University of Reading

“Dey jus’ puts a man and breedin’ woman together like mules”: Family, Gender, and Forced Reproduction in the Antebellum South, 1808-1861

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

Forced reproduction, or 'slave-breeding', permeated every aspect of an enslaved person's life. From arranging marriages between enslaved people to forcing enslaved men to rape enslaved women, slaveholders controlled enslaved communities' intimate and sexual lives. Previously, historians have dismissed forced reproduction as an abolitionist trope – one that sensationalised and exaggerated 'slave-breeding' to the point of claiming the existence of 'stud farms.' They all concluded that there is no empirical evidence that it existed. This thesis disputes these claims on the basis that they do not approach the topic in a qualitative way, nor do they listen to the voices of enslaved and formerly enslaved people who have been discussing this topic since its conception. It instead argues that enslavers carried out forced reproduction in a day-to-day way along a spectrum of violence: while some slaveholders pursued a 'paternalistic' approach to breeding by allowing and encouraging enslaved people to marry and have children, others violently coerced enslaved people into having sex with multiple partners. Though forced reproduction undoubtedly affected enslaved women, it was also a form of sexual exploitation for enslaved men, and by using gender as a tool of analysis, this thesis argues that enslavers attempted to emasculate enslaved men by forcing them to rape and be raped, but also by interfering with masculine ideals such as fatherhood. Forced reproduction infiltrated every aspect of an enslaved person's life, but this thesis will focus on four key themes: coerced relationships, fatherhood, health and medical care, and finally marketisation. By primarily using sources from enslaved and formerly enslaved people and using these four themes as a lens in which to view sexual violence in the antebellum South, this thesis examines the ways that forced reproduction affected enslaved men, women, and children in different ways, dividing from one another, and leaving emotional and physical scars on enslaved communities throughout the South.

COVID-19 Impact Statement

I began my PhD in September 2019, and therefore had only six months of uninterrupted research before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the UK. Expecting to be able to spend the next two years embarking on research in the US, I spent these six months researching secondary literature. My initial plan was to apply for fellowships in the US and spend my second year visiting various archives in order to carry out my primary source research. However, once COVID and lockdown happened I was unable to fly to the US due to travel restrictions and concern for personal health and safety. Unable to travel to the US until the final months of my third year, where I completed two fellowships as the Kentucky Historical Society and the Filson Historical Society (also in Kentucky) my primary source research has been limited to what I could carry out through digital archives. This means that my primary sources may not be as broad and varied as I would have liked, and in some circumstances, there are only a handful of one type of source or (for example, one issue of a newspaper was available online). I ask that my examiners take this into account when evaluating my thesis. Thank you.

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Introduction

From her house in Florida, in 1937, Louisa Everett recalled her and her husband's experience with forced reproduction in Virginia, under their enslaver 'Big Jim' McClain. On this plantation, McClain forced over one hundred enslaved people to 'mate indiscriminately'.[1] Motivated by the potential production of 'strong, healthy offspring, he forced them to have sexual relations, even though they were married to other slaves.'[2] Wielding the threat of violence as a tool of coercion, McClain forced enslaved couples on his plantation to consummate these relationships in his presence to ensure they were fulfilling their purpose, and 'he used the same procedure if he thought a certain couple was not producing children fast enough.'[3] Taking these actions even further, McClain sometimes forced enslaved couples to engage in sexual relations in front of his friends as a perverse, voyeuristic, and sadistic form of entertainment, and as a show of his power and authority.[4] On these occasions, his friends would choose 'for themselves the prettiest of the young women' and rape them, sometimes forcing 'the unhappy husbands and lovers of their victims to look on.'[5]

Recalling her experience with McClain, Louisa Everett described the violent start to her marriage with her husband, Sam, as such:

> Marse Jim called me and Sam ter him and ordered Sam to pull off his shirt – that was what the McClain niggers wore – and he said to me: Nor [Louisa's name before emancipation], 'do you think you can stand this big nigger?' He had that old bull whip flung acrost his shoulder, and

[1] Sam and Louisa Everett, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 127; Language is important, and as seen in this sentence, this thesis will primarily use the term 'enslaved people/person' rather than 'slave' where possible, as recommended by P. Gabrielle Foreman's guide to writing about slavery, as it suggests that slavery was something that happened *to* them, rather than a status or implication that they were objects rather than humans. However, there are occasions where it makes more sense for the prose to use 'slave' for comprehensible prose. (See: P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al., 'Writing About Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help', Community-Sourced Document, accessed 8/6/2022, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A4TEdDgYslX-hlKezLodMIM71My3KTN0zxRv0IQTOQs/mobilebasic.
[2] Sam and Louisa Everett, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 127.
[3] *Ibid. 127.*
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] *Ibid*.

> Lawd, that man could hit so hard! So I jes said 'yassur, I guess so,' and tried to hide my face so I couldn't see Sam's nakedness, but he made me look at him anyhow.
>
> Well, he told us what we must git busy and do in his presence, and we had to do it. After that we were considered man and wife.[6]

Sam and Louisa considered themselves somewhat lucky – 'thank God,' exclaimed Louisa, the couple had 'fine, big babies,' and they grew to love one another.[7] McClain therefore did not see the need to impose another man upon Louisa, although he undoubtedly did force other couples. McClain maximised production and reproduction on his plantation by forcing couples to reproduce, and then extorted the labour of them and their children. Pregnant women worked in the fields 'until they felt their labor pains.'[8] Children were not allowed to play, and instead McClain assigned small tasks to 'even the very small children,' such as the gathering of eggs and poke berries, sweeping, and the shucking of corn.[9] Elderly women systematically fed the children 'pot likker' and milk twice a day out of troughs.[10] McClain regimented every aspect of his enslaved peoples' lives, from their feeding routine to their intimate sexual lives.

Contemporaries in the antebellum US termed McClain's sexually violent and controlling behaviour 'slave breeding,' and the enslaved involved as 'breeders.' This thesis argues that elite white people built the institution of slavery on the backs of enslaved peoples' labour by following proto-'eugenic' pro-natalist ideology. Every day, enslavers forced enslaved people along a spectrum of coercion and violence to reproduce children for the workforce. By encouraging those they deemed of an equal size and value to reproduce with one another, enslavers emphasised both the 'quality' and quantity of their enslaved property. Sam and Louisa Everett's story is just one example in a sea of countless others who faced such horrific experiences. Enslavers cajoled, coerced, and forced enslaved men and women to reproduce to ensure the 'natural' growth of slavery. This thesis begins in 1808 after the ban on the international trade of enslaved people, as it became even more important to cultivate and encourage this natural increase of the enslaved population as they could no longer import, or forcibly traffic people from communities in west and central Africa.[11] Indeed, Daina Ramey Berry makes the distinction in the language of breeding before and after 1808. Before 1808, 'breeding' (adj.) or 'breeder' (noun) referred to women who were pregnant. After 1808, these words referred to the

[6] *Ibid.*, 128.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*, 129.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Sasha Turner has explored forced reproduction in Jamaica thirty-years prior to the 1808 ban on trade to the US. See: Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies, Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

reproduction of children 'for profit.'[12] Slaveholders' concern with the reproduction of enslaved people manifested itself in many different aspects of enslaved communities' lives, and this thesis explores the emotional and physical implications that the interference of intimacy and the 'regimentation' of intimate relationships had on enslaved men, women, and children's inner personal lives.[13] By exploring themes of intimate relationships, parenthood, medical care, and marketisation, it argues that forced reproduction was a form of sexual assault that left emotional and physical scars on both enslaved women *and* men.

William Dusinberre used the term 'regimentation' to define the allegedly paternalistic intrusion into the everyday lives of enslaved people.[14] This included the strict control of labour (the type of work, when to start and stop), leisure time, and, crucially, marriages.[15] Enslavers determined when and who an enslaved person could marry, as well as what characteristics determined an appropriate intimate partner.[16] This thesis builds and expands upon Dusinberre's theory of regimentation by exploring *reproductive* regimentation – the interference of the sexual reproduction of enslaved people. There were multiple different avenues of intrusion, some of which were demonstrated in Sam and Louisa Everett's story: enslavers interfered with sexual activity, marriages, the labour and medical care of pregnant women, and the systematic feeding regimes of groups of children.

Indeed, enslavers consistently interfered in enslaved peoples' romantic and sexual lives and took steps to end relationships when they deemed the enslaved couples unsuitable or unproductive reproducers. Sam and Louisa's story highlights not only the violence that enslavers wielded to ensure the continuation of slavery, but the humiliation, embarrassment, and empathy that enslaved people felt for one another. The emphasis on 'big', 'healthy', and 'fine', though relative terms, reveal the profit-seeking values at the heart of enslavers' motivations, and how this applied to and affected both men *and* women. Sam and Louisa's story represents the inherent complexities in discourse around the sexual abuse and exploitation of enslaved people, as enslavers forced both men and women to engage in non-consensual sexual acts with one another. This thesis therefore considers how gender influenced experiences of sexual exploitation.

The definition and construction of the identity of 'breeder' differed depending on who the person was and the temperament of their enslaver. Drawing general conclusions is challenging,

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[12] Daina Ramey Berry, *Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, From Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Beacon Press, 2017), 20-21.
[13] William Dusinberre, *Strategies for Survival: Recollections of Bondage in Antebellum Virginia* (University of Virginia Press, 2009), 95-103.
[14] Dusinberre, *Strategies for Survival*, 95.
[15] *Ibid*., 97.
[16] *Ibid*.

as there is differentiation between prolific 'breeders' – those that enslavers singled out as 'breeding men and women' – and the 'every-day' enslaved person who felt pressure to reproduce. In the context of forced reproduction, enslavers sometimes singled out specific people as 'breeders.'[17] These people's experiences were therefore different to the 'every-day' enslaved person. Indeed, they faced even more pressure to reproduce quickly, and their enslaver occasionally isolated them from their communities. There are therefore two categories to investigate here: 'breeding men and women' and 'everyday' men and women who experienced methods of coerced reproduction.

Furthermore, this thesis examines the experiences unique to specific genders to understand the spectrum of forced reproduction and how it complicated the everyday life of various groups of people by examining four different themes: intimate relationships, fatherhood, medical care, and marketisation. Linking these four themes are two key concepts: the life cycle and family. Forced reproduction marked enslaved people at every stage of their life, from childhood to adolescence, from adulthood to old age, wherein enslavers valued individuals based on how fertile they were at specific ages. Their fertility determined their value, and consequentially who they were intimate with, *when* they engaged in such intimacies, the type of medical care they received, and how much their enslavers sold them for.

Although enslaved people desired families of their own, enslavers attempted to enforce their own notions of what an enslaved family should be. Forced reproduction manifested in the form of enslavers forcing, coercing, or cajoling enslaved men and women into intimate sexual relationships, or 'marriages.' Within this context, the use of the term 'marriage' is contentious. Nuptials between enslaved men and women were not legally binding, and the post-civil war era saw an influx of freed Black people legalising their relationships. Chapter One therefore argues that during the antebellum era, slaveholders divided themselves into three separate schools of thought: the first group, and most typical, forced enslaved couples to go through a ceremony, sometimes including a traditional 'jumping of the broom' to seal the relationship; the second group included enslavers who simply 'declared' enslaved couples married without any ceremony; and the final group saw enslavers not enforcing any sort of marriage, but instead forced them into an intimate sexual relationship.[18] Moreover, some enslavers forced enslaved individuals to procreate or 'marry' multiple people, as seen in the case of Sam and Louisa Everett. For enslavers, marriage was an excuse for procreation. As is discussed in Chapter One, an acceptance of the term

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[17] Tadman, 'The Persistent Myth of Paternalism', 7-23.

[18] For more on the broomstick ceremony, see: Tyler D. Parry, 'Married in Slavery Time: Jumping the Broom in Atlantic Perspective,' *The Journal of Southern History,* 81 (2015), 273-312; Tyler D. Parry, *Jumping the Broom: The Surprising Multicultural Origins of a Black Wedding Ritual* (University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

'marriage' depended on the views of enslaved individuals themselves. Some felt antagonistic toward this enforced relationship and did not consider themselves truly married, parting ways after emancipation, whereas others accepted and embraced the status and legalised it after emancipation. Others felt that the emotional dedication and love between them was more valid than legalisation. Emotional responses to these forced situations therefore widely varied and depended on the individuals in question.

Enslavers' use of marriage was therefore two-fold: they believed that the promotion of marriage amongst the enslaved made them good Christian masters, but they also used it to justify forcing couples to reproduce. They claimed a couple's marital and moral duty was to procreate with their spouses. Thus, enslavers used religion and marriage to justify their interference and insistence on procreation. Religion and the enforcement of marriage allowed enslavers to buy into their belief that they were benevolent owners who simply wanted their slaves to be happy and build familial networks and communities. However, as Chapter One explores, although enslaved couples did not welcome their enslavers forcing or otherwise cajoling them into wedlock, many enslaved men took advantage of their enslaver's desire for them to reproduce to 'choose' the woman they wished to have sexual relations with, with or without their consent.[19] As Tera W. Hunter argues, being forced by their enslaver to 'play the role and abide by the form… did not make a marriage.'[20] Mutual love and respect were the foundations of a consensual marriage, and many did not start out this way. Moreover, Hunter argues that although enslavers could force men and women to cohabitate, this was only 'to an extent.'[21] Many grew to love one another, but not all enslaved people did, nor did they label these forced relationships as 'marriages' and instead 'bestowed their affections selectively.'[22] For the purpose of this thesis, however, the term 'marriage' will be used, as well as 'intimate relationship', where appropriate, but with caution and the understanding that it is a complex term. Chapter One broadly uses the term 'marriage' to encompass both consensual and non-consensual non-legally binding relationships declared by couples' enslavers, and therefore also incorporates 'forced marriages.' This therefore does not mean that the marriages were necessarily accepted by either the enslaved man or woman in question.

The following historiography and methodology establishes this thesis in the current historiography of US antebellum slavery. Although forced reproduction is an important topic, there are very few works dedicated to its study in entirety and its wider impact on enslaved

[19] See Chapter One: Forced Reproduction and Intimate Relationships, for a discussion on agency and choice with slave marriages.
[20] Tera W. Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the Nineteenth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2017), 8.
[21] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 33.
[22] *Ibid*.

people's day-to-day lives. Each chapter is built upon the foundational works crafted by past and current historians to provide an important entry into the history of slavery and sexuality. The literature review first establishes the origins of forced reproduction in the current historiography, before bringing in four different strands that Chapters One to Four work to build upon, examining through the lens of forced reproduction. By bringing the existing scholarship on *sexuality, family*, *health*, and finally *capitalism* together under the wider thematic umbrella of forced reproduction, this thesis originally and uniquely argues that forced reproduction was a central component to the existence and continuation of the institution of slavery and was an avenue of power that enslavers used to assert hegemonic control over enslaved people of both genders.

Historiography

Historically, forced reproduction has been a contentious topic, which Gregory D. Smithers accurately refers to as an 'elephant in the room' that historians either do not want to discuss or do not know how to begin discussing.[23] Historians of gender and sexuality in the antebellum South have not yet reached a consensus on either the extent of forced reproduction nor its far-reaching consequences on enslaved men and women. White, male scholars of the early twentieth century dominated the bulk of research on slavery, and racist and segregationist attitudes of the time obviously heavily influenced this research. However, from the turn of the twentieth century to the present, debates on forced reproduction have shifted focus from whether the practice existed at all, to a begrudging acceptance, and finally to debates over the extent of its presence in the South. More recently, scholars concerned with ideas of motherhood, sexuality, gender, and masculinity have explored how forced reproduction even provides evidence of the sexual exploitation of enslaved men.

As previously mentioned, this thesis provides an important intersection in the historiography of slavery, gender, and sexuality by bringing together four key strands to reveal the intertwined relationship of slavery, sexual exploitation, and capitalism. These four strands of sexuality, family, health, and capitalism also form the thematic basis for the chapters here – intimate relationships, fatherhood, medical care, and marketisation. All these themes have been subjected to rigorous examination by past historians of slavery. However, it uniquely brings these themes together to understand how forced reproduction affected enslaved people's emotional relationships and day-to-day lives. This thesis therefore challenges the proverbial 'elephant in the room' by sensitively dissecting the inner lives of enslaved people's sexual relationships, and questioning to what

[23] Gregory D. Smithers, 'American Abolitionism and Slave-Breeding Discourse: A Re-evaluation', *Slavery & Abolition*, 33 (2011), 552.

extent enslavers controlled intimacies, challenged enslaved fatherhood, regimented their diet and medical care, and then marketed them as 'breeders'.

Scholarship from the early twentieth century, such as that of the historian Frederic Bancroft, often simply reiterated abolitionist literature of the nineteenth century. Bancroft emphasised the importance of 'slave rearing' to the economy of the South, and maintained that forced reproduction became the 'largest and often the only regular profit of nearly all slaveholding farmers and of many planters in the Upper South.'[24] This argument is based on the assumption that soil in the Upper South was not nearly as remunerative as soil in the Lower South, which exacerbated the belief that the Upper South was 'breeding' slaves for sale. Writing in the second half of the twentieth century, Richard G. Low and Randolph B. Campbell define these states as 'importing' and 'exporting' states.[25] Both Bancroft and nineteenth-century abolitionists believed that enslavers systematically bred people in the Upper South and put them to work on the fertile land of the Deep South. Anti-slavery writers alleged that instead of enslaving people to grow and harvest crops, states in the Upper South focused their efforts on 'mass breeding.' Despite Bancroft's polemics that systematic 'slave rearing' was the singular most important system to support slavery, there is little to no evidence that this happened. Later, in the revisionist period of the 1970s, New Economic Historians such as Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman dismissed the notion of systematic 'breeding' for the market and point out that there is no evidence of enslavers instructing overseers to encourage reproduction on plantations.[26] Furthermore, Michael Tadman shared that after having analysed thousands of letters between slave-traders he never came across a single reference to 'specialist child-production farms'.[27] Tadman's notion of forced reproduction is too narrow, defining it purely as the existence of 'specialist child-production farms'. This thesis takes a broader original approach by defining forced reproduction as any attempt to cajole or coerce enslaved couples into reproducing and demonstrates that it was much more common and normative than explicit 'breeding farms.' Indeed, forced reproduction and reproductive practices happened in less obvious ways through the policing of relationships, the emphasis of *partus sequitur ventrem,* and the regimentation of health in order to cultivate the 'perfect' body to reproduce.

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[24] Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (University of South Carolina, 1931), 68.
[25] Importing states included Texas, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Missouri. Exporting states included Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Kentucky, South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia. See Richard G. Lowe and Randolph B. Campbell, 'The Slave-Breeding Hypothesis: a Demographic Comment on the "Buying" and "Selling" States,' *The Journal of Southern History,* 42 (1976), 403-404.
[26] Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 78, 86.
[27] Michael Tadman, 'Demographic Cost of Sugar: Debates on Slave Societies and Natural Increase in the Americas', *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), 1557.

Other scholars have turned to empirical evidence (or the lack thereof) to reject the notion of coerced reproduction. Quantitative historians, including Tadman and John Boles, argued there is not enough sufficient statistical evidence to suggest that forced reproduction existed.[28] There is insufficient data to prove the widespread systematic forced reproduction of slaves, and no proof of excessive number of sales of enslaved females from the Upper to Lower southern states. Though it is highly unlikely that forced reproduction occurred in a systematic, widespread way – such as on the so-called 'stud farms' argued by abolitionists – there *is* significant evidence that forms of coerced reproduction occurred on an informal, day-to-day basis. Tadman and Boles do not consider the first-hand accounts from formerly enslaved people that indicate the casual day-to-day interference in their intimate lives by white enslavers. Tadman dismisses evidence found in slave narratives as 'boastful exaggerations of former youthful days.'[29] Therefore, instead of listening to those affected by the practice of forced reproduction, these scholars prefer to rely on empirical evidence *alone*. Smithers reprimands economic historians for doing precisely this.[30] However, although Smithers criticises economic historians for overlooking the lived experiences of people, he also criticises social and cultural historians for not utilising statistical evidence.[31] Moreover, Dale Tomich argues that is inadequate to 'simply accept' New Economic Historians findings as they have been presented, and that we should not accepted them as 'economic facts'.[32] Instead, it is important that we combine histories of capitalism with social histories and the examination of sources from the oppressed in order to understand how capitalism and exploitation interact on a daily basis.

Through the study of the reproduction of 'property' (enslaved people), this thesis also contributes to the historiography of capitalism and slavery by arguing that enslavers built their economy on the backs of the forced sexual labour of enslaved men and women. As stated previously, New Economic Historians of the 1970s such as Fogel and Engerman used data to dismiss forced reproduction, and Tomisch argues that it was at this point that New Economic Historians and New Cultural Historians 'tend to [their] own gardens.'[33] In 2004, Walter Johnson questioned what historians really mean by 'commodification of people', arguing that this is a

[28] Tadman, 'Demographic Cost of Sugar', 1541-1559; John Boles, *Black Southerners, 1619-1869* (University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 69.
[29] Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 124.
[30] Gregory D. Smithers, *Slave Breeding: Sex, Violence, and Memory in African American History* (University Press of Florida, 2001), 171.
[31] Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, 171.
[32] Dale Tomich, 'Slavery in Historical Capitalism: Toward a Theoretical History of the Second Slavery', in Dale Tomich (ed)., *Slavery and Historical Capitalism During the Nineteenth Century* (Lexington Books, 2017), 39.
[33] Tomich, 'Slavery in Historical Capitalism', 38.

'baggy' term, that invites all manner of 'comparisons of the incommensurable.'[34] Considering this, this thesis broadly defines the 'commodification of people' as the valuation of fertile women, and enslavers' financially motivated pro-natalist encouragement of desirable enslaved people to procreate. By engaging in scholarly literature on capitalism, it is possible to understand the link between slavery, capitalism, and forced reproduction, and agree with Johnson that slavery and capitalism are *not* different entities, but symbiotic.[35] Indeed, Johnson maintains that enslavers' commodification of labour and commodification of labour*ers* are 'two concretely intertwined and ideologically symbiotic elements of a larger unified though internally diversified structure of exploitation.'[36] Slavery could not exist without capitalism, and this is clearly evident in the ways that enslavers regimented enslaved people's lives to exploit the most labour – sexual and physical – out of them. In this way, this thesis argues that slavery, capitalism, and forced reproduction all feed off of one another. In particular, forced reproduction would not exist if slavery was not an inherently capitalist institute.

Beckertt and Seth Rockman have argued that historians have only just begun to link the more general histories of slavery and capitalism together, observing that we know slavery is tied to the US economy, but we do not yet know *how*.[37] With the exception of scholars such as Amy Dru Stanley, who has examined 'slave breeding and free love' and concludes that forced reproduction created 'a link between human bondage and capitalist revolution,' there is little work explicitly tying forced reproduction and the histories of capitalism together.[38] However, Stanley's work primarily focuses on arguments of forced reproduction from the point of view of nineteenth-century Congressmen, abolitionists, and pro-slavery advocates, rather than exploring the experiences of the enslaved.[39] Moreover, Stanley evokes a romantic view of forced reproduction where she states that 'slave breeding was ultimately about the ways of the heart, as much as about the ways of the market."[40] This suggests that enslavers took advantage of a pre-existing, what she terms, 'sensual love' between enslaved men and women, rather than acknowledging the dearth of agency in many of these relationships due to enslavers' coercion. She further argues that forced reproduction showed 'how much the legitimacy of creating wealth and exchanging commodities

[34] Walter Johnson, 'The Pedestal and the Veil: Rethinking the Capitalism/Slavery Question', *Journal of the Early Republic,* 24 (2004), 299.
[35] Johnson, 'The Pedestal and the Veil', 306.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Sven Beckertt and Seth Rockman, Introcution', in Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman (eds.), *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of America's Economic Development* (University of Pennsylvania, 2016), 3.
[38] Amy Dru Stanley, 'Slave Breeding and Free Love: An Antebellum Argument Over Slavery, Capitalism, and Personhood,' in Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith (eds), *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 120.
[39] Dru Stanley does however briefly look at some formerly enslaved people of note such as Charles Ball, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Jacobs, but does not explore the day-to-day experiences of enslaved people who had to remain in bondage.
[40] Stanley, 'Slave Breeding and Free Love', 134.

owed to the ways of love', again further overlooking the role *forced* sexual exploitation played in the accumulation of wealth.[41] Though many enslavers did take advantage of pre-existing, loving relationships, many others forced enslaved people into unwanted sexual contact.

Historians exploring sexualities such as Edward Baptist have taken orthodox capitalist theories and developed them to understand the relation between sexual exploitation and capitalism. Indeed, Baptist takes Karl Marx's theory of 'commodity fetishism' and Sigmund Freud's 'sexual fetishism', combining them together, to argue that white slave-trading men also saw these as interlinked and that they thought 'coerced sex was the secret meaning of the commerce of human beings.'[42] Indeed, Baptist maintains that slavery and capitalism engaged in a symbiotic relationship through the 'fancy' trade of light-skinned enslaved women.[43] Taking this further, this thesis builds on Baptist's theory by arguing that capitalism also manifested in the commodification and regimentation of enslaved women's bodies as reproductive machines in their capitalism enterprise. Every time an enslaver carried out an action that intended to have a positive, pro-natalist consequence on their plantation economy, they demonstrated how forced reproduction and capitalism intimately intertwined. These actions included acts of reproductive regimentation.[44]

More recently, Daina Ramey Berry has examined the relationship between suicide and human capital, arguing that the decision of enslaved people to take their lives was a 'financial decision…. Knowing that their lives had already been taken.'[45] But to what extent was it more of a financial decision than it was motivated by the desire to end suffering or to end exploitation? She calls suicide 'the act of self-destruction', but we must consider how this financial 'destruction' is interpreted by different parties.[46] Though surely an economic destruction for the enslaver, who could no longer financially exploit the enslaved person in question, for the enslaved it was an act of destruction that kept the physical exploitation at bay. We cannot truly know the extent to which suicidal enslaved people calculated the financial destruction their death would have had on their enslaver in the moment that they ended their lives. Moreover, Berry argues that 'those who terminated their lives just before a sale saved themselves from witnessing the capital side of their existence.'[47] Yet, enslaved people witnessed and experienced the capital side of their existence

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[41] Ibid., 136.
[42] Baptist, '"'Cuffy', 'Fancy Maids', and 'One-Eyed Men'"',1621-1623
[43] *Ibid*.
[44] For more on reproductive regimentation, see Chapter 3; for more on forced reproduction and capitalism, see Chapter 4.
[45] Daina Ramey Berry, '"Broad in de Road dat Leads ter Death": Human Capital and Enslaved Mortality', in Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman (eds.), *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of America's Economic Development* (University of Pennsylvania, 2016),, 146.
[46] Berry, '"Broad in de Road dat Leads ter Death', 149.
[47] *Ibid*., 153.

every day as their enslavers commodified their existence through their dehumanising treatment as livestock, and through the daily sexual exploitation and pro-natalist encouragement to have children. Enslaved people were well aware of their capital existences and witnessed this daily.

The primary focus of historians of capitalism and the economy have considered the motivations behind enslaved enslavers' desire to reproduce the workforce, rather than an exploration of capitalism and forced reproduction from the point of view of the enslaved. This thesis therefore makes an important intersection into the history of capitalism by exploring forced reproduction and capitalism from the point of view of the enslaved, rather than the enslaver or other white people in positions of power (such as politicians or pro-slavery advocates).

In contrast to those who dismiss coerced reproduction due to lack of empirical evidence, David Thomas Bailey rejects the concept by insisting that there is no evidence of the practice from the enslaved people themselves. He declares that there are only eight mentions of forced reproduction in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) interviews of the 1930s, and only one in published narratives by formerly enslaved people.[48] Further, he contends that 'this lack of slave testimony should put to rest a legend which *most serious historians* discounted in any case.'[49] Similarly, Betty Wood argues that there is no evidence that enslavers 'self-consciously encourage[d] their slave women to "breed".'[50] However, searching for the term 'breed' or 'bred' in the WPA interviews brings up 79 mentions -- though this does not contribute to the wider argument that forced reproduction was a common practice, as the frequency of the discussion of forced reproduction within the WPA depends on whether the interviewer explicitly asked about breeding, or if the respondents willingly brought it up themselves (which is less likely).[51] This is therefore not an accurate way of determining how many times coerced reproduction occurred. For example, some respondents referred to the practice as 'raising slaves' or did not even mention the term 'breeding' at all, instead discussing how they were 'forced to marry' and used language such as 'mating' or 'put together like stock'. Not all memories of forced reproduction conveyed by the interviewees used the term 'breeding'. It is also important to read against the grain and decode hidden meanings and implications obfuscated in formerly enslaved peoples' testimonies

[48] David Thomas Bailey, 'A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery,' *The Journal of Southern History*, 46 (1980), 398.
[49] Bailey, 'A Divided Prism', 398 [italics added].

[50] Betty Wood, 'Some Aspects of Female Resistance to Chattel Slavery in Low Country Georgia, 1763-1815,' *The Historical Journal,* 30 (1987), 608.
[51] For a calculation of themes of forced reproduction in Louisiana and Texas, see Andrea Livesey's doctoral thesis: Andrea Livesey, Sexual Violence in the Slaveholding Regimes of Louisiana and Texas: Patterns of Abuse in Black Testimony, PhD Thesis, University of Liverpool, 2015.

and narratives.[52] Moreover, it is necessary for historians to read more critically into evidence about marriages, arranged or otherwise, and slaveholders' reactions to such arrangements. Only deep, textual reading reveals the complex layers and the extent to which enslavers practiced coerced reproduction on Southern plantations.

The codified or often rather vague evidence provided by formerly enslaved people in the WPA interviews highlights a methodological issue with these oral testimonies. Darlene Clark Hine has theorised that formerly enslaved people were likely to 'dissemble' to protect themselves and others against the questions of their white interviewers.[53] Though Hine discusses this 'culture of dissemblance' in regard to rape and threat of rape, her concept can also be applied to other interlinking themes – including forced reproduction.[54] Formerly enslaved men and women were reluctant to discuss how enslavers interfered in their intimate lives in this way. Those that wanted to promote a culture of respectability to fight against negative stereotypes of polygamous and sexually licentious Black people were unlikely to regale their interviewers with detailed stories about how white slaveholders forced them to procreate with various people. Instead, formerly enslaved people adopted a 'cult of secrecy' to 'protect the sanctity of inner aspects of their lives.'[55] Thus, adopting Bailey's method of proving that forced reproduction existed by analysing the frequency of the term 'breeding' would be both inefficient and ignorant of the methodological issues arising from the use of oral testimonies.

Moving on from historians of the early twentieth-century, Eugene Genovese, writing in the 1960s, dismissed the concept of forced reproduction based on the supposed inefficiency of the practice itself. He argued that natural increase was not sufficient enough to replace the loss of enslaved people through death (in this case caused by disease).[56] He argued that 'aside from the number of losses[,] it is impossible to evaluate the extent of the loss of a particularly valuable slave.'[57] Of course, to slaveholding men and women, the loss of a hardworking, somewhat healthy, and therefore valuable enslaved person would have had a harmful effect on the productivity of

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[52] Stephanie E. Smallwood, 'The Politics of the Archive and History's Accountability to the Enslaved', *History of the Present,* 6 (2016), 128.
[53] Darlene Clark Hine, 'Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance,' *Signs*, 14 (1989), 912-919.
[54] Hine, 'Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women', 912-920; Catherine Stewarts more recent study of WPA respondents discusses how race, age, and class of both the interviewee and respondent impacted the discussions that occurred across the racial divide. Stewart argues that both interviewers and interviewees attempted to shape Black identity, and that these white assumptions often conflicted with Black perspectives. While some respondents were reluctant to speak to their interviewers, others 'sp[o[ke truths that may have been unwelcome or unsolicited by their interviewer.' (p.5). See: Catherine Stewart, *Long Past Slavery: Representing Race in the Federal Writers' Project* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).
[55] *Ibid*., 912-915.
[56] Eugene Genovese, 'The Medical and Insurance Costs of Slaveholding in the Cotton Belt,' *The Journal of Negro History,* 45 (1960), 142.
[57] Genovese, 'The Medical and Insurance Costs', 145.

the plantation. However, Genovese's point can be further turned on its head by arguing that it is also impossible to evaluate the extent of the loss of an enslaved person who could reproduce more slaves. The death of one enslaved woman equates to the loss of potential earnings through the multiple children she *may* have given birth to. As Daina Ramey Berry argues, enslavers valued the 'imagined lives' that enslaved women had the potential to produce.[58] The death of an enslaved woman was also the death of an 'imagined life,' and thus a greater loss.

Despite these historians' assertions that there is no empirical evidence for systematic 'breeding', scholars have more recently moved toward accepting the presence of forced reproduction by analysing evidence provided by enslaved or formerly enslaved people. Instances of sexual abuse are often absent from the archive – not because it did not occur, but because people tend to dissemble when questioned about such sensitive topics -- as WPA respondents dissembled to speak vaguely about sexual exploitation to protect themselves and their loved ones. Black female respondents interviewed by white male interviewers often utilised these tactics. Furthermore, women's voices are generally underrepresented in the archive, and thus it is challenging to quantify instances of sexual abuse when women do not or are unable to discuss their experiences. However, as Saidiya Hartman argues, historians must read between the lines and imagine what may have happened – a process she refers to as 'critical fabulation,' a vital tool for historians researching the emotional and inner personal lives of enslaved men and women.[59] As formerly enslaved people spoke in coded or vague ways about forced reproduction, we must use Hartman's practice of critical fabulation to imagine not only what may have happened, but also what the emotional impact may have been on different individuals.

Furthermore, Gregory D. Smithers argues that personal experience is more important than empirical data.[60] He criticises quantitative historians for trying to analyse themes such as sexuality and reproduction by squeezing 'data (that is, "evidence" valued as "factual") into predetermined economic models.'[61] Indeed, it is important not to outright dismiss enslaved people's experiences simply because it is unquantifiable. Having accepted the existence of forced reproduction, historians have tentatively started to debate its extent. Monographs on gender and sexuality often reference forced reproduction without expanding upon the topic. For example, Anthony S. Parent and Susan Brown Wallace's only observation in their work on sexual identity is that 'men and women might be coupled with one another to promote fecundity.'[62] This passive

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[58] Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Beacon Press, 2017), 5.
[59] Saidiya Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts', *Small Axe*, 12 (2008), 11.
[60] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 12-13.
[61] *Ibid*., 14.
[62] Anthony S. Parent and Susan Brown Wallace 'Childhood and Sexual Identity Under Slavery', *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* 3 (1993), 389.

'coupling' alludes to the relationships so-often arranged by enslavers and included in this thesis as an example of forced reproduction. John Blassingame provides another brief example, where he simply states that most enslavers were interested in 'rearing children.'[63]

The body of literature that *does* refer to enslavers' interference in intimate relationships often fails to explicitly link this to forced reproduction. Genovese's work references the power and control that enslavers desired, arguing that 'they could not abide their slaves' living together without outside interference.'[64] Shortly thereafter, Herbert took the 'Good Hope' plantation in South Carolina as a case study and argued that the enslaved people on this plantation resided mainly in monogamous relationships, clarifying that two-thirds of women had all of their children with one man.[65] However, this means that one-third of women on this plantation had children with *more* than one man -- a significant proportion. Furthermore, Gutman maintained that 'prenuptial intercourse was common among them [the enslaved] but hardly evidence of indiscriminate mating.'[66] Though cases where enslaved couples willingly engaged in premarital sex are, as Gutman argues, not a direct indication of 'breeding' practices, cases where enslavers directly influenced and enforced these sexual relationships *are*.

When considering slaveholders' roles within these relationships, and how they interfered in enslaved peoples' intimacies, historians such as Blassingame, Jacqueline Jones, and William Dusinberre, have paid attention to ideas of autonomy and agency, deliberating over the ultimate power that slaveholders had over these relationships. Blassingame, Jones, and Dusinberre all argue that their enslavers had the 'final word' on sexual and marital partners, and they expected their slaves to ask their permission to marry – this was usually the man.[67] As enslavers held the ultimate say on who could marry who, they often dismissed enslaved women's desires, sometimes threatening them with whippings to force them to concede.[68] Thus, enslaved men had a modicum of more power than enslaved women as enslavers allowed them the illusion of choice through the seeking of permission, or when their enslaver deemed they were of marrying age and must therefore 'choose' a partner. Hunter's more recent work claims that due to interference from a 'third flesh' (the enslaver), women were uniquely bound in slavery, *and* 'bound in wedlock.'[69] These forced marriages held women in a 'double bind' of wife and slave, as both husbands and

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[63] John W. Blassingame, *Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (Oxford University Press, 2nd edn. 1979), 179.
[64] Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (Vintage Books, 1972, 1974), 484.
[65] Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (*Basil Blackwell, 1976), 60.
[66] Gutman, *The Black Family,* 60.
[67] Blassingame, *Slave Community,* 165; Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (Hachette Book Group, 1985), 33.
[68] Thelma Jennings, '"Us Colored Women Had to Go Through a Plenty": Sexual Exploitation of African-American Slave Women,' *Journal of Women's History*, 1 (1990), 47.
[69] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 54.

enslavers held authority over their bodies.[70] Indeed, Berry argues that enslaved couples experienced a 'third-party rape', where enslavers inserted themselves in a relationship and forced people to procreate against their will.[71]

As discussed in the first chapter, enslaved men had slightly more power (though still within the confines of the institution of slavery) than enslaved women as they capitalised on their enslavers' desire for productive offspring to manipulate them into giving their permission for the men to marry who they wanted. Enslavers frequently deferred to the enslaved men to choose who they wanted, rather than the women. However, this 'control' or 'authority' over enslaved women was relative. As Hunter shows, an enslaved man did not have any *formal* power over his wife or sexual partner, as he did not own himself.[72] As such, enslaved men grasped at these limited strands of power at the detriment of their wives: 'slave women suffered as a result of these frustrated masculine aspirations, bound in wedlock to disenfranchised men and bound in slavery to enfranchised men' and interfered in the intimacies of enslaved couples to bolster their economic circumstances.[73]

Deborah G. White maintains that in terms of marriage contracts, enslaved women felt a pressure that white women did not.[74] Slaveholders exacerbated this pressure as they were well aware of the potential profit that could be gained from the womb of enslaved women – by either selling its 'products' (children born of enslaved women) or absorbing the children into the plantation workforce. Thus, slaveholders were eager for enslaved women to procreate as early and as often as possible. Although most enslaved people married in their late teens, enslavers attempted to force children to marry at a relatively young age. White contends that this desire for 'adolescent girls' to have children encouraged a 'passive, though insidious kind of breeding.'[75] Meanwhile, other historians have debated at what point in the life cycle enslavers began to encourage slaves to procreate. Berry estimates the childbearing range to be between fifteen and thirty-five, whilst Marie Jenkins Schwartz cites Dr J. Henry Bennet's assessment that, on average, enslaved women experienced their first menstrual cycle at about fifteen, and so enslavers encouraged them to engage in intimate relationships from this age.[76] Furthermore, enslaved

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[70] *Ibid*., 53.
[71] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 79.
[72] *Ibid*.
[73] *Ibid*.
[74] Deborah G. White, *Ar'n't I A Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (Norton, 1999), 98.
[75] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 99.
[76] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, 15; Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South* (Harvard University Press, 2009), 78. However, Schwartz also argues that forced reproduction was neither widespread, nor common, and instead argues that forced reproduction was something that enslaved and formerly enslaved people 'believed' happened. She maintains that 'the extensive effort that would have been required to force sexual partners upon slaves

women began to decline in value from age twenty-six, as enslavers valued the fertility of much younger women.[77] Indeed, women passed their 'prime' stage much earlier than men, with Walter Johnson estimating that women were in their prime between sixteen and nineteen years of age, whilst men were in their prime between nineteen and twenty-four.[78] Berry cites twenty-five years old as the peak age of value for women, and thirty-five for men. After these ages, they began to decline in value.[79] These historians' estimations, whilst disagreeing on exact age, all conclude that enslavers encouraged adolescent girls to have children. As Jones argues, enslavers were less likely to sell women if they had children at a young age and have proven themselves fertile.[80]

White further contends that there is no doubt that enslaved women were 'conscious of their owner's stress on natural increase', which suggests how coerced reproduction permeated enslaved people's everyday lives from a relatively early age.[81] Indeed, Chapter One examines enslaved people's attitudes and responses to forced reproduction and emphasises how aware enslaved men and women were of their enslavers' intentions and desire for them to reproduce. Like many formerly enslaved respondents in the WPA interviews, Berry compares this involvement and process to rearing livestock.[82] Karl Jacoby also contributes to this theory by arguing that enslaved people used this language to 'emphasise the dehumanising features of slavery,' and thus respondents used instances of forced marriage to demonstrate the violence and oppressive nature of the institution.[83] The language used to describe enslaved men and women who enslavers valued for reproductive purposes are important. Developing Jacoby's 1994 work on the animalistic language slaveholders used to compare to enslaved people, this thesis explores what the language in slave sale advertisements and bills of sale reveal about which characteristics slaveholder valued in their potential investments.

While feminist scholar bell hooks maintains that forced reproduction was widespread, she also asserts that it was not an efficient practice due to resistance – though she does not specify what form this resistance took.[84] According to hooks, enslavers felt it was better to allow their slaves

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and ensure that the couple stayed together deterred all but the most ardent of would-be breeders from attempting to force coupling.' (188).

[77] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 95.

[78] Walter Johnson*, Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Harvard University Press, 1999), 143.

[79] Daina Ramey Berry, '"Ter Show Yo' de Value of Slaves": The Pricing of Human Property', in William A. Link *et al* (eds.), *Creating Citizenship in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Gainesville, 2012), 23-24.

[80] Jones, *Labor of Love,* 35.

[81] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 100.

[82] Daina Ramey Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe: Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia* (University of Illinois Press, 2007), 84.

[83] Karl Jacoby, 'Slaves by Nature? Domestic Animals and Human Slaves,' *Slavery & Abolition*, 15 (1994), 89.

[84] bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (2nd edn., Routledge, 2014), 43, 89.

to choose who they wanted to mate with.[85] This line of argument overlooks work carried out by scholars such as J.M. Barbalet, Walter Johnson, and William Dusinberre on ideas about agency and the contentiousness of this term under such an institution.[86] This thesis therefore defines 'agency' as the ability for enslaved people to make their own decisions and choices in their day-to-day lives, and, in the context of forced reproduction, their relationships. Enslaved couples wishing to marry had to ask their slaveholder's permission to marry or engage in an intimate relationship with one another. If the enslaver had the ultimate say in whom people married, was this really true choice, true agency? If their enslavers approved of the match and said yes, the couple were able to go ahead with their marriage, but if they said no the couple would have to either completely abandon their relationship or continue covertly. Thus, hooks's assertion that enslavers 'allowed' enslaved people to choose who they wished to marry does not consider how enslavers held the ultimate power to agree or disapprove of said unions.

More recently, discourse around forced reproduction has appeared in academic and commercial books alike. Smithers' work and Ned and Constance Sublette's broad book on US history represent the bulk of scholarship in the last two decades that are solely dedicated to forced reproduction. Sublette and Sublette's monograph, written for a public audience, claims to have researched the 'history of the slave-breeding industry.'[87] However, *The American Slave Coast* simply narrates the history of slavery in the United States from the colonial era to the end of the Civil War and pays little attention to the subject of forced reproduction as its title claimed to do. Vaguely defining forced reproduction as 'the complex [of] business and individuals in the United States who profited from the enslavement of African American children at birth', Sublette and Sublette only make explicit reference to forced reproduction a handful of times. The authors not only fail to engage in relevant historiography, but they also miss multiple opportunities to examine *how* forced reproduction occurred. Lastly, and most detrimental to their research, they lean heavily on sources from white slaveholders and politicians, rather than those that show enslaved and previously enslaved points of view. This lack of engagement means that the authors' primarily focus is on prominent white people such as Fanny Kemble, Thomas Jefferson, and

[85] hooks, *Ain't I A Woman,* 43; J.M Barbalet, 'Power and Resistance,' *The British Journal of Sociology,* 36 (1985), 531-548; Walter Johnson, 'On Agency', *Journal of Social History,* 37 (2003), 113-124; William Dusinberre, 'Power and Agency in Antebellum Slavery,' *Nineteenth Century History,* 12 (2011), 139-148; Moreover, historians such as Emily West and Rebecca Fraser have explored the duality of marriage, and how although enslavers used it as a tool of exploitation, enslaved people still took comfort in their families. Marriage could therefore be a tool of resistance *and* exploitation (see Emily West, *Chains of Love: Slave Couples in Antebellum South Carolina* (Norton, 1999) and Rebecca J. Fraser, *Courtship and Love Among the Enslaved in North Carolina* (University Press of Mississippi, 2007).
[86] *Ibid*. 43.
[87] Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast: A History of the Slave-Breeding Industry,* (Laurence Hill Books, 2016), xiii.

Andrew Jackson. This is disadvantageous to forming understandings of how enslaved people themselves recognised and experienced coerced reproduction.

In contrast to Sublette and Sublette's approach, this thesis uses gender as a tool of analysis and takes an intersectional feminist approach to consider the role and experiences of Black men and women, as well as white slaveholding women, investigating how slavery and forced reproduction impact each group differently depending on their gender, race, and status.[88] Forced reproduction affected both genders, as obviously both men and women are necessary for the creation of children. Though historians of gender have done much to fill historiographical gaps by focussing on women's history, there are still under-researched areas surrounding the theme of manhood, masculinity, and fatherhood. This is important as slaveholders sexually exploited enslaved men, too. However, this thesis supports the arguments of Foster that historians of gender and men should not 'equate the sexual assault of women with that of men.'[89] The sexual assault of enslaved women and girls was much more prevalent than of men and formed a significant part of enslaved women's lives from puberty, if not even younger. Forced reproduction via sexual assault hence had long-term physical consequences for enslaved women.

Smithers' exploration of the legacy of forced reproduction in the lives and memory of Black communities is another central work on 'breeding', which focuses primarily on abolitionist literature and Black writers of the early twentieth century. Although he has sparked important conversations about the memory and legacy of coerced reproduction, there are limits to using Smithers' work to discuss forced reproduction more broadly. While he discusses forced reproduction in some depth, Smithers ultimately dedicates the bulk of his research to the legacy and memory of slavery in the twentieth century by using works of popular culture such as plays, films, stories, and music. Smithers only devotes one chapter to the use of the WPA interviews and uses them to discuss the methodological issues arising from their use rather than what they reveal about forced reproduction and enslaved peoples' lives.[90]

Smithers attempts to explore how the abolitionist movement latched onto the idea of 'slave-breeding' or 'rearing' as one of the most malevolent functions of slavery, and how they sensationalised the practice so much that it began to be seen as a trope or 'abolitionist propaganda.' Using abolitionist sources, Smithers investigates how the movement placed increasing emphasis on the practice of forced reproduction proclaiming that it was wide-spread

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[88] Kimberle Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracists Politics,' *University of Chicago Legal Forum,* 1 (1989), 139-176; Davis, 'Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves,' 2-15; Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,' *American Historical Review,* 91 (1986), 1056.
[89] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus*, 2.
[90] Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, 89-109.

and systematic. Abolitionists concerned themselves with the idea that states in the Upper South had turned into 'breeding states' after the 1808 ban on transatlantic slave trade.[91] Smithers, however, does not opine whether he thinks these 'breeding states' are an abolitionist trope. Instead, he only tracks the increasing prominence of forced reproduction in abolitionist writings.

Though Smithers's work effectively analyses how forced reproduction left a violent legacy in Black communities well into the twentieth century, he does little work to explore the extent of forced reproduction during slavery itself. Furthermore, Smithers criticises Franklin E. Frazier for discussing forced reproduction as a '*fact',* but his work does the same.[92] So instead of considering the extent to which forced reproduction occurred, whether it existed as a wide-spread system of 'breeding states', Smithers uses sensational abolitionist literature to state that it existed, *as fact*. Although Smithers briefly proposes the idea that forced reproduction emasculated enslaved men – rendering them unable to fulfil the important western nineteenth-century role of the protector of women – he dedicates very little time to forced reproduction's impact on gender.[93]

However, Thomas Foster's more recent work, *Rethinking Rufus* (2019), effectively explores how enslaved men, though incomparable with women, experienced sexual exploitation through coerced relationships at the hands of their enslavers.[94] He maintains that coerced sex divided men along three lines: from other men, from women, and from the rest of their community. Though effective in his analysis of the challenges that sexual exploitation posed for enslaved men such as the struggle with fatherhood, he generalises this as a complete destruction of fatherhood, while also maintaining that 'not all men and women were forced to reproduce.'[95] This thesis therefore builds upon Fosters work by examining how forced reproduction was much more nuanced and complicated than it first appears to be. Instead, it questions how 'forced' is defined by investigating the spectrum of abuse and exploitation enslavers enacted, ranging from covert, subtle forms of cajoling, to more outright and violent forms of force. Moreover, Chapter Two develops Foster's discussion of fatherhood further by exploring how enslaved men battled every day to assert their fatherly authority. With the exception of Foster's work, the historiography of sexual violence and slavery focuses very little on the role that enslaved men have played in coerced reproduction.[96] Forced reproduction was not only a means of sexually exploiting women

[91] *Ibid*., 48.
[92] *Ibid*., 80.
[93] *Ibid*., 74.
[94] Thomas Foster, *Rethinking Rufus: Sexual Violations of Enslaved Men* (University of Georgia Press, 2019), 2; 46-67.
[95] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus,* 49.
[96] Thomas Foster, 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery', *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* 20 (2011), 445-464.

and men, but some enslaved men, as is explored in Chapter One, were explicit participators in the system.

Nonetheless, although both men and women experienced forced reproduction, these experiences were unique to their gender. For example, enslavers viewed infertility as a gendered issue: Jenifer Barclay considers accountability for infertility in her work on congenital disabilities and suggests that white people saw enslaved women as 'innately prolific.'[97] Thus, enslavers expected Black women to be productive breeders. Infertility in enslaved women therefore caused a lot of discussion in medical circles. For example, the physician E.M. Pendleton argued that enslaved women were promiscuous people, and thus contracted venereal diseases that caused infertility.[98] Historians have not yet considered slaveholders' position on infertile men, an important theme that reveals much about slaveholder attitudes towards gendered health and reproduction. Gender impacted the daily lives of men and women in different and unique ways – whether enslaved or not. It is therefore reductive to group men and women together, or to exclude or favour one group over another. Historians must address the effects of forced reproduction on *both* enslaved men and women or risk excluding enslaved men from the narrative of sexual exploitation.

It is also important and necessary to consider how forced reproduction affected enslaved men's relationship with those around them. 'Breeding' practices had a particular impact on fatherhood, as is discussed in Chapter Two. Though scholars have produced important works on enslaved motherhood (including White, Knight, West, Andrea Livesey, and Jones-Rogers), discussions on fatherhood remain somewhat obscured.[99] Indeed, Susan-Mary Grant and David Bowe lament the dearth of an in-depth scholarship on fatherhood.[100] Grant and Bowe primarily discuss enslaved fatherhood in the received memories of WPA respondents and cite skills that fathers passed down as valuable survival mechanisms post-emancipation. Enslaved men often fought to protect their families, whether through physically shielding them from aggressors or by advising their children on how best to protect themselves. Further, Grant and Bowe contend that

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[97] Jenifer L. Barclay, 'Bad Breeders and Monstrosities: Racializing Childlessness and Congenital Disabilities in Slavery and Freedom', Slavery & Abolition, 38 (2017), 291.
[98] Barclay, 'Bad Breeders', 291.
[99] For works on motherhood see: White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?;* Andrea Livesey, 'Conceived in Violence: Enslaved Mothers and Children Born of Rape in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana', *Slavery & Abolition,* 38 (2017), 373-391; Stephanie Jones-Rogers '"[S]he could…spare one ample breast for the profit of her owner": White Mothers and Enslaved Wet Nurses' Invisible Labor in American Slave Markets', *Slavery & Abolition,* 38 (2017), 337-355; R.J. Knight, 'Mistress, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation in the Antebellum South', *Women's History Review*, 27 (2018), 990-1005; Emily West and Erin Shearer, 'Fertility Control, Shared Nurturing, and Dual Exploitation: The Lives of Enslaved Mothers in the Antebellum United States', *Women's History Review,* 27 (2018), 1006-1020.
[100] Susan-Mary Grant and David Bowe, '"My Daddy…He Was a Good Man": Gendered Genealogies and Memories of Enslaved Fatherhood in America's Antebellum South,' *Genealogy*, 4 (2020) 43-61.

slaveholders 'inserted themselves into a "quasi-paternal role".'[101] However, fatherhood consisted of more than simply a provider and protector role. Just as enslaved mothers fought to maintain emotional bonds with their children, so too did fathers. Coerced reproduction had a profound impact not only on the way that fathers interacted with their children, but also how children viewed and interacted with their fathers. The legacy of forced reproduction is evident in the array of evidence examined in this thesis. Indeed, fatherhood is a concept that is 'at once varied, particular and perfectly imperfect,' and, as this thesis will demonstrate, immensely complicated.[102]

By forcing enslaved people to reproduce, slaveholders constructed barriers to fatherhood by emphasising the biological fertility and practicality of enslaved mothers over fathers, especially after the conception of a child. Women, not men, were tied to their children through wombs laws such as *partus sequitur ventrem* (1662), and white society therefore dismissed the importance of fatherhood in favour of mothers.[103] Although this was detrimental to some families, many enslaved men tried to break down or circumnavigate these barriers to embrace their children and loved ones by any means necessary. Importantly, parenthood was also a contested area where white slaveholding men and women appropriated the role of mother and father from enslaved parents, while also regularly separating parents and children through sale, other forms of forced separation, and also through death. As slaveholders placed immense pressure on enslaved families to reproduce quickly, the role of fathers suffered. In this patriarchal society, elite white men desired to be the *only* patriarch, of both their own family and of the families they enslaved. White men thus viewed themselves as the ultimate source of power.

Daniel P. Moynihan's controversial publication of *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, colloquially known as the Moynihan Report, found that slavery had caused contemporary Black men to form an absent and unreliable fatherly role.[104] The new social history of the 1970s from historians such as Gutman, Genovese, and Blassingame criticised the findings of the Moynihan report, and argued that slavery did *not* destroy family life. Gutman, in his 1976 work on Black families, argued that racist presumptions about enslaved fatherhood – such as 'the alleged inadequacy of the slave father and husband, the absence of male "models" for young slave children to emulate, [and] the insistence that the slave marriage usually meant little more than

[101] Grant and Bowe, '"My Daddy… He Was a Good Man"', 9.
[102] Louis Rothschild, 'Introduction to Reconstructing Fatherhood,' *Psychoanalytic Perspectives,* 16 (2019), 312.
[103] John Bouvier*, A Law Dictionary, Adapted to the Constitution and Laws of the United States* (1856) web link: https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Partus+sequitur+ventrem.

[104] Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action* (1965).

successive polygyny' – damaged the study of slavery.[105] More recently, Libra Hilde's work aims to 'counter the enduring stereotype of Black men's irresponsibility within the family,' and demonstrates that enslaved men 'regularly took care of their families and communities in ways that were hidden from dominant society.'[106] However, though Hilde illustrates how enslaved men fathered in a spectrum of ways, she maintains that 'intentional breeding' complicated the household and family structure 'and regularly led to fatherless and emotionally matrifocal families.'[107] Deborah G. White originally discussed the term 'matrifocal families' when she considered cross-plantation marriages and the independence that women had from their husbands.[108] Enslaved women were central to families where fathers lived on different plantations, and they often 'mustered their reserves, persevered, and helped others survive.'[109] Whilst forced reproduction altered family structures, this did not necessarily result in the complete destruction of fatherhood. Furthermore, the term 'intentional breeding' suggests that other slaveholders *unintentionally* 'bred' slaves, when all enslavers were motivated by the desire for profit and power. Therefore, this thesis builds on Hilde's assertions on fatherhood, moving away from damaging stereotypes of absentee and emotionless Black fathers as perpetuated by the Moynihan report, yet departs from her ideas about forced reproduction completely destroying the family.

Hilde also pays little attention to the important roles played by stepfathers and non-biological kin. She argues that forced reproduction, second marriage, and sale often meant children had stepparents.[110] She maintains that children were more critical of their stepparents than biological kin, yet as Chapter Two demonstrates, stepfathers actually treated their children as their own, and as such children valued them just as much as they would a biological father.[111] It is therefore important to demonstrate that fatherly love came from more than just a 'biological' father, and that stepfathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other extended male kin fathered in the same way, carrying out the same emotional and physical labour through 'other fathering.' Though historians such as Gutman and John Patrick Riley argue that enslaved fathers had a 'bond' with their children they do not detail what form this bond took, or how it was developed.[112] Instead, they focus on how men tried to provide materially for their families or how they travelled from another

[105] Gutman, *The Black Family*, 13.
[106] Libra R. Hilde, *Slavery, Fatherhood and Paternal Duty in African American Communities Over the Long Nineteenth Century* (University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill, 2020), 3, 30.
[107] Hilde, *Slavery, Fatherhood and Paternal Duty,* 15.
[108] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 142-160.
[109] *Ibid*., 159-60.
[110] *Ibid*., 74.
[111] *Ibid*.
[112] Gutman, *The Black Family,* 13; John Patrick Riley, '"This is the Last Time I Shall Ever Leave My Family": Fatherhood in Civil War Era America', PhD Thesis, State University of New York at Binghamton (2017).

plantation to visit them. However, materially provisioning their families was not exclusive to biological fathers as childless men often acted in the same way toward other kin.

Blassingame maintains that fathers won the affections of their children, but ultimately concludes that mothers were held in higher esteem in the eyes of children.[113] This may be because enslaved fathers were more likely to be separated from their children than mothers – either through sale or due to living on different plantations in 'abroad marriages', and their physical distance hindered opportunities for bonding.[114] Thus, as Genovese argues, other enslaved males helped raise children if the father was physically absent.[115] These extended kin networks created space for other men to serve as role models: 'they told stories, taught them to fish and trap animals, and instructed them in the ways of survival in a hostile white world.'[116]

Brenda E. Stevenson argues that enslaved fathers 'served their families in a number of capacities.'[117] Fathers provided both materially and emotionally through 'emotional support and affection, moral instruction, discipline, and physical protection.'[118] She further questions whether matrifocal families existed because single and married men refused to take responsibility for their 'illegitimate' children.[119] Stevenson, however, does not consider the impact that forced reproduction had on the relationships between enslaved fathers and their children. Though coerced reproduction may have resulted in the production of 'illegitimate children', Stevenson's argument suggests that enslaved men willingly and obstinately refused to claim their parenthood. Although this may be true in some circumstances, many enslaved men were not *able* to take responsibility for the children they had fathered. Indeed, Foster argues that forced reproduction denied enslaved men a fatherly role as they had multiple children by various women.[120] The interference that reproductive interventions had on the role of father is further developed in Chapter Two.

This examination of fatherhood and male sexuality proves an important contribution to the historiography of gender history, which has historically examined men and women separately. Chapters One and Two therefore attempt to link the experiences of enslaved men and women while appreciating that enslavers treated them differently. Second wave feminism in the United States sparked interest in the research of women's history, with Angela Davis's germinal 1971

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[113] Blassingame, *Slave Community,* 21-34.
[114] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 145.
[115] Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 492.
[116] *Ibid*., 492-3.
[117] Brenda E. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford University Press USA, 1997), 251.
[118] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White*, 251.
[119] *Ibid*., 243.
[120] Foster, 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men', 456.

essay on the role of enslaved women in the South providing the catalyst for feminist readings of antebellum slavery.[121] Davis asserted that rape was a 'terroristic' method of control employed by white enslavers.[122] Slavery, she argued, was based on a ransom system, where women were forced to pay for food and the safety of their selves and their children with their bodies.[123] These enslaved women, or 'warriors', experienced rape on a daily basis.[124] Work from more recent historians of sexual exploitation such as Andrea Livesey and Elizabeth Barnes have clearly been inspired by and built upon this original essay from Davis by exploring the emotional responses of enslaved women who experienced this climate of rape and terror from their enslavers.[125] Davis further remarked that the sexual assault of enslaved women profoundly impacted enslaved men, as they were not able to protect the women on the plantation – an important component of masculinity – though interestingly overlooks claims of forced reproduction and enslaved men's role.[126] Historians of the 1950s such as Kenneth Stampp and Stanley Elkins were among the first to write about masculinity and slavery, arguing that enslavers emasculated enslaved men by forcing them to depend on them, thus appropriating the patriarchal role.[127] Slavery, argued Elkins, thus caused a regression in which enslaved men relied on enslavers in a dependent and childlike way.[128] Though dated, these arguments suggest that, when applied to the context of forced reproduction, enslaved men were inherently disadvantaged as they could not assert their masculine authority by protecting their families and loved ones from their enslavers forcing them into unwanted intimate relationships.

More recent works from scholars such as Sergio Lussana and David Doddington have developed these ideas of masculinity further. Lussana argues that enslaved men were empathetic to one another and embraced a collective brotherhood, as friendship 'framed, shaped, and gave meaning to the homosocial relationships of enslaved men'.[129] Meanwhile, Doddington argues that some enslaved men took advantage of forced reproduction and used sexual relationships as a means of promoting a masculine identity, even if that meant encroaching on other men's

[121] Angela Y. Davis, 'Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves', *The Black Scholar*, 3 (1971), 2-15.
[122] Davis, 'Reflections', 13.
[123] *Ibid*., 13.
[124] *Ibid*., 13-14.
[125] Andrea Livesey, 'Conceived in Violence', 373-391; Elizabeth M. Barnes, '"The Girl Did Not Recognise Him as Her Husband": Freedmen, Sexual Violence, and Gendered Authority After Emancipation', *American Nineteenth Century History,* 22 (2021), 289-306.
[126] *Ibid*., 14.
[127] Kenneth Stamp*, The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (Knopf, 1956); Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (University of Chicago Press, 1959).
[128] Elkins, *Slavery,* 130-131.
[129] Sergio Lussana, *My Brother Slaves: Friendships, Masculinity, and Resistance in the Antebellum South* (University of Kentucky Press, 2016), 9.

relationships.[130] Having multiple sexual partners was a 'proof of manhood' for enslaved men.[131] Indeed, according to Doddington, forced reproduction provided opportunities for enslaved men to compete with one another for female sexual partners, and to prove their masculinity.[132] The 'expectations of male dominance' influenced forced reproduction, and sex was used to 'demonstrate their dominance over men and women.'[133] Doddington discusses masculinity from the point of view of enslaved men as potential aggressors who attempted to have sexual encounters with other men's partners, rather than enslavers as enforcers of said violence. Forced reproduction promoted masculinity among attackers, but simultaneously *decreased* a sense of masculinity or status among defending men. Not only did enslaved men have to be wary of their enslavers taking their wives away to partner with other men, but they also had to be wary of other enslaved men attempting to do the same – with or without enslavers' 'permission.' Doddington concludes by questioning whether any of these enslaved men saw themselves as oppressed. If they did not, then should we?[134] Expressions of manhood and masculinity under forced reproduction are thus complex. As Chapter One demonstrates, while many enslaved men resented their enslaver for coercing them into unwanted sexual relationships, we cannot apply this to *all* enslaved men. Indeed, some did not see themselves as victims at all, and actually found themselves exercising their masculinity within these confines.

Assessing the emotional and psychological impact of those affected by forced reproduction is a challenging, yet important, theme to tackle. White maintains that it is 'difficult to gauge' the effect that slaveholders' manipulation had on enslaved women.[135] In part, this is due to methodological issues where formerly enslaved women were reluctant to discuss intimate matters with white interviewers. White also concludes that formerly enslaved women's 'sensitivity' on the matter of forced reproduction suggests that they knew they were 'cogs in the plantation regime's reproductive machine.'[136] This is also referred to in the writings of white enslavers, where they refer to their plantation as a 'piece of machinery, to operate it successfully, all of its parts should be uniform and exact, and the impelling forces regular and steady.'[137] Formerly enslaved people were reluctant to discuss emotionally heavy or sensitive topic such as rape.[138] It is also clear that gender affected the willingness of respondents to discuss their

[130] David S. Doddington, *Contesting Slave Masculinity in the American South* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 2.
[131] Doddington, *Contesting Slave Masculinity in the American South*, 158.
[132] *Ibid*., 17.
[133] *Ibid*., 146, 150.
[134] *Ibid*., 2.
[135] White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?,* 103.
[136] *Ibid*.
[137] Edwin Adams Davis (ed.), *Plantation Life in the Florida Parishes of Louisiana, 1836-1846, as Reflected in the Diary of Bennet H Barrow* (Columbia University Press, 1943).
[138] Hine, 'Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women,' 912.

emotions. Exploring women, Beth Wilson argues that 'white society's emotional standards…shaped the formerly enslaved people's testimony.'[139] Black women in particular had to 'tread the gender and colour line' carefully in the 1930s, a period of racial segregation and violence.[140] Thinking about men, Doddington argues that enslaved men were not 'powerless victims' in relation to forced reproduction.[141] Instead, some boasted and competed with other enslaved men about their fitness, health, and number of children that they provided.[142] However, typicality is important. Were enslaved men truly proud of their status as 'breeders', or was it a downfall of traditional masculinity, where characteristics such as strength and virility were the hallmark of a 'real man'? Further research into emotional response to trauma, and whether this was a culture in which men, especially Black men, felt that they were freely able to express their emotions is important in understanding the impact that forced reproduction had on enslaved men.

White slaveholding men were not the only perpetrators of emotional, sexual, and physical abuse, nor were they the only ones to enforce reproduction. Where early historians of white women such as Catherine Clinton explored the difficulties many elite white women faced, trapped within a patriarchal southern society, more recent works have striven to demonstrate that slaveholding women were just as violent and financially minded as slaveholding men.[143] This emerging scholarship, especially from Stephanie Jones-Rogers, on the role of white women as complicit actors in slavery suggests that white women took an active role in the forced reproduction of enslaved people. Jones-Rogers has argued that, in the past, the historiography has exempted white women from blame for the sexual assault of enslaved men and women.[144] Sexual exploitation has been masculinized, when in reality white slave-holding women were complicit in forced reproduction as they had 'long-term financial strategies.'[145]

Archival absences from white women's perspectives does not mean they had an aversion to slavery, but rather that many of them either did not have the time or the literacy skills to write their thoughts down.[146] Moreover, evidence from enslaved and formerly enslaved people depict

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[139] Beth R. Wilson, '"I Ain' Mad Now and I know Taint No Use to Lie": Honesty, Anger, and Emotional Resistance in Formerly Enslaved Women's 1930s Testimony,' *American Nineteenth Century History,* 22 (2021), 2.
[140] Wilson, '"I Ain' Mad Now and I know Taint No Use to Lie", 3.
[141] Doddington, *Contesting Slave Masculinity in the American South,* 151.
[142] *Ibid*.
[143] Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (Pantheon, 1982); Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property,* 135-136.
[144] Stephanie Jones-Rogers, 'Rethinking Sexual Violence and the Marketplace of Slavery: White Women, the Slave Market, and Enslaved People's Sexual Bodies in the Nineteenth Century South' in Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris, *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas* (University of Georgia Press, 2018) 109.
[145] Jones-Rogers, 'Rethinking Sexual Violence,' 110, 117, 119.
[146] Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property,* xx.

a multitude of ways that white slaveholding women interfered in the intimacies of enslaved couples to their own end. Indeed, as R.J. Knight (2018) demonstrates, slaveholding mothers relied on the exploitation of enslaved women, commodifying their children, bodies, and breastmilk.[147] 'Enslaved women's own motherhood was also site of intra-gendered maternal exploitation,' as slaveholding women consistently appropriated motherhood from enslaved women.[148] By interfering in mothering, slaveholding women 'expressed their economic interests' in enslaved women's bodies, and thus saw the economic potential in forced reproduction.[149] Slaveholding women often had first-hand experience of arranged marriages motivated by money and societal alliance. Indeed, Marie S. Molloy, in her work on single white slaveholding women, argues that white women felt that patriarchal society both constrained them and pressured them into wedlock.[150] These women therefore may have reflected their own pressures to marry onto enslaved women, forcing them into relationships with enslaved men against their will to financially exploit any resulting children.

This control over enslaved couples simultaneously allowed white women to assert control over their own lives, which were usually dominated by their husbands or other male kin, and the lives of enslaved women. Slaveholding men ascribed the role of 'breeder' to both white and enslaved women, yet these women experienced this in unique ways. As Linda Kerber shows, white society expected women to raise 'Republican sons.'[151] However, where white women endured pressure from the patriarchal society to give birth to sons, enslaved women faced pressure from both patriarchal society *and* white women. White women not only interfered in the mothering of enslaved women by appropriating their breastmilk, taking children into the 'Big House', and controlling terms of endearment by insisting enslaved children call them 'Mother', but they also interfered in the day-to-day health of enslaved women and children, as is explored in Chapter Three.[152]

The physical health of enslaved people was a key point of interest for slaveholders, male and female. Good health enabled labour in the fields and the production of 'big' and 'healthy' enslaved children. The outward appearance of enslaved people indicated to slaveholders how fertile they were. For example, prospective buyers inspecting women would examine their breast size, as they linked size with fecundity.[153] Marie Jenkins Schwartz argues some slaveholders believed that

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[147] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation', 991.
[148] *Ibid*.
[149] *Ibid*.
[150] Marie S. Molloy, *Single, White, Slaveholding Women in the Nineteenth-Century American South* (University of South Carolina Press, 2018), 1.
[151] Linda Kerber, 'The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment – An American Perspective,' *American Quarterly*, 28 (1976), 188.
[152] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation', 998.
[153] Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave,* 90.

a 'union with a man who had a large sex organ would ensure fertility.'[154] Therefore, prospective buyers valued physical strength and visible size. The physical health of enslaved people also altered as they grew older, and thus their value also changed.[155] As discussed earlier, Berry predicted that, for women, childbearing occurred between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five, and that children understood they were property by the age of ten.[156] As they grew older, their market value decreased as their potential for conception also fell.

Enslavers' preoccupation with fertility and the fecundity of enslaved men and women reveals itself in the way that they treated the health of enslaved women. Berry theorised that enslaved women held four values: soul value (their inherent self-worth), external value ('the project value…others attributed to enslaved people based on their potential work output'), ghost value ('the price tag affixed to deceased enslaved bodies' used in post-mortem experiments), and market value (their sale price at the slave market).[157] Physicians, slaveholders, and traders ascribed the market value of enslaved people by performing 'external assessments.'[158] These enslavers valued women as 'real and potential mothers,' and placed monetary value on their 'imagined lives' – unborn children.[159]

These 'imagined lives' were increasingly important to prospective slave buyers, and so traders noted any perceived biological flaws next to their names. Berry observed that where traders highlighted skills and benefits of certain male slaves, for example if they were good field hands, they also noted any menstrual issues alongside enslaved women.[160] Enslavers thus devalued infertile women, or those that had trouble conceiving, but few have considered the links between enslaved men and fertility, and whether enslavers were also concerned about men's ability to produce children. Enslavers treated men like 'breeding animals', and forced young boys to wear insufficient clothing, like girls, exposing their nakedness and subsequently allowing white men and women to sexualise them from a young age.[161] Chapter Three of this thesis examines the extent to which enslavers were concerned about men's fertility and their suitability to reproduce with other enslaved women.

Fertility was therefore important to enslavers, and physicians such as the infamous Dr J. Marion Sims, known as 'the father of American gynaecology', also took an interest in the reproductive health of enslaved women. Deidre Cooper Owens has explored how the enslaved

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[154] *Ibid*., 101.
[155] Foster, 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery', 456.
[156] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, 15, 35.
[157] *Ibid.,* 6-10.
[158] *Ibid*., 7.
[159] *Ibid*., 5, 11.
[160] *Ibid*., 77.
[161] *Ibid*., 78.

women that Sims owned acted as their own nurses and contributed to current medical understandings of gynaecology.[162] Though her work on crediting enslaved nurses is invaluable for understanding the exploitative origins of the invention of the speculum, she does not focus upon the motivations behind Sims's interest in women's reproductive health. Sims is known for his work on vesico-vaginal fistulas, a common affliction for women who have experienced violent rapes, have had too many pregnancies in close succession, and who are malnourished due to poor diet.[163] Pregnancies in young and underdeveloped girls as well as poor medical health care are also risk factors for obstetric fistulas.[164] All of these causes are ubiquitous in the lives of enslaved women and are still prevalent in countries where rape is used as a weapon of war, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo.[165] As a consequence of vesico-vaginal fistulas, women not only suffered from depression and attempted suicides, but some also became infertile.[166] Infertility was detrimental to a society that relied on natural increase. Thus, southern physicians increasingly became concerned with the reproductive health of enslaved women, not only to ensure that enslaved women were effectively reproducing, but also to further their careers by experimenting on said enslaved patients.[167] Indeed, white physicians used enslaved women's bodies – deceased and living – to experiment on and further medical breakthroughs.

Outside of the academy of History, some medical journals have attempted to frame Sims's work historically, yet do not engage with the context of antebellum slavery. For example, J. Patrick O'Leary claimed that Sims 'really did care about his patients' and discussed their options with them.[168] This brings up issues of agency, as although Sims may have discussed their 'options', the women that he worked on did not have the choice to say no due to their enslavement. Like O'Leary, Lewis L. Wall argues that Sim's patients were 'willing participants' who would have

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[162] Deidre Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology* (University of Georgia Press, 2017), 1-11.
[163] J. Patrick O'Leary, 'J. Marion Sims: A Defence of the Father of Gynecology', *Southern Medical Journal*, 97 (2004), 427; Diana Axelson, 'Women as Victims of Medical Exploitation: J. Marion Sims' Surgery on Slave Women,' *SAGE*, 2 (1985), 10-13.
[164] O'Leary, 'J. Marion Sims', 427.
[165] For works on the current 'rape crisis' in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) see: Joanne Csete, *The War Within the War: Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Eastern Congo* (Human Rights Watch, 2002); Sara Meger, 'Rape of the Congo: Understanding Sexual Violence in the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 28 (2010), 119-135; Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond* (Zed Books, 2013; Caryn E. Neumann, 'Congo Mass Rapes', in Paul R. Batrop and Steven Leonard Jacobs (eds), *Modern Genocide: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection, Vol. 4, Rwandan Genocide, Other Atrocities, and International Law* (Gale eBooks, 2015), link: link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX7084901079/GVRL?u=rdg&sid=GVRL&xid=d7f99163 [Accessed 16 March 2021].
[166] Axelson, 'Women as Victims of Medica Exploitation,' 11.
[167] Marli F. Weiner, Sex Sickness, and Slavery: Illness in the Antebellum South (University of Illinois Press, 2012), 138; Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South* Harvard University Press, 2009), 52-53.
[168] O'Leary, 'J. Marion Sims,' 427.

'jumped at the opportunity' to be treated for their afflictions.[169] Wall vehemently argues against the criticism of immorality attributed to Sims by disparaging 'modern writers' who 'have denounced Sims with the kind of righteous indignation that is usually heard only from pulpits.'[170]

But Sims experimented on *enslaved* women, and by that definition they could not fully consent. Marli F. Weiner explains that although some physicians preferred to secure the consent of the enslaved patients, they ultimately would have gone against their will, had they refused.[171] Physicians likely asked for consent in the hopes that it would make their patients more compliant to the treatment administered to them.[172] However, Weiner argues that this consent 'could easily shade into persuasion, [and] persuasion into coercion,' which was often experienced by enslaved women in particular.[173] Again, the concept of 'consent' under a system in which women were vulnerable due to their sex and race was dubious, and, as Diana Axelson argues, 'meaningless.'[174] There was no medical consent in a slave society.[175] Instead, slaveholders took charge of their 'property's' bodies and forced treatment upon them, 'no matter the pain and suffering involved or how doubtful the cure might be.'[176] Indeed, Sims did not use anaesthesia or any other form of pain relief during the operations due to the prevalent belief in both the medical and wider society that Black people did not feel pain as white people did.[177] After Sims had completed each operation, he subjected his patients to regular doses of opium, potentially addicting them and further complicating the notion of 'consent.'[178]

Furthermore, Schwartz disproves the idea that enslaved women were so concerned for their fertility that they were willing to be experimented on, which was often painful and led to long-term complications.[179] She instead contends that enslaved women preferred their own traditional African methods to those from white physicians.[180] Moreover, Sharla M. Fett has demonstrated that in some cases, slaveholders enforced medicine upon the enslaved as a form of punishment: 'this context [slavery] of physical control blurred the line between medicine and plantation discipline, between treatment and torture.'[181] Thus, enslaved people were even less likely to

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[169] Lewis L. Wall, 'The Medical Ethics of Dr J Marion Sims: a Fresh Look at the Historical Record,' *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 32 (2006), 346, 347.
[170] Wall, 'The Medical Ethics of Dr J Marion Sims', 346.
[171] Weiner, *Sex, Sickness, and Slavery,* 203.
[172] *Ibid*.
[173] *Ibid*., 205; Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Plantations* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 147.
[174] Axelson, 'Women as Victims of Medical Exploitation', 12.
[175] Fett, *Working Cures,* 151.
[176] Weiner, *Sex, Sickness, and Slavery,* 205.
[177] Fett, *Working Cures*, 152; Jeffrey S. Sartin, 'J. Marion Sims, the Father of Gynecology: Hero or Villain?' Southern Medical Journal, 97 (2004), 503.
[178] *Ibid*., 151.
[179] Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave,* 105-106.
[180] *Ibid*., 71.
[181] Fett, *Working Cures,* 148.

willingly consent to medical experimentations on their fertility. Indeed, experimentation primarily benefitted enslavers, not the enslaved patients, as it eased their minds and allowed them to buy into their own ideas of paternalism.[182] Jeffrey S. Sartin also criticises Sims by condemning his lack of medical ethics and argues that 'he falls short on issues of autonomy and beneficence.'[183] Instead of acknowledging Sims as a medical marvel, Sartin questions whether his patients were just a means to an end.[184] Chapter Three explores physicians' exploitation of enslaved women, including Sims, and concludes that they prioritised profit over the well-being of said women.

The use of enslaved and Black bodies for educational and experimental purposes was common in the antebellum South. Todd L. Savitt maintains that enslaved people's very presence was convenient as they were readily available to fulfil physicians' pedagogical requirements.[185] The soaring increase in medical students also meant that educators needed more bodies for teaching, and so it became necessary to use the poorer classes and the enslaved.[186] Savitt and Fett also briefly note that enslaved bodies were useful in practicing caesareans on, as this was a dangerous and new procedure that few white women would have consented to.[187]

Although highly concerned about enslaved women's fertility, slaveholders simultaneously forced pregnant women to continue working in the field until soon before they gave birth and were expected to return to work within a few weeks post-birth.[188] Though White and Smithers argue that slaveholders encouraged enslaved women to have children by supplying them with more food, there was still a dearth of food for enslaved people that had a detrimental effect on their health.[189] For example, Cheryll Ann Cody discovered seasonal fertility patterns in Low Country plantations.[190] The climate and lack of food there influenced the timing of enslaved women's pregnancies; there was less physical labour and more food during the harvest season, meaning that enslaved men and women were comparably healthier than at other times of year.[191] However, Cody also argues that there was an increased risk of miscarriage during harvest period due to a seasonal disease.[192] For Cody, 'the agricultural cycle of production and biological cycle of

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[182] *Ibid*., 105.
[183] Sartin, 'J. Marion Sims', 500.
[184] *Ibid*., 504.
[185] Todd L. Savitt, 'The Use of Blacks for Medical Experimentation and Demonstration in the Old South,' *The Journal of Southern History*, 48 (1982), 331.
[186] Savitt, 'The Use of Blacks for Medical Experimentation,' 333.
[187] *Ibid*., 347; Fett, *Working Cures,* 151.
[188] Weiner, *Sex, Sickness, and Slavery*, 134.
[189] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?*, 80-100; Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 11.
[190] Cheryll Ann Cody, 'Cycles of Work and of Childbearing Seasonality in Women's Lives on Low Country Plantations', in: David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (eds.), *More than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Indiana University Press, 1996), 61-78
[191] Cody, 'Cycles of Work and of Childbearing Seasonality', 62-69.
[192] *Ibid*.

production were deeply intertwined,' and had profound impact on the fertility of enslaved women in South Carolina's low country.[193] Although slaveholders sometimes used extra food as incentives for procreation, Cody's findings ultimately prove that it was ineffective as the amount of food was insufficient and the seasonal pattern of disease increased the likelihood of miscarriage. Similarly in Louisiana, Richard Follett argued that May to September were the worst period for disease, which included malaria, yellow fever, and cholera.[194] Such diseases, in addition to a diet deficient in protein and a culture of heavy labour led to 'low levels of conception, depressed libido, and… miscarriages.'[195] Likewise, William Dusinberre argued that in Georgia, enslaved children generally died young of 'feebleness at birth, or from malaria, winter fevers, tetanus, and other killers of infants in the first few months of their lives.'[196] Disease, sickness, and hunger therefore caused slaveholders to think about the 'calculus of life' – was it cheaper to buy or 'breed' slaves?[197] Chapter Three investigates how enslavers rationed and disseminated food to enslaved families and were preoccupied with the 'rearing' of enslaved children to reach a certain standard of size and productivity that they deemed worth their financial investment over the course of a lifetime.

For enslavers in the antebellum South, 'breeding' as opposed to replacing their slaves when they died meant more money to invest in their health. Thus, slaveholders considered whether to insure their slaves against sudden death.[198] Genovese lamented that it is difficult to ascertain the cost of 'rearing a child to maturity', but cites Frederick Law Olmstead who estimated in the 1850s that it would cost $38 per year ($1,424 in 2022), per child until they were twenty-one years old.[199] However, as children began to work from a young age, they were turning a profit for their owners long before they were twenty-one, and many were even sold before they could reach maturity.

Historians who have produced great works on the domestic slave trade have remained unconvinced of the veracity of forced reproduction, though their methodology and approach are applicable to sexual exploitation and marketisation. For example, Michael Tadman claimed there were three types of enslavers: one being a 'genuinely benevolent group which conscientiously protected slave families,' the second 'might represent those who, while generally pursuing a business-first, uncaring attitude to slaves, selected certain favoured individuals for special

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[193] *Ibid*., 72.
[194] Richard Follett, "Lives of Living Death": The Reproductive Lives of Slave Women in the Cane World of Louisiana,' *Slavery & Abolition,* 26 (2005), 294.
[195] Follett, ''Lives of Living Death,' 290.
[196] William Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 103.
[197] Londa Schiebinger, *Secret Cure of Slaves: People, Plants, and Medicine in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford University Press, 2017) 143.
[198] Genovese, 'The Medical and Insurance Costs of Slaveholding', 141.
[199] *Ibid*., 145-146.

indulgence,' and a final group who 'pursu[ed] undiluted business-first racism' which contained a sub-group of those who 'habitually engaged in gratuitous acts of violence and ill treatment toward slaves.'[200] These groups represent a spectrum of behaviours from enslavers.[201] Though the suggestion that some enslavers were 'genuinely benevolent' is contentious, this spectrum is a valuable lens in which to view forced reproduction. While some enslavers may have bought into their own paternalism by emphasising family, the majority of others employed a 'business-first racism' that frequently manifested in violent ways, a categorisation used throughout this thesis.

These business-first enslavers throughout the South concerned themselves with the ever-evolving monetary value of enslaved men and women, and consistently marketed women as 'breeders' to trade them for as high a price as possible. Though some enslavers in fact did *not* want women who would need time away from labour due to pregnancy, many others saw the value in the ability to reproduce slavery. Daina Ramey Berry argues that slavery 'extended its reach into women's bodies' and that enslaved women were 'catalysts of nineteenth-century economic development,'[202] Indeed, forced reproduction in particular 'extended its reach into women's bodies' as it condoned and even encouraged the sexual exploitation of enslaved women to further the interests of the slaveholding elite. Ultimately, forced reproduction extended into women's bodies and beyond, through the control of their wombs and then the *product* of their wombs – their children.

The historiography of forced reproduction brings together strands of knowledge from all areas of the history of antebellum slavery. From the history of motherhood to masculinities, from marketisation to foodways, historians have tentatively probed themes of forced reproduction, yet are still hesitant to explore its ramifications with depth and nuance. This thesis therefore aims to intersect the current historiography on sexuality, slavery, and capitalism by bringing multiple threads together to explore how enslavers' regimentation and intervention in enslaved people's intimate sexual lives impacted their romantic and familial relationships, their food and hygiene habits, and how they ultimately contributed, albeit unwillingly, to the continuation of the institution of slavery.

Methodology

This thesis uses the terms 'reproductive regimentation', 'interference', 'pro-natalism', and 'forced reproduction' throughout, and so it may prove useful for an explicit definition of these terms. Firstly, this thesis defines regimentation as the strict control of certain aspects of an

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[200] Tadman, 'Slave Trading and the Mentalities of Masters and Slaves', 202.
[201] *Ibid.*
[202] Berry, *Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, 13-14.

enslaved person's life with the intention of optimising their reproductive and productive value. Chapter Three explores this regimentation in depth by examining the ways in which enslavers attempted to control diet, exercise, and took part in the medical governance of enslaved women and children. Control over these aspects of an enslaved person's life. This reproductive regimentation, or control, is also evident in Chapter One where enslavers interfered in the sexual lives of enslaved men and women, whether desirable or undesirable. 'Interference' is defined along the lines of Tera Hunter's idea of a 'third flesh' – where a third party was present in an enslaved couple's relationship.[203] This term is used throughout the thesis but is also applied to non-sexual relationships between parent and child, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, as a consequence of forced reproduction. This thesis defines 'pro-natalism' as an ideology perpetuated by enslavers whereby they encouraged desirable enslaved men and women to procreate in order to expand the workforce and subsequently their finances. An example of pro-natalist activity includes the coercion of sexual activity, or the control (or regimentation) of food and medicine to 'cultivate' a certain 'desirable' enslaved person.[204] Lastly, forced reproduction is defined along similar lines as pro-natalism: it is the coercion of individuals to reproduce to expand the institute of slavery in terms of the number of enslaved bodies bound to forced labour.

Although this thesis utilises evidence from both white and Black sources, including slaveholder diaries, medical journals, slave management journals, judicial records, newspaper advertisements and articles, letters, the WPA Slave Narrative Project interviews, and published narratives retrieved from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill project *Documenting the South*, it primarily emphasises Black voices.[205] Sources from white people are invaluable for understanding their pecuniary and hegemonic motivations. But Black communities have been speaking about 'breeding' and forced reproduction since the antebellum era and well into the twenty-first century in other mediums such as literature. Indeed, historian of capitalism Amy Dru Stanley argues 'by no means is it clear what transpired between master and slave to produce an increase of slaves.'[206] However, Stanley primarily uses white authored sources to examine discussions around forced reproduction and overlooks sources from the formerly enslaved who *do* explain, both implicitly and explicitly, what did transpire between enslaver and enslaved to produce an increase of enslaved people. This thesis will therefore refer to works of literature, both from the antebellum period and the twenty-first century, that discuss forced reproduction as evidence of its existence in the continuing memory of Black communities. Their stories, both

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[203] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 6.
[204] Desirable enslaved people are further defined in Chapters One and Three.
[205] Due to access issues with COVID-19 (see COVID statement), this thesis uses only the digitised collection of sources held at the Library of Congress rather than the supplementary sources held at local archives. This collection has been edited.
[206] Stanley, 'Slave Breeding and Free Love', 143.

oral and written, provide the evidence that quantitative (and often qualitative, too) historians have been looking for within more traditional sources left by enslavers. By ignoring these narratives and reports in favour of statistics and numerical data, historians risk further excluding Black men and women from the historical archive and the meta narrative of an already exclusionary and discriminatory institution. This thesis thus leans heavily on sources from enslaved and formerly enslaved people so that their stories of sexual exploitation and regimentation may be brought to the forefront of Black history. Significantly, it is imperative, in particular for non-Black historians, to listen and focus on Black voices, rather than white voices, about Black lives. Yet, like any historical source, these records raise methodological concerns which must be addressed alongside white-authored sources.[207]

By incorporating feminist theories from second wave feminists and scholars such as Joan Scott and Kimberle Crenshaw, and by using gender as a tool of analysis, this thesis examines enslaved men and women's experiences of forced reproduction in relation to one another. Scott's method of gender as a useful tool of historical analysis is a valuable approach for this study of both men *and* women, as she argues that people do *not* exist in separate spheres, but interacted with one another.[208] Indeed, Black men and women, free and enslaved, laboured in the public sphere alongside one another and, as this thesis shows, both genders suffered and lived through sexual exploitation together. Moreover, this thesis is heavily inspired by both Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality and Angela Davis's article 'Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves', and her book *Women, Race and Class.*[209] It therefore takes a distinctly intersectional feminist approach, as defined by Crenshaw by exploring the experiences of men and women, both Black and white, and how their experiences differed depending on their gender, race, and class.[210] Discrimination is not the same for everyone. Whereas white women deal with daily sexual discrimination, Black women face a racial and gender-based discrimination.[211]

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[207] In the wider field of Caribbean slavery, Diana Paton argues that the historians have traditionally only discussed 'breeding' and reproduction from a 'white' point of view and have only recently moved to research from the enslaved point of view. Inspired by Paton's work, this thesis strives to discuss forced reproduction as much as possible from the point of view of Black, enslaved, and formerly enslaved people. (See: Diana Paton, Maternal Struggles and the Politics of Childlessness Under Pronatalist Caribbean Slavery,' *Slavery & Abolition,* 38 (2017), 253).
[208] Scott, 'Gender', 1056.
[209] Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,' 2-15; Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (Vintage Books, 1981). Although Angela Davis writes that sexual abuse can only be inflicted on women (6), and enslavers assigned women the role of 'breeder' more than they were full hand (8), her calls to re-examine the experiences of Black women under slavery in both her influential 1971 article and 1981 book has inspired this thesis and demonstrates the importance of the existence historians works to trace modern intersectional issues back to slavery.
[210] Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex', 139-176.
[211] *Ibid*., 149.

The themes of sexual exploitation and abuse stand at the centre of discussions around forced reproduction, especially in sources from formerly enslaved people. Self-fashioning and presentation of oneself when discussing forced reproduction often resulted in the formation of archival silences and the obfuscation of a more complete picture of the past. This applies to both perpetrators and survivors of forced reproductive practices, as well as the murky liminal spaces where enslaved men were both perpetrators *and* survivors of these practices (as discussed in depth in Chapter One). Indeed, forced reproduction challenges the notion of a dichotomy between perpetrator and victim. Moreover, self-fashioning demonstrates forced reproduction's long-term legacy in Black families, particularly when examining WPA evidence. Women, as discussed, dissembled to protect themselves and their loved ones when discussing themes of sexual labours. In contrast, many formerly enslaved men bragged about their conquests with women, sometimes boasting about the number of wives that they had. Others, however, were less willing to share their experiences of forced reproduction or had a more negative opinion toward the practice. Of course, these differing opinions depended on the person interviewed, but other outside factors influenced these attitudes. Just as formerly enslaved women were reluctant to discuss instances of sexual assault with white, male interviewers, formerly enslaved men may have also been reluctant to allow themselves to be vulnerable or emotional. Instead of presenting negative emotions about something so private and intimate, many male respondents put on a bravado to protect themselves from scrutinising questions about their relationship, or lack thereof, with their children.

Most WPA respondents were only children at the time of slavery, and so issues of long-term memory may have influenced their recollections. In some cases, interviewees were able to remember their lives under enslavement, but were reluctant to share any memories with their interviewers. In her home in Arkansas, Orleans Fingers' interviewer recorded that 'she has two magic phrases with which she dismisses all subjects which she does not wich [*sic*] to discuss: "I don't remember that," [and] "I better quit talking now before I start lying."'[212] Taking place in the 1930s, over seventy years after emancipation, the WPA interviews are dependent on the respondent's mental capacity to recall detailed and emotional events from their childhood. At times, this proved difficult. Winston Davis, enslaved in Alabama, told his interviewer: 'I remember many things about slavery, but know they will not come to me now.'[213] Some others, who were not enslaved at the time but were recalling stories of their formerly enslaved parents, also struggled to recall facts reported to them: 'My daddy used to tell lots of stories about slavery

[212] Orleans Fingers, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, Library of Congress, (1936), 291.
[213] Winston Davis, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress (1936), 86.

times. He's been dead forty-three years and my mother has been dead forty-one years – forty-one years this May. I was quite young and lots of the things they told me, I remember, and some of them, I don't.'[214] Irrespective of this, Paul D. Escott found that there is no link between age and memory.[215] Although failing health may impact memory, emotionally charged events such as separation or instances of violence would have remained firm in the memory of the respondents.[216] Indeed, the interviewees were able to recall events such as when they were sold away, or when they witnessed violence (especially that of loved ones), with great detail.

Moreover, the WPA interviews give a unique insight into life as enslaved children, and how they experienced slavery. As the majority of respondents were children at the time of emancipation, they did not experience the institution as adults, unlike most of the authors of published narratives. They therefore talked about forced reproduction through the lens of a child and reported how it affected them emotionally to see their parents sexually exploited, and to experience forced reproduction themselves, either as extremely young survivors of sexual exploitation, or because they were sold away as a profit of forced reproduction.

Many formerly enslaved people were reluctant to speak to the people interviewing them (usually white and male). The climate of terror and racial violence imposed by Jim Crow segregation caused many Black communities to be wary of white people, and therefore hesitant to reveal any stories that cast white people in a negative light, including violent tales of forced reproduction. As previously discussed, Hine's seminal work on rape maintains that rape and the threat of rape created a culture of dissemblance among women.[217] Instead of explicitly discussing instances of sexual assault personal to them, respondents spoke in a coded language that alluded to cases of violence or other such emotionally difficult topics. Formerly enslaved women also downplayed 'sexual expression' to counteract negative stereotypes of the hypersexual black woman, or Jezebel.[218] During slavery, enslavers perpetuated the trope that women were hypersexual beings, and after emancipation, a stigma developed around Black women having 'too many' children.[219] This was undoubtedly a repercussion of forced reproduction and the value that white slaveholders placed on enslaved women that could produce multitudes of children. Though Hine applies her theory to formerly enslaved women and their reporting of rape, her theory can also be applied to men and their reporting of emotionally heavy themes surrounding accounts of

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[214] James Morgan, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 5, Library of Congress (1936), 141.
[215] Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth-Century Slave Narratives* (University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 15.
[216] Escott, *Slavery Remembered,* 15.
[217] Hine, 'Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women,' Signs, 14 (1989), 912.
[218] *Ibid*., 918.
[219] *Ibid*.

'breeding.' Not only women, but men too, suffered through white-imposed damaging and dangerous racial stereotypes. Men therefore sought to dispel the negative stereotypes of the sexually aggressive Black male, which gained traction in the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, and a fear that their accounts of forced reproduction could be misrepresented by white interviewers most likely held back many men from speaking on this challenging topic.[220] Smithers contends that due to the 'cult of respectability' that was so important and ingrained in Black communities, respondents were less willing to discuss forced reproduction in the presence of white interviewers.[221]

To deal with these silences, this thesis draws inspiration from historians such as Saidiya Hartman, Marisa Fuentes, and Sasha Turner. Hartman's 'critical fabulation' approach requires that historians re-present events to imagine what might have happened and to 'imagine what cannot be verified.'[222] As both enslaved men and women dissembled when their WPA interviewer presented them with questions around forced reproduction or sexual relationships in general we must read between the lines and imagine what might have happened between enslaved couples. Moreover, sources from white people provide even less evidence. Bills of sale that use sexual language such as 'wench' provide little explicit information, but by imagining what might have happened to enslaved girls and women such as these, it is possible to understand the climate of forced reproduction and reproductive regimentation. Moreover, Marisa Fuentes argues that information such as bills of sale survive 'precisely because of the value placed on the property.'[223] Bills of sale, account books, and other such sources which only briefly acknowledge the capitalist existence of enslaved women through 'fleeting glimpses through a historical aperture' make it challenging to 'string events together in a neat narrative.'[224] But, these brief references, or as Jenifer Morgan calls it, 'slips of the pen', allows historians to imagine what cannot be verified, and to consider the inner personal emotional lives of these enslaved women.[225] By observing these slips argues Morgan, they can 'offer suggestions about how to understand the erasures and how to place them at the heart of our inquiries.'[226] It is thus important that even if the archive 'conceals, distorts, and silences as much as it reveals,' historians must still ask the relevant questions: what

[220] For more on lynching and the myth of the sexually violent black male, see Diane Miller Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 200-217.
[221] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 23; Evelyn Higginbotham first discussed the 'politics of respectability' in Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Harvard University Press, 1993), 185-230.
[222] Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts', 11-12.
[223] Marisa J. Fuentes, 'Power and Historical Figuring: Rachel Pringle Polgreen's Troubled Archive', in Jenifer Brier, Jim Downs, and Jennifer Morgan (eds.), *Connexions: Histories of Race and Sex in North America* (Urbana, 2016), 125.
[224] Fuentes, 'Power and Historical Figuring', 133.
[225] Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery,* 209.
[226] *Ibid.*

relationship did enslaved children have with their parents? How did they feel about or react to their enslaver selling them? To what extent did they know they were cogs in a reproductive machine? At what age did they become aware of this? Did enslaved girls and women blame their enslaver or the enslaved man they were in an unwilling sexual relationship with? The archive offers little, especially around enslaved women and sexual assault – whether this is purposefully obscured by the survivors, or because of the capitalist way that enslavers categorised and dehumanised their enslaved 'property'. But by imagining and questioning what may have happened, and by offering up multiple possibilities, historians may be able to provide some insight into the lives of these people.

Although both men and women may have been reticent to discuss their sexual trauma, the WPA interviews are unique in that they are nearly equally weighted between genders. Rachel L. Pasierowska claims that enslaved people's sources in general are weighted too much toward male evidence, because most narratives published before emancipation were primarily from men [227] WPA evidence provides the most testimony from enslaved women, with female respondents constituting between approximately 30% and 60% of interviewees in each state, with an average of 49.4 per cent (See Table 1). Therefore, the WPA can provide insight into the everyday lives and experiences of enslaved women. As the Archive has historically marginalised women, especially Black women, from most narratives, the WPA testimonies are an invaluable source.

Table 1: Percentages of male and female interviewees from the WPA testimonies

State interviewed in	% of men	% of women
Alabama	47.2	52.7
Arkansas	49	51
Florida	58.2	41.8
Georgia	41.5	58.5
Indiana	55.6	44.4
Kansas	66.7	33.3
Kentucky	42.9	57.1
Maryland	72.7	27.3
Mississippi	69.2	30.8
North Carolina	44.4	55.6
Ohio	46.9	53.1

[227] Johnson, *Soul by Soul,* 288; Rachel L. Pasierowska, 'Up From Childhood: When African-American Enslaved Children Learned of their Servile Status', *Slavery & Abolition,* 37 (2016), 96;

Oklahoma	43.2	56.8
South Carolina	57.2	42.8
Tennessee	34.6	65.4
Texas	57.7	42.3
Virginia	40	60
Average	**50.6**	**49.4**

The 1930s also symbolised two eras of racial thinking. The Jim Crow era saw many white southerners look back on slavery with a sense of nostalgia and sadness for a by-gone time. This has influenced testimony, especially those that related to family constructs. For example, many formerly enslaved people intoned a sense of pride when discussing the size of their family, even though their enslavers forced their mothers to have a large number of children, often having a detrimental effect on their bodies and psyche. This demonstrates the love that enslaved men and women had for their children, despite the circumstances of their conception.

Table 2 Number of reference to forced reproduction in the WPA Slave Narrative Project[228]

State interviewed in	**Number of references to forced reproduction**
Alabama	20
Arkansas	78
Florida	17
Georgia	34
Indiana	10
Kansas	2
Kentucky	9
Maryland	1
Mississippi	3
Missouri	8
North Carolina	45
Ohio	2
Oklahoma	16
South Carolina	24
Texas	26

[228] It is important to note that this is not an accurate way to record forced reproduction, as discussed earlier, as it is impossible to quantify sexual assault.

The 1930s also a saw eugenic ideology enter the mainstream and was reflected in the language of WPA respondents who discussed forced reproduction.[229] Although using eugenic language is anachronistic in the antebellum period, the basic ideology of 'improvement' of people still existed before Francis Galton coined the term 'eugenics' in 1883. Smithers argues that this language manifested itself through comparisons to animals and discussions around the increase of both quantity and quality of enslaved people.[230] Jacoby similarly maintains that formerly enslaved people used this animalistic language to reveal the dehumanising nature of slavery, while Foster argues that this language was used to specifically highlight the inhumanity of forced reproduction.[231] However, respondents likely used this language because enslavers were already exhibiting and putting into practice pro-natalist ideology long before Galton's conception of the term. Within the context of the antebellum South, pro-natalist ideology is defined as enslavers' encouragement of the enslaved people to reproduce, either through positive or negative incentives.[232]

This thesis also examines published narratives from formerly enslaved people, spanning a wide temporal and geographic landscape, including testimony from people enslaved in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Virginia, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, and South Carolina, from the antebellum to the reconstruction era. Like the WPA interviews, these narratives reveal instances of forced reproduction and often allude to how enslavers interfered in the daily lives of enslaved people. The published narratives, unlike the WPA interviews, are much more emotional

[229] Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, 58.
[230] *Ibid*., 112.
[231] Jacoby, 'Slaves by Nature?', 89; Foster, *Rethinking Rufus*, 55.
[232] Though labelling forced reproduction a consequence of pro-natalist ideology may be deemed anachronistic by some, it was not unprecedented. Historians outside of the antebellum US have written on pro-natalist thought and ideology before the nineteenth century: Diana Paton's research on childlessness and pro-natalist Caribbean, highlights that although pro-natalist policies had little successful demographic effect, they still existed and caused 'significant effect to the social dynamics of plantation life' (Paton, 'Maternal Struggles,' 255). These pro-natalist policies included the offer of £1 for every child that survived a year (1789), the British Trinidad Slave Code (1880) where 'mothers of three children should work one less day a week for half the year, and those of seven living children be exempted from all labour,' and in 1824, an amelioration policy enacted by the Colonial Office legalized slave marriage, prohibited separation of families through sale, and the violent punishment of enslaved women. Barbara Bush discusses in the last decade of the eighteenth century in the British Caribbean how enslavers began to introduce pro-natalist incentives to encourage women to have children (Barbara Bush, 'Hard Labor: Women, Childbirth, and Resistance in British Caribbean Slave Societies,' in: David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Indiana University Press, 1996), 199). This included the Leeward Island Act (1798) where enslaved women who reached the fifth month of pregnancy were to only engage in 'light work.' These Caribbean enslavers also gave women a house for their first pregnancy, and 'rewards and bonuses were offered to slave women and midwives.' Indeed, though the language used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not as prominent in the antebellum period, the actions and intentions still were.

in tone as most of them aimed to garner support for the abolition cause in the antebellum era. Moreover, though they tend to lean away from offending the sensibilities of white northerners whose sympathies they were attempting win over, using historical tools and understandings of archival silences allows historians to read between the lines and into the silences to interpret what they were *not* saying, rather than what they were. As Smithers argues, these authors and other abolitionists sensationalised the 'slave-breeding' phenomenon as an example of the dehumanising nature of slavery.[233] Moreover, these narratives typically depict the lives of extraordinary formerly enslaved people who fled the regime, such as Charles Ball, Harriet Jacobs, and Frederick Douglass, rather than the 'average' enslaved person who did not dramatically escape slavery. Thus, while the published narratives are an invaluable source that elevates Black voices (though primarily male), the WPA interviews depict a more average, 'typical', life of an enslaved person and their experience with forced reproduction and allows for a more balanced examination of gender experiences.

Though this thesis centres and prioritises Black voices as important actors who have been vocalising their experiences of forced reproduction for years, to only be dismissed by historians, it also examines sources from the white, slaveholding perspective in order to gain insight into their motivations behind forced reproduction. Slaveholder diaries and recollections have a very different set of methodological issues regarding targeted audiences. Where WPA interviews and published narratives were created with the mind that they would be consumed by a wider audience, personal writings of slaveholders differed depending on whether the person expected their writings to be read by others. For example, W. Marshall Bullitt, son of Thomas Bullitt, inserted a prefatory note into the publication of Thomas's memoir, *Life on Oxmoor Farm,* in 1912. The note stated:

> It was written for the children and was never intended for publication, but after his death on March 3, 1910, I determined to print it that each member of the family might have it. I have printed the text of his manuscript exactly as he wrote it.[234]

Thomas Bullitt's recollections may have omitted some details if he was writing for a public audience, or, alternatively, he may still have omitted details of his recollection to give a sanitised version of growing up in a slave-owning family to protect his family members. Moreover, his recollections were written in the early twentieth century, and therefore takes on a tone of Lost Cause-nostalgia. Similarly, Annie Leslie McCarrol Starling wrote in her diary, beginning in the Civil War:

[233] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 30.
[234] W. Marshall Bullitt, Prefatory note in Thomas Bullitt's *Life on Oxmoor Farm*, 17 May 1912, Bullitt Family Papers – Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, Mss /A/B 937c, Folder 333, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.

> Saturday November 10th: […] Oh me! I cannot let any body ever read this nonsense, if they do I hope they will look over it and consider the source, and then you know journal, that you are my confidential friend and into your friendly bosom is poured all the trouble and foolish thoughts of your foolish friends.[235]

Starling wrote privately to her diary but was also concerned about someone finding it. She therefore likely moderated parts of what she wrote. Private letters between friends and family members, while not self-censored, are often requested by the author to be destroyed. The Bullitt family of Louisville in particular frequently wrote to one another and asked the receiver to either burn or tear up the letter (although they evidently did not), usually in regard to salacious gossip about their acquaintances.[236] Other letters that contain more incriminating evidence about forced reproduction appear to have suffered damage but later found and donated to archives (see Chapter One for an example).[237] Although these pieces of evidence have been carefully stored, there are countless invaluable letters and documents that were requested by their author to be destroyed that could have revealed much more about forced reproduction.[238] This destruction of letters and other such documents contributes to the archival silences around sexual exploitation.

Other, less personal, documents from white slaveholders shed light on reproductive practices. Slaveholders and traders frequently placed advertisements in southern newspapers for the sale and auction of groups of enslaved people. Newspapers often advertised a number of 'likely Negroes' alongside other items for sale such as livestock, furniture, and sundries. However, these advertisements typically grouped enslaved people as one general group of 'stock' for sale and did not always separate out individuals. This thesis therefore uses newspapers from Georgia, North and South Carolina, as well as Kentucky between 1808 and 1865 that explicitly describe the characteristics of enslaved people as these highlight the value slaveholders placed on enslaved bodies. It further examines journals about 'slave management' from *De Bow's Review* in conjunction with medical journals such as the *Stethoscope and Virginia Medical Gazette*. Evidence from these sources reveal how enslavers classified enslaved people as 'sound' or 'unsound', and the importance they placed on enslaved women's uteruses. The existence of 'slave-management' journals such as *De Bow's Review*, in which articles encouraged 'good management' of plantations to increase reproduction, labour, and overall efficiencies in the pursuit of profit is evidence of the

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[235] Annie Leslie McCarroll Starling Diary, *My Journal,* 17 October 1860-1 May 1932, Mss52, Box 1, Folder 3, Kentucky Historical Society, Kentucky.

[236] The private letters of the Bullitt family members often request that they burn the letter after reading. Obviously, these were not burned, but others undoubtedly were (Bullitt Family Papers – Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, Mss /A/B 937c, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky).

[237] Partial letter addressed to 'Mr Corlis', 1817, Corlis-Respess Family Papers, Mss A C799b, Folder 7, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.

[238] Bullitt Family Papers – Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, Mss /A/B 937c, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.

eugenic ideas that slaveholding elites formed. These journals thus demonstrate the pervasiveness of forced reproduction and conversations around particular methods of the practice throughout the antebellum South. Lastly, county court petitions and legislation from Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Virginia, Alabama, and Missouri in between 1808 and 1865 expose the buying and selling preferences of slaveholders, specifically referencing 'breeding' women that they did or did not want. By examining sources from these states alongside the advertisements from Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Kentucky between 1808 and 1865 provides a range of evidence across time and space that effectively supports the claim that enslavers across the south practiced forced reproduction, rather than just specific 'breeding' states.

The structure of this thesis is divided into four thematic chapters: intimate relationships between men and women; enslaved men's fatherhood; health and the value of enslaved bodies; and the marketisation of enslaved people's bodies. The first half of the thesis investigates the methods enslavers used to enforce reproduction, followed by the consequence of said forced couplings. The second half explores how and why they valued enslaved people's reproductive labour. Enslaver's participation in forced reproduction meant that these key themes were both central to the continuation of slavery and the lived experiences of enslaved people. Forced reproduction thus permeated every impact of an enslaved person's life and contributed to the perpetuation of slavery by ensuring a cycle of sexual exploitation across gender and age lines. Using gender as a tool of analysis, each chapter examines these themes and relates them to the inner personal lives and experiences of those who enslavers sexually exploited on a day-to-day basis.

Chapter One, 'Forced Intimacy and the Interference in Sexual Relationships', explores how enslavers interfered in the sexual lives of heterosexual (as these relationships were the primary concern to enslavers who were focused on reproduction) enslaved men and women along a spectrum of violence. On one end of this spectrum, enslavers gave or refused their permission for specific couples to marry and reproduce. On the other end, they violently threatened or forced couples into unwanted sexual relationships, sometimes hiring out individual men they deemed particularly 'sound' to procreate with other enslaved women. Enslavers desired enslaved people with similar physical characteristics to be together, and often stopped couples with disparate characteristics from marrying. Where some enslavers encouraged marriage to formalise the union, others did not. Some allowed their slaves a 'choice', others did not. Enslavers' interference, including that from slaveholding women, is viewed as what Hunter calls a 'third flesh.'[239]

[239] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 6.

This opening chapter examines how enslaved people's experiences depended on their gender, with some enslaved men taking advantage of the reproductive tendencies of their enslavers to assert their own authority and masculinity over enslaved women. Enslaved women thus experienced a double burden within the context of forced reproduction, as slaveholding men and women exploited them based on their gender and race, while enslaved men also sexually exploited them to further their own agendas. However, it is reductive to assign individuals the role of 'perpetrator' or 'victim' within this context. As Chapter One argues, discourse around agency demonstrate the restrictive nature of forced reproduction and the limitations that it placed on relationships. If the enslaver has the ultimate decision on whether a coupling was to go ahead, do enslaved people *really* have a choice? If their enslaver said 'yes' to the coupling, the marriage and cohabitation could proceed, but what happened if they said no? The relationship was either ruined or carried out in secret. Thus this 'false autonomy' reveals the extent of covert, and sometimes overt, control that enslavers had over enslaved people. Lastly, this chapter will explore the more explicit forms of forced reproduction in the form of hiring out enslaved people, typically men, to reproduce with multiple women. Though Foster has briefly discussed this in *Rethinking Rufus,* he appropriately discusses the effect on enslaved men.[240] Building on Foster's work, this thesis will deliberate on the interactions that these enslaved women had with these hired-out enslaved men.

Chapter Two, 'Fathers: Parenthood and Forced Reproduction,' explores the inevitable consequence of coerced sexual relationships: children and parenthood. Focusing on fatherhood, this chapter explores a hitherto under-researched aspect of the history of slavery and family. Where most research on family focuses on the role of the mother, and how enslavers consistently exploited and appropriated various forms of mothering for their own gain, this chapter explores how enslavers' preoccupation with forced reproduction dismissed the role of fathers as soon as the children were conceived. Legislation such as *partus sequitur ventrem* (1662) tied children to the status of their mothers, not their fathers. Enslaved men were a necessary part to reproduce slavery and were one half of coerced sexual relationships but were no longer biologically necessary after the fact. Moreover, enslavers could not appropriate men's fathering in the same way they appropriated enslaved women's – for example through forced wet nursing. However, enslavers did appropriate fatherhood through other, non-biological means in order to establish their masculinity and role as the sole patriarch over enslaved people. Enslavers carried this out through the cultivation of relationships with enslaved children, through hunting together or bequeathing gifts to children, or by forcing the children to call them 'Pa' instead of 'master.' In response, enslaved men fought enslavers every day to establish their fatherly authority over their

[240] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus,* 46-67.

own children and assert themselves as more than just a sexually reproductive part. Enslaved men worked to circumnavigate the barriers that enslavers erected to fatherhood and worked to establish themselves as inspirational role models to their children through their status, bravery, and emotional and material provisions. Moreover, this chapter disputes the assertion of scholars that forced reproduction destroyed fatherhood by exploring 'other fathering' from various men in slave communities, such as stepfathers, uncles, grandfathers, and other male figures. This community of men was just as vital as the community of enslaved women in the raising of children.[241] Forced reproduction undoubtedly had some negative effects on relationships between fathers and their children, but enslaved men continually laboured emotionally to establish themselves in the lives of their children.

Chapter Three, 'Forced Health, Nutrition, and the Value of Enslaved Bodies', sets out how enslavers valued enslaved people based on their physical and reproductive health. This chapter examines testimony from WPA respondents, published narratives, enslavers' account logs, letters, and diaries to understand how and why enslavers emphasised health, growth, and nutrition and its link to forced reproduction. Enslavers walked a fine line between providing enslaved communities with enough food for them to labour – both in the fields and sexually – and maintaining control over them. Using the frame of the life cycle and a lens of pro-natalist ideology, this chapter explores the experiences of enslaved children, adults, and elders, and how their enslavers interfered in their medical lives at every stage of their life to monitor their market value. This chapter therefore considers what a 'desirable body' looked like, the distribution of rations and the consequences of hunger, the allocation of medicine, and, lastly, enslavers' attitudes toward fertility and pregnant women. While enslaved men and women raised their families with love and care, concerned that they had enough to eat to survive the brutal realties of day-to-day slavery, their enslavers were concerned with raising productive producers and reproducers of slavery. Enslavers were therefore preoccupied with the health of both current and future reproducers. Current reproducers – fertile men and women – were to look physically strong and capable of birthing equally strong children. They forced future reproducers – young children – to grow up under their watchful and controlling eye, eating communally, taking medicine, and exercising to avoid the 'stunting' of their growth, and thus the stunting of enslavers' future profits. It finally explores *in*fertile men and women. Enslavers treated these people, especially women, as 'barren sows' who were not contributing to the continuation of slavery and thus had reduced in value.

[241] 'Otherfathering' builds on Patricia Hill Collins's work on 'othermothering', where she argues that women carried out mothering tasks for those that were not their own children (see Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2nd edn., Routledge, 2000), 178).

Finally, Chapter Four, 'Forced Reproduction and the Marketplace', examines the cycle of forced reproduction, and how enslavers commodified children from before they were even born, selling them and fertile and infertile women alike. The marketplace reveals the physical manifestation of the financial benefits of forced reproduction for enslavers, and the emotional trauma and loss for enslaved people. This chapter examines the emotional consequences of forced reproduction on children who were separated from their families and were commodified before they could even form their own identity. Forced reproduction enabled the continuation of the domestic slave trade in young fertile women and girls, themselves born from forced sexual relationships, only to follow in the footsteps of their mothers and experience coerced intimate relationships themselves when their enslavers marketed them as sexually available 'breeders.' Forced reproduction was a cycle with no discernible beginning or end, as enslaved mothers, fathers, and children were sexually violated and exploited and sold at all stages of their lives. This climate of fear of rape, sale, and separation plagued enslaved people on a daily basis as they found themselves in a predicament: if they reproduced children, taking comfort in their love and leaning on them as a survival mechanism, they risked the sale of their children, but if they did not, they risked their own sale and suffering.

Overall, this thesis provides an important analysis of the ways in which enslavers forced enslaved men and women to procreate against their will, the emotional impact this has on their own identity and their relationship with others and demonstrates the importance of examining the sexual lives of enslaved men and women alongside one another. Ultimately, this thesis aims to reveal the complex narrative of enslaved people's lives and relationships with those around them under a climate of sexual exploitation, separation, and physical abuse. While enslaved men and women attempted to raise children for their own comfort, survival, and as a conduit of love, enslavers forced couples to raise children to be sold for their own financial profit, and to ensure the indefinite continuation of slavery.

Chapter One
Forced Intimacy and the Interference in Sexual Relationships

In his 1846 narrative, Henry Bibb wrote that his enslaver, David White, did not wish him to marry Malinda, who lived on a neighbouring plantation, as he 'feared [Bibb's] taking off from his farm some of the fruits of [his] own labor for Malinda to eat, in the shape of pigs, chickens, or turkeys' to supplement his wife and family's meagre rations.[242] More importantly however, White would not possess the fruits of Malinda's *sexual* labour. Malinda's enslaver, William Gatewood, however, was also conscious of how her marriage to Bibb would benefit him financially and was accordingly 'very much in favor of the match, but entirely upon selfish principles.'[243] Bibb approached Gatewood to request permission to marry Malinda, to which he consented 'in the affirmative with but one condition, which I consider to be too vulgar to be written in this book.'[244] Writing for the temperaments of a nineteenth century audience, Bibb wrote in a coded language that only alluded to sex, and did not discuss it in explicit terms. Instead, historians must read into what Bibb was suggesting: that Gatewood desired only that they perpetuate the machinations of slavery by producing children.

Intimate sexual relationships between enslaved couples in the antebellum South were often precarious due to the potential for separation and the unwanted interference of the 'third flesh' – their enslavers – who initiated a 'third-party rape' by forcing enslaved men and women to engage in non-consensual sexual relationships.[245] Slaveholders wanted to further their profits and increase their workforce, so they consistently interfered in the courtship and marriages of enslaved couples. Though generally content to allow most couples to marry if the relationship resulted in offspring, others demanded quick, successive pregnancies, and arranged relationships between those they deemed suitable. Enslavers were, as one formerly enslaved respondent

[242] Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb an American Slave* (New York: Spruce Street, 1849), 40.
[243] Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb,* 40.
[244] *Ibid*.
[245] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 6; Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 79.

described, 'crazy about slaves that had a lot of children.'[246] Though slaveholders coerced both men and women into these marriages, enslaved men had access to patriarchal tools that enabled them to use 'breeding' practices to negotiate their masculinity. Even though forced reproduction had detrimental effects for enslaved women *and* men, enslaved women faced a dual exploitation. Where men used coerced reproduction to affirm their masculinity and compete with other men for wives, enslaved women remained oppressed by both slaveholders and enslaved men. Men contributed to the layers of subjugation women experienced as they worked to sustain their masculine authority. Enslaved women were thus 'bound in wedlock' and 'bound in slavery.'[247]

Past and current historians have traditionally argued that enslaved people had the freedom to choose who they wanted to be in a relationship with. Peter Kolchin maintains that enslavers had 'considerable freedom of choice' but that they 'occasionally' arranged marriages, downplaying the typicality and frequency of such arrangements.[248] Thelma Jennings later argued that enslaved men chose the women they wanted, while Thomas Foster maintained that while enslavers allowed people to find and establish their own relationships, enslavers often only delegated this 'choice' to men.[249] Enslaved men took up this role willingly, and often initiated the courting process.[250] Moreover, scholars of women's history such as Deborah G. White have argued that 'slave families were usually egalitarian' and enslaved females were 'equal partner[s]' in their relationships.[251] This, according to White, was because enslaved women did not, and indeed *could not*, rely on their husbands to provide and protect their families.[252] Abroad or long-distance marriages in particular placed geographical restraints on their relationships.[253] Despite these esteemed historians' assertions that enslaved people generally had a choice in marital and sexual partners, and enslaved women may have seen more autonomy within their marriage than

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[246] H.B. Holloway, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023, 288; Although enslaved people were not legally allowed to marry, and any marital ceremonies that did occur did not have any legal standing, this thesis uses the term 'marriage' to apply to intimate relationships sanctioned by either the enslaved community or by slaveholders. This does not mean either enslaved person necessarily internalised or accepted the marriage, or, crucially, deemed themselves a married person. As Tyler D. Parry succinctly argues, enslaved people are not a 'culturally homogenous group', and individual attitudes toward marriage depended on the local culture and customs. While some enslaved people accepted the jumping of the broom ceremony as a binding, others preferred the security of a legal contract after emancipation. Marriage was subjective, and there was no 'unanimous view.' (Parry, Jumping the Broom, 38-39).
[247] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 54.
[248] Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 111.
[249] Jennings, '"Us Colored Women Had to Go Through a Plenty,"'47-48; Foster, *Rethinking Rufus,* 49.
[250] Jones, *Labor of Love,,* 33.
[251] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 158.
[252] *Ibid*.
[253] West, *Chains of Love*, 26-27.

traditional Southern white women did, the conception of their marriage, as will be explored, did *not* always allow women autonomy in their choice of intimate partner.

However, the formation of relationships and the courting process was more nuanced and complicated beyond just whether their enslavers did or did not allow choice. It is important to consider issues of agency and power and understand how enslaved men tested the boundaries of slavery by asserting their masculinity over enslaved women, while simultaneously operating under the sexual and pro-natalist demands of their enslavers.[254] This chapter both builds and departs from this scholarship on egalitarian marriages and relationships. Instead, this selection process was nuanced and saw a complicated combination of the two. Their ability to choose their sexual partner was often a false autonomy, as slaveholders had the ultimate say on who could marry whom. Even though it appeared that enslaved men were choosing their wives of their own volition, they were doing so under the control and decision of their enslavers. It is therefore important, when approaching evidence that discusses how enslaved men chose their wives, that this illusion of independence is considered. As Tera W. Hunter asserts, although enslaved men treated their wives as their property, they did not have any formal power over them because they did not own themselves.[255] Despite this, some enslaved men wielded a modicum of *informal* power over the women they wished to marry by bypassing the women's consent and appealing directly to their enslaver. This chapter will therefore begin by exploring *how* enslavers coerced and cajoled enslaved couples into relationships, and will look at more subtle, covert forms of forced reproduction before moving along the spectrum of violence to more overt, violent forms.

Agency Within Relationships

Courtship was a 'multifaceted process', with differing layers of consent creating barriers to matrimony.[256] Enslaved men and women took the time and effort to court one another, gaining the support of their enslaved community, the family of each party, and, more restrictively (as they held the ultimate say,) the consent of their enslavers.[257] However, courtships were often very brief.[258] Slaveholders desired quick marriages and rapid successive pregnancies in order to see profits sooner. On some occasions, enslaved men took advantage of this desire for natural

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[254] Marisa Fuentes problematizes this well by arguing that the expression of sexuality does not equal agency. She provides the example of enslaved women who 'chose' to have sexual relationships with their white enslaver to gain opportunity and power, and questions whether agency and resistance are one in the same, and their relationships are further complicated by the sexual economy of slavery in which they did not benefit, but the enslavers did (Marisa Fuentes, Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 67-68).
[255] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock.* 54.
[256] Fraser, *Courtship and Love,* 47.
[257] Jones, *Labor of Love,* 33.
[258] Fraser, *Courtship and Love*, 90.

increase to affirm their masculine authority over enslaved women by excluding them from the courting process. Women experienced marriage as a 'double bind', where both enslaver and husband had authority over their bodies, and some enslaved men chose their wives without the consent of the women in question, binding them in wedlock.[259] This process was emotionally complicated, and some enslaved men had more control over their choices than others.

David Doddington argues that enslavers allowed enslaved men to choose their own wives due to the 'assumption of normative male dominance' wherein men 'took' the women that they wanted.[260] Furthermore, Doddington contends that examples of enslaved men 'wanting' enslaved women suggests a 'degree of agency as opposed to unrelenting pressure.'[261] However, evidence actually suggests that enslaved people experienced both – sexual desire for the opposite sex *and* unrelenting pressure from their enslavers to marry. Desire and pressure to marry are not mutually exclusive experiences. This chapter therefore builds on the argument that enslaved men had some degree of agency in comparison to enslaved women, and that ultimate control rested with the slaveholders, but goes further to explore how restrictive these controls were and how enslaved men and women negotiated them. It finally reasons that enslaved men had only the *illusion* of agency within their intimate lives, and that *all* control over intimate bodies lied with the enslaver.

Enslavers used a range of methods to force two people together. In some circumstances, slaveholders brought enslaved men before groups of women for sale and ordered them to select a wife. Enslaved in Alabama, Alice Wright's father was only fifteen years old when his 'master told him to go pick out a wife from a drove of slaves that were passing through.'[262] Actively bringing enslaved men before a selection of women displays how enslavers scrupulously organized sexual relationships and reproduction on their plantations and reveals their insidious and calculative nature. However, though countless enslaved men undoubtedly regarded arranged marriages such as these with disdain and unwillingly complied lest their enslaver punish them, others embraced them, and Doddington suggests it was common for enslaved men to request a particular enslaved woman that had caught his eye to be his wife, rather than wait for their enslaver to demand they chose.[263] For example, William Hunter's father saw his future wife on an auction block in Mississippi, and, considering her a 'mighty pretty young woman,' asked his

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[259] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 54.
[260] David Doddington, 'Manhood, Sex, and Power in Antebellum Slave Communities,' in Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie Harris (eds.), *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas* (University of Georgia Press, 2018), 149-150.
[261] Doddington, 'Manhood, Sex, and Power', 150.
[262] Alice Wright, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7, (1936), Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 245.
[263] Doddington, 'Manhood, Sex, and Power', 150.

master to ‘buy that woman for him a wife,’ suggesting that he deemed this request a demonstration of his agency.[264] These marital selection processes were also sometimes exclusively one-sided. Charles Hinton’s father ‘saw [his] mother, [and] decided he wanted her for his woman.’[265] Hinton’s father notified his enslavers who then ‘fixed up a cabin for them to live in together. There was no ceremony.’[266] Hinton’s mother does not appear to have been consulted, and the absence of a ceremony suggests that weddings did not take place on Hinton’s plantation, instead emphasising the sexual and functional aspect of marriage valued by slaveholders that resulted in offspring. Moreover, this suggests that enslaved men also sometimes lobbied their enslaver for particular women *outside* of the marketplace. For Marshall Butler, courtship was a waste of time. He understood that his enslaver held the ultimate power and ability to couple two enslaved people together. Indeed, he dismissed the ’week or so’ it took to court a girl by supplying her with gifts such as ’pulled-candy.’[267] Butler ’had no time for sich follishness.’[268] Instead, he ‘would pop the question to boss man to see if he was willing for you to marry de gal.’[269]

Similarly, Robert Shepherd argued that on his plantation enslaved men ‘knowed better dan to ax de gal when us wanted to git married. Us jus’ ‘told our Marster and he done de axin.’’[270] This evidence is multi-layered. On one hand, Butler, Shepherd, and Hinton did not attain the consent of the enslaved women they wanted to marry. But on the other, they recognised that even after spending time courting a woman and securing her consent, their enslavers had the power to refuse wedlock. Instead, they bypassed the courting process and cited it as a waste of time, recognising that enslavers had the ultimate decision – not the enslaved men and women involved. If their enslaver said ‘no’, there was little point in pursuing and engaging in an emotional relationship when their enslaver would work to keep them apart. This could be due to a dearth of consideration for enslaved women’s consent and wishes, allowing men to perform a domineering and masculine role within the constraints of their enslaver’s power and control.

Permitting enslaved men to choose their own wives also required negotiation between different slaveholders. Enslaved men that chose women on other plantations required the consent of the woman’s enslaver as well as his own, and on some plantations the consent of both

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[264] William Hunter, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 367.
[265] Charles Hinton, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 278.
[266] Hinton, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 278.
[267] Marshall Butler, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 156.
[268] Butler, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:1, 166.
[269] *Ibid.*
[270] Robert Shepherd, Federal Writer’s Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn043/, 261.

owners stood in place of a marriage ceremony.[271] By purchasing the women under the guise of paternal benevolence, they could commodify any children that came of their union.[272] Alfred Poole's enslaver bought Palestine Kent, an enslaved woman, from a neighbouring plantation because Alfred 'couldn' do no work fer thinkin' 'bout her.'[273] Spending $1,500 ($56,210 today), Poole's owner, Jeff, bought Kent and her three children.[274] Poole's enslaver not only gained Kent, but her children and any other children produced from their marriage.

Solomon Lambert described the logistics involved in arranging marriages between plantations. He told his interviewer that 'the way they married[,] the man ask his [master] then ask her [master]. If they agree it be all right.'[275] After securing permission, the slaveholders shifted the enslaved around: 'if the man want a girl and ther[e] be another man on that place wanted a wife the [masters] would swop the women mostly. Then one announce they married. That what they called a double weddin.''[276] Similar agreements occurred on Mary Minus Biddie's plantation. If an enslaved couple that wanted to marry lived on different plantations, 'the master would consult [the enslaved woman's] master.'[277] Generally, 'it was agreeable that they should live together as man and wife,' and their relationship 'was encouraged for it increased the slave population by newborns, hence, being an asset to the master.'[278] James Henry Stith emphasised the importance of asking the master's permission to marry. He remarked that enslaved people 'had to get the consent of the masters to marry', but that sometimes the enslaver 'would [not] want them to go and would even buy the woman the men wanted to keep them contented on the plantation.'[279] Though it may appear that Stith's enslaver wanted to keep the enslaved happy out of benevolent intentions, it was more likely that he did not want to lose any property to another plantation. By purchasing the enslaved women, Stith's enslaver exploited the man, the woman, and any children they produced. According to Stith, 'it was just like raising stock and mating it.'[280] When Simon Phillips's interviewer asked him about the 'marriage situation' in Alabama, he replied that the men would 'jus' go the massa and tell him that there's a gal over in Capn' Smith's

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[271] Celestia Avery, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 26.
[272] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 21.
[273] Alfred Poole, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936, 1937), Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 320.
[274] Poole, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 320; inflation calculated at: https://www.usinflationcalculator.com.
[275] Solomon Lambert, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesn024/, 229.
[276] Lambert, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:4, 229.
[277] Mary Minus Biddie, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn030, 36.
[278] Biddie, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 36-37.
[279] James Henry Stith, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), /www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 243.
[280] Stith, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:6, 243.

place that he want for a wife[.]'[281] His enslaver, Smith, would place an offer with the woman's enslaver and then it would be contingent on whether her enslaver was willing to sell her.[282] Phillips emphasised that it depended on whether she was 'good strong [and] healthy.'[283] Enslaved people, according to Phillips, 'was bought mostly like hosses,' and so slaveholders considered the health and ability of the enslaved woman to labour (physically and sexually) in determining whether they bought her and allowed her to marry one of their men.[284] As Karl Jacoby maintains, enslavers controlled the reproduction of both enslaved people and animals, and thus compared them to one another.[285] This language subsequently bled into the lexicon of enslaved people. But, where enslavers compared enslaved people to animals to categorise and value them, enslaved people use this language to show the dehumanising aspects of slavery.

In these instances, the slaveholders moved the women around as objects or property in a negotiation. While men traditionally had more mobility than women, in the context of potential procreation and commodification of infants, slaveholders mobilised enslaved women's wombs and moved them to whichever slaver won the profits of her sexual labour.[286] Additionally, as Rebecca J. Fraser shows, slaveholders desired to control their slaves' movements, and hence encouraged marriages within their own plantations.[287] The silence of female voices in these male narratives, even in respect to their own intimate choices, reveals the differences between enslaved men and women, and the impact that forced reproduction had on their agency. Most male respondents unsurprisingly expressed only *their* perspective of the marriage process. Enslaved men centred themselves in the narratives, and portrayed women as passive bodies

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[281] Simon Phillips, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010, 313.
[282] Phillips, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 313.
[283] *Ibid.*
[284] *Ibid.*
[285] Jacoby, 'Slaves by Nature?', 92.

[286] Marie Jenkins Schwartz has argued that enslavers with smallholdings relied on cross-plantation marriages due to smaller demographics, such as in central Virginia, Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia, and that wealthier enslavers felt obliged to 'accept alliances between their slave men and bondswomen belonging to poorer neighbors.' (See Marie Jenkins Schwartz, Born in Bondage: *Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 186, 195-196). Those on smaller slaveholdings, such as just the one family, often had little choice but to allow the enslaved men and women to marry outside. However, evidence of hiring enslaved men for sexual purposes may have been one way that enslavers worked around the smaller enslaved demographic (see page 86-91 for a discussion of hiring out). Evidence discussed on page 68 explores how enslaved men and women were 'brought together' by enslavers to reproduce the workforce.

[287] Fraser, *Courtship and Love,* 34; Infamous South Carolina enslaver James Henry Hammond, who owned multiple plantations, also allowed cross-plantation marriages, but only if it was on one of his *own* plantations. This meant that he reaped the pecuniary benefits of enslaved couple's sexual labour (see James Henry Hammond, *Planation Journal of James H. Hammond,* Typed from the original manuscript in the Hammond Collection of the South Carolina Collection, University of South Carolina Library (1857-1858), http://www.scpronet.com/modjeskaschool/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/James-Henry-Hammond-Plantation-Manual.pdf., 16).

moved at the will of their husband and enslavers. Women discussed forced reproduction in the same way they discussed instances of rape and sexual exploitation: while some *were* willing to discuss it, others were hesitant and spoke in a coded language, dissembling to protect themselves or family members.

Jasper Battle maintained that 'when a slave wanted to git married up wid a gal, he didn't ax de gal, but he went and told Marster 'bout it.'[288] Then, if the woman consented, they would marry.[289] On Bill Heard's plantation, 'if a slave wanted to marry up wid a gal he knocked on his Marster's door and told him 'bout it. If his Marster laked de idea he told him to go on and *take de gal* and to treat her right[.]'[290] Similarly, on Jefferson Franklin Henry's plantation, his enslaver allowed his slaves to 'take' women that they desired, with the permission of their enslavers.[291] Importantly, Henry remarked that 'if the girl lived on one plantation and the man on another that was luck for the girl's marster, 'cause the chillun would belong to him.'[292] This demonstrates the central concern for procreation and the financial benefits that enslavers of women gained from marriage. Thus, the dearth of women speaking about forced reproduction in the archives leaves little to the historian to understand their relationships and how they felt about them. Instead, both enslaved and slaveholding men ignored women's voices as they dictated the movements of their bodies and determined who sexually possessed them.

Although slaveholders allowed men to choose the women they wanted as wives, they still imposed restrictions. Henry Andrew Williams, enslaved in North Carolina, demonstrated this when he stated that there was 'no use to want one of the women on Jim Johnson's, Debrose, Tillery Farms. They kept them on their own and didn't want visitors.'[293] With the exception of enslaved people on Johnson's farms, 'when a man wanted a woman he went and axed the master for her and took her on. That is about all there was to it.'[294] Slaveholders on Williams's plantation restricted the choice to a smaller pool of women. If they loved a woman on the neighbouring plantation, they had to keep their relationship a secret, or alternatively stop seeing one another.[295] Some enslavers refused to allow their male slaves to partake in abroad marriages, as,

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[288] Jasper Battle, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 67.
[289] Battle, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:1, 67.
[290] Bill Heard, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 141-142 (italics added).
[291] Jefferson Franklin Henry, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2 Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 189.
[292] Henry, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:2, 189.
[293] Henry Andrew Williams, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7 (1936) Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 167. Moreover, Emily West found that enslaved people strove to marry who they wanted, 'regardless of size and location of [the] unit.' (West, *Chains of Love,* 5.)
[294] Williams, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:7, 167.
[295] Fraser, *Courtship and Love,* 38.

according to John Blassingame, ‘most slaveholders [felt] that the children their male slaves had by women belonging to other planters was so much seed spewed on the ground.’[296] Louisiana enslaver Bennet H. Barrow recorded a series of strict rules for the management of enslaved people on his plantation, including the management of their relationships. Barrow wrote:

> No rule that I have stated is of more importance than that relating to marrying out of the plantation[,] it seems to me, from What observations I have made it is utterly impossible to have any method, or regularity When the men and woman were permitted to take wives and husbands indiscriminately off the plantation, negroes are verry [*sic*] much disposed to pursue a course of this kind[.][297]

Barrow reinforced his determination for the enslaved men and women on his plantation to marry one another rather than outside with six key points. These include the concern for them having ‘an uncontrollable right to be frequently absent’; their loyalty to their wives’ home rather than their own; and the creation of ‘a feeling of independence, from being, of right, out of the control of the masters for a time.’[298] Lastly, Barrow was concerned that they would be ‘repeatedly exposed to temptation from meeting and associating with negroes from different directions and with various habits & vices[.]’[299] Not only did Barrow enforce these rules and concerns in order to police the bodies of his enslaved people, but also because he did not want them associating with other enslaved people ‘with various habits and vices’, thus alluding to the practice that many enslavers carried out of forcing enslaved people to copulate only with those they deemed of a sound character, both mentally and physically.

However, forbidding abroad marriages was not practical on smaller plantations that had a smaller pool of enslaved men and women to force into couples. Reaching further abroad onto other plantations was therefore the only choice for slave communities with a smaller population, and those that lived on smaller holdings tended to live apart from their spouse.[300] However, those with more enslaved people, and therefore more choice, may have been less willing to let their men’s enslaved children belong to another enslaver as it was not financially beneficial for them. In Kentucky, Peter Still’s enslaver, Mr. Hogun, ’allowed none of them to marry off the place.’[301] Hogan had other plans, and ’by watching them carefully, and pursuing prompt measures, he usually managed to bring them together according to his mind.’[302] For enslavers like Hogan,

[296] Blassingame, *Slave Community,* 165.
[297] Davis, *Plantation Life*.
[298] *Ibid*.
[299] *Ibid*.
[300] West, *Chains of Love,* 46.
[301] Kate E. Pickard, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed: The Narrative of Peter and Vina Still After Forty Years of Slavery* (New York and Auburn: Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1856), 152-153.
[302] Pickard, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed,* 153.

planning matches between his own slaves was of the utmost importance, rather than letting them decide for themselves. In this way, neither enslaved men nor women were able to act freely in their courtship and marriage practices, and slaveholders engaged in pro-natalist practices by matching up particular people.[303]

Hilliard Yellerday's mother provides a further example of how enslavers forced multiple people into unwanted sexual relationships. Informing him about the past days of slavery, his mother referred to the 'loosene[d] morals' of enslaved women.[304] He stated, 'there were cases where these young girls loved someone else and would have to receive the attentions of men of the master's choice.'[305] Yellderday's narrative suggests that his mother's enslaver embraced reproductive practices by arranging marriages between specific men and women, despite the affections of a third party. He further argues that 'some slave women would have dozens of men during their life. Negro women who had a half dozen mock husbands in slavery time were plentiful. The holy bonds of matrimony did not mean much to a slave.'[306] Yellerday's mother's emphasis on and description of the women is important. It not only suggests that the women had multiple husbands on the plantation, rather than men with multiple wives (as logic would assume for productive forced reproduction), but her choice of words also alludes to the sexist double standards society enforced on women. Yellerday's mother accused the women of 'loosene[d] morals', but it is likely that these women did not want multiple relationships. It was probable that their enslaver forced them to. Moreover, there may be many other reasons for why the women had multiple husbands that were simply not explained by Yellerday.

Firstly, enslavers partnered women with multiple men because they wanted them with certain desirable men – and this may have meant more than just one relationship. Secondly, multiple or successive partners increased the chance of conceiving, especially if the enslaver was concerned about their fertility of the enslaved man, rather than the woman. Lastly, despite Yellerday's slightly judgemental tone, this may actually be evidence of enslaved women refusing the marriage arrangements of their enslaver.[307] The reference to young girls who 'loved someone else' suggests that although their enslaver forced them to 'receive the attentions of men' of their choosing, these young girls resisted by carrying on relationships with the men that *they* chose.

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[303] Jennings, '"Us Colored Women"', 47-48.
[304] Yellderday, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:2, 434.
[305] *Ibid*.
[306] *Ibid.*, 434-435.
[307] Jenifer Morgan has recently written on the politics of refusal and argues that resistance belongs on a "continuum". Thus, small, acts such as that carried out by these women can be viewed as refusal along the spectrum of resistance. While carrying on with sexual partners of their choosing may not necessarily be seen as resistance, the women are refusing to abide by their enslavers' request that they marry a specific person. See: Jenifer Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery:* gender, kinship, and capitalism in the early Black Atlantic (Duke University Press, 2021), 219.

Just as some men 'took' enslaved women as wives, others were 'given' to them by their enslavers. Andrew Boone, enslaved in North Carolina, recalled that his father had 'several children cause he had several women besides mother.'[308] Boone also specifically identified Mollie and Lila Lassiter, two sisters that his father had relations with.[309] These women, he recalled, 'were given' to him and 'no udder man wus allowed to have anything to do wid 'm.'[310] Despite the passive tone of 'given', their enslaver most probably forced these women to procreate with this man. This further supports the practice of enslavers forcing one man to procreate with multiple women.[311]

Some enslaved men held little sympathy for the plight of enslaved women. John Cole remembered that if a 'woman wasn't willing' to marry him, 'a good, hard-working hand could always get the master to *make* the girl marry him – whether or no, willy-nilly.'[312] Cole suggested that enslaved men needed skills to coerce a woman into marrying him, but these skills were in labour for the enslaver, not in courting. Men favoured by their enslavers stood a greater chance of their enslaver buying the woman that they desired than those who were not 'key slaves' or who did not stand out to their enslavers.[313]

Choosing their wives affirmed men's sense of patriarchy and masculinity at the expense of the will and happiness of the women they were marrying. Though some women grew to love their husbands, this was not always the case. Some enslaved women were already married to other men. In Texas, Moses Jeffries argued that if he saw someone he wanted to marry, he could ask his enslaver to buy her, and it 'wouldn't matter if she were somebody else's wife; she would become mine.'[314] In a society so reliant on natural increase, Jeffries knew that his owner would happily buy an enslaved woman if it resulted in children he could commodify, even if she was already

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[308] Andrew Boone, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn111/, 136.
[309] Boone, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:1, 136.
[310] *Ibid*.
[311] Enslaved women tend to remain either unnamed in these men's narratives or else their side of the story is lacking. Though there is a relatively equal gender balance in the WPA narratives, women were much more reluctant to speak of their forced intimate relationships than the men. As Darlene Clark Hine argues, formerly enslaved women dissembled when questioned about topics surrounding sex and sexual assault to protect themselves and their community, especially from white interviewers. Methodologically flawed evidence such as this raises questions that would benefit from further clarification. Who were these women? How did they feel about these intimate relationships? Heard's enslaver forced enslaved women to marry without consulting them or obtaining consent, and, as such, their voices are missing from the archive. Instead, as Hartman insists, historians must use their imagination, or 'critical fabulation', to 'imagine what cannot be verified. (Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts,' 11-12).
[312] John Cole, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn041, 228 [italics added].
[313] Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), xix-xxxvii.
[314] Moses Jeffries, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 39.

married to another man. In this way, both enslavers *and* enslaved men dictated the space that women inhabited. By requesting of their enslaver a certain woman for a wife, enslaved men set in motion events that would enable their enslaver to force women away from their family and loved ones. For slaveholders, marriage was a game where they were always the financial winners, regardless of the emotions of the pawns they played, and some enslaved men seized this opportunity to express their male authority within an institution and society that continually attempted to deny men any authority at all.

Enslaved women reacted differently to the husbands their enslavers forced upon them. Sometimes, these relationships resulted in feelings of resentment and disdain and couples then separated if their relationship proved incompatible.[315] Discussions around marriage and separation are obfuscated by methodological issues where stories told by their formerly enslaved parents may have been changed slightly to protect them.[316] For example, Lewis Brown informed his interviewer that in Mississippi, his father 'had two wives.'[317] He had nine children with one wife, but no children with another, and so he 'quit the one that didn't have no children,' and 'went back to the one he had the nine children by.'[318] While Brown is suggesting that his father willingly chose to end the relationship with the woman who did not have any children, it is more likely that their *enslaver* ended the relationship because the woman was not producing any children. Though Brown does not say what became of this childless woman, her enslaver possibly either forced her to procreate with a different man or sold her away if they deemed her infertile. If this assumption is correct, then Brown's father (or mother) may have conveyed this version of the events in order to protect him from the traumatic realities of forced reproduction and sexual exploitation.

Separations obviously became much easier after emancipation once the formerly enslaved were out of the clutches and control of their enslavers, further proving that slaveholders enforced many relationships against the will of the individuals in question. For example, Henry Nelson's mother 'didn't live with her husband,' as she 'never intend[ed] to marry him' and 'was forced to that.'[319] She 'left him when she was freed.'[320] Nelson's mother thus embraced freedom from slavery *and* her forced marriage. Similarly, Linley Hadley's father left the family after freedom.[321]

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[315] Thomas Foster, 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* 20 (2011), 457; Jennings, '"Us Colored Women"', 47; Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavey and Freedom, 1750-1925* (Basil Blackwell, 1976), 159
[316] Hine, 'Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women,' 912-915.
[317] Lewis Brown, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 292-294.
[318] Brown, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:1, 292-294.
[319] Henry Nelson, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 5, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936)https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn025/, 198.
[320] Nelson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:5, 198.
[321] Linley Hadley, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023, 128.

His wife allegedly 'didn't care so much about him,' as 'he was her mate give to her.'[322] Further, Hannah Jones recalled that enslaved men had 'three or four wives before' the war, and after emancipation they had to 'take one woman and marry her.'[323] Thus, although relationships became even more complicated post-emancipation, they also offered freedom for those in unhappy forced marriages.[324]

The story of Rose Williams and her husband, Rufus, also exhibits the resentment enslaved women felt toward their husbands. Enslaved women recognised that enslaved men were complicit in forced marriages at the behest of their owner. In this narrative, Rose Williams's enslaver ordered her to live in the quarters with another enslaved man, Rufus, and encouraged them to procreate (although this is not immediately clear to Rose, who assumes she was there to clean his house).[325] Rufus attempted to engage in sexual intercourse with her, but Rose defended herself and did not let him near her. However, Rose tells this story, not Rufus.[326] It is unclear whether Rufus was completely willing to subject Rose to their marriage. More recently, Thomas Foster's work, *Rethinking Rufus*, reframes Rufus's role in this story, and considers how he too was a casualty of his enslaver's reproductive actions.[327] Demonstrating the complexities of discussions around sexual violence, and whose voices are recorded in the archive, we only have Rose's side of the story, not Rufus'. Even if Rufus's version of events had been recorded, his recollection may have been different to Rose's. We do not know Rufus' thoughts and feelings on the situation, but it is likely that he was considering the violent ramifications they both faced from their enslaver if they did not comply with his wishes to procreate. Thus, his reaction challenges the notion of a dichotomy between 'perpetrator' and 'victim', and although it is important to consider how enslaved men often perpetrated reproductive practices, it is equally important to consider how they were trapped within situations beyond their control.

However, as Emily West attests, intimate partner violence did occur in enslaved people's marriages.[328] Rose notes that Rufus was a 'bully', suggesting that Rufus potentially used violence and aggression to perform his masculinity in their community, and therefore may have even

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[322] Hadley, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 128.
[323] Hannah Jones, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 10, Missouri, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn100/, 214.
[324] Emily West, 'Reflections in the *History and Historians* of the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves: Enslaved Women and Intimate Partner Sexual Violence,' *American Nineteenth Century History,* 19 (2018), 8; Leslie A. Schwalm also discusses how enslaved women left unhappy relationships in the post-war era (Leslie A. Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (University of Illinois Press, 1997).
[325] Rose Williams, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mes164/, 174-178.
[326] Foster, 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men,' 457.
[327] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus,* 1-10.
[328] West, 'Reflections in the *History and Historians* of the Black Woman's Role', 1-21.

willingly embraced his enslaver's 'breeding' practices by accepting the forced marriage and attempting to rape Rose.[329] After emancipation, Rose left Rufus, revealing her unhappiness and unwillingness to be in a relationship with him. Rose did not grow to love Rufus, and thus found freedom from her enslaver's reproductive practices after the Civil War.

A further example of absences in slavery records alluding to the sexual exploitation of enslaved men is also visible in the case of Sarah Ross's mother. An enslaver named Donaldson, a 'cruel man', frequently beat Ross's mother 'because she would not have sexual relations with the overseer, a colored man by the name of Randall.'[330] On this plantation, 'slaves did not marry, but were forced – in many cases against their will – to live together as man and wife.'[331] Ross's generalisation suggests that her enslaver forced both men and women into non-consensual relationships in order to reproduce. However, as with the other evidence discussed, we are only hearing about Ross's mother, not the Black overseer that was also involved. We do not know if he was also unwilling to partake in this relationship, or if he was using his position of relative authority as an overseer to force Ross's mother into a sexual relationship at the encouragement of their enslaver. Stephanie Camp's theory of the 'three bodies' allows for some speculation.[332] While Randall's enslaver used his body as a site of exploitation by elevating him to the status of overseer, Randall also used his body as a site of pleasure by engaging in a sexual relationship with Ross's mother (even though it was against her will, and thus exploited her in turn).[333]

One judicial record about free people of colour demonstrates how enslavers placed emphasis on enslaved men's 'choice' only if they chose to marry an *enslaved* – as opposed to free – woman, and thus reproduce the slave population. For example, in November 1818, thirty-two residents of Nash County, North Carolina, submitted a petition to the County Court, complaining about the amount of free-born Black children.[334] Recognising that this was due to *partus sequitur ventrem* (1662), petitioners asked 'that a law may pass forbidding female free negroes or molatoes [*sic*] from intermarrying with Slaves (either with or without the consent of the owner of such Slave or Slaves).'[335] Enslavers usually expected to be asked for their consent, and plantation rules often forbade enslaved people from marrying without their owner's approval, though some couples

[329] Williams, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:4, 176.
[330] Sarah Ross, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn030, 168.
[331] Ross, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 168.
[332] Stephanie M.H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 67-68.
[333] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 67-68.
[334] Petition 11281804, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, General Assembly Session Records, Miscellaneous Petitions (1818). This appears to be the sole petition in this collection that discusses the number of free-born Black children.
[335] Petition 11281804, North Carolina Department of Archives and History (1818).

took it upon themselves to resist this and marry without permission (usually when their enslaver rejected their request to marry).[336] This permission was important, as both enslavers and citizens of Nash County only desired to see a natural growth in the *enslaved* Black population – thereby ensuring that they were controllable, commodifiable, and exploitable. White southerners therefore tried to control the population of Black people in the South by practicing a subtle, yet insidious, type of pro- *and* anti-natalism – they encouraged the growth of an *enslaved* Black population whilst also discouraging the growth of the *free* Black population, a population they increasingly perceived as a dangerous threat to the stability of their regime.

Although it was primarily enslaved *men* that maintained a fragile choice over who they wanted to marry and women often lacked autonomy, it is reductive to generalise that *all* women were *completely* devoid of autonomy. Some enslaved women had a *modicum* of choice. However, this was ultimately only allowed by the enslaved man who respected their decision, in conjunction with the temperament of their enslaver, who, again, held the ultimate authority. On Hemp Kennedy's plantation in Mississippi, marriage selections appear to have been more equal. Participating in the traditional 'jumping of the broom' ceremony, if one half of the couple jumped the broom but the other did not, the community did not consider them married.[337] The 'jumping of the broom' ceremony was significant, as it gave the opportunity for the community to endorse the marriage.[338] Some other formerly enslaved people recalled that enslaved men asked the permission of the enslaver, who then asked the permission of the woman in question. For example, Henry Bland stated that 'if a man wanted to marry, he merely pointed out the woman of his choice to the master. He in turn called her and told her that such and such an individual wished her for a wife. *If she agreed* they were pronounced man and wife and were permitted to live together.'[339]

George Eason remembered that enslaved men informed their enslavers of their choice of women, who then approached the woman to see if she 'agreed to the plan.'[340] In these instances, the enslaved women had to agree to the match for the marriage to go ahead. If she did not, the ceremony did not go ahead and neither their enslaver nor the enslaved couple considered them married. This is important as it suggests that in some situations, enslavers did not have the moral authority to determine whether a couple were officially married. Instead, this was down to the

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[336] W.B. Allen, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 15.
[337] Hemp Kennedy, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 9, Mississippi, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn090/, 87.
[338] Parry, 'Married in Slavery Time', 298; Parry, *Jumping the Broom,* 39.
[339] Henry Bland, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 80; (Italics own).
[340] George Eason, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 303.

enslaved community. However, from a forced reproduction perspective, the enslavers only really cared that couples were married so they could force them to reproduce. The enslaved women's rejection of the marriage may mean she herself and the rest of the community did not deem the couple married, challenging the authority of their enslaver. But the enslaver may also simultaneously decide that forcing a couple to perform the role of marriage – such as cohabiting, engaging in sexual intimacy – was enough to consider them married. In this way, if a couple did not internalise the marriage, they are unmarried in their own eyes and that of their community. But their enslaver *did* consider them married. These conflicting opinions only mattered to slaveholders – enslavers sanctioned relationships, but enslaved communities did not. This likely had emotional ramifications for the enslaved when their enslaver interfered in their sexual intimate lives. Though the enslaver considered this sexual activity under the sanctification of marriage, the couple did not share this opinion and thus did not internalise the marriage.

Though some enslavers operated under this illusion of allowing a semblance of choice, others had no such regard and matched enslaved people up against the will of *both* parties, completely dismissing any semblance of desire or choice for men *and* women. This often included explicitly purchasing an enslaved person for the sake of marriage and procreation and forcing them with someone else, against their will. An enslaver named David Ferguson purchased Jacob Gilbert as a husband for an enslaved woman named Emily.[341] He did not gain the consent of either party. Emily and Gilbert went on to have nine children, though Gilbert was the biological father to only seven of these children. Two of them had a white father.[342] The white father was likely to be their enslaver, who sexually exploited Emily by forcing her to marry Gilbert, and also sexually abused her himself. Ferguson's sexually violent exploits resulted in nine financially exploitable children. Furthermore, Taylor Gilbert, the interviewee who recalled this family structure, could only remember three of his siblings (Bettie, Rena, and Amie), suggesting that Ferguson sold them away at a young age.[343] This demonstrates the cycle of forced reproduction: Emily's enslaver purchased Jacob Gilbert with the purpose of them producing children, who he then sold for a profit.

Some enslavers not only did not consider the wishes or choices of the enslaved but went further to force those in established relationships to have sexual relations with those they were not married to. The story about forced marriages and reproduction as related by John Andrew Jackson's experience of slavery depicts this absence of care some enslavers had for enslaved peoples' choice. Jackson found himself in a predicament with Adam, a 'slave about thirty years of

[341] Taylor Gilbert, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn030, 55.
[342] Gilbert, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 55.
[343] *Ibid*.

age and six feet high,' Adam's wife, and a fourteen-year-old enslaved girl called Jenny Wilson.[344] Adam's wife lived on a neighbouring plantation, but his enslaver bought Jenny and ordered Adam to marry her, despite his marriage to his wife. Both Adam and Jenny refused; Adam on the grounds that he loved his actual wife, and Jenny because she loved John Andrew Jackson, the narrator of this narrative. However, both Adam and Jenny eventually conceded to the forced match, as their enslaver subjected them both to the violence of the whip. Jackson further described how forced marriages at the decision of enslavers was a common occurrence, as his 'master served nearly all his male slaves in the similar manner.'[345] He demonstrated this by describing another enslaved man, Abraham, as an 'unusually obstinate' man, who refused to 'give up his wife.'[346] Abraham ignored his enslaver's orders not to see his wife anymore and snuck out once a fortnight.[347] Unfortunately, Abraham met a violent end as Gamble McFarden, his enslaver's son-in-law, whipped him to death for his disobedience.[348] Jackson's story not only shows the pervasiveness and prevalence of arranged marriages on southern plantations but conveys the point of view of someone whose romantic partner was taken from them to marry another man. Jackson directed no anger toward Adam, but toward his enslaver for getting between himself and Jenny, and between Adam and his respective wife.

William Ward also provides an extreme example of the control enslavers exacted on their plantations. Ward was bound to the Brown estate, and Mr. Brown 'himself placed every two individuals together that he saw fit to.'[349] As there were no wedding ceremonies, Brown's motivation to force these couples together was in order to produce children.[350] The enslaved people on Brown's plantation 'were allowed no preference or choice as to who his or her mate would be,' and 'these married couples were not permitted to sleep together except when the husband received permission to spend the night with his wife.'[351] Brown attempted to control the moments when enslaved couples conceived. This may have simply been a way for enslavers to exact their direct control over the romantic entanglements of their 'property' or it may have been a way for them to plan when enslaved women were pregnant, and therefore when in the year they would lose some productivity from those individuals, potentially by staggering pregnancies.

[344] John Andrew Jackson, *The Experience of a Slave in South Carolina* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1862), 29.
[345] Jackson, *The Experiences of a Slave,* 29.
[346] *Ibid*.
[347] *Ibid*., 29-30.
[348] *Ibid*., 30.
[349] William Ward, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 130.
[350] Ward, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:4, 130.
[351] *Ibid*.

Additionally, as R.J. Knight has argued, slaveholding women and mistresses somehow timed their pregnancies with enslaved women to exploit the mothers as wet-nurses.[352]

Jacoby, comparing enslaved people's treatment to that of livestock, also maintained that enslavers controlled the 'breeding' of livestock to space out milk and meat, and that of humans to control when children were born to maximise chance of survival.[353] How they did this is unclear, but if slaveholding women timed their pregnancies with enslaved women for their personal gain, slaveholding men, focused on loss of labour and potential profits, undoubtedly carried out the same practices as these white women.[354] Furthermore, Ward recalled that 'if any children were born from the union, Mr. Brown named them.'[355] The naming of the children reinforced Brown's enslavement of the children and attempted to subvert any modicum of authority that enslaved parents had over their children from the very moment of birth. Similarly, Celestia Avery's enslaver also named the children, and forbade enslaved parents from naming their own offspring.[356] This was particularly violating of enslaved men's authority and presence in the lives of their children, as naming practices 'etched patrilineal descent onto the family tree… explicitly in opposition to planters' disregard… for the ties between slave fathers and their children' as fathers named their sons after themselves.[357] Ward himself fathered seventeen children, but at the time of interview he did not know their whereabouts.[358] This may be due to falling out of touch, or, more sinisterly, because Brown sold them away for profit.

Willie McCullough's recollections about his mother and grandmother provide further evidence of how profit motivated enslavers. His mother told him 'that they were not allowed to pick their husbands,' and that their enslaver arranged their marriages as soon as the women turned sixteen years old.[359] This was evidently when their slaveholders deemed they 'became a woman' and was hence the best time for them to conceive children.[360] When McCullough's mother reached this age, her enslaver 'went to a slave owner near by and got a six-foot…man, almost a stranger to her, and told her she must marry him.'[361] McCullough did not consider whether the enslaved man, clearly bought for the purpose of marriage and procreation, consented, or if he found himself in the same unwilling position as McCullough's mother. The ceremony consisted of the enslaver reading 'a

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[352] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal,' 994.
[353] Jacoby, 'Slaves by Nature?', 91.
[354] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation', 994.
[355] *Ibid*.
[356] Avery, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:1, 26.
[357] Leslie A. Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (University of Illinois Press, 1997), 55.
[358] Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We,* 55.
[359] Willie McCullough, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 78.
[360] McCullough, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:2, 78; for more on age and fertility, see chapters 3 and 4.
[361] *Ibid*.

paper' to them, and then declared that they were man and wife.[362] Their enslaver ordered the man to 'take her to a certain cabin and go to bed.'[363] Their enslaver, clearly motivated by profit, systematically arranged marriages between enslaved men and women as the women turned sixteen. Not only did he purchase enslaved men to marry young girls, but he had particular cabins set up for them. Furthermore, this forced reproduction crossed generational lines, as McCullough stated that his grandmother also suffered from reproductive practices, and 'said that several different men were put to her just about the same as if she had been a cow or sow.'[364] Though McCullough is discussing his mother and grandmother's experiences, his language and comparison to livestock suggests that this happened to all the women on their plantation on a regular basis.

In the 1856 biography about his life, Peter Still also provides an example of an enslaver explicitly arranging a relationship between two enslaved people with the purpose of procreation. Still reported that when his enslaver 'saw a young man and woman engaged in any little sport together, or noticing each other in any way, [or] if he thought they would make a good match, he ordered the overseer to build them a house.'[365] Still's enslaver forced the other enslaved people on the plantation to build said house, thus forcing the community to unwillingly be complicit in the forcing together of two people against their will.[366] Once these slaves erected the house, Still's enslaver ordered Bob, 'the head man, to bring Joe and Phillis, and put them into their house.'[367] His enslaver went so far as to padlock them into the house, and Still referred to this couple as 'inmates,' – prisoners within their own relationship, and harkens to Tera Hunter's assertion that enslaved women were 'bound in wedlock' in a very literal sense.[368] Still's enslaver threatened Bob into keeping Joe and Phillis together, and ordered him to ensure that Phillis fulfilled her wifely duties by washing Joe's clothes and cooking his meals.[369] 'No expostulations from either party could alter his decree', recollected Still, 'he had been to the trouble of building a house for them, and now they should live in it, or take the consequences of bracing his authority.'[370] It is clear here that neither Joe, Phillis, nor even Bob, maintained ultimate authority in this relationship. Instead, their enslaver forced them to maintain a relationship against their will, and his threat of punishment implies he desired them to procreate. Moreover, their enslaver forced them to perform the typical hallmarks of a heteronormative relationship of the nineteenth century – the

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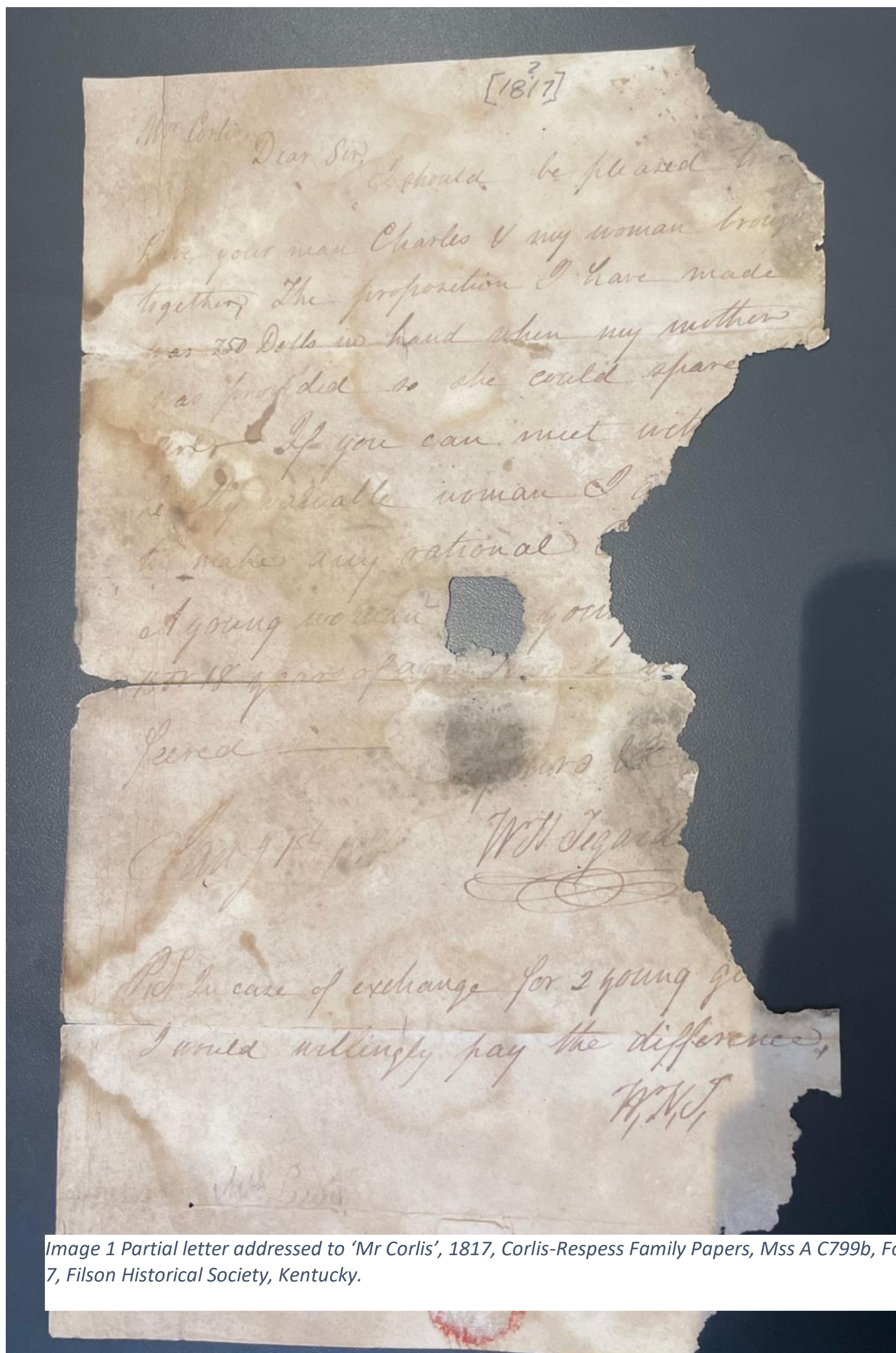
[362] *Ibid*.
[363] *Ibid*.
[364] *Ibid*.
[365] Pickard, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed,* 153.
[366] *Ibid*.
[367] *Ibid*.
[368] *Ibid*.; Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 54.
[369] Pickard, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed,* 153.
[370] *Ibid*.

woman must cook and clean and perform sexual duties for the man. Their enslaver's instance that they perform these domestic roles was likely to justify the sexual aspect of their forced relationship, as these women were performing all aspects of traditional heteronormative marriages of the time – serving their husbands both domestically and sexually.

Just as enslavers negotiated between themselves on behalf of enslaved couples that professed interest in marrying one another, they also did so for couples who did *not.* If an enslaver wanted a man to marry a woman on another plantation, both of their enslavers engaged in a negotiation with one another over living arrangements without the consent of either enslaved men or women. Warren Taylor's parents, enslaved in Virginia, had no choice in their marriage.[371] The only courting that occurred was between their enslavers, and – like any business arrangement – they were unlikely to let their slaves court or marry if the slaveholders did not like each other or suffered disagreements.[372] According to Taylor, one enslaver would say 'I got a good boy. I'm going to let him come over to see your girl.'[373] If this was accepted by the other slaveholder, the couple soon married.[374] However, Taylor remarks that they were 'married in the way they always married in those days…there was no marriage at all.'[375] Taylor's enslaver simply announced, 'there she is. You are man and wife.'[376] In this way, a financial transaction was carried out between the enslavers, with the enslaved the subject. Moreover, their relationship was not sanctified in any traditional form, signifying the emphasis on reproduction rather than traditional marital values and ceremony. Similarly, J.W. Whitefield recalled what his father told him about enslaved people's marriages in North Carolina: 'They did't count marriage like they do now.'[377] Instead, two slaveholders, who held enslaved people they desired to marry off, would force the said couple together.[378] According to Whitefield, if a boy was born from this marriage, 'they [the enslavers] would reserve him for breeding purposes if he was healthy and robust. But if he was puny and sickly, they were not bothered about him.'[379] Their enslaver would also sell any 'desirable' enslaved boys by the time he was thirteen years old.[380]

Though formerly enslaved respondents repeatedly confirm this story with their own narratives, there is little evidence of this from the enslavers in question who arranged

[371] Warren Taylor, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), /www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 274.
[372] Fraser, *Courtship and Love,* 38.
[373] Taylor, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:6, 274.
[374] *Ibid*.
[375] *Ibid*.
[376] *Ibid*.
[377] J. W. Whitefield, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 138.
[378] Whitefield, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:7*,* 138.
[379] *Ibid*., 139.
[380] *Ibid*.


[1817]

Mr Corlis

Dear Sir, I should be pleased to

have your man Charles & my woman

together. The proposition I have made

was 250 Dolls in hand when my mother

was provided so she could spare

her. If you can meet

valuable woman

to make any rational

A young woman

18 years of age

W N J

P.S. In case of exchange for 2 young

I would willingly pay the difference.

W.N.J.

Image 1 Partial letter addressed to 'Mr Corlis', 1817, Corlis-Respess Family Papers, Mss A C799b, Folder 7, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.

relationships specifically with forced reproduction in mind. This may be due to a variety of reasons: because they did not want outsiders, especially abolitionists, finding evidence of such activities that may be deemed immoral, because they did not think it was important or interesting enough to note, or because they regarded it as intrinsic. Moreover, documents may simply have not survived. A rare example of reference to forced reproduction from an enslaver is seen in a damaged partial letter from 1817, signed with the initials W.N.J., to John Corlis (see image 1). The first line of the letter reads: 'Dear Sir, I should be pleased to have your man Charles and my woman

brought together[.] The proposition I have made was 750 Dollars in hand[.]'[381] Though the authors of this source do not explicitly state that this was for the intention of forced reproduction, the language suggests that they should be 'brought together' for some sort of relationship. This could be for marriage or cohabitation. Moreover, the inclusion of an offer of $750 demonstrates that this is a business transaction, where the author is requesting the purchase of Charles. Combined with the '[bringing] together' of both Charles and the woman, it can be read that this was for reproductive purposes. Both the letter to Corlis and Whitefield's evidence highlights the collective effort it took enslavers to 'breed' enslaved people. Two enslavers with 'desirable' slaves came together to negotiate terms of marriage – whether one should sell to the other, or whether they would have an abroad marriage – then forced them together to produce children fit for sale or work, or more callously as with Whitefield's testimony, to 'reserve them for breeding purposes' when they reached the appropriate age, thus perpetuating the violent cycle of forced reproduction.[382]

Where enslavers bought women to marry their enslaved men, evidence suggests that slaveholders also bought *men* for women to marry, but without considering the women's choice or desire as they appeared to do for the men. For example, Ann Maxwell's owner, Captain Peters, 'bought Robert Maxwell from Charles Howell as a husband for Ann.'[383] Likewise, David Ferguson bought an enslaved man, Jacob Gilbert, from Dr. Gilbert 'as a husband for Emily.'[384] Just as enslaved men made some attempt at courting a woman and asked for the enslaver's permission to marry her or request that he purchase her, slaveholders bought enslaved men without considering either party involved. Furthermore, these respondents do not specify why their enslavers bought these specific men. Did they exude certain physical characteristics that their enslaver found appealing, such as large size and strength? Did they think they would produce strong children? Were they similarly matched in size and strength to the women they wanted them to marry? No matter the answer, these enslavers bought men with the explicit goal of impregnating the enslaved women, consequently reproducing the workforce. Moreover, as the following section will show, many of these women were extremely young, having only just began to menstruate, and so enslavers forced older enslaved men to procreate with much younger women.

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[381] Partial letter addressed to 'Mr Corlis', 1817, Corlis-Respess Family Papers, Mss A C799b, Folder 7, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.
[382] *Ibid*.
[383] Henry Maxwell, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn030, 218.
[384] Taylor Gilbert, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn030, 223.

Age of Enslaved Couples

Though most enslaved people married in their late teens, enslavers forced adolescent girls to have children at a relatively young age (before sixteen) often before they had married.[385] Berry estimates the childbearing range to be between fifteen and thirty-five, whilst Marie Jenkins Schwartz places first conception at fifteen – the average age of their first menstrual cycle.[386] Furthermore, enslaved women's value decreased as their fertility decreased, and so enslavers encouraged women to procreate as soon as possible.[387] Although enslaved girls 'tried to resist gaining first-hand knowledge about "evil things" [sexual abuse],' by appealing to elders for protection, enslavers ultimately pressured young girls to become sexually active at a very young age.[388] WPA respondent Hilliard Yellerday maintained that 'when a girl became a woman she was required to go to a man to become a mother' as she 'was expected to have children as soon as she became a woman.'[389] As a consequence, many of these mothers were only twelve or thirteen.[390] Their enslaver would then 'read a paper', after which the couple jumped over a broom' and the master would then tell them they were man and wife and they could go to bed together.'[391] Yellerday's testimony suggests that as soon as a girl experienced menarche, their enslaver either expected or forced them to marry and produce children. This enslaver also 'would sometimes go and get a large hale hearty Negro man from some other plantation to go to his Negro woman. He would ask the other master to let this man come over to his place to go to his slave girls.'[392] This language of 'man' and 'girl' suggests a significant age difference between the couples. Moreover, the emphasis on the physicality of the enslaved men – 'six feet tall', 'large hale hearty' – suggests that the enslaver specifically chose these men based upon pro-natalist and 'eugenic' ideology. As discussed in the Introduction, the term 'eugenics' is anachronistic, as it was not coined until the late nineteenth century by Francis Galton. However, though it did not have a term, enslavers still carried out actions that are distinctly eugenic in nature. Enslavers deemed the strongest and fittest men the most appropriate to procreate with their enslaved women and girls.

Although historians such as Schwartz have cited the average age of first child to be between twenty and twenty-one, there is an abundance of evidence from formerly enslaved people that shows how enslavers forced children as young as thirteen or fourteen to engage in sexual

[385] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 99.
[386] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 15; Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South* (Harvard University Press, 2009), 78.
[387] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, 95.
[388] Wilma King, '"Prematurely Knowing of Evil Things": The Sexual Abuse of African American Girls and Young Women in Slavery and Freedom', *The Journal of African American History,* 99 (2014), 179.
[389] Hilliard Yellerday, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 434.
[390] Yellerday, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:2, 434.
[391] *Ibid.*
[392] *Ibid*.

relationships.[393] Even if this was not the majority, and therefore not the average, as historians such as Schwartz have focused on, sexual exploitation did still happen to young children, and is therefore worth exploring. For example, WPA respondent Minnie Johnson Stewart's mother married her husband when she was just fourteen years old.[394] Tellingly, Stewart could not recall the name of her mother's husband, suggesting that the marriage did not work out, nor was he her biological father.[395] Laura Clark, enslaved in North Carolina, was around the age of fourteen at emancipation, and so must have been remarkably young when she married her husband, Cary Crockett.[396] Similarly, Tom Stanhouse's parents married in South Carolina when his mother was only thirteen years old.[397] These young girls were trapped in a triple bind of age, race, and gender. They could not consent to marriage or sexual relations because of their status as a young, enslaved female.

In this evidence, the respondents emphasise the age of their mothers, but not their fathers. This suggests that enslaved women and girls felt more sexual pressure than men from a young age. Jacqueline Jones argues that enslavers were less likely to sell enslaved girls in particular if they had children at a young age.[398] Thus, marrying at thirteen or fourteen years old suggests that slaveholders expected enslaved girls to marry as soon as they experienced their first menstrual cycle, hence emphasising the reproductive expectations of enslaved women. Millie Evans recalled that she was not 'quite grown when [she] married.'[399] According to her interview, Evans was approximately sixteen-years old at the end of the war in 1865, and so must have been even younger when she married her husband.[400] Enslaved people thus did not consider those under sixteen years old as 'grown,' unlike their enslavers. William Dusinberre found that due to the disease and environment of the Lowcountry, 'most enslaved women had sex young, and married young.'[401] Moreover, it was 'custom' for enslaved women to marry men older than them, and Dusinberre cites age gaps as high as thirty-four years.[402] Age-gaps of more than nine years on the Gowrie plantation – the focus of Dusinberre's research – made up 20% of marriages; 30% of

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[393] Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave*, 22.
[394] Minnie Johnson Stewart, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), /www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 236.
[395] Stewart, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:6, 236.
[396] Laura Clark, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936,1937), www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 75.
[397] Tom Stanhouse, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), /www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 216.
[398] Jones, *Labor of Love*, 35.
[399] Millie Evans, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 248.
[400] Evans, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:2, 240.
[401] Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days,* 104.
[402] *Ibid*., 164-5.

marriages had age gaps of five to eight years.[403] Dusinberre claims this is because enslavers separated girls from their fathers when they were young, and so they married older men to established them as substitute fathers.[404] However, this suggests some sort of choice in their marital partner. It is instead more likely that enslavers forced these women to marry older men, focusing on the women's youth and fertility rather than the men's age. For those enslavers who did not allow their male slaves to marry off plantation like Peter Still and Henry Andrew Williams's enslavers, there was a smaller pool of people to marry.[405] Thus, it was less likely they would be able to marry someone of their own or similar age.[406]

Further evidence from Minerva Davis, whose parents experienced slavery in Tennessee, reveals the mindset of enslavers: 'White folks married young and encouraged their slaves to do so [too, so] they have time to raise big families.'[407] White people who faced pressure from white society to marry also placed these pressures on their own slaves.[408] However, although Southern society pressured white couples to settle down early and raise a large family, as this reflected well on a man's 'status, masculinity, and ability to support multiple dependants,' this was less insidious than the pressure they placed on enslaved families.[409] Sally G. McMillen argued that children gave 'all women' a 'sense of purpose' and joy, but white and Black women faced different challenges.[410] Moreover, 'farm women' saw both their own children and enslaved children as a financial asset.[411] Their own children could help work on the farms, while they could also financially exploit enslaved children by forcing them to work or selling them away. Of course, attitudes to both categories of children depended on their race and status, and white women were undoubtedly more loving toward their own white children. White slaveholding women were thus aware of the financial benefits of forcing female slaves to marry young. Rebecca Latimer Felton wrote that 'child bearing sometimes began at twelve years and frequent births made a heavy per cent of "profit".'[412] According to Felton, enslaving a high number of enslaved people was 'the greatest evidence of wealth', and that slaves were the greatest gift a parent could give to their children, as their natural increase insured continuous exploitation and profit.[413]

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403 *Ibid*., 104.
404 *Ibid*.
405 *Ibid*., 106.
406 *Ibid*.
407 Minerva Davis, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023, 127.
408 Fraser, *Courtship and Love,* 40.
409 Sally G. McMillen, *Southern Women: Black and White in the Old South* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), 70.
410 McMillen, *Southern Women,* 67.
411 *Ibid*., 69.
412 Rebecca Latimer Felton, *Country Life in Georgia in the Days of My Youth* (Atlanta: Index Printing Company, 1919), 79.
413 Felton, *Country Life in Georgia,* 79.

Berry Clay's recollection of brief courtship periods demonstrates how enslavers forced young girls to procreate early.[414] According to Clay, as soon as an enslaved person showed visible interest in a person of the opposite sex, 'the master busied himself to select a wife or husband and only in rare cases was the desire of the individual considered.'[415] This evidence suggests that, on Clay's plantation, the moment enslaved people publicly showed any sort of sexual desire, perhaps at puberty, their enslaver made arrangements to force whoever he deemed suitable together. These couples were therefore potentially very young. Clay's enslaver then 'read the ceremony' after 'the selection had been made', confirming his assertion that the enslaver did not consider the wishes of the individuals.[416] Finally, Clay's enslaver 'requested, or rather demanded, that they be fruitful' under the threat of sale of the female.[417] This enslaver arranged marriages for relatively young slaves without allowing any courting, driven by their desire for profit.

Forcing enslaved girls to be sexually active before they were biologically ready or capable caused long-term medical consequences. Writing in *The Stethoscope* in 1854, William G. Craghead of Danville, Virginia, highlighted a case of 'retention from occlusion of the vagina' from May 1839.[418] The enslaved woman in question, described as 'very stout', was sixteen in 1839, and her enslaver had hired her out to S. Slate, who called in a physician once her ailment became apparent.[419] Craghead inspected the woman, and decided that the adhesion on her vagina 'must have resulted from inflammation caused by a rape committed on her before she was twelve years old, and which followed by a purulent [infected] discharge from the vagina.'[420] Craghead noted that he had seen her 'two or three times this year', as she was afflicted with 'a most violent attack of colic, with irritable stomach, constipation and tumefaction of the abdomen.'[421] Though he did not specify whether these symptoms were linked to the damaged vagina following her sexual assault years before, Craghead proceeded to perform an examination, where he learned:

> the vagina, at a distance of an inch and half, terminated in a cul de sac, through which no aperture could be detected. I stretch the sides of the vagina apart, with a double bladed speculum, and pressed for some time the point of female catheter against the bottom of the sac, without finding any aperture. After withdrawing the instruments, strong uterine contractions came on, and the adhesion so far gave way as to permit the exit of the menstrual

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[414] Berry Clay, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 191.
[415] Clay, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:1, 191.
[416] *Ibid*.
[417] *Ibid*.

[418] William G. Cragshead, 'Case of Catamenial Retention from Imperforated Hymen', *The Stethoscope*, Vol. 5, Medical Society of Virginia, 1854, 193.
[419] Cragshead, 'Case of Catamenial Retention', 193.
[420] *Ibid*.
[421] *Ibid.*

> fluid, which, from the quantity, must have been accumulating for more than twelve months. After this, there was no mechanical obstruction to the menstrual excretion.[422]

The unnamed woman died a year later of 'mesenteric and peritoneal disease.'[423] This woman, who had been raped by an unnamed assailant at only twelve years old, suffered from debilitating pain and physical trauma that affected her daily life, and was noticeable enough that her hired enslaver called a physician to treat it. Though Craghead did not note *who* committed the rape against her, it likely came from either her enslaver, overseer, or another enslaved man who their enslaver forced her to have sexual intercourse with. This case further demonstrates not only the long-lasting emotional and physical trauma that enslaved women and girls experienced post-rape, but also how sexual exploitation sometimes led to reproductive issues and infertility.

Frederick Law Olmsted, in his tour of the US South, recounted a conversation he had with a 'Southerner' about the cost of enslaved labour and the age of married individuals.[424] The 'Southerner' remarked that enslaved people 'breed faster' as they 'begin younger.'[425] According to this man, enslaved people began to marry and 'breed' as soon as fourteen years old.[426] When Olmsted incredulously inquired into the young age of these couples, the man justified the unions by laughing and stating, 'they don't very often wait to be married.'[427] This racist rationalisation speaks to the stereotypes of hypersexual Black people, thus justifying the young age that enslavers forced their slaves to marry. This man further believed that due to the alleged hypersexuality of enslaved people, and the swiftness of their reproduction, 'there would never be any want of labourers at the South,' and that enslaved people 'would increase more rapidly than the need for their labour.'[428] Later, speaking to an overseer, Olmsted asked if the enslaved people had children at a young age.[429] The man replied that the women on his plantation married at fourteen. Then, pointing at an enslaved girl, stated, 'that girl has had a child', and described her as unmarried and looking no older than fourteen.[430] However, unlike the previous enslaver, this man remarked that their desire to marry 'hindered' enslaved women from having children.[431] He claimed that 'they'd have them younger than they do, if they marry or live with but one man,

[422] *Ibid.*
[423] *Ibid.*
[424] Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States* (Mason Brothers, 1862), 59.
[425] Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom,* 80.
[426] *Ibid*.
[427] *Ibid*.
[428] *Ibid*.
[429] *Ibid*., 209.
[430] *Ibid*.
[431] *Ibid*.

sooner than they do.'[432] Like the previous slaveholder, this man scoffed at the idea of fidelity between enslaved couples, and embraced hypersexual stereotypes:

> "Are those who are married true to each other?" I asked. The overseer laughed heartily at the idea, and described a disgusting state of things. Women were almost common property, though sometimes the men were not all inclined to acknowledge it; for when I asked: "Do you not try to discourage this?" the overseer answered: "No, not unless they quarrel."
>
> "They get jealous and quarrel among themselves sometimes about it," the manager explained, "or come to the overseer and complain, and he has them punished."
>
> "Give all hands a damned good hiding," said the overseer.
>
> "You punish for adultery, then, but not for fornication?"
>
> "Yes," answered the manager, but "No," insisted the overseer, "we punish them for quarrelling; if they don't quarrel I don't mind anything about it, but if it makes a muss, I give all four of 'em a warning."[433]

Other enslavers forced women to marry enslaved men much older than themselves, even if they were not as young as some of the girls previously mentioned. Mary Watson's parents met before the war, and due to the scarcity of enslaved or free Black men where her mother lived, her enslavers 'encouraged' her to marry an older man.[434] 'She was only seventeen,' reported Watson, 'My father was much older.'[435] Geographic and demographic constraints encouraged Watson's mother's enslaver to force her to marry her husband despite the age difference. Medically, this would not have mattered to the enslavers, as young women and older men are more likely to conceive than if the woman was much older.

Some slaveholders had an awareness of the link between age and fertility. Lulu Wilson's free Black father and enslaved mother married with the permission of her mother's enslaver.[436] Wilson was born from the union, but her mother did not produce any more children, so their enslaver 'say my paw am too old and wore out for breedin' and wants her to take with this here young buck.'[437] Wilson's enslaver chased away her father by setting hounds on him, and she 'took with' the younger man.[438] Wilson's enslavers were subsequently pleased, as her mother 'birthed nineteen children', fulfilling their desire for their enslaved people to 'breed like livestock.'[439] In

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[432] *Ibid*.
[433] *Ibid*, 209-210.
[434] Mary Watson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 67.
[435] Watson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:7, 67.
[436] Lulu Wilson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mes164/, 190.
[437] Wilson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:4, 190.
[438] *Ibid*.
[439] *Ibid*.

this situation, the enslaver blamed the older man for infertility, and rectified the issue by replacing him with a younger enslaved man. However, explicit evidence about this sort of slaveholder behaviour is relatively uncommon, and, as demonstrated in Chapter 4, enslavers tended to blame women for infertility and then consequently sold them away. Wilson's father may have been exceptionally older than her mother, thus convincing their enslavers that the man was infertile, rather than the woman. Enslavers still valued enslaved men's fertility and promoted long-term relationships between seemingly fertile couples.[440] However, when enslavers felt they needed to rearrange relationships due to fertility issues, marital status became less important to them.

Intimacies Without Marriage

Some enslaved and formerly enslaved people recalled that there were no marriage ceremonies at all on their plantations, although many enslavers allowed marriage ceremonies to reaffirm their own sense of paternalism through Christian ideas about morality and (extra)marital sex.[441] Instead, their enslavers forced them together, without ceremony, with the explicit goal of producing children to enslave. For example, on Katie Darling's Texas plantation, enslaved couples 'didn't cou't them like they do now [in the 1930s].'[442] Instead, their enslaver picked out a 'po'tly man and a po'tly gal' and forced them together, as he wanted 'the stock' produced from these couples.[443] This language of 'portliness' was common within WPA interviews (perhaps a word chosen by respondents for its politeness in opposition to 'fat') and thus demonstrates how frequently enslavers characterised 'healthy' enslaved people by their size. 'Portly' connotes a well-fed, strong, and broad person – an enslaver's ideal person to force to procreate. William Matthews, enslaved in Louisiana, also recalled that 'nobody married in dem days.'[444] Instead, enslaved men and women 'take de notion' for one another and make an agreement to live

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[440] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White,* 245.
[441] Schwalm argues that enslavers 'promoted' marriage as it not only increased the population and contented enslaved people, but also as a 'part of a planter's obligation to impart Christian values to their slaves.' (Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We,* 53). Frederick Douglass, however, succinctly condemned the hypocritical nature of Christian slaveholders who forced enslaved people together as breeders: 'No better illustration of the unchaste, demoralizing, and debasing character of slavery can be found, than is furnished in the fact that this professedly Christian slave-holder, amidst all his prayers and hymns, was shamelessly and boastfully encouraging and actually compelling, in his own house, undisguised and unmitigated fornication, as a means of increasing his stock. It was the system of slavery which made this allowable, and which no more condemned the slaveholder for buying a slave woman and devoting her to this life, than for buying a cow and raising stock from her, and the same rules were observed, with a view to increasing the number and quality of the one, as of the other.' (Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself* (Boston: De Wolfe & Fiske Co., 1892), 151.).
[442] Katie Darling, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mes161/, 279.
[443] Darling, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:1, 279.
[444] William Matthews, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mes163/, 69.

together.[445] Matthews concludes his story by arguing that if an unhealthy man wanted to be with a supposedly 'portly' woman, the 'white folks sep'rate 'em.'[446] Matthews' enslaver further intervened in the relationships of enslaved people by matching 'big, stout [men]' that were of a 'good breed' with 'four [or] five women.'[447] Enslaved men and women wished to be married and the enactment of a marital ceremony was an 'important, memorable event' for slave communities.[448] However, these enslavers held little regard for enslaved people's desires and instead treated them as unemotional bodies whose sole purpose was to procreate.

Not all enslaved men and women recognised one another as spouses when their enslaver forced them together without a ceremony. On her Louisiana plantation, Jane Montgommery insisted to her interviewer that enslaved people did not marry, instead 'they jest took up', and their enslaver gave them a 'permit.'[449] What form this permit took is unclear. The physical giving of a permit suggests some form of documentation, or a pass to visit partners on different plantations, but it was more likely that the marital permission was spoken (unlike plantation passes which were written), and the enslaver vocally agreed that they may be romantically involved (though not necessarily cohabitate, as that depended on whether they lived on the same plantation). Montgommery's enslaver thus encouraged intimate relationships by giving his permission but did not allow them to marry in the traditional sense, nor, crucially, did Montgommery acknowledge this 'permission' as a form of marriage.

Sometimes, marital permits *were* written rather than vocal. In 1850, Harriet Campbell wrote to her enslaver asking permission to marry:

> I have an object in view and I thought it proper to ask your permission on the subject and that is this[:] I wish to get married[.] I want answer from you agreeable [sic] to day. Soo [sic] Please Sire answer this and oblige your humble servant Harriett.[450]

Harriet's written request for permission to marry may be because her enslaver was away or did not live near her, but it reveals the importance of securing permission from the enslaver, and their ultimate decision, and thus control, of reproductive practices. Comparably, in 1841, a white man named G. Duncan wrote on behalf of an enslaved man named Nathan, seeking Orlando Brown's permission to marry a woman named Letita. Duncan specified that this was a 'letter of recommendation', where he states that he had 'every… confidence[,] I think he is one of the most

[445] Matthews, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:3, 69.
[446] *Ibid*.
[447] *Ibid*.
[448] Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We,* 52.
[449] Jane Montgommery, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 229.
[450] Letter from Harriet Campbell, January 15th, 1850, Orlando Brown Papers, Mss A B9791, Folder 37, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.

trustworthy and faithful servants that I ever saw.'[451] Not only did enslavers value optimal physical characteristics (which is discussed in Chapters Three and Four), but also desirable *moral* characteristics. This 'letter of recommendation' from a white man shows the lengths enslaved people had to strive to secure permission to marry. Enslavers trusted the word of fellow white men over the opinion of the enslaved individuals who wished to marry, and thus could only marry those who lived up to white expectations of respectability and potential productivity (especially in the form of future offspring).

All enslavers encouraged reproduction, and their practices manifested in different ways. A slaveholder, writing to Frederick Law Olmsted, noted that 'planters command their girls and women (married or unmarried) to have children.'[452] Furthermore, although white racist southerners referred to Black people as 'boys' and 'girls' in a belittling and racist way, the distinction of 'girls *and* women' suggests, as already discussed, that enslavers forced adolescents, and perhaps even younger children, to marry, and sexualised them from an incredibly young age, especially by modern standards. Thomas Hall viewed family life and marriage in North Carolina as a 'joke in the days of slavery,' as their enslavers only allowed relationships 'to raise more slaves in the same sense and for the same purpose as stock raisers raise horses and mules, that is for work.'[453] Enslaved women 'who could produce fast was in great demand and brought a good price on the auction block in Richmond, VA., Charleston, S.C, and other places,' claimed Hall, demonstrating both the importance that enslavers placed on particularly fertile women and how this comparative language to livestock dehumanised enslaved people.[454] Enslaved people also used this language to demonstrate and emphasise the 'dehumanising features of slavery.'[455]

It is also necessary to look beyond white slaveholders to other positions of authority, including overseers. This authority and control over the enslaved labourers also extended to *sexual* authority and control. Referring to their plantation overseer as an 'overlooker', Fred Brown, enslaved in Louisiana, recalled that this overseer did not allow enslaved people to marry, and that their enslaver 'used [him] to father de chillen.'[456] The overseer, a 'portly man', picked the women he wanted and did not allow them to 'go round' with other enslaved men. If they did, they would be whipped, presumably by said overseer. Brown concluded by informing his interviewer that his enslaver 'raise[d] some fine, portly' children, and sold them after they were 'half-grown' for over

[451] Letter from G. Duncan to Orlando Brown, 12th April 1841, Orlando Brown Papers, Mss A B9791, Folder 50, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.
[452] Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom,* 58.
[453] Thomas Hall, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn111/, 360.
[454] Hall, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:1, 360; Jacoby, 'Slaves by Nature?', 89.
[455] *Ibid*.
[456] Fred Brown, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mes161/, 158.

$500 (about $16,800 today).[457] Brown's recollection is not clear whether this overseer was an enslaved person, white, or a free Black man. Each reading of the sources results in different consequences and reveals the actions and motivations of the slaveholder's employment of the overseer. The use of 'he am used for to father de chillun,' is indicative of explicit breeding practices. The slaveholder on this plantation may have reserved certain enslaved men, such as this overseer, and forced them to procreate with multiple women. This slaveholder, however, afforded the overseer some choice, and he thus abused his power by not allowing the women any choice and by violently punishing them if they disobeyed his authority. This is all under the assumption that the 'overlooker' was an enslaved man elevated to the position of overseer. Another interpretation sees this as an employed free Black or white man. Whether the overseer was Black or white may not have mattered to the slaveholder, as he would have enslaved any offspring produced from their sexual relations, following the rule of *partus sequitur ventrem* (1662). However, the use of the word 'used' is provocative, as it suggests that the slaveholder employed the 'overlooker' (if this is in reference to a free person) for the sole purpose of fathering children. Thus, this slaveholder actively hired this man to rape enslaved women. Brown's story raises questions around the identity of the 'overlooker', but it remains evident that Brown's enslaver actively used a man to impregnate his enslaved women, and then sold the children born of this rape.

Sexual Trade

Like this 'overlooker', enslaved men were distinctly aware of how violent methods of forced reproduction could work in their favour to assert their authority over their female peers and perform their masculinity. Discussing rape and sexual assault in Alabama, G.W. Hawkins argued that 'there were slaves [that slaveholders] kept that forced slave women to do what they wanted. And if [the enslaved women] didn't do it, the masters or the overseers whipped them till they did.'[458] He further highlights the way that enslaved men used sexual assault and the bodies of enslaved women to perform their masculinity. The prevalence of coerced reproduction in slave societies meant that enslaved men easily grasped the opportunity to promote their masculinity and knew that their enslavers would support this if the outcome was more enslaved property. Hawkins maintained that on his plantation the 'women were beat and made to go to them [the enslaved men]' as they were 'big fine men, and the masters wanted the women to have children by them.'[459] Hawkins conceded that white men also did this: 'there were some white men, too,

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[457] Brown, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:1, 158.
[458] G.W. Hawkins, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 218.
[459] Hawkins, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 218.

who forced the slave women to do what they wanted to. Some of them didn't want to stop when slavery stopped.'[460]

Though members of enslaved communities undoubtedly disapproved of such actions, Brenda Stevenson argues that 'tales of male sexual prowess were applauded by the slave community, while female promiscuity was frowned upon.'[461] Similarly, Black feminist theorist bell hooks maintains that enslavers did not emasculate enslaved men but stripped them of their patriarchal status.[462] This masculine performance was characterised by 'strength, utility, vigour, and physical prowess.'[463] Slaveholders hence sought to exploit this desire for masculinity to convince enslaved men to willingly participate in 'slave-breeding' practices.[464] Foster and Doddington also argue that forced reproduction separated enslaved men from their wider communities, with masculinity a 'site of tension among the enslaved.'[465] This gendered division is evident in the way that enslaved men competed with one another for women.[466] In considering enslaved men as 'victims', Doddington asks: 'if these men did not see themselves as oppressed by these practices [forced reproduction], or if the wider community did not view them as victims, should we?'[467] Though this may be true for those men that chose to use forced reproduction to assert their masculinity, it does not apply to *all* men. Furthermore, the conglomeration of the community and the individual is reductive. Communities viewed forced reproduction differently to individuals, and it is therefore important to explore both points of view. Whereas some individuals used coerced reproduction to their own advantage, slave communities generally disapproved of the practices carried out by enslavers. Stevenson's assertion that the community celebrated 'tales of sexual prowess' generalises the community as *male*, as it is unlikely that enslaved *women* would celebrate sexual violence. Though men saw this as an opportunity to promote their sense of masculinity, women and other men in their communities did not see this as an example of positive masculinity. Men that were unsympathetic toward the plight of enslaved women did not easily identify themselves as victims of forced reproduction.

As some enslavers used the threat of physical violence to coerce couples into procreating, others used the threat of rape to convince them. For example, William Ward's enslaver hired him out to Mack Williams's farm in Jasper County, Georgia.[468] Williams was a violent man who was

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[460] *Ibid*.
[461] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White,* 241.
[462] hooks, *Ain't I a Woman,* 20-21.
[463] *Ibid*.
[464] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White,* 241; hooks, *Ain't I a Woman,* 21.
[465] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus*, 55-67; Doddington, *Contesting Slave Masculinity*, 773.
[466] David Doddington, 'Informal Economies and Masculine Hierarchies in Slave Communities of the US South, 1800-65,' in Raffaella Sarti (ed.), *Men at Home,* Special Issue of *Gender & History*, 27 (2015), 773.
[467] Doddington, 'Informal Economies', 161.
[468] William Ward, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 133.

not averse to killing enslaved people.[469] Whilst on his plantation, Williams told Ward that if his wife was 'good lookin[g]', he would not have allowed them to marry and instead raped her to 'take an' raise chilluns off'n her.'[470] According to Ward, enslavers 'uster take women away fum dere husbands an' put wid some other man to breed jes' like dey would do cattle.'[471] Not only did Williams threaten to rape Ward's wife to both impregnate and humiliate Ward, but he also engaged in explicit 'slave-breeding' practices. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese maintains, enslavers often used the language of 'stud', 'buck' or 'wench' to 'deprive [them] of autonomy in gender roles as in all else', but they also used these words with hypersexual connotations to justify the forced reproduction of specific individuals.[472]

John B. Clark bought a thirteen year-old enslaved girl named Vinia in 1808, described in the bill of sale as a 'harty sound wench.'[473] This language sexualises Vinia, and suggests that she was reproductively healthy and thus worth the $220 ($5,103 today) Clark paid for her.[474] WPA respondents in particular also used this language to demonstrate the sexually violent nature of slavery and forced reproduction.[475] In Ward's case, he recalled that slaveholders kept certain men away from their communities and 'used 'im like a stud hoss.'[476] However, although Smithers argues that evidence such as this suggests forced reproduction applied only to specific individuals that enslavers singled out as particularly fecund 'studs' or 'wenches', evidence in this thesis suggests that while enslavers emphasised some individuals as more fertile than others, most people experienced some form of forced reproduction on a day-to-day basis.[477]

James Green recalled that his enslaver both encouraged enslaved men to rape and engaged in it himself. Pinchback, Green's enslaver, 'bred' enslaved people 'as quick as he can.'[478] On his plantation, neither enslaved man nor wife could choose who they wanted to marry, and the women were at the mercy of the 'masters and drivers' who 'took' all de... gals dey wents. Den de chillen was brown and I seed one clear white, but dey slaves jus' de same.'[479] The enslaved men were not the 'only [ones] havin' chillen.'[480] In this way, slaveholders gained both sexual power and financial gratification through the rape of Black women.

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[469] Ward, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:4, 133.
[470] *Ibid*.
[471] *Ibid*.
[472] Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 252.
[473] Bill of Sale, John B. Clark Papers, 1808, Kentucky Historical Society, MSS13, FF15.
[474] Clark, Kentucky Historical Society.
[475] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 103.
[476] *Ibid*.
[477] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 103-110.
[478] James Green, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mes162/, 88.
[479] Green, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:2, 88.
[480] *Ibid*.

Nevertheless, not all enslaved men prioritised their own interests above those of others. Men were willing – though not always *able* – to protect women on their plantation their enslavers and other enslaved men. To conclude that forced reproduction caused division and separation on plantations would be a generalisation that belittles and dismisses the attempts made by enslaved men to protect their wives, daughters, mothers, and other female friends and family. Though some enslaved men took advantage of coerced reproduction this does not mean that they did this violently and is evidence of the spectrum of forced reproduction; while some enslavers forced men to sexually assault women in a violent way, others did so in different ways and employed more implicit tools of coercion.

The case of Sam and Louisa Everett, discussed in the introduction of this thesis, demonstrates how enslaved couples had empathy for one another's plights, as slaveholders sexually violated both men *and* women. Reminiscing about their Virginia plantation where there 'were more than 100 slaves who were mated indiscriminately,' they claimed that 'if there seem[ed] to be any slight reluctance on the part of *either* of the unfortunate ones "Big Jim" would make them consummate this relationship in his presence.'[481] Louisa's description of this traumatic event places no blame on Sam for his part in the situation, suggesting that enslaved women knew that in situations such as this, enslaved men also had little to no choice. Embarrassed for both herself and for Sam, Louisa tried to protect Sam's modesty by looking away as McClain exposed his naked body; Louisa tried to hide her face so she 'couldn't see Sam's nakedness.'[482] In this case, Sam and Louisa learned to love one another, and Louisa recalled that Sam was kind to her.[483] Because their marriage worked, and they had 'fine, big babies', McClain did not force another man on Louisa.[484]

Although Sam and Louisa's story is an example of extreme violence, the silences and violence of the archives obfuscates the frequency of violent rape that enslaved women (and men) experienced at the hands of their enslavers. By reading into the silences, the unwillingness to share such painful and traumatic moments, and the self-preserving acts of dissemblance, we can assume that violent methods of forced reproduction occurred on a daily basis in tandem with more implicit means. Neither enslaved women nor men had much choice when it came to sexual freedom and security of their bodies. Foster succinctly argues that 'narrowly defining sexual assault along gendered lines has obscured our ability to recognise the climate of terror and the physical and mental sexual abuse that enslaved black men also endured.'[485] As such, though the sexual exploitation of enslaved women was much more common than that of men, there are

[481] Sam and Louisa Everett, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 127.
[482] Everett, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 128.
[483] *Ibid.*
[484] *Ibid.*
[485] *Ibid*., 448.

parallels between the sexual labour of men and women. The implementation of 'breeding' practices was one of the most palpable ways slaveholders sexually exploited and abused enslaved men. Just as they did enslaved women by stereotyping them as 'Jezebels' – sexually licentious women – slaveholders portrayed enslaved men as 'promiscuous' and 'lusty', thus justifying, for enslavers, their sexual exploitation and rape.[486] As Fox-Genovese maintains, enslavers perpetuated the tropes of 'Jezebel', 'Buck', 'Sambo', and 'Mammy' in order to assign firm gender roles to what they viewed as specific 'types' of enslaved people.[487] The image of the 'Buck' particularly sexualised enslaved men, and therefore justified enslavers who coerced them into reproducing.

In Robert Jones Jr's novel, *The Prophets* (2021), Jones writes about a plantation where their enslaver, Paul, forced the enslaved men and women to spend time in the 'Fucking House' in order to reproduce the workforce.[488] Though a work of fiction, this novel is rooted in Black oral histories and the narratives of formerly enslaved people. Jones uses the medium of fiction to explore the emotional consequences of forced reproduction on a variety of enslaved people's lives, including men and women of various ages and sexualities. Like historians, Jones uses the limited and methodologically challenging evidence available to imagine what their lives were like. The systematic and organised forced reproduction where men and women were sent in large groups into a building and forced to procreate was not a common occurrence. Typically, enslavers just arranged sexual matches between men and women. However, Jones's centring of the Empty plantation as the focus of the narrative, embodies a case-like micro-history study of forced reproduction. Though rare, this type of forced reproduction – systematic, calculated – does occasionally appear in evidence from enslaved men and women. Systematic forms of forced reproduction include buildings or people reserved specifically for 'breeding', similar to that of 'the Fucking House' in *The Prophets*, and the hiring out of enslaved men. For those that *did* experience this form of reproduction, this was a central and emotionally and physically traumatising aspect of their lives. Moreover, the hiring out of enslaved men also demonstrates how enslavers trafficked the sexual bodies of enslaved men.

Like the trafficking of women for sex, slaveholders hired out enslaved men to other plantations so they could impregnate enslaved women. Enslavers treated this interaction as a business transaction. In this way, the owner of that particular slave received financial compensation, whilst the 'customer' – the other enslaver – received financial gain in the commodification of enslaved infants. In an explicit form of sexual assault and rape of enslaved men, enslavers hired out what

[486] *Ibid.,* 449.
[487] Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 252.
[488] Robert Jones Jr., *The Prophets* (Riverrun, 2021), 44.

they termed 'stockmen' to other slaveholders. Enslavers did not encourage these men to marry. Instead, slaveholders used them in an overt form of systematic 'breeding' where they forced them to reproduce with enslaved women. Maggie Stenhouse claimed that there were 'stockmen' on her plantation.[489] After being weighed and 'tested', slaveholders hired these men out and locked them in a 'room with some young women' that the other enslaver wanted 'to raise children from,' much like the characters in *The Prophets.*[490] In an explicitly eugenic example on another plantation, 'only the strong healthy slave women were allowed to have children.'[491] The enslaver on this plantation 'bred' enslaved women

> like live stock to some male negro [who] was *kept for that purpose* because of his strong physique, which the master whished [*sic*] to reproduce, in order to get a good price for his progeny, just like horses, cattle, dogs and other animals are managed today in order to improve the stock.[492]

According to Stenhouse, their enslaver forced these 'stockmen' to work in the field and 'fed [them] up good.'[493] Furthermore, Stenhouse's experiences raise more questions than we can necessarily answer. How did others in her community, particularly men, feel about these individuals receiving preferential treatment just for being of a large size? How did these 'stockmen' feel about the preferential treatment? Did they enjoy it, or did they feel ashamed, especially as it came at the detriment and rape of other women? How and why did the enslaver choose these particular enslaved women to procreate with the 'stockmen'? If it was possible to hear from the women locked in the room with the hired-out man, what would they say? Did they resent him? Did they feel empathy for both of their situations?[494] In Stenhouse's anecdote, when the enslavers went to the locked room the next morning to let him out, he was glad to be released as 'them women nearly kill him.'[495] On this occasion, the enslaved women banded together and protected themselves and one another through the use of violent resistance.

We do not know how this man reacted. Though outnumbered, the enslaved man may have made advances toward the women, or the women might have immediately defended themselves before he could act. Locked alone in a room with multiple women, he may have been able to lie to the enslavers and claim that they had engaged in sexual intercourse. On the other hand, if all

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[489] Maggie Stenhouse, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 223.
[490] Stenhouse, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:6, 223.
[491] Unknown, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 7, Kentucky, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn070/, 72.
[492] Unknown, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 7, 72 [italics added].
[493] *Ibid.*
[494] Jones's depiction of forced reproduction in *The Prophets* attempts to answer these questions through the fictional imaginings of the characters in the book. These characters are a fictious amalgamation of real formerly enslaved people.
[495] *Ibid.*

parties lied, and then not a single baby came out of this interaction, the slaveholders could have exacted retribution. However, there are few explicit references to the hiring out of slaves for 'breeding' purposes, and so historians must employ their training and tools to read between the lines of more implicit recollections. For example, John Smith recalled that his enslaver owned three hundred enslaved people across three plantations.[496] According to Smith, his enslaver 'started out wid 2 'oman slaves [Long Peggy and Short Peggy] and raise 200 slaves.'[497] Long Peggy gave birth to twenty-five children, but he does not mention how many children Short Peggy had.[498] Smith ended his story by exclaiming, 'just think o'date, raisin' 300 slaves wid two 'omans. It sho is de truf tho.'[499] Smith's assertion that his enslaver started out with only two women suggests that he must have either married them to enslaved men on a different plantation, *or*, crucially, hired men from another plantation just as Maggie Stenhouse's enslaver did. There was no mention in this interview of the enslaver purchasing another enslaved man for the plantation, therefore indicating that they hired an enslaved man for sexual purposes.

A similar example from Ida Blackshear Hutchinson suggests that enslavers forced people into a room together with the purpose of procreation more commonly than previously thought. Discussing his father, Isom, Ida reported that his father's enslaver routinely sexually exploited boys and girls as young as thirteen years old by forcing them into a barn:

> They took all the fine looking boys and girls that was thirteen years old or older and put them in a big barn after they had stripped them naked. They used to strip them naked and put them in a big barn every Sunday and leave them there until Monday morning. Out of that came sixty babies.[500]

Hutchinson's evidence reveals the sexually exploitative nature of his family's enslaver. Not only did he force them into a barn every Sunday – evidencing the systematic nature of this abuse – but he also forced children into sexual labour. The age of 'thirteen years old or older' suggests that Blackshear began sexualising young girls once they experienced menarche, and thus deemed this the appropriate time to begin sexually exploiting them. Moreover, although boys and men do not have as obvious a physical marker for supposed 'sexual maturity' as women with their periods, Hutchinson's enslaver just used the age of thirteen, assuming this was the average age that girls on this plantation started their periods, they also classified boys as sexually exploitable from this

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[496] John Smith, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn112/, 274.
[497] Smith, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:2, 274.
[498] *Ibid.*
[499] *Ibid.*
[500] Ida Blackshear Hutchinson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023, 373.

age, too. Moreover, this did not apply to *all* enslaved people from the age of thirteen, only 'all the fine looking boys and girls.'[501] Hutchinson's enslaver therefore practiced a type of pro-natalist 'eugenics' by forcing the 'fine looking' enslaved boys, girls, and adults, to procreate.

Hutchinson also told his interviewer a story about how these babies and infants drowned during a storm. His family's enslaver did not want the mothers of the babies walking back and forth 'two or three miles from the house to the field' to nurse them while they were working, so instructed them to keep the babies in a 'long trough like a great long old cradle' and placed it 'at the end of the rows under a big old cottonwood tree.'[502] Unfortunately, there was a torrential downpour one day and the trough filled as the 'rain just came down in great sheets', drowning the babies that slept there. According to Blackshear Hutchinson, the enslaver 'never got nary a lick of labor and nary a red penny for ary one of them babies.'[503] Hutchinson's reporting of this event is noteworthy: he does not discuss the death of these infants in terms of the emotional trauma it must have caused their families, especially their parents, but in terms of the financial loss to their enslaver. The way that he discusses their death suggests that he, and the rest of the enslaved people on the plantation, were well aware of *why* their enslaver forced thirteen-year-olds into a barn, naked, and expected them to reproduce. Moreover, Hutchinson used his testimony as an opportunity to demonstrate the dehumanising nature of slavery and enslavers' preoccupation with increasing the quantity and quality of the enslaved population.

Although reports of systematic forced reproduction, such as the existence of 'breeding farms' are products of some abolitionist sensationalism to win over supporters, evidence such as that from Stenhouse and Hutchinson suggests that such activities did occur sometimes. Similarly, Frederick Douglass's 1892 work, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass,* reports a story about Edward Covey, a poor white man, who could only afford to purchase one enslaved woman, Caroline, 'as a breeder.'[504] To increase his human 'property', Covey 'compelled [Caroline] to abandon herself to the object for which he purchased her; and the result was the birth of twins at the end of the year.'[505] As Covey only owned one enslaved person, he hired a man named Bill Smith to reproduce with her: 'Mr. Covey himself locked the two up together every night, thus inviting the result.'[506] This is not only a blatant example of forced reproduction and the sexual exploitation of both women *and* men, but is also revealing of the hypersexual stereotypes enslavers forced on enslaved men and women. Covey expected Caroline and Bill's inability to

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[501] Hutchinson, Slave Narrative Project, 373.
[502] *Ibid*., 373-374.
[503] *Ibid*., 374.
[504] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written By Himself* (Boston: De Wolfe & Fiske Co., 1892), 150-151.
[505] Douglass, *Life and Times,* 151.
[506] *Ibid*.

resist their allegedly inherent carnal sexual desires to result in multiple sexual interactions, and, consequently, a child.

One enslaver, William C. Bullitt of Louisville, Kentucky, set out a formal agreement with a man named William Hite, establishing the conditions for the hiring of Bullitt's enslaved woman, Celia, and her three children, Titus, Absolom, and Dolly. The agreement states that on the last day of the agreed period of hire, Hite must 'redeliver' Celia and her children and 'such child as she may have born during the year.'[507] Though the only labour this agreement refers to is 'on the farm', the emphasis on the return of any child she may have birthed during this period of time ensures that Bullitt still benefitted from Celia's sexual labour. Moreover, there may have been an unspoken agreement between the two enslavers that Bullitt was hiring out Celia to labour for both men: to labour on the farm for Hite, and labour sexually for Bullitt by reproducing with one of Hite's enslaved men. Though not stated explicitly, the enslavers may not have wanted this agreement to appear on any potentially public-facing documents such as a formal written agreement. Even if Bullitt was not hiring out Celia with the intention that she reproduce, he still ensured, through a legal agreement, that he would own any children that came from her sexual activities. Interestingly, Bullitt does not make this stipulation in any other agreements of hire of enslaved women, or men, suggesting that he intended for Celia to reproduce while on Hite's farm. For example, in December 1818, John Shaw dictated an agreement with William Bullitt: 'I have this day hired of William Bullitt a Negro woman Rachael with 4 children for the year 1819, for their victuals and cloaths [*sic*] to be returned at the end of the year well cloathed to s[aid] Bullitt.'[508] There is no mention of any potential children Rachael may potentially produce in that year. Thus, this reaffirms that Celia was hired out for the explicit purpose of reproducing.

Meanwhile, other enslavers had more informal agreements with slaveholders on neighbouring plantations. In Alabama, if Carrie Davis's enslaver 'wanted to mix his stock of slaves wid a strong stock on 'nother plantation, dey would do de mens an' women jest lak horses.'[509] In this instance, Davis's enslaver and his neighbour most likely arranged, 'jest lak horses' to lend enslaved people to one another to 'improve their stock.'[510] Some enslavers also reserved these 'stock men' for exclusive use on their own plantations, rather than hire them out or lend them to other enslavers. For example, Dora Jerman informed her interviewer that her mother's enslaver would not sell

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[507] Agreement of Loan of Enslaved People Between William C. Bullitt and William Hite, 16 December 1814, Bullitt Family Papers – Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, Mss /A/B 937c, Folder 365, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.
[508] Agreement of Loan of Enslaved People Between John Shaw and William C. Bullitt, 24 December 1818, Bullitt Family Papers – Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, Mss /A/B 937c, Folder 365, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.
[509] Carrie Davis, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936, 1937), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 107.
[510] Davis, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 107.

her as 'she brought fine children.'[511] Jerman's mother's enslaver forced her to procreate with the 'regular stock man', suggesting that their enslaver explicitly set aside this man to have sexual relations with the enslaved women on their plantation.[512] In Alabama, Luke Blackshear's enslaver labelled him the 'Giant Breeder.'[513] Reserved by their enslaver as the 'stock Negro', Luke fathered fifty-six children.[514] According to his son, Ida Blackshear, Luke 'was bought and given to his young mistress in the same way you would give a mule or colt to a child.'[515] Blackshear's comparison to livestock demonstrates how this particular enslaver carried out systematic reproductive practices by exploiting both the male and female body. Evidence from neither Jerman nor Blackshear mention marriage or a marital ceremony, suggesting breeding practices motivated these slaveholders, and others took similar steps to ensure the expansion of their plantation workforce. Though some had less explicit interest in honing their breeding 'practices' by forcing men and women to have sexual intercourse, others still did this more implicitly by using marriage as a route to progeny.

White Slaveholding Women's Interference in Intimacies

White slaveholding women, who, as Stephanie Jones-Rogers has demonstrated, also actively hired out enslaved women, mainly for wet-nursing, were further cognizant of the value and benefit of purchasing or producing enslaved children.[516] Indeed, slaveholding women were just as financially minded as slaveholding men and saw economic potential where men did not.[517] Historians have masculinized sexual exploitation, often assuming that all instances of sexual abuse came from white slaveholding *men*, including the carrying-out of 'breeding' practices.[518] However, white slaveholding women and mistresses were equally complicit in enforcing reproduction amongst the enslaved people, sexually exploiting both men and women. These women, and those that commanded authority over enslaved people through their husbands, saw fit to arrange marriages between their slaves, and, as Fraser shows, usually paired off their 'favoured female domestics.'[519] Though white women could serve in budding couples' favour, for example by ferrying messages back and forth, slaveholding women were still business-women who cared about maximising profit.[520] Fraser argues that mistresses cared about the 'personal

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[511] Dora Jerman, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn024, 50.
[512] Jerman, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:4, 50.
[513] Ida Blackshear, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023, 370.
[514] Blackshear, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 370.
[515] *Ibid.*
[516] Jones-Rogers, *They were Her Property,* 135-136.
[517] *Ibid*.
[518] Jones-Rogers, 'Rethinking Sexual Violence', 109.
[519] Fraser, *Courtship and Love,* 40.
[520] *Ibid*., 39-40.

choice of certain slave women', but in general, slaveholding women dismissed enslaved women's feelings in favour of an equally matched and fertile couple.[521] These women felt they had the right to interfere in the emotional lives of enslaved people as a means to assert their own control and ensure their property produced children to exploit.[522]

In Kentucky, when their enslaver sold away Sam, Hannah's husband, Mrs. Gaines (the 'mistress') did not feel sorry for Hannah as the rest of white members of the family supposedly did. Instead, she saw this as an opportunity to move Cato, a field worker, into the house with Hannah. Calling Hannah before her, Gaines informed her of her plans to marry her to Cato:

> Your master has sold Sam, and he's gone down the river, and you'll never see him again. So go and put on your calico dress, and meet me in the kitchen. I intend for you to jump the broomstick with Cato. You need not tell me you don't want another man. I know there's no woman living that can be happy and satisfied without a husband.[523]

Unsympathetic to the grief that Hannah felt for the loss of her husband, Gaines dismissed Hannah's pleas that she did not want an intimate relationship with Cato and that she could never love him, for the love she held for Sam was still strong.[524] Instead, Gaines told Hannah to 'shut up, this moment' and patronised her, questioning 'what do you know about love?'[525] Gaines placed her own societal pressures to marry onto Hannah and other enslaved women on the plantation: 'I didn't love your master when I married him, and people don't marry for love now.'[526] White women often endured marriages they did not always fully emotionally consent to, and so held intimate and first-hand knowledge of arranged marriages.[527] However, in many cases, arranging enslaved people's marriages extended beyond the reflection of their own sufferings. This enabled white women some control over enslaved people, and therefore their *own* lives, whilst their husbands and other male kin controlled their private and public lives. The slave regime, and the pro-natalist society they lived in, allowed white women a semblance of control at the detriment and suffering of Black women. Though both reduced to the role of 'breeder', white and Black women experienced this in distinctly different ways. Where society emphasised the duty that white women had to raise their sons, they were not necessarily physically forced to do this through violent means, whereas enslaved women were – not only by patriarchal society, but also by the very white women who faced their own pressures to marry and reproduce. This reinforces

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[521] *Ibid*., 40.
[522] *Ibid*., 41.
[523] William Wells Brown, *My Southern Home: or, The South and its People* (Boston: A.G. Brown & Co., Publishers, 1880), 40-41.
[524] Brown, *My Southern Home,* 42.
[525] *Ibid*.
[526] *Ibid.*
[527] Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress,* 16-17.

the theory that Black and white women were not united along gendered lines and demonstrates the reality of intersectional issues, where white women had an active role in the sexual exploitation of enslaved women. By forcing Hannah and Cato to marry one another, Gaines was able to 'have them both in the house under my eyes,' and was able to exact control in any way she saw fit.[528]

Hannah attempted to appeal to Cato and pleaded with him to tell Gaines that he did not want to marry her.[529] Believing that, as a man, Cato would be able to defend her, Hannah told Cato to 'tell missis dat you don't want me.'[530] However, Cato's reaction challenges the notion of a dichotomy between 'perpetrator' and 'victim.' He demonstrates the lack of empathy that some enslaved men had for women as he seized the opportunity to fulfil his own desires, whilst simultaneously complying with the subtle breeding practices enforced by their enslaver. Cato refused to take Hannah's side, arguing that 'I does want you, and I ain't a-gwine to tell a lie for you ner nobody else.'[531] Cato asserted his masculinity at the expense of Hannah, and Gaines's actions made this possible.

Figure 2 "The Marriage", Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, accessed January 20, 2021, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2511

[528] Brown, *My Southern Home,* 42.
[529] *Ibid.*
[530] *Ibid.*
[531] *Ibid.* 43.

Slaveholding women sometimes physically forced enslaved couples into 'jumping the broom' by threatening them with violence. The engraving in Figure 2 is from Emily Clemens Pearson's anti-slavery novel *Cousin Francks Household* (1853), based in Virginia, and depicts a traditional 'jumping of the broom' ceremony.[532] The enslaved woman, Mina, is clearly under duress, and the slaveholding woman is holding something in her hand, threatening her into submission as others fearfully look on. Pearson writes that

> the white mistress is compelling her enslaved maid, Mina, to marry in a manner that Mina did not recognize as a proper wedding. The mistress exclaims that if Mina had been willing and obedient she would have made you a pretty wedding in the parlor, and would have called the clergyman in.[533]

Although Mina's narrative is a fictional account, her story represents experiences that happened across the South to countless enslaved women. Moreover, it represents how white slaveholding women and mistresses were complicit in acts of forced reproduction. Abolitionist Lydia Maria Child also gave evidence to the participation of slaveholding women in the arrangement of intimate relationships.[534] Describing an enslaved woman named Phillis as 'handsome' and who 'sang delightfully', Child reported that a slaveholding man on another farm asked 'Mrs. B.,' Phillis's enslaver, if she could marry one of his enslaved men.[535] Mrs B. was not concerned with the consent of her slaves, nor did she consider 'that there could be any appeal by her slave to her decision.'[536] Thus, Mrs B. did not consult Phillis, and the wedding went ahead without her consent. Phillis married her husband on a Sunday in the parlour of the plantation house, and then served food to Mrs B. and the enslaved witnesses.[537] The meal, Child reported, 'was in a solemn, puritanical way…There were no presents, no congratulations, for the young couple.'[538]

Child's depiction of Mrs B.'s assumption that Phillis wanted to marry a stranger she never met is mostly likely a sanitised version of the true story, or of other stories similar to this. Like other abolitionist literature, anti-slavery writers tried to avoid alienating white Northern women, and so were more likely to present a softer version of the truth. In reality, it is likely that Mrs B simply did not care about Phillis's consent or emotions, and instead saw their marriage as a financial opportunity, especially as she was in possession of the female slave and could capitalise on her

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532 "The Marriage", *Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora*, accessed January 20, 2021, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2511.

533 Emily Clemens Pearson [pseudo. Pocahontas], *Cousin Francks Household, or, Scenes in the Old Dominion* (Boston: Upham, Ford and Olmstead, 1853), 169-170.

534 Lydia Maria Child and African American Pamphlet Collection, *Authentic anecdotes of American slavery,* (Newburyport Mass.: Published by Charles Whipple, 1838) https://www.loc.gov/item/92838862/, 11.

535 Lydia Maria Child and African American Pamphlet Collection, 11.

536 *Ibid*.

537 *Ibid*., 11-12.

538 *Ibid*., 12.

children. Child's insistence that Mrs B. was a 'kind mistress' despite forcing Phillis to labour in the potato fields on her wedding day is indicative of the opposite.[539]

Slaveholding women recognised that they and their husbands retained ultimate control over slave marriages. For example, Paul's mistress ordered him to marry an enslaved woman named Sally. When he objected, his mistress 'interrupted a little hotly' and threatened to 'make it a command.'[540] Giving up on Paul, she instead tried to force Sally to marry Abram Williams instead.[541] Sally had never met Abram before, nor did she know about their plans to marry until her mistress brought it up. [542] Her mistress argued that as she was thirteen years-old, it was time for her to marry.[543] Paul remarked that although this couple worked out and they liked each other, 'the same power could have been employed, had they disliked each other.' Enslaved people were therefore acutely aware of the extent and intensity of control enslavers had over them and their relationships. 'What think you of a system', questioned Paul, 'which gives such unlimited control, not only over the time and labor of men and women, but over their most sacred affections?'[544] Although some men found opportunities within forced reproduction, others felt empathy for their female counterparts and understood the oppression that they faced. Men, like Paul who condemned slavery for its 'unlimited control...over the time and labor,' did not see themselves as victims, but nor did they embrace or participate in 'breeding' practices to promote their masculinity.

As shown by Jones-Rogers, white slaveholding women used violence as a means of control and thus aligned themselves with other violent male enslavers such as Jim McCain (Sam and Louisa Everett's enslaver).[545] John Boyd recollected that his enslaver, Polly Meador, 'did her own patrolling with her own whip and two bull dogs.'[546] Boyd recalled the night that 'Bill Pea Legs' snuck into an enslaved woman's quarters. When Bill heard Meador coming, he climbed under the enslaved woman's bed, but Meador's dog pulled him out and 'she gave him a whipping that he never forgot. She whipped the woman, also.'[547] White women thus used violence to police and control the courting lives of enslaved people. Though they wanted their enslaved people to reproduce, enslavers wanted this to happen on *their* terms, and thus attempted to control who

[539] *Ibid*., 11.
[540] Unknown, *The Story of a Slave. A Realistic Revelation of a Social Relation of Slave Times – Hitherto Unwritten – From the Pen of One Who Has Felt Both the Lash and the Caress of a Mistress* (Chicago: Wesley, Elmore & Benson, 1894), 47-48.
[541] Unknown, *The Story of a Slave*, 49.
[542] *Ibid*., 51.
[543] *Ibid*.
[544] *Ibid*.
[545] Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property,* 60-79.
[546] John Boyd, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn141, 73.
[547] Boyd, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:1, 73.

they had relations with. The use of dogs is reminiscent of the gangs of white slave patrollers who policed the plantation boundaries thwarting enslaved people who had snuck away to visit loved ones or attend illicit parties.[548] Slaveholding women like Meador thus used violent means to police enslaved people's bodily and emotional pleasure by preventing them from meeting.

Slaveholding women also interfered in the courting practices of enslaved people, and intervened if they decided a certain person did not meet their standards. For example, Benjamin Russell, enslaved in South Carolina, recalled that the 'master and mistress were very particular in the slave girls', and frequently questioned them about who they were spending time with.[549] Russell's mistress warned one enslaved girl that she better not 'ever let me see you with that ape again,' and 'if you cannot pick a mate better than that I'll do the picking for you.'[550] Russell explained that women on this plantation 'must breed good strong serviceable children.'[551] Thus, Russell's mistress saw it necessary that she intervene in the courting practices of her slaves. Similarly, in Arkansas, Lizzie Hawkens maintained that her mother and father, who lived on different holdings, would never have been able to marry if her mother's mistress had not died.[552] 'Mistress Marshall', for an unspecified reason, did not want Hawkens's mother to marry into the Scott family.[553] In Alabama, Sarah Porter's enslaver did not allow her to marry Andy White, as he was 'too light in color and light [men]… didn't think as strong as a good black one.'[554] Despite this, White and Porter ran away and married, eventually having eleven children.[555] Lastly, Ellen Wallace, a slaveholding woman from Kentucky, wrote in December 1857 about her domestic slave, Jinny, arriving late and drunk. 'As we had considered her one our most faithful servants and the nurse of our children,' wrote Wallace, 'our vexation and distress may be imagined.'[556] Though Wallace did not mention what Jinny had been doing with her time (beyond drinking) it is implied that she spent time away from the slaveholding house, socialising. Wallace does not opine whether or not she was against Jinny courting others, but the anger directed at her suggests an implicit policing of Jinny's pleasure and leisure time.

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[548] For more on slave-patrols, see Sally E. Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Harvard University Press, 2001).
[549] Benjamin Russell, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn144/, 53.
[550] Benjamin Russell, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:4, 53.
[551] *Ibid.*
[552] Lizzie Hawkens, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 205.
[553] Hawkens, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 205.
[554] Janie Scott, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936, 1937), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 337.
[555] Scott, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 337.
[556] Ellen Kenton McCaughy Wallace, Journal, 1849-1864, Kentucky Historical Society, Box 1, FF2.

Resistance to Forced Reproduction

Despite enslavers attempts to interfere in enslaved people's intimate lives, not all were fully successful. As Raymond Bauer and Alice Bauer argue, enslaved people 'were well aware that the work they did benefitted only the master.'[557] This also extends to forced reproduction, as enslaved people knew that their sexual labour – though it benefitted them by producing a family who ultimately provided a source of love and comfort – also benefitted their enslaver and helped perpetuate the commodification of enslaved people as profitable bodies. This led many to make attempts to redirect the remunerations of their intimate relationships (children) into benefitting only themselves instead of their enslavers. As Fraser has demonstrated, enslaved people consistently circumnavigated the physical and temporal boundaries of slavery to court on their own terms.[558] Covert forms of courting that enslaved couples engaged in beyond the knowledge of their enslavers allowed them to shape their own emotional and intimate lives.[559] Enslaved men and women therefore battled their enslavers for agency and control over their relationships, engaging in what Parry terms 'matrimonial resistance.'[560]

Moreover, Stephanie Camp's germinal work on resistance argues that enslaved people had three bodies: the first was a site of exploitation; the second a site of 'the subjective experiences of this process'; and the third a site of 'pleasure and resistance.'[561] Though enslavers sexually exploited enslaved men and women's bodies on a daily basis by interfering in their intimacies, enslaved people also fought back by claiming their bodies for themselves, and by sourcing them as a site of 'pleasure, pride, and self-expression.'[562] Enslaved people thus resisted their enslavers' interventions in multiple ways, using their bodies – so often a site of pain and suffering – to resist their enslavers' desire for profit and reproduction. Moreover, not only did enslavers and the enslaved battle over their bodies as sites of both exploitation and pleasure, but they also battled through what Camp calls 'rival geographies.'[563] This encompassed illicit activities both off and on the plantation, including 'quarters, outbuildings, woods, swamps, and neighbouring farms as opportunities grabbed them.'[564] Enslaved people thus utilised these spaces to take pleasure in their bodies through secret intimacy with people of their choosing.

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[557] Raymond A. Bauer and Alice H. Bauer, 'Day to Day Resistance to Slavery,' *The Journal of Negro History,* 27 (1842), 391.
[558] Fraser, *Courtship and Love,* 69.
[559] *Ibid.,* 70.
[560] Parry, *Jumping the Broom,* 38. Parry uses this term in relation to the 'jumping of the broom' ceremony many enslaved couples performed, arguing that this was a type of marital resistance as it was an important cultural tradition that had nothing to do with their enslavers.
[561] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 60-68.
[562] Ibid., 68.
[563] Stephanie Camp, 'The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Body Politics in the Plantation South, 1830-1861', *The Journal of Southern History,* 68 (2000), 538.
[564] Camp, 'The Pleasures of Resistance,' 538.

For example, Annie Huff recalled that her enslaver did not allow couples on their plantation to have relationships as he purposefully purchased only women and their children.[565] However, similar to 'Bill Pea Legs', discussed previously, young men snuck into the slave quarters, 'usually coming through the window', to visit their loved ones.[566] Bringing gifts such as handkerchiefs and earrings, these men courted women directly under the nose of oppressive slaveholders who made every attempt to control enslaved women's intimate affections. However, Huff recalled that small children often naively informed the slaveholders about the 'happenings in the quarters.'[567] Huff and other women bribed these children with '"hush" money' in the form of 'spending change', but also exacted their own revenge on the children, to the point that 'Mrs. Huff would keep them in the big house for a night to escape the wrath of the offender.'[568] These mischievous children likely did not understand the violent ramifications of their actions.

Although enslaved men had more mobility than enslaved women and were thus able to move between plantations to engage in covert courting practices, some enslaved women seized the opportunity to attend parties on other plantations to court with men of their choosing. When Fannie Tatum 'got grown', she attended a party for the first time, without the permission of her enslavers.[569] When she returned, her enslavers attempted to torture her into confessing whether a boy had gone home with her.[570] Tatum thwarted her enslavers attempts to control her romantic relations, and 'did not tell' them that she returned from the party with a boy.[571] Despite the whipping inflicted by her enslaver, and their attempt to control who she socialised with, Tatum continued to socialise as she wished: 'that was the first time I got out.'[572] Tatum's rebellion reaffirms Camp's theory of the body as a site of resistance and pleasure, as she continuously risked violence and pain to enjoy her body, emphasising its use beyond that of the reproductive machine that her enslavers used it as.[573]

A growing body of literature on reproductive resistance has depicted how enslaved women attempted to maintain control over their bodies and choose when to have children, if they had children at all. McMillen and Liese M. Perrin's work explored how enslaved women used cotton

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[565] Annie Huff, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 234-5.
[566] Huff, Slave Narrative Project, Vol.4:2, 234-5.
[567] *Ibid*.
[568] *Ibid*.
[569] Fannie Tatum, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), /www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 258.
[570] Tatum, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:6, 258.
[571] *Ibid*.
[572] *Ibid*.
[573] Camp, 'The Pleasures of Resistance', 543.

roots as a form of birth control.[574] Understanding that their enslaver valued any children they had as capital, women attempted to control their fertility as an act of both resistance and strike, as reproduction was an 'important work role for most slave women.'[575] More recently, Diana Paton, and Emily West and Erin Shearer, have explored childlessness in the Caribbean perspective, and fertility control in the antebellum South.[576] Though women undoubtedly carried out fertility control, it is challenging to differentiate what was infertility and what was deliberate childlessness.[577]

Southern slaveholders were gravely concerned about reproductive resistance, and most attributed such rebellion to acts committed by enslaved women. Long-term breast-feeding, chewing of the cotton root, and abortions all helped prevent unwanted pregnancies. However, evidence from enslaved men suggest that they also either actively supported these women, or engaged in reproductive resistance themselves, for example through abstinence. A North Carolina enslaver beat sixteen-year-old Ambrose Douglass in 1861 as he 'attempted to refuse the mate that had been given to him – with the instruction to produce a healthy boy-child by her.'[578] Douglass's enslaver stressed the 'value of having good, strong, healthy children.'[579] Somehow, Douglass resisted his enslavers' desire for him to procreate. There may have been a number of reasons behind Douglass's childlessness during slavery. He may have abstained from sexual intercourse with the unnamed woman his enslaver paired him with, the enslaved woman may have been practicing reproductive resistance, or it may have been a combination of the two. Douglass's interviewer noted that at the time of their conversation in 1937, Douglass 'at the age of 92…welcomes his 38th child into the word.'[580] Douglass was clearly not infertile. Instead, Douglass and the woman his enslaver forced him with successfully resisted forced reproduction and he had children in freedom with the partner of his own choosing.

Reproductive resistance was so rife that explicit reference to abortion began to appear in state legislation. In 1843, Virginia passed an act endorsing the punishment of enslaved people that helped perform abortions on pregnant women.[581] The act set out:

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[574] McMillen, *Southern Women,* 67-110; Liese M. Perrin, 'Resisting Reproduction: Reconsidering Slave Contraception in the Old South,' *Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001), 255-259.
[575] Perrin, 'Resisting Reproduction', 256.
[576] Paton, 'Maternal Struggles', 251-268; West and Shearer, 'Fertility Control,' 1006-1020.
[577] *Ibid*., 1009.
[578] Ambrose Douglass, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 101
[579] Douglass, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 101
[580] *Ibid.*
[581] 'Chapter 87: An Act prescribing the punishment of slaves, free negroes, and mulattoes for poisoning or attempting to poison, and for selling medicines, and for other purposes Virginia laws pertaining to slaves and slavery', *Race and Slavery Petitions,* State Slavery Statutes*,* Virginia, (1843), 60.

> that if any slave, free negro or mulatto shall administer, or cause to be administered, any drug or substance whereby the abortion of any pregnant woman is caused, such free negro or mulatto, shall, on conviction thereof, be sentenced to confinement in the public jail and penitentiary for a term of not less than five nor more than ten years; and such slave shall receive thirty-nine lashes on his or her bare back for the first offence, and for the second offence he or she shall suffer death without benefit of clergy.[582]

Similar laws appeared throughout the South. For example, in 1840, Alabama passed a law of 'Offences against the Public Morals' that dictated:

> every person who shall wilfully administer to any pregnant woman any medicines, drugs, substance, or thing whatever, or shall use and employ any instrument or means whatever with intent thereby to procure the miscarriage of such woman… shall upon conviction, be punished by fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, and by imprisonment in the county jail, not less than three, and not exceeding six months.[583]

Other laws appeared in Missouri in 1844, after the 1834 law that prevented the 'wilful killing of any unborn quick child, by any injury to the mother of such child, which would be murder if it resulted in the death of such mother.'[584] The passing of this legislation demonstrates the pervasiveness and common occurrence of enslaved women *and* men engaging in abortive practices.

The *St. Cloud Democrat* ran a story in February 1860 that demonstrates how some enslaved women vocalised their displeasure at their sexual exploitation but faced threats of repercussion. An 'English Gentleman and [his] family', visiting South Carolina for their health, conversed with the landlord and lady of the hotel they were staying at about slavery.[585] Interrupting them, an enslaved woman named Phillis walked in, upset, and complaining of illness.[586] The landlady, her mistress, 'accosted her sharply,' asking what the matter was, and whether she was going to 'stop having children.'[587] Phillis replied, 'Indeed, I hope so missus; I would rather die than have any more,' to which her mistress threatened to sell her if she stopped having children.[588] Tellingly,

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[582] 'Chapter 87: An Act prescribing the punishment of slaves', Race and Slavery Petitions, State Slavery Statutes, Virginia, 60.
[583] 'Chapter Sixth. Of Offences Against the Public Morals', Race and Slavery Petitions, State Slavery Statutes, Alabama, (1840), 143.
[584] 'Sec. 39.', *Race and Slavery Petitions,* State Slavery Statutes, Missouri (1844), 351, 169.

[585] St. Cloud Democrat. [volume] (Saint Cloud, Stearns County, Minn.), Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress, (February 1860), <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016836/1860-02-09/ed-1/seq-1/>

[586] St. Cloud Democrat.
[587] *Ibid*
[588] *Ibid*.

when questioned by the English Gentleman, the slaveholding *woman* held all the answers in regard to Phillis's relationship and sexual interactions, rather than the man:

> "Is that girl married?"
>
> "No," answered the landlady.
>
> "How long have you owned her?"
>
> "Five or six years," replied the landlady.
>
> "How many children has she had since you bought her?"
>
> "Four," replied the landlady.
>
> "All living?"
>
> "All: fine, fat and healthy."[589]

The slaveholding *man* then disclosed that he had bought Phillis as a 'breeding woman' and kept her for that purpose.[590] The 'English Gentleman' noted that all of Phillis's children had different fathers, who the slaveholder 'chose with reference to their stock qualities.'[591] Phillis's enslaver forced her to 'produce a child almost every year since' he purchased her.[592] The 'English Gentleman' noted that the slaveholder coerced Phillis 'into this diabolical arrangement' by the example shown in the sitting-room: the threat of sale.[593] This newspaper article, likely published to garner support for the Abolitionist cause, demonstrates that although women like Phillis vocally demonstrated their displeasure at their enslaver's enforced reproduction, the threat of sale often quieted their pleas for relief.

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In general, enslaved men and women yearned for and married for love. Scholars such as Emily West, Rebecca Fraser, and Tera Hunter have demonstrated the importance of love, courtship, and marriage as a survival mechanism for slavery. However, it is important not to neglect those that wanted to marry for love and yet were unable to due to the interference of their enslavers.

Each slaveholding was different, and each slaveholder upheld their own values and insisted on certain marital practices. Where some enslavers allowed their enslaved men a semblance of choice to the detriment of the non-consenting woman, others did not allow them any control at

[589] *Ibid*.
[590] *Ibid*.
[591] *Ibid*.
[592] *Ibid*.
[593] *Ibid*.

all and matched men and women up as they saw fit. Those whose enslaver allowed them the illusion of choice used this to their advantage, and claimed enslaved women's bodies as their own, requesting they move from one plantation to another, away from their families and loved ones. On the other hand, other enslaved men used their slaveholder's leniency to their advantage by negotiating their own relationships and took the time to court their future wives and gain the permission of her family.

Many of these brides were also extremely young, with formerly enslaved people proclaiming that girls as young as thirteen were entering marriages with enslaved men much older than them. The emphasis on young girls suggests that enslavers were preoccupied with their menstruation and cajoled them into marriages in order to produce more children as soon as possible. Not only were these girls not able to consent due to their status as enslaved, but also due to their age. Thus, the spectrum of sexual violence and exploitation becomes ever more complicated.

Some enslaved men took this further and sexually abused their wives. The story of Rose and Rufus is a clear example of this, simultaneously demonstrating the sexual exploitation that enslaved women experienced from enslaved men, as well as the freedom from intimate partner violence emancipation brought women. However, not all enslaved men were willing participants. Though some men took advantage of breeding practices, enslavers subjected many to sexual exploitation in the name of profit. Mutual rape, enforced by a slaveholding third party, or 'third flesh', as seen in the case of Sam and Louisa Everett, likely had lasting emotional and physical effects on the couple.[594] Where Rose left her forced relationship with Rufus after emancipation, Sam and Louisa grew to love one another.

It is also important to consider that although slaveholders sexualised enslaved women by valuing their fertility, labelling them 'breeding women', some men also suffered similar explicit sexual exploitation. The reservation of certain 'stock men' for the purpose of forced reproduction and the hiring out of these men to other slaveholders to have sexual relations with their enslaved women demonstrate the insidious nature of profit-driven slaveholders, and the lengths they went to ensure the reproduction of a 'healthy' workforce. The interference of enslavers often threw up challenging barriers, and frequently prevented enslaved people from choosing their own romantic partners. Love was not easy. Yet, enslaved men and women found freedom in emancipation, not only for their own lives and status as free human beings, but also freedom to choose who they loved, to have children because they wanted to, and to reunite with those that slavery had taken from them.

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[594] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 6.

Chapter Two

Fathers: Parenthood and Reproduction

Kentucky slaveholder Ellen Kenton McCaughy Wallace's diary consistently referred to children by their mothers. For example, she kept a list of children born between 1859 and 1861, but only listed their mothers names: 'Ann's child Abram born 10 April 1858.'[595] Similarly, Thomas Bullitt's recollections of his childhood on Oxmoor Farm, Louisville, Kentucky, listed 'several of the old negroes to whom in thought I refer with profound respect and admiration.'[596] These enslaved people were primarily women, and described by how many children they had. For example, Bullitt wrote of one enslaved woman: 'Lucinda, John Gordan's wife, was the mother of a good-sized family. Her children were very good servants.'[597] Bullitt also wrote of 'Louisa – "old mammy Toosh." … She had quite a family of her own – Nathan, Daniel, Wallace, Beck, Tena, and Eliza Julia, all intelligent and excellent servants.'[598] Bullitt not only valued these women on the size of their families, but also made little to no mention of their sexual partners. He referred to Lucinda as 'John Gordan's wife', but described the children as exclusively Lucinda's, thus dismissing John Gordan's role as the father.

Parenthood in the antebellum South was a contested area, where enslaved mothers and fathers battled with their enslavers every day for the right to parent their children. Slaveholders saw children as commodities to exploit for financial gain, while enslaved mothers and fathers sought the right to exert authority over their own children and remain free of the fear of separation. Motivated by reproductive practices, enslavers valued enslaved men and women as biological necessities to reproduce the workforce and their subsequent labour. When enslaved couples conceived children, enslavers dismissed men's parental role, reducing them only to a valuable biological mechanism, while women were tied to their children through legislation such as *partus sequitur ventrem* (Virginia 1662, and later elsewhere).

[595] Ellen Kenton McCaughy Wallace, Journal, 1849-1864, Kentucky Historical Society, Box 1, FF2.
[596] Proof Prints of *My Life at Oxmoor,* 5th April 1912, Bullitt Family Papers – Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, Mss /A/B 937c, Folder 334, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.
[597] Proof Prints of *My Life at Oxmoor.*
[598] *Ibid*.

Slaveholders valued men's bodies as a necessary part to conceive children and viewed their status as fathers as a threat to their own patriarchal rule. However, although enslavers worked to dismiss or reduce the role of fathers, enslaved men circumnavigated their efforts and fathered in covert ways that subverted their enslavers' expectations of the meanings of fatherhood to Black and enslaved men. Fathers not only provided for and protected children, but they also worked to assert authority over their them, acted as inspirational role models through their community status and bravery, and created emotional bonds with their children. In this way, enslaved men proved that they were important to their children, wished to be a part of their lives both emotionally and physically, and also demonstrated that they were more than mere reproductive machines.

Scholarship from historians such as White, Livesey, West, Knight, and Jones-Rogers reveal the ways that slaveholders exploited and appropriated motherhood.[599] By forcing enslaved women to reproduce, slaveholding men *and* women simultaneously increased their workforce and exploited the maternal body through, for example, the physical appropriation of their breastmilk and their labour as mothers. Despite this emerging literature on motherhood, historians have only recently turned to the role of enslaved fathers, and even less have discussed the influence of forced reproduction on their ability to carry out their fatherly roles. As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the historiography of fatherhood, as contributed to by Sergio Lussana and David Doddington, primarily battled to break down the damaging stereotype of the willingly absent father and has worked to establish them as providers and protectors. However, slaveholders not only abused and appropriated the role of mother from enslaved women, but also from enslaved men in distinct ways. The negative impact of 'breeding' practices on the male gender and identity goes beyond sexual abuses, as it also affected their relationships with the children born of forced couplings. As Livesey argues, mothers loved their children despite their violent conception, yet there is more to be explored when considering children born from forced sexual relationships between enslaved men and women, especially from the perspectives of fathers, at the hands of enslavers, or the 'third flesh.'[600]

This chapter will therefore build on Livesey's work on children born from the rape of white men by exploring *enslaved* men's relationships with children born from forced reproduction, and how they battled daily with their enslavers to maintain their role of father. The ability to father was important to all members of enslaved communities and men fought to claim authority over

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[599] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?*; Livesey, 'Conceived in Violence', 373-391; Emily West and R.J. Knight, 'Mother's Milk: Slavery, Wet-Nursing, and Black and White Women in the Antebellum South,' *The Journal of Southern History,* 83 (2017), 37- 68; West and Shearer, 'Femininity Control, Shared Nurturing, and Dual Exploitation, 1006-1020; Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation,' 990-1005.
[600] Livesey, 'Conceived in Violence', 373-391; Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock,* 54.

their own children. This chapter will therefore explore the negative impact that forced reproduction had on fathers and their relationships with their children before moving to demonstrate how fathers consistently battled and circumnavigated these negative effects for control and authority over their own children, to varying extents of success. This chapter will explore how fathers acted as role models, provided emotionally and physically for their children, and probe how enslaved children valued men who were able to exert their authority as fathers, were skilled, and maintained a high status within their communities.

Harriet Jacobs, for example, provides some insight into the mindset of enslaved men that supports the idea that they cared for and loved children born of rape and coercion, as she recalled a conversation she overheard between her mistress and a young, enslaved girl about her desire to marry a free person of colour:

> I once heard her abuse a young slave girl, who told her that a colored man wanted to make her his wife. "I will have you peeled and pickled, my lady," said she, "if I ever hear you mention that subject again. Do you suppose that I will have you tending my children with the children of that nigger?" The girl to whom she said this had a mulatto child, of course not acknowledged by its father. The poor black man who loved her would have been proud to acknowledge his helpless offspring.[601]

Though referring to a child with a white father, Jacobs asserts that Black men (although in this case not an *enslaved* man) would have also willingly loved and acknowledged children born of rape, just as the mothers did. Despite the sexual exploitation they suffered at the hands of their enslavers' reproductive demands, enslaved men loved and longed to father their children. Coerced reproduction therefore impacted their sense of self, through their identities as men and fathers.

'Fatherhood' as a social construct is contingent to society and culture, and is influenced by race, class, and sex. As such, fatherhood held different connotations and values for white, enslaved, and free Black people in the antebellum South. Parenthood symbolised the perennial struggle between slaveholder and slave for control over their intimate and familial lives. As slaveholders placed significant pressure on their 'property' to reproduce as quickly as possible, they regularly separated parents from children. Though scholarship on enslaved motherhood has shown that white slaveholding women appropriated mothering from enslaved women, there has been less focus on how slavery affected and denied the role of fatherhood to enslaved men.[602] Through legislation such as *partus sequitur ventrem*, the importance of enslaved women's role in

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[601] Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* 59.
[602] For works on the appropriation of motherhood see: White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, and Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation,' 990-1005.

reproduction, and the denial of masculinity and authority to enslaved men, slaveholders worked to withhold fatherhood from enslaved men.[603]

First, it is necessary to explore what 'fatherhood' meant to enslaved people. Formerly enslaved respondents referred to a number of characteristics that they idolised or admired in their fathers, including their status, authority, skills, their part as both a rebellious and moral role model, and their capacity to protect and provide for both their families and wider enslaved communities. As discussed, fatherhood has proven a divisive topic amongst scholars of enslaved families and parenthood more specifically. Despite the conclusions of the Moynihan Report examined in the Introduction, scholars have worked to disprove the damaging theories that enslaved and free Black men were willingly absent, unemotional, and disconnected fathers. Herbert J. Gans has more recently disparaged the Moynihan Report by criticizing its link between family structure and family stability. Gans argued that there was no correlation between familial structure and stability and argues that the single-parent family did not automatically equate to a single-parent household.[604] Extended networks of kin and friends often helped raise families.[605] Meanwhile, Libra Hilde's work on fatherhood and paternal duty in Black communities works to undo Moynihan's assertion that enslaved men willingly absented themselves from their families. She argued instead that 'enslaved and then free African American fathers… regularly took care of their families and their communities in ways that were hidden from dominant society.'[606]

However, she also assumes that 'forced pairing and breeding… *regularly led to fatherless and emotionally matrifocal families* [italics added].'[607] As discussed in the previous chapter, although some more systematic-minded slaveholders forced their slaves to procreate with more than one sexual partner, which ultimately led to difficulties for enslaved men to father, in general it did not necessarily mean that 'a child would have limited or no contact with their fathers and [increase] the prevalence of fatherless households.'[608] Just because some fathers did not live within close proximity to their families does not mean they did not have an emotional impact on their children from afar or through memory and story. Indeed, where Gutman's germinal 1976 work revealed that enslaved families followed a nuclear pattern, and often maintained two person households, West's more recent work demonstrates that cross-plantation marriages were common, calculating that approximately 35 per cent of wed couples in South Carolina experienced 'abroad

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[603] Rebecca Fraser argues that *partus sequitur ventrem* 'diluted' the role of father, while Sergio Lussana argues that it 'undermined' enslaver fathers' authority. See: Fraser, *Courtship and Love,* 27 and Lussana, *My Brother Slaves,* 2.
[604] Herbet J. Gans, 'The Moynihan Report and its Aftermaths', *Du Bois Review,* 3 (2011), 318-319.
[605] Gans, 'The Moynihan Report', 318-319.
[606] Hilde, *Slavery, Fatherhood and Paternal Duty,* 3.
[607] *Ibid*., 15, [Italics added].
[608] *Ibid*., 30.

marriages.'[609] Families adapted to a structure not dissimilar to twentieth and twenty-first century families (where families were one-parent households in structure, or, as Natasha J. Cabrera *et al* argue, fathers were 'non-residential'), and fathers regularly worked to be present in their children's lives despite the machinations of forced reproduction.[610] To claim that forced reproduction automatically led to completely fatherless families and the decimation of family life would be a disservice to the efforts made by enslaved men to be both emotionally and physically involved in their children's lives.

Difficult relationships between fathers and children

Slaveholders' preoccupation with reproductive practices habitually emphasised the biological importance of men and women's bodies but sought to either diminish or completely dismiss their parental authority once the babies had been born. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, enslavers went to great lengths to arrange sexual relationships between enslaved men and women, and thus recognised the fertile importance of both sexes. Enslavers worked to protect the 'imagined lives' of enslaved children, going as far as attempting to protect the bump when whipping pregnant women (discussed in Chapter Three).[611] Once pregnant, however, enslavers no longer valued the role of enslaved men, and dismissed notions of fatherhood. Their necessity ended at conception. Not only did *partus sequitur ventrem* legally link mothers to the children, but slaveholders also saw a use for enslaved mothers after they gave birth, and frequently appropriated motherhood by forcing them to act as wet-nurses to primarily white babies, thus placing a financial value on motherhood *after* pregnancy.[612] Indeed, enslavers forced motherhood upon enslaved women so that they had ready access to wet-nurses. In 1813, Samuel Brown lamented in a letter that it was difficult to find a wet-nurse for his daughter, Catherine Anna, and that they had to go through 'four or five [women] before we could obtain a suitable one,' demonstrating the time and effort it took to find a suitable nurse.[613] Thus, those that had one or more wet-nurses already to hand on their plantation were at an advantage. Unlike women, men's bodies did not have a biological function for enslavers to appropriate, beyond their use in impregnating women, though dismissing their fatherhood undoubtedly gave slaveholders a sense of power and cemented their status as the sole patriarchal figure on the plantation.

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[609] Gutman, *The Black Family,* xviii-xix; West, *Chains of Love,* 44.
[610] Natasha J. Cabrera *et al*., 'Fatherhood in the Twenty-First Century', *Child Development,* 71 (2000), 132; they also maintain that female-headed households increase from 6% in 1960 to 24% in 2000 (p.128), while the 'proportion of children who live with only one parent at some time during their childhood years is expected to continue exceeding 50%' into the twenty-first century (p.128).
[611] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 11. For more on this, see Chapter Three.
[612] For works on wet-nursing and the appropriation of enslaved women's breast milk, see: West and Knight, 'Mother's Milk', 37- 68; West and Shearer, 'Femininity Control, Shared Nurturing, and Dual Exploitation', 1006-1020.
[613] Letter to Margaret Brown from Samuel Brown, March 1813, Orlando Brown Papers, Mss A B8791, Folder 7, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.

The relative unimportance of fatherhood (to enslavers) is also reflected in trade patterns, where, as White argues, slaveholders commonly grouped families for sale as consisting of mothers and children – excluding father from family units and selling men separately.[614] The formerly enslaved man J.H. Banks wrote evocatively of his experience on the auction block in Richmond, Virginia. Traumatised by the things he witnessed, Banks lamented that he 'saw things there [he] never wish[ed] to see again,' including the separation of fathers from their families.[615] 'Husbands sold, and their wives and children left for another's days auction; or wives sold one way and husbands and fathers another, at the same auction.'[616] The separation of fathers from their families 'made a deep impression upon' his mind, as Banks highlighted the psychological impact that sales had on families and those witnessing separation.[617]

Legislation made fathers further irrelevant in a technical or legal sense through the implementation of the law of *partus sequitur ventrem*, which emphasised the matrilineal line.[618] Frederick Douglass famously wrote, 'Of my father I know nothing. Slavery had no recognition of fathers, and none of families. That the mother was a slave was enough for its deadly purpose.'[619] Though alluding to the influence of *partus sequitur ventrem,* Douglass also highlights the dismissive nature that forced reproduction had on the role of father. Similarly, William W. Brown claimed 'alas! slaves have no father.'[620] He also remarked that his mother, Elizabeth, had seven children, but that 'no two of us were children of the same father.'[621] It appears that on this plantation, Brown's enslaver forced his mother to have sexual relations with more than one man, both enslaved and white, as his father was George Higgins, 'a relative of [his] master.'[622] Thus, in some cases, chiefly when enslavers sold them vast distances away, enslaved children and their fathers had a precarious relationship, with little emotional or physical contact. Furthermore, Thelma Jennings asserts that 'when masters used "stock men", identification of the father could prove impossible.'[623] In these cases – sale, and enslavers' use of 'stockmen' – Hilde's assertion that

[614] White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?,* 145.
[615] J.H. Banks, *A Narrative of Events of the Life of J.H. Banks, an Escaped Slave, from the Cotton State, Alabama, in America* (Liverpool: M. Rourke, 1861), 47.
[616] Banks, *A Narrative of Events of the Life of J.H. Banks*, 47.
[617] *Ibid*.
[618] Eveareat Hubb, 'Unknown Father in Surname, 1838 to 1878,' *Historical Methods*, 46 (2013), 204.
[619] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston: The Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 27.
[620] William W. Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston: The Anti-Slavery Office, 1847), viii.
[621] Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown,* 13.
[622] *Ibid*.
[623] Jennings, '"Us Colored Women", 50.

fatherhood was 'limited' proves true. However, sale and the use of 'stockmen' are just two aspects of forced reproduction.[624]

Testimonies from WPA interviews from formerly enslaved people demonstrate how enslaved children sometimes did not have a direct relationship with their fathers. The WPA interviews provide a unique insight into the lives of enslaved children and these relationships during slavery. However, as they were mainly elderly men and women looking back on their childhoods, their recollections are influenced by their own lives and experiences of parenthood. Despite this, these formerly enslaved interviewees were inclined to be more compassionate and understanding toward their fathers, as they had time to reflect on how enslavers' 'breeding' practices often meant that they sold families away from one another.

Adeline Willis could not remember her father, and her interviewer noted that 'strange to say, she cannot recall how many brothers and sisters she had.'[625] Willis's hazy recollection of her father and limited knowledge about the number of siblings she had is indicative of reproductive practices on her plantation. Her enslaver possibly forced her father to procreate with more than one woman, hence her not knowing all of her siblings, suggesting that he may have been a 'stockman.' Her lack of knowledge on his identity implies that he was either hired out from another plantation, or, if he lived on the same plantation, his enslaver sold him away after a period of time – perhaps once he reached a certain age.

After emancipation, Linley Hadley's father left the family.[626] Neither Hadley nor her mother ever saw him again, but both also seemed to be emotionally indifferent to their situation: 'Mama didn't care so much about him. He was her mate give to her. I didn't worry 'bout him nor nobody then.'[627] Hadley's enslaver had clearly forced her mother and father into a sexual relationship to produce Hadley, and their relationship did not evolve. Hadley's father took the opportunity for freedom that emancipation offered – freedom from both an unwanted intimate relationship and from slavery. Hadley's story also shows that even though she knew her father and lived in close proximity to him, forced reproductive practices at the hands of her enslaver threw up emotional barriers between the father and his children and 'wife.' Therefore, forced reproduction did not

[624] Both Douglass and Brown's narratives were published in the 1840s, a time where, according to Sarah N. Roth, Black abolitionist writers walked a fine balance of 'pacifism and self-assertion' by emphasising the ordeals they experienced to garner sympathy from Northern whites (see: Sarah N. Roth, '"How a Slave was Made a Man": Negotiating Black Violence and Masculinity in Antebellum Slave Narratives,' *Slavery & Abolition,* 28 (2007), 255-275). However, though these aspects were emphasised, this does not mean they were necessarily *over-exaggerated*. Writers of the 1840s instead negotiated for respect and dignity while appealing to Northerners by omitting discussions of slave violence or aggression against Southern whites.
[625] Adeline Willis, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 162.
[626] Linley Hadley, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023, 128.
[627] Hadley, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 128.

automatically result in a physically absent father, but may have sometimes resulted in an *emotionally* distant father. Though not all familial relationships were emotionally distant, it would have been difficult for some fathers to develop an emotional attachment to the woman that their enslaver forced them upon, and the subsequent offspring that they may not necessarily have wanted to have. The assumption that *all* enslaved men and women desired children is reductive, and, as Diana Paton argues, many individuals chose to remain childless by practicing reproductive resistance.[628] Though Livesey demonstrates that women generally loved and accepted their children born from rape, there has been no research on whether *men* emotionally accepted and loved their children born from forced reproductive practices. Unwanted children therefore may have found it difficult to grow emotionally close to their fathers.

Under the context of forced reproduction, enslaved men consistently battled to maintain their right to be present in their children's lives. However, some enslaved men refused to marry as they felt that women and families held them back from escaping or buying their own freedom.[629] This is reiterated in the testimony of John Smith. Highlighting the legacy of this practice, Smith argued that he was not 'even mai'ed to de one I got now.'[630] Smith's personal view was that marriage would tie him down, and 'effen I's free, I's gwine to be free.'[631] Smith's desire to retain his freedom reflects historian Brenda Stevenson's belief that enslaved men did not take responsibility for their children.[632] Smith's enslaver encouraged him to 'take up wid one likely gal atter anoder,' and valued him for doing this. However, Smith's views are just one of many, and Stevenson's assertion that enslaved men refused to claim their 'illegitimate' children is reductive and generalises enslaved fathers as absent.[633] Instead, as will be illustrated, fathers constantly battled their enslavers to be in their children's lives in multiple ways on a day-to-day basis.

Furthermore, situations such as these do not mean that *all* fathers were indifferent or did not feel regret over their predicaments, and, as Thomas Foster argues, it would be remiss to say that that fatherhood meant little to enslaved men.[634] Robert Glenn, enslaved in North Carolina, saw his father fight to keep their enslaver, Henry Long, from selling him away. As sale and separation proved the most effective way for slaveholders to permanently revoke the role of father, Glenn's father battled Long over the rights to Glenn. Glenn's father, also enslaved, had saved up some money acquired by hiring himself out, and, distraught at the separation of his family, tried to

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[628] Paton, 'Maternal Struggles,' 251-268.
[629] White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?,* 147.
[630] John Smith, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936,1937), www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 352.
[631] Smith, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 352.
[632] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White,* 243.
[633] *Ibid*.
[634] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus,* 59-60.

purchase Glenn back.[635] As he was also enslaved and could not legally purchase another slave, Glenn's father appealed to his white enslavers for help.[636] They consented and provided both permission and money for Glenn. However, when Glenn's father attempted to bid on his son, Long 'flew into a rage and cursed [his] father,' shouting 'you damn black son of a bitch, you think you are white do you? Now just to show you are black, I will not let you have your son at any price.'[637] Despite the efforts of his father to protect and reunite him with his family, an enslaver bought Glenn and forced him to Kentucky.[638] This testimony demonstrates the obstacles that many enslaved fathers faced. Enslaved men were 'twice negatively essentialized [or stereotyped] on the parental frontier', based firstly on their race, and then due to the prioritisation of the 'mother-child dyad.'[639] But not only was Glenn forcibly taken from his father and commodified, as forced reproduction consistently did, speculators also prohibited his father from protecting him based explicitly on his *economical*, *societal*, and *racial* status. Forced reproduction valued men as one half of a reproductive machine, and then dismissed their authority as their fathers after the conception of a child. Robert Glenn's father therefore had no authority over Glenn as his father, or as a man in general due to his gender, race, and his status as an enslaved man. This applied to all fathers as a by-product of pro-natalism, not just those explicitly labelled 'breeders' or 'stock men.' Thus, enslaved men had to fight these barriers on a daily basis to maintain some sense of fatherly authority over their children.

Glenn was unable to maintain a physical relationship with his father. However, decades later after emancipation, Glenn reunited with his parents. In his old age, Glenn's father remarked that he 'did not want to die without seeing his son once more.'[640] This evocative comment from Glenn's father suggests that he had been living with the absence of his son his entire life. 'This Christmas,' reported Glenn to his interviewer in 1936, spent 'with mother, father and freedom was the happiest period of my entire life, because those who were torn apart in bondage and sorrow several years previous were now united in freedom and happiness.'[641] Glenn and his family reunited after slavery and spent their final years together, but for many this was impossible – especially before emancipation. This story proves that although Glenn's father did not have a physical presence in his life when they lived separately, he had a spiritual and emotional one, as both individuals longed for one another and for the day they would finally reunite.

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[635] Robert Glenn, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn111, 330.
[636] Glenn, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:1. 330.
[637] *Ibid*.
[638] *Ibid.*
[639] C. Jama Adams cited in Louis Rothschild, 'Introduction to Reconstructing Fatherhood', *Psychoanalytic Perspectives,* 16 (2019), 313.
[640] Glenn, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:1, 338-339.
[641] *Ibid*.

The amount that children knew about their fathers differed depending on the individual. Where some respondents did not know of their fathers at all, others held an inkling of knowledge, and others had close relationships with them. Some children had an early memory of their fathers, some never met them at all, and others met them later on in life. Respondents who lived on plantations where their enslaver explicitly forced individuals to procreate with more than one person recalled that their relationships with their fathers were precarious. Angie Garret, enslaved in Mississippi, informed her interviewer that she 'didn't know [her] father's name.'[642] Importantly, she also stated that she 'never axed 'bout my grand daddy, 'caze wa'n't no tellin.''[643] This is indicative of the intergenerational trauma that coerced reproduction caused. As Angie did not know her father, she consequently did not know the identity of her grandfather, or any other subsequent kin on that side of her family tree.

Similarly, Ryer Emmanuel recollected that she and her siblings used to ask her mother where they came from, to which she answered 'I got you out de hollow log.'[644] Mothers often tried to protect their children, daughters in particular, from the 'mechanics of childbirth' and sex in general by speaking vaguely about how to conceive children.[645] Instead, mothers sheltered their daughters from sex and courtship by claiming, like Emmanuel's mother, that babies came from logs.[646] However, in Emmanuel's instance, it appears that her mother was protecting her from the knowledge of forced reproduction. She remarked that enslaved children had fathers, but that they did not live with them. Instead, they never 'know who us daddy been till us mammy point him out cause us all went in Massa Anthony Ross' name. Yes, mam, all us had a different daddy, so my mammy say.'[647] The emphasis of their enslaver's surname, and the multiple different fathers suggests that Ross enforced reproductive practices on his plantation. Consequently, for Emmanuel and others like her, she did not have a physical or emotional relationship with her father, despite living on the same plantation (though in different households).

Isiah Green's tale demonstrates issues of memory and the methodological challenges around interviewers interpreting the answers of their respondents. Green's interviewer recorded that although he knew the name of his father, Bob Henderson, 'he did not grow up knowing the love and care of a father, for his father was sold from his mother when he was only two years old.'[648]

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[642] Angie Garret, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936, 1937), Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 133.
[643] Garrett, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 133.
[644] Ryer Emmanuel, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn142, 23.
[645] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 96.
[646] *Ibid*.
[647] Emmanuel, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:2, 23.
[648] Isiah Green, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 49.

Although he was physically separated from him, it did not mean he did not know the love and care of a father. Fathers left an emotional impression behind with their children, and Green's knowledge of both his parents' names suggests that his mother kept his spirit alive, even when he was not there and when Green did not remember his presence in his early life. Green also told his interviewer that his household consisted of his mother and nine sisters.[649] This further demonstrates the effects of *partus sequitur ventrem* and the emphasis on motherhood over fatherhood within forced reproduction, as their enslaver kept Green, his siblings, and his mother together, and sold off his father. Green was the youngest of the children, suggesting that his nine sisters shared the same father. Why his enslaver sold his father away is unknown.

John Brown's published narrative about his experiences of slavery in Georgia reveal similar circumstances where his mother ensured that Brown had some information about his father. Brown wrote that his father's name was Joe, and that his enslaver, Benford, trafficked him from the Eboe province in modern day Nigeria.[650] Brown only saw Joe once, but had a 'distinct recollection of him', most likely due to his mother's actions.[651] Brown's parents lived apart, as Benford moved further away, and Brown's mother's enslaver subsequently 'forced [her] to take another husband.'[652] Brown's enslaver subjected his parents to reproductive practices by forcing his mother to marry after her first husband's enslaver forced him away. Though Jennings argues that no one knew who their father was, Brown's 'distinct memory' of his father, despite only meeting him once, suggests that his mother kept his memory alive so that he and his siblings, Silas and Lucy, were able to understand how and why their father was not physically present in their lives.[653] Instead, he was emotionally present, not only leaving behind a lasting impression, but by also providing knowledge of and connection to their African heritage.[654] In this way, Brown's mother worked indirectly with Joe to resist the reproductive practices of their enslaver – instead of letting his memory fade and allowing children to assume her forced husband was their father, Brown's mother ensured that her children knew where they came from, and that Joe was not at fault for his absence.

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[649] *Ibid*., 57.
[650] John Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England* (London: M.W. Watts, 1855). 1-2.
[651] Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia,* 2.
[652] *Ibid*.
[653] Jennings, '"Us Colored Women"', 50.
[654] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus*, *60.*

Similarly, Lewis Jones, enslaved in Texas, informed his interviewer about his father and siblings. Fred Tate, their enslaver, used him to 'build up his slave stock', and produce multiple children by different women.[655] He recalled:

> How many brudders and sisters? Lawd A-mighty! I'll tell to 'cause you asks and dis nigger gives de facts as 'tis. Let's see, I can't 'lect de number. My pappy have 12 chillen by my mammy and 12 by anudder nigger name Mary. You keep de count. Den dere am Liza, him have 10 by her, and dere am Mandy, him have 8 by her, and dere am Betty him have six by her. Now, let me 'lect some more. I can't bring de names to mind, but dere am two or three other what have jus' one or two chillden by my pappy.[656]

Jones's mother told him that Tate forced his father to be a 'breeding' man, and consequently had nearly fifty children.[657] Jones's mother's candour about the sexual exploitation of both herself and his father simultaneously equipped him with the knowledge to try to protect himself from the sexual dangers posed by Tate, and informed Jones that their enslaver compelled his father to procreate with more than one woman.

Children were more likely to mourn the absence of a father in their life if they had a relationship with them early on before their enslaver separated them, or if they had a limited relationship due to cross-plantation marriage. Like many, Nancy Gardner's father spent thirty years not knowing if his children 'were still living.'[658] Once Gardner's father unearthed information on their whereabouts, he began to write to them.[659] However, not all families were able to reunite, as Gardner demonstrates: 'my pa started out to see me and on his way he was drowned in de Missouri River, and I never saw him alive after we was sold in Memphis.'[660] Moreover, not all children deemed the absence of a father completely devastating to their development, and it depended on the individual at hand. Easter Wells, enslaved in Arkansas and Texas, never saw her father, nor heard her mother mention him.[661] For Wells, not having a present or identifiable father did not leave a hole in her life as she 'never thought anything about not having a father.'[662] Wells proves that not *all* children lamented the absence of a father in their lives, especially if they had never known or had a relationship with their father. Children like

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[655] Lewis Jones, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn162/, 237.
[656] Jones, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:2, 237.
[657] *Ibid*.
[658] Nancy Gardner, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 108.
[659] Gardner, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 108.
[660] *Ibid*.
[661] Easter Wells, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 316.
[662] Wells, Slave Narrative Project, Vol.13, 316.

Wells did not feel they were missing anything particularly valuable as their mothers stepped into that absent role or, importantly, they found fatherly role models within their wider social network.

Wells's testimony reveals how children and adults view fatherhood differently, with the additional complexity of adult hindsight from interviewees in the 1930s. Even as an elderly woman, Wells still did not feel that her quality of life was lessened because she did not know her father. Where it may be reductive to assume that *all* children felt as Wells did, Wells's *father* may have felt differently. Wells assumes that he did not try to look for them after the war, but he may have just been unsuccessful in his search, or not have even been alive.[663]

Mack Brantley recalled the first time he met his father. He lived on a 'joining farm', and Brantley's mother's enslaver had 'give[n]' her another husband.[664] Meaning, either the relationship with Brantley's father had not worked out and their enslavers allowed them to separate, or they forced Brantley's father and stepfather on his mother, though this is unknown through available evidence. After his mother died, Brantley finally met his father, and those witnessing the moment repeated, 'Mack, shake hands with your papa.'[665] Brantley's father, however, appeared reluctant, as he 'was standing off to one side', which Brantley described as a 'sorter shame…I was little.'[666] Brantley approached his father, who shook his hand and gave him a nickel.[667] After this occasion, his father 'went off on Alabama River eighteen miles from us to Caholba, Alabama. I never seen him much more.'[668]

Similarly, Georgia Smith did not interact with her father until after her mother died when she was about five or six years old.[669] Before this, she lived with her mother. After her death 'Mistress Chappell' sent for Smith's father, who lived on a different plantation, to collect her.[670] However, as Smith had no relationship with her father she desired instead to live on the Chappell plantation, crying and refusing to eat.[671] Eventually, her father's enslaver, 'Master Smith', told her father to take her back to Chappell.[672] Georgia's life with her mother on the Chappell plantation meant that she saw less of her father, and grew attached to the place where she grew up and the enslaved people who lived in that community. Reproductive preferences where enslavers grouped women

[663] *Ibid*.
[664] Mack Brantley, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 243.
[665] Brantley, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:1, 243.
[666] *Ibid.*
[667] *Ibid*.
[668] *Ibid*., 242-243.
[669] Georgia Smith, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn043/, 279.
[670] Smith, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:3, 279.
[671] *Ibid*.
[672] *Ibid*.

and children separately to the father meant that, in abroad marriages, children usually lived on the same plantation as their mother, with visits from the father when possible. In this case, physical distance was too much for Smith and her father. Smith missed her old community and wanted to live away from her father, a man she did not really know, on her enslaver's plantation, where she felt attachment (or as much attachment as she could in such an oppressive regime) to the enslaved people she knew. This suggests that Smith did not feel a strong emotional bond with her father, but rather with her friends and extended family on the Chappell plantation and is indicative of the scarcity of time allowed together within close emotional and physical proximity. Sending Smith back to the Chappell plantation was likely traumatic and upsetting for Smith's father, yet he took the painful step to ensure her happiness, at the order of his own enslaver. Smith felt not only an attachment to those she grew up with, but also, controversially, her enslaver. Chappell therefore appropriated the only parental role left in Smith's life through her emotional influence. According to Mary Anderson, these children that wanted to stay with their enslavers in the plantation household 'knew no better…and seemed to love marster and missus as much as they did their own mother and father.'[673]

Some formerly enslaved people spoke in more explicit reference to forced reproduction and separation and its effect on parenthood. Snovey Jackson claimed that because Virginia was a 'slave breedin' state', where the slave trade facilitated the westward growth of slavery through the domestic trade of enslaved people into newer states, enslavers routinely broke up families and sold individuals away from one another 'jes' like stock.'[674] Jackson did not 'even know who my father and mother was. I never knowed what 'come of 'em.'[675] In this instance, Jackson's enslaver separated her from both her mother *and* father, demonstrating how forced reproduction isolated individuals away from their entire family. Though Jackson's enslaver separated her from *both* parents, it was more common for slaveholders to sell children separately to the father and keep them with their mothers. Heard Griffin, whose mother, Sarah, gave birth to eleven children, had only a distant memory of his father who his enslaver sold away when Griffin was a young boy.[676] He remarked that 'they would take small babies from their mothers' arms and sell them.'[677] As not all slaveholders wished to incur the cost of raising an enslaved infant until it was old

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673 Mary Anderson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn111/, 22.
674 Snovey Jackson, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 304-5. It is not clear why Jackson refers to Virginia as a 'slave breeding state', but she is potentially repeating a general assumption about forced reproduction within particular states or areas of the US, or she might have meant that Virginia's rates of enslaved exportations were higher than their importations.
675 Jackson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:2, 305.
676 Heard Griffin, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 73.
677 Griffin, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:2, 73.

enough to generate profits, some enslavers sold infants away to gain instant monetary satisfaction.

Mothers ensured that their children knew who was to blame for the absence of their fathers. In South Carolina, Adeline Grey's mother told her that it was their enslaver's fault that she did not know her father.[678] 'Well chillun,' she lamented, 'you'd ain't never known your Pa. Joe Smart carry him off to Texas when he went. I don't guess you'll ever seen him.'[679] This simultaneously reassured Adeline that her father did not *want* to leave them, and also made Adeline aware of the cruelty of her enslavers (if she was not already). Reassuring children that their enslavers were to blame for separation of their family hence reinstated authority to fathers.

Enslavers' Appropriation of Fatherhood

Authority over their children was an important characteristic to enslaved fathers. Men who were able to remain physically present in their children's lives had to endure the sight of their enslavers violating their children. Henry Bibb described his sorrow at witnessing his 'infant child whipped and tortured with impunity' and 'placed in a situation where [he] could afford it no protection.'[680] This helplessness encapsulates the aspect of slavery that sought to undermine familial links and prevented men from protecting their wives and children. Bibb further wrote:

> If ever there was any one act of my life while a slave, that I have to lament over, it is that of being a father and a husband of slaves. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I am only the father of one slave. She is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; poor unfortunate child. She was the first and shall be the last slave that ever I will father, for chains and slavery on this earth.[681]

Bibb represents the paradox that many parents found themselves in. Although Bibb clearly loved his daughter, and found comfort in that love for his family, he felt distraught at her enslaved status and his inability to protect her from the horrors of the regime. His 'satisfaction' that he only had one child speaks to the emotional impact that forced reproduction had on enslaved people. Although most enslaved people wanted families, many chose – primarily through reproductive resistance – to remain childless in order to protect them from the ordeals of slavery. Not all enslaved people were successful in remaining childless, though, especially on plantations where their enslaver was particularly violent or eager to sell slaves (as discussed in Chapter 1). Anti-slavery advocate Mary L. Booth sympathised with enslaved men, writing that

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[678] Adeline Grey, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn142/, 207.
[679] Grey, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:2, 207.
[680] Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb,* 43.
[681] *Ibid.,* 44.

> a man does not marry when…his children must be born his equals, and irrevocably destined to the same miseries as his father; when, having no power over their fate, he can know neither the duties, nor rights, nor hopes, nor cares which accompany paternity.[682]

Like Bibb, Booth highlights the prevalence of feelings of hopelessness among enslaved fathers when it came to exerting authority or power over their offspring. Authority is therefore a key aspect to enslaved men's performance of masculinity. When enslavers appropriated father- or motherhood they encroached on the authority of enslaved parents by transferring that power to themselves. Whilst Stanley Elkins claimed in the 1950s that fathers had no authority whatsoever, Blassingame maintained that although children held their mothers in higher esteem than their fathers, likely because they saw more of their mothers, enslaved children still had respect for their fathers.[683] More recently John Patrick Riley maintained that slaves found alternative ways to assert their fatherly rights.[684] Though Riley does not detail *how* fathers asserted these rights, it is evident that this happened in often implicit ways; for example, through providing and protecting their families, asserting their authority, and by bonding with them through activities such as hunting.

As slaveholders tried to reduce enslaved men solely to 'reproducers,' they not only dismissed the role of father, but also appropriated it in other ways. Previous research from White and Knight demonstrates that slaveholding women and 'mistresses' appropriated motherhood from enslaved women.[685] By taking their children into the slaveholding household to train them as domestic servants, slaveholding women separated the enslaved children from their mothers and bequeathed what they saw as a 'maternal affection' on the children. Indeed, slaveholding women believed they were superior mothers to those enslaved, and that enslaved women did not possess the emotional or mental equipment necessary to be good mothers to their children, characterising enslaved people as 'callous and ignorant parents.'[686] Disguised as maternal care, slaveholding women 'expressed their economic interests' and 'formed a site through which they could exert their control and authority.'[687] Thus, according to Knight, enslaved women suffered a 'duality' of exploitation: white mistresses stressed enslaved women's inability to mother their own children whilst simultaneously exploiting them as 'Mammies' who cared for white children, and as wet-nurses who used their milk to feed their slaveholder's children instead of their own,

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[682] Augustin Chochin, trans. Mary L. Booth, *The Results of Emancipation* (Boston: Walker, Wise and Company, 1863), 246.
[683] Blassingame, *Slave Community,* 190-1.
[684] Lussana, *My Brother Slaves,* 2; Riley, '"This is the Last Time I Shall Ever Leave My Family"', 27.
[685] White, *Ar'n't a Woman?,* 58-61; Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation', 990-1005.
[686] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation', 992.
[687] *Ibid.*

often causing emotional trauma and grief for both themselves and their own children who were left starving.[688] Enslaved women's motherhood was hence important to slaveholding women.

As they did to enslaved mothers, slaveholding men and women also attempted to reduce enslaved men's role of father as much as possible by appropriating the role for themselves. Exploiting them along gendered lines, slaveholding men, too, took enslaved children away from their fathers, denied them their fatherhood, and sometimes acted in a fatherly or 'paternal' way to the children they had taken to further negate the role of their enslaved fathers. Mack Mullen, enslaved in Georgia, remembered that his enslaver, Dick Snellings, 'would take him on his knee and talk to him.'[689] Snellings whispered encouragements to Mullen usually instilled by fathers – for example, that one day he would be a 'noble man' and that he would one day 'make him the head overseer.'[690] Mullen also reminisced that Snelling would give him sweets and money and take him along for rides in the buggy.[691] Mullen's father, Sam, was not absent in his life, but in fact lived on the plantation as a blacksmith. Despite Sam's presence, Snellings imposed what he believed was a 'paternal' influence over him, encroaching on Sam's authority as father. As a child, Mullen may not have comprehended the insidious actions of his enslaver as harmful or upsetting to Sam, but as an adult with hindsight was more likely to understand that his enslaver was attempting to hold power over both Mullen and his father. Snellings's preoccupation with Mullen is a clear demonstration of his attempt to enforce patriarchal authority on the plantation and over the enslaved community. Slaveholding men like Snellings, demanded they be the sole patriarchal figure on the plantation, lest the presence of another man threaten his position, and appropriated fatherhood from enslaved men to emphasise this. Moreover, Snellings's behaviour reveals his own belief in paternalistic ideology. Where enslaved women were allegedly incapable mothers who did not love or look after their children, so-called 'paternalist' slaveholding men acted as fathers to enslaved children, despite the presence of their actual fathers.

Thomas Bullitt, in his memoirs about Oxmoor Farm in Louisville, Kentucky, wrote that the enslaved people on his farm were 'taught politeness from their infancy – by their own parents *as well as by my mother and father*.'[692] By teaching children lessons in morality, enslavers such as Bullitt's father intruded on the authority of enslaved parents – especially enslaved fathers. Moreover, these lessons of 'politeness' likely differed from the enslaved parents' morality lessons. Considering the context of forced reproduction, this act of appropriating fatherhood from

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[688] *Ibid.*
[689] Mack Mullen, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 235.
[690] Mullen, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 235.
[691] *Ibid.*
[692] Proof Prints of *My Life at Oxmoor,* 5th April 1912, Bullitt Family Papers – Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, Mss /A/B 937c, Folder 334, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.

enslaved men further attempts to cement control over enslaved peoples' lives and relationships, inserting themselves into their relationships as a 'third flesh' or, to take the analogy further, 'third parent.' Just as the third flesh in intimate sexual relationships was unwanted, so too was the third flesh in the father-child dynamic.

Though it was difficult to actively impose their authority, enslaved children did recognise and appreciated their status and role as fathers. In an anecdote about his father's death, Edmond Smith remarked that 'since I was the oldest boy I could take his place of bossin', but my mother would take me down a button hole lower whenever I got too high.'[693] Not only had Smith's father managed to instil his authority within the family, but he also managed to encourage patriarchal and masculine ideals within his son. Upon his father's death, Smith believed that as the oldest male in the family he should take on the role of caregiver, provider, and ultimately, the 'boss.' A young boy at the time, this may have been a thrilling game for him, but as an adult he could see that he was encroaching on his mother's authority.

Enslaved fathers also asserted their authority in more obvious ways. Harriet Jacobs's narrative reveals clear evidence of her enslaver contesting her father's right. One day, both the mistress and their father called for Jacobs's brother, John, and

> being perplexed to know which had the strongest claim upon his obedience [,] He finally concluded to go to his mistress. When my father reproved him for it, he said, 'You both called me, and I didn't know which I ought to go to first.'
>
> 'You are *my* child,' replied our father, 'and when I call you, you should come immediately, if you have to pass through fire and water.'[694]

In this way, Jacobs's father inscribed his authority onto his son, and emphasised the importance of listening to him over their enslavers. However, instilling their authority as an enslaved father was complex. By forcing his son to choose him over their mistress, Jacobs's father may have unwittingly subjected his son to violent repercussions. Jacobs does not tell her audience how their mistress reacted to being spurned, but it is likely that she punished him for disobeying her orders. Furthermore, John's confusion over who he should go to when called reveals the battle within both parent and child for authority. Whereas Jacobs's father fought the mistress for parental authority, John did not know, or understand, who held more authority over him, and thus faced his own inner battle on who to obey. The intrinsic authority his mistress inscribed upon him was ingrained from a young age, and John had to learn to navigate this inner turmoil in order to defer

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[693] Edmond Smith, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 182.
[694] Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* 17.

to his father. Though fathers battled to enact this authority, it clearly also depended on who the children obeyed – father or enslaver? – and the psychological impacts this had on the children.

For some enslaved children, the issue over who held ultimate authority over them was more straightforward. After fighting with Alexander, the son of his enslaver, and having suffered the violent consequences, J.H. Banks appealed to his father about what to do next.[695] His father told him 'not to take a blow from Alexander, for the more I did take, the more I would have to take.'[696] And so Banks 'imbibed…the spirit of his father', as 'it was more natural for [him] to obey [his] own father than to obey Alexander's father.'[697] Banks's father had clearly found a way to make sure his influence and authority over his son was more palpable than that of their enslaver.

Enslaved men also inscribed their authority on their children through discipline. Annie Love lived on a different plantation to her father, and recalled that her only memory of her father was when 'one Sunday he come to see me and when he started home I tried to go with him. He got a little switch and whipped me.'[698] By reprimanding his daughter, Love's father asserted his own authority through violence, but also protected her from potential violence from patrollers and enslavers in the event they caught Love leaving the plantation without permission. Punishment from their enslaver or patrollers was likely to be much more of a violent punishment than that doled out by Love's father. Similarly, Josephine Bristow recalled having a 'strict' father who would whip her if she misbehaved.[699] Her father insisted on carrying out the discipline, arguing that 'when I tell you I gwine cut you, I gwine do it.'[700] By following through when he threatened to discipline his children, Bristow's father asserted himself as the source of authority within his family – not the enslaver. On some slaveholdings, though rare, enslavers actively allowed the fathers to discipline their own children. Amanda Rose, enslaved in Alabama, recalled that 'they didn't never whip none of my father's children. If we done something they thought we ought to been whipped for, they would tell father to whip us, and if he wanted to, he would; and if he didn't want to, he wouldn't.'[701] Rose's father had complete control over the discipline of his children, though only at the permission and whim of his enslaver who could change his mind at any point.

Rose's situation was atypical, and enslavers consistently endeavoured to take the role of authoritative disciplinarian away from fathers and disciplined children whenever they deemed

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[695] Banks, *A Narrative of the Life of J.H. Banks,* 11.
[696] *Ibid*.
[697] *Ibid*.
[698] Annie Love, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 17, Virginia (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn170/, 290.
[699] Josephine Bristow, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn141/, 103.
[700] Bristow, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:1, 103.
[701] Amanda Rose, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936, 1937), Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 83.

fit to, just as they did the adults. Parthena Rollins remembered how her enslaver, Ed Duvalle, in Scott County, Kentucky, 'often whipped the children to correct them.'[702] George Rogers's enslaver also disciplined the enslaved children alongside his own children, for example when they stole watermelons and apples.[703] By disciplining the enslaved children alongside his own, Rogers's enslaver acted as head of both the plantation and of individual slave families, taking away enslaved fathers' chances to discipline their children how they deemed appropriate. Moreover, many enslaved fathers had to helplessly watch as overseers and enslavers whipped their children, knowing their involvement would only make situations worse. Jacob Stroyer wrote in his 1885 narrative of the time that he was a 'very bad boy' and suffered through an overseer's punishment.[704] Stroyer 'cried out in a tone of voice as if I would say, this is the first and last whipping you will give me when my father gets hold of you.'[705] Yet, when Stroyer appealed to his father and told him what had happened, his father said 'go back to your work and be a good boy, for I cannot do anything for you.'[706] The whippings persisted, and when Stroyer's mother expressed her intention to appeal to their enslaver, Stroyer's father argued 'you would gain nothing in the end; the best thing for us to do is to pray much over it, for I believe that the time will come when this boy and the rest of the children will be free, though we may not live to see it.'[707] His father's words provided comfort to Stroyer. Even though he could not protect him from the violence of their enslavers, his father could offer comfort and hope for the future in other ways.

Testimonies from Joseph William Carter, Wes Woods, and Morris Hillyer all demonstrate how enslavers appropriated bonding time away from enslaved fathers. When recalling a story about hunting in the woods with some other enslaved boys, Carter briefly mentioned retrieving a flint lock rifle that 'Marse Mooney had let me carry when we went hunting.'[708] Woods recalled that his 'young bosses' on the Kennedy plantation 'would take the dogs and let me go coon hunting at night with them, and what big times we had,' while Hillyer recalled that in Georgia all the boys would go 'hunting with Marster William' to catch 'rabbits, quails, squirrels [and] deer.'[709] All

[702] Parthena Rollins, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 7, Kentucky, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn070/, 167.
[703] George Rogers, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 222.
[704] Jacob Stroyer, *My Life in the South* (Salem: Salem Observer Book and Job Print, 1885), 19.
[705] Stroyer, *My Life in the South,* 19.
[706] *Ibid*.
[707] *Ibid*., 23.
[708] Joseph William Carter, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, Indiana (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn050/, 45.
[709] Wes Woods, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 7, Kentucky, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn070/, 25; Morris Hillyer, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 140.

members of the family contributed to the family economy – including children, who, according to Larry E. Hudson, worked for their families before their enslavers.[710] Hunting with fathers provided opportunities for enslaved men and boys to bond, and for fathers to pass down skills to their children. By taking the young Carter and Woods hunting, Mooney and the Kennedys were taking this emotional bonding opportunity away from their own fathers and encroaching on their status as providers. Lussana emphasises the importance of homosocial worlds in the building of relationships and bonds between enslaved men through activities such as drinking, gambling, and wrestling.[711] However, his framework must also be expanded to include children, in this case sons, into the homosocial world as they bonded through quintessentially 'masculine' activities of the time such as hunting. Though Lussana argues that the historiography of enslaved men's relationships with others has primarily examined the extent to which they could fulfil a provider/protector role, it is still necessary to examine how the actions of provisioning allowed for bonding time between men – including fathers and sons.[712]

Like Carter, Woods, and Hillyer, Jimmie Johnson's enslaver also acted in a fatherly way, claiming that Johnson 'had no father nor mother.'[713] Though Johnson's mother was dead, his father was very much still alive in Virginia while Johnson and his enslaver resided in Spartanburg, South Carolina.[714] His enslaver therefore completely dismissed the role of Johnson's father by claiming that he had no father, despite his presence in Virginia, and undertook what he deemed to be the duties of Johnson's father: teaching him to read (which was technically illegal and therefore unusual), allowing him to play the piano or organ, and telling people that 'Jimmie had sense [and] was a good boy' while in his presence.[715] His enslaver therefore had an emotional impact on Johnson whilst simultaneously erasing any authority that his father in Virginia may have had. Most enslaved men had an emotional and spiritual impact on their children despite the physical distance between them. Yet, enslavers such as Johnson's eroded this far-reaching temporal and geographical emotional connection through his 'paternal' actions.

Further methods of undermining fatherhood by slaveholders included the name that enslavers forced children to call them. Though many slaveholders stuck with the traditional 'master', some others forced them to use paternal names such as "Pa." The children on Mary Minus Biddie's

[710] Larry Hudson, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina* (University of Georgia Press, 1997), 33.
[711] Sergio Lussana,'"No Band of Brothers Could be More Loving": Enslaved men Homosociality, Friendships, and Resistance in the Antebellum American South,' *Journal of Social History,* 46 (2013), 872.
[712] Lussana, '"No Band of Brothers"', 873.
[713] Jimmie Johnson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn143/, 53.
[714] Johnson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:3, 53.
[715] *Ibid*., 53-54.

Florida plantation called their enslaver 'Pa', and their fathers 'Pappy.'[716] Though 'the master never resented this appellation, and took it in good humour,' Biddie's father must have been emotionally compromised at hearing this name. The point that he 'never resented this appellation' suggests that he did not *force* them to call him 'Pa', but took no steps to stop the children doing this, thus embracing this paternalistic nickname. Similarly, Sarah Waggoner informed her interviewer that the children on their slaveholding called their enslavers 'Pap and Old Miss', and the children on Ida Adkin's plantation called their enslaver 'Big Pappy.'[717] For Adkin, however, only the children used this moniker, and as an adult she referred to him as 'Marse Frank.'[718] Jennie Small also clarified that they called their enslaver 'Pappy.'[719] In these cases, enslavers actively appropriated the role of father from enslaved men by forcing or encouraging children to call them 'father' (or some version of this). On Jerry Hinton's plantation in North Carolina, their enslaver did not force the children to call him 'father' but had strict rules on who could have specific nicknames: 'We called our fathers 'daddy' in slavery time. Dey would not let slaves call deir fathers 'father.' Dey called 'em 'daddy', an' white children called deir father, 'Pa.''[720] This evidently established a hierarchy of fatherhood, where enslavers placed white fatherhood above that of the enslaved and demonstrated this through the power of naming practices. Disallowing enslaved children to call their children 'father' further shows how enslavers sought to disregard fatherhood completely, again reducing enslaved men's purpose to one part of the reproductive machine of slavery. This again exposes their paternalistic ideology, where enslavers elevated themselves to the position of benevolent, caretaking fathers that presided over and looked after their entire slave communities, further dismissing the role of the enslaved men after they fulfilled their sexual role in forced reproductive practices. Significantly, enslaved children did not use a version of 'mother' in reference to slaveholding women and wives. Instead, children referred to them as 'missus' or 'old miss.' The use of 'pa' or 'pappy' in reference to slaveholding men established a patriarchal hierarchy with white men exercising authority over both white women and enslaved men.

Although George Morrison's enslaver did not force the children to call him some version of 'father', he did insist that they call him 'Mr. Ray', as opposed to 'master.'[721] This use of 'Mr'

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[716] Mary Minnus Biddie, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 32.
[717] Sarah Waggoner, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 10, Missouri (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn100/, 363; Ida Adkin, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn111/, 9.
[718] Adkin, Slave Narrative Project, 10, 9.
[719] Jennie Small, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 12, Ohio, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn120/, 80.
[720] Jerry Hinton, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn111/, 430.
[721] George Morrison, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, Indiana, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn050/, 145.

distanced Ray from the connotations of slavery and allowed him to buy into slaveholder paternalist ideology. Ray further appropriated fatherly duties by treating Morrison as a father would – protecting him from the harsh labour of the field, playing with him, and gifting him 'boots with brass toes.'[722] According to Morrison, Ray was 'always very good to [him].'[723] Morrison's father, a Union soldier, would have undoubtedly felt that Ray was impinging on his authority as a father. Ray had the luxury of time to play with Morrison and the financial access to gift brass-toed boots. Slavery did not permit Morrison's father these indulgences. Ray's testimony further demonstrates how enslavers routinely dismissed enslaved fatherhood in favour of their own alleged paternalist desires and attempted to depose the enslaved father's authority as a father. In the eyes of enslavers, enslaved men's duty was sexual in nature. Once they reproduced, their role as fathers became obsolete, and thus dismissed.

The complexity of parental authority in an oppressive regime that sought to take away *all* authority of enslaved men and women held many layers. On one hand, enslaved men struggled to assert any authority at all because slavery sought to prevent men from performing their masculinity either by protecting and providing for their families, or by standing up as male role models for their children. By appropriating fatherhood from enslaved men, enslavers also took away their authority and seized it for themselves as ultimate figures of power. When taking forced reproduction into account, enslaved men possessed even less familial influence as enslavers controlled their reproductive bodies and set boundaries on their relationships with both their partners and their children. As enslavers sexually exploited and forced enslaved men to have multiple children by different women, these men saw their authority taken away almost completely. Writing sixty years apart, Kenneth Stampp and Foster have both argued that 'in a patriarchal age, the enslaved male's only vital function was producing children' and that slaveholders denied men a fatherly role.[724]

Where interventions in enslaved mothers and children's lives were 'acts of self-prioritisation' for white women, slaveholding men gained little by appropriating the role of father but were able to amass a sense of power and authority.[725] Thus, the motivation behind this appropriation and traumatic denial of fatherhood was born of pure malevolence and desire for power. By prohibiting enslaved men from fathering, slaveholders stripped men of their masculinity and patriarchal authority, reducing them to a cog in the machine of forced reproduction. However, as Stevenson argues, this dearth of 'patriarchal status' did not mean that enslaved families and wider

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[722] Morrison, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, 145.
[723] *Ibid*.
[724] Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Negro Slavery in the American South* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964), 340-344 cited in: Sergio Lussana, *My Brother Slaves,* 2; Foster, 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men', 456.
[725] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation,' 999.

communities classified fathers as 'inadequate', thus challenging 'traditional, western-centred, ideals of fathers and husbands,' where the family was male-centred or 'patrifocal' in structure.[726] Instead, enslaved fathers battled with their enslavers to assert their authority and their rights as fathers to their own children and fought every day to develop and maintain loving relationships with their families.

It is important to note that both adults and children understood fatherhood differently and placed higher value on some characteristics more than others. Due to their age during slavery, formerly enslaved people typically recalled tales about their parents instead of their own experience of parenthood under bondage, as most were children or teenagers by the time of the war. These respondents frequently refer to how their fathers were particularly rebellious, skilful, or religious, indicating that they admired and tried to emulate this behaviour. Many WPA respondents also discussed the emotional bonds they had with their fathers, or lack thereof. Enslaved children coveted the priceless quality time they were able to spend with their fathers. At the same time, enslaved men valued the ability to provide for and protect their families. This is not to say that they did not value emotional bonding time and connections, but they also saw the hallmark of masculinity as being able to provide for their families without the interference of slaveholders. Supplementing food rations was also necessary for the survival of their loved ones and was therefore a top priority for enslaved men. Although enslaved children did not shame their fathers if they were unable to provide for them, especially those that lived on different plantations, enslaved fathers still prioritised and valued the ability to do this.

While only contributing to *one* aspect of fatherhood admired by enslaved people, a large part of past scholarship has focused on the provider and protector role of enslaved fathers. Historians have traditionally shied away from investigating the emotional connections between father and child.[727] Instead, they have focused on the physical aspects of fatherhood – particularly the provide and protect dynamic.[728] However, more recently, Hilde has explored how provisioning took different forms through the provision of materials, advice, and spiritual counselling.[729] She terms these more subtle forms of provision 'covert caretaking', which were often 'hidden from dominant society.'[730] Developing this further, forced reproduction and the dismissal of fatherhood made it difficult for enslaved men to follow the traditional routes of provision that white fathers might. For those who were in 'abroad marriages', men were often only able to visit their families once a week, regularly crossing great distances to do so. The effort that these fathers

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[726] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White,* 256.
[727] Hudson, *To Have and to Hold,* 150.
[728] *Ibid.,* 166.
[729] Hilde, *Slavery, Fatherhood and Paternal Duty*, 92.
[730] *Ibid*.

made demonstrates the love and commitment that they had to their families, despite the distance.[731] In these instances, fathers had fewer opportunities to provide materially. One respondent in Georgia informed their interviewer that men were only allowed to visit their families on Saturdays.[732] In this particular case, those that were 'smart enough' to maintain a garden plot or build furniture for their children would send it with a runner outside of the visiting hours.[733] However, this was rare. Instead, many provided small items such as food, clothing, and furniture, when they could, which varied depending on the season and when their enslaver allowed them off the plantation (or when they could secretly slip away). Kisey McKimm's father was able to see his family every Sunday during the summer months, but during the winter could only make the journey once a month, perhaps because of the colder weather.[734] For others, such as Rachel Harris, their father's visitations depended on the whims of her enslaver. Her enslaver sold her father away before she was born, but he still visited until 'they stopped him and wouldn't let him come no more.'[735]

Though there was little time or space for the luxury of play, some fathers were able to steal moments of leisure with their children.[736] As a child, Wash Ford's mother told him that 'Papa was bouncing me up and down. He was lying on the floor playing wid me.'[737] For both Ford and his mother, it was important for him to know that his father spent quality time with him as it demonstrated his father's emotional investment in his children. Sarah Pittman's father, who lived on a separate Louisiana plantation, would visit on Saturday until Sunday evening.[738] While mourning her father's death, she mentioned that he used to play with her and her siblings: 'On Sunday night he would go home. He would play with us. Now he and mama are both dead. They are gone home and I am waiting to go. They're waiting for me in the kingdom there.'[739] Pittman valued the time her father spent with her, and it was this emotional piece of information she chose to share when discussing the memory of her late parents. Although historians such as Hudson, Hilde, Blassingame, and Stevenson, among others, maintain that enslaved men performed their role of father through the provision of material goods, there are clear instances where men

[731] Riley, '"This is the Last Time I Shall Ever Leave My Family"', 30; Hudson, *To Have and to Hold,* 175-6.
[732] Unknown, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4 (1936) Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 363.
[733] Unknown, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:3, 363.
[734] Kisey McKimm, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 12, Ohio, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn120/, 64.
[735] Rachel Harris, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 179.
[736] Wash Ford, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 324.
[737] Ford, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:2, 324.
[738] Sarah Pittman, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 5 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn025/, 352.
[739] Pittman, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:5, 352.

provided in many other more emotional ways, despite the barriers and challenges thrown up by forced reproductive practices.[740]

As scholarship on fatherhood has mainly focused on how enslaved men tried to fulfil a protector and provider role, Hudson argues that there is no evidence from enslaved people of any kind of emotional bonds between enslaved men and their children.[741] This may, however, depend on the definition of emotional bonds. Indeed, the creation of ties between father and children did not follow the traditional routes of playing at leisure activities, or other such activities that were luxuries for enslaved people. Instead, enslaved fathers told stories to their children that provided an opportunity for both entertainment and instruction of important survival lessons. For example, Charity Moore reminisced that her father frequently told her entertaining and useful stories to her and the other children on the plantation: 'He telled all them tales 'bout de fox and de rabbit, de squirrel, brer tarrapin, and sich lak, long befo' they come out in a book. He sho' did!'[742] These stories not only entertained these children but taught them valuable lessons of survival. However, it is important to note that not every single action fathers took had to be a survival lesson. It was equally important that parents and children had quality time together. For example, William Curtis's parents told ghost and witch stories around the fire: 'I don't guess dey was sho' nuff so, but we all thought dey was.'[743] Curtis clearly valued these rare quiet moments with his family, especially as his enslaver later sold his father to a man in Virginia, 'br[eaking their] hearts', and they did not reunite until after the war.[744]

Enslaved Fathers as Role Models

Although enslavers attempted to position themselves as the patriarchal standard on plantations, enslaved children respected their fathers as role models. Many enslaved people took pleasure in describing how their fathers covertly undermined the slave system and subverted the expectations of 'breeding practices' that classified enslaved men solely as bodies in a reproductive machine. Camp's theory about enslaved women's three bodies – one a site of exploitation, one a site of that subjective experience, and one a site of pleasure and resistance – can also be applied to enslaved men.[745] Enslavers exploited enslaved men's bodies as reproductive machines, while the men themselves used their bodies as sites of resistance and as strongholds of protection for their children against their abusive enslavers. Indeed, men attempted to be examples of

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[740] Hudson, *To Have and to Hold,* 166; Hilde, *Slavery, Fatherhood and Paternal Duty*, 92; Blassingame, *Slave Community,* 190; Stevenson, *Life in Black and White,* 251.
[741] Hudson, *To Have and to Hold*, 157
[742] Charity Moore, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn143/, 205.
[743] William Curtis, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 48.
[744] Curtis, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 48.
[745] Camp, 'The Pleasures of Resistance,' 543-544.

masculinity to their children by teaching them how to survive slavery. Those that looked up to their fathers as role models for rebellious actions often referenced actions such as absenteeism, stealing, fighting, sneaking away to attend secret parties, and protecting the community from white assailants (such as patrollers looking to break up an off plantation gathering).

Enslaved fathers, and enslaved parents in general, ensured that their children knew they must wear a protective mask around their enslavers.[746] Blassingame has argued that children saw two different sides to their fathers – in the slave quarters he 'acted like a man.'[24] This performance of masculinity was carried out by verbally criticising their enslavers, and by 'being a leader, protector, and provider.'[25] The second side that children saw to their fathers, cites Blassingame, was one *outside* of the quarters when men came into contact with enslavers and acted obediently and submissively.[26] Indeed, enslaved men passed on these tools as survival mechanisms to their children, and in this way asserted their fatherly authority by teaching them about the dangers of their enslavers. For example, J.H. Banks remarked that 'a slave mother or father is expected to impress upon their children the necessity of strict servility to the master, mistress, and their children, no matter what their suffering may be, otherwise they are blamed for any spirit or desire manifested by their children for relief.'[747] This duality of behaviour was a survival mechanism. While enslaved people were apparently submissive to their enslavers to their face, behind their back they carried out small, day-to-day, covert acts of resistance. This was an important survival mechanism not just for slavery in general, but also for when facing enforced reproductive practices: maintaining an identity beyond that of 'breeder' enforced by their enslavers was crucial to their own psychological well-being. Thus, parents taught their children to survive and navigate the dangers and hard labour of slavery and forced reproduction whilst also keeping their own personal identity secretly from slaveholders.

Though not necessarily *actively* taught by their fathers, children observed some types of resistance, such as absenteeism, and praised them as acts of bravery. The historiography of resistance has primarily regarded absenteeism as a primarily female form of resistance as they allegedly had more emotional ties to the children left behind than the men did.[748] Thus, enslaved women practiced absenteeism, a temporary form of fugitivity, rather than permanently running away as men were more likely to do. Fugitivity is usually associated with enslaved men, who allegedly were more willing to leave their families, and lauded as an act of bravery. Women, argues historians such as Camp, were less likely to permanently run away as they felt emotionally tied to their children.[749] This makes the damaging suggestion that enslaved fathers who escaped

[746] Blassingame, *Slave Community,* 190.
[747] Banks, *A Narrative of Events of the Life of J.H. Banks,* 23.
[748] Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 35.
[749] *Ibid*., 37.

slavery permanently did *not* feel an emotional attachment to their children. Instead, men's participation in absenteeism demonstrates how enslaved fathers needed a respite from the violence and horror of day-to-day slavery and that they were also emotionally attached to the children they returned to. Children valued these small, day-to-day acts of rebellion. Henrietta Smith's grandfather, Amos, used to absent himself from his Louisiana plantation to avoid the violent tendencies of his overseer. Amos was 'a good working man', who 'just wouldn't take a blow.'[750] Amos took pride in his skills and the effort put into his work on the plantation and was unwilling to endure the unfair violence of the overseer. Amos's wife, Susan, also 'wouldn't be conquered neither', as she too fled the whip.[751] Smith's reminiscences of her grandparents, and the pride with which she speaks about her grandfather, shows how much she valued these rebellious characteristics. Though she mentions her grandmother she discusses her in less detail, which demonstrates the depth of value she assigned to her grandfather. Aaron Ford also placed great value on his grandfather, emphasizing the fatherly duties he carried out.[752] 'I remember my grandfather all right, he de one told me how to catch otters. Told me how to set traps.'[753] Ford's grandfather ensured that he learned how to survive slavery by teaching him how to hunt and feed both himself and his family – skills often taught by fathers and other men in the communities.

By talking exclusively about their grandfathers, Smith and Ford demonstrate the importance of extended kin-networks as well as the role that stepparents played. Although Hilde downplays the role of stepfathers by maintaining they were *less* important than biological fathers, arguing that they were the result of forced reproduction, second marriages, and sales, she still maintains that children showed respect to those that treated them as their own.[754] Forced reproduction may have indeed resulted in stepparents, but this did not mean they had any less value, and stepfathers generally treated their children as their own.[755] When discussing his father's children, Charles Green Dortch grouped his father's stepdaughter, Cordelia, with the rest of his biological children with his first and second wife.[756] Some children discussed their father and stepfather equally, suggesting that their families interacted as an extended yet unified family. Margaret Nickerson told her interviewer that her 'pa made soap fum ashes when cleaning new ground', and

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[750] Henrietta Smith, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6 (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 193.
[751] Smith, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:6, 193-4.
[752] Aaron Ford, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn142, 75.
[753] Ford, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:2, 75.
[754] Hilde, *Slavery, Fatherhood, and Paternal Duty,* 74, 75-6.
[755] Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll,* 486.
[756] Charles Green Dortch, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 169.

that her 'step-pa useter make shoes frum cowhides fur de farm han's on de plantation.'[757] Nickerson applauds the resourcefulness of both her father *and* stepfather, valuing the roles in her life equally. Forced reproduction often meant that women had more than one sexual or marital partner, and thus enslaved children had more than one father-type figure in their lives.

Marital ceremonies were also important for the children of said couples. Although enslaved children generally loved their parents no matter the circumstances, some related their identity to their parent's marital status. Isiah Jeffries referred to himself as an 'outside child', as his father was not his mother's husband.[758] Jeffries also refers to three of his half-siblings as 'outside children' as they 'each had a different father.'[759] Despite identifying as somewhat 'outside' of their family unit, Jeffries remarks that Ned, his mother's husband, 'was as good to me as he was to his own chillun,' and therefore fathered Jeffries as if he were his biological son. Although Jeffries subtly suggests that his mother's enslaver forced her to have children by different men, Ned importantly took on the fatherly role that the other men could not. In time, Ned 'come to be our Pa.'[760] Just as enslaved women loved their children that were born of rape, so did extended kin-networks and the wider slave community.[761]

Stepfathers that fathered children as their own proved that fatherhood came from more than their biological utility. Where enslavers valued men as far as they could procreate and then dismissed their authority, reducing them to their basic biological function, the love of stepfathers proved that fatherhood extended beyond their reproductive capabilities. Patricia Hill Collins argued for 'othermothering' – mothering tasks carried out by women who were not the children's biological or 'bloodmother' such as 'grandmothers, sisters, aunts or cousins.'[762] Women shared mothering responsibilities, and so mothering did not need to be biological.[763] Nor did fatherhood. As other males in the community who were not 'bloodfathers', such as elders and stepfathers, contributed to the raising of enslaved children, this too can be quantified as 'otherfathering.' This 'otherfathering' was an important non-biological form of fathering that allowed fathers to bond with their children and exert their authority as a parent and be present in their lives.

Hannah Plummer's grandfather also demonstrates the ways that communities and fathers attempted to protect children. Plummer's mistress, Caroline, whipped Plummer's mother,

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[757] Margaret Nickerson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn030, 251.
[758] Isiah Jeffries, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn143/, 17.
[759] Jeffries, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:3, 17.
[760] *Ibid*.
[761] Livesey, 'Conceived in Violence,' 373-391; See Chapter Two for more on fatherhood and 'otherfathering.'
[762] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 178.
[763] *Ibid*.

Bertcha, 'every day, and about anything.'[764] Unable to 'please her in anything', Bertcha ran away to the near-by woods after a particularly brutal beating with a carriage whip.[765] After three weeks, Governor Manly, their enslaver, approached Bertcha's father, Jimmie, and told him 'if he did not get Bertcha back he would whup him.'[766] Jimmie told Manly he did not know where Bertcha was, and that as Jimmie belonged to Manley he could inflict as much violence as wanted on him, but he would not 'take 'one step to hunt Bertcha', his daughter.[767] Whether or not Jimmie was feigning ignorance about Bertcha's whereabouts, he successfully stood up to his enslaver's insistence that he turn her over, asserting both his masculinity and his authority as a father whilst simultaneously protecting his daughter from the violence of his enslavers.

Enslaved children valued bravery such as this the most in their fathers. Mary Gladdy described her father as a 'very large, powerful man,' who refused to be abused by the plantation foreman, who was also enslaved.[768] On one such occasion, 'a colored foreman on the Hines Holt place once undertook to whip him; but [her] father wouldn't allow him to do it.'[769] This noncompliance led the foreman to recruit six other enslaved people to help him, 'but all six of them couldn't 'out-man' my daddy!'[770] Despite his efforts to 'out-man' the others enslaved men, the foreman ultimately shot Gladdy's father, 'inflicting wounds from which he never fully recovered.'[771] Gladdy's reminiscences, and the emphasis on 'out-man[ing]' the other slaves, shows that Mary admired this performance of masculinity and bravery, and respected her father for standing up, alone, against so many other people that wanted to hurt him. Similarly, Bryant Huff's father's enslaver 'rule[d] his small kingdom with an iron hand.'[772] But Huff's father, Daniel, 'was the only man who did not fear "Marse" Rigerson.'[773] Joe Robinson's father, enslaved by a man named Rube Black, was a 'large, strong man' who 'resisted his master and tried to kill him.'[774] These recollections emphasise the physical and emotional strength of enslaved fathers, and the routes that they took to try to protect themselves and their families from the violence of overseers, foremen, and enslavers. Lewis Bonner, enslaved in Texas, provided a more dramatic example of

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[764] Hannah Plummer, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 180.
[765] Plummer, Slave Narrative Project, Vol.11:2, 180.
[766] *Ibid*.
[767] *Ibid*.
[768] Mary Gladdy, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 17.
[769] Gladdy, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:2, 17.
[770] *Ibid*.
[771] *Ibid*.
[772] Bryant Huff, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 238.
[773] Huff, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:2 (1936), 238.
[774] Joe Robinson, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, Indiana (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn050/, 162.

his father's bravery. He stated that 'one morning […] my father killed 18 white men and ran away,' because 'they said he was lazy and whipped him[.]'[775] After three years, Bonner's father came back and 'killed seven before they could kill him.'[776]

Not all acts of bravery were violent in nature. Frank Adamson held his father in high esteem for disregarding his enslaver's authority and marrying who he wished: 'He sho' was a man; he run all de other [men] 'way from my mammy [Lavinia] and took up wid her widout askin' de marster.'[777] Adamson's father blatantly ignored any reproductive practices that his enslaver attempted to enact and asserted his masculinity by chasing away any other potential suitors and choosing Lavinia to be his wife without his enslaver's permission. Adamson clearly valued this bravery in his father, proudly stating that he 'sho was a man.'[778]

The act of telling stories of their heroism and escapades encouraged children to admire their fathers' bravery. Abram Harris recalled that his father, Jake, used to tell his children about the times he would 'run off en hide in de cane thickets fer days en days kase he marster so mean en beat him up so bad.'[779] Jake's motivation for telling Harris about these incidents may have been to warn him of the dangers of the white slaveholders, the violence that their owner was capable of, and as a way to pass on tools of survival (in this instance, absenteeism) for Harris to protect himself. Jake also told Harris that he would sneak back to the plantation at night where the enslaved women would 'slip him sum meat en bread.'[780] This served to demonstrate to Harris that there was safety within his community, that members would be willing to protect and help him.

Formerly enslaved children also loved to tell stories about how their fathers fought other white people in positions of authority, such as overseers or patrollers. James Morgan recalled his father's ability to slip away from the clutches of patrollers when he snuck out at night for social engagements. 'He was one of the ones that the pateroles couldn't catch,' boasted Morgan.[781] When the patrollers tried to apprehend him by breaking into the quarters of the enslaved people he was visiting, Morgan's father would gather up a 'shovelful of ashes' and 'scatter the ashes in their faces and rush out.'[782] Morgan's father was also resourceful: 'if he couldn't find no ashes, he would

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[775] Lewis Bonner, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn130/, 17.
[776] Bonner, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 17.
[777] Fran Adamson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn141/, 14.
[778] Adamson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:1, 14.
[779] Abram Harris, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 172.
[780] Harris, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 172.
[781] James Morgan, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 5 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn025/, 142.
[782] Morgan, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:5, 143.

always have a handful of pepper with him, and he would throw that in their faces and beat it.'[783] This demonstration of resourcefulness and creative rebelliousness was important to enslaved children. Fathers taught their children to take pleasure in their bodies, valuing themselves beyond 'reproducers', and to use them as sites of resistance.[784]

Enslaved fathers fought every day to protect their families from the physical and emotional violence inflicted by their enslavers. Sales and separations proved the most effective way for slaveholders to permanently revoke the authority of fathers. Enslaved men such as Robert Glenn's father, discussed previously, fought hard to keep their families together. Hudson maintains that because enslaved people could be sold away at any given moment, they tried to not become 'emotionally attached to their children.'[785] However, just as Livesey conveys how WPA testimony provides evidence of bonds between mothers and children conceived through sexual assault, the evidence also clearly shows bonds between *fathers* and children.[786] Indeed, to say that parents did not even become *subconsciously* attached to their children would be remiss. Adelaide J. Vaughn regaled her interviewer with the story of her mother, who, when her enslaver sold her away from her family in Virginia, had her final moments with her father (Adelaide's grandfather). He carried her to the wagon, and then, 'when he had gone as far as they would let him go, he put her in the wagon and turned his head away.'[787] This emotionally heavy moment is indicative of the emotional attachment that fathers had with their children. After, Vaughn's mother wondered why her father turned away from her, 'but later she understood that he hated so bad to 'part from her and couldn't do nothing to prevent it that he couldn't bear to look at her.'[788] Unable to protect their families from separation dealt fathers an emotional blow.

J.H. Banks described the emotional turmoil his mother and father experienced whenever their enslaver, Charles L. Yancey, sold away one of his siblings. According to Banks, Yancey enslaved thirty people, and a 'large number of those were the offspring of [Banks's] mother and father, who raised sixteen children.'[789] By reproducing the workforce, Yancey was able to sell off some of the children when he found himself in financial trouble. Banks recalled that 'whenever he found himself in pressing need of cash, he would sell off a slave', including Banks's sister, Charlotte.[790] Banks's mother and father were 'deeply moved at the sight', and his father's inability to protect

[783] *Ibid*.
[784] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 66-68.
[785] Hudson, *To Have and to Hold*, 157.
[786] Livesey, 'Conceived in Violence', 382.
[787] Adelaide J. Vaughn, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 9.
[788] Vaughn, Slave Narrative Project. Vol. 2:7, 9.
[789] Banks, *A Narrative of Events of the Life of J.H. Banks,* 9.
[790] *Ibid*., 18.

his children weighed heavily on his conscience.[791] Whereas his mother was visibly distressed by the sale of Charlotte, his father, Novel, 'did not say much in this trial, but he laboured under great distress,' to the point that Yancey noticed a difference in him.[792] When asked, Novel replied:

> Why, master, if I should see one of your daughters sold away from you, and you did not ever expect to see her again in this life, I could give a pretty close guess how you felt; and now, if you can just place yourself in my stead, and think how you would feel at a separation such as I had to endure, and then my other children weeping around me, you can tell what the matter is with me.[793]

According to Banks, selling a father's child before him was 'enough to break a heart of stone!'[794] Novel's distress at seeing his enslaver sell his children away from him left him feeling powerless, due to his lack of authority and ability to protect his children from the whims of his enslaver. He insisted that if Yancey had to sell away any slaves, he should sell Novel, as he did not 'wish to witness the selling of [his] children.'[795] Novel's children made up the bulk of Yancey's workforce, and so by reproducing, Novel faced the risk of seeing Yancey sell his children every day to finance his debts, treating them as assets to be sold and liquified rather than as children.

Seeing their fathers struggle emotionally had a profound impact on enslaved children. As such, children were protective of their fathers, and though they could not control if their master decided to sell them, they instead often tried to defend them from the abuses of others, especially from white children. The white children of Ellen Cragin's enslaver boasted that their father had violently abused Cragin's father.[796] Cragin retaliated by retorting, 'They better not beat my papa.'[797] Cragin then beat the white children 'for tellin' it.'[798] Though this attitude may be a result of the hot-headedness that comes with puberty and adolescence, Cragin was undoubtedly extremely protective of her father. This therefore demonstrates the love and value children had for their fathers, going so far as to violently defend them against the belittling taunts of white children. This is not unlike how children demonstrated their love for their mothers, and thus puts fathers on equal footing with mothers for the affection and love from their children.

Through observing acts of bravery, physical retaliation, and performances of masculinity, enslaved children looked up to their fathers as role models for such acts. Though they may not have necessarily instructed their children to do this themselves, especially as fathers wanted to

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[791] *Ibid*.
[792] *Ibid*., 18-19.
[793] *Ibid*., 19.
[794] *Ibid*.
[795] *Ibid*., 19-20.
[796] Ellen Cragin, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 43.
[797] Cragin, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:2, 43
[798] *Ibid.*

protect their children, and actions such as these may have led to violent ends (such as in the case of Mary Gladdy's father), these characteristics were incredibly valuable to enslaved children. Status within enslaved communities is primarily defined by their reputation – as strong, brave, hardworking, or protective. By building up their status within their communities, enslaved men earned the respect of their children, overthrowing enslavers' attempts to appropriate their authority and leadership as a father. Revising past historians' assumptions that those in the 'Big House' were held in the highest esteem, Blassingame maintained that enslaved people had their own hierarchy.[799] These men in particular ascribed to what enslaved children valued most – fathers that were brave, cunning, and could circumnavigate the harshest aspects of slavery by stealing to feed their families or protect loved ones. More recently, Doddington and Lussana have explored other ways that men asserted their authority and status within slave communities. While Doddington argues that men were more individual, competing with other men 'in terms of fitness, health, and number of children they provided' to 'craft homosocial hierarchies based on sexual prowess,' Lussana emphasises the importance of collectiveness and brotherhood.[800] Communities revered elders, and older men often acted as 'surrogate father[s] and brother[s].'[801] Forced reproduction complicated family structures and necessitated a strong network of extended family and friends to help raise enslaved children. Thus, familial relationships between men and families were important within the context of forced reproduction as it meant that fatherhood did not always have to be found in biological fathers. Furthermore, as forced reproduction and enslavers' appropriation or dismissal of fatherhood made it challenging for fathers to be able to enforce their authority, the actions that they *were* able to carry out resisted the machinations of slavery that reduced the role of father to that of biological necessity to create new life.

Stories about how fathers used to sneak away to secret parties off the plantation to revel and to court women taught children the steps in how to take pleasure in their own bodies, and how to take control of their own relationships, refuting the control of their enslavers and their reproductive demands.[802] Henry Brown's father even forged his own pass to escape to parties, as 'he could write as well as master.'[803] Louis Pettis, enslaved in South Carolina, recalled how her father snuck away two nights a week to 'have a dance.'[804] His access to a pass did not deter him.[805]

[799] Ibid., 139-151.
[800] Doddington, 'Manhood, Sex, and Power', 151; Lussana, *My Brother Slaves*, 9.
[801] Lussana, *My Brother Slaves,* 35, 44.
[802] Camp, *Closer to Freedom,* 66-68.
[803] Henry Brown, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn141/, 124.
[804] Louise Pettis, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 5, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn025/, 335.
[805] Pettis, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:5, 335.

Pettis's father scattered hot coals to deter the patrollers, and 'studied up a way to get himself and several others outer showing their passes that night.'[806] Her father's demonstration of rebelliousness was also reinforced by his show of community by thinking up ways to help others resist slavery, too. Pettis valued this rebellious trait in her father as his actions helped destroy the authority of his enslavers. Callie Elder's father was similarly rebellious, but was often caught by his enslaver, 'Master Billy.'[807] When Billy set the hounds on him, Elder's father fought back with knives, to the point that his enslavers 'had to keep knives' away from him as he would 'cut 'em up so dey would die.'[808] Likewise, Nellie Smith's father ran away 'because he would not take a whuppin.''[809] His obstinate refusal to be tortured by his enslaver demonstrated to his daughter a sense of will and bravery in the face of systematic violence. These narratives, told by those who were children at the time, demonstrate that witnessing acts of bravery as performed by their fathers left a lasting memory and impact on them, and were used by respondents as examples of their fathers' personality – one defined by bravery.

Importantly, status also came from African heritage. Often, historians narrowly define fatherhood through a Western paradigm, assuming that enslaved people only valued those that could protect and provide for their families. Instead, some formerly enslaved respondents expressed value for those that carried on the traditions of their African ancestors and considered them the bravest out of the other men on the plantation. For example, Edward Glenn, who experienced slavery in Forsythe County, Georgia, informed his interviewer that 'those who refused to take whippings were generally negroes of African royal blood, or their descendants.'[810] Glenn's father 'would not take a whipping.'[811] Although this may only be a perceived tradition, or something that had been passed down as a tale between generations, it is still an important example of how American-born enslaved people found solace in their African heritage. This suggests that enslaved people still found importance and value in the traditions of their ancestors, and that some high-status African families centred around the female. However, typicality and region are important. In other African regions and groups of people, the male was the figurehead, with the father taking on the decision-making role.[812] Clare Robertson also maintains that in 'West

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[806] *Ibid*.
[807] Callie Elder, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 309.
[808] Elder, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:1, 309.
[809] Nellie Smith, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 287.
[810] Edward Glenn, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 327.
[811] Glenn, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:4, 327.
[812] Clare Robertson, 'Africa into the Americas? Slavery and Women, the Family, and the Gender Division of Labor', in David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the*

Africa' fathers and older sons received access to food first, taking the majority of the protein before the women.[813] According to Robertson, families were not matrifocal in structure, but dominated by patriarchal authority, and forced reproduction in the US destabilised this traditional family structure.[814]

Many families emphasised the importance of their African heritage and used it to strengthen their connections to one another, taking pride in their identity. 'Aunt' Adeline, enslaved in Tennessee, recalled that she 'had always been told' (presumably by her mother and father):

> that [she] was a Negro of African stock. That it was no disgrace to be a Negro and had it not been for the white folks who brought us over here from Africa as slaves, we would never have been here and would have been much better off.[815]

Adeline's family emphasised the importance of where she and her kin had come from, despite the efforts of their enslavers to erase memories of her ancestry by dismissing the male side of the family by emphasising the matrilineal line through *partus sequitur ventrem.*

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Forced reproduction in the antebellum South complicated enslaved fathers' relationships with their children. Slaveholders exerted their control by forcing enslaved men to witness other slaves rape their wives and daughters, by coercing them into marriages with enslaved women against their will, and by pressuring them to have large numbers of children. These measures were all carried out in the name of economic profit for Southern slaveholders. Coerced reproduction had a profound impact not only on the way that fathers interacted with their children, but also how children viewed and interacted with their fathers. The legacy of forced reproduction is evident in the testimonies and published narratives from enslaved and formerly enslaved people, as although many men fought hard to embrace fatherhood, build relationships with their children,

Americas (Indiana University Press, 1996), 12; However, Niara Sudarkasa argues that in precolonial Sub-Saharan Africa, women were 'conspicuous in high places, and that gender was 'only one of the defining features of status.' Sudarkasa maintains that although women deferred to their husbands, men also deferred to elder women, or wives of elder men. Thus, it is reductive to generalise various West African and Sub-Saharan communities as a homogenous community. Moreover, although enslaved communities used oral traditions to preserve their African heritage and knowledge of their ancestors, those born in the US slowly formed 'African American' traditions and cultures of their own, merging the old with the new. (See: Niara Sudarkasa, 'The 'Status of Women' in Indigenous African Societies', in Andrea Cornwall (ed), *Readings in Gender in Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2005), 25-31.

[813] Robertson, 'Africa into the Americas?', 12.

[814] *Ibid*., 13.

[815] Aunt Adeline, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 12.

and protect them from the horrors of slavery, some formerly enslaved men still did not have a relationship with their children even after emancipation.

Despite previous historians' assertions that marriage meant little more than polygamy, most enslaved fathers made every effort to not only provide for and protect their families, but also to bond emotionally and stand up as role models for their offspring when they could.[816] However, forced reproduction was inescapable. As has been shown, reproductive practices often prevented enslaved men from performing their role of father in a variety of ways. As Foster contends, enslavers denied enslaved men a 'fatherly role' by forcing them to procreate with more than one woman.[817] In this way, enslavers prevented physical access to their children. In split-plantation families, enslaved fathers had to gain permission from their owners to visit their families. Of course, many fathers made painful efforts to slip away to their families unbeknownst to their enslavers or patrollers, but ultimately, enslavers controlled the time and space where fathers were able to be intimate with their children and wives.

Reproductive practices and the emphasis on motherhood through matrilineal legislation such as *partus sequitur ventrem* dismissed fatherhood beyond its biological use in the conception of children. The emphasis on motherhood over fatherhood and the desire of white slaveholding men to be the only 'patriarch' of the plantation created a physical and emotional barrier between enslaved men and their children. However, as demonstrated, fathers worked hard to circumnavigate these methods, utilising a spectrum of methods. Indeed, enslaved men worked to provide for and protect their children, act as role models through their status or as an example of bravery and fought daily with their enslaver for authority over their children physically and emotionally. Success depended on a variety of factors – the personality of both the father and their enslaver, whether enslavers regularly separated families through sale, whether the father lived on the same plantation as their family, and the level of severity of reproductive practices implemented by the slaveholder. Indeed, fatherhood is a concept that is 'at once varied, particular and perfectly imperfect,' and immensely complicated.[818] By forcing enslaved people to reproduce, slaveholders constructed barriers to fatherhood. Although detrimental to some families, other enslaved men tried to break down or circumnavigate these barriers to embrace their children and loved ones by any means necessary.

[816] Gutman, *The Black Family,* 13.
[817] Foster, 'The Sexual Abuse of Black Men', 456.
[818] Rothschild, 'Introduction to Reconstructing Fatherhood,' 312.

Chapter Three
The Regimentation of Health: Medical Governance and the Value of Enslaved Bodies

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Not only did enslavers interfere with the social and familial intimate lives of enslaved people, but they also regimented their general and reproductive health. This interference manifested in the surveillance and control over food, medicine, and exercise. Enslavers intervened in these aspects of enslaved people's daily lives to ensure that they either grew up to be productive producers or that they reproduced future producers. The medical care of enslaved people has proven a divisive topic amongst scholars of slavery. While some, such as Richard H. Steckel have optimistically argued that enslavers fed enslaved adults well, others have pointed out that this 'well' is relative.[819] Enslaved men, long stereotyped by white enslavers as large, muscular labourers, were actually malnourished and suffered from low immunity; Thomas Foster has argued in his most recent work that it is important that historians do not impose their own modern image of a 'muscular' man, and instead understand that enslaved men's diet and labour would have resulted in disproportionate or weak muscles from repetitive work.[820] Moreover, Steckel argues that accounts from both the enslaved and enslavers describing children as having 'plump stomachs' (kwashiorkor) and 'shiny skin' are more indicative of a malnourished body than a healthy one.[821] By feeding enslaved children too much or too little, enslavers attempted to regiment enslaved children's diet to form productive producers and reproducers. In this way, the rationing of food became a part of enslavers' reproductive regimentation of enslaved peoples' lives. Slaveholders' determination to match up 'strong' and 'healthy' enslaved couples unearths numerous questions about how exactly enslavers defined and classified 'healthy' slaves. Were enslavers concerned about *too much* food as well as too little? How did they calculate what they deemed the correct amount? Did they prefer the perception of a healthy body over an *actual* healthy person? What did the quintessential 'healthy' slave look like? How did enslavers' control over food influence the fecundity and fertility of enslaved people? To what extent did enslavers concern themselves with the feeding regimes of enslaved children on plantations? How did their

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[819] Richard H. Steckel, 'Women, Work, and Health Under Plantation Slavery in the United States,' in David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Indiana University Press, 1996), 52.
[820] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus,* 16-17.
[821] Steckel, 'Women, Work, and Health', 51.

diet affect their growth and therefore contribute to the cycle of forced reproduction where enslavers raised enslaved children to one day become reproducers of slavery? What were the thought processes behind how they distributed rations? This chapter will probe these questions and conclude how enslavers intimately linked general 'good' health with fertility and reproduction.

While enslaved men and women raised their families with love and care, their enslavers saw these familial units as commodified bodies, primed for labour or sale. Likewise, enslaved parents were concerned with the general health, happiness, and wellbeing of their children while slaveholders were preoccupied with the health of these children and the 'stunting' of their growth. The nutrition needed to sustain healthy growth increased during adolescence.[822] Thus, enslavers emphasised the importance of feeding regimes, exercise, and preventative medicine in order to ensure that children grew up to be efficient producers, but also productive *re*producers. This chapter will therefore explore how enslavers forced their concept of 'health' on enslaved people by exploring the link between food, gender, and age; by investigating how the distribution of food affected enslaved people's growth and the motivations behind this; through questioning how enslavers used medicine and exercise to ensure children grew up to be productive workers; and by exploring how enslavers and overseers treated pregnant enslaved women.

Previous literature on food and slavery have focused on one of two strands. The first comprises of a body of work on African American food cultures and how they have been influenced by enslaved people's foodways and southern traditional cooking.[823] The second strand of work focuses on whether enslaved people had enough to eat, utilising modern knowledge about nutrition to estimate the number of calories and protein enslaved people consumed in relation to the laborious work they carried out. Scholars such as Steckel, Cheryll Ann Cody, and Leslie Howard Owens have studied the relationship between food, diet, and disease, exploring how poor seasonal diet led to lower immune systems and thus illness and disease.[824] Steckel, Phillip R. P. Coelho, and Robert A. McGuire also researched the average height of adult slaves and how their diet meant that they were shorter than the average white adult of the time.[825] Eric B. Schneider

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[822] Richard H., Steckel, 'A Peculiar Population: The Nutrition, Health, and Mortality of American Slaves from Childhood to Maturity,' *Journal of Economic History*, 46 (1986), 724.
[823] For examples of works on traditional southern cooking and foodways, see: Jennifer Jensen Wallach, Psyche Williams-Forson, and Rebecca Sharpless, *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (University of Arkansas Press, 2015); Frederick Douglas Opie, *Hog and Hominy: Soul Food from Africa to America* (Columbia University Press, 2008).
[824] Steckel, , 'A Peculiar Population', 721-741; Steckel, 'Women, Work, and Health', 43-60; Richard H. Steckel, 'Diets Versus Diseases: A Reply,' *Journal of Economic History,* 60 (2000), 247-259; Cody, 'Cycles of Work and Childbearing Seasonality', 61-78; Leslie Howard Owens, *This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South* (Oxford University Press USA-OSO, 1977).
[825] Steckel, 'Diets Versus Diseases', 247-259; Philip R. P. Coelho and Robert A. McGuire, 'Diets Versus Diseases: The Anthropometrics of Slave Children', *Journal of Economic History,* 60 (2000), 232-246.

meanwhile argues that foetuses and infants experienced a pre- or post-natal predictive adaptive response, proving that nutritional deficiency both inside and outside of the womb determined the overall growth and height of enslaved people, therefore influencing the value that their enslavers ascribed to their body and determined whether they deemed their mothers 'good breeders.'[826]

This chapter moves away from analyses of calorific consumption that use the benefit of hindsight and modern understandings of nutrition. It instead focuses on what enslavers themselves deemed enough food, how they were concerned with pregnancy and the growth of children, and how this concern with food, medicine, and size correlated with forced reproduction and value at the market. An examination of enslaved people at different stages of the life cycle reveals how valuation fluctuated with age, and how enslavers interfered in reproduction at every stage. This chapter will thus first establish the existence of a proto-eugenic ideology amongst enslavers and their emphasis on certain desirable bodies, before moving on to examine the relation of these ideal characteristics with feeding patterns and the medical governance of enslaved people throughout the life cycle, beginning by examining children, then adults and pregnant women, and then finally elderly enslaved people. The health and valuation of enslaved people is intimately linked with enslavers' thought-process and motivation behind the matching up of specific enslaved couples, as they took interest in the most 'sound' and 'likely' of enslaved men and women.

'Desirable' Bodies

Enslavers' attention to the amount of food they rationed out to enslaved communities and their encouragement of exercise stemmed from their desire to control the physical size and strength of enslaved people, cultivating bodies for the market. As discussed in Chapter One, enslavers liked to force couples together that they thought were of the same strength or size in the hopes that they would in turn produce strong and healthy children in a distinctly pro-natalist and eugenic approach. Enslavers hence implemented a type of pre-'eugenic' practice before Francis Galton coined the term in 1883. Thus, pro-natalist ideology and activity was present in the south, despite the absence of a developed literature on 'social Darwinism' or eugenics. Paul A. Lombardo argues that the definition of eugenics is fluid and has a variety of different meanings and methods of implementation.[827] He defines eugenic practices as the encouragement of the 'most prosperous and successful' to reproduce, while preventing the 'deviant, the disabled, the diseased, or the criminal' from reproducing.[828] This was in an effort to prevent the 'inferior races'

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[826] Eric. B Schneider, 'Children's Growth in an Adaptive Framework: Explaining the Growth Patterns of American Slaves and Other Historical Populations,' *The Economic History Review,* 70 (2016), 2-29.
[827] Paul A. Lombardo, 'Introduction: Looking Back at Eugenics,' in: Paul A. Lombardo, Angela Logan, and Maxwell J. Mehlman (eds), *Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era* (Indiana University Press, 2008), 6-7.
[828] Lombardo, 'Introduction', 6-7.

from reproducing.[829] However, enslavers actively *encouraged* who they deemed the 'inferior races' to reproduce within the confines of slavery. Outside of slavery, free Black people had no use to enslavers, and thus no reason, in their opinion, to reproduce. This eugenic ideology is even more apparent after emancipation, particularly in the early- to mid-twentieth century when eugenics programmes sprung up across the US, and legislation such as the Virginia Racial Integrity Act (1924) attempted to curtail 'race-mixing' by forcing people to declare their race on marriage and birth certificates.[830] Eugenicist Charles Davenport's involvement in the American Breeder's Association (est. 1903) saw the society move from discussions around breeding strong strains of corn to strong white *people*.[831] The comparisons of breeding seeds with breeding people stem from the antebellum period, as seen in journals such as *De Bow's Review.* Pro-slavery writers in this journal insisted that

> in the whole reproductive system of nature [referring to vegetables, animals, and enslaved people], it has been universally established as a rule that a healthy and vigorous offspring can be expected only from parents of similar constitution; and in in all cases where this principle has been acted on with perseverance, it has not only succeeded in preventing deterioration, but in superinducing progressive development.[832]

This writer further argued that the selection of 'the poorest plants for seed, was one of the main reasons which caused that fine variety of cane called the *Creole* to generate to such an extent that in late years it has been almost entirely banished from our fields.'[833] Even as early as 1846, enslavers and commentators on slavery were attempting to 'select' the finest 'seeds' to reproduce slavery. As Chapter One also shows, enslavers were already engaged in active forms of eugenic practices in the antebellum period by restricting who could and could not procreate and forced certain people to marry without their full consent.[834]

Utilising Lombardo's notion that the definition of eugenics is fluid, it is evident that enslavers not only interfered in marriages by adopting a pro-natalist stance where they wanted the most healthy, strong, and skilful of enslaved people ('the most prosperous and successful' within the institution of slavery) to reproduce, but they also interfered after children were born to mould them into what they thought the ideal labourer looked like. This is particularly evident in the language used by enslaved and formerly enslaved people. For example, Charlotte Martin recalled

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[829] *Ibid*.
[830] Paul A. Lombardo, 'From Better Babies to Bunglers: Eugenics on Tobacco Road' in: Paul A. Lombardo, Angela Logan, and Maxwell J. Mehlman (eds), *Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era* (Indiana University Press, 2008), 49.
[831] Marilyn M. Singleton, 'The 'Science' of Eugenics: America's Moral Detour,' *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons,* 19 (2014), 123.
[832] 'Louisiana Sugar', *De Bow's Review*, Vol. 2, July 1846 to December 1846, 323-325.
[833] 'Louisiana Sugar', *De Bow's Review*, Vol. 2, 325.
[834] Jones, *Labor of Love,* 35.

that in Florida, her enslaver, Wilkinson, 'found it very profitable to raise and sell slaves,' and '*selected* the strongest and best male and female slaves and mated them exclusively for breeding.'[835] This language has a distinctively pro-natalist and 'proto-eugenic' undertone, and Smithers argues that eugenic language was prevalent in WPA respondents' testimonies.[836] Respondents used contemporary language and ideology to make sense of the past and their enslavers' intentions. The fact that Wilkinson 'selected' only the fittest of the enslaved men and women suggests that he put much thought behind how he considered someone to be the 'strongest and best' of the lot, and what he expected of their future children. It is also indicative of a hierarchy of enslaved people – though one created by the enslaver, *not* the enslaved communities themselves. According to one unnamed WPA respondent, enslavers in Kentucky only allowed 'the strong healthy slave women…to have children,' and often prevented them from 'mat[ing] with their own husbands.'[837] Instead, their enslavers 'bred them like live stock to some male negro who was kept *for that purpose* because of his strong physique.'[838] The respondent compared this selection process to livestock, stating that it was 'just like [how] horses, cattle, dogs and other animals are managed today in order to improve the stock.'[839] On this plantation, the enslaver carefully selected specific individuals and encouraged them to reproduce due to their possession of what they deemed were prime, valuable characteristics.

Examining published sources that detail descriptions of individuals reveal what enslavers valued in enslaved men and women. In particular, runaway advertisements reveal specific physical details. Though these advertisements contained descriptive details meant to identify the fugitives, they also divulge who they deemed a 'prime hand.'[840] An advertisement in the *Raleigh Register* and *North Carolina Weekly Advertiser* described Dick, twenty-six years old, as a 'dark coloured fellow, about 5 feet 10 inches high well made for strength.'[841] The *Wilmington Gazette* described Harriet (aged thirty-two or thirty-three), Bella, Elsey (aged twenty-five), and Milly (aged twenty-three), by their weight and height.[842] Harriet was 'a tall thin wench of a yellowish complexion'; Bella 'a short wench – her complexion similar to that of Harriet's'; Elsey was 'also a

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[835] Charlotte Martin, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 167 [italics own].
[836] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 103.
[837] Unknown, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 7, Kentucky (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn070/, 72, [Italics own]
[838] Unknown, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 7, 72.
[839] *Ibid*.
[840] Advertisements describing the identity of enslaved people emphasise noticeable characteristics to easily identify enslaved fugitives. Though this limits what information we can gleam form the advertisements, these sources also emphasise the visible characteristics that enslavers notice first at face value.
[841] 'Twenty Dollars Reward/Ran Away', *Raleigh Register* and *North Carolina Weekly Advertise*r, Raleigh, North Carolina, North Carolina Runaway Slave Advertisements, Digital Collection.
[842] 'Forty Dollars Reward', *Wilmington Gazette*, Wilmington, North Carolina, North Carolina Runaway Slave Advertisements, Digital Collection.

short wench…[and] has remarkable teeth and speaks quick'; and Milly was a 'slender wench of the common height, her complexion very much of the mulatto.'[843] Rather than mentioning specific identifiers, these enslavers emphasised the build and skin-tone of each enslaved person, revealing what they prioritised when valuing an enslaved person.

Enslavers and enslaved people alike typically compared the physical size of enslaved people to livestock, although accounts of this assessment from enslaved or formerly enslaved people used this comparison to demonstrate the dehumanising nature of slavery. Parent and Brown Wallace emphasised that the 'intrapersonal violence of slavebreeding cannot be underestimated' as enslavers incessantly compared enslaved men and women to plantation livestock, often as 'cattle...without human morals' and encouraged them to reproduce because that was their purpose as animals: to produce and reproduce.[844]

WPA informants regularly compared the treatment they received from their enslavers to that of livestock to reiterate the systematic and inhumane way slaveholders treated them. Willie McCullough stated that the enslaved on his South Carolina plantation 'were looked after very well in regard to their health' because 'a man can't work a sick horse or mule.'[845] Likewise, a respondent named only as 'Uncle Dave', informed his interviewer that his father, who was 'six feet six, an' weighed 248 pounds…nebah doen a hahd day's wuk in his life,' as his enslaver valued him as a 'breeder.'[846] When asked why his enslaver did not force him to work, Dave replied, 'Does stock breeders with a $10,000-stallion put 'im on de plow?... Dey call my daddy de $10,000 [slave].'[847] These comparisons effectively demonstrate how enslavers did not look after the health of enslaved communities in a benevolent, paternalistic way, but due to functionality. Indeed, McCullough impressed upon his interviewer that 'a [male] slave occupied the same place on the plantation as a mule or horse did', and they viewed the enslaved women as 'brood sows, that is from a standpoint of production.'[848] These enslavers valued strong men and fast breeding women who they could coerce into multiple successive pregnancies, just as they would with livestock.[849]

Enslavers sometimes kept those they deemed prolific 'breeders' away from the rest of their community. J.F. Boone compared this isolating practice to that of the separation of some livestock. He recalled that his father said the enslavers would 'stud 'em like horses and cattle', and that they

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[843] 'Forty Dollars Reward,' North Carolina Runaway Slave Advertisements, Digital Collection.
[844] Parent and Brown Wallace, 'Childhood and Sexual Identity Under Slavery', 387.
[845] Willie McCullough, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn112/, 77.
[846] Uncle Dave, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 323.
[847] Dave, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 323.
[848] McCullough, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:2, 77.
[849] *Ibid*.

would separate 'good healthy m[e]n and wom[en] that would breed fast', keeping them 'stalled up.'[850] Their enslaver did not force these men and women to work, and instead kept them separate to raise children from. Similarly, J.W. Whitefield informed his interviewer that in North Carolina, when a boy was born to an enslaved couple, the enslaver 'would reserve him for breeding purposes if he was healthy and robust.'[851] If he appeared to be 'puny and sickly,' the enslavers remained indifferent.[852] Whitefield concluded by stating 'if he was desirable, he was put on the stump and auctioned off by the time he was thirteen years old.'[853] This language explicitly sexualised young boys from infancy and establishes reproductive practices as evidence of the sexual exploitation of both female *and* male slaves. Enslavers' sexualisation and objectification of young boys *and* girls furthered their financial gains. Intriguingly, Whitefield's enslaver's concern with the strength and sexuality of enslaved boys contradicts most enslavers who placed that burden on enslaved women as the bearers of wombs. Although this treatment depended on the proclivity of certain enslavers, it demonstrates how forced reproduction could sometimes be systematic and organised.

Enslavers also separated women they labelled as 'breeders' from the rest of their community. Louis Napoleon recalled that enslavers knew his mother, Edith, to be a prolific 'breeder', and so kept her in their mansion 'to loom cloth for the Randolph family and slaves.'[854] Although Napoleon does not explicitly state that his enslaver forced Edith to produce children, the juxtaposition of the two sentences – that his mother was a breeder and that their enslaver kept her in the mansion – alludes to their enslaver keeping her in close proximity to maintain close surveillance over every aspect of her life, including, in particular, her social life and general health. The size of the slaveholding would also have affected enslavers' ability to carry out surveillance enslaved women such as Edith. Caitlin Rosenthal found that 'in 1860, more than 20,000 cotton planters owned more than 30 slaves.'[855] Those on smaller plantations of farms, perhaps those with just one or two families, would have been much easier to observe due to the lower population. However, on larger plantations, or those with more enslaved families and therefore larger communities, it may have been more difficult to keep an eye on specific individuals. Enslavers would therefore, such as in the case of Edith, move specific people closer by forcing them to dwell in the 'Big House'. Although

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[850] J.F Boone, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 211.
[851] J.W. Whitefield, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 139.
[852] Whitefield, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:7, 139.
[853] *Ibid*.
[854] Louis Napoleon, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 243.
[855] Caitlin Rosenthal, 'Slavery's Scientific Management: Masters and Managers', in Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman (eds.), *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of America's Economic Development* (University of Pennsylvania, 2016), 68.

the level of surveillance varied slaveholding to slave-holding, it did still exist on some level, and the methods enslavers' employed adjusted accordingly.

Parent and Brown Wallace acknowledge how enslavers paid close attention to those they deemed the healthiest. They argued that slaveholders denied 'puny men…wives and sexual rights' as they deemed them not only unproductive, weaker labourers, but also had a lower market value.[856] Enslavers also sold girls and women who were fertile, usually after an early appraisal to see if they had the potential to be good breeders.[857] As Berry found, those that were in their 'fertility prime' commanded high prices.[858] As discussed in Chapter Four, women consequently declined in value from the age of twenty-five, and men from their early thirties.[859] However, as men remain able to reproduce for longer than women, enslavers could still value them as exploitable reproductive machines for longer.

This preoccupation with 'puny' men and women reveals the pro-natalist mindset of enslavers. For example, Henry H. Buttler recalled that the enslaved people on his plantation married, but 'were compelled to first obtain permission from the master.'[860] Whether their enslaver allowed them to marry the person of their choosing depended on their physical appearance, as they wanted to 'rear negroes with perfect physiques.'[861] Buttler's enslaver, motivated by profit, attempted to control the relationships on the plantation by implementing a crude form of pro-natalist eugenics in which he paired up the most 'fit' enslaved people with one another. In an even more explicit case of eugenic ideology amongst enslavers, Cornelia Andrews recalled that her enslaver did not allow the 'runty' enslaved people to reproduce.[862] Instead, her enslaver 'operate[d] on dem lak dey does de male hog so's dat dey can't have no little runty children.'[863] This, however, does appear to be an extreme and rare occurrence. Genovese, Jennings, Jacoby, and Ned and Constance Sublette all briefly refer to the castration of enslaved men in their works, but do not give much detail or indication of its occurrence.[864] The dearth of evidence suggests that it was particularly rare to castrate supposedly 'weak' enslaved men, yet, as Foster argues, elite whites did castrate men for having sexual relations with or for allegedly raping white women.[865]

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[856] Parent and Brown Wallace, 'Childhood and Sexual Identity Under Slavery', 388.
[857] *Ibid*.
[858] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 85.
[859] Berry,'"Ter Show Yo' de Value of Slaves"', 23-24; Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 95.
[860] Henry H. Buttler, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mes161/, 180.
[861] Buttler, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:1, 180.
[862] Cornelia Andrews, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn111/, 31.
[863] Andrews, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:1, 31.
[864] For references to castration in these works see: Genovese, 'The Medical and Insurance Costs of Slaveholding', 152; Jennings, '"Us Colored Women"', 51; Jacoby, 'Slaves by Nature?' 91-92; Sublette and Sublette, *American Slave Coast.* 33.
[865] Foster, *Rethinking Rufus,* 29.

Thus, it was not unheard of to castrate enslaved men, and so it can be concluded that enslavers, *on occasion*, castrated enslaved men for the crime of being 'unfit' to reproduce, as evidenced by Andrews. One enslaver took it a step further and executed those enslaved men he deemed unsuitable. Shade Richards recalled that his enslaver did not like 'little' enslaved men, 'and when he happened to find one among his slaves he would turn the dogs on him and let them run him down.'[866] Richards's enslaver carried out explicitly eugenic ideology by killing those he deemed unacceptable to reproduce. These enslavers discarded enslaved men they deemed unacceptable to reproduce – not by sale, but through violence and death.

When appraising who the most valuable slave was, enslavers tended to pay more for tall people, and those that appeared 'likely' – likely to work hard, live a long time, and be productive, obedient servants.[867] Enslavers appraised men and women differently. Walter Johnson argues that enslavers commonly valued men for their productive abilities, and women for their *re*productive abilities.[868] Johnson hence concludes that enslavers valued fully grown enslaved men, and women who had experienced menarche.[869] Although this is accurate for the men (with the exception of the explicitly eugenic tendencies of Cornelia Andrews and Shade Richards's enslavers) women experienced a double burden where enslavers expected them to be productive producers *and* reproducers. Thus, enslavers valued 'strong' and 'healthy' women who could not only produce children quickly but could also be productive workers in the field or in domestic spaces. Charles Anderson's testimony of his time in Kentucky demonstrates this double burden women experienced. Not only did enslavers want women who had the potential to reproduce quickly, but women who had a similar physicality to men. Anderson witnessed the sale of one woman who the traders forced to wear a short dress with no sleeves 'so they could see her muscles.'[870] Enslavers bought this muscular woman to force her 'with [a] good healthy m[a]n to raise young slaves.'[871]

However, antebellum markers of strong, healthy individuals are decidedly different to today's standards. Anthropologists Felicia Fricke *et al.* studied a female skeleton recovered from Pietermaii in Curaçao and concluded that although the remains of the person determined their chronical age to be 18.5 years old, the biological age (the stage of physical development) was only

[866] Shade Richards, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 3 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn043/, 201.
[867] Johnson, *Soul By Soul,* 138.
[868] *Ibid*., 144.
[869] *Ibid*.
[870] Charles Anderson, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 7, Kentucky (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn070/, 47.

[871] Anderson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 7, 47.

between 12 and 15 years old.[872] Although the remains were from the Caribbean, we can infer a lot from the treatment of this enslaved woman and the similarities that likely appeared in the remains of antebellum enslaved people in the US. Damage to the skeleton suggests that the enslaved woman suffered from a violent and stressful life: hypoplastic lesions on her molars came from a 'stressful event' such as malnourishment or disease during her childhood or adolescence; joint changes at the knee suggests high levels of activity during adolescence, and a vitamin C deficiency was apparent due to a periosteal reaction (the formation of new bone to replace damaged bone) on her skull.[873] Furthermore, malnourishment caused a number of issues such as weak immune systems, which meant disease spread easily and quickly through enslaved communities, and delayed puberty which ultimately hindered the reproduction of the workforce.[874]

As most enslaved people were malnourished and underfed and underdeveloped, as the remains from Curaçao demonstrate, people that *looked* physically strong or healthy were in high demand from enslavers, and this frequently meant *younger* enslaved people. Mattie Logan, enslaved by a man named Lewis in Mississippi, recalled that enslavers sold enslaved 'girls', especially the 'fat ones who was kinder pretty' the most.[875] Similarly, Morris Hillyer reported that young boys and girls in Georgia fetched the highest price at market, as opposed to adults.[876] According to Hillyer, every first Tuesday of the month traders brought enslaved people from Virginia to sell, inspecting them 'like they was a horse' by looking in their mouths and 'talk[ing] about de kind of work they would be fit for and could do.'[877] The 'young healthy boys and girls brought the highest prices' and enslavers saw them as investments that would 'grow to be valuable.'[878] Though some enslavers were either reluctant or completely refused to buy children, others 'felt they were the hands of the next generation' who would grow into important exploitable commodities as they grew into their prime.[879] Frank Larkin's enslaver 'would just got crazy over a little boy' as 'they knowed what they would be worth when they was grown.'[880] According to Larkin, Virginian enslavers hoped that male enslaved children would grow to be

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[872] Felicia Fricke, et al., 'Delayed Physical Development in a First Generation Enslaved African Woman from Pietermaii, Curaçao,' *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology,* 30 (2020), 46.
[873] Fricke et al., 'Delayed Physical Development', 48-49.
[874] *Ibid*., 49.
[875] Mattie Logan, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn130/, 189.
[876] Morris Hillyer, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn130/, 141.
[877] Hillyer, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 141.
[878] *Ibid*.
[879] Amanda Elizabeth Samuels, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, Indiana, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn050/ 174.
[880] Frank Larkin, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn024/, 236.

worth a thousand dollars.[881] However, many enslavers still sold enslaved children for as much as $500 (about $19,000 today).[882] Although enslaved children could not work to the extent that adults did, and were marketed at half the price of a full hand, these children clearly had *some* value to prospective buyers. As Jones-Rogers argues, white women in particular saw value in enslaved children where male enslavers did not.[883] This argument builds on Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's germinal work where she argues that good domestic servants were difficult to find, and so many slaveholding white women preferred to raise them from a young age.[884] White slaveholding women may have also seen these strong or particularly large children and determined that, with enough surveillance and control, they would grow into productive *re*producers too.

Food, Rations, and Starvation

By dictating food, rations, and feeding schedules, enslavers ultimately controlled the bodies of enslaved men, women, and children. By calculating food, enslavers also calculated fertility and reproduction. Thus, they calculated how to keep the institution of slavery afloat. However, whether they were cognizant of the link between nutrition and fertility appears to be on a case-by-case basis. Susan Cottle Watkins and Etienne Van de Walle argue that in non-European societies, marriage and fertility were intimately linked with women in many societies marrying after menarche.[885] As shown in Chapter One, enslavers decided that enslaved women arrived at marrying age from as young as twelve years old – the average age at which females experienced their first menstrual cycle. Other enslavers forced or cajoled enslaved girls into marrying by the age of sixteen, when menstruation had long since begun, with both menarche and menstruation dependent on available nutrition.[886] Delayed growth due to a dearth of nutritionally sufficient food resulted in later puberty and therefore delayed fertility.[887] Moreover, enslavers believed that the regional climate determined the types and typicality of diseases. For example, one *De Bow's Review* writer determined that as Texas was a 'country infinitely dryer with fewer swamps and freer circulation of air than Louisiana[,] experience says that negroes are more healthy, and multiply faster.'[888] Cody also argues that although low fertility rates on plantations correlated with climate and labour requirements, available food as a consequence of the harvest also played

[881] Larkin, Slave Narrative Project, Vol.2:4, 236.
[882] Brown, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:1, 158.
[883] Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property,* 135-136.
[884] Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household,* 139.
[885] Susan Cottle Watkins and Etienne Van de Walle, 'Nutrition, Mortality, and Population Size: Malthus' Court of Last Resort,' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 14 (1983), 211.
[886] Watkins and Van de Walle, 'Nutrition, Mortality, and Population Size', 211.
[887] Schneider, 'Children's growth in an Adaptive Framework', 7.
[888] 'Texas Sugar Lands', *De Bow's Review*, Vol. 5, January 1848 to July 1848, 321.

an integral part.[889] Less back-breaking labour in the harvest season and an increase in diet potentially increased fecundity.[890]

The food that slaveholders rationed out to enslaved people generally consisted of the same goods, such as milk, greens, cornmeal, meat, molasses, sugar, coffee, buttermilk, and flour.[891] Enslaved people used these ingredients to make items such as biscuits, hoe cake, ash cake, and cornbread. Others, typically those under task systems, were able to grow vegetables such as sweet potatoes and corn in their allotted garden patches and cooked dishes such as soups and stews.[892] On plantations that cultivated sugar, such as in Louisiana, sugar cane was in abundance, and they thus consumed more sugar than those in other states. This higher consumption of sucrose gave energy to the labourers, and they were more likely to conceive a child.[893]

Enslaved children experienced mealtimes differently to adults. In an effort to streamline feeding times for so many families, enslavers and overseers (and very often slaveholding women) fed children in troughs otherwise intended for the plantation livestock. Jennie Wormly Gibson recalled that her grandmother fed all the children, giving them bread, milk, buttermilk, cabbage, and boiled meat.[894] They also usually 'got pot-liquor' which 'was brought in a cart and poured in wooden troughs.'[895] They used hollowed-out gourds as utensils.[896] Other children like Sallie Grane used 'long-handled cedar spoons', while Frank Fikes and his peers' enslaver did not allow them any utensils at all: 'We children did not use spoons. We picked the bread out with our fingers and got down on our all fours and sipped the licker with our mouth. We all had a very easy time[,] we thought[,] because we did not know any better then.'[897] However, the adults on this plantation ate out of wooden bowls and used spoons.[898] Because there were so many young children, their enslavers employed a systematic approach to their mealtimes, similar to the animals on the plantation.[899] Making a more explicit link to the animalisation of enslaved children through feeding, Francis Federic wrote that the children 'feed like pigs out of troughs' and their enslavers

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[889] Cody, 'Cycles of Work', 61-72.
[890] *Ibid*., 62.
[891] Respondents in the WPA Slave Narrative Project consistently refer to these food items as a part of their daily rations.
[892] Damian A. Pargas, *Quarters and the fields: Slave Families in the Non-Cotton South* (University Press Florida, 2010), 97.
[893] Follett, '"Lives of Living Death", 297.
[894] Jennie Wormly Gibson, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 17.
[895] Gibson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 17.
[896] *Ibid*.
[897] Sallie Grane, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 54; Frank Fikes, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 284.
[898] Fikes, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:2, 283.
[899] *Ibid*.

'supplied sparingly.'[900] By rationing the food, the children had to fight over whatever scraps they could. Frederic wrote that he was more concerned about securing a sufficient amount of food than he was coming to terms with the fact his enslaver treated him as an animal.[901] Israel Campbell stated that his mistress fed the children 'like so many pigs', and that her close proximity to them was 'like a hawk flying over a hen with a young brood.'[902] Campbell maintained that her treatment of the children 'unmasked' her disposition, and she was 'delighted to be considered a "bully".'[903]

This harmful method of feeding the children was multifaceted: on one hand it was a simple way for enslavers to systematically feed multiple children and monitor their growth, and on the other it 'adopted the express purpose of brutalizing the slaves as much as possible and making the utmost difference between them and the white men.'[904] To white enslavers, these infants were not children that needed food, health, and happiness, but commodities to grow, cultivate, and ultimately sell. By dehumanising people from a young age, these enslavers focused on the systematic aspect to raising enslaved people that was missing from the initial conception of said children – though they did not necessarily force couples to procreate in a systematic way, the raising of children, particularly through food, *was* regimented.

On some plantations, the adults also ate out of troughs, though this does not appear to be common. Mary Jane Kelley recalled that they had plenty of 'home-raised meat, lots of hogs and cattle' and 'vegetables', but that her enslaver 'fed slaves in a trough in de yard.'[905] They also allowed families 'a small patch to plant watermelons in.'[906] Although there was plenty of diverse and nutritious food on this plantation, their enslaver still dictated what they ate (cattle and vegetables), where they ate it (the troughs), and what they planted in their gardens (watermelons). Furthermore, the food these enslavers allotted to the adults in comparison to the children suggests that they made these decisions based on workload and status instead of nutritional value and desired growth. Using Fikes's narrative as an example, their enslaver fed the adults 'greens and peas and bread,' but gave the children the leftover liquid with bread mashed into it.[907] Although they were growing children, they did not contribute to the plantation economy in the same way adults did.[908] Similarly, Grane 'didn't know what meat was', nor did

[900] Francis Federic, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky; Or Fifty Years of Slavery in the Southern States of America* (London: Wertheim, Macintosh, and Hunt, 1863), 7-8.
[901] Federic, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky,* 7-8.
[902] Israel Campbell, *An Autobiography. Bond and Free* (Philadelphia: Published by the Author, 1861), 9.
[903] Campbell, *An Autobiography*, 9.
[904] Federic, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky,* 8.
[905] Mary Jane Kelley, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn143/, 89.
[906] Kelley, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:3, 89.
[907] Fikes, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:2, 283-284.
[908] *Ibid*.

their enslaver allow them eggs or biscuits.[909] Even though the children were growing and needed a sufficiently nutritional diet to prevent what they called 'stunting', these enslavers typically prioritised full adult hands over the children, ensuring that they received more food as full hands as opposed to the children who did not carry out hard labour in the same capacity.

On the other hand, some enslavers were more cognizant of the effects of nutritional deficiencies on the growth of enslaved children, which was subsequently reflected in their market value or their efficiency in the workforce. In nineteenth-century Britain, poor agricultural workers who could not maintain a sufficient nutritional diet suffered from vitamin deficiency and related diseases such as 'marasmus' which manifested in 'poor skin, stunted [and] deformed growth, deformed limbs, bouts of diarrhoea, lack of energy, susceptibility to disease, and maternal complications.'[910] Malnourished enslaved people in the nineteenth-century US would have faced similar if not the same vitamin related diseases. Thus, enslavers took steps to avoid these diseases in children in order to secure a higher price at market when they came to sell them, or, to ensure that they had only the most productive of workers on their plantation. Future marriages and reproduction were also on their minds, as they believed that 'big and strong' enslaved couples produced healthy and similarly sized offspring. Jennie Washington recalled that her enslavers 'took care' of the children, feeding them well and 'don't let em do too hard er work to stunt em so they take em off and sell em for a good price.'[911] Similarly, Nancy Anderson, whose father experienced slavery in Mississippi, remembered that his enslavers on the Hubbard plantation fed and dressed him well, as 'he was a boy and they didn't want to stunt the children.'[912] The Hubbard's sold Anderson's father, suggesting that they fed the children relatively well so that they would fetch a good price at the market. The emphasis on feeding him well because he was a boy further indicates the Hubbard's proclivity toward the cycle of forced reproduction – they wanted the male children to grow up strong as they would sell for a higher price than the women.

Casper Rumple's enslavers were similarly concerned with 'stunting' the children. On his plantation in South Carolina, 'they fed the young chaps plenty so they wouldn't get stunted. They keep em chunky till they get old nough to grow up tall and that make big women and big men.'[913] Rumple argued that his enslavers were aware that if they forced them into work early ('when

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[909] Grane, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:2, 54.

[910] Ian Gazeley and Sara Horrell, 'Nutrition in the English Agricultural Labourer's Household Over the Course of the Long Nineteenth Century,' *The Economic History Review,* 66 (2013), 767.

[911] Jennie Washington, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 57.

[912] Nancy Anderson, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 50.

[913] Casper Rumple, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 6, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn026/, 104.

they start runnin' up') their growth would be affected.[914] Instead, Rumple's enslaver was 'might careful to feed the chaps nough to eat so they make strong hands.'[915] Unlike the Hubbards, Rumple's enslavers were concerned about malnutrition in children (who he referred to as 'the chaps') because they wanted strong workers that could work effectively in the fields, rather than concern for how much their physical appearance could attract at the market. Whereas the Hubbards emphasised the growth of boys, Rumple's enslaver focused on both boys *and* girls.

In Alabama, Tom Woods's enslaver was also concerned about hunger in children and went one step further to concentrate more on feeding the children over the adults. Feeding them four children to a trough, their enslaver fed the children vegetables, bread, meat, and milk.[916] Apprehensive about their development, he 'gave [them] more and better food than he did his field hands,' arguing that he did not want to stunt their growth.[917] Although Woods's enslaver fed the children better than the full-hands, this suggests that there was an end to the allegedly generous food supply – presumably when the enslaver deemed them 'grown' and therefore no longer at any apparent risk of growth-related health issues. This is indicative of the dearth of scientific knowledge at this time. According to these enslavers, children needed a sufficient amount of nutrients to grow up healthy, but once fully grown they could reduce their nutritional intake, despite their absorption into the workforce and expenditure of a high number of calories a day.

However, other enslavers *were* aware of the correlation between work, food, and the health of individuals. Solomon Lambert's enslaver did not work the children as hard as the adults to avoid stunting them.[918] 'See how big I am?' Lambert told his interviewer, 'I been well cared fur.'[919] His interviewer also remarked that Lambert was 'well proportioned.'[920] Similarly, Green Willbank's enslaver did not allow the children to do much work because he 'desired them to have the chance to grow big and strong.'[921] It is important to emphasise that although some enslavers did not force the enslaved children to work and deliberated over the amount of food they gave them, this was not motivated by benevolence. Indeed, enslavers were only concerned about the health and size of enslaved children and adolescents in terms of how much money they could make them – either at the market or through working on the plantation. Although enslavers may be buying into their

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[914] Rumple, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:6, 104.
[915] *Ibid*.
[916] Tom W. Woods, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 365.
[917] Woods, Slave Narrative Project, Vol.1, 365.
[918] Solomon Lambert, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn024/, 232.
[919] Lambert, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:4, 232.
[920] *Ibid*.
[921] Green Willbanks, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 139.

own belief of paternalism, once dissected and the silences read into, it is evident that there were more insidious motivations.

In a more explicit example of enslavers' concern with physical appearances, Allen Parker remarked in his 1895 narrative that his enslaver only occasionally gave the children meat.[922] Exposing his enslaver's actual motivation, he revealed that 'fat pork was thought to improve the looks of the children, by giving the skin an oily look.'[923] Rather than using protein and fat as a nutritional benefit, Parker's enslaver used it for aesthetic purposes, and often ordered an enslaved woman called Dina to wash, dress, and grease the children 'so that the child would look as if they had been eating meat.'[924] He then showed off the children to his guests, pointing to them stood in a row with 'the same kind of pride that he would have in showing a flock of good sheep, or a lot of good hogs.'[925] Parker's enslaver used the illusion that he was feeding the enslaved children well for a variety of reasons: to show his friends that he was a benevolent and paternalist owner; to advertise his 'property' as the best; and to raise their market value. In reality, he gave these children sour milk and hoe cake 'poured into a trough.'[926]

The dearth of nutritious food was such a burden that some children began to eat soil. Though seemingly rare, it occurred enough that references to it appeared in medical journals such as *The Stethoscope and Virginia Medical Gazette.* In the 1851 volume, a physician referred to a useful remedy including the use of iodide of iron to cure 'dirt eating children', which was 'often observed' amongst Black children.[927] A petition submitted to the Pointe Coupee Parish Courthouse, Louisiana, in November 1837 by Adolphe Flécheux accused Stephen Vanwickle of selling enslaved people inflicted with 'vices and defects such as dirt eating.'[928] The age of the enslaved people that ate the dirt is not specified, though it is useful to see how this affliction manifested and was covered up by traders such as Vanwickle. Pregnant women also ate non-food items as they needed more nutrients than a non-pregnant person.[929] This is known as 'pica', the craving of non-food items, and is a condition that pregnant women are more likely to experience, even today.[930] Sera Young has shown that pica is experienced globally, from less than 0.01% of pregnant Danish

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[922] Allen Parker, *Recollections of Slavery Times* (Massachusetts: Chas. W. Burbank & Co., 1895), 18.
[923] Parker, *Recollections,* 18.
[924] *Ibid*.
[925] *Ibid*.
[926] *Ibid*. 17.
[927] *The Stethoscope and Virginia Medical Gazette,* Vol. 1 (Ritchies & Dunnavant, 1851), Retrieved from https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/stethoscopevirgi11851rich, 693.
[928] Adolphe Flécheux vs Stephen Vanwickle, Pointe Coupee Parish Courthouse, New Roads, Louisiana, 1837-1838, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[929] Owens, *This Species of Property,* 64-65.
[930] Sera Young, *Craving Earth: Understanding Pica – the Urge to Eat Clay, Starch, Ice, and Chalk* (Columbia University Press, 2011), 3.

women to 56% of pregnant Kenyan women suffering with the condition.[931] Children are the second largest group to experience pica, ranging from 1.7% to 74.4% of children consuming non-food items depending on the country.[932] Antebellum physicians thought dirt-eating was unique to the Black population due to their 'mental constitution', when in reality it was likely due to the dearth of healthy nutritious food. Instead, they craved and evidently turned to the nutrients found in soil.[933] Physicians called pica *Cachexia Africanca*, and claimed it was due to 'licentious behaviour.'[934] In addition to the medical solution found in *The Stethoscope*, enslavers also placed muzzles on children to stop them eating dirt, further dehumanising and likening them to livestock (see Fig. 3).[935] Although Pica was not always a consequence of hunger or dearth of nutrition, some cases undoubtedly *were*, especially on slaveholdings with little available food.

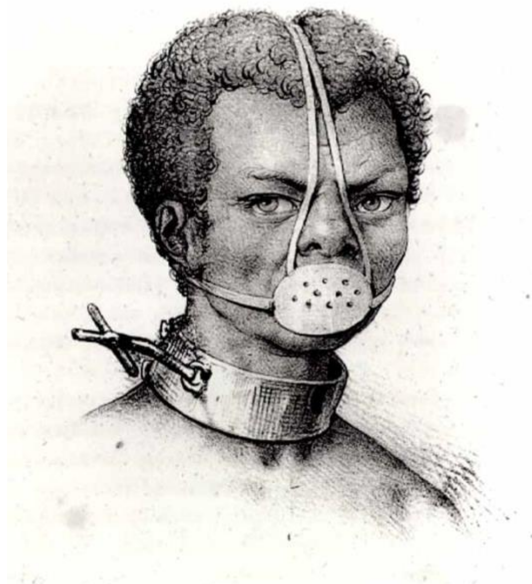

Figure 3. *Slave with Iron Muzzle* (1839), The Hill Collection of Pacific Voyages, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

Figure 4. *Slave with Iron Muzzle* (1839), The Hill Collection of Pacific Voyages, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

Despite enslavers labelling themselves as benevolent masters who fed their 'property' well, in actuality they did not provide enslaved people with enough food and nutrients, especially as they carried out hard labour. Most enslaved people supplemented their meagre weekly rations by

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[931] Young, *Craving Earth*, 6.
[932] *Ibid*., 15-16.
[933] John S. Haller, 'The Negro and the Southern Physician: A Study of Medical and Racial Attitudes, 1800-1860,' *Medical History,* 16 (1972), 238.
[934] Young, *Craving Earth,* 72.
[935] Owens, *This Species of Property,* 65.

hunting, fishing, gardening, and reappropriating what they could. However, supplementing foodstuffs with produce grown in the garden was more complicated than it first appears.[936] As Leslie Howard Owens points out, enslavers may have deducted rations if they saw they were supplementing with garden-grown food.[937] Thus, some enslaved people decided that they would instead stealthily reappropriate the food that they laboured for every day.

Though most enslavers actively discouraged this reappropriation, Elizabeth Brannon's grandmother's enslaver 'told his slaves to steal.'[938] He did not feed them well, instead placing the burden on the enslaved to sustain their food supply while simultaneously exploiting them of their labour for long hours during the day and evening, leaving them little time to labour for themselves. Though the enslaver ordered them to steal, it was likely he expected them to steal from each other or from neighbouring plantations and farms. Damian A. Pargas's examination of Fairfax County, Virginia, and Georgetown, South Carolina, reveals how regionality dictated enslavers' behaviours. Enslavers on Low Country rice plantations such as Georgetown relied on a task system, and thus allowed their slaves garden patches as there was little risk of a dearth of productivity during the day.[939] On the other hand, enslavers who relied on the gang system, or 'sun-up to sun-down' labour, as in North Virginia, did not allow their slaves garden patches through fear that they would spend all their time and energy on cultivating their personal harvests rather than on labour for their enslaver, thus hindering productivity.[940] These enslaved people therefore resorted to stealing from others to supplement their food.[941] Henry Bobbit's enslaver did not allow them to have their own gardens to grow vegetables, and so they 'had ter steal what rabbits we et from somebody elses boxes on some udder plantation…and we ain't had no time ter hunt ner fish.'[942]

Brannon's grandmother's enslaver also contradicted his instructions to steal by punishing those he caught.[943] For example, when her grandmother began to crave meat when she was pregnant, her husband caught and slaughtered a shoat for their supper but had to hide it when the overseer came to investigate.[944] Though Brannon's grandmother's craving for meat while pregnant may have been due to hormonal changes, it may have also been a result of nutritional deficiencies, especially as her enslaver did not feed any of the enslaved people well. Brannon does

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[936] Owens, *This Species of Property,* 53.
[937] *Ibid*.
[938] Elizabeth Brannon, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 237-4.
[939] Pargas, *Quarters and the fields,* 97.
[940] Ibid., 94.
[941] *Ibid*., 96-97.
[942] Henry Bobbit, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1 (1937), Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/item/mesn111, 122.
[943] Brannon, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:1, 374.
[944] *Ibid*.

not mention any explicit references to forced reproduction on her mother's plantation, but their enslaver evidently did not want to provide the basic necessities to survive while still expecting the enslaved people to labour for him and reproduce the workforce. This particularly cruel treatment of withholding food while also forcing them to work and reproduce highlights the insidious nature of forced reproduction. Enslavers allowed only the minimum amount of food necessary for enslaved people to labour both in the field and sexually.

As discussed in Chapter Two, supporting and providing for their families was of the utmost importance to enslaved fathers. This included the ability to access material goods such as food, and enslaved men inserted themselves between their families and enslavers by providing their families with food of *their* choosing. By allowing their families to depend on them instead of their slaveholders, enslaved fathers took back some patriarchal authority that the slave regime had taken away.[945] In this way, they also *protected* their families from slaveholders and the way in which feeding enabled power and control.[946] Indeed, by controlling when and how much the enslaved ate, slaveholders not only controlled their physical and reproductive health but also their 'cultural and social relations.'[947] By supplementing foodstuffs, enslaved fathers controlled the social and cultural relations of their individual family unit. Many fathers passed on the ability to help provide for their families by teaching their sons to hunt and trap live animals.[948] By teaching their children this, they were not only providing them with skills and food but were also forming emotional bonds by spending quality time with one another – even if this time was utilised to ensure the survival of their families. However, this neglects the gendered divisions of parenting in the nineteenth century. Fathers passed these types of skills down to their sons, not their daughters, as the latter learned more domestic focused skills such as sewing and cooking from their mothers. For enslaved boys, hunting with their fathers was a 'much-sought recognition of his own manhood.'[22] George Henderson fondly recalled hunting with his father: 'I went with him and would ride on his back with my feet in his pockets.'[23] Though gender dictated how fathers spent their time with their sons and daughters, hunting with their sons allowed men to circumnavigate the spatial boundaries of the planation, and reappropriate time and space to spend with their families.

Sally, an enslaved woman whose story was told by her son, Isaac Williams, recalled that she was always glad when her father came to visit her and her mother as he 'brought us 'coons an'

[945] hooks, *Ain't I a Woman,* 20-21; Catherine Armstrong, 'Black Foodways and Places: The Didactic Epistemology of Food Memories in the WPA Narratives,' *Slavery & Abolition,* 42 (2021), 618.
[946] Kennedy, '"We Were Not to be Eaten but to Work"', 1.
[947] *Ibid*.
[948] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White,* 251.

'possums, an' we had meat to eat.'[949] Her father would remind her of the dearth of food, telling her, 'you dunno whar you'll eat your last pound o' bread.'[950] The availability of meat was scarce, but some fathers found ways to ensure that their children ate enough protein to keep their strength up, as they knew the importance of good nutrition when enduring hard labour. Maggie Woods's stepfather 'always make us eat a piece of meat if we eat garden stuff. He say the meat have strength in it.'[951] Henry Wright recalled that he would often slip away from his mothers' plantation to see his father, as there he was able to secure food.[952] This may be because his father's owner provided more food than his mother's, or his father was able to secure extra food for Wright through other means, such as hunting and fishing. Wright may have also brought some of this food back for his mother too, and in this way Wright's father, though living on a different slaveholding, was able to provide for both his wife and son.

Re-appropriating food was also a tool of survival valued by enslaved children. Using the term 'reappropriation' also works to breakdown the more antiquated term 'theft.' Enslaved people laboured hard to cultivate food which was then taken by their enslavers. Many enslaved people therefore felt that this food was already rightly theirs, as they had laboured for it, and they were reappropriating the fruits of their labour rather than stealing. Reappropriation served as a means of both survival and resistance.[953] Although enslaved people of all ages reappropriated foodstuffs, children who were young enough to avoid the watchful gaze of the overseers or enslavers found more opportunities to take food than adults.[954] Inadequate rations intended to feed entire families did not sustain individuals, especially if enslavers allotted the majority of food to full-hands or field hands. Growing children especially felt the impact of malnourishment, and so supplemented their food where they could. Taking small items from the kitchen, raiding orchards, and killing small animals such as chickens and turkeys sustained families in the short-term.[955] Most reappropriation of foodstuffs came from sheer desperation and hunger. Louisa Adams, who was only eight at the end of the war in North Carolina, lamented that they were 'so hungry we

[949] Isaac Williams, *Aunt Sally: or, The Cross the Way of Freedom. A Narrative of the Slave-life and Purchase of the Mother of Rev. Isaac Williams, of Detroit, Michigan* (Cincinnati: Western Tract and Book Society, 1859), 47.
[950] Williams, *Aunt Sally*, 47.
[951] Maggie Wood, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 15, Tennessee (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn150/, 232-233.
[952] Henry Wright, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 202.
[953] Moreover, Catherine Armstrong argues that WPA respondents' discussions of reappropriation of foodstuffs was an 'implicit encouragement to other African Americans to take what is theirs without waiting for it to be offered' as a response to racial inequalities in the 1930s. (Armstrong, 'Black Foodways and Places,' 617).
[954] Schwartz, *Born in Bondage,* 133.
[955] *Ibid*.

were bound to steal or p[e]rish.'[956] Likewise, Emma Taylor informed her interviewer that if the families ate all of the rations intended for that week, they would just go without.[957] Consequently, Taylor often stole potatoes from garden patches to help her family, and when her enslaver set the plantation dogs on her, would throw pepper in their eyes to escape.[958]

Having often faced malnutrition due to the meagre rations handed out by their enslavers, enslaved men and women resorted to re-appropriating the goods that they laboured for, and which their slaveholders reaped the benefits of. Linda Hadley's father was 'a little chunky man' who would 'steal flour and hogs.'[959] Adding to this picture of experienced stealth and strength, Hadley also mentioned that he could 'tote a hog on his back.'[960] However, not all fathers wanted to set an example of stealing by their children even though they were re-appropriating the food that they had laboured for. Josh Horn, for example, insisted that 'ef my chillum ever et a moufful dat wasn't honest, dey et it somewhar else, 'ca'se I ain't ever stole a moufful somepin' t'eat for 'em in all my life.'[961] Though Horn felt the pressure to feed his sixteen children, he insisted that he never re-appropriated food, but hunted for food in the woods: 'soon's I found out dat I could help feed dat way, I done a heap of hunting.'[962]

Robert Anderson wrote extensively about his grandfather, who was a driver on their plantation and upheld a high status. Anderson's grandfather used his position to supply food to his grandson, often telling him to 'go into my sugar-cane patch and get as much as you wish, and eat all day if you wish to do so' and to 'go into the apple orchard and get as many apples as you wish, also, for I wish I had something good for my boy.'[963] Anderson's mistress took him into the house to work as a domestic servant, and occasionally allowed him out to visit his grandfather.[964] His grandfather was 'so glad to see his little boy' that he bestowed these gifts of sugar, apples, and honey on him.[965] In this degree, Anderson's grandfather provided him with sugar and fibre, important nutritional foods, whilst simultaneously praising and uplifting his grandson. Anderson's mistress appropriated this parental role by taking him into the house and dictating

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[956] Louisa Adams, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn111/, 2.
[957] Emma Taylor, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/item/mesn164, 74-75.
[958] Taylor, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16:4, 75.
[959] Linda Hadley, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 128.
[960] Hadley, Slave Narrative Project. Vol. 2:3, 128.
[961] Josh Horn, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936, 1937), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 201.
[962] Horn, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 201.
[963] Robert Anderson, *The Young Men's Guide, or, the Brother in White* (Macon: Printed for the Author, 1892), 40.
[964] Anderson, *The Young Men's Guide,* 40.
[965] *Ibid*.

their visiting hours, but Anderson's grandfather ensured that he took advantage of the limited time they had together to nurture their emotional and familial bond. Though he was not his biological father, Anderson's grandfather took on the parental role in his father's absence, and thus validates the importance of fatherly role models and relationships and their responsibility for providing nourishment for their children. As Kathleen Kennedy argues, these 'small acts of care [were] essential to fatherhood.'[966] In this instance, Anderson's grandfather was ensuring that his grandson consumed enough sugar.

Medical Regimentation

Although historians such as Richard Follett have researched whether enslaved people consumed enough calories and other nutrients per day, fewer have investigated to what extent enslavers considered *what* and *why* they fed enslaved people.[967] Advice from planters differed. Some argued that lean meat was better nutritionally, while others argued fatty meat was better for those who carried out hard labour in the fields.[968] J. Hume Simons, a Charleston physician, wrote in a planter's guide for medical management that two meals a day and the inclusion of olive oil would stop enslaved children from being 'poor and emaciated' and '*not thriving'* on the plantation.[969] Simons, however, blamed the emaciated state of the children on the 'negligence of their parents and little nurses.'[970] Typical of nineteenth-century justifications of slavery and the enslavement of children, physicians and other elite whites argued that Black parents were not suitable caregivers and often neglected their children.[971] Moreover, in 1846, *De Bow's Review* further justified the control over food and rationing as beneficial to the enslaved people, otherwise they would 'over eat, unseasonably eat, walk half the night, sleep on the ground, out of doors, anywhere,' as enslaved people were 'thriftless, thoughtless people.'[972] To the writers and readers of journals like *De Bow's Review,* enslaved people could not be trusted to look after themselves – this paternalistic view justified the control and starvation of enslaved people.

Physicians also blamed enslaved mothers for illnesses and diseases that infants contracted based on their alleged inherent inability to care for their own children. In an article in *The American Journal of Medical Sciences,* William O. Baldwin similarly blamed enslaved mothers when infants contracted tetanus. According to Baldwin, on large plantations, an enslaved mother would 'generally pursue her ordinary avocation up to the hour when the warnings of nature

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[966] Kennedy, '"We Were Not to be Eaten"', 14.
[967] Follett, '"Lives of Living Death", 289-304.
[968] Owens, *This Species of Property*., 55.
[969] J. Hume Simons, *The Planter's Guide, and Family Book of Medicine: for the Instruction and Use of Planters, Families, Country People, and All Others Who May be Out of Reach of Physicians, or Unable to Employ Them* (Charleston: M'Carter & Allen, 1848), 208-209 [Italics in text].
[970] Simons, *The Planter's Guide*, 207.
[971] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation,' 990-1005.
[972] 'The Negro', *De Bow's Review*, Vol. 3, January 1847 to July 1847, 420.

admonish her of the near approach of the termination of pregnancy[.]'[973] Enslaved women who were in the field and therefore too far away from the quarters often gave birth in the field, 'or between there and the house.'[974] Baldwin stated that he 'only mention[s] this fact to show how ill prepared the mother is to receive and properly treat her infant.'[975] Medically, enslaved mothers would have required a rest period before they were due to give birth, but their enslavers forced them to work right up to the moment they began to give birth, in order to get the maximum labour out of them. Enslavers, and physicians like Baldwin, placed the blame on mothers, rather than themselves, for the inadequate birth environment. Baldwin further wrote that even if the labouring women *did* make it to the house, the new born infant was then 'exposed, from the condition of the house itself,' which allegedly caused *Tetanus Nascentium.*[976] Moreover, Baldwin explicitly described enslaved mothers and caretakers as 'rude and awkward' and 'inexperienced' in their care of their children, and labelled midwives as 'ignorant, and often old and decrepid [*sic*].'[977] According to Baldwin, 'the mother, with her blunted affections and filthy habits, perhaps herself suffering from bodily malaise, is not disposed, *if indeed she is able,* to perform the most trifling service for it [the baby].'[978] Thus, medical publications blamed the parents for the malnourishment and illness of young children, despite their enslavers restricting their rations, and not allowing them the time or tools to live in a clean environment. Despite this disparaging language toward enslaved mothers and their ability to adequately care for their children, enslavers still ironically forced them to raise their white children as 'mammies' and relied on them for childcare. Thus, enslavers demonstrated the importance of motherhood to the continuation of slave societies, while also maintain that they were 'lesser' than white mothers.

Simons also suggested that to increase 'the number of the children raised', enslavers should ensure they receive two meals a day.[979] This language of reproduction is thinly disguised by Simons's alleged concern for the starving children he encountered on plantations in South Carolina. However, by stating how more food would result in the increase of the number of children that survived childhood, he reveals his true motivation as well as the impetus of the slaveholders he wrote for. Simons supported his advice with an example where he allegedly saw 'ten infants…born the same year, and all raised, and no death occurred on this place for three years, except one from old age.'[980]

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[973] William O. Baldwin, 'Remarks on Trismus, or Tetanus Nascentium, and on its Identity with Traumatic Tetanus in the Adult', *The American Journal of the Medical Sciences,* n.s. Charles B. Slack [etc.], 1827, 359.
[974] Baldwin, 'Remarks on Trismus', 359.
[975] *Ibid*.
[976] *Ibid*., 359-360.
[977] *Ibid*., 360.
[978] *Ibid*.
[979] Simons, *The Planter's Guide,* 209.
[980] *Ibid*., 210.

Lastly, Simons suggested that one person on the plantation should cook the meals for everyone as it would save on both utensils and provisions since enslavers could not trust enslaved people to look after their own rations: 'for it is a common thing for negroes to keep their week's allowance of provisions carelessly emptied on a shelf, or table, in their houses, exposed to rats, fowls, and to general waste.'[981] Simons hence advised that enslavers should maintain strict control over the distribution and consumption of rations, restricting enslaved communities from making judgements on how and when to feed their own families. This condemnation of enslaved people allegedly mishandling their rations is typical of enslavers' attitudes. Just as they did with parenthood, they consistently blamed what they believed was the inherent immoral nature of enslaved people for their own hunger rather than acknowledging the poor living conditions they themselves created and forced upon enslaved communities, all in the name of increasing the enslaved population. Indeed, it was not unheard of for enslaved people to eat spoiled meat as it was all that was available to them.[982] The conditions in which their enslavers forced them to store their food undoubtedly contributed to or caused this. Simons's belief in the inherent incompetency of enslaved people is further exacerbated in his recommendation of a plantation cook, usually a 'strong, able, and healthy woman' who would attend to the enslaved children and make sure they ate 'well cooked' food.[983] Simons suggested this as he claimed that parents fed their children 'half raw' food, due to their alleged laziness, ignorance of cooking, or because they left the responsibility of cooking to the slightly older children that looked after the infants.[984] Further advice from *De Bow's Review* recommended that enslavers carry out an 'occasional personal inspection' and that they should make it 'obligatory on the overseer, frequently to examine the cooking, and see that it is properly done.'[985] Not only does this place the blame for inadequate food on the enslaved, but it also allowed enslavers and overseers to maintain tight control over food rations and ensure that the enslaved were not supplementing food from elsewhere.

Simon's advice to enslavers was influenced by the motivation to raise 'healthy' enslaved children for work and market. The emphasis on forced reproduction and the ensured increase of the institution of slavery drove medical and general plantation management journals to advise enslavers on how to guarantee that children would grow into productive or valuable workers, but also showed them how to do this at minimal cost to the enslaver. As Simons shows, enslavers

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[981] *Ibid*., 208-209.
[982] Owens, *This Species of Property,* 52.
[983] Simons, *The Planter's Guide,* 208.
[984] *Ibid*.
[985] 'Agricultural Department – Management of Negroes', *De Bow's Review*, Vol. 10, January 1851 to July 1851, 326.

were preoccupied in the 'sav[ing] in provisions' while also feeding slaves the bare minimum.[986] Furthermore, Simons's racist and paternalistic rhetoric surrounding the alleged incompetency of enslaved parents to feed their children allowed enslavers to justify their control over the feeding regimes. By arguing that they knew best, enslavers were able to keep children within close proximity, and carefully monitor their growth and ensure that they met their standards for 'healthy' slaves that would grow up and reproduce similarly strong children.

Frederick Law Olmstead witnessed rationing systems in his travels across the antebellum south and commented on whether he thought enslavers provided adequate supplies of food. He wrote in 1856 that enslavers generally allowed 'a peck and a half of meal, and three pounds of bacon a week.'[987] This was 'as much meal as they could eat', but three pounds of bacon was not enough to sustain them.[988] Olmsted wrote that he saw rations distributed on Wednesdays to 'prevent their using it extravagantly, or sell it for whisky on Sunday.'[989] These enslavers clearly thought carefully about which day of the week was best to distribute rations in an attempt to control both enslaved peoples' movements, and what food they were consuming. Similarly, although plantation owner Charles Manigault recorded that he fed his slaves the 'small rice worth $2.50 per bush, instead of corn [worth] $1.00 per bush', he revealed his true controlling methods in a letter to overseer Jesse T. Cooper in January 1848.[990] Manigault wrote that he always gave out rations to the enslaved families on Sundays because it kept them 'at home that day', otherwise if they gave them their rations on Saturday they may go into town to trade and would not come back until Monday.[991]

He further wrote that 'Mr Barclay [a neighbouring enslaver] gives more meat than I do but my people besides being the best clothed in the Country have other advantages.'[992] These 'advantages' included the allowance of 'small Rice' if Manigault deemed they had behaved and not 'done anything wrong', in which case he 'sold the whole of it.'[993] In the same paragraph, Manigault informed Cooper that he did not 'allow no strange Negro to take a wife on my place.'[994] The juxtaposition of these two themes – when Manigault allowed them rations and the control over relationships – are indicative of reproductive practices. As discussed in Chapter One, enslavers controlled the intimate sexual lives of enslaved men and women. By explicitly stating that he used

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[986] Simons, *The Planter's Guide*., 209.
[987] Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States; With Remarks on their Economy* (Sampson Law, Son & Co., 1856), 108.
[988] Olmsted, *A Journey,* 108.
[989] *Ibid*., 108-109.
[990] James M. Clifton (ed.) *Life and Labour on Argyle Island: Letters and Documents of a Savannah River Rice Plantation, 1833-1867* (The Beehive Press, 1978), 3.
[991] Letter from Charles Manigault to Jesse T. Cooper, 10th January 1848, in Clifton, *Life and Labour,* 61-62.
[992] C. Manigault to Cooper, 10th Jan. 1848, 61-62.
[993] *Ibid*.
[994] *Ibid*.

the distribution of rations on a certain day to control their movements and that he did not let anyone he did not personally know to marry the enslaved women on his plantation, Manigault revealed the ways that he used food to control both their bodies and their intimate lives. More generally, a writer in *De Bow's Review* remarked that the

> point [of food] is to provide enough. Too little, independently of other effects, will lead to pillage. A peck of meal, four pounds of good meat, with such vegetables, potatoes, peas, etc., as can be provided without any expense, is a good week's allowance.[995]

Thus, prescriptive journals also advised enslavers to carefully monitor and be exact about their allowance of food as an efficient means of control. Enslavers followed their directions to control the physical health of the enslaved and attempted to cultivate 'desirable' bodies for forced reproduction, labour, and the market.

Olmstead claimed that this rationing process was called the 'drawing', and each head of the family went to collect their weekly rations, though he does not specify the gender of the head of the family. As about a third of families in states such as South Carolina were in cross-plantation marriages, it is logical to conclude that some of these heads of families were women.[996] Despite his suggestion that enslaved people would benefit from more fats such as bacon, Olmstead declared that he thought 'the slaves generally (no one denies that there are exceptions) plenty to eat,' and compared them to free working class people in other parts of the world.[997] This is commonly an argument adopted by southern defenders of slavery, who claimed that enslaved people were better off, especially better fed, than free working people in the North. However, Olmsted also reported that enslaved people 'kn[e]w how to provide for themselves' if their enslaver did not adequately supply them with food.[998]

Manigault's son, Louis, eventually moved to the Savannah plantation and took control over the rationing process – much to his father's displeasure. Charles wrote to Louis in March 1853 that Louis's allowance of 'part Fish & part Bacon in the same day' was 'bad.'[999] According to Charles, the distribution of allowances was 'at best a troublesome job' and pains should be taken to get it over with as quickly as possible.[1000] To ensure this, the enslaved people must not be allowed the luxury of 'picking [and] chusing', and Louis should instead allow each grown man two fish, 'for only the grown ones […] draw meat[.]'[1001] This evidence demonstrates Charles Manigault's belief that because the full hands carried out labour they should be allowed a small amount of meat or

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[995] 'The Negro', *De Bow's Review*, Vol. 3, January 1847 to July 1847, 420.
[996] West, *Chains of Love*, 44.
[997] Olmsted, *A Journey,* 109.
[998] *Ibid*., 110.
[999] Letter from Charles Manigault to Louis Manigault, 6th March 1853, in Clifton, *Life and Labour,* 142.
[1000] C. Manigault to L. Manigault, 6th Mar. 1853, 142.
[1001] *Ibid*.

fish. Neither Charles Manigault nor *De Bow's Review* made any mention of the children and the relation between caloric intake and growth.

However, a letter from Stephen F. Clark, a new overseer, to Louis Manigault shows two conflicting attitudes to feeding enslaved children. He wrote in October of 1853 that Jhon and Ismael's children were particularly sick and had succumbed to their unspecified illnesses.[1002] In an effort to combat whatever affliction they suffered from, Clark 'made Jhons Child [his] particular care', and fed him and two 'new comers…from my table for they looked puny.'[1003] He gave the children molasses and meat to those that seemed to be 'drooping.'[1004] However, Jhon's child died because of an infection in 'its teeth' and Clark maintained he 'did all I could do for it.'[1005] This language from Clark is indicative of the dehumanising way he treated children: he wrote about '*its* teeth' causing the death of Jhon's child; how he did all he could 'for *it*'; and how Ismael's child was unwell but '*it* recovered.'[1006] By describing the children as objects, Clark perpetuated the animalisation of enslaved people and their comparison to livestock, while also creating an emotional distance between himself and the sick children he looked after. Thus, while a first reading may appear that Clark took 'particular care' for the sick children he deemed too small or 'drooping' out of benevolence, his insistence on referring to them as he would an object accentuates their status as property and stock to be cultivated for the market. This objectification continued into other letters sent by Clark. For example, another missive in 1853 described Jimmy's child as 'it' when discussing how 'it has been quite sick' with worms.[1007]

This type of emotionless, dehumanising language also appeared in more personal documents, such as the diary of Ellen Wallace in Kentucky in January 1862. She wrote that Mat, an enslaved man on their farm, 'came up today, [and] report[ed] Lucy's child extremely ill. I suppose by this time it is dead.'[1008] Not only did she refer to Lucy's child as 'it', but she does not use their name. We therefore do not know their gender, or any markers of their own identity beyond 'Lucy's child' or the enslaved property of the Wallace's. In this way, Lucy's child, and the other children on the plantation, were viewed only in terms of property and the biological and social reproduction they would one day carry out. Wallace's diary entries further reveal her callous nature and unattachment to any sense of emotional concern for the enslaved children. On August 28th, 1857, Wallace wrote that she 'heard of the death of Darkey's child today. Made tomato catchup and put

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[1002] Letter from Stephen F. Clark to Louis Manigault, 8th October 1853, in Clifton, *Life and Labour,* 160.
[1003] Clark to L. Manigault, 8th Oct. 1853, 160.
[1004] *Ibid*
[1005] *Ibid*.
[1006] *Ibid*. [Italics added].
[1007] Letter from Stephen F. Clark to Louis Manigault, 15th October, 1853, in Clifton, *Life and Labour,* 161.
[1008] Ellen Kenton McGaughey Wallace, Journal, 1849-1865, Kentucky Historical Society, MSS52, Box 1, FF2.

down the dining room carpet.'[1009] The juxtaposition of an arguably poignant and sad moment, especially for the enslaved woman named as Darkey, with Wallace's mundane declaration that she made tomato catchup suggests that she saw the death of the child as equally mundane. Her disappointment in August of 1847, when she received the 'news of one or two accidents on the farm and the death of Lotty's child making the third death among the children running from Anna's first, then Darkey's next and Lotty's,' demonstrates how this did not affect her emotionally.[1010] Diaries, written for the self, offer space for emotional outpourings, yet Wallace did not take this opportunity, suggesting that she saw these deaths as loss of property rather than people. Indeed, she provided more emotional nuance and depth when discussing the desertion of enslaved men and women for the Union army during the Civil War.

Enslaved children were acutely cognizant of this objectification. Enslaved and formerly enslaved respondents were not only mindful of the link between food, health, and reproduction, but also knew that they had a monetary value to their enslavers.[1011] Charles Hayes, for example, told his interviewer that it 'was always in de owner's interest… to have de [slaves] in a good, healthy condition.'[1012] The enslaver's 'interest' alludes to either the reproductive potential of individuals, their ability to work, or their market value. Either way, enslavers' concerns with the 'good, healthy' conditions of enslaved people was in their best financial interests. Cureton Milling reaffirms enslavers' preoccupation with market values. His enslaver, Levi, gave them plenty to eat to keep them 'fat, just like he keep his hogs and hosses fat' to sell at the market.[1013] According to Milling, Levi kept them 'fat' as he was 'rais[ing] slaves to sell' and sold the 'oldest ones away from de younger ones.'[1014] Levi also 'took advantage' of the young women on the plantation, physically isolating them away from the rest of the community and then sexually assaulting them when they were alone.[1015] Though Milling did not specify whether Levi sold any children that came of this sexual violence, he remarked that Levi attacked his aunt who then gave birth to an enslaved boy.[1016] Even if Levi did not sell this boy, he still reaped the benefits of his enslavement. Thus, Levi used both sexual violence and feeding patterns to improve his financial position.

William Henry Davis recalled that his enslaver forced his mother to feed all the children on the plantation in the kitchen. According to Davis's testimony, their enslaver wanted the children to

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[1009] Wallace, Journal, KHS, Box 1, FF2.
[1010] *Ibid*.
[1011] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 2-3.
[1012] Charles Hayes, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 175.
[1013] Cureton Milling, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn143/, 194.
[1014] Milling, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:3, 194.
[1015] *Ibid*.
[1016] *Ibid*. 194-195.

'hurry up en grow' and so gave them food such as milk, corn bread, and pancakes.[1017] This intense desire for the children to grow up and feeding them the food they thought would enable this is also reflected in evidence where enslavers did not necessarily *want* to buy children. Though children represented the cycle and increase of slavery and were an addition to their workforce, some enslavers were frustrated with the time it took for the children to grow to full hands. In April 1845, William H. Scruggs submitted a petition to Jefferson County, Florida, against John G. Holcomb, alleging Holcomb used the same enslaved people as collateral for a mortgage for himself and another man named as William Bellamy.[1018] Scruggs asked the court for a quick foreclosure on the mortgage to settle the dispute as the enslaved people Holcomb offered as collateral were 'comparatively worthless to him seeing that they consist of a breeding woman[,] two small children[,] one an infant at the breast born since the filing of the original bill.'[1019] To Scruggs, these individuals could not bring him profit through labour or at the market. He described the enslaved woman as a 'breeding' woman (within the definition of a woman who has given birth to baby, rather than someone he had forced to reproduce). For Scruggs, the woman was worthless because she could not be classified as a full hand due to her pregnancy, and the two children were too young for him to classify them as even a half-hand. Scruggs, and others like him, wanted quick pecuniary results and did not want to wait around for years before they could reap the benefits of their enslavement. This therefore explains Davis's enslaver's impatience for the enslaved children to grow up quickly and the consequent focus on feeding of said children.

Richard Jones told his interviewer in South Carolina that his enslaver clothed, fed, housed, and 'doctored' the enslaved children until they were 'well developed young'uns.'[1020] Once they reached this point of peak health – as determined by the enslaver – they began to work at tasks and followed 'what de master and de mistress thought dey would do well at.'[1021] At this point in time, most enslavers gave out the bare minimum needed to survive. As Samuel Boulware stated, their food 'wasn't de best but it filled us up and give us strength 'nough to work.'[1022] He further remarked that the 'heap of vegetables and fruits' their enslaver rationed them in the summer season 'didn't do to work on, in de long summer days.'[1023] It is likely that Boulware and others within his community supplemented their foodstuff in the summer months when their enslaver

[1017] William Henry Davis, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 1 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn141/, 308.
[1018] Petition 20584508, Box 6, Records of the Superior Court, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida, 25th April 1845.
[1019] Petition 20584508.
[1020] Richard Jones, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn143/, 63.
[1021] Jones, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:3, 63.
[1022] Samuel Boulware, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 1 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn141/, 67.
[1023] Boulware, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:1, 67.

only rationed them fruit and vegetables, and the sun-up to sun-down days were longer. Meat, protein, and iron were necessary nutrients for carrying out labour in the fields. Although Boulware's enslaver allotted them low quality food that gave them just enough energy to labour, most enslavers did not have the necessary knowledge about nutrition to give enslaved people a balanced and healthy diet but did evidently *believe* that they were providing their enslaved people with the 'best' nutrition at a minimal cost to carry out work – whether it actually was beneficial is another matter. Evidence from both the enslaved and the enslavers themselves detail how they believed 'fattening' foods, such as bacon grease, made enslaved people appear healthier and thus stronger as opposed to carbohydrates and their slow release of sugar and therefore energy.

Exploring beyond framework of feeding regimes, enslavers also concerned themselves with the physical fitness and growth of enslaved children through exercise. For example, Ben Horry recalled that every Sunday his enslaver, 'Josh', called the children to the house 'to see how the clothes fit.'[1024] His wife, Bess, then forced them to 'run races to see who run the fastest.'[1025] Easter Wells, who experienced slavery in Arkansas and Texas, 'never had to work as old Master wanted us to grow up strong.'[1026] He regularly forced Wells's mother to boil Jerusalem Oak for tea as a curative for worms, and he would force them to 'run races and get exercise so we would be healthy.'[1027] Disguised as a game, these enslavers kept a close eye on how well the children were growing, and who stood out as the strongest of their peers. Moreover, slaveholding women paid close attention to illnesses such as measles, pneumonia, or common colds, and interfered with their caregiving to ensure their survival and that their value was maintained. Ellen Wallace, for example, had 'Mariah's Tom[,] who has a violent cold', brought up to the house and spent her evening 'sitting up' with him.[1028] She later wrote in her diary that 'the boy that had the croup is better. Homeopath did not answer. We resorted to the old practice, hive syrup, hot applications, the juice of onions and other old women's remidies [*sic*].' By taking Tom into her care, Wallace interfered in the mothering of Mariah, determining not only that she knew better than Tom's own mother, but also did so to keep a close eye on her property.

Comparably, H.C. Bruce, writing after emancipation in 1895, informed his readers exactly how and why enslavers ensured that the enslaved children grew up healthy. According to Bruce, their enslavers took 'great pride' in the young children of the plantation, 'especially when they looked

[1024] Ben Horry, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 2, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn142/, 310.
[1025] Horry, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:2, 310.
[1026] Easter Wells, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn130/, 318.
[1027] Wells, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 318.
[1028] Ellen Kenton McCaughey Wallace, Journal, 1849-1864, Kentucky Historical Society, Box 1, FF2.

"fat and sassy".'[1029] His enslaver often showed off these 'fat and sassy' children to their visitors, demonstrating the superiority of his strong slaves.[1030] Further, Bruce wrote that these children had 'all the outdoor exercise they wanted', and that their only worry was to 'eat, play and grow.'[1031] His enslaver's 'special wish' was for these children to 'attain to good size and height' because a 'tall, well-proportioned slave man or woman, in case of a sale, would always command the highest price paid.'[1032] Bruce clearly demonstrates that ensuring the children grew up healthily was not only 'for [his enslaver's] pride', but also 'his financial interest as well.'[1033] Enslavers generally wanted children to have the appearance of being 'fat' and healthy, and WPA respondents (who were primarily children at the time of emancipation) reveal much about the types of food enslavers fed children. This mainly included fatty foods such as milk, clabber, and buttermilk, as well as 'pot-liquor', which were the leftover waters that vegetables had been cooked in.

It was therefore in the enslavers' best financial interest to concern themselves with the sickness of enslaved men, women, and children. As well as enslaved children, pregnant women also received attention from their enslavers as they were concerned with whether a woman could bring a foetus to term, as patterns of seasonal diseases often caused miscarriages.[1034] However, as Walter Johnson argues, medical care for enslaved people was just a 'trick of the trade, nothing more.'[1035] Indeed, physicians and enslavers treated enslaved people to either maintain or increase their market value, rather than out of 'love' or benevolent care – though enslavers still bought into this image and their own ideology of paternalistic ownership. In general, enslavers concerned themselves with the medical governance of enslaved people because to lose an enslaved person 'was losin' money.'[1036] They therefore called in the family physician if someone was seriously ill.[1037] For other minor cases, they used home remedies.[1038] Though some enslavers forced pregnant women back to work as soon as possible, others kept a close eye in case they suffered from post-natal complications. Martha Colquitt, for example, recalled that her enslaver forced 'grannies' to look after the mothers post-labour, and 'if she found a mammy in a bad fix she

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[1029] H. C. Bruce, *The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man,* (Pennsylvania: P. Anstadt & Sons, 1895), 14.
[1030] Bruce, *The New Man,* 14.
[1031] *Ibid*., 15.
[1032] *Ibid*.
[1033] *Ibid*.
[1034] Cody, 'Cycles of Work', 62.
[1035] Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 120.
[1036] Rachel Adams, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 7.
[1037] Celestia Avery, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 26.
[1038] Avery, Slave Narrative Project, Vol.4:1, 26.

would ax Mist'ess to send for Dr. Davenport.'[1039] Similarly, Jefferson Franklin Henry recalled that his enslaver, 'Master Robert', sent for a doctor when the enslaved were sick, '[e]specially when chillun was borned.'[1040] Paying out money in the short term toward medical care for pregnant women and their children benefitted their finances in the long term. However, Michael Byrd and Linda A. Clayton claim that over ninety per cent of births were attended to by enslaved midwives and enslavers only called for a physician in dire cases.[1041] Enslavers did this as they believed that physicians knew more than the enslaved Grannies, when in reality they made things worse. Thus, by allowing Grannies to help with births, they not only reassured the pregnant women, who felt safer in the care of their communities, but also saved them money .[1042]

Formal medical governance depended not only on whether the enslaver *wanted* to provide it, but also on whether they could afford it. George Washingtin [*sic*] Buckner, stated that his parent's enslaver in Kentucky 'was not wealthy enough to provide adequately for their comforts,' and his mother became 'invalidate' due to 'the task of bearing children each year and being deprived of medical and surgical attention.'[1043] Women like Buckner's mother are visible in both oral testimonies and in the recordings of traders who noted the women who were unwell from 'too fast breeding.'[1044] Enslaved women also attempted to appeal to the white slaveholding mistresses of the plantation, and often informed them of their pregnancy-related illnesses and ailments. Former actress and slaveholder Frances "Fanny" Kemble wrote extensively about the ill-health of enslaved women due to forced reproduction. In one letter, she wrote that an enslaved woman named Molly was suffering from fits which their physician, Dr James Holmes, 'attributed…to a nervous disorder, brought on by frequent childbearing.'[1045] Kemble exclaimed that at just thirty years old Molly had given birth to ten children: 'ten children E[lizabeth]!', an exclamation which suggests this was an above average number of children to have.[1046] On another occasion an enslaved woman who 'appeared very ill', approached Kemble, who described her as 'the mother

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[1039] Martha Colquitt, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 246.
[1040] Jefferson Franklin Henry, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 189.
[1041] Michael Byrd and Linda A. Clayton, *An American Health Dilemma*: *A Medical History of African Americans and the Problem of Race, Beginnings to 1900* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2000), 229.
[1042] Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave*, 145.
[1043] George Washingtin Buckner, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, Indiana, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn050/, 27-28.
[1044] Alonzo White Account Book, South Carolina Historical Society, Manuscripts, (1853), https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:113744, xxxxiii, xxxxxi, xxxxxii, xxxxxii, xxxxxiv.
[1044] White Account Book, xxxxvi.
[1045] Catherine Clinton (ed.), *Fanny Kemble's Journals* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 109.
[1046] Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Journals,* 109.

of a very large family.'[1047] This woman complained that with the combination of 'childbearing and hard field labor, her back was almost broken in two.'[1048]

Slaveholding women such as Kemble often took a close interest in the medical governance of enslaved children, administering medicines they believed would help them grow into strong adolescents or which would prolong their lives. Todd Savitt has shown that in the 1850s, 16-20% of all deaths were children under the age of one.[1049] Common causes of infant death included croup, diarrhea, dysentery, whooping cough, pneumonia, fever, and suffocation (although suffocation is now thought to be Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDs)).[1050] Many formerly enslaved respondents who were children at the time of emancipation remembered the white mistress of the plantation routinely handing out medicine. For example, Hush Waters recalled that the mistress used to visit the slave quarters every morning to see to the sick children, and always carried a 'little baske[t] wid oil, teppentine an' number six in it. Number six was strong medicine' and they 'had to take to to be drap.'[1051]

Kemble also kept a list of detailed records of the enslaved women that came and asked for her help. For example, she listed Nanny, who had only one surviving child out of the three she birthed. Kemble noted that Nanny asked her if 'the rule of sending them into the field three weeks after confinement might be altered.'[1052] Charlotte and Sally both complained of pain, Sally suffering with 'incessant pain and weakness in her back' after five pregnancies, and Charlotte was 'crippled with rheumatism' and swollen knees.[1053] Kemble's systematic listing of these women – their names, the number of children they had both living and dead, and their complaint – is indicative of the commonality of physical illnesses related to childbirth. However, not all of these illnesses were physical. One woman, named Sarah, came to Kemble to complain of a combination of physical and mental illness. Sarah had given birth to seven children, of which five were dead.[1054] At this time, Sarah was pregnant again, and was complaining to Kemble that she 'had dreadful pains in her back, and an internal tumor' which had swelled, and 'probably…is ruptured.'[1055] In a language that was typical of the nineteenth century, Kemble also wrote that Sarah had 'once been

[1047] *Ibid*., 102.
[1048] *Ibid*.
[1049] Todd Savitt, *Race and Medicine in the Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century America* (Kent State University Press, 2014), 10.
[1050] Savitt, *Race and Medicine,* 10, 112.
[1051] Hush Waters, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 321.
[1052] *Ibid*.
[1053] Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Journals,* 154-155.
[1054] *Ibid*., 155.
[1055] *Ibid*.

mad' and escaped into the woods, likely for a respite from labour.[1056] Importantly, Kemble linked Sarah's 'derangement' to 'her constant childbearing and hard labour in the fields at the same time.'[1057] Although it is likely that Sarah was not actually 'mad' and was instead absenting herself for some respite from the pressures of forced reproductions combined with the daily toil in the field, the stress of pregnancy combined with the emotional burden of giving birth to seven children only for five of them to die likely had an impact on her mental health.[1058] The uncertainty of her unborn child's future and the knowledge that they faced a lifetime of violence and exploitation also contributed to Sarah's mental state. However, it is probable that Sarah would have felt uncomfortable revealing these thoughts to Kemble. Although Kemble's sympathy and distress at the enslaved women's medical plights does not suggest that she had an interest in forced reproduction, it still reveals her husband's desire for forced reproduction. By recording the occasions that the enslaved women came to her with complaints about the toll childbirth had on their bodies, Kemble reveals her husband's insistence on reproduction.

Despite trying to cure enslaved women of their reproductive troubles, not all physicians found success. James Haynes, Charles Manigault's overseer in 1846, wrote to inform him that an enslaved woman named Nelly was unwell, as she had 'a discharge from the utera.'[1059] Their physician, Dr. Pritchard, had prescribed treatments for two weeks in November and had visited 'two or three times' to see her but was not improving.[1060] The children, however, were 'all quite well.'[1061] Pritchard ordered her confined to her bed in October, and by May she had died 'from chronic affection of the womb.'[1062] The objectification of enslaved bodies continued even in death, with bodies either donated to medical colleges to use in postmortem experiments, or they were disposed of in an unemotional and detached way.[1063] Thus, even in death, enslaved bodies held a value that enslavers exploited to further their financial agenda. Henry Bibb wrote in 1849 that his enslaver gave medical attention to only the 'very valuable slave[s]', and that once they had died 'very little care is taken of their dead bodies than if they were dumb beasts.'[1064] Language that

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[1056] *Ibid.*; Jenifer Barclay discusses nineteenth-century attitudes toward mental disabilities who often referred to mental illnesses as 'madness, insanity, epilepsy, idiocy or feeblemindedness.' See: Jenifer L. Barclay, *The Mark of Slavery: Disability, Race, and Gender in Antebellum America* (University of Illinois Press, 2021), 17.
[1057] *Ibid.*
[1058] Sasha Turner discusses maternal grief and infant deaths in: Sasha Turner, 'The Nameless and the Forgotten: Maternal Grief, Sacred Protection, and the Archive of Slavery,' *Slavery & Abolition*, 38 (2017), 232-250.
[1059] Letter from James Haynes to Charles Manigault, 2nd November 1846, in in Clifton, *Life and Labour,* 42.
[1060] Haynes to Manigault, 2nd Nov. 1846, 42.
[1061] *Ibid.*
[1062] Haynes to Manigault, 2nd Nov. 1846, 56-57.
[1063] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 3, 7; Stephen C. Kenny, '"A Dictate of Both Interest and Mercy"?: Slave Hospitals in the Antebellum South,' *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences,* 65 (2010), 16.
[1064] Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb,* 118.

dehumanized and commodified them also continued post-mortem. For example, in the *American Journal of Medical Sciences*, a physician described an enslaved man, thirty-eight hours after his death as 'a large powerful negro, full six feet and two to four inches high, and not at all emaciated.'[1065] Another described the body of Richard Ford, who died from 'Inhaling Chemical Fumes in a Sulphuric Acid Chamber' as 'of good muscular development, healthy constitution and temperate habits[.]'[1066] At some point when Bibb's wife was sick, their second child died (miscarried), and he 'was compelled to dig my own child's grave and bury it without even a box to put it in.'[1067] For Bibb, his child was buried unceremoniously as it no longer held any potential value for his enslaver -- neither in life or death.

Some enslavers used medicine that they thought would encourage or increase the fertility of enslaved women. Alice Wright's father stated that his enslavers 'put medicine in the water (cisterns) to make the young slaves have more children,' though this is likely a saying such as 'they put something in the water' as a response to the large number of pregnancies amongst enslaved women in this community. [1068] Wright's father's enslaver was evidently motivated by reproductive practices, as is made clear by Wright who proceeded to state that 'if his old master had a good breeding woman he wouldn't sell her. He would keep her for himself.'[1069] This statement has a sinister undertone. Though Wright may have been suggesting that her father's enslaver kept the 'breeding' women to exploit for his own financial means, 'keep her for himself' also suggests that he himself directly sexually exploited these women.

The micromanagement of the distribution of medicine to the enslaved people, particularly children, was born out of enslavers' belief in their allegedly inherent inability to care for children and their ignorance of medicines. Ella Kelly's enslaver would not let the enslaved people administer their own medicine because they 'might make a mistake', and the children would take too much castor oil if left to their own devices.[1070] This regulation of medicine was also due to enslavers desiring to control enslaved people's bodies, and their need to control exactly when and how they received medicine. This ultimately determined the health of individuals and who enslavers deemed deserving of medical care.

[1065] 'Post-mortem, thirty-eight hours after death', *The American journal of the medical sciences*, n.s. 10, Charles B. Slack [etc.], 1827, https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/americanjournalo10thor/, 260.
[1066] Edward A. Mans, 'Art. XII, Case of Death From Inhaling Chemical Fumes in a Sulphuric Acid Chamber', *The American journal of the medical sciences*, n.s. 10, Charles B. Slack [etc.], 1827, https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/americanjournalo10thor/, 380.
[1067] Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb,* 118.
[1068] Alice Wright, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 246.
[1069] Wright, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2: 7, 246.
[1070] Ella Kelly, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn143/, 81.

Threadworms, hookworms or pinworms, referred to simply as 'worms', was another common affliction amongst enslaved children that could affect their growth if enslavers left it untreated. Coelho and McGuire found that hookworm may have had an effect on enslaved children's heights, which, when combined with malaria's effect on their birthweights, stunted their growth.[1071] They further estimated that worms accounted 'for 31 percent of the slave height deficit', while malaria accounted for 14 to 24 percent of low birthweights.[1072] Milton Marshall of South Carolina recalled that his enslaver called 'his big chaps' up to the main house and forced them to drink chinaberry tea to prevent them from being infected with threadworms.[1073] The reference to 'big chaps' suggests that Marshall's enslaver prioritised the care of those that he thought were growing into likely and promising prime hands. Thus, Marshall's enslaver ranked the children on his plantation by size and administered medicine according to this hierarchy. Similarly, Henry Barnes informed his interviewer that his enslaver often gave the children 'Jerusalem oak candy full o' seeds' to treat an infection of worms.[1074] Other enslavers on larger plantations left the care of the sick to enslaved nurses. For instance, William Henry Towns recalled that there was always someone the enslaver appointed as a nurse so that when someone got sick they would be 'righ' dere to give dem treatments.'[1075] These treatments included 'all sorts of roots and yarbs', peach tree leaves, sassafras sprigs in tea, and metals such as brass, copper, and dime to prevent rheumatoid arthritis.[1076] Meanwhile, Josephine Bacchus remembered enslaved people using 'black snake root' and 'Sampson snake root' boiled with whiskey to increase appetite.[1077]

Medical treatment by white physicians was also important for the classification of 'sound' and 'unsound' enslaved people. Like the definition of a 'prime field hand' as an 'enslaved man or woman whose productivity was among the maximum that could be expected from a single individual,' sound enslaved people had a similarly capitalistic definition.[1078] Enslaves similarly saw a sound enslaved person as someone whose *sexual* productivity was among the maximum that could be expected from a single individual. As Rosenthal argues, these definitions helped standardize labor and made it 'easier to put numbers to work.[1079] Enslavers classified sound people as those that were physically healthy, with no clear evidence or illness or disease, and

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[1071] Coelho and McGuire, 'Diets Versus Diseases', 234.
[1072] *Ibid*.
[1073] Milton Marshall, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn143/, 175.
[1074] Henry Barnes, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 21.
[1075] William Henry Towns, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 381.
[1076] Towns, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 381.
[1077] Josephine Bacchus, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn141/, 24.
[1078] Rosenthal, 'Slavery's Scientific Management', 75.
[1079] *Ibid*., 63.

could work and labor sexually, effectively. Unsound enslaved people were those who had an illness, disease, or other such malady that physically prevented them from carrying out labour. Enslavers desired sound, healthy people to not only work effectively and contribute to the plantation economy, but also to *reproduce* the workforce, creating more sound people to enslave and exploit. Unsound enslaved people were less productive, and, as shown in Chapter One, enslavers went to great lengths to keep them from reproducing with those they deemed superior in health. Enslavers therefore physically inspected enslaved women to try to judge their reproductive history and, as Sharla M. Fett succinctly argues, 'with the commodification of black bodies came the objectification of African American health.'[1080] Furthermore, soundness included the past, current, and future health of enslaved individuals.[1081] Enslavers therefore considered the past, current, and future value of enslaved women, and *potential* financial value they could exploit from their wombs and reproductive lives.

Juriah Harris's article in *The Savannah Journal of Medicine* in 1858 specifically defined unsoundness:

> Medically speaking, I believe no disease will constitute unsoundness, unless it is of a *chronic* or *constitutional* character, *and incapacitates the negro for the performance of the usual duties of his calling, viz: hard labor, or tending to shorten life; or an acute disease of such a character as will probably leave as a sequence, a chronic affection, which will more or less incapacitate the negro for manual labor; or again an acute disease, which will render the negro liable to subsequent attacks of the same affection.* Just here I might cite asthma, and rheumatism in some of its forms.[1082]

Harris also classified unsoundness as any 'deformity', both 'congenital or accidental.'[1083] Such congenital disabilities included 'an imperforate anus or occlusion of the vagina' that cannot be cured by 'surgical interference.'[1084] Harris was deeply concerned with tumors on the uterus that cause 'profuse hemorrhages', and 'materially deranged the function of menstruation.'[1085] According to Harris, these cases often remained undetected and 'produced little inconveniences, save an abortion [miscarriage].'[1086] These 'little inconveniences' would have had an emotional impact on the enslaved women that lived with tumors, and consequently suffered miscarriages, while enslavers would have found these tumors an inconvenience in their plans to reproduce their workforce. As Isiah Green attested, 'large families were the aim and pride of an enslaver,

[1080] Johnson, *Soul By Soul,* 143; Fett, *Working Cures,* 18.
[1081] Fett, *Working Cures*, 18.
[1082] Juriah Harris, 'What Constitutes Unsoundness in the Negro?' *The Savannah Journal of Medicine,* 1 (1858), 147.
[1083] Harris, 'What Constitutes Unsoundness', 147.
[1084] *Ibid*.
[1085] *Ibid*. 293-294.
[1086] *Ibid.,* 294.

who would scrutinize the women and determine who he thought would reproduce quickly.[1087] According to Green, a 'greedy' enslaver sold away those women who did not produce fast enough, but he would first wait until he had a substantial group of 'undesirables' that included elderly and 'unruly' enslaved people.[1088]

'Unsoundness' in enslaved women often manifested itself in complications from pregnancies, and petitions filed by enslavers to county courts regarding 'unsound' enslaved people reveal much about the specifics of these women. For example, in October 1853 in Alabama, a man named Joseph Hopper petitioned the court to allow him to sell two enslaved women named as 'Big Mary' and Silvia, on behalf of his underage ward, Caroline Elsberry.[1089] Silvia was 'badly troubled with the falling of the womb & has lost two children,' and Mary gave birth to a child that was 'badly deformed.'[1090] Hopper did not believe that these women would be of any valuable to Elsberry when she came of age and so wanted to sell them before their market value decreased with age and affliction. Silvia held no value in the eyes of Hopper because she had multiple miscarriages and could therefore not reproduce the workforce. Her 'falling of the womb' also suggests that she was in some physical pain, and so could not work as productively as other women. Although she successfully produced a child, Mary's soundness reflected the soundness of her child. Hopper simultaneously deemed her child unsound and therefore not worth much financially or productively, and also devalued Mary for producing said unsound child. Similarly, enslaver William C. Bullitt dropped out from purchasing an enslaved woman named Isabel from John Stadler Allison because he had heard that she had previously suffered from a 'serious mental affliction' and was concerned that it was hereditary.[1091] Indeed, he expressed his concern: '…I should always be under apprehension of a return of the same disease to herself or children[.]'[1092] Isabel value decreased due to an alleged past mental illness that prevented her from working, and Bullitt feared that this 'affliction' would be passed onto her future children. Bullitt therefore determined that Isabel would not only not labor well on his farm, but also that she would not produce productive children.

Jenifer Barclay's research on disabled children that enslavers labeled 'monstrosities' reveals how enslavers blamed enslaved children's disabilities on their mother's 'sexual

[1087] Isiah Green, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/, 50.
[1088] Green, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:2, 50.
[1089] Petition 20185323, 26 Oct. 1853, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Records of the Probate Court, Estate Case Files, Box 63.
[1090] Petition 20185323.
[1091] Letter from William C. Bullitt to John Stadler Allison, 16 October 1824, Bullitt Family Papers – Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, Mss /A/B 937c, Folder 359, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.
[1092] Letter from Bullitt to Allison, 16 October 1824, Bullitt Family Papers.

lasciviousness.'[1093] Enslavers' racist ideology that Black women were immoral and sexually promiscuous combined with their desire for them to have multiple children resulted in an ironic double standard when they assumed that children's congenital disabilities stemmed from their enslaved mothers' sexual immorality. Enslavers and other white elites such as physicians further racialized reproductive practices by arguing that *white* women who gave birth to children with disabilities were not to blame, but their delicate dispositions were.[1094] Furthermore, Barclay argues that the inability to produce children made these Black women 'bad breeders', and often resulted in their enslavers selling them.[1095] For example, Caroline Holland suggested to her enslaver that a man named Lum was observing her romantically from a distance. This made her uncomfortable, and she informed her enslaver, Mr. Abernathy, of Lum's observance. In response, Abernathy went to fetch a seventeen-year-old named as Jeff to 'look after' Holland.[1096] This may appear to be an example of an enslaver's benevolence, if it were not for the fact that Lum had a 'bad eye', and in comparison to Jeff, who was 'a big strong lookin' boy,' was the inferior match for Holland.[1097] If Lum did not have a 'bad eye', Abernathy very likely would not have taken Holland's wishes into account. But because he believed Jeff to be physically superior to Lum, Abernathy assigned him to 'look out' for Holland.

As Berry argues, documents detailing enslavers who took traders to court for selling 'unsound' women who could not reproduce demonstrates the importance of reproductive health.[1098] These 'bad breeders' appear in multiple legal cases in the 1850s and 1860s. Stevenson v. Reaves in January 1854 in Alabama saw the plaintiff purchase an enslaved woman under the guise that she was a 'breeding woman… of good qualities and capacity for household and field work', but instead she was 'incapable of…bearing children.[1099] According to Stevenson, he purchased her for $540 ($18,790 today) but she was not worth $50.[1100] Similarly in Callaway v. Jones in Georgia in January 1856, Jones and a man named Quattlebum sold two enslaved people named as Tenah and Rachel to Callaway in 1850 for $1,100 ($42,221 today) with a 'written warranty of soundness.'[1101] Callaway soon found that 'both…were unsound, Tenah having a disease of the womb' and Rachel

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[1093] Barclay, 'Bad Breeders and Monstrosities', 288.
[1094] *Ibid*.
[1095] *Ibid.*
[1096] Caroline Holland, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 187.
[1097] Holland, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 187.
[1098] Daina Ramey Berry, '"In Pressing Need of Cash": Gender, Skills, and Family Persistence in the Domestic Slave Trade,' *The Journal of African American History,* 92 (2007), 32.
[1099] Stevenson v. Reaves, 24 Ala. 425, January 1854 in Helen Tunnicliff Catterall (ed), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro* (1926), 195.
[1100] Stevenson v. Reaves, 195.
[1101] Callaway v. Jones, 19 Ga. 277, January 1856 in Helen Tunnicliff Catterall (ed), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro* (1926), 47.

'a defect in one of her eyes.'[1102] Callaway classified Tenah as unsound because she was unlikely to conceive a child. In Pulaski County, Arkansas in 1860, James Robinson sought to sell an enslaved woman named as Hannah as she was 'afflicted with a certain disease called 'prolapsus uteri' and is thereby so depreciated in value' that selling her as soon as possible would be advantageous to his finances.[1103]

Traders also concealed less obvious issues enslaved women had with their wombs and advertised them to enslavers as sound. In Mississippi, an enslaver hid that an enslaved woman named as Delia was suffering from amenorrhea, and, once she died, the enslaver that purchased her realized that she suffered from a diseased womb.[1104] Similarly, in the case of George v. Bean in 1855, an enslaved woman named Mary suffered from weakness and a subsequent 'disease of the womb' which 'thought her value reduced on half.'[1105] In another case in 1841, a physician attested that an unnamed enslaved woman 'had been afflicted with a chronic inflammation of the neck of the uterus' and that she must spend her time lying down 'for a year.'[1106] The physician claimed that this cure was difficult, 'owing to their neglect or inability to submit to the necessary treatment', though realistically this was because their enslaver would not allow their slave to be on bed rest for an entire year.[1107] Allegedly, the unnamed enslaved woman's value diminished by a third of her total initial value.[1108] The silence in this evidence around the enslaved woman's identity reduces her to her body and whether or not she could produce children, thereby calculating her value as a functioning womb, rather than a human being. Further, even those who *were* named in these cases are still identified only by their sound or unsoundness.

Pregnancy and Infertility

Thelma Jennings argues that only a minority of enslavers interfered in improving the quality of enslaved people as well as the quantity.[1109] However, this depends on how 'interfered' is defined. By widening the scope and meaning of the term, it is evident that enslavers attempted to interfere in the physical quality of enslaved people from arranging marriages between those they deemed the strongest and healthiest, to controlling food, forcing children to exercise, and giving

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[1102] Callaway v. Jones, 48.
[1103] James Robinson, Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock, Arkansas, 24th Sept. 1860, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[1104] Steppacher v. Reneau, 24 Miss, 114, October 1852, in Helen Tunnicliff Catterall (ed), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro,* (1926), 331.
[1105] George v. Bean, 30 Miss. 147, December 1855, in Helen Tunnicliff Catterall (ed), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro,* (1926), 339.
[1106] Armstrong v. Mooney, i Rob. La. 167, November 1841, in Helen Tunnicliff Catterall (ed), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro,* (1926), 541.
[1107] Armstrong v. Mooney, 541.
[1108] *Ibid*.
[1109] Jennings, '"Us Colored Women"', 54.

medical attention to pregnant and reproducing women. However, specific antenatal care depended on slaveholders, and enslavers ran their plantations in particular ways.[1110]

The paternalistic ideology espoused by enslavers that they looked after and cared for pregnant enslaved women is a contentious topic at best, and untrue at worst. Enslavers often completely ignored the antenatal care that pregnant women needed to ensure a healthy labour, which mainly stemmed from racist assumptions that Black women, like animals, gave birth painlessly.[1111] Enslavers not only forced pregnant women to work in the fields, but continued to force them to walk back and forth to feed their infants.[1112] This likely caused stress on the mothers resulting in infant death and miscarriages.[1113] According to Leslie A. Schwalm, enslavers in the low country forced women back to work three to four weeks post-birth.[1114] Indeed, some enslavers refused to allow women a post-birth lying in period, resulting in infection and other health issues including miscarriage and infertility. For Rosaline Rogers, who experienced slavery in Tennessee, her enslaver only allowed a lying-in period of two to three days.[1115] Other plantations saw only one day.[1116]

Enslavers cared for pregnant women as the *vessel* for carrying unborn commodities. This is particularly evident in the way that they still brutally abused pregnant women but remained mindful of their bump. The concept of 'hysteria' divided women by race and fostered violent consequences for enslaved Black women.[1117] Physicians believed that white women were more delicate and had difficult pregnancies or struggled to conceive.[1118] On the other end of the spectrum, they believed that Black women were tougher, more fertile, and had many children.[1119] As Laura Briggs argues, this 'doubled discourse of women' had an intense impact on the health and medical treatment of pregnant enslaved women.[1120] The belief that Black women conceived easily and quickly, combined with the widespread ideology that Black people did not feel pain as white people did, resulted in the violent mistreatment of pregnant enslaved women. For example, Marie E. Harvey, who experienced slavery in Tennessee, recalled that 'they used to take pregnant

[1110] *Ibid*.
[1111] Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We*, 54; In the Caribbean context, Barbara Bush argues that enslavers kept pregnant women in the fields up to a few weeks before they gave birth, and they had to return to work no longer than three weeks after (Bush, 'Hard Labor', 199-200).
[1112] Jones, *Labor of Love,* 35.
[1113] *Ibid*.
[1114] Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We,* 54.
[1115] Rosaline Rogers, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, Indiana, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn050/, 166.
[1116] Unknown, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 362.
[1117] Laura Briggs, 'The Race of Hysteria: "Overcivilization" and the "Savage" Woman in Late Nineteenth-Century Obstetrics and Gynecology', *American Quarterly,* 52 (2000), 246-247.
[1118] Briggs, 'The Race of Hysteria"', 246-247.
[1119] *Ibid*.
[1120] *Ibid*., 247.

women and dig a hole in the ground and put their stomachs in it and whip them.'[1121] Her enslaver attempted to also abuse her grandmother in this way, but her grandfather threatened him away with an axe.[1122] In Alabama, Mary Gaines's enslaver also put women's pregnant stomachs in holes but went further to then strap them down, before beating them with a cowhide.[1123] Digging a hole for the women's stomach was a futile attempt to protect the pregnancy. Reverend Wamble, enslaved in Mississippi, recalled that his mother died when Wamble was two years-old after her enslaver beat her while pregnant.[1124] She ultimately 'died from a miscarriage cause[d] by a whipping.'[1125] Moreover, Wamble stated that enslavers only allowed the hole in the ground for women who were in 'advanced stage[s] of pregnancy', otherwise they 'were treated like the men' and whipped by the enslaver or overseer without any provisions made for the pregnancy.[1126]

Moreover, the violent torture of enslaved women had an impact on the health and development of unborn children. Peter Still recollected that there were 'very few infants [that] lived on this plantation' as their enslaver forced the pregnant women to work hard and beat them 'while in a situation that required the utmost kindness.'[1127] Consequentially, many women had miscarriages, stillbirths, or the babies 'died in spasms when a few days old.'[1128] Further evidence of this was volunteered by William T. Allan, a son of a former slaveholder. Allan reportedly witnessed an overseer named 'Tune' force a pregnant woman to lay over a log 'and beat her so unmercifully, that she was soon after delivered of a *dead child*.'[1129] Similarly, in March 1839, Fanny Kemble recorded in her journal that an enslaved woman named Die approached her to discuss her treatment whilst pregnant.[1130] Die had sixteen children in total, but only two survived, and she had suffered through four miscarriages.[1131] One miscarriage was due to 'falling down with a heavy burden on her head,' while another was due to her enslaver tying her hands up on a tree and whipping her:

> She said their hands were first tied together, sometimes by the wrists, and sometimes, which was worse, by the thumbs, and they were then drawn up to a tree or post, so as almost to

[1121] Marie E. Harvey, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 231.
[1122] Hevery, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 231.
[1123] Mary Gaines, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 9.
[1124] Rev. Wamble, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, Indiana, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn050/, 200.
[1125] Wamble, Slave Narrative Project, Vol.5, 200.
[1126] *Ibid*.
[1127] Pickard, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed,* 164.
[1128] *Ibid*.
[1129] William T. Allan, *American Slavery as it is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York: The American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839), 45.
[1130] Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Journal,* 157.
[1131] *Ibid*.

> swing them off the ground, and then their clothes rolled around their waist, and a man with a cowhide stands and stripes them. I give you the woman's words. She did not speak of this as any thing strange, unusual, or especially horrid and abominable; and when I said, "Did they do that to you when you were with child?" she simply replied, "Yes, missis."[1132]

Kemble lamented her inability to do anything about this treatment. Despite her position as the plantation mistress, she felt that she had no control or ability to offer reassurance. Instead, she gave her the provisions which Die had originally gone to ask for, and 'remained choking with indignation…[and] most bitter thoughts.'[1133] According to Kemble, the women that approached her knew that she could not interfere with their work regimes despite their pregnancy, but that the women still hoped that she would 'use her influence with Mr. [Butler] to obtain for them a month's respite from labor in the field after childbearing.'[1134] Distressed by their plight, Kemble lamented that Mr. Butler had 'forbidden [her] to bring him any more complaints from them.'[1135] Pregnant women such as Die commonly experienced violence from overseers and enslavers, despite their condition and risk to the unborn child, and their appeals to mistresses like Kemble did not get them any special treatment. For these enslavers, although reproducing slavery was important, they did not want to sacrifice either labour or their violent authority over the plantation community.

Even more traumatically, some enslavers forced other enslaved men to whip pregnant women. James Williams's 1838 narrative details how the plantation overseer forced him to whip Sarah, a pregnant woman, for not collecting the required amount of cotton.[1136] Williams argued with the overseer who ignored his pleading and forced him to whip her fifty times.[1137] The overseer then proceeded to whip her fifty times every time she failed to work productively: on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. By Sunday, the overseer 'ordered her to be tied up to the limb of a tree by means of a rope fastened round her wrists, so as to leave her feet about six inches from the ground.'[1138] Sarah tried to resist by using her feet to relieve the pressure on her wrists, but the overseer tied her feet together and stripped her naked.[1139] He proceeded to whip her twice, and the second one 'cut open her side and abdomen with a frightful gash.'[1140] Seeing her wound, he ordered her untied and carried into the house, where she died three days later 'in a state of insensibility.'[1141] By

[1132] *Ibid*.
[1133] *Ibid*., 157-158.
[1134] *Ibid*., 153.
[1135] *Ibid*., 154.
[1136] James Williams, *Narrative of James Williams, an American Slave, Who Was for Several Years a Driver on a Cotton Plantation in Alabama* (New York: The American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838), 61-64.
[1137] Williams, *Narrative of James Williams,* 61-64.
[1138] *Ibid*.
[1139] *Ibid*.
[1140] *Ibid*.
[1141] *Ibid*.

forcing enslaved men to whip the pregnant women, the overseer moved the blame and responsibility for the pregnant woman away from himself. Moreover, this testimony demonstrates how enslavers still wanted pregnant women to be productive workers – even if it meant whipping them fifty times a day.

Rather than modifying their violent treatment toward pregnant enslaved women, enslavers assigned blame for miscarriages to the women in question. Israel Campbell, for example, wrote that Mr. G., the overseer on his planation, would metre out a punishment of one hundred lashes to any enslaved woman that lost her child.[1142] The overseer believed that this tortuous punishment reiterated the financial loss the miscarriage had on the women's enslaver, 'as if a mother's affection was not inducement enough to secure watchfulness and care on her part, and a mother's anguish at the death of her child not sufficiently intense, without the addition of this terrible scourging!'[1143] These overseers on Campbell's plantation aimed, 'like the stock-growing farmer' to improve the value 'of the planter's human stock as of his crops.'[1144] They wanted to ensure that the enslaved families 'rear[ed] a numerus and vigorous offspring' to secure themselves a higher salary with their employer.[1145] Although overseers did not stand to benefit from the reproduction of enslaved people as enslavers did, they could still manipulate some personal financial gain in the way of salary for a 'good performance.' Indeed, their 'ambition' was to secure a good social and employable standing.[1146]

However, this violent behaviour did not always have the outcome the overseers were aiming for. Court petitions demonstrate how much enslavers valued their pregnant women, but also emphasises that enslavers viewed them as property. If someone damaged that property, they were more than willing to sue. For example, in Greensboro, Georgia, in 1822, Archibald H. Scott sued overseers Frederick Colbert and Robert Hammond for $1,000 ($25,471 today) in damages for assaulting an enslaved pregnant woman named as Chaney, 'with force & arms.'[1147] Colbert and Hammond's mismanagement and violent treatment of Chaney led to her miscarrying her child.[1148] Scott therefore sued for $1,000 claiming medical expenses and the loss of labour from Chaney.[1149] For Scott, Chaney was property that Colbert and Hammond owed him compensation for, for damaging.

[1142] Campbell, *An Autobiography,* 318.
[1143] *Ibid*.
[1144] *Ibid*.
[1145] *Ibid*.
[1146] *Ibid*.
[1147] Petition 20682201, circa 1822, Greene County Courthouse, Greensboro, Georgia, Records of the Inferior Court, Records 1820-1823, pp. 339-340.
[1148] Petition 20682201.
[1149] *Ibid*.

Greene County, Alabama, saw a similar case in 1852, when Robert Leachman, Charles Hays, Mary Hays, and George Ann Hays all sued the administrator of their estate, William P. Gould, for waste and mismanagement.[1150] They alleged that he hired an overseer who whipped an enslaved man named as George so much that he '[put] out his right eye', abused another man named Claiborne 'by getting him down and jumping upon his back with the heels of his shoes', and beat a third man to death.[1151] They also stressed his mismanagement of the enslaved women on the plantation, whereby the overseer he hired forced the women to live in 'miserable Hovels not fit for horse stables' and that the 'breeding women on said Plantations were rendered almost entirely barren, and worthless as such' and were 'subject to continual miscarriages due to their living and working conditions.[1152] Consequently, a number of children died, and Leachman and the Hays calculated that the women's consistent miscarriages resulted in a loss of approximately *forty* children. They further estimated that another fifteen enslaved children died from neglect during their infancy.[1153] Leachman and Hays sought compensation from Gould, not for the emotional trauma that these enslaved people experienced, but for their own financial loss. Like Scott, they viewed the mismanagement of enslaved people as a financial loss, especially for the potential profits they could have made from pregnant women and their offspring. Though enslavers across the antebellum period frequently used violence as a form of punishment, they still wanted enslaved men and women to be able to productively work. Thus, enslavers such as Leachman and Hays sued those that took the violence so far as to noticeably weaken the labour force.

On other plantations, enslavers refrained from beating the pregnant women at all, especially those they deemed 'breeders.' However, this was not out of benevolence for the *person*, but for their *body.* Sallie Paul in North Carolina, for example, told her interviewer that although her enslavers beat the children, they abstained from beating the adult women 'cause dey was breedin.'[1154] This testimony reveals enslavers' concern with the physical health of both pregnant women and those that could potentially have children. Despite the emotional and physical trauma of experiencing or witnessing brutal treatment (one formerly enslaved respondent said she 'never did get over that'), it was only the bodies of enslaved women and their capacity to procreate that enslavers cared about.[1155]

[1150] Robert Leachman, Charles Hays, Mary Hays and George Ann Hays v. William P. Gould, 1852 to 5th Feb. 1852, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.
[1151] Leachman, Hays, et. al. vs. Gould.
[1152] *Ibid*.
[1153] *Ibid*.
[1154] Sallie Paul, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn143/, 235.
[1155] Ellen Cragin, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 45.

Minerva Davis, whose parents experienced bondage in Tennessee, detailed a traumatic incident with her mother that reveals her enslaver's priorities. After putting some potatoes on the fire to cook, she went to sleep beside the flames. Sparks from the fire 'popped out' at her and set her alight: 'her sisters and brothers peed…on her and put out the fire. Her stomach was burned and scarred.'[1156] Significantly, her enslavers were 'disappointed because they thought she would be a good breeder.'[1157] The wounds on her stomach may have become infected and caused fertility issues, or her enslavers thought the scarring would put off potential suitors in an aesthetic sense. This would make sense if her enslavers were more relaxed about who they married as long as they produced children. Another concern may have been her market value, especially if they intended to sell or advertise her as a 'breeder.' Just as potential buyers were concerned with scars from whippings (that indicated disobedience), buyers may have been concerned about the origins of her scars. Either way, Davis's mother's enslavers were more upset over losing her as a potential 'breeder', which therefore impacted their finances, than the fact that she was in an incredibly painful and traumatic accident. Similarly in 1837, a court in South Carolina saw Joseph Gladney and James Wilson seek permission to sell an enslaved woman named Mima, and her infant son Isaac.[1158] When Mima was young, she was somehow 'badly burnt in her breast', which resulted in her inability to produce milk for her children.[1159] Gladney and Wilson referred to this as a 'disability of suckling' and argued that it reduced Mima's value as they could not hire her out as no one was 'willing or in a situation to furnish milk or provide suitable attendance for raising the children.'[1160] Mima's reproductive value was therefore diminished, as although she had successfully produced Isaac and thus contributed to the continuation of slavery, she could not sustain Isaac nutritionally and therefore became a burden to her enslavers. This evidence hence demonstrates the continuing importance of reproductive and maternal health even after the women had given birth to their children.

Account books from traders that note the condition of individuals reveals much about the physical condition of pregnant or previously pregnant women and the dearth of post-natal care, as they itemised them as they would inanimate property.[1161] Moreover, Ian Beamish argues that account books were not a 'sign of the centrality of modern business practices', but evidence of their 'violent, capitalist, and chaotic system of extracting cotton from enslaved people and

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[1156] Minerva Davis, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 128.
[1157] Davis, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:3, 128.
[1158] Joseph Gladney and James Wilson, 10th Jul. 1837 to 1st Jan. 1838, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.
[1159] Gladney and Wilson, South Carolina.
[1160] *Ibid*.
[1161] Berry, '"Broad in de Road dat Leaders ter Death"', 146.

southern soils' through the recording of their discipline and other such activities.[1162] These types of records also reveal what enslavers valued about a person. Alonzo White, a 'commission agent' in Charleston, South Carolina, recorded detailed descriptions of each enslaved person he sold. In particular, Silvy (aged 21 with four children), Sarah, (aged 45) Chloe (aged 40), Betty (aged 30), Sylvia (aged 50), Silvy (aged 33), Phobe (aged 23), Nancy (44), Jinny (34), and Patty (28) all suffered from a prolapsed uterus.[1163] 33-year-old Silvy was noted to have prolapsus 'from too fast breeding.'[1164] He recorded that Mary Ann, aged 49, had a 'fallen womb', and both Silvy and Dinah were 'weekly [*sic*] from fast breeding.'[1165] Similarly, in a letter from Charles Manigault to his son, Louis, Charles noted that an enslaved woman named Patty 'is said to have a slight prolapsus, occasionally' and alluded that this did not make her a 'Prime full hand.'[1166] Therefore, even though Charles may have at one point valued Patty as a 'breeder' or as a fertile woman, her value decreased due to the physical consequences of giving birth. Successive pregnancies and hard labour in the fields resulted in prolapsed uteruses, which ultimately led to not only a poor quality of life, but infertility or difficulties conceiving.[1167]

Though all these women clearly suffered from the effects of forced reproduction, White noted that Mary (aged 35) 'had bred fast' – a potential selling point.[1168] Ironically, enslavers valued women who produced children quickly, labelling them as 'breeders', but simultaneously *de*creased that value if they suffered any medical consequences of childbirth. Most of these enslaved women were over the age of thirty (with the exception of Silvy, Patty, and Phobe), which, according to enslavers, was past the prime age for producing children. Most enslavers cajoled women into reproducing as soon as they physically could and had started menstruating. As discussed in Chapter One, enslavers forced girls to marry as young as twelve. Alonzo White's account book reveals the physical consequences of 'too fast breeding' for both the enslaved women and their enslavers. For the women: physical pain and suffering; for the enslavers: decreased market value.

Charles Manigault's overseers expose the attitudes toward pregnant enslaved women and their comparison to the sick and invalid. In a letter from A.R. Bagshaw to Charles Manigault in August of 1844, Bagshaw bemoaned the burden of pregnant women: 'There is no more Sickness than we Could expect. No deaths. The worst is Pregnant women. There is now five which weakens

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[1162] Ian Beamish, 'A "Complicated Humbug": Slavery, Capitalism, and Accounts in the Cotton South', *Agricultural History,* 95 (2021), 36.
[1163] Alonzo White, Account Book, South Carolina Historical Society, Manuscripts, (1853), https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:113744, xxxxiii, xxxxxi, xxxxxii, xxxxxii, xxxxxiv.
[1164] White, Account Book, xxxxvi.
[1165] *Ibid*., xviii, xxxxxvii.
[1166] Letter from Charles Manigault to Louis Manigault, 16th January 1867, in Clifton, *Life and Labour*, 241.
[1167] Byrd and Clayton, *An American Health Dilemma*, 229.
[1168] *Ibid*., xxxxxvii. 7.

the force very much.'[1169] For Bagshaw, pregnant women were worse than the sick enslaved. This is likely because they deemed women as unproductive labourers during the nine-month gestation period, whereas sick slaves probably recovered within that period, thus making pregnant women the liability.

Though Bagshaw saw this as a weakening of the workforce, other enslavers felt it worth it to *increase* the workforce. This is evident in the way that some enslavers reduced pregnant women's workload to ensure a successful pregnancy and consequent addition to the workforce. As Virginia Davis testified, some enslavers did not allow pregnant women to work in order to ensure the foetus was brought to term. The Walls family enslaved her in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and as she was 'a good breeder' she 'didn't have to work so hard. They wouldn't let her work when she was pregnant.'[1170] Martha Jackson's aunt's enslaver treated his slaves similarly. According to Jackson, her aunt was never beaten as she was a 'breeder woman' who 'brough in chillen ev'y twelve mont's jes' lack a cow bringin' in a calf.'[1171] Jackson's aunt was aware that this made her 'mo' val'ble to her Ole Marster.'[1172] Jackon's aunt's enslaver did not make her work or put any strain on her to ensure that she would deliver healthy babies.[1173] Instead, he worked the other non-pregnant women hard, and she would 'hear dem women uv er night battin' de clo'es on er log in creek wid de sick.'[1174] For some women, though not many, pregnancy therefore represented a sense of freedom. Not only were they adding to their family – a source of love and comfort within the brutal realities of day-to-day slavery – but on plantations such as Jackson's and Davis's they found a respite from gruelling work.

Additional rations also incentivised enslaved women to become pregnant, as Fanny Kemble argued that pregnancy offered a 'premium…in the consideration of less work and more food.'[1175] Peter Brown recalled that his enslaver in Mississippi did not force his mother to work as she had ten children and 'they prized fast breeders.'[1176] Instead, she took care of her children and 'they would come to see her and bring her things.'[1177] On Frank Gill's Mississippi plantation, the enslavers even went as far as to feed pregnant women the same food they themselves ate.[1178] This

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[1169] A. R. Bagshaw to Charles Manigault, 14th August 1844, in Clifton, *Life and Labour*, 7.
[1170] Virginia Davis, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 132.
[1171] Martha Jackson, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 222.
[1172] Jackson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 222.
[1173] *Ibid*.
[1174] *Ibid*.
[1175] Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Journals,* 139.
[1176] Peter Brown, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 312.
[1177] Brown, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:1, 312.
[1178] Frank Gill, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/,150.

ensured that the pregnant enslaved women were relatively healthier, thus more likely to bring the foetus to full term. Dink Walton Young's mother's enslaver distributed more obvious incentives. According to Young, 'every time a Negro baby was born on one of his plantations, Major Walton gave the mother a caliqo [*sic*] dress and a "bright, shiny" silver dollar.'[1179] This pro-natalist incentive encouraged enslaved women, desperate for necessities to survive, to produce children.

Even after an enslaved woman had given birth, her body was still not her own. As historians such as West, Knight, and Jones-Rogers have shown, enslavers appropriated enslaved women's ability to mother their children for their own gains.[1180] Enslavers still controlled their reproductive bodies. The case of James Haynes and an enslaved woman named as Jony represents how enslavers capitalised on the death of children by exploiting the mother's ability to reproduce. Haynes, one of Charles Manigault's overseers on the Argyle plantation wrote to Manigault in September of 1845 concerning an incident with an enslaved woman wet nursing for Mr. Papot's (also an overseer) child. Papot forced Jony to nurse his child, as his wife had recently died and so the infant was in need of milk, and as Jony's infant was stillborn she had no child of her own to feed.[1181] However, Haynes was unsure of the proper procedure for this, as Papot did not ask Manigault's permission to exploit Jony in this way.[1182] This source is particularly thought-provoking, as Haynes was concerned with receiving the consent of Manigault as the owner of Jony, rather than Jony herself. For Manigault, Haynes, and Papot, Jony's purpose was to contribute to the continuation of the labour force. Her only child died at birth, but for the elite white enslavers, her reproductive health was still viable, and she was able to serve them in other ways. The concern for Manigault's consent for Papot's use of Jony's body demonstrates how she was not in control of her reproductive life either before, during, or after she gave birth.

Enslavers considered enslaved people's reproductive potential throughout their lives, moving from child, to adolescent, to adult, to elder. Age, therefore, also had a correlation to desirable bodies and value to enslavers. More specifically, once women passed the prime age for reproducing, their value began to decrease as they were increasingly infertile and weaker within the labour force. These women were no longer valuable producers and reproducers. In Mississippi, Lizzie Johnson argued that her enslaver sold off any 'scrawny' men but could not sell

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[1179] Dink Walton Young, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4 (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 206.
[1180] West and Knight, 'Mother's Milk', 37-68; Jones-Rogers, '"[S]he Could…Spare One Ample Breast,' 337-355.
[1181] Letter from James Haynes to Charles Manigault, 15th September 1845, in Clifton, *Life and Labour,* 28.
[1182] *Ibid*.

the old people because they were of no value – no one else wanted to buy them.[1183] As a solution, Johnson's enslavers kept them to 'take care of the children' and to look after the livestock.[1184] Instead of reproducing the workforce through their strength and fertility, elderly enslaved men and women helped raise the children and future labourers. H.C. Bruce's enslaver likewise used elderly women to look after the children because they were 'too old or too feeble for field work.' These elderly women also prepared the meals for the infants and laboured alongside young children in trash gangs.[1185]

Similarly, Maria Sutton Clements, enslaved in Georgia, recalled that her enslaver wanted to sell her mother just before the war because she was 'too old to bear children.'[1186] He aimed to sell her to buy a younger woman to 'raise mo children to sell.'[1187] Clements's enslaver desired someone young, 'not stunted, strong made', and inspected potential women by 'look[ing] at their wrists and ankles and chestes [*sic*].'[1188] Clements's enslaver objectified and commodified enslaved women's wombs, trading in the older slave for a new one. By turning out elderly people, enslavers treated them as they would their livestock, again perpetuating the animalisation of enslaved people, furthering the institution of slavery through their dehumanisation. Black codes such as the 1806 Louisiana Black Code, as described in *De Bow's Review*, stated that 'if sick and disabled, *or old*… they shall be maintained by their owners, under a penalty.'[1189] Further, the pro-slavery writer questioned 'who has ever heard, except, perhaps, a northern abolitionist, of a negro suffering from old age or want?' and argued that 'if old or disabled, they cannot be sold from their families, and the mother cannot be separated from her young children.'[1190] Indeed, southern enslavers should ensure that 'their hours of rest and meals, and their clothing are regulated; Sundays are to be theirs[.]'[1191] Despite the polemics of the pro-slavery writers of *De Bow's Review,* enslavers consistently valued enslaved women based on their fertility and age, dismissing them once they deemed them too old. Moses Grandy's mother's enslaver sent her to 'live in a little lonely log-hut in the woods' when she became 'aged and worn out.'[1192] Grandy claimed this was common, and that no 'care is taken of them' apart from to clear some land for them to live on,

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[1183] Lizzie Johnson, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn130/, 103.
[1184] Johnson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 103.
[1185] Bruce, *The New Man,* 14.
[1186] Maria Sutton Clements, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 15.
[1187] Clements, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:2, 15.
[1188] *Ibid.*
[1189] 'Black Code of Louisiana', *De Bow's Review,* Vol. 1, January 1846 to July 1846, 411.
[1190] 'Black Code of Louisiana', 411.
[1191] *Ibid*.
[1192] Moses Grandy, *Narrative of the Life of Moses Grandy; Late a Slave in the United States of America* (London: C. Gilpin, 1843), 51.

separately from the rest of their community.[1193] This treatment 'was just the same as turning out an old horse.'[1194] On Grandy's plantation, the enslaver refused to give food to the elderly people that they had excommunicated, and they instead relied on the generosity of their children or other relations.[1195]

As they were neither reproducing or producing, there was no reason for enslavers to invest their money and resources in them. This was ultimately traumatic and tortuous for these people, and 'On these night visits [from their relatives] the aged inmate of the hut is often found crying, on account of sufferings from disease or extreme weakness, or from want of food and water in the course of the day.'[1196] Grandy's enslaver also wanted to sell his eldest sister, Elizabeth, as she was 'growing old', and would only sell for $100 (about $4,000 today).[1197] Their enslaver sold her instead of banishing her to a life of solitude like their mother as she was not as old as their mother, and so was still within the window of being able to make some money off of her. Grandy also mentioned that she had five children, alluding to the value that their enslaver ascribed her, and therefore tried to sell her rather than banish her away from the rest of the community. Similarly, Mary Reynolds's enslaver, Dr. Kilpatrick, only ever sold the *elderly* enslaved people 'who was workin' in the fields and past their breedin' time.'[1198] For Kilpatrick, these elderly members of the enslaved community no longer held any productive or reproductive value, and so he sold them to get as much as he possibly could from them before their market value became zero.

On other plantations, enslavers contrived to get as much work as possible out of women, especially once they passed child-bearing age. They could no longer *re*produce, so they had to produce. Lewis Clarke wrote in 1845 that even enslaved people that could no longer work as a full hand still carried out small tasks such as shelling corn and packing tobacco.[1199] Enslavers tried 'to keep them at work till the last hour of life.'[1200] He also remarked that if they could not labour anymore, their enslavers would 'turn them out,' suggesting the enslavers would somehow exile them from their community and not allow them to live with them,[1201] Like on Moses Grandy's plantation, Clarke witnessed an enslaver sell an elderly man for $1.[1202] The new enslaver then

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[1193] Grandy, *Narrative of the life of Moses Grandy,* 51.
[1194] *Ibid*.
[1195] *Ibid*.
[1196] *Ibid*., 52.
[1197] *Ibid.*
[1198] Mary Reynolds, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 3, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn163/, 236.
[1199] Lewis Clarke, *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke, During a Captivity of More than Twenty-Five Years, Among the Algerines of Kentucky, One of the So Called Christian States of North America, Dictated by Himself* (Boston: David H. Ela, Printer, 1845), 76-77.
[1200] Clarke, *Narrative of the Sufferings,* 77.
[1201] *Ibid*.
[1202] *Ibid*.

'turned [him] out to do the best he could', fighting with 'age and starvation' until someone found him one morning, 'starved to death…and half eaten up by animals.'[1203] Clarke remarked that he knew of several similar cases where elderly enslaved people starved to death because they no longer had any use to their enslaver.[1204] Daina Ramey Berry, in her work on suicide and capitalism, argues that enslaved people's decision to take their own lives was also a financial decision, 'knowing that their lives had already been taken' by their enslavers.[1205] But did enslavers who exiled elderly enslaved women already view them as dead of expired commodifies as they were no longer productive or reproductive? In Berry's investigation, she only explores young enslaved people who still had a value at the time of their suicide. By considering *elderly* enslaved people, we can see how there was an expiration date to the commodification of enslaved women and their ability to reproduce.

Although old age is a relative concept, as women aged, their status within slave communities increased due to their additional roles as caregivers, nurses, and midwives, but decreased among enslavers as they were no longer able to produce children.[1206] Further, enslaved men's status decreased amongst enslavers as they grew weaker and could no longer preform 'men's work.'[1207] Traders also tried to hide evidence of aging men and women by plucking grey hairs from elderly men's heads, shaving their facial hair, and dyeing where there were too many grey hairs.[1208] According to William Wells Brown, 'these old men and women were also told how old they were to be, when undergoing an examination by those who might wish to purchase.'[1209] Youth, therefore, indicated fertility and reproductive capabilities. John Brown wrote in his 1855 narrative that a potential purchaser of an enslaved person was attracted to more than just a 'well made' man or woman who was 'physically faultless in every respect.'[1210] Enslavers were less likely to purchase those that looked unhappy, or who were 'impaired by a sour look, or a dull, vacant stare, or a general dulness [*sic*] of demeanour.'[1211] Therefore, traders forced these enslaved men and women, likely through violent means, into looking 'spry and smart' and forced them to 'put on a smiling, cheerful countenance.'[1212] Significantly, the traders instructed them to not inform potential buyers of their age if they were 'getting past the active period of life.'[1213] Though

[1203] *Ibid*.
[1204] *Ibid*.
[1205] Berry, '"Broad in de Road dat Leaders ter Death"', 148.
[1206] White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?,* 114-115.
[1207] *Ibid*.
[1208] Josephine Brown, *Biography of an American Bondman, by his Daughter* (Boston: J.B. Yerrinton and Son, 1856), 26.
[1209] Brown, *Biography of an American Bondman,* 26.
[1210] John Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Now in England* (London: New Broad Street, 1855), 115.
[1211] Brown, Slave Life in Georgia, 115.
[1212] *Ibid*., 116.
[1213] *Ibid*.

this was important for men and women who were physically weaker than the younger enslaved people, it was also important for the women to conceal their age as it would determine whether they were likely to easily reproduce in a quick or timely manner that suited the enslaver. Brown noted that the stereotype that Black people never knew when they were born is because he 'must say he is just as old as his master chooses to bid him do, or he will have to take the consequences.'[1214]

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Enslavers calculated and valued the health of enslaved people in order to determine which individuals they thought would produce the most exploitable and financially promising children. Close control and examination of the distribution of rations reveals the ways in which slaveholding men and women exerted their power over enslaved bodies. Children in particular experienced the harsh realities of feeding regimes. Though reproductive practices in the form or arranged marriages and sexual partnerships were not in themselves systematic, the treatment of their offspring did appear to have some systematic elements to it. By feeding large groups of children in troughs, enslavers controlled what, where, and how they ate their meals. It was during these feeding times that enslavers could inspect the physical growth of the children and distribute medicine accordingly or force them to carry out exercises to determine who was the fittest of them all.

The concern with the stunting of enslaved children's growth intersects with pro-natalist and 'eugenic' ideology. Enslavers exploited the fittest of these children by either forcing them to carry out hard labour, selling them, or by forcing them to follow in their parents' footsteps and coerced them into reproducing with other 'strong and healthy' enslaved people. These pro-natalist and 'eugenic' practices were widespread across the antebellum south, with all enslavers rationing foodstuffs, overseeing medical care, or employing a physician to do so, and by advising other enslavers to do the same. Medical journals, plantation manuals, letters, and account books all reveal slaveholder actions and motivations. In particular, slaveholder justifications for hunger in the form of the restriction of foodstuffs were clearly motivated by the desire for the perfect enslaved body balanced with fiscal conservatism.

Issues of pregnancy and fertility saw women's bodies turn into battlegrounds, where enslavers and enslaved women fought over the right to their wombs. While some enslavers made attempts to protect pregnant women by allowing them rest, lying in periods, and less work, others did not.

[1214] *Ibid.*

These enslavers brutalised their bodies, torturing them daily by forcing them to carry out hard labour, starving them, and beating them to the point of miscarriage and death. While enslavers forced them to reproduce the workforce, they struggled with the decision over whether to exploit as much work out of them as possible, even when pregnant. The usefulness and value of enslaved women's bodies decreased with age, to the point that enslavers excommunicated them from the enslaved communities, banishing them to an unused part of the plantation to live out their lives in starvation and loneliness. Infertile, elderly women were valueless. They could no longer reproduce the institution of slavery, and so enslavers either discarded them or assigned them to caring over small children. On the whole, enslavers valued strong, large, productive workers, and believed if forced with likewise people, could reproduce their workforce into a similarly strong, large, and productive unit. By selling or reproducing 'strong' enslaved bodies, enslavers ensured the continuation of the institution of slavery and cultivated a culture of exploitation wherein enslaved men, women, and children had little to no control over their reproductive health.

Chapter Four
Forced Reproduction and the Marketplace

On the 10th of January 1859, a court in Charleston, South Carolina, advertised the sale of Betty, a twenty-five-year-old enslaved woman, alongside ninety-nine other enslaved men, women and children (see fig. 1). The advertisement placed Betty alongside her two-year-old son, Plymouth, and inscribed the word 'breeding' next to her name.[1215] Betty had proven herself to be fertile through the conception of her son Plymouth, but this inscription also suggests that she was of particular value as a 'breeding' person. Betty was a financial asset for her future enslaver. Her prominence in the marketplace as an explicitly labelled 'breeding' person makes visible the practice of forced reproduction and reveals how enslavers specifically marketed women as fertile bodies to communicate to other enslavers, through a coded language of reproduction, that she was a fertile body, primed for breeding. The marketisation of enslaved men and women as 'breeders' was a complicated and nuanced process, best viewed along a spectrum tailored to each individual enslaver's needs and desires. Although Berry argues that there were three types of women (breeders, fancy women, and skilled labourers), enslavers often utilised women as all three at the same time.[1216] While some enslavers wanted to purchase enslaved women only as 'breeders', isolating them away from the rest of their enslaved communities, others wanted skilled labourers, such as seamstresses or cooks, who would reproduce the workforce *alongside* their daily tasks. Moreover, enslavers frequently sexually abused these women. Thus, enslavers treated some

[1215] Broadside for an auction of enslaved persons at the Charleston Courthouse (1859), Collection of the Smithsonian and National Museum of African American History and Culture, https://transcription.si.edu/view/26322/NMAAHC-2010_21_3.
[1216] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 18.

UNDER DECREE IN EQUITY.

SANDERS vs. SANDERS, et al.

On *Tuesday, the* 11*th January*, 1859, will be sold at the *Court House, in Charleston, at* 12 *o'clock, M.*, under direction of James W. Gray, Master in Equity, the following Slaves.

TERMS.—One-third Cash; balance in one, two and three years, secured by bonds and mortgages with approved personal security. Purchaser to pay for Papers.

NAMES.	AGE.
1 London,	55 yrs.
2 Nelly,	50
3 Dick,	15
4— 4 Rosy,	4
5 Cuffy,	35
2— 6 Becker,	19
7 Caroline,	29
8 Martha,	4
9 Bull or Frederick,	12
4—10 Infant,	9 ms.
11 Charity,	30 yrs.
12 Susan,	17
13 Floride,	2
4—14 Infant,	6 ms.
15 Ned,	60 yrs.
16 Silvy,	35
17 Frank,	11
18 Easton,	3
19 Infant,	3 ms.
20 Billy,	68 yrs.
21 Lucy,	50
22 Binah,	14
23 Phillis,	12
7—24 Jack,	11
1—25 Thomas,	26
1—26 Toney,	30
27 Becky,	30
28 Sammy,	5
29 Fed,	3
4—30 Infant,	7 ms.
1—31 Isaac,	30
1—32 Moses,	25
1—33 Morris,	21
34 Billy,	45
35 Hagar,	50
36 Joe,	35
37 William,	20
5—38 Rose,	15
39 Martha	70
40 Nancy	45
41 Rachel,	22
42 Ben,	16
5—43 Lot	10
44 Betty,	25
2—45 Plymouth,	2
46 London,	26
47 Grace,	22
3—48 Harriet	2
49 Hester	25
50 Amos	21
3—51 Elsey	5

NAMES.	AGE.
52 Jacob	55 yrs.
53 Mary	45
54 Emma,	21
55 Rose	15
56 Aelie	18
57 Simon	13
58 Francis	6
8—59 Mary	3
60 Hardtimes	70
61 Sary,	30
3—62 Anne,	18
63 Old Peter	70
2—64 Old Nancy	60
65 Old Hester	68
66 Maggy	40
67 Edward,	19
68 Susan	17
69 Robert	13
70 Martha	7
7—71 Sarah	2
72 Peter	28
73 Venus	25
74 Henry	8
75 Hamilton	4
5—76 Cornelia	1
77 Lydy	25
2—78 Hannah	6 ms.
79 Hannah	30 yrs.
80 Nero	10
81 Rachel	7
82 August	4
32 Henry	2
6—84 Infant	1 mh.
1—85 Old Frank,	60 yrs.
1—86 Toney	30
87 Jake,	35
88 Eliza	30
89 Pleasant	12
90 Sukey	10
91 Amanda	8
6—92 Catharine	3
1—93 David	36
1—94 Jim	39
1—95 Binah,	60
1—96 March	40
1—97 Bob	35
1—98 Sarah	10
1—99 Harriet	14

Town Negroes.

Figure 1 Broadside for an auction of enslaved persons at the Charleston Courthouse (1859), Collection of the Smithsonian and National Museum of African American History and Culture, https://transcription.si.edu/view/26322/NMAAHC-2010_21_3.

women as breeders *and* fancy women, *and* skilled labourers.[1217] Though some advertised women more explicitly as sexual labourers than others, all enslavers purchased women with the surreptitious intention to dually exploit them sexually and financially, whether this was by sexually abusing them themselves or by forcing them to procreate with other enslaved men.

As discussed in Chapter Three, enslavers cultivated and prepared enslaved men and women for financial extraction by controlling their food consumption and habits, as well as their health and living conditions. They hoped this would ensure that people worked productively and would also bring a high market price. This valuation and marketisation occurred frequently, with enslavers selling men and women publicly and privately, on and off the physical plantation. Enslavers regularly forced 'healthy', 'strong', and 'sound' enslaved men and women into intimate sexual relationships, as explored in Chapter One, and then either raised or sold away the children born from these relations.[1218] Enslaved children were the ultimate goal of forced reproduction and enslavers either forced them to labour or sold them away to maximise their profits and labour for someone else. Heather Andrea Williams maintains that gender was significant when combined with their age.[1219] When framed within the context of forced reproduction, the combination of age and gender determined when an enslaver deemed it the most profitable time to purchase an enslaved woman and force her to reproduce, or alternatively, market and sell a woman as a 'breeder.' Further, enslaved women experienced a double burden where enslavers forced them to both produce and *re*produce. Prospective buyers therefore inspected enslaved men's bodies for signs of health, strength, and the ability to work, while they also inspected enslaved women's bodies for this as well as evidence of fertility.

This chapter will explore how the cycle of forced reproduction manifested itself in the form of the slave marketplace. Here, in the marketplace, is where slavery, forced reproduction, and capitalism intersected to commodify enslaved women, their wombs, and their children. Enslavers demonstrated their capitalist mindset as they itemised enslaved people, created Last Wills and Testaments that made sure that their accrued wealth in the form of their commoditised enslaved people became a form of generational wealth, and battled in courts over 'faulty goods' when

[1217] Andrea Livesey, in her work on Louisa Picquet, explores how an enslaver, Mr. Cook, subjected six women to sexual slavery under the guise of domestic work, such as seamstressing and cooking. See: Andrea Livesey, 'Race, Slavery, and the Expression of Sexual Violence in *Louisa Picquet, the Octoroon',* American Nineteenth Century History, 19, (2018), 269.

[1218] See Chapter Three, Health and Valuation, for a discussion of the terms 'sound' and 'unsound.'

[1219] Michael Tadman, 'Slave Trading and the Mentalities of Masters and Slaves,' in Leonie Archer (ed.), *Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour* (Routledge, 1988), 194; Heather Andrea Williams, *Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 25.

enslaved women's reproductive capacities were not what the seller promised.[1220] When trading in the flesh of enslaved people, enslavers carried out the final stage of the commodification of bodies. This chapter fits into the historiography of capitalism by exploring the emotional and psychological side of the commodification of enslaved people. By utilising WPA testimony, which is primarily from previously enslaved *children*, it is possible to understand how capitalist enslavers perpetuated a cycle of violence throughout the life cycle of enslaved people.

Moreover, the commodification of enslaved children within this cycle of forced reproduction becomes complex as we consider how to define enslaved children under such a capitalist institution. Historian of childhood Anna Mae Duane points out that as children are technically the property of their parents, 'offer challenges' to the official UN definition of slavery.[1221] But, as Tera Hunter argues, enslaved people did not own themselves.[1222] Thus, as they did not own themselves, and were defined by elite whites and the law as property, then they could not technically claim their children as their own property. Instead, as seen in Chapter 2, enslavers interfered in these familial relationships and appropriated their parents' role by claiming ownership of the enslaved children. They then subsequently regimented their growth (as examined in Chapter 3), before either putting them to work as producers or reproducers, or they sold them on the market as explored in this chapter. Moreover, it is important to consider how children played a part in the commodification process. Historians such as Johnson, Beckertt, Rockman, Stanley, and Baptist generals the commodification of enslaved people as a primarily adult experience.[1223] However, as has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, enslaved children were an important and valued outcome of forced reproduction, and as such *also* experienced forced reproduction, sexual exploitation, and their enslavers' interference and regimentation of their lives. In this way, enslaved children were, like their parents, a cog in the reproductive machine of slavery, and are therefore worth exploring in detail.

The marketplace established a spectrum of buying and selling; on one end, enslavers bought enslaved men and women for the purpose of forcing them to reproduce, and on the other they sold infertile and fertile women alike, in addition to children born of forced reproduction. Enslavers marketed girls of approximately twelve to fifteen years of age not only as offspring of breeders, but as *future* breeders. These young females were themselves the outcome of forced reproduction and therefore perpetuated the cycle of 'breeding' and intergenerational trauma.

[1220] Berry, ''Broad in de Road dat Leads ter Death', 146; Stanley, 'Slave Breeding and Free Love', 137.
[1221] Anna Mae Duane, 'Introduction', in Anna Mae Duane (ed.), *Child Slavery before and after Emancipation: An Argument for Child-Centered Slavery Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 8.
[1222] Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock.* 54.
[1223] Johnson, 'The Pedestal and the Veil', 299-308; Beckertt and Rockman (eds), *Slavery's Capitalism*; Stanley 'Slave Breeding and Free Love', 119-144; Baptist, '"'Cuffy', 'Fancy Maids', and 'One-Eyed Men'"',1621-1623.

This chapter will therefore build upon Berry's 'intellectual history of enslaved people's thoughts, expressions, feelings and reactions to their own commodification' by considering the psychological violence that the combination of commodification *and* forced reproduction had on young children who bore witness to sales or experienced them first-hand, as products of forced reproduction.[1224] The movement of reproducing bodies from the plantation to the marketplace included a range of sexually violent methods: while some enslavers forced enslaved men to rape enslaved women and sold their offspring, others willingly and unemotionally sold their own children born from sexually coercive interracial relationships, thus financially benefitting from the direct sexual assault of enslaved women at their own hands. This chapter will therefore contribute to the discourse around interracial sexual relationships, coerced or otherwise, between enslaved women and their enslavers, and the consequences of these interactions. Lastly, the marketisation and sale of enslaved bodies as reproductive machines demonstrates how forced reproduction was a cycle with no beginning or end – enslavers took young children, born from coerced relationships, sold them on at the market for a profit, and eventually grew up and suffered through the same experiences as their parents, with their own children sold away for money. Using WPA interviews, published narratives, newspapers, and judicial records, this chapter explores the emotional reckoning that enslaved people had with this cycle of forced reproduction and investigates how each generation of enslaved people experienced reproductive commodification.

Gender, Fertility, and the Marketplace

Since the late twentieth-century, historians of the domestic slave trade have debated whether trade patterns and so-called 'importing' and 'exporting' states are proof of forced reproduction.[1225] Though historians such as Richard Sutch, John Boles, and Michael Tadman are sceptical of the practice's existence due to their belief that there is a lack of evidence of 'breeding farms', there is however, an abundance of evidence that enslavers actively went out of their way to purchase men and women who they thought would produce strong children. Furthermore, where some slaveholding men may have seen this forced reproductive process as illogical and time consuming, Stephanie Jones-Rogers has recently argued that slaveholding *women*, complicit in forced reproduction, had 'long-term financial strategies.'[1226] Jones-Rogers thus reasons that

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[1224] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 2; Wilson, '"I Ai'n Mad Now and I Know Taint No Use to Lie", 5.

[1225] Importing states included Texas, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Missouri. Exporting states included Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Kentucky, South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia. See Lowe and Campbell, 'The Slave-Breeding Hypothesis', 403-404.

[1226] Jones-Rogers, 'Rethinking Sexual Violence and the Marketplace of Slavery', 110, 117, 119.

female enslavers in particular saw the economic potential in purchasing enslaved children.[1227] Building upon this, it is evident that enslavers, both male and female, fell into two conflicting camps: those that were eager for quick, financial gains and therefore saw breeding women and children as an economic burden, and those that saw the potential benefit in slowly growing and cultivating their workforce. Though many saw pregnant women as burdens who did not work as efficiently as non-pregnant people, they could not deny that they still gained financially from the offspring of their reproductive labour.

Moreover, white women were also likely to purchase enslaved children or desire reproducing women in order to train people in specific skills. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese contends that good domestic servants were difficult to come by through trade, and so white slaveholding women or mistresses preferred to train them to work in the Big House from childhood.[1228] This method of training people for a specific type of labour benefitted from the system of coerced reproduction because, as Jones-Rogers argues, enslaved children cost less than adolescents or adults, the training and upkeep of the child would see their investment increase, 'especially if the child was female.'[1229] As R.J. Knight argues, reproduction may have been a 'domestic inconvenience', but it eventually became financially beneficial.[1230] Many children that enslavers inspected and traded were daughters of 'breeding women', who their enslaver had exploited for reproduction. They valued, sold, and exploited these daughters for their own reproductive capabilities, following in the footsteps of their mothers. Enslaved people experienced this process of marketisation before they were even born. Their enslavers deemed parents 'strong' and 'healthy' enough to meet their standards, and then coerced or encouraged them to procreate, valuing them for their *potential* offspring, and therefore predetermining their future children as valuable, moveable, financial assets. To enslavers, children were a means to end, and their commodification was vital for the continuation of the institution of slavery.

Enslavers kept children under a watchful eye and encouraged growth through a combination of diet, medicine, and exercise. Once they reached their desired size or age, their enslavers sold them, as seen in Chapter Three. John Hawkins Simpson wrote in 1863 that enslavers made it their 'business to tear men and women from their houses, friends, and hopes, to gratify the cupidity of slave-breeders who sell for money, and the spite of those who sell for malice.'[1231] Enslaved children funded their enslaver's greed and economic desires with their bodies and emotional lives. The slave market consequently made visible the benefits of forced reproduction as

[1227] Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property,* 35-136.
[1228] Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household,* 139.
[1229] Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property*, 136.
[1230] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation', 1000.
[1231] John Hawkins Simpson, *Horrors of the Virginian Slave Trade and of the Slave-Rearing Plantations* (London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1863), 31.

enslavers routinely bought and sold enslaved children, whether with or apart from their wider families.

The marketisation of enslaved people not only highlights the cycle of forced reproduction, but it also reveals the intersection of gender, fertility, and age in matters of 'breeding.' Indeed, enslavers bought and sold enslaved women, young and old, based off their potential and past fertility. Enslavers sold elderly and infertile women alike who could not bring them future profits, and then bought young and 'likely' enslaved women who could. Though enslavers and traders used the term 'likely' to refer to both men *and* women, our knowledge of the sexually violent experiences of enslaved women forces the term to have a distinctly sexual undertone when using it to describe a woman. Enslavers defined 'likely' men by their potential to be productive workers. The term 'likely' therefore suggested that they were skilled or strong, of a visually large size and able to work both quickly and effectively in the fields or at other tasks. 'Likely' enslaved women were also typically young, strong, and skilled at their mode of work, but enslavers further valued them as sexually available and, to use Victoria Bynum's term, legally 'unrapeable.'[1232] Slaveholding men purchased women 'in part because they could be raped', even though they were legally unrapeable as 'non-human' commodities.[1233] Thus, 'likely' possessed a double-entendre of productively and sexually valuable women.

Black enslaved women's bodies legally belonged to their enslavers, who could then use them as they so desired – whether to sexually exploit them themselves, or to force them to procreate with other enslaved men. Legislation around rape and sexual assault was designed (by white men) to protect white women from the 'theft of a woman's most prized possession – a body reserved exclusively for her future or present husband,' and Black women were thus excluded from these laws as they did not own their own bodies, and elite white men in power deemed them inherently hypersexual beings.[1234] Thus, an enslaved woman could not legally be raped, and her alleged hypersexuality further justified forced reproduction and the consequent trade of breeding women and children as 'natural.' This was solidified within white society though the 'Jezebel' trope – the image of a sexually available Black woman, thus further justifying (for enslavers) the consistent sexual exploitation of enslaved women.[1235]

The domestic slave-trade was especially beneficial for those who wanted to play what Adam Rothman refers to at the *'longue durée' and* purchased enslaved children to raise as skilled

[1232] Victoria E. Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 109, 118.
[1233] Edward E. Baptist, '"'Cuffy', 'Fancy Maids', and 'One-Eyed Men'": Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States,' *The American Historical Review,* 106 (2001), 1649.
[1234] For an analysis on white slaveholding women, see Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property;* Bynum, *Unruly Women*, 109.
[1235] White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 27-46.

reproducers and producers over a long time, but also benefitted those who wanted immediate returns through the sale of infants.[1236] Moreover, Edward Baptist's work on 'cuffy, fancy maids, and one-eyed beasts' combines theories from Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx to conclude that slave traders fetishized women both sexually and economically. In particular, enslavers' discussion of the rape of light-skinned enslaved girls and women emphasises their sexualisation of the slave trade.[1237] According to Baptist, commodity fetishism and sexual fetishism intertwined in the minds of white slave-trading men, as 'coerced sex was the secret meaning of the commerce of human beings.'[1238] Just as enslavers sexually trafficked light-skinned enslaved girls and women in what was referred to as the 'fancy trade', enslavers also sexualised and commodified enslaved women's bodies as fertile reproductive machines. The practice of forced reproduction and its presence in the marketplace encapsulates commodity and sexual fetishism. The reproductive language of 'likely' enslaved women commonly found in traders' account books, logbooks, and advertisements (such as that which advertised Betty, the 'breeding' woman) reveal hidden layers whereby traders actively commodified and marketed the sexuality of enslaved men and women. Women in particular bore the brunt of this sexual commodification as potential buyers physically inspected their breasts and reproductive organs for signs of their potential fertility, and thus potential profit.[1239] For example, Alex Woods, enslaved in North Carolina, reported that prospective enslavers would 'look…over' enslaved women who they were purchasing as 'breeders', inspecting them 'just like buyin' hosses.'[1240]

Moreover, when considered within the context of forced reproduction and the addition of recent scholarship on white slaveholding women from historians such as Jones-Rogers, Bynum's initial discussion of 'rapeability' becomes more complex, as white slaveholding women held the power, like their male counterparts, to sexually exploit enslaved couples. Although legislators created these laws to secure white male patriarchal control over women, white slaveholding women (as discussed in Chapter One) also controlled and sexualised bodies of enslaved women *and* men. White slaveholding women and mistresses of enslavers thus held a modicum of sexual power over enslaved men and women as they dictated and interfered with their intimate sexual lives. Slaveholding women therefore separated themselves from Black women and did not sympathise with them along gendered lines. Instead, where there was a lack of gendered essentialism in the antebellum south, white women exploited enslaved women based on their

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[1236] Adam Rothman, 'The Domestication of the Slave Trade in the United States', in Walter Johnson (ed.), *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (Yale University Press, 2005), 35.
[1237] Baptist, '"'Cuffy', 'Fancy Maids', and 'One-Eyed Men'"',1621-1623.
[1238] *Ibid*., 1621.
[1239] Johnson, *Soul By Soul*, 143; Foster, *Rethinking Rufus,* 21.
[1240] Alex Woods, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 417.

race, stereotyping them as hypersexual people who did not feel pain as white women did. Indeed, their alleged racial superiority ranked them above Black enslaved women – white women could be raped, but Black women could not.

Slaveholding women were therefore, as Knight contends, 'central in the systematic separation of enslaved children from their parents for slave labour in the slaveholding household.'[1241] Building upon this and Jones-Rogers's assertion that women were financially astute, slaveholding women contributed to the commodification and reproduction of enslaved men, women, and children. As discussed in Chapter One, slaveholding women frequently arranged intimate relationships and marriages between enslaved men and women. Though these women may be subjected to the stereotype of the 'matchmaker', slaveholding women and mistresses also participated in the entire cycle of forced reproduction – including the sale. For example, Henry Doyl's enslaver, Miss Neely, imposed an environment of fear and anxiety as she frequently told his mother that 'she was going to sell me and put me in her pocket.'[1242] Later, Doyl's younger brother burned to death in a cabin fire, and Neely's only reaction was to tell Doyl's grieving mother that 'as soon as I got big nough she was goner sell me' which 'nighty near break her heart.'[1243] Neely clearly only cared about the financial rather than the emotional loss of Doyl's brother, and demonstrated how slaveholding women played an active role in the commodification and marketisation of enslaved bodies. Neely's lack of sympathy toward Doyl's mother affirms that Black and white women were not united along either gendered or racial lines. White slaveholding women and mistresses held a position of authority over enslaved women and helped perpetuate the practice of forced reproduction by putting children 'in [their] pocket.'

As the feminist bell hooks argued, advertisements that traders or enslavers placed in newspapers marketing 'likely' enslaved people depict a language of breeding and further connotes enslavers' fetishization of enslaved women's bodies.[1244] Broadsides expose how enslavers described enslaved people. The *Alexandria Daily Gazette* advertised the sale of a 'female House-Servant' as 'strong and healthy', while the *Charleston Mercury* posted a runaway broadside detailing Betty, '14 years of age, and likely.'[1245] Indeed, enslavers consistently placed advertisements looking for runaway enslaved people and revealed what they emphasised as

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[1241] Knight, 'Mistresses, Motherhood, and Maternal Exploitation', 998.
[1242] Henry Doyl, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn022/, 206.
[1243] Doyl, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:2, 206.
[1244] hooks, *Ain't I a Woman,* 39.

[1245] *Alexandria Daily Gazette, Commercial and Political,* Vol. XII, No. 3595, (March 14th, 1812), Collection of the Smithsonian and National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2016.66.34;, *The Charleston Mercury* (25/6/1836), Freedom on the Move Database, https://fotm.link/f2UJSgsBuyLae1KpveiQD7.

stand out characteristics. As with Betty, these usually included terms such as 'likely,' and described physical, visible characteristics. For example, an 1840 runaway broadside from Mason County, Kentucky, described Esther, '17 or 18', as 'black, tall, slim, and regularly proportioned.'[1246] After Esther was Amanda, 'aged 15 or 16', which the poster described as 'a dark copper colored mulatto, thick and heavy set, 5 ft. 4 inches high[.]'[1247] Although enslavers visibly sexualised enslaved women more often, they also sometimes described enslaved men with subtly sexual undertones. For example, in 1810, *The Wilmington Gazette* described a fugitive man named Robert as 'near to 6 feet high, black and sleek, well made and erect and very plausible.'[1248] These characteristics are not only definable markers enslavers and other white people looking to reap the monetary reward for their capture used to identify run-aways, but are also indicative of *how* enslavers described, valued, and marketed enslaved people as reproducers.

As detailed throughout this thesis, enslavers valued enslaved men and women who could produce numerous strong and healthy children for either production, sale, or a combination of the two. However, although the valuation of such people occurred outside of the marketplace through surveillance and the rearing of enslaved children into productive reproducers, the physical marketplace – whether at an auction in town, locally, on the plantation itself, or privately – reveals the realities of the trade in living reproductive 'organs.' Account books and traders' journals listing enslaved men and women and their characteristics are markedly divided by gender. Next to enslaved men for sale, traders noted points such as if they had suffered from an injury, or their skills – for example 'trunk minder' or 'field hand.'[1249] For enslaved women, traders made notes about their fertility. Phrases such as 'fallen womb', 'prolapsus from too fast breeding', 'floods', or 'had bred fast', informed the potential buyers about the reproductive health of a particular enslaved woman.[1250]

Documents such as slave bills of sale, receipts, and ledgers do not necessary reveal explicit examples of forced reproduction. However, by reading into the silences and what they *do not* say, these sources raise questions about *why* enslavers sold certain individuals or valued them highly. For example, Bennet H. Barrow's plantation journal lists every enslaved person's name, their age, and their value. By tracking the value of these individuals and comparing them to each other, it is

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[1246] Broadside for a reward for fugitive slaves George, Jefferson, Esther, and Amanda, Collection of the Smithsonian and National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2011.51.17.
[1247] Broadside for a reward for fugitive slaves George, Jefferson, Esther, and Amanda.
[1248] *The Wilmington Gazette*, No. 1 (Wilmington, North Carolina, July 24th 1810), North Carolina State Archives.
[1249] Alonzo James White, 'Account Book', Lowcountry Digital Library, South Carolina Historical Society, Manuscripts, (1853-1863), https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:113744; Broadside for an Estate Sale of "229 Rice Field Negroes" (1859), Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2014.63.18.
[1250] White, 'Account Book.'

clear that the men's value increased higher and longer than the women. Though the only details that Barrow provided were their names, ages, and value, this information is still useful. When compared to one another, some enslaved individuals stand out against their peers. Of Barrow's male slaves, Lorenzo Dow, aged 32, Augustus, aged 44, and Étienne, aged 36, were valued at $1,000, $1,500, and $1,000 respectively.[1251] These individual men stand out in terms of value. Amongst the women, Ester Sarah (aged 26) and Patty (aged 32), stand out as anomalies. While it is impossible to establish for certain why these individual women were valued much higher than others their age (an average of $800), it is clear that there is something special about these women that increased their value. For the men, Barrow probably valued them higher because they had a specific skill or were particularly prolific workers. Meanwhile, Ester Sarah and Patty, although they too could have possessed skills that increased their value, they may have also been prolific *breeding* women. As discussed, enslaved women's values usually peaked at about twenty-five and began to decline thereafter, as enslavers believed that twenty-five was the peak age for working and reproducing children. Combined with other skills such as cooking, nursing, or sewing – skills that served the plantation economy and the wider community – enslavers viewed women who produced multiple children as especially valuable as they not only socially reproduced slavery, but they also produced commodifiable assets in the form of children that could be sold. Thus, Patty at thirty-four was well past the peak value for her gender and age yet Barrow still valued her highly. Betty's value proves that if women continued to produce children while also working productively on the plantation, their value would not have necessarily decreased, and indeed may have soared above other women of the same age who had stopped having children. Thus, this evidence suggests that Ester Sarah and Patty were prolific breeding woman whose fecundity was higher than the other women, and thus of an increased value.

Phrases and terms used in opposition to 'likely', such as 'undesirable', 'aged', and 'unruly', or labelled with phrases indicating their reproductive health such as 'prolapsed uterus', or 'fallen womb', emphasised enslaved women's reproductive potential.[1252] The dearth of notes around men's reproductive potential suggests that enslavers only considered the *women's* reproductive health when inspecting them at the market. Although enslavers aimed to force the perceivably strongest of individuals together, enslaved women suffered a double burden where their enslavers judged and valued them based on both their physical and reproductive/biological strength. Whereas men were most valuable when they appeared physically strong, women's value depended on the number of children they had or could have.[1253] This double standard,

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[1251] Davis, *Plantation Life.*
[1252] White, Account Book, xxxxvi.; Isiah Green, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 2 (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn042/. 50.
[1253] White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?,* 132.

rooted in centuries of sexist societal expectations, allowed enslavers to reinforce patriarchal expectations for women to be the source of reproductive failures. Moreover, elite white men defended both the institution of slavery and the sexual abuse of enslaved women by creating the stereotype of the 'Jezebel' – a sexually available and licentious Black woman.[1254] This role of the hypersexual Black woman allowed enslavers to justify their consistent sexual exploitation of Black women as well as the forced reproduction of the slave workforce. If these 'hypersexual' women did not or could not reproduce, enslavers deemed there to be an inherent issue with the woman.

Indeed, although Berry argues that young men were also important as breeders (as 'women provided the vessel and seed, men provided the fertilizer, and between the two, additional enslaved laborers were born'), enslavers laid the blame for infertility at the hands of women as the carrier of the foetus, and this ultimately affected buying and selling behaviours.[1255] Slaveholder concern over fertility applied only to enslaved women. Enslavers did not appear to have any concern for the fertility of enslaved men, and if a couple was not conceiving, they automatically blamed the woman. For example, Alice Sewell's grandmother appeared to have trouble conceiving, and so her enslaver 'swapped her off' to another enslaver.[1256] Two months later, she was pregnant.[1257] Furious, her old enslaver tried to buy her back, but her new owner refused, and she proceeded to give birth to thirteen children.[1258] Sewell's grandmother could have been employing methods of reproductive resistance to avoid conceiving a child for her enslaver so that he would sell her because she did not like him, or the enslaved man she was partnered with was infertile. Either way, Sewell's grandmother's enslaver saw that she was not pregnant and decided to sell her to another slaveholder, rather than the enslaved man.

Enslavers' emphasis on the reproductive potential of women rather than men meant that women were traded on the basis of their reproductive ability more so than men, and, although men were necessary for the creation of enslaved children, enslavers viewed women as the primary and key reproducer. Indeed, Martha Adeline Hinton's enslaver wanted to sell her father away so they could purchase a *woman* 'so dey could have a lot of slave chilluns cause de 'oman could multiply.'[1259] This demonstrates the importance of the marketisation of enslaved women's

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[1254] Jennifer L. Morgan, ''Some Could Suckle Over Their Shoulder": Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770,' *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 54 (1997), 167-192; White, *Ar'n't I A Woman?,* 28-29.
[1255] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 60-61.
[1256] Alice Sewell, Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 5, (1936), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn025/, 303-304.
[1257] Sewell, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:5, 304.
[1258] *Ibid*.
[1259] Martha Adeline Hinton, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn111/, 435.

wombs as a reproducer of the institution of slavery. Similarly, in April of 1807, just before the international ban on slave trade, Joannes Schneyder's last will and testament left money and instructions to Frederick Rutledge Jr., acting on behalf of Schneyder's estate, 'to buy Breeding wenches' and manumit an enslaved 'Mulatto Boy named Bill.[1260] For Hinton's enslaver, and as set out in Schneyder's will, the presence of one fertile women, who could reproduce multiple slaves, was more important that one enslaved man in attempts to increase his workforce through 'natural growth.'

Last wills and testaments that discuss the 'future increase' of enslaved women reveal an emphasis on enslaved females over males. Their current and future wealth, and that of their children, rested on the increase of their enslaved property.[1261] As in the case of Schneyder, many enslavers left instructions to their executors to use the money left to them in their will to purchase 'breeding women' for their heirs. A further example of enslavers ensuring the future financial security of their loved ones by exploiting enslaved people is seen in the case of the Fettmelzes, who inherited Richard Smith's South Carolina estate upon his death in 1819. Smith instructed that his estate should be sold and the profits used to 'purchase…a negro woman that would breed.'[1262] Smith's children, John, Margaret, Martha, and Sarah Fettmelz, informed the Richland court that they had sued the executors of Smith's will as they waited too long to purchase the enslaved woman, as instructed, and the heirs had 'come of age & the money would now be more convenient to them than the negro.'[1263] Bills of sale also reveal how enslavers intended to bolster their investments by ensuring that they also owned the imagined lives of enslaved children. For example, an 1841 slave bill of sale recorded the sale of an enslaved woman named Emmeline 'and her future increase' to Charles B. May.[1264] Emmeline, along with another enslaved man named as Henson, were sold together for $366.66 ($12,318.76 today).[1265] These cases demonstrate the long-term planning that went into the purchase of fertile enslaved women. Smith intended to time the purchase of a 'breeding' woman, who would give birth to a child that would grow up alongside his heirs. The enslaved child would therefore be of similar age to the heirs, and would reach adulthood, and therefore be of most use to the heir, at the same time. This would ensure that the

[1260] Petition 21380709, Charleston, South Carolina (15th April, 1807), Records of the Equity Court, Bills, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina, Microfilm Order 83, Reel D1258, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[1261] Stanley, 'Slave Breeding and Free Love', 137.
[1262] Petition 21383231, Richland, South Carolina (21st January, 1832), Records of the Equity Court, Bills, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina, Box 42, Order 728, Reel D1277, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[1263] Petition 21383231, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[1264] Slave Bill of Sale, 1841-1843, Kentucky Historical Society, SC205.
[1265] Slave Bill of Sale, KHS, SC205.

heirs would have some enslaved property in the form of 'full hands' when they reached adulthood and would be in a financially comfortable position. Moreover, these enslaved people would likely have also already produced their own children, thus multiplying the number of slaves within enslavers' holding.

Likewise, in 1827, Sarah Milling similarly petitioned the Fairfield District Court in South Carolina to ask for permission to invest money in enslaved people.[1266] She had already purchased Pheby 'a breeding wench' and three of her children for $800 ($23,838 today), as well as Jane, also described as 'a breeding wench', and two of her children for $685 ($19,068 today), in 1823.[1267] Milling's two infant children 'were entitled to considerable ready money' and deemed that 'it would be most for the interest of her said children, to vest the same in negroe [*sic*] slaves…to their benefit.'[1268] She also asked the Fairfield District court judge that she may be granted the 'sums respectively given for said negro slaves.'[1269] Milling planned for the future of her infant children by seeking to invest a 'considerable' amount of money in enslaved people as property that would naturally multiply overtime, likely with her interference, and thus increase their financial standing. A further example of how enslavers invested in enslaved children as financial assets comes from the Virginian case *Ellison v. Woody* in 1819 concerning Micajah Woody's last will and testament, demonstrating Woody's foreplaning for his children's future. Written in 1771, Woody left his daughter, Agatha Woody, 'the first negro child his negro woman, named Beck raised' and left Beck herself to his son, William Woody.[1270] The court summary stated that this 'shew[ed]… that he considered the progeny of Beck, whom he knew to be a young breeding woman, as one of the means of providing for his other children.'[1271] Beck's potential children therefore provided a financial future and security for Agatha and William.

The slaveholders in these petitions, both male and female, found it economically beneficial to invest in their future by purchasing 'breeding' women and coercing them into procreating. In particular, the case of Sarah Milling represents records that testify to the active role that white slaveholding women played in the trade of enslaved women, and demonstrates their attentiveness and emphasis on fertility, evidently with reproduction in mind. Enslaved women's

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[1266] Petition 21382416, Fairfield District, South Carolina (25th June, 1824), Records of the Equity Court, Petitions, Kershaw County, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina, Document Number 1824—13, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

[1267] Petition 21382416, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

[1268] *Ibid*.

[1269] *Ibid.*

[1270] Ellison v. Woody (April, 1819) in Helen Tunnicliff Catterall (ed.), 'Slave trade, slave uprisings, and the Abolitionist movement, legal case summaries for Virginia', *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro* (1926-1937), 131.

[1271] Ellison v. Woody, 131.

potential offspring benefitted the children of the enslavers, and hence perpetuated the cycle of forced reproduction when they, in turn, made similar investments. Moreover, wills and testaments reveal enslavers' thoughts and opinions on the reproductive lives and value of enslaved women and children more openly as they would inevitably not be present or alive when the families and executors discussed said will. Thus, these wills reveal how enslavers valued enslaved women's wombs and fertility as financial commodities that they could bequeath to their children as a financial investment – just as they bequeathed land, property, and money.

Enslavers' investments into their children's future ensured the smooth continuation of slavery from one generation to the next. Gaining access to slavery without generational wealth proved more challenging – though not impossible. Mollie Williams of Mississippi recalled the struggle that her mother's enslaver had when trying to start his own venture in cultivation and slave labour. Williams's enslaver, named only as George, came from Virginia to Mississippi 'lak young folks venturin' about', and married a woman named as Margurite.[1272] Unfortunately for George, he was poor, and 'foun' out ye can't make no crop wid'out'n a start of darkies.'[1273] So, George went back to Virginia to purchase some enslaved people but only found four men and an elderly cook called Harriet.[1274] Realising that he could not ensure natural increase with four men and an elderly woman, George went with his uncle, John Davenport – who was more experienced in the slave-owning business – to a slave auction in Grand Gulf, Mississippi. Davenport told George to 'pick hisself out a pair of darkies to mate so's he could git hisself a start of darkies fer to chop his cotton an' like.'[1275] George first chose Williams's father, Martin, and then saw her mother, Marylin, who he deemed 'big an' strengthy.'[1276] However, George did not have enough money to purchase both. Davenport therefore bought Marylin and in an explicitly reproductive action, 'loan[ed] her over to Marse George for pappy.'[1277] In this arrangement, George and Davenport agreed that the first child of this forced relationship would be Davenports, and the second would be George's, continuing in a repeating pattern.[1278] George and Davenport both invested in Marylin's womb, gambling their money on the likelihood of her giving birth to multiple children that George and Davenport could enslave and exploit labour from. The slave market provided George with the tools to start a plantation with enslaved workers through the forced intimate relationship of Martin and Marylin.

[1272] Mollie Williams, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 9, Mississippi, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn090/, 157.
[1273] Williams, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 9, 157.
[1274] *Ibid*.
[1275] *Ibid*.
[1276] *Ibid*., 157-158.
[1277] *Ibid*., 158.
[1278] *Ibid*.

The language Williams used to describe this initial purchase – 'a start of darkies' – is indicative of the dehumanising language comparing enslaved people to livestock that was vital for enslavers to justify their trade in human flesh. Enslavers and traders used this language in formal and informal settings, appearing in both WPA interviews, published narratives, and judicial records. For example, Anne Patterson, Susan Cobbs, and Elizabeth Cobbs, the daughters of the late Thompson Mills, petitioned the court to divide the enslaved people belonging to their deceased father.[1279] In the proceedings, references are made to the 'the original stock' of enslaved women, Rachel and Pollina, who had collectively given birth to eleven children.[1280] By referring to these women and others within this original group of people as 'stock', and as one homogenous group rather than identifying individuals who led unique lives, the Cobbs heirs detached themselves emotionally and morally from the institution of slavery, specifically the trade and movement of bodies, rather than people.

Testimony from formerly enslaved people reveal that enslavers used this animalistic language to streamline the enslaved as a means of production, as seen in the case of Mollie Williams and George, her enslaver. Words that compared enslaved men, women, and children to 'mules' or 'pigs' demonstrates how enslavers saw both enslaved people and livestock as unhuman, unfeeling, and disposable objects to systematically abuse and use for their own financial gain. Moreover, as Smithers and Jacoby both argue, formerly enslaved people interviewed in the 1930s used this language of animalisation to emphasise the dehumanising nature of slavery.[1281] Such language also appeared in published narratives of the nineteenth century, such as that of John P. Parker, who wrote that he 'knew [he] was an animal worth $2,000.'[1282] However, Smithers argues that this was a trope used by anti-slavery writers to explain the violence of slavery.[1283] Although formerly enslaved people may have modified their narratives in order to attract sympathy, enslavers nevertheless dehumanised and emotionally distanced themselves from enslaved people in order to force them to reproduce and commodify their offspring. Formerly enslaved people therefore used this language two-fold: to demonstrate the dehumanising violence of slavery, and to show the thought-process behind enslavers' attempts at forced reproduction.

As Anthony S. Parent and Susan Wallace Brown argue, enslaved children were acutely aware of the comparison between livestock and enslaved people, and they maintain that the

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[1279] Cobbs and Paterson verses Evans, Caroline County, Virginia (16th May 1832), Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[1280] Cobbs and Paterson v Evans.
[1281] Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, 103-110; Jacoby, 'Slaves by Nature?', 89.
[1282] Stuart Seely Sprague (ed.), *His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996), 61.
[1283] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 106.

'intrapersonal violence of slavebreeding cannot be underestimated.'[1284] Children were thus well aware of the dehumanising process of marketisation as they listened to the language used around them, and is consistently referred to in their own words in WPA testimonies.[1285] For example, Henry Banner told his interviewer that in Virginia, enslavers 'raised [people] to sell', and if they misbehaved by killing a white overseer, 'they wouldn't do nothin' to him', but sell him, as they 'didn't want to lose them.'[1286] Instead, 'it was just *like a mule killing a man*.'[1287] Others said that enslaved people were 'sold an' traded an' given away just like stock, horses, and mules,' or that they would 'look in their mouth and examine their teeth just like they was a horse.'[1288] Exposure to constant dehumanisation of themselves and their parents likely left lasting trauma upon the minds of impressionable young children, influencing their self-identity and further fracturing their sense of individuality and self-hood.[1289]

Berry argues that 'human commodification occurred at the moment of sale,' when traders bought and sold human beings like objects.[1290] However, based on the animalistic language used by both the enslaved and their enslavers, human commodification was a process that occurred across time and space, on a daily basis, and enslavers persistently viewed enslaved people as commodities and property. As enslavers commodified enslaved women's wombs as producers of *future* commodities for exploitation, this process hence began before an enslaved child was even born, as enslavers calculated their potential value based on their parents' desired physical characteristics. This process of commodification then continued after they were born as enslavers kept a close eye on their growth, tallying these factors with their calculations. By monitoring the growth of enslaved children and by using the language of livestock, enslavers further perpetuated their commodification and dehumanisation as this language, used so casually by enslavers and traders, ingrained itself in the lexicon and psyche of enslaved people to discuss their perceived value. Although they worked hard to build their identities separate to that of 'slave', enslaved people still suffered through this dehumanising process as their enslaver exposed them to the risk of sale at any possible moment.

[1284] Anthony S. Parent and Susan Brown Wallace, 'Childhood and Sexual Identity Under Slavery,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* 3 (1993), 387.
[1285] Parent and Brown Wallace, 'Childhood and Sexual Identity', 387.
[1286] Henry Banner, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 105.
[1287] Banner, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:1, 105 [italics added].
[1288] John Smith, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 277; Morris Hillyer, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 141.
[1289] Nell Irvin Painter describes this low self-esteem, depression, and anger as 'sould murder.' See: Nell Irvin Painter, *Southern History Across the Colour Line, Second Edition* (University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 14.
[1290] Berry, *Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 41.

Although this process of commodification impacted enslaved women severely because they possessed the reproductive organs capable of carrying children, enslavers also used language comparing adult men to livestock on the rare occasions that they considered *male* fertility at slave auctions. There is limited evidence that enslavers traded explicitly in fertile men, and those that did used such language to demonstrate their virility, strength, and exploitability as non-human machines. Winston Davis, enslaved in Alabama, recalled that enslavers called fecund enslaved men 'stallion[s], [who were] able to get plenty of children', and would sometimes sell them for 'about $2,500' (almost $60,000 today)[1291] However, the majority of evidence suggests that enslavers primarily considered the reproductive potential of women. Mary Brown's grandmother did not have any children under her first enslaver, and so he sold her away to another enslaver named as Taylor.[1292] Whilst there, she gave birth to eleven children, who Taylor ultimately sold.[1293] Brown's grandmother likely did not have any children at her original enslaver's plantation because she was either performing some sort of reproductive resistance, or she was in an intimate relationship with an infertile man. Taylor exposed his sexist ideology by selling Brown's grandmother away and not considering the man's role in this sexual relationship. This double standard was typical of the day, and Brown's enslaver revealed his belief that only the women were responsible for fertility.

Sale and separation were particularly brutal for those that either could not or refused to conceive any children, such as Mary Brown's grandmother. Enslaved women's worth reflected that of her unborn children, and so her enslaver treated infertile women as 'barren sow' and 'passed [them] from one unsuspecting buyer to the next' if she did not conceive.[1294] Henry Banner, for example, told his interviewer that 'if a woman didn't breed well, she was put in a gang and sold,' and Patsy Moore testified that 'if they would have no children they got trafficked about.'[1295] Women and girls also faced particular pressure to produce children as young as they possibly could to avoid their enslavers selling them away. Alice Douglass stated that 'peoples make big miration 'bout girls having babies at 11 years old. And you better have them whitefolks some babies iffen you didn't wanta be sold.'[1296] This extremely young age reveals the sexual pressures

[1291] Winston Davis, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 87.
[1292] Mary Brown, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 299.
[1293] Brown, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:1, 299.
[1294] White, *Ar'nt I a Woman,* 101.
[1295] Henry Banner, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 105; Patsy Moore, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 5, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn025/, 123.
[1296] Alice Douglass, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 74.

placed on young, enslaved girls, as explored in Chapter One. Even if their enslaver did not force them to marry that young, the threat of sale loomed over them and subtly coerced them into reproducing. Pro-natalism therefore manifested itself in covert ways and enslaved people always had to consider the threat the marketplace posed.

However, enslaved women and girls that became pregnant early did not necessarily avoid their enslaver selling them away from their families, but sometimes sealed their fate for the auction block.[1297] Though enslavers frequently sold enslaved women away due to fertility issues and wanted to keep those they deemed fertile to reproduce their workforce, they also sold enslaved women *because* they were fertile. This was usually because they either were not prepared to pay for any offspring of reproducing women, or because they wanted to make money by selling them to those who were particularly keen to buy a 'breeding woman.' This demonstrates the fluidity of slaveholder ideology and how each individual enslaver valued women differently. Determining typicality (whether an enslaver was more likely to buy or sell fertile or infertile women) is challenging and generalising one way or another risks completely diminishing enslaved people's experiences with forced reproduction and sexual exploitation. However, *all* enslavers were motivated by profit. Establishing themselves in the eyes of their enslaver as a particularly fertile person confirmed enslaved women's status as a 'breeder', and their enslaver then had to calculate which would be the most finically advantageous: sell or keep? Either way, enslavers exploited those they deemed the most fertile. Jacqueline Jones argues that enslaved women were likely to be sold if they had a child at a young age, though this depended on the enslaver's temperament.[1298] Although an enslaver might decide to keep an enslaved girl who had proven herself to be fertile to grow his slaveholding, the threat of sale always loomed.

For those that preferred to buy rather than sell reproducing women, the fertility of enslaved women was so important that enslavers frequently filed petitions in county courts suing traders who sold them apparently infertile females. For example, James Trotter sued traders William Fisher and Thomas Whitlock for selling him an enslaved woman called Phoebe. Fisher and Whitlock marketed her as 'fine [,] likely', and pregnant.[1299] Trotter subsequently 'bid & g[a]ve more, for her than he otherwise would have done.'[1300] Time revealed that not only was Phoebe 'afflicted at the time of the Sale with a diseased called the King's Evil [scrofula],' but she was also *not* pregnant.[1301] Fisher and Whitlock therefore 'falsely represented' Phoebe at the auction, as

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[1297] Jones, *Labor of Love,* 35.
[1298] *Ibid*.
[1299] Trotter v. Fisher and Whitlock, Brunswick County, Virginia (1817), Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[1300] Trotter v. Fisher.
[1301] *Ibid*.

they knew that interested enslavers would pay more for a healthy reproducing woman.[1302] Another petition filed by William Hickman in Bourbon County, Kentucky, in 1829, demonstrates the importance of healthy pregnant enslaved women. Hickman was 'anxious' to purchase an enslaved woman between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-five 'of good qualities that would breed' and who had already proven to have male children.[1303] He therefore purchased a woman named as Queen and her son Ned from a man called Thomas Trundle, presumably under the assumption that Queen would produce more children.[1304] However, after the purchase, Ned revealed himself to have epilepsy, which, according to Hickman, 'will ultimately result in idiocy, or intire [*sic*] derangement of the mind.'[1305] Hickman also complained that Queen was unhealthy, and sought a judgement that would result in Trundle rescinding the contract made between them. Although Queen had produced Ned, proving to produce male children, he did not meet Hickman's expectations of a 'healthy' enslaved child that he could exploit to the maximum. Moreover, Queen was also unhealthy, and Ned's unsound status reflected back onto Queen. The fact that Hickman did not automatically sell them away as soon as he realised they did not meet his criteria suggests that these people would have had an extremely low value at market, and it would have been more astute to take the case to court.

It is also important to note that the gender of Queen's child was important to Hickman. Although Berry has argued that gender was not significant when enslavers appraised the value of children, enslavers undoubtedly considered the future fertility of young girls, and purchased them with this in mind.[1306] Indeed more recently, Williams reasons that gender *was* significant when combined with their age.[1307] Enslavers valued boys for their physical strength, and desired girls between the age of twelve and fifteen 'both for their strength as laborers and for their potential reproductive capacity.'[1308] Enslavers therefore valued enslaved children as future adults, and paid particular attention to their physical and biological potential as producers and reproducers despite their young age. J.W. Whitefield, whose father, Luke Whitefield, experienced slavery in North Carolina, described how enslavers inspected male infants:

> When a boy-child was born out of this marriage they would reserve him for breeding purposes if he was healthy and robust. But if he was puny and sickly they were not bothered

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[1302] *Ibid*.
[1303] Petition 20782909, Bourbon County, Kentucky (1829), Records of the Circuit Court, Case Files, Bourbon County Courthouse, Paris, Kentucky, Box 718-722, Packet 722, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Hickman likely desired male children to train them into field workers or because they tended to sell for more than enslaved women.
[1304] Petition 20782909.
[1305] *Ibid*.
[1306] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, 47.
[1307] Williams, *Help Me to Find My People,* 25.
[1308] *Ibid*.

> about him. Many a time if the boy was desirable, he was put on the stump and auctioned off by the time he was thirteen years old. They called that putting him on the block.[1309]

Here, it is clear that enslavers valued 'strong' male babies and determined their destiny for the marketplace from birth. Enslavers valued enslaved girls who were close to a 'breeding age.' Mary Grayson, for example, told her interviewer about her mother's experience when she was about eleven years old.[1310] Her enslaver sold her away and she was bought by someone she referred to as 'the Creek man.'[1311] He decided she was 'too young to breed' and so sold her to someone else, who decided she *was* old enough and forced her to marry 'one of his "boys".'[1312] However, they did not have any children, and so he sold her to a man named Mose Perryman.[1313] It is likely that Grayson's mother did not have any children simply because she was too young and physically could not. However, her enslaver did not view her as a child, but an infertile womb, and so sold her when he deemed her useless to his reproductive endeavours.

Hickman's anxiety to purchase an enslaved woman between the age of twenty-four and twenty-five was not uncommon. Enslaved men and women reached their peak value at different ages: the price for enslaved women declined once they reached twenty-five, and for men once they reached thirty-five.[1314] Traders and enslavers likely calculated this value based on fertility, with twenty-five the peak of their fertile window.[1315] Moreover, Berry argues that the average life expectancy of an enslaved woman was twenty-five, in comparison for thirty-nine for men.[1316] Although she claims this is based on 'thin' data, this suggests that enslavers were forcing enslaved women to reproduce for as long as they possible could.[1317] This value increased over the course of slavery. Some enslavers deemed some women 'unsound' long before their peak age of twenty-five, usually if they were afflicted with some sort of obvious illness or disease that prevented them from conceiving. Daniel Dofflemeyer, for example, sued Thomas West for $1,000 in damages for selling him Rose Ann, a seventeen-year-old enslaved girl in 1858 ($35,645 today).[1318] Dofflemeyer deemed Rose Ann unsound, and wanted to trade her for another female, Huldah, and her five-month-old child.[1319] Intimate knowledge about Rose Ann and Huldah's fertility

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[1309] J.W. Whitefield, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 139.
[1310] Mary Grayson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 115.
[1311] Grayson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 25.
[1312] *Ibid*., 116.
[1313] *Ibid*.
[1314] Berry,'"Ter Show Yo' de Value of Slaves"', 23-24.
[1315] *Ibid*.
[1316] *Ibid*., 131.
[1317] *Ibid*.
[1318] Dofflemeyer v. West, Jackson County, Missouri, 1858, Missouri Supreme Court Historical Database, Box 32, Folder 134
[1319] Dofflemeyer v. West.

determined their value as reproducing commodities. Rose Ann was declared unsound, and Huldah was proven to be sound and fertile.

While historians such as Wilma King argue that the slave trade was 'age specific' rather than determined by gender, enslaved women still experienced oppression based on their combined gender *and* age.[1320] According to Berry, enslavers valued women over the age of forty at an average of $268, while they valued enslaved men of the same age at $433.[1321] While enslaved women's fertility had declined by this age, enslaved men could still procreate. This therefore contributed to their higher value. A petition submitted in Edgefield, South Carolina in 1851 by Jonathan Taylor and his wife, Charity Blackstone, reveals the motivation behind the sale of enslaved women who had reached their peak age.[1322] The Taylors asked the court for permission to sell an enslaved woman named Minty on behalf of Charity's daughter, Frances.[1323] They argued that Minty 'is now about twenty four or five years of age…and will never have any increase.'[1324] They therefore intended to sell Minty, who was apparently infertile, and use the profits to purchase another younger female slave.'[1325] Minty had reached what her enslavers decided was the peak of her fertility window, and market value, and had not reproduced. Thus, the Taylors sought to exchange her for a younger enslaved female. Although there is no mention of an enslaved man, or whether they coerced her into sexual relationships with more than one man to test her fertility, it is likely that they automatically blamed Minty herself for her lack of children.

Enslavers also sold infertile women if they needed a boost to climb out of financial straits. For example, Elizabeth A. Keen inherited an enslaved woman named Eliza upon her marriage to John B. Keen. Eliza was then put into a trust overseen by Alfred A. Fisher. John Keen was unwell and unable to provide financially for his family, so he wished to sell Eliza, who was decreasing in value as time went on: she was twenty-eight, had been married for several years, but had no children. Eliza was therefore 'of little value or no value' to the Keens' daughter, Ellen, once the couple died.[1326] Although they were selling an enslaved person in order to provide for themselves financially, and to 'invest the proceeds of said sale in the purchase of said house and lot', the Keens justified the sale by emphasising Eliza's dearth of children. At twenty-eight, she was three years

[1320] Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America* (Indiana University Press, 1995), 234.
[1321] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, 136.
[1322] Petition 21385123, Edgefield, South Carolina, Records of the Equity Court, Petitions, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina, Microfilm Reel ED164, 36-37, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[1323] Petition 21385123.
[1324] *Ibid*.
[1325] *Ibid*.
[1326] Petition 20585209, Leon County, Florida, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida, Box 12, Folder 770, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

past the average peak value of enslaved women. If she had given birth to multiple children, it is likely they would have kept her but sold away her children. Similarly, Maria T. Minor Bouchelle petitioned the Lowndes County Court to appoint her husband, Ezra, as trustee and to sell their enslaved woman, Eliza, who had not produced any children and was declining in value as she was now twenty-eight.[1327] In both of these cases, the enslavers valued women solely by their ability to produce children. As they could not, they sold them at the market as soon as they began to decline in value, rather than force them to labour in some other way or risk their value declining too much. This demonstrates how enslavers identified enslaved women as 'breeders' and marketed them as either non-breeding or breeding women at auctions.

Knowledge regarding fertility was vital for enslavers to calculate the market value of enslaved people and to earn as much as they could from the wombs of women. Knowledge that a woman was fertile was firmly evidenced through the reproduction of children. Though enslavers also paid more for the *potential* fertility of an enslaved woman, firm proof that a woman could produce children reassured them in their purchase. Eliza Hayes of Arkansas recalled hearing her mother say 'many times that a woman would be put on the block and sold and bring good money because she was *known* to be a good and fast breeder.'[1328] The connection between known fertility and value is repeated by multiple formerly enslaved people: S.S. Taylor reported that enslaved women 'went like horses' and that 'a woman that birthed children cost a heap.'[1329] Isiah Green stated that 'large families were the aim and pride' of enslavers, and that they 'quickly learned which of the slave women were breeders and which were not.'[1330] This suggests that enslavers allowed only a small window of time for women to produce or not produce children and confirm their status as either fertile or infertile.

This intimate knowledge regarding enslaved women's fertility allowed enslavers to increase their fortunes by 'sell[ing] a breeding woman for twice the usual amount [of a *non*-breeding woman].'[1331] Lina Hunter claimed that a 'good breedin' 'oman sho did fetch de money', while Fannie Moore spoke of how traders physically stood a woman's children around her on the auction block as evidence of her fertility and 'ter show folks how fas she can hab chillun.'[1332] Millie Williams confirmed Moore's testimony by stating that 'if a woman had lots of chillen she was sold

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[1327] Petition 21085205, Lowndes County, Mississippi, Race and Slavery Petitions Project, Series 2, County Court Petitions, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
[1328] Eliza Hays, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 224; [italics own].
[1329] S.S. Taylor, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn023/, 289.
[1330] Isiah Green, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/, 50.
[1331] Green, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:1, 50.
[1332] Fannie Moore, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 131.

for mo', 'cause it a sign she a good breeder.'[1333] Similarly, enslavers and traders advertised women alongside their children on paper, as seen in the case of Betty auctioned at the Charleston courthouse with her son, Plymouth. A further example is seen in *The Georgia Express* in 1808, as an advertisement promoted 'Three negroes, viz. one likely young woman, Silva, and her two daughters Sarah and Betty.'[1334] The juxtaposition of Silva, a 'likely young woman' next to her daughters is suggestive of her sexual labour and fertility, marking her 'likeliness' in relation to her womb.

The sale of 'breeding' women for a high price is indicative of the demand for a slave-breeding society and the prevalence of reproductive practices. If one enslaver sold a fertile woman as a 'breeder' because they either did not want the financial burden, or because they wanted to cash in on their value, there was always another who wanted to purchase a fertile woman to grow their group of enslaved people.[1335] Francis Fedric wrote in 1862 that upon the death of an enslaved person, the enslaver could always 'replace the dead with others,' as there was an 'abundant supply in the markets of the breeding States of all kinds, field and house hands, some bringing long prices, so that a slaveowner finds the sale of them the readiest mode of extricating himself from any pecuniary difficulty.'[1336] Meanwhile, John G. Fee, the son of a Kentucky enslaver, wrote in 1891 that his father 'came to the conclusion that if he would have sufficient and permanent labor he must have slave labor. He purchased and reared slaves until he was the owner of some thirteen.'[1337] Through a combination of buying and selling, enslavers perpetuated forced reproduction to sustain their plantation economy.

The Marketisation of Enslaved Children

Although forced reproduction emphasised the importance of the copulation of healthy enslaved adult men and women, the ultimate goal was to produce children worthy of labour and sale. Thus, a study of enslaved children's experiences as both the children of sexually exploited reproducers and future reproducers themselves is necessary. Historians such as Wilma King and Marie Jenkins Schwartz have researched childhood under slavery, arguing that of the 3,952,760 enslaved people living in 1860, 56 per cent were under the age of twenty.[1338] These young people

[1333] Millie Williams, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn164/, 170.

[1334] *Georgia Express* (Athens, Ga.) 1808-1809, August 27, 1808, Image 4, Georgia State Archives, https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn88054105/1808-08-27/ed-1/seq-4/.

[1335] Marie Jenkins Schwartz argues that it was financially secure enslavers who were unconcerned with the financial burden on enslaved children and births. She argues that although enslaved children 'lacked coordination, strength, endurance, and judgement,' enslavers were more interested in training them to be subservient than in particular tasks at this age. (See: Schwartz, *Born in Bondage*, 59, 88-89.)

[1336] Fedric, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky,* 44.

[1337] John G. Fee, *Autobiography of John G. Fee* (Chicago: National Christian Association, 1891), 9.

[1338] King, *Stolen Childhood*, xvii; Schwartz, Born in Bondage, chapters 3 and 4.

had different experiences of slavery to their parents, and were also the product of forced reproduction and destined for labour or sale (or both) as soon as it became apparent the mother was pregnant.

Moreover, by purchasing or otherwise interfering in the rearing of the offspring of enslaved men and women, and by coercing them into unwanted sexual relationships once they grew older, enslavers perpetuated intergenerational violence through the cycle of forced reproduction. In a discernible demonstration of the interweaving of the general life cycle of an enslaved person and the violent cycle of forced reproduction, enslavers sold the children of 'breeding' men and women – often as breeders or future breeders themselves. Discourse around the separation of families through sale has moved on from Frederick Bancroft's assertion that enslavers tried to be humane unless it was 'not financially disadvantageous or inconvenient to be so', to more nuanced arguments that enslavers sold people because of the sheer amount of money, rather than as a last resort.[1339] Indeed, Brenda Stevenson argues that enslavers regarded children only as a 'financial resource' they could exploit or sell.[1340] John Boles's assertion that only 25% of enslaved families migrated with their families, and Michael Tadman's calculations that enslavers sold 43% of all enslaved people away from their families supports this narrative.[1341] There was little to no emotional attachment on the side of the enslaver. Of this 43%, 7.8% were children under twelve, sold without their parents, and 12.1% were aged twelve to fourteen without a parent.[1342]

Furthermore, Berry concludes that enslaved children understood that they were property by the age of ten and knew that their enslaver could separate them from their family at any moment.[1343] The slave community educated their youth, informing them that 'they were living property, but a unique form of property that also had a soul.'[1344] Both White and Wilma King discuss the education of young enslaved children, where parents intended to protect them from the sexual violence of white men, though they still suffered sexual exploitation from a young age.[1345] Although enslaved children were, as White makes clear, well-educated on sexual matters, it is uncertain whether they knew explicit details about forced reproduction in particular and the tole it took on peoples' identities, especially as enslavers could be subtle in their manipulation. It is therefore important to consider that central role that children also unwillingly played in forced

[1339] Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South,* 197.
[1340] Stevenson, *Life in Black and White,* 252.
[1341] Boles, *Black Southerners,* 68; Tadman, 'Slave Trading', 199.
[1342] *Ibid*.
[1343] Berry, *Price For Their Pound of Flesh*, 35.
[1344] *Ibid*., 36.
[1345] White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?* 95; Wilma King, '"Prematurely Knowing of Evil Things": The Sexual Abuse of African American Girls and Young Women in Slavery and Freedom,' *The Journal of African American History,* 99 (2014), 173-196.

reproduction. Though enslaved parents wanted their children to remain innocent as long as possible in such a violent and suppressive institution, this innocence was cut short by the 'yoke of slavery,' and the ceaseless presence of forced reproduction [1346]

Enslaved children were the goal for enslavers who practiced forced reproduction, and many enslavers sold them away in groups with other children to earn a profit on the sexual exploitation of enslaved men and women. For example, Jennie Hendricks's grandmother 'brought her and group of other children along much the same as they would a herd of cattle,' and that they 'had to dance through the streets and act lively so that the chances for selling them would be greater.'[1347] Thus, marketisation and sale of enslaved children was an important part of forced reproduction, and enslaved parents feared their enslavers would take their children away from them at any given moment. Many of these formerly enslaved children whose enslaver sold them away from their families at a young age had only few or no memory of their parents. John Smith, who was born in North Carolina, did not remember his parents ''cause I was took 'way from dem by specklaters when I was 'bout thirteen year ole.'[1348] According to Smith, these speculators raised enslaved people to sell.[1349] Thirteen was also the typical age that enslavers judged boys as healthy and large enough to work as a full-hand in the fields alongside grown adults. Moreover, this is also the age that their value began to increase at the market. For Smith's enslaver, who likely engaged in forced reproductive practices and then sold the children away, this was the prime time to cash in on the sexual labour of his enslaved men and women. Smith also recalled that the speculators 'would feed 'em up an' git 'em fat and slick and make money on 'em.'[1350] This routine dressing up of enslaved people, as discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3, reveals the intentions that enslavers and traders went to market with. They wanted to purchase enslaved men and boys that appeared to be well-fed, strong, and healthy, and thus enslavers and traders marketed their enslaved property as such at the marketplace. Smith went on to sell for $1,000, (just under $18,000 in today's money) suggesting that, at thirteen, his new enslaver saw potential in him for labour: both sexually and in the fields. Smith recalled these details easily but lamented that he 'don't remember much 'bout my Mammy an' Pappy.'[1351] Forced reproduction meant that Smith's earliest memory was of the marketplace and the monetary value that his oppressors placed on him, rather than details of his mother and father. Those that experienced sale at the hands of their financially minded enslavers lost their innocence from an early age, despite their parents' best

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[1346] Berry, *Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 36.
[1347] Jennie Hendricks, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 3, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn043/, 1.
[1348] John Smith, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936,1937), www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 349-350.
[1349] Smith, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 350.
[1350] *Ibid*.
[1351] *Ibid.*

attempts to shield them from the horrors of slavery and separation. Others told similar stories. Mingo White, born in South Carolina but trafficked to Alabama, remembered only that he was 'loaded in a wagon wid a lot mo' people in 'hit' when he was four or five years old, and did not know what happened to his parents 'for a long time.'[1352] Mingo stated that he was 'jes' a li'l thang; tooked away from my mammy an' pappy, jes' when I needed 'em 'mos.''[1353]

Some WPA respondents had minor recollections of their parents, but such memories were often marred by the act of sale and permeant separation. Laura Clark recalled to her interviewer that she was 'born on Mr Pleasant Powell's place' in North Carolina, who then sold her when she was about 'six or seven years ole' to a Mr Garret, along with ten other children.[1354] Garret had recently bought 'eight miles [of land] from Livingston.'[1355] Clark was not related to any of the children that Garret purchased, and so they must have come from multiple different families, highlighting the breadth of trauma that one sale could have.[1356] Though Laura's memories of her mother were few, the moment of separation stood out in her mind:

> I recollect Mammy said to old Julie, 'Take keer my baby chile (dat was me) and iffen I never sees her no mo' raise her for God.' Den she fell off de waggin where us was all settin' and roll over on de groun' jes' acryin.' But us was eatin' candy what dey doen give us for to keep us quite, and I didn't have sense 'nuff for to know what ailed Mammy, but I knows now and I never seed her no mo' in dis life.[1357]

Although Clark was not entirely cognizant of the finality of this separation at the time, and it was only with hindsight that she knew that this was a traumatic and formative moment in her young life, these details remained clear in her mind for her to emotionally digest over time. Clark also mentioned two facts that allude to slave-breeding practices on her plantation: First, she did not know her father's name 'ca'se he done been sole to somewhars else when I was too little to recollect'; Second, her mother had twenty-two children.[1358] Although this was the first time Clark experienced marketisation and sale, this was unlikely to be the first time her mother helplessly witnessed her children's sale. Enslaved men and women also experienced the slave market second-hand when their enslaver sold away their children. The obfuscation of her father's name or presence in Clark's life combined with the high number of siblings suggests that Powell forced her mother to procreate with more than one enslaved man, then sold him away when he had

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[1352] Mingo White, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936,1937), www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 413.
[1353] White, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, 413.
[1354] Laura Clark, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 1, Alabama, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936,1937), www.loc.gov/item/mesn010/, 72.
[1355] Clark, Slave Narrative Project, Vol.1, 72.
[1356] *Ibid*.
[1357] *Ibid*.
[1358] *Ibid*., 73.

fulfilled his reproductive role. Though Clarke did not divulge any further details, it is likely that her enslaver coerced her parents into a sexual relationship and then sold the children once they reached a workable age – in this case, six years old.

As Smithers argues, the trauma of sales and separation highlights the commodification of enslaved people and their enslavers' coercion into reproducing for sale to the southern states.[1359] Moreover, the emotional reaction to the death or separation of their children reveals the love and devotion that enslaved parents had toward their children.[1360] Although enslavers unemotionally sold away children, dehumanising and commodifying them, the experience was entirely emotional for the children's parents. As Berry contends, death circled motherhood: their own death, the death of their child, or the sale and separation from their child, which was likened to death as they would never see each other again.[1361] The narrative of Reverend Elisha W. Green described his wife, Susan, who helplessly watched her enslaver sell her son away: 'she bade him a tearful adieu, her heart bleeding and yearning for her child which the accursed yoke of slavery prevented her from claiming as her own and whom she never saw again.'[1362] Green's assertion that Susan could not claim her son as her own is indicative of the control that forced reproductive practices had on the lives of slave families. Not only did they intervene in the intimate relationships of couples, but they also commodified their children and dictated the exact moment they would be separated. Susan could not claim her child as her own, because his body belonged to their enslaver who sold him to meet his pecuniary demands. In the eyes of her enslaver, her son *never* belonged to her: he owned and controlled this child from the moment of conception.

Enslaver attitudes toward enslaved children expose their pecuniary mentality. Enslavers valued them as both marketable commodities *and* valuable future workers. While enslavers may put these children to work alongside adults as 'half-hands', they had the option to sell them whenever they wanted to earn a quick figure – whether to pay a bill, a gift, or just because they wanted the spare money. A common way to make the sale worth the time, effort, and marketing, was to sell children in groups with other children to earn a substantial profit, as seen in the recollections of Laura Clark. Indeed, Lewis and Milton Clarke compared this 'gathering of young children together' to a 'litter of pigs, to be raised for market.'[1363] According to the Clarkes, a man named Bill Myers, who was likely a speculator, frequented the auction houses of Kentucky and

[1359] Smithers, *Slave Breeding,* 116-117.
[1360] Owens, *This Species of Property,* 199.
[1361] Berry, *Price for their Pound of Flesh*, 31.
[1362] Elisha W. Green, *Life of the Rev. Elisha W. Green, Written by Himself* (Maysville: The Republican Printing Office, 1888), 50.
[1363] Lewis Clarke and Milton Clarke, *Narratives of the Sufferings of Lewis and Milton Clarke, Sons of a Soldier in the Revolution, During a Captivity of More than Twenty Years Among the Slaveholders of Kentucky, One of the So Called Christian States of North America* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1846), 108.

purposefully bought enslaved women around the age of forty years-old, as their declining fertility meant they were cheaper than younger women.[1364] He took the children of these women and 'shut them up in a log pen', and forced some other enslaved women to look after them, feeding them broth.[1365] Myers then sold the older women, and kept the children for three months longer.[1366] The children became 'emaciated to skeletons,' suffering from 'cold and hunger, [and] some were frostbitten.'[1367] Myers benefitted from the enslaved women's reproductive abilities by purchasing them and their children, and by attempting to sell them on. However, the declining state of the children's health meant that his attempt to cultivate and raise these children as he would a 'litter of pigs' ultimately failed: 'the success was not such as to warrant a repetition on the part of Myers.'[1368] Others, however, were more successful in their endeavours. William Webb wrote about speculators who 'went round buying colored people --- even little children', and once they 'got a large drove of them together, they shipped them down South.'[1369] Eugene Wesley Smith spoke about speculators who 'used to steal children.'[1370] These speculators came in covered wagons and kept children on plantations 'until they were big enough to sell, and they had an old woman there to tend to those children.'[1371] Similarly, Mary A. Hicks recalled men who came in 'kivered wagons, (we called dem speckled wagons) an' steal Marse Gus'…chilluns.'[1372] Hicks's enslaver did not feel distress at the loss of the children as human beings, but because he made a *financial* loss: 'he had lost a heap of money dat way, so he forbids us of goin' out ter de road an' he orders us ter stay 'way back in de rear uv de house.'[1373] These speculators and enslavers did not engage in the forced reproductive practices that ensured the growth of slavery, but they did benefit from others who did by stealing or purchasing the children of coerced relationships.[1374]

[1364] Clarke and Clarke, *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis and Milton Clarke,* 108.
[1365] *Ibid*.
[1366] *Ibid*.
[1367] *Ibid*.
[1368] *Ibid*.
[1369] William Webb, *The History of William Webb, Composed by Himself* (Detroit: Egbert, Hoekstra, Printer, 1873), 7.
[1370] Eugene Wesley Smith, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 232.
[1371] Smith, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4:4, 232.
[1372] Mary A. Hicks, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 2, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn112/, 372.
[1373] Hicks, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:2, 372.
[1374] Laura R. Sandy has also published work on white women's involvement in 'slave stealing' and argues that slaveholding women participated in 'everyday crimes, as thieves, as victims of theft, or indeed stolen chattel.' (See: Laura R. Sandy, 'Slave Stealing Women, Slave-owning Women, and Stolen Slaves in the American South,' *American Nineteenth Century History* (2022), 1-18. Within the context of forced reproduction, stealing groups of enslaved children, when possible, could prove a somewhat lucrative business – the kidnappers did not have to go through the effort of forcing a couple to procreate nor did they contribute to the material raising of said child (by providing food, clothing, or medicine). Instead, they benefited from the sexual labour of enslaved couples, which was also at the expense of the slaveholders.

While many speculators stole enslaved children they came across, others purchased them from enslavers, and exploited enslaved women's motherhood by forcing them to look after the children that were temporarily in their care. For example, Matilda Poe of Oklahoma knew of an enslaver who 'once sold several babies to traders' who 'stopped at our plantation to stay a while.'[1375] The enslaver forced Poe's mother and some other women to 'take care of dem babies for two days, and teach dem to nuss a bottle of drink from a glass.'[1376] Poe described the 'awful' way that the 'little children cr[ied] for they mothers.'[1377] As Alexandra J. Finley argues, enslaved women unwillingly contributed to the continuation of slavery through their gendered experience as mothers and caretakers of enslaved adults and children.[1378] This 'socially reproductive labor' that enslaved women carried out intertwined with forced reproduction and the marketplace as enslavers, speculators, and traders forced women and mothers to look after and prepare children for the marketplace, as seen in the Poe and the Clarke evidence.[1379] These children, the products of forced reproductive practices, represented the growth and continuation of slavery. Building on Finley's work on how enslaved women fed, clothed, and cleaned for enslaved adults, it is also clear how enslaved women did the same for the next generation of young slaves, even if they themselves had not given birth to them.[1380] Enslavers and traders therefore not only forced enslaved women to procreate and give birth to children against their will, but also forced them to contribute to the continuation of slavery by raising children for the market. Enslavers thus took advantage of 'other mothering' and extended kin-ship networks where slave communities contributed to the raising of enslaved children.[1381] Though these communities helped raise children out of their own love and care for the next generation, enslavers and traders exploited this care for their own financial means. Forced reproduction therefore extended beyond the physical, intimate relationships between enslaved men and women, and into the marketplace as mothers helped prepare children, perhaps unwittingly, for sale.

Though speculators benefitted from forced reproduction through the illicit gathering and sale of enslaved children, enslavers who did not necessarily force couples together also still benefited from the sexual labour of enslaved men and women through the sale of their offspring. In an explicit example of an enslaver's intentions, Harriet Jacobs's enslaver (whose real name was James Norcom), directly informed Jacobs of his intentions toward her children. In her 1861

[1375] Matilda Poe, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 243.
[1376] Poe, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 243.
[1377] *Ibid*.
[1378] Alexandra J. Finley, *An Intimate Economy: Enslaved Women, Work, and America's Domestic Slave Trade* (University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 4-23.
[1379] Finley, *An Intimate Economy,* 7.
[1380] *Ibid*.
[1381] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 178.

narrative, Jacobs wrote that as her children 'grew finely', Flint frequently told her 'with an exulting smile: "These brats will bring me a handsome sum of money one of these days."'[1382] Anne Broome's enslaver sometimes found that he had *too many* enslaved children on his plantation, which created a Malthusian concern about the ratio of rations to people, where the growth in population outstripped the available food.[1383] Broome's enslaver therefore sold the children away when there were too many, upsetting his wife, but 'tears didn't count wid old marster, as long as de money come a runnin' in an de rations stayed in de smoke house.'[1384] Both enslavers happily benefitted from the sexual labour of enslaved men and women, perpetuating the system of slavery and furthering the demand for the marketisation of enslaved bodies.

Like many enslaved mothers who had to watch as their enslaver exploited and sold their children away, Jacobs wrote that she would 'rather see them killed than have them given up to his power.'[1385] As enslavers reaped the pecuniary benefits of forced reproduction by selling them, some enslaved mothers committed infanticide rather than see their children subjected to this fate and further exploited in the violent cycle of forced reproduction. However, this type of violence was rare. The infamous case of Margaret Garner demonstrates the lengths that some mothers went to keep their children out of the hands of enslavers. In 1856, Garner, who had fled slavery with her husband and four children, killed her two-year old daughter by slitting her throat with a butcher's knife, and planned to kill the other three when they were discovered by pursuing whites.[1386] This act of resistance prevented her enslaver from capitalising on her sexual labour and the consequent labour of her children.

Another example, in the 1930s, saw Lou Smith tell her interviewer about a woman who killed her baby rather than see them sold:

> My mother told me that [her enslaver] owned a woman who was the mother of several chillun and when her babies would get about a year or two of age he'd sell them and it would break her heart. She never got to keep them. When her fourth baby was born and was about two months old she just studied all the time about how she would have to give it up and one day she said, "I just decided I'm not going to let old Master sell this baby; he just ain't going to do it." She got up and give it something out of a bottle and purty soon it was dead.[1387]

[1382] Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* 122.
[1383] Anne Broome, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14, South Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn141/, 105; Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (J. Johnson, 1798).
[1384] Broome, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 14:1, 105.
[1385] Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* 122.
[1386] Delores M. Walters, 'Re(dis)covering and Recreating the Cultural Milieu of Margaret Garner,' in Maya E. Fredrickson and Delores M. Walters (eds.), *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery, and the Legacy of Margaret Garner* (University of Illinois Press, 2013), 1, 3.
[1387] Lou Smith, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 302.

Smith's story details the desperation that enslaved mothers felt to protect their children from exploitation, even if it meant infanticide. Though Smith did not explicitly state that the enslaver valued this mother as a 'breeding' woman, he benefitted from her sexual labour and sold away all her children without regard to her emotions or the trauma he was causing. Instead, he capitalised on the woman's sexual and emotional labour, selling each child as it matured and reaping pecuniary benefits.

Similarly, Lewis Clarke wrote of the women he knew who had committed acts of infanticide to prevent their enslaver from selling their children at the slave market.[1388] One woman 'took her child into the cellar and killed it' to 'prevent being separated from her child.'[1389] Another woman 'took her three children and threw them into a well, and then jumped in with them, and they were all drowned.'[1390] Clarke wrote of the emotional struggle that enslaved mothers went through while they deliberated over their limited options: 'joy that it was beyond the reach of the slave monsters, and the natural grief of a mother over her child.'[1391] Moreover, Clarke alluded to the emotional mask that many enslaved people wore around their enslaver to protect themselves and others. According to Clarke, these women that committed acts of infanticide to free their children from the violent cycle of slavery and forced reproduction acted full of grief 'in the presence of the master', but 'when away from them, they rejoice that there is one whom the slave-driver will never torment.'[1392] However, it is challenging to quantify how many enslaved women actually killed their children. As Michael P. Johnson shows, evidence of such cases is unclear, and many instances are now thought to be due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDs).[1393] Moreover, the bodies of infants found in woods or hidden in hay-bales were likely to be panicked mothers hiding their children after a case of SIDs.[1394] Enslavers exaggerated claims of infanticide by alleged 'incompetent' mothers, and it therefore became a racist trope. However, although perhaps in the minority, there *were* still cases where enslaved women committed these acts of desperation. King's assertion that these women were under psychological distress is evident in the reproductive pressures that enslavers put on enslaved women.[1395] Not only did enslavers threaten women with violence if they did not capitulate to sexual advances from either white or

[1388] Clarke, *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke,* 76.
[1389] *Ibid*.
[1390] *Ibid.*
[1391] *Ibid*.
[1392] *Ibid*.
[1393] Wilma King, '"Mad" Enough to Kill: Enslaved Women, Murder, and Southern Courts,' *The Journal of African American History,* 92 (2007), 37-56Michael P. Johnson, 'Smothered Slave Infants: Were Mothers at Fault?, *The Journal of Southern History,* 47 (1981), 493-520; see also: Wilma King, '"Mad" Enough to Kill: Enslaved Women, Murder, and Southern Courts,' *The Journal of African American History,* 92 (2007), 37-56.
[1394] Sally G. McMillen, Southern Women: Black and White in the Old South (John Wiley and Sons., Inc., 2018), 73.
[1395] King, '"Mad Enough to Kill,' 43.

Black men, but they also felt the emotional and psychological strain of witnessing their children go through the same exploitative and soul-destroying experiences as them. Thus, the women discussed here felt driven to infanticide to protect their children from the same horrific fate.

Knowing their value as breeders, some women resisted by destroying their own bodies before their enslaver could. An enslaved woman named as Eliza found her enslaver selling her in 1855 for $800 ($26,877 today) because she refused to eat and had become a 'skeleton.'[1396] Eliza's first enslaver originally sold her in Vicksburg, Mississippi.[1397] Her second enslaver determined that she was unsound, allegedly due to her separation from her husband and child, and so sold her in New Orleans.[1398] It is likely that Eliza suffered from a mixture of grief and determination not to be sold as a 'breeding woman.' Refusing to eat would have not only weakened her for physical labour in the fields, but would have also reduced her likelihood to reproduce, and thus reduce her 'likeliness' as a person. However, it is also important not to romanticise this response as a heroic act of resistance. It is equally as likely that Eliza was depressed by the separation from her family, and thus her refusal to eat was a symptom of her mental state. Either way, the sale and separation of enslaved families for the financial benefit of their enslaver clearly had long-lasting traumatic impacts that affected future reproduction.

The Sexual Exploitation and Sale of Enslaved Children

Forced reproduction manifested itself not only in the form of enslavers coercing individuals into intimate relationships, as discussed in Chapter One, but also through interracial rape and sexual exploitation at the hands of slaveholding men. Sexual abuse was therefore a financially viable way for enslavers to make a profit on their violence as they either forced their own enslaved children to a life of labour on their plantation or sold them away. Baptist argues that enslaved people of white heritage 'symbolized the dependence of white men on Black labour, both in the field and in the bed.'[1399] The sexual exploitation of enslaved women by white slaveholding men therefore further represented their dependence on sexual labour to reproduce the slave labour force. Children born with white fathers and enslaved mothers were automatically enslaved following the law of *partus sequitur ventrem,* and so they were absorbed into their father's retinue of enslaved labourers, subject to his every whim. Whether or not the enslaver intended to influence the natural increase of his enslaved property, they still financially benefitted from the birth of children to an enslaved mother. As Baptist argues, 'every enslaved man, woman, and child was a repository of reproduction and capital and a source of production.'[1400] The continuation of

[1396] Caldwell v. Porter, Jackson County, Missouri, 1855, Missouri Supreme Court Historical Database, Box 26, Folder 69.
[1397] Caldwell v. Porter.
[1398] *Ibid*.
[1399] Baptist, '"Cuffy', 'Fancy Maids, and 'One-Eyed Men'"', 1647.
[1400] *Ibid*.

slavery as an institution depended on the sexually violent exploits of enslaved men to result in further enslaved children.[1401]

Slaveholding men either forced their children to work or sold them at the market, separating them from their mothers, communities, and other kin. According to Andrea Livesey, in her work on children 'conceived in violence', she cites that 10% of the sample she used (the Louisiana WPA interviews and all printed narratives from Louisiana), reported their father (7.3%) or grandfather (2.8%) as white.[1402] Moreover, over 10% of the WPA interviewees from Louisiana told their interviewer that their father sold them, though admits this is likely to be higher as the average age of emancipation was thirteen years-old (and many were younger than this when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued in 1863).[1403] According to King's data, there were 588,352 mixed-race people in the US by 1860, constituting 13.25% of the Black population.[1404] Though not all sexual relations resulted in children, and some of those that did were born from consensual relationships, there was undoubtedly a myriad of non-consensual relationships that resulted in the birth of these children. Moreover, it is essential to consider the power imbalances at play, and it is therefore challenging to classify any of these relationships as completely and undeniably consensual.

Sexual violence and forced reproduction manifested itself in the marketplace, and enslaved mothers had to watch as their oppressors sold away their children conceived in rape. Anne Clark's mother's enslaver sexually assaulted her, and then sold two of the children she bore of these relations.[1405] Both Clark and her mother had to reckon with the emotional trauma of losing children and siblings to forced reproduction. Moreover, long-distance sales caused more trauma and emotional toil than short-distance sales as they were unlikely to ever see one another again.[1406] Enslaved children with white fathers suffered emotional trauma as they came to terms with the circumstances of their conception and their identity as a mixed-race child and they also went through the traumatising and dehumanising act of sale at the hands of their own fathers.[1407] Though Tiya Miles has recently argued that slaveholding fathers often manumitted their children, there is an abundance of evidence from the formerly enslaved themselves who either witnessed or experienced their father's sale of them.[1408] Indeed, the sale of their own children was so

[1401] *Ibid*.
[1402] Livesey, 'Conceived in Violence,' 373-374.
[1403] *Ibid*., 386.
[1404] King, *Stolen Childhood,* 255.
[1405] Mother Anne Clark, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 16, Texas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn161/, 224.
[1406] Emily West, 'Surviving Separation: Cross-Plantation Marriages and the Slave Trade in Antebellum South Carolina,' *Journal of Family History,* 24 (1999), 217.
[1407] King, *Stolen Childhood*., 260.
[1408] Tiya Miles, *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashely's Sack, a Black Family's Keepsake* (Random House, 2021), 88-90.

economically advantageous, and was so common, that Francis Fedric wrote an entire chapter in his 1863 narrative about the frequency of such an event, emphasising this point to attract abolitionist support.[1409] Fedric spoke of the perpetuation of sexual violence, as he recalled hearing about a particular enslaver who sold his 'quadroon' daughter to a man in New Orleans for $1,500, who wished for her to 'to do just as he wanted her, for he had no wife.'[1410] On first reading, these duties performed by a wife included domestic chores and overseeing the other enslaved people on the plantation.[1411] However, by reading into the silences and delving into the hidden layers, his desire for her to perform duties as a wife would is also indicative of sexual acts. This enslaver sexually exploited an enslaved woman, impregnated her, and then knowingly sold his daughter to a man who would sexually exploit her. Fedric stated that there were 'thousands upon thousands' of children enslaved by their fathers, and argues slavery was particularly hard for those whose fathers were their enslaver.[1412] Enslaved people had to both reckon with their status as an enslaved person and also with their own flesh and blood as their suppressor. This was particularly difficult, Fedric argued, 'when they contrast their usage with the pampered luxury in which they see his lawful children revel[.]'[1413]

Fedric wrote of one particular unnamed enslaved man whose father was his enslaver. His father did not treat him lovingly and as a son, but frequently flogged him, to which he showed Fedric his 'lacerated back.'[1414] This man told Fedric that he intended to 'run a dirk-knife through' his father the next time he attempted to whip him.[1415] Fedric begged him not to, but the next time his father took out the whip, 'he pulled out the dirk, and ran through the house.'[1416] The man was clearly unsuccessful, as 'his father sold him soon after this' to a milliner.[1417] His father brutalised his son so much that he drove him to attempted murder, clearly demonstrating the trauma and mental anguish that he experienced at the hands of his own father. The resulting sale subsequently benefitted both the father and son: the father financially, and the son mentally and emotionally. Fedric commented that the next time he saw him he was 'a smarter and more gentlemanly-looking young fellow I have rarely seen.'[1418] Moreover, the violent treatment from his father is indicative of the sexually violent circumstances around his conception: his distaste and negative attitude toward his son suggests that he treated the mother in a similar way, and

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[1409] Fedric, *Slave Life in Virginia and Kentucky,* 44-45.
[1410] *Ibid.*, 45.
[1411] *Ibid.*
[1412] *Ibid.*
[1413] *Ibid.*
[1414] *Ibid.*, 45-46.
[1415] *Ibid.* 46.
[1416] *Ibid.*
[1417] *Ibid.*
[1418] *Ibid.*

likely sexually abused her. The ultimate sale of this man further demonstrates the linked relationship between sexual violence and the marketplace; his father sexually exploited the mother and then sold away the outcome of this sexual abuse.

Enslavers explicitly purchased enslaved women with the intention to sexually exploit them and then sell their offspring. John Andrew Jackson wrote about a man who took an enslaved 'girl' (he does not specify her age) offered at a nearby auction to a barn and 'stripped her *stark naked'* to examine her 'as he would a horse.'[1419] After his examination, he bought her 'for his own vile purposes, and when he had several children by her, sold both her and her children.'[1420] Jackson's language is noteworthy, as he states that the enslaver sold *her* children rather than *their* children. This language establishes the distance that enslavers put between themselves and their enslaved children, and vice versa. For the enslaved, placing emotional distance between children and their sexually violent slaveholding fathers allowed them some recovery or protection from the traumatic consequences of their violent treatment. For slaveholding fathers however, emotional distance between them and their 'illegitimate' offspring allowed them to easily sell them away and reap the profits of their sexually exploitative actions. Slave traders also frequently raped enslaved women and then sold their babies, adding them to their supply of moveable property.[1421] As Jackson stated, the father of a Black woman's child would often 'be the master himself, who would heartlessly sell his own offspring to some other master, without regard for his welfare.'[1422] Charlotte Martin of Florida also argued that her enslaver would engage in forced sexual relationships with the enslaved women 'for the products of miscegenation were very remunerative.'[1423] Indeed, hooks argues that some enslavers preferred enslaved women to have children with white men, as their children would bring a higher price at the market.[1424] Though hooks's work is limited by a dearth of historical citations, there *was* a demand for a trade in lighter-toned enslaved domestics and sexual labourers.[1425]

As light-skinned enslaved people 'were in demand as house servants,' the market therefore specifically called for the rape of enslaved women to suit their preference for domestic slaves with lighter complexions.[1426] In this way, enslavers actively physically inserted their own bodies into the cycle of forced reproduction in a distinctly pro-natalist and 'eugenic' way, instead of forcing enslaved men to take part, and reaped the benefits of enslaved women's sexual labour by

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[1419] Jackson, *Experience of a Slave in South Carolina*, 29.
[1420] *Ibid*.
[1421] Finley, *An Intimate Economy,* 422.
[1422] *Ibid*., 72.
[1423] Charlotte Martin, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, Florida, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Materials, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn030/, 167.
[1424] hooks, *Ain't I A Woman*, 40.
[1425] Baptist, '"'Cuffy', 'Fancy Maids', and 'One-Eyed Men'"',1621-1623.
[1426] Martin, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 3, 167.

selling their children or forcing them to work. This supports Fox-Genovese's assertion that enslavers preferred to raise and train house servants from birth rather than purchase them.[1427] Because of their racism, enslavers wanted their domestic slaves to have light skin, and so attempted to curate this by sexually exploiting enslaved women. Moreover, for those enslavers who bought and sold children to be raised as house servants, 'part white children sold for more than black children' according to Nancy Anderson of Mississippi.[1428]

Anderson also spoke of one of her friends, Jane, whose enslaver frequently raped her and intended to sell her children once they were old enough to generate a profit.[1429] According to Anderson, Jane, who lived in Virginia as a house servant and so worked in close proximity to her enslaver, 'had two girls and a boy with a white daddy.'[1430] Her enslaver would tell her, 'Jane, go to the lot and get the eggs.'[1431] Jane was 'scared to go and scared not to go', through fear of punishment if she did not do as he said, the fear of rape from her enslaver if she *did* go, while also fearing punishment from her 'jealous mistress.'[1432] Jane told her enslaver, 'Old missis whip me. This ain't right.'[1433] Instead of heeding her concerns (or veiled threat to tell his wife) Jane's enslaver beat her, and 'put her head between the slip gap where they let the hogs into the pasture from the lot down the back of the barn.'[1434] He then raped her. Jane gave birth to three children 'in a room in the same house his family lived in,' but luckily 'freedom come on[,] and soon as she heard it she took her children and was gone.'[1435] Jane was relieved that emancipation came 'before her children come on old enough to sell', as her mixed-race children would have sold for more than darker-toned children, and her enslaver would have therefore been more keen to sell them.[1436]

Those that had a lighter complexion sold for more at the market, especially in the sex trade as 'fancy girls.'[1437] Lewis and Milton Clarke wrote in 1846 that the average price of a female plantation hand, house hand, or breeder was between $500 and $700 (between £18,980 and $26,572 today).[1438] 'Handsome girls' sold in New Orleans for between $2,000 and $3,000

[1427] Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household,* 139.
[1428] Nancy Anderson, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn021/, 52.
[1429] Though Nancy Anderson is discussing her "friend", she may be dissembling to protect herself and her children, and actually be discussing experiences that she herself lived through.
[1430] Anderson, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2:1, 51.
[1431] *Ibid*.
[1432] *Ibid*.
[1433] *Ibid.*
[1434] *Ibid.*
[1435] *Ibid.*, 51-52.
[1436] *Ibid*.
[1437] Michael Tadman argues that the 'Fancy Trade' of enslaved men and women was more profitable than the sale of people as just 'light-skinned' (see: Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves,* 127).
[1438] Clarke and Clarke, *Narratives of the Sufferings of Lewis and Milton Clarke,* 122.

(between $75,921 and $113,881 today).[1439] Enslavers tended to advertise enslaved women with more than one skill in order to increase their market value, and the sexual role was only implied or unspoken. For example, many enslaved women sold as seamstresses, but their enslaver also demanded sexual labour of them. Henry Wright recalled that his enslaver, Mr. Wright, forced the enslaved people on his plantation to learn a skill or trade, 'not because it would benefit the slave… but because it would make the slave sell for more in case he had to "get shot (rid) of him."'[1440] For enslaved women, possessing a skill meant that if they did not or could not reproduce, their enslaver could still sell them away for a profit. Berry calculated the frequency of advertisements of women as servants, cooks, washerwomen, seamstresses, and nurses, but did not calculate how many advertisements displayed them as 'breeders.'[1441] Nevertheless, enslavers expected enslaved women to perform sexual labour alongside their allotted role on the plantation. Analiza Foster of North Carolina recalled that her grandmother's enslaver sold her at the auction block four times, each time for $1,000.[1442] Foster argued that this was because her grandmother 'wuz strong an' could plow by day, den too she could have twenty chilluns an' wuck right on.'[1443] Enslavers valued Foster's grandmother because she was an efficient labourer, both sexually and in the fields. As enslavers only recorded their marketing of enslaved women and domestic or field labourers but also sexually exploited them, it is challenging to calculate the frequency of women advertised as 'breeders', but the relative silence also suggests the number is significant if it was an unspoken expectation for all women to labour sexually.

Enslavers therefore frequently sold light-skinned enslaved children, born of rape, into the sex trade and perpetuated the cycle of sexual abuse. Slaveholders held little emotional attachment toward their illicit offspring, and instead saw them as a potentially financial asset. John Hawkins Simpson, who recorded the tale of an enslaved woman Dinah, who escaped Virginia and made it to London, wrote in 1863 that 'the whiter the slave is the greater his or her market value', and accused southern enslavers of the 'ill-usage of female negroes…on slave-rearing plantations' due to the 'superior demand…for white slaves.'[1444] This narrative implies that enslavers' 'ill-usage' of enslaved women included either rape at the hands of the enslaver, or their coercion to procreate with other light-skinned enslaved men.

[1439] *Ibid*.
[1440] Henry Wright, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 4, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn044/, 197.
[1441] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh,* 18.
[1442] Analiza Foster, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11, North Carolina, Part 1, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn111/, 313.
[1443] Foster, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 11:1, 313.
[1444] Simpson, *Horrors of the Virginian Slave Trade*, 59.

These enslavers focused less on their active participation in the forced reproduction of enslaved people, and instead purchased enslaved people with light skin for the explicit purpose of reproducing with one another to produce further light-skinned children for sale. For example, Anna Washington's parents' owners 'wanted them both light so the children would be light for house girls and waiting boys. Light colored folks sold for more money on the block.'[1445] Though Jennings argues that only a minority interfered in reproduction to improve the *quality* of children as well as quantity, most enslavers paired enslaved people together who they deemed to be of similar value, and this included matching people up due to their skin-tone. The experience of Washington's parents is likely to be common, as enslavers valued lighter-skinned enslaved people for domestic roles, in addition to the sex-trafficking of 'fancy girls.'[1446] Thus, this particular enslaver, George Birdsong, intentionally bought both of Anna's parents because they were light in skin tone, and he wanted to increase his stock with light-skinned children that he could sell for a higher amount than darker skinned children, or train them to work as domestics in his house.

Patriarchal society dictated a double standard, where society allowed slaveholding men to engage in forced sexual relationships with enslaved women, but not white women with enslaved men. Harriet Jacobs wrote in her 1861 narrative about the enslaved children of her enslaver: 'my master was, to my knowledge, the father of eleven slaves' who he 'unblushingly reared for the market.'[1447] These children were primarily the product of sexual assault, and secondly, by consequence of sale, contributors to the cycle of forced reproduction. Jacobs wrote that if a child was born from a relationship between a white woman and an enslaved man, 'the infant is smothered, or sent where it is never seen by any who know its history.'[1448] Out of shame, the child was sometimes not sold and absorbed into the cycle of reproduction but killed. 'But,' wrote Jacobs, 'if the white parent is the *father*, instead of the mother,' the enslavers sold their children.[1449] Jacobs also alluded to the sex trade, and the suggestion of sexual exploitation and forced intimate relationships: 'if they are girls, I have indicated plainly enough what will be their inevitable destiny.'[1450]

Although intergenerational trauma and the cycle of violence of forced reproduction had the greatest impact on enslaved men, women, and children who suffered sexually and faced the threat of sale every day, Jacobs also makes the case that this violence influenced the behaviour of

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[1445] Arkansas Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 2, Arkansas, Part 7, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), www.loc.gov/item/mesn027/, 47.

[1446] Finley, Alexandra, "'Cash to Corinna": Domestic Labor and Sexual Economy in the "Fancy Trade"', Journal of American History, 104 (2017), 420.

[1447] Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,* 55, 81.

[1448] *Ibid*., 81.

[1449] *Ibid*.

[1450] *Ibid*.

multiple generations of *white enslavers*. She wrote that 'the slaveholder's sons are, of course, vitiated, even while boys, by the unclean influences everywhere around them[,] nor do the master's daughters always escape.'[1451] Their exposure to the violent language of forced reproduction – the comparison of humans to animals, the assumption that Black women were 'unrapeable' and sexually available – 'corrupted' them. Indeed, Jacobs believed

> that slavery is a curse to the whites as well as to the blacks. It makes the white fathers cruel and sensual; the sons violent and licentious; it contaminates the daughters, and makes the wives wretched. And as for the colored race, it needs an abler pen than mine to describe the extremity of their sufferings, the depth of their degradation.[1452]

Jacobs maintained that enslavers did not seem to be aware of how they were passing down racist and exploitative attitudes or the 'widespread moral ruin occasioned by this wicked system.' Indeed, 'their talk is of blighted cotton crops – not of the blight on their children's souls.'[1453] Slaveholders handed violence down generations and enabled and encouraged the sexual exploitation of multiple generations of enslaved people and their subsequent sale. An example of this is demonstrated in the narrative of Henry Bibb. His mother, Mildred Jackson, who was 'so fortunate or unfortunate, as to have some what is called the slaveholding blood flowing in her veins,' bore seven sons for her enslaver.[1454] Though 'fathered by slaveholders', her enslaver still sold away her children 'to the slave markets of the South.'[1455] Bibb wrote that he had 'no personal knowledge' of his father, and that his mother informed him that his name was James Bibb, 'doubtless one of the present Bibb family of Kentucky.'[1456] Bibb's narrative reveals how white, slaveholding heritage, despite going back generations, had no effect on their enslaver's inclination to sexually exploit women and then sell their offspring.

Most enslavers were entirely unemotional and unaffected when selling their own children for the market. Doc Daniel Dowdy's cousin Eliza's father was her enslaver, who sold her away because his white daughters were jealous of the (unwanted) attention Eliza received from their 'beauxs.'[1457] When her enslaver 'showed [her] off', Dowdy's mother and Eliza 'both cried…and master told 'em to shet up before he knocked they brains out.'[1458] Similarly, Ellen Cave alluded to the sexual exploitation and subsequent sale of mixed-race children on her plantation.[1459] Cave's

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[1451] *Ibid*., 80.
[1452] *Ibid*., 81.
[1453] *Ibid*.
[1454] Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb,* 14.
[1455] *Ibid*.
[1456] *Ibid*.
[1457] Doc Daniel Dowdy, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 77.
[1458] Dowdy, Slave Narrative Project, Vol., 13, 77.
[1459] Ellen Cave, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, Indiana, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn050/, 50.

enslaver's father had many children by the enslaved women on the plantation, and 'sold his own half-breed children down the river to Louisiana plantations where the work was so severe that the slaves soon died.'[1460] Cave's enslaver willingly sold his own children away to Louisiana, which was notorious for its swamps and disease-prone climate. Status as the children of a white, male enslaver had no bearing on Cave's enslaver as his only interest was financial gain. John White of Oklahoma also attested that he had heard that 'sometimes the white folks go around the slave quarters for the night…[and] after a while they'd be a new baby. Yellow.'[1461] White testified that once the children grew enough to begin carrying out chores, the enslaver would sell them – 'no difference was it his own flesh and blood – if the price was right!'[1462] These enslavers, as discussed by Dowdy, Cave, and White, and countless others beyond the realm of this chapter, did not feel enough of a human, emotional attachment to their children. Where enslaved men fought every day to fulfil the role of father, these enslavers dismissed or did not acknowledge their fatherhood at all, and instead commodified their children by selling them for money.

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Slaveholding men and women perpetuated the cycle of forced reproduction on a daily basis by selling and commodifying enslaved men, women, and children. Enslavers marketed young, valuable women as 'likely', connoting their sexual availability and potential for sexual labour and emphasised their ability or inability to reproduce by noting their characteristics and health. Enslavers combined what Baptist calls commodity fetishism and sexual fetishism through the sex trade or 'fancy' trade, where enslavers bought women primarily for sexual acts. However, slaveholding men and women also bought men and women to force them to have sexual relations with one another to reproduce the workforce – thus literally combining commodity and sexual fetishism.

Moreover, the slave marketplace reveals how enslavers interpreted the life cycle of an enslaved person. The role of enslaved children within forced reproduction and marketisation has been markedly understudied. As Chapters Two and Three demonstrated, enslavers paid great attention to the emotional and physical growth of enslaved children – not in a benevolent way, but in an exploitative and manipulative attempt to maximise their profits. This attempt to regulate their food, exercise, medicine, as well as their relationships with those around them such as their fathers, prepared them for a life of hard labour – both sexually and in the fields or domestic spaces. As the aim of forced reproductive practices was to develop and grow the slave labour

[1460] Cave, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 5, 55.
[1461] John White, Federal Writer's Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, Oklahoma, Library of Congress, Manuscript/Mixed Material, (1936), wwwloc.gov/item/mesn130/, 325.
[1462] White, Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 13, 325.

force, children were the expected outcome and were thus vital. There is an abundance of evidence from both the enslaved and enslavers that demonstrate the frequent trade in children, though these take different forms and contain different levels of detail. Formerly enslaved people emphasised the trauma that forced reproduction, sales, and separation left on both the children and their parents through their narratives and interviews in the early twentieth-century. Sources from white enslavers are less emotional and record only the necessary details of a legal trade or agreement. Moreover, there is a gendered aspect to these sales, as recently argued by historians such as Jones-Rogers: slaveholding white women were just as financially astute as slaveholding men and played an active role in this aspect of forced reproduction by constantly selling enslaved children and threatening to 'put [them] in her pocket.'[1463]

From childhood, to adolescence, to adulthood, and lastly (as discussed in Chapter Three), the elderly stage of life, enslavers valued enslaved men and women within the frame of their reproductive capacity, and how much money they could make through either the sale of 'breeders', their offspring, or by forcing them into hard labour. Enslavers who sexually exploited and impregnated enslaved women were often unemotional and detached, not only enslaving their mixed-race children following *partus sequitur ventrem,* but also going as far as selling them away from their families, thus maximising profit, sexual pleasure, and patriarchal control. Slaveholding men therefore engaged in direct acts of forced reproduction by sexually assaulting enslaved women and forcing them into a coerced intimate sexual relationship, and then sold the offspring that came from these unions. Though evidence from white enslavers regarding sales and marketisation primarily consist of slave bills of sale, advertisements, and account books, thus providing little *emotional* detail, it is possible to supplement these with evidence from Black formerly enslaved voices to build a fuller, more vibrant picture. WPA testimony and published slave narratives from adult enslaved women who enslavers marketed as 'breeders' and the surviving children that experienced sale at the hands of their fathers, demonstrate how forced reproduction affected enslaved people at all ages. They reveal the legacy of trauma: these children who survived slavery had to spend the rest of their lives reckoning with the knowledge that their father was also their enslaver who saw them nothing as commodities to be marketed and sold at auction.

[1463] Jones-Rogers, 'Rethinking Sexual Violence and the Marketplace of Slavery', 110, 117, 119.

Conclusion

Charlotte Rutherford's 1992 report for the Yale Journal of Law on reproductive freedoms for Black women demonstrates the long-lasting racism that forced reproduction has sustained in the US, in conjunction with more present-day forms of racism and inequality. According to Rutherford's findings, Black women have limited 'reproductive freedoms', as reproductive health care is often unavailable to poorer classes of Black women.[1464] Indeed, she found that many rich white couples looking for gestational mothers targeted poor Black women, paying them to carry their baby.[1465] She highlights the historical links between slavery and modern forms of IVF, comparing gestational mothers as 'wombs for rent.'[1466] As IVF allows a woman to carry a baby that it has no biological relation to, it means that Black women are able to give birth to a white baby, an intensely symbolic image.[1467] Rutherford succinctly links this arrangement to historical arrangements of white slaveholders exploiting enslaved women as wet-nurses and 'breeders.'[1468]

Such legacies of forced reproduction are scattered throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Throughout the US, individual states put anti-Miscegenation laws in place forbidding interracial marriages, which was only overturned through *Loving v Virginia* in 1967.[1469] Forced sterilisation saw thousands of Black women unable to have children.[1470] Eugenic societies and campaigns sprung up across the country: Gregory Michael Dorr and Angela Logan have shown that Black communities in the early twentieth century adopted their own version of 'Better Babies' and 'Fitter Families' competitions – competitions which originated with white

[1464] Charlotte Rutherford, 'Reproductive Freedoms and African American Women', Yale Journal of Law and Feminism, 4 (1992), 255.
[1465] Rutherford, 'Reproductive Freedoms and African American Women,' 255.
[1466] *Ibid*., 270.
[1467] *Ibid*.
[1468] *Ibid*.
[1469] Arica L. Coleman, *That the Blood Stay Pure: African Americans, Native Americans, and the Predicament od Race and Identity in Virginia* (Indiana University Press, 2013); David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History* (Little, Brown & Co., 2000.
[1470] Elof Maxwell Carlson, 'The Hoosier Connection: Compulsory Sterilization as Moral Hygiene,' in Paul Lombardo, Angela Logan, and Maxwell J. Mehlman (eds), *Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era* (Indiana University Press, 2008), 11-25; Jason S. Lantzer, 'The Indiana Way of Eugenics Sterilization Laws, 1907-74', in Paul Lombardo, Angela Logan, and Maxwell J. Mehlman (eds), *Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era* (Indiana University Press, 2008), 26-41.

eugenicists.[1471] Between 1924 and 1934, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) held these baby pageants to help raise money for their campaigns.[1472] W.E.B. DuBois, the prolific Black intellectual, wrote that although white and Black people were biologically equal, each group had 'fit' and 'unfit' members.[1473] Indeed, he argued that 'reasonable, eugenic breeding and euthenics, [and] environmental conditioning would save the race.'[1474] DuBois published 'Children's Numbers' in *The Crisis,* showcasing the 'best' Black children at that time, with the 1927 edition listing children by their IQ scores.[1475]

In the twenty-first century, physicians such as J Marion Sims and Ephraim McDowell are still heralded as the 'Father of American Gynaecology' and the 'Father of Ovariotomy', respectively, with statues erected in their honour in Central Park in New York City and the State Capitol building of Kentucky, attracting protests from women and feminist groups arguing for their lack of acknowledgement for the enslaved women they experimented on.[1476] Though the Sims statue has successfully been taken down, the McDowell statue remains in the Kentucky capitol building, facing the empty spot that the Jefferson Davis statue used to stand. In the UK, Heidi Downes, an NHS antenatal screening counsellor and midwife, has campaigned for a plaque or statue commemorating the enslaved seventeen year old girl Anarcha and countless other women that Sims experimented on.[1477] In literature, Robert Jones Jr.'s debut novel, *The Prophets* (2021), discusses the sexual exploitation of enslaved men and women and their suffering at the hands of their enslaver Paul, who forced the slaves on his plantation to go to 'the Fucking House' to procreate and reproduce.[1478]

[1471] Gregory Michael Dorr and Angela Logan, '"Quality, Not Mere Quantity, Counts": Black Eugenics and the NAACP Baby Contests,' in: Paul A. Lombardo, Angela Logan, and Maxwell J. Mehlman (eds), *Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era* (Indiana University Press, 2008), 81; for an overview on medical experimentation on Black people throughout time, see Harriet Washington, *Medical Apartheid: the Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (Anchor Books, 2008).
[1472] Dorr and Logan, '"Quality, Not Mere Quantity, Counts", 80-81.
[1473] *Ibid*., 74.
[1474] *Ibid*., 75.
[1475] *Ibid*., 76.
[1476] P.R. Lockhart, 'New York Just Removed a Statue of a Surgeon Who Experimented on Enslaved Women,' *Vox*, (April 18, 2018), https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/4/18/17254234/j-marion-sims-experiments-slaves-women-gynecology-statue-removal [accessed 28/4/22]; Kat Eschner, 'This American Doctor Pioneered Abdominal Surgery By Operating on Enslaved Women,' *Smithsonian Magazine* (December 19, 2017, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/father-abdominal-surgery-practiced-enslaved-women-180967589/, [accessed 28/4/22].
[1477] Heidi Downes, 'Honoring the Slaves Experimented on by the 'Father of Gynaecology',' *The Conversation*, (October 20, 2020), https://theconversation.com/honouring-the-slaves-experimented-on-by-the-father-of-gynaecology-148273, [accessed 28/4/22]; Heidi Downes, 'The Forgotten Women of Gynaecology', *British Journal of Midwifery*, 27 (2019), https://www.britishjournalofmidwifery.com/content/comment/the-forgotten-women-of-gynaecology, [accessed 28/4/22]; Heidi's petition can be found here: https://www.change.org/p/acknowledgment-statue-of-enslaved-woman-anarcha-for-her-part-in-pioneer-gynae-techniques.
[1478] Jones Jr., *The Prophets,* 44.

Forced reproduction was and is a reality for the hundreds of thousands of descendants of enslaved men and women, albeit in different forms, and its legacy has woven itself into the cultural and political climate of the last two centuries. With emancipation came only limited freedom for Black communities. Though legally no longer enslaved, and no longer experiencing enslavers forcing them to reproduce lest they face violent and emotionally traumatic repercussions, the eugenic discourse took a different route. As discussed in Chapter One, white southerners desired to see an increase of enslaved Black people they could commodify and exploit but did *not* wish to see an increase in the *free* Black population. White communities campaigned to ban marriage between free women and enslaved men, motivated by *partus sequitur ventrem* (1662) and the tying of slave status to a woman's womb. If Black people were enslaved, they were controllable and commodifiable assets to exploit. After emancipation, they were no longer enslaved 'property' and so white southerners had no interest in ensuring an ever-increasing Black population. Indeed, the lynching of Black men in in the post-emancipation and Jim Crow era reveals an active effort to decrease the Black population. Southern attitudes thus shifted from pro-natalist to anti-natalist, and they encouraged an environment of racialised violence through Jim Crow rule and the everyday limitation, incarceration, and murder of Black people. As time has progressed, other forms of racism have replaced these methods. Just as segregation replaced slavery, mass incarceration replaced *de jure* segregation.[1479]

In contrast, enslavers in the antebellum era South consistently worked to coerce, force, and cajole enslaved couples into sexual relationships with no regards as to whether they were consensual intimate relations or not. Viewing forced reproduction along a spectrum, enslavers used a range of methods to force enslaved people into submission. These methods included third party rape, the threat of violence, the permission or refusal for some couples to 'marry', hiring out of enslaved men as 'stock men' or 'breeders', and the splitting up of families. These actions, ranging from explicitly violent to more subtle yet equally as insidious, had a profound emotional effect on the enslaved individuals that experienced this exploitation, as well as an impact on gender relations between enslaved men and women. Forced reproduction effected enslaved men and women differently, and to study the experiences of enslaved women it is necessary to examine how they differed in comparison to the experiences of enslaved men.

Enslaved men's reactions to this form of sexual exploitation varied. Though many suffered through this forced intimacy alongside their female peers, others saw this as an opportunity to assert their masculinity and take advantage of the patriarchal plantation rule. Though enslavers held racialised power over enslaved men, enslaved men held power over enslaved women based

[1479] For a discussion on mass incarceration see: Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colourblindness* (New Press Inc., 2010).

on their gender. To both white and Black men, women were moveable sexual objects: for white men, their wombs were marketable commodities; for enslaved men, they could appeal to their enslaver and choose which woman they wanted to have sexual relations with (even if they were already in a relationship with someone else or lived on a different plantation), as long as they matched up to what their enslaver deemed a 'suitable' person. Enslaved men were oftentimes both perpetrator *and* victim of forced reproduction – while they may have 'chosen' who they wanted to have sexual relations with, this was under the false illusion of autonomy as set out by their enslaver. Ultimately, their enslaver held the definitive decision on whether a couple could procreate and could change their mind at any moment.

Intimate partner sexual violence was not uncommon.[1480] However, Thomas Foster counters this argument by maintaining that we only have Rose's side of the story, and we do not know how Rufus felt. Nevertheless, Rose and Rufus's story is a clear example of how enslaved men could be both perpetrator and victim of an exploitative system under forced reproduction. Men like Rufus felt pressure from their enslaver to procreate with the woman chosen for them, but by enforcing their enslaver's wishes in order to avoid punishment, protecting both themselves and the women, they inadvertently oppressed their female partner. Though enslaved men were sexually exploited by those who held them in bondage, women faced a double burden where they were exploited by both their enslaver and other enslaved men. Moreover, by hiring out enslaved men as 'stock men' or 'breeders', enslavers forced a choice on enslaved men: sexually assault the women as instructed or face insurmountable punishment from their enslaver. Thus, marriage and intimate relationships were complicated affairs. The interference of enslavers in these relationships ensured a pro-eugenic society based on the alleged 'soundness' of certain enslaved individuals and their reproduction of equally 'sound' enslaved children.

At the heart of forced reproduction are two key concepts: family, and the life cycle. Slavery relied on family, especially in the form of the mother-child unit, to sustain itself. Where enslaved communities welcomed the birth of children, it was bittersweet, as they knew they would experience the same violent and laborious enslavement that they had lived through and could only do so much to protect them. For enslavers, families were only beneficial to the point that married couples produced exploitable children. Once they were born, enslavers attempted to dismiss the traditional nuclear familial unit by reducing enslaved men's authority as fathers. Enslaved men only held value if they laboured or if they contributed to the creation of new slaves.

[1480] As Emily West attests, Rose William's testimony about her husband Rufus reveals how men attempted to sexually abuse their partners: Emily West, 'Reflections in the *History and Historians* of the Black Woman's Role in the community of Slaves: Enslaved Women and Intimate Partner Sexual Violence,' *American Nineteenth Century History,* 19 (2018), 1-21.

Unlike women, whose performance of othermothering benefitted their enslavers, such as wet-nursing, enslaved men's role of father, or their 'otherfathering' did not serve the plantation economy or their enslaver in any valuable way. In fact, fatherhood weakened enslavers hegemonic control as it threatened their status as the sole patriarchal figure on the plantation. Though enslaved fathers worked to provide for their children emotionally and physically and attempted to stand up as a moral role model, enslavers interfered in their relationships with their children by appropriating the role of father through activities such as hunting, or by forcing them to call them Pa. Thus, enslavers attempted to forcibly assert themselves as the sole father on the plantation, emasculating and dehumanising enslaved men. Enslaved men were not fathers, but reproductive parts to a wider machine of slavery.

Indeed, enslavers only took an interest in potential fathers in terms of their soundness and perceived fecundity. Enslavers emphasised the 'desirable body' – a large, muscular man who could work hard in the fields and reproduce equally large and hardworking children. Enslavers disliked 'runty' enslaved men, with one going so far as to run them down with plantation hounds. Visibly physically superior enslaved people not only apparently worked the hardest and reaped larger profits, but they also sold for more on the slave market. There cultivation of sound bodies was therefore of great interest to enslavers, beginning before children were even born. Thus, the second key concept, the life cycle, exposes how enslavers' valuation of enslaved people fluctuated depending on the enslaved people's life-stage. As Berry argues, enslavers valued the 'imagined lives' of enslaved people. The contradictory image of overseers and enslavers attempting to protect pregnant women's stomachs when dolling out brutal punishments by digging holes in the ground demonstrates how the potential labour of the child was more important than the mother. Enslavers thus treated pregnant women as walking wombs carrying the future of slavery.

Enslavers kept children within close proximity and, just as they regimented sexual relations through the interreference of intimacies, they also regimented the food, medicine and exercise of enslaved children on a daily basis to ensure their 'growth' was not stunted. By dictating their diet through the rationing of food, handing out medicine, and engaging children in 'races' to see who was the strongest and healthiest amongst their peers, enslavers interfered in the growth of enslaved children regardless of their parents' permission. Just as they dismissed and appropriated the role of father, enslavers appropriated the general role of 'caregiver' by regimenting children's' health. However, this is not to assume that this 'caregiving' was in any way benevolent or benign. Indeed, enslavers and white overseers habitually dehumanised enslaved children, referring to them with neutral pronouns such as 'it', or as 'Sally's child,' relating the children to their mothers, and thus once again reminding them every day that their status was tied to the wombs of their mothers. Slaveholders' regard for children's health began long before

they were born. Their imagined value was important when predicting their future role. Whether it was to labour in the fields or plantation house, or if they were destined to be sold for a small sum - perhaps they would pay for a daughter's wedding dress or pay for a college education – children were an important marketable commodity.[1481]

From the womb, to infant, to child, to fertile adolescent, to adult, and lastly to old age, enslaved people's experience of forced reproduction can be viewed within the paradigm of the life cycle. Enslavers determined enslaved women's value based on their fertility at different stages of their lives. As discussed, enslavers valued the imagined lives of enslaved children before they were born. Once born, women's values increased (unless there was some medical or behavioural issue), until they reached their peak at twenty-five, in which case their values began to decline. However, as seen in the evidence, some enslaved women stood out as anomalies, and fetched a high price at the slave market even after they had surpassed the peak average. Once women began to reach old age and could no longer reproduce slavery in the form of work or children, enslavers began to provide less and less for them, with some dying of starvation away from their families. These women, and on occasion men, no longer held any value for their enslavers, and were therefore no longer commodifiable assets that could contribute to the plantation economy. Thus, their reproductive places within this pro-natalist society came to an end.

For decades, historians have argued that there is no sufficient evidence to support the theory that forced reproduction existed. However, these historians have neglected to listen to the voices of the enslaved people who experienced and witnessed enslavers enforce reproduction. The lived experiences of forced reproduction have gone too long ignored. The WPA testimony from the 1930s and published narratives of the antebellum have their own set of methodological issues, as any source does, but both source bases describe a range of 'breeding' methods.[1482] Though forced reproduction was not the systematic process as described by abolitionists attempting to demonstrate the barbarity of slavery, it did definitively occur in a more implicitly insidious way. By arranging intimate relationships between equally 'sound' enslaved people, regimenting their food, medicine and exercise, and by marketing enslaved women and children as potential, future, and proven 'breeders', enslavers practiced forced reproduction on a daily basis. While enslaved mothers and fathers raised their children with love and affection, hoping to provide them with the tools to protect themselves from the violently harsh realities of slavery, enslavers attempted to raise these families and children for back breaking labour in the fields or domestic spaces, or

[1481] In December 1818, Orlando Brown wrote to his father that he was 'sorry, very sorry, to see that you would like to sell the negroes – if necessity to compel you to do that to educate your son ten times I would rather that you keep them and take my bank stock for the purpose.' Letter from Orlando Brown dated 26TH December, Orlando Brown Papers, Mss AB8791, Folder 17, Filson Historical Society, Kentucky.

to commodify and sell them on the slave market. Enslavers turned their slaveholdings, whether a farm or plantation, into pro-natalist societies operated by racist money-hungry dictators.

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