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Brandy Parris

Emotional Labor, Women's Work, and Sentimental Capital
in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction

Brandy Parris

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2005

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:
English

UMI Number: 3178100

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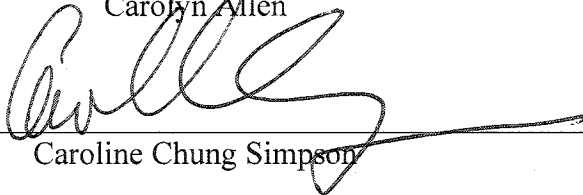
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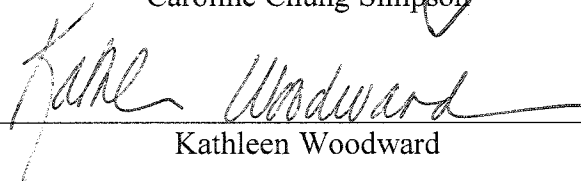
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Abstract

Emotional Labor, Women's Work, and Sentimental Capital
in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction

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In this dissertation, I examine texts by mid-nineteenth-century American women writers that undertake the difficult task of portraying women's labor within the confines of Sentimentalism. Despite Sentimental injunctions to keep women in the home and out of the marketplace, women wrote from within the Sentimental to claim the value of domestic labor and the influence of women in the business world. The lynchpin of this discussion was emotional labor, which enabled authors to discuss women's productive public contributions via the affective practices condoned by Sentimentalism. I argue that Sentimental emotional prescriptions work in tandem with economic theories to inscribe the gendered division of labor.

Following the work of Lauren Berlant and Glenn Hendler, my project transforms criticism of Sentimentalism by attending to the emotional and "public" valences of the Sentimental. Unlike other scholarship, however, my project redresses the general elision of women's work from discussions of domesticity, Sentimentalism, and nineteenth-century American women's literature. Using sociological theories of class and practice to expose the economic source of "separate spheres" ideology, my project also shifts the discussion away from the emotion of sympathy to include the larger, more complex socio-emotional networks that underlie Sentimentalism. I employ Certeau's notions of practice to understand the way women writers take up but rework Sentimental conventions to critique its contradictions and restrictions and its role in gender, race, and class formation. In an extension of Pierre Bourdieu's

metaphor of cultural capital, I argue for the Sentimental as a habitus with its own circulating Sentimental capital, a stock of social, economic, cultural, and emotional assets.

The texts in this study take up Sentimental dispositions but engage in a variety of literary tactics to retheorize the Sentimental by revealing its inconsistencies and its economic foundations. Placing emotional practice at the center of their work enables these women writers to infuse women's emotional and household duties with labor value and women's imbursed work with emotional value. By offering a corrective for the limitations on women's labor imposed by Sentimental dispositions, these women writers defiantly situate economics as central to representations of women's lives.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people supported me in the process of writing this dissertation, and I want to offer my thanks to them here. Mark Patterson, for aiding in the weeding process without implanting his own ideas of what the project should be, and, of course, for his emotional labor, being kind, patient, and helpful when I was despairing, cranky, or obstinate. Caroline Simpson, for her stories and humor. Carolyn Allen, for introducing me to the theoretical side of emotion and for trusting in my abilities. Kathleen Woodward, for her own work in emotional life and for creating a vibrant intellectual community at UW. Anis Bawarshi, for professional advice and for a few heartening conversations when I was thinking of giving it all up for cooking school. Tani Barlow, for being an outstanding mentor and a good friend.

My writing group, the Dissy Dames -- Brooke Stafford, Kim Emmons, and Tamiko Nimura -- for providing helpful feedback on early drafts. Christine Wooley for ongoing discussions of Sentimentalism and very helpful comments on the cross-dressers chapter; Todd Tietchen for arguing the state of American Studies; Amy Reddinger for dogsitting and talking domesticity; Steve Johnson for his Civil War expertise; and Alissa Karl for theoretical discussions of shopping and fashion.

Spencer Schaffner, for always asking hard questions, pushing my thinking in new directions, arguing with me about Bourdieu, etc. etc. etc. Chooch and Stubbs, for making me take walks. Meta, Dean, and Stephen Parris for their support and good humor. Robin Veder, for feedback and silliness. Samantha Soma & Bill DeRouche, John Fife & Melissa Messina, AmberJo & Naomi Hatt, Keith Haddock, and Andrew Felsing for their thoughtful questions and valued friendship. Jennifer Schaffner, for being a cool librarian and a great cheering section. And, Jim Schaffner, for reminding me that "It's just typing!"

I was fortunate to have assistance from the University of Washington in the form of the Elizabeth Kerr MacFarlane Endowed Scholarship in the Humanities. I also benefited greatly from a research fellowship and the kind assistance of the staff at the Winterthur Library and Museum.

Introduction

To Count the Tears and Weary Vigils

I think women need, especially at this juncture, a much greater range of occupation than they have, to rouse their latent powers. -- Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (174)

[A]ll the social regimes of "History" are based upon the exploitation of one 'class' of producers, namely, women. Whose reproductive use value . . . and whose constitution as exchange value underwrite the symbolic order as such, without any compensation in kind going to them for that "work." -- Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One* (173)

After at least a century of popular and scholarly debate about the nature of women's labor and role in capitalist society, the types of labor and levels of compensation remain stunted while a variety of labor forms, such as housework and child care, persist primarily as women's unimbursed responsibility. As Irigaray suggests, women have long performed the unpaid work of sustaining social order and guaranteeing social relations by serving as a medium of exchange as well as a reproductive machine. Women thus have provided not only exchange value and reproductive use value, but also a labor productive of social order.

In the nineteenth century, as early feminists like Margaret Fuller were arguing for both a revaluing and an expansion of women's work, many women were striving to make women's labor visible. Writing from within the dominant discourse of sentimental domesticity, which functioned in the emerging industrial economy to maintain women's subordination to patriarchal family structures by denying them access to economic independence, these writers exposed the realities of women's work. Contra the pervasive representation of refined women as leisured, some writers strove to depict the very real predominance of work in women's lives, from the varieties of waged labor to the multifarious demands of housework and childrearing.

The most prominent of these figures in literary studies is Fanny Fern,¹ who, like many feminists of the era, identified women's economic dependence as the primary source of their oppression. Having faced great economic hardship because of gendered labor restrictions, Fern wrote regularly in her newspaper column and in her novels about the realities of women's work and the barriers to their economic independence. One such story, "The Widow's Trials,"² rehearsed the plot and themes of her later novel *Ruth Hall*. A middle-class woman falls into poverty when she is widowed and her greedy, self-serving family members refuse to protect her financially. Even her uncle John, a successful publisher, refuses to help her or even to allow her to write for his newspaper, advising her instead to be "resigned" and "submissive" (18) and "take in sewing, or something" (20). Nevertheless, through her

¹ Fanny Fern is the *nom de plume* of Sarah Parton Willis, sister of publisher Nathaniel Willis.

² Fern Leaves v. 1 (1853), 17-24.

own hard work and persistence the long-suffering widow, Janie, builds a literary career with her immensely popular contributions to other newspapers. Fern repeatedly juxtaposes Uncle John's love of money with Janie's love of her child as spurs to their labor. Doing so places Janie within the confines of respectable sentimental domestic womanhood while providing an acceptable justification for Janie's need to earn money. It just so happens that Janie's labor also brings her fame and economic independence.

This conjunction of sentimentalism and labor prompts the manifestation of a particular kind of labor, emotional labor. In describing Janie's work, Fern writes, "she must not yield to despair"; instead, "the widow sat up till the stars grew pale, and bent wearily over long pages of manuscript" (21). Janie represses her despair during long desperate hours of work, but this emotional labor, although it enables Janie's writing, is not the labor that is counted and Fern seeks to correct the problem. When Janie becomes famous, her uncle deigns to recognize her talent by stealing her articles and reprinting them in his paper "without credit, without remuneration to herself" (23). Fern ends the story with a chastisement of this man:

Sanctimonious, avaricious uncle John! Did you count the weary vigils [those articles] cost the writer? Did you count the tears which blistered their pages?
 ... No, no, Uncle John! how should you? For where your heart should have been, there was a decided vacuum. (23-4)

What Fern deems most heinous in Uncle John's theft is his failure to recognize, either emotionally or financially, the emotional labor Janie's success has "cost" her.

Furthermore, Janie's emotional labor arises from sentimental motherhood, or reproductive use value, which functions to maintain social order. Thus, Fern insists that the exploitation of women's labor rests not only on greed and desire for economic power but also on a refusal to value emotional labor.

In the context of the 1850s, it is surprising that Fern was so popular, and her popularity at a historical moment when women's labor was undervalued suggests the important cultural work her writing and that of other's like her did when they took on the issue of women's work. Despite the fact that most women worked for money, either by selling home manufactures or earning wages in domestic service or manufactory work, there was a fairly strong cultural taboo again women working. The antebellum era saw manufacturing begin to replace the Jeffersonian agrarian economy. In this age of rapid industrialization, the nature of labor changed, inaugurating new class formations. The new economic and labor system created the material conditions for the assertion of a middle class with enough money to purchase domestic service and new manufactured goods while working in new non-manual positions of proto-management as well as non-business jobs -- religious, educational, or political.

The emergent middle class defined itself against other social groups, defined as a frivolous and vice-ridden aristocracy and a degraded, immoral working poor. In contrast to these other groups, the middle class professed a natural refinement and respectability, essentially adapting the aristocratic claim to power-via-gentility to their own material conditions. Richard Bushman thoroughly examines the role of "refinement" in the formation of the American middle class through manners, goods,

religion, and spaces. He finds that assimilating the genteel values of a leisured, governing class created tensions for the industrious and thrifty republicans. It was in fictional representations, Bushman argues, that genteel manners were most successfully adapted to Jeffersonian republican values. By moving the scene of gentility from ballrooms to parlors, "[a]uthors of sentimental fiction made aristocratic gentility accessible by domesticating it" (Bushman 281).

In bringing refinement to the emerging middle class, sentimental fiction writers activated and advocated the tenets of sentimental domesticity. Enmeshed with "The Cult of True Womanhood" and republican motherhood, the tenets of sentimental domesticity have been well rehearsed in critical texts; they emphasize a woman's duty to inculcate morality in her family and thereby the nation, which she does by manifesting the virtues of forbearance, sympathy, and submission to God's will. The refining process of sentimental domesticity featured a double-pronged attack on women's work, requiring new moral, aesthetic, and emotional responsibilities while simultaneously denigrating the labor essential to fulfilling those duties. Linked by notions of refinement to the corrupt world of politics and business on the one hand and the immorality of the poor on the other, labor, once a civic asset, became a liability. The ideal woman kept an immaculate tasteful house and regulated the virtue of its inhabitants, but to be truly refined, her labor had to be invisible. Women selling their labor or goods in a market economy invoked images of prostitution, thus linking a man's right to women's reproductive use value, which Irigaray identifies, to his right to the exchange value of her labor. Furthermore, the dematerialization of women's

household work asserts as well a man's right to the surplus value of his wife's and daughters' labor. Sentimental domesticity thus maintained patriarchal authority and economic power by erasing the economic contributions of women's work.³

But real women worked. Almost all women performed housework of some kind, even those few who could afford servants. Industrialization moved work away from the home and the responsibilities for housework devolved upon women who previously could depend on help from other members of the household. While many household items such as cloth were increasingly available in the marketplace, mid-nineteenth-century women still made most of their families' clothing, grew foodstuffs and managed livestock, and produced a wide variety of household goods. Even in the middle class, women worked for pay, some taking in boarders, other taking in sewing or laundry, still others producing fancywork or preserves for sale.

When Fuller argued for a greater range of occupations for women, she primarily referred to middle-class women, very few of whom worked outside the home. But, the opportunities for wage-earning women were likewise extremely limited. Those who worked outside the home found jobs in textile mills, millinery and dressmaking shops, textile sweatshops, or domestic service. Some women found work teaching or nursing, or as clerks in shops, but those professions remained dominated by men until well after the Civil War. Not surprisingly, the same patriarchal system that devalued women's housework likewise diminished the exchange value of women's

³ For an excellent discussion of the process of devaluing women's household work, see Boydston *Home and Work*.

work outside the home. The pay and pay system for women were extremely exploitative, women earning a fraction of the wages earned by their male counterparts. To survive in this economy, women needed to marry or remain with their families, forcing them into positions of economic dependence, a role only few women escaped, usually via inheritance or living their lives disguised as men. Fuller and other writers recognized that women's economic dependence on men authored their subordination in other fields as well and that effective agitation for women's empowerment would begin with validating their labor.

An early advocate of women's work, Catharine Beecher wrote the widely read *Treatise on Domestic Economy, for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School*. Originally published in 1841 and reprinted almost annually for fourteen years, the *Treatise* contains both her philosophy of domestic economy and instructions for its practical application.⁴ Her text reveals as well that women's domestic labor must entail a great deal of labor not entirely relegated to the upkeep of house and material objects; indeed, much of the advice in the *Treatise* concerns the regulation and maintenance of social relations. Beecher insists, "Children can be very early taught, that their happiness, both now and hereafter, depends on the formation of *habits of submission*,

⁴ The *Treatise* was used widely as a textbook in schools for girls and in private homes. Beecher argues for universal education in the book and claims that all women, regardless of their means, need to be instructed in a variety of domestic skills. The instability of the American economy produced financial insecurity so that a wealthy family could easily lose everything and, less often, a working-class family could gain wealth. Women, Beecher argued, needed to know how to do everything required to manage a household in case of an unexpected change of fortune. Nonetheless, the *Treatise* is solidly middle-class in its values and its expectations.

self-denial, and *benevolence*" (224). These elements of a "good character" involve habits of mind and behavior that are conducive to interactions that minimize conflict.

These habits, however, should not beget self-mortification or be practiced for that sake; instead, they offer one a way of interacting with the world. Beecher emphasizes throughout the book that, in both a Christian and democratic society, "the value of the happiness of each individual is the same as every other"; "[b]ut," she continues, "as there must be occasions, where there are advantages which all cannot enjoy, there must be general rules for regulating a selection" (140). These rules dictate good manners for all and entail submitting one's will to another and denying one's personal happiness for the sake of another's all with an attitude of patient benevolence. Good manners, then, entail operating on the Christian principle of doing unto others as you would be done by. In addition to cultivating good manners, giving in charity enables both children and adults to practice regularly the habits of self-denying benevolence. Beecher notes that charitable activities work to eliminate habits of "engrossing self-indulgence" (168) or "indolent self-indulgence" (170). Turning away from the self allows greater attention to the social and prevents dangerous selfishness. Personal emotional management makes one more sociable because more attentive to others' emotional needs. Consideration of the emotions of others demands a form of sympathetic identification that then allows one to manifest the emotions appropriate to maintaining harmonious social relations, sometimes referred to as "feeling right."

The often-invoked notion of "feeling right," from Stowe's exhortation in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for her readers to feel right about slavery, suggests, as well, that there are

also ways of "feeling wrong." Right feeling, in this vein, is not solely based on sympathy or sympathetic identification. "Feeling right" fundamentally directs attention outward to one's interpersonal relations, requiring one, in Beecher's terms, to "promote the comfort and enjoyment of others, and to avoid all that gives needless uneasiness" (136). It demands one generate positive emotion (right feeling) or contain negative emotion (wrong feeling) based on the needs of others to maintain desirable interactions. Sociologist Arlie Hochschild calls this "emotional labor," labor that "requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (7). Hochschild's study refers to people, particularly women, in service-related jobs (the bulk of her study examines flight attendants) who must continually gauge customers' emotional needs and respond with the appropriate emotion to maintain the comfort and ease of the customer. I take up but extend this definition and contest Hochschild's assertion that emotional labor only obtains in the service industry.

Hochschild argues, "emotional labor occurs only in jobs that require personal contact with the public, the production of a state of mind in others, and (except in the true professions) the monitoring of emotional labor by supervisors" (156). I take exception to this assertion on three counts: the construction of the "public" space of business in opposition to the private space of the home, the emphasis on a distinctive sale-able product, and the authorizing function of the supervisor. Although Hochschild addresses the same kind of emotional practice as it occurs in the context of familial relations, she does so largely to argue that the late twentieth-century middle-class

home is an emotional training ground for workers capable of performing the kinds of emotional tasks demanded of them by the service industry. In making this argument, Hochschild rearticulates the gendered sphere distinctions made by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century economists.

The most prominent of eighteenth-century economists, Adam Smith, produced two equally influential texts -- *A Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations*. Although the content of these texts at first seem quite disparate, they in fact work in tandem to confirm in the first, a moral economy based in the home and maintained by the family and, in the second a market economy that elides the role of the home and family in producing capital. Kathryn Sutherland observes that Smith's works marks a moment of "redescription" in economic discourse that includes "the severing of the epistemological link of household and economy at a national level" (108). In this formulation, the "public" sphere is constituted by men, commerce, politics, and individualism while the "private" sphere contains women, morality, domesticity, and collectivity. This notion of separate spheres has influenced contemporary scholarship on the nineteenth century; however, in the last fifteen years, many scholars have worked to defuse its power as a structuring concept.⁵ Hochschild's work precedes this effort and thus, perhaps, falls victim to separate spheres constructions in her distinction between public and private emotional practices.

⁵ See in particular, *Separate Spheres No More*, an expansion of the groundbreaking special issue of *American Literature* (Sept. 1998) edited by Cathy Davidson and *No More Separate Spheres*.

Hochschild's emphasis on emotional labor's production of a commodity -- in this case, the emotional well-being of the customer -- also falls into the trap of Smith's division of labor. In Smith's formulation, "productive labour is that labour which replaces or augments capital" (Pujol 18). Yet, he also allows for "human capital" which inheres in a person as a result of education or apprenticeship. Hochschild's description of emotional training in the home seems to create human capital in its subjects as it prepares them for service sector jobs. Similarly, Catharine Beecher argues that the health of the nation rests on the proper, character-forming education of its women because women shape the characters of their husbands and children. Beecher proclaims, "The proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman and the interests of a whole family are secured" (37). Beecher here begins to articulate women's role in producing human capital.⁶ As Michele Pujol argues, "The work of educating and nurturing the productive abilities of people should, by Smith's definition, be seen as productive labour" (18). By extension, when that work entails emotional regulation, management, and practice, the term emotional labor ought to apply, and emotional labor ought to be understood as productive of human capital.

John Stuart Mill comes closer to acknowledging the economic value of this type of labor, yet ultimately finds home education and nurturance "unproductive because [the worker's] intention . . . is not to increase production or productive

⁶ Beverley Skeggs notes the darker side of this attribution of power when she remarks, "if women refuse to take responsibility for social order they can be blamed for its disruption" (*Formations* 42).

capacity" (Pujol 32). In Hochschild's formulation of emotional labor, the supervisor serves the function of marking the productive intention of the emotional laborer. But nineteenth-century emotional labor was formulated in opposition to the production of capital as well as the increase of production or productive capacity; it was, in fact, conceived of as a means to counteract the corrupting influences of capitalism and thereby produce moral citizens. And, yet, a key characteristic of a moral citizen in nineteenth-century America is industriousness; thus, if a woman intends, via her emotional labor, to produce a good citizen, she also intends to produce a good worker. Nevertheless, the dominant discourse maintains a Smithian "severing of the epistemological link of household and economy at a national level" (Sutherland 108) to prop up a gendered division of labor that sutures women's human capital to their economic dependence on men. Clearly, denying the economic value of women's labor maintains their economic oppression.

In order to identify the majority of women's unpaid domestic practices as labor in a materialist economic system, feminist Marxist scholars have labeled this work "reproductive."⁷ Doing laundry, for example, "replenishes the use" of the objects laundered (Willis 86). I want to argue, instead, that this labor is productive, but my position demands that we view such labor in terms of its own economy, the domestic economy. By the mid-nineteenth century, industrialization had radically reshaped the domestic economy by moving production of material goods out of the home and into the factory. In its stead, women's labor gradually centered around familial relations

⁷ Strasser 5; Ryan 198-203.

and behaviors, in the form of republican motherhood -- raising children to be proper citizens -- and in creating a comfortable environment in the home. In this increasingly extra-materialist domestic economy, emotional labor renders domestic labor productive. It produces not goods, but a highly regulated sociability. Judith Butler has drawn our attention to Marx's claim that "'mode of production' needed to include forms of social association" and that "a mode of production is always combined with a mode of cooperation" (39). Emotional labor bears this out. Domestic emotional labor produces human capital in the form of emotionally disciplined subjects attuned to a prescribed emotional disposition that limits social conflict and encourages social harmony.

Insisting on emotional labor as extra-material has another consequence. Kathleen McHugh has argued that Catharine Beecher portrays a housekeeper whose body should not appear to labor (44). Indeed, several scholars have noted the problem, apparent in nineteenth-century fiction and advice manuals, of the "angel in the house," an ethereal presence that produces a beautiful home environment without ever appearing to labor.⁸ This dematerialization of women's labor reinforces the sense of the domestic as a sphere entirely other than that of the market economy. In part, this is made possible by the emotional component of women's domestic labor since emotional labor is not material in the sense that it is either visible or produces a visible, vendible commodity.

⁸ As Mary Ryan argues, "Within the home, the woman's chief activity was to please others" and was "often expressed in metaphors of light" (*Empire* 37). See also McHugh 44; Noble 43.

And, yet, emotional labor is embodied labor, experienced and expressed physically as well as psychologically. For example, one might experience "deep and rapid breathing . . . the jaw clenched, and the eyes narrowed, with a reddening of the face . . . a by-product of the elevation of blood pressure" (Tomkins 197), and through years of socialization, would come to recognize this feeling as the emotion "anger." The emotion is then displayed through a variety of physical signs, such as clenched fists or glaring eyes. The physiological affect is understood via socially constructed emotion, which in turn is evidenced by a socially coded physical response. And, it is this physical display, sometimes accompanied by verbalization, which is the product of emotional labor and enacts exchange in the emotional economy. The terms of exchange differ across time and cultures, and vary based on one's social position. In the nineteenth-century sentimental economy, a display of anger would buy a woman disdain and a consequently (if temporarily) lowered status. Distinguishing between physiological affective response and psychological understanding of that response and coded display rends the suturing of culture to nature in western discourses of emotion and articulates the social regulation of affective practice.

The sentimental, like most categories, presents the scholar with a dilemma of definition. On the one hand, clear patterns trace a fairly distinctive outline of a field; on the other, the field fluctuates and interflows with other seemingly distinctive fields. Post-structuralism has taught us to view categories and fields as fluid and slippery. I see them as viscous, liquid but slow and gluey, oozing and sticky, gripping objects in their paths, but not inextricably. As a category within scholarship on American

literature, sentimentalism began as a derogation of women's literature as emotionally manipulative and false, formulaic, and moralizing by male authors, such as William Dean Howells and Henry James, who argued for the superiority of their own, initially less lucrative, category of fiction, which they defined as Realism. Early twentieth-century scholars picked up this thread, effectively dismissing women's writing from the canon formation of American Literature based on aesthetic arguments derived from James and Howells.⁹ The late 1970s brought feminist intervention into this categorization. Nina Baym reclaimed what she called "Woman's Fiction," dispensing with the loaded and derogatory term "sentimental," and attending to the formal and thematic elements to elaborate an explicit tradition of American women's writing. Ann Douglas provided an astute examination of the interrelated cultural positioning of nineteenth-century women and ministers, in which sentimental fiction and clerical biographies narratize the "forging, severing, and re-creating" (199) of an individual's relationships. However, Douglas, gripped by decades of negative characterizations of sentimentalism, ultimately derides sentimental narratives for both aesthetic faults and for avoiding history and politics, claiming that "sentimentalism . . . never exists except in tandem with failed political consciousness" (254). Jane Tompkins later responded to

⁹ See, in particular F.O. Matthiessen and Helen Papashvily. I would like to say this type of analysis has given way, but it has not. When I teach nineteenth-century women's literature, I still inevitably have students who refer to it as fluff and express their grief that I am not teaching enough of "the classics." The attitude persists among many scholars as well. As recently as 1992, Edwin Black took the distaste for sentimentalism to hyperbolic, almost hysterical levels, by referring to sentimental fiction as "a rhetorical equivalent of fascism" (132).

this charge, and initiated a flood of scholarship on American women's fiction and the concept of sentimentalism, when she argued for viewing the sentimental novel "as a political enterprise, halfway between sermon and social theory, that both codifies and attempts to mold the values of its time" (126). More recent scholarship has concerned itself with the various political ramifications of sentimentalism and its implications for gender and race.¹⁰ Lori Merish, for example, has traced "the affiliated emergence of feminine consumer 'subjectivity' and the literary culture of sentiment" and the ways they construct women as "civilized" political subjects (25). Like Merish, I am concerned with the interactions of sentimentalism and everyday life, but seek to address the elision of women's work from discussions of domesticity, sentimentalism, and nineteenth-century women's literature.

Because the category of the sentimental has been so variously defined and widely discussed, and I am certainly influenced by and indebted to previous scholarship, I must explain my own approach somewhat carefully. I understand the sentimental as originating with Adam Smith and David Hume and the philosophies of moral sentiment. Enlightenment "sensibility" is a belief that we view and understand the world through our sensations. Hume proposed that we feel first and think second. Feeling for Hume means both physical sensation and that physical response we would call affect or emotion. Since, according to his view, all thinking arises from feeling, all reasoning also arises from feeling. Adam Smith also articulated a theory of sensitivity

¹⁰ See, for example, "Poor Eliza" (Berlant), *States of Sympathy* (Barnes), *sentimental Bodies* (Burgett), *sentimental Men* (eds. Chapman & Hendler), *sentimental Confessions* (Moody), and *Tender Violence* (Wexler)

to the world, an understanding of the world based in feelings, which he called "sympathy." Smith claimed that sympathy was the basis for communication, for morality, and thus for a good society. To understand the turn these theories take in nineteenth-century America, one must consider the ideals of domesticity.

Domesticity arises as a response to the changing economic system of the United States. With the beginnings of industrialization, work increasingly moved to venues outside the home, people moved away from their families and to urban centers to work. Class distinctions became more apparent in urban environments and new work structures, and poverty was seen as a symptom of immorality. The "cult of domesticity"¹¹ was a popular discourse that responded to these changes, painting the city and the workplace as a mass of corrupting influences and the home as a refuge from the outside world. Additionally, middle-class women, who once were partners in their husband's work when the work meant running a farm and household, were now left to care for homes while capital-producing work was performed outside the home. Women's labor, aside from housekeeping, began to be formulated as "republican motherhood,"¹² or what I like to call citizen-rearing. The twin discourses of domesticity and republican motherhood alongside the aforementioned dematerialization of women's labor emerged as a range of descriptive and prescriptive

¹¹ Barbara Welter's 1966 article "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" launched contemporary scholars' understanding of nineteenth-century proscriptions on women's social role.

¹² Linda Kerber introduced the term "republican motherhood" to explain the duty of women in the new republic to raise children as virtuous citizens.

formations articulated in etiquette books, women's periodicals, newspapers, fiction, poetry, and homemaking manuals. Middle-class white women, as homemakers, were expected to create a particular emotional environment in the home in which husbands could renew their morals and children would develop the proper types of emotions (termed "affections") that would make them good moral citizens.

Nineteenth-century American sentimentalism thus relies on an epistemological model of emotion grounded in eighteenth-century theories of sensibility and inflected by nineteenth-century domesticity. In addition, the ethical philosophy of sentimentalism merged with domesticity finds expression in literature and emerges as a literary genre, with distinct formal elements, tropes, and themes. Sentimental characters are figured as emotional types, sentimental tropes represent a set of emotional relations, and plots remark upon particular emotional systems. As such, American sentimentalism is based on a concept of social relations reducible to those relations originating in the home, wherein the home itself is conceived of as what Nina Baym identifies as a "system of human relations" (49) that are structured by an "affective model of relationships" (50). Thus, the discourse of sentimentalism grants primacy to domestic emotional experience, expression, and relations. Yet, in doing so, it also draws on political philosophers contemporary with Smith who argue from an "'as in the household, so in a nation' analogy" (Sutherland 108). Thus, sentimentalism also informs economics and politics and profoundly shapes the emerging national field of the United States.¹³

Critics have approached sentimentalism as a literary genre or mode or as a discourse, and more recently, Glenn Hendler has described it as a "structure of feeling," "specifically affective elements of consciousness," distinct from "ideology," "meanings and values as they are actually lived and felt" (Williams 132-4). Here, I will engage in a theoretical *bricolage*, whereby the set of established theories constitute a toolkit, "a heterogeneous repertoire" (Levi-Strauss 17), from which I draw here a wrench, here a whisk, here some bias tape to construct my own instrumental set, necessarily altering the conditions of each tool as I redefine its use in relation to other tools. I find Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus" a more useful (although similar) concept to Williams' "structures of feeling." Bourdieu explains habitus as "a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures, and the socially structured situation in which the agents' *interests* are defined" (*Outline* 76). Structures of feeling thus relate to the habitus in that they are both cognitive and motivating structures that create meaning and value affectively. Bourdieu refers to these cognitive and motivating structures as "dispositions," "matri[ces] of perceptions, appreciations, and actions" that order everyday practices (*Outline* 83). Dispositions relay and code everything we perceive and prompt specific behaviors and responses. The habitus generates and comprises a system of dispositions, which function as a set of affective and practical logics. Dispositions evince varying degrees of cultural capital, which in turn signifies the relative value of subjects and locates them within a class structure.

¹³ Lauren Berlant's work has made particularly important contributions to exploration and analysis of these dynamics. See especially *Anatomy* and "Poor Eliza."

While we are now well versed in the signifying function of material objects, we are less aware of the same potential as it adheres in affect formations. As Bourdieu remarks, "it is an immediate adherence, at the deepest level of the habitus, to the tastes and distastes, sympathies and aversion, fantasies and phobia which, more than declared opinions, forge the unconscious unity of a class" (*Distinction* 77). None of these elements function outside affect; indeed, it is through affect that such "sympathies and aversions" are experienced. Bourdieu acknowledges that "tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance . . . of the tastes of others" (*Distinction* 56). Tastes, experienced emotionally, are formed within a social field and are thus contingent upon social conditions and structures. Such a conception of emotion combines cognitive¹⁴ and social constructivist¹⁵ theories to argue that emotion serves the primarily social purpose of appraising situations, objects, and practices. Yet emotion is not only mental appraisal but also physical experience and expression.

Silvan Tomkins explains the connection between the physiological element of emotion, the part that leads people to think of emotion as a biological or natural occurrence, and the social element of emotion, the part that is constructed by our interactions with other people and the world. Tomkins uses the term "affect" to describe the physiological response triggered by a particular stimulus. The affect is

¹⁴ See notably, philosopher Robert C. Solomon's *The Passions and Not Passion's Slave* as well as psychologist Richard S. Lazarus' *Emotion and Adaptation*.

¹⁵ Arthur Kleinman *Rethinking Psychiatry* and Abu-Lughod & Lutz, eds. *Language and the Politics of Emotion*.

then processed and responded to based on an individual's history of experience with that particular affect, its various triggers, and different responses used in the past. Experience with affect is gained through social interaction, beginning with one's parents. "Emotion" in Tomkins' terms, is precisely this understanding of the affect based on experience. For example, one affect he labels Fear, and it is distinguished by the following physical features: "eyes frozen open, pale, cold, sweaty, facial trembling, with hair erect" (74). The physiological affect becomes recognizable as the emotion "fear" when one learns to associate certain cognitive and social experiences with the physiological response. One is trained via social interactions to understand a certain physiological response as "fear" but also to moderate the expression of even the experience of the emotion based on cultural conventions. Thus, Tomkins defines emotion as learned and regulated affect.

Catherine Lutz considers emotion a social practice, claiming, "each element and combination of elements that make up the concept of emotion emerge out of everyday social practices" (59). It functions socially as a means of communicating and instilling values, authorizing behavior, and mediating relations. As a social practice, emotion can also "mark or acknowledge the existence of particular kinds of relationships" (122). Emotional experience, she suggests, is shaped by and shapes social relations and the values that underpin those relationships. "Values and social relations in flux thus mean emotions in flux -- emotions in process of cultural reconstruction" (163).

In the language of everyday life theory, emotion is practiced affect. I am adapting this claim from Michel de Certeau's argument that "*space is a practiced place*" (117, emphasis in original). Place, a distinct point that configures a set of positions, becomes space, a social field, via specified uses of the place which then imbue that place with constructed meaning and value, signifying and relating multiply rather than singularly. Similarly, affect is a distinct set of physiological responses that gains meaning and value via its social use, understood as emotion. Emotion as practiced affect engages assorted practices or "ways of operating" (Certeau 30) in relation to a system of dispositions. Within this system, any number and combination of emotional practices are possible, including structuring strategies that provide and maintain the dispositional framework as well as tactics such as *bricolage*, *la perruque*, and other forms of making-do that subtly alter that framework's potential. Thus, sentimentalism can be conceived of as a habitus that inflects everyday practices, specifically via a variety of emotional practices. In this project, I will identify and discuss primarily the practices and dispositions¹⁶ that underlay this habitus, including literary practices as well as emotional practices as they are represented in the texts I examine. Although sentimentalism has already been understood as a disciplinary

¹⁶ A caveat here is that while Bourdieu uses "disposition" to understand lived experience and practices, I am using it to understand representations of lived experience and practices. As Beverley Skeggs has argued, representations are central to understanding social formations such as class and gender, particularly in understanding "how they become authorized and institutionalized through policy and administration, how they produce the normative, how they designate moral value and how those who are positioned by negative and pathological representations are both aware and resistant" (*Class, Self, Culture* 117).

apparatus, scholars have yet to dismantle the affective dimensions of practice regulated by the sentimental.¹⁷

I use Certeau's notion of practice to modify Bourdieu's formulation "[habitus (capital)] + field = practice" (*Distinction* 101). In Bourdieu's model, a Foucauldian conception of power obtains wherein all agency is subsumed by a larger structure. Practice exists only as a necessary outgrowth of habitus and capital and which serves essentially to uphold the structure. For Certeau, Bourdieu's notion of practice is like "a knowledge that subjects do not reflect. They bear witness to it without being able to appropriate it" (71). Conversely, Certeau argues that practices arise out of memory, an "invisible knowledge [that] escapes visible power" (85). In line with this I wish to evoke Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *puissance*, a capacity, "a range of potential," "a capacity to multiply potential" (Deleuze & Guattari *Plateaus* xvii). *Puissance* is a different form of power than *pouvoir*, which (Massumi explains) is the Foucauldian sense of power "as an instituted and reproducible relation of force" (Deleuze & Guattari *Plateaus* xvii). While for Bourdieu, practice appears largely to be a product of *pouvoir*, for Certeau, practices can also articulate and enact *puissance*.

Certeau's notion of practice as divisible into strategies and tactics more fully engages the difference between *puissance* and *pouvoir*. Strategies are institutional, spatial, ideological. Tactics are temporal and individual; they operate through and in excess of ideology to reinvent, and affirm existing modes of operating. This practical

¹⁷ Lori Merish begins this project in *sentimental Materialism*, wherein she opens the door on the relation of sentimental regulation of emotion in consumer practices, but her attention to emotion is a sideline to her widely inclusive analysis of liberal subjectivity within commodity culture.

distinction facilitates an understanding of the generic power of sentimentalism in an author's deployment of its conventions as well as her innovations within and through the mode. Sentimental strategies enact generic expectations to discipline readers (*pouvoir*) to take up sentimental dispositions. Sentimental tactics, on the other hand, refract sentimental dispositions to generate new stories that exploit the potential of the form to enable moderate alterations of dispositions (*puissance*).

Adam Smith's notion of "human capital" anticipates Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital. Bourdieu argues that class, and subsequently power, is based upon different forms of metaphorical capital -- cultural, social, and economic. Cultural capital consists of education, aesthetic sensibility, manners, and various apparently natural predilections and knowledge actually acquired socially. I would add that emotional responses also signify cultural capital. One's social connections and the ability to exploit them comprise social capital while economic capital is obviously wealth, assets, and cash. Bourdieu plots class position at the nexus of these types of capital. Beverley Skeggs has expanded on Bourdieu's formulation to argue that "[o]ur cultural capitals have different values -- both in terms of sites of legitimation and tradable value" because "[w]e all have differential access to frameworks for understanding" based on our social positioning (29-30). The power to legitimate one's cultural capital and its tradable value (*pouvoir*) rests on one's access to a framework of understanding, a habitus, or set of strategies. Limited access to legitimation can generate tactical responses energized by *puissance*.

Class formations serve ultimately to naturalize class distinctions and mystify the connections between socio-economic status and conditions. By identifying the role of emotion in constructing class formations, I expose a key mode of the naturalization as well as the gendering (and racialization) of class. Emotion is most commonly viewed in nineteenth-century texts as natural, essential, and inherent. Twentieth- and twenty-first-century commonplace understandings are not terribly different. Catherine Lutz provides a lengthy evaluation of popular Western discourses of emotion, including emotion as natural and as feminine.¹⁸ I have already begun to show above the ways in which emotion is constructed as feminine in the nineteenth century, and I will add the component of race as I proceed through my analysis of nineteenth-century texts. Examining the emotional practices underlying the dispositions that formulate class position enables an understanding of how socio-economic oppression has functioned via emotion and emotional conventions as well as how individuals have protested that oppression by contesting those emotion-based structures.

The sentimental habitus so dominated and infiltrated popular discourse and literature in the mid-nineteenth century that it became a standard by which women and women writers were critiqued. Fanny Fern, for example, was critiqued for being unrefined and unladylike because she dared to break somewhat from sentimental emotional and literary conventions. Understanding the sentimental as habitus enables us to see how widespread and deeply embedded it was in the culture, how it

¹⁸ *Unnatural Emotions* 53-80.

functioned in the formation of class, race, and gender distinctions, and how individuals responded to the system of dispositions sentimentalism operated through.

I locate my study within the historical context of the mid-nineteenth-century. I have chosen this era because it marks American sentimental fiction's apex of popularity. Additionally, this period also witnesses a rapidly changing economic system as the country becomes increasingly more industrialized, altering both the conditions and forms of labor. Furthermore, the political structures of the country likewise undergo significant reinvention during the years preceding and following the Civil War. Many factors surrounding the war alter the social and economic landscape as well. Yet, I wish to somewhat alter our understanding of the war era by avoiding eventalist thought. While I find current readings of the Civil War that emphasize wounds and trauma compelling and valuable,¹⁹ I want to point to a consistency of ideas across the era, which grow and change, but not always in direct relation to the war. I wish to identify "Some sort of continuing plateau of intensity [which] is substituted for . . . ' war, or a culmination point" (Deleuze & Guattari *Plateaus* 22). In de-emphasizing the approach to history that attends primarily to big events, battles, and political leaders, I am also working within a tradition of feminist historical and

¹⁹ See, for example, Silverman.

literary critical enquiry that emphasizes the daily lives of individuals²⁰ and attends to the experiences of daily life expressed by women in their writing.²¹

I study writing by women for what I assume are obvious reasons.

Sentimentalism as a category, as noted above, has been employed to devalue and inter women's writing. Despite years' worth of scholarship disinterring and revaluing women's writing, there is still work to be done in dismantling the gendered and derogatory uses of the term "sentimental." In addition, the gendering of emotion persists as a means of naturalizing gender differences, and I wish to challenge that perception by exposing the diverse ways women activate emotion in relation to and beyond gendered norms in their writing. Finally, because I am concerned with issues of women's economic oppression via the sexual division of labor and gendered labor regulations and practices, I look to women's writing to provide representations of their lived experience of labor. As Fern teaches us in "The Widow's Trials," we need to begin to count the cost of weary vigils and tears, to both evaluate and validate the many types of women's labor and the ways emotional labor can authorize, displace, and even transform other labor formations.

Chapter One introduces the relation of women's work and emotional labor to sentimentalism using the ur-text of nineteenth-century American sentimentalism, Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World*. Examining the correlation of physical labor and emotional consequences in the practices of domestic labor, I lay out the notion of

²⁰ Most notably, the work of Mary Ryan, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Susan Strasser.

²¹ Joyce Warren "Realism."

emotional labor as it inheres in sentimental definitions of women's work. I argue that emotional self-mastery is one practice in a more elaborate emotional system -- with a corresponding constellation of forbidden and encouraged emotions -- that structures daily household practices, both physical and emotional, and regulates interpersonal relations. In *The Wide, Wide World*, Warner attempts to articulate and codify sentimental dispositions intended to maintain social control and to signify status in the emerging middle class. In doing so, she legitimates a set of dispositions that offer its practitioners social dominance, finally prioritizing emotional labor as the engine of the sentimental economy as it obtains in both the domestic and larger social realm.

Chapter Two problematizes the notion of separate spheres by examining the interrelation of women's domestic and waged labor. Material from *The Lowell Offering*, Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*, and Fanny Fern's *Ruth Hall* each reveal the class and race biases of sentimentalism in their efforts to represent the realities of women's labor within the sentimental system of dispositions. The writers for *The Lowell Offering* partially dismantle the patriarchal structure by imagining a family of women workers authorized to regulate themselves and each other. They participate in the formation of a lower middle class grounded in an amalgamation of genteel and Jeffersonian values. Harriet Wilson draws attention to the conditions of indentured service, stressing the lack of cultural, economic, and even labor capital. Both the writer and main character of *Our Nig* reject sentimental emotional conventions, and in doing so, reveal the way those conventions maintain class and race hierarchies. In *Ruth Hall*, Fanny Fern contests sentimental claims for the equalizing function of

middle-class sympathy and male guardianship of women by locating its heart in pecuniary self-interest; she offers, instead, a reformed sentimental economy that prioritizes emotional social bonds founded on the acknowledgement and defense of unmarried women workers. Wilson, Fern, and the Lowell operatives each indicate the role of economic capital in providing access to cultural and social capital and, through their literary *bricolage* as well as their characters' emotional tactics, rewrite sentimentalism and protest the socio-economic oppression of women and blacks as they critique the patriarchal apparatus underlying the sentimental habitus.

Chapter Three considers the work opportunities war provides for women as well as the emotional demands of various forms of war work. I read E.D.E.N. Southworth's novel *Fair Play* in conjunction with two semi-fictionalized accounts of cross-dressing women serving as soldiers and spies in the Civil War -- Loreta Janeta Velasquez's *The Woman in Battle* and Sarah Emma Edmonds *Soldier, Nurse, and Spy*. Women's work during the war strongly refutes the sentimental argument that women's emotional sensitivity unfits them for labor outside the home, and their emotional labor suggests that there are no essentially gendered emotions or jobs. The cross-dressers in chapter three gain access to new forms of capital generally not available to women, their efficient performance of wartime labor offers proof that women were capable of excelling in traditionally masculine jobs, and their emotional flexibility provides an implicit critique of the sentimental gendered restrictions on women's labor based in constructions of women as emotionally too sensitive and morally too pure to thrive in the marketplace. At the same time, they identify the multifarious, and often

conflicting, forms of emotional labor demanded during wartime, drawing on both dominant sentimental and transgressive Sensational emotional and literary conventions. Ultimately, they disrupt and reform the sentimental habitus by incorporating the Sensational dispositions for self-orientation that allow them to assert women's labor potential.

Chapter Four examines the function of race and emotional labor in the changing Civil War-era economy. Elizabeth Keckley, dressmaker to Mary Lincoln, uses her book *Behind the Scenes* as a form of literary *perruque*. Ostensibly written to vindicate Mrs. Lincoln's behavior in the eyes of a critical public, in other words as Keckley's work on behalf of her employer, *Behind the Scenes* performs work for Keckley herself by identifying the emotional links between the slave and waged labor of African Americans. Keckley takes up sentimental dispositions and juxtaposes them with depictions of material conditions to challenge white entitlement and black dispossession. Exploring classed and raced power dynamics in terms of affective practices, *Behind the Scenes* protests the labor structures, emotional and material, that exploit black labor to support white extravagance. In addition, both Keckley and Lincoln participate in the marketplace in ways that question feminine domesticity, and Keckley demonstrates that sentimental constructions of women necessitate a particularly destructive form of feminized economic participation.

Each of the texts examined disrupts and transforms the sentimental habitus through a variety of literary tactics, which infuse women's emotional and household duties with labor value and their work for pay with emotional value. By offering a

corrective for the limitations on women's labor imposed by sentimental dispositions, these women defiantly situate economics as central to representations of women's lives.

Chapter 1

The Domestic Emotional Labor of "Feeling Right"

The room was dark and cheerless; and Ellen felt stiff and chilly. However, she made her way to the fire, and having found the poker, she applied it gently to the Liverpool coal with such good effect that a bright ruddy blaze sprang up, and lighted the whole room. Ellen smiled at the result of her experiment. "That is something like," said she to herself; "who says I can't poke the fire? Now, let us see if I can't do something else."

-- Susan Warner, *The Wide, Wide World*

Thus, with a simple poke of the fire, little Ellen Montgomery begins her "experiment" with domestic labor. Her mother's serious illness makes Mrs. Montgomery unfit for housework, and Ellen recognizes the unspoken arrangement that transfers housekeeping responsibilities to her. But, what kinds of duties would she be able to perform and to what ends? This initial experiment suggests her labors could bring light, warmth, and cheer to a dark, cold, and cheerless home. She could be the "light of the home." The "light of the home" or "angel in the house" -- well-known metaphors ascribed to women through the nineteenth-century "cult of domesticity" and evident in *The Wide, Wide World* (published 1850) -- figures a homemaker as an ethereal presence creating, without giving any impression of her labor, an atmosphere

of love and comfort in the home.¹ The visual absence of the homemaker's labor includes that which is emotional. Indeed, the creation of a particular emotional environment figured prominently, although often implicitly, in the list of a housekeeper's duties.

Scholars of *The Wide, Wide World* have widely addressed the issue of emotion, mainly in terms of Calvinist prescriptions for emotional self-control, the political, social, and erotic function of sympathy, and sentimentalism's emotional appeal to the reader.² Missing from this conversation is the imbrication of emotion with domestic labor. Domestic labor's deployment of emotion is twofold. First, physical labor has emotional consequences. When Ellen pokes the fire, the material effects of her labor (warmth and light) have the extra-material effect of making the room more cheery, and Ellen herself, we see through her smile, more cheerful. Second, a type of emotional labor is required while performing domestic tasks. Near the end of chapter one, Ellen is making tea for her mother. Normally a very pleasant task, this time it is marred by her knowledge that she will soon be separated from her mother. Ellen's grief distracts her, making her unfit to perform her duties, as she lets the pot boil over and the toast fall in the ashes of the hearth. Furthermore, her grief also greatly disturbs her mother who "too exhausted to share or soothe Ellen's agitation [. . .] lay in suffering silence," finally saying, "Ellen, my love, I cannot bear this much longer"

¹ As Mary Ryan argues, "Within the home, the woman's chief activity was to please others" and was "often expressed in metaphors of light" (*Empire* 37). See also McHugh 44; Noble 43.

² See especially Tompkins, Goshgarian, and Noble.

(14). In order to create a comfortable atmosphere, Ellen must control her grief.

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild calls this "emotional labor," labor that "requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (7).

Hochschild's study refers to people, particularly women, in the late-twentieth-century service economy such as flight attendants, who must continually gauge customers' emotional needs and respond with the appropriate emotion to maintain the comfort and ease of the customer. Likewise, in the domestic economy, the housekeeper's labor is not only physical, but emotional. As noted in the introduction, I take up but alter Hochschild's definition to expand our conception of women's labor, in waged jobs as well as in the home. In the late eighteenth century, the American economy began a shift from subsistence to industrial capitalism, a change that created new forms of waged and domestic labor. When most forms of labor and trade were removed from the home space, women who once closely supported and assisted with their husband's or father's craft or farm work found themselves responsible largely for housework. By the mid-nineteenth-century, women were no longer recognized as integral to generating income for the family, and the types of income-earning labor available to women were considered supplementary with imbursement to match that conception.

Of course, most women continued to work to provide income for their families, by selling eggs, flowers or handiwork, by running a boarding house, by taking in sewing, by teaching, or by going out to work in shops and factories. Nevertheless, the dominant discourse figured "good" women as non-laborers,

unsullied by the corrupting influences of the marketplace, which effectively functioned to mark class distinctions. This conception served to keep wage-earning women underpaid and to restrict women's job opportunities while simultaneously figuring women who worked for pay as lower in status than those who did not. A virtuous woman was one who was able to stay home, who had a man to provide for her and protect her from the world while she in turn provided him with a well-run home, emotional support, and moral cleansing. Most importantly, by maintaining morality in the home, a woman promoted morality in the larger society. Domestic labor thus became a woman's primary contribution to familial and societal welfare. A man's human capital rested in his physical and intellectual capabilities, and could earn him a wage; a woman's human capital rested in her emotional prowess.

In the mid-nineteenth century, emotional expertise entailed "feeling right." Most scholarly discussion of "feeling right," emerging from Harriet Beecher Stowe's injunction to readers of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to "feel right" about slavery, emphasizes feeling compassion or sympathy.³ Yet, "feeling right," at least for Warner, also entails a mastery of one's emotions. C. Dallett Hemphill finds that Revolutionary-era conduct books for the "middling" (emerging middle-class) emphasize self-mastery of emotions with the goal of presenting a smooth front to the world in order to increase their worth in the social market; as with the logic behind the "poker face," any show of extreme or negative emotion would offer other people an advantage. Women, faced with the

³ Glenn Hendler, *Public Sentiments* 3-11; Fisher, *Hard Facts* 118-22.

marriage market, were expected to tread delicately between attracting men and restraining their passions.

In the antebellum period, then, the emphasis on self-mastery is not surprising, but what is remarkable about Warner's novel is that Ellen's emotional labor entails not merely masking unacceptable emotions, but ceasing to feel them and seeking instead to "feel right." Warner argues that performing the proper emotions is only the first step toward right feeling, which entails truly feeling the right thing, and calls for a subjective shift to accommodate sentimental emotional conventions. And the social relevance of this shift becomes apparent when she writes, "all things mend with your own mending" (xx). Not only will Ellen's real emotional change provide her a clearer and more pleasant view of the world, so too will her physical manifestation of this change provide the world a model of and hope for a more moral and "right" society. "Right feeling," alongside its implied opposite "wrong feeling," also indicates class distinctions; the sentimental woman who inhabits a sheltered nest of virtue has more access to right feeling than a working-class woman who daily struggles in the marketplace to survive. Effectively, this internal change promises a heightened subject position, both respected and influential, yet accessible only to those who already possess a middle-class status. Extending class distinctions to a morality based in emotional response naturalized them and rendered them almost impermeable.⁴

⁴ Bourdieu notes that habitus includes a naturalizing mechanism that reinforces class distinctions (*Distinction* 68). Similarly, Lutz argues that the Western view of emotion as natural coincides with a tendency to value emotional response as "authentic" (68-9).

Jane Tompkins argues that the sentimental heroine's battles for emotional self-control take place in private, both spatially and personally, and depict contemporary readers' real psychological conditions, the representation "provid[ing] them with a catharsis of rage and grief that registers the cost of living" under those conditions (172-73). Donna Campbell, returning that power to the characters, reads emotional self-mastery in *The Wide, Wide World* as an assertion of Ellen's control over "the self and its responses to life's vicissitudes" (119). Rather than reading this emotional labor as completely private or inward -- either for the reader or the characters -- I argue that emotional self-mastery is one practice in a more elaborate emotional system, "feeling right," that structures daily household practices, both physical and emotional, and seeks to regulate interpersonal relations, and may thus be considered more public and more economically driven than heretofore imagined. A disposition for "feeling right" arises out of a middle-class, sentimental habitus, and signifies sentimental capital that indicates one's status.

Nineteenth-century American sentimentalism's discursive and cultural power intertwines with the emerging discourse of the American middle class. While etiquette manuals and domestic advice books, and fiction in the first half of the century begin to describe the types of behaviors and objects that signify middle-class refinement,⁵ sentimental novels and stories add to those distinctions a form of emotional response that signals a refined sensibility. Specific practices, objects, and emotions together

⁵ Bushman provides a thorough account of the genealogy of refinement and the sources that participated in the discursive construction of middle-class refinement in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century United States.

constitute a sentimental habitus formed in contradistinction to both the coarse working-class and the leisured aristocrats.

The rules of sentimental domesticity dictate good manners for all and entail submitting one's will to another and denying one's personal happiness for the sake of another's with an attitude of patient benevolence. Good manners, then, involve operating on the Christian principle of doing unto others as you would be done by and function as currency in the social market as well as in the domestic economy. If one performs the emotional labor of adhering to sentimental emotional conventions, one acquires sentimental capital that signals middle-class status and concomitant social power, which in the mid-nineteenth-century grew larger as the middle class gained discursive hegemony. What we find in *The Wide, Wide World*, is that this division draws even finer distinctions between various members of the middle class; while some may qualify as middle-class based on their sentimental capital, their cultural capital may place them closer to working-class or aristocratic vices.

In Warner's novel, Ellen's first foray into the world, the marketplace, suggests what might happen when not everyone shares this disposition for "feeling right." Because of her illness, Ellen's mother cannot leave the house but must have some merino before Ellen is sent away to Fortune's. Ellen bravely offers to go alone. When she arrives at the shop, the crowds and clerks ignore her. Finally, a store manager asks a clerk, Mr. Saunders, to help her. Saunders tries to cheat her on the price and treats her with rudeness and impatience. When Ellen is on the verge of tears, a kind older man intervenes, chastising Saunders and helping Ellen purchase the merino. The currency of Ellen's good manners buys her male protection in the marketplace. Her

own father is absent throughout the text, unable, or unwilling to care for his daughter, but this scene suggests that a solitary woman can find protection if she inhabits the sentimental habitus and displays the marks of virtue and refinement of that habitus, which in this case, are good manners, a form of emotional control whereby one resists anger and frustration and instead resorts to patient forbearance.

Those who lack emotional control are punished, both socially and economically. Saunders is not only shamed, but also loses his job because of his behavior toward Ellen. Warner's use of terms such as "slovenly," "careless," "sauntering," and "dissatisfied" accompanied by his behavior toward Ellen define Saunders as both lazy and self-centered (46). He is also "ill-bred," suggesting he has not been raised in a manner that would instill right feeling, which would require eliminating selfish habits and behaviors. Overcoming the perception of being "ill-bred," and its implications of lower class status, would involve the emotional labor of generating positive emotion or containing negative emotion based on the needs of others to maintain desirable interactions. Saunders, however, either lacks this knowledge or simply refuses to follow the conventions. An argument could be made that Saunders, because of his relatively low status, wishes above all to protect himself and thus fails to behave in a way that puts others' needs before his own. Nevertheless, his behavior definitively marks his lack of sentimental capital, which results in his firing and subsequent drop in socio-economic status, which further reduces his access to various forms of capital.

Indeed, interpersonal interactions, Bourdieu argues, "are never, except in appearance, individual-to-individual relationships"; instead, they consist of

interactions between dispositions, which enable the assessment and maintenance of social position through a set of appropriate practices (*Outline* 81-82). Emotion is a social practice, a means of communicating and instilling values, authorizing behavior, and mediating relations,⁶ and as such, is organized by dispositions. A disposition for sympathy is one of the main organizing features of the sentimental habitus.

Discussions of emotion in sentimentalism identify sympathy as the key arbiter of social relations, and many have noted that sentimentalism's assurance of affective similarity works to reduce the world to a homogeneous white middle-class and effects an erasure of all qualities or conditions beyond that social position.⁷ Bourdieu notes, "[e]ven those forms of interaction most amenable to description in terms of 'intentional transfer onto the Other', such as sympathy, friendship, or love, are dominated . . . , through the harmony of habitus" (*Outline* 82). In other words, emotions of affiliation are extended primarily to those with a shared habitus. *The Wide, Wide World's* depiction of sympathy emphasizes the dual meaning: sympathy enables the agent to feel with another, and sympathy implies feeling the same about the world. Both senses of sympathy might be collapsed in Bourdieu's terms as "the harmonization of the agents' experiences and the constant reinforcement each of them receives from expression . . . of similar or identical experiences" (*Logic* 58). If "feeling right" is equivalent to sympathy as most critics suggest is the case, right feeling is a type of emotional display that denotes both rightness and middle-class

⁶ Lutz 59, 80, 163-8.

⁷ For particularly resonant arguments, see Berlant "Poor Eliza, Kaplan, and Wexler.

status, and thus designates the middle class as the "right" class. Hence, access to right feeling, either as its object or subject, is denied to those outside the middle class.

So Saunders' behavior indicates his lack of sentimental capital, which both marks him as "not middle class" and serves to deny him potential access to middle-class status. As shop clerk, he is on the higher end of the working class, with greater potential for class mobility, and his behavior may even be read as a presumption to higher status than he actually has. When Ellen effectively gets him fired, she shores up class boundaries. But, this scene also points to the element of labor in class distinctions. As noted above, the emerging capitalist industrial economy changed the shape of labor and contributed to a discursive division between working-class, middle-class, and aristocratic women. And just as sentimental capital allowed for further partition within the middle class, one's relation to labor also indicated exactly where in the middle class one stood. On the one end, too much physical labor was unrefined while, on the other, a refusal to labor was indulgent, and both were potentially corrupting. Too much labor left one little time to tend to moral and emotional matters, and no labor left too much leisure time filled with vice and sensual pleasures.

The importance of labor in the sentimental formation of the middle class is evident throughout *The Wide, Wide World*. Early in the novel, Ellen receives a brace of woodcocks from the kindly man who helped her deal with Saunders. She exclaims, "I think these birds have made me happy for all day," to which her mother replies, "Then, I hope, daughter, they will make you busy for all day" (54). One might think the birds should keep Ellen busy plucking and cooking, but that is not her duty. Instead, her mother provides a list of sewing tasks that Ellen should complete, which

suggests that the happiness the birds provide should be put to some use, and that use is to keep Ellen pleasantly busy about her domestic duties. This disposition that equates cheerfulness and virtue with activity will inform Ellen's response to her various labors throughout the book.

Warner's promotion of activity is directly linked to her assertion that the aristocracy defines itself through its leisure or inactivity, its distance from labor.⁸ In the novel, the aristocracy remains firmly planted in the United Kingdom, represented by Ellen's Scottish relatives, the Lindsays. Ellen's interactions with them find her defending her country and its practices, and Warner privileging Ellen's middle-class sensibilities over the Lindsays' more aristocratic dispositions. Bourdieu observes that: "The habitus is not only a structuring structure . . . but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world," each class "defined, simultaneously, by its intrinsic properties and by the relational properties which it derives from its position in the system of class conditions, which is also a system of difference, differential positions . . . ; social identity is defined and asserted through difference" (*Distinction* 170-72). In attempting to assert an American social identity, Warner chooses to differentiate against the European aristocracy and emphasize the dispositions that regulate practices of activity and labor. An American -- as defined by Warner -- participates in a particular form of emotional practice informed by the sentimental habitus. Such an assertion, however,

⁸ Catherine Beecher remarks, "[I]n aristocratic countries, especially in England, labor is regarded as the mark of the lower classes, and indolence is considered as one mark of a gentleman" (123).

as egalitarian as it appears in its rejection of the aristocratic habitus, also figures American-ness as solidly middle-class, effectively denying American subjecthood to the working class.

Emotional and labor systems mutually inform the construction of the sentimental middle class, and emotional practice, in relation to various forms of labor, shapes the training of Ellen Montgomery as she travels between the homes of caring friends and well-meaning relatives throughout *The Wide, Wide World*. Just as sentimental domesticity places the responsibility for inculcating proper emotional practice in children to the housekeeper/mother, Warner provides her main character with a variety of emotional guides in three distinct households -- Aunt Fortune's, the Humphreys', and the Lindsays'. Aunt Fortune represents a lack of sentimental capital and a preoccupation with labor marking her as unrefined and not properly middle-class despite her economic capital. The Lindsays, on the other hand, typify the aristocratic pretensions of wealthier middle-class families, living in leisure and failing to attend to anyone's emotional well-being. Warner's ideal middle-class family is the Humphreys, who balance physical exertion with emotional labor.

Ellen is sadly forced to part from her ailing mother and move to the countryside to stay with her aunt Fortune, a rigid and ascetic housekeeper who is both angry and contemptuous. While there, Ellen meets a neighboring family, the Humphreys, a minister and his two adult children (Alice and John), the son away much of the time studying to become a minister. The Humphreys figuratively adopt Ellen and begin to attend to her emotional growth. Their lifestyle is both more refined and more peaceful than Aunt Fortune's. Eventually, Ellen receives word that her

parents have died and her mother's dying wish is that Ellen move to Scotland to live with her maternal grandmother, uncle, and aunt (Mrs. Lindsay, Mr. Lindsay, and Aunt Keith), a proud and wealthy family with aristocratic habits. Ellen lives with them for several years, and at the end of the book, she moves back the United States to live with and presumably marry John Humphreys.⁹ However, the story ends not with a marriage, but with Ellen's maturation to womanhood demonstrated almost solely by her emotional self-control.¹⁰

The Wide, Wide World, then, is less about the formation of Ellen's character as a wife than it is about the formation of Ellen's character as a sentimentally disciplined subject, performing the emotional labor that produces the most exchangeable form of sociability, which in turn will purchase her first, a seemingly transcendent status that is figured as powerful enough to pass in any social circle but which is only tried among the various layers of the middle class, and second, male protection from the dangers of the wide, wide world. Ellen's advance to emotional mastery -- marked by her movement through these households, each representing a distinct habitus -- maps sentimental capital onto the domestic, as she adopts finally, through the domestic and

⁹ That she marries Humphreys is strongly implied in the text and affirmed by the originally unpublished chapter included in the Feminist Press edition.

¹⁰ Some critics insist that Ellen does not truly mature since she remains in a subordinate, dependent position at the end of the novel. While I agree with the points these critics make, I would argue, that in the terms of maturation set forth by the novel, Ellen indeed does mature. See, for example, Erica R. Bauermeister, "*The Lamplighter, The Wide, Wide World, and Hope Leslie: Reconsidering the Recipes for Nineteenth-Century American Women's Novels*," *Legacy* 8 (1991): 17-28.

emotional labor required of her in each home, the habitus which promises the highest social return.

Ellen begins her journey to sentimental middle-class adulthood in the home of her Aunt Fortune, and her initial encounter with Aunt Fortune characterizes all her experiences in that household. She arrives in a strange town with no one to meet her, which signals her vagrancy. Since, in this novel, each home represents a particular habitus, Ellen's homelessness represents a loss of a sheltering habitus. This is, of course, a liminal subjectivity, with all its benefits and drawbacks; in Ellen's case, her liminal position offers few restrictions, especially emotional restrictions, yet it also offers no protection via forms of community, like friends, family, or marriage. She remains in this position only briefly, however, as she is quickly taken up by Fortune's farm manager Mr. Van Brunt, coincidentally in town on errands, who drives Ellen back to the house in an ox-cart. When she arrives, the sun has set, and Ellen must feel her way through the dark yard and house until she finds the one lighted room, the kitchen. Throughout Ellen's stay at Aunt Fortune's she is plunged into a world dominated by a foreign habitus and thus remains "in the dark," "feeling" her way by responding emotionally to her aunt's limited emotional cues and violent guidance.

On this first evening in Fortune's house, Ellen finally reaches the warm, clean, "cheerful-looking" kitchen, the hub of this home and site of most of Fortune's physical domestic labor. But, Ellen soon finds that a well-kept house does not ensure the kindness or sympathy of its occupants. An old woman sits facing the fire, her back to Ellen. Ellen eventually learns that this woman, her paternal grandmother, is largely neglected, shut off from human attention and affection. Soon, Fortune appears, hands

full of dinner necessities, and efficiently shuts the door with her foot, but "[t]he sight of Ellen stop[s] her short. 'What is this? --and what do you leave the door open for, child?'" (99). Ellen disrupts Fortune's busy and regimented life -- she quite literally already has her hands full -- and this disruption of her plans causes her to become frustrated and scold Ellen. Her frustration increases with the appearance of Ellen's trunk which signals only more work for Fortune, both in the immediate need to carry it upstairs and in the long period of responsibility for Ellen it represents. When Mr. Van Brunt offers to take Ellen's trunk upstairs, Fortune retorts "in a tone of indignant house wifery," "Indeed you won't! That'll never do! With those shoes!" (100). While she scorns the thought of added labor, she is reluctant to delegate that work to someone else. By introducing Fortune in her kitchen, in the midst of housekeeping duties, and responding to others only in relation to the management of her household, Warner effectively renders Fortune as a woman dominated by difficult domestic labor. Because Fortune's labor attends to physical space and material conditions rather than her emotions, however, her perfectly clean kitchen lacks the extra-material cheerfulness that animated Ellen's fireside in the example that opened this chapter.

The trials of domestic labor are well-documented by the prescriptive literature penned by domestic economists and the short story writers for various women's periodicals in the nineteenth century. As arbiters of taste and middle-class domestic and social practice, these texts articulate the conventions that were gaining dominance in popular discourse. In her famous *Treatise on Domestic Economy*, Catharine Beecher acknowledges that a woman in charge of a home and family will meet with daily frustrations because her job consists of myriad minutely detailed and discrete

tasks, the obligations of which are often incompatible. Plans are almost always disrupted, family members' schedules and needs conflict, and others' errors must be compensated for. Not all the housekeeper's aggravation can be attributed to others, however; she too is answerable for much of the burden. Too much work, too many conflicting duties, and not enough time for them all creates anxiety. Beecher's chapter on time management suggests methods to prevent overwork, but here she also insists that one needs to balance the demands of housework with the happiness of the household: Beecher's key tenets of "*system, economy, and neatness*, are valuable only so far as they tend to promote the comfort and well-being of those affected" (152).

The primary responsibility, then, is to maintain positive interpersonal relations, and the prescribed habits should be practiced only to that end. Therefore, domestic labor must always be accompanied by emotional labor that attends to the emotional needs of the household members. Aunt Fortune, however, cares primarily about the orderliness of her house and the production of household goods; she places little to no value on her relationships with others except to the extent that they help her maintain the material conditions of her home. Because Fortune's habitus does not include the disposition toward cheerful domesticity, she lacks sentimental capital. Warner, in fact, suggests that Fortune's over-attendance to physical labor is itself the source of this lack.

While throughout her text Beecher espouses habits of order and neatness as a solution to many housekeeping problems, her chapter "On the Preservation of a Good Temper in the Housekeeper" notes that the more orderly a housekeeper is, the more likely she is to have her temper tried. Beecher emphasizes that it is more important for

children to benefit from a mother's "amiable temper" and to emulate it than to develop and maintain perfect habits of order and neatness because cultivating a good temper will help them "meet the crosses of life with patience and cheerfulness" (153). As well, the housekeeper's own temper will be less sorely tried if she too develops a habit of submission: in her case, a submission to divine providence which orders everyday life and, consequently, the needs and demands of others. Christian forbearance and faith in God's will forms the basis of the sentimental emotional system. Fortune, however, is too concerned with material order, frustrated by her heavy workload, and not concerned enough about anyone's emotional or spiritual well-being. On Ellen's first full day at her aunt's, she crosses Fortune by getting her white stockings muddy. Aunt Fortune responds by dyeing all Ellen's stockings gray. When Ellen asks why, her aunt replies irritably, "How many pair of white stockings would you like to drive into the mud and let me wash out every week?" (113). Because she performs all the labor to maintain the household and is already overworked, any behavior that creates more labor for her appears as an affront, to which she responds with anger.

In Warner's novel, Aunt Fortune is always unhappy and usually visibly and vocally angry, and her emotional state both signifies and emerges from her habitus. Fortune functions in the text as a node of distinction, a cautionary tale about the hazards generated by a habitus other than the sentimental. Although she is an American, and economically middle-class, her approach to domestic labor (both physical and emotional) represents a habitus distinct from the sentimental habitus. In fact, she represents a retreating habitus, that of America's first housekeeping expert, Lydia Maria Child. Child's "American frugal housewife" of the 1820s and 30s still

produced much of her own material goods, but by the 1840s and 50s, more and more industrially manufactured goods were available, and thus the housekeeper's independence from the market began to appear outmoded.¹¹ At a time when domestic manuals and women's periodicals were instructing women about their new role as consumers,¹² Fortune's self-sufficiency appears to endanger capitalism via a refusal to participate in the market economy. Ellen's mother, as her last bequest to Ellen, takes her shopping to teach her how to be a good consumer, placing Ellen squarely outside the Frugal Housewife habitus. The new housekeeper is still productive but is so in the context of an altered domestic economy, the currency of which is emotion and sociability rather than goods and independence.

Ellen's very presence requires Aunt Fortune to work even harder because she must provide basic necessities for Ellen, and this also angers her. Therefore, when Ellen moves in, she is quickly brought into the system of manual domestic labor. She helps with cleaning up the cookware and dishes, milking the cows, and later churning butter. While Ellen performs these difficult chores, it is clear that other characters in the novel deem this type of labor inappropriate for a young girl. Ellen finds it unpleasant and burdensome, and Aunt Fortune seems to feel the same. Aunt Fortune's preoccupation with and resignation to a life of toiling at unpleasant and burdensome

¹¹ McHugh notes that the "qualities of independence, industriousness, and self-reliance with which Child imbues the frugal housewife [had] not yet been fully masculinized." (31). See also Ryan and Boydston on home production.

¹² While a number of books examine female consumerism, Lori Merish provides a particularly thorough and compelling analysis of consumerism imbricated with sentimental values.

tasks results in her generally negative affect. Furthermore, Fortune's independence forecloses her interest in interacting productively with others; therefore, her primary disposition in any situation is to protect her interests and defend herself. The emotional reaction to an offense that rouses one to defense is anger.¹³ Consequently, Fortune reacts to most situations with anger.

Indeed, it is less the domestic labor Aunt Fortune requires of Ellen than the angry way in which she instructs and admonishes her that makes Ellen rebellious and cross.¹⁴ As Silvan Tomkins notes, "The primary function of anger is to make bad matters worse and further to increase the probability of an angry response" (197). Although Fortune is an astounding housekeeper in the realm of physical labor, she fails dramatically to fulfill her designated emotional duties: to keep a cheerful temper, never to display anger, and to teach Ellen to do the same. Bourdieu claims, "The child imitates not 'models' but other people's actions" and readily identifies patterns and the rationale behind those patterns, adopting a "principle generating conduct organized in accordance with the same rationale" (*Outline* 87-88). Failing to provide explicit emotional instruction, Fortune's own behavior transmits the emotional habits of her own habitus to Ellen. Accordingly, rather than moderating Ellen's temper, Fortune provokes it.

¹³ Ben-Ze'ev 380.

¹⁴ Beecher notes that regular scolding and complaining (like Aunt Fortune's) "is met, either by sullen silence, or impertinent retort . . . [and] prevents any contrition, or any resolution of future amendment" (153). What's more, Beecher warns, scolding is both "very unlady-like, and in very bad taste" (154); thus, such behavior serves to undermine the character of both parent and child.

In one instance, Ellen eagerly awaits a letter from her mother, and becomes infuriated when she finds the much-anticipated letter has already been opened. Ellen demands to know who has read *her* letter. Although Fortune, the culprit, momentarily recognizes her own behavior is wrong, she haughtily insists she has a right to open Ellen's letters and vows to open any others that arrive "to serve [Ellen] for looking so" (146). Had Fortune simply admitted her error, she would have both appeased Ellen and taught her the importance of recognizing and acknowledging one's faults. However, because Fortune's habitus values material over emotional order, the emotional labor of self-reflection, confession, and atonement seems to demand time better spent in physical labor, and thus receives only the most fleeting attention. The lack of attention to emotional order consequently prioritizes reactive and defensive emotions, such as anger. And in Warner's emotional economy, that of the sentimental habitus, anger is repaid with anger.

Ellen throws the letter down, "livid and trembling with various feelings--rage was not the only one"; unable to cry, her tears "burnt up by passion," Ellen soon feels she cannot "breathe the air of the house" (146). Ellen's inability to cry indicates the precedence of anger over grief as she is overwhelmed by outrage. Both her passion and the atmosphere of the house, or the habitus, which generates and supports such passion is figured as suffocating. Anger, in this scenario, forecloses all other emotional possibilities thereby stifling Ellen's emotional expression of a more appropriate and less threatening sentimental emotion: grief. The grief Ellen cannot express is despair over her absent mother and the habitual injustices that absence exposes her to. Her grief is also partly for the loss of protection her mother's habitus affords. Because the

letters between her and her mother were planned to aid Ellen by providing guidance, the letter that arrives would have made the habitus present, albeit as a fetishized embodiment of the mother, yet when mediated by Aunt Fortune, it instead becomes a sign only of the absence and, thus, of Fortune's power over Ellen. Operating in Aunt Fortune's habitus, Ellen's emotions are dominated by anger, which inhibits her ability to recognize, reflect on, or regulate affective practices. This habitus threatens to make Ellen in Fortune's image -- an angry, coarse, overworked spinster -- rather than in her mother's -- a peaceful, delicate, leisured wife.

Enraged, Ellen rushes out of Fortune's house and finds her way to the mountain nearby where the pastoral landscape "softens" her even as she fails to appreciate its beauty, and she finally breaks down in violent, convulsive fits of "grief and passion" (148). Without her mother's letter and outside of Fortune's home, Ellen is once again homeless or habitus-less. This is not to say that she lacks a habitus, but instead that one set of inchoate dispositions duels with another inchoate set. This lack of a decisive structuring force results in affective confusion manifested ultimately in emotional excess that threatens physical harm. Ellen indulges in an excess of emotion as she repeats a sequence of screaming, thrashing, and crying followed by exhausted sobbing. The excess in expression accompanies an excess in duration: as the narrator notes, "How long she had lain there, or how long this would have gone on before her strength had quite worn out, no one can tell" (148). Ellen's violent passion displays a selfish indulgence in excess that only weakens the individual.¹⁵ But the physical

¹⁵ Beecher warns that no part of the body should ever be overstimulated because overstimulation leads to overtaxation of a particular system, which weakens it and

weakness that results from passionate excess disguises the real threat such behavior poses. This passage suggests that, left to her own devices, Ellen has the potential for unlimited emotional self-indulgence, an utter lack of self-control. In the sentimental emotional economy, this amounts to a failure to perform emotional labor and a concomitant failure to produce sociability. Ellen's liminality, and the lack of community it entails, seems to both activate and be activated by her emotional self-indulgence. In other words, a deficit of emotional labor equates with a position of social marginalization.

During a brief period of exhaustion between fits, Ellen hears a voice, and "the silver sweetness of the tone came singularly upon the tempest in Ellen's mind" (148). The voice belongs to Alice Humphreys and has an immediate calming influence on Ellen. When Alice asks what's troubling her, Ellen admits, "Instead of feeling right I have felt wrong all the time, almost, -- and I can't help it. I have been passionate and cross, and bad feelings keep coming, and I know it's wrong, and it makes me miserable" (151). Ellen's ability to differentiate between "good" and "bad" emotions indicates that, to some degree, then, Ellen has internalized her mother's habitus and its disposition for emotional self-control. Bourdieu argues that one's initial habitus tends to dominate those one is later exposed to: "Early experiences have particular weight because the habitus tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change through the selection it makes within new information capable of calling into question its accumulated information" (*Logic* 60-61). The mother's habitus still holds sway in

debilitates the whole body, leading to ill health. Furthermore, any overstimulation is a selfish indulgence in excess; therefore, any emotional excess is self-indulgent, and any self-indulgence weakens the individual (168-70; 99).

Ellen's system of dispositions, but without new information consistent with the habitus in the form of advice and imitable behaviors, Ellen cannot maintain or further build on that system. She knows right feelings from wrong, but she does not know how to stoke the one and extinguish the other. In her response, Alice takes up the role of guide, reminding Ellen to pray and adding finally, "In a day or two I hope you will be able to give me a very different account from what you would have done an hour ago" (152). Holding Ellen accountable to an external authority provides sentimental discipline until she has fully internalized the emotional master.

Ellen initially finds Alice appealing because she reminds her of her mother, but soon, Ellen also witnesses Alice's social power. After Alice and Ellen meet on the mountain, Ellen comes regularly to the Humphreys' home. At first, Ellen is concerned that Aunt Fortune won't allow her to visit Alice, but Alice remarks almost offhandedly, "I'll come down and ask her myself, and nobody ever refuses me any thing" (175). Such an utterly unqualified assertion of her power suggests the dominance of her social position, which simultaneously legitimates and is legitimated by her dispositions. Sentimental capital, at least as it is represented by this novel, affords a very powerful social status.

Ellen's location on the rugged ledge of the mountain situates her as both lost and wild, lacking a stable social position. Similarly, her wandering evokes vagrancy, homelessness, and thus an undetermined habitus. Aunt Fortune demonstrates to Ellen through a variety of insults directed at her mother that Mrs. Montgomery's ways are not Fortune's while Alice's sweet tones and insistence on prayer closely approximate Ellen's mother's, signaling to her the attendant similar habitus. Alice promises to guide

Ellen introducing a "civilizing" influence into her life, offering dispositions very close to Mrs. Montgomery's. Indeed, when they separate, she gives Ellen directions to the Humphreys' home, "Instead of turning up this little rocky path, you must keep straight on the road, --that's all" (153). Alice thus indicates that the way to the appropriate habitus is direct and already laid out; any attempts to branch off on one's own will prove challenging, unstable, and potentially painful.

This suggests also that Aunt Fortune's house is not properly civilized, a notion corroborated by descriptions of the interior, the food, the labor, and the people who regularly occupy the home. Kathleen McHugh has argued that nineteenth-century domestic manuals portray a housekeeper whose body should not appear to labor (44). I'd like to extend her argument to suggest that the housekeeper's body is actually subsumed by and subsumes the household. Bourdieu's habitus applies here particularly well as it encompasses one's whole lifestyle, including objects, people, behavior, habits, and habitat, and marks a person's social status based on the homologous signifying power of these items. In Warner's text, the housekeeper's character is the character of the domestic space, and her emotional state becomes the home's predominant emotional state. The home and homemaker become the site of production and circulation of dispositions for emotional expression or control. In the case of Aunt Fortune, the habitus we have already recognized by her behavior is replicated in her domestic environment.

The people who populate Fortune's home are "uncivilized." A wild tomboy wreaking havoc wherever she goes, Nancy Vawse feels comfortable with Fortune and eventually makes a place for herself working in Fortune's household. Mr. Van Brunt,

although he is Ellen's source of protection in Fortune's home, is described as "coarse" and "rough," his name has a harsh, abrupt sound, and Ellen has a strange aversion to him through much of the book. All of them speak in what Alice Humphreys calls a "Yankee" dialect, which is to say, not "proper" English. What's more, none of these Yankees are Christians. Ellen attempts to convert Mr. Van Brunt and Nancy, and her efforts eventually soften or tame, if not fully convert, each. Ellen's paternal grandmother also lives in the home, and her presence signals Fortune's inattention to interpersonal relationships as she is largely ignored, shushed, or sent off to her room.

The interior of Fortune's home, while neat and clean, is sparse and ascetic: white walls, plain furniture, no decoration. Ellen's bedroom provides a good picture of the general sparseness of the home furnishings and décor. She hangs her clothes on a few nails hammered in the wall by Van Brunt. She sets her writing desk on her trunk to write. She has no washbowl; instead, washing is done outside at an icy spout at all times of the year. Whereas antebellum domestic economists endorse a simple, even inexpensive décor, they also emphasize the need for comfort and practical items, such as wardrobes, washstands, and curtains.¹⁶ Similarly, Fortune's food is heavy and hearty (coffee, pancakes, bacon, pork, potatoes, pies, gravies), necessary for strong appetites produced by hard physical labor.¹⁷ The food is unrefined and indelicate, like the inhabitants, the structure, and the lifestyle supported in Aunt Fortune's home.

¹⁶ See, for example, Beecher (312-13).

¹⁷ For adults who perform plenty physical labor, mid-nineteenth-century scientists considered some of this food appropriate, but no one should eat so much fat and definitely not fat and flour mixed as in gravies or pie crust. A

The Humphreys' home, on the other hand, is the sentimental ideal of comfort and refinement.¹⁸ On Ellen's first visit, she finds Alice in a sitting room with a glass door and a picturesque view, where she claims to spend all her time. The Humphreys always gather in the sitting room, and are usually depicted in conversation or at study. Those in Fortune's household always gather in the kitchen, and are always either working or taking a meal between jobs. In the sitting room, the center of activity in the Humphreys' home, there are two large easy chairs and portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Humphreys above the fireplace. This fireplace is designed for heating and comfort to support study, conversation, or light labor like mending, whereas Aunt Fortune's fireplace always supports heavy household labor in heating irons or cooking. Likewise, Fortune's kitchen has a sturdy table and chairs, constantly in use for some household task. Alice's sitting room, by contrast, has furniture geared toward comfort: the easy chairs, a practical, light settee for summer months, and a fluffier, warmer sofa for winter. The other objects in the room suggest intellectual activity and light physical activity. Against one wall lies Alice's "greatest treasure--[her] precious books" (164). Against another rests a large "cabinet of curiosities," which contains things Alice has collected on her walks, dried flowers, butterfly wings, beetle skins, rocks, bird's nests (163). In addition to this being a popular pastime recommended as

non-laborer, and particularly a child (like Ellen), who eats stimulating foods like coffee and meat "keeps the body working under an unnatural excitement, *lives faster* than Nature designed, and the sooner the constitution is worn out" (Beecher 99).

¹⁸ On comfort in refined domestic spaces, see Bushman 238-79.

both delightful and improving,¹⁹ Alice's natural history specimens indicate a type of labor that tempers moderate physical activity with the intellectual and aesthetic concerns of science education and interior décor. As well, nineteenth-century approaches to nature read God's design in flora and fauna, so Alice's hobby effectively combines physical, intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual labor in one activity.²⁰

The rooms radiating from each of these central rooms further indicate the differences between the two households. Adjacent to the Humphreys' sitting room, Alice's bedroom is simple and tidy, with comforting touches such as a glass of flowers, a toilet table, and white curtains. Fortune's kitchen leads to the buttery, where butter is churned and dairy products are kept cool, and to the lower kitchen, where pigs are butchered, hams are cured, and apples stored. Fortune's rooms demand physical labor at every turn, leaving no space for the intellectual labor of study or the emotional labor of conversation, prayer, and reflection catered to in Alice's rooms. Each home manifests the character and dispositions of their respective housekeepers and defines, by its very structure and contents, the type of lifestyle one is capable of leading within. Thus habitus combines the material with the phenomenological as the material conditions of the house are defined by and define the practices and dispositions generated therein.

Despite the identification of Alice with her comfortable sitting room, the Humphreys are not entirely removed from physical labor. They have a few servants

¹⁹ Beecher 253.

²⁰ Welch 135.

who do most of the hard physical work, but Alice regularly interacts with those servants, working with them at times on lighter tasks.²¹ Indeed, Ellen is surprised to see Alice making tea-cakes because "mamma never kept house, and [she] never saw any body do it" (168). Yet, unlike the food at Fortune's, food at the Humphreys' is delicate -- pots of chocolate and tea, fresh strawberries, tea-cakes or scones. And, the preparation of such delicacies Margery leaves to the daintier hands of Alice Humphreys. Alice's manner is smooth, quick, and nimble; her delicate and deft movements not to be employed for any but the lightest, most skilled domestic labor. And, when the household cat jumps up on Alice's board, instead of becoming angry or even mildly irritated, Alice asks Ellen to remove him and then jokes about the cake he's stepped in being marked as his. Even the wild thing in her home, her domesticated cat, she jokes, "is very particular and delicate about his eating" (169).

Ellen eventually begins to live for extended periods with the Humphreys. Alice takes an active role in Ellen's education, and this comes to be her primary labor, which is assisted on occasion by her brother John to whom she also turns for guidance. Alice teaches Ellen proper English during their regular conversations, and they learn French together. Warner demonstrates that participating in Ellen's activities and education secures Ellen's trust and love, which enables better communication and confidence in

²¹ Alice notes that Margery, the maid, "looks upon John and me as her own children" (173) but not that she looks upon Margery as a mother. Mrs. Humphreys has died some years past, and Alice, now in her early twenties, has taken on her mother's role in the home. Alice does not say that she looks upon Margery as her mother because to do so would place Margery in a position of equality or even superiority, and in this economy, servants must take a subordinate role to their employers, particularly since a refined sentimental woman cannot perform hard physical labor, but it has to be done by someone.

the guidance offered.²² Of course, the sentimental prescription that women take responsibility for child-rearing²³ requires the housekeeper be freed to some degree from other duties necessary in managing a household. Indeed, Alice's most important duty is to oversee Ellen's emotional education.

Alice teaches Ellen to command her temper by praying for God's help and by reflecting on her own behavior rather than the behavior of others in a given situation, and to be sure her behavior is always without reproach. According to Alice, pride and selfishness prevent one from recognizing faults and asking forgiveness, and insists, "Ellen dear, if you cannot humble yourself to this you must not count upon an answer to your prayer" (166). God listens only to those who are humble, and Alice's reprimand also implies that God does *not* listen to those who are angry. Conveniently, humility defuses anger by accepting rather than assigning blame. Just as Alice requires Ellen to be attuned to the needs and emotions of others, so too is she attuned to Ellen's emotions and needs. Like Aunt Fortune, Alice teaches through example. Alice regularly performs the emotional labor she asks of Ellen; just as she is forbearing and patient with Ellen, so she expects Ellen to be with others. Sentimental emotional conventions thus demand a form of emotional self-control and self-monitoring regulated by outwardly directed emotional labor that attends to others' emotional and physical comfort thus producing sociability and social order.

²² Brodhead has famously argued that this "disciplinary intimacy" was not more humane, but particularly invasive and coercive (13-47).

²³ See, for example, Ryan *Empire* and Goshgarian.

Unlike the Humphreys, Fortune has no formal education that we can tell, and disdains Ellen's request to go to school. Neither does Fortune look after any sort of spiritual or emotional education, for herself or her young charge. For Aunt Fortune, the only useful education comes from throwing oneself into the tasks at hand to learn how to work hard to take care of one's home and oneself. The individualistic mindset of her approach is also at odds with sentimental domesticity, which suggests that learning to care for oneself is only part of the process. A young woman only matures in a sentimental narrative when she is also able to take care of others. Warner portrays Aunt Fortune's independence as a form of selfishness grounded in a mistrust of others and an unwillingness to engage socially.²⁴ As asserted earlier, Fortune's independence is a disposition more in line with an earlier period's habitus (what Raymond Williams would call a "residual" habitus) in which self-sufficiency was the ultimate virtue because so necessary in a predominantly agrarian economy. In the emerging industrial capitalist economy, however, Aunt Fortune threatens the market by failing to participate as a consumer. The novel correlates Fortune's refusal to participate in the market with a refusal to participate socially. She rebuffs visitors because of the bother they cause and is annoyed even when they come to help. She has unfounded prejudices against everyone, but mainly against people whom she considers "too proud" to work (230-31). While this sentiment appears aligned with sentimental domesticity's distaste for aristocratic indolence, Aunt Fortune's contempt for those

²⁴ Lucinda Damon-Bach suggests that Fortune's anti-social independence allows Warner to make a distinction between self-reliance and self-sufficiency that Emerson elides, the former being commendable and courageous, the latter displaying arrogance and a sense of superiority (35-6).

who do not lead her particularly rigorous lifestyle give her a sense of superiority that further distances her from others while sentimentalism privileges social interaction.

Many of her neighbors comment that Fortune should participate in the market economy by paying for some of her work to be done by others, which would ease her own workload and unhappiness and provide more time to spend in social activity. But, Fortune does not particularly care to spend more time with others, nor does she trust other people to do her work properly. Mr. Van Brunt jokes with Ellen that Fortune will be upset if even they, who are part of the household, help with some tidying up: "[I]t's more than you nor I can do. You know, . . . we might sweep up the shavings into the wrong corner!" (247). Nevertheless, Fortune makes Ellen responsible for a variety of chores, the clumsy execution of which creates renewed sources of tension between the two. Fortune's form of labor is too physical to suit the sentimental habitus. Other characters in the book are at times concerned or even shocked at the type of labor performed by Ellen.²⁵ Warner punishes Fortune's tendency to overwork by bringing illness upon her past the middle of the book when her disposition for ceaseless physical labor has been well established by the narrative.

When Aunt Fortune becomes ill, the narrator remarks, "Besides catching cold, and doing her best to bring it about, Miss Fortune had overtasked her strength; and by dint of economy, housewifery, and *smartness*, had brought on herself the severe

²⁵ In Beecher's *Treatise*, she discusses several forms of manual labor that women should be prepared to do, yet she notes that some work is too difficult and too strenuous for children. More important, however, is Beecher's emphasis on balance. Too much time spent on one type of task is draining of the body's capacities because it weakens the function not being used and overtaxes the one constantly at work.

punishment of lying idle and helpless for a much longer time than she at first reckoned on" (355, emphasis in the original). The emphasis on her "smartness," knowing better than others how to manage, stresses the problematic nature of Fortune's stubborn independence. Aunt Fortune's illness furthermore forces dependency upon her and necessitates Ellen's removal from one of her extended stays with the Humphreys and appropriates her labor to take care of the household while Aunt Fortune is ill.

Fortune's fussiness only adds to Ellen's burden as she demands, "[K]eep people out of the house. [. . .] I don't care what becomes of the house -- I won't have anybody in it" (355). Even at her weakest, Aunt Fortune's independence takes precedence and paints her as irrationally antisocial. It also creates more labor for Ellen, who has become accustomed to the sentimental habitus at the Humphreys' and now finds herself confronted by the competing demands and values of Fortune's Frugal Housewife habitus.

Of course, this burden functions in the novel as a test of Ellen's self-discipline. Has she fully adopted the Humphreys' sentimental habitus, or is she still susceptible to the dispositions of Fortune? In Aunt Fortune's household, Ellen's main difficulty is controlling her anger. She becomes easily angry and indignant when her character or a friend's is criticized. She also becomes angry when someone does something wrong to her, to an animal, or to a friend. Her anger always leads to bad behavior that usually consists of her saying something unpleasant, which, in turn, means she is shirking her duty to be respectful to everyone. Most important, anger separates one from the community, and is thus, according to the sentimental habitus unacceptable.

Highlighting the anti-social nature of anger, Philip Fisher argues that anger, and other passions, temporarily suspend the sense of reciprocity necessary for social relations and replace it with a "radical singularity" of self (53-65). Indeed, Ellen's anger always functions to separate her from the community, and is thus unacceptable in the system of "feeling right." Ellen's expression of anger is figured as bad behavior and makes her feel ashamed and sad at what she calls "feeling wrong." Shame, dependent on the ability to assess the public response to one's behavior, operates as an acknowledgement of wrongdoing and thus brings about a sense of humility, which enables one to rejoin the community.²⁶ Ellen's anger and shame fight for control in her assessment of a given situation in a battle to overcome individual will in favor of communal will. Ellen always discovers that her wound cannot take precedence over her need for attachment, so all her struggles result in the victory of humility and the desire for love (or social attachment) with the concomitant defeat of selfish pride and anger.

Yet, the novel describes both a "good" and "bad" form of anger, its value predicated on a social or a self-orientation. When Aunt Fortune begins to recover from her illness, Ellen remains in her house to help out. During this period, Ellen has very successfully battled her own anger and learned to live with Fortune without feeling her influence. One day, Mr. Van Brunt, usually Ellen's protector at Fortune's house, breaks his leg by falling through a trap door. Ellen and Fortune first notice his absence when one of the oxen breaks into the garden. Fortune, predictably, becomes angry and

²⁶ Fisher *Vehement* 65-70.

frustrated at Van Brunt not watching the ox and even threatens to dock his pay. Her anger arises as a defense of her property rather than a protection of self or friend, highlighting a key distinction between Fortune's habitus and the sentimental habitus: Fortune values property over interpersonal relations. She sends Ellen to bring Van Brunt to do his job.

Ellen finds Van Brunt, seriously injured, on the floor of the barn and immediately rides off on her horse to find help, charging straight into another scene dominated by anger. Ellen's adventure parallels the one earlier in the book when she is sent out, unprotected, by her mother to buy merino. In both, she meets Saunders, who wishes to harm her in one way or another and who represents an unacceptable use of anger. In town seeking the doctor, Ellen runs into Saunders, eager to have his revenge because he blames Ellen for his dismissal and subsequent loss of status. To some degree, he is right to blame Ellen since the presence of middle-class women in the marketplace requires he adapt his behavior to conform to sentimental conventions, to which a working-class man would not have ready access. Yet, Warner figures his anger as the product of indolent self-indulgence. Had he the self-discipline and humility to admit his own wrong behavior or to behave properly in the first place, he would not be angry with Ellen for his discharge. Like Fortune, Saunders provides an emotional foil for the predominant set of emotional dispositions. But, Saunders also supplies a dangerous social presence that demonstrates Ellen still needs protection. Although Ellen is no longer directly harmed by Fortune's anger, other forms of anger in the world still pose a threat.

Saunders follows Ellen into the woods and spends good deal of time tormenting her horse and terrifying Ellen. Just when Ellen feels the most threatened, John Humphreys opportunely rides up. Like Saunders, John is extremely angry, but unlike Saunders, he expresses it calmly. "The speaker [John] did not put himself in a passion, and Mr. Saunders, accustomed for his own part to make bluster serve instead of prowess, despised a command so calmly given.--Ellen, who knew the voice, and still better could read the eye, drew conclusions very different. She was almost breathless with terror" (400). Ellen's fear of John here is important because it shows that real anger is not her province. John's anger is so much more efficacious than Ellen's and so much more righteous, that in comparison, Ellen's various moments of anger throughout the book wither to frustration, irritation, and petulance. As Marianne Noble has noted, much sentimental literature provides a father figure (in this case, John) to whom the main female character submits as though to God and often ultimately marries. The father's wrath is portrayed as intended to purify the female of her willfulness and her sin, as do God's punishments.²⁷ John, as God-like figure, is allowed the emotion of anger; whereas, Ellen, who is expected to maintain a position submissive to God (and the male authority in her life), is not.

Throughout his emotional education of Ellen, John shows his displeasure at her stubborn pride, the source of most of her misbehavior. His anger always remains latent, lurking as a threat. The threat is supported by a story of John beating a horse

²⁷ Noble also notes that while the woman character is not allowed to express anger, the fiction specifically constructs the scene with the abuser clearly in the wrong so that the (implied female) reader can feel the anger without the consequences. For full discussion of these ideas, see Noble 86-92.

into submission, which all who tell it imply was only because the horse refused stubbornly to obey despite kinder methods having been tried; the horse afterward becomes John's favorite whom he trusts to no one. Ellen would like to be such a cherished and sheltered favorite, and learns from the horse tale that only her obedience will secure her that position. The scene in the woods with Saunders solidifies for Ellen the connection between John's anger and his power over her. He who wields the power to shield also wields the power to destroy, and Ellen's own emotional labor will decide which treatment she earns. Although John offers Saunders the chance to make amends and ride away, Saunders instead tries to fight John. Saunders' insolence earns him a trip off of his horse and into a ditch, a symbolic reduction of his status. Ellen, on the other hand, who has behaved out of compassion for Mr. Van Brunt and stifled her anger at Saunders, escapes punishment although she must promise never to venture away from home again. In this emotional economy, Ellen's emotional labor and submission to John's will buys her his protection just as Saunders' refusal of emotional conventions brings about his quite literal social downfall.

Envy, ambition, pride, revenge, and anger (referred to in the nineteenth-century as "passions") appeared in sentimental discourse as the expression of selfish excess, and were generally vilified, especially in women and "inferiors." Fisher argues, "The passions require us to invent a term that would be the opposite of 'socialization' so as to represent a process that goes in the opposite direction, breaking the hold of the world, including the social world, educating each of us about our extrasocial being" (61-2). Because all of these emotions tend to set one apart from others, prohibiting them reduces conflict and encourages social relations. Yet, refusing

the expression or even the feeling of such emotions imposes a limit on the potential to protect oneself or even to see oneself as distinct from the social and thus deserving of individual rights and freedoms. The promise of status in *The Wide, Wide World* encourages adherence to an emotional code that seeks to ease or limit conflict and nonconformity and offers protection in return. But, clearly this status comes at a price, which is effectively, the forfeit of experiencing oneself as extrasocial and the consequent capacity for self-protection that the passions secure.

Ellen's apparent inability to protect herself leaves her no option but to seek the protection of John and the larger community he represents, that of the American middle class. Both scenes with Saunders point to the dangers inherent in Ellen's vagrancy and evidence her unpreparedness to face the wide world outside of the home. In the first, her utter confusion and her trust allow both the old gentleman and Saunders to influence her decisions and actions. In the second incident, although Ellen is more firmly established in the sentimental habitus -- she can make the decision to stay with and protect her beloved horse, for example -- she is not yet able to expunge the forbidden feelings of anger. Immediately after the Saunders incident, Ellen moves back to the Humphreys' and studies with John until he leaves again for his ministry. That this period of education directly follows the Saunders confrontation indicates that John's influence has superseded Alice's. As Ellen matures, the authority of the mother figure is replaced by that of a paternalistic male.²⁸

²⁸ Noble argues that "Alice's death symbolically completes Ellen's protracted separation from her mother and her development of an identity within a symbolic realm" dominated by the patriarchal law that John represents (108-10).

Not long after John leaves, Alice Humphreys becomes terminally ill, and Ellen returns to the Humphreys' where Alice informs her, "You must come here and take my place, and take care of those I leave behind" (432). Ellen has learned enough now to take on Alice's role. She finds the work pleasant, because it consists of gentler and more nurturing work than that she had performed at Aunt Fortune's. Putting away laundry, skimming cream, and tidying Mr. Humphreys' study all directly provide for someone else's needs in a way that churning butter at Fortune's never did. Churning butter, while it provides butter for a household, does not fulfill an immediate personal need; furthermore, it's a raw, very physical form of labor that does not require any refinement. The daintier work requires a different, more intimate, mode of interaction. When Ellen puts away or mends clothes or cleans the study, she is touching, affecting, and maintaining objects that belong to someone she is emotionally attached to. Putting away laundry and skimming cream enable Ellen to help Margery (the maid) by assuming what might be one of her duties. The former also helps Mr. Humphreys and John by keeping their clothing orderly and making it readily available. Tidying Mr. Humphreys' study serves similar functions, and both these tasks also distances the men in the house from both domestic labor and the hard physical labor performed by servants that maintains the household. Ellen also takes over Alice's regular charitable visits to the old and infirm, bringing them baked goods and reading to them.

All of Alice's, now Ellen's, tasks have at their core the goal of providing for others, an attention to social relations, which in and of itself requires emotional labor in the form of self-denying benevolence. That this labor is properly Ellen's also implies that delicate work, like arranging books and knickknacks or baking treats,

requires a particular taste that a servant, a member of the working-class, would not have. The social conditions of the emerging middle class enable and construct this disposition. Ellen's taste is seen to arise from an emotional sensitivity (founded on well-regulated passions and evidenced by a sober happiness), one that Ellen is able to cultivate because she has the time to devote to daily prayer and study and because she is not unduly hindered by disagreeable and physically difficult chores required to produce goods. Furthermore, Ellen's duties are well-balanced; she never spends an inordinate amount of time pursuing any one activity; instead, her time is parceled out equally between household chores, study, exercise, and prayer. In sharp contrast to her Aunt Fortune, Ellen represents the new housekeeper of the 1840s and 50s, who produces sociability rather than goods.

Ellen's official incorporation into the Humphreys' household marks also the moment she is sheltered by and inhabits the sentimental habitus symbolized by that home. As soon as Ellen settles into her routine at the Humphreys', she learns of her mother's dying wish that Ellen be reunited with her maternal grandmother in Scotland, a visit the Humphreys approve. The narrative indicates, thus, that Ellen is ready to venture into the wide world, sentimental habitus intact. Her time with the Lindsays' constitutes Ellen's final test of character: if she can resist the powerful lure of their aristocratic dispositions, she will earn her status as a member of the American middle class.

In contrast to both Fortune and the Humphreys, the Lindsays' lives are spent in leisure: dining, socializing, and visiting. Ellen's first encounter with the home takes her into the parlor, which contains old and expensive furnishings and objects that

signify the genteel pastimes of reading, drawing, and playing music. Accordingly, the Lindsays have many servants and are never depicted at any kind of manual labor. None of them takes the role of housekeeper, and although it is likely that their domestic work entails managing servants, that labor is not present in the novel. In fact, they are never shown communicating with servants, and Ellen is eventually reprimanded for chatting too regularly with the housekeeper (whom Ellen goes to for tales of her mother). Clearly, the Lindsays require great distance from the physical labor of maintaining their home, and their habitus, representative of the old European aristocracy, is characterized a disdainful disposition toward manual labor.

As with Ellen's first encounter with Aunt Fortune, her meeting with the Lindsays is revealing. When Mrs. Lindsay receives the letter announcing Ellen as her granddaughter, Ellen is immediately taken from the parlor, a room for those outside the family, and ushered into her grandmother's dressing room, an intimate space, and a place devoted to the labor of seeing to one's appearance. It is described briefly as "large and pleasant," and the scene gives way to Ellen and Mrs. Lindsay's emotional meeting complete with "tears" and "caresses" (502). Because Mrs. Lindsay had disowned her daughter (Ellen's mother) when the girl married an American and they were reconciled only in the daughter's final illness, it is not surprising that when Mrs. Lindsay holds her daughter's daughter for the first time, she declares, "I will never let you go!" (502) As if to seal this promise, Mrs. Lindsay takes Ellen into her bedroom, the most intimate room in the house, locks the door, and lies on the bed with her to rest. "Ellen *felt*, as a recovered treasure that would not be parted with" (503, emphasis in original). The emphasis on feeling in the sentence highlights Ellen's educated

sensitivity to other's emotions and needs, and Ellen aptly experiences Mrs. Lindsay's affection and desire ambivalently. She is delighted to be so welcomed and so loved, but Mrs. Lindsay's grasping possessiveness, distaste for Americans, and potential to objectify Ellen -- all simultaneously implied in the phrase "recovered treasure" -- are disquieting. When the two awaken, Mrs. Lindsay takes great pleasure in helping Ellen out of her traveling clothes and into others, and the image, although brief, recalls the pleasure one might take in dressing a doll.

Indeed, the Lindsays' domestic work consists of turning Ellen into a doll of sorts, training her to be of their habitus, which means "finishing" -- learning to ride, speak French, play piano -- acquisition of surface accomplishments that one can display at social gatherings. The Lindsays also require that Ellen socialize with other children who play games, gossip, and chatter endlessly about fashion. Warner depicts such habits as harmful to positive social relations, with fashion and gossip providing nothing but an opportunity for ridicule and condemnation of others, unchristian expressions of contempt that deny equality by asserting superiority and alienate one from the community. Ellen has no physical labor required of her, but she tries to exercise her domestic skill in her own room at least, by arranging it and keeping it tidy, and "resolve[s] to deserve her pretty little room by being very busy there" (527), an indication that she retains the Humphreys', maybe even a bit of Fortune's, disposition for physical order and values the labor it requires. At the Lindsays', Ellen remains responsible primarily for a form of emotional labor. Ellen's uncle, aunt, and grandmother all closely monitor and respond to Ellen's behavior, her appropriate or

inappropriate expression of emotion, but the conventions she's expected to follow are not those of the sentimental habitus.

The Lindsays require of Ellen a rather exacting form of emotional labor. They are jealous of her affection for the Humphreys. They never take Ellen's former experience or current desires into account. They constantly demean America and Americans, which tries Ellen's patience. Even though she feels that they love her, which is better than her relationship with Aunt Fortune, it is clear that the Lindsays' interest in Ellen is purely self-oriented. The narrator notes, "Ellen was the plaything, pride, and delight of the whole family" (528), not a real person with needs and thoughts of her own, but an object to enhance the pleasure and status of the family. In stark opposition to Alice's guidance, the Lindsays demand Ellen's perfect obedience, without winning her trust or explaining the reasons behind their demands. Neither do they model the emotional labor they require of her. The Lindsays' own desires and well-being always come first and must always be perfectly satisfied. They have no sympathy for Ellen's interests or her attachment to and grief at her separation from the Humphreys. Her real feelings have no value because the currency tendered in the Lindsays' domestic economy is not authentic emotional sensitivity, but emotional display.

While Ellen's struggles in the past have been with "feeling right," her efforts here must turn to appearing right, a sort of emotional finishing. The attention to surfaces suggests a lack of substance and threatens Ellen with the loss of moral awareness. If she no longer must attend to her real emotions or the emotions of others in interactions, she will be unable to exercise her sensitivity to emotion to decide

which relations to engage in and how. Indeed, the Lindsays seek to manage those relations for her, trying to keep her out of conversation with adults and engage her in games and gossip with children. They find her predilection for prayer and study unbecoming and unnatural in a child her age, and they consider her behavior around other children overly austere and self-righteous. Ellen continually undermines the Lindsays' reconstruction of her by following their rules as closely as she can without sacrificing her own dispositions. For example, she participates in various finishing activities but rises early to continue to her bible study and prayer. The Lindsays regard her ardent moral sensibility, her sober emotional state, and her propensity for critical conversation as a morbid seriousness that must be overcome.

However, Ellen's seriousness is a manifestation of her hard-earned self-control, and her self-control is what grants her status in the sentimental habitus. The Humphreys' have taught Ellen that her opinion matters, and her voice will be heard only when tempered by emotional self-control. Despite the Lindsays' efforts to force Ellen to participate in activities she finds senseless and immoral, Ellen regularly finds adults who recognize the sentimental capital Ellen possesses and engage her in conversations in which she can assert her opinion (one much opposed to the Lindsays) on politics and history and learn more about these topics. Her triumph in these situations recalls Alice's power over others. Interestingly, for once in the novel, Ellen's pride is figured as an advantage rather than a shortcoming when she argues with her uncle about American history and politics. When Mr. Lindsay derides American leaders and accomplishments, Ellen defends her country by claiming, "Washington always did right" (515). Again "rightness" is the measure of claim to superior

standing. The transformation of Ellen's pride from an individual to a collective pride grants the emotion legitimacy within the sentimental code. Ellen's pride, when subsumed by the nation, establishes and affirms her own right to speak, to vote per se by publicly registering her opinion. Nonetheless, her act of self-defense is only acceptable when sutured to a defense of America and the sentimental habitus that epitomizes the notion of what constitutes "American," which as I argue above is specifically middle-class.

Bourdieu claims that "[t]he propensity to speak politically . . . is strictly proportionate to the sense of having the right to speak," of being "entitled to express an authorized authoritative opinion, to voice the performative utterance of a legitimate pressure group" (*Distinction* 411). Ellen's adoption of the sentimental habitus, in this sense, offers her some power, and she recognizes that power in the Humphreys. She knows both John and Alice have a strange ability to win people over and get what they want. After all, "nobody ever refuses [Alice] any thing" (175), and her ability to bend even Fortune to her will suggests not only her power over the most stubborn and independent person, but also the power of her will over fortune, or fate. Similarly, when John arrives unexpectedly at the Lindsays, he readily overcomes several obstacles to get what he wants, a meeting with Ellen and later with her uncle.

When John first arrives, Lady Keith tries to prevent his entrance, but he manages to get in and speak with Ellen by not complying with Lady Keith's injunction to leave. After a covert discussion with Ellen, John's integrity compels him to insist on meeting Mr. Lindsay. Mr. Lindsay's discomfort during this conversation counters John's ease.

[H]owever strong might have been his desire to dismiss his guest in a very summary manner, or to treat him with haughty reserve, the graceful dignity of Mr. Humphreys' manners made either expedient impossible. Mr. Lindsay felt constrained to meet him on his own ground -- the ground of highbred frankness; and grew still more afraid that his real feelings should be discerned.

(567)

Meeting John on his own ground necessitates assuming his disposition for sincerity, yet Mr. Lindsay fears the exposure of his real feelings. His fear seems at first related to John's ability to discern the real from the display; however, it's the dominance of the sentimental habitus that defines his real feelings as wrong. In his current circle, a habitus that values display and thus allows Mr. Lindsay's self-indulgent possessiveness of Ellen dominates, but in the world (or rather, Warner's ideal world), the Humphreys' habitus predominates and self-indulgence must give way to self-denying benevolence. "Feeling right" marks the dominant social position, and that position in this novel belongs to the emerging American middle-class.

In *The Wide, Wide World*, Warner both depicts a world whose challenges are minimized by the authority provided by sentimental conventions and attempts to articulate and codify this set of dispositions intended to maintain social control. While she appears to argue for a type of social contract in which everyone monitors and manages her own emotions based on the disposition for self-denying benevolence, Warner seeks a type of control that is not so clearly democratic. By indicating the Humphreys' dominance in all social positions, Warner claims an authoritative social

position only for those operating under the legitimate dispositions. She rewrites what Bourdieu calls "the hierarchy of legitimacies" when John Humphreys' disposition appraises for more than that of the aristocratic Lindsay, and when the battle of manners leaves working-class Saunders sprawled in a ditch. Fortune's inadequacies indicate how finely this hierarchy distinguishes its levels. Warner, then, seeks not just a harmonious society, but social dominance and power or entitlement for the new middle class.

The middle class Warner defines in *The Wide, Wide World* emerges as a contrast to but also a combination of the established social positions of gentry (represented by the Lindsays) and yeoman farmer (represented by Aunt Fortune), particularly in terms of their relations to labor. Warner's version of the emergent middle class, embodied by the Humphreys, distances itself from the yeoman farmer by figuring that lifestyle as unnecessarily coarse and wearing, with its staunch and stubborn independence and single-minded attention to physical labor. The anti-social self-indulgence of Aunt Fortune's obsession with her housekeeping duties corresponds with the indolent self-indulgence of the Lindsays. The excessive emotional labor required by the gentry, with its tendency toward display is portrayed as too dependent on social esteem and, although less distasteful than Aunt Fortune's form of self-indulgence, similarly dismal and false. The middle class Warner advocates, instead, creates a space between these two by incorporating a balance of physical and emotional labor, tempering both with an emphasis on reciprocal social relations. Ultimately, however, Warner grants primacy to emotional labor in the ideal domestic system presented in *The Wide, Wide World*. Emotional rather than physical labor

provides the currency of legitimating dispositions not only in the new domestic economy, but the novel suggests, in a new social economy as well.

Chapter 2

Working Women Rewriting the Sentimental

In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, one of Margaret Fuller's main concerns was the subject of women's self-reliance. One means to an independence from men was the pursuit of a broader range of activities than formerly permitted as she notes in the quote that opens my introduction. Expanding on this discussion, Fuller remarks, "In families that I know, some little girls like to saw wood, others to use carpenters' tools. Where these tastes are indulged, cheerfulness and good-humor are promoted. Where they are forbidden, because 'such things are not proper for girls,' they grow sullen and mischievous" (174). Moving her discussion from women to girls, from independent women to well-behaved young girls, Fuller defuses the threat posed by her suggestion of expanded opportunity for women. She intimates that when given opportunities to work in new ways, women will more readily conform to sentimental emotional conventions of good-humor and cheerfulness; however, she also implies that denied of wider prospects, women will not only fail to perform emotional labor but also fail to behave properly in other ways that may create trouble. The texts explored in this chapter address women's limited opportunities for work and the trouble that results from their exploitation.

Despite the predominant representations of women in nineteenth-century fiction as ensconced in the home, the majority of antebellum-era women worked for pay in some form, taking piecework or boarders into their homes or producing goods

in the home for sale on the market. Many more worked in factories, sewing rooms, shops, or other women's homes. Women who worked for wages faced the same kinds of social and emotional constraints as housewives without the protections promised by domesticity. For Ellen in *The Wide, Wide World*, the sentimental economy works; she performs her emotional labor and is rewarded with patriarchal protection, from John or God. The sentimental novel in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America centers around breakdown of biological family and the heroine's search for support and protection from a family of her own making. The creation of a hand-picked "family" of sympathetic individuals echoes the political and economic notions of sentimentalism that rely on fellow feeling to regulate moral behavior as well as the sentimental transference of family affections and structures to national affections and structures.¹ Nineteenth-century texts about wage-earning women extend the familial structure to labor relations as well, with the employer figured as a benevolent father protecting his workers.² But, many of these texts also show that women workers regularly endured exploitation by a patriarchal system of labor that devalued women's work and profited by their financial and social vulnerability. In particular, many fictional narratives written by and about women workers critique the patriarchal underpinnings of the sentimental habitus, which secure women's economic and social bondage to maintain their dependent position. This chapter examines how wage-

¹ On self-selected family, see Baym 38, 49-50.

² Amireh 15-17.

earning women recreate themselves to survive when the sentimental economy fails them.

The American sentimental tradition, based in part in Calvinist transcendence of earthly things, demands women's transcendence of physicality.³ While she must still manage to run a household, her labor must be invisible.⁴ Working women are excluded from the middle-class culture of sentimental domesticity in part because wages materialize their labor. Within the sentimental habitus, feminine corporeality intertwined with capital is linked with immorality while feminine morality depends on its distance from bodies, markets, and funds. As working women write their labor power while claiming respectability within the sentimental habitus, they must confront its repression of strong laboring women's bodies. Bourdieu notes:

The fact that, in their relationship to the dominant classes, the dominated classes attribute to themselves strength in the sense of labour power and fighting strength . . . does not prevent the dominant group from similarly conceiving the relationship in terms of the scheme strong/weak; but they reduce the strength which the dominated . . . ascribe to themselves to brute strength, passion and instinct . . . and they attribute to themselves spiritual and intellectual strength, a self-control that predisposes them to control others, a

³ Elizabeth Barnes has argued that while both post-Revolutionary and antebellum sentimental novels feature a woman's virtue at stake, the threatened bodily hymen of the earlier novels is replaced by the disembodied spiritual heart and soul in the later novels so that the "problem of women's political status becomes represented as a problem of character and of emotional, rather than physical or material, susceptibility" (10).

⁴ Kathryn Sutherland calls women "the invisible workforce" in Adam Smith's economic formulations (107).

strength of soul or spirit which allows them to conceive of their relationship to the dominated . . . as that of the soul to the body, understanding to sensibility, culture to nature (479).

To accumulate sentimental capital, wage-earning women must represent themselves as laboring bodies regulated by sentimental dispositions for emotional self-control and spiritual and intellectual strength. The writers I examine in this chapter balance these demands with varying levels of success dependent largely on their originary class position which influences the degree both to which they access cultural capital and to which that capital can be transformed into symbolic capital.

The Lowell Offering -- a periodical produced from 1840-45 by female mill workers -- originated as a project of one of Lowell's literary clubs and sought to display the intellectual and spiritual accomplishments of mill operatives.⁵ In the 1840's, factory work had many attractions: it paid quite well and offered young women, especially young rural women, independence and opportunities for education and advancement in small cities. The work attracted young women whose other work opportunities were restricted to farm labor at home or domestic labor in another's home, either of which paid poorly or not at all, demanded much more time than factory jobs, and invasively regulated non-work activities. Factory operatives, on the other hand, generally worked regular hours and lived in boarding houses, which also monitored their activities and behavior but to a lesser extent than families or domestic

⁵ Whether this display was to assert worker's respectability for their own good or for the good of the companies eager to recruit new workers was and is debatable. See Eisler 33-41; Foner, *The Factory Girls* 57-60.

employers.⁶ Most significantly, these young women entered the capitalist system based on the value of their labor. For the Lowell mill workers, the view of oneself as socially valuable because of one's physical labor, as evidenced by wages, must be affirmed within a sentimental culture that prioritizes the emotional labor that evinces spiritual and intellectual strength. *The Lowell Offering* demonstrates these tensions within the emergent laboring classes and the role of the sentimental dispositions in new class formations.

If wage-earning women struggled to squeeze into labor-disdaining sentimental conventions, indentured servants necessarily exploded them. Indentured servants struggle merely to claim their labor power since they do not own their own labor and as such are situated in the economy as laboring machines. Because their work provides for an eventual release from bondage, these laborers are at one remove from slaves. But, often, their indentured service exhausts their physical capacities, leaving them a vastly diminished store of labor capital. Furthermore, as a laboring machine, an indentured servant's primary emotional labor is in the service of maintaining her status as machine rather than attending to her spiritual or intellectual growth. Thus, she lacks both labor capital and cultural capital and consequently a position with no spending power in the sentimental economy. Harriet Wilson's autobiographical *Our Nig*, the story of an indentured servant named Frado, explores this very problem via an oscillating uptake and inversion of sentimental dispositions.

⁶ Benita Eisler reprints a list of boarding-house regulations (27) and a mill time-table (30).

Fanny Fern's highly successful, although roundly criticized, autobiographical novel *Ruth Hall* examines the life of a middle-class woman turned laborer through economic necessity. The sentimental trope of middle-class woman who has lost her station struggling nobly and virtuously to care for her family is common in the 1840s, likely a response to the economic panic of 1837, which forced domestic angels to earn money as a matter of survival. Originating in the middle-class, Fern's heroine Ruth need not struggle to acquire cultural capital, but to maintain it while she enters the labor market. Pairing *The Lowell Offering* and *Our Nig* with Fanny Fern's *Ruth Hall* allows a consideration of how antebellum women laborers' ordinary class position influenced their access to the forms of capital valued within the sentimental habitus.

I find that these writers teach us about sentimentalism as a culture of exclusion even as it valorizes a sympathetic culture of inclusion. The authors point to the underlying economic structure of sentimentalism, recalling its connections to economist Adam Smith. Despite the sentimental emotional excellence of the mill girls and Ruth Hall, and Frado's potential sentimental excellence, their labor, a product of economic need, stigmatizes them. In these narratives, the authors demonstrate that the cultural capital acquired by taking up sentimental dispositions for self-control and spiritual and intellectual power only transforms into symbolic capital when bolstered by economic capital. These texts thus expose the sham of economic superiority as moral and emotional superiority and, in seeking to claim a position of respectability for women laborers, rewrite or reverse the terms of the sentimental.

"Factory Girls shine forth in ornaments more valuable than *Gold Watches*"

The Lowell Offering -- published irregularly at first, and then monthly, for five years -- featured short stories, essays, and poetry written by female factory operatives who worked in the Lowell textile mills. In its very mission, this periodical is a response to the exclusion of working-class women from the dominant culture's definition of the feminine via sentimental domesticity. Begun in 1840 by Rev. Abel Thomas, the *Offering* was a public exhibit of the literary talents developed by factory operatives attending the Reverend's Mutual Self-Improvement Club, one of eight such organizations founded to promote the intellectual, religious, and moral improvement of Lowell's laborers.⁷ "The worker's literary culture was a badge of morality, femininity, and socialization into dominant American culture" (Lutes 8), the culture of sentimental domesticity. As Elizabeth Freeman argues, "[I]f *The Lowell Offering* functioned as "PR" for the Lowell corporation, it also functioned as PR for feminine self-making through fashion, labor, and literature and for the making of a meaningful life context and identity that included wages" (113-14). This self-making initiated as well a rewriting of the sentimental to offer a corrective for the elision of women's labor.

Yet, "[t]he first generation of Lowell mill girls was also the last WASP labor force in America" (Eisler 29); this generation of workers thus possessed a combination of economic and cultural capital unknown to later workers, and as such, plays a unique

⁷ Eventually, the *Offering* was purchased by William Schouler, editor and publisher of Lowell's "corporation" newspaper, and he turned over editorship to Harriet Farley and Harriott Curtis, both long-time mill workers (Eisler 34).

role in the formation of an American working class. Lowell mill operatives who sought to improve their work conditions -- like those who published in *The Voice of Industry*, the labor counterpart to *The Lowell Offering* -- wrote about themselves primarily in terms of their labor, and "their rhetoric was strongly colored with a class antagonism that openly challenged the ideology of a community of interests" (Amireh 22). Writers for *The Lowell Offering*, on the other hand, wish to alter their social position and thus valorize rather than critique their conditions. Although it is tempting to argue that these authors felt socially compelled to appropriate the values and style of sentimentalism to assert their claim to middle-class respectability, "such values have their own cultural distinctiveness as forms of life and cannot be understood as simply bourgeois norms imposed from above" (Felski 35). Furthermore, while the *Lowell Offering* authors take up the notions of middle-class refinement from the system of sentimental dispositions, they also necessarily adapt those systems to their own material conditions.

The writers for *The Lowell Offering* were painfully aware of their status within the larger community. Other periodicals often represented factory workers and their lifestyle negatively, and occasionally, an *Offering* writer would challenge these representations. Helen Merrell Lynd has argued persuasively for the active role of shame in asserting class distinctions, and more recent scholars have expanded on her findings. Pamela Fox notes, in her study of shame in fictional representations of class, that moments of public shaming "expose one's lack of cultural capital" (13). And, indeed, *The Lowell Offering* has many stories describing the public shaming of mill operatives that function in precisely this way.

In the "Affections Illustrated in Factory Life" series, two stories in particular address this issue. In "The Sister," hard-working Hannah works to support her brother Orville's education. As he gains cultural and social capital via his education, he begins courting the wealthy Olivia, who regularly conveys her "contempt of the factory operative" (21). Hannah keeps her relationship with her brother secret from everyone so as not to hurt his chances of marrying Olivia. It is only when Olivia learns of Hannah's perfect sentimental self-sacrifice for Orville that she can embrace the factory girl as a sister.

In "The Wife" (April 1844), wealthy and pampered Alina, raised with an "educational prejudice" against factory workers, is confronted by her husband Dr. Alden's indignant assessment of "the puerile distinctions of caste among [the] inhabitants" of their mill town (134). Dr. Alden recommends a friendship with Elsa, a good-hearted factory girl, with a "love of moral rectitude, and strength of kindly feeling" (133), but Alina refuses to accept Elsa as her equal. Through Alina's own trials of illness and poverty, however, she learns the value of work and the virtue of the workers she has formerly shunned. Ultimately, Elsa's patience and support and refusal to denigrate or chastise Alina, her sentimental capital, that wins over the middle-class Alina.

Alina admits, "I did not treat Elsa at first as if she were a human being; but, at the bedside of my dying child, I found that she was either saint or angel" (135). Elsa's emotional labor -- sympathizing, soothing, and cheering -- is what gains her entry into the middle-class home, and teaches Alina to understand and appreciate the working class. Conversely, Alina's experience working in the mills helps her to overcome her

"romantic ideas" (137) of love and learn that "love is stronger and purer, which has suffered and labored, than that which has merely enjoyed" (138). Furthermore, she "was taught much real knowledge of the human heart" when she realizes that the "envy, injustice, and ill will" of workers toward leisured classes are "awakened in them" by the leisured classes ill treatment of workers (138). Thus, "The Wife" approaches class relations by explaining away working class anger and asserting that the leisured can learn the value of sentimental emotional conventions only when they are tested by hardship. Temporary middle-class hardships are the everyday reality of the working class, which implies they better appreciate and abide by sentimental emotional conventions than do the leisured. And, finally, it is the emotional labor performed by the laborers in both "The Wife" and "The Sister" that signify their virtue and provide their sentimental capital.

But not all *Offering* responses to public shaming were so peacefully resistant. For example, "Gold Watches" (1842) responds to an article in *Godey's Lady's Book* about operatives' sartorial excesses, which complained, "how the factory girls do rig up! We cannot get anything but they will imitate us" (Eisler 186). The *Offering* article reacts to this public shaming with sarcasm and insightful critique, finishing with a call to operatives to band together to improve each other and the image of factory girls. The *Godey's* article is a clear attempt to shun and shame factory girls into accepting their class position, but the anonymous author of "Gold Watches" refuses to be shamed. Instead, she responds with anger and indignation, sometimes implied by her sarcasm, but at other times, explicitly stated. In one paragraph, she combines both:

I pity the girl who cannot take pleasure in wearing the new and beautiful bonnet which her father has presented her, because, forsooth, she sees that some factory girl has, with her hard-won earnings, procured one just like it. I said I pitied the girl; but I fear there is too much of contempt and indignation in the feeling which swells my heart, to render it worthy of the gentle name of pity. (Eisler 186)

The biting tone of the first sentence indicates the author's emotions, but her straightforward announcement of these feelings in the second sentence forecloses the possibility of mistaking her intent. While the sentimental heart-swelling action of these emotions suggest a righteous response to wounding, the sarcasm and use of "contempt" outweigh the lighter claim.

Both contempt and indignation are based in anger, an emotion forbidden by sentimental emotional conventions. The anger fueling indignation stems from a desire for justice, but the anger behind contempt concerns status, figuring the object of contempt as inferior.⁸ In the next paragraph, the author assigns the feeling of "haughty contempt" to "the girl who has half a dozen silk gowns, [and will] toss her head, as if she felt six times better than her neighbor who has none" (Eisler 186). The wealthy woman's contempt is, thus, based in arrogance founded only on her material possessions and serves to heighten her own status at the expense of the mill girls'. Working women, conversely, will "watch over and endeavor to improve each other" until "it will finally be acknowledged that Factory Girls shine forth in ornaments more

⁸ See Ben-Ze'ev 390-93.

valuable than *Gold Watches*" (emphasis in original, Eisler 187). Their superiority, in other words, shall be moral rather than economic, and thereby righteous. By shaping her anger as righteous indignation, the author links her anger to a sentimental morality based in socially oriented benevolence rather than self-serving indulgences.

Furthermore, because sentimental writers frequently targeted the frivolous and fashionable for critique, the author places herself rhetorically among her contemporaries in opposing fashion plates with an image of hard-working, education-seeking laborers. Unfortunately, insisting on the future superiority of the worker would likely have evoked the same concerns about class mobility that originally spurred the *Godey's* article, effectively counteracting advances the article might have made in class relations.

Bourdieu argues:

[T]he logic of the stigma reminds us that social identity is the stake in a struggle in which the stigmatized individual or group . . . can only retaliate against the partial perception [of it in terms of that which is stigmatized] . . . by highlighting, in its self-definition, the best of its characteristics . . . [and] to give the dominant taxonomy the content most flattering to what it has and what it is. (475-6)

The mill operatives, in order to counter negative perceptions of the corrupting conditions of women laborers, instead depict those conditions as supportive of the qualities most valued within the sentimental habitus. For example, "The Dignity of Labor" (1842), an excerpt from Catharine Beecher's *Treatise* published in the *Offering*, argues that a woman's labor signals good character. Calling upon various

examples of noble and royal working women from history, she concludes, "I hope the time is not far distant when none of my country women will be ashamed to have it known that they are better versed in useful, than they are in ornamental accomplishments" (192). Work, she implies, offers one a better moral foundation than leisure because it teaches one to be useful, to attend to social needs and be productive, rather than simply displaying surface ornamental attractions. This type of discourse was common in representations of factory work as progressive and offers a corrective for nineteenth-century class distinctions pitting an innovative, intellectual middle-class against a backwards mass of workers.⁹ Several *Lowell Offering* authors assert further that their material conditions are actually more conducive to generating sentimental dispositions than those of the leisured classes.

Some stories highlight, for example, the salutary effects of a laborer's lifestyle. "Early Morning" (1841) describes a worker heading to the mills as the sun rises, claiming "Our purest and best spirits are aroused at such times; we rise from earth and walk . . . amid the stars, and hold communion with their spiritual inhabitants" (50). Those who do not work for a living, on the other hand, "[yield] to the sluggish feelings of our nature" and fail to "acquire the energy of character to prosecute and persevere, in all their undertakings" as do the early-rising working class (50). Some conditions of labor, then, could develop character and do so more readily than the conditions of leisure that distinguished the middle from the working classes. The observation was a shrewd one, reversing the argument that leisure time led to moral and intellectual

⁹ On the representations of factory work as progressive, see Amireh; on the middle-class as progressive, see McClintock.

improvement.¹⁰ Similarly, "Song of the Spinners" (1841) proclaims, "Labor to leisure a zest imparts, unknown to the idle" (32). Without labor to enhance the value of leisure, one may not productively use one's leisure time. The song's structure -- lively 6/8 time, in cheerful G Major, with two-part harmony -- underscores not only the worker's happily energetic use of leisure time, but also its social and wholesome nature. Such an "improving" use of leisure time, the song claims, was "unknown" to the leisured middle class. Physical labor, *Offering* authors argue, sustains rather than hinders the spiritual and intellectual growth that takes place during leisure hours.

Other articles continue in this vein but argue for the mill as conducive to contemplation because of its demands for physical labor. In "Pleasures of Factory Life," Sarah Bagley explains, "[A]ll powers of the mind are made active by our animating exercise; and having but one kind of labor to perform, we need not give all our thoughts to that, but leave them measurably free for reflection on other matters" (Eisler 63). Here, the effects of physical labor energize rather than deaden the intellect, and although these workers lack leisure time, Bagley suggests that ample mental time is available because of the repetitive manner of their work. Bagley's article is aligned with the *Offering's* mission to show factory work as offering the opportunity to take advantage of educational and cultural experiences in mill towns, of which the magazine itself was material proof. Their labor does not intrude upon their pursuit of

¹⁰ Lutes finds that the rival labor reform magazine, *The Voice of Industry*, argued against the possibility of improving oneself during work hours and "transformed the potentially elitist idea of self-culture into a justification for their" agitation for a ten-hour workday (13).

scholarly and religious improvement; instead, working in the mills and living in a mill town enables those activities.

Contemplation and mental composition occurred during work hours in what *Offering* authors refer to as "the mill-girl's reverie." "A Weaver's Reverie" (1841) argues that a factory girl "thinks, not of the crowded, clattering mill, nor of the noisy tenement which is her home, nor of the thronged an busy street which she may sometimes tread, -- but of the still and lovely scenes which, in by-gone hours, have sent their pure and elevating influence with a thrilling sweep across the strings of the spirit harp, and then awakened its sweetest, loftiest notes" (188-9). Here the author admits that her environment is not the most savory; nevertheless, her work offers the opportunity to think of things that evoke "pure, hallowed feelings . . . to bear away upon their swelling tide the corruption" which might otherwise accumulate under such conditions (189). Several authors refer to the practice of mental composition of articles and stories during these reveries. So, while the reverie suggests both an alienation from labor in the worker's mental, emotional, and spiritual detachment from her work, it also can be identified as what Certeau calls "la perruque," an appropriation of work time for one's own personal activities. The reverie and the early riser's meditation, thus, both prioritize a submission to proscriptive sentimental emotionality even as it takes place in the context of what Elizabeth Freeman calls "submission to industrial time-space" (122). But submission to the industrial system did not mean, as the reverie indicates, an entire loss; even as the mill operative is alienated from her labor, she recuperates her time via "la perruque" and dedicates it to acquiring cultural capital. As

Farley wryly comments in a late editorial (October 1845), "imprisonment is not always unfavorable to the intellect" (240).

Nevertheless, to assert the factory worker's superiority in terms of behaviors predicated on leisure necessitates reframing their own material conditions. The predominant *Offering* response to factory operatives' social position was to downplay the role of labor in their lives in order to diminish, rather than highlight, differentiation from the middle class. Because the sentimental habitus devalues and even dematerializes physical labor, *The Lowell Offering* prioritizes the disposition for emotional sensitivity and elides representations of physical labor. Indeed, the periodical evidences its authors' and editors' deep ambivalence about the role of labor in working women's lives. Elizabeth Freeman argues, "labor represented for the Lowell women a dialectic between submission to industrial time-space and the ability to transform themselves " (122). On the one hand, labor requires long difficult working hours and little leisure time or privacy; on the other, it offers economic and social independence. Although these factors may balance each other, they simultaneously serve to exclude laborers from True Womanhood, grounded as it is in dependence, submission, leisure, and private domesticity.¹¹ Independence was therefore purchased at the price of social status.

Rita Felski has defined the lower middle class as a class of laborers who view themselves as middle-class, who value labor but also embrace many bourgeois dispositions. "The prevailing characteristic [of this group]," she argues, "[is] an

¹¹ Barbara Welter's 1966 article "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" is, of course, the root of scholarly understanding of this ideology.

anxious display of refinement on a low income" (40). The writers and editors of *The Lowell Offering*, similarly addressed but downplayed issues of economics and the industrial lifestyle; the majority of material in *The Lowell Offering* presents a worker's life as a series of domestic scenes enlivened by their concomitant affective concerns. In her penultimate farewell editorial in the November 1845 issue, Harriet Farley writes of the *Offering's* authors, "One thing . . . might be reasonably expected from their writings -- that they would exhibit the state of feeling among the contributors" (263). Even the rare story to mention work attends primarily to the emotional rather than the physical labor performed.

One effort to evince refinement involved portraying factory work conditions more favorably. In one of a series of epistolary stories, "Letters from Susan" (1844), the author, Harriet Farley, depicts the mills and factory environs as clean and lovely: "the rooms are high, very light, kept nicely whitewashed, and extremely neat; with many plants in the window seats, and white cotton curtains to the windows. The machinery is very handsomely made and painted, and is placed in regular rows . . . presenting a beautiful and uniform appearance" (Eisler 57). The description mimics those of a plainly appointed room in a sentimental novel -- clean, orderly, and bright, a morally sound environment.¹² The emphasis on plants is reiterated in several *Offering* articles and Farley notes, "some of the corporations have beautiful flower gardens connected with the factories" (Eisler 57). Tending flowers and plants was considered

¹² The squalor of poverty and industrial conditions was widely equated with vice and immorality. One of the reformist voices arguing against this common misperception was John Griscom (Hoy 25-7).

improving because it taught one to care for another living thing, and flowers were reminders of little moral lessons.¹³ "Plants and Flowers in the Mills" (December 1840) notes that when operatives visited family once a year, they could take cuttings from their favorite plants and transplant them in Lowell, causing workers to "remember the love of your kindred and the joys of your childhood" (Eisler 66). Thus, plants in the mills could both create a more domestic environment and support the affective health of the laborers. Plants, however, represent a tenuous bond to home and family, and sentimental emotional conventions demanded a stronger attachment to domesticity than a delicate tendril could offer.

The Lowell Offering at once de-emphasizes the materiality of labor as it highlights the working woman's emotional imperative to labor. Repeatedly, stories and essays refer to the laborers' need to work. Thus, the material result of her labor, wages, are transferred immediately from the female worker's potential market consumerism to her investment in affective domesticity in the form of a mother's medical care, a sister's upkeep, a brother's education. This transaction would ideally function to preserve both the mill worker's ethereality and detachment from the marketplace; however, because her ability to provide this support is predicated on her physical detachment from the family home, the image of sentimental domesticity quickly dissolves. The labor she provides for her family ought to be of an emotional character that only proximity affords.

¹³ Robin Veder provides an extensive discussion of the use of flower-gardening as a mode of labor reform in England during the 1840s. She notes that developing and interest in this pastime worked, in part, to shift attention from financial gain to "the disinterested pursuit of beauty and knowledge" (127).

The "The Affections Illustrated in Factory Life" series of stories -- the titles of which place women in their properly affective relational roles -- concisely emphasizes the primacy of emotional labor in a female mill operative's life. The stories offer a husband's illness, orphanage, or widowhood as a reason for the worker's need to labor. As already noted above in regard to "The Wife" and "The Sister," the women in these stories labored not for their own advancement or independence but to serve their families in times of need. In "The Mother" (Jan 1844), a widow works in the factory to support herself and her young son. It is her devotion to him that pushes her to work. One of her housemates visits the grieving mother in her rooms to offer consolation. The mother explains that she has only sought solitude because "I did not wish to make others unhappy," after which she pours out her story to the sympathetic ear of her boarding-house friend. Both of these women, thus, perform sentimental emotional labor, one controlling her grief and the other offering sympathy, both seeking through their actions to promote the happiness of others.

In "The Sister," Hannah becomes ill and her only friend takes a leave of absence from work to nurse and comfort her, dropping her wage-earning labor for a time to perform the more important labor of nurture, sympathizing, and cheering. However, "The Sister" also details the darker side of boarding-house life: in this case, unfounded gossip about Hannah's relationship with the strange man who visits her (her brother Orville) that almost gets her evicted. Fortunately, she has a sympathetic friend and a submissive, self-sacrificing nature that help her quietly face these difficulties until providence intervenes to prove the gossip false.

Thus the stories cannot easily evade the problems of boarding-house living, the fact that they slept, ate, bathed in crowded tenements, with little to no privacy. In addition, boarding houses had fairly bad reputations in the popular press as both squalid and vice-ridden. Nevertheless, attention to boarding-house life imparted a partially domestic atmosphere to a story, and distracted from the physical labor evoked by the mills. References to boarding-house keepers, who performed numerous tasks including cooking and cleaning, attend primarily to their emotional labor. In "The Sister," the narrator describes Mrs. Matthews, the boarding-house keeper, as having a "deep vein of the kindest feeling" despite her "light crust of asperity" caused by "vexation and toil" (15). The author, Harriet Farley,¹⁴ points to the negative emotional effects of physical labor as superficial and exterior while the positive emotions, such as kindness and sympathy, are internal and bodily, part of one's immutable nature, and thus not dependent on social or economic factors. In the end, although Mrs. Matthews is responsible for monitoring her residents' virtue, she sympathizes with Hannah and trusts in her word for quite some time before the pressures of losing her own place force her to ask Hannah to leave.

Farley elaborates on the kindness of boarding-house keepers in the first "Letter from Susan" (1844). The narrator describes her arrival in Lowell and her surprise at the warmth and kindness of the landlady, who incidentally, is a widow running a boarding house to provide for her "several children" (Eisler 46). When Susan discovers that "The boarding-women are always 'dreadful good' to a new boarder," she

¹⁴ This story is reprinted in Eisler's collection (83-95), and signed "Adelia," whom Eisler identifies as Farley.

explains it this way: "[T]here is surely something to excite a woman's sympathies in the sight, which is not uncommon here, of a lonely friendless helpless stranger" (Eisler 47). By figuring sympathy as innate, and then linking it to femininity, Farley finds in the boarding-house keepers' sympathetic natures a claim to True Womanhood.

As "The Sister" shows, even the kindest boarding-house keepers and sympathetic friends could not always protect a woman from gossip. It is only Hannah's illness that protects her from being thrown out. When Orville learns of her illness, he visits and clears her name by proclaiming their familial relationship. Boarding-house gossip could lose one their position and their home, and more, it was potentially life-threatening. Harriet Farley writes, in an editorial (1844), about two suicides of female operatives, the first of whom is doomed by gossip. Farley scolds, "in no place is an evil report more quickly circulated, and apparently believed, than in a factory" (Eisler 206). After people insinuated she was involved in premarital sexual activity, a young woman would be shunned socially and often also ejected from her boarding house and fired from her job, depriving her of friends or resources and leading her, quite reasonably, to despair. Farley suggests, "[m]orbid dejection, and wounded sensibility, have in these instances, produced that insanity which prompted suicide" (207). So, while Farley reprimands the gossipers, she more strongly condemns the suicide victim for giving in to depression and hurt feelings, in other words, failing to perform the emotional labor necessary to save herself.

For the other suicide, Farley has more sympathy. She repeats three times, "she had no home," the result being "[t]here was not the voice of sympathy to sustain her, nor the necessity of acting for others to arouse her energies" (Eisler 205). In this

formulation, affective bonds maintain life, both as a form of emotional support and as a motivation to persevere. This woman had no family, and where others ought to have filled that lack, "mere acquaintance strove not to comfort her" (Eisler 205). Farley gently suggests that "mere acquaintance" ought to have tried to cheer her despite their fears of having no effect, or worse, of becoming depressed themselves. In Farley's call to improve the behavior of "factory girls," she draws attention to their unstructured affective lives; lacking the clear organization of affective bonds and accompanying emotional conventions that govern family life, many working women's needs are unmet, sometimes with tragic consequences.

The story of the two suicides also recalls the problem explored in sentimental literature of the single woman alone and unprotected in the world. As laborers these women's involvement with commerce -- trading on the embodied commodity of their labor -- heightens the potential for danger because it links them to vice and prostitution and thus demonstrates their need of male protection and regulation. Male factory overseers were charged with this duty, but their watch could not extend to the boarding houses where young women lived among their own sex. Boarding-house keepers, as noted above, had limited abilities to protect their charges, busy as they were with the various physical demands of the boarding house. As a result, the women must regulate each other's behavior, which could at times end tragically as in the suicide stories. In other stories, this self-regulation entails transferring affectionate familial structures onto an all-female system.

Sometimes emotional regulation is offered in the form of cheering words, as in "The Spirit of Discontent" (1841), in which the narrator dispels her friend Ellen's

every complaint about work, reminding her that her work in the country was far more restrictive and less rewarding, with the result that:

We agreed, that since we must work for a living, the mill, all things considered, is the most pleasant and best calculated to promote our welfare; that we will work diligently during the hours of labor; improve our leisure to the best advantage, in the cultivation of the mind, -- hoping thereby not only to increase our own pleasure, but also to add to the happiness of those around us. (Eisler 162)

Not only does the narrator perform the quintessential sentimental emotional labor of cheering someone, she also ends by converting this woman to sentimental emotional culture as they vow to "add to the happiness of those around" them. Notably, the friend also learns submission to her fate, that she must work for a living and thus must find the best work that is offered and accept it gratefully, despite the drawbacks Ellen notes: the poor ventilation, the noise, the long hours, the short breaks, the "obedience to that ding-dong of a bell -- just as though we were so many living machines" (161). But, such complaints, as Farley notes in an editorial, were not the province of the *Offering*; instead, the writers' contentment and concern for things other than working conditions and wages "implies that it was quite as important to be good, as to have good. They have striven for improvement of head and heart before that of situation" (263). Again, adopting the sentimental code means morality and affective virtue trumps economic or social status.

These women, cut off from family and home, could find a family-like feeling among their co-workers as in "The Mother," mentioned briefly above, with its

description of workplace solidarity, which in this case doesn't mean striking but filling in for a co-worker so she can tend to a sick relative. In this portrayal of work relationships in terms of affective bonds, a woman learns "that her child was sick -- perhaps dying; and she wished permission to go to him immediately. There were no objections made. The girls, beside whom she had worked, shared her task between them; and with deep sympathy from us all, she left the mill" (59). The co-workers have come to know each other well and have become emotionally attached to this woman enough so that they are willing to perform her labor, in addition to their regular thirteen hours, to aid her in a time of need. In this case, their physical labor provides indirect comfort to the woman in distress by freeing her to perform the domestic emotional labor of caring for her sick son.

Yet other stories show that women could construct a surrogate family for themselves among their boarding-house mates; such is the theme of "The Leisure Hours of the Mill Girls" (1842) by Eliza J. Cate. Ann, Isabel, Ellinora, and Alice live together. Ann "was a bit of a wag," as careless in her housekeeping as she was in her emotional responses (Eisler 99). Ellinora is pretty and silly. Alice, "half dead with the blues," likes to mope and indulge her morbid moroseness (105). Isabel is "gentle but earnest" (106) and never says "any thing against any body" (109), and over the course of the story, she teaches both Ann and Alice a lesson about proper emotional management. When Ann and Isabel learn that Alice is sulking in her room, they decide to cheer Alice by urging her to take a walk with them. Alice responds, "I am only fit for the solitude of my chamber" and proceeds to list her complaints to Isabel. Isabel tears up in sympathy, but she controls her grief and "answer[s] in her own

sweet, calm manner" (107). She explains her own situation, which is similar too, but far more difficult than Alice's; her story makes Ann cry, and though Isabel's "whole frame shook with emotion[,] . . . not a tear mingled with Ann's" (107). Again, although her story is painful enough to move even carefree Ann, Isabel contains her emotion, evincing remarkable self-control, and then whispers words of advice in Alice's ear.

Ann claims Isabel's similarity to her own mother, pointing to Isabel's hardships but constant efforts to cheer everyone else in the house and never complain, and indeed, Isabel is like a mother to many of the her housemates, offering sympathy and advice and modeling proper emotional self-control. Alice, on the other hand, Ann reproves for never showing pity for others when she herself demands so much sympathy. Later, when Ann and Isabel are walking, Ann has harsh words for Alice, but Isabel, like a good sentimental mother, teaches her that a sympathetic attitude is best and leads her to express her own difficulties and to trust them to God, rewarding Ann's penitent tears by saying "we will be sisters to each other" (110). Finally, when they return, they vow to help Alice overcome her bad habits "to think less of her own gratification, and more of that of others" (111). Ellinora indicates that Isabel has talked to her about her frivolous habits because she promises to be "steady, but not gloomy; less talkative, but not reserved" and then seeks out Alice at dinner, wishing they could exchange portions of their temperaments for improved emotional balance. The story ends with Alice, Ellinora, Ann, and Isabel, becoming "as intimate as sisters . . . resolutely struggling [together] against the tide of habit" (111). The power of sympathy resides in the girls' shared hardships as well as their admiration for Isabel and desire to be as happy as she. By modeling and regularly performing the emotional

labor of self-control, cheerfulness, and sympathy, Isabel creates an affectively structured home environment in which boarding-house residents offer each other support and guidance, and thus converts her housemates into family, embracing them in an all-female sentimental family in which sentimental discipline appears in the friendly guise of maternal and sisterly regulation of behavior.

Perhaps not surprisingly, stories like these were not popular among workers. The cheerful contentment of sentimentalism failed to address the problems and realities of wage labor, and soon *The Lowell Offering* could not find enough subscribers to continue publication. A new, more popular periodical, *The Voice of Industry*, spoke in a more compelling voice, one still seeking social acceptance but also eager to protest inequalities and injustice rather than submit quietly, like a refined sentimental lady.¹⁵ As Susan Alves notes about Lucy Larcom, a frequent contributor to *The Lowell Offering* and its only author to find widespread fame, "By embracing the middle-class cultural standard of True Womanhood, [Larcom] not only erases the role of work in the lives of working women but limits the aspects of working-class women's lives that qualify for this popular definition of womanhood" (159). Certainly, other *Offering* authors often did the same.

A *Voice of Industry* author asks of the *Offering's* emphasis on intellectual and spiritual pursuits: "[W]hen do they find the time for all or any of these? When exhausted nature demands repose?" (qtd. in Foner, *Factory Girls*, 85). Eager to define themselves primarily in terms of their labor, the *Voice of Industry* writers are part of

¹⁵ Both Lutes and Foner, *The Factory Girls* provide information and analysis of *The Voice of Industry*.

an emerging working-class habitus. *The Lowell Offering*, conversely, clings to the status of pre-industrial agrarian virtue ascribed to their families, and are thus drawn to sentimental values that define the emerging middle class, the class that replaces that of the farm family in the new industrialized economy. Their emphasis on hard work, however, a remnant of Jefferson's republican agrarian work ethic, distinguishes them from the middle class. Similarly, their reconfiguration of family, as inclusive of a group of fellow workers, indicates their participation in an economy distinct from the leisured sentimental. As such, they identify class-based prejudices that seek to exclude working women from the sentimental habitus, indicate the humanity of workers and their need for affective bonds, and offer strong arguments for the role of labor in producing sentimental character, one more inclined to perform required emotional labor. In their liminal space, between the emerging working and middle class, the *Lowell Offering* authors participate in the formation of an emerging habitus with distinct dispositions, which will eventually be recognized as the lower middle class.

"This unexpected demonstration"

If the writers of *The Lowell Offering* described a class slightly above the working class in the socio-economic hierarchy, Harriett Wilson describes one slightly below the working-class.¹⁶ Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two-Story White House, North*, the first published novel by an

¹⁶ Gretchen Short argues that Wilson's protagonist "Frado is locked within the hidden domestic marketplace where labor can be appropriated without compensation and where her 'worth' is judged not by earnings but by the 'profit' she brings [her employers] and the money which can be beaten 'out of her'" (20).

African American woman, tells the semi-autobiographical story of Frado, an unofficially indentured servant, given up by a poor and self-serving mother who can no longer take care of her. The family who takes her in is run by Mrs. Bellmont, a violent, selfish woman, and her young protégé, daughter Mary. Others in the family -- the invalid daughter, the kind but ineffectual father and sons, and Aunt Abby, Mr. Bellmont's spinster sister who lives nearby -- cringe under Mrs. Bellmont, protecting themselves by emotionally detaching from the household. Mrs. Bellmont treats Frado like a slave, inflicting vicious punishments and "commodifying Frado's energy and labor: she considers the child only a beast of burden, fit to do twice the work of other laborers and so maximize profit" (Cole 38). This familial power inversion not only places the white middle-class mother in command, but also indicates her abuse of power as she terrorizes rather than sympathizes with her family.

When Frado finally leaves the Bellmont house, her health ruined by years of hard labor and brutality, she struggles unsuccessfully to support herself. The Bellmont family fails to support or protect her once she has left their home. She makes a bad marriage and must find a way to provide for her son when her husband leaves her; thus, she writes the book *Our Nig*, which she hopes will garner both sympathy and funds. Indeed, within the sentimental economy, inducing sympathy with her situation ought to procure her funds either through increased sales of the book, charitable donations, or offers of work.

Henry Louis Gates finds that, on the contrary, Wilson's book did not sell well and, in fact, her son died soon after its publication.¹⁷ Some scholars argue that it failed to sell because of its controversial themes, including a critique of abolitionists and Northern racism; others claim that Wilson simply did not have access to publishers who could distribute her work.¹⁸ Most scholars, however, attend lightly to this unanswerable question, turning instead to the complications of the novel's structure and discourse. Wilson handily whips and flips genres into a remarkably syncretic text. Critics have discovered in this novel elements of slave narrative, tragic mulatta tales, and sentimentalism, either inverted or allegorical,¹⁹ as well as made compelling claims for the text as Realist and Gothic,²⁰ and as, playing on the full title, a "two-story" blending genres for subversive purposes.²¹ The incredible complexity and individuality of *Our Nig* perhaps destined it for failure in the nineteenth-century

¹⁷ Gates, *Figures in Black*, 141.

¹⁸ On controversy, see Gates "Introduction" xxix; Fox-Genovese 33; and Warren "Performativity and the Repositioning of American Literary Realism" 15. On publishing limitations, see Short 24; and Eric Gardner, "'This Attempt of their Sister': Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* from Printer to Readers," *New England Quarterly* 66:2 (1993) 226-46.

¹⁹ As an inversion or reversal, see Stern, Fox-Genovese, Ellis "Autobiography"; for parodic subversion, see King; for allegory, see Carby 44 and Tate. Gabrielle Foreman views this genre-blurring as Wilson's attempt to "write the unutterable in a manner which challenges [her] readers to recover not only [the] 'texts' but the contexts and codes" of her literary work (313).

²⁰ Warren argues for the text as Realist in "Performativity"; Stern argues for the text as Gothic.

²¹ Ellis 67-9; Leveen 567-8.

literary market; it most certainly excludes it from any clear place in a canon organized by genre, except as a "problem piece."

The inability or refusal of the text to conform to conventional literary standards parallels the problem of locating the main character -- a mulatta child, born of a white mother and black father, unofficially indentured in a Northern white household -- in an identifiable subject position. Her strangeness, and that of the text, is utterly other yet simultaneously entirely recognizable: the stranger in the mirror. Frado is thus not so much excluded as she is repressed. She and the novel embody key emotions that sentimental domestic culture requires one to repress -- disgust, anger, pride, and *Schadenfreude*.²² Like the repressed elements of the psyche, Frado and her tale return repeatedly and with a vengeance, via the text, attempting to force an undesirable reality to consciousness.

At first, Frado's anger and disgust are turned inward, igniting depression,²³ a deep sadness and sense of futility about her situation. After a particularly cruel and unfair punishment, Frado runs away, only to be sought out by the kindly Belmont son

²² Many scholars note the rage that underlies this text; see, for example, Stern on the relation of anger and sorrow (445), and Grasso's chapter on *Our Nig* for an extended discussion of Wilson's use of anger.

²³ Julia Kristeva has argued that "the analysis of depression involves bringing to the fore the realization that the complaint against oneself is a hatred for the other" and "conceals an aggressiveness" toward that other (11). Leslie Brody has noted that women are more likely than men to manifest symptoms of depression because their lower status and power makes the expression of negative emotions socially unsafe. "Expressing distress instead of anger may be a strategy used by women to minimize potential interpersonal hurt and harm while attempting to change an unsatisfying interpersonal relationship" (Brody 215).

James. Although she despairs, she never blames herself for her situation; in fact, she is looking for somewhere to lay the blame, as when she says, "Who made me so?" (51). James' attempt to instill a sentimental submission to God's will results in what Phyllis Cole has called a "reverse catechism" in which Frado causes James to question his own Christianity (39).²⁴ But, in this moment, Frado also finds an outlet for her anger in God, proclaiming, "I don't like him . . . [b]ecause he made her [Mrs. Belmont] white, and me black" (51). "God" is a metonym for the sentimental habitus, standing in for the Christian disposition that underlies the whole system of dispositions. The sentimentally sympathetic characters who are kind to Frado are also those who wish to indoctrinate her into Christianity. Just as Frado recognizes God's injustice in making her black instead of white, thereby trapping her in an abject position, Wilson shows that sentimental Christian "benevolence to Frado enacts her imprisonment" by continually cajoling Frado back to the house of oppression (Leveen 569). And, indeed, sentimental conventions don't serve Frado in the way they serve a middle-class white girl like Ellen Montgomery in *The Wide, Wide World* who would receive familial protection and spiritual salvation in exchange for her emotional labor. As Thomas Lovell contends, "Wilson consistently argue[s] that outside of a properly organized wage system, the practice of the moral principles associated with sentimentalism is impossible" (2). Indeed, the emotional labor of repressing pride and anger instead of providing salvation or protection in *Our Nig* only serve to prolong Frado's abjection, indicating the failure of the sentimental system to create universal compassion.

²⁴ On Christianity in *Our Nig*, see Cole 39-40; and Elizabeth West, "Reworking the Conversion Narrative: Race and Christianity in *Our Nig*," MELUS 24:2 (1999) 3-27.

sentimental submissiveness does not benefit the poor, the laborer, or the black. God's will translates on earth to a racist social and economic structure that views laborers (always poor and often black) as "members of a perceived underclass designed for use by their superiors" (Short 5), with Mrs. Bellmont as its primary enforcer. Consequently, to submit to God requires Frado to submit to this system as well as to Mrs. Bellmont, whose will is arguably more arbitrary and cruel than even that of Job's God. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese puts it, "Being abandoned and abused does not transform Frado into a long-suffering saint" (35). Neither does Mrs. Bellmont's role as white, middle-class mother insure her sympathetic nature. In fact, Mrs. Bellmont upends sentimental motherhood, displaying primarily selfishness, greed, and anger, and emerges as an emotionally self-indulgent and false creature. In sentimental theory, class (and race) relations remain stable and humane when those in power exercise sympathy for those "below" them. But, Mrs. Bellmont only views Frado in economic terms, "destined to be *spent*, used up and worn out" (Stern 457). Viewing indentured servants as laboring machines effectively denies them the subjectivity requisite for evoking sympathy. Wilson argues that such interclass relations are based predominantly on economics, and in such a scheme, blind selfishness rules over sentimental compassion.

Mrs. Bellmont's view of Frado as a mere laboring body depends on her ability to silence Frado,²⁵ and this silencing demands of Frado, in addition to her physical labor, a form of emotional labor, usually the suppression of grief, but also of pride and

²⁵ On silencing, see Foreman; Cole 38; Ellis "Body Politics" 166-18.

anger. The suppression of grief, a form of submissiveness to God's will, means something quite different and more oppressive for Frado than sentimental discipline. Mrs. Bellmont enforces Frado's emotional labor in this regard with beatings and cruel tortures, including propping her mouth open with a stick while she beats her, making it impossible for her to cry out. When Frado first comes to work for the Bellmonts, Mrs. Bellmont demands excessive labor from the six-year-old, beating Frado whenever she falters; the combination of overwork and beatings eventually causes Frado to cry. She quickly learns to weep silently, however, because Mrs. Bellmont views her crying as "a symptom of discontent and complaining which must be 'nipped in the bud'" (30) and thus punished with a harsher beating. Throughout the text, Frado must suppress her grief, often to the extent of refusing to report her situation to those who might help her. Again, Wilson points up the problem with sentimental emotional conventions when applied to the indentured class. Submitting to God's will, or the discipline of the sentimental habitus, equates to compliance with earthly oppression when "Providence" places you in abjection.

Finally, sentimental emotional conventions require the repression of pride and anger as we have seen with Ellen Montgomery's emotional labor in *The Wide, Wide World*. Frado rejects this emotional system when she refuses to repress her anger, her pride, or the resultant blend of the two, her *Schadenfreude*. Although Frado struggles with her pride and her anger throughout the text, as guided by the sentimental exemplars Aunt Abby and James, in one late chapter, she finally gives in. Ironically, her embrace of the forbidden emotions occurs immediately after the deathbed scene in which James exhorts her to Christianity and she ought, if this were a functioning

sentimental system, to convert, grieving over her sinfulness and turning to God for aid. Instead, she declines to remain submissive.

Frado first displays a form of righteous anger when confronting Mrs. Bellmont who attempts to beat her with a stick: "'Stop!' shouted Frado, 'strike me, and I'll never work a mite more for you;' and throwing down what she had gathered, stood like one who feels the stirring of free and independent thoughts" (105). Thus, Frado meets a threatened physical strike with a threatened labor strike, finding power over brute force in her own labor, by reclaiming her own labor power. "By this unexpected demonstration, her mistress, in amazement, dropped her weapon, desisting from her purpose of chastisement" (105). The unexpectedness of Frado's anger comes in part from her rebellion but also from what it reveals: Mrs. Bellmont's dependence on Frado's labor. Frado's reaction exposes what sentimentalism seeks to hide, its own dependence on working class and black labor and the othering of non-"whites."²⁶ Inverting the notion of the indentured servant as dependent on the charity of her employers, Frado herself feels the possibility of her own independence.²⁷

Perhaps most notable about this scene is the lack of sentimental descriptors of Frado's anger; there is no flashing eye, no paleness or flush, no description of her tone of voice. R.J. Ellis remarks that "repeatedly, sentimentalism's characteristic rhetorical hyperbole is deployed when describing the experiences of the white characters in the

²⁶ See, especially, Short, Freeman, and Adams.

²⁷ Debra Walker King notes, "The opposite is often true in sentimental novels where obedience yields freedom and independence from the sin of resistance; and self-awareness and self-possession are the rewards of quiet submission" (39).

book . . . , whereas Frado's experiences recurrently draw on litotes and ellipses" (109), which emphasizes the marginalization of African Americans within the sentimental culture. When considered in terms of emotional expression, this refusal of sentimental discourse demonstrates likewise Frado's rejection of sentimental emotional conventions. Anger, Wilson insists here, need not be flashing or screaming or violent as it is in Mrs. Bellmont; instead, anger can function simply as a calm denunciation of oppression and assertion of one's rights.²⁸

One year (textually only three pages) later, Frado considers leaving the Bellmonts' when Mrs. Bellmont becomes more viciously abusive than ever: "She determined to flee. But where? Who would take her? Mrs. B. had always represented her as ugly. Perhaps everyone thought her so. Then no one would take her. She was black, no one would love her." (108) Mrs. Bellmont has instilled so much shame in Frado that she feels as though there is no place for her in the world. Shame arises from the exposure of a person's unacceptable attributes and, on that basis, exclusion from society. Just as the sentimental heroine's virtuous character shines through in her pale, delicate beauty, Frado's so-called blackness and ugliness mark her as having bad character. Elsewhere in the book, Wilson makes clear that Mrs. Bellmont has deliberately hidden, repressed, Frado's natural beauty (and thus her innate good character) through beatings, overwork, head shaving, and malnutrition.²⁹

²⁸ Linda Grasso reads Frado's anger differently, as hinging on a vengefulness which the book enacts as it exposes Wilson's real-life tormentors.

Nonetheless, Frado has internalized the "ugly" image of herself, and it appears to hold sway until she remembers "her victory at the wood-pile" (108). This moment of independence and self-assertion, which depended on pride to provide a recognition of her rights, also offers Frado a glimpse of her power, increasing her pride to counteract years of shaming and enabling her "to assert her rights when they were trampled on" (108). Pride, as opposed to shame, is a feeling of pleasure in possessing an admirable quality -- labor power.³⁰ In recalling her act of power, Frado can overcome shame with pride and see herself as worthy of social membership. She, thus, replaces the image of herself as abject beast of burden with that of a laboring subject with rights.³¹ While sentimental emotional conventions demand the subjugation of pride, Wilson indicates the importance of pride in claiming any position beyond abjection. The disposition to repress pride effectively prevents access to other forms of capital valued by the sentimental habitus.

However, Wilson also points to the very real threat of uncontrolled anger and pride. Frado is so pleased with her power that she must make a conscious effort to control it; Frado decides that although she "had learned how to conquer[,] she would

²⁹ Julia Stern argues that "because [Frado's] female identity has been beaten into a polymorphous transsexual blur" Mrs. Belmont can view her as a mere laborer and avoid seeing any sexual threat she poses (444).

³⁰ Ben-Ze'ev 493.

³¹ For Wilson, "the wage constitutes the only possible (but not always realized) foundation for self-ownership and the possession of a will" (Lovell 8). Gretchen Short argues that "for domesticity to be a truly national virtue . . . all domestic workers must be recognized as performing labor worthy of U.S. citizenship, and self-sufficiency must be made possible within the individual household as well as the national marketplace" (21).

not abuse the power while Mr. Bellmont was at home" (108). On the one hand, this passage suggests that Frado understands the potential for her productive, non-violent anger to become like Mrs. Bellmont's destructive, violent anger since she decides not to "abuse" her power. And, yet that decision is qualified with "while Mr. Bellmont was at home" which, of course, leaves open the possibility of Frado abusing her power when Mr. Bellmont is *not* at home. Indeed, in the next paragraph, Frado "contemplate[s] administering poison to her mistress" (108) and is only "restrained by an overruling Providence" (109). Wilson here points to the capacity of the anger of the oppressed to turn violent. In this case, Frado's affection for Mr. Bellmont (and her accompanying desire to avoid distressing him) and his influential disposition for Christian forbearance holds her back. Frado's self-control in this situation places Frado in a morally superior position by highlighting Mrs. Bellmont's lack of restraint, her inadequate affection for her husband, and her deficient sentimental morality.

Wilson also explores the forbidden feeling of *Schadenfreude*, or pleasure in another's misfortune.³² When Mrs. Bellmont's equally cruel daughter Mary dies, "[i]t seemed a thanksgiving to Frado" (107). Frado's gratitude for the removal of one of her tormenters creates an energy and excitement that causes her "pop in" to express her delight to Aunt Abby, saying things like, "S'posen she goes to hell, she'll be as black as I am. Would n't mistress be mad to see her a nigger!" (107) Mrs. Bellmont's construction of blackness as evil is also exposed here as racially false since her white daughter is more morally "black" than the racially half-black Frado. And, of course,

³² Ben-Ze'ev 351-62.

these types of comments are "not at all acceptable to the pious, sympathetic" Christian, sentimental emotional conventions of Aunt Abby. Linda Grasso reads this scene as an "affirm[ation] of black women's right to vengeful feelings" (176); I understand Frado's response to Mary's death as *Schadenfreude* rather than vengefulness because it is expressed in conjunction with joy and relief rather than anger.

Understood as *Schadenfreude*, Frado's gleeful fantasy of Mary in hell frames Mary's death as a punishment for and final embodiment of her bad character. Frado's *Schadenfreude* is directed toward Mary and toward Mrs. Belmont, who is finally truly suffering as she failed to do for her dead son James. *Schadenfreude*, in this case, is predicated on Frado's pride and anger: her pride recognizes her desert of fair and kind treatment; her anger acknowledges the Bellmonts' repeated insults to her pride. Conversely, the Bellmonts deserve punishment; therefore, Mary's death and Mrs. Belmont's subsequent grief appear to enact justice. The pleasure of *Schadenfreude* resides in this sense of justice being served, and specifically by some force outside the person who feels they have been wronged. In other words, Frado would not feel *Schadenfreude* had she poisoned Mrs. Belmont. Instead, the sense of external justice on which *Schadenfreude* rests provides a greater pleasure and feeling of righteousness because it appears divine. Unlike vengefulness, which might offer greater agency to Frado (and Wilson), *Schadenfreude's* passive resistance allows Frado to remain a social actor whereas active revenge would result in punishment and loss of cultural and social capital. Because *Schadenfreude* disrupts the fantasy of sympathetic relations generated by the sentimental habitus, it is repressed within the system of dispositions. Wilson's evocation of this repressed emotion illuminates the imbalanced

sentimental moral structure and its link to race and economics while suggesting that a higher form of justice overrules that meted out by the sentimental economy.

Despite this brief chapter filled with the triumph of anger and pride, and the reward of divine justice that evokes Frado's *Schadenfreude*, Frado eventually fails -- physically, economically, and socially. The beatings she regularly received to keep her and her potentially liberating emotions repressed have worn her out; she is "all broken down" (120). Unlike the Lowell mill operatives described in *The Lowell Offering*, Frado's labor is consuming, depriving her of moments of contemplation or "improvement." Her physical deterioration, in fact, forecloses any chance of economic or social improvement, as she cannot maintain a position and her consequent economic difficulties keep her socially marginalized. Finally, Frado discovers that "[t]he story of her physical subjection is what she can sell in lieu of her physical labor" (Leveen 578), and *Our Nig* reveals the un-sentimental reality of black and indentured labor in America.

Frado never gains ready access to capital within the Bellmont family or the sentimental economy, and her book similarly fails to acquire expendable capital because, with its inversion of the sentimental and the author's lack of social capital, it does not already have a share of sentimental capital to stake in the literary market. Frado's anger and pride are ultimately too threatening for middle-class consumers of fiction because, alongside her desire for revenge and pleasure in the Bellmont's misfortune, they evoke fears of working-class, slave, and African American insurrection. Nevertheless, the story and the social problems it documents refuse to disappear. The book and Frado return -- in rediscovered old copies, in reissues, in

scholarship, in repeated readings, in classrooms, bookstores, and libraries -- demanding attention to that which sentimental emotional culture represses: middle-class white anger and pride, and the violence they lead to; the righteous anger and pride of blacks and laborers and the threat they pose to white middle-class power; the *Schadenfreude* felt by oppressed people for the misfortunes of their oppressors that implicitly denies any possibility of sympathetic relations between these groups.

"How much of her own heart's history was there laid bare"

While *The Lowell Offering* claims that working class women are more competent emotional laborers than the leisured classes, and *Our Nig* argues that sentimental emotional conventions serve only those in power, Fanny Fern's writing combines these two notions and responds with an effort to recuperate the sentimental as a more accurate and inclusive discourse. Her semi-autobiographical novel *Ruth Hall* traces the life of Ruth from middle-class domestic angel to impoverished widow to successful and independent woman writer. Ruth comes from a well-to-do and well-respected family. She makes a happy companionate marriage³³ and is a good homemaker, wife, and mother. When her husband becomes ill and dies, he leaves her with two young daughters to take care of and no money. Neither her in-laws nor her own family come to her aid unless she agrees to give up her children, so Ruth moves to a tenement and begins looking for work. The rest of the novel considers the

³³ Companionate marriage was only beginning to be thought of as ideal in this era (Lystra 193-5).

difficulties of finding work and describes Ruth's rise to literary stardom and eventual financial independence.

When Fern herself divorced a vicious and jealous husband, she too faced a class shift and, as a result, her writing persona changed.

One of the characteristics of her new persona was the ability – need – to work for a living. She explicitly stated her culture's denial of this identity to a middle-class white woman . . . [but, t]he reality, Fern asserted, was that women did work – not only working-class women but middle-class women who were unmarried or widowed or whose male providers were unable or unwilling to support their families. (Warren 13)

Her ordinary class gave her access to sentimental capital, but her new class status gave her access to tactics with which to critique that habitus. "Fern uses sentimental imagery and language patterning as means first, of disguising her goal to project a woman who grows into self-definition and verbal power, and second, of bringing the world view implicit in the sentimental mode into doubt" (Harris 613). Rather than simply enacting generic expectations to discipline readers to take up sentimental dispositions, Fern refracts sentimental dispositions to exploit the potential of the form to alter those dispositions. Fern's approach to sentimental emotional culture is twofold: first, she critiques and disrupts existing structures and conventions; then, she reconstructs them on the foundation of the realities of women's work. Fern thereby rends the gauzy notion of the leisured, immaterial woman and the sympathetic culture she creates by exposing the material woman beneath the veil.

Like Wilson, Fern reveals a sentimental habitus founded on economic privilege. Ruth's domestic labor as housewife to her striving middle-class husband resonates with contemporary depictions of the angel in the house who "beautifie[s], unconsciously, everything her fingers touched" (28). Her clever economies allow her husband to entertain business contacts, and her artistic sensibilities and love of flowers enable her to create a beautiful home environment with inexpensive materials. Even her exacting mother-in-law must manufacture something to complain about when she makes a surprise inspection of Ruth's home. This visit provides the context for our view of Ruth's housekeeping, and significantly, Ruth is absent; we do not see her labor, only its products. The only reference to her work is to the flowers "which Ruth, basket in hand, climbs many a stone fence every morning to gather; and not a country boy in the village knows their hiding-place as well as she" (34). This delightful, pastoral image of labor juxtaposed with the parallel to boyhood adventure marks as play the one glimpse we are given of Ruth's labor.

Conversely, Fern describes Ruth's emotional labor several times and in detail. While living with Harry's hyper-critical parents, Ruth's temper is regularly tried, but convention demands she bend to their will and suppress any anger or frustration she feels. Ruth draws on her love for her husband to perform this labor: "Oh love! That thy silken reins could so curb the spirit and bridle the tongue, that thy uplifted finger of warning could calm that bounding pulse, still that throbbing heart, and send those rebellious tears, unnoticed, back to their source" (23). Emotional excitement, the "throbbing" and "bounding," parallels rebellion in this passage, all signs of which must be controlled. A flattened emotional exterior signifies obedience, and others should

detect no signs of the emotional labor required to preserve the smooth surface. The emotional body of the obedient sentimental woman, then, is one with her home in that both give the appearance of ease. Yet, Fern asserts here the illusory nature of the placid emotional surface by describing Ruth's tumultuous interior; furthermore, Fern claims a representative reality for her depiction of Ruth when she writes, "Ah! could we lay bare the secret history of many a wife's heart, what martyrs would be found, over whose uncomplaining lips the grave sets its unbroken seal of silence" (23). She also suggests that a truly sensitive husband, like Ruth's, will recognize, appreciate, and seek to lessen the emotional labor of maintaining a cheerful exterior. Harry, in fact, does ease Ruth's burden -- first by sympathizing and soothing, and eventually by making enough money to move Ruth into a home of her own. In this way, Fern reasserts the importance of financial security in realizing sentimental emotional conventions.

Because economic privilege energizes the fantasy of sentimental domesticity, the maintenance of the fantasy prioritizes the protection of economic and social position over any other considerations, including extending sympathy. Emotions of affiliation like sympathy are extended primarily to those with a shared habitus. Fern's novel extends this insight to show how sympathy of this nature also fortifies the social, economic, and cultural capital of those within that habitus. In *Ruth Hall*, this overarching concern with one's own status repeatedly explodes sentimental expectations of sympathy through Fern's derisive depictions of the widowed Ruth's treatment at the hands of her friends and relations.

The men who, by the standards of sentimental domesticity, ought to protect Ruth are so concerned about distancing themselves from Ruth economically, that they also distance themselves emotionally. Immediately after Harry's death, Ruth's brother Hyacinth flinches from the coffin claiming, "These business details are very shocking to a sensitive person" (59), a response that foreshadows his refusal to help Ruth. His extreme sensitivity ought to signal an immense capacity for sympathy, yet in the next paragraph a man looks at him "with a sympathizing glance, which was quite thrown away on Hyacinth" (59). And, if Hyacinth's "sensitivity" fails to detect sympathy, it most certainly will fail to generate it. Similarly, one of Harry's friends, Mr. Develin aids Ruth's father-in-law in reclaiming Harry's effects from Ruth even though he knows "the law is on her side" and "Ruth's husband was [his] friend to be sure" (76). His justification is that "a man must look out for No. 1 in this world" and Mr. Hall "may leave me a little slice of property if I keep on the right side of him"; Ruth, on the other hand, is poor and has nothing to offer but gratitude.

Even Ruth's father quibbles with her in-laws about who bears financial responsibility for her. Mr. Ellet fails to protect both Ruth and her children because he is too concerned with protecting his own wealth. As Mr. Hall, whose comments throughout the book expose others' hypocrisy, puts it, Mr. Ellet "thinks more of one cent than of any child he ever had" (70). He refuses to help Ruth unless she gives her children to the Halls and chastises her for rejecting this offer of "help," at which Ruth begins to cry. Her children then "[nestle] up to her with an indistinct idea that she needed sympathy" (68). The weakest, most dependent individuals bear the burden of

sympathy while the male protector not only fails to protect, but harms others in protecting himself.

When he eventually relents and offers her an occasional pittance of support, he verbally attacks and shames his granddaughter, Katy, when she comes to pick up the money when Ruth is too sick to do it herself. He shows no concern about his daughter's illness; instead, he looks "at the [dollar] bill affectionately, as he part[s] with it" and says, "'if you keep on coming here at this rate, you will get all my money away. Do you think it is right to come and get all my money away, hey?" (88) All his affection is misplaced from his family onto money. It is the strong feelings and attachment one has to capital rather than people, Fern suggests, that girds the sentimental economy. And, the lack of emotional connection to family is palpable: his coldness "always made [Katy] shiver" (87), and in this instance makes her long for her properly affectionate and protective father to shelter and comfort her.

Just as male protectors³⁴ fail Ruth, so too do sympathetic females. Friends of Ruth's snub her, proclaiming "if Ruth Hall has got down hill so far as this, *I* can't keep up her acquaintance" (81). When they enter Ruth's neighborhood, they are "mortified" just "to be seen in such a quarter of the city" (82). Indeed, while they begin to condemn Ruth's family for failing to support her, one notes, "Hyacinth has just married a rich, fashionable wife, and of course he cannot lose caste by associating with Ruth now" (82). Their sympathy is not for Ruth in her desperate situation but the man of their own class who has his status to protect. The women, instead of visiting

³⁴ Susan Harris notes that Ruth and other women in the novel "learn what it is like to be entirely freed from familial and class 'protections'" as well as male protection (621).

Ruth as planned, quickly make their way to a fashionable "saloon" for an ice, talking about their frivolous and thoughtless clothing expenditures. Both the saloon ices and their clothing are signifiers of their status, which quite easily distract their attention from the misfortunes of their now clearly former friend.

Just as Ruth's geographical displacement marks her drop in class, so too her exclusion from certain leasured spaces, like the saloon, indicates her new location in the laboring class. Ruth's aunt is her kindest relation, but the limit of her sympathy is allowing Ruth the use of her kitchen to do her laundry once a week. Ruth is allowed in the kitchen, the center of household labor and space where servants congregate, which links her to labor and laborers. However, she is refused access to the areas of their home, like the parlor or dining room, that signify wealth and leisure and a distance from labor. Completely cut off from leisure by the Millets, Ruth's lowered status results from her family's treatment of her; and her loss of status protects their own by excluding her laboring body from their leasured spaces, sentimental spaces that should exhibit the results of labor, never labor itself.

Mrs. Millet even seeks to add to her own status at Ruth's expense. In the process of deciding upon the proper decoration of a dress which her daughter will wear to meet a socially influential woman, Mrs. Millet offers to buy a piece of jewelry from Ruth. Ruth objects that the coral pin was a gift from Harry and thus holds sentimental value, to which her cousin responds, "I thought you'd be very glad to part with it for *money*" (97, emphasis in original). Ruth corrects her to emphasize the emotional difficulty she faces on account of her financial insecurity, of which the Millets pointedly wish to take advantage. Indeed, despite the fact that Mrs. Millet has

just discussed her easy expenditure on lace to trim the dress, saying, "ten dollars will not make much difference" (97), she will only pay Ruth a dollar and a quarter for the brooch that Harry paid ten dollars for. As with Ruth's interactions with her father, her relationship to her aunt revolves around the circulation of funds and goods rather than emotions. Even when Ruth pointedly asserts the sentimental capital that adheres in the object, the Millets recognize that it signifies only in the right hands. For Ruth, who has lost her status, it has only emotional or exchange value.

Similarly, Mrs. Hall takes Katy from Ruth under the guise of helping her. It is only when Mr. Ellet commends her for finally relinquishing her eldest child to the Halls that Ruth realizes she has been duped, and wonders, "Was the old lady's sympathy a mere stratagem to work upon my feelings?" (119) When Katy is in her Grandmother's home, Mrs. Hall continues to fall short by not fulfilling her part of the sentimental exchange. In a particularly distressing scene, Katy is reluctant to go into the cellar on an errand for her Grandmother, to which Mrs. Hall responds, "'But I say you shall . . . don't you belong to me, I'd like to know? And can't I do with you as I like?'" (184) The affective transaction, which transferred Katy from mother to grandmother, breaks down as Mrs. Hall expresses her view of the exchange. Like the Millets, she offers a type of sympathy to Ruth and receives in return a piece of precious property that will benefit her by maintaining her own leisured status. Grandma Hall extracts Katy's domestic and emotional labor and fails to provide her with any affection in return. Thus, in the guise of sympathizing and helping, the

women in Ruth's family, those who ought to be most sympathetic to her according to sentimental feminine dispositions, exploit Ruth's condition for their own gain.³⁵

Financial self-protection demarcates the limits of middle-class capacity for sympathy in proportion to its safeguards against their own suffering. It is said of Hyacinth but applies to the other middle-class characters as well, "Sorrow in satin he can sympathize with, but sorrow in rags is too plebian for his exquisite organization" (207). Indeed, Hyacinth helps a young actress struggling to make her way by pleading her cause in his paper (121); similarly, he publishes outstanding book notices for authors who will pay him a compliment in press (160). But, Hyacinth will not plead Ruth's cause, or let her write for his paper, and neither will he review a book "Uncle Sam's Log House," which we may assume is *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, because he fears a positive review will present an anti-slavery stance that would in turn scare off his Southern subscribers. By invoking Hyacinth's coldness toward Stowe's enormously popular text with its call to sympathize with slaves, Fern condemns Hyacinth's self-serving style of sensitivity in terms that would turn a great many readers against him. She turns Hyacinth's attempts to protect his cultural and social capital against him by invoking the enormous cultural capital eventually acquired by Stowe's text. Of course, this passage also infers Hyacinth's lack of political or ethical commitment to even the most pressing issue of the time, and reminds the reader of his lack of "right feeling"

³⁵ Fern elsewhere remarks on the greed and selfishness of middle-class women who cheat working-class women of their due pay. Kristie Hamilton reads Fern's depiction of middle-class women as a critique of their isolation and competitiveness with each other which "effected the in-group surveillance and policing that would ensure the continued identification of womanhood with certain narrowly defined activities and with a particular socioeconomic status" (103).

that Stowe invokes for the slaves. Mr. Ellet, likewise, provides a luxurious meal to a clergyman while his grandchildren starve (125) because he cares most deeply about "his reputation for devoted piety" (72). He thus protects his social and cultural capital while failing to protect his family. Hyacinth and Mr. Ellet, like Ruth's other fair-weather friends and relations, are ready to extend sympathy to those who can somehow enhance their reputations, but quick to distance themselves from anything or anyone who might threaten their status and, thus, their comfort.

When one has not suffered himself, sympathizing with another's suffering becomes near impossible. Furthermore, to maintain his comfort, which is, in effect, a lack of suffering, the middle-class individual must distance himself from suffering. Fern indicates that the comfortable life provided by financial solvency insulates one from suffering, and results in a selfish attention to protecting one's own status and comfort so that one turns from suffering to avoid the discomfort caused by looking upon it. I have argued elsewhere that "Sympathy . . . functions in sentimental literature and in a society grounded in sentimental philosophy to formulate and codify the community in the terms of the sympathizer" (28). If the sympathizer is the middle-class individual,³⁶ Fern argues, then the community he codifies excludes anyone who is not (or no longer) middle-class.

³⁶ Alison Easton points out that Fern also critiques the capacity to sympathize in working-class individuals. She finds that "[t]hose near the bottom socially are more outspoken about their employers and tend to be more sympathetic to Ruth" (232) while "[t]hose who have ambition . . . tend to toady to the class they aspire to and appear as villains" (232). Thus, those seeking to distance themselves from working-class discomforts will also distance themselves from the spectacle of suffering.

While Fern exposes the unkindness of both men and women, she more roundly attacks men. As Claire Pettengill notes, "patriarchy takes on protean form in Fern's work, wreaking economic, social, personal, and literary damage – not violently, but through tight-fisted control of valuable material or emotional resources" (79). The patriarchal component of the sentimental domestic code offers male protection in return for female obedience, but also, as Ruth discovers, maintains women's economic dependence. When Ruth tries to find work, the male protectors fail her once again, and it becomes clear that what they are protecting is male economic privilege. The instance noted above of Mr. Develin supporting Mr. Hall because of the financial assistance Hall can give him suggests a network of privileged males supporting each other. The network reasserts itself in a later scene when both Develin and Ruth's uncle, Mr. Millet, vote against her when she applies for a teaching position because "The greatest gun on the Committee" was against her and "Mr. Millet and Mr. Develin always followed in the wake of *great* guns" (103). Likewise, the male publishers Ruth meets with, and eventually sells her articles to, pay her a pittance and deceive her about her potential in order to maximize their own profit. Thus, Fern inverts the notion of the male protector, exposing the self-serving economic motivations that make men more predatory than protective.

Fern also links economic predation to sexual predation to reformulate the notion that "[t]o work for money was to advertise one's lack of a male protector, without whom . . . the female would only with difficulty remain pure" (Easton 221). In Ruth's boarding house, a group of men appraise Ruth's sexual assets and comment upon the ease with which they prey upon widows' emotional vulnerability by "helping

to dry up their tears; and then the little dears are so grateful for the attention" (73). Like Mrs. Millet and Mrs. Hall, these men seek to profit by using false sympathy to exploit Ruth's situation, but the prize they seek is sexual. Down the street from the boarding house is a brothel, which Ruth sometimes watches from her window, noting the fine furniture and draperies of the house as well as the carriages bringing a wide range of well-to-do men to visit. The proximity of the brothel suggests how close Ruth is to falling into prostitution herself, and having suffered, she sympathizes with the women who take that route. She understands the yearning for material comfort when all other work pays so little and is so hard to come by. Sexual labor provides not only money to these women, but emotional compensation as well. "She knew now how, when the heart, craving sympathy, craving companionship, doubting both earth and heaven, may wreck its all in one despairing moment on that dark sea" (91). The shift to sentimental language and metaphor serves to euphemize prostitution, but it also joins the earlier boast of the predatory men to insist on the emotional element of women's turn to sex. Women's economic dependence, perpetuated by men as Fern argues the case, makes women emotionally vulnerable as well as economically vulnerable, which benefits men who wish to either sexually or economically exploit them. Prostitution, Fern suggests, arises not out of a need for women's waged labor or socio-economic independence, but rather from the impossibility of finding decent waged labor and women's dependent condition.

The contention that women's waged labor will disrupt the home environment is another tenet of sentimental domesticity that Fern refutes. She emphasizes the working woman's domestic abilities, and economic hardship as the real culprit of domestic

infelicity or squalor. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Ruth's efforts to care for her children, the most important duty of the sentimental domestic woman. First, she has difficulty finding work that will allow her to either bring the children with her or take the work home so she can watch her children. Finally, she finds piecework,³⁷ which requires long hours, pays poorly, and is available irregularly but allows her to work at home. When she finally acquires a writing job, it functions in the same way, enabling her to be present for her children but providing a limited and uncertain income for hours of work. In neither of these jobs is she able to make enough money to adequately care for her children even though she works all day and well into the night. Ruth's work does not prevent her from caring for her children; instead, the waged labor system fails to provide adequate pay and working conditions for working mothers.

Ruth's domestic labor is not replaced, but supplemented by wage labor, and part of Fern's approach to rewriting the sentimental script is to materialize that labor. For example, a typical work night finds Ruth caring for her children and doing piecework simultaneously: "smoothing back the damp tresses from the brow of each little sleeper, she sat down to table, and drawing from it a piece of fine work, commenced sewing" (96). While Ruth's domestic labor appeared only ethereally in earlier scenes mentioned above, her labor becomes physically apparent in her poverty. Doing her own laundry gives Ruth "parboiled fingers" (96), and she must work at

³⁷ Piecework is sewing performed in the home, for a manufactory or an individual, for which one is paid by the piece. While piecework offered the convenience of working at home -- a necessity for widowed or abandoned women with children -- it paid poorly and was available sporadically.

night by poor light (because she cannot afford good oil) that further harms her "eyes, [which] from excessive weeping, had become quite tender, and often very painful" (125). The physical marks of Ruth's labor inscribe themselves on her body thereby asserting an embodied labor that the sentimental habitus disavows.

The material challenges of domestic labor are revealed in a scene that features the abandoned boarding-house owner Mr. Skiddy's ineptness at fulfilling his wife's domestic duties in her absence. Skiddy has covered the floor with kitchen implements "in the vain attempt to propitiate" his crying baby. Ruth intervenes, picks up the kitchenware, and then she "took the poor worried baby tenderly, laid it on its stomach across her lap, then loosening its frock string, began rubbing its fat little shoulders with her velvet palm" (93). With her physical and emotional expertise, Ruth immediately calms the baby. Later, Mr. Skiddy takes charge of the baby once it is quietly rocking in its cradle. Skiddy sits with the paper, but the candle he reads by attracts the baby's attention, and "Miserable Skiddy! He recollected, now, alas! Too late, that Mrs. Skiddy always carefully screened the light from Tommy's eyes while sleeping" (95). Fern's detailed description of the labor entailed in soothing the infant, contrasted with Mr. Skiddy's lack of training and experience, points to domestic labor as consisting of specialized skills and practices, which have very specific material origins and consequences. Thus, domestic labor appears as labor rather than disappearing and leaving only a product, a calm baby or lovely home, to suggest its existence.

Ruth's waged labor as a writer, although difficult to describe, also takes on a physicality that demands it be recognized as labor. The descriptions bear quoting at length.

Scratch--scratch--scratch, went Ruth's pen; the dim lamp flickering in the night breeze, while the deep breathing of the little sleepers was the watchword, *On!* to her throbbing brow and weary fingers. One o'clock--two o'clock--three o'clock--the lamp burns low in the socket. Ruth lays down her pen, and pushing the hair back from her forehead, leans faint and exhausted against the window-sill, that the cool night-air may fan her heated temples. (125-6)

In this passage, Fern highlights Ruth's working conditions of writing by lamplight late into the night while keeping watch over her children. The repeated scratch of the pen reverberates in the passing of hours to accentuate the tedious and protracted workday. Finally, Ruth's throbbing brow, weary fingers, and heated temples are the physical manifestations of her mental labor that attest to the materiality and strain of her work.

A later descriptive passage, which features a more successful Ruth on her way to make enough money to reclaim her oldest daughter Katy, combines the considerations of the former passage with a depiction of the specialized practices Ruth has developed as mother/writer:

The little room was littered with newspapers, envelopes, letters opened and unopened, answered and waiting to be answered. One minute she might be seen sitting, pen in hand, trying, with knit brows, to decipher some horrible cabalistic printer's mark on the margin of her proof; then writing an article for Mr. Walter, then scribbling a business letter to her publishers, stopping

occasionally to administer a sedative to Nettie, in the shape of a timely quotation from Mother Goose, or to heal a fracture in a doll's leg or arm. Now she was washing a little soiled face, or smoothing little ruffled ringlets, replacing a missing shoe-string or pinafore button, then wading through the streets while Boreas contested stoutly for her umbrella, with parcels and letters to the post-office, (for Ruth must be her own servant,) regardless of gutters or thermometers, regardless of jostling or crowding. (173-4)

Again, the physicality of her labor is apparent: in her knit brow, in smoothing Nettie's hair, in struggling with her umbrella, in bumping up against the crowds. So too are the material conditions and consequences of her labor made visible in the strewn papers, the soothed and cleansed child, the mended doll, the proofs of an article. Again and again, Fern materializes women's domestic and waged labor, refusing the separation of the two from each other or from their products. By entwining Ruth's emotional and material labor, Fern alters the sentimental economy that would obscure material labor with ethereal emotional response and atmosphere; Fern insists only the joint forces of material and emotional labor can produce both material comfort and emotional harmony.

Ruth's waged labor is made even more difficult by her efforts to maintain domestic standards, but the domestic emotional labor required by those standards motivate her to persevere. In the passage above, Fern indicates Ruth's care for her children as an impetus to keep working: "the deep breathing of the little sleepers was the watchword, *On!*" (125-6). This emphasis is repeated as well in the later passage, which ends thusly:

What cared she for all of these, when Katy would soon be back--poor little patient, suffering Katy? Ruth felt as if wings were growing from her shoulders. She was never weary, or sleepy, or hungry. She had not the slightest idea, till long after, what an incredible amount of labor she accomplished, or how her *mother's heart* was goading her on. (174, emphasis in original)

Propping up Ruth's physical and intellectual labor is the emotional work of love and caring for her children. The sentimental emotional requirements of child-rearing are not undermined by waged labor in Fern's accounting; instead, those emotional demands and commitments make waged labor under impossible conditions possible.

In *Ruth Hall*, emotional labor falls clearly into three types: 1) physical work that has the result of making others happy; 2) emotional repression or sublimation coupled with the generation of cheerfulness; and 3) attending emotionally to others' emotional needs. An example that combines the first and last type is the aforementioned baby-soothing scene. Ruth's physical labor of cleaning the kitchen and then manipulating the child until it relaxes is also a way of tending to the emotional needs of the infant, Mr. Skiddy, and boarding-household by restoring peace and reducing Skiddy's frustration (93). Often, these three types of emotional labor are combined within the text.

Ruth is a good sentimental mother and wife, self-sacrificing and nurturing, and the bulk of her emotional labor entails repression, conquering her own grief, anger, and fear when she knows it may upset others. We see this first when Ruth is a housewife, hiding her frustration at her mother-in-law's carping, "a self-conquest she had so tearfully gained for [her husband's] sake" (21). Again, for her husband, she

represses her anxiety, discomfort, and despair during his long illness and death so that she can make him calm, comfortable, and hopeful; when he dies, she collapses and becomes "unresisting" and "insensible" (58). This failure of the body after an overwhelming loss and months of repression demonstrates a need for rest from emotion, during which she "lay mercifully insensible to her loss" (58). The need for rest emphasizes the arduous physical nature of her emotional efforts, designating it as labor. Further repression occurs while Ruth struggles with poverty and the unkindness of her family and friends, she repeatedly "send[s] back to the source that starting tear, ere like a lowering cloud it o'ercasts the sunshine of those beaming faces" (85). Keeping up a cheerful front for her children who are frightened, sad, and confused, Ruth helps maintain their happiness. Repression of emotion, then, generally is combined with the emotional labor of attending to other's emotional needs. Nevertheless, repression of despair and generation of cheerfulness also serve Ruth's own emotional needs and helps her persevere. She relies on her ability to set aside worry and focus on potentially positive outcomes, like her financial independence, to continue working, "laughing and crying behind her mask,--laughing all the more when her heart was heaviest" (133).

However, the depiction of Ruth's emotional state is not entirely limited by sentimental emotional conventions. Ruth also discovers (like Frado) the power of anger and pride to protect herself when no one else will.³⁸ When Hyacinth refuses to

³⁸ In "When You Are Angry" from the second series of *Fern Leaves*, Fern argues that prohibiting anger in women only leads to long-term depression and sulking. Anger is

help her find work writing, Ruth's contempt for and frustration with him mingle and manifest as a "bitter smile" and "hot tear" (116). These emotions turn to anger as she refutes his judgment, "No talent! 'At another tribunal than his will I appeal!'" (116); Ruth's anger activates her pride, which enables her to trust in her abilities and keep striving. Taking a cue from her brother's comment that her writing will never make it outside of her city, she proclaims proudly, "But they shall be heard of;" and Ruth leaped to her feet. 'Sooner than he dreams of, too. I *can* do it, I *feel* it, I *will* do it," and she closed her lips firmly" (116). Her anger with Hyacinth, arising from her wounded pride, causes her literally to rise up against him, to prove him wrong. Driving herself to achieve her goal with the incantation, "*can . . . feel . . . will*," Ruth invokes a dual force of ability linked with emotion to enable action, about which she is resolute as her closed lips imply. Later in the passage, as Ruth examines the struggle ahead and considers the various rejections she will receive, she claims, "*Pride* must sleep!" but immediately remarks that her children and brother will be proud of her one day (116, emphasis in original). Ruth admits that pride is a spur, but that it "must sleep" to prevent her wounded pride from causing her to despair and surrender.

Fern critiques sentimental conventions even as she supports them by critiquing both family members and businessmen as unfeeling and deceitful, as described above. She offers an alternative to both in the form of Mr. Walter, a kind and honest publisher who helps Ruth gain financial independence. Mr. Walter's first appearance in the novel presents him trying to discover the identity of "Floy" (Ruth's *nom de plume*) in

preferable because short-lived: "a good heavy clap of thunder for me -- a lightning flash; then a bright blue sky and a clear atmosphere" (199).

order to help her career and his newspaper. He has read her suffering in her articles and sympathizes heartily with her, wishing he had the means to help: "Ah me, were my purse only commensurate with my feelings" (141). Unlike the other publishers who employ her, forcing her to write several columns per week for very little pay, exploiting her popularity for their own benefit, Mr. Walter will offer her increased pay for fewer articles as long as she contracts to write solely for his newspaper, an arrangement that will benefit them both.

He also figures himself as a "brother, writing in his initial letter to Ruth, "I feel a warm, brotherly interest in your welfare" (143) and refers to this familial relation repeatedly in their acquaintance. The kind "brother" Ruth finds in Mr. Walter counters the bad brother Hyacinth proves to be as Mr. Walter proves to be a "*real, warm-hearted, brotherly brother*, such as she had never known" (emphasis in original 144). Family, in Fern's account, is based on bonds of sympathy and kindness rather than blood, and in this way, she replays the familial theme of sentimental literature. Yet, Fern also revises the story. For one, she points to the importance of good business practices and the role of sentimental emotional conventions in shaping those practices; good businessmen, like Mr. Walter, treat their laborers as family members and respond to them on emotional terms, being sympathetic. Furthermore, whereas the kind, sympathetic "brother" would typically become the heroine's husband, Mr. Walter instead helps Ruth find lucrative labor and aids her in establishing financial independence so that she need not marry him or any other man. In the end, Ruth heads into the sunset not with Mr. Walter but with a certificate (reproduced in the text to

emphasize its importance) for one hundred hundred-dollar shares of bank stock.³⁹ Fern thus rewrites the nature of family within the sentimental economy. The new family is based primarily in sympathy but also in shared financial interests. Like many of her contemporaries, Fern was working through the tensions between the capitalist system of material interests and sentimental structures of affective attachment and seeking a proper balance.⁴⁰

Finally, Fern completes her revision of sentimentalist emotionality by introducing a fourth type of emotional labor: the expression of emotion and understanding of emotion in writing. When Ruth's book is published, she recalls "how much of her own heart's history was there laid bare" (175). Each story recalls some emotionally charged moment in her life, and she claims, "no happy woman ever writes. From Harry's grave sprang 'Floy'" (175). It is her personal experience with suffering as well as joy that make her writing so powerful, and people recognize this quality in her work. Ruth's champion, Mr. Walter describes her work as "a wail from her inmost soul" (140) and asserts that she "knows every phase of the human heart"

³⁹ Alison Easton finds that the bank-note represents the telos of Ruth's writing as "work for money, [which] is charted in precise detail up to the point where payment is large enough to restore her class status – a fact that Fern thrusts at the reader by printing the image of money in the very page of her text" (233). Lauren Berlant contends that the bank stock "denotes a successful negotiation of the national-capitalist public sphere, a profitable commodification of female pain and heroism in an emerging industry of female cultural workers" ("Female Woman" 448).

⁴⁰ See, in particular Jeffrey Sklansky's excellent chapter on Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Bushnell, and Margaret Fuller in which he traces the way each of these intellectuals "exalted the passionate, intuitive side of human nature as opposed to the cold calculation of pecuniary interests" (6).

(193). Ruth's fan mail also praises her work for its emotional power: "your printed works come to me, on my sickbed, like the ministrations of some gentle friend, sometimes stirring to its very depths the fountain of tears, sometimes . . . provoking the mirthful smile" (136). Just as Ruth has performed the sentimental emotional labor of ministering to a sick husband, her writing performs the sentimental emotional labor of ministering to a sick friend. The work of writing performs a type of labor valued within the sentimental habitus and thus offers Ruth a form of cultural capital that laboring at a mechanical loom or serving in someone else's home cannot. Furthermore, her relationships to her readers generates a new social field, one again based primarily on sympathetic bonds, but also supported by financial exchange in which the reader pays for Fern's emotional, intellectual, and physical labor by buying newspapers and books of her writing.

Readers praise Ruth's writing for its emotional perceptiveness: "I have read your heart in your many writings. In them I see sympathy for the poor, the sorrowing, and the dependent" (165). A phrenologist reads Ruth as "characterized by unusual sympathy and tenderness of feeling" (168), and as Mr. Walter later remarks to Ruth upon this reading, "'You can't help "expressing your real sentiments"' (173). Ruth has developed true sympathy for suffering because she herself has suffered, but she also has a temperament that allows her to read the world in emotional terms and to reinterpret it as such in writing. Her writing, because it arises from "authentic" emotions has the power to make others feel more effectively. One letter from a reformed patriarch claims, "I am a better son, a better brother, a better husband, and a better father, than I was before I commenced reading your articles" (183). The letter,

in turn, draws Ruth's sympathetic and thankful tears, as she remarks, "This will repay many a weary hour" (183). It is the emotional power of Ruth's writing that makes her so successful and, finally, financially independent, but writing as emotional labor has emotional as well as monetary rewards.

Fern's rewriting of the sentimental economy seeks to balance the material and emotional needs and interests of individuals within the emotional and economic structures that maintain social relations. In doing so, she must reconfigure those structures to account for and value women's labor. Fern exploits sentimental valuing of women's emotional capacities and contributions by combining those values with depictions of the physical effort and expense as well as the financial and emotional reward for what she can claim now as emotional labor. By defining her work (writing) in terms of emotional labor, Fern distinguishes Ruth from other laborers in the book and the labor of writing from other forms of labor for women.⁴¹ She creates a form of labor acceptable within the sentimental habitus because it specifically performs the dispositions for sympathy, self-sacrifice, and nurture. Yet, Fern also redefines sentimental emotional conventions to claim the importance of tightly controlled expressions of negative emotions such as pride and anger. Finally, *Ruth Hall* argues most forcefully against the sentimental feminine disposition for dependence, making a case for women's financial independence within a refigured sentimental familial structure that regulates and protects women in the marketplace but does so unselfishly

⁴¹ Antebellum domestic advice books structured housework into physical and intellectual tasks which sustains a hierarchy of labor: with physical labor performed by servants (working-class women), middle-class women were freed to perform intellectual tasks of management and writing (Tonkovich 134-45).

and sympathetically. To place one's own pecuniary interests foremost, Fern argues, is to undermine one's ability to sympathize, and only when the patriarchal system attends to the needs of all equally, can it provide true protection and support.

Although much nineteenth-century fiction depicted women as domestic angels, several authors offered a more realistic picture of women's lives, one that accounted for the fact that the majority of antebellum-era women worked for pay. These books also critique the patriarchal system of labor and family that sentimentalism authorizes in part through its dematerialization of women's labor, which ultimately renders women ethereal, delicate creatures in need of male protection. This leisured woman becomes a contested figure in the formation of the middle-class, and narratives of wage-earning women do their part in challenging her dominance. Representations of women workers, however, must also balance sentimental dispositions with depictions of labor to trade on the cultural capital validated by sentimentalism, and in doing so expose sentimentalism's contributions to class formation.

The mill girls' project, *The Lowell Offering*, provided snapshots of factory life that tamed fears of independent women with assurances of their ties to family and to familial regulation in both the mills and the boarding house. The stories partially reinvent the family structure by imagining a family of women workers, made up of emotionally laboring mothers and sisters helping each other survive. Ultimately, however, the *Offering* appealed less to the laborers than it did to mill owners and middle-class readers because in its grab for respectability it necessarily diluted their connections to labor and the economy. Yet, the stories do address labor and the material conditions of laborers' lives, with a regard for hard work that recalls the

country's Jeffersonian roots. Thus they effectively distance themselves from both the working class and the middle class, and anticipate the lower middle class habitus.

Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* describes the indentured class, situated tenuously between the working class and slavery. The story of Frado's abuse and resistance reveals the highly restricted situation of indentured servants, and their economic valuation as laboring machines. With no labor capital or cultural capital, the indentured servant has no spending power in the sentimental economy. Furthermore, the emotions she must express to assert her subjectivity invalidate her claims to social or cultural capital as they break with sentimental emotional conventions. Frado's anger, pride, and *Schadenfreude* and Mrs. Belmont's violence dismantle sentimental class and race hierarchies and demonstrate that the emotional and physical labor conditions of indentured servants foreclose opportunities for acquiring any form of capital.

In her depiction of the recently impoverished middle-class Ruth Hall, struggling to maintain her cultural capital while working, Fanny Fern uses Ruth's emotional labor to validate her wage-earning labor. In the process, Fern reveals that middle-class sympathy is bounded by its economic and social self-interest. Fern consequently retheorizes the sentimental economy as one that values and protects women workers by moderating pecuniary interests with a primary emotional investment in others. Ruth finally succeeds, however, because she finds work that not only maintains but adds to her sentimental capital because Fern presents writing as a sentimental labor, one that performs the emotional labor of sympathy, self-sacrifice, and nurture for a larger public. In doing so, Fern justified her own work in a way that

the Lowell operatives and Harriet Wilson were unable to do because writing was only supplemental to the work they did to survive and was not the work they described in their own writing.

Each of these authors reveals the socio-economic hierarchy enforced by sentimentalism by indicating the limitations of access to symbolically transformed cultural and social capital by those with little economic capital. These texts likewise question the patriarchal underpinnings of the sentimental economy that prevents women's independence by refusing to acknowledge their labor. Like Margaret Fuller and many proto-feminist authors of this era, Fern, Wilson, and the writers for *The Lowell Offering* argue for the moral and social value of women's self-reliance. Only by rewriting the terms of the sentimental are they able to claim the propriety of independent women laborers.

Chapter 3

Martial Passions and Emotional Cross-Dressing: Women Soldiers in the Civil War

In a two-part *New York Ledger* article entitled, "A Law More Just than Nice" (1858), Fanny Fern rails against the arrest of a woman for wearing pants. She even admits to have one evening put on her husband's clothing and gone out for a walk with him thus appareled. Fern condemns the unfairness of the law, speaking mainly in terms of dress conventions and freedom to walk unhindered. In the second article, however, she admits that cross-dressing allowed her to spy on the masculine world and understand the distinctively gendered practices that one must adopt when in male or female garb. In various moments, as well, Fern links male freedom of dress to male freedom in other spheres: men "make the laws" (300) after all, and "a female clerk, who performs her duties equally well with a male clerk, receives less salary, simply because she is a woman" (302). Thus, she suggests reasons beyond practicality and comfort for which a woman might wear men's clothing.

Indeed, many nineteenth-century women cross-dressed and passed as men in their daily lives for a variety of reasons, including safety, independence, and survival. An unmarried woman without family was in a dangerous position: work that would pay enough for her survival was rare, and the alternative was often a life of sexual servility as a prostitute or wife to an abusive husband. Many women preferred independence and took it by cross-dressing. When the Civil War began, women who

were already passing as men joined the army while others took the opportunity of the war to seek adventure as soldiers, a job available only to men (or women disguised as men). This chapter will examine three texts about women who fought as men in the Civil War. One is the somewhat fictionalized and very much sentimentalized memoir of Sarah Emma Edmonds, whose experiences during the war have been verified by historians. The second memoir, by Loreta Janeta Velazquez, is highly sensationalized and there is contention among scholars about its veracity. My third text is E.D.E.N. Southworth's *Britomarte* series, a fictional work that blends the sentimental and sensational genres. Like Fern, cross-dressing provided these women the experience of male privilege and responsibility and the narratives about such experiences, which I examine in this chapter, prove women capable of filling the role and allow them to critique its failings. Furthermore, the texts capitalize on the war's demands for women's labor to argue for the capacity of women to labor effectively not only outside the home, but in traditionally male jobs. The publication of these texts also coincides with the end of the war and Reconstruction, which suggests a more complex cultural role for the cross-dresser. In effect, the fluid identity that enables her to gain information about the "other" also aids the goal of ultimately reincorporating the other into the national body.

Cross-dressing emerges from a refusal to inhabit a specifically gendered subject position. Judith Butler has taught us that cross-dressing exposes gender as a performance. While cross-dressing requires a kind of performance, both bodily and behavioral, it also includes a delicate balancing of gendered dispositions. Within the sentimental habitus, cross-dressing allows these characters to inhabit masculine

dispositions, evocative of Judith Halberstam's assertion that cross-dressing as men opens a space for women to "embody masculinity" (241). What this means emotionally is a different set of emotional conventions (restrictive in new ways but also liberating), primarily distinguishable by self or community orientation. Halberstam argues that a woman taking on masculinity "is much more likely to transform the mechanisms of masculinity and produce new constellations of embodiment, power, and desire" (276) rather than reproduce male power dynamics and hierarchies. I find that the cross-dressing characters in these narratives provide a critique of masculinity and contest the sexual division of labor while simultaneously formulating new hierarchies based on emotional proficiency. Specifically, cross-dressing women workers expose the gendered restrictions of labor in the sentimental habitus, especially those that are based on a gendered construction of women's delicate emotional nature.

For most scholars, the main issue at stake in these narratives is the construction of difference. Many focus on the fact that clothes seem to "make the man," asserting that gender is ultimately performative. Some address the ways these texts (with their accounts of spies dressing as black or Irish) dispute the visual construction of race. Above all, scholars are concerned with the ways these texts challenge restrictive roles for women even as they note the ways the texts must succumb to some form of gender ideology in order to be made public. As Julie Wheelwright notes, many "accounts [of women soldiers] neatly tied together the ideals of female devotion to husband and country. The women's more complex, less sanguine reasons -- the desire for escape, the longing for independence and excitement that a masculine identity appeared to

offer -- were overlooked. Simplified, the female warrior embodied more familiar visions of perfection" (33). The discourses available to women failed to account for the realities of their experiences and their various motivations.

Because sentimental discourse posits a hyperemotional female subjectivity incapable of labor outside the home, I am concerned mainly with the ways these texts confront gendered labor prescriptions; in other words, how they challenge notions of what type of work women are qualified for and capable of. These texts' deployment of sentimentalism brings emotional labor to the forefront, and this highlighting of emotional labor, in turn, exposes the fantasy of sexual divisions of labor. I find that gender performance, either literary or material, requires adherence to gendered emotional conventions. For example, fear is a feminine disposition within the sentimental habitus that aids in the construction of the weak woman in need of male protection. The masculine dispositions then restrict fear in order to establish the male as protector. Thus, cross-dressing requires a specific type of emotional labor, adherence to the emotional conventions of the masculine dispositions, which produces a recognizable masculine subject. Since emotional conventions were also a key factor in the discourse of gendered work restrictions, the emotional adaptability of these cross-dressers implicitly counters those claims. There is tension in these texts between the emerging discourse of emotion as ungendered and the sentimental discourse that painted women as emotionally and morally superior. Marjorie Garber writes, "If [cross-dressing] is not a critique of gender roles, that may be because it is a critique of gender itself as a category" (9). While these texts begin to recognize emotional capacity and temperament as a type of social training rather than innate and thus

ungendered, to fully acknowledge this means to let go of the category of gender and thus the little social power offered them in the form of emotional and moral superiority.

Significantly, the emotional labor performed by women in battle suggests that neither emotions nor jobs are inherently male or female. To pass as men, the women aren't required to generate certain emotions in the way that they create elaborate disguises or perform manly behaviors. Instead, cross-dressed emotional labor is simply a matter of altering the emotions you repress or express, under a variety of shifting circumstances. For example, a nineteenth-century woman is revered for her compassion, but in order to pass as a man, she must most often repress her compassionate feelings, particularly on the battlefield. But, the texts also indicate that compassion ought to be expressed for wounded soldiers, not only by female nurses and attendants but also by male nurses, soldiers, and surgeons. As well, the authors critique masculinity in terms of emotional labor; most often, the men who display compassion when appropriate are revered in these texts while those who do not come under censure. These narratives reveal the ungendered nature of martial and sentimental passions and through their depiction of cross-dressed emotional labor, refute the myth that certain jobs require a gendered emotional constitution.

One might expect that war would reify gender categories, with men going off to war and women staying home to tend the home fires. Indeed some scholars have understood it this way. Melissa Herbert points out, "The complex weaving together of the achievement of manhood or masculinity with military service offers us insight into the way in which the notion of soldiering has historically been so central a part of

male identity" (7-8). Other scholars have recognized war as disruptive of a variety of social hierarchies and conventions, especially those of gender. Most notably, Kaja Silverman reads war as a traumatic rupture of masculinity in which men recognize their lack and subsequently "withdraw their belief from the dominant fiction," leaving "the social formation . . . without a mechanism for consensus" (55). Without consensus, a space opens for erosion or transformation of the dominant fiction, in my study this pertains to the social formation of the sentimental habitus and specifically its gender hierarchies. Margaret Higonnet argues that civil wars in particular encourage critique of gender roles because "once a change in government can be conceived, sexual politics can also become an overt political issue" (80). The Civil War provided women new opportunities to express discontent with, among other things, sexual divisions of labor. The texts under consideration in this chapter all argue in one way or another for expanded economic opportunities and independence for women, and they do so in the context of women's contributions to the country during the Civil War.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the few work opportunities available for women included domestic service, sewing or laundry outwork, or factory work. Well-connected and well-educated women might find work teaching or writing. Traditional women's work paid poorly, and while factory work originally paid fairly well (as we have seen with Lowell mill girls), by the mid-nineteenth century, popular opinion turned against women laborers, insisting that all but degraded women worked outside the home. This was partially due to men's fears, during a time of rapid immigration and thus job competition, that women created too much competition for work. Alice

Kessler-Harris argues that fears of job competition fueled the development of a discourse that deemed women seeking traditionally male employment, "physically, mentally, and emotionally unsuited for the work" (70). An emotional incapacity for labor, substantiated by sentimental domesticity, became an argument not just for privileging "refined" middle-class, white women, but also for keeping working-class women out of better-paying, more highly skilled jobs.

The war created a new milieu primed for the reconsideration of women's labor. The need for goods produced by women to support troops "gave public, political significance to the domestic manufacturing of women" (Whites 16). Women's labor of making clothing, preserving fruits and vegetables, nursing, and new duties such as picking lint and raising money, were considered valuable contributions when these goods circulated in the wartime economy. Such women's work supported the troops and thus the political and economic goals of the nation (Union or Confederate) in visible, salient ways. Alice Fahs investigates the numerous articles, books, and stories in the war-era public press, many of which emphasize the importance of women's labor during wartime. Significantly, Fahs finds that "[m]any stories . . . set up a moral economy in which women's suffering was seen as at least equal to, if not greater than, that of men" (135). So, while women's physical work supported the wartime economy, their emotional labor, in the form of sacrifice of family members and personal suffering, supported the nation's sentimental economy. This emotional labor modeled the appropriate self-sacrificing, socially oriented stance toward the war while also doing the cultural work of grieving the great losses produced by war.

Many wartime stories "stressed the disastrous economic consequences of war for women, whether of the laboring classes or precariously situated on the margins of the middle classes" (Fahs 132-3). While the war created new legitimacy for women in fields formerly open primarily to men, such as clerical jobs and teaching, and professionalized the traditionally domestic work of nursing, other forms of women's labor continued to be undervalued and poorly paid (Kessler-Harris 76). Working women formed a sort of underclass even before the war because, as noted above, fears of job competition from women and sentimental discourse worked in tandem to keep women either out of well-paying jobs or out of the marketplace all together. As women's domestic labor experienced a revaluation during the war, so too did the understanding of women's labor outside the home. Many women found work during wartime as camp followers. Often female family members of soldiers, camp followers worked as washerwomen, nurses, cooks, and seamstresses. Some women also followed camps working as prostitutes. Hundreds of women worked as nurses in military hospitals while others became spies. Stories that follow the careers of women Civil War soldiers are part of this trajectory as they argue for women's ability to work in male-dominated professions and to function safely in all-male environments.

In addition, these texts also contend that women's emotional sensitivity enhances their abilities to make them in many cases superior workers to men. Wartime emotional labor includes generation of pride, righteousness, anger, primarily masculine dispositions, and suppression of the feminine dispositions for fear and sympathy. But these same emotional characteristics that help one function effectively in battle also threaten social order if allowed to rage beyond the battlefield. Thus,

wartime emotional labor must also harness individualistic emotions to a larger communally oriented cause to produce people capable of fighting but with their rage and aggression directed not toward personal gain but rather for a communal good, which makes these potentially destructive emotions both less threatening and more contained. Asserting a ready postwar assimilability was an important cultural contribution of Reconstruction-era texts, and a key feature of the cross-dressing soldier, whose ability to balance masculine and feminine dispositions produces an emotional flexibility that facilitates this wartime emotional labor.

The narratives of cross-dressing soldiers manifest the distinct self-oriented and socially oriented dispositions in the generic terms of sensationalism and sentimentalism. Sensationalism is a transgressive disposition within the sentimental habitus. Most scholarship on sensationalism in American Literature considers Edgar Allen Poe and to a much lesser extent Louisa May Alcott's thrillers. I'm going to rely on Alcott, since she is considered primarily a sentimental writer with her thrillers just money-making opportunities, to help make my argument for sensationalism as a transgressive disposition within the sentimental habitus. But also, most of the work on sensationalism is in the field of British fiction, focusing on such writers as Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. In the 1860s, emerging sensational works vied with sentimental novels for popularity. Interestingly, these new stories employed the same types of middle-class female characters and domestic settings but infused them with crime, scandal, mystery, and secrets.¹ They also represented and evoked a

¹ Wynne 4-10.

different set of emotions from sentimental literature, which focused on sympathy, grief, cheerfulness, and penitence.

Jenny Bourne Taylor finds that contemporary criticism painted the "[t]he sensation novel . . . as a collective cultural nervous disorder . . . threatening to pollute and undermine [the middle-class] boundaries" (4), and these critical depictions expressed larger cultural concerns "connected with anxieties that class-based cultural boundaries were breaking down with the expansion of new methods of production and circulation" (5). This anxiety recalls the sentimental policing of middle-class boundaries explored in Chapter One, but in that case, the threat was not figured in such horrifying terms as murder for example. The transgressive emerges as a disposition within the habitus as a space to work out cultural anxieties. It is, in Certeau's terms, a "making-do" that utilizes but inverts the dominant dispositions. The genre adopted the conventions of sensational journalism, "stage melodrama, street literature, and penny dreadfuls," "lower-class genres which had developed independently of middle-class forms, and outside of the constraints and controls of middle-class moral management" (Pykett 53). The uptake of lower-class genres tactically disrupts the sentimental habitus by mixing generic practices both approved and unauthorized. The sensational dispositions simultaneously release the potential of transgressive dispositions and uphold the key principles of the sentimental habitus by providing a counter formation defined as corrupt, diseased, and doomed.

Sentimentalism and sensationalism present competing dispositions articulated, in part, in terms of the emotional conventions they rely on. The sentimental figure feels fear, benevolence, sympathy, compassion while the sensational generates fear

and feels vengefulness, anger, and disgust. Ultimately, the key emotional characteristics highlighted in these genres emphasize primarily social (sentimentalist) or anti-social (sensationalist) emotions. The emotions of sympathy, compassion, and benevolence show a concern with maintaining social relations while anger, vengefulness, and disgust distance one from others and respond to perceived threats on the individual. The dispositions for self-orientation (sensational) and social orientation (sentimental) reflect as well the mixed forces behind the Civil War: the liberal democratic cause of individual freedom (freeing the slaves) and the republican cause of preserving national sovereignty. The sentimental eases the threat of war and social conflict while the sensational plays on those fears and exacerbates them.

One of the key figures of sensational fiction is the dangerous woman, or in American Literature, what De Grave has termed the confidence woman.² She defies sentimental emotional conventions, which deem emotions such as anger unfeminine. Not only does she feel the more self-protective emotions and anger, etc., she also only performs the socially oriented emotions such as sympathy to serve her own selfish ends. The prevalent cultural concern with emotional sincerity³ is particularly potent

² Examples of this type are the eponymous antagonists in Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* or *Aurora Floyd*, or for example, Pauline Valary/Laroche and Jean Muir in Alcott's thrillers. The figure of the dangerous woman has been discussed in numerous works: on Lady Audley, see Hughes (106-33); on Aurora Floyd, see Jeni Curtis and Marlene Tromp in *Beyond Sensation*; on Pauline, see Gail K. Smith; on Jean Muir, see De Grave (164-77).

³ In *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, Karen Halttunen explains that the sentimental ideal of emotional sincerity, which distinguished the middle-class from the lower classes, was a liability in the public sphere because the sincere individual could be easily duped or taken advantage of in business (33-55).

with cross-dressers since their performance as men immediately puts into question the authenticity of their emotional performance. But, the cross-dresser also threatened gender hierarchies. Because sensationalist fiction was largely written and read by women, and featured realistic domestic settings, the figure of the dangerous woman posed a critical concern: did she somehow represent real feminine nature or was she a distortion that would encourage transgression of gender bounds?⁴ The cross-dresser, particularly in the form of the confidence woman, is transgressive in terms of gender and class because she seeks an escape from both social and financial restrictions on women. Once women found means to economic independence, as suggested in Chapter Two, they would be closer to gaining certain social freedoms as well. Tempering their narrative with sentimental discourse allowed Southworth, Velasquez, and Edmonds to dabble in the freedoms allowed by sensationalism.

Yet, even as these texts deploy conventional sentimental rhetoric, they counter the domestic ideology that underpins much sentimental fiction. I find that, on one level, the use of sentimental language and tropes effected the transformation of the independent woman into the devoted woman, while the tools of sensationalist writing allowed female characters to venture beyond the domestic, to display typically masculine characteristics, and to perform men's work. With the use of sentimental approaches to describe the experience of cross-dressing women, "nineteenth-century gender flexibility is significantly underwritten, its representations compromised and marketed as works of loyalty and piety. These modifications did, however, allow a

⁴ Pykett 32-4.

woman's wartime gender reconfigurations to appear more visibly in nineteenth-century U.S. culture, suggesting possibilities for other women and men fettered by prevailing sex-gender assumptions" (Laffrado 179). As well as providing an audience by depicting female soldiers as safely ideal women, sentimentalism also offered a woman writer a superior moral position from which to critique any number of targets - the army, soldiers, dandified men, frivolous women, ministers. Ultimately, this positions also allowed women writers to suggest that women, in fact, could perform men's duties as well as if not better than most men because of their emotional expertise and flexibility.

In each case, the female soldiers blend the martial passions of rage, revenge, and courage (typically gendered male) with the sentimental passions of sympathy, loyalty, and self-sacrifice (typically gendered female) to create the image of the ideal soldier. Velasquez's memoir, published in the closing years of Reconstruction, emphasizes the sensational dispositions. Velasquez is angry, independent, and proudly transgressive. As a southerner, it is fitting that Velasquez claims more self-oriented dispositions, which suggest the defense of state's rights that led in part to the war. She has the emotional capacity and other capabilities of a man, and even promotes herself as better than men at her work. But, Velasquez's narrative also lacks sentimental tempering, and finally highlights her corrupted nature, suggesting that if a woman works like a man, she will inevitably turn bad. Edmonds' memoir, in turn, was published during the war and is the most sentimental of the three. Not surprisingly, then, her emphasis is on socially oriented dispositions, and her key concern is preserving the nation. In her book, she also lays out various types of wartime labor and

shows the emotional demands of each, finally illustrating that anyone who can perform the emotional labor can perform the job and gender is not relevant. Edmonds also demonstrates how transgressive acts can be subsumed by the sentimental habitus within the circumstances of war; sensational dispositions, such as violence and deceit, can be explained by sentimental justifications for the war. Finally, Southworth's novel, published during Reconstruction,⁵ offers a variety of women's war work and more thoroughly combines the sensational and sentimental dispositions. She claims a place for and acknowledges the importance of anger, for example, and other self-protective emotions but ultimately in the name of self-sacrifice for the community (the cause). She blends a concern with preserving the nation with the concern for individual freedoms, specifically feminist concerns, and tries to reconcile the two competing demands in her depictions of women's labor and women's social role.

Velazquez's *The Woman in Battle* (1876) recounts the experiences of a Cuban-born woman serving as a Confederate soldier in male disguise, and as a spy in various costumes. The narrative follows Velazquez as Harry T. Buford through several legendary battles of the early war, and then chases her back and forth across Union and Confederate lines in a variety of costumes and personas as she spies for the Confederacy and engages in money-making schemes, such as drug trafficking and bounty hunting. Finally, the narrative concludes with Velazquez's post-war travels to find a home away from the decimated South.

⁵ The novels were serialized as "Britomarte, the Man-Hater" in *The New York Ledger* in 1865 and 1866.

The veracity of Velazquez's narrative has been disputed since its publication. It was written and published well after the events described within, and Velazquez claimed to have written it largely from memory as her notebooks were lost or destroyed. Furthermore, it was edited, perhaps largely composed by, C.J. Worthington, a former Union soldier.⁶ Even Velazquez's contemporaries charged the narrative was false, and in fact, it's at least highly sensationalized if not largely fictionalized. As Elizabeth Young notes, "In these condemnations . . . what emerges in the absence of authenticity is the presence of the literary" (160) and argues for reading the book as an example of the popular genre adventure story, or a subgenre, the female picaresque. While I fully concur with this reading, I wish to consider the moments of sensationalism and sentimentalism invoked in the text because Velazquez deploys them to manipulate her readers just as she feigns specific emotional states to outmaneuver her assorted conquests.⁷

Velasquez's tale reads in part like a sensational story, full of crime, scandal, and secrecy, with her playing the role of confidence woman. Yet, her tale is also tenuously situated within a domestic frame as she begins the book safely within her father's home, marries, and ostensibly goes to war to be with her husband. Within the text, she occasionally emphasizes her feminine disposition for familial devotion by discussing her husband or her brother and the sacrifices she makes to be with them. By

⁶ Elizabeth Young provides a helpful discussion of Worthington's participation in authoring this text and the effects his editorship had on contemporary critiques of *Woman in Battle* (157-60; 182-3).

⁷ Kathleen DeGrave argues that Velazquez is a confidence woman and *Woman in Battle* just one more of her confidence games (115-19; 123-43).

the end of the book, she also has a child who, though barely mentioned, asserts her motherhood. Nonetheless, these assertions of domesticity serve primarily as reminders that she fails to fulfill those roles in her pursuit of military glory. Velazquez's text is an almost lurid, sensational tale only rarely balanced by the sentimental. She is unconcerned with the moral superiority sentimental femininity offers because her masculine success marks her as superior. Instead, Velazquez narrates the adventures of a woman who excels in masculine duties and critiques the failures of the men around her even as she celebrates her own successes. She readily defies gendered emotional conventions, and the masculine dispositions she takes up appear authentic not performed. She describes herself as "obstinate" (56), "Firm-minded" and "determined" (59), "with as stout a heart as ever beat in the breast of a soldier" (69), an "insatiable love for adventure" (133), and "unlimited confidence in [her] own abilities" (281). She is impulsive, hot-headed, adventurous, independent, and ambitious, and these masculine dispositions propel her into the masculine sphere of labor to which she seems most suited.

Velazquez's enthusiasm for battle reverberates with sensationalist discourse. She teems with martial passions and feels a real desire to fight. On occasion, Velazquez claims this desire is socially oriented, that she wants to fight "to do my whole duty for my cause" (116), to "reveng[e] my husband's death" (87), or "to render myself deserving of [other soldiers'] praises" (208). But, for the most part, her narrative emphasizes her urge to fight in terms of the emotional expressiveness and excitement of battle. She explains that during her first battle, at Bull Run, "I only saw the enemy before me, and was inspired by an eager desire to conquer him" (102). She

continually uses the words "rage," "fury," "ire" in her confrontations with the enemy on and off the battlefield. Her determination to vanquish the enemy and the anger that inspires her to act are accompanied by feelings of fearlessness and excitement. In describing her combat experiences, Velazquez claims, "fear was a word I did not know the meaning of" (100) and "there was an exhilaration in an actual, hotly-contested fight that far surpassed anything my imagination had pictured" (127). She does not appear to be generating anger or suppressing fear; instead, she seems to experience "exhilaration" at the expression of emotions normally suppressed. Velazquez's embrace of such self-oriented emotions, rather than typically feminine other-oriented emotions, allow an assertion of power not normally granted to women.

Even after she has seen some desperate battles and defeats and begins to temper her discussion with a greater emphasis on fighting for the Confederate cause, Velazquez admits, "My love for such excitement as only a great battle can give . . . overpowered all lesser emotions" (202). Velazquez suggests here a hierarchy of emotions with those of battle (anger, rage, exhilaration) as superior to emotions that may not lend themselves to battle (sober cheerfulness, sympathy). Sensationalism encourages the excitement of emotions, and Velazquez's narrative repeatedly stirs up the emotions of the reader, but more notably, emphasizes the excitability of Velazquez's own emotions as well as the extreme pleasure she takes in her excited state. Although Velazquez experiences authentic emotions, her felt emotions fail to match up with the emotional expectations for someone of her gender. Her narrative thus suggests that gender does not limit one's affective capacity to a specific set of emotions.

Velazquez's emotional fervor also informs her relationship to the Confederacy. She declares herself by nature "a partisan," making it "an impossibility . . . to limit or divide my affections and predilections; and in choosing a side . . . I must do so with my whole heart and soul" (161). She then asserts that her devotion to the Confederate cause is "more ardent" than any "man or woman in the whole Confederacy" (161). Throughout the text, even as she criticizes the Confederate leaders' handling of various battles that end in failure, Velazquez maintains strict loyalty to the Confederacy. Significantly, Velazquez repeatedly views Southern defeat as personal defeat, and when her belief in Southern invincibility is checked, it becomes clear that she has equated it with her own supremacy. The Southern rebellion thus parallels the threat of a female rebellion becoming ever more present near the end of Reconstruction as women's rights advocates gained momentum across the country. During the Southern defeat at Fort Donelson, Velazquez experiences, by turns, "humiliation" (162), "terror," "despondency," (168) disgust, and "melancholy" (172). Velazquez's total identification with the Confederate cause does not equate, however, to her submission to it. This is most clear in her refusal to enlist and insistence on working as a private soldier, a sort of wartime free agent.

She again equates her desires with those of the Confederate cause after the defeat at Shiloh: "It made me gnash my teeth with impotent fury to think of these things, and to have all my high hopes so suddenly dashed to the ground, just when the prospects for their realization seemed so bright" (218). She feels personally thwarted, which suggests in this and other similar moments that Velazquez personifies the Confederacy. Elizabeth Young argues, "Since Velazquez's text twins Buford [her male

persona] and the Confederacy as newly born 'men,' then when Buford suffers, so too does the Confederacy metaphorically decline" (181). Furthermore, as a personification of the South, Velazquez can express more than just the mood of the defeated South, she can also describe distinct emotional states and explain how they emerge. The emotions that are aroused by personal defeat -- anger, vengefulness, humiliation, shame, disgust, melancholy -- also pervade a society that has been vanquished. Thus, Velasquez performs the incomplete mourning of the South, repeated compulsively in Southern literature via motifs of decay, defeat, and death.⁸

But, while Velasquez may represent the South, she also represents the much-feared confidence woman, dangerous because of her independence, passion, and selfishness. At Bull Run, her first battle and a decisive victory for the South, we see another side to her reaction to defeat. When her troop is halted, Velazquez feels personally affronted.

I only saw the enemy before me, and was inspired by an eager desire to
conquer him. I forgot that I was but a single figure in a great military scheme;
. . . every man on the other side became for the moment my personal enemy,

⁸ Examples of this theme in Southern fiction include *Gone with The Wind* and William Faulkner's work. Patricia Yaeger traces this theme and its relation to race in *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2000). Parallel to Kaja Silverman's assertion that "when the male subject is brought into a traumatic encounter with lack, as in the situation of war, he often experiences it as the impairment of his anatomical masculinity" (62), Elizabeth Young argues that "[t]he metaphorical inseparability of Velasquez and the Confederacy not only emphasizes the South's loss of 'manhood' through military defeat, but also raises the question of whether than manhood -- like Velasquez's 'Lt. Buford' -- had ever existed at all" (181).

whom I was furious to overcome, so, when . . . we were compelled to fall back, I was overcome with rage and indignation, and felt all the shame and mortification of a personal defeat (102).

Her rage and humiliation arises from feeling personally thwarted. Her personal ambition and "determination to have [her] own way" (279) make her better suited for spying than soldiering. In fact, her work as a soldier is almost entirely as a private soldier, unattached to any particular command, able to join any company for one battle and move on. Her individualism and the emotions it generates are not conducive to North-South reconciliation and suggest the problems such ideal of liberal individualism posed for Reconstruction as well as the South's refusal to be fettered by Northern regulation.

This extreme independence intertwines Velasquez's ambition and obstinacy, and encourages her unending critique of soldiers, generals, the government, her superiors, mostly anyone who has more power than her, but even just women and men in general. Velazquez begins her adventure through a desire for glory, inspired by Joan of Arc and other women soldiers she has read about. She yearns for public acknowledgement of her capabilities throughout the narrative except for a brief time after her celebrity causes her trouble and threatens to prevent her from continuing her activities. Her desire for individual recognition and achievement pervades the text and emphasizes her self-absorption, a key feature of the sensational confidence woman.

The occasional cooling of her ambition results in her reversion to a sentimental persona. For example, she discovers a:

feverish desire to be in motion, to be doing something, to have occupation for mind and body, such as would prevent me from dwelling on my griefs, more than any ambitious designs or aspirations for personal distinctions, that now compelled me to seek for employment in some shape, under the Confederate government . . . to advance the interests of the cause. (340)

As in *The Wide, Wide World*, labor becomes a means to assuage grief, especially labor performed for the benefit of others, and her "feverish desire to be in motion" -- more commonly seen in the narrative as a dual result of her desire for glory and for expressing rage in battle -- is validated through her use of sentimental rhetoric. Ultimately, however, Velazquez's narrative highlights her ambition and independence, and her experiences after the war -- going to South America alone, going West alone, and regularly noting her public acclaim -- reinforce this reading. So, cross-dressing does not in fact require of her the emotional labor of taking up masculine dispositions. Instead, it allows her to express emotions she genuinely feels. Because these emotions are not tempered by a conventionally feminine disposition, however, she appears transgressive and dangerous.

Within the sentimental habitus, the feminine dispositions include a convention of emotional management, which entails reading and altering others' emotions. Generally, emotional management involves soothing passions and promoting cheerfulness and sociability. Yet, these emotional powers also prompted narratives of women emotionally manipulating their husbands, fathers, and male lovers to political or financial ends. Highlighting fears of emotional exploitation, Velazquez's ability to manipulate others' emotions make her an excellent spy. Significantly, it is not her

cross-dressing as a soldier but her dissimulation, evidenced as "skills with disguises, verbal fluency, shrewdness, energy and mimetic abilities" (De Grave 112), that exposes her as a confidence woman.

Her reactions to those she deceives while a spy signals her dangerousness: Velazquez feels both delight in her abilities and disgust for her victim. In regard to one man she deceives, she remarks, "I pitied the poor fellow's perplexity, but could scarcely help laughing in his face at his desperate stupidity" (282). Occasionally, Velazquez will remark that she "greatly regretted deceiving" (238) some group of people she had become friendly with. More often, her response begins with a sentimental gesture and ends with a sensational guffaw, as when she observes, "I pitied the poor fellow's perplexity, but could scarcely help from laughing in his face at his desperate stupidity" (282). The rhetorical power of the second half of the statement almost entirely voids the attempt at sympathy in the first half. In her male disguise, Velazquez also courts several women and takes the opportunity to comment on the foibles of her own gender, which serves to distance her from a feminine subject position. But, what her constant critique of others demonstrates above all is that Velazquez is a misanthrope, who perceives herself as superior to all.

As well, although she often aligns herself with the gentlemen as opposed to the blackguards, she finds the gentlemen much easier to deceive. One example occurs while Velazquez is disguised as a poor widow and boards a train of Federal soldiers. The soldiers immediately insult her -- either by calling her a spy (which of course she is) and threatening to hang her, or flirting with her outrageously. Their colonel, however, intervenes on her behalf, very kindly protecting her from the soldiers. She

notes that his men are "wiser" than he and begins to "beguile him into giving" her information (361). Rather than having any compunction about deceiving the man who has saved her from harm, she sees his sympathy as a weakness she can use to her advantage. Thus, again, she appears to function as a confidence woman as well as to flout sentimental values.

But designating Velasquez a confidence woman, while helpful, does not go far enough toward understanding her character or the cultural work she performs. She feels disgust not only for her victims, but also for her comrades. At Shiloh, for example, Velasquez redirects her anger at the Confederate defeat to "the inexcusable blunder that caused it" (218). She complains about the lack of action after the victory at Bull Run, calling the halt to military activity a "mistake" (108), and although she admits she had no idea it was a tactical error at the time, she still felt "impatient and disgusted at the inactivity that prevailed" (109). Despite her denial of critiquing in hindsight, she portrays herself as having had an emotional response to the situation, which if she had the power to heed could have brought about victory for the Confederacy. So, she justifies her reaction of disgust because it was impelling her to right action, which, in turn, validates the disgust she later feels about the strategic mistake that caused the defeat. She notes at several moments similar feelings not only of frustration, but also of anger and disgust at the errors made by the Confederate leadership and military command, and these emotions are always both damning of others and self-aggrandizing.

Occasionally, Velasquez's critiques of others appear to arise from a sentimental conscience, but that illusion quickly dissolves. For example, Velasquez denounces the

burning of a hotel "through the reckless and unthinking anger of men" (270), which appears to be a critique of unrestrained emotion. However, she sympathizes with the men who set fire to the building, "knowing the passions of men engaged in warfare" (271) and instead blames the officers in command for allowing the hotel to be burned. At another point, Velazquez comments on "The Kind of People an Army is made up of" (310) -- "blackguards as well as gentlemen" (311). Even the gentlemen "permitted themselves a license of language and conduct that they would not have ventured upon in the society of ladies," and she claims, as a concession to sentimental feminine dispositions, that the behavior "shocked," "offended," and "annoy[ed]" her (311). These claims, and others like them, seem calculated to deflect criticism that she must have been corrupted by the "unpleasant and disgusting features of camp life" (311), yet to maintain her disguise, it must have been necessary for her to engage in such language and conduct if indeed the gentlemen she knew did so. Her own behavior and emotional response throughout the narrative is so shocking and offensive, to the sentimental habitus, that this particular moment is a meek concession indeed. Her critiques primarily serve to assert her own superiority.

Indeed, it appears throughout the narrative that Velazquez's principal goal is to portray herself as the ultimate military hero. In one instance, Velazquez recalls her own weakness, an inability to blow up an arsenal in Indianapolis. Despite the fact that she deems it her duty to injure the enemy by any means necessary, she draws the line at destroying the arsenal because there is no way to do so without killing the workers there. She "shrank from" the duty because "there was a wide difference between killing people in a fair fight and slaughtering them in this fashion" (447). Notably, it is

not sympathy for the workers that stops her -- she derides the women she works with as "light-headed" and flirtatious, and, in fact, the temptation to blow up the arsenal is so strong, she must leave the place after a few weeks; rather, it is her sense of military honor, of fighting a "fair fight," that prevents her action. Thus, she manages to maintain the semblance of morality -- a masculine morality -- while still projecting an image of herself as a stalwart Confederate, angry and courageous enough to wreak havoc on the enemy under any circumstances. Typically, she completes her discussion of the event by condemning "the great many men, either Confederates or Federals, who [she doubts] would have been so considerate in similar situations" (448), which has the further effect not only of justifying her actions, but claiming her moral superiority to the average soldier. Velasquez distinguishes between a sentimental masculine morality, doing the honorable thing, rather than feminine morality based in sympathy, to posit a moral superiority that functions within the sentimental habitus but asserts her independence from gender restrictions.

Her critiques, in fact, often serve to deflect potential criticism of her own morality while simultaneously bolstering her own moral superiority. For example, she excoriates the Federal government for their "inefficient system of recruiting" (493) and then notes the worst evils of this system: "bounty-jumping and substitute-brokerage" (494). Wealthy men who did not want to enlist could pay for a substitute, and there arose substitute-brokerage businesses that found substitutes, which were quite often fraudulent. Sometimes, the brokers tricked poor immigrants into enlisting by offering them money; other times, substitutes would be paid a small sum, then enlist, and finally escape from the recruiting station or Governor's Island often by

bribing soldiers to help them.⁹ Once escaped, they could apply once again as a substitute. Velazquez, herself, becomes involved in this very profitable scheme all the while condemning the government for maintaining a policy that essentially created the crime and fails to stop the blatant fraud. In the end, while Velasquez is engaged in counter-espionage for the Federal government and still involved in bounty-jumping, she warns her associates to "close out" and then provides the government the information needed to raid the "whole bounty-jumping fraternity" (496). Despite her involvement in the immoral activity, Velazquez never accepts responsibility and instead diverts the blame upward. The only responsibility she claims is for bringing the bounty-jumpers and substitute brokers to justice. The questions of morality that plague Velasquez reveal the shifty margins of individual morality during wartime.

DeGrave argues that masculinity was not the main con game; rather, it was "put[ting] on an artificial femininity" (130) that most effectively aided multiply cross-dressed confidence women, like Velazquez. Indeed, Velasquez's text shows that dressing as a man allowed her to express her authentic emotions while she performs sentimental femininity throughout the text. In both her spy work and in her narrative, Velazquez uses feminine conventions to snooker her victims and her readers. Yet, her use of sentiment continually falls short, and sensationalism takes the reins of the wild narrative. Velazquez's sensational *puissance* makes a strong feminist appeal -- she is an independent, strong-willed, and very capable woman. But, her potential is unrealizable within the sentimental habitus because her self-aggrandizement and ambition make her morally reprehensible and thus lacking emotional and cultural

⁹ Velazquez discusses bounty-jumping in Chapter 42.

capital necessary to enact her power.¹⁰ The revulsion she excites results partly from her failure to define herself in sentimental terms of female humility or compassion, but also because she sets herself at the opposite extreme, actually delighting in her ability to manipulate and fool people. Misanthropy infuses Velazquez's delight accompanied as it is by a consistent disgust for other people's beliefs and behaviors, and consequently alters the tone of her anger, vengefulness, and indignation. Instead of having a righteous cause for her rage, she appears to vent her rage merely for her own pleasure and excitement, exacerbated by her driving ambition and decided independence.

Velazquez poses a threat to sentimental social order not so much because of her cross-dressing or display of masculine emotions, but because the mixture of her emotional characteristics and the actions they allow her to engage in mark her as someone who sees herself as existing above and beyond all law, social or otherwise. She, thus, finally serves as a negative representation of the potential transgressiveness of women's abilities to labor outside the home as well as of women's abilities to manipulate emotions. Her text provides a case study of the immorality that erupts from improper emotional management and the encouragement of non-relational emotions. Yet, as such, the text fulfills an important role in maintaining the sentimental habitus by articulating the failure to follow emotional conventions by performing the proper emotional labor as horrifying, shocking, offensive, immoral and thereby containing these transgressive dispositions.

¹⁰ Southworth, in fact, even emphasizes Britomarte's lack of personal ambition, and Edmonds likewise plays that feature down, caring more for adventure than glory.

For men and for women, the divisive hatred and rage stirred up by the war posed a threat to efforts at Reconstruction; for Southerners, however, maintaining these emotions provided a means to maintain a sense of independence and power in the reforming nation. The 1876 publication date of this text also suggests distress at the failing efforts of Reconstruction. The same battles that began the war continue after the war has ended. The South still desires independence, and its ambitions are repeatedly thwarted by the ineptness of the government, as evidenced by Velasquez's antipathy for authority figures. Just as the text contains transgressive dispositions, it also serves to contain the transgressive and threatening desires and emotions of the South during Reconstruction.

Sarah Emma Edmonds' Civil War memoir, conversely, subsumes transgressive acts in the sentimental habitus. While her narrative contains shocking moments and addresses issues of morality, all sensational dispositions (violence, deceit, anger) are explained in sentimental terms. In this way, her story establishes a version of the cross-dressing soldier which Velasquez's narrative, wherein all sentimental strategies are quickly undermined by sensationalist practice, later upends. By figuring war labor and the battlefield and camp environment in sentimental terms, Edmonds designs a place for women in this male-dominated space and demonstrates that women can do men's work and retain their virtue. Deploying the sentimental also focuses the narrative on the emotional labor involved in war work. As Edmonds describes her various jobs, she illustrates the emotional demands of each, and suggests that anyone who can perform the emotional labor, regardless of gender, can perform the job.

Sarah Emma Edmonds' memoir of her experiences serving in the Civil War was originally published in 1864 as *Unsexed; or, the Female Soldier* and the following year as *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army*.¹¹ Edmonds grew up in New Brunswick and left Canada when her parents tried to marry her to a man she disliked. She fled to the U.S. and almost immediately took on male attire and the persona "Franklin Thompson" in order to find lucrative work, selling books.¹² When the Civil War erupted, Edmonds was twenty and felt "It was not my intention, or desire, to seek my own personal ease and comfort while so much sorrow and distress filled the land" (3); instead, she took a noble stance that accorded with the sentimental habitus, she sacrificed her own health and safety to care for the suffering as a field nurse. Or so her narrative tells us.

Women already passing as men would likely have felt pressure to enlist in order to continue living as a man,¹³ yet scholars have found that Edmonds claimed to have desired the independence and adventure that soldiering offered.¹⁴ Similarly, while Edmonds writes about being a nurse and spy in her narrative, her military records provide evidence only of her work as a soldier on hospital duty and as a

¹¹ *Memoirs of a Soldier, Nurse, and Spy*, Introduction by Elizabeth Leonard, xviii.

¹² Elizabeth Leonard's introduction to the new edition provides quite a bit of biographical detail as does Leonard's *All the Daring of the Soldier* (169-85). Further biographical material on Edmonds can be found in Hall (46-97).

¹³ Blanton and Cook provide this as only one the many reasons women enlisted, including following loved ones, fleeing oppressive families or husbands, and finding work that paid better than women's war work such as camp laundress or cook (25-44).

¹⁴ Edmonds indicated that she went to war because she "loved her independence and hated male tyranny" (Blanton and Cook 40).

postmaster.¹⁵ Both nurse and spy were jobs other women had undertaken during the war and about which were published numerous tales and newspaper accounts, so this form of war labor provided a more conventional explanation for Edmonds' wartime activity. Similarly, "[T]he female soldiers who claimed patriotic zeal or love for a man as their reasons for fighting were rewarded with the longest articles and no little amount of praise" (Blanton and Cook 150). Popular discourse, then, shaped Edmonds' narrative, and her uptake of the sentimental habitus brought her more popular appeal and approval than her "real" story likely would have garnered. Whatever Edmonds' real motivations to enlist and whatever her actual wartime job title, she felt compelled to represent her reasoning as well as her service in a particularly sentimental and, thus, feminized vein. This approach did not necessarily undermine her story. For one, it created an audience for her book, which went through two printings and sold 175,000 copies. Her transgressions are always justified because they are always cloaked in the sentimental communal disposition, appearing to be in the service of the cause and not for self-promotion or advancement. But, more subversively, sentimental rhetoric places the narrator Edmonds in a morally indisputable position, which deters potential criticism of her posing as a man and, simultaneously, provides a podium from which to offer a critique of the men around her.

Another intriguing feature of Edmonds' memoir is the narrator's own fluid and ambiguous gender. It is unclear through most of the text whether she is dressed as a man or as a woman and to what extent anyone is aware of her biological sex. Her

¹⁵ Leonard *Daring* 171.

unsexing detracts attention from the shocking decision to pose as a man and the many unseemly situations such a disguise would expose her to. For example, women in camps were considered easily corrupted by the influences of immoral soldiers as well as the harsh material conditions of camp life. The idea of women sharing close quarters with men, perhaps even sharing tents with them also connoted sexual indiscretion, perhaps even prostitution.¹⁶ Jane Schultz argues that "[T]he narrator's ambiguous sexing [in *Soldier, Nurse, and Spy*] helps offset the charge that her male disguises 'unsex' her, assures readers of her hetero-normativity, and perhaps most importantly allows her the liminal and liberating identity of a sexual go-between -- one who defies both gender and sexual categorization" (83). By avoiding a fixed gender and any gendered interactions with others in her narrative, Edmonds avoids audience censure and, in conjunction with her sentimental posture, enables her narrative to claim a voice of authority. Furthermore, as a sexual go-between, Edmonds takes up differently gendered dispositions simultaneously, which diminishes the claims of gender on a given disposition. But, Edmonds' ambiguous gender referents serve another purpose: they de-emphasize gender difference and shift the focus instead to the narrator's abilities. Emphasizing labor and experience over gender send the message that gender should not play a role in deciding one's fitness for a particular duty.

¹⁶ As we have seen in Chapter Two, the image of women in the marketplace connoted women as sexual commodities. Massey notes that prostitution became a wide-spread problem during the war, and was largely attributed to female camp followers and immoral soldiers (262-4). On the other hand, "some female soldiers were even promoted as the ideal of women's sexual purity if they retained their virtue amongst and all-male regiment" (Wheelwright 75).

In *Soldier, Nurse, and Spy*, Edmonds discusses the emotional labor of several types of positions one might occupy in the military: soldier, spy, minister, nurse, and patient. Although the last is arguably not a "job," a key part of a soldier's duty was, when wounded, to be a good patient. In fact, Alice Fahs argues that representations of patients did more cultural work than those of active soldiers, noting that "sentimental literature discussing the hospitalized soldier redefined heroism during the war, moving heroism from the battlefield to hospital" (115). While Edmonds depicts many types of war heroes, she also offers several scenes of brave wounded and dying men. Physically, a patient has little to do other than rest, recuperate, and endure pain. A patient's emotional labor, however, involves a great deal: "bearing patiently all his sufferings" (20), thinking fondly and with "quivering lip" of loved ones at home (usually mother or wife), and facing death fearlessly with the exultant Christian expectation of Heaven. Evoking ideals of Calvinist salvation, the patient was to be "a most noble specimen of the patient, cheerful, suffering soldier" (197). Although all positions in the military, according to Edmonds, ought to be conducted primarily as Christian, the patient, closest to death and also with the time to meditate at length on such things, was the one figure focused on salvation. While ideally, a patient's labor would produce finally a healthy, active soldier, quite often the patient's death was even more productive as it allowed a focus on the emotional labor and sacrifice that produces a war hero. Furthermore, the emotional attention to salvation with its recuperation of emotions such as love and cheerfulness set aside during war, produced a soul cleansed of the corruption of battle, and thus provided symbolic hope for the ultimate salvation of a nation rent and despoiled by war.

Key to a patient's recovery and salvation was the nurse.¹⁷ Edmonds spends some time working in hospitals and in the field. While most field nurses were men, many women worked in military hospitals during the war, and because most women's domestic labor included nursing family members, many women were at least somewhat prepared for hospital work by their experiences in the home. As in home nursing, cheerfulness is key with an extra dose of suppressing disgust. In the hospital, where soldiers stay for long recovery periods, the nurses must attend to their patient's emotional needs much as they would at home. This is the emotional labor of reading and managing others' emotions. In Edmonds' hospital, the nurses arrange the patients by temperament into three groups: the "working," "pleasure," and "pathetic department[s]" (148). The working department requires basic physical relief to cheer them, the pleasure group needs entertaining diversions such as books, and the pathetic department responds well to food and close attentions like being fanned or softly sung to. The hospital nurse, thus, performs many of the same duties that homemakers performed for sick family members, and in terms of emotional labor, she is primarily sympathetic.

¹⁷ Edmonds focuses little on ministers in the field except to critique them. In a particularly pointed attack, she says, "I only wish that there were more of our holy men willing to take up the carnal weapons of warfare, forego the luxuries of home, and, by setting examples worthy of emulation, both in camp and on the battle field, thus strike a fatal blow at the unholy rebellion" (73). In one comment, she takes up two strands of contemporary rhetoric, one which feminizes the ministerial profession (as Ann Douglas has discussed), and one which justifies the war in Christian terms. Edmonds valorizes the good Christian men in the army, regular soldiers who encourage others to pray regularly, preach hope, and provide a good Christian example for others. See for example, her description of Willie B. (14-15).

If the hospital nurse focused primarily on tending the patients' emotional needs, the field nurse tended primarily to their physical needs. Walt Whitman's poem "The Wound-Dresser" emphasizes the gruesome duties of the field nurse with its descriptions of "a refuse pail,/Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood, emptied, and fill'd again" (ll. 32-3) and multifarious wounds: "The crush'd head" (l. 40); "a wound in the side, deep, deep" (l. 50). His work is also stomach-turning and depicted in detail. "From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,/I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter and blood" (ll. 45-6). And another example, "I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet-wound,/cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so sickening, so offensive" (ll. 53-4). In both of these examples, the visual and olfactory imagery stress the difficulty of the work as well as the intense bodily contact that wound-dressing entails. Whitman also, in the past paragraph notes the emotional labor performed, when he notes the soldiers he "Pacif[ies] with soothing hand" (l. 61) and sits by "all the dark night" (l. 62), and those whose "loving arms about this neck have cross'd and rested" (64). His attention to fresh, unhealed wounds also evokes the wounds of war and paints the field nurse as a national figure of healing and Reconstruction.

Edmonds includes some graphic details like those of Whitman's that are not found in other women's texts about hospital nursing, such as Alcott's *Hospital Sketches*, but she also discusses more extensively the emotional labor required. Although nursing is labor most women performed in their own homes, the hospital presents a quite different scene. The number of people, the types of wounds and illnesses, the prevalence of death all distinguish hospital from home sickroom. What's

more, in the hospital, nurses would care for men who were not family members, and as Whitman's poem suggests, their jobs would entail intimate bodily contact with these men, yet nurses somehow avoid any suspicion of vice. Perhaps this is one reason women's accounts of nursing focus less on the physical and more on the emotional elements of the job. If so, Edmonds' willingness to portray wounds is one more sign of her stressing concerns of labor over gender. As well, Edmonds' experiences as a field nurse allow her to distinguish between the two types of work, and one was certainly more physically intimate than the other, yet field nursing offered different emotional challenges, which Edmonds specifically addresses.

While any nurse must tend to patients -- dressing wounds, bathing, feeding, assisting surgical procedures -- the field nurse has additional duties including carrying water to the wounded on the field, digging trenches and laying tarps for temporary hospital shelters, performing triage operations, removing wounded to the hospital area, and more. Edmonds describes the experience as a flurry of activity: "One moment I was ordered to the front with a musket in my hand; the next to mount a horse and carry an order to some general, and very often to take hold of a stretcher with some strong man and carry the wounded from the field" (68). So, in the field, the nurse did whatever was needed.¹⁸

Camp and battlefield conditions also require a different form of emotional labor than one might usually associate with hospital or home nursing. The field nurse

¹⁸ Scholars are unclear about what type of work Edmonds actually performed and suggest that she places it all under the category of field nurse, but her descriptions corroborate other accounts of Civil War nursing such as Whitman's and Alcott's. See also Giesberg 34-51, 94-7; Freemon 41-76; and Kalisch & Kalisch 36-53.

must generate positive emotions: courage, cheerfulness, and hope allowed the nurse to keep working under strenuous and terrifying conditions. The capacity to project these emotions also aided the nurse's ability to soothe patients. But, more importantly, to get any work accomplished in this consistently dangerous environment, fear must be repressed. Occasionally, a field nurse faced increased dangers when sent to nearby, often enemy, homes to purchase necessary supplies, usually food and material for bandages. Edmonds describes several of these incidents, all of which included serious threats to her safety. Her willingness to put herself in danger to help the patients under her care is a repeated theme. During a retreat, the nurses and surgeons had a difficult job to do. Removing patients was not always an option, and once "[o]ne of the noble-hearted nurses refused to leave those helpless men, whom he had taken care of so long, and was taken prisoner" (126). Fear functions to protect an individual by alerting it to a threat. While home nurses must also repress their fear, it has less to do with real physical self-protection. For example, when Ruth Hall's husband is dying, she must repress her fears in order to soothe him, but her fear is that he will die and she will be alone, not that she will be killed. Thus, she makes an emotional sacrifice for her husband's well-being. For the field nurse, however, the repression of fear entails ignoring life-threatening situations to work effectively. The examples Edmonds' provides celebrate the sentimental disposition for self-sacrifice that buttresses all of the field nurse's emotional labor, which is specifically not an emotional but bodily self-sacrifice.

Similarly, personal suffering, either through grief or physical pain, also must be set aside in order to perform one's duties. When Edmonds has suffered a serious

injury from being bitten and kicked by her horse, she proclaims stoutly, "[T]his was no time to groan over a slight kick from a horse, when so many lay around me with shattered limbs and ghastly saber wounds" (104). After steeling herself against her own pain, she must face the even more difficult, but more important, labor of suppressing disgust at horrifying wounds and surgical procedures as well as vistas of mangled, bloody bodies. In this instance, her arm is bound in a sling, and she has no scissors or knife with her, so she must use her teeth to cut away blood-clotted material from soldiers' wounds. She remarks, "the very remembrance of [this] now makes me feel rather uncomfortable in the gastric region; but then there was no unpleasant sensation" (104). Despite the fact that she now feels the physical symptoms of disgust, when focused on her job duties, she somehow avoided that emotion on the field. As with fear, disgust is an individual protective reaction, in this case to something potentially contaminating. To function effectively in the field, Edmonds suggests, requires a turn away from self-protective emotions and attention to communal good, thus enacting the teleology of sentimental subjectivity.

As the title of the book suggests, Edmonds also worked as a spy. Her experiences as a spy illustrate the necessity for a vast repertoire of skills, emotional and otherwise, and demonstrate both a broadened range of women's capabilities and her potential flexibility. While a spy, she must dig trenches, chop wood, prepare food, travel long distances by foot, survive in a swamp, and even nurse a Rebel soldier. Her spy duties require her, at different moments, to perform the emotional labor of other positions, such as patient and nurse. On one of her missions, she crosses enemy lines and is stricken with ague. To add to her misery, her only place of safety is a swamp,

not particularly conducive to overcoming illness. At first, she feels terribly depressed, but eventually, like a good patient, calls to mind scenes that make her more cheerful and hopeful.

When she has recovered enough to move, Edmonds makes her way to an abandoned house, only to find a seriously wounded Rebel soldier inside. She must decide whether to aid the enemy or let him die miserably. She remarks on her dilemma: "It is strange how sickness and disease disarm our antipathy and remove our prejudices" and this man's "sad condition called forth the best feelings of my nature" (87). The Rebel's weakness, as I have argued elsewhere,¹⁹ diminishes his threat, which then activates Edmonds' sympathy, a nurse's emotional labor. This scene anticipates North-South reconciliation narratives made possible by acknowledging these enemies' one commonality -- the wounds of war. Two hours after the soldier dies comfortably and happily, Edmonds wraps him in a winding sheet and falls into a sound sleep. In this reading, the death of the Confederate soldier and Edmonds response to it is noteworthy as it suggests an end of the rebellion and a time of long-awaited, restorative rest.

When Edmonds awakens, she sets about returning to her spy duties. In chapter twelve, Edmonds asks in the chapter's contents heading "Am I a Stoic?" (92) and notes in the text that some readers will charge her with Stoicism for being able to set aside her emotional distress to sleep soundly and return to her duties. While sentimental emotional conventions would expect men to suppress their distress and women to

¹⁹ Parris 41.

sympathize with the dying man, Edmonds is able to combine the gendered expectations to more effectively and humanely handle the situation than she would if working with only one gender's set of dispositions. What's more, her other experiences as a spy refute any charges that she is an unfeeling Stoic and simultaneously explain why she might appear to be so since they establish the need for her to regularly suppress her emotions. She is merely performing the emotional labor her job requires.

Edmonds describes the three key forms of emotional labor performed by a spy and simultaneously their relation to authenticity. First, a spy must generate false emotions to provide both protection and access; second, a spy may express real emotions within a given context when to some degree in sympathy with the enemy; finally, a spy might also express real emotions with false explanation of their origin. If the cross-dresser is a type of spy, Edmonds' descriptions of the spy's emotional labor suggests that dressing as a man entails a range of emotional response, from a performative uptake of masculine dispositions, to a refiguring of feminine dispositions in masculine terms, and finally, to an opportunity to express real emotions shared by all. Yet, her ambiguous gender referents and failure to describe her male disguise sets her spying apart from her cross-dressing and finally suggests no distinction between her "real" self and her male persona.

The principal emotional labor of the spy is repression of any emotion that might expose her disguise or Union sympathies, but it also requires the generation of emotions. Edmonds must repress any anger she feels towards Rebels in order to befriend them or at least gain entry into their ranks. Once in disguise, she must also hide her fear of discovery. For example, when disguised as a black man, her coloring

begins to fade, and although she is alarmed, she must maintain a front of inattention. Because she disguises herself as a variety of characters, from black man to Irish widow, she must also assume the appropriate affect for those types, feigning emotions such as grief.²⁰ Dressed as an Irish widow, Edmonds reddens her eyes and applies a "peppery handkerchief" (94) to approximate the appearance of weeping. Such emotional fakery is clearly manipulative and evokes antebellum paranoia about women's political influence via their manipulations of men, which the sensationalist confidence woman enacts. As the widow, Edmonds convinces a picket guard to let her pass, and perhaps to offset her deceit, she speaks well of the man, noting, gratefully, that her ruse worked only because he was "good-natured" (94). This directly opposes Velasquez, who would deride the man's good nature as a contemptible weakness to indicate her own superiority. Edmonds, instead, sees his goodness as a strength, one which allows her righteous activity for the Union to prevail; furthermore, her sympathetic response to him is indicative of her own "good nature."

Edmonds' good nature and the real emotions it yields can be channeled to serve her needs. Upon meeting with a Confederate major to deliver a package from the Rebel she had nursed, Edmonds comments: "I did not require any black pepper now to assist the lachrymal glands in performing their duty, for the sad mementoes which I had just delivered to the major so forcibly reminded me of the scenes of the past night

²⁰ This emphasis on maintaining a specific emotional front suggests that emotion is a key component of identity performance. This contrasts with Edmonds' treatment of gender distinctions in the text. Perhaps because these characters are raced, Irish and black, she performs a type so wholly other she cannot possibly imagine inhabiting their subject position. Thus, in Edmonds' narrative raced subjects are marked by their emotional expressions whereas white gendered subjects are not.

that I could not refrain from weeping" (96). Clearly not a Stoic response to the man's death, her grief, appropriate for the occasion, is enacted in sentimental terms, as is that of the major who "sobbed like a child" (96). Any individual death, even a Rebel death the book suggests, deserves to be grieved, and an authentic grief unites these enemies. Again, the narrative predicts a future reconciliation, but the war is not yet over, and moments later, the major almost discerns Edmonds' true identity, and she becomes so terrified that she bursts into tears. She contrives a false reason for this authentic outburst, however, to divert his attention and satisfy him as to her disguised identity. His kindness to her and their shared moment of grief causes her to feel some regret for her deceit, saying, "I really felt mean, and for the first time since I had acted in the capacity of spy, I despised myself for . . . betraying him" (96). Because they had shared a moment of sympathy, of shared authentic emotion, Edmonds feels her subsequent deceit as a betrayal of that bond. Once the war is again invoked, however, her conscience is eased as she recognizes the Confederate officer as a foe. This scene highlights the emotional complexity of a Civil War in which sympathetic members of a community are reconfigured in enmity. Emotional manipulation and deceit is part of her mission and her duty to her country, and sympathy must be repressed to effectively battle the other. Because Edmonds both registers regret about her behavior and ascribes it to her occupation, she effectively exonerates herself of this immoral element of spy duty. Unlike Velasquez, all Edmonds' emotional deceit while spying is merely for self-protection and not for self-promotion and she maintains her morality via an authentic and good emotional self. Thus, her deceit in cross-dressing also appears to arise from a desire to serve her country as suggested in the opening quote.

Edmonds thus implicitly addresses the charges of spying as immoral whereas her discussion of soldiers explicitly seeks to counter "the general belief that the army is terribly demoralized in its best estate, and all who go there must inevitably plunge into vice" (41). Edmonds celebrates the soldiers' courage, cheerfulness, and self-sacrifice. Certainly, there were selfish types, she claims, but there were also "the cheerful, happy man," who after having served food for hours not having eaten yet himself, "looked as good-natured as if he had dined on roast beef and plum pudding" (43). There was also the self-sacrificing man "who always made it the first duty, under all circumstances, to look after those who were not able to look after themselves" (43). Finally, Edmonds describes the good Christian soldiers who make an effort to bring spiritual light into the atmosphere of camp. In general, she seems eager to situate the soldiers' activities and duties within the sentimental moral economy.

Once, when she speaks of a childhood friend, killed in battle, in gendered terms: "His heart, though brave, was tender as a woman's" (52). Her effort here is to express, in the gendered language of sentimental rhetoric, the variety of emotions on the battlefield and in the camps. This move serves a dual purpose: it allays fears of soldierly rage, immorality, and murderousness spilling over into non-combat arenas; and, it promotes an image of camp-life emerging from sentimental representations of home, thus marking camp as a suitable milieu for women, and specifically herself. Edmonds' descriptions of camp life that includes a routine of work, meals, and sleep at regular hours as well as "prayer meetings, debating clubs, military lectures, and numerous musical entertainments" (169-70) bear this out as do her interjected stories of good Christians. Edmonds thereby deflects potential criticism of her actions and

simultaneously counters arguments against women laboring in the public sphere. If the most horrendously corrupting environment imagined by the sentimental mind was made safe for women, what was to prevent her from entering other less dangerous fields.

Nonetheless, in her war memoir, Edmonds cannot avoid narrating two less savory incidents in which she is personally involved. In the first scene, she is confronted by a Confederate woman who shoots at Edmonds after giving her supplies. Edmonds shoots back, hitting her hand, apparently acting in self-defense. However, she then ties the wrist of the woman's wounded hand with her halter strap and drags her by the wrist 30 to 50 feet along the ground; finally, Edmonds makes the injured woman walk another mile and a half before attending to her wound and letting the woman share her horse. As in Christian conversion, the woman claims to have been guided by "the evil one" -- "insane" since the death of her husband and brothers, all Confederate soldiers -- and "seemed deeply penitent" (50). Her sentimental references to home and family do not excite Edmonds' sympathy, but her Christian penitence does appeal to Edmonds' disposition for charity. Edmonds responds by telling the woman that she "forgave her fully if she was only truly penitent. Her answer was sobs and tears" (50). The Rebel woman's sentimental outpouring signals her penitence and attendant conversion. Edmonds' shocking and cruel treatment is justified ultimately by the Rebel woman's "conversion to the federal faith" (51).

Edmonds thus acts as a servant of an angry God, intent on punishing the sins of the Rebels and forcing their repentance.²¹ This image parallels the sentimental construction of Union goals expressed most clearly in Julia Ward Howe's poem, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," first published in the *Atlantic* in April 1862. The poem begins, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord" and equates God's arrival with a destructive and cleansing wrath with which he means to punish the Confederates, via the Union army. On a mandate from God, whose "gospel" reads "Let the hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,/ Since God is marching on" (ll. 11-12), the Union army will punish the sins of the Confederates and, finally, as Christ "died to make men holy, [they will] die to make men free,/ While God is marching on" (ll. 19-20). Their battle is one justified by God and parallel to the sacrifice made by Christ to save men from their wickedness. Edmonds contextualizes her surprisingly vicious individual actions within the broader goals of the Union army and the army's enforcement of Christian justice.

In another instance of punishment harder to justify than others, Edmonds shoots a man in the face. While spying in Rebel territory, she is conscripted into the Confederate army by a Captain Logan. She describes him as handsome and newly married "to a brilliant widow whose husband had been killed in the rebel army a few months before" (188). Captain Logan taunts Edmonds that she eventually would be grateful to him for conscripting her when she had "steeped her saber in Yankee blood and driven the vandals from [Southern] soil" (190). Edmonds' angry reaction is only

²¹ Elizabeth Young suggests, "By fighting against the Confederacy, Edmonds gets to wage her own war against female civility" (152).

barely implied at the time but subsequently borne out by her actions. When their troops march into battle, Edmonds moves quickly to the Union side as soon as she recognizes her Federal unit. Once there, she is "brought face to face with my rebel captain, to whom I owed such a debt of gratitude. Thinking this would be a good time to cancel all obligations in that direction, I discharged the contents of my pistol in his face" (190). Because her action occurs on the battlefield and is primed by Logan's war-mongering rhetoric, it seems martially justified, as does her anger. War allows, even demands of a soldier, certain emotions like anger. Without a righteous rage at the Confederacy and all it stood for, Union soldiers would be ineffectual on the battlefield.

When Edmonds adds a level of cruelty to this shooting, she relates it to the more general sinfulness of the South, which then serves as further justification of her act. She explains that his "face was very much disfigured, a part of his nose and nearly half of his upper lip being shot away"; she then remarks caustically, "I was sorry, for the graceful curve of his mustache was sadly spoiled, and the happy bride of the previous morning would no longer rejoice in the beauty of that manly face and exquisite mustache of which she seemed so proud, and which had captivated her heart ere she had been three months a widow" (191). Invoking Logan's almost dandified beauty and his wife's improper behavior in marrying too soon, Edmonds shoots Logan, she implies, not only to punish him for conscripting her, but also to punish Logan for his unseasonable marriage and his wife for her frivolous and selfish decision to marry him well before her period of mourning had ended. Furthermore, as her depictions play on Northern stereotypes of the frivolous, self-centered Southern belle and

gentleman in the second instance and the vicious Rebel woman in the first,²² they effectively engage Union war rhetoric of punishing the wicked South in hopes of reforming it. Constructing her actions in each of these scenarios as punishments rather than revenge insists on her own and the North's righteousness. Even though her rage is socially oriented, it is a big step for a woman to claim God's wrath as her own power. As we have seen in the *The Wide, Wide World*, only men hold that power in the sentimental habitus. The war, however, prioritizes Union or Confederate loyalties as the primary signifier of identity so that in this book, Edmonds' Unionism is more important than her gender.

Thus, Edmonds' narrative presents a case for the primacy of labor rather than gender as what defines the laborer. Emotional conventions are shaped by particular jobs and social roles and gender does not influence one's capacity to perform either the physical or the emotional labor required. Her use of sentimentalism makes a space for women in male-dominated realms by portraying the types of virtue that thrive in these places. Her inclusion of incredibly violent examples of her own behavior, especially, push this point. Although a female, her anger is justified as long as it promotes the Union cause. There's a collective spirit in holy punishment rather than individual revenge that keeps the sentimental from prompting questions about Edmonds' gender or, more importantly, about the morality and legitimacy of the war itself.

Like Edmonds, Southworth claims a place for and acknowledges the importance of anger and other self-oriented emotions, but ultimately in the name of

²² See Silber's "Intemperate Men" for discussion of these types.

self-sacrifice for the community the cause. Because Southworth is more explicitly feminist than Edmonds, however, she is more bound by constructions of "woman." Even in twentieth-century feminist theory, the unwillingness to let go of the category that effects one's oppression is vexing. Thus, while Edmonds relies heavily on sentimental discourse to justify her actions, Southworth conflates sentimentalism with feminine dispositions and thus finds women's potential power in the transgressive sensational.

E.D.E.N. Southworth, best known in our era for her humorous sensational tale *The Hidden Hand; or, Capitola the Madcap* (1859), was one of the most popular writers of her time, publishing at least 92 books over the second half of the nineteenth century. Southworth was no stranger to issues of women's labor; she began writing to support herself and her children when her husband deserted her. By the time she wrote *Britomarte, the Man-Hater* -- serialized in Peterson's (year?) and subsequently published as two novels *Fair Play; or, the Test of the Lone Isle* (1868) and *How He Won Her* (1869) -- she had a well-established popularity and reputation for sensational renderings of thrilling tales of adventure and horror, tempered by a sentimental sensibility.

The *Britomarte* books follow four young female schoolmates from their graduation through their various experiences directly preceding and during the Civil War. The main character Britomarte²³ is an avowed "man-hater" whose horrifying

²³ Britomart is Spenser's militant female knight in *The Faerie Queene*. Like Southworth's Britomarte, the original legendary figure begins her military quest to rescue her lover Artegall, saves a woman from an enchanter, fights and wins many battles, and eventually marries Artegall.

experiences with the men in her family have made her a strong and vocal advocate of women's rights. Most of the action of the first volume, *Fair Play*, centers on Britomarte's shipwreck and consequent education in how to live with a man (her best friend's brother Justin) on a desert island. Her exploits overlap with those of her friends Erminie, Elfrida, and Alberta, who spend their time falling in love and either refusing marriage or eloping while they define their positions in the impending war, thereby mapping a gender war onto the country's larger Civil War. Because they live in a border region (Washington and Virginia), the side they choose in the war becomes a particularly difficult and divisive issue.²⁴

The women all have at least one love interest that Southworth uses to shape each woman's relation to the war and to metaphorically negotiate Reconstruction.²⁵ Yet, as Karen Tracey argues, the Civil War also offers Southworth the perfect ground from which to claim better opportunities and rights for women because it "shatters the fragile, and artificial, barriers that had been rhetorically constructed between the public and the private world, the political and the domestic sphere. No one could

²⁴ Elizabeth Young argues that for Elizabeth Keckley, "the Civil War border state is an implicit metaphoric frame for ambiguities of class, race, and the internal tensions of civility" (168) and that for Velazquez, this includes gender. In Southworth's novel, the border functions in much the same way, but the border itself is ambiguous. Borders, mainly highlighted during interactions in liminal spaces such as the battlefield or guerrilla territory, indicate here the mutable and complex political and ideological differences between the North and South.

²⁵ An excellent and thorough discussion of this can be found in Karen Tracey's *Plots and Proposals* in which she examines Southworth's use of the double proposal plot to insist, "while women do indeed love passionately, they may be at least as passionate about their political convictions" (133). For discussion of representations of love and marriage in re-imagining a unified nation after the war, see Nina Silber's *The Romance of Reunion*.

pretend any longer that the domestic space could be protected from the rough male world" (133). Indeed, the women in the *Britomarte* series survive without, and sometimes in spite of, their male "protectors" and reject their lovers as often as they choose them. Although the second volume concludes the series with a triple marriage (one of the women has died), the narrative seeks, above all, to claim for women the agency in marriage and in society that law denies them. The ending reincorporates the transgressive heroine into the sentimental, but also attempts to reconcile the war's competing discourses of national sovereignty and individual rights. If the notion of individual rights fuels Britomarte's actions through much of the novel, her concerns for national sovereignty are resolved by her ultimate submission to Justin once he has proved a worthy and benevolent sovereign.

In the first chapter of *Fair Play*, Southworth introduces Britomarte, who "felt and made you feel, that if *her* earnest soul had been clothed with the form of a man, she would have been one to govern the minds of men and guide the fortunes of nations; or, woman as she was, if law and custom had allowed her freer action and a fairer field, she would have influenced the progress of humanity and filled a place in history" (28-9). The split between character and body implies that gender may mark one's body but not one's personal potential; in addition, it protests the limitations places on female bodies. *How He Won Her* allows Britomarte to fulfill her personal destiny to some degree as she takes on the guise of a man to serve as a soldier. In this second volume, Britomarte's friends also uniquely contribute to wartime society -- nursing, enlisting, and following their loved ones to war. With the key male characters preoccupied with war duties, the women learn to protect and provide for themselves,

and quite often, the men in their lives. They travel beyond the home, laboring in a variety of settings from hospital to guerrilla camp to battlefield. Through these characters and their varied choices of war service, Southworth identifies a range of women's temperaments and capabilities.

As in most sentimental novels, the characters are differentiated fundamentally by their temperaments, and in this two-volume novel, the characters' different temperaments in turn determine the form of labor they engage in for the war effort. Some of the duties described are those laid out by Edmonds, but Southworth offers more descriptions of specifically women's labor. Her attention to the labor these women perform outside the home as well as the variety of labor to which their individual temperaments suits them begins to break down the universalizing tendencies of domestic ideology, which would paint all women in the model of Ellen Montgomery tending to delicate home duties with a docile and sober cheerfulness. Southworth expands on these sentimental prescriptions of womanhood in part by relying on sensationalism and the greater repertoire of emotions and actions it affords. However, as with the triple marriage that concludes the novel, all sensational practices are eventually tempered if not entirely subsumed by the sentimental.

Each of the main female characters engages in both sensational and sentimental practices. Alberta possesses the dispositions of passionate love and self-sacrifice, a mixture of sensational passion and sentimental benevolence. Her consuming love for the Confederate guerrilla leader, Corsoni, carries her along through an assortment of seedy hideouts where she creates a "home" for her lover and herself. Throughout the book, Southworth stresses Alberta's sacrifice of a comfortable,

pampered life to follow Corsoni into battle as well as Alberta's ability to maintain her refinement in such coarse settings. Although her sensational passion has driven her away from her safe home, and into the masculine field of violence and corruption, Alberta still fulfills the duties of good, sentimental wife, never complaining about her situation and providing Corsoni an emotional haven from the war. In the end, she literally sacrifices her life for him, shielding him from a bullet. Proving the strength and reciprocity of their love, the bullet has shot straight through Alberta and pierced Corsoni's heart as well. Their passion for each other rather than the cause involves them in the Confederacy and makes their sacrifice and misguided work for the Confederacy tragic. All Alberta's sacrifice, both her emotional and physical labor, has been in vain because it was guided by individual rather than communal passion.

Erminie represents the ideal qualities all sentimental heroines strive for: self-sacrifice, compassion, moral superiority, quiet suffering, and emotional self-control. Nursing is the appropriate labor for someone with these qualities, as is guarding the home front while her father and brother are at war. Erminie's decision to work as a nurse is an extension of her role as a good daughter and sister as she claims to nurse to provide a substitute female family member to soothe the homesick wounded soldiers [get cite]. Erminie's story also enacts a common sentimental plot, recognizable to contemporary audiences from *St. Elmo*, a very popular Southern sentimental novel in which the virtuous heroine quashes her pain and love for a scoundrel, sublimating with work, until he redeems himself and proves worthy of her love. Erminie's headstrong love interest chooses the Confederacy, and she refuses him, throwing herself into her nursing.

The one sensational scene in her plotline is her lover Eastworth's ghostly visitation at her deathbed. He visits as a "ghost" because if anyone were to find him, a Confederate soldier in Union territory, he would be taken prisoner. But, his ghostly appearance is preserved in the narrative as an unexplained mystery until late in the novel. On the one hand, his visitation enacts the return of the repressed -- Erminie still loves him although she has renounced him, and her passion for him lingers menacingly beneath her sober cheerfulness, suggesting the negative potential of quiet suffering. On the other hand, his love for her, as evidenced by his risking capture to see her, is potentially strong enough to redeem him. And, in fact, by the end of the novel, Eastworth recognizes through her love how he has "sinned" and eventually does repent and Erminie sets aside her work and marries him. Erminie's physical and emotional labor thus serves her male relatives and her country, and simultaneously enables her to sublimate her grief and love. Eastworth has also performed the emotional labor of penitence, which includes "grief, pain, remorse" (496). Together, their emotional labor has produced Eastworth's conversion and the couple's reconciliation, which "was but a forerunner of a deeper and broader reconciliation to come" (496). The North's strength and socially oriented disposition will eventually win over and recuperate the obstinate individualistic South.

The less typically sentimental characters Elfrida and Britomarte have much in common, but Britomarte shines as the more noble of the two while Elfie infuses the novel with humor. Elfrida, or Elfie, has more typically male passions and reminds the reader of *The Hidden Hand's* delightful heroine, Capitola Black. Elfie readily displays anger and indignance, and is brave, vengeful, impulsive, and adventurous. She is a

vocal proponent of various causes, "lively" and "witty," but also "fickle" (31). Elfie's behavior generally springs from self-oriented motivations, and her willfulness gets her into trouble. For example, she decides to have a picnic near the enemy lines because she is bored and she wants to prove her valor. During the picnic, she is kidnapped by her former lover Albert (Alberta's brother and a member of Corsoni's gang), and others in the picnic party are injured. Elfie's willfulness makes trouble for others and worries people unnecessarily, thus indicating the destructive potential of her selfishness. The incident also points up her passion. During her captivity, she viciously attacks Albert, tearing at his ears, punching him, railing at him. But her passionate anger, aroused for self-protection, is treated somewhat humorously with the image of a tiny elfin creature thrashing uselessly at a giant. So while Elfie's indignant spunk arouses some respect for her bravery, she never poses a real threat.

While Britomarte also exhibits anger, courage, and indignance, and sees much more adventure than Elfie, her self-control and sense of duty strongly distinguish her temperament from Elfie's puckish nature. But, Britomarte's sobriety and intensity make her a force to reckon with. Britomarte shares Erminie's sentimental qualities of compassion, cheerfulness, and moral superiority, which temper her passions. She also possesses Alberta's romantic devotion, yet Southworth steers clear for the most part from defining Britomarte through self-sacrifice. Instead, her disposition for sacrifice is figured as a keen commitment to a righteous cause: "Proud, brave, just, ardent, earnest, enthusiastic, she was capable of the most sublime self-devotion, of achieving or enduring to the utmost in the cause of right" (*FP* 29). Like Elfie, Britomarte is generally outspoken, but usually with a conviction that Elfie lacks.

Elfie's martial passions suit her to the soldierly life, and she does manage to get herself drafted by using her middle name "Sidney." She then undertakes a strict training regimen and becomes quite adept at soldierly maneuvers. Yet, when she finally goes to enlist, she doesn't disguise her gender and is forthcoming about her plans; the draft board, predictably, refuse to enlist a woman despite her logical arguments. Britomarte, however, successfully enlists because she disguises herself as a man. Elfie's attempt to enlist suggests that such desires were not anomalous and re-emphasizes the foolishness of judging someone's passion and ability and limiting their opportunities based on gender. Britomarte's success in light of Elfie's failure also serves to recommend her actions -- in effect, to authorize Britomarte's dissimulation.

Early on in *Fair Play*, we discover that Britomarte, like Alcott's sensationalist characters, has a knack for disguise and dramatic emotional expression. As Britomarte reads poetry to a group of friends, "she left herself and entered, mind, body, soul, and spirit, into the thought, passion, or pathos of her subject. The tones of her voice, the expression of her countenance, changed naturally with the changing emotion of her theme" (110). Sympathy, the height of sentimental capacity, energizes Britomarte's performance, and her "natural" shift of emotional expression indicates an authenticity in her theatricality rather than dissimulation and deceit.²⁶ In addition, her masculine disguise also recalls the narrator's earlier suggestion that Britomarte's nature evinced a capacity for greatness that was limited only by gendered social restrictions. Her

²⁶ Alcott's thrillers, conversely feature deceitful and dangerous women who gain power over others via their ability to manipulate their own and others' emotions. Even in *Work*, Christie finds her dramatic abilities potentially dangerous, partially because of the power it allows her to wield over others.

disguise then appears to provide the opportunity to evade those restrictions and fulfill her destiny. Thus, the narrative initiates the approval of Britomarte's various disguises and deceptions.²⁷ Unlike Velasquez, the confidence woman who merely dissimulates, there is something authentic in Britomarte's theatrics, and her true character is one that transcends gender conventions. Britomarte authentically experiences the emotions prescribed by her masculine role and thus contests the artificiality of her cross-dressing. Dressing as a man, in fact, provides Britomarte the opportunity to experience and express latent emotions, to fully realize her emotional potential.

Karen Halttunen, speaking of Louisa May Alcott's propensity for acting, argues that dramatic expression in the nineteenth-century home could act as an emotional outlet for passions likely to disrupt the peaceful family order and thereby enabled emotional self-control to reign in one's daily life.²⁸ Dramatic expression, then, is a form of emotional labor that engages the transgressive sensationalist dispositions within a contained and controlled space. Dangerous emotions remained on the stage (be it in the theatre or parlor) or in stories further bounded by the limitations of the script or narrative. When Southworth portrays Britomarte's cross-dressing as plausible in consideration of her acting ability, she safely contains her sensational practice to a confined sphere, in this case the theatre of war. In addition, Britomarte's uptake of masculine dispositions is activated by her need to sublimate her love for Justin, which she experiences as a violent and frightening emotional chaos.

²⁷ Britomarte, herself, backs up this reading when she regrets the deceit her spying requires (*How He Won Her* 203; 287).

²⁸ Halttunen "Domestic Drama" (245-6).

While stranded on a desert island with Justin in volume one, Britomarte engages in homemaking duties and finds she cannot exist all alone and sometimes needs Justin to help with heavier duties. In the process, she learns that not all men are beasts and falls in love with Justin, yet she refuses to marry him because she firmly believes marriage is equivalent to slavery for women. Her passion for him threatens her personal world order, but she nevertheless seeks to maintain a friendship with him. At the opening of volume two, when they have managed to return home, Justin is called to war, and Britomarte must face separation from him. He asks her to marry him, suggesting that knowing she loved him would make him more ready to face battle. Britomarte tells Justin, "I could stand at your side -- your brother-in-arms -- on the day of battle!" (73), but not as his wife. Britomarte will only consider their relationship as a brotherhood of equals, a view of social relations based on the premises of democracy, and as such, the only official bond possible is as individual citizens united for the greater cause of the nation. She refuses marriage, saying, "Love of your country should be all sufficient to nerve your arm, Justin" (73), effectively critiquing his notions of soldierly and marital duty at once. Soldiers should not fight, she suggests, to protect their loved ones, but instead to protect their country. Neither should husbands see their role as protector of a weaker being but as a member in an equal partnership. Britomarte thus also refuses the sentimental disposition for feminine self-sacrifice, which asks her to give up her independence and her rights for one man; however, she is willing to sacrifice for the more worthy cause of war. In Civil War literature, women make an emotional sacrifice by giving up their loved ones while men make a physical sacrifice in giving. This formulation parallels the gendering of

labor whereby women perform emotionally based labor, such as childcare, while men perform physical labor. Britomarte's refusal to take the feminine role asserts her willingness to perform physical labor and offer a physical sacrifice to a greater cause. In the process of taking on this role, she will prove that even the most masculine physical labor entails a lot of emotional labor.

Despite her stoic response to Justin, as soon as he leaves she repents not marrying him and breaks down in a sentimental anguish of tears. She finds, ironically, that life without Justin is suffocating and unbearable; if she was his wife, she could be with him, like other wives who become camp followers to stay with their husbands. Yet, Britomarte finds an alternative to marriage as she whips her despair into a strange blend of marital and martial passion. She realizes that she can disguise herself as a man and stay with Justin "as his brother, for as his brother she might be beside him on the battlefield, in the midst of an engagement, when shot and shell were flying fastest, in the thickest carnage, where, as his wife, she would never be allowed to appear" (79). Her yearning for Justin merges with a desire to see battle, but is quickly subsumed by her desire to "be to him more than wife, sister, brother had ever been to a man before," to be in effect all of them in one person, "to be his brother-in-arms, his inseparable companion, his shadow, his shield, his guardian angel" (79). She cannot simply be his brother and go adventuring as her ideal demands; she must also take on the traditional duties of sister and wife. Britomarte understands the socially and legally enforced male/female relation as that of master and slave, and she sees the ideal relation as one of mutuality. Of course, as a woman, to attain mutuality requires she maintain her feminine dispositions while adopting additionally the masculine.

Ironically, she takes on the protector role that she refused to grant Justin, perhaps to show that woman can do it better, and her martial passions appear to arise from her marital passions. Thus, although the sensational values of adventure, passion, and intrigue are tempered by the sentimental values of self-sacrifice, self-control, and domesticity, the sentimental also authors and authorizes Britomarte's transformation into a soldier.

Finally, her decision to disguise herself brings about a "wonderful calmness and resolution that settle[s] her stormy features into stillness" (80). The threat of disruption to Britomarte's sense of peace and order is allayed by her dramatic expression in two ways. First, her theatrical abilities combine with her sentimental sense of self-sacrifice to allow her to pursue and protect Justin. Second, her dramatic sensibilities enable her to take on more than one role; if she must play the wife and sister, she will also play the brother and soldier. However, because the narrator has established that Britomarte's emotional experience of a role is authentic, her conduct as brother, soldier, sister, and wife does not appear performative; instead, it arises from Britomarte's "natural" emotional capacities. In other words, her emotional character has a broad capacity for both masculine and feminine dispositions, and thus male and female social roles and their concomitant duties.

However, Britomarte's emotional capacity exists in tension with her "man-hating" style of feminism, which rests on a clear distinction between the sexes. Her flexibility in performing a variety of duties does not cohere to fluidity between

genders.²⁹ Britomarte does not wish to become a man, and she remains pretty firmly a "man-hater" through most of the text. Once she has enlisted, the narrator critiques the men Britomarte labors with and consistently shows Britomarte to be more competent and more qualified for the work of soldiering, often because of her feminine dispositions. For example, on a dangerous, long, and dark ride through guerrilla territory, Britomarte (as Wing) rides with Justin and his other orderly, Hay. Hay grumbles about the distance while Wing performs the sentimental feminine emotional labor of cheering him up by pointing out the brightness of the stars and "cheerfully" saying "not more than twenty miles now" (213). In this scene, Britomarte proves a better soldier than Hay. Because she is uncomplaining and concerned with the welfare of her fellow soldiers, she makes everyone more submissive to the conditions of their labor and thus more prepared for duty.

Britomarte also undertakes the emotional labor of a soldier in the appropriate circumstances. When Wing has been promoted to captain for rescuing Justin, the men s/he takes charge of jokingly question Wing's gender as a symbol of his ability. "'Looks like a girl in boy's clothes!' grumbled Corporal Bang. 'Boy? Girl? Why he is a mere infant!' exclaimed Corporal West" (367). Questioning Wing's gender finally leads to an ungendering of infantilization,³⁰ which displays the utmost doubtfulness

²⁹ Mary Ryan argues that a sexual division of labor "allotted domestic affairs exclusively to woman and granted her a distinct temperament appropriate to her new sphere" but also included "ambitions to imperial moral power" with which "female authors conspired to usurp the cultural authority of patriarchs" (*Empire* 33).

³⁰ In the nineteenth-century, boys and girls were not treated or dressed differently until they passed out of "infancy," around age six (Rotundo 32).

about Wing's abilities to even protect himself. Hay comes to Wing's defense, arguing that unlike some cowardly officers, Wing "won't *drive* you like sheep, but *lead* you like men" (368). In the ensuing combat, Wing has a moment of fear, which s/he instantly suppresses, and displays the courage necessary to lead the soldiers, riding in front of them through a number of devastating charges that eventually win them the battle. Here, her masculine disposition dominates the feminine, but only on the battlefield. Masculine aggression poses a serious social threat that must be contained within the field of war.

After the fight, the narrator offers a critique of a Major who fails to practice masculinity in the appropriate space. While Wing is called an "angel of destruction" during the battle, "Wing's taste was more for fighting than for destruction, and naturally he had taken the town, but hesitated to burn it" (371-72). Wing, sympathetically, tries to save the dwellings of the town but cannot find a way to do so and still destroy the saltpeter works (a strategic necessity), and so becomes resigned to the fact that the city must be burnt. The Major, conversely, refuses to fight, hanging back until it is time to destroy the city. His actions justify Wing's aggression for a cause and condemn aggression beyond those bounds. The explicit critique of soldiers bent on pure destruction beyond combat, which extends in this scene to burning homes, literalizes Britomarte's critique of men's destruction of women's lives. Once aligned with the critique of soldiers, Britomarte's promise to protect Justin takes on added significance. Certainly, she plans to shield Justin from Confederate soldiers, but also, perhaps by her presence on the battlefield and in the camps, to shield him from the negative masculine influence of those environments which evokes the specter of

women's moral superiority. Britomarte's promise to protect Justin recalls her promise to his sister in *Fair Play*: "I shall love you truly all your life and shield you carefully from all men" (47). Again in tension with this assertion of gender difference, Britomarte's own activation of masculine emotional qualities, such as fearlessness and aggression, and subsequent return to a feminine distaste for destruction claims a need for a flexible emotionality based not in gender but in the appropriate emotional labor for given situations.

Significant to Britomarte's vexed relationship with gender, the reader does not witness Britomarte transform into Wing, nor does Southworth give more than a few hints as to Britomarte's whereabouts or Wing's true identity until her unveiling in Chapter Forty. Wing displays all the qualities and emotions necessary to perform the duties of a soldier and a spy -- independence, courage, loyalty, composure, and ingenuity -- qualities generally assigned to the masculine dispositions. Yet, she also quite often defers to sentimental feminine dispositions for cheerfulness, sympathy, grief, and self-sacrifice. The narrator and other soldiers comment on Wing's female qualities, which operates narratively as clues to Wing's true identity, suggesting an intrinsic emotional distinction based on gender. Yet, Southworth's refusal to identify Wing as Britomarte, a function of the sensational plot development, insists on his male gender, thereby inaugurating a reconsideration of masculinity which serves as a complementary commentary to Britomarte's explicit critique of men. Britomarte's cross-dressing allows her to inform on revise masculinity by tempering it with feminine dispositions.

The narrative engages in a critique of masculinity in order to prompt a simultaneous reconsideration of femininity. Although Britomarte is the heroine, the other key female characters figure significantly in the narrative, and their diverse experiences and temperaments argue for an understanding of emotionality that transcends strict gendered binarism, if not gender categorization altogether. The women characters' temperaments suit them to particular forms of labor, but the emotional labor required by different jobs does not reduce to a gendered division. As the distinction between Elfie and Britomarte shows, (masculine) martial passions are not sufficient to make a good soldier. Britomarte's successes in the field, just as Erminie's successes in the hospital, substantiate the novel's support of women's rights, indicating that women have the capacity to labor outside the home and to excel in positions formerly entrusted to men.

Cross-dressing allows the women in these narratives to critique both masculinity and femininity.

By engaging in the sentimental, the authors emphasize emotional labor. Cross-dressing demands adherence to the emotional conventions of the masculine dispositions. Rather than fully reifying gender categories, however, this emotional labor stresses the emotional adaptability of the cross-dressers, which allows them to expose the emotionally gendered restrictions on women's labor in the sentimental habitus. Yet, a tension remains between sentimental constructions of women as emotionally and morally superior and emerging ungendered notions of emotion. Engaged in a distinctly feminist project, Southworth struggles most with this tension since her critique requires her to retain the category of "woman." Velasquez, on the

other hand, seeks to set herself above all, regardless of gender and her ability to cross gender boundaries are way for her to critique masculinity, femininity, and humanity while asserting her singular superiority. Edmonds' memoir, published during the war, profits from the primacy of sectional identity over gendered identity that war prompts, which allows her to effectively elide gender distinctions in her narrative and to critique behaviors largely unmediated by gender.

Nonetheless, the emotional labor performed by each of these women in battle indicates that there are no essentially gendered emotions or jobs. Although Velasquez portrays herself as an exceptional case, her experience nonetheless demonstrates a woman's capacity to perform many types of labor and feel many different emotions. Edmonds' and Southworth's characters have more distinctly gendered responses at times, but their emotional labor as soldiers and spies is performed with relatively "natural" ease. The elisions of gender in Edmonds's narrative focuses attention on the way work conditions and duties determine emotional response. Southworth's preservation of gender difference, on the other hand, causes her to make fine distinctions between different women's and men's emotional characters so that she finally inverts Edmonds structure and emphasizes the importance of temperament in suiting one to a particular job.

Thus, wartime emotional labor must also harness individualistic emotions to a larger communally oriented cause to produce people capable of fighting but with their rage and aggression directed not toward personal gain but rather for a communal good, which makes these potentially destructive emotions both less threatening and more contained. Asserting a ready postwar assimilability was an important cultural

contribution of Reconstruction-era texts, and a key feature of the cross-dressing soldier, whose ability to balance masculine and feminine dispositions produces an emotional flexibility that facilitates this wartime emotional labor.

Finally, by deploying both sensationalism and sentimentalism the texts engage in a more or less counter-hegemonic discourse by blending the dispositions for self-orientation (sensational) and social orientation (sentimental). When these cross-dressing soldiers unify the passions of rage and revenge with the affections of sympathy and self-sacrifice, they forge the ideal emotional framework of a soldier.

Velasquez, although predominantly self-oriented, nonetheless serves the sentimental habitus by confirming the immorality and danger produced by transgression. Writing from a sentimental social orientation, conversely, offers Edmonds and Southworth the opportunity to transgress safely. Similarly, these two texts assert the ability of both the emotionally flexible cross-dressers and the ideal soldier to assimilate into post-war society whereas Velasquez represents the threatening emotional forces the war has released and, specifically, the threat still posed by the South at the end of Reconstruction.

Chapter 4**"Suffering for a Decent Dress": Entitlement and Extravagance in *Behind the Scenes***

On December 17, 1867, two years after her husband's assassination, Mary Todd Lincoln wrote to her former White House modiste and confidante, Elizabeth Keckley, complaining, "As *influence* has passed away from me with my husband, my slightest act is misinterpreted. . . . I am positively suffering for a decent dress. I see Mr. A and *some recent* visitors eyeing my clothing askance" (363, emphasis in original). Like the cross-dressers in the previous chapter, Mary Lincoln understood the social power of clothing although her dress consisted of extravagant gowns of silk and lace rather than army uniforms. Mary Lincoln had been pampered her whole life and developed a sense of entitlement that culminated in her tenure as First Lady, during which period she had come to understand her personal display as a sign of her personal influence. When her husband was assassinated, she quickly lost her status and had little income thanks to the small Congressional appropriation and delays in the settlement of President Lincoln's estate. Unfortunately, she also faced monstrous debt from expenditures for fashionable display she had deemed suitable to her position as First Lady.

The symbolic capital drained from her extravagant wardrobe, Lincoln sought to exchange her clothing for economic capital. It was a common practice for many women to sell their old clothes, but Mary Lincoln's approach involved deceit, attempted blackmail, and a just barely averted touring exhibition of the clothing.

Partly due to her celebrity as the former First Lady, Lincoln's failed efforts to sell her clothes brought her public shame and humiliation through numerous scathing newspaper accounts of what became known as the "Old Clothes Scandal." The letter to Keckley cited above was written in the midst of the scandal when Mary Lincoln still struggled to assert her position and still clung to the equation of sartorial display with power.

While newspaper articles about the Old Clothes Scandal paint a highly unflattering portrait of Mrs. Lincoln, *Behind the Scenes: or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*, a memoir published in 1868, more thoroughly exposes the actions and motivations of Mary Lincoln. Framed as an effort to "vindicate" Mrs. Lincoln's actions in the eyes of the offended public, the tell-all memoir published by her dressmaker and confidante, Elizabeth Keckley, reveals in more detail than any newspaper article Mary Lincoln's emotionally overwrought and self-absorbed personality alongside her enormous debt, at least as high as \$27,000.¹ Keckley's book, *Behind the Scenes*, highlights both the emotional and financial difficulties Mrs. Lincoln's public role posed, and suggests that selling her clothes was the only way she could make enough money to pay her debts. Keckley also wished to clear concerns about her part in the scandal. On the contrary, *Behind the Scenes* sparked several

¹ Fleischner notes that Mary Lincoln was unsure of the full amount of her debt, but at the time of her husband's death, she told Keckley that she owed \$27,000 (291). In *Behind the Scenes*, Keckley estimates Lincoln's debt to be as high as \$70,000 (204), an amount Mary Lincoln adamantly denies in a letter to her friend Rhoda White written after the publication of *Behind the Scenes* (Turner & Turner 476).

scathing newspaper commentaries along with a particularly nasty racist parody of the book, and people viewed her exposure of Mrs. Lincoln as a betrayal.²

Keckley claims her literary labor is conducted to "place Mrs. Lincoln in a better light before the world" (xiv), and to some degree, it provides insight into Lincoln's difficult situation that could evoke sympathy. On the other hand, her portrayal of Lincoln, particularly in relation to herself, serves more to valorize her own character at the expense of her employer's. In doing so, Keckley engages in *la perruque*, "the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer" (Certeau 25). Michel de Certeau refers to *la perruque* as an "economic *diversion* [that is essentially] the return of a sociopolitical ethics into an economic system" (27, emphasis in original). Keckley wrote her book while working unpaid for Mrs. Lincoln to sell the used clothing in New York. The final pages find Keckley proclaiming, "The labor of a lifetime has brought me nothing in a pecuniary way. . . . If poverty did not weigh me down as it does, I would not now be toiling by day with my needle, and writing by night, in the plain little room on the fourth floor of No. 14 Carroll Place" (330). Keckley thus establishes her writing as an economic necessity, the memoir as an ethical intervention in the sociopolitical inequalities that negated the economic worth of her labor, labor that supported Mary Lincoln's privilege.

Keckley's *perruque* depends on her deployment of a variety of literary strategies that will highlight her own virtue while emphasizing the story of Mary

² The very title of this parody -- *Behind the Seams; By a Nigger Woman who Took in Work from Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Davis* -- indicates a desire to keep Keckley in a positions of subservience via her labor. She is reduced to a faceless raced laborer.

Lincoln. The book follows a fairly chronological structure with the majority of the text accounting for Keckley's time working in the White House. The first three chapters comprise Keckley's experiences as a slave, and the next two discuss her start in the dressmaking business and introduction to politicians' wives in Washington. The following seven chapters describe the trials of the Lincoln family while in the White House, discussing relations with other politicians, the difficulties of leading during wartime, Mary Lincoln's activities as First Lady, and Lincoln family dynamics. Keckley also provides occasional references to her own activities during the period, but her focus is the Lincolns. This section ends with President Lincoln's assassination and the family's departure from the White House. The next two chapters seem odd. In the first, Keckley tries to dispel the negative stories about the Lincoln marriage, first introduced in William Herndon's biographical lectures on the President³ by describing Abraham Lincoln's and Stephen Douglas' simultaneous courting of Mary Todd. The second of these chapters, the book's penultimate chapter, depicts Keckley's post-war reunion with her former owners, the Garlands. The final chapter, "The Secret History of Mrs. Lincoln's Wardrobe in New York," retells the story of the Old Clothes Scandal from the inside. Finally, the book concludes with an Appendix containing "Letters from Mrs. Lincoln to Mrs. Keckley." Each chapter assembles an assortment of seemingly random elements: brief scenes with detailed conversations, anecdotes,

³ Herndon was Lincoln's Springfield law partner and gave one lecture in particular detailing Lincoln's love for Ann Rutledge. On the Herndon lectures, see Fleischner 301-03.

observations of the political news of the day, sentimental descriptions and explanations, as well as the occasional excerpted letter or document.

Part slave narrative, part sentimental novel, part memoir, part celebrity exposé, *Behind the Scenes* presents a difficult task for the literary critic. Many have effectively approached the text in terms of African American autobiography, discussing its representation of African American citizens in the Reconstruction era.⁴ Others have worked to make sense of the erratic narrative structure that throughout the book packs several seemingly unrelated events into one chapter. Carolyn Sorisio astutely merges these scholarly efforts by arguing that the awkwardly juxtaposed scenes allow Keckley to subtly compare herself with various white characters. In this comparison, Keckley presents herself as having superior gentility, for which she claims respect, but she also specifically exposes Mary Lincoln's "false gentility" (Sorisio 27). I want to extend Sorisio's insightful treatment of the text to argue that Keckley employs recognizable tropes and character types of a value-laden sentimental literary discourse to create a hierarchized cast of characters judged by sentimental standards of virtue, figuring herself in roles ranging from the standard sentimental heroine to beloved mother. The book also draws on sentimental fiction's negative characterizations of fashionable women, which serve to fuse Mary Lincoln's emotional and financial excesses and to depict them as immoral.⁵ Keckley thereby portrays herself as performing the

⁴ See Foster and Hoffert.

⁵ While Keckley brings to Lincoln the then-familiar image of the sexualized woman consumer and debtor (most recognizable to present-day scholars in the French Emma Bovary) she utterly elides the equally well-known figure of the cruel and deceitful dressmaker.

appropriate emotional labor, managing both her own and others' emotions, and depicts Mrs. Lincoln as emotionally unmanageable.

Mary Lincoln's failure to live up to the sentimental domestic ideal appears particularly disgraceful because of her role as First Lady. Katherine Adams refers to the symbolic resonance of the First Lady and her home, the White House, as "executive domesticity," "an iconic image central to the white identity of nation and national freedom" (50). Domesticity constructs a white world of political and social privilege marked as "a space that disavows contact with materiality, individuality and individual interest" (49), in other words, a space ostensibly apart from politics and capitalist enterprise. Keckley's book undermines that image's ideal of white detachment from regimes and markets, according to Adams, by exposing its reliance on black labor to produce itself and is aided in this iconoclasm by Mary Lincoln's own highly publicized entrée into commercial activity during the Old Clothes Scandal. I would add that, as well as exposing white reliance on black labor, *Behind the Scenes* underscores the contested nature and value of black labor in the Reconstruction era and its continued affective resemblance to slave labor. As Lori Merish has noted, "Mary Lincoln seems to feel herself entitled to the labor as well as affection of Elizabeth Keckley -- suggesting that forms of cross-racial sympathy between white women and "free" black domestic workers are here . . . structured by sentimental proprietorship and continuous with proprietary relations of slavery" (252). Analyzing Keckley's relation to Lincoln in terms of her emotional labor spotlights the social formations, dispositions, and practices at work in this socioeconomic-affective circuit. In addition, *Behind the Scenes'* acknowledgement of Lincoln's and Keckley's desire for

access to social status further contradicts domesticity's configuration of both black and white women as unambitious, having influence only in the private sphere. Indeed, it was largely the social influence both women tried to assert -- Lincoln through contact with politicians and through fashionable display, Keckley through her contact with the Lincolns and through her book -- that drew the censure of the American media and public.

In the preface, Keckley explains about Lincoln, "the world do not know what her intentions were; they have only been made acquainted with her acts without knowing what feeling guided her actions" (xiv). Keckley's attention to emotion as arbiter of truth indicates the influence of the sentimental habitus on this highly syncretic text. As James Olney notes in the Introduction to the reissued text, "slave narrative and sentimental fiction were indeterminative of each other, and both were bound up with -- and to a considerable degree bound by -- social conventions of the time" (xxxiii). Yet, Keckley repurposes⁶ the types of sentimental fiction, shifting markers of virtue to challenge the socioeconomic inequalities that buttress the sentimental habitus. Repurposing is a tactical practice that "boldly juxtaposes diverse elements in order suddenly to produce a flash shedding a different light on the language of a place and to strike the hearer" (Certeau 38). Keckley's repurposing of sentimental objects and dispositions provides new insight into the apparatus of the sentimental habitus.

⁶ The term "to repurpose" comes from contemporary art and describes the way artists use (often discarded) objects to new ends in their work.

She creates an African American sentimental heroine whose suffering provokes outrage rather than quiet submission. She also more fully and sympathetically describes what impels the fashionable woman type, presenting her as torn between the contradictory social expectations of Log Cabin simplicity and aristocratic gentility, giving this character the complexity sentimental fiction fails to provide. At the same time, the character types allow Keckley to explore classed and raced power dynamics in terms of affective practices. Through the types, Keckley identifies the emotional labor both she and Mrs. Lincoln perform. However, neither women truly embody the types because of their very public roles and their activity in the marketplace; therefore, issues of appearance and display interweave with those of commerce and consumerism to redefine the sentimental types Keckley has appropriated. This redefinition not only highlights the falsity of the public-private split, it also signals a shift in the role of women in politics and the marketplace. Finally, *Behind the Scenes* speaks out loudly about the way these new roles both alter and maintain pre-war labor structures, particularly that of emotional labor.

Fears of African Americans and women agitating for equality in the nineteenth century were based in the concern that African Americans would wrest power from whites, and women from men. The desires of the underprivileged have long been figured in terms of envy, and from Aristotle to Descartes, envy has been entwined and confused with resentment.⁷ The envious person, so the formulation goes, resents another's good fortune and wishes to remove that person from a superior position to

⁷ For a good general discussion of envy, see Ben Ze'ev, 282-89.

take their place. Such malicious desire for another's fall appears immoral, so figuring envy in this way allows one to figure the envious as immoral. Thus, a person of inferior social standing who envies another's superior standing can be considered dangerous, willing to behave immorally, to hurt another, particularly a superior, to attain higher status. Indeed, this is the type of critique that was leveled at Keckley upon the publication of *Behind the Scenes*.⁸

But, of course, this formulation serves those in power; a different view of envy considers it a response to feelings of exclusion. Carolyn Steedman has argued that the moral approach to envy does not fully account for the emotion. Instead, she examines envy in terms of class and its relation to "feelings of exile and exclusion, of material and political envy" (112), finding that envy arises from a loss of something one believes one has a right to. One's sense of deservingness then underlies envy of another's subject position. What her contemporaries viewed as threatening their own power, Keckley figures as deservingness of an equal subject position. As Beverley Skeggs has argued, "Analysing access and legitimation of cultural formations enables us to see how cultural capital is or is not converted into symbolic capital and hence how inequalities are generated and systematic disempowerment engendered" (10). *Behind the Scenes* evidences Elizabeth Keckley's feeling that she deserves access that she is continually denied. No matter how perfectly she fulfills the emotional conventions of the sentimental habitus, the cultural capital acquired fails to transcode into adequate symbolic capital because of her race.

⁸ Fleischner 216-18.

If Keckley's relation to the sentimental habitus is one of deservingness, Mary Lincoln's is one of entitlement. Entitlement arises from one's belief in their right to something, and can be distinguished from deservingness, which is based in "conditions of personal worthiness which are not written down in any legal or official regulation" (Ben-Ze'ev 148). While entitlement requires no personal investment or effort, in short no mutual exchange, deservingness involves a production of personal worth which then purchases access. The deserving person must work to acquire capital, and once she has it, quite often finds she remains excluded because she cannot convert it to symbolic capital; the entitled person presumes her cultural and economic capital will automatically transform into symbolic capital, and so it often does. Ultimately, the disposition for entitlement negates the disposition for self-sacrifice central to the sentimental habitus. Deservingness, on the other hand, as it tries to assert itself in the habitus latches on to the disposition for self-sacrifice as a way to prove it's worth. However, aligning herself with the disposition for self-sacrifice is problematic for Keckley because her race already negates or diminishes the material and symbolic return on her labor and capital. Keckley's continual declaration of her deservingness, figured as socially oriented sacrifice and benevolence contrasts with her portrayal of Mary Lincoln as self-oriented and thus undeserving but nonetheless entitled to a great many things. This contrast exposes Mary Lincoln's white privilege as unjust within the terms of sentimental behavioral expectations.

Behind the Scenes reveals the contestation of such raced and gendered socioeconomic restrictions coming to the fore during the Reconstruction era. African Americans and women had two means by which to gain status in this social

environment: by epitomizing behavioral norms or by associating with those in power. Of course, the former was almost universally requisite to effect the latter. Following standards of self-restraint, self-denial, and submission, of course, proscribed one's position. But, normative behavior, particularly ideal behavior, could gain one access to people with *pouvoir*. For example, a dressmaker with genteel manners could attract a more elite clientele.⁹ Her association with affluent women, then, granted her status by association as well as access to conversation with women who had social power and potentially had influence with their husbands, the only people in this circuit with legitimated political and economic power.

Genteel behavior for women in the 1850s and 60s was to a large extent idealized as sentimental domesticity, the tenets of which I have laid out in the Introductory chapter, but briefly, they include submission to God and earthly authority, maintenance of one's own and one's family's moral and mental "improvement," concern for the feelings of others blended with a desire to please, and self-discipline. In Chapter One, I argued that a genteel woman's domestic emotional labor entailed controlling her own emotions (particularly anti-social emotions such as pride and anger) and helping to manage others' emotions. Etiquette books, manuals of genteel behavior, demanded perfect emotional self-control, necessitating an emotional performance, which was politely denied as performance (Halttunen 99-101). Such a performance was a form of cultural capital, and Keckley's efforts to attain social status

⁹ See Gamber on dressmakers' status and gentility 73-5, 108.

and respectability rest on her ability to perform gentility, not only in her role as a dressmaker, but also in her book.¹⁰

Elizabeth Keckley's idealized self-portrayal gains even greater force as Keckley presents less-than-ideal white middle- and upper-class women as foils. Her portraits of white women, although couched in sympathetic language, expose their weaknesses and faults, and do so in juxtaposition to Keckley's own virtues. Because these white women gain access to social benefits Keckley knows she deserves but has been denied, she affiliates herself with them by figuring herself in their terms. Both leaders and citizens, according to republican principle, must exercise civic virtue for the well-being of the country. Virtue, then, because it is recognized as necessary for the maintenance of the republic, offers one a claim to respect, social status, money, opportunity, and voice. Therefore, Keckley's superior virtue proves that she is more deserving of, and has a greater claim to, these social benefits than any of the middle- to upper-class, white women who seem to gain them merely by nature of their race and their class. At the same time, Keckley's representation of Mary Lincoln reveals the First Lady's real lack of power and points to the problems such powerlessness creates. Even as Keckley conveys the negative impacts of disempowerment and dependency on all women, she clearly distinguishes between how white women of leisure and black, working women experience and respond to their subjection.

¹⁰ Sorisio argues, "the sentimental, genteel culture represented by the ideal white woman was a racialized method of defining class status. Therefore, when Keckley marked herself as genteel [via sentimental methods], she threatened to dismantle the racialized binary of true womanhood that the genteel performance partially relied upon" (28).

Keckley makes one key distinction between these types of women via their emotional character and specifically in their relation to emotional labor. Using recognizable character types from sentimental fiction, Keckley constructs an affective world of black emotional labor and white affective extravagance. In sentimental fiction, the fashionable woman is often portrayed as immoral, selfish, childlike, and vain. Her childlike behavior results from being petted and spoiled as a child, which in turn causes her to believe she is entitled to such treatment. Her childishness generally manifests as emotional whims often accompanied by material desires and demands that those whims be catered to. Consumerist longing is thus linked to emotional impulsiveness, and figured as childlike, uncontrolled, and demanding external management. Her vanity causes her to need constant praise but also creates regular feelings of jealousy, which can only be assuaged by denigrating the woman she is jealous of; such feelings make interfemale sociability difficult at best. Her vanity and childishness emerge from and perpetuate a self-absorption that is the most unacceptable female attribute during this time period.

A self-indulgent woman not only creates the problems listed above, she also fails to attend to others' needs and emotions because she is only concerned with her own. Thus, she is both unsociable and unfit for the self-effacing demands of wife and motherhood. Similarly, the fashionable behaviors of tight-lacing, wearing impractical shoes, keeping late hours, and eating only dainties seriously damaged a woman's health, and regular exposure to sensual excitements was believed to weaken one's constitution. As we have seen in the case of Aunt Fortune, an unhealthy woman is unable to fulfill her duties and quickly becomes a burden to her family. So, a

fashionable woman's self-orientation not only prevents her from performing emotional or material labor for her family, her behavior also tends to makes her ill and dependent on those she ought to be supporting. Lacking the disposition for self-sacrifice, the entitled fashionable woman fails to conform to sentimental conventions of virtuous womanhood.

Keckley depicts Mary Lincoln as the typical fashionable woman in sentimental fiction, having all of the characteristics noted here. At different points throughout the text, Keckley places Mary and Abraham Lincoln in conversation, figuring Mary as impetuous and often self-absorbed and her husband as loving and accepting. She speaks directly to their relationship in chapter nine, explaining,

He was not admired for his graceful figure and finely moulded face, but for the nobility of his soul and the greatness of his heart. His wife was different. He was wholly unselfish in every respect, and I believe that he loved the mother of his children very tenderly. He asked nothing but affection from her, but did not always receive it. When in one of her wayward impulsive moods, she was apt to say and do things that wounded him deeply. (146)

The implication of the first two sentences is that Mary Lincoln, unlike her husband, was admired for her appearance rather than her character. The following lines suggest not only that she is selfish, but also emotionally undisciplined, and that her emotional self-indulgences cause her to neglect the feelings of others, which leads her to behave inappropriately and inflict emotional damage. Yet, Mary's husband accommodates her emotional whims, attracted by her childishness, even calling her on occasion his

"child-wife" (236), an appellation which relieves her of much responsibility for her own behavior. In effect, Mary Lincoln is excused from performing emotional labor, reinforcing her sense of entitlement.

Significantly, President Lincoln is not the only person to cater to Mary's whims. The inauguration of Keckley and Lincoln's relationship coincides with Lincoln's inauguration as First Lady. Keckley finishes her first gown for Mrs. Lincoln just in time for the inaugural levee, and rushes to the White House with it to dress her. The presidential levees, and this was the first Mary would preside over, signaled the First Lady's social position and offered the opportunity to display her cultural and economic capital. When Keckley arrives, Mary Lincoln is piqued, complaining that she doesn't have enough time to get dressed, so she simply won't go to the ball. An entourage of women about her, "in a terrible state of excitement" (87), try to convince her to get dressed and go down. Finally, only the suggestion that Keckley assist her propels Mary to get ready for the party, signaling her need for constant attendance as well as her sense of entitlement to such attentions. The literature of the period tends to enfold entitlement into the notion of vanity. Mary Lincoln's entitlement assumes her superiority, which she uses not only to avoid affective duty but also to induce others to labor emotionally for her. And, indeed, throughout the book, Keckley attends regularly to Mrs. Lincoln, coming whenever she is called to assist in any situation. In this instance, instead of managing her own frustration and anxiety, Mary Lincoln looks to

her entourage and her dressmaker to soothe her temper. Lincoln's privilege is enabled by others', and specifically Keckley's, labor.¹¹

Keckley also notes the health problems Mary Lincoln endures because of her excessive emotional responses to things. For example, when her son Willie dies, Mary is "inconsolable," suffering the standard sentimental "paroxysms of grief" (104). Yet, as Ellen learns in *The Wide, Wide World*, sentimentalism prescribes control over one's grief. Mary Lincoln grieves too long and too intensely until President Lincoln takes her aside and points out the asylum across the street, warning, "try and control your grief, or it will drive you mad, and we may have to send you there" (104-05). Whether or not Mrs. Lincoln did not want to control her grieving or simply could not manage to, her emotional extravagance, an extreme and indulgent emotional expenditure, in this case appears as an inability to perform the emotional labor required of her and thus marks her as irrational and lacking self-control and, as such, incapable of functioning socially.¹² Here, her vanity, which seeks to place her above the restrictions of emotional law, marks her not as socially transcendent, but socially improper. Her extravagance takes her beyond the bounds of acceptable behavior. Although the nineteenth-century had elaborate mourning rituals that in some sense seemed to extend

¹¹ See also Merish 247-51, and Adams on this issue.

¹² In 1875, Robert Lincoln had his mother declared legally insane and institutionalized largely because of her antisocial behavior that was explained in part by her acute anxiety and compulsive shopping. Fleischner links her behavior to what we now call an anniversary reaction to her husband's assassination ten years earlier (321).

the grieving period, those rituals also circumscribed the extent of acceptable grief.¹³

Excessive grieving indicated a refusal to submit to God's will, but also a concomitant refusal to submit to the sentimental disposition that regulated grieving.

Lincoln's refusal to conform to the emotional conventions of the sentimental habitus included her refusal to perform her duties as wife and mother. Like the emotionally self-oriented fashionable woman, Mary Lincoln's self-absorbed grieving makes her unfit to care for her family. When Willie dies, Abraham is also severely stricken with grief, but Mary is no consolation to him; instead, she creates more worry and becomes a burden. Similarly, when the President is assassinated, Mary is so overwhelmed that she cannot stop crying. Her young son Tad needs her to support him and help him cope with his grief, but she exacerbates his emotional distress by causing him to worry about her. In fact, her excessive grief not only prevents her from performing the emotional labor that would make her child at ease, her lack of emotional discipline requires her child to take care of her. Keckley gives one example of Mary's sobbing waking Tad in the night. He comes to her bedside and begs her to stop crying; it is only when he threatens to cry too that she can control herself. Significantly, Keckley is called upon to provide the emotional labor that Mary cannot during both of these times of crisis.

By way of contrast to Mrs. Lincoln's emotional extravagance, Keckley reserves one paragraph after this scene to describe the loss of her own son on the battlefield. She provides the facts and then notes only "it was a sad blow" and that when it

¹³ Halttunen 138, Taylor 46-8, and Stannard 26-8. Kete finds that writers "transform[ed] their grief into restorative mourning" via sentimental poetry (7).

occurred, Mrs. Lincoln wrote her a kind letter that comforted her. In a period when the death of a child was sadly quite common, Mrs. Lincoln's grief over her son seems excessive, but when Keckley's own loss reminds readers of the losses women all over the country suffered during the war, Mary's excessive grief appears self-indulgent and insensitive. Simultaneously, Keckley seeks to portray her own disposition for self-sacrifice against Mary's disposition for self-indulgence. Yet, as will happen repeatedly in the text, Keckley wraps herself in the mantle of self-sacrifice to assert her worth but quickly removes it when it threatens to completely envelop her. Her disposition for self-sacrifice is in practice tactical, apparently in line with sentimental prescriptions but in fact a bricolage of disparate components that trouble the implicit principles upon which those prescriptions rest.

Keckley's bricolage is apparent in her activation of sentimental motherhood tropes. While maternal values are glorified in sentimental fiction, the mother paradoxically "comes to represent those aspects of failed femininity against which the domestic heroine is constructed" (Barnes 103). In the opening chapters of *Behind the Scenes*, Keckley underplays her motherhood, emphasizing herself as heroine instead, most likely because the mother never plays the feature role in the sentimental narrative but must die off to make way for the heroine. By the end of the sentimental narrative, however, the mature heroine must take on the mother role. Keckley avoids reproducing the teleology of both character types by using motherhood to establish her position while simultaneously removing her child from the narrative. She ultimately inverts the trope of the sacrificial mother as her child must die to confer motherhood upon her.

Of course, sentimental motherhood is reserved for white women, as Eva Cherniavsky and others have shown, so Keckley must also contend with issues of race. Initially, she depicts her motherhood via slave narrative tropes, which generate sympathy for her virtue in distress and underscore the sacrifices she makes for her child. To this end, Keckley notes briefly in an early chapter that her "unfortunate son," born into slavery, was the product of rape by a white man¹⁴ and that she bought him his freedom. The only other mention of her son is in the passage that explains his death. He died in battle in Missouri after joining the Union army before blacks were allowed to fight. Although Keckley does not remark on the fact of his enlisting as a white soldier, his death comes before Willie Lincoln's death, which occurs in February 1862. Not until January 1863, with the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation, did the government authorize the use of black soldiers by Union troops. Thus, Keckley's son passes, literally and figuratively, as a white soldier, the brave son she, consequently figured as the white mother and good citizen, sacrifices willingly for the cause of the country. Although sentimental fiction and slave narratives assert the mother's bond with her child, she is nonetheless, as Hortense Spillers puts it, "robbed of the parental right" (78). Thus, for Keckley to claim her right to motherhood, and all of its cultural power, she must formulate that motherhood as white.

¹⁴ Frances Smith Foster argues that the "abrupt, brief, and vague manner in which she relates that incident suggest" she was not raped (120), but I find this unconvincing. In fact, it is precisely Keckley's use of the sentimental euphemism "he persecuted me for four years" followed by the vague but stammering and emotionally evocative "and, I--I--became a mother" (39) that suggests in the terms of sentimental discourse at least coercive sex if not violent rape.

Keckley similarly refuses the "mammy" role and claims white motherhood for herself when describing her relationship with her slaveowners' family, the Garlands. When Keckley meets the Garlands after the war as a free woman, she describes their joyous reunion and refers to one of the daughters as "my foster child" (251). All the servants seem bewildered at her reception, one of them, the cook, even wondering aloud "if I should go off and stay two or three years, if all ob you wud kiss and hug me so when I cum back?" (252) The implied answer is no, but the question is necessary both to distinguish Keckley from the other servants, whom she portrays through dialect as both African American and relatively ignorant, and to figure her role as distinct from that of a common manual laborer.¹⁵ The slave or servant may be considered a member of the household, but that consideration does not extend to family membership.

Keckley distances herself from the cook to assert her own racial and class status as distinct from the servant, but also to aid her claim to Garland family membership. Presumably, Keckley has performed the emotional labor necessary to elicit such warm appreciation. After Keckley leaves, one Garland "daughter" comes to visit, staying in her rooms as a visiting relative might, and they keep in touch through letters, some of which she reprints in the text. Most notably, she ends the chapter with a letter signed "Your child Mag" (266), which she introduces by drawing the reader's attention to the ending: "The reader will observe that she signs herself "Your child,

¹⁵ Gamber discusses the dressmakers' and milliners' sense of themselves as an elite among the working-class: in part because of the class of their clientele, and in part because of the refinement of their raw materials and finished products (72-6).

Mag," an expression of love warmly appreciated by me" (264). Much advice literature of the period offers a child's love and devotion as the primary reward for a mother's affective efforts, and Keckley seem to be reaping the promised benefits. The regular exchange of letters and the intimate visits suggest a familial relationship but could also represent a close friendship. Yet, when Keckley draws attention to the closing "your child" accompanied by a signature, she points to a legal seal witnessing and authorizing her familial relationship with Mag. As the mother to this white girl, then, Keckley completes the portrait of herself as a beloved sentimental mother, raced white. Keckley does not claim a particular racial identity; instead, she claims her right to the position and concomitant social relations that whiteness provides.

Keckley, herself, as Sorisio has shown, writes racialized status inversion into the book.¹⁶ For example, she includes scenes that "highlight [Keckley's] economic success, and juxtapose this success with the status of her former mistress" (Sorisio 24). Similarly, in a brief conversation between Keckley and her former owner, Keckley subtly insists on her independence from the family while asserting their dependence on her, a move that places Keckley in a position of mastery. But, the Garlands' dependence on her also highlights the emotional labor she continues to perform for this family. For one, her former mistress insists that despite Keckley's move to the North where her "head must be completely turned[;] . . . I knew your heart, and could not believe that you would forget us" (256). Keckley admits that she could not forget them, is attached to them, and looks forward to meeting those "who claimed my first duty and my first love" (241). Despite the fact that Keckley argues for the "warm . . .

¹⁶ See also Merish 253.

attachment between master and slave" (242), her choice of words to explain that they "claimed . . . [her] first love" suggests obligatory rather than voluntary affection. Indeed, in light of several descriptions of the family beating slaves for lack of cheerfulness, this scenario cannot easily play out any other way; Keckley must respond positively or not at all. Similarly, the Garlands generally do not ask after Keckley's emotional well-being except in reference to themselves, probably because inquiring into her emotional well-being would require a dismantling of the myth they've built about their own, that they and their slaves were one happy, loving family. Even as a free woman, Keckley finds herself required to perform the emotional labor of a "devoted" slave in her social relations with this family.

Accordingly, Keckley's representation of her emotional labor evokes slave labor. And, in fact, her emotional labor for this family as well as for the women she makes dresses for is something she is never directly paid for. Wendy Gamber explains that dressmakers in the nineteenth century regularly listened to and sympathized with their clients' problems, and uses the term "emotional labor" to describe this part of the job. Instead of suggesting equality between dressmaker and customer, this confidence served to mark the dressmaker as a social inferior since "'ladies' could divulge secrets [to dressmakers] that pride and propriety forbade them from telling their peers" (Gamber 106). Likewise, although Mary Lincoln initially engages Keckley as her modiste, it is finally not her dressmaking skills that Mrs. Lincoln wants Keckley for; rather, Lincoln engages Keckley's emotional labor. Mrs. Lincoln regularly calls Keckley to the White House to attend to her in times of crisis, but her dependence on Keckley's emotional labor comes to the forefront when Lincoln must leave the White

House and has no more elaborate dressmaking needs with which to legitimately employ Keckley.

When she leaves the White House, Lincoln wants Keckley to come with her to Chicago even though Keckley at first refuses, saying, "You forget my business Mrs. Lincoln" (209). The reprimand refers specifically to Keckley's dressmaking business, which she cannot easily neglect, but it also serves as a reminder to Mrs. Lincoln that Keckley's rightful position is as a modiste and small business owner, not as Mrs. Lincoln's emotional caretaker. Even Keckley's assertion that she has a big order to finish for Mrs. Stephen Douglas does not impress Lincoln, who in response promises that Keckley will be well rewarded if Congress provides Lincoln a widow's pension. Keckley starts to reply, "It's not the reward, but--" when Lincoln cuts her off and insists she come to Chicago. Significantly, Mrs. Douglas' release of Keckley from her obligations is given in emotional not financial terms: "Never mind me. Do all you can for Mrs. Lincoln. My heart's sympathy is with her" (210). Mrs. Douglas' selflessness contrasts Lincoln's self-absorption, highlighting again the sentimental standard by which Lincoln is judged.

Mary Lincoln continues to assure Keckley of financial remuneration for this "work." Thus, Lincoln figures Keckley as an employee rather than a friend, ensuring both her continued service and confidence, and maintains her own status by remaining in the position of employer and by continuing to retain a dressmaker. "The giving of caring can be seen as a form of gift exchange. A social relation is effected throughout the gift of a part of oneself (Diprose, 1994) in which the receiver is expected to enter into a reciprocal relation, or a position of debt. They hope their caring practices will

produce a return of respectability, but this is always under evaluation and never guaranteed" (Skeggs 72). By enclosing the relationship within the economic system, Lincoln refutes Keckley's caring as gift exchange and thereby exonerates her own selfish emotional behavior and refusal to have a mutual emotional exchange with Keckley. She simultaneously denies Keckley's claim to an interpersonal relationship with Lincoln or to her own feelings and expression of them, and places her in an emotionally abject position. Despite Lincoln's repeated promises of money, she fails to compensate Keckley for her labor. She likewise refuses to participate in a reciprocal emotional exchange, writing letters to her up until the end of their relationship, which vent her emotional hardship and demand Keckley respond sympathetically. Keckley's emotional labor for Mary Lincoln, in life and in the narrative, functions as cultural capital within the sentimental habitus, yet Lincoln's refusal to value this labor either by conferring money or respect upon Keckley prohibits its transformation into symbolic capital. As Keckley tries to tell Mrs. Lincoln, "[i]t's not the reward, but--" the abject position that echoes her enslavement that she objects to.

While effectively employing elements of sentimentalism, Keckley also writes in the style of the sentimentally informed slave narrative in the first five chapters of the book to describe her experiences as a slave.¹⁷ The particular emotional labor required of a slave is surprisingly similar to the expectations of the sentimental

¹⁷ Gabrielle Foreman, in her discussion of Frederick Douglass' literary work, argues for a category of "sentimental abolition" that "stresses the affectional over the authoritative, emphasizing that the heart is the only true site of change and redemption" (150). Keckley appears to be working in this tradition, asking the world to judge her and Mrs. Lincoln based on their hearts.

heroine: to suppress grief, suffer quietly, quash anger, subdue pride, and maintain a cheerful demeanor. The most obvious difference between the slave and sentimental heroine, of course, is that the slaves' emotional behavior is enforced with physical punishment, and the enslaved body must succumb mentally and physically to emotional prescriptions. Whippings for grieving and for pride are common in Keckley's narrative, but Keckley validates and maintains the slave's true emotion in each situation, even as she represents the affective demeanor the slave must portray.

After portraying two slave family's partings -- a common scene in abolitionist literature that functions as an appeal to sympathy -- Keckley explains that one of the slave mothers whose son was sold grieved so much that the Master had her whipped. She adds that, in fact, any slave who "wore a sorrowful face" "offended" the Master and was thus punished (29). One could argue that a slave's unhappy demeanor contained an implicit critique of his conditions and by extension of his master. To maintain absolute authority, the master cannot allow any form of critique and thus punishes any appearance of disdain or dissatisfaction because that would acknowledge a right had been denied, and "the enslaved must not be permitted to perceive that he or she has any human rights that matter" (Spillers 75). Grief results from the loss of something of value, most often a relationship, and is a feeling of sadness for the person lost as well as for the self having lost. In abolitionist literature, slaves were most often portrayed as grieving over the loss of a family member, through death or separation by sale. However, this grief necessarily entails an acknowledgement of the loss of a perceived right to have a family and maintain personal relationships. If a person did not believe she had the right to maintain relationships, she would not feel

the lack of them as a loss. By disavowing the grief of slaves, one was effectively disavowing their right to personal relations, as well as any sense of a subject with something to lose.

Yet, Keckley concludes this scene by remarking, "Alas! the sunny face of the slave is not always an indication of sunshine in the heart" (29). Her use of sentimental phrasing here points to the tendency of sentimental discourse to attenuate the horrors of slavery while also indicating the way sentimental discourse informed the emotional practices and expectations imposed upon slaves. The greatest part of a slave's emotional labor, she suggests, is a performance of cheerfulness.¹⁸ Unlike Warner's heroine who must learn to submit to God's will and really *feel* cheerful, the slave can often only act cheerful. Keckley thus identifies, by juxtaposing a contradictory set of sentimental conventions, the irrelevance of sentimentalism to slavery by insisting on the injustice and impossibility of truly submitting to one's abjection even as one must appear to do so.

Reminiscent of Frado's revolution at the woodpile, Keckley's own reactions to punishment and various attempts to alter her emotional self-expression are a refusal to perform emotional labor in order to disclaim her abjection. Even though she knows she will be whipped for it, Keckley expresses anger at her unjust punishment by fighting back and demanding an explanation for her punishment. Her anger fuels whoever happens to be whipping her, but it also disavows abjection and claims

¹⁸ This splitting of one's felt emotions and one's performed emotions anticipates W.E.B. DuBois' notion of double-consciousness by which African Americans experience themselves as simultaneously feeling "black" and performing "American."

subjectivity as Keckley's anger asserts her right to her own emotional responses. This particular anger, although it does get her into deeper trouble, would seem justified to many contemporary readers who would have recognized the inhumanity and injustice of her treatment. Although Keckley doesn't describe a process of overcoming her anger, as Warner does for Ellen in *The Wide, Wide World*, she never again refers to herself as being angry or even having to struggle with those feelings. Instead, she pictures herself as the emotionally controlled mature sentimental heroine. Frances Smith Foster suggests that containing the anger within the confines of the slavery system was a way to express Keckley's "individual initiative" while taking care "to assuage [whites'] fears of violent reprisals" (123). When Keckley's anger falls out of the narrative, we are to assume that she no longer feels angry about her continuing lack of power. However, the production of *Behind the Scenes* gives voice to Keckley's anger at social and economic inequalities based on race and gender. The righteous anger of the slave carries over into Keckley's depictions of more covert forms of oppression, and just as she demands to be heard by her master, so too does her publication mark her demand to be heard by the civic body.

Nevertheless, after this set of scenes in the book, Keckley maintains a self-presentation consistent with the affective qualities of the sentimental heroine, which includes responding to infuriating situations with acceptance and aplomb. One incident that could easily have raised her ire occurs when she tries to raise money to buy her freedom. Keckley plans to go to New York to raise money, but her owner requires that she give the names of six white men who will secure her return by promising to pay whatever she is worth if she doesn't. Keckley obtains five names, and

the sixth man signs for her return while remarking good-naturedly that he knows she won't come back. Since the promise of five men is required to supply the deficit in the worth of Keckley's promise, it may not be surprising that this man also fails to value her word. Yet, Keckley receives his comment as an insult to her integrity. Instead of reacting with anger, however, she "feel[s] sick at heart, for I could not accept the signature of this man when he had no faith in my pledges" (52). The narrative then switches into a sentimental mode, suggesting theatrically that slavery is preferable to being distrusted and describing extensively the emotional experience of dashed hopes, humility, and grief. Keckley conforms to sentimental affective norms in this situation perhaps to gain the sympathy of her reader, but also to portray herself as having the genteel and moral qualities of the sentimental heroine, specifically to insist on her fitness to follow the social rule of honoring one's word.

Keckley also understands her role too well to grieve too long, excess grief being a form of self-indulgence. Immediately, her grieving is ended -- in a moment that recalls (and surpasses with its rapidity) Ellen's meeting with Alice on the mountainside in *The Wide, Wide World* -- by the intervention of a kind friend who "seemed to bring sunshine with her handsome cheery face" (54). Keckley has more reason to grieve than even the most unfortunate white sentimental heroine, yet her grief is always brief and well contained. But, again, her uptake of sentimental dispositions alters the raced dimension of the habitus. Despite the fact that she controls her grief quickly, she allows herself the grief commonly denied to slaves.

Keckley's disposition to follow sentimental social and emotional conventions becomes increasingly important as she seeks to claim her right to citizenship. When

she confronts her owner about buying her freedom, he refuses to take her request seriously since he relies on her labor to feed his family. He even jokes that she could just cross the border into the free states at any time, but she insists that running away would be breaking the law. As a slave, she is always abject, always beneath the law, represented not as a subject but as property. By refusing to break the law, she marks herself as a subject, one with the capacity to choose whether or not to submit to authority. Furthermore, her refusal to break the law even while enslaved marks her as virtuous and deserving of citizenship. Keckley goes to great lengths in describing how she purchased her freedom, including at the conclusion of the slave chapters copies of papers documenting the financial exchanges that purchased her deed of emancipation. Paradoxically, to become a citizen, she must acknowledge herself to be property, and she can only legitimately exit the role of commodity and enter the role of citizen as a consumer. Keckley's citizenship, nay her very subjectivity, is predicated on her condition as consumer.

Elizabeth Keckley and Mary Lincoln gained access to cultural capital, if not power, by participating in consumer capitalism.¹⁹ For many African Americans and women, access to social status and power came only through enacting gentility, which in turn, demanded consumption. Richard Bushman remarks, "Genteel consumerism was a form of cultural revolution" in that it provided marginalized groups access to a form of social power via various sets of purchasable signifiers of status (410). In the

¹⁹ Lori Merish has argued for the power commodity culture granted women; for example, she claims, "In late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American literary and political discourse, consumption is . . . a practice that both facilitates and domesticates women's political agency" (18).

mid-nineteenth century, commodity capitalism offered an emergent means to status for women and for African Americans -- a mode of differentiation and expression via consumption. Baudrillard claims that the "differential system of consumption [based in objects serving as empty signifiers] significantly helped to distinguish . . . within society, categories of status groups, recognizable in a specific collection of objects" (16). That specific collection, I would argue, consists of what is currently "fashionable" in a particular group.

Participating in fashionable modes of dress, like Mrs. Lincoln, or discourse, like Elizabeth Keckley, transformed cultural and economic capital into symbolic capital since fashion -- in goods, activities, or behaviors -- signals one's dominant social status. In his essay, "Fashion" (1904), Georg Simmel claims that fashion at once "satisfies the demand for social acceptance" and "the need for differentiation" (543). Because it fulfills both needs, fashion offers a way for individuals to distinguish themselves "safely" within a culture. Simmel suggests that the shame one would normally feel when departing from a norm does not occur with departures through fashion since fashion is structured to individuate in sets. In other words, fashion is never purely individual as any behavior or mode of appearance must be supported by a group in order to be considered fashionable, yet it still functions to express an individuality distinct from other groups. As Simmel states, "we have here on the one hand a field of general imitation, the individual floating in the broadest social current, relieved of responsibility for his tastes and his actions, yet on the other hand we have a certain conspicuousness, an emphasis, an individual accentuation of the personality" (550-51). Conspicuousness in relation to personal display fulfills an individual need

for personal distinction but harms the individual's need to be social as it sets him against others. Fashion mediates between these needs. Thus, adopting fashionable norms generally enables one to stand out or speak out while avoiding any great disruption of social expectations. Consequently, both Mary Lincoln's and Elizabeth Keckley's fashionable display ought to have afforded them public attention and power within socially prescribed bounds; however, even as fashion could signal gentility, it could also indicate a manipulation of appearance and behavior for personal gain.²⁰

The history of American consumerism reveals persistent tensions between consumption and republican values, and the 1860s and 70s provide a view of nascent consumerism still strongly conflicting with republican norms. In the years preceding the Revolutionary War, many saw increasing British taxation as a direct result of Americans' extravagant spending on British products. Boycotts of British goods were widely framed as virtuous self-denial, a refusal to consume that marked the good citizen; economic indulgence, in turn, became a glaring vice.²¹ During the antebellum period, the same values persist but become framed in different terms. Lydia Maria Child's *American Frugal Housewife* demonstrates the anti-consumption viewpoint, not only in its pointed title, but also in her insistence that the problem underlying all behavior "injurious beyond calculation to the interests of our country" is "the extravagance of all classes of people" (5-6). More specifically, Alexis de Tocqueville argues that excessive consumption causes one to turn away from the common good

²⁰ See Halttunen 90-91.

²¹ Breen 103, 107-110.

and toward the blinding light of individual reward. Catharine Beecher, influenced by Tocqueville, expands on this argument, claiming that fashion, which is implicitly equated with excessive spending, is self-indulgent and weakens the intellect and the nerves, but more so, it makes one self-absorbed and thus unable to cultivate benevolence, which is in her scheme, the only possible remedy for the potential for selfishness in an increasingly commercial society. Child and Beecher both recognized that gentility required consumption, but both sought to teach their readers that "by the exertion of ingenuity and economy, . . . neatness, good taste, and gentility, are attainable with no great expense" (Child 6).

In this manner, Mary Lincoln's emotional extravagance becomes linked in the text with her material extravagance, the combination suggesting her irredeemable self-absorption. In one instance, a juxtaposition of events evidences her twinned indulgences. Keckley describes Mrs. Lincoln's fears that her husband will be assassinated and her refusal to send the eldest son, Robert, to war. At a time when mothers all over the country are losing their sons and husbands to the war, Lincoln's emotional self-indulgence appears unpatriotic. The First Lady, although certainly feeling many of the things other women felt, would have been expected to set an example for other women; instead, she feels entitled to special treatment and tries to use her status to prevent her son from fighting. As noted earlier in the book, Keckley has given up her own son to the war, but Keckley as narrator reserves judgment, passing that responsibility to another. Robert finally chastises, "The services of every man who loves his country are required in this war. You should take a liberal instead of a selfish view of the question, mother" (122). Mary's self-orientation prevents her

from attending to the common good, in this case the cause of the union, thus making her an unfit citizen and endangering the democracy.

Intertwining emotional self-indulgence and fashionability, the scene is quickly followed -- and the rebuke compounded -- by Mary's reception for Charles Stratton, a world-famous dwarf who was touring the United States as Tom Thumb with his new wife (another dwarf). A reception for the Strattons would be a particularly fashionable event, and because European royalty had already feted Tom Thumb, Mrs. Lincoln's friends "made her believe that it was [her] duty" to hold the reception (122-23), representing fashionability as a social expectation Lincoln ought to meet. Robert critiques Lincoln's sense of obligation to fashion, proclaiming, "No, mother, I do not propose to entertain Tom Thumb. My notions of duty, perhaps, are somewhat different from yours" (123). The importance of duty to the country is heightened in wartime, and Robert's remarks remind Mary that his duty is to fight in the war, her duty is to allow him to fight. Furthermore, the Tom Thumb reception entailed expenditures that appeared particularly frivolous during wartime, which, alongside Mary's insistence on following the fashionable trend of entertaining Tom Thumb begun by European royalty, suggests a view of herself as an American "royal" entitled to spend money according to royal extravagance. Although Keckley takes care to blame some unnamed "friends" of Mary Lincoln for suggesting the parallel to royalty, it is a dangerous one for the First Lady of a democratic republic to make. Mrs. Lincoln appears to engage with fashion at the country's expense and for personal aggrandizement.

To assert the impropriety of Lincoln's actions, Keckley again relies on Robert's opinion, remarking that he "could not stoop to all the follies and absurdities of the ephemeral current of fashionable life" (124). The equation of fashion with folly and absurdity marks it as irrational, and this irrationality becomes linked to emotion as the "ephemeral current" recalls Mrs. Lincoln's everchanging moods and irrational behavior, an example of which Keckley provides in the paragraph immediately following Robert's pronouncement. The various elements of the scene thus conspire to portray Mary Lincoln's fashionability as selfish and self-aggrandizing as well as arising from and promoting mental and emotional instability. Her notions of self-importance are thereby bound to and by irrationality, suggesting that she, in fact, has no reasonable claim to the position she feels entitled to. Mrs. Lincoln's self-indulgent fashionability appears extravagant and undemocratic: trying to keep her oldest son out of the war indicates a lack of consciousness or concern for the troubles of the nation and bespeaks her inability to attend to the common good just as her desire to emulate European aristocracy via fashion and consumption is an affront to the principles of the republic.

During the Civil War, blockades and inflation made even common goods expensive and difficult to obtain, and many individual citizens and civic groups focused efforts on providing supplies for soldiers and relief for the many struggling families of soldiers. There were so many people without basic needs met, especially soldiers and their families who were "sacrificing" for the war effort, that extravagance like Mrs. Lincoln's appeared callously self-indulgent, perhaps even un-patriotic. In addition, distinctions between the virtuous North and rebellious South were often

contemplated in terms of consumption. In much Reconstruction-era Northern literature, the North portrays its citizens as thrifty and hard-working, while figuring Southerners as lazy spendthrifts. The antebellum notion of luxurious consumption persists in these images, gaining validation in depictions of Southerners whose laziness and luxury combine to create a culture lacking any benevolence, evidenced by the cruel and inhumane institution of slavery, and whose self-centered desire to maintain this institution causes the war that tears the country apart. Indeed, Mary Lincoln's purchase of luxuries to furnish the White House, give parties, and adorn her person during wartime evidenced indifference to the needs and the troubles of the nation. Mrs. Lincoln and Keckley both seem to recognize the need to justify her spending and attempt to portray her extravagance as a requirement of her role as First Lady.²²

Keckley explains Mrs. Lincoln's purchases as "endeavoring to make a display becoming her exalted position" (147). Making a display has both theatrical and sexual connotations, which suggest duplicity and immorality -- characteristics Keckley has already shown Mary Lincoln to have in other contexts. Furthermore, Keckley's use of the term "exalted" to describe Lincoln's position reads as sarcastically hyperbolic, implying that Lincoln thinks more highly of her station than called for. The implication is, as with the Tom Thumb reception, that Mrs. Lincoln thinks her position equivalent to royalty, but that notion does not suit, and in fact seems to undermine, a

²² Rappaport discusses legal attempts to justify women's shopping debts "by attempting to resurrect some mythic correspondence between class level and commodity consumption" (171).

democracy. This description, rather than expiating Lincoln's consumption, binds the vanity of feminine display to Mrs. Lincoln's feeling of royal entitlement.

In her own defense, Lincoln justifies her debt this way: "I must dress in costly materials. The people scrutinize every article that I wear with critical curiosity. The very fact of having grown up in the West [Kentucky], subjects me to more searching observation. To keep up appearances, I must have money--more than Mr. Lincoln can spare for me" (149-50). Although an unfounded stereotype, many Americans considered the West uncivilized and degenerate. Lincoln understood that despite her upbringing in a wealthy and influential family, she had to counter continual social disparagement due to her husband's backwoods childhood and their origins in the West. Additionally, Southern women spread stories about her crudeness as one method to discount the Presidency of an anti-slavery candidate. While Keckley's earlier comment derides Mrs. Lincoln's efforts at display, this short speech suggests Lincoln's real sense of herself as spectacle. As the First Lady, Mary Lincoln was the top society matron in Washington, DC, hosting numerous receptions and levees, about which society ladies wrote letters and journalists wrote articles, including comments on Mrs. Lincoln's appearance and behavior.²³ Katherine Adams refers to Mrs. Lincoln and her apparel as "the crucial, domesticizing accessories of the presidential spectacle," that both characterize the President as an ordinary citizen and as an icon of American values (53). Mary Lincoln, unable to balance the competing demands of

²³ Fleischner 208-212.

spectacle and ordinariness, buys in to the commercial fashion system at the cost of \$27,000 and ultimately of her respectability.

Elizabeth Keckley's dressmaking labor affirms and facilitates Lincoln's sartorial extravagance just as her emotional labor sustains Lincoln's emotional extravagance. Keckley's work for Mrs. Lincoln again recalls her relationship with slaveowners, and the narrative departure to, in the book's penultimate chapter, a story about a silk dress given by her former mistress' mother to Keckley's aunt aligns Keckley's free labor relationship to Mrs. Lincoln with her slave labor relationship to the Garlands. Mrs. Garland explains that her mother

had [Keckley's] aunt punished one day, and not liking her sorrowful look, she made two extravagant promises in order to effect a reconciliation, both of which were accepted. On condition that her maid would look cheerful, and be good and friendly with her, the mistress told her she might go to church the following Sunday, and that she would give her a silk dress to wear on the occasion. (255)

Although she owns only one silk dress, the mistress keeps her promise and gives the dress to her maid. Two weeks later, she's invited to visit a neighbor, an event for which fashion requires her to wear a silk dress. She informs the maid of the situation and the maid offers to loan the dress, which her mistress accepts. Consequently, "she made her appearance at the social gathering, duly arrayed in the silk that her maid had worn to church on the preceding Sunday" (256).

This story is significant for a number of reasons. First, the mistress, Mrs. Burwell, recognizes that her treatment of her maid, Charlotte, has caused her sorrow

and next offers to compensate for that sorrow in some way. This is in some distinction from Colonel Burwell, her husband, who beats his slave for expressing the sorrow he himself has instigated. Next, Mrs. Burwell offers a means to and reward for Charlotte's emotional labor, in this case cheerfulness, rather than punishment for its lack. Then, she follows through on her promise of reward even though it means giving up something she cannot really afford and something that carries social significance. A silk dress signified social status in the antebellum period because of its delicacy and expense. Mrs. Burwell's bribe of an extravagant gift to alter Charlotte's emotion simultaneously refuses the slave's emotions while intimating the mistresses' right to her own emotions and the richness of her own emotional life and its free and extravagant expression.

Similarly, Mary Lincoln's letters to Keckley minimize Keckley's emotions even as they give free rein to her own. By January, she had almost completed her business with Brady and Keyes, who had sold very few of her items. In a letter appended to *Behind the Scenes*, dated January 15, 1868, Lincoln writes to Keckley:

You will think I am sending a deluge of letters. I am so very sad today, that I feel I must write you. I went out last evening with Tad, on a little business, in a street car, heavily veiled, very imprudently having *my month's living* in my pocket-book--and, on return, found it gone. The loss I deserve for being so careless, but it comes very hard on poor me. Troubles and misfortunes are fast overwhelming me; may *the end* soon come. I lost \$82, and quite a new pocket-book. I am very, very anxious

about that bill B[rady] & K[eyes] may bring in. Do go, dear Lizzie, and implore them to be moderate for I am in a very narrow place. (368-69)

Her acknowledgement of sending "a deluge of letters" indicates an excess of expression, and the rest of the letter teems with outpourings of her emotions. Such extravagance in emotional expression exceeds even the slave mistress' with Lincoln's bathetic cry, "may *the end* come soon." While "the end" may refer to the Old Clothes Scandal or her financial difficulties, it seems likely she's speaking of death because she so often refers to her own longed-for demise in her letters to Keckley. Lincoln's anxiety over her bill with Brady and Keyes denies any claim Keckley might have on her, emotional or otherwise, since she fails to refer to her debt to Keckley. In fact, asking Keckley to carry out yet more business for her even as she fails to pay her transfers the sense of obligation to Keckley instead. This is, of course, reminiscent of Mrs. Lincoln's failure to perform her own emotional labor when frustrated about her lateness in dressing for a ball. In that situation and in this letter, Lincoln's sense of entitlement, or vanity, enables her to foist her duties onto other women, making them feel responsible for her well-being. And, she offers no emotional return.

The silk dress story at once parallels and contradicts Mary Lincoln's promises to Keckley. Lincoln continually promises financial reward for Keckley's cheerful demeanor, yet she fails to follow through on her promise, regularly citing her own lack of funds. Furthermore, Lincoln never seems to think of "paying" Keckley in any form other than money. Despite the fact that she has lots of expensive clothing and jewelry, which Keckley could sell or recycle into saleable goods, Lincoln never offers these as payment. In part, this indicates Lincoln's selfishness, her unwillingness to part with

items of personal significance or potential economic value. In relation to the silk dress story, however, it also reveals Lincoln's refusal to confer upon Keckley even a symbol of equal social status. The mistress, on the other hand, although requiring the use of the dress, does not ask to borrow it, but acknowledges her maid's rightful ownership of the object by explaining her situation rather than asking or demanding to borrow the dress. Lincoln, conversely, continues to demand dresses of Keckley even as she fails to pay her for any of her labor. Repeatedly promising to pay Keckley sometime in the future, she also continually suggests Keckley come to live with her. In another letter from the appendix, dated Jan 12 (1868), Lincoln appeals to Keckley, "Of course you would not suppose, if I had you come out here and work for me six weeks, I would not pay your expenses and pay you as you made *each* dress" (365-66). This is precisely what she had done when Keckley had come to Chicago a few years earlier, and her protest implies that Keckley had remarked on the fact that Lincoln had not yet paid her for the labor she was performing for her in New York. What is most important to note here is that even as Lincoln is promising to pay and contesting any charges that she might not pay (indicating that she has not paid), she is asking Keckley for more labor, labor that requires her presence -- dressmaking is explicitly requested, emotional labor is implied.

Thus, the silk dress story serves as a critique of a new economic system that fails to account for or alter the old social system. After emancipation, African Americans may be free to labor, but their own labor still primarily serves the function of upholding white social status and power rather than earning African Americans that position and power for themselves. The emotional system of the old order is still

firmly in place and African American emotional labor is still unremunerated; thus, it remains unrecognized as labor and exists instead as a duty that African Americans owe to whites and denies them equality in yet one more arena. Whites thereby maintain a measure of control over African Americans' emotional expression even after the law relinquishes their control over African American bodies. At the same time, despite the various prohibitions against it, wealthy white women maintain the right to extravagant emotional expression.

In addition, this lopsided affective structure leaks into other aspects of Reconstruction-era interracial and interclass relations. The letters appended to the memoir indicate that Keckley did indeed ask Lincoln for money once the former First Lady returned to Chicago, leaving Keckley in charge of selling her goods. But, in the end, Lincoln fails to pay Keckley for her time in New York, and Keckley is forced to take in sewing to support herself while she works as Mrs. Lincoln's liaison. She had closed her business in Washington to come to New York to help Mrs. Lincoln and was in New York through the fall and winter months. Like many dressmakers, Keckley was exploited by her client, who promised to pay, but did not have control of the finances of her family and therefore couldn't pay.²⁴ Like Charlotte in the silk dress story, Keckley's symbolic equality with her employer is never realized. Not only is Keckley's emotional labor a form of slave labor, but so is all the unpaid work she performs for Mrs. Lincoln in New York, construed as one more thing Mary Lincoln (the white mistress) feels entitled to.

²⁴ Rappaport 168-75 and Gamber 116-17.

Like a freed black woman Keckley meets through her benevolent work, Keckley finds Missus Government unable to provide for her. In chapter nine, Keckley describes some of her experiences helping contrabands newly arrived in Washington. In the passages, she continually sets herself apart rhetorically by making statements that begin "The colored people are . . ." and referring to their activities and behavior and beliefs with detachment, referring only once to any interaction she has with them. In narrating this one particular interaction, Keckley remarks on the ignorance of a freed black woman who mistakenly believes that the Lincolns will provide for her in the same way her old plantation mistress provided for her. Keckley uses dialect to further characterize the freedwoman as ignorant as she delivers the punch line of Keckley's joke: "I is been here eight months, and Missus Lingom an't even give me one shife. Bliss God, childen, if I had are know dat de Government, and Mister and Missus Government, was going to do dat ar way, I neber would 'ave comes here in God's world. My old missus us't gib me two shifes eber year." (141) At this, Keckley admits, "I could not restrain a laugh at the grave manner in which this good old woman entered her protest" (141). At once, the passage sets Keckley apart from the old woman by placing her in closer proximity to the reader who is in on her joke and by implying the difference between the freedwoman's relationship to the Lincolns and her own.

In a sense, Keckley indicates her own power over Mrs. Lincoln in this scene, suggesting that the mistress/slave relation has been inverted since it is Mrs. Lincoln

who relies on Keckley for her "shifes" and not the other way around.²⁵ But, this inversion and her distinction from the contraband woman are partial. Lincoln is a slave to fashion and Keckley only feeds that dependence. Keckley, in turn, depends on Mrs. Lincoln to employ and pay her, as well as to enhance her reputation and bring the patronage of other wealthy women. Eventually, Mrs. Lincoln fails to do either, and just as the contraband woman is disappointed in Missus Government's failure to provide for her, so too will Keckley, as the producer of the book rather than of fashionable gowns, bare Mrs. Lincoln's false sense of entitlement, her irresponsibility, and, more importantly, her impotence.

Because Mary Lincoln's sense of entitlement becomes so closely associated with wardrobe, it is perhaps not surprising that it is often figured as vanity. Keckley alludes to Lincoln's vanity -- in the sense of undue regard both of oneself and of one's appearance -- through the clothing she describes. In one scene, Mary sweeps into a room dressed for a reception. Lincoln remarks, "Whew! our cat has a long tail tonight!" in reference to the long train of her gown. Then he adds, "[I]f some of that tail was nearer the head, it would be in better style" (101), insinuating that the dress is too revealing of her neck, bust, and arms. Keckley remarks then that Mrs. Lincoln had a lovely neck and arms, and such a cut was "becoming to her" (101). So, while President Lincoln suggests that her vanity leads to immodesty, Keckley defends not the style of dress but Mary's beauty that justifies a display of her charms. Despite

²⁵ Merish claims that this also gives Keckley a black woman the opportunity to dress white women and thus reconstruct taste (246).

Keckley's attempt to validate Mary Lincoln's sense of superiority, Mrs. Lincoln's awareness of her own physical attractions and her complicity in displaying them draws disapproval and serves as a point of critique of her character.²⁶ A newspaper article about the Old Clothes Scandal reprinted in the last chapter of the book explains the cultural significance of Mary's chosen style: "The peculiarity of the dresses is that most of them are cut low-necked--a taste which some ladies attribute to Mrs. Lincoln's appreciation of her own bust" (305). Being fashionable puts Mrs. Lincoln on display and positions her as vain, but, more importantly, her fashion choices sexualize her and thus suggest an immoral character. Like the fashionable woman of sentimental fiction, Mary Lincoln thus emerges as a bit of a coquette, willing to use her sexual attractions to get what she wanted.

Fashion, therefore, also held sexual dangers, which result from a combination of a fashionable woman's vulnerable public location and excess attention to her facade. The cut of a woman's dress and the love of display combined with a larger threat to a woman's virtue: entering the marketplace as a consumer of luxury goods. Shopping became figured as a form of seduction in which shop owners seduced female consumers with their wares and the ease of buying on credit; furthermore, making a "purchase on credit gave another person 'power over [their] liberty'" (Rappaport 167), a phrase commonly used in sentimental fiction to describe a rogue's sexual power over a virginal female. Similarly, fashion attends to display, and female

²⁶ Fleischner notes that Washington socialites and journalists commented negatively on Mrs. Lincoln's as inappropriately youthful, the implication being that she was vain (211-12).

display becomes closely tied to sexuality and linked with consumerism as goods are increasingly put on display in the new department store of the mid-nineteenth century.²⁷ A woman displayed herself to attract a husband as she put herself on the marriage "market." Once in the public sphere, a woman became an easy target to rogues, and the temptations of a fashionable life, such as the power she gained over men by making herself sexually attractive, threatened to turn a woman into a coquette.

The producer's role in the fashion circuit was just as questionable as the consumer's if not more so. Millinery and dressmaking shops sometimes served as fronts for brothels, and were even more often portrayed as such in fictional accounts.²⁸ And, like the rogue, the dressmaker could be seen as preying on the vanities of susceptible women. Keckley could easily have appeared as an immoral influence on Mrs. Lincoln, and her self-representation in *Behind the Scenes* seeks to quell such suspicions. Keckley rarely mentions her work as a dressmaker or her business in the book even though she was an enormously successful businesswoman.²⁹ Instead, she stitches together narrative and characters from the sentimental patterns laid out by other successful authors. Keckley dresses herself in the fashionable literary modes and mores of the era to make her story more attractive in the marketplace. When she enters

²⁷ See Rachel Bowlby on shops as a site of visual display (*Just Looking* 1-8). Mary Lincoln made regular shopping trips to New York during the Lincoln presidency, and frequented Stewart's, one of the early "palaces" of retail.

²⁸ Gamber 73-4, 162-3.

²⁹ Fleischner notes that Keckley was able to open shops and hire employees in Washington D.C. (222 & 295), and Gamber informs us that only a tiny percentage of the most successful dressmakers could head their own shops, particularly African American women (Ch 3: 55-93).

the public sphere via her book, however, she finds herself at risk of attack from the literary world's rogues -- reviewers and satirists. The attractions of the book offer her a kind of power over the genteel white families and social world she portrays, but this power threatens to unmask the established order (as did a woman's sexual power) and is thus quickly discussed in a negative light. One reviewer tellingly exclaims, "What family of eminence that employs a Negro is safe from such desecration?" (qtd. in Fleischner 317) Figuring Mrs. Lincoln as the victim, the newspapers ironically instated Keckley in the predatory image of the dressmaker her book was meant to contravene.

Mary Lincoln's intimacy with her modiste makes her susceptible to public exposure but her slavery to fashion bears a more dangerous threat: the seductions of credit. While in the White House, she has a significant amount of buying power because of her husband's position, and accordingly, she contracts enormous debts. As in common contemporary depictions of the female consumer, Mary Lincoln's debt makes her a bad wife who lies to her husband. Keckley notes, "Mr. Lincoln knew nothing of these bills, and the only happy feature of his assassination was that he died in ignorance of them" (204). Such a statement implies that he is better off dead than facing his wife's debt, and indeed, a wife's debt, particularly in the extraordinary amount of Mrs. Lincoln's debt, seriously threatened a husband's financial status as well as his class and social position.³⁰ Further threatening her husband's reputation, Mary's debt causes her to become involved with other men in her attempts to get them to help

³⁰ Rappaport 180.

pay or absolve her debt or work for President Lincoln's re-election, which would ensure her either the income or social position to pay her debts or prevent agents from suing to collect on her bills. During the 1864 re-election campaign, Mrs. Lincoln courted the favor of a variety of politicians, many of them unscrupulous, and rumors censured her "for having a certain class of men about her" (145), stressing the inappropriateness of Mrs. Lincoln's behavior with its sexual innuendo.³¹

Keckley comments that Mary was "extremely anxious" that Abraham be re-elected (147). Her anxiety is two-fold, and each factor serves to reinforce the other. When the future direction of the war and thus the future of the nation is at stake in the re-election, Mrs. Lincoln confides to Mrs. Keckley, "To me, to him, there is more at stake in this election than he dreams of" (149). One wonders what could be of greater concern to the First Lady than the Civil War. She continues, "I have contracted large debts; of which he knows nothing, and which he will be unable to pay if he is defeated" (149). Once again, Mary Lincoln's self-orientation prioritizes protecting herself over defending the nation. Her anxiety over concealing her debt is accompanied by a perceived pressure to "keep up appearances," not only with her husband but with the public as well. This particular anxiety leads her to buy a lot of "expensive goods on credit," running into enormous debt, which she then must conceal from her husband, increasing her anxiety. Consumer anxiety over appearance and status, like Mary Lincoln's, fuels the circulation of goods by providing a need for

³¹ Fleischner discusses Mary Lincoln's flirtations with politicians in efforts to re-elect her husband (275-76), and explains that a great deal of the time Lincoln spent with men other than her husband involved trying to clear her debt and to hide it from her husband, which would only add another layer to the sense of sexual intrigue and marital betrayal (223-25).

products that signify status. Mary Lincoln is trapped between the emotional demands of traditional sentimental domesticity that asks her to control her fears and anxieties, and those of an emergent consumer culture that feeds and feeds off of those same emotions.

Lincoln's anxiety results to some extent from an increasing emphasis on appearance and display as the visual signifiers of status become more easily transmitted in the 1850s and 60s. Developments such as lithography, which allowed newspapers and magazines to publish visual images alongside text, and the introduction of department stores in the mid-nineteenth century, which displayed readily accessible consumer items for sale "tend[ed] to reinforce a visual culture premised on appearance, display, exposure, and spectacle" (Solomon-Godeau 128). Rapid urbanization also added to the emphasis on appearances. Since one could not rely on personal information rapidly circulated in a small community, the anonymity of city life required one to judge character initially on appearance.³² In an increasingly visual culture, appearances mattered, and personal display affected not only how one's character but also how one's status was perceived. Even a dressmaker, like Elizabeth Keckley, would need to be well dressed to attract an elite clientele.³³

Keckley's own connections with fashionable life and social power come through her affiliation with wealthy white women. She remarks, "Ever since arriving in Washington I had a great desire to work for the ladies of the White House, and to

³² Haltunnen 34.

³³ Gamber 107-8.

accomplish this end I was ready to make almost any sacrifice consistent with propriety" (76). Keckley acknowledges here that her status is bound both to her affiliation with affluent and powerful whites and to her own virtuous behavior. Although she does not write about it, a certain amount of consumption would have been required to maintain both her person and her shop in the image of gentility. But, Keckley primarily gains access to fashion and the fashionable world not as a consumer but as a producer. As a producer of fashion, Keckley assumes a role in the marketplace that necessarily entails personal gain in the form of financial remuneration for her services. In addition, her production of fashionable goods effects her social rise as it enables both her performance of gentility and her affiliation with the wealthy and influential.

For example, her benevolent activities help position her as genteel, but although prescriptive literature identifies benevolence as a condition of gentility, Keckley makes clear that benevolence itself requires a certain genteel status. In chapter seven, Keckley outlines her efforts to organize the Contraband Relief Association to provide assistance to the thousands of blacks fleeing the South during the war. It is her affiliation with affluent, influential, and well-connected individuals, as a sought-after dressmaker, that enables her success in this endeavor. Mrs. Lincoln is the first person to contribute and also takes Keckley along on a trip to New York and Boston where she is able to solicit more contributions. Keckley acknowledges Mrs. Lincoln's assistance and lists the names not only of the whites but also the important African American leaders who help her fund the association. Keckley closes this discussion by noting that Mary Lincoln afterward continued to "make frequent

contributions, as also did the President. In 1863, I was re-elected President of the Association, which office I continue to hold" (116). Keckley demonstrates here the Lincolns' benevolence as well as her own and she acknowledges the importance of her connection to them. But, more importantly, she simultaneously places herself in closer proximity to President Lincoln and marks out a distinct social space for herself when she refers to her own re-election as a "President." A doubly disenfranchised African American woman, she makes clear here that she too has a claim to Presidency, a claim that exposed the raw nerve of the keenest anxieties of the Reconstruction era: whites' fears of black domination and males' fears of female domination.

Mary Lincoln's behavior activates similar fears although her gentility depends on physical rather than behavioral display. Quite often her manipulation of display, still a vexed issue during this time period, is entwined with her entitlement. In one move to assert her position in the White House, she changes the tradition of the President choosing a lady to lead the promenade at the state receptions. She calls the custom absurd, noting, "On such occasions our guests recognize the position of the President as first of all; consequently, he takes the lead in everything; well, now, if they recognize his position they should also recognize mine. I am his wife and should lead with him" (144). While she refers to a symbolic gesture of leadership, Mary Lincoln asserts her entitlement to public recognition equal to her husband's.

When Mrs. Lincoln loses her husband, however, her status is threatened and her real position revealed as entirely dependent upon his symbolic capital. After the assassination, Mrs. Lincoln has approximately five weeks to move her family and belongings out of the White House. She remains in confinement, but begins packing,

which "afforded quite a relief, as it so closely occupied [her and Keckley] that [they] had not much time for lamentation" (201). As both Beecher & Warner insist, keeping busy wards off excessive grief and self-pity. When Mrs. Lincoln leaves the White House, she takes fifty or sixty packing boxes, and the large amount draws unfavorable attention from the public. What is significant in these passages is that she carries away so many things even while she refuses to keep anything of the President's, giving it all away to friends. One might argue that with his death his cultural capital evaporated and thus his possessions held no significance for Mrs. Lincoln. Yet, she recognized the symbolic capital of "Abraham Lincoln," reified upon his death, and worked hard both to protect and use that power.

So, what was inside those fifty-plus packing boxes? Mary Lincoln's clothing and effects. Keckley notes, "Mrs. Lincoln had a passion for hoarding old things" (204), such as bonnets and clothes. Lincoln tries to enact the role of the frugal housewife when she claims to be keeping these things to reuse the materials in the future, a common practice regularly suggested by homemaking advice manuals. In regard to this apparent frugality, Keckley acknowledges, "I am sorry to say that Mrs. Lincoln's foresight in regard to the future was only confined to cast-off clothing, as she owed, at the time of the President's death, different store bills amounting to seventy thousand dollars" (204). Thus Keckley contradicts Mrs. Lincoln's "hoarding" as a measure induced by thrift. Juxtaposed as this is with Lincoln's refusal to keep any memento of her husband,³⁴ it suggests that what Mrs. Lincoln keeps instead are

mementos of herself, signifying her former social position. The personal memento helps log an individual's history, but also "[b]ecause of its connection to biography and its place in constituting the notion of the individual life, the memento becomes emblematic of the worth of that life and of the self's capacity to generate worthiness" (Stewart 139). Leaving the White House was a sort of death for Mrs. Lincoln because it marked the moment when her opportunity to grasp social and economic power had clearly passed, when she no longer generated value and worth in Stewart's sense: in other words, when she lost access to ready conversion of cultural and economic capital into symbolic capital.

Hence, her grief over Lincoln's death almost certainly includes grief at the loss of position her widowhood brings. Her loss becomes clear in a later passage in which Keckley remarks on the difference between the President's departure from the White House -- with music, flags, and crowds of people there to pay their respects -- and the departure of his wife when "there was scarcely a friend to say goodbye" (208). Of course, the two situations are entirely different in terms of their symbolic significance: one a funeral of a head of state, the other a widow moving out of a house. Once her husband is dead, Mary Lincoln is no longer the First Lady, the White House no longer her home; she has already lost her access to symbolic capital. As Lincoln's behavior before the first levee reveals her status change from everyday woman to First Lady,

³⁴ Sorisio notes that the failure to follow genteel custom of keeping a memento of the deceased marks her mourning as selfish (34). And, indeed, Mrs. Lincoln's refusal to keep anything seems particularly odd in a culture with extensive mourning practices that included highly prized mementos of the deceased, such as hair rings and photographs. See, for example, Sanchez-Eppler and Delorme on mementos in mourning customs.

her reactions to moving out of the White House concede her status change from First Lady to war widow. The lack of attendance and excitement at this ritual indicates precisely the relative insignificance of her new status. As Keckley notes, "The silence was almost painful" (208). In contrast to Mary, her young son Tad seems to recognize and accept his new role: "Yes, Pa is dead, and I am only Tad Lincoln now, little Tad, like other boys. I am not a President's son now. I won't have many presents any more. Well, I will try and be a good boy, and will hope to go someday to Pa and brother Willie in heaven" (197). Tad's awareness of both his loss of social position and its concomitant loss of material benefits is accompanied by a sentimental submission to providence and the sole goal to be good and get to heaven with his father and brother. Tad thus performs the appropriate emotional labor for the situation, providing stark contrast to his mother who is inconsolable, clinging to her lost position through the objects that signified her status via display.³⁵

After leaving the White House, Mary Lincoln continually attempts to reestablish her position. Most notably, she tries to have her debts paid by Republican politicians she entertained while still in the White House.³⁶ Her first, incognito, effort to make money from the sale of her clothing fails. Subsequently, the diamond brokers to whom she has given charge of the sale advise her to write a series of letters to them explaining her circumstances, which they will then circulate among well-known republican politicians asking them to give her money so she (and they) are not

³⁵ Keckley is appropriately sad for death of the President, but also appears to presume she will continue on in her successful business in DC.

³⁶ On the "Old Clothes Scandal," see Fleischner 304-314.

publicly humiliated by her poverty. The letters play off her and the country's grief over the death of Lincoln, depict Mrs. Lincoln as a properly grieving woman, and reprimand the government for not providing for the beloved President's widow. For example, one letter states, "I am passing through a very painful ordeal, which the country, in remembrance of my noble and devoted husband, should have spared me" (293). Mrs. Lincoln appraises her worth according to the deceased President's symbolic capital, whose very death instead defines the conditions for her displacement from a position of entitlement to one of deservingness. She also attempts to trade on her own social capital by calling in favors from men she had helped with their political campaigns by giving them access to the President. At the same time, the letters repeatedly suggest that she has nothing to do with the business of selling her clothing and jewelry, that she leaves this business to her broker, W.H. Brady. Keckley exposes this myth by showing Lincoln was not only involved in the sale, but also a willing partner to Brady's plan. Although the idea does not originate with Mrs. Lincoln, she nonetheless agrees to participate in what is essentially political blackmail, thereby demonstrating how little social or symbolic capital she finally possesses. The politicians refuse to respond to her threats and the plan backfires as the letters are published in a Democratic paper, making their objectionable political intent clear. The newspapers portray Mrs. Lincoln's attempt to curry political favor as improper at best and publicizing her financial difficulties as unbecoming, and her cultural capital dwindles. Subsequent events in "Old Clothes Scandal" certify this assessment.

A short time before the letters are published, Mary Lincoln returns to Chicago leaving Elizabeth Keckley to manage her business in New York. To do so, Keckley

had to stay with friends and take in sewing to pay for her expenses as Lincoln continually claimed to be unable to pay her. While her self-sacrifice is real in this scenario, Keckley also engages in *la perruque* as she begins writing her memoir during this period. She had already written letters to the newspapers in an attempt to clear Mrs. Lincoln's name and perhaps believed that a memoir would not only redeem her and Lincoln's reputations but also supply an income. Yet, like Mary Lincoln's efforts to use her connections to politicians to pay her debts, *Behind the Scenes* appears as Keckley's attempt to capitalize on her affiliation with Mrs. Lincoln. And, as Mrs. Lincoln's publication of letters indicted a set of politicians for failing to provide for her, so too did Keckley's publication of Mary's personal letters indict Mrs. Lincoln for failing to provide for Keckley. Finally, the public reception of *Behind the Scenes* parallels the vehement response to the "Old Clothes Scandal" itself.³⁷

The issue of inappropriate publicity in the "Old Clothes Scandal" escalates for Mrs. Lincoln when her clothes are put on display. In conjunction with publishing the letters to the politicians, Mrs. Lincoln gives "Brady permission to place her wardrobe on exhibition for sale" (296). Keckley includes in the memoir a newspaper article condemning the sale. The newspaper account uses the terms, "exposition" and "exhibition" to describe the sale in which items of Mrs. Lincoln's "superabundant clothing" "excited the public curiosity," lying "exposed" and "displayed" in the "rooms of Mr. Brady" (302-03). The sexual innuendo is clear, with a telling blend of excess and spectacle. In the nineteenth century, it was common for women to sell their used

³⁷ On the public response to *Behind the Scenes*, see Fleischner 317.

clothing to second-hand dealers,³⁸ but Mrs. Lincoln's sale varied from the norm because it involved a publicized exhibition of her clothing, which amounted to a use of her public image for monetary ends. Adams refers to this dilemma as a *verboten* "conflation of the nation's symbolic and capitalist economies" (55). As noted above, Mary Lincoln's sense of herself as spectacle created anxiety that led her to consume to maintain the spectacle; thus, her brief tryst with the symbolic economy necessitated a heightened involvement in the capitalist economy. If the sale had been private, it would not have aroused such condemnation. Whereas fashion itself combined commodity and sexuality at the service of spectacle, the addition of monetary exchange to the circuit evoked prostitution.³⁹ The potent combination of these elements made Mrs. Lincoln's public sale of her fashionable wardrobe highly taboo.

The publication of Mrs. Lincoln's personal letters to Elizabeth Keckley in the appendix to *Behind the Scenes* recalls the exhibition of the dresses as it entails the display of intimate articles to the public for financial gain. Thus, while Mrs. Lincoln's efforts to exploit political connections as well as her own public image as a President's wife aroused concerns over white women's political and financial power, Keckley's book poses an altogether more shocking threat to Reconstruction-era social order. Keckley's possession of Mrs. Lincoln's letters and secrets was, as the book reviews

³⁸ Fernandez 24.

³⁹ Twenty years later, another First Lady, Mrs. Frances Cleveland's image was used regularly in advertisements for various items including sewing machines (Fischer 121, 130). However, in the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, the image of women in the marketplace was commonly linked to prostitution (Jennifer Jones 42, Bowlby *Just Looking* 10-11). On dressmaker's links to prostitution, see Gamber 18, 72-3.

indicate, quite disturbing to whites of the middle and upper classes. Keckley explains in the terms of sentimental discourse, the publication of the letters in the Preface: "These letters were not meant for publication, for which they are all the more valuable; they are the frank overflowings of the heart, the outcropping of impulse, the key to genuine motives" (xv). The letters represent the true Mary Lincoln as nothing else can, Keckley argues, because they are the written equivalent of her emotional state, and one's emotion most candidly speaks for one's character. But, Keckley's possession of and control of these affective outpourings is precisely the problem. Mary Lincoln's emotional dependence on Keckley, which causes her to write the letters, equates to a kind of submission to Keckley's will.

This is not to suggest that Keckley had any type of control over Lincoln's behavior, but that she had the power to construct or alter Mary Lincoln's public image and use it to her own advantage. Like the terrifying confidence men of the nineteenth century, Keckley appeared to have gained the confidence of Mrs. Lincoln only to use their intimacy for her own financial gain and the (public, literary) destruction of Mrs. Lincoln's character. The power dynamics of their relationship seemed to invert the racial structure of the era in the way many whites feared. As one reviewer remarked, "What family that has a servant may not, in fact, have its peace and happiness destroyed by such treacherous creatures as the Keckley woman" (qtd. in Fleischner 317). Intimacy with or emotional dependence on African Americans becomes pictured by the publication of *Behind the Scenes* as dangerous to one's own position. Elizabeth Keckley manages the production of the sartorial and literary spectacle of Mary Lincoln, both of which she stands to gain from financially.

Like the gift of the silk dress, Mary Lincoln has given Keckley something equally intimate and precious, her letters. And like the silk dress, these letters similarly reveal her extravagance, emotional and otherwise. The letters bare her extravagant emotional life as well as her persistent dissatisfaction with her own material circumstances, social position, and lack of political influence. In the letter of January 15th discussed above, after giving a few more directions about how she'd like Brady and Keyes handled, Lincoln closes, "I am literally suffering for my black dress. Will you send it to me when you receive this? I am looking very shabby. I hope you have entirely recovered. *Write* when you receive this" (369). The pithy sentence that refers to Keckley's well-being feels barren and perfunctory, particularly after her own emphatic affective demonstration, and her emphatic command that Keckley write is one more instance of the emotional labor she demanded of her former modiste. Significantly, the climax of Lincoln's misery is that she is "suffering for [her] black dress," no longer "suffering for a decent dress" as she was only a month before. While "suffering for a decent dress" exhibits an enduring sense of entitlement, "suffering for her black dress" nods to the conventions of mourning and an emerging acceptance of her diminished social position. In the midst of the Old Clothes Scandal, she recognizes her impotence in the financial, social, and political realms; consequently, her intense need for and claim to position resorts to her only sites of access, fashion and emotion. The statement, "suffering for my black dress" also neatly conjoins her extravagant emotional expression with her sense of entitlement, status anxiety, and uncontrolled consumption better than any journalist, confidante, biographer, or literary critic could. The letters clearly do offer insight via emotion into Mary Lincoln's complex character,

just as Keckley promised they would, and their inclusion at the end of the book replicates the imbalanced affective economy the book exposes by devoting the last forty pages of the book to Mary Lincoln's emotionally extravagant voice at the expense of Keckley's own.

Conclusion

Women's Work, Emotion, and Class Formation

Subsequent to the radical transformation of labor produced by industrialization, women writers included in their literary labors a commitment to describing women's work. Agitation for abolition, unions, and women's rights energizes antebellum conversations about women's labor while the national crisis of Civil War and the subsequent recovery period of Reconstruction drew increased attention to women's economic position and productive capacities. Despite sentimental injunctions to keep women in the home and out of the marketplace, women wrote from within the sentimental habitus claiming the value of domestic labor and the influence of women in the business world. The lynchpin of this discussion was emotional labor, which enabled authors to discuss women's productive public contributions via the affective practices condoned by sentimentalism.

The sentimental habitus provided a standard of literary quality in the mid-nineteenth century by which women writers were critiqued. The success of a novel by a female author depended largely upon its conformity with sentimental literary and cultural conventions. The texts in this study take up sentimental dispositions but engage in a variety of literary tactics to retheorize the sentimental by revealing its inconsistencies and its economic foundations. Placing emotional practice at the center of their work enabled these women writers to validate women's labor while still

adhering, roughly, to sentimental expectations that would ensure the distribution and wide readership of their work.

In *The Wide, Wide World*, Warner attempts to articulate and codify sentimental dispositions intended to maintain social control. In doing so, she legitimates a set of dispositions that offer its practitioners social dominance. The habitus she describes corresponds to a very specific middle-class formation, defined in relation to other pretenders to middle-class social superiority. Warner both takes up and rejects various dispositions of gentry and yeoman farmer, particularly in terms of their relations to labor. Balancing the demands of physical and emotional labor offers a middle ground between these groups, but Warner finally prioritizes emotional labor as the engine of the sentimental economy as it pertains in both the domestic and larger social realm.

Antebellum-era women writers critique the patriarchal apparatus underlying the sentimental habitus. They demonstrate that dematerialization of women's labor and the dispositions that support that dematerialization also serve to devalue women's labor and maintain them in positions of social and financial dependence. The writers for *The Lowell Offering* partially dismantle the patriarchal structure by imagining a family of women workers authorized to regulate themselves and each other. They participate in the formation of a lower middle class with a mixture of genteel and Jeffersonian values.

Harriet Wilson draws attention to the conditions of indentured service, stressing the lack of cultural or economic capital but also drawing attention to the indentured servant's lack of real labor capital. In order to claim her labor capital, Frado must refuse sentimental emotional conventions, and in doing so, reveals the way those

conventions maintain class and race hierarchies. Similarly, Fanny Fern's *Ruth Hall* exposes the gender inequalities that define the conditions for the sentimental habitus. Fern contests the equalizing function of a middle-class sympathy and male guardianship of women that is based primarily in pecuniary self-interest and offers a reformed sentimental economy that prioritizes emotional bonds that acknowledge and defend women workers. Wilson, Fern, and the Lowell operatives each indicate the role of economic capital in providing access to cultural and social capital.

The cross-dressers in chapter three gain access to new forms of capital generally not available to women. Their efficient performance of wartime labor offered proof that women were capable of excelling in traditionally masculine jobs. And, their emotional flexibility provided an implicit critique of the sentimental gendered restrictions on women's labor based in constructions of women as emotionally too sensitive and morally too pure to thrive in the marketplace. Velasquez seeks to distance herself from her gender, but also from men to assert her general superiority and thus replicates gender conventions as part of her critique. In attempting to assert women's special conditions and abilities, Southworth is likewise trapped by gender conventions. Edmonds, distinctly, avoids these traps by maintaining an ambiguous gender throughout her text, which enables her to challenge gender distinctions. While the authors that depict cross-dressing range in their approaches to gender, their battlefield performances of martial and emotional labor refute the gendering of labor forms. Ultimately, they disrupt and reform the sentimental habitus by incorporating the transgressive sensational dispositions for self-orientation that allow them to assert women's labor potential.

Finally, Elizabeth Keckley engages in *la perruque*. While performing labor that supported Mary Lincoln's privilege, she simultaneously wrote an exposé of the sociopolitical inequalities that negated the economic worth of her labor. Keckley takes up sentimental dispositions only to juxtapose them with material conditions that challenge white entitlement and black dispossession. Both Keckley and Lincoln participate in the economy in ways that question sentimental assumptions of feminine domesticity. Exploring classed and raced power dynamics in terms of affective practices, *Behind the Scenes* protests the labor structures, emotional and material, that exploit black labor to support white extravagance.

By the 1870's, a new generation was writing more freely and more regularly about women's labor. The most notable and popular of these authors, writing in the sentimental tradition but continuing to stretch its capacities, was Louisa May Alcott. Alcott's *Work* (1873) follows Christie Devon through nine different jobs on her quest for independence. Christie's variety of employment also allows Alcott to explore a variety of women: black, leisured, working class, wealthy, housewife, working poor, and "fallen." In the end, she suggests that increased opportunity for women relies not only on their economic independence, but also their economic and social solidarity secured by affective bonds. According to Alcott, only communal action that includes women of every class and race will advance women's rights.

The authors discussed in this project demonstrate that gender, race, and class distinctions rest on dispositions that generate specific emotional practices. These emotional practices, then, participate in the formation of class, race, and gender. Analyzing emotional practices as part of a larger habitus indicates the ways emotion

and emotional conventions operate as forms of socio-economic oppression. More importantly, such analysis allows us to recognize the potential for protest in contestation of normative affective practices.

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- Young, Elizabeth. *Disarming the Nation: Women's Writing and the American Civil War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

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Field: 19th and 20th C American Literature and CultureDissertation: *Emotional Labor, Women's Work, and Sentimental Capital in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction* (completed June 2004)

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M.A., Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA (1997)

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Exam Concentrations: Women's Literature and History, Media Studies

B.A., San Jose State University, San Jose, CA (1992)

With Distinction, Honors in English

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AWARDS AND HONORS

Elizabeth Kerr MacFarlane Endowed Scholarship in the Humanities, UW (2003-04)

Simpson Center Institute for the Public Humanities Fellow, UW (September 2003)

Winterthur Library and Museum Short-Term Research Fellow, UW (June 2003)

University of Washington Excellence in Teaching Award, Departmental Nominee (2002-03)

Eve Alvord Interdisciplinary Fellowship, Departmental Nominee, UW (2002-03)

English Department Travel Grant, University of Washington (2003)

David Allen Robertson Scholarship, University of Washington (2000)

Graduate School Recruitment Award, University of Washington (1999-2000)

Donald J. Whiting Teaching Excellence Award, Boston College (1996-97)

Teaching Fellowship, Boston College (1996-97)

First-Year Graduate Scholarship, Boston College (1995-96)

Phelan Award for Patterned Verse, San Jose State University (May 1992)

 PUBLICATIONS

- “‘Feeling Right’: Domestic Emotional Labor in *The Wide, Wide World*”
Arizona Quarterly (Forthcoming)
- “Difficult Sympathy in the Reconstruction-Era Animal Stories of *Our Young Folks*”
Children’s Literature Volume 31(2003): 25-49.
-
- “To Count the Tears and Weary Vigils: *Ruth Hall’s* Sentimental Capital”
Legacy (under review)
- “‘Suffering for a New Dress’: Emotion and Extravagance in *Behind the Scenes*”
African American Review (under review)

 PRESENTATIONS

- "Retention Strategies and EOP Writing Programs"
 Conference on College Composition and Communication (March 2005)
- "The Passion for Labor in E.D.E.N. Southworth’s *Britomarte, the Man-Hater* Series.”
 American Literature Association Annual Conference (May 2004)
- "Dreiser and Norris" -- Panel Moderator
 American Literature Association Annual Conference (May 2004)
- "Discourses of Fertility" -- Panel Moderator
 University of Washington American Studies Colloquium Conference (April 2004)
- “Domestic Labor, Emotional Labor: Elizabeth Keckley and Mary Todd Lincoln”
 Pacific Ancient and Modern Languages Association Annual Conference
 (November 2003)
- "Emotional Labor and Extravagance in *Behind the Scenes*"
 Society for the Study of American Women Writers Conference (September 2003)
- “Cold-War Domesticity” -- Panel Moderator
 University of Washington American Studies Colloquium Conference (May 2003)
- “A Sober Cheerfulness: Regulating Emotion in the Nineteenth-Century American Home”

- Presenter and Panel Moderator for "Making the American Dream Home"
Pacific Northwest American Studies Association Annual Conference (April 2003)
- "Domestic Emotional Practice in the 'Happy Home'"
Kansas State University Annual Cultural Studies Symposium (March 2003)
- "Tensions and Possibilities: Supporting the At-Risk Student In and Beyond the Department"
Roundtable participant
Western States Composition Conference (October 2002)
- "Beyond Sympathy: Expanding the Notion of Sentimentalism"
University of Washington American Studies Colloquium Conference (May 2002)
- "Internment Domesticity: Home and Emotion in Japanese American Newspapers"
Pacific Northwest American Studies Association Annual Conference (April 2002)
- "The Failure of Sentiment and Sympathy in the Children's Stories of *Our Young Folks*"
American Literature Association Annual Conference (May 2001)
- "Reconstructing Standards of Citizenship in the Animal Stories of *Our Young Folks*"
Pacific Northwest American Studies Association Annual Conference (April 2001)
- "'66N: Music and Lyrics of the American Road"
University of Washington American Studies Colloquium Conference (April 2001)
-

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

Co-director, actor, and editor

9 Interviews, Mockumentary Shorts
Web films available at <http://9interviews.com>

Co-director, interviewer, and co-editor

The Guerrilla Masquerade Party, Documentary Short Subject
Screened at Ladyfest Seattle (June 2004);
Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival (October 2004)

Columnist on vegetarians and vegetarianism in history

Herbivore Magazine (Issue 4, Spring 2004-present)

Librettist and Vocalist

The Terrible Truth about Marriage, Chamber Opera

Performance at Town Hall, Seattle, WA (February 2002)

Lyricist

The Parris Cycle, Song Cycle

Performance at Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle, WA (June 2001)

Independent Researcher

Portland Parks and Recreation, Portland, OR (1998-99)

Researched and wrote a brief history of the bureau itself and a thorough guide to the resources available. Now published on the web at (starting page)

http://www.parks.ci.Portland.or.us/History/History_1852-1900.htm