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In Distress:
A Marketplace of Feeling in the Early American Republic

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Abstract

This dissertation documents the centrality of emotion to Americans' understanding of, participation in, and critiques of the expanding economy in the first half of the nineteenth century. By then, many people viscerally understood that white men's attempts to procure credit and escape debt could produce fear, anger, guilt, and sadness. In response, anxious middling and upper-class white families cultivated an economy of emotion, consciously laboring to produce cheerfulness and hope to counter those debilitating feelings. This marketplace of feeling served as a necessary corollary to the material market with which historians are more familiar.

Nervous merchants tried to establish a "commerce of affection" to help each other through an unpredictable and sometimes unforgiving economy. Male breadwinners both North and South "deposited" difficult emotions with their wives, who labored to make happiness but were uneasy about sacrificing their emotional wellbeing to the pursuit of wealth. Many anxious enslavers insisted that enslaved people absorb the emotional costs of sale, demanding they appear happy to be sold away from their loved ones. However, enslaved people's displays of anger and grief undermined paternalist claims that slavery produced happiness. These embodied emotions were foundational to abolitionist discourse.

I contend that the marketplace of feeling was patriarchal, rooted in (and simultaneously reinforcing) both gendered and racial power. While popular fiction and didactic literature celebrated dependents' labors to produce happiness for white male breadwinners, many Americans ignored the detrimental effects of this intimate, uncompensated, and sometimes violently coerced labor. Like other labor markets in the early U.S., then, the marketplace of feeling was exploitative, with "profits"—namely happiness and tranquility—often kept from those who labored hardest.

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"You call yourself poor, my friend; you never were so rich—
you never knew the boundless treasures of excellence you possess in that woman."
-Washington Irving, "The Wife" (1819)

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This project has benefitted from the incisive feedback of many generous scholars. An invaluable Skype conversation with Mandy Cooper and Cassie Good put me on the right track for entering the wide and wonderful world of emotions history. Thank you to Mandy for sharing her dissertation and introducing me to the Business History Conference. Our pandemic-proof panel with Dan Levinson Wilk—especially Wendy Woloson's trenchant comment—helped me clarify this project's historiographic claims. I'm grateful to Sarah Winsberg for organizing a SHEAR panel on family, labor, and capitalism, and to Scott Sandage and Jeremy Zallen for their perceptive commentary on my somewhat unusual contribution. Several chapters of this dissertation have been strengthened by generous questions and comments from audiences at the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, the Business History Conference, the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Virginia Historical Society, the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies, the Chabraja Center for Historical Studies, and Queen Mary University.

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To Dad, for everything

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Introduction
The Pursuit of Profit and the Pursuit of Happiness: Emotion in the Early American Economy

It is strange to see with what feverish ardor the Americans pursue their own welfare;
and to watch the vague dread that constantly torments them
lest they should not have chosen the shortest path which may lead to it.
-Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1840)[1]

In 1843, Valeria Forbes finally put her foot down. Her merchant husband Paul had been away on two different continents for most of their marriage. While he scoured the hemispheres for profit, Valeria remained in the United States, raising their three young children on limited funds. After nearly eight years of marriage, Valeria had had enough. "I think you had better come home in a year," she admonished Paul, "& be satisfied to make less money & more happiness."[2] Less money, more happiness. Like many other Americans in the first half of the nineteenth century, Valeria Forbes had come to understand that the pursuit of profit and the pursuit of happiness were not always complementary endeavors. Even more, she believed that Americans had to *make* happiness, just as they made money.

By the early nineteenth century, many Americans viscerally understood that attempts to procure credit and escape debt could produce fear, anger, guilt, and sadness. The pursuit of wealth, they feared, did not necessarily facilitate the pursuit of happiness. Major financial panics in 1819, 1837, and 1857 brought the nation's financial system to its knees, and a credit-based

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[1] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America, Volume II,* trans. Henry Reeve (New York, 1840), Chapter 8.
[2] Valeria Forbes to Paul Siemen Forbes, January 23, 1843, Forbes Family Business Records [FFBR], Baker Library at Harvard Business School, Boston, MA. For more on Valeria and Paul Forbes, see Rachel Tamar Van, "Free Trade & Family Values: Kinship Networks and the Culture of Early American Capitalism" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2011), Chapter 5.

economy also meant that individuals faced sudden loss or even failure at any time. The expansion of credit, banks' inability to maintain enough specie to fulfill that credit, widespread speculation, sudden debt and bankruptcy—each of these factors made the early decades of the new nation fraught with anxiety for many white Americans across region, profession, and even class.[3] The mobility required to pursue greener financial pastures wherever they could be found only increased anxiety. Many white families learned that the pursuit of profit required short- and long-term separations. International merchants like Paul Forbes left their loved ones behind for months or even years at a time. Merchants were not alone in this peripatetic life. Doctors, lawyers, and other middling sorts frequently moved (either alone or with select family members) wherever they thought their prospects for financial success were strongest—even (or perhaps especially) if that was in distant and unfamiliar lands to the west.

Historian Jonathan Levy has argued that Americans have continually embraced "countermovements" to combat the uncertainties of capitalism, using financial instruments to mitigate commercial volatility. After the Panics of 1837 and 1857, for example, the ideal of landed independence resurged as "a literal terra firma apart from the perilous seas of an extending and intensifying national market economy." Another countermovement, life insurance, allowed profit-seekers to insure the value of their future labor and provide economic security for

[3] On failure and fears of downward mobility in the early republic, see Edward J. Balleisen, *Navigating Failure: Bankruptcy and Commercial Society in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Jessica Lepler, *The Many Panics of 1837: People, Politics, and the Creation of a Transatlantic Financial Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Bruce Mann, *Republic of Debtors: Bankruptcy in the Age of American Independence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Scott Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

dependents. This security, Levy argues, "granted many Americans the very ability to play the great commercial game" with "a greater sense of calm."[4]

This dissertation contends that in the first half of the nineteenth century, white Americans relied on emotional—not just financial—strategies to mitigate the unsettling consequences of an expanding capitalist economy. Post-Revolutionary Americans did not embrace this increasingly market-driven world without qualms. They worried especially about the moral implications of an acquisitive ethos that could easily foster corruption and decadence. The following chapters explore how emotions became key to mitigating the market's potential immoralities. Anxious white Americans hoped that intentionally cultivating benevolent emotions (like love and sympathy) could prevent other passions (like greed and envy) from driving men to immoral ends, thereby serving the public good. Middling to upper-class families thus consciously labored to produce hope and cheerfulness to counter market-induced fear, anger, shame, and melancholy—just to name a few. In short, white Americans embraced producing and managing emotions as a strategy for preventing the pursuit of profit from destroying their hard-won pursuit of happiness. This emotional economy—which I call the marketplace of feeling—thus became a necessary corollary to the material market with which historians are more familiar.[5]

The marketplace of feeling was *not* simply an iteration of separate spheres ideology, which combatted middling class social and economic fears by establishing home and family as a corrective and protective buffer against growing moral threats. The ideal of separate spheres allowed men to venture into the competitive and potentially corrupting public sphere of politics

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[4] Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 18-19, 66, 85. Levy also examines slaveholding, fraternal societies, and trusts as countermovements.

[5] For analysis of how emotion is exchanged and circulated within a culture, see Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social Text,* vol. 22, no. 2 (Summer 2004), 117-139.

and business and then recuperate at home, in women's peaceful and loving domain.[6] It should be news to no one that separate spheres was more ideology than reality, more prescriptive than descriptive. Scholars of women's history have been making this clear since the 1970s at least, focusing on the many and varied ways that women acted as economic agents. However, historians have not yet accounted for another blurring of supposedly gendered spheres of labor. The idea of separate spheres suggested that only women undertook palliative emoting. But the concept of a marketplace of feeling encompassed men's emotional labors and transactions, too.

Indeed, this dissertation shows how emotions were not only the domain of women, nor were emotions restricted to the home. Both men and women produced, exchanged, and managed emotions to temper the economy's ill effects. Affective transactions took place in the bustling counting-house as well as the candle-lit parlor—though in different ways, and on different terms. In fact, the ubiquitous concept of an emotional economy in some ways connoted the precise *opposite* of separate, gendered spheres. "Home" guided the market as merchant men constructed professional networks through familial affection, either going into business with male relatives or friends they thought of as "brothers." The "market" also dictated home life in the form of affective labor, as non-wage-earning women reflected on the "hard work" of cheering themselves and their families during financial uncertainty. Men and women of the middling and upper classes merged the languages of emotion and capitalism, revealing their understanding that—despite prevailing domestic ideology—home and market were profoundly connected.

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[6] Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). On the historiography of separate spheres, see Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History,* vol. 75, no. 1 (June 1988), 9-39.

Elucidating the marketplace of feeling as the material market's necessary and intertwined corollary should remind us of the intellectual roots of separate spheres scholarship. As Nancy Cott and Jeanne Boydston in particular demonstrated, the ideology of domesticity that took hold in the United States between the 1780s and 1830s was a direct response to economic and social development—specifically the apparent democratization of politics and society, as well as the commercialization of daily life.[7] In Cott's words, a contrast between home and the world "seemed to explain and justify material change in individuals' lives," and "the literature of domesticity thus enlisted women in their domestic roles to absorb, palliate, and even to redeem the strain of social and economic transformation."[8] Refiguring ideas about gender thus helped early Americans understand and adapt to their changing economic world. And yet, many contemporary scholars of early America do not recognize separate spheres scholarship for what it is: the history of capitalism. Despite many and varied studies demonstrating how women as economic agents helped constitute the early American economy, gender is curiously absent from much of the new history of capitalism in the early American republic.[9] By sidelining domesticity scholarship and under-emphasizing the importance of gender to both facilitating and explaining economic change, these histories re-inscribe the false dichotomy of separate, gendered spheres.

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[7] Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*. Also see Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Amy Dru Stanley, "Home Life and the Morality of the Market," in *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880*, eds. Stephen Conway and Melvyn Stokes (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 74-98.

[8] Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood,* 66, 70. Chapters one and two especially lay out the economic context for the rise of domestic ideology and a change in gender roles for American society.

[9] Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, "Gender's Value in the History of Capitalism," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Winter 2016), 613-635; Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, "The Personal is Political Economy," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 2016), 335-342; Amy Dru Stanley, "Histories of Capitalism and Sex Difference," ibid., 343-350.

The following chapters analyze and emphasize emotions to recuperate both separate spheres scholarship and gender analysis as constitutive and illuminating tools for the history of early American capitalism. Crucially, middling and well-to-do Americans' dedication to a marketplace of feeling challenges the modern assumption (implicit in both women's history and the history of capitalism) that separate spheres was the only influential framework for understanding gender, work, and the economy in the first half of the nineteenth century. Even scholarship that incisively demonstrates the economic significance of women's labor has naturalized emotion as something *outside* the economic realm. Jeanne Boydston, for instance, has argued that early eighteenth-century ministers described wives in ways that "framed their contribution to the family in emotional and psychological (rather than economic) terms."[10] By opposing women's "emotional" and "economic" contributions to the family, Boydston makes a distinction that would have been unrecognizable to the many of the people she studies. The following pages reveal that, at least by the early nineteenth century, many middling white Americans contended that women contributed to the family economy *through* emotions. With its emphasis on emotional transactions both at "home" *and* in "the market," the marketplace of feeling provides a more precise framework for understanding the intertwined histories of gender and capitalism in the early United States.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, we find examples of this affective economy in many different forms. Like merchants keeping account books, people tracked exchanges of letters as exchanges of emotion, even using financial metaphors to note when family members were "in debt," owing uplifting updates. Nervous merchants tried to establish, in the words of one New Englander, a "commerce of affection" to help each other withstand the emotional

[10] Boydston, *Home and Work,* 8-9.

struggles of an unpredictable and sometimes unforgiving economy. Male breadwinners both North and South "deposited" debilitating emotions with their wives, who labored to suppress their own anxieties to project hope and good cheer. Indebted enslavers tried to mitigate any anxiety about slave sale by demanding that enslaved people appear content and willing, despite the known trauma of sale and family separation. Too often, however, enslaved people's displays of anger and grief undermined paternalist claims that slavery provided for the happiness of all involved.

By exploring some of the affective dynamics that made up the wider marketplace of feeling in the early republic, this dissertation documents anxious white Americans' widespread reliance on emotion work as a strategy for tempering the ill effects of a broadening capitalist ethos. Nearly forty years ago, sociologist Arlie Hochschild revolutionized her field with the concept of emotion work, or the effort one puts into either controlling one's own feelings or producing particular emotional responses in others.[11] She distinguished between emotion work and emotional labor, the latter referring to managing emotions and emotional expressions as part of a job (in short: emotion work sold for a wage). Cultural commentators in and outside the academy have used Hochschild's formulations to reveal the burdens of emotion work in our modern homes and workplaces.[12] However, this contemporary focus has masked emotion work's much longer historical significance in the American economy. In fact, early Americans relied on emotions and emotion work to understand the expanding capitalist economy and their place within it.

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[11] Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 85, no. 3 (Nov. 1979), 551-575; Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
[12] For a sample of this work, see Anita Ilta Garey and Karen V. Hansen, eds., *At the Heart of Work and Family: Engaging the Ideas of Arlie Hochschild* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

Hochschild's definition of emotion work eerily maps onto early nineteenth-century white Americans' understanding of emotions, as historians like John Kasson and Martha Tomhave Blauvelt have perceptively recognized.[13] Nineteenth-century Americans believed they could direct and control feelings. Just as people manufactured iron nails, they could also make desired emotions. Early Americans believed, for instance, that intentionally cracking a smile could stimulate genuine cheerfulness.[14] Didactic literature's emphasis on producing emotions and controlling emotional expressions reveals that class-making relied on emotional production in the early United States, when social status seemed newly (and, to some, frighteningly) malleable.[15] As several historians have observed, emotional *control* had particular significance in the new United States. C. Dallett-Hemphill has argued that revolutionary-era conduct literature aimed at the middling classes laid out rules for face-to-face behavior that "evoke a new world of individualistic strivers," suggesting that "the possibilities of that world depended on one's ability to exert emotional self-control." This was as true for men in a competitive commercial marketplace as it was for women in the marriage market. As Hemphill has argued, "A smooth façade would allow middling men to both achieve and assert their worth, by keeping vital information from competitors and demonstrating their own worth via gentility," while "women

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[13] Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart: Young Women and Emotion, 1780-1830* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990).

[14] Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility,* 149. On the smile revolution in western civilization, see Colin Jones, *The Smile Revolution in Eighteenth Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[15] Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*; C. Dallett Hemphill, "Class, Gender, and the Regulation of Emotional Expression in Revolutionary-era Conduct Literature," in *An Emotional History of the United States*, eds. Peter N. Stearns and Jan Lewis (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 33-51. On the importance of feeling and its cultivation in the revolutionary era, see Andrew Burstein, *Sentimental Democracy: The Evolution of America's Romantic Self-Image* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999); Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Nicole Eustace, *Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

were told that a well-balanced modesty would allow them to both attract and retain potential marriage partners."[16]

But emotion work was also economically significant beyond this formation of class and selfhood, and also well beyond the Revolutionary era. While historians have emphasized the significance of emotional control and repression for signifying class and respectability, they have not interrogated the economic significance of emotional *production*—especially people's conscious efforts to manufacture happiness and hope to navigate the changing and challenging economic landscape. By exploring Americans' focus on manufacturing sentiment to regulate economic progress and social order, this dissertation contends that emotions were at the very heart of the American economy in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The affective labor of producing and managing emotions was not without its costs—and, as following chapters reveal, those costs were not equally shared. The marketplace of feeling was patriarchal, rooted in (and simultaneously reinforcing) both gendered and racial power. While popular fiction and didactic literature celebrated dependents' labors to produce happiness and hope for white male breadwinners, many Americans ignored the detrimental effects of this intimate, uncompensated, and sometimes violently coerced labor. Patriarchal market discourse called on dependents to produce the head of household's happiness at the expense of their own. Like other labor markets in the early U.S., then, the system of emotion work was often exploitative, with "profits"—in the form of happiness and tranquility—kept from those who

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[16] Hemphill, "Class, Gender, and the Regulation of Emotional Expression," 36. Also see Jan Lewis, "Domestic Tranquillity and the Management of Emotion among the Gentry of Pre-Revolutionary Virginia," *The William & Mary Quarterly,* vol. 39, no. 1 (January 1982), 135-149; Jacquelyn Miller, "An 'Uncommon Tranquility of Mind': Emotional Self-Control and the Construction of a Middle-Class Identity in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 30, no. 1 (Fall 1996), 129-148.

labored hardest. To fully understand the power structures that undergirded the early American capitalist economy, we must therefore contend with the unequal economy of emotion that was, early Americans believed, its necessary corollary.

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Why do we need this emotional history of capitalism? The history of capitalism in the early United States is a vibrant and burgeoning field.[17] And yet, the significance of emotion to early Americans' financial world has been buried in the archives because historians have not dug deeply or widely enough in their methodological toolkits, thus neglecting how Americans produced sentiment as well as capital. Historians of Britain have far more effectively investigated emotions—especially family ties—as a driving force in the nineteenth-century economy. Andrew Popp and Deborah Cohen, for instance, have shown how English and Anglo-Argentine families (respectively) used their businesses to serve familial emotional needs. These families mobilized economic assets to produce desired emotional effects, thus underscoring how

[17] For recent states-of-the-field on the history of early American capitalism, see Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, Introduction to *American Capitalism: New Histories*, eds. Sven Beckert and Christine Desan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 1-32; Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, "Introduction: Slavery's Capitalism," in *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*, eds. Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 1-28; Roseanne Currarino, "Toward a History of Cultural Economy," *The Journal of the Civil War Era,* vol. 2, no. 4 (December 2012), 564-585; Paul A. Gilje, "The Rise of Capitalism in the Early Republic," in *Wages of Independence: Capitalism in the Early American Republic*, ed. Paul A. Gilje (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 1-22; Brian P. Luskey and Wendy Woloson, Introduction to *Capitalism by Gaslight: Illuminating the Economy of Nineteenth-Century America*, eds. Brian P. Luskey and Wendy Woloson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 1-9; Seth Rockman, "What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 34, no. 3 (Fall 2014), 439-466; Jeffrey Sklansky, "Labor, Money, and the Financial Turn in the History of Capitalism," *Labor*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2014), 23-46; Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith, "Introduction: An American Revolutionary Tradition," in *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America*, eds. Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1-12.

the material economy could serve an emotional economy, not just the other way around.[18] In Cohen's words, "Rather than maximizing returns or seeking above all else to retain control of their businesses, [Anglo-Argentine families] prioritized family harmony over profits and stability over the possibility of expansion."[19] These British families pursued happiness *via* pursuing profit, and willingly accepted material losses if doing so meant achieving emotional gains.

The work of Cohen and Popp underscores Susan J. Matt's perceptive point that the history of emotions "indicates that the history of capitalism has never been simply a tale of rational actors following their innate, acquisitive, and self-aggrandizing impulses."[20] Historians of emotion contend that investigating how emotional priorities (as well as customs for emotional expression) change over time provides insight into the power relations that have governed societies across time, as well as how and why those emotional hierarchies change.[21] Who has the

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[18] Andrew Popp, *Entrepreneurial Families: Business, Marriage and Life in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 20012); Deborah Cohen, "Love and Money in the Informal Empire: The British in Argentina, 1830-1930," *Past and Present*, no. 245 (November 2019), 79-115.
[19] Cohen, "Love and Money," 86.
[20] Susan J. Matt, "Current Emotion Research in History: Or, Doing History from the Inside Out," *Emotion Review*, vol. 3, no. 1 (January 2011), 121. For recent works integrating the history of emotions and economics in the Anglo-American world, see for instance, Mandy L. Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion: Families, Friends, and the Making of the United States" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2018); John Corrigan, *Business of the Heart: Religion and Emotion in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, "Abigail's Accounts: Economy and Affection in the Early Republic," *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Fall 2005), 35-58; Brenna O'Rourke Holland, "Mad Speculation and Mary Girard: Gender, Capitalism, and the Cultural Economy of Madness in the Revolutionary Atlantic," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 39, no. 4 (Winter 2019), 647-675; Robin Holt and Andrew Popp, "Emotion, Succession, and the Family Firm: Josiah Wedgewood & Sons," *Business History*, vol. 55, no. 6 (2013), 892-909; Susan J. Matt, "An Emotional History of Capitalism" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, Chicago, January 2019); Popp, *Entrepreneurial Families*; Scott Sandage, "The Gaze of Success: Failed Men and the Sentimental Marketplace, 1873-1893," in *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in America Culture*, eds. Mary Chapman and Glenn Hendler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 181-204.
[21] For an introduction to the field of emotions history, see Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2018); Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns, eds., *Doing Emotions History* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2014); Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction,* trans. Keith Tribe (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2015).

power to dictate emotional rules? Who determines which emotions matter, or what groups can openly express them? Much can be gleaned from who holds (or believes they hold) the power to direct a society's emotional culture, how they choose to do so, and who resists that imposed emotional regime. For precisely this reason, it is past time Americanists similarly reckon with the tangled drives for love and money in the early United States. If we look at how middling and well-to-do white Americans understood the economy and themselves as economic actors, the centrality of emotion to the American economy is unmistakable. Recovering the significance of emotion to the nineteenth-century American economy—especially how philosophical debates over the relationship between commerce and emotions informed Americans' everyday lives and decisions—is a main project of this dissertation.

Those philosophical debates over the vexed relationship between emotions and economics came to a head in Europe during the Enlightenment. Emma Rothschild has argued for the existence of a short-lived "romantic enlightenment" in Europe during the 1780s and 1790s, whereby economic life was "part of political, emotional, and moral life." This "romantic enlightenment" helped social theorists like Adam Smith and Condorcet understand the economy in emotional terms. Rothschild contends that this moment had passed by the early decades of the nineteenth century. By 1836, she points out, John Stuart Mill argued that political economy had become more bounded—in Rothschild's words, "a science with its own territory, its own definition, and its own method of investigation."[22] A science, in other words, unrelated to emotion. This disaggregation of political economy and emotion may have happened on an

[22] Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 218-19. On the historiography of political economy in the early American republic, see Dael A. Norwood, "Political Economy, or Ways to Make Early America Add Up," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Winter 2016), 753-782.

intellectual level for some theorists. However, the following chapters reveal that, on the ground at least, emotions still had a place in economic life in the early- to mid-nineteenth-century United States. In fact, especially on the individual and familial levels, emotions remained a driving force in the early American economy.

As Rothschild's take on the "romantic enlightenment" suggests, nineteenth-century Americans were not the first to uneasily consider the vexed relationship between the pursuit of happiness and the pursuit of profit. For Adam Smith nearly a century earlier, the economy depended on emotion. He argued that commerce was rooted in sympathy, by which he meant "fellow-feeling with any passion"—or a person's ability to understand, through his or her own experience, a multitude of emotions felt by another person. Sympathy enabled people to imagine themselves in the place of someone else and thus inspire within themselves "an analogous emotion."[23] Commerce, Smith contended, facilitated sympathetic exchanges. He argued that sympathy had an important role to play in driving commercial society. In the opening lines of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Smith declared that there are "principles" in every person's nature "which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him."[24] To exchange effectively in a commercial society, an economic actor had to sympathize with other people, to understand what they wanted and why, and from there figure out how he or she could fulfill those desires according to his or her own interests. It was a system of benign manipulation. Being able to serve both one's own and others' interests meant that commerce could, theoretically, support the public good. Smith's imagined economic agents survived and

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[23] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley (1759; New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 15. Nicole Eustace and Sarah Knott have shown the limits of sympathy in the American colonies during the period in which Smith wrote, especially during the Revolution. See Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*; Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*.

[24] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* 13.

thrived on emotional connection, and his imagined commercial society rested on the exchange of *both* goods and sympathy.[25]

More broadly, eighteenth-century political economists wondered if commerce could have a soothing effect on the passions.[26] From the Renaissance on, European thinkers had feared that moral philosophy and established religion could no longer subdue man's destructive passions, arguing that another restraining power had to be cultivated. Political economists began to wonder if commerce and capitalism could fill that void. In the eighteenth century, many Europeans' opinions about commerce and profit-seeking began to change. Before, money-making had been seen in a negative light—as vulgar and desperate. But in the eighteenth century, many Europeans came to value commerce for its purported potential to restrain the passions—to give men something productive to do (individually and societally, privately and publicly) and keep them out of trouble.[27]

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[25] Philosophy scholar Lisa Herzog astutely notes that "Today, Smith's trust in the natural ability of *all* individuals to feel sympathy with one another, as well as to attract it by speaking in the right way, seems overly optimistic, as does the idea that commercial society can include all members into the exchange of goods *and* sympathy." Indeed, she captures how his "bourgeois fantasy" can be problematic in our own time, "hid[ing] the real problems at the lower end of the social ladder. Can we indeed imagine the problems of, say, a single mother from an ethnic minority who struggles to make ends meet? Or is the serene assumption that we can put ourselves into her shoes a naïve and dangerous deception that keeps us from really understanding the monotony of her work, the trouble she has in receiving reliable information, and the weakness of her bargaining position in wage negotiations?" Lisa Herzog, "The Community of Commerce: Smith's Rhetoric of Sympathy in the Opening of the *Wealth of Nations*," *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2013), 81-82. The problems of sympathy are effectively analyzed in the historiography of white, middle-class women's "benevolent" work in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States, as well as Christian civilizing missions across the world in the same period.

[26] In the eighteenth century, the word "passion" had multiple connotations. Nicole Eustace argues, "the word *passion* was often linked to two specific emotions: anger and lust. In the eighteenth century, such associations could taint any emotion labeled a passion as debased and dangerous to reason and morality—or could simply emphasize the strength of the emotion." Eustace, *Passion is the Gale,* 485. On the perceived differences in emotions in the eighteenth century, see Eustace's invaluable appendix, "Toward a Lexicon of Eighteenth-Century Emotion," in *Passion is the Gale*, 481-486.

[27] Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 41-43. Also see Albert O. Hirschman, "Rival Interpretations of Market Society: Civilizing, Destructive, or Feeble?," *Journal of Economic Literature,*

Thus emerged the concept of doux—or soft—commerce, the idea of commerce as a gentle, civilizing process.[28] Proponents of the doux commerce theory argued that commerce was *relatively* peaceful and productive. By bringing people together through mutual obligation and sympathetic conversation, commerce would have a calming effect at a time when people increasingly feared that men grasped for tyrannical power over one another. In an age of tyranny and enlightened calls for liberty as a natural right, some political economists heralded commerce as a calming, restraining power, capable of "repress[ing] and perhaps atrophy[ing] the more destructive and disastrous components of human nature."[29] Commerce promoted the public good, they argued, by fostering industriousness and progress, driving men to cultivate innovation in science and the arts, and cumulatively working to provide greater prosperity to more people.[30] A prime example of doux commerce theory is Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois* (1748), in which he argues that "the spirit of commerce brings with it the spirit of frugality, of economy, of moderation, of work, of wisdom, of tranquility, of order, and of regularity. In this manner, as long as this spirit prevails, the riches it creates do not have any bad effect."[31] Commerce, Thomas Paine similarly contended in *The Rights of Man* (1791), "is a pacific system, operating to cordialise mankind, by rendering Nations, as well as individuals, useful to each other."[32] By

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vol. 20, no. 4 (December 1982), 1463-1484; Mark L. Movsesian, "Markets and Morals: The Limits of Doux Commerce," *William & Mary Business Law Review*, vol. 9, iss. 2 (2018), 449-475.

[28] For an extensive analysis of the doux commerce theory, see Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* and "Rival Interpretations of Market Society." Of course, arguments that commerce had a peaceful, civilizing effect underplayed if not ignored the fact that in reality, the capitalist economic system was rooted in violent, oppressive, and white supremacist processes like the slave trade and colonialism.

[29] Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests,* 66, 134.

[30] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 214.

[31] Translation in Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests,* 71.

[32] Thomas Paine, "Rights of Man, Being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution," in *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Library of America, 1995), 598.

the early nineteenth century, one Irish-American economist declared confidently that political economy had become "the science of promoting human happiness."[33]

But what did "happiness" mean? Enlightenment philosophers lingered on the idea of happiness, what it was, and how best to achieve it.[34] For centuries, people had seen suffering as their natural, divinely ordained condition. But with the intellectual and social revolutions of the eighteenth century, people were beginning to understand that *not* suffering—that happiness—could be a natural right.[35] European and Euro-American intellectuals certainly perceived happiness as an emotional state. Adam Smith, for instance, believed happiness consisted of a prolonged state of peacefulness and pleasure, fostered through affectionate, sympathetic human relationships.[36] But the term had a more expansive definition than we now understand it, encompassing emotional, economic, and even political components. For instance, historians have debated the meaning that Thomas Jefferson intended with the phrase "the pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence. The current consensus is that happiness, in the founding fathers' understanding, contained a little bit of the various meanings held at the time—from a Lockean understanding of happiness as both pleasure and property, to a classical republican idea of happiness as civic virtue, to a Scottish Enlightenment belief that pursuing public good is the best way to promote individual happiness.[37]

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[33] Mathew Carey, *Essays on Political Economy; Or, the Most Certain means of Promoting the Wealth, Power, Resources, and Happiness of Nations: Applied Particularly to the United States* (Philadelphia: H.C. Carey & I. Lea, 1822), 3.
[34] Darrin M. McMahon, *Happiness: A History* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 319; Janet Ann Riesman, "The Origins of American Political Economy, 1690-1781" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1983), chapter 1, "The Spirit of Commerce."
[35] McMahon, *Happiness: A History,* 247.
[36] Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 51.
[37] For summaries of this debate, see Jan Lewis, "Happiness," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, eds. Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole (Cambridge, U.K.: Blackwell, 1994) and McMahon, "Liberalism and Its Discontents," in *Happiness: A History*, 312-362. Other helpful takes

Eighteenth-century theorists pondered happiness at the same time that commerce expanded and the modern capitalist system took shape. The same theorists interrogating happiness also considered the consequences of commercial society—often in the same breath. How might the pursuit of happiness and the pursuit of wealth coexist? Adam Smith proclaimed that "the chief part of human happiness arises from the consciousness of being beloved," and suggested it was better for men to rise slowly than achieve a "sudden revolution of fortune," which would provoke envy and threaten friendships.[38] Affectionate relationships, not fortune, were the root of happiness. The question of how (or, perhaps more accurately, whether) happiness and the pursuit of wealth fit together was on many European philosophers' minds. At the same time that many Enlightenment philosophers trumpeted the positive, pacifying, and unifying effects of commerce, others were cautious about commerce's possible negative effects. As historian Darrin McMahon has noted, the view that commerce and economic growth drove social progress and civil improvement (and thus social happiness) did not resolve the question of whether modern commercial societies promoted *individual* happiness.[39]

Even Adam Smith doubted whether the pursuit of wealth was the best means of achieving the pursuit of happiness on an individual scale. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he gave the rhetorical example of a "poor man's son" who thought he would be happier if he was wealthier. "Through the whole of his life," Smith contended,

> he pursues the idea of a certain artificial and elegant repose which he may never arrive at, for which he sacrifices a real tranquillity [*sic*] that is at all times in his power, and which,

include Riesman, "The Origins of American Political Economy," chapter 1, "The Spirit of Commerce"; Howard Mumford Jones, *The Pursuit of Happiness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1953); Gary Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (New York: Vintage, 1979); Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

[38] Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 51.

[39] McMahon, *Happiness: A History,* 329.

> if in the extremity of old age he should at last attain it, he will find to be in no respect preferable to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned for it. It is then, in the last dregs of his life, his body wasted with toil and diseases,…that he begins at last to find that wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity [*sic*] of mind than the tweezer cases of the lover of toys.[40]

To Smith, "happiness consists in tranquillity [*sic*] and enjoyment."[41] When the pursuit of wealth caused a feverish and constant desire for more, it could not be said to promote "tranquillity," even if it did serve as a powerful engine of wider economic and social growth.[42] Smith's conviction that the pursuit of wealth could rupture tranquility and enjoyment remained when he published *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. "The desire of bettering our condition," he then contended, "comes with us from the womb, and never leaves us till we go into the grave. In the whole interval which separates these two moments, there is scarce perhaps a single instant in which any man is so perfectly and completely satisfied with his situation, as to be without any wish of alteration or improvement, of any kind."[43]

Adam Smith was far from alone in doubting whether the pursuit of wealth was the surest path to happiness. Across the Channel in France, Jean-Jacques Rousseau worried that modern, commercial civilization made people certain they *should* be happy, while leading them further astray from actually *being* happy.[44] Industry, the arts, consumerism—these things could certainly

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[40] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 211-212.
[41] Ibid., 171.
[42] McMahon, *Happiness: A History,* 329-330.
[43] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, Vol. 2,* (1776; Basil: J. Decker, 1801), Chapter 3, 111. For a political scientist's approach to resolving the paradox of Smith advocating for commercial society while admitting that the pursuit of wealth challenged the pursuit of happiness, see Dennis C. Rasmussen, "Does 'Bettering Our Condition' Really Make Us Better Off? Adam Smith on Progress and Happiness," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 100, No. 3 (August 2006), 309-318.
[44] On Rousseau's understanding of happiness, see McMahon, *Happiness: A History,* Chapter 4; Stephen G. Slakeve, "Rousseau & the Concept of Happiness," *Journal of the Northeastern Political Science Association* 11 (Fall 1978), 27-45; Ronald Grimsley, "Rousseau and the Problem of Happiness," *Hobbes*

provide short-term pleasure, but could they facilitate long-lasting happiness? In 1782, Rousseau worried, "How can we give the name of happiness to a fleeting state which leaves our hearts still empty and anxious, either regretting something that is past or desiring something that is yet to come?"[45] Commercial society—with its uncertainties and commodification—had the potential to cause precisely this kind of regret and covetous desire on a large scale. Rousseau linked this desire and disappointment to unhappiness, arguing "it is by dint of agitating ourselves to increase our happiness that we convert it into unhappiness," and "what causes human misery is the contradiction between our condition and our desires."[46] By fostering emotions like regret and greed, Rousseau feared, commercial society had the potential to disrupt people's pursuit of happiness.

Adam Smith's countryman Adam Ferguson also worried that the commercial spirit actually destroyed beneficial sympathetic bonds.[47] Ferguson challenged Smith's idea of sympathy, arguing that two people sharing the same emotion did not necessarily mean the emotion was right or just. Instead, Ferguson prized affection, arguing in 1767 that "in the breast of a man, its flame redoubles where the wrongs or sufferings of his friend, or his country, require his aid." But he unfavorably compared the state of affection in commercial societies with that in ancient civilizations, where people felt "sanguine affection" for their tribes or countries. In a commercial society, Ferguson feared, "man is sometimes found a detached and solitary being: he

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and Rousseau: A Collection of Critical Essays, eds. Maurice Cranston and Richard S. Peters (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 437-461.

[45] Rousseau, *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, translation in McMahon, *Happiness: A History,* 237.

[46] Rousseau, *Emile* and *Political Fragments*, respectively, translation in McMahon, *Happiness: A History,* 241-243.

[47] Jack Russell Weinstein, "The Two Adams: Ferguson and Smith on Sympathy and Sentiment," in *Adam Ferguson: Philosophy, Politics and Society*, eds. Eugene Heath and Vincenzo Merolle (2009; London: Routledge, 2016), 89-105.

has found an object which sets him in competition with his fellow-creatures, and he deals with them as he does with his cattle and his soil, for the sake of the profits they bring." The "mighty engine" of a commercial society in fact meant that "the bands of affection are broken" among men.[48] Ferguson feared that the anxiety wrought by the pursuit of wealth had larger social implications—that anxiety about wealth made men more open to accepting tyrannical governance if it promised to stave off status anxieties, whether real or imagined.[49] The pursuit of wealth was acceptable when it was moderate and reasonable. But when it became a single-minded passion, it had to be contained—much like would-be tyrants' desire for political power had to be checked.

Alongside the social, scientific, and political revolutions of the eighteenth century, Europe (and its imperial outposts, including the North American colonies) also underwent an *emotional* revolution. The Enlightenment had ushered in new conceptions of the self, encouraging individuals to think for themselves rather than relying on authority. Sentimental culture arose in part to retain a communal spirit, to encourage people to relate positively to one another through feeling.[50] Regulating emotions became a way to reconcile individual feelings and ambitions with social cohesion and happiness. By the mid-eighteenth century in the American colonies, sympathy (or shared feeling) became a cultural value precisely because it

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[48] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Dublin: Boulter Grierson, 1767), 27-28.
[49] "When heirs of family find themselves straitened and poor, in the midst of affluence; when the cravings of luxury silence even the voice of party and faction…when fortune, in short, instead of being considered as the instrument of a vigorous spirit, becomes the idol of a covetous or a profuse, of a rapacious or a timorous mind; the foundation on which freedom was built, may serve to support a tyranny." Ferguson, *An Essay*, 392.
[50] Ironically, Nicole Eustace argues, "the very act of examining, identifying, and expressing emotion aided the expansion of the autonomous self." She contends that the conflict between "personal advancement and community enhancement, between the pursuit of selfish passions and the promotion of social feeling" has dogged the United States ever since. Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 478.

might restrain the untrammeled self. Emotions—especially affective bonds—remained socially and politically urgent in the late eighteenth century. During the American Revolution, patriot leaders strove to unite Americans through shared feelings of grief and anger, as well as love and sympathy.[51] This shared "spirit" suggested people deserved to be free *because* they felt anger, grief, and especially civic virtue. Emotions had become the language through which Americans navigated the personal and the political, the individual and the social.

Attention to emotion only increased in the new United States. After 1800, the Second Great Awakening further entrenched emotional exploration as an individual and social value. Leading scholars of emotions history argue that the beginning of the nineteenth century was a key transition in the United States, tied to "the emergence of a democratic form of government and an egalitarian social ethos, the market revolution, the abolition of certain social hierarchies, and the creation of an American middle class."[52] Americans paid more and more attention to their emotions and interior life. Self-awareness and self-interrogation were culturally important—a shift visible, for example, in early nineteenth-century Americans relying on guilt (self-judgment) rather than colonial America's preferred shame (community sanction) to police individuals' behavior.[53] With this increased attention on emotion, Americans began to ascribe new emotional meaning to familiar things. They newly heralded marriage, for instance, for its

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[51] On the rise of sympathy, sentiment, and sensibility in the revolutionary era, see Eustace, *Passion is the Gale;* Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*.
[52] Peter N. Stearns and Jan Lewis, Introduction to *An Emotional History of the United States*, 10.
[53] John Demos, "Shame and Guilt in Early New England," in *Emotions and Social Change: Toward a New Psychohistory,* eds. Carol Z. and Peter N. Stearns (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), 69-86. For more on an individual sense of self emerging in the Anglo-American context in the late eighteenth century, see Eustace, *Passion is the Gale.*

emotional, not just economic function. The first half of the nineteenth century was variously an age of sensibility, sentimentalism, and romanticism—an age, in short, of emotional exploration.[54]

To Americans freshly attuned to emotional experience, the trials and tribulations of the market economy contradicted earlier claims of "doux commerce"—the idea that commerce and capitalist society more generally would restrain dangerous passions and improve general welfare through increased prosperity. The early to mid-nineteenth century expansion of financial risk management through mechanisms like insurance and bankruptcy reveals just how much financial anxiety had come to dominate the American psyche, and how dependent Americans were on the economy for a sense of security.[55] Facing financial uncertainty at every turn, many Americans had practical and pressing reason to echo the earlier, more abstract worries of Rousseau, Ferguson, and even Smith that the commercial spirit and the pursuit of wealth actually *exacerbated* unwanted passions, making people angry, anxious, and resentful in response to their varied financial fortunes.

Concerns about commerce's deleterious influence on the pursuit of happiness were worrisome when, as Adam Smith observed, "augmentation in fortune is the means by which the greater part of men propose to better their condition."[56] This acquisitive ethos was alive and well

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[54] On sensibility and sentiment, see (among many others) Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart;* Burstein, *Sentimental Democracy;* Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1977); Knott, *Sensibility and the Age of Revolution*; Jan Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Shirley Samuels, ed., *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Jane P. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[55] Levy, *Freaks of Fortune*; Sandage, *Born Losers*, esp. chapters one ("Going Bust in the Age of Go Ahead") and two ("A Reason in the Man").

[56] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 111-112. Mark Movsesian has also highlighted Edmund Burke's critique of the doux commerce thesis. "For Burke," Movsesian points out, "the *doux commerce* thesis had cause and effect backwards. The market does not create virtues and habits of mind; rather, it depends on pre-existing virtues and habits of mind, like law-abidingness, probity, toleration, and trust, all of which people

in the nineteenth-century United States. As Alexis de Tocqueville famously observed after he visited the United States in the early 1830s, freshly organizing a society around market competition and political equality among white men meant more than just the equal opportunity to rise; it also meant the equal opportunity to fall spectacularly, even for families that had enjoyed decades of good fortune or social standing. Many Americans faced this reality. Channeling Rousseau's fear that the "contradiction between our condition and our desires" underlay "human misery," de Tocqueville argued in *Democracy in America* (1835 and 1840), "[t]his constant strife between the propensities springing from the equality of conditions and the means it supplies to satisfy them harasses and wearies the mind." Because Americans in uncertain economic times had to expect the unexpected, positive results were never assured, and anything from complex economic forces to simple bad luck often interrupted, redirected, or obscured the path to prosperity. This uncertainty led to what de Tocqueville called being "restless in the midst of abundance." He did not believe that this restlessness was unique to the United States; it was a "spectacle" that was, in fact, "as old as the world." In the United States, however, "the novelty is to see a whole people furnish an exemplification of it."[57] Their newly democratic society raised Americans' expectations for wealth, happiness, and general opportunity. Consequently, de Tocqueville saw democracy as a root cause of the anxiety pervading the nation.

While de Tocqueville attributed the miseries and nervousness of restless Americans to their ostensibly democratic "equality of conditions," others were not so sure. Historian Darrin McMahon has noted that in positively reviewing de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, John

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bring to it from other sources—from the wider culture, and, especially, from religion. Without those pre-existing virtues and habits, the free market would collapse." Movsesian, "Markets and Morals," 465.

[57] de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* 146, 144-145.

Stuart Mill wondered if the capitalist ethos—rather than democracy itself—was the true cause of American anxiety. Mill saw in his native Great Britain both decidedly *un*equal political conditions and yet the same "petty pursuit of petty advancements in fortune" and "habitual dissatisfaction" that de Tocqueville observed in America. Mill cautioned his readers "that the most serious danger to the future prospects of mankind is in the unbalanced influence of the commercial spirit."[58] Whether democracy, capitalism, or a combination of the two wrought this "restlessness in the midst of abundance" across the United States, the simple truth was that many Americans were deeply anxious—and they were not happy about it.

Indeed, white Americans at the time of de Tocqueville and Mill were becoming increasingly aware of the pursuit of profit's negative emotional impact—of capitalism's ability to derail rather than grease the wheels of individuals' pursuit of happiness. The mentality of capitalism—its acquisitive ethos and core values of profit, competition, and individualism—was expanding in the early United States. Historians of capitalism consider the early republic "a key transitionary period" in American economic history. It was an era that saw the rise or expansion of many defining elements of modern capitalism—including a fluid and expansive money supply, banking, corporations, industrialization, consumerism, flexible currency, and vast transportation innovation.[59] In a nation promoting democracy for white men, these financial mechanisms helped entrench wealth-seeking as a cultural value across the nation's white population. These changes wrought massive growth for the national economy, but they also

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[58] Mill quoted in McMahon, *Happiness: A History,* 344-345.

[59] Gilje, "The Rise of Capitalism," 2. Gilje provides a concise yet reasonably comprehensive account of the rise of capitalism in the United States. For a longer synthesis, see John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Common Good* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

caused enormous uncertainty—and thus emotional distress—for many white individuals and families.[60]

This anxiety had acute, damaging consequences for black and indigenous people. As countless studies of colonialism, slavery, and indigenous history attest, "the commercial spirit" endangered far more than just the happiness of non-white peoples across the globe. In the race for profit, many white Americans grasped opportunities that rested on the exploitation and disempowerment of others. Westward expansion especially depended on violently expelling Native Americans, and then violently coercing labor from enslaved black people. Many white Americans' pursuit of happiness thus depended on the *denial* of happiness (in all its varied meanings) to marginalized peoples. With these histories of white supremacy in mind, it is all the more critical to interrogate the outsized role of white anxiety and emotion management in early America's cultural economy.

In this rapidly expanding capitalist economy, credit exchanges drove simultaneous growth and instability. The early American economy depended on free people promising to pay one another, and thus assuming debts. Through this "currency of promises," the credit economy connected anyone and everyone, which meant that one person's losses could have a ripple effect on his or her friends, loved ones, and business associates.[61] In such an economy, failure loomed everywhere and linked everyone. International financial panics erupted almost every decade, meaning many Americans observed and experienced market-driven fear and misery. In his history of failure in America, historian Scott Sandage noted increasing reports of suicide due to "pecuniary embarrassment" across the country in the mid-nineteenth century, from

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[60] For considerations of how feelings played into the history of capitalism in the early republic, see Balleisen, *Navigating Failure;* Lepler, *The Many Panics of 1837*; Sandage, *Born Losers.*
[61] Zakim and Kornblith, *Capitalism Takes Command,* 3.

Massachusetts and New York to Louisiana and Virginia.[62] "Nineteenth-century Americans," Sandage astutely observed, "had to learn to live in a new world where the sky was always falling." The first half of the century was an age of both languorous "hard times" and shocking "panic"—an era, Sandage rightly contends, "of collective mania and individual anxiety."[63]

In his influential intellectual prehistory of capitalism, Albert Hirschman argued that "by the middle of the nineteenth century the experience with capitalism had been such that the argument about the benign effects of *le doux commerce* on human nature had totally changed." Specifically,

> the idea that men pursuing their interests would be forever harmless was decisively given up only when the reality of capitalist development was in full view. As economic growth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries uprooted millions of people, impoverished numerous groups while enriching some, caused large-scale unemployment during cyclical depressions, and produced modern mass society, it became clear to a number of observers that those caught in these violent transformations would on occasion become passionate—passionately angry, fearful, resentful.[64]

Historians have studied this nineteenth-century disenchantment with capitalism both on the ground and through the philosopher's pen, primarily through the lens of labor history and the (often violent) emergence of class struggle.

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[62] Sandage, *Born Losers,* 6.
[63] Ibid*.,* 22.
[64] Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests,* 126, 128. In his 2015 presidential address to the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, John Lauritz Larson emphasizes this distinction between "real-world evidence" of "how markets actually worked," and "abstract and schematic" Smithian arguments. "By 1830," Larson argued, "there was plenty of evidence that neither reason nor self-interest governed all human behavior. The rising tides of productivity did *not* lift all boats equally, or even proportionally, and sometimes market adjustments through supply and demand came at great cost to lots of people whose personal wickedness (the warrant for their suffering) could not be established. That the greatest good for all naturally resulted from the selfish pursuit of private wealth might have seemed plausible in 1776, when faulty mercantilist interventions had corrupted nearly every aspect of the British Atlantic economy; but by the 1830s Smith's confident assertion appeared less self-evidently true." John Lauritz Larson, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 35, no. 1 (Spring 2015), 20.

This dissertation takes another tack, though still rooted firmly in the lived experience of real people, and in overarching concerns about labor, power, and agency. Rather than tracking the continuous battle between labor and capital, the following pages trace another struggle—that between the pursuit of wealth and the pursuit of happiness. To combat the "serious danger" (to borrow John Stuart Mill's words) that a capitalist acquisitive ethos presented to happiness in a purportedly democratic society, white Americans had to find a way to curb what had become a potentially destructive passion. Their solution, this dissertation argues, was the marketplace of feeling. In the first half of the nineteenth century, white Americans worried that anxiety, sorrow, and anger were the price they had to pay for pursuing wealth. To counter the destructive passions wrought by this pursuit of profit, people consciously produced feelings of love and hope, and deposited them with struggling loved ones. Inattentive friends hastily complied when failing peers called in emotional debts by demanding offerings of affection to help them through hard times. Just as political economists initially hailed commerce as a curb for the destructive passions of tyrannical power, Americans embraced the marketplace of feeling as a source of countervailing emotions to restrain the potentially destructive passions wrought by the pursuit of profit.[65]

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The idea that commerce—or any economic system—interfered with the pursuit of happiness unnerved many middling and upper-class white families in a new United States whose founding declaration asserted the pursuit of happiness as a natural right. This dissertation interrogates that unease, recovering how these seemingly well-to-do Americans wrestled to

[65] Hirschman describes the principle of countervailing passions as "to utilize one set of comparatively innocuous passions to countervail another more dangerous set." Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, 20.

balance the pursuits of profit and happiness, and asking how the compatibility of capitalism and happiness played out in daily life. The first half of the dissertation explores two communities particularly attuned to anxiety about the changing economy and financial uncertainty: Boston merchants seeking fortune in the China trade during an uncertain era of frequent financial panics, and slaveholding Virginia families reckoning with economic and social decline in a new democratic order. These two populations are also linked by their investment in explicitly exploitative pursuits of wealth. Many successful China traders built their fortunes by smuggling massive quantities of opium into China. Virginian enslavers similarly built their wealth on the backs of the people they enslaved to labor for their happiness. Interrogating the anxieties and emotion work of these two groups allows us to parse both similarities and differences in how the marketplace of feeling operated in "free" and slave economies.

The first two chapters focus on Boston merchant families seeking fortune in the China trade in the 1830s and 1840s. The speculative nature of trade exposed merchants and their families to the negative passions of the marketplace—from anxiety and fear of failure to greed and envy. "The life of a merchant is, necessarily, a life of peril," one writer proclaimed in *The Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review* in 1839. "He can scarcely move without danger. He is beset on all sides with disappointments, with fluctuations in the current of business, which sometimes leave him stranded on an unknown bar, and sometimes sweep him helpless into the ocean. These vicissitudes depend on causes which no man can control, and are often so sudden, that no calculation could anticipate, or skill avoid them."[66] Like merchants in other American cities, Boston's traders were caught up in the repeated financial panics of the first half of the

[66] Judge Joseph Hopkinson, "Lecture on Commercial Integrity," *The Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review*, *Conducted by Freeman Hunt,* vol. 1, no. 5 (1839), 372.

nineteenth century. During the Panic of 1837, merchant's wife Ellen Coolidge worried about her family's prospects, anxiously confessing to her sister, "Our merchants have been lunatics for the last five years, mad gamblers, moonstruck maniacs. The rage of speculation has extended from them through all classes of the community, and all or nearly all, are now repenting in a lucid interval, the extravagancies of their phrensy fit."[67] As these observations suggest, people understood the risks, rewards, and overall economic presence of merchants in anxious, emotional terms.

Because of this emotional vulnerability, merchants avidly pursued an effective marketplace of feeling that would help them feel more secure in an uncertain and often unforgiving economy. Masculinity was at the heart of this venture. Chapter one argues that the known uncertainty, risk, and failure associated with the merchant profession led Boston merchants to attempt to forge a "commerce of affection"—a network of both economic and emotional support—to help them withstand the emotional ills of their profession. This chapter makes the case for the need to integrate emotions history into business history, offering a case study of the business partnership between Joseph Coolidge and Augustine Heard. The chapter shows that their China trade firm (established in 1840) can only be understood through the analysis of both emotions and masculinity. Thrown out of the biggest American trading firm in China, Joseph Coolidge's shame and anger drove him to establish Augustine Heard & Co. to recuperate an embattled sense of manhood. He drew Heard into the partnership by appealing to feelings of brotherly affection between the two. The chapter thus underscores the importance to Boston's merchants of cultivating bonds of affection that could be mobilized in the economic

[67] Ellen Coolidge to Virginia Randolph Trist, June 14, 1837, Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge Correspondence [ECC], Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

realm. In speeches, magazines, and counting-house chatter, merchants heard warnings that without such manly, affectionate bonds, they could not withstand the booms and busts—both financial and emotional—of the profession.

Where else should merchants turn for support when the tides of trade rose against them? Chapter two argues that wives played a central role in the marketplace of feeling for merchant families. Merging the history of emotions and feminist labor history, the chapter asserts that in a society professing ideals of individualism and independence for white men only, a marketplace of feeling was the only market in which women's labor was openly celebrated. In fiction, didactic literature, parlor whispers, and admonishing letters, wives confronted pressure to produce cheerfulness in themselves and thus happiness for husbands encumbered by the burdens of the economic realm. The chapter takes Ellen Coolidge, Joseph Coolidge's wife, as an example of how women struggled with the emotional effects of this unceasing affective labor. While the speeches and magazines of mercantile societies used the gentle language of support and sympathy to describe bonds of affection between male business partners, writing both public and private acknowledged the hard *work* that went into wives suppressing and producing emotions for their families. The difficult and draining work of making happiness pushed wives to critique an economy that demanded they sacrifice their own emotional wellbeing. Should Americans be willing to sacrifice the pursuit of happiness for the pursuit of profit? Many merchants' wives were unsure, and made their concerns known.

Ellen Coolidge also provides a bridge to another anxious community's marketplace of feeling further explored in chapter three: Virginia enslavers reckoning with fears of decline in a new democratic order and changing economy. Though married to a Boston merchant, Ellen Coolidge had been born in Virginia and was a formerly slave-owning granddaughter of Thomas

Jefferson. The Jefferson-Randolphs were one of many Virginia gentry families whose fortunes declined in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the second half of the eighteenth century, soil exhaustion, a difficult tobacco market, and taxes sank Virginia's slaveholding elite deeply into debt.[68] As the outside world of politics and economics became less hospitable, Virginia's slaveholding gentry began to turn inwards, finding solace in their families and seeking happiness in and through domestic life.[69] They formed what Barbara Rosenwein has called emotional communities—or social groups with shared emotional values, priorities, and rules.[70] For these families, the marketplace of feeling compensated for a less productive and even (to their minds) destructive economic marketplace. Patriarchs demanded emotional support from their dependents, admonishing wives, children, and other relatives for neglecting to provide sufficient financial *or* emotional support in hard times. But what happened when family members were unwilling or unable to participate in these emotional transactions? Chapter three explores such conflict through the Mason family of Southampton County. It argues that by the 1850s, struggling patriarchs like John Young Mason had come to depend so fully on their family to provide affection as compensation for economic loss that when family members did *not* provide that emotional support, patriarchs saw the lapse as an unforgivable debt, and reconstituted the boundaries of the family's emotional community accordingly.

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[68] Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Cynthia Kierner, "'The Dark and Dense Cloud Perpetually Lowering Over Us': Gender and the Decline of the Gentry in Postrevolutionary Virginia," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 20, no. 2 (June 2000), 185-215; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

[69] Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness;* Herbert E. Sloan, *Principle and Interest: Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Debt* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001).

[70] Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 107, no. 3 (June 2002), 842.

Chapters four and five continue to explore the marketplace of feeling in the slaveholding South. Together, these chapters demonstrate that slavery's critics *and* defenders evaluated it as both an economic system and an emotional economy. Chapter four uses the context of a broader marketplace of feeling to interrogate paternalist claims that the institution was designed, as one enslaver argued, "to foster kindly feelings."[71] This argument takes on new meaning in a society in which white Americans worried openly about how money matters made them feel. Despite portraying themselves—and slavery—as far removed from the corruptions, abuses, and anxieties of a commercial economy, by mid-century paternalists made an argument similar to proponents of doux commerce: slavery was a desirable economic system because it fostered benevolent feelings of trust and affection—an argument that enslaved people, abolitionists, and historians have proved false and self-serving.

Chapter four explores one particular aspect of this claim: slave sale. While many enslavers eagerly and unhesitatingly embraced sale as a tool for profit, some were still uneasy about buying and selling human beings even as they continued to profit from the practice. These anxious enslavers wanted to believe—or at least project—that they were benevolent "masters," often despite acknowledging that sale and separation traumatized enslaved communities. Chapter four argues that to soothe their own unease, many enslavers tried to enforce a strict regime for the emotional expressions surrounding sale. They demanded that enslaved people "reconcile" themselves to sale by intentionally tamping down anger or sadness, and instead projecting happiness. This attempt to coerce emotion work from enslaved people demonstrates the

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[71] James Henry Hammond, "Hammond's Letters on Slavery," in *The Proslavery Argument: As Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States: Containing the Several Essays, on the Subject, of Chancellor Harper, Governor Hammond, Dr. Simms, and Professor Dew* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., 1853), 128.

operation of white supremacy on an intimate register. The chapter also contends that the coalescence of proslavery "positive good" ideology in the 1840s and 1850s reflects widespread dedication to a marketplace of feeling (and the desire for an economy that produces positive emotions) in the decades leading up to the Civil War.

It is significant, then, that many enslaved people did *not* hide their anger, grief, and fear about sale, as many scholars of slavery and African-American history have made clear.[72] Chapter five argues that enslaved people's emotional expressions challenged enslavers' desired restrictions for the emotions of sale—often (though perhaps unintentionally) denying enslavers the emotional catharsis of being able to reasonably claim that enslaved people were happy to be sold. Abolitionists politicized enslaved people's emotional expressions (especially in the 1850s), using their displays of sadness and fear to underscore the institution's evils. Tears of grief and wails of anger contradicted paternalist claims that slavery produced positive feelings for both enslavers and enslaved people. Enslaved people's emotions were thus foundational to the abolitionist argument that slavery was not a benevolent force in the marketplace of feeling.

Together, these chapters illuminate the marketplace of feeling in the first half of the nineteenth century. Setting northern merchants alongside southern enslavers reveals that both slave and free societies valued producing positive emotions to counter the emotional ills of the expanding capitalist economy. Despite self-serving proslavery claims that the slave economy

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[72] See, among many others, Daina Ramey Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe: Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010); Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Damian Alan Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration in the Antebellum South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Calvin Schermerhorn, *Money over Mastery, Family over Freedom: Slavery in the Antebellum Upper South* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Heather Andrea Williams, *Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

was not capitalist, the emotional concerns of enslavers overlapped with those of their distinctly capitalist northern neighbors. Both free and slave economies required a marketplace of feeling, though those affective economies took quite different forms. Through the history of emotions, then, we are able to see the history of slavery's capitalism in a new light.

These chapters do *not* represent the entire economy of emotion in the first half of the nineteenth century. The focus here is intentionally on unwaged emotion work. Despite their insistence that love and money were fungible and that affection could compensate for dwindling fortunes, the middling and upper-class Americans who invested so deeply in the marketplace of feeling would likely never have accepted a penny for their own emotional efforts. This, to them, was a matter of class distinction. They would have viewed their own production of emotion as distinct from those who did so for money—like sex workers, boardinghouse-keepers, and domestic servants. The significance of this paid emotion work to the marketplace of feeling merits further research, but is not the focus of study here.

Further research into unpaid emotion work by other groups is also necessary, though the merchants and enslavers examined here are intentionally chosen. These families were at the forefront of the frenzied pursuit of wealth and happiness in the early United States. The instability and risk within these professions made them susceptible to intense anxiety about financial loss and social status. Because they experienced this anxiety, and because they were concerned about the emotional consequences of the pursuit of wealth, these families invested heavily in the marketplace of feeling (though they were by no means the only people to do so). Interrogating this anxiety in the middling to upper echelons of American society has a particular purpose. The larger question to be answered is this: what effects—both material and emotional—did middling and upper-class white male breadwinners' anxiety have on those around them? If

family dependents and enslaved people labored to produce happiness for these men, was the "trickle down" effect of that emotional economy one of happiness or misery? The costs of this patriarchal marketplace of feeling must be tabulated.

Chapter One
"the commerce of affection":
Masculinity and Emotional Bonds among Boston Merchants

Joseph Coolidge was a dreamer. He often thought about the future he wanted for himself, his family, and his closest friends. Only rarely did he keep those fantasies to himself. Sitting alone in Canton, China in March of 1840, Coolidge wistfully turned his thoughts to the other side of the globe—to his business partner and friend, Augustine Heard, in Boston. Coolidge had recently announced the pair's new China trade firm, Augustine Heard & Co.[73] From halfway around the world, Coolidge shared his dream for the pair's future in domestic, rather than financial terms:

> My friend, it is one of the great blessings of my life to have known you; and I look forward to joining you again, with the same pleasure and happiness that I do to once more being with my children…[W]hen this takes place, dear H[ear]d, we must never part more…[Y]ou I hope will feel as [my wife and I] do that, without binding ourselves never to part for a day, our happiness will be promoted by living with each other as the members of one family.[74]

The familial vision at the heart of Coolidge's letter is striking. He dreamed of sharing not only profits but also domestic bliss with his business partner. Coolidge and Heard were friends as well

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[73] For more on Augustine Heard & Co. (as well as American trade in China), see Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784-1844*, 2nd edition (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2015); James R. Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Stephen Lockwood, *Augustine Heard & Co., 1858-1862: American Merchants in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); Tim Sturgis, *Rivalry in Canton: The Control of Russell and Co., 1838-1840 and the Founding of Augustine Heard and Co, 1840* (London: The Warren Press, 2006); Paul van Dyke, ed., *Americans and Macao: Trade, Smuggling, and Diplomacy on the South China Coast* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2012); Paul Van Dyke and Susan Schopp, *The Private Side of the Canton Trade, 1700-1840* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 2018); Thomas Franklin Waters, *Augustine Heard and His Friends* (Salem: Newcomb and Gauss., 1916).

[74] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, March 6, 1840, Heard Family Business Records [HFBR], Baker Library at Harvard Business School, Boston, MA.

as colleagues, and Coolidge's emotive imagery captures how familial feeling obscured any dividing line between the men's personal and professional relationships. The deep affection evident in this letter underscores the need to consider the role of emotion and masculinity within merchant communities and commercial endeavor in the early American republic. Why would a businessman like Coolidge dream of living "as the members of one family" with his financial partner? What work did such brotherly affection do in the business realm? To what degree were merchants like Coolidge and Heard motivated by feeling versus by finances? And, more broadly, how did merchants balance these personal—and collective—emotional and economic goals?

The project of this chapter is to consider how emotions—especially a marketplace of feeling—factored into the economic success that firms like Augustine Heard & Co. achieved in the mid-nineteenth century. Merchants are a particularly fruitful group for studying how emotions drove business because speculation, risk, and frequent loss made merchants especially vulnerable to bouts of anxiety, depression, and even anger about their economic standing. With that much difficult emotion to manage, it is unsurprising that merchants attempted to cultivate a strong and reliable marketplace of feeling. Trade was by no means the only profession that experienced this anxiety and, in turn, fostered a strong marketplace of feeling. Anya Jabour has unearthed a similar network of emotional support among young lawyers in Virginia, who turned to each other for professional advice and affectionate relief when their professional and social status got them down.[75] That a professional "commerce of affection" (as one Massachusetts

[75] Anya Jabour, "Male Friendship and Masculinity in the Early National South: William Wirt and His Friends," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 20, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 83-111. For another example of men's professional affectionate networks in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Samuel J. Watson, "Flexible Gender Roles during the Market Revolution: Family, Friendship, Marriage, and Masculinity among U.S. Army Officers, 1815-1846," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 29, no. 1 (Autumn 1995), 81-106.

lawyer termed his manly support network) developed for merchants in Boston and lawyers in Virginia suggests that the experience of anxiety was the most important factor in whether or not certain professional groups cultivated a marketplace of feeling. Region or business details mattered less than feelings and the need to contend with them. Where financial uncertainty existed alongside masculine anxieties about status and family provision, a manly commerce of affection could be an important business *and* affective strategy for many men.

Merchants provide a particularly rich archive for understanding how and why certain professions intentionally cultivated a marketplace of feeling. As voluntary associations rose in popularity in the early decades of the nineteenth century, mercantile libraries and societies popped up in northeastern cities to provide education, culture, and community to young men embarking on commercial careers. The Mercantile Library Association of Boston—established in 1820—was, according to its own records, the first of its kind in the United States, though others soon followed in port cities like New York and Philadelphia.[76] Mercantile library associations hosted distinguished speakers to lecture on a wide variety of topics, from necessary commercial skills and knowledge, to slavery, to patriotism. These lectures were frequently printed in commercial magazines like popular New York-based *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, established in 1839. The proliferation of these associations outside of Boston points to the fact that merchants everywhere sought education and companionship to combat their professional anxieties.

In Boston's merchant community, speeches, popular literature, and correspondence reveal a clearly articulated emotional rule book to guide men through the boom and bust cycles

[76] "History of the Mercantile Library Association," in *Catalogue of Books of the Mercantile Library Association, of Boston, Together with the Acts of Incorporation and the By-Laws and Regulations Adopted January 1848* (Boston: Dickinson Printing House, 1848), 3-6.

of the speculative economy in the first half of the nineteenth century. These sources reveal a determined attempt to normalize the idea that it was manly and professionally responsible to sympathize with fellow merchants during financial duress. This brotherly commerce of affection was rooted in the kind of commercial sympathy popularized by Adam Smith. In Boston, merchant masculinity included both taking financial risk *and* emotionally supporting one another through the possible negative consequences of that risk. This merchant masculinity was thus both individual and communal: brotherly sympathy would ideally cultivate a beneficial marketplace of feeling—specifically, a commerce of affection—that could sustain men even in the most anxious times.

Analyzing the formation and function of merchants' marketplace of feeling addresses an under-studied historiographic question in the history of early American capitalism: in an age of emotional exploration and economic growth, how did emotion shape business strategies?[77] To consider this question, this chapter concludes by examining the affectionate business partnership of Joseph Coolidge and Augustine Heard as a manifestation of merchant masculinity. Coolidge's primary reason for forming a new partnership in 1840 was emotional, not economic. He had already accumulated a respectable fortune in the China trade, and thus did not have pressing financial needs. However, he felt anxious and angry because he believed his former business partners had imperiled his masculinity. He felt humiliated and vengeful after being ousted as partner from Russell & Co., one of the leading American firms in China. So, he formed a new

[77] As noted in the introduction, scholars of Britain in this period have directly considered this question to an intriguing end; they have found that many families shaped their business activities around the goal of protecting and furthering familial bonds and affection. In other words, emotion was a crucial engine of economic dealings. See Cohen, "Love and Money"; Popp, *Entrepreneurial Families*.

partnership with Augustine Heard to recoup his reputation as both man and merchant, and to seek revenge on his former partners.

Beyond vengeful motivation, emotion also helped procure the material means for Coolidge's new partnership with Heard. Coolidge mobilized longstanding bonds of kin-like affection between Heard and the Coolidge family to trigger feelings of obligation (both emotional and financial) to convince Heard to join him in this new venture, despite Heard's reticence to return to business in China. Because emotion provided both the motivation (anger and shame) and means (brotherly affection) for the firm, it is clear that Augustine Heard & Co. must be analyzed within its emotional context, especially the anxious masculinity and fraternal feeling that brought it into existence. If emotion provided the motivation and means for what became one of the most profitable American China trade firms in the mid-nineteenth century, it is imperative that historians of American business take the history of emotions seriously and consider the fundamental role emotion played in early American capitalism.

The particulars of Coolidge's and Heard's professional experience are certainly not representative of all merchants in the 1830s and 1840s. Not all merchants faced the specific kind of humiliation Coolidge felt when he was cast out of Russell & Co. Not all merchants ventured to the far side of the globe to serve a friend's emotional needs. And yet, the emotions that drove Coolidge's business strategy (anxiety, anger, shame, fear of loss) and Heard's support (brotherly affection, sympathy) were precisely those that the Boston merchant community's commerce of affection was cultivated to address. Coolidge's decision to turn in his time of need to a man whom he cared for like a brother—and Heard's choice to help his friend out of affection, not personal financial need—reflect the same logic other Boston merchants followed in less extreme situations. The pair's actions in fact reveal just how powerful ideals of merchant masculinity *and*

the need for a marketplace of feeling were, if merchants grasped for them to navigate seemingly unusual situations. The pair's relationship thus tellingly exemplifies what was possible within the conventions of business, emotional expression, and manhood in the first half of the nineteenth century. Even more, these affective roots of Augustine Heard & Co. provide a compelling example of how emotion, not just the unfeeling laws of supply and demand, helped drive early American capitalism.

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In recent years, a handful of scholars of the Anglophone world have demonstrated the utility of integrating the history of emotions into the histories of business and capitalism.[78] Most of the work on emotions and capitalism in the U.S. context focuses on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[79] The few studies that do meld the histories of emotion and business in the early nineteenth-century Anglophone world take family (and especially family firms) as a central category of analysis—and for good reason [80] Despite the rise of individualism and preoccupation

[78] See, for instance, Cohen, "Love and Money"; Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion"; Corrigan, *Business of the Heart*; Hartigan-O'Connor, "Abigail's Accounts"; Holland, "Mad Speculation and Mary Girard"; Holt and Popp, "Emotion, Succession, and the Family Firm"; Popp, *Entrepreneurial Families*; Sandage, "The Gaze of Success."

[79] On emotions and capitalism in the later period, see, for example, Susan J. Matt, *Keeping up with the Joneses: Envy in American Consumer Society, 1890-1930* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Carol Z. Stearns and Peter N. Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Peter N. Stearns, *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (New York: New York University Press, 1994). On class and emotion in the earlier nineteenth century, see Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart*; Corrigan, *Business of the Heart*; Hemphill, "Class, Gender, and the Regulation of Emotional Expression"; Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*. Tellingly, gender analysis figures prominently in many of these studies.

[80] For historical analysis of emotion within family firms, see Holt and Popp, "Emotion, Succession, and the Family Firm"; Ludovic Cailluet, Fabian Bernhard, and Rania Labaki, "Family Firms in the Long Run: The Interplay between Emotions and History," *Enterprises et Histoire*, No. 91 (2018), 5-13. The latter is an introduction to a special issue of *Enterprises et Histoire* that contains several essays working at the intersection of business, family, and emotions history. Still, historians have studied the role of emotion in business far less than scholars in other fields, like psychology, sociology, management, and organizational studies. See, for example, Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*; Eva Illouz, *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (Malden, Ma.: Polity Press, 2007); Rania Labaki, Nava Michael-

with the self, as well as the migration of men's labor outside the home, family remained an effective economic resource in the nineteenth century. Individuals used their family network to help launch them into the wider, developing economy—including pooling family finances and using the family economy as a safety net.[81] Kin was especially important for families that migrated to begin anew in the western territories.[82] Across the new nation, businesses—including merchant firms—formed around trusted family relations. Overall, mobilizing kin networks remained a crucial economic strategy in the first half of the nineteenth century. Before corporations began to soar, family capitalism worked by solidifying mutual interest, mitigating risk, and providing a financial safety net during hard times. At the same time, family became increasingly tied to sentiment. Partially in response to industrialization and the expansion of capitalism, people began to seek solace in home and family life.[83]

Tsabari, and Ramona Kay Zachary, "Emotional dimensions within the family business: towards a conceptualization," in *Handbook of Research in the Family Business*, 2nd edition, eds. Kosmas X. Smyrnios, Panikkos Zata Poutzouris, and Sanjay Goel (Northampton, Ma.: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2013), 734-763. It should also be noted that studying emotional factors in economic decision-making is central to the field of behavioral economics.

[81] On family as an economic strategy in the nineteenth-century United States, see, among others, Joan Cashin, *A Family Venture: Men and Women on the Southern Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion"; Toby L. Ditz, *Property and Kinship: Inheritance in Early Connecticut, 1750-1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Anne Farrar Hyde, *Empires, Nations & Families: A History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). In Britain, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); R. J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780-1870: A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies amongst the Leeds Middle Classes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[82] See, among others, Cashin, *A Family Venture*; Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations & Families*.

[83] On the sentimental family, see (among many others), Stephanie Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families, 1600-1900* (London: Verso, 1988); Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1987); Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness.*

Interrogating how families operated as both economic and emotional unit, several historians have specifically analyzed how *feeling* shaped business within family firms beginning in the later eighteenth-century Anglophone world.[84] Andrew Popp and Robin Holt, for instance, argue that succession difficulties within the late eighteenth-century English pottery firm Wedgewood & Sons stemmed in part from the patriarch's desire for his children to pursue happiness however they saw fit. Josiah Wedgewood's decision to value his family members' happiness over capital accumulation shaped the future of his business.[85] Rachel Van has argued that the Boston-based Perkins family built their China trade firm around extended kin relationships and even used expressions of kin-like affection and obligation to ally with the prosperous Wu family in China—thereby using familial affection to smooth the firm's path to prosperity.[86]

And yet, as historian Mandy Cooper astutely notes, even studies that consider the centrality of personal, affective relationships to nineteenth-century economic networks do not fully interrogate the *production* of emotion that constituted and maintained those relationships, thus making the bonds financially useful.[87] Cooper's scholarship demonstrates the analytical

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[84] On the centrality of kin relationships and family feeling to economic and political networks in the Atlantic world, see Sarah M.S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)*;* Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Susanah Shaw Romney, *New Netherlands Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in Seventeenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

[85] Holt and Popp, "Emotion, Succession, and the Family Firm."

[86] Overall, Van argues that "[c]ultivating a sense of family feeling did work for the maintenance and perpetuation of family firms." Van, "Free Trade & Family Values," 146.

[87] Cooper writes, "[T]he majority of the scholarship has naturalized the emotions linking kin and creating (and often managing) kinship identity, thereby leaving them unquestioned." Cooper thus points to the need to use the methodologies of emotions history to "denaturalize the self-fashioning of affective kinship identity." Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion," 24. Similarly, Rachel Van notes that merchant families were clearly aware that potent and useful familial ties had to be intentionally forged. About the Perkins family of Boston she writes, "The effort the Perkinses put into creating a 'family feeling' indicates that kinship was not something that they took for granted. Economic dependence created its own sense of obligation

benefits of using emotions history to denaturalize these affective bonds. For instance, she is able to identify the epistolary conventions of emotional expression—and thus affective labor—that underwrote familial economic and political strategies in the antebellum South. By linguistically signaling both financial and emotional obligations, Southern family members produced affectionate feeling that then solidified the family safety net, thus maintaining political and economic power.

This careful production of affectionate bonds that could be mobilized—especially through the language of sympathy—makes sense not just in the antebellum South but also in the broader emotional landscape of the early to mid-nineteenth-century United States. Early Americans were keenly aware of feelings and their consequences—especially the importance of affective bonds and conventions for emotional expression in organizing and improving society. The Revolutionary War (as well as the development of an American political and cultural identity) was rooted partly in shared ideas about sensibility.[88] Shared emotions remained central to both masculinity and politics in the early national period, when white men united in fraternal orders, professional societies, and political parties.[89] E. Anthony Rotundo has argued that

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and authority, but the relationships between kinship, firms, and market values were more complex than simply considering economic relationships allowed." Van, "Free Trade & Family Values," 173.

[88] Burstein, *Sentimental Democracy*; Eustace, *1812*; Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*; Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*.

[89] On the importance of fraternity to the political, economic, social, and cultural identity of the early American republic, see, among others, Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Richard Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship: Love between Men and the Creation of the American Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Mark E. Kann, *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Amy Pflugrad-Jackisch, *Brothers of a Vow: Secret Fraternal Orders and the Transformation of White Male Culture in Antebellum Virginia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

through schools, apprenticeships, literary societies, and men's associations, young men of the early republic were expected to socialize one another, "train[ing] each other in the harnessing of passions and the habits of self-command."[90] Through the republican value of fraternity, white male friendship became a cornerstone of American political discourse, celebrated for its function of fostering both individual happiness and qualities of sympathy and virtue that could uplift wider society. [91] In this context, it was not unusual for men to freely and openly express affection for one another. Indeed, these fraternal affective bonds helped constitute respectable republican masculinity. As the scholarship on early republican manhood has demonstrated, the distinct social worlds of male spaces like workplaces, lodges, militias, taverns, and voluntary associations "encouraged manly intimacy and affection, a love between equals."[92]

With fraternal affection as a national value, it is unsurprising that early Americans used the terms "family" and "friend" interchangeably and simultaneously. What mattered was not the blood or legal connection, but the affective bonds that united people. Mandy Cooper has termed

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[90] E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 21.
[91] Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship,* 9.
[92] Quotation from Elizabeth Pleck and Joseph Pleck, *The American Man* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 13. On open and accepted expressions of love and affection between men, see John W. Crowley, "Howells, Stoddard, and Male Homosocial Attachment in Victorian America," in Harry Brod, ed., *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 301-324; Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship*; Karen V. Hansen, "'Our Eyes Behold Each Other': Masculinity and Intimate Friendship in Antebellum New England," in *Men's Friendships*, ed. Peter M. Nardi (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, Inc., 1992), 35-58; Jabour, "Male Friendship and Masculinity"; E. Anthony Rotundo, "Romantic Friendship: Male Intimacy and Middle-Class Youth in the Northern United States, 1800-1900," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Autumn 1989), 1-25; Donald Yacavone, "Abolitionists and the 'Language of Fraternal Love,'" in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, eds. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 85-95; Donald Yacavone, "'Surpassing the Love of Women': Victorian Manhood and the Language of Fraternal Love," in *A Shared Experience: Men, Women, and the History of Gender*, eds. Laura McCall and Donald Yacavone (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 195-221. Together, these histories challenge E. Anthony Rotundo's contention that men's intimate friendships were limited to youth and bachelorhood.

this blurring of lines "kinship shape-shifting," and Sarah Pearsall has used the term "familiarity" to capture informality and affectionate ease between people, even outside of family relationships.[93] Familiarity could deepen friendship, "allow[ing] non-family members to become integrated into family-like worlds."[94] Developing and expressing familiarity was a way to create social groups that could then be mobilized for purposes beyond sociability.

One such purpose, as this chapter demonstrates, was for business. The concept of familiarity clarifies the affective side of professional relationships between men in the unpredictable marketplace of the early nineteenth century, enabling us to explore how affective bonds undergirded the development of early American capitalism. Boston merchants embraced familiarity, frequently mixing the language of family and friendship when referring to one another. For instance, Augustine Heard's nephew referred to his uncle as a "kind, indulgent friend" while Robert Bennet Forbes similarly recalled "my long-time faithful friend and uncle, T.H. Perkins."[95] Joseph Coolidge told Augustine Heard that Heard was "more than" a brother to him.[96]

Simply being related by blood was not enough to produce familiarity: familiarity had to be cultivated before it could be capitalized on. In the nineteenth century, as business and finances

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[93] Cooper contends, "In all areas of life—social, economic, and political—the lines between family and friendship blurred, with friends becoming family and family becoming friends. All of these relationships represented intimate emotional bonds of love, affection, respect, and trust." For both family and friendship, "affection established and sustained trust that tied people together" socially, economically, and politically. Cooper further notes, "Because reciprocity was so critical to economic and political endeavors, families selectively extended kinship bonds only to those people who could provide assistance or support." Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion," 23, 7.

[94] Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, 56-79.

[95] John Heard to Elizabeth Heard, November 20, 1842, Elizabeth Heard Papers, Baker Library at Harvard Business School, Boston, MA; Robert Bennet Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1878), 140.

[96] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, July 2, 1838, HFBR.

shifted outside the home and family to a certain degree, carefully cultivated and expressed familiarity enabled men to build trusting and reliable economic partnerships with men to whom they were not related by either blood or marriage. For many men, sympathetic male friendships were a necessary alternative to the competitiveness of a professional culture often driven by ambition and acquisitiveness.[97] Men did not just haphazardly stumble into these sympathetic male relationships. Family advice and popular literature urged them to seek out and consciously build these bonds of familiarity from early in life. For instance, a local Massachusetts newspaper urged young men to seek out a friend with "sympathetic feelings" because once found, "all the anxieties of fortune" would "vanish and his soul overflow with a profusion of joy" to the point that friendship would "smooth the path of life and render less miserable the tempestuous days of adversity."[98] Male friendship thus helped form a protective barrier from the anxieties and disappointments of economic endeavor. [99]

Faced with an emotionally challenging world of business, men celebrated the dual defense system of what one historian has termed "male camaraderie" and "male domesticity."[100] On both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, many men consciously melded these two types of

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[97] Here it is important to emphasize that historians contend that *multiple* masculinities co-existed across the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century. The version of merchant manhood I explore here was not the only practice of masculinity available to men in this era. For more on the variety of manhood existing at midcentury, see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. 9-11. For syntheses of trends and troubles in the history of men and manhood in the early U.S., see Konstantin Dierks, "Men's History, Gender History, or Cultural History?," *Gender & History*, vol. 14, no. 1 (April 2002), 147-151; Toby L. Ditz, "The New Men's History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power: Some Remedies from Early American Gender History," *Gender & History*, vol. 16, no. 1 (April 2004), 1-35; Bruce Dorsey, "A Man's World: Revisiting Histories of Men and Gender," *Reviews in American History*, vol. 40, no. 3 (September 2012), 452-458.

[98] *Newburyport Herald* quoted in Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship*, 163. On sensibility and friendship, see Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 113-122.

[99] For more on wives supporting husbands through commercial anxiety and peril, see chapter two.

[100] Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter-Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 169.

affective bonds into a protective shield. Virginia lawyer William Wirt, for instance, confided to his friend, "But for the domestic joys which encircle me, and the conviction that I have a few valuable friends by whom I am known and beloved, I should be the poorest wretch for business that ever groaned upon the Earth." Wirt argued that alongside an affectionate and supportive wife, men also needed male friends to "console them in adversity, and rejoice with them in prosperity."[101] This dual system of support bolstered men's fortitude and self-confidence, enabling them to face the uncertainties of the economy.

Not everyone saw marriage and male friendship as complementary, however. For instance, one unmarried Boston lawyer became concerned when his married friends' attentions waned. He warned a married friend that there must be "no monopoly" in "the commerce of affection." With sympathetic male friends "scattered all over the world," bachelors like himself "love at a thousand places in the same moment." But, he accused, "you husbands carry all your wares to the same market. You have one bank, in which you deposit all your tender sentiments."[102] The language here is telling: sentiment and capital were so linked in Americans' minds that people could seamlessly use economic terms to convey emotional meaning. If this "commerce of affection" ceased to reach male friends, to whom could those bachelors turn for emotional support? How could those unlucky bachelors survive the economy's emotional blows without affection from sympathetic male friends?

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[101] William Wirt quoted in Jabour, "Male Friendship and Masculinity," 98-99.

[102] Daniel Webster quoted in Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship*, 80. Critiques like Webster's demonstrate that men expected affective male friendships to last throughout adulthood precisely because these affectionate exchanges helped men navigate the emotional challenges that manhood—especially in the economic realm—often presented. Sarah Knott has noted that high expectations for the sentimental benefits of male friendship could lead to disappointment. Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 122.

Seeking these supportive male friendships within the realm of business and commerce was thus especially important, and not only because friendly professional relationships created networks of trust within commerce that improved one's chances of securing profit. In the early nineteenth century, popular merchants' periodicals touted the economic *and* social benefits of cultivating affective bonds within professional circles. In 1839, for instance, *Hunt's Merchants Magazine* published a lecture drawing on Smithian ideals of commercial sympathy to nostalgically celebrate commercial societies from antiquity. In ancient Rome, commerce "caused men to begin to regard each other as friends and brothers, who might be better employed than in robbing and murdering one another," the author claimed.[103] By facilitating friendship and fraternity, commerce wrought peace. The same year, *Hunt's* published another piece on "The Advantages and Benefits of Commerce," which noted that "the perfection and happiness of our nature arise, in a great degree, from the exercise of our relative and social feelings," and suggested that commerce was an excellent way to exercise those social feelings. Through commerce, "mutual confidence takes place; habits of acquaintance, and even of esteem and friendship, are formed." Consequently, the article argued, both wealth and "an improvement in the intellectual character, and a superior degree of civilization" can be achieved.[104] Echoing eighteenth-century theories of doux commerce, both essays argued that by facilitating affective bonds (especially fraternal friendship), commerce could foster not only peace, but also individual and social improvement.

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[103] Daniel D. Barnard, "Commerce, as Connected with the Progress of Civilization" (lecture read before the Mercantile Library Association of New York on December 4, 1838), *The Merchants' Magazine, and Commercial Review, Conducted by Freeman Hunt*, Vol. 1 (July 1839), 17.
[104] "The Advantages and Benefits of Commerce," *Hunt's Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review*, No. 3 (September 1839), 200.

Commercial men developed epistolary conventions to establish and solidify these ameliorating affective bonds. The language of family, friendship, and familiarity guided these conventions. In studying the confluence of business and emotion among Southern elite families in the early nineteenth century, Mandy Cooper has noted that "business correspondence followed specific patterns with repeated elements—all of which involved family metaphors and ties." Letters began with greetings specifying the intimacy of the relationship between sender and recipient, and ended with references to family, such as general family news or wishes for health and messages of affection for the recipient's wider family.[105] Referencing these familial bonds emphasized the feelings of trust and the reciprocal obligations that defined relationships of both business and family.

Didactic writers also specifically laid out the epistolary conventions for business correspondence, grounding them in feeling. For instance, *Chesterfield's Art of Letter-Writing* directed,

> In correspondence of a professional nature, where both parties are strangers, it would always be well to commence with the simple 'Sir,' or 'Madam,' and in the second or third letter adopt the more agreeable 'Dear Sir,' or 'Dear madam.' A little enhancement of the gentlemanly or lady like feeling is to be found in 'My dear Sir,' or 'My dear Madam,' which may by degrees, as the parties know and respect each other more sincerely, take the very friendly and now fashionable form of 'My dear Mr. Swallowwing.'[106]

Boston merchants followed these linguistic, familiar strategies. Joseph Coolidge, for instance, addressed many of his letters to Augustine Heard to "My dear friend" or "My dear Heard," with the addition of "friend" and especially "my" signaling a connection more intimate than a letter

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[105] Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion," 76-86.
[106] *Chesterfield's Art of Letter-Writing Simplified … to which is appended the complete rules of etiquette and the usages of society …* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1857), 29-30. Also see Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion," 76.

simply addressed "Dear Mr. Heard." Coolidge also signed his letters in a variety of ways that signaled the intimate and affectionate connection between the business partners—from "Farewell, my friend" or "my excellent friend," to "faithfully & affectionately" or "affectionately, y[ou]rs."[107] Both North and South, Americans drew on the affectionate language of familiarity to solidify and strengthen business relationships.

As Coolidge's salutations suggest, the idea that men of commerce should be united as "friends and brothers" was influential in Boston's merchant community in the first half of the nineteenth century. Since the colonial era, many Massachusetts firms had been structured around kinship ties.[108] Even as men's labor moved even further outside the home in the early nineteenth century, family remained an important strategy within commercial business—from partnering with brothers or cousins to relying on an uncle's capital (both economic and social) to enter trade. Established merchants studied their young male relations to decide who had the qualities of character and intellect to succeed as merchants take over family firms down the line. Even when young trainees were not related by blood, historian Rachel Van argues that "[y]oung apprentices and their families expected, or at least hoped for, a paternal bond of filial respect and obligation in exchange for mentorship and tutelage."[109] Indeed, the credit- and credibility-based economy of the early to mid-nineteenth century still operated to a certain extent on the friendly terms of the colonial era, whereby men and women could more easily and reliably obtain credit and commodities from personal connections—people who knew (and trusted) their reputations

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[107] Cooper argues that, like an opening salutation, a business letter's closing words could "imply intimacy and affirming trust." Ibid., 77.
[108] Among others, see Bernard Farber, *Guardians of Virtue: Salem Families in 1800* (New York: Basic Books, 1972); Betty G. Farrell, *Elite Families: Class and Power in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *The Jacksons and the Lees: Two Generations of Massachusetts Merchants, 1765-1844* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937).
[109] Van, "Free Trade & Family Values," 83.

for credit-worthiness and also wanted to help out of affection and mutual obligation. Building and maintaining familiarity with other professional men was thus an important business strategy, especially since a reliable network of support was crucial at a time when widespread financial panics struck with regularity, and many a commercial man got caught in cycles of financial loss and failure.[110]

Rooting business in family networks was especially popular within American China trade firms based in Boston, the professional community to which both Joseph Coolidge and Augustine Heard belonged. Many of the Canton firms in the mid-nineteenth century formed around kin relationships and depended on generational succession. Historian John Haddad has termed this strategy "meritocratic nepotism": China traders preferred to hire family and friends but only kept them in the firm if they proved themselves to be trustworthy and beneficial to the business.[111] Trust was enormously important when conducting business at such distances, so China trade firms drew on pre-established networks of familiar relationships to pursue financial interests abroad. In the words of China trade expert Jacques Downs, "[q]uite naturally when an early American businessman needed an agent to operate at some distance from the countinghouse, he chose first a relative and second a friend."[112]

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[110] Naomi Lamoreaux, "Constructing Firms: Partnerships and Alternative Contractual Arrangements in Early Nineteenth-Century American Business," *Business and Economic History*, vol. 24, no. 2 (Winter 1995), 43-71; Brian P. Luskey, *On the Make: Clerks and the Quest for Capital in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Balleisen, *Navigating Failure*; Sandage, *Born Losers.*

[111] Haddad, *America's First Adventure in China,* 36; Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*; Van, "Free Trade & Family Values"; Thomas H. Cox, "'Money, Credit, and Strong Friends': Warren Delano II and the Importance of Social Networking in the Old China Trade," in *The Private Side of the Canton Trade, 1700-1840*, 132-147. Downs' extremely detailed volume describing the American China trade in Canton even contains an appendix entirely dedicated to "commercial family alliances."

[112] Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 367, 233.

More generally, Boston-based merchants continued to forge an emotionally and financially supportive community both by mobilizing family networks and by drawing on affective connections outside the family.[113] Because of these family connections, it was not unusual for letters between Boston merchants to reflect both affective and financial bonds. For instance, when their nephew, eighteen-year-old John Cushing, took over as their firm's primary agent in Canton during a particularly precarious financial moment in 1805, brothers James and Thomas Perkins wrote John a letter that intermingled financial and emotional concerns. After notifying John of basic financial details, such as the $500 annual allowance they permitted him for private expenses, the Perkins brothers concluded the letter with a mix of financial and emotional terms: "Persevere as you have begun and we shall have reason to continue the patronage wh. we have always been inclined to extend to you…We now close this long letter with our affectionate love and regards, and hope it will find you in as much happiness as can be enjoyed away from y'r friends and connections."[114] This combination of financial and emotional support often (though not always) eased the sacrifices young men felt they made in entering the China trade, spending years away from home and thus prevented from enjoying the company of loved ones or even building a family of their own.

Young merchants who received training, social capital, and money from older male family members expressed a great deal of gratitude and affection towards them. For instance, after being trained in commerce from age seventeen and made partner in his uncle Augustine's successful firm, John Heard reported to his father, "I feel towards Uncle A. as to another father,

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[113] On businessmen's use of personal relationships (both family and friends) to establish credit, prevent failure, and re-invent themselves in the economic realm, see Balleisen, *Navigating Failure*; Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion"; Sandage, *Born Losers*; Van, "Free Trade & Family Values."

[114] James and Thomas H. Perkins & Co. to John Perkins Cushing, June 19, 1805, James Elliott Cabot Ledger Extracts, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

and only wish I could prove how deeply I am sensible of his unwearied kindness to me and mine."[115] Of course, this gratitude served older relations' financial interests, as it made younger men all the more anxious to show their elders that they deserved this support. "They had pushed me into the world," Robert Bennet Forbes remembered of his uncles (and bosses), "and I considered it my duty to do every thing in my power for their interests."[116] Familiar affection and obligation thus connected Boston's China trade merchants in the first place, and, with careful cultivation, could secure future profits for all involved.

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To understand how Boston merchants produced and mobilized emotion to sustain this supportive professional network grounded in both family and familiarity, it is helpful to consider two concepts central to the history of emotions: emotionology and emotional community. Most simply, emotionology refers to emotional norms within a particular social group—a kind of emotional rule book. Peter and Carol Stearns coined the term in 1985 to correct what they saw as misleading findings in earlier historical studies. They argued that historians had too frequently "confused [historical actors] thinking about emotion with [those actors'] experience of emotion."[117] The pair wanted to give historians the tools to effectively distinguish between "professed values and emotional experience."[118] Consequently, the Stearnses pushed historians to study the social expectations that governed emotional life in a given historical moment,

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[115] John Heard to George Washington Heard, Elizabeth Heard Papers.
[116] Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences*, 91.
[117] Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *American Historical Review*, vol. 90, no. 4 (October 1985), 814. Emphasis added.
[118] Ibid., 824. On debates about foundations and methodologies within the field of emotions history, see Nicole Eustace, Eugenia Lean, Julie Livingston, Jan Plamper, William M. Reddy, Barbara H. Rosenwein, "*AHR* Conversations: The Historical Study of Emotions," *American Historical Review*, vol. 117, iss. 5 (December 2012), 1487-1531.

defining emotionology as "the attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression."[119] Depending on the historical period, these standards can be assessed in different types of written sources, from private correspondence and diaries to didactic literature to popular fiction. While the emotional standards legible in these texts may not have been followed to the letter, they still created conventions for emotional expression that governed how individuals understood feeling and managed their own emotional lives.

Didactic literature, popular periodicals, and private correspondence reveal that cheerfully providing sympathy to fellow merchants was a key emotionological value for Boston merchants in the early nineteenth century. The Stearnses point out that "the emotionology of a society often responds to economic or demographic change."[120] We can see this in the push for sympathy among Boston's merchant class in the 1830s and 1840s, a time of commercial uncertainty and instability (especially following the panics of 1819 and 1837).[121] To merchants, the economy was both seductive and capricious, ripe with both fortune and peril. Their work was inherently speculative. Ships could sink, taking profit—and lives—with them. War and politics could interrupt trade, and repeated financial panics ensnared many a merchant's fortune. Historian Scott Sandage has noted the increasing popularity in the 1840s and 1850s of a false statistic that ninety-seven out of one hundred merchants failed in the early republic, a figure that reverberated, he argues, "because it conveyed not the economic but the emotional magnitude of ubiquitous

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[119] Ibid., 813.
[120] Ibid., 831.
[121] On the "gloom" and "melancholy" expressed by the commercial class during the financial panics of the early nineteenth century, see (among others) Sandage, *Born Losers*, esp. chapters 1-3; Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution*: *Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), esp. chapter 5.

failure."[122] *Fear* of loss and failure persisted even if that was not individual families' material reality.

Wary of these fluctuations both financial and emotional, public figures and popular publications proposed strengthening affective bonds within commercial networks as a protective measure, since failed or struggling merchants could then capitalize on those sympathetic bonds in hard times. In 1840, for instance, *Hunt's Merchants Magazine* encouraged merchants to overcome any feelings of resentment or scorn when another merchant needed help, urging them to be "compassionate, not cruel":

> [L]et us beware how we suffer charity to be stifled by indignant feelings and harsh judgment against a fallen brother….[I]f a brother has sunk under trials which we have been permitted to escape, or have had strength given us to resist, we should be thankful, not proud; compassionate, not cruel; see only the signal of distress, and incline to its relief, rejoicing that we are enabled to give succor.[123]

By asking men to stifle indignation and harsh judgment when fellow merchants requested help, publications like *Hunt's* established compassion as a valued emotion within business networks. By referring to these struggling men as "brothers," the essay emphasized that fraternal feeling should guide this compassion. Merchants could also find solace in the expectation that they themselves would *receive* succor should they encounter financial distress.

The drive to establish a mutually supportive commercial community is especially clear in a speech lawyer William Sullivan gave to the Boston Mercantile Association in 1832. Sullivan presented a vision of mercantile fraternity that explicitly used the commerce of both capital *and* affection to knit Boston businessmen together in a mutually-supportive and profitable class. He

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[122] Sandage, *Born Losers*, 7-8. On merchants, see Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986); Van, "Free Trade & Family Values."
[123] "Mercantile Character," *The Merchant's Magazine and Commercial Review, Conducted by Freeman Hunt,* Vol. 3 (July-Dec. 1840), 9.

argued that businessmen "can do what no legislature can do"—namely, save one another from losing everything (especially social status and reputation) if one of their own encountered financial failure. Sullivan did not merely consider the financial side of this mutual support. He also highlighted the *emotional* effects. If a fellow merchant failed honestly and honorably, Sullivan urged his audience, "You can pour a precious balm on his wounded spirit, and carry sympathy and consolation to the innocent hearts of the wife and of the children, who must be partners in his sorrows."[124] Sympathetic men could, of course, administer that "precious balm" by offering financial relief. But the primary image Sullivan conjured was of men trading in *emotion*, not just capital. Sullivan did not present either sorrowful or sympathetic merchants as feminized. Instead, he grounded his vision of merchant solidarity and power—and thus effective merchant masculinity—in mutual emotional support. An honorable man of business must know how to soothe his fellow merchants' "wounded spirits."[125] The emotionology of Boston's merchant class was thus rooted, in part, in sympathy among men.

This sympathetic emotionology helped unite Boston's merchants into what historian Barbara Rosenwein has called an emotional community. Rosenwein postulates that humans live—and have lived—in overlapping emotional communities, or "groups in which people

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[124] For more on Sullivan's speech, see Balleisen, *Navigating Failure,* 175. In part this followed on Adam Smith's push for sensibility to undergird capitalist endeavor in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. See Stephen Shapiro, *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 65: "By installing a shared sense of fear of failure, sensibilitarian claims attempt to link commercial groups together by training them to sympathize with the possibility of each other's possible bankruptcy so that they do not push exchange into spirals of destructive competition." On the evolution of bankruptcy laws in the early nineteenth-century United States, see Mann, *Republic of Debtors*.

[125] On merchants and masculinity, see Toby L. Ditz, "Shipwrecked; or, Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representations of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 81, no. 1 (June 1994), 51-80. On masculinity and the rising class of clerks (including merchants' clerks, the position in which Joseph Coolidge began his career in the China trade) in the early nineteenth century, see Luskey, *On the Make*; Michael Zakim, *Accounting for Capitalism: The World the Clerk Made* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value—or devalue—the same or related emotions."[126] People belong to multiple emotional communities, altering emotional expressions as they move from one community to another. A man's angry outburst might be more accepted among other men in a rowdy tavern than among women and children in a quiet domestic space, for instance. Sullivan's speech made clear that he wanted Boston's merchants to shape their own, mutually protected emotional community united by expectations for sympathy in hard times.

Popular publications during the financial turbulence of the first half of the nineteenth century clearly laid out the proper emotional expressions that guided how merchants should offer financial aid within their emotional communities. *Hunt's* argued that merchants were obliged to financially aid not just other merchants, but also their own family members. "The good merchant," an 1839 essay argued,

> remembers and cares for all who are related to him, and who may in any way stand in need of his aid. And this aid is administered in the most kind and delicate manner. He does not wait to be solicited; he will not stop to be thanked. He anticipates their wishes, and by a secret and silent bounty removes the painful sense of dependence and obligation. He feels it a pleasure, as well as a duty, to help them; he claims it as his privilege to do good unto his brethren. He would feel ashamed to have his needy relatives relieved by public charity or private alms.[127]

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[126] Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2; Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," 842. Rosenwein clarifies that emotional communities "are precisely the same as social communities—families, neighborhoods, parliaments, guilds, monasteries, parish church memberships—but the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore." Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," 842. For more on emotional communities and their use for historians, see Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), esp. 3-4.

[127] "The Good Merchant," *Hunt's Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (August 1839), 139.

The author laid out not only merchants' duty to help their families, but the emotions one should carefully express to take the sting out of the transaction. A merchant must be "kind and delicate" when offering aid, and must make it clear he feels "pleasure" to do so and would be "ashamed" if he did not. When offered in this way, financial assistance would prevent needy relatives from feeling "the painful sense of dependence and obligation." By emphasizing emotion so clearly, the article implies that the emotional transaction was just as important as the aid itself, since it was the offer of *feeling* that would alleviate the emotional sting of dependence and neediness. The influence of these emotional conventions can be seen in merchants' correspondence. When offering aid to his failed cousin Paul, for instance, John Murray Forbes reassured him that he did so "cheerfully" and with "real pleasure.[128]

Similarly, letter-writing guides published throughout the nineteenth century provided templates for the emotional transaction that should accompany the offer or refusal of financial aid. Generally, letter-writing guides clearly articulated the desired signaling of emotion during financial transactions, demonstrating how important emotional expression was to the transaction of cash or credit. In laying out the ideal correspondence between debtor and creditor, for instance, the *American Fashionable Letter Writer* showed a penitent debtor politely asking a creditor to "consider me as one whose misfortunes call for pity instead of resentment," and the benevolent creditor acknowledging the "affecting letter" by saying he "should consider myself as very cruel indeed, if I refused to comply with a request so reasonable as that made by you."[129] In

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[128] John Murray Forbes to Paul Sieman Forbes, January 31, 1839, FFBR; John Murray Forbes to Paul Sieman Forbes, March 1, 1839, ibid.

[129] "From an insolvent Debtor, to his principal Creditor, requesting an investigation into his accounts, for the benefit of his Creditors," *American Fashionable Letter-Writer: Original and Selected, Containing a Variety of Letters on Business…with Forms of Complimentary Cards. To the Whole are Prefixed Directions for Letter Writing, and Rules for Composition* (Troy: Merriam, Moore & Co., 1850), 59-61.

providing an example of a letter "Soliciting the Loan of Money from a Friend," the same guide urged those in need of financial support to emphasize details of personal relationships that would recall and evoke friendly feeling. The example letter began by establishing a longstanding, intimate connection and knowledge of character: "I believe that ever since you first knew me, you will be ready to acknowledge that no person was ever more diffident in asking favors than myself." It also included a clear statement of friendship: "I would by no means choose that my friend should suffer in his present circumstances in order to oblige me." The model reply suggested that a true friend would offer such assistance without being asked, thus saving the debtor from potentially embarrassing and emasculating statements of dependence: "had I known that my worthy friend had been in the want of the sum mentioned, I should never have put his unaffected modesty to the blush by suffering him to ask it." The reply ended on a confirmation of personal ties and friendly feeling: "I am, sir, your sincere friend."[130]

That these epistolary templates appeared in general letter-writing guides underscores that it was not just merchants who needed financial and emotional support. Failure could strike any man, at any time. Offering sympathy and consolation to loved ones struggling financially

[130] The next example letter made the importance of personal relationships and friendly feeling in financial support even more clear. It outlined a reply "To a Person who wants to borrow Money of another, without any claim but Assurance" that focused on the lack of intimate ties: "You must certainly have mistaken me or yourself very much, to think we were enough known to each other for such a transaction. I was twice in your company; I was delighted with your conversation, and you seemed as much pleased with mine. Should I answer the demand of every new acquaintance, I should soon want power to oblige my old friends, and even to serve myself. Surely, sir, a gentleman of your merit cannot be so little beloved as to be forced to seek new acquaintance, and to have no better friend than one of yesterday. Ibid., 56-57. Emotional expression was also central to the guide's example letter "From a young Tradesman, in distressed circumstances, to another of age and experience." Addressed "Dear Friend," the letter template highlighted the recipient's "goodness of heart" in asking for advice to ameliorate the writer's "temporal misery" and "unhappy circumstances." Longer than other letters in the guide's section "On Business," the letter continued, "I know you have a tender, compassionate heart, and your charity will shine with a distinguished lustre, if displayed on the present melancholy occasion." Signed, "I am your sincere, though afflicted friend," the example letter asked not for material financial support but simply advice from an experienced and sympathetic friend. Ibid., 63-64.

became a duty associated with intimate ties and familiar feeling. If a man failed, his friends and relations should offer their condolences, at the very least. In 1838, for instance, an attorney heard that his friend had suffered embarrassing losses due to speculation, and swiftly undertook the "sacred duty" of extending condolence, affection, and hope to a friend in need: "I cannot omit the performance of a sacred duty which one friend owes to another in misfortune, to send you my heartfelt grief & sympathy."[131] The commerce of affection was crucial for any man enduring hard times, a duty hopefully fulfilled by those who truly cared for him.

Still, after experiencing the trials of merchant life—from long familial separations to sudden and unexpected financial losses—many merchants felt that the commerce of affection was most valuable when it involved a man who had himself run the mercantile gauntlet and could offer both sympathy and practical advice. In 1843, N.M. Beckwith wrote to his fellow merchant and brother-in-law Paul Siemen Forbes about their individual commercial struggles—Forbes in the process of bankruptcy in South America, and Beckwith having just lost many trading clients in Canada and the West Indies. Beckwith revealed that despite the distance between them, he found solace in writing to Forbes. "In my distress I thought often of you and what you must have suffered," he mused. "[T]here is alw[ays] that in you that makes me lean to you, therefore I write freely: it is alw[ays] some relief." Beckwith further confessed that he had thought of confiding in Forbes' brother, but demurred because he was a preacher, not a merchant, and thus could not have offered the particular *sympathetic* relief Beckwith sought.

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[131] Henry Van Der Lyn to John Siddell, March 1838, quoted in Sandage, *Born Losers*, 51. Sympathy was also valuable from female relatives, whose dependence on family members' financial endeavors made them personally sympathetic to male relatives' financial struggles. For examples of women offering this support to struggling male relatives, see Sandage, *Born Losers*, chapter one.

Beckwith quipped, "he could tell me the way to Heaven much better than how to pay my notes!"[132]

Paul Siemen Forbes himself turned to other merchants for solace when he struggled with the emotional sacrifices of working far from home for extended periods. During a long stay in Rio de Janeiro, he urged his cousin, China trade merchant Robert Bennet Forbes, "Do let me hear oftener from you—you who can so readily appreciate the misfortunes of involuntary expatriation should be the last to withhold your sympathy and add to their bitterness by continued silence."[133] Over time, Bennett delivered a commerce of both affection *and* capital to his struggling cousin. Two years later in 1839, he assured Paul that "all the affectionate and Brotherly expressions are fully reciprocated," and a few years after that, facilitated Paul's entry into the China trade to try to claw back to financial stability after Paul's failures in the South American market.[134] Bennett's brother and business partner John Murray Forbes also provided Paul with both hope and reminders that he must fight despondency. "Pray keep your spirits up," John urged Paul in 1842. "[B]elieve that if you continue to struggle…you will at last catch [Fortune's] wheel at the right turn."[135] As these letters suggest, networks of male relatives were crucial sources of invigorating sympathy, especially when that affection was accompanied by financial relief. In difficult times, hope and cheer were valuable commodities especially when offered by sympathetic male relatives or friends, bound to one another in an emotional community of mutual financial *and* emotional support.

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[132] N. M. Beckwith to Paul Siemen Forbes, April 4, 1843, FFBR.
[133] Paul Siemen Forbes to Robert Bennet Forbes, July 1837, ibid.
[134] Robert Bennett Forbes to Paul Siemen Forbes, April 2, 1839, ibid.
[135] John Murray Forbes to Paul Siemen Forbes, April 8, 1842, ibid.

Merchants valued these offerings of affection even when not accompanied by the additional relief of financial support. For instance, upon hearing that the dry goods firm his father partnered in had failed, merchant's clerk John Heard wrote to him with gentle advice. "Do not let misfortune overwhelm you," he advised, "Look forward to brighter days." He even reminded his father that although John and his siblings could not offer much in the way of financial assistance, they could still offer the comfort of their love: "All your children will, I have no doubt, feel that this is the time to show their affection for you, and will do all in their power for you. Unfortunately, we are none of us in a situation to enable us to do much, but if our sympathy and affection can be of any avail, I am sure they are most cheerfully given."[136] Young John's reassuring message that this emotional support was "most cheerfully given" echoes letter-writing guides' emphasis that financial support should be offered with pleasure, to lessen feelings of dependence or emasculation. Struggling men even recorded messages of encouragement to themselves. In 1821, one Philadelphian wrote an ode to failure: "Shall I to gloomy fears resign/My life, because its hues are faded?/No—this exulting thought be mine/Although *depress'd* I'm not *degraded*."[137]

Being able to express cheerfulness in the face of financial anxiety was important for merchants receiving sympathy, as well as those offering it, because bucking up under misfortune was advertised as a central tenet of merchant masculinity. *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* regularly urged merchants to be cheerful despite any financial or social trials. In an 1839 piece entitled

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[136] John Heard to Elizabeth and George Washington Heard, December 5, 1842, Elizabeth Heard Papers. For more on the importance of these emotional offerings within financially struggling families, see chapter three of this dissertation. That chapter's focus on a slaveholding family suggests that the commerce of affection within families mattered as much to Virginia's slaveholding gentry as it did to Massachusetts merchants.

[137] Joseph Hornor quoted in Sandage, *Born Losers*, 38.

"What constitutes a merchant," the author noted: "A cheerful disposition, says Hume, is worth ten thousand a year. With decision of character and a cheerful disposition, our merchant will be enabled to ward off envy and hatred."[138] Another article the next year advised, "An hour's industry will do more to beget cheerfulness, suppress evil rumors, and retrieve your affairs, than a month's moaning." The author argued that bearing up under misfortune was a central facet of merchant masculinity. Explicitly tying manhood to the ability to repress sadness, the article warned anxious indebted merchants, "Beware of feelings of despondency. Give not place for an hour to useless and enervating melancholy. Be a man."[139] The emotional community of Boston's merchants was united in this battle against despondency. The sympathetic emotionology of that community—Sullivan's entreaty that merchants should "pour a precious balm" on each other's "wounded spirits"—gained even greater significance when tied to manhood in this way. The commerce of affection was all the more critical if it helped stave off feelings of both melancholy and emasculation. Merchants' manhood *and* financial success depended on this network of mutual sympathy and emotional support.

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We can see the emotional foundation of this merchant masculinity especially clearly in the friendship and business partnership of Augustine Heard and Joseph Coolidge. Before they united in forming Augustine Heard & Co. in 1840, Coolidge and Heard got to know each other when both worked for the prosperous and influential Russell & Co. in the early 1830s—Heard as a partner and Coolidge, thirteen years his junior, as a clerk. Though the men were not related by blood, the Coolidge family used the language of kinship (especially fraternal and paternal

[138] "What Constitutes a Merchant," *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. IV (October 1839), 292-293.
[139] "Advice to Men in Debt," *Hunt's Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review*, Vol. 20 (1840), 526.

feeling) to include Heard in their fold. In a time when many American China trade firms (and commercial businesses more generally) were grounded in familial relationships, this language of familiar trust and obligation carried particular weight.

Heard himself was unmarried and childless, though he kept close paternal watch over his nephews (with whom he allied professionally when they came of age). When Coolidge began an extended trip abroad for Russell & Co. in 1834, he beseeched Heard to serve temporarily as his family's patriarch. "My friend," Coolidge warmly requested, "I commend my family to your kind attentions…I like to think of my oldest Boy walking by your side, with his hand in yours."[140] Coolidge was anxious about leaving his young family without a male head of household. He soothed those fears by imagining Heard taking his place as a father figure, guiding and protecting Coolidge's children during his long absence. Coolidge's wife Ellen felt the same way. A few years later, on Coolidge's next extended trip abroad, Ellen joined him and entrusted Heard to accompany her sons to school in Switzerland. Away from her children for an extended period for the first time, Ellen confided in Heard, "I think of my children incessantly, and you have associated yourself so completely with them that your image is always in company with theirs. Were I to die, it would be a source of the greatest comfort to me in my last moments to think that, besides their father, they had a friend who would sympathize with him in his concern for their well-being."[141] The Coolidge children did indeed associate Heard with paternal affection. Once when Heard went out of town, the Coolidges' eldest daughter Nell, then age ten, complained to him, "I have nobody to give me my luncheon now, nobody to let me climb on their lap in the evening; in short I shall not be perfectly happy again until you return."[142] Two

[140] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, October 10, 1834, HFBR.
[141] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, October 5, 1839, ibid.
[142] Ellen (Nell) Randolph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, February 16, 1836, ibid.

years later, when Heard left for a longer voyage, Nell affectionately informed him, "I shall think very often of you and wish for your return, for next to my father and mother and my little brothers I love you better than any-body else."[143]

If Heard was a father figure to the Coolidge children, he was a brother to the Coolidge adults. "If you are not a Brother in the usual sense of the term," Coolidge once told him, "you are more than one in deed and trust—and dearer to [my wife and I] both than any other who bear that name."[144] In an era that fostered fraternal feelings in many contexts outside the family, Coolidge similarly felt the true significance of brotherhood was in action ("deed") and psyche ("trust"). Other merchants made the same distinction. Paul Siemen Forbes similarly defined "brother" as one who shares the same profession and is willing to "extend a helping hand." Forbes compared his relationship with his preacher brother unfavorably to his connection with his merchant cousin, John Forbes: "John's pursuits & my own bringing us so often in contact & affording him daily opportunities of extending a helping hand he appears more like a brother, than my own of N. York with whose efforts to save the soul of the wicked I have little sympathy."[145]

For his part, John Forbes echoed this fraternal sentiment in ways that show how the familiarity, trust, and affection connoted by the word "brother" had special meaning in the China trade. In 1842, John used the language of brotherhood to recommend Paul to Houqua, the leading Chinese merchant in Canton. Despite the fact that Paul had never worked in the China trade and

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[143] Ellen (Nell) Randolph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, October 1, 1838, ibid.
[144] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, July 2, 1838, ibid. Two years later, when trusting Heard to decide whether his teenage daughter should join her parents in China, Coolidge emphasized the deep faith he and his wife had in Heard by informing him that Ellen "relies on you like a Brother." Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 29, 1840, ibid.
[145] Paul Siemen Forbes to Robert Bennet Forbes, June 10, 1839, FFBR.

had recently failed in the South American trade, John asked that Houqua favor Paul because John felt for him "the same regard as for a Brother."[146] Houqua acquiesced. Anthropologist Sylvia Yanagisako has argued that the only way to determine who constitutes a family is to consider how people "identify the culturally meaningful 'kinship' units in their society."[147] In claiming fellow merchant friends and cousins as even closer kin relations, merchants like Joseph Coolidge and the Forbes men made clear that for them, the true value of "brotherhood," both economically and emotionally, lay in "deed and trust"—in short, in a reliable commerce of affection with like-minded men.

In fact, Joseph Coolidge relied much more on Augustine Heard than his own male relations. Coolidge appears to have held Heard closer to his heart and purse strings because Heard was able to offer something Coolidge's male relations could not: a reliable commerce of *both* capital and affection. For example, though Coolidge's cousin Thomas Bulfinch had mercantile experience, Joseph did not trust his commercial abilities enough to want to partner with him when cast out of Russell & Co. in 1840. Though he had himself partnered with Bulfinch in a short-lived domestic goods business in the 1820s, Coolidge found his cousin to be too "cautious and hesitating" in business.[148] However, two decades later, Coolidge admitted he would not mind if Bulfinch joined him in China "as a friend," working for any other firm but

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[146] As Rachel Van has noted, John Murray Forbes also used the language of kinship to remind Houqua of the affection that bound them in business endeavors, and hopefully prompt feelings of mutual, familial obligation. Forbes informed Houqua that Paul had begun working as a commission merchant "at the same age that I had reached, when you took me under your fatherly care." John Murray Forbes to Houqua, December 31, 1842, FFBR.

[147] Sophia Junko Yanagisako, "Family and Household: The Analysis of Domestic Groups," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 8 (1979), 197-198.

[148] Little information about the small firm is extant, though it appears to have engaged mainly in the textile trade. In 1825 the venture was termed that of "American goods commission merchants." *The Boston Annual Advertiser, Annexed to the Boston Directory* (Boston, 1825), 79. The 1832 register lists the business as "T. Bulfinch & Co." *Stimpson's Boston Directory* (Boston, 1832), 116.

Coolidge's own.[149] To Coolidge, Bulfinch was valuable in the marketplace of feeling, but not the commercial market.

Coolidge's feelings towards his younger brother Thomas (who was also a merchant for a time) were more complex. Though Coolidge questioned Bulfinch's ability as a merchant, he still believed his cousin was a good man and friend. On the other hand, Coolidge doubted his brother's character as *both* man and merchant, and consequently struggled to manage his own feelings of anger and betrayal enough to engage in the commerce of either affection or capital with him. Coolidge was frequently frustrated by Thomas' idleness and poor judgment, which resulted in complete financial failure while Coolidge was first finding his feet in China in the early 1830s. Angry and saddened, Coolidge confessed, "I despair of his ever retrieving his fortune or character; he will end life in some brawl, or in the hospital." [150] Coolidge hesitated to send any money because he "distrust[ed Thomas'] power of self control" and feared "he would relapse into former modes of life, and that any thing I could do would impoverish me, without benefitting him."[151] Fearing his brother did not have the habits or character to succeed as a merchant, Coolidge struggled to "pour a precious balm" on his brother's spirits—certainly neglecting to use his own commercial connections to keep his brother afloat as a merchant, and even hesitating to provide immediate relief by paying Thomas' debts. In matters both financial and emotional, Joseph Coolidge had a "brother" whom he trusted and relied on far more: Augustine Heard.

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[149] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 30, 1840, HFBR.
[150] Joseph Coolidge to Nicholas Philip Trist, March 6, 1838, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC.
[151] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, July 1839, HFBR.

Coolidge trusted Heard not only as a brother in business for himself, but a brother in feeling to his wife. Coolidge requested that Heard "be all things a brother" to Ellen during Coolidge's first lengthy trip to Asia in the early 1830s.[152] Heard acted as a brother both financially and emotionally. Although Ellen retained her husband's power of attorney, Heard was essentially the financial head of household while Joseph was away, managing Ellen's spending by paying her bills and providing small loans. Heard checked in on Ellen and her children regularly, and Ellen quickly developed a profound affective bond with him. She called Heard her "kind, excellent friend" and wrote that his friendship gave her "an assurance of strength that few other things could."[153] Ellen and Heard became so close that rumors swirled about their relationship and exactly what roles Heard played while Ellen's husband was absent. Ellen angrily defended herself against these salacious rumors by referring to Joseph's request that Heard act as a *brother* to her. Joseph himself dismissed the rumors as the work of "scandal mongers, retailers of malice."[154] The Coolidges were so taken with Heard that they even tried to make him their brother in legal, not just emotional, terms. They regularly tried to play matchmaker between Heard and Ellen's unmarried sisters, but to no avail. Heard remained a bachelor throughout his life.

Despite never officially becoming family, both Joseph and Ellen Coolidge believed that Heard's financial and emotional interests aligned with theirs as if they were, indeed, related. The Coolidges believed that the family *feeling*—the affection, trust, and loyalty—Heard felt for them was enough to bind his financial interest to theirs. This became especially clear in 1840, when Joseph found himself at loose ends professionally after being expelled as partner from Russell &

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[152] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, June 9, 1836, ibid.
[153] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, undated letter ("I shall want $300 this month…"), ibid.
[154] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, July 1838, ibid.

Co. China trade expert Jacques M. Downs has characterized Coolidge as "a mediocre merchant at best…rather lazy, presumptuous, and sometimes tactless."[155] Coolidge had only become a partner in Russell & Co. through Heard's good graces. When Heard fell ill in China and had to return home to Massachusetts, he recommended the firm promote Coolidge to take his place. Russell & Co. partner John Murray Forbes remembered Coolidge as "a gentleman in his manners, but had very crude ideas about commerce, believing in show rather than in substantial management." Forbes reported that, "wishing only peace," he and the other partners "did the best [they] could to place [Coolidge] where he would do the least mischief."[156]

By late 1839, the other partners had entirely lost faith in Coolidge. He had recently made unauthorized investments with funds from a crucial Chinese business partner. In an attempt to justify his mistake, Coolidge erred again by showing clients some of the firm's confidential documents. Any trust or faith the partners had in him evaporated. Because he continually betrayed their trust, the partners determined that Coolidge was no longer an appropriate member for the firm in either economic or emotional terms. They wanted him out—of both the firm and its emotional community. Several partners began a campaign to remove Coolidge as partner

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[155] Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 192-195.

[156] John Murray Forbes, *Reminiscences of John Murray Forbes, Volume I* (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1903), 194. Augustine Heard's nephew John, who accompanied his uncle to China as clerk in 1841, remembered Coolidge as existing outside a commerce of affection among merchants in Canton. "There was plenty of jealousy of trade, but in spite of this, a great deal of kindness and good feeling," he remembered much later in life. "Out of their offices, the residents were always 'hail fellow, well met.' Some were unpopular and among them was my respected 'Taepen' Mr Coolidge. I never quite understood why, for, though rather stiff, he was a very agreeable man and remarkably well read and intelligent. Just as I arrived a perfect war was raging against him." John Heard, "An Account of His Life and the History of Augustine Heard & Co.," (1891), 31-32, HFBR.

when the firm re-organized for the new year. On January 1, 1840, he found himself in Canton without a firm to represent.[157]

None of this was particularly surprising to him. Coolidge had suspected he might be forced out even before heading to China in 1839. Indeed, before leaving Boston, Coolidge had secured Augustine Heard's permission to establish a new trading firm with both men as partners. Heard himself had no need or desire to return to international trade. His finances were secure, and he certainly had no inclination to return to China again at age fifty-five, after having left six years earlier due to declining health.[158] Heard even once told Coolidge that he "would rather live on $300 a year, than come again to China."[159] Heard's primary motivation in offering to partner with Coolidge in a new firm was emotional: he wanted to support his friend. Economic and emotional support often melded in Heard's mind, and he appears to have valued money for the emotional impact it might have for others. "Money was worth acquiring," Heard's nephew John reported Uncle Augustine advising, "from the amount of good which could be done by it, & he said that if I ever become worth a fortune, I should find that I should derive more pleasure from being able to aid and aiding others, than in any selfish gratification."[160]

Emotional and economic motivation mingled when Heard got word that Coolidge had indeed announced a new firm—one bearing only Heard's name. Heard wrote to his friend to express both frustration and resignation. He made it known that he would have much preferred if

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[157] For a detailed account of the reorganization of Russell & Co. from both sides, see Sturgis, *Rivalry in Canton*.
[158] Heard's friend and former Russell & Co. partner John Murray Forbes reported that Heard was "quite broken down by the climate and the work" in China, and had been "pale as death, with a bad cough, and was spitting blood" before he finally left the place in the 1830s. Forbes, *Reminiscences of John Murray Forbes,* 190-191.
[159] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, November 29, 1839, HFBR.
[160] John Heard to Elizabeth Heard, November 6, 1841, Elizabeth Heard Papers.

Coolidge had either reconciled with Russell & Co., or simply joined another existing firm. He was especially irritated that Coolidge had used only Heard's name for the new concern, a complication that made Heard feel he had to head to Canton despite Coolidge's repeated declarations that Heard was free to simply lend his name to the firm and remain in Boston.[161] With Heard's name on the figurative marquee, his reputation was now on the line.

Coolidge apologized for the sacrifices he asked his friend to make, but assured Heard that he had acted according to what he believed to be Heard's best financial *and* emotional interests. Coolidge explained that he had had "some vague idea" that Heard's property had diminished. More importantly, he declared that he had been sure Heard would approve of the new joint venture for emotional reasons: because Heard "had a sincere regard for my wife, an interest in my children, and kindness for myself."[162] Coolidge's wife Ellen was mortified to think that she had played a role in compelling Heard to return to China against his will. She confessed,

> I fancied your interests so identified with ours that they had become one and the same thing. Your attachment to Mr Coolidge and myself of which you had given such noble, generous, touching proofs, your affection for our children and all that you have done for them, your whole course in fact from the commencement of your friendship for us gave me the ideas that your destinies were linked with ours not to be separated.[163]

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[161] Coolidge explained his reasoning behind choosing the name "Augustine Heard & Co." rather than "Coolidge, Heard & Co," among other options, in a letter to Heard in late November 1839: "when I remembered that in Manila, Java, Calcutta, Boston, Salem, New York and Philadelphia, this name is favorably known to merchants, while mine is not at all, or unfavorably, I felt that the greater sacrifice involved the less, and that if you allowed me to use it at all you would let me do so in the way I thought best…I will do my best to honor it, by industry, integrity, and such intelligence as I possess. I hope these reasons will reconcile you to the resolution to which [my wife and I] came." Still, he openly acknowledged, "I choose your reputation, to support my own." Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, November 29, 1839, HFBR.

[162] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 22, 1840, ibid.

[163] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 30, 1842, ibid. She repeated this belief a year later, reminding Heard that she had believed "your interest being so bound up with mine and Mr Coolidge's that what was good for me must be good for the other." Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, February 28, 1843, ibid.

Both Joseph and Ellen Coolidge thus believed that the emotional connection between their family and Heard also bound together their financial interests, paving the way for their partnership in Augustine Heard & Co. Emotion thus provided the means for establishing the new firm: the Coolidges drew on affective, familiar feeling between Heard and the entire Coolidge family to justify uniting their financial interests in a new partnership.

The couple also revealed that emotion provided the motivation for the new firm by explaining Joseph's actions through his emotional, not financial, needs. Being ousted from Russell & Co. was a blow to Coolidge's pride, manhood, and professional reputation. He explained that his motivation for forming a new firm was emotional rather than financial. "I have yet 200,000 dls [dollars], but if I came home I should never be able to hold up my head among business men," he told Heard. "I must be true to myself, and notwithstanding my own feelings, do that which is just to my own character."[164] Coolidge could easily have returned to Boston comfortably with that amount, a prospect that Ellen—who was desperate to reunite with their children—supported. But Coolidge would not hear of it. Overwhelmed with frustration and indignation, he felt his reputation was at stake, and he wanted revenge.

Coolidge wrote lengthy, impassioned letters designed to evoke sympathy in Heard, casting himself as unfairly emasculated and in need of his "Brother's" help to recoup his manhood and professional reputation. Both Joseph and Ellen reported that his former partners had acted in an obviously unmanly manner, far from the model merchant masculinity that Coolidge saw as grounded in honor, integrity, and transparency (the very qualities, it should be noted, that his Russell & Co. partners accused *him* of lacking, and not without evidence). Coolidge labeled his former partners as "wanting…in common courtesy," and the ringleader of

[164] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 19, 1839, ibid.

his ousting, John C. Green, as "a clever scoundrel" whose devious plots against Coolidge showed "proofs of his injustice, meanness, and dishonesty."[165] Coolidge depicted the other partners as fearful and cowed by Green, unmanly in their inability to act independently of him.[166] The only former partner with whom Coolidge remained on fairly good terms was Robert Bennet Forbes, whom Joseph repeatedly described as "manly, and gentlemanlike" or "manly & honourable."[167] Ellen supported her husband's unfavorable depictions of his Russell & Co. partners. She cast Joseph as "a man of honour" going up against "treacherous" and "vain" men of "deadly malice" and "cold ingratitude" who made him feel "ill-used in a most unfair and ungentlemanly manner."[168]

The Coolidges thus claimed that these ungentlemanly men had unjustly attacked *Joseph's* merchant manhood. They had stamped him with "the brand of incompetence," treating him with pity and disdain, like "a poor creature" who "never ha[d] been good for any thing."[169] Highlighting his feelings of emasculation, he worried that returning to Boston after being expelled from Russell & Co. would make him look like "a whipped schoolboy."[170] He also feared that his former partners publicly challenged both his industry and his independence—two cornerstones of early nineteenth-century masculinity. Several partners claimed that Coolidge was lazy and disruptive, and that he had not earned the small fortune his partnership terms accrued to him. Such jabs at Coolidge's parasitic relationship with the firm created, in Ellen's words, "his

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[165] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 5, 1840, ibid.
[166] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 19, 1839 and January 5, 1840, ibid.
[167] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 10 and 19, 1839, ibid. Also see Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, November and December 15, 1839, ibid.
[168] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 31 and 2, 1840, ibid.
[169] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 19, 1839, ibid; Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 10, 1839, ibid; Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 15, 1839, ibid.
[170] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 10, 1839, ibid.

determination to prove to the world that he is not the useless do-little that his partners represent him [as], fattening on their labours."[171] Both Joseph and Ellen thus deployed gendered language to capture his emotional state of embarrassment and shame, as well as anger and vindictiveness.

Toby Ditz has argued that eighteenth-century merchants humiliated by financial failure used letter-writing to try to reconstitute a more respectable self, "to use the transaction between writer and reader to recuperate a fragile masculinity."[172] Though he had not failed financially, Coolidge felt unmanned by his former partners' actions and accusations, and his letters to Heard similarly reflect an effort to reconstitute manly qualities. He described his plans for Augustine Heard & Co. as a means of convincing people that he was hard-working, independent, and creditworthy—a competent merchant as well as an autonomous, respectable man. He wrote in militaristic terms of preparing to "do battle" and "make a fight" against his foes at Russell & Co.[173] Ellen used similar language, writing that she tried to advise her husband "like a soldier's wife, trembling and cowardly, but not daring to advise an act of cowardice in her husband."[174] For a brief moment, Coolidge even vengefully dreamed of creating a rival firm with exactly the same name that would surpass his former partners in wealth and influence. The spite behind this idea is clear in a letter he sent to Heard explaining why he ultimately decided *not* to name their new firm "Russell & Co." "[I]n a little time," he explained to Heard, "it would be known who was in each house, and the business would be given to the men, and not to the name." In other

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[171] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 2, 1840, ibid.
[172] Ditz, "Shipwrecked," 79. Several of the gendered patterns Ditz identified among eighteenth-century Philadelphia merchants also ring true in Coolidge's conflict with Russell & Co. partners in the 1830s, suggesting that gender (and manhood) remained an important character qualifier in nineteenth-century merchant culture. This continuity suggests that emotion and manhood cannot be disambiguated when studying the business history of merchants. On manhood and the emotional experience of financial failure, see Sandage, *Born Losers*.
[173] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 19, 1839, HFBR.
[174] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 2, 1840, ibid.

words, he would not long be able to confuse clients into sending commissions to him, rather than the original Russell & Co.[175]

Despite this evidence of rash and foolhardy impulses, both Coolidge and Ellen took pains to assure Heard that, notwithstanding Coolidge's well-known "impetuous" temper, his decision to establish a new firm was not an unmanly fit of passion, but a reasoned and calm attempt to recoup his manhood.[176] Coolidge repeatedly assured Heard that during his negotiations with Russell & Co., "I have never once lost my temper, or treated anyone otherwise than in a gentlemanlike manner," and "I have never for one moment, by word or look, acted otherwise than with perfect calmness, respect, and temper."[177] Such assurances show Coolidge's understanding that manly power—even, or perhaps especially, when preparing to "do battle" with one's professional enemies—was rooted, in part, in emotional control. A fit of passion in the warehouse was not a sign of the honorable man he so desperately wanted to prove himself to be. Joseph also took pains to demonstrate to Heard that he understood the foolhardy emotional *and* economic consequences of his abandoned plan to create a rival Russell & Co. He acknowledged, "it would produce bitter feelings of jealousy and animosity" such that "a spirit of rivalry which would be injurious in a business point of view, would exist where I wanted to have a friendly feeling, if possible."[178] To further his business prospects, Coolidge knew he had to temper his anger and cultivate a commerce of affection with his former partners.

Ellen and Joseph Coolidge believed that evidence of the "unfair and ungentlemanly" treatment Coolidge received at the hands of his former partners justified his choice to strike up a

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[175] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 19, 1839, ibid.
[176] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, exact date illegible, ibid.
[177] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 10 and 19, 1839, ibid.
[178] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 29, 1839, ibid.

new business in China, dragging Heard with him. How could Coolidge bear to return to Boston if it meant living in constant anxiety and embarrassment, every day facing people who believed he was not only an incompetent merchant, but a weak and dependent man—"a whipped schoolboy," no less?[179] No friend and fellow businessman could allow him to accept such a miserable fate. So, Coolidge asked Heard to "pour a precious balm on his wounded spirit" by joining him in China—partners in business and, Joseph hoped, life. Augustine Heard & Co. was thus born out of two gendered emotional factors: Joseph Coolidge's anger and anxiety over his wounded manhood, and his affectionate, brotherly bond with Augustine Heard, which he mobilized to gather the capital—both material and social—to begin a new firm. Without considering masculinity and emotion, we cannot understand how and why Augustine Heard & Co., one of the largest American firms in China in the nineteenth century, existed at all.

Most historians treat Augustine Heard & Co. as a family firm, founded by Augustine Heard and passed on to his nephews. While Joseph Coolidge is typically mentioned as a founding partner, the extent of his early influence is almost always underplayed, if not ignored—perhaps because he left the concern after only four years and, of course, the firm did not bear his name. However, this means that historians have neglected the firm's roots in Coolidge's emotional world, particularly his gendered anxiety. The emotional roots of Augustine Heard & Co. suggest we need to consider the extent to which emotion was a driving factor in early American capitalism. Augustine Heard & Co. operated in Asia between 1840 and 1877, becoming one of the most influential American firms in the region and, during its peak, turning

[179] He described the conversations with his former partners as "of a nature to wound and lessen my own self-esteem, or rather, perhaps, my self-respect," and because of that, he "determined if it cost me years of devotion to the business, that I would remain here until I had convinced them, and others at home, that I am not the poor creature they represent me to be." Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, November 29, 1839, ibid.

profits of $200,000 per year. Much of this came from trading opium to Chinese merchants in exchange for tea, silk, porcelain, and other products that could be exported to the United States. Historians must reckon with the fact that emotion—both masculine anxiety and fraternal affection—was a fertile seed from which these ventures sprouted, bringing profit and commodities to Americans, but exacerbating the damaging effects of opium on Chinese society.[180]

Examining Boston's merchants (especially those in the China trade) as an emotional community reveals that these businessmen understood emotion as a significant factor in commerce. To them, sympathy and a reliable "commerce of affection" was critical for the merchant class to withstand the financial and emotional blows of an unpredictable economy. They therefore idealized merchant masculinity not only around independence and creditworthiness, but also the ability to provide emotional support to one's "fallen brothers." Merchants aimed to produce and exchange positive sentiment as well as goods and credit. Capitalizing on bonds of affection meant that emotion, not just material support, united Boston's merchants into a mutually supportive class. The marketplace of feeling meant that these men did not do business only in a ruthless market of cold-hearted individual competitors: their economic world was simultaneously driven by this consciously-constructed emotional cooperation.

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[180] On the United States and the opium crisis in China, see Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*; Jacques M. Downs, "Fair Game: Exploitative Role-Myths and the American Opium Trade," *Pacific Historical Review,* Vol. 41, No. 2 (May 1971), 133-149; Fichter, *So Great a Proffit*; Haddad, *America's First Adventure in China*; Macabe Keliher, "Anglo-American Rivalry and the Origins of U.S. China Policy," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April 2007), 227-257; Thomas N. Layton, *The Voyage of the 'Frolic': New England Merchants and the Opium Trade* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Dael A. Norwood, "Trading in Liberty: The Politics of the American China Trade" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2012).

But merchants did not only turn to other men for support when riding the rough seas of early American commerce. Merchants' wives also played a crucial role in the economy's emotional makeup. Focusing in part on Joseph Coolidge's wife Ellen, the next chapter examines how advice literature and popular fiction tasked women with the exhausting and often ceaseless labor of cheering despondent husbands in hard times. Contrary to gendered expectations, the discourse surrounding the marketplace of feeling called on sympathetic male friends to gently "pour a precious balm" on each other's wounded spirits, while demanding women tackle the difficult, draining "hard work" of making happiness for their merchant husbands.

Chapter Two
'make less money, and more happiness':
Merchant Wives and Emotion Work

Man, wife, reversal of fortune, womanly fortitude, bliss. Washington Irving outlined this formula for marital happiness in his 1819 short story "The Wife," published during the United States' first major peacetime reckoning with widespread economic uncertainty. Irving's narrator, Geoffrey Crayon, recounts the tale of his friend Leslie, a newlywed fearfully hiding financial ruin from his wife. Crayon dismisses his friend's fears, citing the value of womanly fortitude in hard times. "Those disasters which break down the spirit of a man, and prostrate him in the dust," Crayon advises, "seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex," inspiring a wife to "suddenly ris[e] in mental force to be the comforter of her husband" and "abid[e], with unshrinking firmness, the bitterest blasts of adversity." Sure enough, when Leslie informs his wife of their fall from financial grace, she responds with "sweetness and good humor" and cheers him to the point of "exquisite felicity." "You call yourself poor," Crayon admonishes his friend, "you never were so rich—you never knew the boundless treasures of excellence you possess in that woman."[181]

At least one reviewer hailed Irving's story as instructional amid the financial uncertainty of the early nineteenth century. Finding the story "beautifully pathetic," the reviewer noted that "in these times of commercial disasters ["The Wife"] will be read with interest, and, it is to be hoped, with *benefit*, by many."[182] The "commercial disaster" of the Panic of 1819 and the

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[181] Washington Irving, "The Wife," in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819; London, 1865), 42-43, 49, and 51.

[182] Henry Brevoort, Jr. review of *The Sketch Book*, in *Critical Essays on Washington Irving*, ed. Ralph M. Aderman (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1990), 46. Also see Andrew Kopec, "Irving, Ruin, and Risk," *Early American Literature*, vol. 48, no. 3 (2013), 709-735. On failure in the early republic, see Balleisen,

economic recession that followed was a shock to the system for many Americans—a "traumatic awakening" in the words of one historian.[183] Recovered from the costs and shortages of the Napoleonic wars, Europe had less need for American cotton and foodstuffs and the value of American goods (especially all important cotton) plummeted. London banks stopped lending credit to Americans, and the Bank of the United States began to call in loans, followed by state banks. Everyone needed credit all at once, and it was nowhere to be found. Panic and failure rippled across the country.[184]

How could Americans deal with this widespread economic anxiety, and why might Irving's story provide a useful lesson? The country faced such questions repeatedly in the first half of the nineteenth century, as more "panics" again shook the economy from top to bottom in 1837 and 1857. Financial innovations like bankruptcy and life insurance eased anxiety from a logistical perspective, but many Americans needed something more direct and immediate on the emotional level. Family continued to provide a hedge against financial uncertainty in the early nineteenth century, serving as a source of both material and emotional support. As financial uncertainty persisted, anxiety helped crystallize that emotional support into a new system of gendered emotion work aimed at alleviating the pursuit of profit's emotional costs.

Navigating Failure; Lepler, *The Many Panics of 1837*; Mann, *Republic of Debtors*; Sandage, *Born Losers*.

[183] Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 137. For more on the social and cultural impact of the crisis, see Daniel S. Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," in Cathy Matson, ed., *The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives and New Directions* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2006); Sarah Kidd, "The Search for Moral Order: The Panic of 1819 and the Culture of the Early American Republic" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 2002); J. David Lehman, "Explaining Hard Times: Political Economy and the Panic of 1819 in Philadelphia" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1992).

[184] Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 142-147.

This chapter argues that many middling to upper-class families treated wives' efforts to soothe and cheer as a key strategy for mitigating male breadwinners' anxiety. Acquiring an effective wifely emotion worker enabled men to insure their emotional state against a volatile market. Irving's language mingles the languages of capital and sentiment: though cash poor, Leslie was still emotionally "rich" because of the "treasures" he "possess[ed]" in his comforting wife. In an uncertain commercial landscape, a wife dedicated to reducing anxiety and producing happiness became crucial for all profit-seeking families, not just those in economic freefall.[185] Wives' emotion work is especially significant because it was the only form of women's labor that middling and upper-class Americans openly recognized as respectable and necessary, despite being difficult and draining work.

To demonstrate the significance of this labor, this chapter focuses on wives of merchants—quintessential capitalists who needed emotional support to withstand the uncertainties of an unforgiving market, as the previous chapter demonstrated. Merchants' wives were thus on the frontlines of a new nation grappling with the emotional consequences of a speculative, profit-driven society. Early nineteenth-century didactic literature and popular fiction aimed at the middle class clearly established how merchants' wives should try to control and express their feelings. They must make the best of it, for everyone's sake. Even if they felt sad and lonely as their husbands spent years buying and selling tea in Asia, or angry and frightened when men did not make enough profit to return home when they had promised—no matter the situation, merchants' wives should tamp down their negative feelings and produce positive ones,

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[185] On family as a tool for risk management, see Ditz, *Property and Kinship;* Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*; Van, "Free Trade & Family Values," esp. 13-16. On spouses contending together with financial panic, see Andrea R. Fouroughi, "Vine and Oak: Wives and Husbands Cope with the Financial Panic of 1857," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Summer 2003), 1009-1032.

thereby cheering and reassuring not just themselves, but the whole family. This work was not easy, nor did it always achieve the desired results. This chapter reveals that laboring to suppress one's own emotions to produce happiness for others could lead to even more emotional suffering. Consequently, some merchants' wives became increasingly wary of an economic system that demanded they sacrifice their own happiness.

Though several merchants' wives—both real and fictional—are explored in the following pages, one voice in particular drives the narrative. Ellen Coolidge hardly represents all merchants' wives, but she provides an illustrative case study because she was especially attuned to the difficulty and significance of wifely emotion work. Raised in a downwardly-mobile slaveholding Virginia family and married to a Boston-bred China trade merchant, Ellen was acutely sensitive to men's financial anxieties *and* women's perceived duty to manage those feelings. Coolidge could thus explicitly articulate how the pressure to produce her husband's happiness shaped—and confined—her life. Though her husband never suffered catastrophic financial failure, the pressure to labor for his happiness permeated Ellen's writing even in seemingly flush times. Her voluminous epistolary record therefore provides a rich archive for exploring the significance of wives' emotion work in an uncertain financial world. With one foot in Virginia and the other in Massachusetts (not to mention a few toes in China), Coolidge's case also suggests that the burdens of wifely emotion work existed wherever men's financial anxiety persisted. Examining Ellen Coolidge alongside her sisters in Virginia and other American merchants' wives in China, the chapter contends that wives' emotion work was crucial to the American marketplace of feeling. Analyzing Coolidge in both her Virginia and Massachusetts contexts clarifies how the burdens of emotion work led many women to worry that the pursuit of profit interfered with the pursuit of happiness—and to demand change accordingly.

Finally, reading Ellen Coolidge's emotion work for her husband alongside the "friendly feeling" he tried to maintain with various business partners clarifies a crucial distinction in how merchant families perceived men's and women's emotional support.[186] Joseph Coolidge could urge, persuade, or even try to intimidate his business partners to serve his emotional interests. While he successfully translated his brotherly affection with Augustine Heard into financial support for a time, he did not manage to maintain a profitable commerce of affection with his Russell & Co. partners. Despite his best efforts, Joseph did not hold any authority over these men that enabled him to compel emotion work from them. This was not the case when it came to his wife. As the following pages make clear, the patriarchal authority that husbands held over wives put men in a position to compel or even coerce emotion work from women if necessary. The discourse of the wifely emotion worker that emerged in response to the financial panics of 1819 and 1837 created not only the expectation that women should dedicate themselves to serving their husbands' emotional interests, but a great deal of pressure to do so. In many ways, the marketplace of feeling turned on the gears of white men's patriarchal power.

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The unveiling of previously unseen or misunderstood labor has been a constructive thread of women's history for decades. Jeanne Boydston's scholarship remains canonical for understanding how white women's unpaid but arduous labors in the home were romanticized and devalued—pastoralized, in Boydston's terms—as work came to be defined by wages, public visibility, and masculinity. Advice writers and even many women themselves treated domestic work as "effortless emanations of [women's] very being," and not "as a conscious form of labor." By identifying this ideological veil and examining women's consumption, waged labor,

[186] Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 29, 1839, HFBR.

and unpaid domestic labor, historians have shown that many women worked tirelessly for their families' survival, and that home and market were never truly separate. Though often unwaged or unrecognized, women's sewing, stirring, and scrubbing was still essential to early American capitalism.[187]

Recently, feminist historians have expressed frustration that gender- and woman-focused analysis has not been fully incorporated into mainstream narratives for the early republic, especially the history of capitalism.[188] This chapter emerges from that frustration, arguing that there was one form of women's labor that early Americans *did* openly celebrate as critical to the economy: emotion work. A modern sociological concept, emotion work refers to the effort put into either controlling one's own feelings or encouraging particular emotional responses in others. Arlie Russell Hochschild, the concept's progenitor, breaks the category down into two broad forms of work: "*evocation*, in which the cognitive focus is on a desired feeling which is initially absent, and *suppression*, in which the cognitive focus is on an undesired feeling which is initially present." Hochschild posits that individuals shape their own emotions through two types

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[187] Boydston, *Home and Work*, 145-6. Also see Jeanne Boydston, "The Woman Who Wasn't There: Women's Market Labor and the Transition to Capitalism in the United States," *Journal of the Early Republic* vol. 16, no. 2 (1996), 183-206; Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place"; Serena Zabin, *Dangerous Economies: Status and Commerce in Imperial New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). For literary scholars on home and market, see Gillian Brown, *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Lori Merish, *Sentimental Materialism: Gender, Commodity Culture, and Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Brandy Parris, "Emotional Labor, Women's Work, and Sentimental Capital in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2005); Lora Romero, *Home Fronts: Domesticity and Its Critics in the Antebellum United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[188] On the need to integrate gender histories, see Hartigan-O'Connor, "Gender's Value in the History of Capitalism"; Hartigan-O'Connor, "The Personal is Political Economy"; Dru Stanley, "Histories of Capitalism and Sex Difference."

of acting: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting means changing outward displays of emotion through manipulating facial expressions and gestures. Deep acting means guiding one's own memories, thoughts, or feelings to elicit desired emotions—usually those that are socially expected—within oneself, so that those newly produced emotions can be displayed to others.[189]

Like modern sociologists, early nineteenth-century Americans believed they could direct and control feelings. Women could manufacture happiness and good cheer just like they molded wax into candles. As historian Martha Tomhave Blauvelt has perceptively noted, for many middling young women, a combination of deep and surface acting was crucial to producing the self, especially in terms of class and gender.[190] Conduct literature, school lessons, and novels instructed young girls to feel amiable, unselfish, and even-tempered. These were what Hochschild calls the "feeling rules" of the middle-class culture of sensibility.[191]

For young white women, feeling rules emphasized how emotional expressions affected others. Early nineteenth-century Americans held that women's primary social and cultural value lay in their ability to influence other people. In a graduation speech, one young woman summed up what she had learned about woman's social role: woman, she declared, "exercises over the affections a power which can subdue more than armies." "Remember," she urged her fellow female graduates, "that you can, by a kind word, a look, or an action, heal the wounds of the broken-hearted, wipe the tears from the fatherless and motherless, and render the most miserable and destitute happy in their poverty." This military-grade emotional control and ability to cheer

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[189] Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure," 558. Also see Hochschild, *The Managed Heart.*

[190] Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart*; Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*. Kasson even argues that "the foundations for our current situation, with all its accompanying opportunities and persistent inequities, were laid in the nineteenth century." Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility,* 181.

[191] Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure," 563.

the poor could collide in the home, where "woman's Destiny is to promote peace, love, and happiness in the social circle, to exert a happy influence on all around, to cause every eye to beam with delight at her presence, every ear to listen with profound attention, to the gentle words of wisdom which fall from her lips, and every heart to swell with gratitude for the enjoyment of her influence."[192] Women should exercise their all-powerful emotional control at home, making the domestic sphere—in theory at least—a refuge of virtue and happiness from the immoral temptations of the political and economic realms.[193]

Obeying feeling rules by both feeling and projecting amiability was important for women who wanted to make the home a cheerful haven for husbands and fathers encumbered by the stresses of the public realm. Advice books targeting the middle class argued that women owed cheerfulness to their husbands as compensation for men's labors outside the home, and that this cheerfulness was necessary for their family's overall happiness. Reformer William Alcott insisted that in projecting good cheer, women must aspire to "self-denial and self-sacrifice." Nor should cheerfulness be mere surface acting. A wife's smile must be "unaffected," such that "her every word or action corresponds to the feelings indicated by her countenance."[194] Lydia Sigourney instructed young women that unaffected cheerfulness had to be "the result of cultivated principle, of persevering effort, and the solicited succour of the grace of god." Sigourney urged women to "[d]aily pursue the investigation" of any errors that had hitherto prevented them from producing and expressing good cheer, until they formed a persistent habit

[192] Mary Early Brown, speech given at F.C. Institute on June 13, 1842, Mary Early Brown's Essay and Miscellaneous, Early Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA.
[193] Boydston, *Home and Work;* Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place."
[194] William Alcott, *The Young Wife: Duties of Woman in the Marriage Relation* (Boston: George W. Light, 1837), 76, 47.

of cheerfulness.[195] By rigidly controlling their own emotions, women should literally embody domestic tranquility.

"Self-denial," "unaffected," "persevering effort"—these words, echoed in the many essays and books advising women to master their emotions, show that managing emotions was *work*, and everyone knew it. Even Bostonian Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, whose domestic fiction emphasized women's need for emotional control, found the perpetual embodiment of cheerfulness to be, in her husband's recollection, the "struggle of her life."[196] In school, at home with family, while courting, and upon entering marriage and matronhood, white women grappled with contradictions between what they knew they were *supposed* to feel as sensible young women, and what they *did* in fact feel.[197] For instance, Ellen Coolidge once confided to her mother, "it is only by hard work that I can overcome my inclination to sadness." This was especially true when facing financial uncertainty. Fearing that her family would never recover its dwindling fortune, Ellen's mother had called her own attempts at cheerfulness a "constant

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[195] Lydia Sigourney, *Letters to Young Ladies*, 5th ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1838), 171, 226. Similarly, Lydia Maria Child's *The Mother's Book* instructed mothers to suppress sadness or anger around children. Lydia Maria Child, *The Mother's Book* (Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1831). Jane Tompkins has argued that sentimental novels also trained female readers to discipline their passions. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, 176. On domestic literature, see Mary P. Ryan, *The Empire of the Mother: American Writing about Domesticity 1830-1860* (New York: Haworth Press, 1982).

[196] Austin Phelps quoted in Nancy Schnog, "Changing Emotions: Moods and the Nineteenth-Century American Woman Writer," in *Inventing the Psychological: Toward a Cultural History of Emotional Life in America*, eds. Joel Pfister and Nancy Schnog (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 95.

[197] Martha Blauvelt notes that by intentionally and painstakingly producing and displaying emotions between these two poles (of what they felt and what they knew they were supposed to feel), young women negotiated the production of both class and gender. Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart*. On emotional control and middle-class identity in the nineteenth century, see Hemphill, "Class, Gender, and the Regulation of Emotional Expression"; Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility,* esp. chapter five.

struggle."[198] Words like "struggle" and "hard work" confirm that to the women trying to produce happiness, it was labor—and taxing labor at that.

This labor had entwined economic and moral significance. As scholarship on the ideology of separate spheres demonstrates, many Americans envisioned home and family as a buffer for the market's pernicious effects. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the family's moral engine shifted from men to women, making women key figures in conversations about acquisitive capitalism's potential moral dangers. People came to believe that selfishness, greed, and corruption would not destroy men—and capitalist society—if wives and mothers provided a moral counterweight.[199] Separate spheres scholarship is less attentive to the role emotion—especially emotion work—played in this delicate moral balance. When the economy produced fear, anger, or jealousy, men's commerce of affection with friends and colleagues would not suffice to keep dangerous passions under control. Women had to constantly and carefully manage emotions—both their own and their husbands'—lest men succumb to immoral impulses in business. For doux commerce to even be possible, women's emotion work was paramount.

Fiction writers explicitly tied women's emotion work to the vicissitudes of capitalism by using sentimental language to explain and soften the turbulent market. "Panic fiction" assuaged

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[198] Ellen Coolidge to Martha Randolph, May 31, 1833, ECC; Martha Randolph to Thomas Jefferson Randolph, March 2, 1837, Papers of the Randolph Family, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

[199] On women's increasing religious role, see Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). On morality and the market, see Amy Dru Stanley, "Home Life and the Morality of the Market," in *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880*, eds. Stephen Conway and Melvyn Stokes (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 74-98; Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*; Cathy Matson, "Markets and Morality: Intersections of Economy, Ethics, and Religion in Early North America," *Early American Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3 (Fall 2010), 475-481.

anxiety by following frenzied scenes of speculation and failure with calm narrations of recovery, often driven by female characters. Literary scholar Mary Templin has shown how those fictional female characters used calm, rational strategies to help their families out of financial trouble. When hard times hit, fictional wives and daughters practiced economy—from balancing budgets to selling their beloved pearls—to improve their families' material condition, thus easing anxiety and fear.[200]

Beyond the practical economic actions Templin describes, panic fiction also articulated the value of *emotion* work in clear and compelling prose. The figure of the wifely emotion worker became particularly popular after the Panic of 1837, when anxiety about financial loss was once again ubiquitous for the middling sorts. For *Godey's Lady's Book*, popular moralist T.S. Arthur published several stories across multiple decades developing this feminine ideal. Arthur's "Blessings in Disguise" (1840) is remarkably similar to Washington Irving's "The Wife," with a struggling merchant whose wife, Emily, reveals herself to be his greatest asset when financial disaster strikes. Emily carefully controls physical traits like her facial expressions and tone of voice to soothe her distressed husband. In return, her husband's "eye beam[ed] with an expression of pleasure that richly repaid the heart of his wife."[201] By interweaving the language of emotion with the language of the market, T.S. Arthur illuminated an important transaction within the marketplace of feeling: for her emotional labors, Emily's husband paid her in physical expressions of pleasure—an embodied sign that Emily herself should be happy. In the aftermath of the Panic of 1857, Arthur further clarified the dual emotional and economic

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[200] Mary Templin, *Panic Fiction: Women and Antebellum Economic Crisis* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014), 11-12, 19-20.
[201] T.S. Arthur, "Blessings in Disguise," *Godey's Lady's Book, and Ladies' American Magazine*, vol. 21 (July 1840), 15.

function of a wifely emotion worker. "A Tale of the Times" (1858) depicted a woman who refused to lose hope even when fear and depression immobilized her ruined husband. Unfazed, she pushed him back out into the marketplace to defend his honor and competence. The wifely emotion worker now not only supported her husband in difficult times, but directly guided him through the unforgiving market.[202]

Arthur's stories for *Godey's* also laid out the less-than-ideal wives against whom the wifely emotion worker should be favorably compared. In "Blessings in Disguise," Emily's dedication to cheering her husband was part of a larger transformation from "a giddy votary of fashion" to "a rational, sympathizing woman."[203] Through Emily, Arthur cast the wifely emotion worker as a much-needed antithesis to another familiar figure: the extravagant and selfish wife.[204] Arthur also outlined the catastrophe that could ensue when a wife failed to work for her husband's happiness. In "Shattered By the First Storm" (1858), merchant Harry Melville fruitlessly sought solace from his "dainty, fashionable wife" when he could not pay his demanding creditors. "She could weep, and wring her hands, and sob like a distressed actress," Arthur advised, "But she had no comforting suggestions, no brave words, no hopeful sentiments

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[202] T.S. Arthur, "A Tale of the Times," *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, vol. 56 (June 1858), 356. On sentimental fiction and economic crisis, see David Anthony, *Paper Money Men: Commerce, Manhood, and the Sensational Public Sphere in Antebellum America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009); Joseph Fichtelberg, *Critical Fictions: Sentiment and the American Market, 1780-1870* (Athens: University of Virginia Press, 2003); Andrew Lawson, *Downwardly Mobile: The Changing Fortunes of American Realism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). For historians on emotion and economics intertwining, see Sara T. Damiano, "Writing Women's History Through the Revolution: Family Finances, Letter Writing, and Conceptions of Marriage," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 74, no. 4 (October 2017), 697-728; Hartigan-O'Connor, "Abigail's Accounts"; Elizabeth White Nelson, *Market Sentiments: Middle-Class Market Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2004).

[203] Arthur, "Blessings in Disguise."

[204] On the threat of women's extravagance, see Alcott, *The Young Wife,* 366-368; Lydia Maria Child, *Good Wives* (Boston: Carter, Hendee and Co., 1833), xi; Hartigan-O'Connor, *Ties That Buy,* 161-189; Mary Beth Sievens, "Female Consumerism and Household Authority in Early National New England," *Early American Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Fall 2006), 353-371.

to offer." With this "helpless wife," Harry withered. Notably, in both of Arthur's stories with dedicated wifely emotion workers, husbands did not actually lose their fortunes. Only Harry Melville, with his "mere summer-blossom of a wife," was truly ruined.[205]

Advice writers, fiction writers, anxious husbands, even wives themselves—all of these people did *not* veil women's emotion work in the same way that they pastoralized women's physical domestic labor. Instead, they recognized that women's efforts to produce positive emotions had economic significance, if not direct exchange value. For instance, in 1835, China trade merchant Russell Sturgis praised his wife Mary for "the efforts you have made to appear contented," pinning his ability to withstand long, lonely business trips in China to "the manner in which you have schooled your feelings," and "reasoned yourself into calmness."[206] In recognizing that Mary "schooled" her feelings and "reasoned" away her panic, Sturgis reflected on her intentional efforts to manage her feelings, as well as the positive effect her labors had on his emotional state, and thus their financial prospects. Russell Sturgis continued to celebrate his wife's skilled emotion work and the sacrifices she made to support his pursuit of profit even after she died in Manila in September 1837. Eulogizing his late wife, Sturgis wrote to her mother that though Mary missed her own family dearly when in Macao, "still she never repined, never faltered in her performance of her duties, even maintaining her sweet, even temper, which so endeared her to all who knew her." He continued, "When I have spoken with regret of the sacrifices she was making, how fondly and affectionately she has reproved me & assured me that if I were contented & happy she could be so anywhere."[207]

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[205] T.S. Arthur, "Shattered By the First Storm," *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, vol. 57 (July-Sept. 1858), 152-154.
[206] Russell Sturgis to Mary Sturgis, January 23, 1835, Correspondence of Russell and Mary G. Sturgis [RMSP], Boston Athenaeum, Boston, MA; Russell Sturgis to Mary Sturgis, February 24, 1835, ibid.
[207] Russell Sturgis to Jane Parkinson, October 6, 1837, ibid.

Many anxious families believed, as Russell Sturgis did, that economic stability and growth depended on women laboring to cheer their husbands, fathers, and sons so that men could withstand the emotional harm of continually engaging with an unpredictable and often unforgiving marketplace. It is telling that men spoke of their "commerce of affection" with one another while women wrote of the "hard work" of managing their—and their husbands'—emotions. Suppressing anger or sadness to cheer an anxious husband was, to borrow historian Martha Blauvelt's words, "self-aware and often strenuous labor."[208] This was significant at a time when middling and upper-class families signified respectability in part by demonstrating that female family members did *not* perform draining physical or waged labor. The labor of "respectable" women could be celebrated—but only in the realm of emotions. Emotion work was thus the only form of women's labor recognized *and* celebrated as a crucial component of the early American marketplace. By laboring to produce happiness for anxious husbands, wifely emotion workers became crucial figures in the nation's marketplace of feeling.

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Ellen Coolidge was perhaps uniquely prepared for this emotional side of her wifely duties. Her family members—the Randolphs of Virginia—were no strangers to anxiety, both economic and emotional. Throughout her childhood, her family had relied on emotion work to navigate challenging times—especially financial uncertainty and familial separation. Born in Albemarle County, Virginia in 1796, Ellen was the daughter of Thomas Mann Randolph (an enslaver and aspiring politician) and Martha Jefferson (Thomas Jefferson's eldest daughter). Ellen's grandfather was deeply in debt and her father had his own financial and emotional

[208] Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart*, 6.

troubles, which meant that Ellen grew up within the complex emotional dynamics of a family in anxious financial decline.[209]

Her family's prioritization of emotion work began with its patriarch. Thomas Jefferson consistently demanded emotion work from his relations, especially his female dependents. Historian Jan Lewis has argued that he was "patently manipulative" in extracting demonstrations of affection from his daughters, especially when he felt unfulfilled by his expensive and demanding public life in Washington.[210] During the upheaval preceding the election of 1800, for instance, Jefferson wrote to his then twenty-eight-year-old daughter Martha requesting that she write him more letters since they "serve like gleams of light, to chear [*sic*] a dreary scene where envy, hatred, malice, revenge, and all the worse passions of men are marshalled to make one another as miserable as possible."[211]

Jefferson ensured that Ellen became part of this familial emotional economy as early as possible. In 1805, for instance, the then-president sent eight-year-old Ellen a receipt for the

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[209] On Jefferson's finances, see Sloan, *Principle and Interest*. On the decline of the Virginia gentry, see Kierner, "'The Dark and Dense Cloud Perpetually Lowering Over Us'"; Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*. On Jefferson, gender, and emotion work, see Andrew Burstein, *Jefferson's Secrets*: *Death and Desire at Monticello* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), esp. chapter 4; Cynthia A. Kierner, *Martha Jefferson Randolph, Daughter of Monticello: Her Life and Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), esp. chapter 6; Brian Steele, "Thomas Jefferson's Gender Frontier," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 95, no. 1 (June 2008), 17-42; Fredrika J. Teute and David S. Shields, "Jefferson in Washington: Domesticating Manners in the Republican Court," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 35, no. 2 (Summer 2015), 237-259. Also see Dierks, *In My Power*, chapter 4.

[210] Jan Lewis, "The White Jeffersons," in *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture*, eds. Jan Lewis and Peter S. Onuf (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999), esp. 129 and 131. The Jefferson-Randolphs were only one of many declining gentry families that Lewis argues turned inward, to themselves and each other, in their search for emotional stability in a post-revolutionary world that seemed less and less welcoming and fulfilling. For more, see Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*. Ellen herself demonstrated her absorption of this belief during a stay in Washington in 1816, when she wrote to her grandfather that she longed to return home to "the bosom of my family, where alone I can expect to find real happiness." Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge to Thomas Jefferson, March 19, 1816, *Founders Online*, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-09-02-0399.

[211] Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, December 8, 1798, quoted in Andrew Burstein, "Jefferson and the Familiar Letter," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 14, no. 2 (Summer 1994), 216.

epistolary debt she owed him. The "bill" laid out the frequency with which the young girl "ought" to write him affectionate epistles, and declared the "balance due from E. W. Randolph" to be four letters.[212] Yet another instance of early Americans intertwining the language of emotions and the language of capitalism, the letter was teasing and affectionate. But the jocular tone masked a stark truth: the president of the United States billed his granddaughter for the emotional support he believed she owed him. Even more, the "bill" did not include any mention of what young Ellen would receive in exchange for her labors. Jefferson simply demanded this labor for free, claiming his granddaughter's time and energy for himself. The "bill" reflects Jefferson's understanding that Ellen's status as a dependent female relation entitled him to command her emotional labor free of charge. The letter appears to have had the desired effect. Not long after receiving it, young Ellen wrote a hasty reply, asking her grandfather to "Excuse the faults and bad writing of this letter since nothing but my anxiety to write to you and to show you I had not forgotten you could have made me do it."[213] Ellen learned responsibility for emotion work—and how to use letters as conduits of emotion—from an early age. Not only that, she learned that her position as a dependent girl (and then woman) entitled patriarchs to her affective labor.

Throughout her youth, the strained emotional dynamics of her parents' marriage provided a tumultuous example of how a wife should undertake emotion work to support a struggling husband. Ellen witnessed her mother constantly laboring to soothe her father, Thomas Mann Randolph—a man, in Ellen's own words, whose "feelings were morbid, his judgment controuled

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[212] Thomas Jefferson to Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge, May 21, 1805, *Founders Online*, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-1762.
[213] Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge to Thomas Jefferson, June 27, 1805, *Founders Online*, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-1970.

by his passions."[214] Randolph's passions were often inflamed by perceived challenges to his manhood and status (especially financial struggles) and his jealous fears that family members were more dedicated to one another than to him. Through witnessing her mother's consistent efforts to soothe her father, and both observing *and* experiencing her grandfather's loving yet insistent demands for affectionate remembrances, Ellen Randolph became all too familiar with the emotional economy of families in financial distress, especially the importance of women's emotion work. In the financially unstable Jefferson-Randolph households, women labored to produce patriarchs' happiness when faced with economic and status anxiety.

The Jefferson-Randolphs were not the only Virginia family that trained young women to control their emotions for the sake of others. In 1841, a teacher sent worried letters home to a Virginia schoolgirl's mother complaining that the girl was frequently "very low-spirited" and the teacher had resorted to "scold[ing] her occasionally about her long face."[215] The girl, Mary Early, knew her mother would be disappointed with this report, as she recorded in her diary that upon arriving at the school, "Ma' used so many arguments to convince us that we ought to be cheerful, and happy."[216] As teachers continued to critique her emotional displays, Mary assured her no doubt disappointed mother that she was "determined to be cheerful."[217]

Even adult Virginian women were subject to criticism for their failure to appropriately manage emotional displays. When a young woman's baby died in 1826, her mother gently urged her to control her grief for the sake of her family: "You ought not to yield yourself up to your misfortune. You are a wife, and a mother, and you have many friends who have claims on you.

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[214] Ellen Coolidge to Henry S. Randall, March 13, 1856, ECC.
[215] Harriet P. Bailey to Elizabeth Brown Rives Early, December 22, 1841, Early Family Papers.
[216] Diary of Mary Early Brown, ibid.
[217] Mary Bailey and Mary Early to Elizabeth Brown Rives Early, May 24, 1842, ibid.

you must not suffer the energies of your mind to be prostrated by this calamity dreadful as it is."[218] Another woman scolded her aunt for similarly allowing herself to be overcome with sadness after a loved one's death. "She is very melancholy," the niece complained, "resigns herself entirely to grief does not appear at all to try to overcome it[.] I have always thought her a disposition who gave up too much to her feelings on all occasions; which did she but know it instead of promoting her happiness greatly diminishes it."[219] Overcoming undesirable emotions—like sadness and grief—was a skill Ellen Coolidge and many other Virginia-born women had to learn and practice, from girlhood to adulthood.

At first glance this may seem rather similar to the advice that merchants must "[g]ive not place for an hour to useless and enervating melancholy. Be a man." However, whom this emotion management was *for* suggests a critical distinction. Merchants tried to eliminate their melancholy to increase their own productivity and professional standing. Virginia women tried to "overcome" their griefs for the sake of all those who had "claims" on them as wife, mother, and friend. In short, patriarchal understandings of who owed what to whom defined individuals' motivations within the marketplace of feeling. Men like Joseph Coolidge did emotion work for themselves first (and their dependents only by consequence), while wives like Ellen Coolidge did emotion work to serve others.

It was especially important that Virginian women use those emotion management skills to support their husbands. When a young Virginian married in 1845, her father instructed her, "It is your duty to contribute to [your husband's] happiness… It is necessary that you should study

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[218] Agnes Cabell to Louisa Cabell, December 28, 1826, Letters of the Cabell and Carrington Families, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.
[219] Ann Hoskins to David and Mary Higginbotham, November 1830, Letters from Jane Randolph (Higginbotham) Macmurdo Haxall, David Higginbotham Correspondence, Higginbotham Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA.

his temper and character; that you should accommodate yourself to his foibles; that you should soothe his passions; that you should conform to his wishes with cheerfulness, and alacrity."[220] When she married, Mary Early (the schoolgirl with a perpetually long face) struggled to check her low spirits for the sake of her husband. When he went away on business, Mary tried to invigorate her attempts to be cheerful. "I know I ought to be willing to make any sacrifice for your good," she told him, "and will try to do my best in your absence, and be cheerful."[221] During another separation she confessed, "The day you left me was a very sad one to me, and if I had indulged myself would have given up to my gloomy feelings—and gone to bed—but I tried to behave myself like a woman, and a Christian attended to all my domestic duties read some, and spent the day in active employment."[222] Mary often noted the emotion work it required to endure her husband's frequent absences, referring to "the struggle in [her] poor heart to check the grief which at times overwhelms" as "a sacrifice of feeling."[223]

Like her fellow Virginians, as Ellen Randolph matured, she also learned (through her own experiences and the confessions of her female relatives) that producing happiness in oneself and others was not easy. Ellen's confession that "it is only by hard work that I can overcome my inclination to sadness" reflected a sentiment shared by many of her immediate family members, especially her sisters, sisters-in-law, and mother.[224] As Ellen's sister Mary once noted, "it is a painful thing to look up our feelings in our own breasts."[225] The Randolph women tried various

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[220] John B. Dabney to Maria Carrington, February 16, 1845, Letters of the Cabell and Carrington Families.
[221] Mary Early Brown to James Leftwich Brown, undated letter, Early Family Papers.
[222] Mary Early Brown to James Leftwich Brown, July 1854, ibid.
[223] Mary Early Brown to James Leftwich Brown November 28, 1854 and August 24, 1857, ibid.
[224] Ellen Coolidge to Martha Jefferson Randolph, May 31, 1833, ECC.
[225] Mary Randolph to Virginia Randolph Trist, December 5, 1835, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers (NPTP), Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC.

strategies for keeping their sad thoughts at bay, from staying busy with domestic duties and social visits to drawing on prayer and the hope that earthly struggles would be rewarded in the hereafter. Like other Americans dedicated to sensibility, they also tried to reason themselves into tranquility—considering and talking back to their feelings in an attempt to lessen or even overcome emotions that they felt they should neither feel nor express.[226]

However, these strategies did not always succeed. Ellen herself once confessed to her mother, "no argument of reason or religion has power to quiet a mind agitated by the remembrance of former misfortune, and apprehension of what may come."[227] Ellen's sister Mary frequently noted the failure of reason or religion in her attempts to overcome melancholy and project cheer to her loved ones. Like Ellen, Mary found managing her emotions to be hard work, often finding herself "unhappy beyond my power to subdue."[228] Though she believed "low spirits" to be "a weakness of the mind," knowing that she *ought* to be able to lift her own spirits did not enable her to actually do so.[229] She often bemoaned "how little influence reason has over my feelings," describing this as a failure of both surface acting ("I try to bear [sad thoughts] silently & uncomplaining but I cannot at all times wear a mask with my friends") and deep

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[226] Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart.*
[227] Ellen Coolidge to Martha Jefferson Randolph, January 23, 1834, ECC.
[228] Mary Randolph to Virginia Randolph Trist, September 6, 1835, NPTP.
[229] *Ibid*. Mary repeatedly noted this gap between what she should feel and what she truly did feel. For instance, castigating herself for sending a mopey letter to her sister Virginia in 1837, Mary explained that the letter resulted from "the hurry and confusion of my mind which I have not the strength to subdue a thousand conflicting emotions are springing up in it at every turn, each with its strong infusion of bitterness, how unlike the calm, the self possession, the resignation I should desire to feel. What a miserable thing it is to be weak." Mary Randolph to Virginia Randolph Trist, November 26, 1837, ibid. Martha Blauvelt has argued that the acknowledged tension between how they felt and how they knew they *ought* to feel defined how young women in the antebellum north struggled with selfhood, class, and gender. Mary's status as an unmarried, thirty-something Southern woman residing in the north suggests that we should investigate how this tension functioned similarly for other kinds of women outside the narrow demographic Blauvelt studied. Blauvelt, *The Work of the Heart*.

acting ("my reason condemns [sad thoughts] but they are not the less strong for that disapprobation").[230]

The Randolph women's struggles to manage and properly express feelings intensified after Thomas Jefferson died in 1826, leaving his loved ones in an increasingly difficult financial situation. The Jefferson-Randolphs struggled to cope even more as family members—and thus their emotional support network—dispersed in pursuit of financial recovery. Most of Ellen's brothers moved away from planting, or just sought better land and opportunities outside Virginia. As Ellen and her sisters Virginia and Septimia married outside the slaveholding gentry, they moved out of state as their husbands pursued livelihoods in Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, Cuba, and China. Family matriarch Martha and new patriarch Jeff (Ellen's eldest brother, who took charge of the family's finances after Jefferson's death) dedicated themselves to hiding their fear and melancholy about the family's financial prospects from other members of the family. Jeff urged his mother to "let no word of complaint escape our lips or trace of mortification darken our countenances."[231] Martha assured him that while she confessed her low spirits and hopeless feelings to him, "to the girls I have always assumed a tone of cheerfulness which was seldom from the heart, but which kept up their spirits." Martha called this surface acting "a constant struggle," and found even more challenging the deep acting required to "never indulge in any train of thought that is calculated to depress my spirits."[232]

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[230] Mary Randolph to Virginia Randolph Trist, December 5, 1835 and April 17, 1836, NPTP. For the failure of religious faith in "the bright promise of a happy hereafter" to help her "throw off the shackles" of sadness and hopelessness, see Mary Randolph to Virginia Randolph Trist, November 26, 1837, ibid.
[231] Thomas Jefferson Randolph to Martha Jefferson Randolph, December 18, 1826, Randolph Family Papers.
[232] Martha Jefferson Randolph to Thomas Jefferson Randolph, March 2, 1827, ibid.

The family's economic struggles made it difficult for Ellen to find a suitor, though in 1825 at age twenty-eight she married Joseph Coolidge, a Harvard-educated Boston merchant's son, after he visited her grandfather at Monticello. The Coolidges were wealthy and well-respected, and Joseph and Ellen immediately moved to Boston so he could pursue his own commercial fortune. Joseph believed trade was "the most enviable, and most respectable" profession, "the only one wh[ich] leads to fortune." After failing to make a domestic goods partnership with his cousin profitable, Joseph moved firmly to international trade when he secured a position with Russell & Co. in 1832.[233]

International ventures meant change for the family, which by then included five young children. Joseph spent years abroad traveling between England, India, and China while his young family remained in Boston. Joseph's first trip with Russell & Co. lasted almost three years and he returned to the U.S. in 1835 for only a few months before heading back to Asia for another two years. Joseph did not take these separations lightly. He justified his absences as "only less painful than death in poverty," though he also worried his sacrifice would be in vain since not every merchant found fortune in China. The Coolidges' hopes for prosperity increased in January 1834, when Joseph became partner in Russell & Co., entitling him to a far greater share of the company's profits. For partners, the average time spent in Canton to amass enough capital to be independent for life was just under five years.[234]

Still, the Coolidges remained anxious about their financial status, even with the additional safety net of Joseph's influential family and wealthy friends. Joseph never failed financially, and

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[233] Joseph Coolidge to Nicholas Trist, November 19, 1825 and September 27, 1825, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[234] Joseph Coolidge to Martha Randolph, June 11, 1832, ECC; Downs, *The Golden Ghetto,* 192; He Sibing, "Russell & Co., 1818-1891: America's Trade and Diplomacy in Nineteenth-Century China" (Ph.D. diss., Miami University, 1997).

Ellen never taught, worked for wages, took in boarders, or resorted to other strategies women (including her own family members) used to combat financial insecurity. And yet, the couple's uncertainty about their prospects highlights that nervous futurity that Alexis de Tocqueville termed "restlessness in the midst of abundance."[235] Freshly organizing a society around economic competition and political equality among white men meant families could rise *or* fall, which the Coolidges knew all too well. Ellen's Virginia relatives struggled to maintain gentility as their fortunes faded, and Joseph's brother Thomas failed after only a few years as a merchant. Soon after, Ellen observed the Panic of 1837 decimating Boston merchants, even those with significant property and social standing. Fear of loss drove wary men like Joseph to constantly strive for more, creating emotional volatility that made women's emotion work all the more necessary. Although Joseph secured his fortune in China within a decade, Ellen never forgot the struggle it required. "Heaven knows," she confessed in 1841, "a quiet competence has in our case been dear bought."[236]

For Ellen, the steep price of competence was the physical mobility required to achieve it. In the early nineteenth century, the motion of people, capital, and commodities shaped capitalism into, in the words of one historian, "an economy that rested on constant movement." Men across professions chased profit wherever it could be found, sometimes bringing their families with them but other times temporarily leaving their wives and children behind. Fictional depictions of the wifely emotion worker mostly ignored this separation. In reality, many wives had to craft an effective and timely commerce of emotions across distance, using letters as vehicles for

[235] de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* 144-146.
[236] Sandage, *Born Losers*, 7-8; Ellen Coolidge to Jane Randolph, August 22, 1841, ECC.

emotional exchange.[237] Ellen's childhood and familial context prepared her for the kind of emotion work that capitalists' wives—especially merchants' wives—had to undertake. And yet, while she knew what to do, that did not mean it was an easy venture, and the burdens of emotion work frequently left her wondering if the sacrifice was worth it.

Two episodes in particular illuminate how Ellen labored to reconcile financial anxiety, distance, and feeling within her marriage: her reservations about occupying an expensive house during the Panic of 1837, and the couple's decision that she accompany Joseph to China in 1839. Leaving Virginia in 1825 had wrenched Ellen from her home and support system. Soon after arriving in Boston, Ellen had written to her mother that the only thing she "would not give up to be restored once more to the home & friends of [her] childhood" were her "husband, his love, & the hope of making him happy." She had six children in six years (including a set of twins) and became overwhelmed with their care. Her daughter Bessie died of scarlet fever in 1832, just before Joseph went abroad with Russell & Co. Before leaving the country, Joseph installed his wife and children in his deceased grandfather's stately home, where Ellen ran the household while suffering from persistent, debilitating headaches. She oversaw several servants who

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[237] Michael Zakim, "The Business Clerk as Social Revolutionary; or, a Labor History of the Nonproducing Classes," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 26, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 570. On mobility and capitalism, see Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Cashin, *A Family Venture*; John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Paul Johnson, *Sam Patch, the Famous Jumper* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 79-89, 129-164; Zakim, *Accounting for Capitalism*. On letters and emotional exchange, see Damiano, "Writing Women's History Through the Revolution"; Dierks, *In My Power*; Toby L. Ditz, "Formative Ventures: Eighteenth-Century Commercial Letters and the Articulation of Experience," in *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945*, ed. Rebecca Earle (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 59-78; Anya Jabour, *Marriage in the Early Republic: Elizabeth and William Wirt and the Companionate Ideal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*.

cooked, cleaned, sewed, and cared for her children. She often had the aid of her mother and unmarried sisters Mary and Cornelia, who stayed in Boston for months at a time to help care for her children and mitigate her loneliness. Despite this significant help, Ellen complained of "that want of leisure which always affects the mother of a family in this land of liberty and drudgery."[238] Happiness eluded her.

Perhaps Ellen's most crucial asset in managing Joseph's long absences in the 1830s was Augustine Heard, Joseph's friend and fellow Russell & Co. partner. As the previous chapter established, Joseph and Ellen Coolidge treated Heard as part of their family. Ellen came to trust and love Heard, and often sought his counsel when working for her family's happiness during her husband's absence. The grand house in which Joseph had installed his family signaled the class status he was keen to project, but in the midst of the Panic of 1837, Ellen became concerned that this was a foolhardy financial decision. The house was expensive to maintain, requiring huge amounts of fuel in the frigid Boston winters. Ellen had to hire additional laborers to do basic tasks her regular servants could have managed in a smaller home. To Heard, her trusted friend, she confided, "I can only let [Joseph] know at what cost he is purchasing what is with him a mere pleasure of sentiment—to preserve for a few short years his grandfather's home from being desecrated as a boarding house." Struggling with the daily costs and stresses of the large house, Ellen did not profit emotionally from it as her distant husband did. Her willingness to downsize reveals she was also less dedicated to maintaining a veneer of gentility than her husband, who perhaps felt the appearance of status crucial to his professional reputation. Still,

[238] Ellen Coolidge to Susan Bulfinch Coolidge, December 28, 1836, Coolidge-Lowell Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA; Ellen Coolidge to Martha Randolph, January 23, 1834, ECC.

Ellen confessed to Heard that she did "not feel [herself] authorized to make any change without [Joseph's] permission."[239]

Ellen framed her compliance as the actions of a wifely emotion worker protecting her family's emotional assets. She begrudgingly told Heard that she had decided to remain in the house "rather than do anything to distress Joseph or hurt the feelings of his family." "If I submit to the injury which is thus inflicted on my husband's fortunes," she continued, "it is entirely out of respect to the feelings of his family and the tranquility of his father's mind which at present will bear no suffering." Joseph's father had recently had a stroke and was, in Ellen's eyes, "so nervous that it would never do to run the risk of agitating him by the mention of any change in my arrangements."[240] Ellen's words reveal she made her decision based on emotional outcomes. By allowing her husband his "mere pleasure of sentiment" and suppressing her anxiety about expense to prevent distressing her father-in-law, Ellen fulfilled her duty to uplift "the feelings of [her] family" in the face of economic anxieties. This was a charged choice amidst the uncertainty of the Panic of 1837, when Ellen worried that Joseph would not make any profit that year since very few vessels were leaving for Canton. Even in this fraught financial moment, she chose to combat emotional rather than financial distress. Her thinking reveals the complex reality of the kinds of decisions wifely emotion workers might have to make. Ellen accepted an obvious financial blow because she was committed to protecting her husband and father-in-law from emotional blows, even if this meant delaying *future* emotional blows (and wifely emotion work) that this financial compromise might provoke.

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[239] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, July 18, [1837], HFBR; Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, undated ("I enclose two letters…"), ibid.
[240] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, undated ("The daily expenses of my family are great…"), ibid; Ellen Coolidge to Virginia Randolph Trist, July 17, 1837, NPTP.

Ellen's decision to privilege patriarchs' emotional states also helps explain why she followed her husband to China in 1839.[241] During Joseph's first international business trips in the early 1830s, Ellen had remained in the U.S. because it was expensive for merchants' families to live in China, and the couple agreed that their children needed maternal guidance. By 1838, both Joseph and Ellen hoped that time away from childcare and housework would improve her physical and mental health. Having been a Russell & Co. partner for several years, Joseph could now afford to bring his wife with him, but he also justified his desire in divine terms. "'It is no good for man to be alone,'" he told his brother-in-law, quoting Genesis 2:18 about God creating Eve to be Adam's helpmeet. Ellen weighed the "opposing duties and affections" of wife and mother, and felt she had to go wherever she was "most necessary." When her children were younger, "their helpless years and delicate constitutions required [her] constant care," but now, "their father's claims have become paramount to theirs." After months of "bitter struggle," Ellen and Joseph settled on what they hoped were the best arrangements for their children in their absence. Augustine Heard accompanied their sons to a well-respected school in Geneva, Switzerland, while their daughter Nell would be educated and cared for by family and friends in the United States.[242]

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[241] Before going to China, she first accompanied Joseph to England. For more on this sojourn, see Lisa A. Francavilla, "Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge: Thomas Jefferson's Granddaughter in New England and Beyond," in *Virginia Women: Their Lives and Times*, vol. 1, eds. Cynthia A. Kierner and Sandra Gioia Treadway (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2015), 283-304; Lisa A. Francavilla and Ann Lucas Birle, eds., *Thomas Jefferson's Granddaughter in Queen Victoria's England: The Travel Diary of Ellen Wayles Coolidge, 1838-1839* (Boston and Charlottesville: Massachusetts Historical Society and Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2012).

[242] Joseph Coolidge to Nicholas Trist, March 6, 1838, NPTP; Ellen Coolidge to Virginia Randolph Trist, February 28, 1838, ibid. On the cost of families in China, see Van, "Free Trade and Family Values," 278-279. Other merchants' wives felt similarly torn between their duties as wife and mother. When Rebecca Kinsman's husband and young daughter became sick in China in 1846, she could not decide whether she should go home with her daughter or remain with her husband in China, a conundrum she described as "a source of great anxiety" because "the path of duty is not clear" and "between these contending duties [her] poor heart is well nigh rent in twain." Rebecca Kinsman, March 13, 1846, in "The Daily Life of

Despite Joseph's insistence on being with his wife, the couple could not live together in China. Before the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing that ended the First Opium War, Chinese regulations forbade foreign women from residing in the port city of Canton, where foreign traders like Joseph lived and worked. Going back long before the nineteenth century, the ban on foreign women in Canton was part of a larger effort by Qing officials to restrain foreigners from embedding themselves in Chinese society—to prevent trade from morphing into settlement. Chinese officials used a variety of gendered restrictions to discourage foreign traders from establishing family ties in the region, from banning foreign women from living in port cities, to prohibiting foreign men from marrying Chinese women or consorting with Chinese sex workers.[243] Concerns about Western female propriety informed the ban on foreign women in Canton. Differing expectations about respectable women's behavior meant Chinese officials questioned the virtue of foreign women who mixed with male company in public. When Chinese people protested British and American trading factories in Canton in 1842, one English observer claimed the protesters had been disturbed by foreign wives and children having recently ventured into the streets around the factories. Explaining the outrage, the man observed, "not even Chinese ladies are ever to be seen in public, except in sedan chairs."[244] When British and American women walked down the streets of Canton (especially in the presence of men to whom

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Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in China, 1846," *The Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. LXXXVIII* (January 1952), 391. Kinsman eventually decided to remain with her husband since, in her words, "my first duty is to be near him, that he may have a home to which to retreat in case of sickness." Though "my heart is very sad," she confessed to her family, "my husband needs my support and encouragement." Despite Kinsman's best efforts, both husband and daughter perished in the same year. Rebecca Kinsman, February 24, 1846, in "The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in China, 1846," *The Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. LXXXVIII* (January 1952), 389, 395.

[243] Rachel Tamar Van, "The 'Woman Pigeon': Gendered Bonds and Barriers in the Anglo-American Commercial Community in Canton and Macao, 1800-1849," *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 83, no. 4 (2014), 561-591, 571.

[244] William Hall quoted in Van, "The 'Woman Pigeon,'" 586.

they were not related), Chinese understandings of gender, class, and virtue led Chinese observers to believe these women were anything but "ladies."[245]

Due to the prohibition of foreign women in Canton, merchants' wives like Ellen Coolidge thus lived in Macao, nearly ninety miles downriver.[246] In her study of gendered conflicts and policies in Macao, Rachel Van notes that "Chinese officials aimed to use Macao as something of a quarantine space for foreign merchants and their families."[247] Macao was a precarious place. It was, Van argues, "ostensibly a Portuguese colony," governed by Portuguese administrative and judicial officials but still subject to Chinese authority.[248] In the mid-nineteenth century, residents included Portuguese settlers, Chinese workers, servants and enslaved people of African and

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[245] Van, "The 'Woman Pigeon,'" 586-587. Also see Frances Wood, *No Dogs and Not Many Chinese: Treaty Port Life in China, 1843-1943* (London: John Murray, 1998), 133.

[246] Not all women in Macao were merchants' wives. Some, like Henrietta Shuck, were missionaries, while others were companions for merchants' wives, like Harriet Low, who accompanied her aunt and uncle. For the published diaries of women in Macao, see Harriet Low Hillard, *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life: The Journal of Harriet Low, Traveling Spinster*, ed. Nan P. Hodges and Arthur W. Hummel, 2 vols. (Woodinville, WA: History Bank, 2002); J.B. Jeter, ed., *A Memoir of Mrs. Henrietta Shuck, the First American Female Missionary to China* (Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, 1846). For secondary work on America merchants' wives in Macao, see Rogério Miguel Puga, "Representing Macao in 1837: The Unpublished Peripatetic Diary of Caroline Hyde Butler (Laing)," in *Narratives of Free Trade: The Commercial Cultures of Early US-China Relations,* ed. Kendall Johnson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 117-130. For other work on American women in Macao, see Stacilee Ford, *Troubling American Women: Narratives of Gender and Nation in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), esp. chapter one, "'American Girls' in Three Acts: Encounters in Nineteenth-Century Macao and Hong Kong"; Rosemarie W. N. Lamas, *Everything in Style: Harriet Low's Macau* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006); Isabel Morais, "Henrietta Hall Shuck: Engendering Faith, Education, and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Macao," in *Americans and Macao: Trade, Smuggling, and Diplomacy on the South China Coast*, ed. Paul A. Van Dyke (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 105-124; Dane A. Morrison, *True Yankees: The South Seas & The Discovery of American Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), esp. chapter four, "Harriet Low in Manila and Macao, 1829-1834"; Susan E. Schopp, "Five American Women's Perceptions of China 1829-1941: 'A Yard-stick of Our Own Construction,'" in *Americans and Macao,* 125-142. More generally on life for foreigners in Macao, see Lisa Hellman, *This House is Not a Home: European Everyday Life in Canton and Macao, 1730-1830* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

[247] Van, "The 'Woman Pigeon,'" 572.

[248] Ibid., 575. For more on the history of Macao, see Austin Coates, *Macau and the British, 1637-1842: Prelude to Hong Kong, Echoes* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009); Steve Shipp, *Macau, China: A Political History of the Portuguese Colony's Transition to Chinese Rule* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1997).

Indian descent, missionaries, British administrative officials and military families (especially during the Sino-British conflict over opium in the 1830s and 40s), and families of merchants from all over the world, but especially Britain and the United States.[249] Though merchants visited their families in Macao, during busy trading seasons they lived almost exclusively in Canton.

As Van's scholarship reveals, bringing wives to China could be a business strategy for both American and British merchants. Beyond signaling a certain degree of financial stability and thus creditworthiness, a woman in Macao could solidify her husband's business networks through her own conduct and social networks. In 1844, for instance, Rebecca Kinsman reminded her husband Nathaniel that she was the sole representative of his company in Macao at that time, and laid out the overwhelming nature of her duties in Macao as mother, homemaker, hostess, and merchant's wife: "I sometimes think it never could have been intended that such a variety of occupations should devolve upon one person—nursing a baby, mantua making, reading, writing letters…entertaining visitors, opening the treasury, (the key of which is confided to my charge, as I am now virtually 'Wetmore & Co.' in Macao) receiving & paying out money, with other & divers [sic] matters too numerous to particularize." One advantage to being so busy, she confessed, "is that it makes the time pass so rapidly, that I have no time to reflect how lonely I am."[250]

As Rebecca Kinsman's duties attest, while merchants worked in the Canton trading houses, their wives were just as busy in Macao, almost constantly making and receiving social visits. Merchants were well aware that their wives' sociability affected their business prospects. A woman's charming display in the right parlor could solidify a business partnership, while a

[249] Van, "The 'Woman Pigeon,'" 576.
[250] Rebecca Chase Kinsman, "The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao, China; Excerpts from Letters of 1844," *The Essex Institute Historical Collection*, LXXXVI (October 1950), 324.

faux pas at a dinner party could raise doubts about her husband's judgment and trustworthiness. Because of this, merchants asked for regular reports on their wives' comings and goings in Macao. In 1834, for instance, Russell Sturgis (of Russell, Sturgis & Co.) anxiously urged his wife Mary to explain to her Macao neighbors that her recent failure to return their social calls was due to illness, not ill will or lack of courtesy.[251] This constant socializing—and thus affective work—could be exhausting. Soon after arriving in China, one merchant's wife complained that she was tired of "company, company, company all the time."[252]

When business was good, the duties of trade kept merchants in Canton. By the time Ellen Coolidge had passed ten months in Macao, Joseph had only spent two months with her there. If Joseph indeed believed "it is no good for man to be alone," why did he agree to living arrangements that kept him and his wife under separate roofs, with ninety miles of river between them? The couple's joint handling of conflict shortly after arriving in China suggests that Joseph believed keeping Ellen *close*, though perhaps not exactly *together*, was crucial for emotional state, and thus his career.

When Joseph feared for his place within Russell & Co. and waged figurative war against his partners, Ellen worked to assuage his emotional volatility. She wrote from Macao to reassure him of her support, showering him with "my sympathy, my affection, my warm and fond thoughts, my wishes, my hopes, my prayers." She also pushed him to control his anger, easing him away from a path of greed and vengeance by reminding him of his "good sense, good temper and prudence," his "responsibility and knowledge of [his] own character." Ellen's letter brings the fictive wifely emotion worker to life, showing a woman carefully choosing her words

[251] Van, "The 'Woman Pigeon,'" 578.
[252] Valeria Forbes quoted in ibid., 589.

to provide emotional support to a husband encumbered by the stresses of the economic realm, thereby enabling him to make the best choices for his career (and his soul). Making use of the skills in epistolary emotion work she learned as a child, Ellen's efforts bore fruit. Following his wife's advice, Joseph curbed his rash impulses and, with Augustine Heard's permission, formed Augustine Heard & Co.[253] A few weeks after composing her supportive note, Ellen wrote to Heard about its impact. "The mortification and chagrin which Mr Coolidge has endured has, I think, been softened by the fact of having me at hand to write to and talk with, and I feel that my coming has not been in vain." Joseph agreed. He separately reported to Heard the soothing effects of the "calm" counsel from his "tender and true" wife. Ellen's emotion work had succeeded and, perhaps more importantly, was only possible because she was not far from her husband in his time of need.[254]

Other China trade merchants whose financial stability enabled them to bring their families to China did so in part to have a wifely emotion worker close at hand. While living in Canton at the tail end of Joseph Coolidge's stay in the 1840s, Nathaniel Kinsman sent almost daily letters to his wife Rebecca in Macao, beseeching her for words of comfort to help him through bouts of sickness and financial stress. He made clear his expectation that she support him through the anxieties of trade, once telling her, "When the cares of business press heavily upon me, then shall I most need your kind & efficient aid in soothing and sympathising with

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[253] Ellen Coolidge to Joseph Coolidge, December 4, 1839, HFBR; Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 191-198.
[254] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 2, 1840, HFBR; Joseph Coolidge to Augustine Heard, December 1, 1839, ibid. Other wives accompanying profit-seeking husbands expressed similar sentiments. Historian Lisa Norling has uncovered how sea captains' wives believed "their most important function was to be at their husbands' side." For instance, after following her husband to sea, Mary Brewster proudly reported in 1845, "When perplexed with the duties of the ship…I can sooth [sic] his ruffled feelings." Like Ellen Coolidge, Brewster felt "cheered" by "the conviction [that] in coming I did perfectly right." Mary Brewster quoted in Norling, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife*, 239.

me."[255] In his letters, he reminded her that he was "indebted to [her] for happiness," and frequently fantasized about her comforting him in person, imagining her soothing him with whispered words and gentle touch.[256] In reply, Rebecca offered what sympathy she could through writing, frequently conveying her wish to be with him to provide that more intimate and immediate comfort.[257]

Like Joseph Coolidge, Nathaniel Kinsman—who once declared "I don't feel rich in anything but a wife"—acknowledged the emotional effects of his wife's epistles.[258] Putting pressure on her as his sole source of comfort, he informed her, "all the comfort I have is in your letters," which were, he assured her, "a great source of happiness to me."[259] Even a brief "perusal" of one of her letters could have "a very perceptible effect on [his] spirits."[260] He saw one particularly well-timed letter as divine intervention, assuring her, "Never was there ever anything more opportune than the receipt of a precious message of love, by one under such circumstances. It was almost like an interposition of Kind Providence."[261] Nathaniel demonstrated the uplifting effects of Rebecca's affectionate words in sentimental declarations of love and appreciation (which were, as Kimberly Alexander has noted, far more sentimental than Rebecca's replies).[262] Perhaps he hoped descriptions of "the throbbing heart that now directs my

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[255] Nathaniel Kinsman to Rebecca Kinsman, February 12, 1844, Nathaniel and Rebecca Kinsman Correspondence, Nathaniel Kinsman Papers (NKP), Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.
[256] Nathaniel Kinsman to Rebecca Kinsman, November 23, 1843, ibid.
[257] For example, Rebecca Kinsman to Nathaniel Kinsman, February 5 and 12, 1844, ibid.
[258] Nathaniel Kinsman to Rebecca Kinsman, February 14, 1844, ibid.
[259] Nathaniel Kinsman to Rebecca Kinsman, February 12 and 10, 1844, ibid.
[260] Nathaniel Kinsman to Rebecca Kinsman, January 31, 1844, ibid.
[261] Nathaniel Kinsman to Rebecca Kinsman, February 3, 1844, ibid.
[262] Kimberly Alexander, "'Demure Quakeress': Rebecca Kinsman in China, 1843–1847," *Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings, 2006/2007* (Boston: Boston University, 2009), 102-113.

pen" or "the pearly drop that at this moment dims my sight" would reward Rebecca for a job well done, serving as emotional compensation for her epistolary efforts.[263]

Merchants in Canton also put pressure on wives to carefully regulate the emotions they expressed in letters sent from Macao. Because those letters were, in Nathaniel Kinsman's words, "all the comfort I have," husbands urged wives to write happy letters that could cheer them. For instance, Nathaniel worried that their Chinese sojourn made Rebecca unhappy, telling her,

> nothing will be wanting to render our residence here in any part tolerable, but the entire consciousness that my dear wife is contented and happy. [T]he belief that you were otherwise would make me unhappy aye miserable, because I could not and would not remain here without you and to return home without a competence to live comfortable the residue of our lives, would be mortifying indeed.[264]

The emotions Rebecca conveyed in her letters were important not only because they had the power to console and cheer Nathaniel, but because he claimed her *unhappiness* would be the sole impediment to his financial and emotional success. If she were unhappy, he would feel obliged to return home, mortified and without a competency. The stakes were high for women like Rebecca: what wife would willingly cause the financial and emotional failures of her family?

Nathaniel Kinsman was not the only China trade merchant who explicitly made this link between a wife's happiness and the family's financial standing. In 1835 when Russell Sturgis celebrated his wife Mary's ability to school her feelings in Macao, he directly attributed his potential financial success to her emotion work. "If I had been obliged to think of you as counting the moments at Macao & wishing yourself out of it," he informed her, "I could not have gone on with my share of the trouble."[265] Sturgis gave Mary specific instructions for emotion management if she ever felt his business responsibilities interfered with her emotional needs.

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[263] Nathaniel Kinsman to Rebecca Kinsman, February 5, 1844, NKP.
[264] Nathaniel Kinsman to Rebecca Kinsman, February 26, 1844, ibid.
[265] Russell Sturgis to Mary Sturgis, January 23, 1835, RMSP.

During a particularly busy period, he informed her that he might not be able to visit her and their children in Macao as planned, but urged her to manage her melancholy. Acknowledging both the pain he felt in conveying this message and the "pain or disappointment" the news would prompt in Mary, Russell still reminded her, "Do you remember, my own dearest, I have sometimes told you that you must be glad when I was prevented from visiting you by business." They should be grateful when business was good, Russell argued: even if it kept them temporarily apart, in the longer term, more business meant more profit, which meant they could sooner commence a comfortable life together back in the United States. Russell continued, "When I tell you, dear wife, that it makes me very happy to be doing business, I think I know you well enough to be sure you will be glad of it too."[266]

Russell Sturgis went further in trying to redirect his wife's emotional response, literally providing her with a script. He confessed,

> It is useless for me to say, 'don't mind this letter' but my own Mary will summon to her aid the principles we have so often spoken of as being the rules of her conduct—she will look at the comforts which surround herself & the children, the continuance of which depend on the success of their Father—she will say that their Father's happiness depends too on being able to do all for her & them—and I am sure she will say 'I truly hope for his sake and mine he may be able to steal for a few days at New Year, but if it is business prevents I am truly thankful, for I know he is well, & that he is made happy by it.'

Sturgis concluded with the affect he hoped—or, perhaps more accurately, demanded—she achieve: "you must consider the subject in all its bearings & be as you have ever been the true, fond, considerate, affectionate wife."[267] This line of thinking privileged the male breadwinner's happiness over all others. Especially in the context of his pursuit of wealth, a patriarch's emotional needs subsumed that of his dependents. A robust professional life not only made him

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[266] Russell Sturgis to Mary Sturgis, January 4, 1835, ibid.
[267] Ibid.

happy, it promised material improvement and security for his dependents, and so should make them happy as well. If "business" was the cause of Mary's unhappiness, she must think instead of how it made her husband happy, and reorient her own feelings accordingly.

The letters of Russell Sturgis and Nathaniel Kinsman reveal the pressure merchants put on their wives to not only manage their *own* anxiety and disappointment, but also project happiness for the sake of their husbands' happiness and financial success. These husbands demanded, gently but firmly, that their wives sacrifice individual emotional needs for a greater familial cause—as if this was the wifely equivalent of men's republican virtue. If his wife convincingly claimed to be happy, there was no reason for a merchant to choose between making money and making happiness. He would be free to pursue wealth in the China trade as he pleased, secure in the knowledge that he was producing both profit and happiness for his family—a successful provider in both financial and emotional terms.

Despite this pressure to be happy in Macao, several merchants' wives struggled to produce or project happiness. Indeed, emotion work could have clear and distressing consequences for the women undertaking it. Joseph Coolidge's dispute with Russell & Co. devastated Ellen, who felt she had to remain with him in China rather than return to her children. Although she had convinced herself that separating from her children was in her and their best interests, she became consumed by anxiety for them as soon as they were out of her sight. Her family shared this unease. Before Ellen's departure, her sister Mary had worried to Augustine Heard that "the separation from them for two or three years is almost too great a sacrifice for her and for them" since "absence will lessen their affection for their mother and the influence she might have over them." En route to China in October 1839, Ellen used similar language to assure Heard that this was not the case: "Although my children are never an instant absent from my

thoughts, I do not feel that I have made too great a sacrifice." And yet, just days later Ellen confided to her sister Virginia that separation from her children was "the most painful sacrifice I have ever been called on to make." She did so only out of a sense of "duty" to her husband, noting that despite the struggles, "I am rewarded by the gratitude and affection of my husband and by seeing of how much importance he considers my presence."[268] The couple thus made an emotional transaction: to compensate for the grief and loneliness Ellen felt while far from her children, Joseph showered her with "gratitude and affection" that could inspire pride and satisfaction that her presence was meaningful to him.

But the calming effects of this gratitude only went so far and only lasted so long. Once in China, Ellen struggled to manage the sadness born of her "sacrifice." A few months after feeling Joseph's appreciation of her presence as a balm, Ellen confessed to her sister, "To be happy separated from [my children] is out of the question…but if I can keep tranquil it is all I aspire to." Throughout 1840, Ellen sent such frenzied letters to friends and family inquiring about her children that she feared she sounded "half crazy" and "almost demented." Tranquility eluded her. In Macao, Ellen had a personal maid and rented a furnished home complete with a "comprador" in charge of domestic management, a dining room servant, a chambermaid, a cook, and several day laborers. "Every arrangement," she marveled, "is made to spare labour to the mistress." Though free of the housework and childcare that had plagued her in Boston, Ellen still found herself overwhelmed by *emotion work*, especially the energy it took to overcome her

[268] Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 2, 1840, HFBR; Mary Randolph to Augustine Heard, August 20, 1838, ibid; Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, October 5, 1839, ibid; Ellen Coolidge to Virginia Randolph Trist, October 11, 1839, NPTP. On motherhood, see Ruth Bloch, "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785-1815," *Feminist Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2 (June 1978), 100-126; Nancy M. Theriot, *Mothers and Daughters in Nineteenth-Century America: The Biosocial Construction of Femininity* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

"discontented and repining spirit" so far from her loved ones, her nervous uncertainty about her children, and the responsibility of supporting Joseph through his professional crisis.[269]

After a year in Macao, Ellen was ready to go home. Desperate to reunite with her children, frustrated by her anxious and lonely existence in Macao, and with her health weakened by the tropical climate, Ellen departed Macao alone, returning to Boston in April 1841. She reunited with her daughter and the pair soon traveled to Switzerland to join her sons. Joseph remained in Canton until 1844 when, just four years after forming Augustine Heard & Co., he left the firm when it became clear Heard had lost respect for him as a businessman. He joined his family in Geneva and the then-wealthy Coolidges traveled Europe for several years before settling again in Boston in 1848, when Ellen was fifty-two years old. Joseph shifted from the China trade to investing in real estate, utilities, and railroads, which required fewer trips abroad. Back in the United States, Ellen's loneliness during her husband's voyages could be assuaged by visits from her unmarried sisters, and by venturing to see other family in Philadelphia, New York, and her beloved Virginia. Greater access to familial support networks meant the burdens of emotion work could be shared.

By then, a pattern had emerged within the Coolidge marriage: Ellen sacrificed her emotional needs to support her husband's business endeavors. Suppressing her anxiety about the expensive house, suffering through separation from her children to support Joseph during a trying professional moment—these acts of emotion work provoked frustration, anger, melancholy, and guilt for her. The Coolidges' emotional economy thus raises an important question: if women labored to produce positive feelings in themselves and their families, what—

[269] Ellen Coolidge to Virginia Randolph Trist, December 8, 1839, NPTP; Ellen Coolidge to Augustine Heard, January 1840, HFBR; Ellen Coolidge to Virginia Randolph Trist, January 29, 1840, NPTP.

if any—"wages" did they receive for that labor? Advice literature, fiction, and familial guidance suggested that the compensation for emotion work and cheerfulness was happiness itself. After laboring to cheer their husbands, Washington Irving's Mary "seem[ed] in better spirits" than ever before, and T.S. Arthur's Emily was "richly repaid" by her husband's "expression of pleasure." Some real women also received this emotional wage. One wife confided to her diary in 1802, "I am every day amply repaid for all my endeavors to please, every look from my master is a certificate of my success."[270] The language recognized a transaction fulfilled, but also a stark power hierarchy within marriage.

And yet, evidence suggests that for many women, the "wage" they received for their emotion work was more akin to the "bill" Thomas Jefferson had sent eight-year-old Ellen, in which he claimed her emotion work for free. As an adult, Ellen Coolidge still struggled to find any "wage" for her work, especially the happiness promised in fictional tales. Though momentarily satisfied when she saw her advice "soften" Joseph's "mortification and chagrin" in China, her letters home from that period suggest anything but happiness. Efforts to lift a struggling patriarch's spirits could be anxious, draining, and fraught with self-doubt. After failing to cheer her bankrupt merchant father, for instance, Bostonian Caroline Healey felt like "an incubus,--and could have wept bitterly."[271] For many, personal satisfaction was not a regular or reliable "wage" for laboring for their families' happiness. Women's attempts to manage emotions were therefore speculative: well-considered, certainly, but not guaranteed to achieve the desired result, and with the risk of further depressing moods (especially their own). Indeed,

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[270] Mary Orne Tucker quoted in Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 72.
[271] Caroline Healey diary, entry for June 12, 1842, in *Daughter of Boston: The Extraordinary Diary of a Nineteenth-Century Woman, Caroline Healey Dall*, ed. Helen R. Deese (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), 47.

the emotion work they felt pressured to perform could provoke in women the same kinds of harmful emotions that they felt duty-bound to mitigate in their husbands.

Through the burdens of emotion work, many women became painfully aware that the pursuit of profit could derail the pursuit of happiness. By the early nineteenth century, many Americans understood marriage as an emotional (not just economic) arrangement. When men's professional choices produced anxiety or depression even with financial success, some wifely emotion workers demanded emotional compensation for their labors. These women began to weigh the benefits of financial gain against the emotional costs, often prompted (like Ellen Coolidge) by the mobility and separation of capitalism. One wife called her husband's lengthy absences in pursuit of profit "vexatious drawbacks to happiness."[272] Returning to the opening lines of this dissertation, Valeria Forbes asked her merchant husband to "make less money & more happiness."[273] Even if her husband succeeded in the economic market, Valeria demanded he not neglect his duties within the marketplace of feeling.

Wives' concerns about their husbands' pursuit of profit interfering with the pursuit of happiness made it into the pages of *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, a periodical dedicated to practical, intellectual, and moral concerns for men employed in commercial trade. In 1845, the magazine published a letter to the editors of the *Evening Journal* (a publication, the editors noted, "that should find its way into every merchant's family") entitled, "Complaint of a Merchant's Wife." The letter's author, "Amanda Smith" (perhaps a play on Adam Smith), wrote "to protest most heartily and fervently against a crying evil in this community, and one which preys upon the spirits, and undermines the happiness of too many of us poor women." The crying

[272] Elizabeth Wirt quoted in Jabour, *Marriage in the Early Republic*, 137.
[273] Valeria Forbes to Paul Siemen Forbes, January 23, 1843, FFBR.

evil? "That terrible, unnatural, slavish devotion, which our lords and masters pay to their business"—a devotion that meant "they are good trustees, directors, cashiers, bankers; but they are very indifferent husbands and fathers." The author called men's preoccupation with business a "cruelly unjust" and "sad perversion of life" that surely is "the too certain source of deep and lasting misery to those who indulge in it." The writer clearly articulated her own consequent misery: "I bitterly feel and lament the want of that sympathy and communion of heart, which are so liberally promised us in the marriage-vow." She concluded with a heartfelt but sharp plea to the editors: "Exhort, frighten, ridicule, if you can, our erring husbands into a return to their allegiance, and to a more rational and happy life."[274] Was "Amanda Smith" indeed a disgruntled merchant's wife, or was the letter perhaps a male-authored tongue-in-cheek jab at real wives' complaints? Both are possible. Still, over the years, *Hunt's* dedicated many pages to proposals for mitigating negative consequences of commerce both at home and in the counting-house. Valeria Forbes and Ellen Coolidge would likely have been glad if wives' concerns about the pursuit of profit derailing the pursuit of happiness were counted among those.

The question of what became "too great a sacrifice" for merchant families in the early republic vexed the decision-making of couples like the Coolidges and the Forbeses. For the delicate emotional balance of home and market to be upheld, wives could feel compelled to sacrifice their own emotional needs for the sake of their husbands'. Feminist scholars have long recognized self-abnegation as a core value—and source of pride—for women in the nineteenth century. The figure of the wifely emotion worker suggests that this self-abnegation was deeply imbricated in understandings of how the economy should work in the new United States. Men

[274] "Complaint of a Merchant's Wife," *The Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review, Conducted by Freeman Hunt*, vol. 12 (January to June 1845), 105.

could seek wealth as long as women labored to restrain men's immoral impulses and manage the anxiety, fear, and depression that often accompanied the pursuit of profit. Women's self-abnegation was thus not only a cultural and political value, but also an economic value achieved through emotion work. Indeed, wifely emotion workers both fictive and real demonstrate that we must investigate how Americans understood the pursuit of profit to *require* the sacrifice of women's emotional wellbeing. For women like Valeria Forbes and Ellen Coolidge, the emotional distress wrought by the work of manufacturing husbands' happiness was indeed "too great a sacrifice." Their experience illuminates a troubling hierarchy operating within the emotional economy: for the marketplace of feeling to work as desired, patriarchs needed to be able to command emotion work from their dependents.

Chapter Three
"their affection compensates me":
Power and Patriarchy in Virginia's Emotional Economy

Family can be a tricky business. Few knew that more than fifty-nine-year-old John Young Mason of Virginia. In October 1858, Mason griped to his eldest son Lewis about a relationship he intended to sever for good. "I will address to Mr. Joseph T. Mason," he proclaimed, "a brief note which will close forever, my communication with that young gentleman—there is no excuse for his conduct, and my self respect will never permit me again to recognize him."[275] The shared surname was no coincidence. "Joseph T. Mason" was in fact Joe, a beloved relation—a young man to whom John Mason had, until then, felt like a father. When Joe's father had died twenty years earlier, Mason had become guardian to his five children and administrator of his estate. Mason fed, clothed, and sometimes housed Joe and his four siblings, and also arranged their education. To Mason, this investment of both love and capital meant he was owed a debt of gratitude from, in his words, "those whom I have ever loved as if they were my children."[276] What then drove Mason to sever all ties with his adoptive son?

The two men fell out over differing opinions about the familial marketplace of feeling. Their point of rupture came when Joe filed a debt suit against Mason just as Mason's financial stability was irreparably crumbling. Though Mason believed Joe owed him gratitude for years of support, Joe's demand for payment exacerbated the emotional turmoil Mason was already experiencing due to crippling debt. Mason believed Joe should repay his emotional debt by

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[275] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, October 17, 1858, Mason Family Papers (MFP), Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA.
[276] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 27, 1858, ibid.

prioritizing Mason's emotional and financial needs over his own. However, by taking his debt claim to court, Joe made Mason's financial and familial struggles humiliatingly public, thereby threatening Mason's honor and reputation as well as his finances and familial support network.[277] Joe's willingness to sue his own flesh-and-blood forced Mason to reckon with the possibility that the marketplace of feeling was not working the way he wanted it to.

The culprit, in Mason's eyes? Joe's refusal to respect his adoptive father's authority to direct the family's emotional economy. Mason believed that all family members should be committed to his happiness, and hoped that they would willingly (and cheerfully) undertake emotion work on his behalf. Like Thomas Jefferson several decades earlier, he tried to extract good cheer from his dependents to soothe his own anxiety about threats to his financial and social status. Even if family members were unable to help him financially, he still expected them to provide affection and cheer that could cover the emotional costs he accrued through his attempts to increase the family's financial stability. Mason valued what he called compensatory affection, putting a label on one of the central transactions of the familial marketplace of feeling. In 1858, as his sons and daughters scrambled to help him improve his finances, he called them "my greatest blessing" because "their affection compensates me, for much suffering."[278] A year later and even deeper in debt, he drew again on the language of compensatory affection to thank his wife, children, and sons-in-law for their financial and emotional support. He told his eldest son, "The affection of my children and of my noble wife, who never shows so much affection as

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[277] For more on the social and cultural meaning of debt in the antebellum South, see David Silkenat, *Moments of Despair: Suicide, Divorce, & Debt in Civil War Era North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), esp. chapter 7 "Sacredness of Obligations: Debt in Antebellum North Carolina." Silkenat demonstrates how networks of credit and debt served as both financial and social bonds.

[278] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, October 2, 1858, MFP.

when I am distressed, compensates me for much of the terrible suffering, which I have undergone."[279] To Mason, affection from his family served as payment for the trials and embarrassments he underwent on their behalf as patriarch and breadwinner.

The idea that affection could "compensate" once again underscores how Americans mingled the language of emotion and capital to understand their lives and relationships. For families like the Masons reckoning with financial fear, affection could compensate in multiple ways. Affection could compensate in a literal sense, since loyalty and love drove dependents and close relations to devote their time, labor, credit, and capital to protect a loved one's financial interests. But affection could also serve as a kind of intangible currency, as Mason's words make clear. Affection could not erase financial woes. But, even when expressed across long distances through letters, affection *could* help counteract the negative feelings struggling men like Mason encountered. Mason's contention that his wife's and children's "affection compensates" reveals his dedication to a marketplace of feeling in which family members produced and exchanged emotions to combat the anxieties of financial life. Familial affection made enduring worldly suffering easier for cash-strapped and increasingly forlorn men on the downswing.

By valuing the compensatory affection of his wife, children, and other relations, John Young Mason embraced his extended family as an emotional community with a particular economic function. As head of household, Mason imagined his family united in the shared emotional goal of producing *his* happiness, especially in hard times. His desired emotional community was distinctly patriarchal. Though he relied on a commerce of affection with friendly creditors and debtors of his social rank, within his family he wanted a *hierarchy* of emotional obligation. This hierarchal marketplace of feeling thus relied more on the kind of emotion work a

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[279] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, June 2, 1859, ibid.

merchant's wife owed her husband than the commerce of brotherly affection Boston's merchants sought with one another.

Power is the key distinction here. Mason's struggle to obtain the compensatory affection he so desired from Joe underscores a critical point: for the marketplace of feeling to work as promised for the declining Virginia gentry—for it to successfully temper the ill effects of poor crop yields, increasing debt, and financial panics—patriarchs needed the authority to *compel* emotion work from their dependents. Joe's stubborn resistance to Mason's demands show that it was not only merchants' wives who were uneasy with a marketplace of feeling that demanded they privilege the patriarch's emotional interests over their own. His clash with Joe jolted Mason into the realization that his power to compel emotion work from relations was not absolute. As his attempts to command emotion work from Joe failed, Mason became increasingly agitated. Finally, he decided that the only solution was to police the boundaries of his familial emotional community, casting out anyone who did not respect his authority to direct the family's emotional economy. This extreme response underscores just how foundational patriarchal power was to the marketplace of feeling among Virginia's plantation gentry at midcentury.

Mason's actions thus suggest a sobering qualification to Jan Lewis's influential argument that the economic and political struggles of the post-revolutionary Virginia gentry pushed them to turn inward for solace, to both the family and one's internal thoughts, feelings, and spirituality. Lewis convincingly contends that with their economic and political stronghold weakening, and friends and family failing at every turn, the world around the gentry seemed grim and unwelcoming in the decades after the Revolution. They were anxious and angry, fearful of losing the standard of living their forebears had enjoyed. As the burdens of the nineteenth century increased and neither parents nor children could offer the financial support to which the

gentry was accustomed, Lewis contends that "parents and children dealt in the same currency, feelings of love." In such families, "Love was seen as compensation."[280]

Attention to the marketplace of feeling suggests that by midcentury, even the perceived respite of home and family rested on the anxious power of the patriarch. The expectation that love and money were fungible—that familial affection could soften the blows of financial strife—actually heightened distress and could fracture longstanding family networks when relations were unable or unwilling to provide compensatory affection. The example of John Young Mason suggests that the failure to compel emotion work and cultivate an effective marketplace of feeling could force men to realize that even within the family, their authority was declining. With the economic and political anxiety of the slaveholding gentry across the South reaching a fever pitch in the 1850s, for many this inward turn—especially the currency of love—was governed by a distinct power hierarchy within the family (and, as the next chapter demonstrates, wider plantation household). At a time when the Virginia gentry worried that their political and economic authority was becoming ever more precarious, realizing that they did not even wield desired authority at home—supposedly a source of comfort, solace, and stability—could be a shattering blow.

John Young Mason was certainly not representative of all Virginia enslavers—not least of all because he held important state and federal political offices, including Secretary of the Navy and Attorney General. But even with that socio-political clout, Mason was not alone in struggling financially even while holding powerful political offices. Several decades earlier, former presidents and fellow Virginians Thomas Jefferson and James Madison had died with enough debt to stymie their surviving relatives for decades. In North Carolina, a Superior Court

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[280] Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 179, 184, and 206.

Judge overwhelmed by debt complained, "[t]o be harassed by my Creditors is worse than Death to me."[281] Indeed, the particular financial and social anxiety Mason described as he scrambled for solvency represented a fairly typical affective experience for the declining slaveholding gentry.

Even more, Mason's desperation to command emotion work from family members is emblematic of other Virginia patriarchs struggling to retain some semblance of independence and authority not just in the 1840s and 1850s, but in the first half of the nineteenth century more broadly. Mason's break with Joe over unfulfilled emotional debts represents a heightened evolution of Thomas Jefferson's efforts to compel emotion work from his eight-year-old granddaughter in 1805. Jefferson's son-in-law (and Ellen Coolidge's father), Thomas Mann Randolph, had similarly bemoaned his dependents' failure to provide compensatory affection in the 1820s. Randolph was struggling to pay off $33,000 in debt accrued from his late father's estate, plus his own profligate habits and financial failures. Randolph's eldest son Jeff was a far better financial manager and agreed to assume Randolph's debts in exchange for deeds of trust for two of his properties. However, a rift between father and son (as well as husband and wife) developed when Randolph's wife Martha supported Jeff's plan to liquidate his father's estate to quickly satisfy the family's creditors.[282] Deeply insulted, Randolph expressed anger that his wife and son seemed to be colluding against his authority as patriarch—authority that he believed he retained despite becoming economically dependent on his own son. Labeling his son's plan "coldblooded avarice," Randolph made his anger clear. Not only had his wife and son failed to

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[281] Archibald Murphey quoted in Kidd, "'To be harassed by my Creditors is worse than Death': Cultural Implications of the Panic of 1819," *Maryland Historical Magazine,* vol. 95, no. 2 (Summer 2000), 161-190.
[282] Kierner, *Martha Jefferson Randolph, Daughter of Monticello*, 190.

provide any affection to compensate for his worldly sufferings, they had *added* to his emotional turmoil by challenging his authority—and thus manhood. Randolph was so incensed by his family's economic and affective betrayal that he moved out of the family home, figuratively abandoning the patriarchal position he felt had already been stripped from him.

John Young Mason's angry feelings of betrayal about his adoptive son's unpaid emotional debt must be read in the context of these earlier outbursts. Mason was not the first (and surely not the last) Virginia patriarch to lash out when dependents neglected to provide sufficient affection to compensate for worldly strife. Examining how men governed their familial marketplace of feeling thus illuminates how Virginian enslavers struggling to recover or achieve economic independence sought the *feeling* of independence in other ways.[283] In studying the wave of young families that left the eastern seaboard for the southern frontier in the first half of the nineteenth century, Joan Cashin has argued that men pursued the psychological aspects of independence even as they relied on male relations for financial aid. Cashin points to frontiersmen who adopted aggressive, self-interested behavior like gambling, drinking, and violence against vulnerable dependents (especially wives and enslaved women).[284] Even southern men who did not seek this new, manly independence on the frontier found ways to pursue the psychological aspects of independence even as economic independence eluded them. Commanding emotional support from dependents was one such method. Requiring emotion

[283] Recent work by Stephanie Jones-Rogers on white slave-owning women necessitates further research into how female enslavers engaged with their familial emotional community. Did they wield (or attempt to wield) the power to compel emotion work in the same way that male heads of household did? Did the relative authority women enslavers exerted over enslaved people influence how they approached the emotional economy within their own family, especially during hard times? Interrogating these questions is critical to understanding how gendered versus racial power governed the marketplace of feeling in the Old South.

[284] Cashin, *A Family Venture*, 99-110.

work from relations did not make men like John Young Mason *feel* emotionally dependent. By casting emotion work as an obligation owed to a hard-working patriarch, struggling enslavers like Mason could try to maintain control of the familial marketplace of feeling. Achieving this control allowed financially dependent men to retain some semblance of independence in the emotional realm. Losing that control—that feeling of independence and authority—was a sobering and emasculating prospect.

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John Young Mason represented an extreme example of the Virginia gentry's fall from financial grace in the generations after the Revolution. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Virginia declined in both wealth and socio-political influence. By the mid-nineteenth century, planting was no longer a sure path to continued fortune as soil depletion had ended the tobacco boom. Most slaveholding planters switched to grain, which was far less profitable. Land values across the state declined from $206,000,000 in 1817 to $90,000,000 in 1829.[285] Exports and slave prices also fell, and the Panic of 1819 only exacerbated existing economic decline for many well-to-do Virginia families.[286] By the 1820s, the slaveholding elite believed their way of life was under siege by "Yankee" financial and governmental incursions—from tariffs, to banks, to increased federal spending and oversight. Fearful that their wealth and socio-political capital was waning, Virginia writers spun stories of ruin, desolation, and decay. In the words of one

[285] Robert P. Sutton, "Nostalgia, Pessimism, and Malaise: The Doomed Aristocrat in Late-Jeffersonian Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 76, no. 1 (January 1968), 42.
[286] Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 134-135. For more on the economic and social decline of the Virginia gentry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (1985; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Philip Hamilton, *The Making and Unmaking of a Revolutionary Family: The Tuckers of Virginia, 1752-1830* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2003); Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*; Kierner, "'The Dark and Dense Cloud Perpetually Lowering Over Us.'"

historian, the slaveholding planter aristocracy "became imbued with a deepening nostalgia, pessimism, and malaise."[287] Many slaveholding Virginians fled the state for cheaper land and more fertile soil on the southern borderlands. Purchasing land recently and violently pried from indigenous peoples and forcing enslaved people to migrate and work that land (often in a dangerous climate), enslavers embraced a white supremacist pursuit of profit in their search for improved economic opportunity.[288]

Born in 1799, John Young Mason came of age amid this anxiety and frustration. Still, his early life followed the typical pattern for young Virginia men aiming for greatness. He went from a privileged childhood in the plantation house to a university education (at the University of North Carolina) to legal training (with Judge Tapping Reeve in Connecticut) to a career in politics. By age twenty-four he had been elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, and from there he proceeded to the Virginia Senate, to Congress, and to the presidential cabinets of John Tyler and James K. Polk.[289] In 1821, Mason married Mary Ann Fort at her family's plantation house, Fortsville, where the couple soon took up their residence and had a large family. Enslaved labor yielded cotton, corn, and wheat at Fortsville, and Mason soon expanded his property in both land and enslaved people with another plantation called Day's Neck in Isle of Wight

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[287] Sutton, "Nostalgia, Pessimism, and Malaise," 42-44. James D. Miller has noted similar anxiety and nostalgia among the South Carolina elite, many of whom (like Virginia's slaveholding gentry) moved south and west to greener pastures, transporting around three quarters of a million enslaved people to the Southwest between 1820 and 1840. James David Miller, *South by Southwest: Planter Emigration and Identity in the Slave South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 6.

[288] On the federally funded and legislated forced removal of Native Americans from this land, see Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2020). On slaveholding planters' forced migration of enslaved people, see Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration in the Antebellum South.*

[289] For more on Mason's life, education, and political career, see Frances Leigh Williams, "The Heritage and Preparation of a Statesman, John Young Mason, 1799-1859," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 75, no. 3 (July 1967), 305-330.

County, Virginia—though his political career kept him based in Richmond and Washington. Low crop yields and fluctuating prices meant Mason struggled to maintain the success of his forebears. The expenses of public life also took a toll, and taking on liability for loved ones' debts gradually chipped away at his financial security. By 1858, while serving as U.S. minister to France, Mason's financial obligations had reached $125,000.[290]

In the years leading up to this crisis, Mason relied on family members to battle the anxiety and fear that accompanied his financial losses. For the Virginia gentry, emotion had long played a crucial organizing role in the economy. Throughout the eighteenth century, the slaveholding elite had solidified social and economic prominence through wide kinship networks, cultivating a friendly economy grounded in the extension of credit as a symbol of trust among peers. The material market and the emotional economy were often one and the same. Elite enslavers regularly served as surety for friends and family members, extending credit as personal favors and symbols of trust even when they themselves were in less-than-ideal financial standing. Slaveholding planters eagerly participated in this friendly economy, intertwining their finances and reputations to form a network of mutual obligation. Participating in this credit network was a sign of social status, trust, and belonging, uniting elite enslavers financially, socially, and emotionally.[291] Virginia slaveholders exploded with anger when they felt people

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[290] Daniel W. Crofts, *Old Southampton: Politics and Society in a Virginia County, 1834-1869* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 31. This would be approximately $3.5 million in 2016, calculated using www.measuringworth.com.

[291] For more on the gentry's social approach to a friendly economy in colonial Virginia and how those attitudes shifted due to increasing debt in the pre-Revolutionary years, see Breen, *Tobacco Culture*. For more on the social elements of the gentry's friendly economy, see Carrie B. Douglass, "Thomas Jefferson: Breeding and Buying Horses, Connecting Family, Friends, and Neighbors," in *The Eighteenth Centuries: Global Networks of Enlightenment*, eds. David T. Gies and Cynthia Wall (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), 95-119. For more on the emotional considerations of family as a social, political, and economic engine for enslavers, see Cooper, "Cultures of Emotion."

betrayed the friendly economy—such as when British tobacco merchants protested planters' credit or pressed for immediate payment in the decades before the Revolution.[292] Previewing nineteenth-century calls for a commerce of affection among Boston merchants, late-eighteenth-century Virginia enslavers angrily accused British merchants of neglecting the responsibilities of "true Friendship."[293]

John Young Mason provides an illuminating example of how anxiety about financial security could weld slaveholding patriarchs to a friendly economy well into the nineteenth century—much like merchants in Boston. When he took stock of his debts in 1859, Mason categorized his creditors partially in terms of affectionate bonds. He divided his sources of debt into seven different categories, distinguishing between creditors whom he trusted would "be satisfied to indulge & forbear pressing until [he] can gradually pay them all" and a wholly separate class of creditors willing to do the same but out of friendship. This class of creditors, he told his son Lewis, "are my friends, and are able to wait without inconvenience, and I am persuaded will do so to oblige me."[294] Not only was this second group different because they were wealthy enough to be *able* to resist calling in any payments, but Mason valued friendly feeling as a significant financial determinant.

The familial marketplace of feeling was key to the friendly economy that kept the slaveholding planter class in power both economically and socially, despite fears of declining status. Marriage, kinship, and longstanding friendships united the slaveholding gentry in Virginia. Like many other Virginia patriarchs (and indeed Boston merchants) in the mid-nineteenth century, John Young Mason viewed kinship as a source of economic and emotional

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[292] Breen, *Tobacco Culture,* chapters 4 and 5.
[293] Robert Beverley quoted in ibid., 139.
[294] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, June 2, 1859, MFP.

strength, and believed family obligation and financial strategy were intimately linked. He believed that honorable men of business should tailor their financial strategies to support friends and loved ones in economic distress, even if this meant taking on personal risk. Where sympathetic understanding for the risks of their shared profession united Boston's merchants into a commerce of affection, Mason expected affection (and obligation) rooted in blood and friendship to unite his own emotional community. For Mason, this was about both demonstrating family loyalty as a financial value, and ensuring his relatives adhered to the bargain of fair exchange. If he provided them with financial and emotional support, he expected the same from them in return.

Mason's financial relationships with his brothers provide a good example of this approach. In 1824, then twenty-five-year-old Mason had come to the aid of his older brother James, who was in desperate need of financial help. When Mason encountered his own financial difficulties thirty years later, he expected James to repay the decades-old debt. Mason saw this as reciprocal obligation owed to him by all those whom he had favored with financial aid in the past. When he asked his son Lewis to call in James' debt in 1855, Mason rationalized the request in terms of what was "right" and what his debtors "ought" to do in his time of need: "as I must close my matters of business, and I am selling my own property, those who owe me, ought to be willing to meet some sacrifice to pay me."[295] Mason felt especially aggrieved that James was slow to make this sacrifice because Mason himself had long sacrificed his own financial needs to serve James' interests. "Your Uncle James has not treated me well," Mason complained to Lewis. "He has been indebted to me, since 1824, and now he has large property, I have to sell mine, & he ought not to hesitate to sell his, to relieve me to the extent of his debt to me….I write

[295] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, October 18, 1855, ibid.

not to reproach him, but it is not right, that I make sacrifices to meet engagements and leave his debt to me uncollected for & may not have enough to pay my…debts."[296] Mason only pressed James to repay his debts because he knew that James had accumulated "large property" and could likely afford to settle the debt.

The same was not true of George, another less financially secure brother whom Mason urged Lewis *not* to press for financial aid because he did not want to increase George's own anxiety. When he desperately needed security for a new loan in 1854, Mason told Lewis not to ask George because "he has a large family, and his mind may become disturbed about his liabilities."[297] Even as his own finances became less secure, Mason continued to take George's need to provide for his large family into account, even if this meant prolonging his own financial travails. When instructing Lewis to pacify his sureties' anxieties at the height of his debt crisis in 1859, Mason regularly singled George out for special reassurance that "no apprehension need be felt for the future" since Mason "would not for the world make him unhappy."[298] Mason was grateful for George's attention to Mason's own feelings, noting that George had only once "alluded to his anxiety" about his liabilities to Mason, and thus only minimally "added to the pain of my separation from my home in an agony of mind at the condition of my affairs." George's "affection to a Brother, who was always kind to him," Mason believed, should be rewarded in this life and next.[299] For a beloved brother, Mason was willing to prolong his own financial difficulties if it meant preventing the distress (both financial and emotional) of a loved

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[296] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 14, 1856, ibid.
[297] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, August 4, 1854, ibid.
[298] Quotations from John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, June 2, 1859, ibid. Also see John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 11, 1858 ibid; John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, August 22, 1858, ibid.
[299] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 11, 1858, ibid.

one. This was not a universal practice. During the same time, though Mason felt "great sympathy" for men who had "been great friends" to him, he still pressed them to pay their debts to him, though "not without regret."[300]

Mason's closest family recognized that devotion to family was, for him, central to the marketplace of feeling. Mason was committed to producing loved ones' happiness even if doing so went against his financial interests. About Eliza, Mason's cousin (and Joe Mason's mother), Mason once declared he "love[d her] as well as if she were my own sister," confessing to his eldest son, "I would have willingly submitted to my suffering myself to have saved her from distress."[301] Lewis concurred, recognizing, "Your motive was such as has always distinguished you—a desire to promote her happiness."[302] But Lewis also chided his father, reminding him that if he had *not* acted out of the goodness of his heart and instead pressed Eliza for payment despite his deep affection for her, the family could have paid off a large debt and their current distress would have been greatly lessened. After Mason's death in 1859, his wife Mary Ann reflected on "the kindness he had, and how impossible it was to refuse money or any thing else to his friends." She recognized that though Mason held that producing fear or distress for a beloved relation was not a price he was willing to pay to protect his own financial interests, his adherence to this friendly economy—especially his forbearance to others—caused his closest relations a great deal of distress. In the throes of debt after her husband's death, Mary Ann later lamented that his "kindly nature has been the curse, of leaving his children, and myself with very very little."[303] After a lifetime of financial decisions rooted in concern for others, Mason's dependents

[300] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, February 18, 1858, ibid.
[301] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 27, 1858, ibid.
[302] Lewis Mason to John Young Mason, Sr., January 22, 1858, ibid.
[303] Mary Ann Fort Mason to General Dodge, January 1860, ibid.

feared that in protecting more distant relatives' emotional and financial interests, the family patriarch had ended up sacrificing his closest family's chance at happiness and security. His dedication to producing happiness and ease for more distant relatives had hindered his ability to produce material security—and thus happiness—for his closest family.

The effects of Mason's friendly economy on his dependents illuminates the issue of power within the family, in both economic and emotional terms. Though his elder brother James owed him a decades-old debt, the nature of sibling (especially brother) relationships—which was more egalitarian than hierarchical—meant Mason did not have the authority to *command* James to meet his financial obligation.[304] Mason used affective tactics to try to *persuade* James to pay his debt, trying to guilt James into easing the distress his lack of payment caused. Mason bemoaned, "I cannot live in the state of anxiety and harassment which now preys on me." He also raised the fearful specter of a legal suit against James to force payment, though he held that he would be "grieved" to pursue that "painful" course.[305] Taking legal action to collect on debts meant that the debt—and each party's financial status—would be made public, potentially threatening both men's credit and reputation, and often causing other creditors to demand immediate payment. To take legal action against a family member was thus a "painful" and grief-inducing prospect for a man who loved and respected his brother as both blood and businessman.

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[304] Lorri Glover has argued that sibling relationships among the eighteenth-century South Carolina gentry reflect the coexistence of deference and patriarchal power alongside mutual aid and egalitarianism. Elites used patriarchy and deference to dominate others (especially poorer whites, Native Americans, and slaves) and reserved cooperation and equity to unite their kin network into a mutually dependent and self-protecting class. Lorri Glover, *All Our Relations: Blood Ties and Emotional Bonds among the Early South Carolina Gentry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

[305] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 14, 1856, MFP.

Mason's tone was vastly different when demanding emotion work from those over whom he more solidly held power, from a position of patriarchal authority. Like merchants in Boston, Mason and other elite Virginia enslavers relied on emotion work from their wives. One Virginia man claimed that "with a good and affectionate wife, who cheerfully bears her lot,…no reverse of fortune could happen to me, which I could not bear with fortitude."[306] Similarly, after Jane Randolph died in 1871, her husband Jeff (who had fallen out with his father Thomas Mann Randolph years earlier) reflected on how "in a thirty year struggle with bankruptcy…she never faltered or repined at the ruin resulting therefrom. In the dark hour of my troubles her bright and beaming countenance of hope and trust braced me for the struggle."[307] Region and profession, it seems, did not necessarily determine whether men called for wifely emotion work. Since the gendered system of emotion work arose to manage anxiety about financial conditions, any man who felt such anxiety might easily see the benefit of a wifely emotion worker.

Jeff Randolph's retrospective celebratory tone masks the rhetorical force with which he had, in the moment of crisis, compelled Jane to maintain "her bright and beaming countenance" during their financial trials. In 1826, as he had tried (unsuccessfully) to save Monticello from the clutches of creditors, Randolph emulated his grandfather's efforts to extract emotion work from female dependents. He pressed Jane, "For godsake keep up your spirits," and heightened the stakes of her ability to manage her feelings by telling her, "with you alone I have known happiness."[308] Her low spirits threatened his own hopes, and since she was, according to him, his sole source of happiness, the pressure was on for her to lift her spirits for his sake.

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[306] Wilson J. Cary to Virginia Cary, January 9, 1822, quoted in Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness,* 193.
[307] Thomas Jefferson Randolph, note c. 1871, Papers of the Randolph Family of Edgehill, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.
[308] Thomas Jefferson Randolph to Jane Hollins Nicholas Randolph, January 30, 1826, ibid.

Thirty years later, also struggling with financial insecurity, John Young Mason similarly compelled his wife Mary Ann to work harder to manage her emotions for his benefit. In a letter celebrating their thirty-seventh wedding anniversary, Mason expressed "hope that in the future, our life may be happier," while also admonishing Mary Ann for not regulating her emotions with his happiness in mind. "Nothing will more effectually save you from irregularities of temper on my part," he scolded, "than contentment, cheerfulness, and the submissive duties which a wife owes her husband. Such a course will make you happier, and me infinitely more so."[309] Mason thus argued that Mary Ann's happiness (especially her ability to escape his "irregularities of temper") depended on her ability to make *him* happy, which in turn required regulating all of her own emotions to project "contentment [and] cheerfulness."

The forceful tone of these urgings is important. The romantic tone Randolph used to eulogize Jane's emotion work is nowhere to be found in his command that she "for godsake keep up [her] spirits," or in Mason's reminder to Mary Ann that emotion work was one of the "submissive duties which a wife owes her husband." Anxious Virginia patriarchs issued commands for emotion work from a position of authority. Their forceful and manipulative tone underscores the hierarchy that struggling men across Virginia wanted to govern their marketplace of feeling, especially within the family. The three decades separating Randolph's and Mason's eerily similar demands for wifely emotion work suggests that the varied yet persistent financial anxiety for the Virginia gentry throughout the first half of the nineteenth century heightened anxious men's resolve to enforce their patriarchal authority to compel emotion work.

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[309] John Young Mason, Sr. to Mary Ann Fort Mason, August 31, 1858, MFP.

Few historians have explored in depth men's desire to control the emotions women felt as a result of men's financial decisions. However, men's anxious pursuit of emotional authority was not unusual. Historian Joan Cashin has noted that though many southern women were distraught about migrating away from family networks when their husbands sought manly independence on the frontier, most men expected women to get over their grief and accept their new lives.[310] And not only husbands chided women for failing to overcome sadness. One man scolded his sister for acting like "such a poor soldier in the strifes and vexations of a settler's life," and another felt relieved when he became convinced his sister was "reconciling her mind" to her new frontier home, far from family.[311]

Though not a frontiersman permanently displacing his family, John Young Mason expected this emotion work from all dependents, not just his wife. He sought patriarchal and not simply gendered authority. He depended on his sons and sons-in-law to not only help manage his finances, but also help manage his fear, anger, and sadness when his prospects did not seem promising. It was not unusual for patriarchs to depend on younger male relations for this dual economic and emotional support. Joan Cashin found that economic instability and disruption—like the Panic of 1837—led many men to realize "that the family was still a potent source of capital, assistance, and information and that they had to compromise their ideals of independence."[312] Struggling men found that affectionate and loyal family members were more likely to set generous terms for loans and repayment than banks, which many southerners treated with suspicion anyway. Cashin found that the financial support of male kin was a determining

[310] Cashin, *A Family Venture,* 71.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid., 86.

factor in whether male slaveholders succeeded, especially in new ventures.[313] For these men, a certain degree of dependence on friendly male relations was key to maintaining, recovering, or newly establishing economic independence. Because financial independence was so important for anxious enslavers, Cashin concluded that migrating men and women differed in what they needed from friends and relatives. While women sought emotional exchanges, she argues, men were more focused on economic exchange. And yet, John Young Mason's closely regulated emotional community suggests that this gendered division may not be quite so neat—at least for struggling enslavers who did *not* migrate west for better opportunity. Studying Mason's systems of economic and emotional exchange with various family members reveals how some slaveholding men demanded both emotional and economic reciprocity.

Especially at the apex of his financial woes, Mason was blunt with his relations about just how much his emotional wellbeing depended on their emotion management. "If I lose all earthly possession I cannot be deprived of the happiness which I derive in the affection of my children," he told Lewis in November 1854.[314] Such statements established an expected framework for emotional exchange during Mason's enduring financial distress. The Mason children knew that providing affection could produce happiness for their father. In Mason's framing, this happiness was the one glimmer of "glad sunshine" amidst "the clouds which surround me, & which probably will grow darker through the evening of my life."[315] Mason expected his family—especially his sons, who bore financial news—to send letters that rendered him relieved and happy. If they did not do so, they were in his debt—owing the happiness and relief he expected. Mary Ann acutely understood how the tone and content of her children's letters could affect her

[313] Ibid., 93.
[314] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, November 12, 1854, MFP.
[315] John Young Mason, Sr. to John Mason, Jr., September 2, 1857, ibid.

husband's mood. Mason thanked Lewis for "very cheering" financial updates whose hopeful tone he was "happy to see."[316] But when Lewis wrote with less pleasing news—such as having to sell large swaths of Mason's property to raise funds to keep creditors at bay—Mason was greatly aggrieved. Mary Ann admonished Lewis for sending a "letter which made your Father very sadd." She urged him to be more careful, writing, "I beg that you will not be constantly telling him such things."[317]

Though he expected all family members to provide this emotional support, Mason relied particularly on his male relations who could also provide financial help—whether through managing his affairs or providing direct, material support when possible. His primary support network consisted of his eldest sons Lewis and John Jr., as well as his wealthy sons-in-law Roscoe Heath, James Cook, and Archer Anderson. Lewis and John (with the help of Heath and Cook) managed their father's finances when he was occupied with political appointments and away from Virginia. Throughout the 1850s, his sons and sons-in-law took charge of the family's attempt to regain economic footing, primarily through selling the property Mason claimed in both land and enslaved people, and also scrambling for credit from forbearing peers.[318] These money-raising schemes also provided some emotional relief for Mason, since they could delay further loss of credit and capital, as well as swarming creditors demanding swift repayment.

It was not unusual for enslavers to rely on sons-in-law for financial assistance. Indeed, by guiding children to financially prudent marriages, parents could intentionally procure this type of

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[316] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, March 10, 1858 ibid; John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, February 18, 1858, ibid.

[317] Mary Ann Fort Mason to Lewis Mason, October 12, 1857, ibid. Lewis' younger sister Mary Anne also admonished him for sending "dreary accounts" of his struggles to repair the family finances while the rest of the Masons gallivanted in Paris. Mary Anne Mason quoted in Crofts, *Old Southampton,* 34.

[318] For more on the potentially traumatic effects of enslavers' financial anxiety on the people they held and sold as slaves, see chapters four and five of this dissertation.

aid should they need it. Among North Carolina slaveholding planters in the first half of the nineteenth century, Jane Turner Censer noted many men financially supported their fathers-in-law by serving as surety, borrowing and lending money, and transacting business on the older man's behalf.[319] John Young Mason similarly relied on his daughter Elizabeth's husband Roscoe Heath to transact his business in Virginia, often requesting that Lewis consult with Roscoe before acting on his behalf. Mason also heavily relied on his daughter Fanny's husband James Cook in financial matters. When Mason or Lewis needed money quickly, both turned to Cook for substantial loans. When Mason had to sell his plantations Day's Neck and Fortsville, Cook purchased them both so the property would remain in the family.

This financial dedication was enmeshed in affection. Towards his three sons-in-law, Mason felt "so much attachment as if [they] were [his] own son[s]."[320] Mason used emotion to maintain the aura of authority when he accepted his sons-in-law's financial assistance. For instance, Mason only accepted James Cook's financial help when he felt certain Cook was not merely acting out of feelings of pity. In 1854, when Cook initially offered to buy Day's Neck to keep the property in the family, Mason demurred because, as he explained to Lewis, "I felt confident, that he did so, merely to relieve me." Consequently, Mason rejected his son-in-law's initial offer. Mason even admitted that he did not at first reveal the extent of his debt to Cook because he feared Cook would help him out of charity—"that as he had means,…he might, under the impulse of feeling, involve his affairs in aid of mine." Mason did not want his son-in-law to

[319] Jane Turner Censer, *North Carolina Planters and their Families 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 100-101.
[320] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, July 25, 1854, MFP.

help him simply out of "feeling." He wanted aid to be an equal business exchange that mutually benefitted two independent men.[321] The emotional drive behind the transaction mattered.

However, as time went on and Mason's debts—and emotional distress—increased, Mason's feelings changed. Three years after rejecting Cook's offer rooted in "the impulse of feeling," Mason accepted a loan from Cook for precisely the same reason. "[T]ell Mr. Cook," he implored Lewis in July 1857, "that with all my hope I thank him. I would not be able to bear dependence on my children, if I did not know, that what they do, is the offering of affection."[322] What had changed in those three years? Put simply, Mason had come to see how dangerous it was for him if his friends and loved ones did *not* make offerings of affection in his time of need. Mason had always been able to allay his own anxieties by reminding himself of his loved ones' support. As long as his sons, sons-in-law, and other family and friends remained able and willing to serve his financial interests, then he had hope for climbing out of debt. Once he saw the fraying edges of this network of trust, his emotional state spiraled steadily downward.

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In 1854, Mason's demands from his family's marketplace of feeling increased exponentially when he accepted a post as ambassador to France. With his debts unpaid and ever-increasing, he knew he could not afford the position. Diplomats were expected to participate fully in the expensive social life of Europe, and Mason would have to pay to support and entertain the family members who accompanied him. Still, the social capital was difficult to turn down. Mason accepted the position, and he arrived in Paris with his wife Mary Ann and their four youngest children in January 1854.

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[321] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, November 12, 1854, ibid.
[322] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, July 16, 1857, ibid.

With thousands of miles separating him from his affairs in Virginia and Mississippi, Mason demanded more frequent updates from his adult sons to ease his anxieties. By February, disaster had struck. Lewis and his younger brother John had determined that their father's debts—which he had calculated at $106,626, an already impressive amount—were in fact $20,000 greater. Mason himself declared an "emergency."[323] The family had to get money—and quickly. As his sons sold the property—both land and enslaved people—that Mason had long hoped would enable his eventual climb out of debt, Mason's mood became more volatile. Depending on the news he received from Virginia, he ranged from entirely despondent to blissfully confident. Most frequently, he begged for "some respite from the torturing cares, which now threaten to overcloud the evening of my life." His wife Mary Ann complained to Lewis, "it makes him so miserable when he is pressed [by debts] that it throws a damper on all of us."[324] Mason's moods—heavily shaped by his financial situation—affected everyone around him. Mason was aware of the impact his emotional state had on his family, even across an ocean. In one letter home to Lewis, after implying his mental distress endangered his health, Mason reigned himself in, telling Lewis, "I will not torture you my son, by depicting my feelings of distress. We are all well and there is no extravagance."[325]

Lewis' response to his father's increasing dismay was to focus almost entirely on practical solutions to the family's financial problems, and to try to ease his father away from his near total reliance on a friendly economy. He warned, "A relief from a friend can-not always be gotten, places us under obligations to do likewise & by that interchange we cannot be much

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[323] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, February 28, 1854, ibid.
[324] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, January 16, 1856, ibid; Mary Ann Fort Mason to Lewis Mason, September 1858, ibid.
[325] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 24, 1857, ibid.

benefitted." Any relief provided by relying on forbearing friends to lend money was thus "simply temporary."[326] Lewis urged his father to stop borrowing money and focus on dramatically reducing his debt as fast as possible through selling property. Soon after his parents arrived in Paris, Lewis expressed his hope that they would live frugally, that his father would try to save rather than spend his salary, and that he would avoid all risky speculation. Mason welcomed his son's advice and often agreed—at least in writing—with his suggestions, though he never sent his children back to Virginia and continued to accrue debts in Europe. He occasionally sniffed at his son for being too practical, taking a rather more romantic stance on his ability to pay off his debts and save the family from sinking into poverty. "In your schedule of our means for the future," he chided Lewis, "you do not include some elements which I persuade myself will largely contribute future comfort. I mean, my own Head and good right hand, and a heart determined to bear up against adversity, and to earn by toil, the means of support for those I love."[327] Once again, John Young Mason made his commitment to the affective side of financial matters clear.

Still, within the extant letters, Lewis never wrote his father a harsh word about his financial missteps. Framing advice in such bald (and bold) terms would likely have been too much a violation of the deference a son owed his father, and would have caused Mason more emotional distress. Indeed, Lewis always couched any scrutiny of his father's questionable financial decisions in reassuring rather than confrontational terms. Lewis advised his father to "keep cheerful under all circumstances," and did his best to make this possible.[328] Even as Lewis urged his father to take drastic action to save money, Mason thanked Lewis for his "amiable

[326] Lewis Mason to parents, February 12, 1854, ibid.
[327] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, June 28, 1858, ibid.
[328] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, October 18, 1855, ibid.

motive to relieve my mind from anxiety on account of my affairs at home."[329] This "amiable motive" often bore fruit. In the years Mason spent in France while Lewis managed the family's financial "emergency" back in the United States, Mason told Lewis that his letters brought "great consolation," "made my heart glad," and were "a great comfort."[330] He thanked Lewis "for the joyous & hopeful spirits with which you write," and urged him "to be of good cheer" when Lewis' letters did not reflect such uplifting spirit.[331] Altogether, Mason's letters reveal that he depended on Lewis to cheer him up even from thousands of miles away. His frequently desperate tone alongside his insistence that Lewis' updates would "relieve him" no doubt put pressure on Lewis to be careful in striking a balance between delivering comfort and difficult news—as well as advice.[332] Lewis's letters had to be measured, and he had to frame his advice to demonstrate that even when disagreeing, delivering bad news, or challenging his father's habits or authority, he was still part of his father's carefully curated emotional community.

The extent to which John Young Mason relied on his sons' offerings of financial and emotional support is strikingly revealed in his conflict with his adoptive son, Joe Mason. The more desperate his financial situation became, the more Mason expected his relations to act "under the impulse of feeling" to help him, even if it meant taking on financial risk for themselves. For Mason, this was about both demonstrating family loyalty as a financial value, and ensuring his relatives adhered to the bargain of fair exchange, compensating Mason for "the offering[s] of affection" he had provided to them in the past. Mason was thus perturbed when

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[329] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, August 4, 1854, ibid.
[330] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, November 12, 1854, ibid; John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, March 14, 1856, ibid; John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, March 31, 1856, ibid.
[331] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, January 24, 1856, ibid; John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 20, 1858, ibid.
[332] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 25, 1857, ibid.

Joe, his own flesh-and-blood, threatened to take legal action against him in 1857. The situation was complex. Joe was the son of Mason's beloved relations Eliza and Joseph, and when Joseph died in 1838, John Young Mason became guardian to his children and administrator of his estate. When the children reached adulthood, Mason was pleased with all he had accomplished as their guardian. He prided himself for having provided them with good educations, and he was also proud of them for "setting out in life so respectable." For this, and for his efforts to recover $20,000 for their father's estate which everyone had assumed lost, he felt they owed him a debt of gratitude.[333]

This debt of gratitude was complicated by mistakes John Young Mason made in managing Joseph Mason's estate. As administrator of the estate, Mason made payments to Eliza, Joseph's widow, that were more than that to which she was entitled. The extra money should have eventually gone to her children, which meant, in Mason's eyes, "it was the children's money which she owed me." The family had become aware of the error by 1856 (by which time John Young Mason was in France), and Mason blamed the confusion on outside actors, placing blame far from himself and the Mason children. By that time, Mason himself owed Eliza's children money, but Mason gratefully acknowledged that they did not press him for it, honoring their familial connection by being "just & affectionate" to him, rather than rapaciously pursuing their own economic interests at his expense.[334]

Mason's real trouble began when those feelings of affection wore thin, and Eliza's children finally pressed him repay his debts. Joe Mason confessed to Lewis in the fall of 1857 that his own debts of about $7,000 were soon due, and his sister Theodora and her husband were

[333] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 27, 1858, ibid.
[334] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, January 5, 1856, ibid.

similarly in need of credit. Joe likely corresponded with Lewis rather than John Young Mason himself because Lewis remained in the U.S. while his father was in France, and thus harder to reach efficiently. Joe's obsequious and deferential tone when requesting payment suggest he was trying as much as possible to retain friendly feeling. "I hope it may give you no trouble," he sheepishly told Lewis, "and it is painful to make this request if it can possibly occasion inconvenience."[335] Joe's request came at a difficult moment for the Mason family. He asked for payment at precisely the same time that Mason and his sons had realized the crushing extent of Mason's own debt, and were desperately seeking ways to forestall creditors and find means to pay off those debts in full. Mason expected Joe to act sympathetically towards him, not only because Joe was aware of Mason's financial distress, but also because Mason had taken guardianship of Joe and his sisters when their father had died. Mason assumed that his past paternal support had solidified the bonds of family devotion among them.

Perhaps because he trusted those bonds of affection would govern Joe's behavior, Mason at first did not begrudge his adoptive son for politely requesting payment. In March 1857, Mason acknowledged that he was "concerned" about Joe's request, especially because he had not counted on having to make progress on that debt while preoccupied with other payments. Still, he recognized that Joe "has a right to insist on a settlement & payment, however embarrassing." The most logical way for Mason to pay his debts to Joe, however, was pressing Joe's mother for payment of *her* debts to Mason. Mason did not want Eliza to think him cruel. He urged Lewis to reassure Eliza that if he could avoid collecting her debt, he would do so at all costs. But, he bemoaned, "it is not in my power. It is forced on me." To make up for putting this financial pressure on Eliza, throughout 1857, Mason pushed Lewis to renew the bonds of family devotion

[335] Joseph T. Mason to Lewis Mason, November 23, 1857, ibid.

with her, even as Mason himself was thousands of miles away. "Give my affectionate love to dear cousin Eliza," he reminded Lewis in May. "[T]ell her I love her dearly and always will—for to me she has been a most affectionate friend & dear relation."[336] Mason's dedication to a marketplace of feeling is clear: he repeatedly deposited offerings of affection with Eliza, hoping they would compensate for any distress his demand for payment would cause.

Based on his dedication to compensatory affection, Mason likely hoped his offerings of affection would persuade Joe to be patient with Mason—to reciprocate the bonds of affection Mason had always shown him and his mother, and not press the financial obligation. However, eight months after his initial request for payment, Joe politely informed Lewis that he and his had decided to bring suit against John Young Mason's securities to get the money Mason owed them. With the threat of a lawsuit, Mason's language describing Joe shifted from understanding (as a fellow man of business) to hurt and dismay (as a loved one). He called Joe's demand for payment through a public suit "most unfriendly and disgraceful."[337] He knew the damage such a suit would have on his finances, his career, and his reputation. "[I]f possible to avoid it," he warned Lewis, "this suit must not be brought. It will alarm the security owed, it will injure me as a public man, because the world will not know the circumstances, and it may alarm the…creditors, who are yet unpaid."[338] In contrast, he began to reflect more frequently on "the kindness of those friends who have extended so much forbearance, and permitted us peacefully without compulsion of law, to sell property and pay our debts." By comparison, Joe and his potential lawsuit were "heartless" and "cruel," especially since Mason believed Joe "owed [him]

[336] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 18, 1857, ibid.
[337] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, April 1, 1858, ibid.
[338] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 6, 1858, ibid.

gratitude" for years of care and loyalty.[339] Instead, Joe's push for payment and willingness to play out the family's financial drama in a public court caused Mason deep "mortification."[340]

By September 1858, threat had become reality: Joe Mason had finally brought the suit against Mason. Eliza's children demanded one bond for $6000 with seven or eight securities. Lewis asked if Joe would accept several smaller bonds with a single security for each (which would put each security at lesser risk, since they were accepting responsibility for smaller amounts). Joe refused.[341] Mason erupted, his dismay shifting to anger. He now knew his efforts to influence Joe by invoking the emotional context and consequences of Joe's actions had failed. Mason was unable to extract the emotion work he felt he, as a protective father figure, deserved.

The matter of blood—and familial obligation—was Mason's main grievance: Joe was sabotaging the family's reliable marketplace of feeling. Mason erupted at the very thought that *any* relative could cause him so much anguish. "I have not [before] been sued," he reminded his son, "and the first step of this kind is threatened not by strangers, but by those of my own blood and for a balance which is not paid because their mother, whom I sincerely love, is unable to pay." He thus implied that he would have understood such an action from a stranger, but that Joe's blood connection to Mason *and* his knowledge that Mason's inability to pay his debt stemmed in part from kindness to Joe's own mother, made the suit a betrayal of the most painful sort. He now knew that Joe was not only unwilling to save him from "the injury and humiliation of a suit," Joe was also willing to intentionally cause Mason "an irreparable injury" and would

[339] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, April 1, 1858, ibid.
[340] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, April 10, 1858, ibid.
[341] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 6, 1858, ibid; Lewis Mason to John Young Mason, Sr., September 16, 1858, ibid.

persist with his "unreasonable" demands even though he knew that Mason and his sons had "done every thing which honor and good faith required to discharge every obligation."[342]

Mason was particularly perturbed that the relations causing him such trouble were people he thought of—and treated—as children. These were relations over whom he expected to exert influence, even direct power. Almost as if he could not fully believe it, Mason's letters to his sons increasingly fixated on "the hard necessity of having the first suit brought against me by those whom I have ever loved as if they were my children."[343] To bring them in line, Mason thought about how he could evoke different emotions in them—to make them feel in ways that benefitted rather than stymied Mason's financial interests. Mason quite literally underlined the importance of kin *and* his expectations for relations' emotions in an angry letter to Lewis, in which he begrudgingly committed to raising enough money to "reduce the debt to my relations!!! so low, that they will be ashamed to go on with their suit."[344] Mason failed to raise the money, thereby also failing to provoke in his adoptive children the shame and guilt that he felt *should* guide their behavior.

Joe's actions were particularly egregious to Mason because he could so easily compare Joe's behavior unfavorably to that of his own children, who continued to offer both compensatory affection and material support when possible. Not only had his eldest sons dedicated much of their young adult lives to advancing his financial interests, but the larger failure loomed, the more devoted his other children and wife became. His children had long offered their property—held almost entirely in enslaved people—to their father if it would help pay his debts. Mason had always been able to refuse because his creditors had been forbearing

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[342] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 6, 1858, ibid.
[343] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, May 27, 1858, ibid.
[344] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 20, 1858, ibid.

and had not pressed him to meet his obligations. But Joe's suit changed matters, and Mason found himself both grateful and grieved to consider accepting his children's "offerings of affection."

Mason wrote to Lewis in September 1858 explaining that he would allow his daughter Mary Anne ("Mollie") to sell the enslaved people she held as property and give the proceeds to her father. "[B]e assured," he wrote to Lewis, "that I would sooner have gone into the Seine, and rested under its dark waters, than have suffered her to do this act." The offer perturbed Mason because of the implications for his daughter, not the enslaved people whom she was willing to scatter to the wind raise money. Without property, it would be more difficult for Mollie to marry well. Perhaps because of this, the only way Mason could accept his daughter's sacrifice was by reiterating his confidence that he could eventually pay her back.[345] Still, Mollie's selflessness lifted his mood. He appreciated "the gratification of knowing that my child is ready and willing to sacrifice everything, for the honor and peace of mind of her father." Mason also believed that his children's sacrifices should have shamed Joe, swaying him into his own demonstration of familial devotion. Of his daughter's offer to sell her only property, Mason demanded, "Will Joe

[345] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 6, 1858, ibid. When he was less financially unstable, Mason had worked to keep enslaved families together. However, when he became truly financially desperate, he abandoned all efforts to take enslaved people's emotional welfare into account. This episode illuminates the layers of sacrifice made to protect John Young Mason's state of mind. Mason and the entire family recognized and celebrated Mollie's willingness to sacrifice her property (and, potentially, marital future). But, everyone ignored a larger sacrifice being made: that of the enslaved people whose families and communities Mollie and her father were quite willing to shatter just to lessen the "damper" on her father's spirits. Enslavers' attitudes towards the emotions and emotion work of the people they held as property are explored in the next chapter. For more on women enslavers eagerly embracing slave sale to protect their own financial and emotional interests, see Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019)*;* Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

refuse as security for his dollars what this devoted daughter offers, to relieve the feelings of a father whom she loves, with a fidelity honorable to her[?]."[346] When Joe *did* refuse Mollie's "noble act," Mason concluded that this "indicates a purpose to give the proceeding the most painful & harassing form."[347]

Mason was not the only one to make this unfavorable comparison between his own children and Joe. When Mason's anger at Joe exploded in the fall of 1858, Lewis tried to soothe him from afar by suggesting that Joe's actions should remind him of his own blessings. "What a contrast there is between the conduct of your children, & cousin Eliza's," he wrote. "[N]ot one of them (some are not able) has been willing to pay one cent for their mother…[while] your children one & all, are willing to do any thing, to relieve you & to protect your creditors. This alone ought to be a great consolation to you, in your troubles, & will be a delightful remembrance, after we have worked out & all are safe."[348] Mason's wife Mary Ann also struggled to comprehend Joe's actions. "To think that this unkind blow has come from the Mason to whom Mr Mason has been a father," she sighed, noting that "persons who were not intimate with my dear husband have been so kind and indulgent," but "this boy who has been at home in our house" could not bring himself to do the same. Of the young relations she believed her husband had selflessly protected, Mary Ann concluded, "They are vengeful and I am glad we know them as they are." [349] That Mason's wife and eldest son similarly castigated Joe's filial failure indicates how deeply engrained the shared emotional goal of producing the patriarch's happiness was among Mason's closest relations. All faulted Joe for not fulfilling what they saw

[346] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 6, 1858, MFP.
[347] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, November 30, 1858, ibid.
[348] Lewis Mason to John Young Mason, Sr., November 8, 1858, ibid.
[349] Mary Ann Fort Mason to Lewis Mason, 1858, ibid.

as his filial obligation in the family's marketplace of feeling: to put Mason's financial and emotional interests ahead of his own.

Part of Mason's concern came from knowing that if Joe refused to be lenient with him, Mason would have to inflict financial and emotional distress on his own loved ones. If he was pressed to repay his debt to Joe quickly, he would have to call on Joe's mother to pay her debts to Mason himself. "It is my duty to assert my legal rights," he grimly admitted to Lewis. "I am forced to it, and can no longer consult the feelings of sympathy and affection, which I have for Cousin Eliza." Still, he reminded both his son and himself, "I will never cease to respect and love her."[350] Mason made clear that though he could no longer act leniently toward Eliza in financial terms, this did not mean that his affection for her had waned. Mason believed that Eliza met her emotional obligations to him, even as her inability to pay her debts to Mason increased his distress. Eliza expressed her affection and remorse to Mason through Lewis. When her land sold for much less than expected and she realized she could not pay Mason back in full, Lewis reported, "She desired me to express to you her deep regret that the property did not bring more & that you should lose one cent by her: & also to assure you that she sold the property willingly & has the kindest feelings towards you & us all."[351] Even if Eliza's financial credit had lessened in Mason's eyes, her emotional credit with him remained strong because she consistently relayed those "kindest feelings" and "deep regret[s]," which were met with Mason's reciprocal attestations of his "respect and love" for her. To Mason, Eliza's affection compensated for her financial liability enough to preserve their relationship. She continued to make deposits of affection, thus paying tribute to his authority within the familial marketplace of feeling.

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[350] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 6, 1858, ibid.
[351] Lewis Mason to John Young Mason, Sr., May 2, 1858, ibid.

Mason claimed that Joe did no such thing. And yet, in reality, Joe's words and actions reflected his own dedication to the Mason family's marketplace of feeling. In casting Joe as unfeelingly betraying his own flesh-and-blood, Mason did not acknowledge Joe's efforts to justify his behavior in terms of the familial loyalty that Mason himself so prized. Like Mason himself did when asking for payment or forbearance from a friend or loved one, Joe had reminded Lewis of financial favors *he* had previously granted Mason out of familial affection. When Joe had come of age, not only had he obligingly not pushed Mason to immediately settle his debts, he had also loaned Mason $3,000—a sum he had to borrow from others to provide. Joe also reminded Lewis that in asking Mason to settle his debts, Joe was trying to protect *his* closest family. Joe told Lewis that he wanted Mason's debt to his sister Theodora settled quickly because he feared she would struggle financially if Mason failed or died. He was willing to delay calling in his own debt against Mason if it meant Theodora could be repaid more quickly. Joe also reminded Lewis that Joe needed to improve his *own* financial standing in order to support and protect his mother, Eliza.[352] Joe thus called attention to the fact that he had his own financial and emotional obligations to loved ones, and was trying desperately to fulfill those obligations in the same way Mason cared for his own. Joe even made sure to affirm the bonds of affection he knew his adoptive father prized so dearly. In his letters to Lewis explaining the suit against Mason, Joe carefully and continually reiterated that it was not his intention to inflict suffering on his relatives. He claimed that going the legal (and therefore public) route "will be painful to adopt," and was a course he had hoped to avoid. Joe took pains to underscore the bonds of

[352] Joseph T. Mason to Lewis Mason, March 12, ibid.

familial affection that linked him to "Cousin John," assuring Lewis that despite the legal suit, "I love him and you all."[353]

Whether intentionally or unknowingly, Mason did not acknowledge Joe's offerings of affection. Instead, he complained that Joe withheld any sign of affection that could compensate for the distress his suit caused Mason. And with emotional obligations purportedly unmet, Mason claimed he had to sever the relationship in both business and familial terms. "It is a mockery," Mason raged to Lewis in September 1858, "and I hope he will never again speak of friendship to me or my family."[354] Soon after, he reminded Lewis, "I do not wish to have any business relations with Mr. Joseph Thomas Mason—our paths lie in different directions."[355] Mason's use of Joe's full name indicates the linguistic stripping of family devotion and affection from the men's relationship. He was no longer Joe, to whom Mason felt paternal urges of affection and support, but Joseph T. Mason, an untrustworthy man who put his own self-interest before that of the family. To Mason, this was how a familial emotional community had to work in such an unforgiving financial environment. When members no longer "consult[ed] the feelings of sympathy and affection" in family financial dealings, when they no longer provided patriarchs with affection that could compensate for worldly suffering, those people no longer deserved—and could not be trusted—to belong to the family's emotional community.

It is possible that because Joe appears to have corresponded primarily with Lewis rather than Mason himself, Mason was not aware of Joe's attempts to explain his behavior in terms of his own devotion to a familial marketplace of feeling. Still, in failing to recognize Joe's commitment to family as similar to his own, Mason betrayed the fact that his dedication was not

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[353] Joseph T. Mason to Lewis Mason, August 11, 1858, ibid.
[354] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason, September 6, 1858, ibid.
[355] John Young Mason, Sr. to Lewis Mason December 16, 1858, ibid.

to family, but—quite self-interestedly—to patriarchy. In ignoring Joe's familial motivations, Mason rejected a familial marketplace of feeling in which the patriarch's financial and emotional needs were not prioritized above all else.

Financially anxious elite Virginians like Mason—and Thomas Mann Randolph, and Thomas Jefferson—bristled at dependents' unpaid emotional debts. Where was the system of fair, equal financial *and* emotional exchange they had so carefully tried to cultivate? Their touchy responses reveal an intensifying fear that the patriarchal marketplace of feeling was fracturing. If it was, new anxieties had to be dealt with. Would a smaller emotional community still be able to buttress a patriarch during difficult times? If men could not trust their own family to look after their financial and emotional interests, whom *could* they trust? This felt like a life-altering conundrum. The friendly economy and compensatory affection on which Mason and other struggling patriarchs had so thoroughly relied no longer seemed guaranteed. Deeply anxious, men like Mason and Randolph contracted their familial emotional communities to try to preserve, for as long as they could, a reliable marketplace of feeling within which they exerted firm patriarchal power.

The results were uneven and, for the Mason family, catastrophic. John Young Mason died suddenly in Paris on October 3, 1859. As the family continued to wrestle with financial distress after his death, their emotional community fractured even further. Some of his children continued to thrive, but others sank lower. His wealthy sons-in-law provided for their struggling relations as much as possible, but relationships among the Mason siblings became strained as impoverished ones continued to ask for aid. Lewis, his father's most devoted son, ended up living in poverty at Fortsville, which had been purchased by his brother-in-law James Cook. Cook allowed Lewis to live there as long as he paid rent—a meager offering of affection that did

not yield either financial or emotional stability for Lewis.[356] John Young Mason's most precious resource—a familial marketplace of feeling—had been destroyed.

For all his concern about his own emotional community, John Young Mason showed little care for another community within his purview: that of the enslaved people he forced to labor for his dwindling fortune. In fact, the ways in which he mobilized his familial emotional community to protect his financial interests threatened to sunder the emotional ties among the people he held as property. Across southern states, enslavers often used property rights in slaves to protect their own financial interests. As Edward Baptist has put it, "the ultimate hedge against the destruction of prospects and welfare was the relative liquidity of enslaved people."[357] Indeed, John Young Mason and his children repeatedly sold enslaved people when creditors came knocking. In 1858, Lewis told Joe he planned to sell a single enslaved person to raise money to help pay his father's debt to Joe.[358] Two years earlier, Lewis calculated through gritted teeth the amount he had "lost by having to sell the negroes in [18]55 under a severe pressure," to pay people who "threatened suit."[359] Lewis Mason's records reveal that he did manage to sell enslaved people in family groups from time to time, but this did not ensure that families would be kept together by traders or new buyers. Through their willingness to sell enslaved people to

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[356] Crofts, *Old Southampton*, 34-35.
[357] Edward E. Baptist, "Toxic Debt, Liar Loans, Collateralized and Securitized Human Beings, and the Panic of 1837," in *Capitalism Takes Command*, eds. Zakim and Kornblith, 79. Also see Richard Kilbourne, *Debt, Investment, Slaves: Credit Relations in East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, 1825-1885* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995); Levy, *Freaks of Fortune;* Bonnie Martin, "Slavery's Invisible Engine: Mortgaging Human Property," *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 76, no. 4 (November 2010), 817-866; Sharon Ann Murphy, "Securing Human Property: Slavery, Life Insurance, and Industrialization in the Upper South," *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 25, no. 4 (Winter 2005), 615-652. On the debate over property in slaves after emancipation, see Amanda Kleintop, "The Balance of Freedom: Property Rights in Slaves during and after the US Civil War" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2018).
[358] Lewis Mason to Joseph Mason, August 14, 1858, MFP.
[359] List of prices obtained in 1855 compared to value in August 1856, ibid.

ease both debts and anxiety, the Masons (both men and women) further revealed their willingness to sacrifice enslaved people's affectionate bonds—their emotional communities—to serve enslavers' financial and emotional needs.

Chapter Four
'the effect of the system is to foster kindly feelings':
Paternalist Arguments for Slavery's Emotional Production

In 1845, South Carolina enslaver John Henry Hammond declared slavery a productive marketplace of feeling in and of itself. He insisted that the institution was designed to produce sentiment, not mere profit. In his eyes, slavery was more humane than free labor because it was a sympathetic system

> in which the laborer is under the personal control of a fellow-being endowed with the sentiments and sympathies of humanity…It has been almost everywhere else superseded by the modern *artificial money power system*, in which man—his thews and sinews, his hopes and affections, his very being, are all subjected to the dominion of *capital*—a monster without a heart—cold, stern, arithmetical.

Hammond contrasted what he saw as the "sentiments and sympathies of humanity" with the heartlessness of capitalism, which sacrificed "hopes and affections" to the cold, calculated pursuit of cash and credit. Only slavery, he argued, ensured that the economy would not be devoid of "hopes and affections." Only slavery, in short, could "foster kindly feelings."[360] Hammond was not alone in contending that slavery was preferable to "the dominion of capital." The prolific (and radical) George Fitzhugh opened his 1854 *Sociology for the South* with an explicit critique of what he saw as the cold rationalism of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, whose "whole philosophy, moral and economical," was, Fitzhugh claimed, "Every man for himself, and Devil take the hindmost." In contrast, Fitzhugh argued, slavery protected the

[360] James Henry Hammond, "Hammond's Letters on Slavery," in *The Pro-Slavery Argument, as Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States: Containing the Several Essays, on the Subject, of Chancellor Harper, Governor Hammond, Dr. Simms, and Professor Dew* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., 1853), 163, 128.

hindmost through "care-taking."[361] Slavery, in Fitzhugh's framing, was a commerce of affection, not of capital.

The argument that slavery "fostered kindly feelings" would have been alien to most enslavers a century earlier. As historians have shown, in the nineteenth century proslavery ideology shifted from arguing that slavery was a necessary evil to contending that the institution was, in fact, a positive good.[362] Historians have rightly pointed to economic and political pressure to explain this shift, drawing particular attention to the 1808 end of the international slave trade, and intensifying abolitionist campaigns beginning in the 1830s. In between, evangelical revivals ushered in an attempt to "reform" slavery, accelerating the spread of paternalist ideals of slaveholding that claimed the plantation functioned as a family, centered around bonds of obligation and affection between enslaver and enslaved. Historians have long debated whether purportedly paternalist enslavers actually believed that slavery was a gentle system, whether they cared for the people they enslaved.[363] Most important for the purposes of

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[361] George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society* (Richmond: A. Morris, 1854), 10, 68.

[362] For more on this shift to "positive good" thinking, see Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[363] Eugene Genovese kicked off the historiographic debate over paternalism with *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, and historians ever since have tussled with his claims. While Genovese believed that enslavers sincerely believed that they were the benevolent (and beloved) protectors of the enslaved, most scholars since have highlighted the self-serving nature of paternalist claims. On paternalism, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), and *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery;* Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); Eugene D. Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*; James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982); Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration*. Walter Johnson's careful re-appraisal of Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* skillfully captures the stakes of the historiographic debate over paternalism. See Walter Johnson, "A Nettlesome Classic Turns Twenty-Five," *Common-place*, vol. 1, no. 4 (July 2001).

this dissertation, however, is not whether enslavers truly believed in their own benevolence, but rather the clear fact that paternalist ideology relied on emotion as a rhetorical tool.

Indeed, historians' social, political, and religious explanations for the rise of the positive good theory in the second third of the nineteenth century do not account for why the new argument rested so firmly on the production of *feeling*, as Hammond's words make especially clear. The widespread cultural valuation of a marketplace of feeling clarifies why positive good theorists embraced the language of sympathy and sentiment to make their case. That enslavers in the 1840s and 1850s contended that slavery "fostered kindly feelings" and protected enslaved people's "hopes and affections" suggests that this radical shift in paternalist ideology relied on an understanding of emotions and economics as inseparable and somewhat fungible. The argument that slavery produced positive emotions and affective bonds only gained ground because people were already familiar with (and open to) the idea that emotions were a telling barometer for evaluating economic systems. Even more, paternalists took up this emotional argument because formerly enslaved people and abolitionists both white and black were already arguing that slavery created despair and terror for enslaved people. The emotional lives of enslaved people prompted white Americans to see feelings as a judgment of an economic system.

The rise of paternalist thinking also reflects the particular significance of the marketplace of feeling to proslavery ideology in the decades leading up to the Civil War. In "domesticating" slavery and arguing that the plantation functioned as an affectionate family, paternalists contended that slavery constituted an economic *and* emotional economy, while other labor systems neglected the affective dimension. Public figures like Hammond and Fitzhugh argued that the institution produced positive emotions (like love and gratitude) while the free market of

waged labor produced anger and resentment, thereby driving class conflict.[364] Hammond explicitly made the distinction between affective and material production. He complained that "it is the prevailing vice and error of the age" to "bring everything to the standard of money," accusing abolitionists and free laborites of "mak[ing] gold and silver the great test of happiness." This was ridiculous, Hammond suggested: money was no measure of happiness. He indignantly argued that to free marketers, "it is altogether praiseworthy to pay the laborer a shilling a day, and let him starve on it," but "to supply all his wants abundantly, and at all times, yet withhold from him *money* [as enslavers did] is among 'the most reprobated crimes.'"[365] To Hammond, where wage labor crassly revolved around money, slavery revolved around affection, protection, and mutual obligation.

Claims that American slavery—with its violent commodification and forced labor of black bodies—was not about money are patently absurd to modern readers. Scholars of the new history of capitalism like Sven Beckert, Seth Rockman, and Edward Baptist have shown that

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[364] Michael E. Woods, *Emotional and Sectional Conflict in the Antebellum United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), chapter 1. This argument rested on many falsehoods, including James Henry Hammond's claim (conveniently ignoring the history of slave uprisings both large and small) that "So far from encouraging strife, such scenes of riot and bloodshed, as have within the last few years disgraced our Northern cities, and as you have lately witnessed in Birmingham and Bristol and Wales, not only never have occurred, but I will venture to say, never will occur in our slave-holding States." Hammond, "Hammond's Letters on Slavery," 114. For more on Hammond, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

[365] Hammond, "Hammond's Letters on Slavery," 162. Margaret Abruzzo has skillfully outlined the moral stakes of the slavery versus free labor debate. She contends, "Abolitionists, proslavery writers charged, wept sympathetic tears over accounts of slave suffering but did little to help enslaved blacks; tears did not actually bandage wounds or comfort slaves. Slavery—not emancipation—fulfilled the moral demands of sympathy by providing laborers with food, clothing, shelter, and security. Invoking the concept of active benevolence, slavery's defenders categorized abolitionists' sympathy as a false sympathy of mere emotional identification, akin to sympathizing with characters in a novel. Proslavery writers drew on widespread suspicions of sympathy that ended in emotion, not action. True benevolence, after all, '*acts,* as well as *feels'*; sympathy without action was simply self-absorbed." Margaret Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 135, 192-197.

proslavery claims that the institution was *not* rooted in the acquisitive ethos of capitalism were false. In fact, slavery rested on capitalism, and vice versa. Beckert and Rockman recently compiled an influential collection of essays to "show how slavery became central to and perhaps even constitutive of a particular moment in the history of capitalism and how slavery helped constitute capitalist modernity in the workplace, the counting house, the countryside, and the factory." They point to recent trends in the history of slavery that "recognize the technologies of capitalism as indispensable to transforming human beings into commodities," and demonstrate that "approaching slavery in transactional terms reveals the institution's fundamental consistency with the emerging business practices and market logic of capitalism, and even its constitutive role."[366] Scholars of slavery's capitalism convincingly argue that the anti-capitalist guise of paternalism was just that: a guise. And yet, these perceptive studies do not recognize a crucial fact that strengthens their depiction of slavery's capitalism: ostensibly proslavery arguments in the 1840s and 1850s were in fact a logical extension of marketplace of feeling ideology, particularly the importance of emotions to understanding and responding to economic change. In short, this new paternalist ideology rested on a concept already central to the expansion of capitalism in the early United States.

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[366] Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, "Introduction: Slavery's Capitalism," in *Slavery's Capitalism,* eds. Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, 5, 10-11. Also see Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014); Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh : The Value of the Enslaved, From Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Caitlin Rosenthal, *Accounting for Capitalism: Masters and Management* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Joshua D. Rothman, *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2012); Calvin Schermerhorn, *The Business of Slavery and the Rise of American Capitalism, 1815-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

The history of emotions is thus critical to the new history of slavery and capitalism. This chapter draws on paternalist polemics and enslavers' life writing to analyze the shift to "positive good" thinking in the 1840s and 1850s as a widespread campaign of self-interested emotion work. Arguing that slavery could "foster kindly feelings"—that it was about emotion, not just money—invited enslavers to feel good about themselves, and potentially overcome any unease or guilt they had about buying and selling human beings. This chapter focuses primarily on a central mechanism in the economy of slavery: sale. It argues that to convince themselves and others that slavery was a positive force in the marketplace of feeling, paternalist polemicists and enslavers attempted to establish and enforce an emotional regime for sale. Conceptualized by historian William Reddy, an emotional regime refers to the set of normative emotions within a society, as well as the rituals and emotives (or words people use to describe feelings) that people deploy to express and foster those normative feelings.[367] Emotional regimes are about power. Authorities try to solidify power by establishing *and* enforcing these emotional prescriptions—by controlling how people express emotions and to whom. When slavery's advocates claimed that slavery manufactured benevolent passions, they revealed their desire to establish an emotional regime whereby contentment, love, and gratitude were the normative emotions of slavery—despite all the evidence to the contrary, especially at the moment of sale.

To make this argument, paternalists had to contend that slavery could produce positive emotions for both enslavers and enslaved people. So they had to rhetorically minimize slavery's visibly *negative* emotional effects—from enslaved people's anger, grief, and fear, to enslavers' guilt and shame. Of course, not all enslavers felt guilty for either slaveholding or slave-selling;

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[367] William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 129.

many cared nothing at all for the emotional wellbeing of the people they treated as property. But evidence of the many ways that enslavers tried to manipulate the emotional experience of slave sale (both selling and being sold) suggests that many not only felt guilt, but actively sought ways to alleviate that guilt—including taking action that further inflicted emotional harm on enslaved people.

One of the primary means of alleviating guilt became paternalist fantasies like those that opened this chapter. Enslavers perpetuated narratives about the emotional parameters of slave-selling that invited them to absolve themselves of responsibility of traumatizing others. Foremost among these were fantasies about enslaved people's emotional states—from doubts that people of African descent had the biological capacity for profound feeling, to confidence that enslaved people were happy to be sold. Crucially, enslavers' attempts to establish an emotional regime of contentment and affection did *not* entail the kind of intense and draining emotion work we have seen other Americans undertaking in this period—like that demanded of merchants' wives, for instance. Enslavers did not do emotion work themselves. Instead, they tried to offload the affective labor of sale to others—including male relatives, overseers, and traders, and especially enslaved people themselves. Enslavers demanded that enslaved people suppress anger, fear, and sorrow about sale. Enslavers wanted enslaved people to see sale as an inescapable financial necessity, and to thus tamp down any grief or rage at the time of separation, and quickly move past any lingering emotions in the aftermath of a sale. Many enslavers used physical violence and terroristic threats to try to coerce this emotion work from enslaved people, punishing those

who cried out in grief or rage at the moment of sale and separation.[368] Enslavers thus expected enslaved people to absorb the emotional costs of enslavers' self-interested pursuit of wealth.

And yet, enslavers only *desired* this emotional regime of contentment. As the final chapter of this dissertation demonstrates, enslaved people's expressions of grief and anger—often despite the threat of punishment—reveal that enslavers were not fully successful in coercing this emotion work from the people they bought, sold, and (ab)used as property. Historian Erin Dwyer has questioned whether we should even use the concept of an emotional regime to characterize slavery in the nineteenth-century United States. She rightfully contends that such a top-down concept does not fully capture how enslaved people shaped the emotional politics of slavery, especially how their emotional expressions challenged enslavers' attempts to use feeling to bolster their authority.[369] And yet, it is still important to understand how enslavers *aspired* to establish and enforce an emotional regime. Their efforts to control the emotional expressions of sale demonstrate their understanding that controlling a society's emotional rules was crucial to building and maintaining power. That they felt this way so strongly about the emotions of sale reveals how important emotions were to slavery as a coerced, exploitative labor system. Enslavers made emotional control central to the project of white supremacy. But for the institution to live up to what enslavers claimed was its purported emotional promise of fostering kindly feelings, they had to guard—often through terror and affective discipline—the emotional expressions of sale.

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[368] This approach conforms to Reddy's definition of a *strict* emotional regime, in which "those who refuse to make the normative utterances…are faced with the prospect of severe penalties." Ibid., 125.
[369] Erin Austin Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions: The Emotional Politics of Slavery" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2012), 4, 7.

Historian Bianca Premo has called for historians to contend with our own emotional responses while studying the history of slavery. She argues that Reddy's concept of the emotional regime enables us to interrogate our *own* prioritization of feeling when it comes to understanding historical slavery. She argues, "if we interrogate closely our own tendency to empathize with slaves' quest for freedom while recoiling from slave owners' materially interested emotional attachments to the humans they held in bondage, a more disturbing underside of our own, modern emotional regime might be exposed." For Premo, this disturbing underside is "our own insistence on recognizing the emotional history of slavery only if it is evacuated of any feelings and attachments that are not compatible with our modern desire for liberty and our own sense of ourselves."[370] It might not feel good to probe enslavers' clearly false and exploitative claim that slavery "fostered kindly feelings." And yet, doing so provides invaluable insight for not only the history of slavery but also the broader history of capitalism in the nineteenth century. Interrogating enslavers' claims about kindness and affection does not in any way suggest that human bondage in the nineteenth-century South was gentler or more benevolent than the brutal reality exposed by enslaved people, abolitionists, and modern historians. Rather, delineating enslavers' affective fantasies about sale allows us to see how enslavers used emotion—especially its perceived relevance for evaluating economic systems—to defend slavery and thus advance the cultural work of white supremacy. The history of slavery and capitalism is incomplete without considering the institution's emotional economy, both perceived and real.

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[370] Bianca Premo, "As if She Were My Own: Love and Law in the Slave Society of Eighteenth-Century Peru," in *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas*, eds. Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018), 72-3, 80, 82.

To understand paternalist arguments about the marketplace of feeling of sale, we must first consider the role enslavers believed emotions played in racial slavery more broadly. Arguing that slavery produced positive emotions for both enslavers and enslaved people marked new territory in proslavery thought. In the eighteenth century, the prevailing white assumption was that black bodies had limited capacity to feel emotion. This hypothesis was a tool of domination and exploitation, as enslavers argued that an unfeeling nature suited people of African descent for enslavement. For instance, eighteenth-century British slavers capturing women on the west coast of Africa reported to Parliament that they could do so easily because African women did not express emotional attachment to their children in the way that Europeans did.[371]

In the North American colonies, enslavers crafted similar fantasies. Take, for instance, Thomas Jefferson, who did not believe slavery was a positive good yet worked to ameliorate rather than abolish the institution, from which he directly profited both economically and emotionally. In his 1781 *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson argued that enslaved people's emotions were shallow—composed "more of sensation than reflection," which he believed was "fixed in nature." "Love," Jefferson contended, "seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation."[372] Even more, he observed, "their

[371] Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property*, 120.
[372] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia,* ed. William Peden (1787; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 138. Erin Dwyer notes that some white thinkers believed there was "a race-based emotional spectrum," especially when it came to emotional control. On this spectrum, Native Americans were seen as unsusceptible to human passion, people of African as highly susceptible, and whites comfortably in the middle, capable of emotional control and the proper amount of passion. Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 45-46, 82.

griefs are transient," and "those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them."[373]

The idea that people of African descent had limited emotional capacity carried particular potency for proslavery ideology after the end of the international slave trade in 1808. The interstate and intrastate slave trade boomed, and enslavers frequently separated enslaved families through sale. The idea that people of African descent had limited capacity to feel became a way for enslavers and proslavery thinkers to rhetorically diminish the effects of sale. In 1853, one South Carolinian described what he perceived to be enslaved people's "want of domestic affections, and insensibility to the ties of kindred."[374] Around the same time, a Georgia enslaver declared that among enslaved people, "passions and affections are seldom very strong, and are never very lasting," and "consequently he is cruel to his own offspring, and suffers little by separation from them." This enslaver further insisted that whatever pain an enslaved person felt would be easily diminished by time and distraction. "The dance will allay his most poignant grief," he hypothesized, "and a few days [will] blot out the memory of his most bitter bereavement."[375] Claiming that people of African descent felt less than white people, slavery's advocates argued that shallow love and fleeting grief meant that people of African descent could more easily endure experiences that might shatter those with more "advanced" emotional capacities.[376] The self-serving nature of these racist claims is clear: if family separations only

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[373] Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia,* 139.
[374] Harper, "Harper's Memoir on Slavery," 56.
[375] Thomas R. R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: T. & J. W. Johnson & Co., 1858), 39.
[376] Williams, *Help Me to Find My People,* 98, 110. Also see Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration*, 58.

briefly and minimally distressed enslaved people, then why should enslavers distress *themselves* about separating enslaved families?[377]

And yet, not all advanced this limited feeling argument. By the 1840s and 1850s, the nation's fixation on emotion—particularly broad conversations about the need for a marketplace of feeling to produce beneficial emotions, and the spread of paternalist ideology across the South—meant that some enslavers embraced new opinions about enslaved people's emotional lives. Since the eighteenth century, abolitionists had testified to the pain and suffering caused by enslavement and white supremacy. In 1762, Anthony Benezet argued that people of African descent had the "same natural Affections, and areas susceptible to Pain and Grief as [white people], that therefore the bringing and keeping them in Bondage, is an Instance of Oppression and Injustice of the most grie[v]ous Nature."[378] Attention to enslaved people's emotion intensified in the late 1840s, when class conflict in Europe cast a spotlight on the clash between labor and capital, and raised fears for the ruling classes about the affective relationships between "employer" and "employee." More than ever, *laborers'* emotions merited attention.[379] In this context where laborers' happiness mattered, where Americans sought a productive marketplace

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[377] Michael Tadman, "The Reputation of the Slave Trader in Southern History and the Social Memory of the South," *American Nineteenth Century History*, vol. 8, iss. 3 (2007), 250. Elsewhere Tadman specifies that "Slaveholder concerns about the possibility of anything like deep emotional suffering among their enslaved people seems mostly to have been limited to individual favourites and to particularly valuable slaves." Tadman, "Reputation," 264. Some observers at the time were aware of the self-serving nature of enslavers' claims about enslaved people's emotions. For instance, while travelling through the South, Frederick Law Olmsted observed: "it is frequently remarked by Southerners, in palliation of the cruelty of separating relatives, that the affections of negroes for one another are very slight." Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States 1853-1854, with Remarks on their Economy* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856), 555-556.

[378] Benezet quoted in Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 22. On the role of affect in transatlantic abolitionism, see Stephen Ahern, ed., *Affect and Abolition in the Anglo-Atlantic, 1770-1830* (London: Routledge Ltd., 2013).

[379] Woods, *Emotional and Sectional Conflict,* 39-45. Woods argues that this attention to free and enslaved workers' happiness (or lack thereof) evolved into a debate over "the political economy of contentment."

of feeling, and where abolitionists (especially black abolitionists) testified to the emotional consequences of slavery, many enslavers rethought their beliefs about enslaved people's emotional capacity. Enslaved people's emotion not only existed, the new argument went, but should be read as signs of enslavers' benevolence and the institution's positive affective effects. As historian Michael Woods has astutely recognized, the phrase "happy and contented" became omnipresent in antebellum proslavery publications and enslavers' unpublished life writing. So proliferated the myth of the happy slave.[380]

That paternalist ideology in the 1840s and 1850s espoused two seemingly contradictory claims about emotions—that people of African descent were incapable of feeling deeply, and that enslavers cultivated strong affective relationships with the people they enslaved—underscores just how much the debate over slavery as an economic and (im)moral system took place in emotional terms. Sale in the age of paternalism brought these two lines of thinking crashing together. Paternalists argued that the plantation should function as an extended family with enslavers governing and providing for enslaved people as they would their own flesh and blood: with firmness and affection. Historians have underscored the self-serving nature of this image of "the family, black and white," demonstrating that familial language appeared most often in proslavery polemics and that, in everyday life, the brutality that many enslavers inflicted on enslaved people negates the possibility that enslavers viewed them as actual family members.[381] Indeed, when selling enslaved people, many enslavers who claimed that they cultivated strong and long-lasting affectionate bonds with the people they enslaved suddenly espoused the seemingly contradictory position that when sold, those people's grief was shallow

[380] Ibid., 41.
[381] See especially the work of Edward Baptist, David Brion Davis, Walter Johnson, and James Oakes.

and brief. Sale thus clarifies what unified the two seemingly contradictory understandings of enslaved people's emotional lives: both lines of thinking invited enslavers to feel good about themselves, even (or perhaps especially) at the moment of sale.

The positive good theory for slavery made direct claims about the marketplace of feeling and the emotions that *should* define life—including sale—for both enslavers and enslaved people. Michael Woods has shown how advice literature for enslavers drew on domestic sentimentalism to urge enslavers to run their homes and plantations to produce benevolent emotions (like love and gratitude) rather than antisocial emotions (like anger)—a lofty goal to which enslavers failed to live up.[382] Seeking evidence for the claim that enslavers were benevolent protectors of helpless enslaved people, paternalist advice writers urged enslavers to consciously cultivate the emotional states of the people they enslaved by repressing cruel passions and expressing affection towards them. By the 1840s, slavery's advocates consistently argued that enslavers were responsible for producing happiness among the people they held as property. In the words of one Episcopal minister, slaves had "delicate and sensitive" feelings that "demand to be respected."[383] By the eve of the Civil War, a Methodist writer warned that neglecting the emotional wellbeing of enslaved people had grave consequences for enslavers: "the master who ignores [enslaved people's emotional states], and proceeds upon brute principles, will vex his own soul and render his servant worthless and wretched. Love and fear, a regard for public opinion, gratitude, shame, the conjugal, parental, and filial feelings, these all

[382] Woods, *Emotional and Sectional Conflict*, esp. chapter two. Also see Phillip Davis Troutman, "Slave Trade and Sentiment in Antebellum Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2000).
[383] George W. Freeman, *The Rights and Duties of Slaveholders: Two Discourses Delivered on Sunday, November 27, 1836, in Christ Church, Raleigh, North Carolina* (Raleigh: J. Gales & Son, 1836), 28.

must be appealed to and cultivated."[384] "Cultivating" emotion in enslaved people charged enslavers with great responsibility in slavery's marketplace of feeling: they had to guide the production of feelings that would, supposedly, benefit everyone.

As the opening of this chapter suggested, by the 1850s, many paternalists argued that the institution was *primarily* a marketplace of feeling, not a material market. How did this argument hold up with respect to sale, the financial transaction at the heart of a slave economy? Thinking about sale as a marketplace of feeling was crucial for this rhetorical endeavor. Some people argued that enslavers financially martyred themselves to protect the emotional wellbeing of enslaved people. In 1853, "A Lady of Georgia" argued in popular Southern agricultural magazine *De Bow's Review* that many enslavers "sacrifice[d] pecuniary interest and personal pleasure to their affection for slaves."[385] A popular minister made a similar argument in 1859, suggesting that enslavers "part with other property to save their servants; and, if compelled to part with them, willingly sacrifice upon their market value to secure for them good homes and keep them in families."[386] Such statements claimed that enslavers prioritized enslaved people's emotions *over* their own financial interest when it came to sale—that, to enslavers, the production of positive emotions for enslaved people was more important than personal financial profit. In letters to other enslavers, white southerners deployed this narrative to describe their own approach to buying and selling: their motivation was not personal profit, but instead

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[384] H. N. McTyeire, "Plantation Life—Duties and Responsibilities," in *De Bow's Review*, no. 29 (September 1860), 357. In an earlier essay, "Master and Servant," published in 1851, McTyeire argued that the enslaver had "feelings to cultivate and a part to perform" towards those he enslaved. H.N. McTyeire, "Master and Servant," in *Duties of Masters to Servants: Three Premium Essays* (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1851), 8.

[385] "A Lady of Georgia," "Southern Slavery and Its Assailants," *De Bow's Review* 15, no. 5 (Nov. 1853), 492, quoted in Woods, *Emotional and Sectional Conflict,* 78.

[386] H. N. McTyeire, *Duties of Christian Masters* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1859), 114.

producing enslaved people's happiness. One Louisiana enslaver told a friend that though prices were too high, he still "may be induced from feeling to buy" because some of the people on offer were "very much allied to mine by both blood and intermarriage." Of course, this purchase did not entirely go against the man's own financial interest; he also mused that he had "one vacant improved plantation, and could work more hands with advantage."[387]

As historians of the slave trade like Michael Tadman and Stephen Deyle have shown, claims that enslavers financially martyred themselves on the altar of enslaved people's emotional needs were both self-serving and patently false.[388] Individual enslavers at times put enslaved people's desires ahead of their own financial interest—purchasing a favored person's relatives even though it may not have been a profitable investment, for instance. But the market for slaves was not defined by buyers and sellers sacrificing their financial interest to serve enslaved people's emotional interests. Instead, the basic facts and figures for the antebellum slave trade show "for the substantial majority of slaveholders, an easy resort to self-interest, sale, and separation."[389] Even more, historians of capitalism like Edward Baptist and Bonnie Martin have shown how financially struggling enslavers aggressively used the liquidity of enslaved human

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[387] Richard T. Archer quoted in Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 108. Johnson also cites another Louisiana enslaver who claimed his "principal inducement" to buy an enslaved man named William was feeling, since William was the husband of a woman the enslaver already owned. The feeling driving the purchase here was twofold—the affection between William and his wife, and the feelings of benevolence and care that supposedly pushed the enslaver to protect their relationship.

[388] Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Robert H. Gudmestad, *A Troublesome Commerce: The Transformation of the Interstate Slave Trade* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); Walter Johnson, ed., *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves*.

[389] Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves,* 133. Tadman argues that "where white emigrants were at all serious about reuniting families, the matter of dollars and morality then arose." He concludes that "in instances of this sort, white priorities ranked either the convenience of keeping the services of a valuable slave or the inconvenience of settling at an unattractive price higher than the moral worth of slave families. Evidence on the fate of families in sales does indeed suggest that white migrants and the slaveholding class generally set a low priority on the slave family." Ibid*.,* 158.

property to boost their own financial prospects.[390] More often than not, enslavers sacrificed the families and emotional needs of enslaved people to serve their own financial interest, not the other way around. And yet, it is significant that paternalists drew so heavily on emotion to try to defend slavery as a financial institution. Claiming that enslavers valued feeling over profit buttressed the racist, self-interested argument that slavery was the economic system that most effectively produced positive emotions for American society.

To make the argument that slavery produced positive feelings, paternalists had to address situations in which the institution clearly produced trauma for enslaved people—such as sale. Paternalists argued that these instances were aberrations. They claimed enslavers did everything they could to protect enslaved families, and only separated them when forced to by conditions outside their control, such as economic exigency or enslaved people's misbehavior. Paternalists tried to claim that, in the words of one Southern novelist, "no step was so unpopular at the South, when voluntary, or considered so indicative of utter ruin, when involuntary, as the sale of slaves."[391] This myth of the reluctant slave seller proliferated in "anti-Tom" novels published as a backlash against Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851-2), and its amplification of abolitionist claims that slavery destroyed domestic feeling and traumatized enslaved people.

Novelist Maria McIntosh clearly articulated the myth of the reluctant slave seller in *The Lofty and the Lowly* (1853). The slaveholding protagonist informs a greedy Northern capitalist (who had been eager to sell the protagonist's property to a profit-hungry slave trader) that he can have no idea of the "feelings" of a "Southern gentleman towards his people." When the

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[390] Baptist, "Toxic Debt, Liar Loans"; Martin, "Slavery's Invisible Engine"; Schermerhorn, *Money over Mastery*.

[391] Maria J. McIntosh, *The Lofty and the Lowly, or Good in All and None All Good, vol. 1* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1853), 294.

Northerner demanded to know why, then, enslavers sold enslaved people, the protagonist responds with a clear articulation of the myth of the benevolent, reluctant slave seller:

> His people are the last property a true Southerner will part with, but misfortune may leave him no choice. In that case it is the custom either to sell plantation, negroes and all, just as they stand, to some one who is believed to be humane; a belief which would overbear many hundreds higher bid from another applicant; or where the property must be separated, to make that separation by families, and sell these even at some sacrifice to those to whom they themselves express a desire to belong.[392]

The rhetorical power of a marketplace of feeling is clear: "a true Southerner" should let concerns for humane treatment "overbear" the opportunity to make more money. Even if financial necessity forced sale on reluctant enslavers, the story went, enslavers put the emotional needs of enslaved people before their own financial interests by doing their utmost to secure a kind buyer or sell families intact.

As Michael Tadman has definitively shown, the claim that sale only resulted from economic necessity was false. In fact, "patterns of private slave purchase and the general context of planter profitability suggest that sales to the trader came essentially, not from distressful emergencies and necessities, but from the temptations of attractive speculative opportunities."[393] In the 1840s and 1850s, slavery's advocates tried to use these self-serving myths to shape a discursive shield against abolitionist attacks on slavery's dehumanizing effects. These myths also served an important emotional function for enslavers themselves. The narrative of sale forced by economic exigency conveniently displaced blame by neglecting the reality that not all debts were honorably accrued, and that enslavers' own misbehavior often caused any economic distress that did in fact lead to sale. The myth of the reluctant slave seller is thus one example of the stories enslavers told themselves to try to ease guilt or anxiety they felt about the consequences of

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[392] Ibid., 36.
[393] Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves,* 118.

holding people as property. Walter Johnson has argued that enslavers "construct[ed] themselves out of slaves"—that in the slave market, enslavers not only purchased enslaved people but fantasies about themselves as benevolent, caring, and independent "masters" acting in the enslaved people's interests.[394] Myths about sale as an aberration forced by economic necessity reveal enslavers' desire to *retain* possession of those fantasies even as they sold the people they claimed to be protecting.

Some paternalist fiction writers suggested that Southern white women had an important role to play in ensuring slavery rested on affective and not just financial considerations—that they, like merchants' wives in the North, had an important role to play in the marketplace of feeling. Much like panic fiction about merchant wives, panic fiction about slavery held up women as a balm for economic ills. Literary scholar Mary Templin has observed that novels about indebted enslavers often included female characters who demonstrated sympathy for the people they enslaved, intervening to prevent enslavers' financial woes from destroying enslaved characters' happiness.[395] Again, *The Lofty and the Lowly* provides an illustrative example—not least of all because Maria McIntosh herself was the daughter of a slave-owning family whose financial struggles drove her to take up her pen. When the slaveholding family at the heart of the novel is in danger of losing their estate to debt, the young head of household Donald Montrose accepts the likelihood that the enslaved community will fall into the hands of a "remorseless villain" who would not protect them. His mother and sisters, however, are motivated by what McIntosh called "womanly feeling." They are horrified at Donald's selfish passivity. "Have you thought of your people," his mother demands, "of those whom your father commended to you

[394] Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 88 and chapter three, "Making a World Out of Slaves."
[395] Templin, *Panic Fiction*, esp. chapter four, "Threats from Outside: Defending Southern Economy."

with his dying breath?" Donald's mother and sister offer to risk their own financial assets to save the estate from falling into undesirable hands. When Donald tries to refuse, his mother impatiently replies, "It is not for you, Donald; it is for the servants born in our house."[396] *The Lofty and the Lowly* thus depicted female enslavers as sympathetic allies willing to push slaveholding men to feel guilty about their risky or selfish behavior, and even to sacrifice their own finances to protect enslaved people's happiness. Anti-*Tom* authors like McIntosh found in female characters a vehicle for contending that, with women's moral guidance, slavery could be a commerce of affection, not just money.

Historians have refuted the nineteenth-century claim that women's supposed gentle nature resulted in kind "mistresses" who stayed far away from the more brutal aspects of slavery. Outside the pages of novels, white women wielded the whip and inflicted psychological punishment as much as white men did.[397] Some women sold enslaved people as punishment, specifically to inflict emotional harm. Historian Stephanie Jones-Rogers has pointed to Leah Woods, who found an enslaved man named Buck "insolent and highly provoking" and consequently determined to punish his misbehavior by selling him out of state, "far off from his kindred and those with whom he was familiar."[398] The cruelty was the point. Other women arranged sales to protect their *own* feelings—like when a woman convinced her husband to sell any enslaved women whom he forced to bear his children. White women not only failed to ensure that slavery produced positive emotions for enslaved people, they were often the architects of intentional trauma.

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[396] McIntosh, *The Lofty and the Lowly, vol 1*, 290, 294, 291.
[397] Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*; Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property.*
[398] Leah Woods quoted in Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property,* 142-143.

Some white women even specifically chastised family members for letting feelings for enslaved people interfere with the pursuit of profit—in short, for treating slavery as a marketplace of feeling rather than a material market. In 1829, for instance, Virginian Peggy Nicholas warned her daughter Jane that "indulging" her affection for enslaved people was detrimental to Jane's ability to provide for her own children. Buying enslaved people's loved ones to reunite families, she warned, would "more than eat up the proffits [*sic*] of your estate."[399] Nicholas contended that Jane should weigh her affection for her own children (including her responsibility to provide for them) *more* than her feelings for the people she enslaved. It was not just women who worried in this way. In the throes of their family's debt crisis, Lewis Mason's brother-in-law tried to warn him off an ill-advised financial plan, worrying, "I think your tenderness for the negroes is at the bottom of that scheme. Do not let that influence you."[400] Affection for enslaved people was natural and encouraged, but some southerners worried that acting on that affection went too far when it contravened a white family's financial interests—in short, when slavery's emotional economy interfered with its financial economy. Warnings not to let feelings for enslaved people interfere with financial concerns put in sharp relief the tension between slavery as a marketplace of feeling and an economic market.

Still, many enslavers tried to maintain fantasies of benevolence by blaming outsiders for negatively influencing the institution's marketplace of feeling. Paternalists blamed abolitionists for injecting acrimony into an otherwise peaceful economy of affection. "In this cold, calculating, ambitious world of ours," James Henry Hammond argued, "there are few ties more

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[399] Margaret Smith Nicholas to Jane Hollins Nicholas Randolph, January 17, 1829, Papers of the Randolph Family of Edgehill. For more on this episode, see Lucia Stanton, *"Those Who Labor for My Happiness": Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 207-208.

[400] Roscoe Briggs Heath to Lewis Mason, January 1856, MFP.

heartfelt, or of more benignant influence, than those which mutually bind the master and slave." And yet, he bemoaned, "The unholy purpose of the abolitionists, is to destroy it by defiling it; to infuse into it the gall and bitterness which rankled in their own envenomed bosoms; to poison the minds of the master and the servant; turn love to hatred."[401] In Hammond's rhetorical framing, abolitionists, not enslavers, produced any emotional trauma attributable to slavery.

Paternalists who wanted to believe slavery produced positive emotions blamed any negative consequences of sale on traders. Many sale-friendly enslavers would likely have agreed with the assertion of minister H.N. McTyeire that "the monstrous wrong and cruelty" of separating enslaved families was "not necessary to slavery" but rather an "abuse"—a perversion—of a system that was, at its heart, benevolent.[402] McTyeire provides a clear example of how paternalist ideologues tried to shift the negative emotions associated with sale (especially when sales broke up families) onto the slave trader. Calling traders "an anomaly in the social life of the South," McTyeire argued that traders "coldly, calculatingly" sought profit above all else, "regardless of violence done to personal feelings and the tenderest family ties." He claimed that slave traders stripped the emotional considerations from sales, treating them as coldhearted capitalist transactions while enslavers, he insisted, were becoming more and more distraught at the destruction of enslaved families. "Among slaveholders," McTyeire contended, "this sense of the monstrous wrong and cruelty of tearing infant children away from parents, and putting

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[401] Hammond also argued that it was only since abolitionists began attacking enslavers that they had "to abandon our efforts to attach them to us, and control them through their affections and pride. We have to rely more and more on the power of fear. We must, in all our intercourse with them, assert and maintain strict mastery, and impress it on them that they are slaves. This is painful to us." Hammond, "Hammond's Letters on Slavery," 161, 126-127.

[402] McTyeire, *Duties of Christian Masters*, 111. For more on enslavers scapegoating slave traders, see Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 25; Tadman, "The Reputation of the Slave Trader"; Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves,* chapter five.

asunder husband and wife, not only prevails but deepens."[403] Scapegoating slave traders for the traumas of sale was especially appealing for enslavers who sold members of their supposed "family," whom they were theoretically duty-bound to protect. Blaming the traumas of sale and separation on external factors invited enslavers to absolve themselves of guilt or fear about their failure to live up to the paternalist ideal.

Some southerners even used the paternalist ideal to reorient the valence of selling enslaved people to settle debts—to recast it not as a traumatic event for enslaved people but as a happy gift (and thus a positive force within the broader marketplace of feeling). During the 1832 Virginia legislature's debate over slavery after Nat Turner's Rebellion, one proslavery advocate defended the internal slave trade by arguing that an impoverished enslaver was "sure to sell" enslaved people "to someone who is able" to better provide for them.[404] Similarly, in *Duties of Christian Masters* (1859), H. N. McTyeire argued that enslaved people should be grateful when struggling enslavers sold them. He contended that "Christian duties and his worldly interests bind the master" to provide for enslaved people, which meant that "[i]f, on account of his management or soil or trade, he cannot do these things, he cannot do his duty, and ought to dissolve the relation out of which it owes." In this case, "[b]y a commercial necessity the servant passes into the hands of another master, who is able to maintain him."[405] In this view, sale for

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[403] McTyeire, *Duties of Christian Masters*, 109, 111.

[404] Brown cited in James Oakes, "'Whom Have I Oppressed?': The Pursuit of Happiness and the Happy Slave," in James Horn, Jan Lewis, and Peter S. Onuf, eds., *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 230. Oakes argues that "in reducing human happiness to its material components, slavery's defenders ripped happiness from its broader emotional and political contexts." Oakes, "'Whom Have I Oppressed,'" 237. For more on this debate, see Joseph Clarke Robert, ed., *The Road from Monticello: A Study of the Virginia Slaver Debate of 1832* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1941). For an intellectual history of the status of enslavement and its relation to happiness, see Don Herzog, *Happy Slaves: A Critique of Consent Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

[405] McTyeire, *Duties of Christian Masters*, 70-71.

debt became a mechanism that ensured enslaved people's comfort and happiness. McTyeire asserted that sale produced contentment, not agony, and thus could be a positive force within slavery's marketplace of feeling. In this case, enslavers not only retained feelings of benevolent mastery despite sale, they *extended* those self-congratulatory feelings *through* sale.

Even if they did not espouse the belief that slavery was a positive good, enslavers who believed they could ameliorate the institution (and thereby feel better about their participation) rhetorically cast sale as consensual contract.[406] James Madison even built the language of consent into his 1834 will, which stated it was his "desire" that none of the enslaved people he transferred to his widow "should be sold without his or her consent."[407] The ways in which enslavers mixed the language of consent with the language of feeling to describe slave sale had larger implications for understanding slavery as an economic institution, especially how slavery fit into the marketplace of feeling. When Ellen Coolidge moved from Virginia to the free state of Massachusetts, she used the language of consent—of choice, desire, and willingness—to frame how she wanted to handle the future of a woman she owned named Sally. Sally's "own wishes," Coolidge firmly held, "must direct the disposition that is made of her…if she wishes to be sold let her chuse her own master, if to be hired she should have the same liberty, or at least not be

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[406] On amelioration, see Christa Dierksheide, "'The great improvement and civilization of that race': Thomas Jefferson and the 'Amelioration' of Slavery, ca. 1770-1826," *Early American Studies,* vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring 2008), 165-197. There is, of course, similarity between antislavery approaches to amelioration and paternalist proslavery claims that slavery was being reformed. Both claimed immediate improvements, but neither took any direct, meaningful action towards the abolition of slavery in the United States.

[407] James Madison's will quoted in Drew R. McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 318. Even before he built the language of consent into his will, Madison reassured himself that slaves he sold to a relative "gladly consent to be transferred," and that he only agreed to sell them because they were unwilling to go along with his colonization scheme to emigrate to Liberia. James Madison to Edward Coles, October 3, 1834, quoted in ibid., 257-258.

sent any where she is unwilling to go." Coolidge also framed the importance of Sally's choice in terms of Sally's own feelings: "I would not for the world that after living with me fifteen years any kind of violence should be done to her feelings."[408] Coolidge's insistence that Sally have the "liberty" to "chuse her own master" reflects an effort to ameliorate slavery by liberalizing the master-slave social contract. Rhetorically treating enslaved people as consenting beings and speaking, as Ellen Coolidge did, of their "liberty" to "chuse" implied (to a limited and contradictory degree) treating them as liberal actors within the marketplace—of treating sale as a kind of three-way contract between seller, buyer, and commodified human.[409] By relying on enslaved people's emotional expressions as evidence of their willingness to be sold, enslavers tried to liberalize slavery *through* emotions.

Not all enslavers cared about consent in the context of sale; the massive proliferation of the domestic slave trade indicates as much. For those enslavers who *did* care about enslaved people's willingness to be sold, even that concern did not always prevent them from selling slaves without consent. Still, many enslavers made claims about consensual sale, especially those who wanted to see themselves as benevolent protectors of enslaved people's physical and emotional wellbeing. For some enslavers, this claim was specious; they did not care about the feelings or wishes of the people they enslaved, and claimed consent primarily to pacify outside observers who decried the evils of slavery. Historian Sonia Tycko has argued that in the context of forced labor in the seventeenth-century British world, the concept of consent could be a

[408] Ellen Randolph Coolidge to Martha Jefferson Randolph, June 26-27, 1825, ECC.
[409] On contractualism in the nineteenth century, see Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Era of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

conservative force that upheld existing power structures.[410] Consent represented a similarly conservative force in the context of slave sale in the nineteenth-century United States. Some enslavers did in fact try to take enslaved people's wishes into account when planning sales, asking enslaved people to choose, accept, or reject potential new owners, and sometimes pulling out of sales if enslaved people protested. These enslavers drew on the language of willingness to cast their treatment of enslaved people as humane and consensual, saying they would only purchase enslaved people who were "willing to live with me," or claiming that they gave enslaved people "the liberty of choosing masters."[411] Even traders used this rhetoric of consent to attract the business of paternalistic owners. One Baltimore trader advertised that he "would not buy to separate families without their consent."[412]

Consent is a difficult and troubling concept to contend with in the context of slavery. In the words of Saidiya Hartman, "how does one grapple with issues of consent and will when the negation or restricted recognition of these terms determines the meaning of enslavement?"[413] Scholars like Hartman, Marisa Fuentes, and Emily Owens have carefully and eloquently interrogated the meaning and cultural work of consent in their studies of the power, violence, and coercion of sex in the context of slavery.[414] This work illuminates the purpose of "consent" to

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[410] Sonia Tycko, "Captured Consent: Bound Service and Freedom of Contract in Early Modern England and English America" (Ph.D. diss. Harvard University, 2019). Also see Holly Brewer, *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); François Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington's Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), especially the introduction "Consent, Slavery, and the Problem of American Nationalism."

[411] Both quotations from Virginia enslavers cited in Troutman, "Slave Trade and Sentiment in Antebellum Virginia," 183-186.

[412] John Busk quoted in Deyle, *Carry Me Back*, 222.

[413] Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 181.

[414] Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Emily A. Owens, "Fantasies of Consent: Black Women's Sexual Labor in 19th Century New Orleans" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2015).

enslavers when it came to sale—especially in the context of the marketplace of feeling.[415] As Hartman has argued, from the perspective of the dominant slaveholding class, the idea of enslaved people's consent often represented "a strategic disavowal of power that masks the violence of property relations and the despotism of the domestic institution behind the guise of the subaltern's willed surrender and consent to subjection."[416] Emily Owens has identified consent as an "affective object" for white men who paid women of color for sex in antebellum New Orleans. The idea that women of color were willing participants invited those men to feel a certain way about their own actions—and Owens argues that procuring that feeling was one of their primary goals for the transaction. In Owens' words,

> when a white man bought sex with a woman of color, he was not only buying the sex act, but the consent that was implied by the contracted purchase. And when he bought consent, he was buying the fantasy of a relation shaped by the free will of two equal subjects. Thus even as he entered into a relationship with a woman of color whose social location determined her vulnerability with respect to him, he could buy the feeling that he was not dominating her.[417]

Just as the concept of affective objects makes clear for Owens *why* white men paid for sex when "the legal and social world in which these men lived unequivocably [*sic*] sanctioned forced sex with women of color," so too does considering the affective dimensions of consent make clear *why* some enslavers wanted to believe that enslaved people consented to their own

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[415] In using the scholarship on consent and sex to understand the meaning of consent within sale, I am not claiming the two contexts are equivalent. To do so would be to erase the violent contingencies of both slavery and sexual commerce for women of color (especially black women), and to neglect the specific, constant danger these women experienced in a world shaped by white men's desire for pleasure, power, and profit. Rather, I invoke this work because it is imperative to interrogating the broader emotional economy of slavery of which both sex and sale were a part. Considering the emotional dimensions of enslavers' claims that enslaved people could consent to sale helps us better understand the nefarious and intimate workings of white supremacy in the era of slavery.

[416] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection,* 103.

[417] Owens, "Fantasies of Consent," 22. Emphasis added.

sale.[418] Enslavers were not required by law or social convention to obtain enslaved people's consent before selling them. So, what value did that "consent" offer to enslavers?[419] Again, the answer is *affective* value. The idea of consent in the context of sale was valuable to enslavers because it invited them to feel that they were not cruelly exerting power over enslaved people they were meant to protect, or sacrificing enslaved people's emotions to enslavers' financial interest. If enslavers believed that enslaved people wanted to be sold, then enslavers could feel that they were taking care of enslaved people's emotional needs—that their economic actions did not produce negative emotions. Understanding the idea of consent as an affective object illuminates how enslavers justified and perpetuated white supremacy on an intimate register. In claiming that enslaved people consented to sale, enslavers invested in a fantasy of non-domination and good will that protected their *own* feelings. Viewing enslaved people's consent as an affective object reveals how the idea of consensual sale functioned within the marketplace of feeling of slavery: it produced positive emotions for enslavers themselves.[420]

These fantasies served as enslavers' tools for emotion work in the quest to produce positive emotions through slavery. However, for enslavers, maintaining fantasies of benevolence was not the kind of difficult, draining, and self-abnegating emotion work undertaken by merchants' wives. Enslavers rarely took on such difficult work themselves. Some tried to remove

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[418] Ibid., 80.

[419] Here it is imperative to remember Emily Owens' crucial point that within the racialized sexual commerce, "there was no pure consent—no pleasure, no freedom—that was not already shaped by the market through which it was articulated." Ibid., iii. I argue the same is true of the slave economy more broadly: we, as well as historical actors themselves, can only understand the idea of enslaved people consenting to sale within the confines (and limited possibilities) of slavery as a financial system and set of power relations. Recognizing these limitations helps illuminate the crucial *affective* dimensions of consent within the slave trade.

[420] For more on this self-interested emotion work, see Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 109-111; Troutman, "Slave Trade and Sentiment," 187.

enslaved people's emotions from the moment of sale, thereby, in Walter Johnson's words, "keeping their business free of the feelings of the people they sold," and pretending their financial decisions did not have traumatic consequences.[421] Many enslavers used the elements of surprise and deceit to ensure that the moment they removed an enslaved person from their property would not be marred by aggrieved cries. This was especially true when enslavers wrenched children from mothers. For instance, Charity Bowery recalled how her enslaver sent her on an errand so Bowery would not be present when a trader took her son, Richard. Her enslaver, Bowery bitterly attested, "didn't want to be troubled with our cries."[422] When Sella Martin's owner sold him and his siblings and sent a trader to deliver the news to their mother in the middle of the night, Martin's mother desperately tried to speak with her owner in person, to hold her accountable and "learn from her mistress the reason of these unlooked for and undeserved proceedings." But, Martin recalled, their enslaver "refused to see her or speak to her, and sent for the negro trader to come and drag her from the house."[423] Sella Martin's owner thus refused to engage in any exchange—of words or emotions—with the woman whose children she sold. She refused to hear Martin's mother's grief or anger, or provide any potentially mollifying (or indeed further infuriating) explanation for the sudden and secretive sale. The women who owned Charity Bowery and Sella Martin *knew* that separating mothers and children would be heartbreaking for enslaved people, but they took proactive steps to hide or even deny the trauma they wrought.

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[421] Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 39-40.
[422] Charity Bowery in John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 265. For more on enslavers tricking enslaved mothers into leaving their children for a few hours so the children could be sold in their absence, see Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 39.
[423] Sella Martin in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 704.

Sella Martin's memory of his enslaver's deceit—of her not only refusing to see or hear his mother's emotional pleas, but also sending a slave trader to do the dirty work of delivering bad news, separating loved ones, and violently repressing grief and sorrow—points to another way in which enslavers sidestepped the emotion work of sale. Many enslavers offloaded the potential emotion work of sale to others. Some relied on slave traders to deliver the devastating news of sale and physically tear enslaved communities apart, while others asked male relatives or overseers to do the deed. In all these cases, the person triggering dismay and sadness turned a blind eye to true emotional expressions wrought by sale—not only abandoning the fantasy that slavery produced positive emotions, but refusing even to allow enslaved people's emotions any place in the transactions of slavery. Both men and women used other people as emotional shields to avoid difficult and potentially guilt-inducing conversations with enslaved people, thereby attempting to preserve their own emotional stability *and* maintain distance from the devastation their decision to sell caused among the enslaved community. The people sent to confront enslaved people's grief and anger were almost always men—a fact that highlights the farcical nature of any argument that white women intervened to ensure slavery operated as a beneficial marketplace of feeling for enslaved people.

More generally, sale highlighted the fallacy of paternalist claims that slavery was rooted in and produced sympathy. In removing themselves from the emotional realities of sale and separation, enslavers refused to undertake the kind of moral sympathy that Adam Smith, evangelicals, and abolitionists argued was key to civil society. In Elizabeth Clark's classic essay on sympathy (or, in her words, "the willed act of knowing a fellow being"), she points out that Smith's influential *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* argued that sympathy "allowed individuals to act in the social and political spheres in a benevolent way that acknowledged the needs and

passions of others."[424] Smith's strategies for moral sympathy read like a guide to emotion work: "By imagination we place ourselves in [a fellow being's] situation" and "His agonies…when we have thus adopted and made them our own, begin at last to affect us, and we then tremble and shudder at the thought of what he feels."[425] After the Second Great Awakening, evangelical abolitionists rooted their critiques of slavery in this process of intentionally observing the suffering of enslaved people, thereby provoking sympathy and awakening a spirit of reformative action. Abolitionists exhorted people to use domestic fiction to "follow" enslaved people "to their huts," to "see them groaning."[426] More recently, historian Margaret Abruzzo has contended that sympathy was "intensely visually oriented in the nineteenth century," pointing to enslavers who lambasted northern abolitionists for ignoring suffering closer to home, like that of impoverished industrial workers.[427] In 1853, South Carolina lawyer Edward Pringle argued that because of their close proximity to enslaved people, enslavers would regularly "be moved to pity by the sight of the misery," and take immediate action to relieve any suffering.[428] But in removing enslaved people's pain from their line of sight, in distancing themselves from the moment of sale and the act of rupturing enslaved communities for personal economic gain, enslavers literally refused to take this visual journey into the homes and hearts of suffering enslaved people. In short, enslavers refused to do the emotion work of moral sympathy even as paternalist ideology coalesced around the argument that slavery was the preferable economic system because it encompassed a material *and* emotional economy.

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[424] Elizabeth B. Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 82, no. 2 (September 1995), 478.
[425] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 13.
[426] Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak,'" 486.
[427] Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 137.
[428] Edward J. Pringle, *Slavery in the Southern States* (Cambridge: John Bartlett, 1853), 26.

Though many enslavers physically distanced themselves from the emotions of sale and separation, they did not entirely deny that those emotions existed. Instead, many southerners argued that it was enslaved people's responsibility to reconcile themselves to being sold—in short, to do the emotion work that might maintain the fiction that slavery "fostered kindly feelings." Paternalist author Charles Jacobs Peterson made this argument in his 1852 anti-*Tom* novel *The Cabin and Parlor; or Slaves and Masters*. In the novel, the patriarch of the Courtenay family dies and leaves his descendants in charge of a deeply indebted estate and many anxious enslaved people. Fearing separation through sale, a young enslaved man named Charles tries to convince an older enslaved couple (Peter and Violet) that they must all run away together. Peter replies that he has faith God will protect them by encouraging neighbors to purchase entire families, thereby keeping loved ones together. When Charles disputes this, Peter becomes angry, arguing that poor whites—especially widows and orphans—have it worse than enslaved people.[429] While the free white Courtenay family would be dispersed as they each struggled to provide for themselves, Peter argues, enslaved families would be kept together through the kindness of white, Christian neighbors, passing to new enslavers who were better able to provide for them. Trying to assuage Charles' panic about being separated from his community, Peter argues that Charles must instead focus on pitying his indebted owners, and feeling grateful for benevolent buyers and a more secure material future. Peterson's paternalist polemic thus imagined enslaved people doing emotion work just as they did physical and reproductive labor for their enslavers' benefit.

[429] Charles Jacobs Peterson, *The Cabin and Parlor; or, Slaves and Masters* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson, 1852), 41-55.

Flesh-and-blood enslavers echoed this fictional hope that enslaved people could do the emotion work needed to lessen or even negate the trauma of sale. In 1843, Louisiana enslaver Lewis Stirling decided to sell enslaved people to settle a pressing debt, despite acknowledging that they "will probably be somewhat distressed at being sold." Shielding himself from the moment of truth, Stirling put his son in charge of the sale, instructing him to "do what you can to reconcile them, tell them (which is the fact) that I owed Mr. Lyon and had no other way of paying."[430] Lewis Stirling wanted the enslaved people he sold to become "reconciled" to sale, in part through the knowledge that his monetary issues prompted the sale. Stirling expected enslaved people to put their enslaver's financial needs ahead of their own feelings about being sold away from loved ones.

Stirling was not alone in hoping the people he sold would come around to sale. Some enslavers directly ordered enslaved people to undertake the work of emotional reconciliation. When a Georgia enslaver decided to move some of his enslaved property to Alabama, he assured himself that they were "cheerful" about the move, and felt "strong hopes that every one will go without a murmur."[431] A Virginia enslaver purchased a woman named Martha Ann, ignoring her husband's pleas that the family remain together. Martha Ann recalled that her new owner chided her, "cheer up; you'll find me a good master, and I'll get you a new husband."[432] Elizabeth Keckley's owner put it more harshly. When she sold Keckley's father and Keckley's mother openly grieved, the woman brusquely told her, "Stop your nonsense…Your husband is not the only slave that has been sold from his family, and you are not the only one that has had to part. There are plenty more men here, and if you want a husband so badly, stop your crying and go

[430] Stirling quoted in Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 38.
[431] Charles Tait quoted in Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration*, 60.
[432] Martha Ann quoted in *ibid.,* 89.

find another."[433] "Cheer up," "stop your nonsense," "stop your crying"—these commands both acknowledged the pain enslavers caused through sale *and* reflected enslavers' attempts to enforce their desired emotional regime. This was the marketplace of feeling that enslavers wanted: the power to demand enslaved people tamp down their grief and actively work to feel happy. The coerced work required to bolster any argument that slavery produced happiness for enslaved people rested heavily on enslaved people themselves.

Enslavers put the onus of emotional reconciliation on enslaved people in varied ways. Virginian Martha Randolph drew on her own experience of family migration to contend that even free people experienced family separation, and that enslaved people must thus similarly bear responsibility for separation's emotional consequences. In 1836, Randolph reneged on a promise of emancipation to gift an enslaved woman named Martha Ann Colbert to her son Lewis as he embarked on a new life in distant Arkansas. Randolph acknowledged that removing Colbert from her loved ones was "an evil." She clearly understood the distress she caused, since she instructed her son to inform Colbert as quickly as possible so that the news "may not fall like a clap of thunder upon her at the moment of separation." And yet, Randolph insisted that gifting Colbert would not "endanger her happiness" because her new owners were "sweet amiable" and "kind"—the implication being that if Colbert was *not* happy in her new situation, it was her own fault. Even more, Randolph tried to lessen her own sense of responsibility for the evil of separation by insisting that "it is one that we are all exposed to in this life."[434] Randolph

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[433] Keckley quoted in Schermerhorn, *Money Over Mastery,* 157. Enslavers often argued that enslaved people should not be upset about losing spouses to sale since they could easily find a replacement. Using the belief that enslaved people's affections were shallow and brief, white people like Henry Brown's enslaver dismissed Brown's tearful pleas that he buy back Brown's wife, scoffing that "could get another wife so [he] need not trouble [himself] about that one." Brown quoted in ibid*.,* 160.

[434] Martha Jefferson Randolph to Benjamin Randolph, January 27, 1836, Samuel Smith Papers, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

frequently bemoaned the fact that her children had dispersed across the globe, leaving her without the comfort of a domestic circle. Randolph argued that Colbert should bear the burdens of separation as she herself did, conveniently ignoring the fact that the Randolph family separations were voluntary, and her literacy and free status meant she remained in constant written contact with her loved ones. Understanding family separation as a shared experience (albeit misguidedly) did not lead Randolph to treat enslaved people more empathetically. Instead, she used it to prop up the emotional regime of slavery, demanding that enslaved people like Martha Ann Colbert manage the grief and frustration of separation just as free people did.[435]

Enslavers' letters and diaries are replete with one-sided claims that enslaved people did indeed reconcile themselves to sale—that they were, in the end, willing and happy to be sold. In 1845, for instance, Thomas Chaplin decided to sell ten enslaved people before the sheriff could seize them to settle Chaplin's outstanding debts. Though he reported feeling "mortif[ied] and griev[ed]" that the enslaved people suffered "to pay for [his] own extravagances," he soothed his guilt with rumors that they were "apparently quite willing and in good spirits."[436] Chaplin's focus on the apparent "good spirits" of the people he sold supports historian Heather Williams' contention that enslavers tried to wrest control of the emotional narrative of sale to promote their

[435] Martha Randolph was not alone in doing this. Historian Margaret Abruzzo argues that "By the 1830s, proslavery rhetoric relied heavily on the argument that slavery was more humane than freedom. Such claims normalized slaves' suffering. If blacks endured pain, those pains were neither the effect of slavery nor unique to slavery; they were instead the typical sufferings of life." Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 145, 215.

[436] Chaplin quoted in Williams, *Help Me to Find My People,* 95. Williams notes the self-interest that could have in part motivated Chaplin's grief: "He was mortified by the humiliation that public knowledge of his fragile finances would bring. He grieved because of the pain the ten people and their families would feel, but there is a sense that he also grieved at having to 'select out' some of his assets for liquidation. These were the same assets whose labor could enable him to produce crops and achieve some level of solvency."

own "good spirits."[437] Williams sees Chaplin as a prime example of this. Though he confessed in his journal that "[t]he Negroes at home are quite disconsolate," he soothed his guilt by reassuring himself that this suffering would not last long. "[T]his will soon blow over," he told himself. "They may see their children again in time."[438] Telling themselves (often despite glaring evidence to the contrary) that enslaved people's griefs were short-lived invited enslavers to cut short their own uneasiness.

Indeed, enslavers frequently recounted their *own* relief after sale. After learning ten enslaved people had been successfully removed from his property, Chaplin's mortification and grief about selling them subsided enough that he could declare he was "glad it is all over."[439] Similarly, despite noting that she "felt sensably" on the day her brother sold some of her enslaved people at her behest, a South Carolinian noted that her spirits lifted once the sale was complete. Like Chaplin, she felt "so happy that it is over"—especially since the enslaved people "sold most extravagantly high."[440] Mary Randolph, granddaughter of Thomas Jefferson, felt relieved when her family auctioned off most of their enslaved property in 1826, happily concluding that the emotional toll of the sale was limited to the auction itself. She confided to her sister Ellen Coolidge, "during five days that the sale lasted you may imagine what must have been the state of our feelings." But, she expressed a sigh of relief once those five days had

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[437] In Williams' words, enslavers might attempt to "tamp down [enslaved people's] pain, to abbreviate [enslaved people's] suffering so as to ease [enslavers'] own guilt and discomfort and to dull [their own] empathy." Ibid., 97. Walter Johnson cites another example of this in Anton Reiff's account of visiting a New Orleans slave pen. Reiff saw a woman crying on the auction block and witnessed the auctioneer arguing the woman was distraught because she was being sold away from the only enslaver she had ever known, who was obliged to sell her due to debts. The auctioneer thus cast the woman's clear display of grief as a positive sign of her loyalty. Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 127.
[438] Chaplin quoted in Williams, *Help Me to Find My People,* 97.
[439] Chaplin, quoted in ibid., 96.
[440] Percy quoted in ibid.

passed: "Thank heaven the whole of this dreadful business is over, and has been attended with as few distressing occurrences as the case would admit."[441] Mary did not consider whether the "dreadful business" was indeed "over" for the people whose lives had been forever changed by the auction. For slaveholdings families, sale was a momentary transaction. Imagining that the emotional consequences of sale were temporally limited to the act of sale, enslavers revealed that their *own* "griefs are transient"—tempered quite easily with the soothing balm of cash reward. Indeed, money often compensated for any anxiety, grief, or guilt enslavers temporarily felt about selling enslaved people and rupturing enslaved communities.

Enslavers punished enslaved people whose emotional expressions disproved enslavers' claim that slavery—especially sale—did not produce negative emotions. In turn, enslaved people consciously tempered their emotional expressions to avoid further antagonizing enslavers who wanted to believe them reconciled to sales that shattered their communities.[442] William Craft recounted how he fought to keep his emotions under control when slave traders separated him from his sister. When the auctioneer denied Craft's request to say farewell to his sister, Craft felt "red-hot indignation darting like lightning through every vein." But, Craft recalled, "we were only slaves, and had no legal rights; consequently we were compelled to smother our wounded

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[441] Mary Randolph to Ellen Randolph Coolidge, January 25, 1827, ECC. Her sister responded in kind. "Thank heaven this winter is over," Ellen wrote to her sister Virginia in March 1827. "I trust we are at liberty to hope at least that the 'winter of our discontent' may now 'be made summer by the glorious sun' of better prospects." Ellen Coolidge to Virginia Trist, March 20, 1827, ibid.

[442] Erin Dwyer has noted many instances when enslavers punished enslaved people for displaying emotions like anger or melancholy. She hypothesizes that enslavers whipped angry slaves, and sold morose ones. Some enslaved people exploited this pattern to escape certain enslavers, displaying sadness or other undesirable emotions in an effort to be sold to new owners. Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 275-276.

feelings, and crouch beneath the iron heel of despotism."[443] In the case of William Craft, it appeared that enslavers' desired emotional regime had taken effect. Terrorized with the knowledge that any expressions of undesirable emotion could be punished (perhaps with additional sale and separations), enslaved people might hide their true feelings of grief, indignation, or anger.

And yet, the fact that enslavers had to punish enslaved people for openly expressing these emotions (and that enslaved people knew to expect, and thus how to avoid, this punishment) shows that enslavers did not entirely control the emotional expressions of sale, despite their best efforts. Enslavers were not always able to enforce the emotional regime they so desired. Sometimes even punishment was not enough to terrorize enslaved people into masking their grief or anger about sale. For instance, an enslaved woman named Eliza was so inconsolable after being sold away from her children that her new enslaver regretted purchasing her. After first sending the despondent Eliza to work in the fields, her new owners eventually sold her "for a trifle" to be rid of her. Her newest owner "lashed and abused her most unmercifully," trying unsuccessfully to beat the sorrow out of her, or at least violently force her to mediate her emotional expressions.[444] Despite these punishments, Eliza's overwhelming grief did not diminish, nor did her expressions of that grief. She had lost her children; her oppressors had already inflicted the worst possible punishment on her, and nothing could reconcile her to her

[443] William Craft, quoted in ibid., 60. Dwyer cites this case in arguing that "To be free, therefore, was to be able to exercise a full range of emotional expressions without restriction, to exhibit what William Reddy refers to as 'emotional liberty.'" Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 60.
[444] Solomon Northup, quoted in Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 272. For more on enslavers' attempts at affective discipline—and enslaved people's strategies for resisting this discipline—see Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," chapter five.

pain.[445] Enslaved people like Eliza who displayed their grief, anger, fear, or resentment openly contradicted paternalists' claim that slavery "cultivate[d] the tenderest and purest sentiments of the human heart."[446] Instead, these displays of emotion revealed that slavery—and sale especially—produced the worst of feelings, firmly placing enslavers' pursuit of profit and happiness above any concern for the emotional wellbeing of enslaved people.

[445] On the discrepancy between enslavers' and enslaved people's understandings of sale and its emotional consequences, see Williams, *Help Me to Find My People*. She writes of race- and power-based emotional distance and differentiation, "This is how slavery was able to flourish for more than 250 years in a country where white people avowed a love of liberty and equality of human beings. These daily encounters in which whites ignored or denied the feelings of enslaved people but counted their own feelings as special and significant derived from and shored up a society in which sharp lines could be drawn between whites and blacks." Williams, *Help Me to Find My People,* 110.
[446] Hammond, "Hammond's Letters on Slavery," 161.

Chapter Five
'they voiced objections even in the presence of company': Redefining Slavery as a Marketplace of Feeling

When James Madison died in June 1836, his will stipulated the terms by which he wanted his widow Dolley to manage the enslaved people he transferred to her as property. It read, in part: "it is my desire that none of them should be sold without his or her consent, or in case of their misbehavior."[447] When Dolley began to sell enslaved people soon after her husband's death, Montpelier's enslaved community made their anger and dismay known. Madison's friend, politician and antislavery advocate Edward Coles, visited Montpelier in the fall and disgustedly reported that slave traders appeared "like a hawk among the pigeons," terrifying the enslaved residents. Whenever these traders appeared, "slaves ran to the house to complain, citing the language of James' will" and "voiced objections even in the presence of company, which may have been a deliberate strategy."[448] Whether or not the enslaved people truly cited the language of Madison's will, their publicly displayed objections to Dolley's slave-selling tactics clearly articulated that they did not, in fact, consent to the sales.[449]

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[447] James Madison's will quoted in McCoy, *The Last of the Fathers*, 318.

[448] Edward Coles to Sarah (Sally) Coles Stevenson, November 12, 1836, in *The Dolley Madison Digital Edition*, ed. Holly C. Shulman. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2004. http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/dmde/DPM2827. For more on Dolley Madison as an enslaver, see Catherine Allgor, *A Perfect Union: Dolley Madison and the Creation of the American Nation* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007); Elizabeth Dowling Taylor, *A Slave in the White House: Paul Jennings and the Madisons* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Ties that Bound: Founding First Ladies and Slaves* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

[449] There are several extant letters from enslaved people at Montpelier (typically transcribed by white interlocuters) from the period after James Madison's death. While most are about sale and represent an attempt to sway Dolley Madison's decisions about sale, none specifically mention the terms of James Madison's will—or the language of consent—to make their case. However, absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence.

The idea of consenting to sale is especially important considering historian François Furstenberg's contention that in a democratic society based on the "consent of the governed," slavery "shaped the nation's liberal and republican traditions by subtly refashioning the meaning of consent." "By holding individuals responsible for resisting their oppression," Furstenberg argues, "civic texts shifted the moral burden of slavery onto slaves. They reduced slavery to a simple choice—active resistance or passive acceptance—and promoted the belief that slavery, just like freedom, resulted from individual choice." This was, as Furstenberg points out, "a shallow, decontextualized understanding of consent."[450] And yet, associating lack of consent with active resistance means that unmistakable embodied signs of opposition—from tears to shouts to clear statements of opposition—clearly signified when enslaved people did *not* consent to sale.

Demonstrating opposition through emotional displays did not always prevent sales and familial separations, though sometimes they did. Regardless of the sale outcome, expressions of anger, frustration, and grief had great significance in slavery's marketplace of feeling because—even if unintentionally—those emotional expressions disrupted enslavers' desired emotional regime. Enslaved people's clear articulations of emotional suffering (not to mention anger) denied enslavers their desired affective objects of consent and contentment. Tears, wails, shouts—all of these embodied emotional responses made clear that sale, a central financial mechanism of slavery, did not unfold benignly. Enslaved people's emotional expressions testified to a reality that enslavers were eager to deny: slavery produced profit (and sometimes happiness) for enslavers, and trauma for enslaved people. It was a blight, not a light, within the marketplace of feeling.

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[450] Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father,* 18, 22-3.

To modern readers, this is painfully obvious. But as the previous chapter made clear, by the 1850s, many outspoken paternalists argued precisely the opposite. They contended that slavery was a desirable economic system because it produced benevolent, sympathetic relationships between enslavers and the people they enslaved, uniting them through shared financial and even emotional interests. Walter Johnson's perceptive study of the New Orleans slave market reminds us that

> The worshipful admiration of the aesthetics of domination which has seethed through so much recent work in the humanities—the thrilling fear that the world is built out of the phantasmic dreams of the powerful, their language and categories and objectifying gaze—must be cooled with the recognition that dreams, even the dreams of powerful people, must be made material if they are to come true. And in the slave market, slaveholders' dreams could not come true without slaves—without people who could look back, estimate, manipulate, and sometimes escape.[451]

An emotional regime demanding enslaved people's reconciliation to sale was one of those "phantasmic dreams" that required enslaved people's cooperation to become manifest. This chapter argues that enslaved people's emotional displays contradicted paternalist arguments that slavery had a beneficial role to play in the marketplace of feeling. In particular, enslaved people's open expressions of grief and anger about sale—when they "ran to the house to complain," "voiced objections even in the presence of company," or simply let tears fall or cries of anger ring out—conjured an entirely different marketplace of feeling for slavery, one in which enslavers' decisions to sell human beings could perhaps produce relief and happiness for themselves, but the exact opposite for enslaved people. This was the marketplace of feeling that white abolitionists capitalized on in their critiques of slavery during the same period that saw the emergence of a "positive good" theory about slavery. Abolitionists (including formerly enslaved people) politicized enslaved people's emotions about sale in order to critique slavery for

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[451] Johnson, *Soul by Soul*, 188.

producing widespread and perhaps irreversible turmoil. Indeed, the debates over slavery in the two decades leading up to the Civil War were in many ways over competing visions of slavery's emotional effects—over its true function as a marketplace of feeling.

The intellectual foundation for this debate goes back to the eighteenth century—not only to Enlightenment musings about emotions and economics, but to black abolitionists' early arguments about the traumas of enslavement. Long before "positive good" rhetoric gained full ground in the 1840s and 1850s, black abolitionists were publicizing and politicizing the emotions of slavery, presenting clear evidence that slavery produced misery. In a 1773 poem lauding freedom, for instance, Phillis Wheatley described her experience of being kidnapped and sold into slavery in emotional terms—lamenting being "snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd happy seat," and mourning "what sorrows labour in my parent's breast."[452] In his 1789 autobiography, Olaudah Equiano described the moment he finally purchased his freedom in terms of feelings of happiness he had not before known. "My feet scarcely touched the ground," he crowed, "for they were winged with joy."[453] In her ambitious study of abolition's longue durée in the United States, Manisha Sinha forcefully contends that "[t]he actions of slave rebels and runaways, black writers and community leaders, did not lie outside of but shaped abolition and its goals." Even the earliest waves of Anglo-American abolition were not strictly white endeavors: in the long history of abolition, she asserts, "black testimony was foundational to its cause."[454] This chapter

[452] Phillis Wheatley, "To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth," in *Poems on Religious Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773; Denver, Co: W.H. Lawrence & Co., 1887), 66-68.
[453] Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, ed. Angelo Costanzo (1789; Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 156. For more on the feelings of freedom, see Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," chapter 6 "'The Pursuit of Happiness': Freedom, Race and Emotion."
[454] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause,* 2, 129.

contends that black *emotional* testimony was particularly foundational to the slave's cause, especially in the decades before the Civil War.

Emotion has long played a supporting role in scholarly studies of enslaved people's lives. Post-Moynihan Report debates about the family in slavery turned in part on affective connections, as did debates over paternalism. Walter Johnson's study of the New Orleans slave market convincingly showed how enslaved people used emotional and physical performance to shape sale and enslavers' self-perception as "masters."[455] Stephanie Camp's study of everyday resistance revealed how enslaved women sought temporary feelings of pleasure and relief to resist enslavers' claims to their bodily autonomy.[456] Most recently, Erin Dwyer has outlined what she terms the emotional politics of slavery, examining how both enslavers and enslaved people used emotion to navigate the power dynamics of slavery. These studies are critical for understanding slavery, especially the experiences of slaveholding and enslavement. And yet, they do not go far enough in interrogating how enslaved people's emotions shaped Americans' broader understanding of slavery as an economic system.

Considering enslaved people's emotional expressions in the context of the mid-nineteenth century's marketplace of feeling is thus especially important. This chapter builds on Dwyer's contention that the emotional politics of slavery was not a top down story—that enslaved people "resisted the institution of slavery by refusing to feel what their masters wanted them to."[457] Sale is central to the story. If, as the previous chapter argued, enslavers demanded enslaved people labor to produce their enslavers' happiness *and* transform their own feelings into contentment,

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[455] Ibid.
[456] Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
[457] Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 274.

what happened when enslaved people openly expressed their grief and anger about sale? When enslaved people made clear that enslavers' self-serving appetite for cash and credit produced profound unhappiness for the people they sold? Focusing on emotions at the moment of sale and separation focused blame on enslavers as emotional and economic agents, not on outside agitators like abolitionists or slave traders. Enslaved people's responses to sale thus clarified that enslavers used slavery to produce their own happiness, and certainly not that of the people they held and sold as property.

Some enslaved people recognized that *not* restraining emotions as enslavers commanded could be a form of resistance. Of a particularly hated enslaver, Solomon Northup declared, "there was no law that could prevent me from looking upon him with intense contempt."[458] Laws may have unjustly permitted men and women to enslave human beings, but no law required enslaved people to feel how enslavers wanted them to feel. Expressing anger or sorrow about sale through tears, shouts, or somber expressions made clear when enslaved people did not "reconcile" themselves to sale as enslavers hoped they would. Even if enslaved people did not intentionally use emotional displays to resist enslavers' desired emotional regime, their emotions still provided evidence that slavery—especially sale, a core transaction—was not an example of doux commerce. By examining enslaved people's emotional expressions about and during sale, this chapter argues that enslaved people's emotions were a crucial factor not only in the national conversation about slavery's place within the marketplace of feeling, but also the ongoing debate about the relationship between emotions and the economy. Enslaved people's emotions are central to the history of American capitalism.

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[458] Solomon Northup in ibid., 32-33.

Managing emotions was central to the intimate, daily power struggle of slavery. Even outside the context of sale, enslavers tried to inflict emotion work as punishment, demanding enslaved people repress emotions that challenged enslavers' fantasy of benevolent mastery. James Bradley argued that every enslaved person (including himself) knew that managing emotions was necessary for evading harsh treatment. "If any slave shows discontent," Bradley asserted, "he is sure to be treated worse, and worked the harder for it; every slave knows this."[459] Enslavers began teaching their desired emotional regime early, even punishing young enslaved children for expressing undesirable emotions: Madison Jefferson bitterly remembered that enslaved children were "whipped for crying."[460] Knowing that enslavers valued certain emotional expressions and punished others meant that emotion work could be a survival skill for enslaved people, who could consciously manage their feelings—of anger, hatred, sadness, and even joy—to escape punishment, or generally try to better their condition.[461] For instance, Charles Ball frequently hid anger and bitterness from his enslaver by "forc[ing] a sort of smile upon [his] face," choosing to feign "humility" because he knew "a slave must not manifest feelings of resentment."[462] These were the feeling rules of slavery—rules intended to affirm and enforce enslavers' power over the people they enslaved.

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[459] James L. Bradley in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 690.
[460] Madison Jefferson in ibid., 217-219. For more on enslaved children's lessons in the emotional regime of slavery, see Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," chapter three, "'Born and Reared in Slavery': Learning the Affective Norms of Slavery."
[461] Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 31-32. Dwyer also perceptively explores how enslaved people learned to read their enslavers' emotional expressions, and to choose their own emotional displays and other strategies for survival accordingly.
[462] Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States. A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave Under Various Masters, and was One Year in the Navy with Commodore Barney, During the Late War* (New York: John S. Taylor, 1837), 384, 314.

Enslaved people were especially careful with emotional expressions when it came to sale and separation. The stakes were high. After sales, enslavers were quick to punish visibly sad or angry enslaved people with physical violence or threats of further sale. When Madison Jefferson's enslaver sold Madison's sister, the family knew they had to conceal their grief and sorrow from enslavers who, "if they caught them crying, would tell them they would give them something to cry for."[463] James Curry similarly labored to control his emotions when his enslaver threatened to separate him from his new wife. Curry later recalled, "my indignation was roused, I forgot whom I was talking to," and just barely "recollected myself and smothered my feelings."[464] These acts of "smothering" illuminate the emotional terrorism of slavery: enslavers used threats of punishment (both physical and psychological) to try to intimidate enslaved people into expressing only emotions enslavers permitted.

Enslaved people often attributed smothered feelings to a sense of powerlessness, especially when it came to feelings about sale and separation. Bethany Veney initially resisted when an enslaver threatened to remove her husband. It was only when her husband—hungry, afraid, and "completely cowed"—told her, "'tis no use. We can't help it," that she gave in, "stifled [her] anger and [her] grief," and stopped resisting.[465] Louis Hughes similarly felt "'tis no use" in expressing grief after an enslaver sold him away from his mother. "I thought of my mother often," he recalled, "but I was gradually growing to the idea that it was useless to cry, and I tried hard to overcome my feelings."[466]

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[463] Madison Jefferson in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 217-219.
[464] James Curry in ibid., 140.
[465] Bethany Veney, *Aunt Betty's Story: The Narrative of Bethany Veney, A Slave Woman* (Worcester: George H. Ellis, 1889), 24-25.
[466] Louis Hughes, *Thirty Years a Slave. From Bondage to Freedom. The Institution of Slavery as Seen on the Plantation and in the Home of the Planter* (Milwaukee: South Side Printing Company, 1897), 15.

As the language of hopelessness implies, masking emotions, feigning emotions that enslavers desired, or even working to "overcome" natural feelings did not necessarily challenge enslavers' desired emotional regime. Performing enslavers' desired emotions reflected the oppressors' power to set and enforce standards for emotional display. Enslaved people were all too familiar with these standards. Lewis Clarke, for instance, reflected on the emotional constraints he and other enslaved people felt:

> Slavery makes a brute of a man; I don't mean that he *is* a brute, neither. But a horse *can't* speak; and he *daren't*. He daren't tell what's in him; it wouldn't do. The worse he's treated, the more he must smile; the more he's kicked the lower he must crawl. For you see the master *knows* when he's treated his slave too bad for human nature; and he *suspects* the slave will resent; and he watches him the closer, and so the slave has to be more deceitful.[467]

Clarke made clear that a significant power disparity limited how enslaved people chose to express emotions: there were certain feelings enslaved people "daren't" show their enslavers. And yet, enslaved people's ability to control their emotional expressions—the possibility of being "deceitful"—also meant that enslaved people could, if they chose, keep their true feelings hidden from those who tried so desperately to master those feelings.

Enslaved people who altered their emotional *displays*—their facial expressions, their words, their bodily movements—but not necessarily their true emotional states engaged in what sociologists call "surface acting." Surface acting involves "disguising what we feel" and "pretending to feel what we do not," thus deceiving others (though not ourselves) about what we really feel.[468] Suppressing emotional expression did not mean enslaved people did not permit

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[467] Lewis Clarke in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 152.

[468] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 33. Much like how enslaved people used surface acting to mask their true emotions, many formerly enslaved people often chose not to fully depict the emotional experience of enslavement in their published narratives. Instead, they chose to emphasize that, in Lunsford Lane's words, "I cannot describe my feelings to those who have never been slaves." Jacob Stroyer similarly wrote, "No one can describe the intense emotions in the negro's soul on those occasions when they were

themselves to feel those emotions. Sometimes enslaved people intentionally suppressed emotions—especially grief, frustration, and anger—when in the presence of enslavers, but then found release for those feelings in more private settings. James Williams, whose owner forced him to act as a slave driver, controlling and punishing his fellow enslaved people, feigned jocularity to pacify his white overseer. "If I did not laugh with him," Williams reported, "he would get angry and demand what the matter was. Oh! how often have I laughed, at such times, when my heart ached within me; and how often, when permitted to retire to my bed, I found relief in tears!"[469] Williams' experience suggests that enslaved people could perhaps find beyond the gaze of their oppressors what William Reddy termed an emotional refuge: "a relationship, ritual, or organization (whether informal or formal) that provides safe release from prevailing emotional norms and allows relaxation of emotional effort, with or without an ideological justification, which may shore up or threaten the existing emotional regime."[470] Crying away from enslavers still threatened enslavers' desired emotional regime by permitting enslaved people to express the sadness that enslavers claimed did not exist, or was short-lasting. Any expressions of grief thus carried important weight in the marketplace of feeling, as it implied there was a segment of the emotional economy that enslavers could not control.

Shock could also prevent enslaved people from expressing emotions they felt deeply. When Charity Bowery found out that her enslaver had sent her on an errand so the woman could sell Bowery's son in secret, Bowery was too overwhelmed to respond: "My heart felt as if it was

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trying to please their masters and mistresses." Lane and Stroyer quoted in Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 74. Historian Erin Dwyer has speculated that "By denying their readers full knowledge of their emotional lives as slaves, authors of slave narratives may also have been trying to prevent the mastery of enslaved emotions by non-slave readers." Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 75.

[469] James Williams, *Narrative of James Williams, an American Slave, Who Was for Several Years a Driver on a Cotton Plantation in Alabama* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838), 44.

[470] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 129.

under a great load. I couldn't speak a word of reproach to her."[471] Similarly, John Brown recalled that when an enslaver wrenched him from his mother as a child, "I was so stupified [sic] with grief and fright, that I could not shed a tear, though my heart was bursting."[472] Moses Grandy found that when he lost his wife to sale, "my heart was so full, that I could say very little."[473] Especially when it came to sale and separation from loved ones, the "great load" of shock and sorrow sometimes "stupefied" enslaved people to the point that they could not express any of the feelings they felt so overwhelmingly. But, those feelings still existed as a product of slavery's emotional economy, and formerly enslaved people clearly expressed them (especially in written narratives) even if they had been too stunned to express the feeling fully in the moment. Naming those feelings long after sale also challenged enslavers' desired temporal understanding of sale within the marketplace of feeling: the agony of sale was in no way limited to the brief moment of transaction. Sale's emotional afterlife was anything but fleeting.

Sometimes, on the other hand, enslaved people could not repress physical embodiment of the intense emotions they felt at the moment of sale or separation from loved ones. When describing the shattering emotional outbursts that often accompanied sale and separation, some formerly enslaved people argued that their feelings had been too strong and overwhelming to suppress. After witnessing a woman torn from her family, James Smith described the separation as "more than this wife and slave mother could bear without sobbing."[474] L. M. Mills similarly recalled that for one woman he observed, the horror of being forever separated from her husband was impossible to repress. Though a slave driver "told her to shut up," Mills reported, "she

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[471] Charity Bowery in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 265.
[472] John Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, A Fugitive Slave, Now in England*, ed. L. A. Chamerovzow (London, 1855), 15.
[473] Moses Grandy quoted in Schermerhorn, *Money over Mastery*, 64.
[474] James Smith in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 278.

couldn't."[475] Ambrose Headen described his own grief and terror at being torn from his family in similar terms of impossibility. When he burst into tears, an overseer dragged him behind a building to try to stop his crying. "But I couldn't stop," Headen recalled.[476] An enslaved woman named Kitty remembered, "When I was sold away by de speculators it seem like I griebe ter death," concluding, "It done seem as tho yer couldn't to bear it."[477] Contending that the traumas of sale and separation were so intense that enslaved people physically could not restrain their emotions threatened enslavers' idealized marketplace of feeling in a crucial way: by suggesting that reconciling oneself to sale by overcoming certain emotions was not only impossible, but also unnatural. Even more, these feelings lingered. As an adult, Charles Ball vividly remembered how his mother "clasped me in her arms, and wept loudly and bitterly" as his new enslaver led him away. The trauma of witnessing his mother's pain stuck with Ball the rest of his life. "Young as I was," he later attested, "the horrors of that day sank deeply into my heart, and even at this time, though half a century has elapsed, the terrors of the scene return with painful vividness upon my memory."[478] Once again, sale was not a brief transaction in slavery's emotional economy; it was a long-term source of suffering.

Like Ball, many formerly enslaved people recalled the harrowing experience of witnessing their mothers' heartbreak when separated from children. Allen Sidney remembered his "mother crying as if her heart would break when we were parted."[479] Josiah Henson's mother ran up to the man who purchased her and "fell at his feet, and clung to his knees, entreating him in tones that a mother could only command, to buy her *baby* as well as herself, and spare to her

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[475] L.M. Mills in ibid*.,* 504.
[476] Ambrose Headen in ibid*.,* 744.
[477] Kitty quoted in Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration*, 56.
[478] Ball, *Slavery in the United States,* 17-18.
[479] Allen Sidney in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 552.

one of her little ones at least."[480] Enslavers' efforts to steal children away from their mothers in secret, and their violent responses when mothers cried, berated, or pleaded in response, point to their awareness that women's emotional expressions not only had the potential to derail sale and stymie enslavers' financial interests, but also served as powerful examples of the inhumanity of slavery as an economic system. Emphasizing mothers' grief underscored that sale frequently ruptured mother-child relationships, sundering rather than fostering sympathetic bonds.[481] That abolitionist media drew so heavily on stories and images of enslaved mothers' grief underscores the rhetorical power of enslaved women's emotions.

Enslaved people also testified to the traumatic experiences and painful emotional expressions of strangers whose sale they happened to witness. James Williams described hundreds of enslaved people making the chained journey to the deep South as "a sorrowful sight." "Some were praying, some crying, and they all had a look of extreme wretchedness."[482] Another enslaved person described New Year's Day (when many slave sales and annual hiring out arrangements were made) as a time of open distress, a day "when the cries and tears of brothers, sisters, wives, and husbands were heard" in the streets.[483] Lewis Clarke similarly testified, "Many and many is the wife that I've seen sobbing and crying for the husband that's driven off to go down the Mississippi."[484] Witnessing other enslaved people's open expressions of grief heightened enslaved people's own distress. Lizzie Gibson recalled that her childhood

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[480] Josiah Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself* (Boston: A. D. Phelps, 1849), 4.
[481] On maternal grief caused by children's deaths, see Sasha Turner, "The Nameless and the Forgotten: Maternal Grief, Sacred Protection, and the Archive of Slavery," *Slavery & Abolition*, vol. 38, iss. 2 (2017), 232-250.
[482] Williams, *Narrative of James Williams,* 32.
[483] "Statement of a Slave" in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 171-172.
[484] Lewis Clarke in ibid*.,* 160.

experience witnessing a man crying as he was separated from his family left her in the middle of a public street with "briny tears" pouring down her cheeks.[485] These testimonies of other enslaved people's emotional suffering revealed an extensive network of sympathy among enslaved people. Where enslavers averted their gaze, enslaved people both witnessed and sympathized with other bondspeople's suffering. This was a true commerce of sympathy—one that laid the groundwork for an extended emotional community comprised of people who shared the experience, and thus understood the emotional aspects, of enslavement.

Slave songs also testified to physical expressions of grief after sale. One song about the sale of a man named Henry Silvers to a Georgia trader included lines about how "his wife she cried, and children bawled."[486] Sella Martin argued that songs were a way for enslaved people to publicly express emotions that contradicted the feelings traders and enslavers wanted them to display. In his 1867 autobiography Martin reflected,

> The purpose of the trader in having them sung is to prevent among the crowd of negroes who usually gather on such occasions, any expression of sorrow for those who are being torn away from them; but the negroes, who have very little hope of ever seeing those again who are dearer to them than life, and who are weeping and wailing over the separation, often turn the song thus demanded of them into a farewell dirge.[487]

In his 1845 memoir, Frederick Douglass contended that enslaved people could find some emotional release in these songs, arguing, "the songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears."[488] Enslaved people could thus use song to process grief and fear both before and after sale. However, songs did not represent acquiescence to the emotion work enslavers demanded from enslaved people

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[485] Lizzie Gibson in ibid., 739.
[486] Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 43.
[487] Sella Martin in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 705.
[488] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*, *with Related Documents*, ed. David W. Blight, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford Books, 2003), 14-15.

whom they wanted to be cheerful and content. Instead, songs became vehicles to communicate the painful emotions slavery and especially sale caused. As transactions within the marketplace of feeling, songs provided evidence of sale's traumatic effects, and of the fact that sale was not an emblem of doux commerce.

Some enslaved people expressed their anger, grief, frustration, and even hope about sale through writing. If literate, they could write letters to enslavers themselves. Illiterate enslaved people also passed on messages through literate white interlocutors.[489] These messages invoked emotion in an effort to influence (or even prevent) sale. For instance, in 1842, Sukey and Ersey wrote from St. Louis to their owner in Virginia, trying to dissuade him from selling them down to Texas. The pair began their missive by clearly articulating their emotions: they took care to "write the very feelings of our hearts," which were in "much pain" and "much distress." They argued, "to be separated from our husbands forever in this world would make us unhappy for life," and made their case for an alternative *local* sale on emotional grounds. If they *had* to be sold, the women wanted their enslaver to know that they preferred this sale of their own deriving "merely because we shall be happier here with our friends and Husbands."[490] Sukey and Ersey thus asked their owner to agree to a financial transaction rooted entirely in emotion. They urged him to prioritize slavery's marketplace of feeling over the material market from which he profited. In doing so, they calmly asked him to live up to the paternalist claim that even as an economic institution, slavery could protect and even produce positive emotions.

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[489] For more on enslaved people's writing strategies (especially the use of sentimental language), see Troutman, "Slave Trade and Sentiment."

[490] Susan (Sukey) and Ersey to Beverley Tucker, October 24, 1842, in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 13-14.

Other people directly urged their enslavers to make sound investments in the marketplace of feeling by protecting enslaved people's bonds of affection. Anxious about being sold away from her home and loved ones in 1843, Sarah Stewart asked a white woman to transcribe a message to her owner, Dolley Madison. Like Sukey and Ersey asking their enslaver to not make them "unhappy for life," Stewart gently prodded Madison to take into account the emotional interests of the people she enslaved: "If we are obliged to be sold perhaps you could get neighbours to buy us that have husbands and wives, so as to save us some misery." Stewart directly asked her enslaver to consider enslaved people's emotions: "Think my dear misstress [*sic*]," she pleaded, "what our sorrow must be."[491] Like Sukey and Ersey, Sarah Stewart noted that it was not sale itself to which she (and the rest of Montpelier's enslaved community) objected, just non-consensual sale that separated families. The emotional impact of sale was the crucial point of objection—and a factor over which an enslaver could, Sukey, Ersey, and Sarah Stewart reminded their enslavers, exert some control.[492]

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[491] Sarah Stewart to Dolley Payne Todd Madison, December 19, 1843, in *The Dolley Madison Digital Edition*, ed. Holly C. Shulman. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2004. http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/dmde/DPM1679. For more on Dolley Madison's approach to slaveholding (including her willful neglect of enslaved people's feelings), see "Dolley Madison and the Dispersal of the Montpelier Enslaved Community, 1844," in *The Dolley Madison Digital Edition*, ed. Holly C. Shulman. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2004.

[492] There is no direct evidence that Dolley explicitly acknowledged or replied to Sarah Stewart's emotional plea. However, eleven days after Stewart wrote her letter, Dolley Madison took steps to protect her assets. She transferred ownership of the people she enslaved to her son, Payne Todd, to prevent them from being seized to pay her debts. Then, Henry Moncure—a Richmond merchant who had spent the past few months negotiating the purchase of Montpelier—intervened. He purchased several enslaved people from Todd, thereby providing the funds needed to pay outstanding debts and prevent subjecting the Montpelier slaves to the auction block. Moncure finalized his purchase of Montpelier on August 1. Although spared the suffering of being purchased by slave traders and sold far from home, the enslaved community at Montpelier would never be the same. The community was scattered and families divided. Moncure's purchase of the Montpelier estate included about one quarter of the Madisons' enslaved property; Dolley and her son sold half of the remainder, and settled the rest at Toddsberth, Payne Todd's nearby estate. "Dolley Madison and the Dispersal of the Montpelier Enslaved Community, 1844," *ibid*.

Sarah Stewart was not the only enslaved person who directly urged Dolley Madison to consider the emotional impact of her slaveholding decisions, especially in the context of James Madison's will having made clear it was his "desire" that she not sell them without their consent. Five years after Dolley sold a young man named Ben Stewart against his will to a Georgia enslaver, Ben wrote to his former owner asking if she would buy him back. He appealed to what he hoped was Dolley's benevolence by seeking her pity, repeatedly referring to himself as "unfortunate" and reminding her that he was far from his loved ones (without mentioning that Madison herself had orchestrated that painful separation). Ben tried to evoke sympathy for his melancholy position, writing, "I know, Mistriss Madison, if you Will but Consider my unfortunate Situation away from my Relatives, Who are very near & very dear to me[,] you Will if not yourself influence Some person to buy me so that I may go back to Virginia."[493] It is unknown whether Madison responded to Ben's plea, but a newspaper interview he gave in the 1880s reveals that his attempts to stir her pity and prompt her to respect his emotional needs failed. By then in his sixties, Ben Stewart revealed that he had remained enslaved in Georgia, far from his loved ones, until the Civil War.[494] Some enslavers may have been swayed by Ben's pleas, but Dolley Madison was not one of them. Ben's attempts to extract sympathy from her failed, underscoring that an enslaved person's ability to influence slavery's emotional economy was limited by their owner's commitment to economic (and emotional) self-interest—which, for Dolley Madison, was unwavering. Slavery's marketplace of feeling depended on enslavers' willingness to truly consider enslaved people's emotions as determining factors in their economic decisions.

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[493] Benjamin F Stewart to Dolley Payne Todd Madison, July 13, 1848, *ibid*. http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/dmde/DPM1552.
[494] "Uncle Ben Stewart Talks About His Master and Mistress," *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, June 8, 1888.

In recollecting their enslavement, people like Ben often noted when their emotional displays did not sway enslavers more interested in finances than feelings. A heartbroken woman named Emily wrote to her mother about her failed attempts to convince her husband's new owner to keep the couple together. "All my entreaties and tears," she mournfully reported, "did not soften his sad heart."[495] Moses Roper similarly fell "on [his] knees, with tears in [his] eyes, with terror in [his] countenance, and fervency in all [his] features," but was unable to convince a man to buy him and thus him from his cruel owner.[496]

These emotional appeals were dangerous. Enslavers punished enslaved people for expressing emotions that contradicted their desired emotional regime for sale. Formerly enslaved people's narratives frequently depict the violent retribution enslavers inflicted on enslaved people whose emotional displays challenged their fantasy of benevolence. Sella Martin's owner handcuffed his mother in a stable and told her she would be beaten if she cried out while traders seized her children.[497] When Charles Ball's mother begged the man who had just bought her not to separate her from her child, "without making any reply, he gave her two or three heavy blows on the shoulders with his raw hide" and dragged her away.[498] Similarly, when Josiah Henson's mother clung to her purchaser and begged him to also purchase her son, the man violently kicked her off so that she was left "mingling the groan of bodily suffering with the sob of a broken heart."[499] When his cruel enslaver refused to sell him to another man, Peter Wheeler "boohooed and boohooed." He "bellowed jist like a bull" and "cried 'bout it two or three days" despite the

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[495] Emily to her mother, February 12, 1836, in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 22-23.
[496] Moses Roper, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper, from American Slavery* (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Gunn, 1838), 18.
[497] Sella Martin in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 705.
[498] Ball, *Slavery in the United States*, 17.
[499] Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson,* 4.

fact that his enslaver "give [him] a lock over [his] ears, 'cause [he] was a cryin.'"[500] This punitive violence could have deadly results. L.M. Mills saw a woman sold away from her husband, crying with her two-month-old baby in her arms. "A driver asked her what she was bellowing about," Mills reported, and when she replied that she did not want to leave her husband, the driver "told her to shut up." When she did not, he "snatched her little baby from her and threw it into a pen full of hogs."[501] Enslavers' violent attempts to enforce enslaved people's emotional reconciliation to sale made expressing fear, sadness, or anger incredibly dangerous—even life-threatening.

Because enslaved people's emotional expressions did not always (or even often) interrupt the material, oppressive, and terroristic realities of slavery, it would be easy to conclude that these emotional displays are only a sign of enslavers' domination. While they certainly testify to the cruelty of the system and its profiteers, we must also recognize that enslaved people continued to express these emotions even when enslavers demanded they suppress them. By loudly and clearly expressing their sorrow and anger, enslaved people ensured that enslavers *saw* their grief—a crucial factor in the nineteenth-century visual culture of sympathy. If truly sympathetic, enslavers should then take action to ameliorate enslaved people's pain. When they did not, the fallacy at the heart of paternalist enslavers' claims became manifestly clear: slavery did not, in fact, produce good feelings or strong affective connections. Slavery's supposedly sympathetic marketplace of feeling did not exist.

In their narratives of slavery and even correspondence with former enslavers, freed men and women testified to the emotional cruelty at the heart of the institution, explicitly implicating

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[500] Wheeler, *Chains and Freedom*, 46-47.
[501] L.M. Mills in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 504.

enslavers in the failure to cultivate a commerce of affection, and accusing them of being manufacturers of dangerous and destructive passions. Some argued that if, as some enslavers argued, people of African descent were happy when enslaved, that was merely proof of the degrading influence of slavery.[502] Others directly charged enslavers with destroying happiness—specifically, of sacrificing enslaved people's emotional needs and bonds to their own financial interest. In a letter to his former enslaver, Henry Bibb charged, "You have not only lived up on the unrequited toil of your fellow men, from your cradle up to the present time: but you have wilfully [*sic*] destroyed their social happiness."[503] Formerly enslaved people highlighted their own deeply felt experiences while accusing former enslavers of being "heartless" and "unfeeling." Slavery could not foster affective relationships because enslavers had "cold hearts [that] cannot sympathize" with enslaved people's feelings.[504] Even more, enslavers like Henry Bibb's owner repaid enslaved people's "unrequited toil" by "destroying their social happiness." Enslavers were *not* honoring the affective contract that many claimed was at the heart of slavery's marketplace of feeling.

Enslaved people also explicitly argued that slave sale was rooted in the exchange of capital and credit, not feeling: it was a commerce of self-interested exploitation, not a commerce of affection. In his 1849 autobiography, Henry Brown explicitly stated that profit drove sale, not feeling, as many proslavery ideologues claimed in the 1840s and 1850s. Brown contended, "the tyrant slaveholder regards not the social, or domestic feelings of the slave." Instead, he argued, enslavers based buying and selling "according to the *moneyed* value."[505] Another man similarly

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[502] Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 185.
[503] Henry Bibb in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 54-55.
[504] Quotations in Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 80-81.
[505] Henry Brown, *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown, Written by Himself* (1849; Manchester: Lee and Glynn, 1851), 17. Harriet Jacobs similarly depicted her former enslaver as incapable of recognizing

placed enslavers' economic interests and enslaved people's emotional interests on two opposing sides. In his 1838 narrative, James Williams argued that enslaved people were "wretched victims, who have been bought up as the interest of the trader and the luxury or necessities of the planter may chance to require, without regard to the ties sundered or the affections made desolate by these infernal bargains."[506] Others claimed, "The buyer seldom respects the feelings of the slaves."[507] By reinforcing that the typical sale was based *not* on feeling, as enslavers claimed, but on economic self-interest, formerly enslaved people challenged the paternalist argument that enslavers and enslaved people shared both economic and emotional interests. If enslavers did not act to protect the "domestic feelings of the slave," how could they share either economic *or* emotional interests?

Enslaved people's emotional expressions also countered another paternalist argument: that slavery was better than free labor because it saved enslaved people from anxiety—both the anxiety of materially providing for dependents, and the anxiety of finding employment and avoiding poverty even in hard times.[508] By feeding, clothing, and sheltering enslaved people, the argument went, enslavers removed material anxiety from the range of emotions enslaved people had to contend with, thus saving enslaved people from the arduous emotion work free laborers (and their families) had to undertake to manage economic anxieties. For instance, South Carolina governor Whitemarsh Seabrook argued that enslaved people were "free from those thousand anxieties, which beset the mind of the free man."[509] However, enslaved people testified to

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and thus protecting her enslaved people's emotions. "It had never occurred to Mrs. Flint that slaves could have any feelings," she charged. Harriet Jacobs in Dwyer, "Mastering Emotions," 81.

[506] Williams, *Narrative of James Williams*, 37.

[507] Tabb Gross and Lewis Smith in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 347.

[508] Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 144-145.

[509] Seabrook quoted in ibid*.,* 144.

another, more pernicious form of anxiety from which they could never escape while in bondage. In 1861, for instance, Tabb Gross and Lewis Smith told a Londoner of

> the continued dread of this separation of husband and wife, parents and children, by sale, which may arise from the improvidence, misfortune, death, or other accident in life, happening to the owner, is inseparable from a state of slavery. It may happen at any moment, and is one of the greatest miseries hanging over the head of the slave. His life is spent in fear of it. The slave may forget his hunger, bad food, hard work, lashes, but he finds no relief from the ever-threatening evil of separation.[510]

Even if, as paternalists claimed, enslavers' provision of food, clothing, and housing freed enslaved people from the anxiety of materially providing for themselves and their loved ones, enslaved people found no relief from the constant dread of sale and separation.

Observers reported that enslaved people clearly articulated their anxieties about protecting kin and community to white people. In the 1820s, a group of enslaved people told a visitor that, in his recounting, "their liability to be sold…and to be separated from their families, was a cruel part of their condition," and thus a major source of anxiety.[511] In the 1830s, a northern visitor to North Carolina reported that an enslaved man told him that the fear of being separated from his wife "was always impending over him, and threatening every moment to crush him beneath its weight."[512] It was not just visitors to the South who correctly identified enslaved people's anxiety, especially about sale. One Louisiana couple reported that a local

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[510] Tabb Gross and Lewis Smith in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 347. It must be noted that this account—with its language clearly carefully targeting specific proslavery arguments about its superiority to the free labor system—was clearly mediated by white interlocutors, so it is not clear whether the enslaved people, Gross and Smith, provided this language.

[511] Adam Hodgson, *Remarks During a Journey through North America in the Years 1819, 1820, and 1821, In a Series of Letters, with an Appendix Containing an Account of Several of the Indian Tribes and Principal Missionary Stations, &c.; Also a Letter to M. Jean Baptiste Say, on the Comparative Expense of Free and Slave Labour* (New York: Samuel Whiting, 1823), 102.

[512] Ethan Allan Andrews, *Slavery and the Domestic Slave-Trade in the United States, In a Series of Letters Addressed to the Executive Committee of the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race* (Boston: Light & Stearns, 1836), 103-104.

enslaved woman "manifested a great anxiety" for them to buy her.[513] After hiring an enslaved man named Nathan, another Southerner reported to the man's owner that Nathan was "anxious to know what disposition is to be made of his wife."[514] Even white Southerners could thus recognize and correctly label the anxiety enslaved people felt about very real threats to their emotional communities. Once again, from the perspective of the enslaved, the emotions of sale were not constrained to the transaction itself. Both before and after sale, the threat of separation created a constant circulation of anxiety and fear for enslaved people.

Some enslaved people made their anxieties clear directly to their owners. An enslaved woman named Patience was so transparent about her worries that her enslaver knew beyond any doubt that Patience was "uneasy about what will become of her [and] dreads a separation from her children."[515] Another recognized, "My Girl Evoline is anxious to be as near [her husband] George as she can," and told George's owner that George "is very anxious for Me to sell you Evoline."[516] By making their anxiety about the future and their family clear, enslaved people—even if unconsciously—contradicted paternalist arguments that slavery was preferable to waged labor because it saved enslaved people from anxiety. Enslaved people's emotional expressions thus challenged enslavers' self-assuring vision of benevolence, their claims that they made the people they enslaved content and happy through material support.

Enslaved people confounded another affective object of sale for enslavers: consent to sale. When enslaved people went "willingly" to sale, it was often because that particular sale was the best option for protecting their emotional interests—like Sukey and Ersey requesting a local

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[513] Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 183.
[514] Blassingame, *Slave Testimony,* 28-29.
[515] Mary Stratton quoted in Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration,* 65.
[516] Pendleton Adams quoted in Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration,* 77.

sale that ensured they could stay close to their husbands. In many other cases, enslaved people made clear that they did *not* consent to sale—including explicitly saying that they were not willing to go. Moses Roper remembered telling a potential buyer, "I would, on no account, live with him, if I could help it."[517] When a rural sugar planter purchased an enslaved woman named Mary, she ran away because she was unwilling to live in an isolated, non-urban environment anymore.[518]

Those who held people in slavery noted when enslaved people explicitly said they did not consent to sale, hiring, migration, or other changing conditions. One enslaver did not buy an enslaved woman named Virginia because she "said she would not come" with the woman.[519] When another enslaver sent the majority of the people she enslaved to Kentucky, she noted (and respected) that one woman refused to go: "Violit would not agree to part with her [daughter] Sarah," and "said she would not go to Cantucky nor let Sarah untill I deyed unless Stephen her husband could go with them."[520] Slave agents reported that enslaved people "declined" to go to slave markets, and observers hypothesized that enslaved people faked illness because they were "unwilling to go live" with a new enslaver.[521] Enslaved people also demonstrated their lack of consent by preventing sale from going through—especially by diminishing (or temporarily

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[517] Roper, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper*, 71-2.
[518] Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 180.
[519] Ibid.
[520] Mary Cabell quoted in Gail S. Terry, "Sustaining the Bonds of Kinship in a Trans-Appalachian Migration, 1790-1811: The Cabell-Breckinridge Slaves Move West," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* vol. 102, no. 4 (Oct. 1994), 466. Violet's maneuverings only protected her for so long. Eventually, her husband and several children (who belonged to different people) ended up in Kentucky, and Violet was unable to join them there.
[521] Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 33, 185.

removing) their market value by physically harming themselves or running away.[522] Enslaved people also used enslavers' reliance on consent to advocate for better situations for themselves and loved ones. When enslaver Maria Williams asked an enslaved man named Henry "whether he was willing to be sold," he replied that she could obtain his consent on one condition: "he did not desire to be sold without his wife."[523] Clearly signaling unhappiness about sale and forcing enslavers to pursue their financial interests in other ways highlights how the emotional economy of slavery was contested ground. By rooting their benevolent self-perceptions in part in emotions they wanted enslaved people to produce, enslavers ceded some authority within the marketplace of feeling to the people they enslaved.

Through these open and explicit demonstrations of non-consent, enslaved people challenged enslavers' claims about slavery's role in the marketplace of feeling. Though enslavers might try to stifle or hide those emotional displays through terror and threats of violence, the visceral evidence of enslaved people's emotions remained visible on plantations, in slave markets, and especially in the cultural lexicon. The abolition movement politicized enslaved people's anger, grief, and fear about sale. Historian Margaret Abruzzo has argued that the debate over slavery in the 1840s was, in part, a debate over humanitarianism and sympathy. Garrisonian abolitionists highlighted the physical and emotional cruelty of slavery to contend that immediate emancipation was necessary. Slavery's defenders retorted that emancipation was cruel and unsympathetic, drawing on scientific racism to contend that God had created people of African descent to be happy in slavery, and abolition would destroy that happiness. Both sides, Abruzzo

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[522] For more on running away as a method of curtailing undesirable sales, see ibid., 31-32. On the temporary physical and emotional relief of running away to the woods for bodily freedom even if only for a short time, see Camp, *Closer to Freedom*.
[523] Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 181.

demonstrates, argued that *they* were most sympathetic to enslaved people, and best provided for enslaved people's physical *and* emotional needs.

In the 1840s and 1850s, white abolitionists joined more radical black abolitionists in politicizing the emotional suffering that formerly enslaved people had long documented in their memories and published narratives. For decades, enslaved people had highlighted enslavers' inability to sympathize with them, and owners' heartless refusal to acknowledge or act on clear evidence of enslaved people's emotional pain. White abolitionists in the 1840s and 1850s also explicitly pointed out examples of enslavers (or, more broadly, white southerners inured to slavery) being unwilling or unable to extend sympathy to enslaved people. The 1852 publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* reinforced an increasing antislavery emphasis on enslaved people's emotional pain, especially the suffering caused by sale and separation.[524]

Critics of slavery highlighted not only the depth of enslaved people's grief, but the equal depth of white southerners' inability to sympathize. In 1855, a northern visitor described Southern whites' response to what, for him, was a moving scene of family separation. He described a group of enslaved people consumed with emotion, "some of them crying, -some weeping silently, - others running to and fro, as if in the excitement of incipient mania, or of approaching delirium, - while *one* sat mute in despair." When he asked an enslaver what was happening, the man downplayed the emotional display "in a cold, formal manner." "Nothing" was happening, the man scoffed. Some of the people had been sold, "and the others are making a fuss about it." Of the many Southerners around him, the visitor reported, "no sympathy was expressed for the wretched victims." Instead, some "laughed at them, and ridiculed their

[524] Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 193.

expressions of grief."[525] The author's message to his readers was clear: these Southerners looked straight at enslaved people's suffering and were not compelled to sympathize with or help them. Instead, they mocked the enslaved people's grief. In a period when both slavery's defenders and detractors argued that they embodied humanitarian attitudes towards enslaved people, slavery's critics politicized enslaved people's emotional expressions to demonstrate that slavery (especially sale) fostered unfeeling antipathy in enslavers, not "kindly feelings."

In enslaved people's emotional suffering, formerly enslaved people and sympathetic abolitionists found evidence that slavery was a noxious force in the marketplace of feeling—that it produced fear and despair, rather than happiness and affectionate bonds between enslavers and enslaved people. With this evidence, slavery could not be an example of doux commerce rooted in sympathy and the production of peaceful emotions. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* Harriet Beecher Stowe united these critiques of slavery as the *opposite* of doux commerce, and the cause of profound trauma through sale and separation. In the novel's opening pages, Stowe contended,

> So long as the law considers all these human beings, with beating hearts and living affections, only as so many things belonging to a master,–so long as the failure, or misfortune, or imprudence, or death of the kindest owner, may cause them any day to exchange a life of kind protection and indulgence for one of hopeless misery and toil,–so long it is impossible to make anything beautiful or desirable in the best regulated administration of slavery.[526]

Rather than simply dismiss proslavery claims that enslavers were benevolent providers and protectors of the people they enslaved, Stowe asked what that supposed kindness could even mean within an economic system of racial slavery.

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[525] C.G. Parsons, *Inside View of Slavery; or, A tour among the planters* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Co., 1855), 85-87.
[526] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin: A Tale of Life Among the Lowly* (London: George Routledge & Co., 1852), 17.

Through the "good-natured and kindly" character of enslaver Arthur Shelby, Stowe began the novel by reminding her readers that even the kindest enslavers were subject to the caprice of the market (and to their own financial missteps). Though Shelby sees himself as "a humane man," he accumulates debt and reluctantly decides he must sell two enslaved people, Eliza and Tom.[527] As Arthur Shelby's son George bitterly complains, "Kind families get in debt, and the laws of *our* country allow them to sell the child out of its mother's bosom to pay its master's debts."[528] Stowe's critique is clear. The diabolical nature of slavery lay in the uneven and untenable balance of supposed affective bonds and economic needs: an enslaver's kindness could never compensate for the traumas they inflicted through their desire to accrue credit and escape debt. As one of the novel's redeeming white characters, George turns this abstract critique into direct action at the end of the story. When he becomes patriarch of the estate, he frees the family's enslaved people and offers to let them stay and work for wages, arguing, "The advantage is, that in case of my getting in debt, or dying,–things that might happen,–you cannot now be taken up and sold."[529] Only in freedom, Stowe suggested to her readers, could black Americans possibly escape the life-altering consequences of white people's financial anxiety.

Stowe's critique echoed similar observations in enslaved people's narratives published much earlier. In his 1833 account, for instance, Richard Allen claimed that his former enslaver was "tender, humane," "what the world called a good master," and (living up to the paternalist ideal) "more like a father to his slaves than anything else." And yet, Allen regretted that "slavery is a bitter pill, notwithstanding we had a good master" because, despite his kindness, the man fell deeply into debt. The knowledge that debt made them vulnerable to sale deeply affected enslaved

[527] Ibid., 13.
[528] Ibid., 127.
[529] Ibid., 470.

people like Allen, who "was often brought to weep between the porch and the altar."[530] An enslaver's supposed kindness might not be sufficient to save the feelings of the people they enslaved. In the context of slavery, then, enslavers' compensatory affection could only do so much—a conclusion enslaved people like Richard Allen reached decades earlier than Stowe's popular novel. As Manisha Sinha has argued, early black abolitionist texts in the eighteenth century were the first to offer an unflinching critique of slavery as capitalism.[531]

By the eve of the Civil War, abolitionists both white and black explicitly used the languages of emotion and capitalism to critique slave sale. News coverage of Pierce Butler's sale of 429 men, women, and children in March 1859 provides a prime example. "The Weeping Time," as it came to be known, was one of the largest slave auctions in American history. Pierce Butler, who lived primarily in Philadelphia, had inherited his grandfather's sizeable Georgian rice and cotton plantations (and its enslaved human laborers) in 1834. But Butler's fortunes faltered. His 1848 divorce from British actress Fanny Kemble was a costly endeavor, and by 1856 he had lost a significant portion of his large inheritance through stock market speculation, unwise business decisions, and a taste for gambling. The stock market crash of 1857 only worsened his financial situation. Trustees took charge of Butler's estate, selling his Philadelphia mansion and other property to try to satisfy his creditors. It was not enough. Butler and the trustees turned their gaze south, to the hundreds of men, women, and children enslaved on the Butler plantations.[532] The two-day sale on March 2-3, 1859, netted the Butler estate $303,850, and thoroughly shattered the community of nearly five hundred enslaved people sold.

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[530] Richard Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen…* (Philadelphia: Martin & Boden, 1833), 7.
[531] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, esp. 147.
[532] For more on the auction and especially its aftermath for the enslaved families and their descendants, see Anne C. Bailey, *The Weeping Time: Memory and the Largest Slave Auction in American History*

Abolitionist media dedicated angry coverage to describing the sale as a brutal sacrifice of "human feeling," a tragic but emblematic transaction in the economic and emotional economy of slavery. Mortimer Thomson, a white reporter for the *New York Tribune,* attended the two-day auction, masquerading as an interested buyer. Newspapers across the North reprinted his blistering account during the spring of 1859. Though sale announcements insisted that people "will be sold in families," Thomson's account of the sale revealed that "family" was open to interpretation.[533] Though the auctioneer often sold husbands and wives together, he separated siblings and other kin, and did not protect unmarried couples. The auctioneer separated one unmarried couple, Jeffrey and Dorcas, despite Jeffrey's emotional pleas, by including Dorcas in a family lot with another man and his three children—a sight that must have *looked* like a complete nuclear family to prospective buyers, but was in fact an illusion. Historian Anne C. Bailey speculates that Dorcas was lumped in with this family because they were all rice hands, while Jeffrey, her partner, was a cotton hand.[534] Two definitions of "family" existed at the auction block on those chilly spring days. The definition that guided sale was shaped by self-serving white supremacy. The "family" protected was not rooted in blood or affection, but in the financial interest of buyer and seller.

Thomson's account—and the newspapers that reprinted it—used enslaved people's emotions to highlight the sale's material immoralities, and vice versa. Abolitionists starkly contrasted the sale's emotional losses and financial gains. One headline sneered, "Mr. Pierce M.

(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017). For more on life on the Butler plantations, see Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863).

[533] Advertisement, *The Savannah Republican*, February 8, 1859.

[534] Bailey, *The Weeping Time,* 5.

Butler Changing His Investments…Human Feelings of No Account."[535] Thomson reported, in excruciating detail, the emotions flickering across the faces of the people sold away from their loved ones. "On the faces of all was an expression of heavy grief," he reported. Their expressions when they climbed onto the auction block "told more of anguish than it is in the power of words to express." Some "sat brooding moodily over their sorrows," while others "occasionally turned aside to give way to a few quiet tears." He noted that few people openly wept since "the place was too public and the drivers too near"—suggesting the enslaved people moderated their expressions of grief to avoid attention or punishment. Still, Thomson concluded, "The blades of grass on all the Butler estates are outnumbered by the tears that are poured out in agony at the wreck that has been wrought in happy homes, and the crushing grief that has been laid on loving hearts."[536]

Thomson depicted enslaved people skillfully navigating the language of love and the language of money in a campaign to keep their families intact.[537] Jeffrey provided Thomson's prime example. Knowing that he could easily be separated from his betrothed, Jeffrey tried to

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[535] "American Civilization Illustrated, A Great Slave Auction. 429, Men, Women and Children Sold. Mr. Pierce M. Butler Changing His Investments. Scenes at the Sale. Human Feelings of No Account. Mr. Butler gives each Chattel a Dollar," *The New York Tribune,* March 9, 1859.

[536] Ibid.

[537] Historian Daina Ramey Berry has shown this operating on a larger scale throughout Georgia in the first half of the nineteenth century. She argues that enslaved people cannily used financial language to try to influence sales: "they understood the importance of the monetary value assigned to them and used this knowledge to persuade buyers to purchase their entire families." However, "the pleading, begging, and crying by slaves to be allowed to stay together rarely resulted in intact families"—a point she illustrates through the case of Jeffrey and Dorcas. "Playing on the financial interests of potential buyers," she says, "Jeffrey did all he could to speak their language by using descriptive words that planters understood so that the two of them could have the same master." When the language of love and sympathy had no effect, Jeffrey quickly shifted to the language of money, which he knew enslavers spoke—and understood—more readily. Still, his acute understanding of buyers' financial self-interest was not enough to save his relationship. Daina Ramey Berry, "'We'm Fus' Rate Bargain': Value, Labor, and Price in a Georgia Community," in *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*, ed. Walter Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 55, 66, 67.

evoke sympathy and even pity in his new owner to convince him to also purchase Dorcas. With a trembling voice and tears in his eyes, Jeffrey beseeched his owner, "I love Dorcas, young mas'r, I love her well an' true; she says she loves me." But, Thomson reported, "Jeffrey then remembers that no loves and hopes of his are to enter into the bargain at all." Realizing his new owner would likely approach his request as a financial and not emotional transaction, Jeffrey quickly switched to the language of financial value: "Young mas'r, Dorcas prime woman…long arm, strong, healthy, and can do a heap of work in a day." He even estimated her monetary value: "worth $1,200 easy, mas'r, an' fus' rate bargin at that." Thomson snidely commented that "the man seems touched by Jeffrey's last remarks"—moved not by Jeffrey's declarations of love for Dorcas, but his claims about her financial value.[538] Though the man agreed to bid on Dorcas, (for financial not emotional reasons), the auctioneer offered her for sale in a family lot that put her out of his price range, and Jeffrey and Dorcas were forever separated. As we only have Jeffrey's words through Thomson's pen, we cannot know for certain whether Jeffrey truly distinguished between the languages of love and capitalism at the sale. Still, Thomson's written articulation of the conflict between love and money in the context of slave sale reveals that this distinction was firmly in the nation's cultural lexicon by mid-century. Abolitionists had become deeply invested in the project of cracking open false claims at the heart of slavery's marketplace of feeling.

Thomson further contrasted the languages of love and money to excoriate the sale. To end his account of the tragic saga of Jeffrey and Dorcas he wrote, "to-morrow, Jeffrey and Dorcas are to say their tearful farewell, and go their separate ways in life to meet no more as mortal beings. But didn't Mr. Pierce Butler give them a silver dollar apiece? Who shall say there

[538] "American Civilization Illustrated."

is no magnanimity in slave-owners?" Thomson's sarcasm honed in on pressing questions about the emotional economy of slave sale. Should enslaved people sacrifice their emotional interests to serve enslavers' financial interests? Could enslavers' financial gain compensate for the emotional trauma they caused enslaved people? This was, in many ways, the reverse of the compensatory affection John Young Mason worried so desperately about. Thomson captured the absurdity of Pierce Butler gaining $303,850 from selling human beings and then offering them "a silver dollar apiece" after shattering their community. A single silver dollar could never compensate for the lifetime of sorrow Butler inflicted on the people he sold to serve his own financial interest. Thomson's abolitionist perspective made clear that in the context of slave sale, money certainly could not compensate for emotional harm.

Other abolitionists picked up on Thomson's devastating point. Several newspapers printed a poem called "Pierce Butler's Slave Sale" whose central thrust was the *un*-fungibility of emotion and money in the context of slavery. One particularly illuminating stanza read:

> Generous souls! For his lordly sake
> They ought to be willing their hearts should break,
> And rejoice to be anywhere, anyhow sold,
> To fill his coffers with needful gold!
> For what is the grief of such as these,
> Compared to a gentleman's moneyed ease?
> And then, when the little arrangement's made,
> And he feels quite sure 'twas a gaining trade,
> He'll give them a dollar! that will heal
> Every sorrow a slave can feel—
> Scores for the master, and one for his tool—
> Thus he'll follow the *Golden Rule*,
> That reads, 'To others I'll do what I see
> Will bring the most money to mine and me!'[539]

[539] "Pierce Butler's Slave Sale," *Liberator* (Boston, Ma.), vol. 29, iss. 15, April 15, 1859, 60.

The poem laid bare the cruelties of slavery as an economic *and* emotional system—especially as a financial institution that enabled enslavers to sacrifice enslaved people's emotional needs to their own financial gain. Slight variations on the final six lines formed the poem's incriminating refrain, creating an insistent, thrumming censure of the idea that a dollar could "heal/Every sorrow a slave can feel." The final stanza depicted the aftermath of sale, when enslaved families who had previously been able to enjoy each other's love and support under the same roof were forever parted. "But this is nothing!" the poet sarcastically concluded, "Their master paid/For all the ruin and wreck he made;—/Each had a dollar! and that will heal/Every sorrow a slave can feel." To slavery's advocates, the enslaver's "moneyed ease" was worth far more than the "grief" of the enslaved people he sacrificed to achieve it. The poet used Butler's rumored offering of a silver dollar to show the cruel condescension and exploitation of such an argument.

Newspaper coverage of the Butler auction thus reveals that by 1859, critics of slavery challenged whether financial gain for one white family was worth the cost of sorrow for many, many black families. Not only did abolitionists dispute paternalist claims that the institution produced positive affective relationships between enslavers and the people they enslaved, abolitionists also directly targeted the emotional effects of slavery's financial mechanisms—especially sale. Because slavery was an economic system maintained through white supremacist power—and because those white supremacists had economic interests that often contradicted the *emotional* interests of the people they enslaved—slavery could not simultaneously produce profit and positive feelings, as paternalists eagerly claimed. Enslaved people's emotional displays contradicted enslavers' vision of slavery's positive role within the larger marketplace of feeling in the nineteenth-century United States. Adam Smith had hoped that a market economy would encourage sympathy and cultivate positive affective relationships. Paternalist enslavers may have

claimed that their favored labor system "foster[ed] kindly feelings," cultivating sympathetic bonds between enslavers and enslaved people (and in so doing producing social harmony). But, enslaved people testified to enslavers' unsympathetic, cold hearts, and thereby denied enslavers some of their most self-serving affective objects—like the idea that enslaved people would "reconcile" themselves to sale. Racial slavery, enslaved people's emotional expressions made clear, could never be an example of doux commerce.

Epilogue
Towards an Emotional History of Capitalism

Emancipation threatened to strip enslavers of their economic assets and racial power. Between 1864 and 1866, those who had claimed people as property consistently and explicitly demanded material compensation from both state and federal governments.[540] However, they did not expressly demand—through legal channels, at least—*emotional* compensation. It would certainly be easy to conclude from this that emancipation illuminated enslavers' false dedication to slavery as a marketplace of feeling. Pursuing economic but not emotional compensation suggests that what mattered most to enslavers was not, as they had previously claimed, the emotional economy of slavery, but its bare monetary foundations.

And yet, things are not quite that simple. The failures of Reconstruction and the long history of Jim Crow certainly demonstrate many white Americans' enduring dismissal of African Americans' emotional and material interests, as well as their rights. While ex-Confederates did not explicitly press the federal or state governments for emotional compensation in the same way that they vociferously pursued financial reimbursement for the value of their freed slaves, they *did* undertake a widespread project of collective emotion work to, in the words of historian Gary Gallagher, "find something positive in all-encompassing failure."[541] After emancipation, white southerners sought new means of producing their *own* happiness. The myth of the Lost Cause

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[540] Kleintop, "The Balance of Freedom."

[541] Gary W. Gallagher, "Introduction," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, eds. Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 1. On the importance of emotion to identity and especially manhood to former Confederates after the Civil War, see James Broomall, *Private Confederacies: The Emotional Worlds of Southern Men as Citizens and Soldiers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019); Anna Koivusalo, "Honor and Humiliation: James Chesnut and Violent Emotions in Reconstruction South Carolina," *American Studies in Scandinavia,* vol. 50, no. 1 (2018), 27-49.

provides one of the starkest examples of collective emotion work (and self-delusion) in U.S. history. Vigorous national debates over the harm of Confederate monuments still standing throughout American cities demonstrate that this affective campaign is yet ongoing (though not unopposed). The abiding myth of the Lost Cause also provides an enduring example of a troubling question probed in the preceding chapters: who benefits and who is harmed by Americans' efforts to self-soothe—by their pursuits of both profit and happiness?

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This dissertation illuminates tensions between the pursuit of profit and the pursuit of happiness in the early United States. The troublesome relationship between emotions and economics (especially between happiness and capitalism) was familiar to many Americans by the mid-nineteenth century—and to enslaved people long before then. From political economists to merchants' wives to enslavers, Americans debated whether capitalism facilitated or thwarted happiness. Even more, they considered whether unhappiness was a cost they themselves were willing to pay—or demand from others.

If people at the time so clearly used feeling to understand themselves as economic agents, why have historians neglected to analyze the nineteenth-century economy in those emotional terms? Why have historians of capitalism focused so much on accounting and banks, but not on banked emotions or emotional debt? Within the "new history of capitalism," historians have become preoccupied with how the field relates to and is received by economists. In Caitlin Rosenthal's recent and compelling attempt to define capitalism, one of her motivations appears to be reaching across the disciplinary aisle to economists.[542] Her definition of capitalism is

[542] Caitlin Rosenthal, "Capitalism when Labor was Capital: Slavery, Power, and Price in Antebellum America," *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Spring 2020), 296-337.

refreshingly clear but frustratingly narrow. In crafting a definition of capitalism that is legible and useful to both historians and economists, historians risk obscuring what the expanding capitalist economy looked and felt like to people in the nineteenth century. Restoring emotions, not just economics, to our understanding of capitalism enables historians to reach across the *temporal* aisle more effectively—to come closer to seeing the early American economy through the eyes of early Americans themselves.

According to historian Paul Gilje, the aspect of capitalism's expansion in the early U.S. that is "most difficult to get a handle on" is the spread of the *mentality* of capitalism—by which he means "a mindset [that] saw the production of more capital as its basic end and espoused values of hard work and delayed gratification."[543] This dissertation makes clear that in the minds of early Americans, this capitalist mentality had an emotional corollary. To many, the production of capital was not enough. The troubling emotional and moral effects of the pursuit of wealth necessitated an equal dedication to the production of happiness. To grasp the expansion of a capitalist mindset in Americans simultaneously seeking financial and emotional stability, we need to interrogate how and why *they* understood the economy through an emotional lens.

The emotional history of capitalism has been neglected in part because we modern observers are *ourselves* embedded in a capitalist model of understanding and valuation. Our gut instinct is to "follow the money"—to trace power, oppression, and agency through the movement (or absence) of cash and credit, and to understand significance through material effects.[544] These material conditions are indeed significant. Access to—and denial of—material effects reveals a

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[543] Gilje, "The Rise of Capitalism," 7.

[544] "Following the money" has led to what Stephen Mihm calls a financial turn in the history of capitalism in the early American republic. Stephen Mihm, "Follow the Money: The Return of Finance in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic,* vol. 34, no. 4 (Winter 2016), 783-804.

great deal about power and the nuance of human experience. But the history of capitalism must entail more than the history of financial mechanisms and material conditions. This approach simply will not suffice if early Americans themselves valued economic life in profoundly linked material *and* emotional terms. Crucially, affection did not have to be commodified to be significant in early American society. To underscore the significance of emotions outside a strictly material valuation system, the preceding chapters have focused on *unpaid* emotion work rather than that done for a wage.[545] This dissertation is thus an act of sympathy in the Smithian sense—an exercise in becoming impartial spectators and seeing the economy through others' eyes, and thus through the lens of emotions.

How can we effectively integrate the history of emotions into the history of capitalism, and thus make the necessary move towards an emotional history of capitalism? Historians of gender and capitalism provide an illustrative model. Historians have long acknowledged that the first half of the nineteenth century was a period of capitalist expansion and emotional exploration. They have even acknowledged a cause-and-effect relationship between these two transformations—in particular, that middling class Americans treated the home as a balm for the disruptions of the economic realm. As scholars of women, gender, and the family have made clear, domesticity arose in part because of capitalist expansion and anxiety.[546] For decades,

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[545] Further research on paid emotion work in the early republic is absolutely necessary. Topics of particular interest to historians should be the gendered emotion work provided by boardinghouse keepers and sex workers.

[546] For the first wave of this work, see, among many others, Boydston, *Home and Work* and "The Woman Who Wasn't There"; Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class;* Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990). For an ongoing second wave, see, for instance, Sara Damiano, "Agents at Home" and "'To Well and Truly Administer': Female Administrators and Estate Settlement in Newport, Rhode Island, 1730-1776," *New England Quarterly,* vol. 86, no. 1 (March 2013), 89-124; Alexandra Finley, "'Cash to Corinna': Domestic Labor and Sexual Economy in the 'Fancy Trade,'" *Journal of American History*, vol. 104, no. 2

women's historians have shown how the line between public and private—between home and market—was far more permeable than domestic rhetoric acknowledged. Breaking down the barrier between the "separate spheres"—both historically and historiographically—has required studying women as economic agents as well as mothers and wives, and men as fathers and husbands as well as bankers and lawyers.[547] Breaking down the barrier between the history of emotions and the history of capitalism requires shifting our categories of analysis in similar ways. Thus, the preceding chapters consider economic agents as emotional actors, analyzing emotion as motivation for economic action, as compensation for financial loss, as something one is owed or can owe to others. Economic actors in the first half of the nineteenth century produced and exchanged sentiment, not just capital and credit. To grasp how they perceived their own economic world, then, we need to follow the emotion as much as we follow the money.

Exploring transactions within the marketplace of feeling is one method of achieving this goal. Tracing the production and exchange of emotion reveals the fulcrum upon which early Americans hoped to reconcile the pursuit of profit and the pursuit of happiness: emotion work. Considering who had the power (or simply believed they held the power) to compel others' emotion work is telling. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a distinct race and gender

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(September 2017), 410-430; Wendy Gamber, *The Boardinghouse in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties that Buy*; Katie M. Hemphill, *Bawdy City: Commercial Sex and Regulation in Baltimore, 1790-1915* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Ruth Wallis Herndon, "Poor Women and the Boston Almshouse in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic,* no. 32 (Fall 2012), 349-81; Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property;* Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Daina Ramey Berry, "Preconception: Women and Future Increase," in *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017) and *"Swing the Sickle for the Harvest Is Ripe": Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Karin Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

[547] For an excellent example of how this is done, see Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place."

hierarchy guided the development of a marketplace of feeling that might temper the expansion of capitalism. Across the country, white Americans—especially white men—contended that *their* emotional interests mattered most, and must be prioritized. In Boston's merchant families, it was the merchant himself—the male head of household, the breadwinner—who compelled emotion work from his dependent relations. Popular literature made clear that wives owed self-abnegating emotion work to their anxious husbands. Ellen Coolidge's efforts to protect the emotional health of both her husband and father-in-law reveal how patriarchal power governed her emotional priorities and labors. Though fiction and advice literature contended that women's emotion work was difficult but necessary to help men weather the storm of financial uncertainty, wives received no real wages for their efforts. Instead, they confronted the personal emotional costs of constantly laboring for other people's happiness: frustration, guilt, exhaustion, and sometimes anger. In the marketplace of feeling, merchants' wives produced and distributed happiness for their husbands, but they did not necessarily receive sufficient emotional benefits in return. As Ellen Coolidge and Valeria Forbes reveal, some women struggled to accept this unbalanced economy of emotion.

The system of emotion work governing slaveholding Virginia gentry families similarly revolved around the patriarch's emotional needs. Like Joseph Coolidge in Boston, John Young Mason tried to mobilize familial bonds of affection to soften both economic and emotional distress. He was used to a friendly economy in which shared affection and obligation had safeguarded the plantation gentry's privileged economic and social status, and he assumed the power to compel compensatory affection from his relations. And yet, while Mason chastised his adoptive son Joe for refusing to extend sympathy during Mason's financial decline, Mason himself refused to extend that same sympathy to Joe. Rather than recognizing that Joe was

motivated by his *own* desire to protect family (a desire Mason shared), Mason branded him heartless: he refused to recognize the feeling that drove Joe's own economic behavior. In using Joe as an example of the unfeeling economy he feared, Mason embodied the lack of sympathy—the narrowed vision of self-interest—he so decried. Wedded to the expectation that he should be able to wield the patriarchal power to compel emotion work, he policed the boundaries of his familial emotional community without considering whether sympathy flowed not just to but *from* him—especially in financial matters. John Young Mason thus demonstrates how patriarchal self-interest could blind white men to the emotional motivations behind even their loved ones' financial behavior. Patriarchal entitlement could block the channels of sympathy even within families long united by affection.

It is troubling, then, that the marketplace of feeling rested on patriarchal power, relying on and even solidifying existing hierarchies of both gender and race. The same perceived entitlement to happiness and profit that prevented Mason from extending sympathy to his relations also prevented him from effectively extending sympathy to the people he enslaved. When Mason heard that several enslaved people on his Mississippi plantation had died of cholera, he was concerned and aggrieved. But he was concerned *not* about alleviating the grief and fear of the enslaved people who had survived (or improving the living conditions that had facilitated the disease's spread), but that of his own son, who himself worried only about the financial ramifications of losing laborers. Entitled self-interest led enslavers to privilege their own emotions about financial loss over enslaved people's grief and fear in other, more glaring ways, as chapter four demonstrated. Enslavers sold people to settle debts and pursue wealth. These sales separated enslaved communities, making enslaved people's emotional wellbeing a

major cost of enslavers' pursuit of profit or solvency.[548] Some enslavers chided one another whenever feeling, not economic self-interest, dictated sales. For these family members, sympathetic bonds between enslavers and enslaved people were well and good *until* feelings interfered with economic interests—in other words, until the marketplace of feeling hindered, rather than complemented, the material marketplace.

Power and entitlement could block sympathetic channels between enslaver and enslaved people regardless of the enslaver's gender. As Stephanie Jones-Rogers has recently emphasized, white slaveholding women held and exerted power over the people they enslaved in the same way white men did.[549] Within the marketplace of feeling in the slaveholding South, white women approached enslaved people from a position of authority and the possibility of domination. This translated into a relative position of power within the marketplace of feeling. Like their male counterparts, female enslavers attempted to control the emotional transactions of slavery, especially when it came to sale. Dolley Madison tried (but failed) to remove painful emotions from the equation when she tried to sell a fifteen-year-old enslaved girl without warning, sending traders to ambush the girl when she was on an errand, far from any loved ones who could object.[550] Martha Jefferson Randolph maintained that she was a benevolent mistress guarding the happiness of the people she enslaved, even as she sent an unwilling enslaved woman away from her family just so Randolph could make an offering of affection to her own son.

One key difference between the marketplace of feeling of slavery and that of dependence more generally, then, was the relative power white women believed they held to compel emotion work from the people they enslaved. Though she claimed to abhor slavery and was relieved to

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[548] For more on this dynamic, see especially Schermerhorn, *Money over Mastery.*
[549] Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property,* xv.
[550] Schwartz, *Ties that Bound,* 335.

raise her children far from its grasp, when Ellen Coolidge moved to Boston and began overseeing servants rather than slaves, she missed the emotional hierarchy of Virginia. In Boston, she was rankled to find that there was nothing much she could do about a "desperately sulky" servant who knew she could earn a higher wage elsewhere. Ellen complained, "she does nothing but pout and complain, & I suppose will go away as soon as she can."[551] Enslavers, men and women alike, pursued both profit and happiness through the physical *and* affective labor of the people they claimed as property.[552]

Adam Smith had envisioned a modern capitalist society driven by sympathy. But this was not what emerged in the new United States, where people in relative positions of power not only felt entitled to the pursuits of both profit *and* happiness, but were also eager to rest both pursuits on the laboring backs of their subordinates. In both Boston and Virginia, the difficult and draining emotion work of producing happiness for struggling heads of household fell to dependents. But neither hierarchy of affective labor rested on unshakeable ground. Merchants' wives like Ellen Coolidge and Valeria Forbes protested feeling forced to sacrifice their own happiness for the sake of profit. Enslaved people's displays of anger, grief, and fear contradicted enslavers' desired emotional regime for sale, and abolitionists (including formerly enslaved people) politicized those displays to critique slavery's traumatic effects. Both North and South, emotions provided a battleground for debates over the pursuit of profit and its emotional costs. This was especially true in western territories, where women unhappily left their family networks behind to follow their husbands' dreams of independence and prosperity. From frustrated wives

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[551] Ellen Coolidge to Martha Jefferson Randolph, January 23, 1834, ECC.

[552] Further research is needed to understand whether a similar power dynamic existed between women and paid servants. This dissertation has intentionally focused on *unpaid* emotion work rather than paid emotional labor.

to horrified abolitionists, anxious and angry Americans crafted critiques of capitalist society that rested provocatively on emotional concerns. In debates over capitalism's trajectory in the early United States, emotions had rhetorical power.

Indeed, some abolitionist critiques of capitalism echoed that of paternalists contending that slavery was preferable to free labor because it rested on affection.[553] In 1845 James Henry Hammond lambasted "the modern *artificial money power system*, in which man—his thews and sinews, his hopes and affections, his very being, are all subjected to the dominion of *capital*—a monster without a heart—cold, stern, arithmetical."[554] Just five years earlier, influential white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison had similarly drawn on emotion (particularly sympathy) to critique the self-interested pursuit of wealth. "It is rightly named—*Wall Street*," Garrison mused in 1840,

> for those who habitually occupy it in quest of riches at the expense of mankind, are *walled* in from the sympathies of human nature, and their hearts are as fleshless and hard as the paving stones on which they tread, or the granite and marble buildings which they have erected and dedicated to their idol Gain. Love—pure, benignant, all-sympathizing, all-embracing Love—where art thou?[555]

Both paternalist arguments *for* slavery and abolitionist arguments *against* slavery decried financial capitalism for its lack of heart—its lack of sympathy. For both Hammond and Garrison,

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[553] Manisha Sinha has called for scholars to reevaluate the history of antislavery and capitalism. In her monumental history of abolition, Sinha cogently argues that "contrary to conventional historical wisdom, [abolitionists] developed an incipient critique of capitalism that linked the emancipation of the slaves with that of all laboring people." Where past scholars have focused on how abolitionists' critiques of slavery legitimized free labor, Sinha contends that many abolitionists (especially black abolitionists) were far more anti-capitalist than historians have previously recognized. Sinha, *The Slave's Cause,* 339. For Sinha's argument about abolitionist anti-capitalism, see *The Slave's Cause*, 347-358; Manisha Sinha, "The Problem of Abolition in the Age of Capitalism," *American Historical Review*, vol. 124, no. 1 (February 2019), 144-163.

[554] Hammond, "Hammond's Letters on Slavery," 163.

[555] William Lloyd Garrison, May 20, 1840, in Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879: The Story of His Life, Told by His Children,* vol. II: 1835-1840 (New York: The Century Co., 1885), 358.

financial capitalism was a negative marketplace of feeling. On the other hand, they disagreed about whether slavery produced beneficial or destructive emotions (an obviously self-interested question for Hammond, an enslaver). On both sides of the debate over slavery *and* financial capitalism, the language of emotions—especially the marketplace of feeling—provided potent rhetoric for critiquing the expanding capitalist economy.

Emotions still factor into contemporary concerns about the capitalist economy in the United States. Journalists worry that the lack of a universal basic income means that the American economy denies workers "the ability not to worry"—that the modern economy produces fear and anxiety.[556] Magazines and online publications urge burned-out readers to resist employers' attempts to domesticate the office. Writers contend that "the idea of a 'work family' boils down to simple manipulation"—a greedy attempt to cultivate affective ties that can then be mobilized to squeeze loyalty and productivity out of workers (a troubling thought considering nineteenth-century efforts to rhetorically "domesticate" exploitative institutions).[557] Present-day academics and cultural commentators are especially concerned with the racial and gendered dimensions of both paid and unpaid emotion work. Jobs requiring lots of emotion work—like those in the caring and service industries—are disproportionately held by women and people of color.[558] In part because care work has become coded feminine, these economic sectors are not

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[556] Annie Lowrey, "The Pandemic Proved That Cash Payments Work: An extra $600 a week buys freedom from fear," *The Atlantic*, July 10, 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/07/600-week-buys-freedom-fear/613972/.

[557] Mandy Michael, "Work is not your family," *The Pastry Box Project*, February 4, 2018, https://the-pastry-box-project.net/mandy-michael/2018-february-4; Sarah Levy, "The 'Work Family' Fantasy is Actually Hurting Your Career," *Cosmopolitan*, April 22, 2020, https://www.cosmopolitan.com/career/a32188171/work-is-not-your-family/.

[558] On the racial and gendered history of care work in the United States, see Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). On race, gender, and emotion work in the modern care economy, see Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Love and

compensated as well as others.[559] Even outside professions rooted in paid emotion work, women and people of color report taking on additional unpaid emotion work to conform to feeling rules rooted in masculinity and whiteness.[560]

The hierarchies of gender and race that governed the marketplace of feeling of the early republic thus appear to still stymie the American economy. Grappling with the history of emotion work within the early American economy is an important and pressing venture when our own homes and workplaces are still driven by both paid and unpaid emotion work. This history can help frame what should be a continuous investigation in modern society: can capitalism's pursuit of profit and the pursuit of happiness peacefully coexist? Or, are we always wondering, as Valeria Forbes did, whether we need to "make less money, and more happiness"?

Gold," in *Global Women: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, eds. Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004), 15-30.

[559] On emotion work as a cause for lower pay in women's work, see Mary Ellen Guy and Meredith A. Newman, "Women's Jobs, Men's Jobs: Sex Segregation and Emotional Labor," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 64, iss. 3 (May 2004), 289-298.

[560] For an example of gendered emotion work within a particular industry, see Marcia L. Bellas, "Emotional Labor in Academia: The Case of Professors," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 561, Emotional Labor in the Service Economy (January 1999), 96-110. On people of color conforming to feeling rules in predominantly white spaces, see, for instance, Louwanda Evans and Wendy Leo Moore, "Impossible Burdens: White Institutions, Emotional Labor, and Micro-Resistance," *Social Problems*, vol. 62, iss. 3 (August 2015), 439-454; Marlese Durr and Adia M. Harvey Wingfield, "Keep Your 'N' in Check: African American Women and the Interactive Effects of Etiquette and Emotional Labor," *Critical Sociology*, vol. 37, iss. 5 (2011), 557-571; Alicia A. Grandey, Lawrence Houston III, and Derek R. Avery, "Fake It to Make It? Emotional Labor Reduces the Racial Disparity in Service Performance Judgements," *Journal of Management*, vol. 45, iss. 5 (May 2019), 2163-2192.

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