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Transforming Sentiment: Adam Smith, Sentiment and Nation in Eighteenth-Century Transatlantic Literature

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Transforming Sentiment: Adam Smith, Sentiment and Nation in Eighteenth-Century
Transatlantic Literature

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

This thesis addresses points of connection among sentimental texts of the long eighteenth century that have previously been read as inhabiting distinct national literary traditions.

Transforming Sentiment brings together the works of Samuel Richardson, Laurence Sterne, Sarah Robinson Scott, Charles Brockden Brown, Jane Austen, James Fenimore Cooper and Olaudah Equiano in order to demonstrate how seemingly disparate texts can be productively read to destabilize homogenous nationalist literary histories.

Transforming Sentiment argues that these British and American sentimental authors can be understood and linked together in light of theories of sympathy and disinterestedness articulated in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and specifically embodied by his figure of the impartial spectator. However, these theories resist being confined within national boundaries, and, consequently, these texts may be newly read as part of a transatlantic exchange, an exchange that alters the way we read sentimental texts: not as ineffective effusions of feeling but as possible alternate histories with transcultural potential.

This thesis demonstrates how these authors adapt and interrogate the figure of the impartial spectator to think about the individual and the nation's relationship to the other—from questioning imperial conquest, through models of benevolent paternalism, to more cosmopolitan views of global citizenship. By situating these texts within a transatlantic context, this thesis reveals the internal tensions within these authors' texts that stem from an awareness of their global membership. It also demonstrates how this transatlantic intellectual exchange shapes the way these authors think about identity, the scope of moral obligation, and politics of empire.

Transforming Sentiment argues that these authors share a collective discourse of sentiment that helps them reimagine traditional hierarchies of power and reductive social categories—for instance, these texts question the divisions between those who are recognized by the state as political participants with legal rights from those who are not. However, they mould the concepts of sympathy and disinterestedness to promote social reform according to the needs of their historical moment. By adapting Smith's sentimental theories, these authors question constructions of nation and embrace the potential for a global theory of morality that the transatlantic offers.

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For Mom, Dad and Rich

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Of Sympathy:

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it—

Adam Smith Theory of Moral Sentiments I.i.1

Introduction: Transforming Sentiment

The greatest crimes do not arise from a want of feeling for others but from an over-sensibility for ourselves and an over-indulgence to our own desires. –Edmund Burke to the Chevalier de Rivarol (1791)

The above quotation from Edmund Burke to the Chevalier de Rivarol encapsulates the fraught relationship between self-interest and sympathy for others. What are the limits to what we can feel for others? And how do these limits affect our moral duty towards their well-being? Burke's statement that an indulgence of feeling for ourselves will result in immoral action exposes his interest in moral perfectibility. What Burke reveals is that moral perfectibility should be an expansion of feeling from the self towards the other. However, as Burke suggests in his emphasis on self, the "over-sensibility for ourselves" and the "over-indulgence" of "our own desires," knowing ourselves and seeing our motivations clearly is profoundly difficult. If we have trouble knowing ourselves, how much more difficult is it to know others? More problems arise when we move from interactions with others with whom we are familiar to interactions with others whom we have never met. Burke's need for outward expressions of feeling thus raises questions of distance: what might it mean to extend sympathy not only to a family member or a neighbour but to a distant stranger? How do we negotiate between individual or local identities and national or even global identities? How do we expand our sympathetic connections in a way that retains our essential difference? And do we want to preserve differences or pursue common ideals?

The questions arising from the relationships between immoral action, excessive feeling and the self/other dichotomy which Burke's brief quotation opens up are the subjects of this project, *Transforming Sentiment*. *Transforming Sentiment* focuses on the transformation of

sentimental concepts of sympathy and disinterested virtue in the transatlantic connections between British and American sentimental literatures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Transforming Sentiment* looks at the ways moral perfectibility becomes a narrative of sympathetic exchange and social identity.

Each of the authors I discuss in this project responds to the above questions by using sympathy to negotiate the moral boundaries between self and other as well as between nation and world. Authors like Samuel Richardson and Sarah Robinson Scott whom I discuss in Chapter 1, as well as Jane Austen, whom I discuss in Chapter 3, are particularly invested in preserving essential and definite selves. These authors use sympathy to establish moral identities dependent on national boundaries. Authors like Charles Brockden Brown, James Fenimore Cooper and Olaudah Equiano, the subjects of Chapters 2, 4 and 5 respectively, require identity to be fluid and permeable. For these authors sympathy is a means of defining an ideology very similar to modern definitions of cosmopolitanism: sympathy becomes a moral “education for becoming a human being capable of sustaining and fulfilling his humanity and creating a social context of inter-human relationships of trust and respect” (Cheng 560). Thus *Transforming Sentiment* traces the development of sentimentalism from a way of defining national identity to a transatlantic movement that critiques nationalism’s parochial inability to stand at a critical distance from itself.

The main texts I examine in this project are rarely if ever read together because of their nationally and historically bound literary histories. Charles Brockden Brown, Jane Austen and James Fenimore Cooper, the subjects of Chapters 2, 3, and 4 respectively, have long been read as authors whose literature represents a distinct national ethos. Austen and Cooper moreover are also read as authors who represent a break with the sentimental tradition. However, reading these

authors' works as part of a transatlantic network opens the scope of interpretation to unsettle the boundaries imposed by conventional assumptions about both nation and genre.

By examining the cultural forces behind the evolution of a literary mode within imperial and colonial nations as well as the way ideologies are shared and adapted via the transatlantic exchange, *Transforming Sentiment* looks at the ways sympathy and disinterestedness are articulated and challenged in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The transatlantic as a literal as well as an imagined space of cultural contact allows the authors I discuss here to ask not only how we become members of our particular moral cultures but also how we might stand outside them. The boundaries that separate individuals, societies and nations that the authors I discuss in this project describe are as determined by each author's particular moral standards; therefore, the different moral standards these authors imagine for their societies bring us back to questions about the limits of moral duty. Nevertheless, all the authors I discuss share a belief that sympathy and disinterestedness—however they are imagined—can resolve the tensions between our numerous selfish, national and international allegiances and identities. For example, Equiano uses sympathy to claim cultural/racial identity is a positioning rather than an unchanging essence. Equiano addresses national “difference which is not pure otherness” (S. Hall 132) to reveal affinities that can unite disparate nations via a common system of moral sentiment.

A transatlantic approach does not deny national narratives their power nor their individuality; placing texts within a transatlantic context reveals the significance of networks of intellectual, economic and imperial exchange at play during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Reading these texts within a transatlantic frame destabilizes national boundaries particularly within questions of colonialism and empire. The authors I examine in this project bring different expectations and interpretations to the concepts of sympathy, disinterestedness

and nationalism, but for my project such distinctions are less important than the exchanges and affinities that occur when each author is situated within a transatlantic network of sentimental influence.

Transatlanticism suggests the importance of reading texts as part of a network of influence; *Transforming Sentiment* is, in many ways, an influence study. My thesis argues that each of the authors discussed in this study works within a common sentimental tradition anchored by Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). However, as Susan Manning and Andrew Taylor warn, "the 'influence' story" can assume "hierarchical forms of connection that answer to a politically-and-culturally-inflected historicism in which a dominant (prior) position exerts power and imposes uniformity on a subdued other" ("Introduction" 7). The transatlantic dimension of my project allows me to move away from hierarchies. Instead, it offers a model of reciprocity: the sentimental tropes of sympathy and disinterested virtue that were pervasive on both sides of the Atlantic are part of a circulating narrative. This narrative is about the role sympathy and disinterestedness play in the formation of a political morality intended to transform repressive social systems or social systems that exclude some members from political recognition. Smith's *Theory* epitomizes the sentimental impulse of writers on both sides of the Atlantic to champion, as an indication of virtue and social worth, individuals who embody the sympathetic ideal.¹ For these writers, an individual or societal ability to sympathize becomes an indication of civilization because they see sympathy as the basis of egalitarian social bonds. Those bonds can then serve as the basis of a just and virtuous society.

¹ The ideal sympathetic individual was defined as someone who was affectively responsive—a person whose body, mind, and heart reacted to the feelings and situations of others, and not necessarily only human face to face interaction. As Catherine Kaplan writes, "[t]he correct sensibility was a kind of . . . 'psycho-perceptual scheme'" where an individual reacts "to environmental stimuli, be those stimuli physical, social, or even textual" (16).

Through the circulation of texts across the Atlantic as well as in the imagined space created by cultural exchange, Smith's conceptions of the impartial spectator and disinterestedness became a staple of sentimental theory on both sides of the Atlantic. These conceptions are adapted and changed to fit each author's specific historical moment and can produce diverse meanings in the conversation between universalism, nationalism and imperialism. For example, Austen and Equiano, while both working towards abolition, nevertheless see sympathy as evidence for contrasting cultural arguments: Austen favors imperial paternalism. Equiano works toward an egalitarian cosmopolitan ideal. Nevertheless, the figure of the impartial spectator provides a foundation for all the authors examined here to discuss how individuals and nations acquire those sentiments about virtue, justice, and social obligation that make moral society a possibility.

Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* was foundational to moral thinking. His approach and influence to moral questions was so popular that it was virtually impossible to escape its influence. *The Theory* informed the atmosphere of the Enlightenment's moral thinking. Even if an author had not read Smith's *Theory*—which was readily available to any one of them—they would inevitably encounter works influenced by it. Thomas Clarkson, for example, an early organizer and historian of the abolitionist movement in Britain, was an enthusiastic reader of Smith. He was also Equiano's friend and correspondent. Clarkson's *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by British Parliament* (1808), a book which provides the framework for understanding the origins of the British anti-slavery movement for writers like Austen and Cooper, quotes Smith liberally. So I use Smith's *Theory* as the foundational first half of a conversation between Smith and the authors I discuss here who also think about sentimental theory and sentimental practice. I use Smith's *Theory* as a

lens through which to explore the importance of the impartial spectator, sympathy and disinterested virtue on both sides of the Atlantic; consequently, even though we may note nationalist aspects of an author's work, the pervasiveness of these notions of impartiality and sympathy across geographies as well as across narrowly constructed national histories allows me to work outside the limitations of national boundaries and also allows me to see the legacy and importance of the sentimental novel past the restrictive dates that usually relegate the British sentimental novel's influence to "the 1740's to the 1770s" (Todd 4). This strategy allows me to read Smith and the authors I discuss here differently; these authors, when read as part of the transatlantic context, form previously undiscussed cultural and political interconnections within the transatlantic sentimental movement.

Smith is best remembered today for his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) and his contribution to political economy. However, both *Wealth of Nations* and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* were transatlantic best-sellers. Under the protection of statutory copyright, Smith's London publishers, the Strahans, published 7,750 copies of *The Theory* in nine editions. In America *The Theory* was also a best-seller, meaning that it was reprinted over 10 editions. The Strahans published over 15,000 copies of *Wealth of Nations* while the book also became a best-seller in America.² Yet critics seem to forget the influence Smith

² For more on Smith's publishing history in Britain and America see Richard Sher. *The Enlightenment and the Book* and "Early Editions of Adam Smith's Books in Britain and Ireland, 1759-1804." Smith and his works were well known across Europe. D.D Raphael and A.L Macfie note in their "Introduction" to *The Theory* that the "international reputation of TMS is borne out by part of the resolution adopted by the University of Glasgow on 1 March 1764 accepting the resignation of Adam Smith, 'whose uncommon Genius, great Abilities and extensive Learning did so much to Honour this society; His elegant and ingenuous Theory of Moral Sentiments having recommended him to the esteem of Man and Taste and Literature thro'out Europe'" (29). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was well received in Paris, despite criticisms about its poor translation by Marc-Antoine Eidous one of the Baron d'Holbach's circle in 1764. Other French editions were published in 1774-75 and 1798. *The Theory* was well received in Germany. The first German translation was published in 1770, a second translation in 1791, a supplement in 1796, a third translation in 1926 and a fourth in 1948. Smith's influence also extended to Russia.

exerted during the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, not only on British thought but also on American culture. Perry Miller argues that after events of the late eighteenth-century, like the French Revolution, American Independence, British abolition and the Founding of the American Constitution, “the philosophy and the philosophers of Scottish Realism vanished . . . and were swiftly replaced by expounders of some form of Idealism” (ix). So it is that critics of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth transatlantic literature neglect the continuing importance of Smith’s ideas that, while no longer explicitly called sentimental, persist in the period’s cultural dialogue.

If authors like Equiano, Brown, Austen and Cooper seem historically removed from Smith, it is important to remember that Smith’s *Theory* as well as *Wealth of Nations* retained their currency throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. Smith revised *The Theory* six times during his lifetime. The sixth edition was first published in 1790 and quickly sold out of its 1000 printed copies. The edition continued to sell out throughout the decade; “[a] steady seller from the outset, *Theory of Moral Sentiment* was, by the time of Smith’s death in 1790 . . . a more popular [book]” than ever before (Sher, “Early Editions” 14).³ In America too, Smith was considered required reading. Both Thomas Jefferson and Elihu Hubbard Smith, Charles Brockden Brown’s publisher, recommended Smith’s *Theory*, among other works of the

Théodore Tronchin, physician to Voltaire, sent his son to study at Glasgow under Smith. Thus Smith was well acquainted with and well known to Genevan philosophical circles. Smith also taught two Russian students, Semyon Desnitsky and Ivan Tret’yakov, protégés of Catherine the Great; both dedicated their professional careers to promoting and adapting Smith’s theories of ethic and jurisprudence. Desnitsky also proposed, although never published, a Russian translation of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*; “Smith’s theory of government and police was reaching court circles in Russia a decade before the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*” (Phillipson 170). For more on Smith’s publishing history in Europe and Russia see Raphael and Macfie’s “Introduction” to *The Theory* p.29-32, and Nicholas Phillipson *An Enlightened Life* particularly chapter 9.

³ As Sher writes, another 1000 copies of the seventh edition [publishing run] were printed a little more than two and half years later [than the sixth printing edition of 1790], in December 1792. There was an eighth edition of 1000 copies in January 1797 and a ninth of the same size in 1801—the last edition to be covered by statutory copyright (“Early Editions” 14)

Scottish Enlightenment like David Hume's *Enquiry* and Lord Henry Homes Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, as essential reading for an American gentleman and modern American reader respectively.⁴

When Smith's contribution to the "modern world"⁵ is remembered, he is often misread, based on readings of *Wealth of Nations*, as promoting an individualistic, mercantile system that relies on the power of self-interest to promote civil progress.⁶ However, interpretations that place Smith as an untroubled capitalist who endorses "enlightened self-love," or the unintended benefits of self-interest distort the significance Smith places on sympathy and disinterestedness.⁷ Situating Smith within a transatlantic intellectual movement that critiques the moral implications of traditional social hierarchy and structures of empire allows me to read Smith not as an author who promotes an uncomplicated capitalist, globalist and often imperialist mindset but as an author concerned with individuals' capacity for being aware of other people's feelings and

⁴ Thomas Jefferson's famous letter to Robert Skipwith of 3 August 1771, recommends 148 titles for the establishment of a gentleman's library in America and constitutes evidence about the influence and popularity of Scottish Enlightenment books in the colonial period. Jefferson's list includes Smith's *Theory* (*Writings, Letters* 396). Elihu Hubbard Smith writes to his sister Abigail, "It will be best to direct your principal attention to such writings as will assist you in forming just notions in morality and criticism. In the former, read [Dugald] Stewart's *Philosophy of the Mind*, and [William] Godwin's *Political Justice* . . . as also [Adam] Smith *Theory of Moral Sentiments* . . . I mention these books, because I know that you can obtain them; and because they are, perhaps, as good as any you can procure" (E. Smith, *Diary* 141).

⁵ Manning and Taylor define one of the features of the modern world as "Complex interchanges between the Americas, Europe and Africa, with all the forces of "global" markets and movements of people" ("Introduction" 3).

⁶ Scholarship of Smith has moved towards a reconciliation of his two works, often through the mediation of Smith's posthumously published *Letters of Jurisprudence*, a collection of his Glasgow lectures from 1762-64. Donald Winch's *Adam Smith's Politics: An Essay in Historiographic Revision*, Knud Haakonssen's *The Science of a Legislator: The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith*; *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* and Emma Rothschild's *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* all consider *The Theory* and *Wealth of Nations* as unified in Smith's thought. However, in less specialized academic circles and in general thought Smith's reputation is still that of the "father of capitalism" a reputation that does not take into consideration his dedication to mankind as a social animal. Ethics and economics are not separate issues for Smith.

⁷ Enlightened self-love is the idea that self-love, mediated through reason, can accomplish selfless ends. Accounts of Enlightened self-love can be found in Albert O. Hirschman's, *The Passions and the Interests* p.42-49, Milton Myers' *The Soul of Modern Economic Man: Ideas of Self-Interest, from Thomas Hobbes to Adam Smith* and more recently Michael Shapiro's *Reading "Adam Smith": Desire, History and Value*, particularly Chapter 2.

rights; this capacity depends on concepts of the impartial spectator and disinterested virtue to describe a pluralistic morality, sensitive to the social and cultural environment of each individual or nation.

Transforming Sentiment argues that Smith's conception of the impartial spectator and the sympathetic exchange it enables offers radical potential for a global theory of morality, a topic with which the authors discussed here are also concerned. I claim that in Smith's descriptions of the impartial spectator, he offers a model which enables the sympathetic imagination to move an individual's or even a nation's feelings afar, across an ocean for example, to counteract self- or national-interest; these same phenomena can also make the feelings of distant others appear as near and important as the interest of the self or the nation.

The transatlantic space becomes the location for different perspectives on the morality of cultural and economic exchange between societies. Sympathy and disinterestedness are foundational concepts in sentimental theory; these concepts play a significant role in imperial narratives and narratives that resist the impositions of national geographies or ideologies. The transatlantic exchange of sentimental philosophy both enables and challenges constructions of cultural authenticity. For example, writers like Scott believe sentiment can create a single, true cultural identity. Scott sees sentiment as a means of controlling otherness; she claims there is a distinctive "Britishness" that can be defined and replicated, while writers like Equiano challenge this idea of authenticity. Equiano writes against the notion that national identity is static and homogenous. Despite the fact that Equiano labels himself as "British," the success of his narrative depends on the fluidity of identity and a nation's capacity for accommodating multiple perspectives. The authors that I discuss in this project think about the relationship between cultural authenticity and the negotiation between self and other. Who is recognized as part of our

civic polity and who is excluded? What are our obligations to those who are a part of our local circle and do they differ from our obligations to those outside our inner circle? My project examines how this double focus between local and universal responsibilities opens possibilities for extending the wealth, liberty and happiness of individuals within nations and acknowledges the problems associated with colonial expansion.

Maintaining the balance between love of self, love for family and our local community versus our universal love for others, strangers and global society is a transatlantic concern because the transatlantic must negotiate between relationships of local interest and relationships that cross geographical and national boundaries. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon terms these transatlantic relationships “ties of intimate distance” (15). Dillon claims ties of “intimate distance” are crucial in formulations of empire because European colonials could maintain “close connections with metropolitan culture” (16), while asserting “that vast cultural (if not biological) distance separated them from the individuals with whom they shared the intimacies of daily life and physical habitation in the colony, including New World Africans and Native Americans” (16). I agree with Dillon that ties of “intimate distance” are crucial in formulations of empire and nationalism, but where Dillon argues that sentiment enables European colonials to generate a “sense of absence or erasure in the face of physical presence” (16), I argue that for Smith and for all of the authors discussed here, sentiment can challenge nationalistic or imperial agendas. For these authors, geographical or cultural differences do not necessarily prevent a global understanding of humanity or political belonging. Moral sentiment can create intimacy from cultural distance.

The *Theory* is a local lens onto eighteenth century moral culture but it can also reveal insights into how societies can be altered and renewed across history. Wai Chee Dimock argues

that we should study literature as “a structure of evolving relations, a structure of everyday ties, rather than a few executive dates. Scale enlargement [of studies] along the temporal axis changes our very sense of the connectedness among human beings” (3). Smith’s *Theory* offers this very opportunity for scale enlargement and new ways to read conventional literary histories. Each of the authors I discuss appropriates and transforms concepts of sympathy and disinterested virtue to offer a model of moral rejuvenation for their society and their national history; the transatlantic context within which I situate these texts reveals the internal tensions each author encounters between the possibility of a universal humanity and a bounded cultural identity.

The different authors discussed embrace or emphasize different aspects of Smith’s *Theory* to support their own vision of an ideal society. Austen, for example, sees Britishness as a specific set of qualities defined by national allegiance; consequently, Austen’s impartial spectator, Fanny Price, is literally kept distant and different from the society she reforms. On the other hand, Brown questions the viability of a distinct national identity and moves towards recognizing a transatlantic identity. His sense of the impartial spectator is much more fluid; spectators in *Ormond* take on any identity at will. However, even authors like Austen who use sentiment as a way of defining national identity see sympathy and disinterestedness as procedures for talking about identity and the scope and substance of our moral duties within a global setting.

Reading Richardson, Sterne, Scott, Brown, Austen, Cooper and Equiano alongside Smith reveals principles of human connectedness more important than those defined by national or historical boundaries. While each of the authors I discuss in this project uses the concepts of sympathy and disinterested virtue in a way that is particular to them and their vision of society, each author uses sympathy, like Smith, as a principle of judgment that has the moral potential to

negotiate between self and other. It is thus the potential and the repercussions of moral sentiments' ability to extend the individual's and the nation's affective and political power beyond the geographical borders of the nation state that this thesis explores.

Early eighteenth-century sentimental novels, like *Clarissa*, embrace indicators of an individual's affective responsiveness like sympathy, tears and bodily displays of emotion as indicators of moral worth, but later in the century these indicators fall under suspicion. Eighteenth-century critiques of sentimentalism, critiques that continue to resonate in the twenty-first century, accuse sentimentalists of exhibiting gratuitous emotion and using sympathy as "an almost unashamedly manipulative cultural tool" (Goring 179). Other criticism of sentimentalism suggests that the sentimentalist claim of common humanity is complicit with imperial aims: in order to share feelings, sympathy requires subjects who can be made in the sympathizer's image. Complicity arguments about sentimentalism continue today in other forms: they are transformed as current critical debates about the validity of a cosmopolitan ideology, a subject to which I turn in Chapter 5. *Transforming Sentiment* shows how we can rethink criticisms of sentimentalism that are tied to specifically nationalist or imperialist readings and instead read the novels I discuss here as part of a transatlantic circulation that destabilizes the ideal of an essential and uncontested nationalist discourse that is not a constructed narrative. For example, conventional readings of Scott see her as using sympathy to justify a conservative national history that legitimizes Britons as purveyors of civilization, justice and order.⁸ But reading Scott with Smith, "allow[s] us to rethink the genealogies and historiographies of national belonging and exclusion"

⁸ Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown describe as this conservative national history as a narrative of "political stability linked to an image of equivalent social and cultural coherence, to a sense of an unchallenged class hierarchy represented and perpetuated in a literary culture where aesthetics, ethics, and politics perfectly mesh" (5).

(Wilson, Introduction 3) because Smith's theories on sympathy and disinterestedness reveal empire and nation to be sites of interconnection and interdependence.

Smith's *Theory* is still one of the preeminent sources for understanding the "modern subject," and during the eighteenth century his *Theory* both reflected and redefined Britons' notions of freedom, selfhood, and representation.⁹ My project shows how Smith's explanation of how we mediate our selfish and sociable desires is adapted and transformed in the sentimental novels I discuss in order to draw attention to imperial structures of exploitation and the contradictions of freedom and enslavement within a transatlantic discourse of moral virtue.

In my first chapter, I look at the historical development of the sentimental literary tradition in eighteenth-century Britain through a brief discussion of seminal sentimental texts: Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748), Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) and Sarah Robinson Scott's *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766). This chapter establishes the centrality of sympathy and disinterested virtue to the sentimental tradition as well as Smith's importance to this tradition. It also discusses the patterns of movement and transformation which allow these sentimental tropes to move beyond national and historical boundaries. The first two sections of this chapter discuss Richardson's and Sterne's concern with

⁹ Simon Gikandi defines the modern subject as "an identity premised on the supremacy of a self functioning within a social sphere defined by humane values . . . [and] predicated on the existence of free and self-reflective subjects"(4). Gikandi goes on to explain that while there are disagreements about key features of the modern subject as well as disagreements about the "origins, history, and consequences of a modern identity, all major documents on the Enlightenment and its aftermath have been premised on the idea of what Marcel Mauss and others have termed 'the category of the person'" (4). Consequently, the theories of Adam Smith, among other Scottish Enlightenment theories, and those of Immanuel Kant, are defining moments of modernity; the modern subject is generally defined by the "liberation of the subject" (4). Kant makes this claim explicit at the beginning of his essay "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" (1784): "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another . . . For enlightenment of this kind, all that is needed is freedom" (55). All these definitions emphasize individualism.

the process of moral judgment.¹⁰ Despite the use of excessive emotion in *Clarissa* and *A Sentimental Journey*, Richardson and Sterne work against criticisms of sentiment that suggest cultivating emotional displays encourages an emphasis on moral *performance* rather than moral *action*; to counter this criticism they argue that in order to develop moral judgment we must learn to cultivate disinterestedness.

Richardson and Sterne, when read with an awareness of Smith, demonstrate the importance and the limits of social context on moral judgment. Smith claims that we only become expert moral judges through social interaction: other people must witness and correct our behaviour before we can judge ourselves. The problem with this process of developing moral judgment is that our sentiments and feelings are too partial and too limited to extend past our immediate circle of self and family. Richardson and Sterne question how moral feeling can be translated to moral action when the individual's natural response is to fully sympathize only with his or her immediate circle. We must learn to correct our limited capacity for impartiality. In order to make the correct decision, Richardson and Sterne argue, we have to be able to stand beyond our own consciousness and set aside our own interest. Thus, for Richardson and Sterne the mediation of sentiment through disinterestedness is the way culture is created, reformed and/or continued.¹¹ The questions that Richardson and Sterne raise about the need for cultivating a moral judgment that overcomes space and time in order to stand outside a particular cultural

¹⁰ *Clarissa* was published eleven years before Smith published *The Theory*, but as seminal sentimental texts, an interweaving of Richardson and Smith offers a clearer picture of both authors' moral philosophy. Smith's *Theory* offers a way of reading *Clarissa* that offers a more concrete and accessible understanding of sentimentalism's founding ideology that reflects Britain's changing self-conception.

¹¹ As Fonna Forman-Barzilai points out, using the term "culture" in conjunction with Smith is an anachronism (14). Smith never used the term, but what he is describing is what today we would call culture, so I use the term to describe Smith's moral project. Using this contemporary term helps demonstrate Smith's continued relevance to contemporary social and cultural theory.

moment become particularly important to writers like Austen and Equiano who seek immense social reformation in their support for the abolitionist movement.

The third section of my first chapter discusses how Scott uses sentiment to think about the process of moral judgment and the effects of empire on both British and colonized subjects in *The History of Sir George Ellison*. Scott's novel constructs a British identity based on "the assertion of important political and human rights" (Walvin 33) and ideals of freedom even as it reinforces the perpetuation of oppressive imperial organizations that designate non-whites as less than human. However, reading Scott's novel in conjunction with Smith's *Theory* complicates a standard reading of imperial complicity. Smith's thoughts on particular versus universal moralities as well as his thoughts on economic exchange as a sympathetic tool can clarify the way Scott understands transatlantic exchange. *The History of Sir George* works to make distant geographies local and culturally distant others proximate. In doing so, Scott reveals the difficulty of standardizing moral judgments when differences in cultural, affective and physical proximity all impact the perspective of both spectator and actor. Scott demonstrates that empire may expand a nation's power, but it does not necessarily create moral subjects or the moral actions that lead to justice.

The way that Scott thinks about the sympathetic divisions between self and other in relation to national boundaries and empire is also important for writers, like Charles Brockden Brown, who struggle with dual identities as colonized and colonizer. In Chapter 2 I look at the way Brown's *Ormond; or, The Secret Witness* (1799) examines the possibilities and limitations associated with an independent America as an empire of a new kind. Although previous critics have read Brown as part of a distinct American literary tradition, the transatlantic context in which I situate Brown's works challenges this literary structure and opens up Brown's need for a

more fluid form of identity. It is well known that Scottish moral philosophy was very influential on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American ideology. This influence seems to be forgotten in critics' desire to read Brown's novels as political allegories.¹² Rather than reading Brown, as most critics do, solely through his political allegiances, I argue Brown is better understood through Smith's theories of the impartial spectator, sociability and empire. Brown explores the economy of selfish and social passions as well as America's evolving democracy.

Adapting Smith's theories of morality and his ideas on how societies are bound together, *Ormond* responds to America's new political and social reality in the Revolution's terms of fraternal social bonds. Brown, like Smith, believes in the freedom of ideological exchange; he believes this exchange will create bonds of affection and trust that American founders demanded but ultimately failed to produce. The dialogue of ideas between Smith and Brown is necessary in understanding how Americans saw the development of their new nation as well as how America was positioning itself in relation to other nations. Brown aspires to create a different kind of citizen from the fraternal framework of the constitution, a citizen not limited by national boundaries.

Like Brown, Jane Austen addresses the ramifications of a post-Revolutionary world on national identity, and, like Brown, Austen is invested in the reformation of a society and nation she sees as corrupt. However, where Brown moves towards a more fluid conception of nation,

¹² Terence Martin's *The Instructed Vision* is one of the definitive studies on the literary influence of the Scottish Philosophers in America. Martin explains how theorists like Smith popularized sentimentalism and helped articulate America's need for social order. Martin claims this philosophical tradition served both Federalists and Democrats and was an important preceptor to political figures like Thomas Jefferson and William Cullen Bryant. Martin argues Americans embraced Scottish moral philosophy so readily because "the American self-image was not at all that of an infant nation. A new start did not mean a primitive start. Americans were concerned to start afresh as adults. In Scottish thought they could find a convenient argument for congratulating themselves on escaping a cultural childhood. Moreover, Scottish philosophy . . . could be applied to society as a cohesive force. (48).

Austen, like the authors I discuss in Chapter 1, sees disinterestedness and sympathy as a way of regulating a specific national identity within a transatlantic context. As David Armitage and Kathleen Wilson state, British liberty was a source of national pride by the mid-eighteenth century.¹³ This pride was based on Britons' belief that their nation was superior in morality and liberty to its neighbours; however, the French Revolution and the loss of British-American colonies made Britons re-think their imperial aims and refocused British self-examination on the meaning of virtue and liberty.

In Chapter 3 I look at the way Austen's *Mansfield Park* reevaluates the limits of empire and nation within local and transatlantic settings. Austen's concern is with the formation of a moral British character which she shapes via sentimental aims. Austen is generally believed to be a realist rather than a sentimental author, but in this chapter I explain how Austen adapts sentimental ideals like sympathy and disinterested virtue. The impartial spectator becomes a central motif in *Mansfield Park* as an indication of the sympathetic imagination and the sense that the sympathetic social impulse is a fundamental precondition of society and moral behavior. Austen returns to the idea that sympathy and affective response allow individuals to distance themselves from selfish impulses and the impartial spectator can move them towards emotional reactions that impel appropriate moral action.

Austen uses sentimental tropes to demonstrate how aesthetic and moral judgments are linked. Smith's *Theory* helps illuminate the moral impetus behind Austen's link between aesthetic judgment and moral and political judgment in relation to just laws, debates of empire and the economy of slavery. Aesthetic judgment can open the way for the sympathetic

¹³ See Armitage *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* p.17,104 and Wilson *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England* p.20,24,46

imagination which can then influence each individual's moral judgment and a nation's political actions. Like Smith, Austen points out how easily moral enterprise can collapse if we allow self-interestedness to dictate our actions. People copy actions which garner approbation, so in order to preserve morality in the state, we must carefully judge actions or ideas lest we unthinkingly condone them by not condemning actions or ideas with which we do not agree. For Austen, the moral imperative of the impartial spectator opens up the Atlantic world in complex ways that demonstrate how feeling and action, speech and silence are intertwined in Britain's colonial history.

James Fenimore Cooper, like Austen, is often implicated in an imperial history. But if we return Cooper to his sentimental roots we can see how his ideas of disinterestedness contribute to a vision of America as part of a transatlantic network. Like Brown, Cooper's sense of identity is fluid and he moves national identity away from national boundedness and towards a cosmopolitan agenda. Chapter 4 questions critics' tendency to read Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) as a novel perpetuating an image of an enclosed America isolated from transatlantic cultural and intellectual influence. Manning and Taylor note that classic interpretations of American literature pit "New World youthfulness and apocalyptic regeneration" against "an Old World cultural lateness and enervation" ("Theories and Practice" 77). Chapter 4 breaks down these boundaries to challenge Cooper's reputation as an imperial isolationist that segregates Cooper from the sentimental tradition as well as the geographical and historical influences that inform his transatlantic and cosmopolitan vision.

Like Brown, Cooper uses theories of sociability to investigate America's claims to fraternity and equality within a colonial history; like Austen, Cooper questions the political work of developing isolating, racial identifications and violence in the pursuit of imperial gain.

Cooper's focus on colonial relationships examines the ideologies which allow race and land ownership to dictate categories of humanness and political belonging. For all these authors cultivating the sympathetic imagination allows individuals to recognize others as being like themselves; therefore, imagining what it is like to be someone else leads to a recognition of and distaste for the oppression of others—this is the core of Smith's universal sense of justice.

Chapter 4 looks at the questions Smith and Cooper generate in the tensions each author reveals in the dialogue between universal principles and local or imperial interest. Cooper helps clarify Smith's pluralist approach to social theory; the way Cooper deals with the multiple cultural encounters within America can help explain contradictions between Smith's application of stadial theory and his ideals of social pluralism and the possibility of universal rules of justice.¹⁴ Smith in turn illuminates Cooper's evolving cosmopolitan ideology. The potential for a cosmopolitan ideal inherent in Smith's *Theory* is useful for Cooper because property rights, liberty and legal definitions of citizenship are what are at stake for him; Cooper believes there should be universal rules of justice to which every society is held accountable. This universal justice is important to him because he believes that moral principles ought to govern relations between societies or cultures within a nation and laws of war and peace ought to hold internationally. Cooper's works read in conjunction with Smith's theories of social development allow us to see how Cooper criticizes laws and institutions, of any nation, that lead to self-interest and the corruption of egalitarian practices and subjectivities. Both Cooper and Smith use

¹⁴ Smith's stadial or "four-stages" theory claims that the "four stages of society are hunting, pasturage, farming, and commerce" and that the corresponding cultural trajectory passes from "savagery" through "barbarism" to "civilization" (*LJ* 149). Smith does discuss stadial theory in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in terms of moral and cultural variance between social groups, but his most direct and concise description, which I use here for clarity, comes from his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (1763). For a more complete discussion of Smith's stadial theory and its impact on sentiment see my Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

sympathy as a means to work through the difficulties of reconciling universal standards of virtue with deep cultural diversity.

Transforming Sentiment examines the way sentiment is transformed and adapted over historical and geographical spaces of the transatlantic. Chapter 5 takes advantage of the way a transatlantic approach allows us to form “connections leaping far over chronological or geographical contiguity” (J. Hillis Miller 95) to break with the chronological arrangement of the thesis up to this point. Chapter 5 discusses Olaudah Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself* (1789) as a text that favours global, cosmopolitan politics. Equiano’s anti-imperial discourse undermines the situatedness of racial and exceptionalist agendas to recognize the necessity of hybrid identity. My discussion of Equiano comes last because Equiano’s conception of a more inclusive and multicultural national identity provides a close connection with Cooper’s cosmopolitanism. I have also placed Equiano last in my discussion because up until this point I have emphasized the way Smith’s *Theory* can help us better understand how sympathy and disinterestedness in novels from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries form part of a transatlantic culture. However, in this chapter I show how reading transatlantic novels can help us understand the full cosmopolitan potential of Smith’s *Theory*. Finally, the dialogue generated between Equiano and Smith raises questions pertinent for a twenty-first century audience, for instance, the debate over whether a nation should pursue isolationist policies or open its border to cultural and political fluidity.

Like Cooper, Equiano struggles with the constitution of personhood and citizenship. Equiano writes during a period when “Europe could not function as an idea or structure of identity without its real or imagined others” (Gikandi 8); Equiano’s solution to the geographical and cultural difference separating Europeans from “others” is to describe a global egalitarianism

that redistributes wealth via free trade agreements which, he believes, will also further every nation's independence and fundamental human rights. Equiano's commercial cosmopolitanism describes a strategy for enabling internal, independent social change, but in doing so he reveals the complex relationship between colonizer and colonized that persists despite Equiano's hopes for African independence. *The Narrative* asks readers to consider how we can recognize the lasting effects of the colonial presence while also resisting its influence.

Equiano's *Narrative* read alongside Smith's *Theory* allows us to understand Equiano's complex national identifications in a new way and also allows us to understand Smith's full conception of how the sympathetic imagination might enable a cosmopolitan world. Smith develops a cosmopolitan thesis about moral responsibility: each individual must strive to overcome the tendency for selfish, familial or local obligations to overwhelm our moral obligations to distant others. Moral action is an obligation when it is possible. For both Smith and Equiano, cosmopolitanism does not mean we must give up local or familial sympathies. Instead it means that we can indulge these "selfish" sympathies only so long as we uphold basic egalitarian treatment—each individual is entitled to equal worth and equal rights—to all other human beings regardless of their distance, either cultural or geographical, from us. We live in a world that is both increasingly connected and increasingly divided, and we are in more need than ever of becoming aware of ourselves and others. Smith's *Theory* when read with *The Interesting Narrative* raises questions that continue to be important for the twenty-first century: is it possible to create a cosmopolitan world that does not revert to racial hierarchy or imperial conquest? And to what extent should cultural situatedness play a role in the way we imagine or judge others?

Transforming Sentiment began as an inquiry into the adaptation of sentimental novels across the Atlantic as well as how early eighteenth-century British sentimental narratives were

altered and adapted for different audiences and historical moments. Yet what emerges from this project is less an account of the adaptation of specific texts than a study of the transformation of the logic of sympathy as conceived by Smith and how this transformation plays out in each text. In the past we have defined sentiment and sympathy in a way that obstructs our ability to read authors like Austen, Cooper or Richardson as transatlantic authors. The definition of sentiment has changed over the years; it is defined at its worst as “emotion for emotion’s sake, gratuitous, manipulative, solipsistic, mawkish, self-indulgent, insipid, and inauthentic” (Festa 67), while at its best it is associated with what we would call compassion or empathy.¹⁵ But sympathy for Smith is not all about pure feeling. Morality may begin with a feeling impulse but it must be filtered through the reasoned disinterest of the impartial spectator; sympathy for Smith, while closer to definitions of empathy, is not purely a spontaneous emotional connection. Sympathy for Smith is a complex process that requires an exchange between spectator and “agent.” Both parties are changed by the experience, and thus by repeated interactions society changes over time. Sympathy allows individuals to transform their selfish passions for sociable ones in order to become members of a cohesive group. We need to return to Smith’s definition. Smith’s far-reaching influence on the development of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors seems to have been forgotten, but *Transforming Sentiment* emerges from my belief that discussing

¹⁵ I don’t want to be accused of setting up a straw man argument here. There have been numerous contemporary critics like Markman Ellis, Lynn Festa, John Mullan and Tennenhouse, among others, who have rehabilitated sentimentalism as performing important cultural work. However, the impulse to see sentimentalism as a somehow lesser genre continues to persist. For example, there is generally a strong critical resistance to labelling either Austen or Cooper as a sentimentalist despite both authors’ use of sentimental tropes. I was recently presenting to a JASNA (Jane Austen Society of North America) group about “Austen’s Tourism,” a talk that included a section on Austen’s sentimental roots and her legacy of sentiment. After the presentation one gentleman came to talk to me and harangued me on my use of the word “sentiment” to describe Austen because, he argued, she was “a strong, smart and funny woman.” For me, “sentiment” and “strong, smart and funny” are not mutually exclusive terms, but this experience suggests that for many the term sentiment continues to connote, as I cite above, “emotion for emotion’s sake,” “insipid” and “inauthentic” etc.

sentimental authors without referring to Smith will leave the full import of their explorations into their own social histories and politics unrealized.

While all the authors use sentiment for different ends and mold its definition to support their desired outcome for the negotiation between self and other, they all, like Smith, understand sentiment as the moral foundation to social interactions. Each of the authors discussed here is better understood if we acknowledge the role of Smith's *Theory* in the construction of British and American cultural ideologies as well as a collective transatlantic/transnational identity born from cultural exchange. Because both parties (either individuals or collective entities) are altered during the sympathetic exchange, sympathy in the Smithian sense is ideally suited to the transatlantic: "to imagine the transatlantic is to conceive of spatial practices as dynamic and unfolding; it is to posit both a geographical area and an intellectual arena in which material and conceptual goods circulate and are exchanged" (Manning and Taylor, "The Nation" 17). Sympathy as the process through which disparate and even geographically distant selves share an awareness of each other becomes the perfect starting point for authors who are aware of themselves as members of both national and international communities and who are looking to describe the effects of fluid identity from multiple perspectives. Consequently, from questions about the scope and nature of morality within national contexts to discussions about universal or cosmopolitan duties of moral justice, sentiment, throughout this project, is a tool which enables each author to demonstrate how morality is socially constructed and therefore how moral standards may be re-viewed to initiate social reform.

The sentimentalist interest in sympathy begins with questions about the nature and limits of the self. Smith is one of the modern founders of human behavior studies in which sentiments are capable of unifying our moral lives for the "welfare and preservation of society" (II.i.5), so it

is important to reinstate Smith's *Theory* rather than just his *Wealth of Nations* as a significant contribution to how we understand history as well as how we can understand our own global society. Each of the authors here understands themselves, humanity and social theory, in part, because of the cultural work Smith did in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. *Transforming Sentiment* questions categorical boundaries of nationality in order to reveal the transnational exchange on political, geographical and social locations of sentimental thought. Given their complex ideologies and backgrounds, the authors discussed cannot be adequately understood without an appreciation of the transatlantic and intercultural context of sympathy that shaped them. Reading British and American sentimental narratives together does not deny either culture its individuality but rather opens up space to examine how transatlantic dimensions illuminate shared social, political, and cultural implications of the sentimental structure of sympathetic exchange.

Chapter 1: Developing Sentiment: Foundations of Sentimental Theory in Samuel

Richardson, Laurence Sterne, Sarah Robinson Scott and Adam Smith

This chapter establishes the centrality of sympathy and disinterestedness to the sentimental tradition. While it begins with Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa; or, The History of a Young Lady* (1748), a novel published eleven years before Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), this chapter also establishes Smith as a foundational thinker to the way sentimental authors of the eighteenth century think about the nature of the self and the reciprocal moral obligations between self and society. Sympathy and disinterestedness are foundational sentimental concepts not bound by national borders. This chapter examines the importance of these concepts within three seminal sentimental novels of the eighteenth century: Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748), Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768), and Sarah Robinson Scott's *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766).¹⁶ I look at these novels in conjunction with Smith's *Theory* in order to demonstrate how sympathy and disinterestedness are relevant to transatlantic discourse. Eighteenth-century writers often use sympathy and disinterestedness to define an emerging national identity that separates Britons from other nations and races.¹⁷ However, in the negotiation between self and other, sympathy and disinterestedness also become the means by which distances, whether geographical or cultural, are bridged. The rhetoric of moral sentiment allows these authors to move beyond their traditional geographical boundaries.

¹⁶ I deviate from strict chronology because Scott, unlike Sterne, deals explicitly with the effect of sympathy on empire and therefore provides a closer counterpoint to writers like Brown, whom I discuss in the next chapter, who also think about the effects of empire.

¹⁷ There have been many studies done on sympathy as a tool of the British Empire. Lynn Festa's *Sentimental Figures of Empire*, Srinivas Aravamudan's *Tropicopolitans*, Laura Doyle's *Freedom's Empire* and Markman Ellis' *The Politics of Sensibility* are a few examples.

Samuel Richardson: Reason, Feeling and the Impartial Spectator's Social Mirror

Readers familiar with the eighteenth century know Richardson's *Clarissa* is often cited as the embodiment of sentimental culture. *Clarissa*'s emotional engagement with her readers along with their tearful and heartfelt responses are markers of what critics like Edward Cahill and William Warner see as conventional representations of sentiment. Warner claims sentimental novels are primarily about "exploring the recesses of the human heart" (Warner, *Reading* 18). Cahill claims sentiment is a "useful placeholder for an otherwise diverse constellation of concepts similarly concerned with discovering truth in pleasure, emotion, and non-rational modes of knowledge . . . [sentiment] relates to ideas of sensation, perception, pleasure . . . passion, emotion" (Cahill 2-3). *Clarissa* undoubtedly participates in this culture of affective bodily response. Richardson's readers found themselves affected by *Clarissa*'s death even after finishing the novel. Lady Bradshaigh writes, "My spirits are strangely seized, my sleep is disturbed; waking in the night, I burst into a passion of crying; so I did at breakfast this morning, and just now again" (11 January 1749, *Correspondence* IV, 242). 'Philaretus' similarly writes that he "read the Account of [Clarissa's] Death with as much Anguish of Mind, as I should feel at the Loss of my dearest Friend" (qtd. in Keymer, *Richardson's Clarissa* 202). *Clarissa* embodies the eighteenth-century's sympathetic ideal as a person whose body, mind, and heart react spontaneously to the feelings and situations of others, but *Clarissa* is not, as critics like Cahill and Warner suggest, entirely about the moral valuation of partiality and individual subjective response. I argue that by reading *Clarissa* with Smith's *Theory* we can see how Richardson emphasizes moral judgment as a balance between reason and sentiment.

While eleven years separate the publication of *Clarissa* and *The Theory*, the connection between Richardson and Smith helps us reconsider each author's nuanced philosophical

foundations. Richardson's aesthetics supplement Smith's moral philosophy, while Smith's moral philosophy can illuminate a richer image of Richardson's vision for British virtue. Critics like Lynn Festa, Laura Doyle and John Zomchick argue that *Clarissa's* sympathetic ideal emerges as an indication of virtue for eighteenth-century readers that changes British conceptions of social worth; Doyle notes, Clarissa's plight is a "negotiation between aristocratic and bourgeois values in the transitional eighteenth century" (Doyle 112).¹⁸ Similarly, Zomchick claims, "Clarissa speaks a 'hybrid' class discourse, mingling traditional and new values (67).

According to these critics, for Richardson and his readers, sentiment helps define a developing British identity that no longer sees *exterior* markers of worth, like wealth and family status, as indicators of moral worth. Instead, *interior* markers like emotional responsiveness and an individual's capacity for feeling define moral worth. For example, Clarissa, according to all who meet her, is a woman of "noble consciousness" (I.5). She possesses a "noble spirit," a "noble expansion of heart" (I. 465), and "to love [Clarissa] is to love virtue, good sense, prudence, and everything that is noble in a woman" (II.421). I agree that *Clarissa* tells the story of the changing dynamics of Britain's social system and an emerging British identity that privileges the moral worthiness of those individuals who easily and demonstratively sympathize with others.¹⁹ However, I add to these readings by arguing that *Clarissa* is a novel about

¹⁸ See Festa *Sentimental Figures of Empire* p7-9, Doyle *Freedom's Empire* chp.1 and Zomchick *Family and Law in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* chp.3.

¹⁹ As Linda Colley argues, the sense of a common national identity in England did not occur because of a single easy integration of different cultural identities; rather, the "Other" in the shape of militant Roman Catholicism and continual wars with France established a national identity to help unite internal differences against a common "enemy." Colley argues that the Act of Union in 1707 created a shared sense of Britishness, but did not erase pre-existing identities; she identifies Protestantism, commercialism, and imperial advancement as areas around which a sense of British allegiance could be formed. Colley's thesis has been criticized by critics like Srinivas Aravamudan, who has called this narrative of history "a Whiggish teleology" (12), but it remains a seminal work in the history of British identity formation.

Britain's moral identity as well as a didactic novel about the importance of educating moral judgment in order to reform standards for Britons' immediate social obligations and their national social project.²⁰ Richardson rethinks the lines of national belonging and exclusion by questioning the value of Britain's traditional social hierarchy and negotiating new political identities and new measures of morality via the balance between reason and sentiment. By achieving this balance, Richardson believes, readers learn to cultivate the disinterestedness required for social justice both domestically and nationally.

The necessity of disinterestedness in social justice is a theme important in both Richardson's and Smith's works. Richardson does not use the term "impartial spectator" as Smith does, but both authors believe moral judgment requires the mediation of a higher consciousness. Richardson calls this higher consciousness "the God within the breast" (II.15), while Smith calls it "the man within the breast" or, more frequently, the "impartial spectator" (III.2).²¹ But for Richardson and Smith, it is importantly the division of the self into two, the spectator and the "agent" (Smith, *Theory*), that allows individuals to develop moral judgment. Morality, for Richardson and Smith, is not, as most philosophers and writers of the eighteenth

²⁰ Domestic and national issues often become conflated in the sentimental tradition. This allegory of family, nation state and empire becomes particularly important in my Chapter 3 discussion of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*.

²¹ Richardson believes God plants the knowledge of right and wrong within the human consciousness. *Clarissa* was written "above all, to investigate the highest and most important doctrines not only of morality, but of Christianity" (*Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* 73). However, like Smith, Richardson also acknowledges that we require the validation of either an external impartial spectator or our idealized internal spectator to be sure we are acting with propriety. Smith's emphasis is much less religious and more empirical, but he is often vague about the origins of our ability to sympathize and to what extent this ability emerges from ourselves or from God. Smith is very suspicious of "false notions of religious duty" (III.6), but this does not mean he discounts the idea of God. Over his six revisions, Smith struggles with God role in humanity's developing conscience. Smith sometimes refers to the impartial spectator as a "demigod within the breast" or of "partly of immortal . . . extraction" (III.2). Smith is adamant that we can stand outside our society's moral judgments, but sometimes he relies on a divine inspiration to make this possible. In this Richardson and Smith are similar in their views.

century assume, a result of feeling impulse alone.²² Where Smith differs most from thinkers like David Hume and Francis Hutcheson, and many others of the eighteenth century, is the degree to which he stresses moral judgment as a social process. The individual's moral judgment must be educated; it is not a quality with which we are born.

Richardson too emphasizes the development of morality as dependent on an educative process that requires both feeling and disinterestedness. For all Lovelace may say of Clarissa that "[h]er whole person was informed by her sentiments" (II.15), Clarissa is aware that she is divided into two selves: the self that is governed by the "God within the breast" and the self that follows her "unowned inclination" (I.322). This division is clearly seen when Lovelace arrives at Clarissa's house to lure her into his carriage. As Lovelace pulls her toward his carriage, Clarissa remarks, "I ran as fast as he . . . [M]y voice, however, contradict[ed] my action; crying, no, no, no, all the while" (I.351). After the rape, Clarissa comments that while she may now have escaped Lovelace's house "I, my best self, have not escaped" (II. 134). The division of selves is important because while the feeling impulse portion of moral judgment may be intrinsic, disinterested reason must be learned: morality is a process of rational self-analysis.

Clarissa thinks her conduct will be moral if she listens to her feeling because, she believes, her impulses will accord with natural standards of right and wrong; her feelings will naturally agree with the principles "found" in her mind (I.56). However, Clarissa's

²²Major philosophers like David Hume and Francis Hutcheson, for example, see morality as a product of human nature's benevolent impulses. Hume argues that reason is "inactive" and amoral. For Hume reason provides the means by which we find a way to satisfy our passions—either virtuous or vicious. Hutcheson's definition of moral action is essentially benevolence. Hutcheson and Hume believe that our first impulses accord naturally with right and wrong. See Hume *Treatise of Human Nature* "Part I: Of Virtue and Vice in General" and Hutcheson *An Inquiry in to the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. "Treatise II" sections i-vii.

correspondence with her friend Anna Howe reveals that Clarissa cannot rely solely on feeling to guide her moral action. Anna notices her friend's partiality towards Lovelace, a partiality to which Clarissa cannot or will not admit. Accordingly, Anna asks Clarissa to perform "a close examination into the true springs and grounds of this your *generosity* to that happy man" (I.35). Richardson, like Smith, believes that feeling must be tempered by the influence of the impartial spectator, or an impartial higher consciousness. Without this disinterested consciousness to mediate our impulses, we can deceive ourselves into rationalizing our self-preference. As Anna writes, "a stander-by is often a better judge of the game than those that play" (I.38).

Smith's conception of the impartial spectator is complex, and the term "impartial" may be slightly misleading. The impartial spectator represents an ideal observer whose judgment is based on complete knowledge of the situation; Smith introduces the concept of the impartial spectator in his discussion of the virtue of self-command. Self-command is the result of our ability to restrain our emotions to that pitch of moderation, in which the impartial spectator can entirely enter into them" (I.i.5); self-command, for Smith, means to feel for ourselves only what others can feel for us "in the light in which others see us, or in which they would see us if they knew all" (III.4). Therefore, while our ability to judge "of ourselves as we judge of others," i.e. with the "candour" of the impartial spectator, implies a high level of detachment, crucially, Smith recognizes the impartial spectator is always somewhat subjective. When "we judge . . . of any affection . . . it is scarce possible that we should make use of any other rule or canon but the correspondent affection in ourselves" (I.i.3). This partiality is a good thing because only through nearness are we capable of understanding "all those little circumstances" that make up the "whole case" (I.i.4). Thus for Smith, the ideal spectator is one who is detached enough to combat

the partiality of self-preference but near enough to comprehend and enter into the situation “with all its minutest incidents” (I.i.4).

The other reason why the impartial spectator is paradoxically subjective is because the impartial spectator is, in large part, a product of society.²³ We educate our moral judgment through our immersion in society. Smith claims, man naturally “desire[s] to please, and [has] an original aversion to offend his brethren” (III.i.2.); therefore, the way we see and conduct ourselves depends largely on the way others see and feel about us. We modify our behavior to align our actions and feelings with social acceptance. We may first learn our society’s notions of right and wrong by internalizing actual spectators’ reactions to our feelings and actions. Eventually, however, the impartial spectator becomes, not an actual spectator who approves or disapproves of our conduct but rather a creation of our imaginations. It is this imaginative play that Smith calls “Sympathy,” and it is what first allows us to judge others and then turn that judgment on ourselves: “we either approve or disapprove of our own conduct, according as we feel that, when we place ourselves in the situation of another man, and view [ourselves], as it were, with his eyes and from his station” (III.i.1). Thus the ability to divide ourselves and judge from outside our self-preference is the skill most important to moral judgment. It is our natural ability to feel for others and put ourselves in their place mediated by reason and the disinterestedness it engenders that reminds us we are “but one of the multitude, in no respect

²³ Smith does believe it is possible, albeit difficult, to judge outside the context of society. The impartial spectator may judge differently from an actual spectator—a member of society. Smith does struggle with this distinction throughout the *Theory* and throughout his revisions, but ultimately he believes the impartial spectator must be based on a “standard” for that “idea of exact propriety and perfection” which can help us overcome “false judgments” of society (III.2) otherwise no one could stand outside popular opinion—which does happen. For example, the abolition of slavery began as a movement that contradicted social expectations and values. I go into more detail about the way Smith thinks through the contradiction in socially shaped values later in this chapter and in more depth in Chapter 5.

better than any other in it” (II.ii.2). Reason allows us to create general rules of morality that prevent us acting immorally when our feelings deafen us to the dictates of the impartial spectator. Smith’s conception of the impartial spectator is complex, but *Clarissa* can help to illustrate the nature of the impartial spectator and why the social process of moral education is so important.

Anna adopts a role like Smith’s conception of the impartial spectator. She is detached enough from Clarissa’s situation to be able to judge disinterestedly, but she is also near enough affectively and physically to know all of Clarissa’s circumstances. In many ways Anna is Clarissa’s other self. She is the first of Smith’s division of the self “into two persons” (II.iii.1); she is “the examiner and judge” (II.iii.1).²⁴ Clarissa recognizes the danger in unmediated feeling and appeals to Anna to help her uncover any partiality in her [Clarissa’s] conduct: “I charge you as I have often done, that if you observe anything in me so very faulty, as . . . partial love, you acquaint me with it; for . . . how shall [I] avoid the censure of such if my friend will not hold a looking-glass before me to let me see my imperfections?” (I.37). But Anna and Clarissa remain as separate entities. In the end Anna’s disinterested-self fails to mediate Clarissa’s feeling-self, and Clarissa’s ultimate failure to internalize Anna’s disinterestedness leads to Clarissa’s violation and her death.

Clarissa reaches the first stage in the development of moral judgment. She recognizes the need for an impartial mediator to ensure the morality of her conduct; however, she is unable to reach the second stage of moral judgment. She never manages to internalize the impartial

²⁴ The “two-selves” concept of sympathy and its role in moral judgment is essential to Charles Brockden Brown’s sense of and social justice. I discuss friendship as “two-selves” in relation to Smith’s theory of social mirroring and Brown’s vision of an ideal society in Chapter 2.

spectator. Anna, at Clarissa's funeral, remarks "*nature*, was (as I have hinted) [Clarissa's] law," (II.655), but, as I argue, neither Smith nor Richardson sees nature or impulse as sufficient for true moral judgment.²⁵ It is Anna's judgment meditated between the reason of disinterestedness and the feeling of the sympathetic-self that Richardson endorses. The sympathetic imagination cultivates a response to the world that requires self-monitoring of the mind and heart. Imagining ourselves in someone else's place and imagining that we can see ourselves from an outside perspective allows us to shape, criticize and change not only individual behavior but also social values.

Richardson, like Smith, sees moral judgment as a social process that educates the self in the correct internal balance between reason and feeling. For Smith, as I explain above, morality is the product of society, but morality does not have to be identical with social judgment. Morality or virtue is not just about what is approved of by society; the impartial spectator can overcome social values that have become corrupt or act in a moral way that doesn't necessarily benefit society as a whole. A moral action accords with the judgment of an ideal impartial spectator who has both adequate information to judge properly and who is not misled by partial passions or selfish interest. For example, Richardson wants readers to see Clarissa's defiance against her family as moral despite any potential readerly claims that "for all their cruelty and cupidity . . . the Harlowes have a solid foundation for their case [that Clarissa should marry Solmes]" (Keymer *Richardson's Clarissa* 128).

²⁵ Critic Amit Rai demonstrates the double edged sword of impulsive feeling. She notes, "that if the feeling subject was the most natural, she was also, and for precisely that reason, dangerous . . . too close, that is, to the uncivilized state, to the darkness of the primitive" (17).

Clarissa is above the law of society that dictates that a daughter should obey her father because she appeals to a higher moral standard than her father's word. As Keymer explains, Clarissa "recollect[s] at least seven distinct reasons for exemption, drawing on natural law, divine law, expediency and sentiment to build the case for refusal . . .,[and] to enlist the sympathies of even her most disapproving readers" (*Richardson's Clarissa* 133, 138). Thus Clarissa's moral principles transcend the socially sanctioned moral standards of her family. Clarissa's morals align her values with the emerging eighteenth-century British ideal against the corruption of the ruling class whose authority is not derived from internal merit but rather presumption of their own value. The conflicts between Clarissa and her family as well as between Clarissa and Lovelace engage with contemporary concerns about the limits of patriarchal authority and individual authority. Clarissa struggles with her disobedience, but because Richardson's readers act as spectators who are in possession of all the particulars of Clarissa's situation and who are not misled by the Harlowes' avarice, these spectators can validate Clarissa's disobedience as moral action. Readers are thus encouraged to sympathize with Clarissa and endorse Britain's emerging moral values that promote liberty from authoritarian rule.

Richardson explores the consequences of unregulated authority: what happens when authority becomes corrupt or fails in its leadership? Richardson uses Clarissa to think through the limits of self-determination and sympathetic engagement with others in order to present the possibility of a society regulated by the power of moral authority rather than un-judging

obedience to contemporary hierarchical standards.²⁶ Authority figures whether they be fathers, kings or governments are meant to protect and serve not oppress and rule. Clarissa stands outside her society and by doing so her example helps Richardson describe his vision for a British identity: Britishness means individuals who are willing to stand against corruption, tyranny and oppression and who possess the capacity for independent moral judgment.

The hardest step in developing true moral judgment is the internalization of the ideals that make an individual praiseworthy. Richardson, like Smith, demonstrates that the partiality engendered by feeling can, if not mediated by reason, lead to social destruction. Lovelace embodies an individual without an impartial spectator; he is unable to move past his own partial feelings. He lives to act on impulse, and he believes it is only Clarissa's impulses, her desires, that matter. Lovelace is a flawed reader of moral sentiment because he does not possess the ability to sympathize with others, nor does he have the capacity to heed either his "man within the breast" or the social equivalent. Lovelace's friends eventually condemn his persecution of Clarissa, but Lovelace continues to justify his position. He writes to Mennell, "I was a fool to let either you or [Belford] see her; for ever *since* ye have both had scruples" (I.660). Lovelace's language of domination and power does not engender sympathetic identification or enable moral judgment. As Richardson and Smith argue, moral judgment and social justice are possible only when feeling, mediated by reason, produces the capacity for the sympathetic imagination and the development of the impartial spectator. Lovelace does not uphold justice and therefore his crimes

²⁶ Susan Dwyer Amussen notes that Richardson's portrayal of Mr. Harlowe reflects Eighteenth-century church catechisms that use the fifth commandment's call for obedience in the model hierarchy between God and man in order to urge duty to father, mother, neighbor, and ultimately king and country as "benevolent and reciprocal relationships" (36). Richardson's domestic conflicts use a popular eighteenth-century metaphor that likens the family to the state with the father analogous to the king. Consequently, Richardson's story of a young woman who finds that moral action can no longer be realized in obedience to her father becomes a fundamental reordering of a known social order where filial obedience is vital.

are not only against Clarissa but against society. This is why we must educate our moral judgment and develop our impartial spectator. Because Lovelace's self-preference destroys Clarissa and himself, Lovelace's death at the end of the novel constitutes what Richardson sees as social justice. Lovelace's death also subverts Britain's traditional social hierarchy. Moral authority no longer originates with the aristocracy and they can no longer claim to be above moral and social authority.

Ewha Chung argues that Lovelace's exile and death strip Lovelace of any political authority and his death represents domestic harmony within England. She suggests Lovelace's death acts as a national allegory because Lovelace, "although of English origins, represents the Francophilic libertine devoid of national consciousness or responsibility, and he remains unassociated with the Protestant religion or any domesticated English community" (72).²⁷ Consequently, Chung argues, Richardson creates a British nationalism opposed to the corruption represented by France. Similarly, Doyle claims *Clarissa* reflects a British national identity in Richardson's representation of Britain's changing social system: Clarissa's inheritance "rooted in the landed property" conflicts with Clarissa's brother James' "new but unstable source of revenue in the colonial economy of Atlantic modernity" (141). Doyle argues that these conflicting systems reflect Richardson's critique of the established "English Gothic balance" (141).²⁸ I agree with Chung and Doyle that Richardson constructs a British identity, but I argue

²⁷ Chung's argument resonates with Benedict Anderson's idea of the "imagined community" as well as Linda Colley's argument that British identity was constructed against an "other"—usually French and/or Catholic, see n.20. Chung's argument is that essentially Clarissa's death unites the nation as her tragedy resonates across the imagined community of the novel's readership; her death and reader's responses to her death repudiate aristocratic (as represented by Lovelace) libertinism and patriarchal (as represented by her father and brother) despotism.

²⁸ Doyle defines "Gothic balance" as a "compromise-formation that gave the English parliamentary government historical authority while also limiting the sway of both king and people" (63).

that his sense of Britishness depends on a moral identity grounded in moral sentiment.

Richardson defines British identity as a promise of liberty that relies on his or her ability to balance reasoned disinterestedness with sympathy.

Richardson raises the question of British moral identity by characterizing Clarissa as the embodiment of “native dignity” (II.96) and virtue besieged by different models of tyranny on either side. On one side Clarissa faces her family. Her father is “despotic, absolute,” and “arbitrary” in pursuing “undue exertion of [his] natural authority” (I.50), while the rest of her family are driven by their “insatiate[able] and devouring” flames of “Avarice” (I.32) to force her marry the very rich but very unappealing Solmes. On her other side Clarissa faces Lovelace, a self-declared “Caesar” who feels he is owed his possession of Clarissa as the rights of conquest in a “triumphant entry into Rome” (I. 400). Clarissa does not succumb to either tyrant. Instead she invokes Britain’s identity as a nation committed to liberty for its subjects. She challenges Lovelace’s authority when she demands to know “whether it be, or be not, your intention to permit me to quit [this house]?-To permit me the *freedom* which is my *birthright* as an English subject?” (II.96 emphasis added). The juxtaposition between Clarissa’s repeated uses of the terms “entrapment” and “force” as well as the constraints placed on Clarissa by her family and Lovelace and her insistence on her “freedom,” “liberty of speech” and the right “to tell my own story” (II.342), suggest Richardson’s critique of Britons’ conviction that the nation has achieved the virtuous ideal of civilization.²⁹ Not all subjects are at liberty and without liberty there can be no moral judgment.

²⁹James Thomson’s poem *Liberty* (1736), read on both sides of the Atlantic, embodies Britain’s commitment to this narrative. The poem recounts the way liberty has moved its locus from Greece to Rome and then to Britain where it has been cultivated. Liberty narrates the poem and explains that through a revolutionary turn against the tyranny of

Clarissa may embody Britain's "native" virtue and feeling heart, but her society has not allowed her to develop the moral judgment that will permit her to achieve "that independence to which [her grandfather's] will has entitled [her]" (I.21). This inheritance is her birthright, not just as a Harlowe but as a Briton, to liberty and the right to political subjectivity. Clarissa says "the LAW shall be my resource . . . The LAW only shall be my refuge" (II.111), but the law offers her no recourse from her oppression. Her inheritance does not make her free.³⁰ She is doomed by the social systems of oppression that surround her; they do not judge impartially. Richardson's novel uses the impartial spectator concept to question Britain's moral development. Both Richardson and Smith agree that "nothing tends so much to corrupt and enervate and debase the mind as dependency, and nothing gives such noble and generous notions of probity as freedom and independency" (Smith, *LJ* 333). Clarissa's forced dependency rallies her community around her. The sympathy her plight and her death engender allows Richardson to shape a national community that values liberty for all its members.

In the first part of this section, I demonstrate the troubles Clarissa experiences with moral judgment: ultimately she cannot balance her feelings with a sufficient sense of disinterestedness. The difficulties with moral judgment within Clarissa's narrative become the means by which Richardson reaches the narrative beyond itself for a social judgment about oppression and natural rights on a national level. Smith states that we are predisposed to be blinded by self-love

monarchy Britons have risen phoenix-like from the ashes to take up the responsibility of spreading liberty throughout the world. "There was a flame/ Broke out that clear'd, consum'd, renew'd the Land," a "Conflagration" in which "KINGS, LORDS, COMMONS, thundering to the Ground, / Successive, rush'd-Lo! From their Ashes rose, / Gay-beaming radiant Youth, the Phoenix-State" (4-1020 - 21, 1041- 45). Many critics have written detailed histories of Britain's self-narrative of liberty and virtue. For examples see David Brion Davis *The Problem of Slavery*, Kathleen Wilson *A New Imperial History* and Doyle *Freedom's Empire*.

³⁰Anne McClintock, makes the connection between female subjugation and colonial subjugation in transatlantic concerns about questions of political recognition. She argues, "women are not seen as inhabiting history proper; but existing, like colonial peoples, in a permanently anterior time within the modern nation" (264).

and we tend to avoid judging our motivations honestly; “[i]t is so disagreeable to think ill of ourselves that we often purposely turn away our view from those circumstances which might render that judgment unfavourable” (*Theory* III.i.4). Richardson wants Britain to recognize the tyrannies its current system perpetuates by cultivating the moral judgment that allows individuals to face rather than turn away from unfavorable judgments. This is how society can change. It is by playing on the sympathies created by his readers’ sense of injustice committed against Clarissa, that Richardson creates an affective connection with his readers “towards securing what he anxiously called ‘the Bonds of Human Society’ (Keymer *Richardson’s Clarissa* 46).

Smith’s impartial spectator and the division of self into disinterested moral judge and the sympathetic individual can help readers understand how Richardson and other writers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rethink their societies. In order to become as impartial as we can, we must internalize the experiences and views of as broad a group of observers as possible. But reasoned disinterestedness is not enough. Sympathy must also inform moral judgment. It isn’t enough to just recognize injustice; we must be moved by feeling to remedy it. Richardson may be concerned with the British moral identity, but the questions Richardson raises about tyranny, liberty, political recognition and property rights are questions that continue within the transatlantic context throughout the works I discuss in this project.³¹ Clarissa feels she can no longer follow her inner sense of morality if she follows her father’s orders, but is complete reliance on the ‘moral’ feeling of the self a viable alternative? How does an individual or a society renegotiate a social contract when its conditions become unacceptable? The questions Richardson raises leave echoes for revolutionary societies across the Atlantic. As I

³¹ The works of Samuel Richardson, Laurence Sterne, Sarah Robinson Scott, Charles Brockden Brown, Jane Austen, James Fenimore Cooper and Olaudah Equiano.

discuss in Chapter 2, Charles Brockden Brown confronts the question of how to reconstitute society after America has freed itself from patriarchal tyranny of empire—are fraternal bonds really better than patriarchal bonds?

For both Richardson and Smith, social justice rests on the moral judgments of the impartial spectator. The big question for all the writers here is how we extend our too partial and too limited feelings past our immediate circle of self and family in order to enable social justice. Of course, as critics of sentimentalism later in the eighteenth century recognize, we don't always manage to transcend the circle of our self-preference. In the next section I look at the way Laurence Sterne questions the role of the impartial spectator in moral judgment and whether or not the impartial spectator can help us overcome the limits of our particular situations to create moral action.

Laurence Sterne: Transcending Borders of Self for Moral Action

Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) reveals the difficulties in using sentiment as an indication of morality. On one hand critics like Janet Todd have read *A Sentimental Journey* as a conventional representation of “[sensibility’s] emotional and physical manifestations” (9) of “refined and tender emotions (7) that correspond with an individual’s sense of morality. On the other hand, *A Sentimental Journey* can be read as the beginnings of the death knell for sentimentalism in Britain.³² Julia Stern remarks, “Sterne’s book

³² Late-eighteenth-century writers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Anna Laetitia Barbauld, for example, criticised the potential for sentimentalism to promote passive spectatorship. Barbauld writes, suffering, “if truly represented, shocks our nicer feelings; therefore . . . employments incident to that state, must be kept out of sight, and . . . an object of distress which, if we relieve, we turn away from at the same time” (“An Inquiry” II, 222-3). Wollstonecraft, after describing a slave’s misery as “the lash resounds on the [his] naked sides,” declares “[s]uch misery demands more than tears” (60). Sterne, Barbauld and Wollstonecraft all question the relationship between moral feeling and moral action

marks the high-water moment of eighteenth-century” (*Plight* 245) sentimentalism, but Sterne also exposes “the danger of the eighteenth century’s semiotics of sympathy—the fact that, as indices of sincerity, physical manifestations of compassion are sorely unreliable” (*Plight* 217). Although Sterne’s novel was generally well received by his contemporary readers as an authentic representation of moral feeling, modern critical consensus highlights Sterne’s use of feeling as an ironic “mode of self-study . . . naturally at odds” with “sincere expressions” of moral sentiment (Van Sant 105). Thomas Keymer, similarly, reads *A Sentimental Journey* as “necessarily . . . self-serving” (“Sterne”174) and “sceptical[ly] self-consciousness” (“Sterne”176) about the capacity of sympathetic feeling alone “to fashion a neutral documentation and dispassionate analysis” (“Sterne”174).³³ Sterne’s descriptions of emotional displays express the tension between self-knowledge and self-indulgence.

This tension exposes Sterne’s concern over the efficacy of feeling for inducing moral action: expressions of sympathy are not necessarily motivated by humanitarian impulses. Sentiment is meant to be the means by which individuals come to know themselves by knowing and feeling the realities of others—but how reliable is sympathetic identification as an indication of moral action? Both Sterne and Smith question the process of sympathetic display: if increased affective response indicates moral superiority, then what is to stop individuals cultivating selfish moral performances rather than extending the self towards the other in moral action? How do we bridge our self-interest to turn feeling into action? Sterne does not go as far as Smith in his explorations of the potential for the sympathetic imagination to bring the alterity of the other

³³One eighteenth-century reviewer writes, “What delicacy of feeling, what tenderness of sentiment, yet what simplicity of expression are here! Is it *possible* that a man of *gross ideas* could ever *write* in a strain so pure, so refined from the dross of sensuality!” (Griffiths 200-201), while *The Sentimental Magazine* claims Sterne as the founder who “introduced the present mode of sentimental writing” (4).

closer to the self, but if we read *A Sentimental Journey* and *The Theory* together, we can better understand the value both authors place on moral responsibility and how this moral responsibility might look when it involves geographically or culturally distant others. Sterne's work is not an uncomplicated effusion of feeling nor is it simply an ironic diatribe against effusive feeling; *A Sentimental Journey* demonstrates how the process of moral judgment is entwined with questions about the usefulness of a universal system of morality and the limits of particular borders—either borders of the self that indicate a failure to imagine the other, or borders of the nation that indicate a failure to incorporate other nations within its community.

In the section of *A Sentimental Journey* entitled “The Passport,” Sterne, like Smith, makes a claim for the power of the imagination in an individual's capacity for sympathy: the process by which an individual imagines himself in another's place can help prompt us to moral action by helping us to understand others' feelings and situations. In the episode, Yorick comes across a caged starling who “thrust[s] his head through the trellis” and cries “I can't get out—I can't get out” (60). Yorick purchases the bird, and the starling's plight causes Yorick to contemplate a chain of imaginative association from the bird to “LIBERTY” (60) to captives confined in the Bastille:

I begun [sic] to figure to myself the miseries of confinement. I was in a right frame for it, so I gave full scope to my imagination. I was going to begin with the millions of my fellow creatures born to no inheritance but slavery; but finding, however affecting the picture was, that I could not bring it near me, and that the multitude of sad groups in it did but distract me.—(61)

Yorick here lights on a problem with the sympathetic imagination: how can we overcome our own situatedness to extend our sympathy towards those who are too far removed from our

habitual sympathy or our circle of self-preference?³⁴ Yorick cannot bring himself to sympathize with a multitude of captives; their collective experiences are too far removed and too “distracting” (61). He cannot make the imaginative leap to understand their emotions.

The problem Yorick experiences in the Bastille of imagining multiple individuals’ feelings is an aspect of a root problem with which Smith wrestles throughout the *Theory*: how to affectively overcome distance. Smith argues that there are some human experiences and certain human rights, liberty for example, that should be universal in scope; however, he acknowledges that humanity in general has difficulty extending their sympathy past their immediate context. The further away our experience is from another individual—or from a group of individuals—the harder it becomes to place ourselves in the other’s situation. This is why we need the impartial spectator: to mediate between self and other. But as I explain in my section on *Clarissa*, the impartial spectator is only “supposed[ly]” impartial” (Smith, *Theory* III.2).³⁵ There is always some degree of subjectivity; therefore, Smith is concerned with the process of moral judgment—how do we learn to make moral choices from within our particular social context that can extend outside of it? *The Theory* is Smith’s description of the ways in which individuals learn how to negotiate conflicts that emerge between “two opposite sets of passions, the social

³⁴Smith explains habitual sympathy is what we understand as affection. When an individual, like a family member, is in close proximity to you every day, you have a better chance of understanding their feelings and situations; he or she in all likelihood shares similar experiences with us in his or her day to day lives, so we are easily able to place ourselves in his or her place. Thus sympathy becomes “habitual” through repetition: “What is called affection, is in reality nothing but habitual sympathy. Our concern in the happiness or misery of those who are the objects of what we call our affections; our desire to promote the one, and to prevent the other; are either the actual feeling of that habitual sympathy, or the necessary consequences of that feeling. Relations being usually placed in situations which naturally create this habitual sympathy, it is expected that a suitable degree of affection should take place among them” (*Theory* VI.ii.1).

³⁵ Smith generally refers to the “higher tribunal” of humanity’s consciousness as the “impartial spectator,” but throughout *The Theory* he uses the “supposed” qualifier. See II.ii.2, III.3, VI.ii.1, VI.iii.1 and VII.ii.1 for examples. While the philosophical ideal, arguably, may be complete impartiality, Smith recognizes the impossibility of this reality. In fact, Smith believes some self-love is a good thing as long as it never leads to the oppression of others or the removal of others’ rights.

[our sympathetic responses] and unsocial [our selfish responses]” (I.ii.5). As Smith notes, the self often conflicts with itself: judgment and action do not always accord. Smith believes the impartial spectator is fully developed only by immersion in social situations; it is social interaction that trains individuals to subsume their selfish passions on a consistent basis. Once developed, it is the impartial spectator who can help individuals negotiate between the limits of particular, local personal commitments and the universal recognition of a shared humanity.

The impartial spectator negotiates between the self and other by helping us create and follow general rules of morality that are applicable to any situation and extendable to any other person. These general rules of morality help us remain impartial even when we are experiencing strong emotions. For example, the preservation of another’s life should always take precedence over the incurrance of a minor injury to the self even though that injury is at the expense of self-preference.

Smith’s famous example of a general rule of morality that has a universal application develops from his discussion of the Chinese earthquake in II.iii.3. Smith explains that it is “natural” for us to feel more strongly about the loss of our little finger than for “the ruin of a hundred millions of our brethren” (II.iii.3).³⁶ Smith’s point is that our selfish passions, if allowed to run unchecked, will delude us into placing our needs over the needs of others; consequently, we need to develop a general, or universal, moral rule to help us behave correctly even when we are not disinterested. The way to develop this rule is, as we saw with *Clarissa*, the mediation of the sympathetic imagination by reason. This produces the impartial spectator, “so that when we

³⁶ In other words, as Smith notes, the “destruction of that immense multitude seems plainly an object less interesting to [us], than this paltry misfortune of [our] own” (II.iii. 3).

prefer ourselves so shamefully and so blindly to others, we become the proper objects of resentment, abhorrence, and execration” (III.3). Consequently, the impartial spectator allows us to act according to a general moral rule. Even though we may privately be more concerned over the loss of our finger than in the fate of those for whom we have no physical, affective, cultural or economic connection, if we were given the opportunity to save that “immense multitude” by sacrificing our finger we would take it (II.iii.3). This general rule has a universal application: a minor hurt to the self should always be incurred if it prevents catastrophe or fatality to others.

In Smith’s earthquake example the moral choice seems obvious—one person’s finger for the sake of millions of lives. But we are often presented with moral choices that are not so clear cut. Smith admits to the importance of universal moral dictates, but, for him, their importance is limited to cases where self-preference or violent emotions run rampant. Smith explains that general or universal rules of morality are important in cases where there is an absence of sympathetic exchange: general rules can help us overcome the obstructions to moral action that distance poses up to a point, but sympathy is a much stronger impetus. So how do we create sympathy for distant others? Sympathy occurs only when an individual imagines himself in a particular other’s position. A spectator must feel the resentment that comes with understanding another’s particular circumstances. Resentment in Smith’s sense of the word is the feeling we experience when an injustice has been committed. It is the emotional foundation of justice because resentment makes injustice personal and therefore rouses the spectator to moral action.

Smith asserts that sympathy is produced by our understanding of another’s feelings and motivations, and we are more likely to sympathize with those who share “similar experiences” (VI.ii.1). If we can find the “familiar” within those who are culturally or geographically distant, we can overcome both geographical and affective distance; therefore, we must look for shared

particularities between ourselves and others. I labour the point because it becomes important for my discussions on Cooper and particularly Equiano in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively: Equiano uses the concept the impartial spectator to overcome the constraints of a particular social morality to generate independent moral judgment capable of envisioning a universal morality. The way Smith thinks about the ways to overcome distance as a process of moral judgment is complicated, but we can better understand Smith's thoughts through Yorick's imaginative experience with the prisoner in the Bastille.

Yorick's imagined captive is an exercise in self-interest. Yorick is aware of the universal moral rule that "confinement" and "slavery" (61) are morally unacceptable. He knows he should feel *something* (sadness, resentment, compassion etc.) for "the millions [of his] fellow creatures born to no inheritance but slavery" (61), but Yorick cannot capture the intensity of the captives' suffering because Yorick cannot "bring them near" (61). Yorick, like Smith, overcomes the lack of sympathy by emphasizing a particular situation. Yorick finds he cannot sympathize with the multitude of captives—he cannot find the familiar within such a diverse group, so instead he imagines, "a single captive, and having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then look'd through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture" (61). Once Yorick finds the point of familiarity between himself and the captive—the horror of imprisonment and the "kind of sickness of the heart . . . which arises from hope deferr'd" (61) — he is able to imagine the prisoner's suffering. Yorick takes the first step towards moral action that Smith describes: he imagines the sensations of "those born to slavery" (61) by drawing on the sensations his own "confinement" (61) elicits. But, Sterne demonstrates, Yorick doesn't really feel at all, at least he really feels for only himself: he falls back on a set of general moralities, like an individual's rights to freedom, but he never really becomes absorbed in the particular plight of others. When he becomes too affected

by the scene he imagines, he simply dismisses the image of the captive by “startl[ing] up from [his] chair, and calling La Fleur” (61). Yorick imagines the captive, but he doesn’t particularize enough to feel the captive’s injustice as his own, and the captive is easily left behind. The captive only ever remains in Yorick’s imagination; Yorick does not think about real captives he might aid.

Sterne illustrates in *A Sentimental Journey* what Smith makes explicit: becoming self-aware is the first step towards taking responsibility for our behaviour. *A Journey* is full of ironies and double entendres because Yorick cannot or will not, honestly scrutinize his conduct. Yorick is eager to witness suffering, as long as it is not too real. He continually seeks out and even creates scenes of distress, not to relieve them but rather to demonstrate “so perfectly [his] conscious[ness] of the existence of a soul within me” (94). Michael Meranze notes that in Sterne’s “critical parody of sensibility . . . Sympathy could only be sustained at a suitable distance; if sympathy’s object was too intense or too near, the subject of sympathy fled” (qtd. in Stern, *Plight* 173).³⁷ Yorick doesn’t actually want to bridge the differences between himself and others; he wants to create distance by making *himself* the sympathetic subject rather than the sympathetic/impartial spectator. Individuals like Yorick believe themselves morally superior because of their capacity for feeling. By feeling for themselves they no longer feel obligated to

³⁷ Catherine Kaplan similarly argues, about sentimental writing in general, that sentiment “create[s] its own pecking order: those most sensible would be more wounded by vice and ugliness and also more likely to appreciate beauty and goodness” (17). The eighteenth-century medic George Cheyne illustrates Kaplan’s point in his medical text *The English Malady* (1734). He writes, “There are as many and as different Degrees of Sensibility or of Feeling, as there are Degrees of Intelligence and Perception in human Creatures; and the Principle of both may be perhaps one and the same. One shall suffer more from the Prick of a Pin, or Needle, from their extreme Sensibility, than others from being run thro’ the Body; and the first Sort seem to be of the Class of these Quick-Thinkers I have formerly mentioned” (366). In other words, it is easy to make a distinction between those that feel and those that are felt for, and therefore sympathy, these critics argue, assists selfish rather than disinterested ends.

relieve the distresses of others. Thus those that feel, rather than those who are felt for, hold the power.

The process of moral judgment becomes particularly important in the context of colonial relationships where a British moral identity is predicated on its subjects' heightened sensitivity.³⁸ Because those that feel hold the power, it is easy for the “feeler”—in this case British subjects—to see the other as at best in need of supervision and guidance and at worst a commodity.³⁹ British subjects control the sentimental value of other national subjects for whom they feel pity—enslaved Africans, for example. However, in this formulation pity becomes an indication of morality; no moral action, according to this logic, is required. Sterne never makes the connection between the prisoners in the Bastille, British apathy and African slavery explicit, but his implicit connection between the starling and the captives has led critics like Ellis and Festa to suggest a connection between Sterne's starling and African bondage. This chain of association foregrounds Sterne's query as to whether spectatorship and the sympathetic imagination can become equal to what the other has endured and felt.

Ellis argues the starling unites “the idea of a rational animal (inflected with anthropological discussion of the status of African people) and that of an incarcerated subject (inflected with his surrounding remarks upon chattel slavery)” (75).⁴⁰ If Ellis and Festa are

³⁸ Numerous critics have addressed the topic of British identity as it corresponds with the British capacity for feeling. Kelly McGuire, for example, in *Dying to be English* states, “sensibility . . . comes to be identified with an emergent national consciousness in this period [the 18th century]” (3). Other works on this topic include: Kathleen Wilson's *The Island Race*, Marc Redfield's *The Politics of Aesthetics*, and Eric Gidal's “Civic Melancholy.”

³⁹ Festa's argument in *Sentimental Figures* centers on sentiment as a commodity. She claims Sterne problematizes the commodification of the sentimental object because the only way to maintain the object's sentimental value is to perpetuate the conditions that raise the emotions of the spectators, thus moral action is never realized. I agree with Festa, but I think reading Smith in conjunction with Sterne helps us understand how Sterne plays with barriers to sympathetic identification, such as distance as well as the importance of the impartial spectator to moral judgment.

⁴⁰ Sterne was a supporter of abolition. Festa notes that “Sterne's interest in slavery is often traced back to his correspondence with [Ignatius] Sancho” (85). Festa quotes from one of Sancho's letter to Sterne where Sancho urges

correct about Sterne's concern over the fate of enslaved Africans, which I believe they are, then Yorick's musings over the freedom of the starling and the imaginary captive reveal Sterne's misgivings about the limits of sentiment for producing moral action.⁴¹ Yorick's judgment and words proclaim his belief in universal liberty, but his actions counteract his moral ideals. Even in his imagination Yorick does not free the prisoner in the Bastille—he is more useful to Yorick as a sentimental stimulus to self-indulgent expressions of feeling. Similarly, upon hearing the starling's plea, "I can't get out" (60), Yorick proclaims, "I vow, I never had my affections more tenderly awakened" (60), and he will let the bird "out, cost what it will" (61). But this is not what happens. Yorick not only does not free the starling, but he uses the starling as a sentimental commodity. He gives the bird to "Lord A" because Lord A, like Yorick, wants to have his feelings awakened. Lord A then gives him to "Lord B" and so on until the starling has been passed "half round the alphabet . . . and pass'd the hands of as many commoners" (63). Moral judgment is stymied by the failure of true sympathetic exchange. Each individual who possesses the starling feels for only himself.

Sterne to "give one half-hour's attention to slavery, as it is at this day practised in our West Indies . . . [Slavery] handled in your striking manner, would ease the yoke (perhaps) of many-but if only of one-Gracious God!-what a feast to a benevolent heart!-and, sure I am, you are an epicurean in acts of charity" (85).

⁴¹ As David Oakleaf points out, many Britons did not connect political liberty from absolute rule with African slavery. Oakleaf cites John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon's *Cato's Letters* (1744) as an example of a "ringing and influential celebration of liberty from slavery to an absolute monarch [that] does not challenge New World chattel slavery" (120-21). In *Cato's Letters*, essays that, as Bernard Bailyn argues, "ranked with the treatises of Locke as the most authoritative statement of the nature of political liberty" (36), Trenchard and Gordon lament the fall of the Roman state to corruption "and ambition of a few . . . til at length two thirds of the people were destroyed and the rest made slaves" (No.18. Sat. Feb. 25, 1720), but their tirade against absolute monarchy and tyranny does not extend past Europeans. Their concern is liberating British people not colonial others. Thus Sterne's symbolic association between the captive in the Bastille with the chattel slave cannot be taken for granted. However, Sterne's works do show his concern with liberty on a global scale. In his letters Sterne claims *A Sentimental Journey* will "teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do" (*Letters* 401). In statements like this as well as his documented interest in slavery, and his correspondence with Sancho, it seems clear, if not explicit, that Sterne was engaged in thinking about liberty as it applied to Britons as well as enslaved Africans.

If Sterne does intend the starling as “an emblem of chattel slavery” (Ellis 75), then we can see how, just as Yorick’s single captive in the Bastille represents the “millions born to slavery” (Sterne 61), the starling “condenses and displaces these suffering throngs [of slaves], exposing the tension between human particularity and representative interchangeability” (Festa 86). Because Yorick can’t get past his self-interest, the particulars of slavery don’t matter—any representational object (the captive or the starling) can make Yorick feel. Therefore, Yorick controls the value of the starling and by proxy the value of the African slave. He controls the sentimental value of these figures as *objects* of pity; the bird/slaves need Yorick’s spectatorship to make them worthy of sympathy. So how can sentimental authors claim Britons possess superior moral judgment in the face of inequalities like slavery or imperialism that constrain an individual’s freedoms? Sterne does not give a definitive answer, but his satire against those who claim to feel for others but do nothing to alleviate or, worse, actually perpetuate others’ misery, as Yorick does with the starling, demonstrates Smith’s point that acting on moral feeling rather than merely having it, or even recognizing the need for action, is the hardest step in developing true moral judgment. If the captive and the starling are read as allegories for African slaves, then the question Yorick raises is whether universal moral rules can overcome the limitations of our particular borders. Smith believes that they can, but while Sterne recognizes that moral action can only be completed in the presence of the disinterested moral judgment, *A Sentimental Journey* remains skeptical that an individual can distance themselves enough from their own interest to act morally on a consistent basis.

By recognizing Sterne as part of the same cultural context as Smith, we see that both authors are concerned with similar issues surrounding the process of moral judgment, and we can read Sterne in a different light; Sterne’s panegyrics to excessive feeling, whether sincere or

ironic, open up questions about feeling, judgment and moral action that have significant repercussions for Britain's relationship with colonized peoples: is the concern for the well-being of others possible only within local and intimate spheres of family and friends? Can sympathy be moved across distance? If we can move our sympathy across affective distances, then does this lead us to moral action? And to what extent can the impartial spectator allow us to overcome our moral apathy? In the next section I look at the way Sarah Robinson Scott addresses these questions to reveal the tensions between universal ideals of sympathy and the process of empire.

Sarah Robinson Scott: Situatedness and Empire

Sarah Robinson Scott's novel *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766) presents the eponymous hero as a man whose sympathy defines him as the new ideal of moral Britishness. Part of Sir George's history recounts his time in Jamaica as overseer of a plantation. In order to provide for his younger brother and sister, Ellison expresses his intention to become a "citizen of the world" (6) and sets off for Jamaica to make his fortune. There he marries a Creole woman and takes over her plantation. Ellison is appalled by the treatment of the slaves on the island and models a plan of amelioration that endears him to the slaves, increases the plantation's efficiency and prosperity which thus allows him to return to England wealthy, and once home he again proceeds to enact social reforms.

Scott describes three distinct societies in Jamaica: the British, represented by Ellison; the Anglo-Jamaican planters, represented by Ellison's wife and other slave-owners on the island; and Afro-Jamaican labourers, the slaves Ellison encounters. Scott negotiates between local, British and global concerns of empire. Many of the economic and moral reformations Ellison

initiates in Jamaica are analogous to the reforms Scott envisions for Britain.⁴² By using Jamaica as a way to move between domestic concerns and concerns of empire, from the local to the global and back, Scott reveals political tensions created by struggles between national and global allegiances and the attendant moral obligations of each. Her novel raises questions about the possibility of extending sympathy across national borders: what do we owe our nation and what do we owe the world? How does situatedness, the extent to which we are embedded in our national context, affect our ability to make moral judgments at the global level?

Markman Ellis and Ann Wierda Rowland claim that in *Sir George*, Scott's "accounts of plantation slavery" define "an affective humanity" that grants "humanity to the slave but, like the slave owner's benevolence, . . . the humanitarian sensibility that emerges . . . operates only within bounds" (Rowland 198). These critics claim the outcomes of novels like Scott's that "produce, define, and contain non-European difference" develop "ideological justifications of colonialism" and end up by producing "colonial violence," that relies "on a structure of binary opposition that posit[s] the racial, cultural, and linguistic inferiority of the colonized as compared with Europeans" (Garraway 234).⁴³

I agree that while Scott writes to ameliorate slavery, she uses the guise of a universal humanitarianism to voice British concerns and endorse a "natural" racial hierarchy that promotes British superiority. However, critics like Ellis and Rowland downplay the degree to which Scott

⁴² Markman Ellis in *The Politics of Sensibility* argues that just as domestic representations of sympathetic relations represent an analogy between state and family, "colonial slavery was an arena in which sentimentalist commercial experiments could be conducted without threatening the established order within the metropolitan political culture" (124).

⁴³ While the majority of critics agree with Ellis and Rowland, there are some critics like Nicholas Thomas in *Colonialism's Culture* (38–4), Benita Parry "Problems in Current Theories," Arif Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura" and Garraway "Of Speaking Natives" have challenged postcolonial readings of novels like *Sir George* by dismantling "the ways in which such broad, totalizing claims confuse discourses of representation with regimes of governmentality, thus discounting the violent struggles of anticolonial resistance movements, the historical development and variability of European writings on the colonial world" (Garraway 208).

also critiques European imperial rule in her struggles with the extent to which morality is created by social context and the application of universal moral principles. Doris Garraway sees the sentimental “claim about the universality of humanist values” as “a paradox of universalism in its constitutive particularism, since only a portion of society emancipates itself by equating its own interests with that of the entire community” (238). Similarly, I see Scott’s conflicted political position as a result of her attempt to integrate local British concerns with universal values. Scott imagines Sir George Ellison as a supposedly impartial spectator-like figure who can improve the morality of both his slaves and the other planters. In her focus on a mediating moral figure, Scott thinks about many of the same problems Smith raises in *The Theory*: both Scott and Smith address situatedness and the social constructedness of morality. If we read Scott within this context of moral sentiments, then we can better understand how she works to resolve the tensions between colonialist power structures and a sympathetic British identity that can accommodate the views of the other.

In *The Theory*, Smith is clear that morality is constructed by social conditions; our sense of the “propriety or impropriety of [our] sentiments” (II.i.4) is shaped by the responses of others to our feelings and actions. Over time sympathetic exchange with members of our society causes us to internalize our particular society’s values and directs our social compliance; consequently, our internal impartial spectator cannot represent a universal standard of morality or truth. However, Smith’s view of the impartial spectator is complicated. Smith argues our sense of morality is shaped by society, but he claims all humanity possess an innate and shared sense of right and wrong which the impartial spectator helps us detect: some aspects of morality are universal. Therefore, Smith claims, it is possible to stand outside our society to make truly

impartial judgments.⁴⁴ This is important because this is what Scott attempts to do; by urging her readers to follow Ellison's example and stand outside current British social mores, Scott wants to reform British morality by applying a universal standard of right and wrong in order to ameliorate slavery.

Ellison is Scott's ideal moral model, and by locating him in Jamaica, Scott places Ellison outside British domestic and imperial culture as a marginal spectator-like figure. Ellison has British interests at heart, but he can stand outside both British and Jamaican societies. He can therefore judge them disinterestedly because he is geographically distanced from the former and culturally distanced from the latter. Ellison is meant to act as a "higher tribunal" (*Theory* III.2) like the impartial spectator, even though, ultimately, he is unable to overcome his own situatedness. His sympathy ostensibly produces a system of universal morality that "civilize[s] [the slaves'] manners and rectif[ies] their dispositions" (Scott 17) as well as reforming the Anglo planters to become sympathetic, benevolent and humane. By emphasizing the need for an outside and disinterested perspective in order to enact social reform, Scott acknowledges the role situatedness plays in moral judgment. Scott suggests that slavery has corrupted both Jamaican and British morality, but because morality depends on cultural context, morality is not fixed and can be reformed if the current system is replaced by a new moral sentiment. Scott wants to replace the imperial ideology that believes tyranny and violence are acceptable within a particular context (i.e. in Jamaica) with a global moral system of benevolence. She believes the way to implement this global morality is to extend the British belief in liberty as a moral right past its national borders.

⁴⁴ I look at this contradiction in more detail in Chapter 5.

Upon arriving in Jamaica, Ellison specifically contrasts moral Britishness with immoral Jamaicanness. This moral dichotomy, according to Ellison, is the direct result of British liberty and Jamaican tyranny that is associated with the system of slavery: England, Ellison states, “with all its faults is conspicuously generous, frank, and merciful, because it is free,” while in Jamaica, slavery has created a tyrant out of a master who now “abuses a power he has no right to exert” (17). This moral corruption affects both the planters and the slaves.⁴⁵ Ellison notes that the “tyranny of their overseers” creates “sordid and abject” slaves whose resentment leads to immoral behaviour (16, 17). The key to Ellison’s plan to ameliorate and civilize his slaves lies in his superior paternal role; he will enable the process of moral judgment by becoming the slaves’ “General Parent” (14) and by providing a moral example for the planters to govern with sympathy. Ellison does not rule his “family” of slaves by tyranny or violence. In one of the more radical aspects of the text, Ellison takes it for granted that the slaves possess the same capacity for taste, feelings and principles as himself; they just need to be properly socially conditioned. Ellison’s sympathetic identification evokes reciprocal sympathy thereby creating an ideal community of industrious, happy and virtuous slaves which can then be replicated by the other planters on the island.

Ellison continually draws attention to the social construction of morality by suggesting that moral qualities are a product of cultural context rather than innate qualities. Their previous treatment and the prevailing moral situation in Jamaica are what keep Ellison’s slaves enslaved. In *The Theory*, Smith argues that sometimes necessity may make a culture adopt a practice that

⁴⁵ Oluadah Equiano makes a similar argument in his *Interesting Narrative*. Equiano argues that slavery is a disease which corrupts *all* individuals—slave owners and slaves alike. I discuss Equiano’s arguments about this topic in Chapter 5.

would be morally unacceptable in other times. The danger develops when that behavior or belief becomes “uninterrupted custom” (*Theory* V.2). Immorality thus can be “thoroughly authorized” in the culture’s moral code so that the whole society is led “away by the established custom” to “support the horrible abuse” (*Theory* V.2). This is what Scott suggests has happened in Jamaica. Ellison remarks that due to a “scarcity of natural inhabitants,” slavery was introduced “at the expense of humanity” (16), but now the tyranny and oppression associated with slavery have become commonplace behaviours. The slaves, as well as the overseers and planters on the island, must therefore undergo a period of moral education under the ameliorative plans of Ellison’s plantation so they know how to behave correctly. This narrative reveals the tension between Ellison’s attempts to separate his “benevolent” paternal British control in the name of a global civil society from “bad” tyrannical imperialism brought by conquest and slavery. Ellison undertakes massive reforms to plantation life, yet he perpetuates slavery.

Ironically *Sir George* is concerned with the importance of liberty to the formation of the moral subject, since, as Ellison observes in his comparison between England and Jamaica, the truly moral subject only arises when he is at liberty.⁴⁶ Ellison notes that the “Slave’s mind is as heavily fettered as his body” (17), and because of his lack of liberty the Slave lacks the capacity for moral, social behaviour. But because the slaves have been conditioned to this system of slavery, if granted their liberty, Ellison argues, they will likely behave as their tormentors have and perpetuate cruel behavior; “persons so habituated to slavery, requir[e] a different treatment than [is] shown to free servants” (11). Scott, like Smith, claims “natural liberty” (VII.ii.1) is a

⁴⁶ As we saw in *Clarissa*, the ability to judge for ourselves is true liberty. We must learn the process of moral judgment by first relying on the judgment of others, then internalizing the demands of the impartial spectator, but finally by being able to stand outside the dictates of society to listen to our internal impartial spectator.

universal moral right, but Ellison (or Scott) is not as disinterested as Smith's ideal impartial spectator. His situatedness blinds him to his own culturally defined morals—he cannot endorse a system that fully offers the same rights and status to all individuals.

Ellison alleges he will extend Britain's "particular" moral value of "freedom" (16) to Jamaica, and he tells his slaves he has "increased" their "liberty" (14) by providing them with "convenient habitations" and "a plentiful portion of all necessaries [and] assign[ing] to each a small share of peculiar property" (14). But the contradictions in his position are clear. Ellison claims, "'While you [slaves] perform your duty,' . . . 'I shall look upon you as *free servants*, or rather like my children, for whose well-being I am anxious and watchful'" (14), but if any slave "repeatedly offend[s]," then on his third offence he is no longer "worthy to be the object of my care" and "shall become the property of some master, whose chastisements may keep within the bounds of duty the actions of that man, whose heart cannot be influenced by gratitude" (15). Scott's novel advocates for proto-cosmopolitan reform, but, for Scott, British national interests in the end fail to contain global interests.⁴⁷ Scott's interest in maintaining British rule and racial hierarchies means Ellison's universal moral system only exists when it serves Britain's local, interests.

So far my account of *Sir George* generally agrees with critics who, like Ellis, argue that Scott endorses "the normative institutional violence of the system of chattel slavery," and she has "no interest in destroying or even destabilising" this "hegemonic system of coercion" (Ellis 128,

⁴⁷ Proto-cosmopolitan in the sense that Scott advocates for a cosmopolitan approach that anticipates what Cosmopolitan scholar Gilles Paquet defines as an approach that "promotes a mediated solidarity between strangers, emerging from our shared humanity" (84). But while Scott wants her readers to recognize the extended nature of their sympathetic community, she doesn't really combine multiple perspectives to create an integrative moral system. She imposes Britain's (ideal) particular morality to a global level. The way Scott's version of cosmopolitanism is exactly what modern critics criticize about cosmopolitan theory. I discuss these criticisms in more detail in Chapters 4, 5 and the Conclusion.

106). But Scott does have an interest in destabilizing imperial justifications for violence and tyranny. While she may not dismantle the legitimacy of Empire, her emphasis on situatedness and her negotiation between national and global moral obligations do demonstrate her interest in reforming a British moral identity to include the perspectives of colonial others within a transatlantic sympathetic community. Scott emphasizes the need for individuals or nations to recognize the situatedness of moral judgment, and she demonstrates that local social morals can be challenged or overcome. Social reform is enacted by standing outside prevalent social judgment and implementing a larger global system of morality that recognizes the shared humanity of others. For example, Ellison challenges the West Indian system of punishing slaves with physical abuse because he believes all humans have a right to care and safety. Ellison is critical of current slaveholding practices and the lack of morality that enables them; Ellison does ameliorate the living conditions for his slaves and he manages to change the slaveholding practices of the Anglo-Jamaican planters.

Where Scott's thought becomes complicated is in the conflict between national and global economic interest. Ellison effects a change to slaveholding practices in Jamaica, but this amelioration is not effected by Ellison's appeals to a universal moral system but rather to the planters' (and Britain's) economic interests. Ellison "made it the object of his constant endeavors to prevail with all his acquaintance to treat their negroes with humanity," but, the narrator notes, "his arguments might possibly have proved ineffectual, had not the good conduct of his own slaves, their more than common industry and dispatch of business, shewed the advantages arising from it to their master" (36). In other words, because Ellison's plantation becomes so economically productive, and there is no risk of insurrection from his slaves, his system "could not fail of influencing men attached to their own interest; and Mr. Ellison had the satisfaction of

seeing the condition of the slaves much mended in the greater part of the island” (36). Ellison’s universal morals do not triumph; his sympathy creates profit-oriented economic results. Ellison’s sympathy seems to promote universal standards of morality, but it ends by establishing a “natural” social hierarchy dependent on the slaves’ use to British economic concerns.

Scott reveals her national interest when Ellison suggests that his plantation reforms can also reform English landholding. Ellison’s claim that he regards his slaves as “free servants” (14) implicitly correlates enslaved Africans with oppressed laborers in England. Ellison is sympathetic and (supposedly) acts disinterestedly in both England and Jamaica.⁴⁸ He treats his slaves in Jamaica and his laborers upon his return to England in much the same manner and looks upon both groups “as his children” (31). Ellison maintains current social hierarchies by using a paternal model of control—his morality indicates his social superiority, while the learned morality of his laborers and his slaves indicates their willingness to accept their inferior social position as natural.⁴⁹ But Ellison’s return to England becomes morally instructive for British landowners, since, as Bannet notes, “wealthy West Indian planters who returned to England were caricatured as self-indulgent, showy, and despotic nabobs who did not behave like Englishmen” (“Scott and America” 644). Ellison’s example refutes this caricature and his

⁴⁸ As Eve Tavor Bannet notes, “[d]isinterested philanthropy to the poor was central to what Scott called her ‘practical Christianity,’ and she represented it in all her novels” (“Sarah Scott and America” 643)

⁴⁹ David Brion Davis in “Capitalism, Abolitionism, Hegemony” argues that opponents of slavery often inadvertently promoted the exploitation of laborers in England by advocating for “free” labor; English rejection of colonial slavery “helped to legitimate both the existing system of class power and the emerging concept of free labor as an impersonal marketable commodity . . . In response to proslavery indictments of the wage-labor system, most abolitionists accentuated the moral contrast between what they conceived of as the free and slave worlds. Their greatest hope, after all, was to end the involuntary shipment of Africans to the New World and to transform black slaves into cheerful, obedient, grateful laborers whose wants could be satisfied only by working voluntarily for wages. This hope rested on the assumption that the British system of labor had achieved a reasonable balance between freedom and order and could serve as a norm against which harsher regimes could be measured” (214).

sympathetic disinterestedness to groups outside both his social and cultural circles speaks to Scott's continued belief in the moral responsibilities of the upper class.

For Scott and Smith the key to moral improvement is humanity's innate desire to be not just praised but praiseworthy (Smith, *Theory* III.2). This effect is achieved through the sympathetic imagination: the pleasure of being praiseworthy in the eyes of the spectator makes us behave in accordance with that imagined approval. Scott sets Ellison up to represent the disinterestedness of the impartial spectator. In Jamaica the slaves learn the "correct" moral behaviour via sympathetic exchange with Ellison, while the planters learn to correct their behavior by following Ellison's economic model. In England similar reforms protect the interests of the laboring classes, and Ellison's moral ideal produces a better British society. Scott, like Smith, claims that we are social beings and without the approval or disapproval of society we have no moral selves; however, Scott's connection between Ellison as an impartial spectator-like figure and his paternal rule differentiates her from Smith.

Both Scott and Smith emphasize that moral behaviour is dictated by cultural situation and we learn what is appropriate only by interacting with our fellow members of society. Society's approval or disapproval will be our guide to what we believe to be appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. Our first moral guides, as Smith notes, are usually our parents. This guidance is beneficial since moral judgment must be developed. Smith however emphasizes that if we must continually rely on another's judgment we become trapped within a hierarchy of power. This is the danger in paternal rule. If we always rely on the judgment of an authority figure, we never attain liberty or the capacity for disinterested moral judgment. Morality may be a social construct, but the ultimate goal for moral judgment is independent thought. This is how social customs may be reformed. Smith notes that different motivations may govern moral actions for

different societies,⁵⁰ but the truly moral individual is the individual who can act “independent[ly] of all positive institution” because this individual in his “independency upon the public opinion [can] have little temptation” to act against “the natural rules of justice” (VII.iv.1, III.2).

Scott tries to replicate this disinterested judgment, and she does show that immoral cultural norms like slavery can be remedied by making individuals aware that they are all “citizen[s] of the world” (15). However, like many writers of the period, Scott portrays her Afro-Jamaican characters as permanently childlike. Ellison does not, as Smith urges a parent should, prepare his slaves for independent thought. They remain dependent on his “superior” moral judgment. Although Ellison’s sympathy allows him to acknowledge colonial others’ shared humanity, he does not recognize their moral independence and as a result they cannot be liberated. The slaves’ “dependence on him [Ellison] . . . could not fail in proving of great service to them, both as a restraint on their inclinations to evil, and an encouragement to their virtues” (195). Ellison’s sympathy is a means of colonial control. Scott’s cultural situatedness prevents her embodiment of British morality from being impartial; she tries to create a moral code that transcends national boundaries, but her national interest outweighs her global interest.

The questions of identity within a national and global context that the three authors I discuss in this chapter address are questions which continue to trouble authors within the sentimental and Enlightenment tradition throughout the rest of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. The sentimentalists search for understanding among national, cultural or racial groups, but often find universal consensus to be impossible. Richardson, Sterne and Scott try

⁵⁰ What makes Smith so innovative for his time is his *Theory*’s openness to culturally different understandings of morality: “The different situations of different ages and countries . . . give different characters to the generality of those who live in them . . . [traits that are] either blamable or praise-worthy, vary, according to that degree which is usual in their own country, and in their own times” (V.2).

relativizing moral claims to unify difference, but they show, sometimes inadvertently, that recognizing and celebrating difference is the only way to enable independence and thus moral judgment. Reading these authors in conjunction with Smith shows that in order to move towards equality, individuals must challenge their situatedness through the negotiation of the universal and the particular. For Smith, moral growth only occurs once the individual can stand enough outside his own self-preference to acknowledge and accept the other's difference by enlarging his perspective and imagining himself as other; this growth cannot occur within the confines of a single view. We must be able to see ourselves in the other, but also to reason from the other's point of view.

The rest of this project examines novels from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-centuries that are not always considered sentimental, but, I argue, they should be considered within this tradition. All the novels discussed in this project question the way sentimental ideals such as disinterestedness, the sympathetic imagination and the impartial spectator can mediate national and transatlantic identities. How can a collective national interest develop in a way that is fair to the particular differences within that collective? How can the collective include the voices of those whose interests seem to oppose the dominant culture? Do national boundaries enable or hinder a nation's growth? In the next chapter I look at the way Charles Brockden Brown's novel *Ormond* (1799) demonstrates and critiques the limits of national enfranchisement. In Brown's post-revolutionary moment the sympathetic imagination and spectatorship continue to be bound up with the dilemma of differentiating the self (or nation) from imperial self-preference, while also recognizing the self (or nation) as part of a transatlantic society beyond national boundaries.

Chapter 2: Revising Sentiment: Charles Brockden Brown, Smith and a New Nation

In the previous chapter I examined the way Smith's ideas on disinterestedness, the sympathetic imagination and the impartial spectator as key components of British sentimental literature. In the hands of Samuel Richardson, Laurence Sterne and Sarah Robinson Scott, disinterestedness and sympathy become fundamental qualities of a moral, British identity. At the same time, however, these authors push the limits of national borders to imagine sentimentalism as generating a new global identity of shared humanity. We can see the difficulty these authors share in negotiating the boundaries between national and global identities particularly in relation to questions of empire: how can empire be justified in the face of a common global identity that demands equal rights for its disparate components? What all these authors share is their conviction in an underlying British morality, but their colonies did not feel the same way. American Independence in 1776 signaled to Britons and new Americans alike that the British Empire was no longer the imagined model of moral virtue. Writers like Charles Brockden Brown living in America were now faced with a whole new set of questions about national identity and the constitution of a moral society. In this chapter I look at how the transatlantic context of Brown's novel *Ormond; or, The Secret Witness* (1799) reveals connections with Smith's sentimental thought that help Brown rethink assumptions of exclusionary national identity.

Brown is now recognized as one of the founding fathers of American literature.⁵¹

Criticisms of Brown's work focus on how Brown's political allegiances shape his vision of

⁵¹ Brown's status as one of the founders of American literature is based on the fact that he was one of the first American writers to make a living in America from his writings, and statements from critics like Robert Levine who claim Brown is a "sort of Aristotelian prime mover" of American fiction, the "father of American Romance" (*Conspiracy* 29). For an inclusive summary of critical statements claiming Brown as a founder of American literature see Jeffrey Weinstock p.1-6. However, Brown claims a transatlantic connection for himself and for an influence on his style and early works. He claims Samuel Richardson's "instructive texts" ("Letter to Bringhurst

America, yet these criticisms on the overall cultural politics of Brown's writing, generally, remain divided along Federalist and Republican lines. These criticisms have tried to simplify the complex ways in which Brown's writing intersects with larger ideological narratives about America's early national period by subscribing to an either/or approach regarding Brown's politics. Brown *either* advocated for a vision of America congruent with Republicanism, which saw virtuous citizenship as dependent on the universal and "disinterested" experiences equated with equal rights and equal opportunity, *or* he supported the Federalists' hierarchical blend of paternalistic and "deliverer nation" rationales associated with imperial expansion. Scholarship on Brown maintains that Federalist and Republican views must be mutually exclusive and consequently Brown must promote either one or the other.

In an argument related to Brown's political allegiance, critics also disagree over the extent of Brown's radicalism. Critics who frame Brown's works within a political context tend to roughly align Brown-the-Republican with Brown-the-radical, while Brown-the-Federalist is seen as Brown-the-conservative. David Clark, for example, argues that Brown's sympathies lay "firmly in the ranks of the Revolutionaries" who aimed to "disseminate the radicalism" (192) associated with a nascent Republican distrust of social constraints on individual liberty. On the other hand, critics like Jane Tompkins contend Brown's works are a "direct reflection of Federalist skepticism" (51) about a society without governmental direction and hierarchy. According to Tompkins, Brown's defense of conservative policies criticizes Republican-led

May 20 1972" *Collected Writings* 88) first inspired him to write. Brown writes to his friend Bringhurst about a sketch for an epistolary novel "The Story of Julius" (1792) that like Richardson, he (Brown) aims to trace "the mazes of the human heart" (91) inflamed by noble passions.

“conditions [that] inevitably give birth to demagoguery and thence to tyranny” (Tompkins 47) in a society now governed by rational rather than sympathetic social bonds.⁵²

Disputes surrounding Brown’s political allegiances arise because critics oversimplify the nuances and complexities of his works. Critical accounts of Brown have categorized Brown’s four early novels⁵³ as radical novels of purpose⁵⁴ indebted to revolutionary thinkers like William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft,⁵⁵ while his two later sentimental novels as well as his later historical and political writing are generally seen to support a conservative Federalist agenda. Steven Watts, for example, argues Brown’s politics and aesthetics underwent a significant transformation “[o]n or about April 1800” (131), at which point Brown abandoned his “putatively radical fictions to become a ‘bourgeois moralist’ and advocate for a belief in ‘manifest destiny’” (177). Watts’ representative comments suggest that critics have read Brown as discarding his earlier radical sympathies in favor of “the psychobiographical argument that

⁵²Roughly aligning Republicanism with radicalism, and Federalism with conservatism simplifies the complex and still emerging political views of early America; however, the danger in simplification is inaccuracy, as Robert Levine warns: “we need to be wary of simple allegorizations of ‘Federalist’ as ‘conservative reactionary’ and ‘Republican’ as ‘good democratic progressive.’ After all, by the early nineteenth century it was the Republicans who were committed to Indian removal and western expansionism, [while] . . . many of the supposedly reactionary and elitist Federalists were actually in the antislavery vanguard” (*Dislocating Race* 360). Levine’s warning is profoundly pertinent in Brown’s case, as readings constructed through these equations are easily dismantled.

⁵³Brown’s four major novels are recognized as *Wieland; or the Transformation an American Tale* (1798), *Ormond; or the Secret Witness* (1799), *Arthur Mervyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793* (1799), *Edgar Huntly; or Memoirs of a Sleep Walker* (1799). His two sentimental novels are *Jane Talbot* (1801) and *Clara Howard* (1801).

⁵⁴Jeffrey Weinstock defines “novels of purpose” as “productions” popular during the 1790s and after “by socially conscious writers in England who believed that the novel could be used as a medium through which to debate contemporary issues and as an instrument of social protest and change” (21). Among the novelists of purpose upon whom Brown modeled his own writings were Jean Jacques Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. In these writers Brown found fellow feeling for a belief in the innate morality and essential liberty of the citizen.

⁵⁵Barnard and Shapiro introduce the term “Woldwinitite” in their introduction to *Edgar Huntly* as an abbreviation of Wollstonecraft and Godwin. In their words, they “use the term ‘Woldwinitite’” because “[t]he term ‘Godwinians’ erases the crucial role of Wollstonecraft and other women in this group, a role that was particularly important for Brown and many other writers” (xxi). Hereafter I will also refer to Wollstonecraft and Godwin’s shared ideologies as “Woldwinitite” philosophy.

Brown's writing and cultural politics became more conservative after the 'youthful' novelistic period" (Barnard, Kamrath and Shapiro 254).

Although more recent scholarship has begun to question divisive, either/or views of Brown's writing career, critics still find Brown's politics contradictory. Even individual works are deemed a "chaos of narration" (Rosenthal 4) full of "inconsistent attitudes of which scholarship has yet to make full sense" (Stern, "State of Women" 183). Watts and Tompkins claim that Brown may youthfully have tended towards radicalism by questioning "the [European] hegemonic ideology of the day" (Watts xvii), but ultimately, despite these apparent "lapses" he promotes that very hegemony in a conservative "bourgeois creed of genteel self-control" (Watts xviii) which "warn[s] people" of the "horrifying consequences" of American independence and demonstrates his rejection of Jeffersonian Republicanism (Tompkins 44). Similarly, Andy Doolen claims that the ideologies presented in Brown's novels are "incompatible" since Brown's texts simultaneously embrace a Federalist agenda concerned with "imperial warfare and expansionism," that "eschew[ed] democratic sympathies" (42, 47) as well as a strong, Republican, "patriotic belief" that America's values would extinguish the "logic of empire" (xiv). Brown's Republican tendencies specifically condemn the "imperialist dimensions" of the Federalist's agenda of American exceptionalism" (Kamrath, *Historicism* 367) by embracing the "heroic dream of egalitarianism and freedom" (Doolen xiv).

Critics like Doolen or Tompkins may find Brown "inconsistent" because they insist Brown's political allegiances must have shaped his American vision; they see Brown as *either* participating in Federalist exceptionalist rhetoric that construed "a vision for American empire that was both benevolent and powerful in purpose" (Wertheimer 11). *Or* they see him as a Republican who shaped an American tradition both culturally and politically distinct and

separate from the rest of the world. In this Republican iteration of Brown's ideology, America resisted European determinist elitism along with Federalist hierarchies in a discourse of liberty and equality that needed to be isolated from the rest of the world; Brown supported Jefferson's Republican-Democrats that claimed America must protect itself from outside corruptions with an "ocean of fire" (Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Elbridge Gerry" 1044).

To simplify discussion, these political arguments stage the debate between Federalists and Republicans as a founding dialogue with each position representing a diametrically opposed and coherent political theory. However, neither political position fully covers the American identity Brown's novels articulate. It is no wonder critics who read Brown through a purely political lens claim Brown's works are "seriously flawed" (Tompkins 40). Reading Brown as either Federalist or Republican simply creates inconsistencies because Brown's main framing ideology is not politically aligned. I argue that in order to make sense of Brown's vision for America we must expand the scope within which we read Brown and stop reading Brown as an either/or author. If, instead of reading Brown through his political allegiances, we read Brown through an aesthetic moral theory based on widely disseminated Scottish Enlightenment ideals, particularly Adam Smith's theories of morality generated by the impartial spectator, we can make sense of his works' apparent contradictions.⁵⁶ We can read Brown's texts as aware of all of the politics, uncertainties, conflicts, and debates of his contemporary moment, yet also see Brown as formulating a fluid American identity which takes pride in and critiques its state of

⁵⁶ Scottish Enlightenment aesthetic texts were imported to America in large numbers. Colonial booksellers lists from as early as the 1760s list texts such as Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks of Man, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), Hutcheson's *Inquiry Into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), and Gerard's *Essay on Taste* (1759). These books were widely available as David Lundberg and Henry May demonstrate: "from 1777 to 1790 imported and reprinted editions of Kames, Blair, and Smith first reached between a quarter and one half of American college and circulating libraries" (Cahill 27).

moral civilization. Reading Brown and Smith together reveals how Brown sees his new nation as at once unique and a member of a transatlantic community.

An Uneasy Fit: Republican or Federalist?

Before I move to a more detailed analysis of the way Brown and Smith think about moral theory, it is necessary to unpack the criticism of Brown's work that sees him as nationalistic and politically aligned. The temptation to read Brown politically is in many ways justified. As Tompkins, among others, notes, American literature written during the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary decades was regularly used as a vehicle for political statements regarding national politics and the future of the republic (44). A representative comment from Brown's contemporary Joel Barlow, author of the national epic *The Columbiad* (1807), captures the politics/literature association for early American writers: "To induce the men who now govern the world to adopt these ideas [rational systems of public felicity], is the duty of those who now possess them" (*Advice to the Privileged Orders* 99). Barlow's comment shows how American Revolutionary and Post-Revolutionary writers saw themselves as influencing America's national direction; "[t]o have political ideas, to express them in literary form . . . was not only standard practice in Brown's day, it was the *raison d'être* of an American author" (Tompkins 45). Thus, to read Brown as political novelist is an easy choice, but interpretations of Brown's works are limited by this nationalist approach. I read Brown as part of a transatlantic tradition of sentimental theory. Brown adapts Smith's foundational aesthetic and moral theories in order to shape an American ideal within its global context. This approach does not supplant political readings, but rather supplements this work. Smith's moral theory is crucial to understanding Brown's vision for his society, but it is also impossible to understand Brown's intervention into

the early nation's intellectual environment without understanding some of the economic and political factors shaping Brown's American experience. Therefore, in order to see why sentimental theory is a better lens for reading Brown, it is necessary to understand both the lure of reading Brown politically and why these readings limit the possibilities of his texts.

Reading Brown's works as vehicles for Republican ideologies in many ways makes sense because the frequent democratic impulses that reject centralized authority in Brown's writing coincide with Republican policies "that all men are created equal." The ideal relationship between the individual and society was, for Republicans, guided by values of equal rights and equal opportunity. Although the phrase "liberty, equality, fraternity" is the French Revolution's manifesto, many Republicans sympathized, at least before the Reign of Terror, with the Revolutionaries; the French call for equality and brotherhood echoed Republicans' desires for self-governance. Republicans valued self-governance and equality; consequently, they idealized the bonds created by fraternal friendship and rejected the pressures or partialities created by social relationships dictated by state-institution such as the hierarchical bonds of marriage or between king and subject. Fraternity then came to stand for America's difference from corrupt European societies. Fraternal bonds were seen as a way to create an egalitarian and democratic nation by disassembling the oppressive constraints on individual liberty that hierarchical social bonds imposed and in their place creating disinterested citizens. True liberty is created when *reason* overcomes feeling in order that truth and not private preference or social obligation is served.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ A good way of understanding this aspect of Republican philosophy is through Godwin's famous example of the valet and Fenelon the archbishop of Cambray in his 1793 *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*. Godwin argues that, "The illustrious archbishop of Cambray was of more worth than his valet, and there are few of us that would hesitate to pronounce, if his palace were in flames, and the life of only one of them could be preserved, which of the two

Critics who align Brown with Republicanism often do so because of Brown's admiration of William Godwin and Woldwinite philosophy. Texts by Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft and other British radicals were widely circulated and extremely popular during the 1790s in America. Woldwinite views directly influenced political issues relating to limits on government power and whether individuals were capable of self-governance. These issues have been simplistically divided along Republican and Federalist lines: Republicans "held an essentially Godwinian optimistic belief in man's innate integrity" and therefore imagined a nation capable of self-regulating equality with "minimal federal oversight or interference in private affairs" (Weinstein 14). Federalists, on the other hand, "adopted a more pessimistic attitude toward human nature and argued for the necessity of external controls to maintain law and order and to regulate the economy" (Weinstein 14). This governmental structure, while rejecting European aristocratic values, nonetheless preserved some hierarchies.

That Brown was influenced by the Woldwinites is undeniable: in his journals of 1795 Brown refers to Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* as his "Oracle" (qtd. in Kafer 66). Several critics have also examined Brown's responses to Godwinian and Wolstonecraftian politics in his (1798) *Alcuin* a dialogue on women's rights.⁵⁸ Brown was a member of several groups dedicated to the "project [of] friendly converse" (Tuete 151) which, in a Republican-

ought to be preferred . . . Suppose the valet had been my brother, my father, or my benefactor. This would not alter the truth of the proposition . . . What magic is there in the pronoun "my," that should justify us in overturning the decisions of impartial truth? . . . Of what consequence is it that they are mine?" (II.ii. 1).

⁵⁸ Steven Watts claims *Ormond* is a "rather wooden novel of [Godwinian] ideas" whose characters of "somewhat mechanical representation" are "caught up in political and intellectual agitation of the late-eighteenth-century Atlantic world" (89). Bryan Waterman claims that Godwin's and Wollstonecraft's "religious and sexual radicalism" is the key to Brown's early fiction (98). Other critics have also noticed Brown's progressive tendencies regarding women. Mark Kamrath argues Brown displays a "Godwinian focus on the use and abuse of political power" where "both heterosexual marriage and queer romantic union [are] possible means by which Constantia might preserve her 'homely liberty'" (*Historicism* 111, 43) and Jeffrey Weinstock states that, "*Alcuin* is thoroughly Woldwinite in its repudiation of arguments for the natural inferiority of women and its radical critique of marriage and related laws disenfranchising women" (14).

minded train of thought, Brown saw as freeing from hierarchies of duties and obligations.⁵⁹ Brown clearly participated eagerly in this intellectual environment; he was also founder, editor and writer for several publications that reviewed and debated political and philosophical issues of the period. The argument for both Brown's radicalism and his Republicanism, then, hinges on his espousal of democratically minded fraternity along with his rejection of hierarchically arranged social orders and the corresponding constraints these hierarchies imposed on individual liberty. However, we cannot make the mistake of assuming that because Brown admired radical Woldwinitic ideologies that in some ways converge with Republican politics, his political allegiances were also uncomplicatedly Republican. As we will see democracy and equality, while certainly key Republican ideologies, are by no means uniquely associated with its political position.

If we treat Brown's works as though he were not writing "well-made novel[s], but political tract[s]" (Tompkins 44), then problems with political arguments are easily apparent: the ideas present in Brown's works do not align neatly with either Republican or Federalist political ideologies. If, so the argument goes, Brown's early novels are clearly Republican in their espousal of democratic, egalitarian and fraternal ideals, then Brown must also believe in the cornerstone of Republicanism: disinterested virtue, or, rational disinterestedness—the idea that reason and self-abstraction could guarantee equality and social harmony.⁶⁰ But Brown clearly

⁵⁹ For more information on Brown's thoughts on social clubs see Brown's *Letters in The Collected Writings of Charles Brockden Brown vol. I* particularly "Brown to?, Dec. 15, 1800" (471), and "Brown to Joseph Bringhurst Jr., July 29, 1793" (247).

⁶⁰ Self-abstraction refers to the act of disavowing all private interests to act as an "abstract" citizen, one who puts aside particularizing status attributes, interests, and desires. This principle, in republican discourse, ostensibly leads to equality because, as Michael Warner states, "[w]hat you say will carry force not because of who you are but despite who you are. Implicit in this principle is a utopian universality that would allow people to transcend the given realities of their bodies and their status" ("Mass Public" 382).

does not agree with this foundational tenet of Republicanism.⁶¹ Like Smith and Richardson, Brown champions morality as a combination of *feeling* mediated by *reason*. Brown's moral model works against the dictates of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson about the primacy of reason in moral judgment.⁶²

Madison and Jefferson, founding members of the Democrat-Republican Party in 1791, write that the ideal nation would be governed by rational representatives. These representatives must be familiar with their constituents, but they cannot feel for them because this would "render him unduly attached to these, and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects" (Hamilton, Madison and Jay *Federalist 10* 83). That is, representatives who do not practice disinterestedness will be too partial to the feelings and interests of a single group and leave no room for "enlarged conceptions" in the nation's interest (Hamilton, Madison and Jay *Federalist 10* 159). This national ideology is easily translated for the local and individual: the virtuous and disinterested Republican citizen fulfills his/her civic responsibility when he/she is able to transcend private interest to enact a disinterested loyalty to community and nation therefore reducing the need for government interference. But while Brown agrees that the ideal citizen must overcome the self, he fundamentally and consistently disagrees with the Republican notion that rational disinterestedness creates moral judgment.

⁶¹ See note 57 for an example of the way reason should overcome sympathetic bonds. While Godwin's account is more radical than Republican tenets, and presages utilitarianism, it is a useful example of the ways in which Republican ideologies construct virtue as acting for the communal good rather than acting from feeling which is partial to the self. In this way man's innate sense of justice can overcome socially imposed bonds of obligation or private affection.

⁶² Sound familiar? As we saw in Chapter 1 in the section on *Clarissa*, The particular blend of feeling and reason for which Brown advocates is part of Smith's basic premise on morality. For Smith, the morality occasioned by the ideal impartial spectator arises from the dual considerations of "what he himself . . . feel[s], and . . . his present reason and judgment (I.i.1).

For Brown feeling and sympathy, not reason, are the most important factors in creating ideal citizens and an ideal nation. Brown questions the moral implications for a society without sympathetic bonds and demonstrates that without feeling, reason quickly turns to self-interest. In *Ormond*, one of the early so-called radical novels supposedly corresponding with Brown's Republican phase, Ormond, the novel's villain, is also the most rationally disinterested character. Ormond is rational disinterestedness personified. He is superficially the very epitome of the Republican ideal, but Ormond's murderous villainy demonstrates that reason without sympathy is easily corrupted. Ormond claims to act with civic responsibility and that his actions all promote general benevolence for the greater good; however, these claims become perverted when Ormond possesses no real feeling for individuals.⁶³

Ormond performs a mockery of the impartial spectator. He literally becomes other people by disguising himself and observing others' actions in order to gain access to private knowledge. But his spectatorship does not bring him closer to these individuals. His spectatorship is intended to increase his power over others, yet Ormond claims his impersonations are virtuous. He uses "rational disinterestedness" to justify his illicit spectatorship: "the treachery of mankind compelled him to resort to [illicit spying]. If they should deal in a manner as upright and explicit as himself, it would be superfluous" (87). This is the same type of logic Ormond later applies to justify murder; Ormond believes himself and his "benevolent" agenda to be rationally superior to the feelings of others. With no other checks and balances, Ormond pushes his mistress to commit suicide, claims it is his right to rape the novel's heroine, Constantia Dudley, and orchestrates the

⁶³ In other anti-Republican moves, Brown shows that the lack of visible or external authorities means that there are no checks on Ormond's moral code. Without a higher and external moral code Ormond relies on his own judgment of what the greater good entails. Once Ormond's moral code is corrupt, there is, as Smith puts it, "scarce any particular practice so gross which it cannot authorize" (*Theory* V.2)

murders of Mr. Dudley and his apprentice Craig because, Ormond believes, their deaths are for the greater good.

Ormond's rationally sanctioned crime spree reveals that a lack of sympathy will doom Republican ideals. If Brown's aim was truly to promote a Republican agenda, then why does the lack of higher, external, (moral) authority and a deficit of sympathy consistently cause such obstacles to national development in his writing? Moreover, in contrast to the writings of Republicans like Thomas Jefferson, and St. John de Crèvecoeur where America becomes the "Promised Land," a "haven of security and freedom, a place where men and women . . . curbed their passions and their selfishness in the interests of the public good" (Tompkins 48), Brown's novels reliably end with his protagonists forced to leave America in favour of European countries. The American societies they leave are hotbeds of indifference, vice and contagion.

On the other hand, if we read Brown as using Smith's moral theory as a starting point from which to accept and defend his vision for America, we can find coherence in Brown's works. Brown's emphasis on sympathetic over rational bonds is consistent throughout his works and finds its origins in Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Smith states that corruption occurs when certain conditions arise: the inhibition of our capacity for sympathy due to an indifference to the condition of our social inferiors, an encouragement of individualism and the associated fragmentation of social ties as well as a growing indifference to noble-mindedness and acceptance of moral compromise. He writes, "[m]en who . . . feel so little for another, with whom they have no particular connection, in comparison of what they feel for themselves . . . have it so much in their power to hurt [other men]" in which case "the different members of it [society], are, as it were, dissipated and scattered abroad by the violence and opposition of their discordant affections" (*Theory* II.ii.3). In other words, Smith's particular concern is that the

eradication of our natural feelings of sympathy for the well-being of our neighbors will result in society's corruption and eventual dissolution. Smith admits that a society can continue to function in the absence of benevolence *if* individuals' self-interest can facilitate general good, but, Smith argues, these types of societies are easily corrupted.⁶⁴ Smith's aim in his moral theory is to promote and maximize the benefits of mutual affection. Feeling must be present in a virtuous society that continues to progress and flourish. When "love," "gratitude," and "friendship," are present, "the society flourishes and is happy. All the different members of it are bound together by the agreeable bands of love and affection, and are, as it were, drawn to one common centre of mutual good offices" (*Theory* II.ii.3).

Brown's belief in egalitarian, democratic, individual liberty based in bonds of friendship can also be accounted for in Smith's theory. Smith defines a noble individual and a virtuous society as one committed to the spirit of egalitarianism. Ann Arbor identifies Smith's theories with egalitarianism on the basis that Smith believes any individual has the right to liberty rather than being "coerc[ed] [by] specific choices and overriding preferences" in the manner of "hierarchicalism" (xvi). In section II of *The Theory* in particular, Smith's purpose is to find a "social virtue" (*Theory* II.ii.1) that can overcome mankind's propensity to dominate others—this virtue, he concludes, is justice. As we saw in Chapter 1, the further away the spectator is from an agent, the harder it is to sympathize. Smith argues that inequalities can create this detachment just as easily as geographical distance, and thus we need general laws to support a society that

⁶⁴ This point becomes particularly important to Equiano, whom I discuss in Chapter 5. For Equiano, living in a society still enmeshed in the slave trade, it is hard to argue that societies cannot survive without the presence of mutual affection binding all members of society because he is part of the evidence that not only can these societies survive but they can prosper financially. Equiano must therefore build on the point Smith makes here that while these societies may survive for a time, without sympathy, or a system to take the place of sympathy, self-interest will eventually lead to corruption and the society will cease to flourish.

sees “each individual” as “naturally . . . regarded as having a right” (II.ii.1) to justice. Justice, as we saw in the first chapter’s section on Laurence Sterne, is activated by an individual’s sense of resentment. It is feeling that initiates the sympathetic imagination and our sense of injustice against the dignity of equals. Consequently, for Smith sympathy and equality are intimately connected as the basis for an ideal society for to neglect them “is destructive of all liberty, security, and justice” (*Theory* II.ii.1); an unequal society is an unjust society.⁶⁵

Brown, like Smith, emphasizes the need for sympathetic ties because the very disinterestedness that encourages impartiality can also promote “hardness of heart” (*Theory* VI.iii.15). Brown, in line with Smith and contra Republican rhetoric, believes that rational disinterestedness makes an individual “insensible to the feelings and distresses of other people,” and “exclude[s] him from the friendship of all the world” (*Theory* VI.iii.15). On these grounds Brown expands on Smith’s theories to differentiate between “rational disinterestedness,” which violates mankind’s sociable and natural disposition for mutual sympathy, and “sympathetic disinterestedness,” which recognizes human dignity and urges us to moral action because “we sympathize with the sorrow of our fellow-creature whenever we see his distress” (*Theory* II.i.2.5). This difference produces moral effects of sympathy which Brown details throughout his writing career. If we retain sympathetic ties, we can imagine both others’ situations and how

⁶⁵ Other critics like Iain McLean have claimed Smith approved of egalitarianism in economics. McLean claims Smith understood economics to be “a radically egalitarian disciple” that aims to minimize distinctions of rank (80). However, this being said as Derek Parfit argues, Smith privileges a concern—sympathy and alleviation of distress—for, for example, the poor, rather than an eradication of all hierarchy; consequently, his position may more accurately be described as “prioritarian” (201). Also, Norbert Waszek has argued that Smith applies a two-tiered model, rather than a strictly egalitarian one, of morality with different standards for different classes. Waszek basis his claim on Smith’s assertions that the morality of general rules is indispensable in shaping the “coarse clay of which the bulk of mankind are formed,” if not for those “of the happiest mold” (*Theory* III.iv.1), along with Smith’s differentiation in *Wealth of Nations* between loose aristocratic morality and moral for “the common people” (*Wealth* 86). This is an instance where Brown clearly sees the potential in Smith’s arguments, but he extends Smith’s basics for a more radical sense of egalitarianism to fit his cultural moment.

others see us; therefore, we are always morally accountable. Without this crucial distinction, Brown believes, disinterestedness degenerates into individualism and injustice. Brown's villains are without exception those individuals who are without sympathy.

Brown demonstrates that rational disinterestedness can lead to selfishness and individualism. Therefore, he sees the Republican ideal as open to corruption. In *Ormond*, Brown describes Philadelphia's yellow fever epidemic of 1793. A destitute Constantia takes it upon herself to nurse the infected Mary Whiston who has been abandoned by her brother Whiston. Despite the fact that Whiston and the residents of the farm house from whom Whiston seeks aid when he falls ill could be said to be acting in the best interests of society in preventing the spread of infection, Brown condemns Whiston and the family for not sympathizing and offering help where needed; it is their rational disinterestedness that is their undoing. Both Whiston and the family succumb to disease, both the literal yellow fever and a figurative selfishness. The narrator notes, "they probably imbibed their disease from the tainted atmosphere around them. The life of Whiston and their own lives, might have been saved by affording the wanderer an asylum and suitable treatment, or at least their own deaths might have been avoided" (37).

Brown wants to protect America's ideals of liberty, equality and democracy, but he is suspicious of all forms of individualism (while all individuals are entitled to liberty, it should be limited to the extent that individuals profit when they meet the community's needs) because he sees the resulting lack of sympathetic social bonds and respect for social order as leading to the violent radicalism associated with the French Revolution. Consequently, readings that try to claim Brown is endorsing Republican politics fail because Brown so obviously disagrees with the Republican founding fantasy that self-abstraction, disinterestedness, and reason could guarantee Americans' liberty and equality.

Readings that claim Brown's writing promotes a Federalist and/or conservative agenda also cannot encompass Brown's ideologies. Federalist politics, in contrast to Republican principles, were skeptical about citizens' ability to govern themselves. Tompkins sees Brown's "Federalist skepticism" (68) in *Wieland* in Wieland's descent into madness. She argues that the novel expresses Brown's horror at the "consequences of independence" and his "plea for the restoration of civic authority in a post-Revolutionary age" (44). Bill Christophersen claims the *Wielands'* isolation "poses a highly skeptical vision of God and the American experience—one that stresses the abyss on whose verge the nation's temple has been erected" (51). For Federalists, the security of the government and the nation should not have to depend on each individual's intrinsic virtue; the dismantling of social bonds and social hierarchy means, for them, a descent into social disorder. Federalists also insisted that laws made according to smaller local governments, or worse, the individual, led inevitably to tyranny. They argued that liberty could only be guaranteed by establishing a direct line of loyalty from individuals to the power of the nation-state.

A reading, therefore, of *Ormond* that places Brown as a Federalist might see both Ormond and Craig, the apprentice who kills Mr. Dudley, as "confidence men" of the type made possible by the dismantling of social hierarchies. Traditional social ties stress reciprocal obligations of moral watchfulness, but Craig and Ormond can change their identities, their occupations, social positions, nationalities and even race at will. Uninhibited by traditional restraints and unencumbered by loyalties to the community or the nation, they warn us that immorality results when there are no social authorities in place that help define and fix the self.

Readings that place Brown in the Federalist camp tend to do so because Brown describes the need for a higher authority. In his writing the lack of a higher authority consistently causes

social breakdown which spells out dire consequences for the majority of his characters—murder, fratricide, exile, and social banishment. Accordingly critics draw the conclusion that for Brown revolution and the promises of the Republicans are disastrous and anarchic.⁶⁶ Julia Stern, for example, sees Brown’s novels as portraying America’s founding “not as a celebration of the birth of the nation but as a funeral rite” (*Plight* 10). Thus critics who want to fit Brown into the Federalist camp align Brown with Federalist writers like Arthur Maynard Walter who despaired over changes to traditional hierarchical social orders in both France and America. Maynard writes in almost Burkean terms: “I will not excuse the person, who . . . tramples on authority for he or she breaks the bands, which hold society together” (Arthur Maynard Walter to William Smith Shaw, Sept. 28, 1799; qtd. in C. Kaplan 28).⁶⁷

Federalist readings of Brown also see him as an apologist for American imperialism because a belief in social hierarchy can so easily be translated into a belief in, and justification for, “the violence against others required for [America’s]founding” (Rowe, *Literary* 43) . In his analysis of Brown, which focuses on *Edgar Huntly*, Jared Gardner claims Federalist discourses “script[ed] stories of ‘origins’ that imagined white Americans as a race apart, both from the Europeans without and the blacks and Indians within the new nation” (xi). In a similar argument David Kazanjian argues that Brown’s racial hierarchies become the “precondition for the

⁶⁶ In general these promises can be summarized as “America is the Promised Land.” Crèvecoeur, for example, writes, “The meanest of our log-houses is a dry and comfortable habitation. Lawyer or merchant are the fairest titles our towns afford; that of a farmer is the only appellation of the rural inhabitants of our country.... There, on a Sunday, he sees a congregation of respectable farmers and their wives, all clad in neat homespun, well mounted, or riding in their own humble wagons. There is not among them an esquire, saving the unlettered magistrate. There he sees a parson as simple as his flock, a farmer who does not riot on the labor of others. We have no princes, for whom we toil, starve, and bleed; we are the most perfect society now existing in the world” (40).

⁶⁷ Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* notoriously defends the monarchy and hierarchical society. For Burke, Woldwinite radicalism produced a nightmarish vision of society. In Burke’s view institutions such as the monarchy and the aristocracy were the source of both of knowledge and the means to unite individuals across the social differences of the nation. Without these hierarchies society would be devoid of order and sympathy and would collapse into violent chaos.

transformation of white settler colonials into national citizen-subjects” at the expense of the “disembodied” other (5).

The problem with these readings is that, as I have described above, Brown is committed to a more liberal, egalitarian and democratic state than the Federalists envisioned. Gardner argues that nation-building for early America was about “constructing and exorcizing the alien” (60). Race is pivotal to that construction, because it was race that enabled “[white] Americans to recognize common interests in each other, to recognize each other as Americans” (60). Brown, however, destabilizes this racial binary and warns against cultural subordination dependent on ethnocentrism. In his “Annals of Europe and America” (1807-1810), Brown thinks about sympathetic exchange as a means to discredit imperial conquest in much the same way as Smith. Brown writes, “[t]he habit of imputing our own feelings to others has betrayed us” (27). In Chapter 1 I describe how Sir George Ellison’s universalisms can’t see the particular and therefore end up endorsing British colonialism; this is the same problem for which Brown criticizes Americans. In the quotation for his “Annals” cited above, Brown criticizes Americans’ lack of sympathetic exchange—their tendency to see only one perspective. This lack of exchange is dangerous because it is used to justify invasion or conquest. Americans, and other colonial powers, he argues, are not approaching their encounters as an attempt to make sympathetic sense of others’ feelings but are rather imposing their own self-love on other races and nations.

Brown also criticizes Americans’ tendency to condemn other imperial powers without interrogating their own complicity. He first censures British imperial conduct in India, but he goes on to censure America for turning a blind eye to British actions: “the recent conduct of [British] power in Turkey was as egregious an instance of political injustice as the imagination can conceive. The conduct, likewise, of the same government in India was a tissue of bare-faced

usurpations on the rights of others” (“Annals” 27-28). However, America remained indifferent to these injustices because “these [iniquitous policies] were likewise afar off, and affected a race of men too much unlike ourselves to awaken our sympathy (“Annals” 67). Brown claims apathy in the face of moral injustice is as serious a crime as the original tyranny.⁶⁸ Brown views the exploitation of racial and ethnic others as a betrayal of America’s democratic principles; while perhaps Brown did not see all other races as equal in our sense of the term, it is fair to say he consistently wrote against oppression, tyranny and exploitation. Across his writing career Brown sees any lack of equality based on race or gender as a result of a lack in education, opportunity and environment rather than nature.⁶⁹ Brown’s mandate against oppression refutes critics’ claims for his Federalist-born elitism and imperialist agenda.

While Federalist readings pick up on Brown’s distrust of non-ordered societies, they generally fail to notice that it is not necessarily hierarchy that Brown supports, but rather the stability of sympathetic social bonds that enable both the equality and democracy necessary for an ideal society. Equality, in this sense, is inseparable from freedom. Constantia from *Ormond*, for instance, like Clarissa, is only free once she rejects claims that, as a woman, she must be

⁶⁸ Apathy in the face of moral injustice is also a failing Jane Austen spends much of *Mansfield Park* discussing. I look at the way Austen defines moral injustice in Chapter 3.

⁶⁹ At the risk of overstating Brown’s progressiveness, it is important to point out that Brown could still exhibit many of the ambivalences of his period about race and, to a lesser extent, gender. For example, there are some occasions where Brown seems to view Indians, and sometimes African-Americans, as less civilized than white European-Americans. In his *Address to the Congress of the United States on the Utility and Justice of Restrictions upon Foreign Commerce* Brown writes, “savages may be profited by intercourse with civilized” whites and even each other (86-87). In an ideal world, however, it seems Brown would like to see Indians and African-American slaves integrated into American society; “One of the consequences of extended empire is to pull down those barriers which separate mankind from each other . . . to create one nation out of many”(87). This sentiment, while not entirely egalitarian, is a far cry from the racist removal, extermination and extinction policies expressed by many other writers and government officials of the period. Brown saw and expressed the political injustice involved in the process of colonial exploitation and cultural subversion. He notes ironically that “[The Indians’] condition would doubtless be improved, if they abjured everything new and European. They would profit, on the whole, if they got rid of spirits and the small-pox, together with every beneficial acquisition” (*View of the Soil and Climate* 381).

dependent; however, unlike Clarissa who cannot escape her dependency, eventually Constantia begins a life with her best friend Sophia without constraints of dependency on either a father or a husband. Brown's writings articulate a clear tension in the correct balance between state power and individual rights that corresponds with neither Republican nor Federalist ideologies; he offers readers something different from a simple either/ or choice between Federalism's hierarchies and centralized government and the Republicans' rational dissolution of traditional social bonds. Brown understands that these political ideas and practices present a serious impediment to American' independence and a truly representative democracy. His works expose tensions between private and public power and the various forms of resistance to national, institutional, and individual oppression more expansively than either Republican or Federalist policies. Consequently, we must turn to a different explanation of his works than political allegiances— and I suggest we turn to one that has to do with sympathetic exchange.

Brown was born and raised as a Quaker, and critics have noted “the Quaker model of intellectual investigation” on his writing (8). Kamrath notes that in particular the Quaker belief in the “‘Light of Truth’ within” shaped the way Brown “constructed [philosophical truth] in his personal life and his political and historical writings” (*Historicism* 24). Peter Kafer also explains the reason Woldwinite philosophy appealed so strongly to Brown was the compatibility of “Godwin’s credo about ‘truth’ and ‘justice’” with the Quaker belief about following one’s “inner light” in pursuit of truth and knowledge” (69-70). However, if we align Brown’s religion with his philosophy we run into the same problem as we did when we read his novels solely as manifestations of political rhetoric. Weinstock explains how after Brown married “Presbyterian Elizabeth Lynn,” he “was formally disowned by the Philadelphia Quaker Meeting House” and this event has often been interpreted as marking a shift in Brown’s ideology from “political

progressive to a more conservative orthodox Christian” (11). Consequently, critics who align Brown’s “radicalism” with his religious upbringing continue to see Brown’s writings as “a puzzling,” “contradictory” and “inconsistent series” of allegiances and attitudes (Stern “State of Women” 183).

While Brown’s Quaker upbringing undoubtedly shaped his world-perspective, it did not definitively define it. It seems more likely that Quaker ideals of egalitarianism and the Quaker “instinct of social reform” (Kamrath *Historicism* xviii) led Brown towards his appreciation for Smithian theories of sympathetic exchange. Critics like Kafer and Kamrath may connect Brown’s Quakerism with his espousal of Woldwinite philosophy, but while Brown did remain committed to social reform, as we will see he ultimately rejects the idea that extreme rationalism can “give us our judgments about truth and error”(Brinton 35), an idea these critics associate with both Godwin and Quaker beliefs. Brown does promote the ideal of a disinterested truth, but he also stresses the importance of feeling in the pursuit of social justice; the necessity of feeling is evident from his early works through to his later political writings.⁷⁰ The need for sympathy consistently informs his representations of gendered relationships and the lives of marginalized others.

It is the Smithian model of sympathetic exchange that Brown applies to his ideal of America’s evolving concepts of self, liberty and equality. His writing expands the sympathetic potential offered by Smith’s *Theory* and articulates a vision of America that elaborates on

⁷⁰ As an example of Brown’s use of feeling in his early works see his “Letter to Bringhurst May 20 1792” in *Collected Writings* 85-99. Brown describes his main characters in his sketch for “The Story of Julius”; he writes that his plan is to “describe that refined and exquisite relation which must arise when the causes, producing friendship, operate in uniting to brothers or two sisters or a brother and a sister . . . Having, in the first place, selected all the external circumstances proper for my design, it was next my province to endow them with corresponding talents and dispositions; with souls attuned to love and Sympathy, and with virtue which, though heroic and uncommon, I contrived to render not romantic or incredible” (92).

Smith's sympathetic spectatorship and his egalitarianism. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* Smith argues that our sociability, our dependence on "the consciousness of being [deservedly] beloved" (I.II.5), and our ability to sympathize with others regulates social corruption. This regulation occurs because we learn morality from observing the world around us and putting ourselves in another's place; our ability to sympathize enables us to judge impartially and therefore allows us to form general moral rules to which individuals are held accountable. Smith and Brown see morality as a product of socialisation. *The Theory* makes it clear that individuals will strive towards "bettering" themselves because of the influences of friends and neighbours. When we no longer care if we are "praise-worthy" and only that we are praised, morality is compromised.

Brown uses this idea of community influence and public good to protest against elitist and inflexible laws—for instance the Federalist born Alien and Sedition Acts. These Acts targeted French and Irish immigrants as potential subversive radicals and allowed the government to deport any "aliens" they suspected of undermining American policies or imprison any authors of material deemed false or malicious towards the government. Ormond acts in the same oppressive way. Anyone who threatens his authority and/or ideals is severely punished or subjected to his will. Brown claims individuals or nations who act in this way forestall liberty. Liberty and sympathetic exchange form a mutually dependent relationship. It is an individual's liberty that enables sympathetic exchange, but liberty is also made possible by sympathetic exchange—Brown believes true liberty cannot exist when an individual is subject to the imposition of laws of another's making. Thus citizens should have the liberty to govern themselves, but they are answerable to a higher authority in the moral consensus of their community. This social experience produces the moral imagination. Interactions with others

require acts of imagination, which, Brown suggests, are the conditions of social transformation. The sympathetic imagination reconciles our self-love with our understanding of virtue and vice. Society is only viable if, in general, it recognizes everyone's individual moral rights. The Philadelphia of *Ormond* is not viable because the majority of its citizens reject the value of social experience and instead pursue their individual interests at the expense of others.

The social experience produces moral imagination on all levels: individual, local, national and global. In Brown's later political writings he continues to use a model of disinterested sympathetic imagination. His writings emphasize the need for individuals to imagine disinterested, though sympathetic, friendships with individuals and nations unlike themselves. His novels and his political writings describe these types of relationships, for example Constantia and her wood carter friend or America's relationship with France, so his readers could share in them. He also explicitly contrasts these disinterested relationships with exploitative and selfish relationships. Brown brands both isolationist and imperial policies as the products of a national self-interestedness, but he also imagines a disinterested alternative that, like Smith's vision of an equal society, draws on concepts of liberty.

Brown understands liberty, in his early novels as well as his later historical writings, as a collective, not simply as an individual, right. In his 1803 *Address to the Government of the United States on the Cession of Louisiana to the French*, Brown, writing in the voice of a French counselor, claims the "great weakness," of the United States "arises from their form of government and condition and habits of the people" (79). Their pursuit "of their own individual interest is indicative of the country's political chaos," which makes the country a "hot-bed for faction and sedition" (74). Brown warns America about its own imperial designs in the immoral and divisive practice of Southern slavery. He argues that America remains vulnerable to imperial

aggression by other nations precisely because of the fractures in national unity caused by slavery and independent sectional politics. In the voice of the French consul he urges Napoleon to recruit both black slaves and displaced Indians to the cause since, “[w]e shall find, in the bowels of the States, a mischief that only wants the well-directed spark to involve in its explosion, the utter ruin of half their nation” (75). Both slaves and Indians have been robbed of their “blessings of humanity” and are therefore “ready to retaliate” (73, 74).⁷¹ In this example, Brown’s vision of equality is more inclusive than either Republican or Federalist policies. Brown’s vision is based on sympathy and a system of politics that connects citizens, states and nations to each other without constraining their essential rights and liberties. This is Brown’s ideal America.

For Brown equality means the ability to participate freely and publicly in the formation of the nation. Neither Republicanism nor Federalism, while surely contributing to Brown’s perspective, does justice to the way Brown grounds political and moral authority in a dialectic of liberty and constraint itself grounded in sympathetic social bonds. If, however, we read Brown as engaging with and adapting Smith’s moral theories, we find a common thread between Brown’s early and late works. Brown targets the selfishness of individualism he sees as nascent in the new Republic. Brown sees selfishness and individualism as the first steps towards oppression and tyranny. All of Brown’s works reflect on oppression in the American experience; sentimental theory allows him to warn against gendered or racist exclusionary claims for political justice.

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity: Reimagining a Gendered National Fraternity

⁷¹ As we will see in the next chapter, the argument that subjecting others to oppressive, tyrannical or slavish rule actually weakens the nation is common in both anti-colonial and abolitionist rhetoric. In the next chapter I describe how Austen participates in variations on this argument in her novel *Mansfield Park*. While Austen is more invested than Brown in the maintenance of some kind of social hierarchy, the claim that slavery and tyranny are unworthy of a nation that prides itself on liberty is common to both authors.

In the decades after the Revolution, the Republican Party opposed Federalist elitism by endorsing the political sway of the common man, but political rhetoric, on both sides, promoted the idea of brotherly egalitarianism. Jeffersonian Republicanism⁷² became widely associated with the political promise for “universal” suffrage,⁷³ but America’s founding fathers also based their conception of America as a political force and a cultural ideal on fraternal friendship. In *The American Crisis* (1777) Thomas Paine describes how fraternal friendships held the nation together in the moment of revolution: “We had no other law than a kind of moderated passion,” Paine claims, “no other civil power than an honest mob; and no other protection than the temporary attachment of one man to another” (*Collected Writings* 124). For early Americans fraternal bonds meant freedom from domination by a superior; this egalitarian political ideal could therefore justify America’s claims to superior morality and its title of Promised Land.

Of course images of fraternal friendships, in both Federalist and Republican rhetoric, and promises of “universal” suffrage from the Republicans conveniently cover injustices. American citizenship was defined as an individual’s right to public and political participation, and in the new nation all women, and non-white men were excluded from these rights. Brown’s writings reveal the struggle for a more inclusive definition of citizenship and equality; they demonstrate different modes of democratic possibility and show how equal representation can be extended through sentimental moral theory. In the rest of this chapter I take a detailed look at Brown’s *Ormond*. In particular I use one of *Ormond*’s central scenes, Philadelphia’s yellow fever epidemic, as a touchstone for Brown’s engagement with the relationships between moral

⁷² Republican Thomas Jefferson won the presidency away from the Federalists in 1801 and “released the ‘voice of the people’” (Nelson, *Commons* 523).

⁷³ Universal in the sense that “all white men, regardless of their access to wealth or property, won the vote” (Nelson, *Commons* 525),

sentiment and America's emerging sense of itself as democratic and egalitarian. Brown sees images of fraternal bonds as exclusionary. Instead, by adapting Smith's notion of sympathetic sociability to the post-revolutionary moment, Brown offers a vision of America with the potential to be truly egalitarian

As I have summarized earlier in this chapter, *Ormond* is set against the yellow fever outbreak of 1793. The fever infects many of the main characters, Constantia, Whiston and Baxter. The way each character reacts to the outbreak reveals Brown's investment in the necessity of sympathetic bonds for a moral, egalitarian and ideal society. Constantia, despite risk to herself, nurses the infected Mary Whiston and does not die. Whiston abandons his sister, contracts the disease and dies. The family to whom Whiston futilely appeals also contract the disease and die. Baxter observes the burial of a man whom he assumes has died of the fever; he refuses to offer aid, contracts the disease and dies. While critics like Stern, Tompkins and Weinstock have also seen the importance of *Ormond's* yellow fever scenes, they have failed to touch the most radical aspect of Brown's position: namely Brown's claim that morality, individual worth and an individual's propensity to moral action, *no matter your gender or skin colour*, is dependent on your ability to sympathize with others.⁷⁴ Constantia finds help and sympathy only from an African-American wood carter who aids Constantia and helps her to bury Mary. Those who refuse to become involved, those who refuse to offer aid to those in distress, are killed off, while those who do proffer their aid survive. The African-American presence is small in this novel, but it is nonetheless significant that, while the white brotherhood fails to

⁷⁴ See Stern *Plight of Feeling* Chapter 4, Tompkins *Sensational Designs* p.44-61 and Weinstock *Charles Brockden Brown* Chapter 2 "The Urban Gothic."

support one another, Philadelphia itself survives because of people like Constantia and her black friend.

Brown struggles with political imagery that shows fraternal bonds equating to national liberty. Friendship in the Republican period constitutes the ideal, virtuous relationship because it is presented as an equalizing affiliation—as opposed to the tyranny of the passions in a romantic relationship or the hierarchy of marriage. Friendship was the perfect allegory for America’s vision of itself as a democratic and egalitarian society. The need to forge a national identity for a group of colonies that differed in size, population, importance, and economic values gave rise to a language of friendship that became embedded in the nation’s political founding tenets. The *Articles of Confederation* bound Americans as political equals in “a firm league of friendship” (Hamilton, Madison, Jay *Federalist* 500), while political leaders used friendship as a rhetorical device to demonstrate America’s cultural superiority. The capacity for intense friendship demonstrates an individual’s virtue, as pastor Joseph Stevens Buckminster sermonizes: “No one can be so absurd as to imagine that Judas was in any part of his intercourse with our Saviour carried away by his attachment to our Saviour” (Sermon April 20 1808; qtd. in C. Kaplan 39). In other words, friendship engendered virtue while an individual’s incapacity for friendship revealed his vice. Friendship increases virtue; in an ideal friendship the friend is a second self who provides a constant stimulus to the practice of virtue and correctives for vice.⁷⁵

Images of male friendship became an attractive metaphor for American identity to replace images of America as Britain’s unruly child or wayward wife as the colonies’ bond to

⁷⁵ Conceptions of friendships in early Republican thought were based, in part, on definitions of friendship articulated by Classical thinkers. For these classically educated men, friendship was confined to men who were part of the political nation. Ruth Bloch explains that the “highly gendered” and specifically masculine attributes of Republican virtue are based on “the intellectual and cooperative virtues (such as judgment, justice, and friendship) that bind men in citizenship with the polis” (42-43).

England had previously been imagined. This new perspective “proliferate[d] the myth that the American Revolution extirpated the force and logic of empire with the irresistible and heroic dream of egalitarianism and freedom” (Doolen xiv). Images of male friendships were meant to represent America’s new relationship between polity and civil society. America’s founding tenets were meant to provide political power to a broad range of citizens—no longer subjects. Of course the realities of political influence and deference were not truly equal. Paine’s description of America’s birth as dependent on “the attachment of one man to another” (*Collected Writings* 124) necessarily becomes hierarchical and exclusionary. If the basis of Paine’s America is the friendships that spring up between male American Revolutionaries fighting for the independence of their nation, then the categories “white,” and “male” confer the status of “free citizen”; “increasingly, to be a political actor was to be a white male, and to be a white male was to be a political actor” (C. Kaplan 3).⁷⁶

Women were thus ideologically excluded from active political participation. America’s politics of friendship limited women’s political participation to dependent citizens in their roles as mothers, wives, or daughters. Female political interventions began to be represented as moral suasion rather than public intervention into the running of the nation. Female or mixed gender

⁷⁶ Friendship could of course bind women, too, but in political rhetoric like Paine’s and even in George Washington’s 1796 “Farewell Address” the friendship which cemented the nation together was implicitly constructed as male. Throughout his “Address” Washington terms himself an “old and affectionate friend” (303) to the nation and expresses the wish that party disputes and factions would be reconciled because, “who that is a sincere friend to it [free government] can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?” (299). Politically, then, male friendships protected and defined America, fraternal bonds were “spirit that ever characterized the true friends to the democratic nation” (Letter from the Republicans of Fayetteville (1794) qtd. in Foner 37). Friendships between women are not represented in political conceptions of America’s identity of the nation, and relationships between men and women (filial or marital), often figured as the colonies’ tie to Britain in pre-revolutionary representations, were not a good model for Republican ideology because friendship, in its equality, should not bestow benefits that were financial or sexual therefore male-female relationships were viewed as impossible because they fostered dependency.

friendships are excluded from the political realm because they must exhibit some form of dependence, either sexual or financial. In *Ormond*, Constantia, before leaving America to begin her own community with Sophia, finds herself a victim of her dependence in a society where not all citizens share the same civil and political rights. Constantia is constantly threatened by male citizens who profess their virtue, but who, safe in their status as first-class citizens, are free to manipulate, objectify and disempower others: Craig murders Mr. Dudley and embezzles Constantia's home and fortune, Martyne trades on a false representation of his relationship to Sophia not only to wrangle his way into the pocketbooks of wealthy Philadelphians but also to exhort money from Constantia, and Ormond threatens to both rape and kill Constantia. Representations of male friendship were meant as a byword for a society free of conflict, but, as *Ormond* demonstrates, defining citizenship by gender results in an inequality which threatens the virtue of all citizens and pollutes society as a whole.

Brown works against limiting definitions of citizenship by playing with Smith's definition of a corrupted society as a society that excludes all it finds unlike. Smith observes that, "those persons most excite our compassion and are most apt to affect our sympathy who most resemble ourselves, and the greater the difference the less we are affected by them" (LJA iii.109). Society unravels as we succumb to self-interest and self-deceit; we "cease to be of importance to one another . . . [I]n a few generations, [we] not only lose all care about one another, but all remembrance of [our] common origin" (*Theory* VI.ii.1.13). Smith's claim here is that "blindness" to a common sympathetic impulse becomes inimical to the values of "care" and "connection." If we foster sympathetic ties based only on superficial likeness, such as gender or race, rather than humanity's general capacity for mutual sympathy, then we gradually perceive ourselves to be less and less like others until selfish concerns are allowed to take precedence. It is

this exclusionary aspect of citizenship as defined by fraternal friendship that Brown sees as a source of potential corruption.

Brown shows that America's claims for equality are based on a type of bond that is not only exclusionary—America's liberty and equality are represented by white men only—but also that without sympathetic bonds answerable to some higher power, moral obligations can become easily cast off for individual gain. Ormond embodies rational disinterestedness, but without sympathetic bonds he comes to see himself as superior, rather than equal, to the people he encounters. If we separate ourselves from our sympathetic community we lose our ability for moral action, as do Whiston, Baxter, Craig and Ormond. Without the moral imagination dependent on social interactions we forget the sympathy due to others. Ormond puts himself above the possibility of reciprocal relationships, friendly or romantic, with women because he does not see their likeness in himself; consequently, as Smith warns, they cease to be important to him thus producing injustice and the moral infection that plagues Philadelphia.

Ormond's relationships with Helena and Constantia reveal the dangers in limited definitions of citizenship. Ormond refuses to marry his mistress Helena because her understanding is not equal to his. Despite the fact that Helena is "endowed with every feminine and fascinating quality," Ormond cannot endure the thought of marriage since "to raise to his own level one whom nature had irretrievably degraded was . . . with respect to himself a genuine debasement" (89). Ormond is willing to take Helena as a mistress, but he is unwilling to put her feelings or desires on par with his own; consequently, when Helena gets in the way of his relationship with Constantia, he drives Helena to suicide.

Ormond's relationship with Constantia begins with more promise. Ormond says he will abandon his dislike of social institutions and consent to marry her. However, the relationship is

quickly perverted. Because Ormond does not /cannot imagine himself in another's place, he is unconstrained by conventional morality or social expectations. His rational disinterestedness easily becomes self-serving. He takes advantage of others in order to observe them so that he might acquire the knowledge that will allow him to appear omnipotent and to control those upon whom he spies. Ormond's social mirror only reflects away from himself, and his relationship with Constantia is certainly not one of egalitarian friendship. He tells Constantia he will possess her regardless of her own desires: "Living or dead, the prize that I have in view shall be mine" (216). Ormond claims to want, and work in the best interests of, an egalitarian and harmonious society. However, those with whom Ormond cannot sympathize have a tendency to wind up dead.

Ormond thus effectively demonstrates the social rot which occurs when bonds of sympathy can be cast off at whim or the destruction that happens if we can pick and choose who is worthy of sympathetic democracy. Whiston forgets his obligation to his sister, Baxter to his neighbour, Ormond both invents and denies sibling ties: he withholds information about his relationship to Martinette and he tries to force Helena to be his sister. Brown exposes the way "sympathetic friendship"—America's claim to virtue—is not viable if only certain citizens are members of a politically sanctioned fraternity. In order to counter the vice which is enabled by emerging American narratives of fraternity, Brown, in Sophia and Constantia's relationship, offers another model of friendship that counters Republican versions of fraternal sympathy and which offers the potential for ungendered sentimental citizenship and equal political participation.

Previous critics have misread Sophia and Constantia's relationship; they claim their relationship represents "female homoerotic longing" (Stern, "State of Women" 185), or that the

novel represents “the first extended fictional portrayal . . . [of] ‘romantic passion’ between women” (Comment 57-8). But these critics miss the fact that Brown is exploring the connections between sexual disempowerment, colonial domination, and the moral conditions of citizenship. I am not denying that Brown may have imagined Constantia and Sophia’s relationship to be an example of “both female homosociality and romantic love between women” (Stern, “State of Women” 215). However, it is also worth remembering that the sympathetic communication between Sophia and Constantia is very similar to the idealized fraternal sympathy Republicans promoted as the nation’s foundation: that perfectible “second self” whose presence begets virtue.⁷⁷ As Caleb Crain explains in his study of letters and journals of American Revolutionaries, writing became a vehicle for men’s affections for one another; writing was “the representation of bonds between men that kept men free” (77). American “soldiers expressed their love for one another in terms that may seem unusually frank to a modern reader” (97).⁷⁸

Sophia expresses her love for Constantia with the same frankness:

The ordinary functions of nature were disturbed. The appetite for sleep and food were confounded and lost amid the impetuositities of a master passion. To look and to talk to each other afforded enchanting occupation for every moment. I would not part from her

⁷⁷ See note 23. Additionally, Ivy Schweitzer claims that friendship as a story of the ‘second self’ is a “deeply ‘American’” narrative that is “an undeniable possibility of personhood created through relation and affinity. In this American story . . . we can understand the American democratic project as the necessary and ongoing work of “perfecting friendship” (3).

⁷⁸ One of the numerous examples Crain gives in his study are the letters between Alexander Hamilton and John Laurie who served together as aides-de-camp to Washington. After Laurens left Washington’s camp for South Carolina with hopes, unrealized, to recruit slaves into American troops, the two exchanged numerous letters. As a representative index to the type of sympathetic power and romantic friendship expressed in these letters an extract from Hamilton’s letter to Laurie reads: “Cold in my professions, warm in my friendships, I wish, my Dear Laurens, it might be in my power, by action rather than words, to convince you that I love you. I shall only tell you that ‘till you bade us Adieu, I hardly knew the value you had taught my heart to set upon you.” (AH to JL, April 1779. qtd. In Crain 112). In Hamilton and Laurie’s letters we can see the ideal “disinterested” fraternity of men to which America as a nation aspired.

side, but ate and slept, walked and mused and read, with my arm locked in hers, and with her breath fanning my cheek. (250)

Readings that focus purely on the erotics of Sophia and Constantia's relationship miss the balancing act which Brown performs. Brown gives his readers an alternative to a national literary movement that describes passionate male friendships of like-minded and even like-visaged individuals. Sophia and Constantia's friendship specifically counters excerpts, such as this one from *The Monthly Anthology, and Boston Review*, which actualize a patriarchal vision of a utopian male-bonded society intrinsic to America's sense of democratic superiority:⁷⁹

[The two men] heartily embraced. The form of the one now met the eyes of the other; they both stood fixed in contemplation, and each gazed, in his turn, with wonder and delight. Each, indeed, had the same appearance with the other in age, in form, in dress, in the vivid light of his eyes, and in the majesty of his whole countenance. (qtd. in C. Kaplan 189)⁸⁰

If we read Sophia and Constantia's reunion not as an experiment in homoerotics but rather as an embodiment of the moral ideal of friendship reserved for men, then we can see Constantia and Sophia's friendship as an important form of social and political intervention in claims for equality, virtue, citizenship, and national identity.

This doubling principle, the mirror imaged friend, present in both *The Monthly Anthology* and *Ormond* owes much to Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Brown like Smith believes the

⁷⁹ *The Anthology* was a periodical founded by Phineas Adams, who envisioned a periodical like Addison and Steele's *Spectator* including original and extracted reviews, essays, poetry and reviews. *The Anthology* had no declared political allegiance, but it exhibits Federalist leanings in both its general praise for revolutionary ideals and specific criticism of resulting Republican action.

⁸⁰ Although *Ormond* is chronologically slightly earlier than the excerpt cited from *The Anthology*, Brown's novel can still be read as responding to Founding fraternal fantasies of patriarchal assumptions about authority and political power. Images and descriptions of these fraternal bonds were in wide circulation during the period.

ability to imagine ourselves in another's position will produce a harmonious society. As Smith writes, we must feel what others feel; we must "enter as it were into his body and become in some measure the same person with him" (*Theory* I.i.9), or, in other words, we must experience a likeness with others which results in our (imaginative) interchangeability.⁸¹ While Smith's theories have political implications, Smith is more explicitly concerned with moral egalitarianism than political egalitarianism. Brown on the other hand is openly concerned with equal representation within civil recognition. Sophia and Constantia's epistolary sympathetic exchanges tie in to Brown's belief that the sympathetic imagination will regulate public and private connection which in turn enables political liberty and justice.

Ormond is framed by Sophia's letter to the mysterious I.E Rosenberg, as an account, in letters, of "the history of Constantia Dudley" (3).⁸² The epistolary-like⁸³ style of Sophia's shared letter(s) is a sociable mode of writing which sustains a pattern of judgment that asks both the

⁸¹ All of Brown's novels play with the image of the doubled other in some form or another. The focus of this chapter is *Ormond*, but Brown's *Edgar Huntly* also deals with interchangeability. *Edgar*'s focus is the Native American presence. As with most Brown scholarship there is a division of interpretation as to whether Brown endorses ethnic cleansing or whether his novel draws attention to the injustice of colonial expansion on Native lands. Either way, *Edgar Huntly* specifically looks at the potential for doubling and becoming the other: Edgar takes on many of the characteristics and behaviors of a Delaware brave. Again, while some critics like John Carlos Rowe see the conflation of Delaware and European-American identity as legitimizing Europeans' displacement of Native inhabitants ("U.S Novels and U.S Wars" 814), other critics like Kamrath suggest Brown is highlighting the inherent savagery of colonial conquest ("American Exceptionalism" 375-377). I am more inclined to agree with Kamrath, but either way I think Brown uses the doubling image to demonstrate the social constructedness of identity and the possibility for relationships that transcend the European-male/European-male bond.

⁸² Barnard and Shapiro note that while the most obvious reason for Sophia's letter to Rosenberg is that Sophia is relating Constantia's "history and reputation as a possible prelude to marriage" (*Ormond* 3 n.2). Rosenberg's identity is left unexplained, and, more importantly, for critics who read *Ormond* as a novel that explores same-sex romantic relationships, ungendered. However, to me, it seems more likely that Rosenberg is a male suitor, particularly since Sophia's marriage to Courtland is described as the type of egalitarian sympathetic friendship between men and women for which the novel advocates: "There was that conformity of tastes and views between us, which could scarcely fail, at an age, and in a situation like ours, to give birth to tenderness. My resolution to hasten to America, was peculiarly unwelcome to my friend . . . but I was willing . . . to gratify my own heart, by an immediate marriage" (178 emphasis added).

⁸³ I use the caveat "epistolary-like" because, while framed by a letter *Ormond* is written from the third person omniscient until chapter XXIII when Sophia begins to tell the story from her perspective. There are no exchanges of letters during the novel. We are meant to imagine that the narrative is a series of, or one long, letter(s) to Rosenberg.

fictional Rosenberg and real readers to become co-judges and co-spectators of Constantia's history.⁸⁴ Sophia and Constantia are not "permanent[ly] exclu[ded] from the fraternity of fellow feeling" (Stern *Plight* 234), but rather Sophia creates a sympathetic community with not only (the ungendered) I.E Rosenberg, but also with her readers.

Letters imply community because they bridge the gap between private and public. In contrast to a political sphere that was increasingly accessible only to privileged, white male citizens, letters could open a space for private feelings to be judged in the public sphere. Some exchanges of letters just before American independence between John and Abigail Adams illustrate this point. On November 27, 1775, Abigail reassures John that "All Letters, I believe, have come safe to hand" (*Book of Abigail* 114). John's anxieties stem from the risk of interception by agents of the Tory press who published and parodied letters from Abigail and John.⁸⁵ John goes on to state on July 10, 1776, six days after signing the Declaration of Independence, "It is not prudent to commit to Writing such free Speculations, in the present state of Things" (143). Both John and Abigail recognize that private is also political; private sentiments made public can change the course of politics. When private letters are opened to the public, the personal is immediately political. Consequently, feeling and politics become linked through the publication and circulation of letters, and in Brown's novel Sophia's letters turn readers into sympathetic "spectators" of moral action.

⁸⁴ Active exertions of beneficence are achieved when spectators feel sympathetic indignation which, according to Smith, is shaped by judgments of justice and injustice. Sympathetic indignation forms an explicit counter to self-love which only raises artificial pity and no action. Brown shows the reformatory potential of "sympathetic indignation" in characters', and presumably readers', responses to images of Constantia's "beset virtue." Sympathetic indignation acts here as the mechanism for moral judgment that allows the spectator to judge the appropriateness of all behavior. Political justice and sympathy are thus not as separate as they first appear.

⁸⁵ For more on the dangers of mail and political fraud see Butterfield, Friedlaender, and Kline "Introduction" *The Book of Abigail and John Adams* p.7

Neither Sophia nor Brown ask their readers to judge against an authoritative law or judicial narrator; they ask them to rely on their sympathetic moral sense to dictate just judgments. For example, according to the facts of law, Ormond does not kill Mr. Dudley or Helena—his is not the hand that deals the fatal blow. Brown urges his readers to judge by the demands of the heart. He wants his readers to feel resentment towards Ormond and therefore to feel an injustice has been committed which needs to be rectified. The logic of moral feeling will condemn Ormond's "rational" logic as faulty and find him guilty of a triple murder—Helena, Mr. Dudley and Craig.⁸⁶ By the same logic of moral feeling, readers will find Constantia justified in her action. It is Constantia who embodies moral action not Ormond, despite the fact that it is Constantia's hand that kills Ormond.

For Constantia to be judged as moral, she must appeal to her spectator(s)'s sense of resentment on her behalf; she must be judged by her community. Constantia cannot receive justice unless those like Ormond, Craig, Whiston and Baxter are judged socially as well as privately. Laura Edwards emphasizes how in this period "state law [only] protected the rights of legally recognized individuals" (3). This state law meant that the rights of women and racial others could become unrecognizable; therefore, these "non-citizens" might be unable to obtain a public voice and/or justice. Constantia, then, must appeal outside state law to the public sphere for justice. This public sphere includes not only Constantia's (fictional) community and

⁸⁶ Ormond defends himself this way—he explains his murder of Craig: "Have I not already told thee that Ormond was his own avenger and thine? To thee and to me he [Craig] has been a robber. To him thy father is indebted for the loss not only of property but life. Did crimes like these merit a less punishment? And what recompense is due to him whose vigilance pursued him hither, and made him pay for his offences with his blood?" (213). Likewise, as I have already examined, Ormond's justification for both Helena and Mr. Dudley's deaths are that "My happiness and yours [Constantia's], depended on your concurrence with my wishes," (213) and both Helena and Mr. Dudley stood in the way of that concurrence. Ormond sees himself as unconstrained by conventional morality or social expectations.

Rosenberg but also an implied (real and fictional) transatlantic reading audience who can be reached through Sophia's letters and the novel itself.

By publishing the private history of Constantia's life along with the intimate feelings of the individuals involved, Sophia encourages readers to judge the history she writes. Sophia therefore encourages spectators to participate in the creation of acceptable social morals and the nation's identity in a way that does not involve formal politics. Political liberty, according to Brown, can be achieved only if all citizens are granted equal independence and are judged socially by equal standards. Smith demonstrates the dangers of a society that requires dependence from its members, and Brown expands Smith's arguments for America's historical moment to include a policy of equality for women.

Smith begins his argument against dependence as an argument against feudalism. He states that the dependence of laborers and retainers is tantamount to slavery (*Wealth* 309). Smith uses this same argument against dependence in his condemnation of primogeniture, which necessarily promotes discord and dependence (see *LJ* i.115–16; *LJ* ii.1; *LJ* 168); Smith's claims the surest way to a virtuous society is neither good police nor good laws, but independence itself: "Nothing tends so much to corrupt and enervate and debase the mind as dependency, and nothing gives such noble and generous notions of probity as freedom and independency" (*LJ* 333). Brown adapts this policy and argues social interdependence promotes individual independence by severing direct dependence. Independent citizens will then lead to a virtuous society.

Brown demonstrates the evils of dependence in his depictions of Helena and Constantia's fates. The results of Helena's dependency are tragic and fatal; Constantia, at least, frees herself from dependence when she kills Ormond, and she and Sophia begin their own community. Sophia's actions reflect Brown's belief in the connection between independence and morality.

As Brown writes to his friend Joseph Bringhurst several years before the publication of *Ormond*, individuals must “ascertain the dictates of moral duty, by consulting [their] understanding, and measuring the opinions of others . . . by the [best] standard of [their] own judgment” (*Collected Writings: Letters* 310).⁸⁷ Sophia and Constantia’s relationship demonstrates that women are equally capable of acting or achieving independence; women are entitled to equal voice and equal justice in the public sphere.

Critics generally have trouble with the fact that Constantia and Sophia leave America for Europe. Republican readings tend to gloss over this aspect of the text altogether, while, as we have seen, Federalist readings like Tompkins’ see *Ormond*’s ending as Brown’s “direct refutation of the Republican faith in men’s capacity to govern themselves without the supports and constraints of an established social order” (49). However, Brown’s ending makes more sense if we first contextualize it with Jefferson’s description of “public happiness” in his essay “Rights of British America,” and then read it in conjunction with Smith’s claims for equal rights among all members of a society. Jefferson describes his idea of liberty:

Our ancestors . . . possessed a right, which nature has given to all men, of departing from the country in which chance, not choice, has placed them, of going in quest of new habitations, and of there establishing new societies, under such laws and regulations as, to them, shall seem most likely to promote public happiness. (105– 6)

In short, Jefferson stakes a claim for American independence by claiming Americans’ right to determine their own freedom. Jefferson defines this freedom as citizens’ right to representation in the public realm, an individual’s right to share in public power, and his right to be “a

⁸⁷ Brown to Joseph Bringhurst, Oct. 24, 1795.

participator in government affairs” (106). Brown whole-heartedly agrees with Jefferson, but he sees America as not living up to that promise of equality for all its citizens. Consequently, Brown turns to Smith for a model of sympathy that will promote a truly egalitarian nation.

Sophia’s letters participate in sympathetic exchange to reveal a social and political authority not based in a coercive political power but in qualities of mind and habits of cultural practice. Sophia’s letters offer a different kind of citizenship. They connect America and Europe, man and woman, rich and poor; these letters create a vantage point from which characters and readers can think about, criticize, and potentially reform the new Republic from within a community of affection and trust outside the American polity. In the meantime Sophia and Constantia exercise their right “of departing the country . . . of going in quest of new habitations” where they may be “participators in government affairs” (Jefferson, “Rights” 105-6).

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity: Reimagining a Racial National Fraternity

Just as women became lesser citizens under the rubric of male friendship, European Americans were considered “more equal” than those not of European-American descent. The slave-trade was still a fact of life for Americans during Brown’s era. Even later in the nineteenth-century, in the midst of America’s abolitionist movement, African–Americans were often figured as culturally deficient, while growing tensions with the Native American population led to the Republican-mandated Indian Removal Act in 1830.⁸⁸ It is now established fact that, despite the

⁸⁸ More ominously, as Weinstock notes, “black insurrection in the West Indies between 1791 and 1803 claimed the lives of over 46,000 whites. The most serious revolt took place in the French colony of Saint-Domingue and led to the formation of Haiti in 1804” (13). Philadelphia, where Brown was living, became a primary destination for West Indian Creoles and heightened anxieties about slave revolts in America. In his *Address to the Government of the United States, on the Cession of Louisiana to the French*, published in January 1803, Brown comes across as apprehensive about the possibility of insurrection in America but also places the blame for these unstable race relations squarely at the feet of those who preach liberty while dehumanizing others in slavery. Brown writes,

protestations of writers like Crèvecoeur and Jefferson, early America was not the land of equal opportunity for all as it promised.⁸⁹ As Ezra Tawil explains, “the ‘Indian problem’ and the ‘slave problem’ were intimately and inextricably linked at the level of cultural meanings” (5-6).

Questions of race inevitably also raised questions about property conflict, its relation to racial descent, and its effects on the emerging national community. Brown writes explicitly about Indian/colonial conflict in his novel *Edgar Huntly* as well as in his later historical writing.

Ormond alludes to the African-American presence in order to demonstrate how non-European others were pushed into political irrelevance, and this racial presence helps frame Brown’s vision of a truly democratic and moral society.

Even as the abolitionist movement gained momentum during the nineteenth century, political events like the French Revolution, slave rebellions in the West Indies and propaganda for Indian removal policies made the cultural climate in America inimical to racial others and foreigners. Even amongst societies like New York’s Manumission Society, to which Brown’s close friend, publisher and Federalist supporter Elihu Smith belonged, a rhetoric of superiority informs the paternalistic concern of their social reforms.⁹⁰ In his 1798 *Discourse for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves*, E. Smith writes that his subject is, “the best means of civilizing, or

“Whom a cruel servitude inspires with all the vices of brutes and all the passions of demons; whose injuries have been so great that the law of self-preservation obliges the State to deny to the citizen the power of making his slave free; whose indelible distinctions of form, colour, and perhaps of organization, will forever prevent them from blending with their tyrants, into one people; who foster an eternal resentment at oppression, and whose sweetest hour would be that which buried them and their lords in a common and immeasurable ruin” (73).

⁸⁹ I go into more detail about racial representations and inequalities in my discussion on James Fenimore Cooper in Chapter 4. As I explain in Chapter 4, racism during the nineteenth century worsened conditions for enslaved Africans and African-Americans, and restricted civic possibilities for both free blacks and First Nations people.

⁹⁰ Brown along with E. Smith was a member of New York’s Friendly Club a coterie of intellectuals who met to read, reflect on, discuss, and debate literary works and social issues of the day. The Friendly Club members circulated writing they found noteworthy, Godwin’s *Political Justice* for instance, as well as exchanging or presenting their own writing. At the time the Manumission Society was founded Brown had returned to Philadelphia although he remained in contact with E. Smith for the rest of his life. For more on the Friendly club see Bryan Waterman’s *Republic of Intellect* particularly chapter 5.

making good citizens, of, the Negroes” (6). He goes on to say, “I wish also to write an essay on the best means of civilizing the Indian— and on the true obstacles to their civilization” (6). E. Smith and other society members worked hard to effect change. Their work attests to their belief in the reformatory power of education on both African-Americans and “Indians,” but, as demonstrated by E. Smith’s remarks, the hierarchy of American citizenship under either Federalist or Republican ideology was far from egalitarian.

Republican claims for America’s moral superiority based on the virtue of friendship did not go uncontested. Brown, among other—mostly Federalist—writers, satirized the hypocrisy of prominent Republicans like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison who professed sympathy for their “coloured brothers,” but continued to exclude women from the political scene and condone slavery. Anti-Jefferson journals like *The Port Folio*, for which Brown both wrote and edited, satirized Jefferson’s Republican virtue as hypocritical by comparing him to a political version of Oliver Goldsmith’s eponymous “Citizen of the World.” Goldsmith’s world citizen watches men proclaim their sympathy as they shed tears over the suffering of animals all while happily “devouring the flesh of six different animals tossed up in a fricasee” (63). *The Port Folio* replaces the citizen’s flesh-devouring animal lovers with Jefferson as a slave-beating champion of liberty. Jefferson claims America was built on the equalizing power of fraternal friendships, yet he beats his slaves. Consequently, *The Port Folio* concludes, Jefferson is devoid of true social affections.⁹¹ Brown fears an America built in this image of exclusion.

⁹¹ Although *The Port Folio* and Brown’s own magazines were published after his four novels, Brown’s modes of historical interrogation into subjectivity and citizenship are consistent. It is useful to read Brown’s later historical and political writings alongside his novels since we can see in both his novels, particularly *Ormond* for the purposes of my argument, and his historical writing, Brown’s concern with the ways in which history, events like the yellow fever epidemic, the French Revolution, immigration and federal policies, can promote human sympathy.

In *Ormond* Brown examines the consequences of a society that creates liberty for some while excluding others from the benefits of true citizenship: women and those of African descent, both slaves and free blacks. During the yellow fever epidemic, the citizens of Philadelphia forget “what is due to . . . humanity” (36), and abandon their fellows to save themselves. Constantia, as I have already mentioned, despite the risk to herself, nurses Mary Whiston who has been abandoned by her brother. Constantia’s pleas for help are rebuffed by her neighbours and landlord; her only aid comes from an African-American wood-carter. Although her friend is one of the few African Americans not under orders to help with the disposal of yellow fever victims, he nonetheless sympathizes with Constantia and Mary and consents to remove and bury Mary’s body.⁹² Brown doubles Constantia’s sympathy in the humane action of the carter while white privilege falls into barbarism and savagery; Brown overturns exclusionary fraternal bonds and reconstitutes them as sympathetic bonds which should extend to all members of a society.

Constantia’s interaction with the wood-carter counters Philadelphia’s indifference with sympathy. It is a minor episode in the novel, but it helps to frame a related incident which even more thoroughly describes the dangers of allowing for only one type of citizen. Ormond takes on the guise of a black chimney sweep to gain entrance to Constantia’s home in order to secretly observe Constantia and determine whether he deems her worthy of financial aid. His disguise “was the most entire and grotesque metamorphosis imaginable. It was stepping from the highest to the lowest rank in society . . . In a word, it was sometimes his practice to exchange his

⁹² Common thought during this period maintained that African-Americans were immune or less susceptible to yellow fever than whites. As Stern notes, “this spurious diagnosis enables public officials to justify the near-conscription of the black population into caring for the sick and removing the dead when one half of Philadelphia’s white inhabitants close their houses (sometimes against their own kith and kin) and flee the city, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson among them” (*Plight* 166).

complexion and habiliments for those of a negro and chimney sweep” (100). So much for the sympathetic exchange of egalitarian friendship. Ormond literally puts himself in another’s shoes, but he does not, as Smith recommends, participate in “the mutual exchange of all essential feelings” (*Theory* VI.ii.1.8–9). Rather he asserts his control over Constantia and manipulates another’s misfortune for his own advantage.

As Stern notes, Ormond’s ability to reproduce sentiments of pity for the “‘Negro’ marks nothing more than a calculated performance . . . purged of all political or moral content” (*Plight* 152). In withholding sympathy, Ormond denies any antislavery consciousness or claims of sympathetic fraternalism. He may possess “a remarkable facility in imitating the voice and gesture of others” (*Ormond* 86), but he does not engage in that exchange of sympathies which reveal the second self as a reflection of democratic equality. He does not allow himself to be changed or effect a change in the other. He does not imaginatively enter into the feelings of the chimney sweep he impersonates, nor does he place himself in Constantia’s position as he observes her from his assumed disguise. Instead Ormond enacts a perversion of the doubled friend. His relationships are shams rather than the true meeting of like-minded individuals.

Ormond sees himself as superior to other members of his community. He is therefore unable to participate in the frankness of speech that true equals exercise as a necessary corrective for one another. Ormond sees himself as “omnipotent,” and above the need for moral correction. Ormond recognizes the potential for sympathetic response from spectators to his persona of the black chimney-sweep, but he is not moved to alleviate the distresses of real African-Americans. He puts on the mask of sympathy when he becomes the “negro chimney sweep,” but he does not enact this sympathy with a view to moral action. His lack of moral action perverts his spectatorship and reveals his corruption.

Ormond's failures are America's potential failures—promises of liberty, equality and transparent governing bodies have not empowered all citizens equally. In the connection between Ormond's blackface spectacle of parodic sympathy and his later violence, Brown warns his readers about the dangers of forgetting sympathetic bonds in light of America's history of personal and social violence in the struggle against European imperialism. *Ormond* articulates a sympathy for the oppressed, which associates British expressions of imperialism and oppression with American colonial constructions of race and gender which subjugate the other.

Critics like Stern and Weinstock argue that Ormond and his sister Martinette, as Europeans, actually reinforce America's virtuous self-conception since both represent the corruption of aristocratic ideals. Their lack of sympathy is an extension of European oppression. But, it is important to note that Craig, American-born, commits the same crimes as Ormond only more off-stage: forgery, deceit, illicit observation, rape and murder. Brown, much as he does in "Annals of Europe and America," questions American imperialism by linking British and American colonial behaviors. In the "Annals" Brown tentatively associates American expressions of imperialism with British ones, particularly in colonial activities in South America. He first condemns the British for their "instances of selfish and iniquitous policy" but goes on to comment on Francisco de Miranda's attempt to liberate Argentina that, "[we have been] betrayed into the glaring folly of imagining the same impatience of foreign control [sic] in all the American colonies which once actuated ourselves. We have even harboured the gross delusion, that a wretched adventurer, at the head of two or three hundred men, picked up in our cities, could work a revolution in South America, and that the initial spark only was wanting to kindle a rebellion in Peru or Mexico. The grossness of these delusions is now made evident by the failure

of so many formidable expeditions to La Plata” (28-29). The similarity of Ormond and Craig’s crimes suggests Brown does not exonerate Americans from crimes of oppression and tyranny.

The link between the danger in Ormond’s lack of social sympathy and American policies which differentiate between types of citizens becomes clear in light of the historical context in which *Ormond* was written. In 1798 when Brown was writing his first four novels, John Adams’ Federalist government passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, as mentioned earlier, in response to the XYZ Affair, with the view of protecting American civic and political institutions from the extortions of conspirators “Hostile to true liberty and religion” (Bradshaw 357).⁹³ The result of these Acts, Gardner argues, was a movement to develop “a national narrative that aimed to secure to white Americans an identity that was unique (not European) but not alien (not black or Indian)” (xi), and as a consequence, “anxieties about aliens were conflated with anxieties about race” (56). This political situation gave rise to many conspiracy theories and in Philadelphia “the end result of the repeated declarations of French, Illuminati, Federalist-aristocratic, and even Irish conspiracy was a near panic situation” (Levine, *Conspiracy and Romance* 23). In order to counter the perceived threats to the nation state, political rhetoric began to construct a homogenous definition of citizenship that silences and mistrusts voices that do not endorse that white fraternal bond of America’s founding.

In Washington’s 1796 “Farewell Address,” for example, support for the “Unity of Government” is motivated by “every inducement of sympathy . . . The name *American* which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt just pride of Patriotism, more than

⁹³ In 1794, the United States signed the Jay Treaty with Great Britain, which opened up a ten-year period of peaceful mercenary trade between the two nations. The Jay Treaty averted possible war between America and Great Britain, but became a dividing line between Federalists and Republicans. In 1798 France sent representatives, publically referred to as X, Y and Z to threaten America with trade embargoes and interrupted shipping unless America agreed to pay France certain “loans.” America refused and their relationship with France quickly deteriorated.

any appellation derived from local discriminations” (108). However, the “Address” goes on to say that sympathy can lead to dangerously “passionate attachment[s] of one Nation for another” (301), and the latter half of the “Address” mainly attacks threats to the “*American* character,” from the “insidious wiles of foreign influence” (301). Washington’s “Address” ultimately promotes a policy of isolation and homogenization. The “Address” proclaims, “you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union . . . [since] it is at this point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be [covertly and insidiously] directed” (292). America’s enemy, then, becomes anyone who questions the government as the representation of the people. Being other—African American, female, foreign or simply disagreeing with government policies—could be considered criminal.

“The Address” invokes the threat of “foreign influence” in order to create the “Independent Patriot” (301) and to create a boundary between loyal citizens and the seductive, oppressive alien. Brown clearly disagrees with the isolating effects of these policies. Instead, Brown’s desires for an inclusive nation stem from his moral theories. Moral virtue, whether the individual’s or the nation’s, comes from the transcendence of selfish individualism to achieve a love of the whole: a whole community, nation or world. In contrast to “The Address” which ultimately promotes a policy of national isolation, Brown attempts to produce sympathetic bonds between supporters of liberty from all nations and races. Brown writes in his own *Address to the Government* that America’s claims of liberty and democracy are self-deluding: “They call themselves free, yet a fifth of their numbers are slaves” (12). Similarly, in his *Address to Congress* Brown claims that without sympathetic connections between nations, what becomes “beneficial” to America, and other nations, is economic policy rather than “Equity and justice”: “If any proof were wanting that our system of political justice is as narrow, selfish, depraved,

unfeeling, as that of European states, we have only to consider the purpose of the embargo, the intention of imposing it: the effects on foreign nations” (III.vi.37). He goes on to say that justice may be on the tongues of nations, but without sympathy, it is “in the hearts of” none (III.vi.37).

Brown and Smith’s thoughts on patriotism are remarkable similar. Both advocate for the necessity of sympathetic bonds to create a strong nation, but they are also both concerned with the dynamics of a nation’s place within a transatlantic history. Smith states, the “mean [selfish] principle of national prejudice” must be distinguished from the “noble [self-less principle] of the love of our own country” (*Theory* VI.II.2.3). Smith argues that loving your nation means loving your neighbouring nations as well; “each nation ought not only to endeavour itself to excel, but, from the love of mankind, to promote, instead of obstructing, the excellence of its neighbours (VI.ii.2).⁹⁴ For Brown the love of nation should be similarly disinterested. The interest of the nation and the interest of the nations with which it interacts are tied together. *Ormond* demonstrates how individuals’ who do not see nations as part of a larger community corrupt the nation. Ormond, Martinette, and Whiston compromise both individual and national virtue. All espouse the language of benevolence and liberty, but they reject personal ties and are consequently beyond the reach of sympathy.

Where Ormond’s “benevolence” leads him to “exercise absolute power over the conduct of others” (131), his sister Martinette ostensibly fights for liberty. However, Martinette is the other side of the same coin as Ormond. She is a revolutionary for the sake of her own liberty at the cost of anyone else’s; she does not champion the liberation of a specific national cause. Martinette travels to America to fight during the Revolutionary War. She cross-dresses to

⁹⁴ Olaudah Equiano also follows the same line of thinking of Brown and Smith in regards to foreign trade and international economic policy. I discuss this topic in greater detail in Chapter 5.

become a soldier in Santo Domingo, helps “repulse” the “Americans at German-Town” in St. Domingue, and then travels on to participate in the French Revolution as an ardent “adorer of liberty” (206). Martinette, like Ormond, claims she acts for the greater good. For instance, she puts aside personal ties for the good of the country when she kills two nobles “she had known and loved” because their opposition to the revolutionaries and “the cause they had since espoused, cancelled their claims to mercy” (158); however, like Ormond, Brown shows that this kind of unfeeling dispassion leads to corruption. Martinette oppresses others when it suits her and she has no specific allegiance. After Roselli’s death, Martinette is perfectly happy to live in a furnished mansion surrounded by French-Caribbean servants, or as Bernard and Shapiro note, “possibly slaves, since many Creole immigrants only emancipated their slaves as a technical means of accommodating Pennsylvania laws regarding slavery” (*Ormond* 160 n.11). In doing so Martinette enacts the hypocrisies of fraternal sympathy. She preaches equality and liberty but only when it benefits her self-interest.

The best example of the isolating nature of indifference on both national and individual levels is Baxter’s contagion, illness and death. Baxter lives next to a Frenchman, Monroe, and, as he (erroneously) presumes, his daughter Ursula—who is really Martinette. One night after several days have passed and neither Monroe nor his daughter have been seen, Baxter investigates their house and witnesses Ursula in the act of burying Monroe, who, Baxter wrongly presumes, has died from yellow fever. The next day Baxter begins “to feel very unpleasant symptoms” and dies after “a long period of sickness” (55).

As in the earlier case of Whiston, the narrator remarks that Baxter could have lived if his “panic” had not “occurred to endow [the seeds of this disease] with activity” (55). Baxter’s panic is due to the fact that he believes “Frenchmen were not susceptible to the contagion” (54), and

consequently he has rushed into “the jaws of the pest” by involving himself with the Monroses. Stern claims that Baxter’s panic “takes on an evocative political charge” (*Plight* 165) since Brown plays on contemporary nationalist discourse which claimed both African Americans and foreign émigrés were immune to the disease.⁹⁵ Monroe’s vulnerability to a domestic disease blurs the boundaries between the “true citizens of the new republic” who can be identified by “their susceptibility to pestilential affliction” (Stern, *Plight* 165) and those foreigners who are supposedly immune.⁹⁶ True citizens of the Republic attain a social cohesion through their shared tribulations; however, this white, English-speaking essentialism falls apart when the disease makes no distinction between race and nationality.

As readers we may sympathize with Baxter, Whiston and the farm family’s fear of contagion, but because they allow their selfishness to overcome their fellow feeling, the novel directs us to judge their isolating actions as morally wrong. Whiston abandons his sister, Baxter only agrees to check up on the Monroses because he believes them to be immune from the yellow fever, but once he witnesses Monroe’s death, and even though he imagines Ursula to be in torment, he refuses to offer aid. Brown’s narrator indicates Whiston’s and Baxter’s immorality in his observations that had they acted with benevolence and sympathy they would have escaped

⁹⁵ Stern devotes much of her analysis of *Ormond* in *The Plight of Feeling* (pp 153-237) to Baxter’s narrative, and she links Baxter’s “nativist panic” to a failure in sympathy. Stern’s analysis is valuable, but while she does note that Baxter’s disease is the result of his lack of sympathy and a refusal to create a sympathetic community by projecting, rather than identifying with, the alterity of the other, she attributes Baxter’s disease to Brown’s skepticism about man’s ability for fellow feeling and moral progress. Stern does briefly mention Smith, but she reads *Ormond* as refusal of Smithian sympathy. I, on the other hand, see Brown using elements of Smith’s theory to reject trends of individual selfishness apparent in nascent American civilization and to describe an ideal society.

⁹⁶ Brown is playing with the logic of two nationalist myths. The first depends on conventions of sensibility: the sensible body demonstrates a sensible and virtuous mind; therefore, American citizens who succumb to the disease do so because of their superior virtue. The second depends on the religious convention that trials and tribulations assure social cohesion and salvation: the community that suffers together stays together. By showing that the fever is indiscriminate in its victims, and that Baxter contracts the disease because of his lack of a higher morality, Brown annexes both of these proto-exceptionalist national myths.

death. The reader is also urged to compare Baxter (and Whiston) to Constantia and the free African Americans who give aid to the infected despite the risk to themselves. We are told that the story of Baxter and the Monroses relates “circumstances [that] were nearly parallel” to Constantia’s. Yet Constantia uses the fever as a period of “ardent meditation” (56) on the commonality of her experience with her community, while on the other hand Baxter and Whiston’s reactions to the yellow fever end in alienation and death. Edward Cahill claims that the point of this “example for the novel, however, is anything but clear” (177) because he, like Stern, reads Baxter’s panic as excessive, if misplaced, sympathy.⁹⁷ Cahill asks whether, “sympathy actually cause[s] the disease itself, or [whether] it merely delude[s] and agitate[s] a man already infected? Is the tale meant to warn against excessive sympathy, or does it describe what can happen to even the most ‘consistent’ person under the right circumstances?” (178). But what Cahill and Stern do not see is that it is Baxter’s (and Whiston’s) immoral inability to overcome their self-love to sympathize with the greater good of the city, as per Smith’s definition of a good citizen, rather than *excessive* sympathy that condemns them.

In Smith’s theory a nation is made whole by the actions of patriots who view themselves “as but one of the multitude, in the eye of that equitable judge, of no more consequence than any other in it, but bound at all times to sacrifice and devote himself to the safety, to the service, and even to the glory of the greater number” (VI.ii.2.2). To create a stable and virtuous nation, self-love and hierarchy must be overcome for the interests of a sympathetic community. The true citizen is able to transcend self-preference. In this vein Constantia rises to the challenge; she,

⁹⁷ Stern argues that Baxter’s sympathetic imagination is excessive: Baxter’s witnessing “takes place not with a real woman but rather with his own fantastic and melodramatic projection of Miss Monroe . . . Baxter conjures an absent tormented other who does not exist outside the purview of gothic and sentimental novels” (*Plight* 174).

along with her friend the wood-carter offer help, sustenance and companionship to those afflicted by the fever.

In contrast to Constantia, Whiston and Baxter behave more like Smith's definition of "traitors to the nation" (VI.ii.2) despite the fact that Baxter believes he is upholding American nationalism in his xenophobia. Traitors, "promote [their] own little interest" at the expense of public good which is evidence that they "prefer [themselves], in this respect so shamefully and so basely, to all those with whom [they have] any connexion" (*Theory* VI.ii.2). These individuals should therefore be condemned as "of all villains the most detestable (*Theory* VI.ii.2). It is not the definitions of patriot and traitor according to Washington's "Address" to which Brown adheres but rather Smith's definitions. Smith's definitions of patriot and traitor help Brown's readers understand his conception of American nationalism: it is selfless people like Constantia and her African-American friend who become the true citizens of the Republic. Fundamentally, Brown continues to warn against individualism, isolation and alienation only now on the international level. *Ormond* exposes the hypocritical idea that liberty or equality could arise from a nation made from policies of exclusion, oppression and enslavement.

Rejecting Rational Disinterestedness: Embracing Sympathetic Disinterestedness

Ormond's moral philosophies espouse an essentially individualist tenet. He believes the perfection of self-love leads to innate integrity, reduces the need for institutionalised interference, and creates a harmonious society. On the surface Ormond's doctrines of virtue have much to recommend them:

He gratified his love of the beautiful, because the sensations it afforded were pleasing,
but made no sacrifices to the love of distinction. He gave no expensive entertainments for

the sake of exciting the admiration of stupid gazers, or the flattery or envy of those who shared them . . . It was easier for him to reduce his notions of equality to practice than for most others . . . He affected to conceal nothing. No one appeared more exempt from the instigations of vanity . . . He must not part with benevolent desire. (85-87)

Ormond seems to be a model virtuous citizen in his sincerity, his egalitarian views, and his desire for a benevolent and virtuous society, but Ormond fails the test of morality in one major respect: for him “virtue and duty were terms [not] without meaning, but they require us to promote our own happiness and not the happiness of others” (85). Ormond believes in benevolence but he believes benevolence can be obtained only when a man “proposes nothing but his own good” (85). In Ormond’s terms “rational disinterestedness” does not mean removing self-interest as it does in the moral theories of Smith, but rather a disengagement from feeling.

The problem with Ormond’s moral philosophy is that without sympathetic feeling there are no external checks to judge the righteousness of his desires. For instance, Ormond claims his orchestration of Constantia’s father’s death was “benevolent” (213). Not only, he argues, did he save Mr. Dudley from the potential “torments of a lingering malady” or the “poison” of a separation from Constantia when she wed (215) but Mr. Dudley’s murder was for the greater good. Ormond’s philosophy of rational disinterestedness means that he believes that for the good of society, for his felicity, and for Constantia’s felicity, Mr. Dudley must die. For “killing [Mr. Dudley], therefore, [Ormond] may claim [Constantia’s] gratitude. His death was a due and *disinterested* offering” (213 emphasis added). Ormond’s “disinterestedness” is not the removal of self for the benefit of others, but a disassociation from feeling which allows him to witness, but not participate in the feelings of others.

Ormond reformulates Smith's idea of the impartial spectator, which in the context of early America Brown sees as leading towards selfish individualism. Brown's understanding of the impartial spectator embraces a new theory of sympathetic-disinterestedness. In this theory our capacity for sympathy allows us to regulate our own moral behavior. It is this moral imagination which frees us from vice and protects all members of society from injustice. In their lack of sympathy for the dead and dying, Whiston, Baxter and Ormond are iterations of the same moral flaw, and they are condemned by their lack of social cohesion. Their selfish actions and the death and decay that follow them become political acts; their actions become a metaphor for the potential consequences of oppression of the other. For Brown, as in Smith, nations are rendered virtuous when both neighbours and the nation are "endeared to us, not only by all our selfish, but by all our private benevolent affections" (*Theory* VI.ii.2.2). Brown believes the remedy for social corruption or perverted self-love is education through sympathetic exchange.

Brown explores the range of sympathies presented in the novel from the most dubious and destructive, Ormond's love-of-self selfishness, to the moral actions sympathetic-disinterestedness can produce. The fact that Sophia and Constantia's moral ideal is not realized in America doesn't negate their morality, but rather it makes Ormond's failure all the more tragic. Brown offers a moral warning, not a condemnation. Constantia's capacity for sympathy, the instances of African-American sympathy for the dead and dying, Sophia's shared sympathy and the sympathy readers feel for the beleaguered Constantia offer the hopeful prospect of a sympathetic community responding to a shared post-Revolutionary world in similar ways.

Brown argues America needs his new definitions of citizenship in order to survive. By privileging both female and African-American individuals as ideal American citizens, Brown questions rhetoric that employs sympathy as propaganda to cover America's colonial or

patriarchal agendas. His model is one of community, inquiry, fellowship and this community embraces otherness. If we dismiss Brown's writing as "incoherent," "contradictory" or "a chaos of narration" that barely "anticipates that national literature of major American writers such as Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville and James" (Verhoevan, "Displacing" 202) because we read his writing in terms of his political allegiances, we miss the ways in which Brown thinks about moral theory. Reading *Ormond* with Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* illuminates the way Brown believes moral sentiment can liberate society by placing civic authority in the moral sentiment of collegial sympathetic habits rather than coercive, or hierarchical political powers. Brown challenges us to look at America's emerging literary voice as part of transatlantic exchange and a community that resists the marginalization of the other.

Ormond describes American politics as moral theory. Brown's works have most often been read as political allegories and indices of an American nationalism and identity. However, Brown's writings fit into a larger picture of both American nationalist and transatlantic writing. American Independence did not mean America's ties to Britain and the Enlightenment tradition were cut; Brown works within the transatlantic scope of moral theory; his thoughts on sympathy and disinterestedness become part of the conversation on social morality that Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* founds. Brown's novels describe a nation that contains overlapping communities in the nation and within wider global networks. These social connections are the only alternative to the death and contagion of isolationist principles. Brown sees sympathy and disinterestedness as ways of building the tolerance necessary to make a morally sound society out of free individuals. His moral arguments question the political work of developing racial identifications and violence under the terms of equality and fraternity in the new nation. His novels work against the nationalist impulse that attaches moral value to select individuals based

on characteristics like gender, race, or nationality. Brown suggests that the sympathetic imagination is central to a moral society, because it is the sympathetically derived impartial spectator who is able to mediate between the individual and society.

Brown's negotiation of social and political moral conditions of post-Revolutionary America depicts an encounter with otherness that destabilizes rather than bolsters America's nationalist claims of equality. Brown is often considered the first American author, but the questions and concerns he raises extend past national boundaries. In *Ormond* Brown's spectators must learn the difference between rational and sympathetic disinterestedness in order that the nation can take its place within a global network. In the next chapter I examine the transatlantic connections of another author whose works, like Brown's, have come to represent a distinct national ethos, but also like Brown's works her works become richer when they are read within a transatlantic context. In the next chapter I look at the way Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) continues the conversation on sympathy and social morality. Austen too is concerned with the transnational embeddedness of all individuals, but unlike Brown, Austen writes from the position of imperial power. Austen's thoughts on colonial relationships necessarily differ from Brown's, but, like Brown and the other authors I have discussed so far in this project, the central ideology that moral judgments depend on the approval of the impartial spectator remains. Using Smith's *Theory* as a lens through which to read *Mansfield Park* can help illuminate the way Austen thinks about the problems and benefits associated with social structures of transatlantic reciprocity versus conservative social structures of authoritarian deference. Austen acknowledges the independent nature of a nation's evolving identity, but she also recognizes that nations exist internationally: moral judgment can never rely on the interests of one ruling group. Austen uses

the image of the impartial spectator to critique Britain's current moral values and to suggest a means for social reform.

Chapter 3: Returning to Sentiment: The Impartial Spectator and Shaping the Nation in

Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*

In Chapter 2 I resituated Charles Brockden Brown's novels from within a context of nationalist political allegory to part of a transatlantic exchange of moral sentiment. When we move Brown from a national to a transnational arena we can see how he uses sentimental concepts of the impartial spectator and disinterestedness to question a nationalism paradoxically based on universalisms and exclusions. Brown's dialogue with Adam Smith reveals the way Brown thinks about the limits on how an individual can or ought to extend their moral commitments to enact local justice and how an individual might justify those same moral commitments at the global level. Like Brown, Jane Austen examines the distortions of self-interest that can compromise our moral judgments and produce corrupt and even violent social standards. In the first half of this chapter, I look at how Austen uses sentimental concepts of the impartial spectator and the sympathetic imagination to question how a nation might reform itself. In the second half of the chapter, I examine how Austen moves from the national to the transnational. She questions how that reformed moral nation might spread its knowledge and understanding to assist others and how the distance of others might affect that nation's moral duty towards them.

Austen, Sentiment and the Impartial Spectator

Mansfield Park (1814) has long been labeled a "problem" novel because of Fanny Price, its "problem heroine." Many critics, including Austen's contemporaries and family, have a hard time taking Fanny seriously as a heroine; Austen's mother found Fanny "insipid" while her niece Anna "could not bear Fanny" (*Later Manuscripts* 230). Although Lionel Trilling makes a case

for Fanny as a strong moral example, he also dismisses Fanny when he states, “Nobody, I believe, has ever found it possible to like the heroine of *Mansfield Park*” (212). More recently Nina Auerbach compares Fanny to Frankenstein, Frankenstein’s monster, Grendel, and a vampire. She concludes Fanny is “a charmless heroine who was not made to be loved” (64). From nineteenth-century readers to contemporary critics, Fanny is thought passive and meek and thus a problem. It is difficult to reconcile Fanny the apparent “victim of social conformity” (Mudrick 93) with Austen’s lively, authoritative and independent heroines like Elizabeth Bennett or Emma Woodhouse. Particularly, for twenty-first century readers, Fanny’s inability, or unwillingness, to stand up for herself in the face of the bullying and tyranny to which she is subject at Mansfield Park sits uncomfortably with our (desired) image of Austen as a feminist, reformist, or socially progressive writer.

Recent studies such as Peter Knox Shaw’s *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment* and Laura Mooneyham-White’s *Jane Austen’s Anglicanism*, as well as many of the papers presented at the 2014 the Jane Austen Society of North America’s Annual General Meeting which celebrated “200 years of *Mansfield Park*,” have championed Fanny, but readers and critics remain divided in their satisfaction with Fanny as a heroine. While no one at the AGM would have agreed, at least out loud, with Marilyn Butler’s conclusion in her seminal *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* that “Fanny is a failure” (248), papers which focused on Fanny’s character still tended to see her, disappointedly, as a “conduct book” heroine or a vessel through which Austen explores her conservative religious values.⁹⁸ Additionally, there was some debate during the forums as to

⁹⁸ Two examples from the 2014 AGM A. Marie Sprayberry’s “Fanny Price as Fordyce’s Ideal Woman? And Why?” and Susan Allen Ford’s ““Assisting the Improvement of Her Mind””: Chapone’s *Letters* as Guide to *Mansfield Park*”

whether Fanny or Mary Crawford was meant to be the more attractive heroine since some readings have seen Fanny's unflagging morality as ironic.⁹⁹ Mary certainly displays the liveliness of mind and body which Austen's most popular heroine Elizabeth Bennet possesses, while Fanny's timidity and sensitivity align her with a tradition which many critics reject for Austen—the sentimental novel.

Influential readings of Austen, such as Butler's, offer in-depth readings of Austen within the context of sentimentalism and the cult of sensibility; nonetheless, almost all these critical studies consider Austen as an "anti-sentimentalist."¹⁰⁰ Butler argues Austen's satirical treatment of sentimentalism in her juvenilia and her critique of Marianne's brand of sensibility in her mature *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) positions Austen between "the advocates of a Christian conservatism . . . with their pessimistic view of man's nature, and their belief in external authority" and "progressives, sentimentalists, revolutionaries, with their optimism about man,

⁹⁹ It is purely conjecture to ascribe any irony in Austen's proprietary treatment of "my little Fanny," or whether, as some critics have argued, Fanny is in fact a *critique* of the conduct book heroine. In addition, it is worth considering that in her letters Austen reveals her desire to create different types of heroines. In regard to *Emma*, she famously states, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like" (J. E. Austen-Leigh 157), and she writes to her niece Fanny Knight in regard to *Persuasion*, "You may *perhaps* like the Heroine, as she is almost too good for me" (*Letters* 23 March 1817). Fanny's difference from Elizabeth or Emma can be therefore just as persuasively read as Austen's tribute to sentimental novels.

¹⁰⁰ Readings of Austen as a realist begin with her writing practices and with her contemporaries. Austen is notorious for only writing about what she herself knew and extending this writing advice to her niece Anna in regards to the probability of events in Anna's novels: "Lyme will not do. Lyme is towards 40 miles distance from Dawlish & would not be talked of there . . . They must be *two* days going from Dawlish to Bath; They are nearly 100 miles apart" (To Anna Austen 10-18 Aug. 1812, *Letters* 268). Sir Walter Scott also credited Austen with creating a new class of fiction "fastidiously copy[ied] from nature" which adhered to "the current of ordinary life" (Unsigned Review: *Emma* 1816, 14). Even more recent studies of Austen situate her as anti-sentimental. For example, Clara Tuite's *Romantic Austen: Sexual Politics and the Literary Canon* (2008) names the "threat of writing as the threat of the sentimental novel" which Austen "moves beyond" to "vindicate the form of female subjectivity" (9-11).

and their preference for spontaneous personal impulse against rules imposed from without” (165). Butler therefore links Austen to the “The New Morality” of the 1790s’ rather than seeing her as part of the sentimental tradition. Recent scholarship challenges Butler’s reading of Austen as ultimately conservative but continues to overlook Austen’s grounding in the sentimental tradition.

Other Austen scholars have got around Fanny’s passivity by persuasively reading *Mansfield Park* as an injunction against slavery. Fanny’s journey to Mansfield Park is an allegory of flesh as a “transported commodity” (Said 118), and the depiction of her subsequent treatment by her Aunt Norris is read as a slave narrative. Moira Ferguson reads Mrs. Norris as Austen’s allusion to John Norris, a notorious slaver denigrated in Thomas Clarkson’s *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1808). Norris first presented himself to Clarkson as an abolitionist sympathizer, but, Clarkson later discovers, Norris is in fact a Liverpool delegate for the Slave-trade.¹⁰¹ As Enit Steiner states, “Austen’s appreciation of Thomas Clarkson and the depiction of Mrs. Norris as a double-dealing woman seems to justify the association” (201) between the two Norrises. Gabrielle White similarly claims *Mansfield Park* is the “colonial garden” and Sir Thomas’s “absenteeism places the then status quo of chattel slavery under the spotlight” (51). John Wiltshire on the other hand argues *Mansfield Park* is not a slave narrative; he does not see enough evidence of colonial or historical analogies to conclude that *Mansfield Park* adheres to slave narrative conventions, but rather the novel follows popular rhetoric which

¹⁰¹ Clarkson relates a history in which Norris refuses to help African slaves even though he knows his lack of aid will result in their deaths: “Mr. Norris himself, when certain prisoners of war were offered to him for sale, declined buying them because they appeared unhealthy; and though the king then told him that he would put them to death, he could not be prevailed upon to take them, but left them to their hard fate; and he had the boldness to state afterwards, that it was his belief that many of them actually suffered” (*History* I.168)

compared young English women with slaves.¹⁰² While I do not dispute these interpretations—indeed, I hope to add to them in the second section of this chapter—it is important to recognize that in *Mansfield Park*, whether or not we approve of Fanny as a heroine, Austen takes aspects of sentimentalism, such as the sympathetic imagination and the ability to feel and judge rightly, very seriously.¹⁰³ These aspects are crucial to Austen’s representation of the ideal sentimental heroine and her representation of Britain’s ideal moral empire.

Austen intentionally works within a sentimental framework in order to intervene in early nineteenth-century issues such as the formation of a distinctive British civil subject and Britain’s imperial projects. Britain lost its first empire with American Independence, and, as I explain in Chapter 2, the loss of the American colonies made Britain re-evaluate both her imperial position as well as her commitments to liberty and justice for all; although, there is of course a large disparity between the realities of slavery and British ideals of freedom. For Austen, growing abolitionist movements; controversies over Britain’s deportment in India that were brought to

¹⁰² The distinction is subtle, but for example, Moira Ferguson in her seminal essay “*Mansfield Park* Slavery, Colonialism, and Gender” makes the link between slavery and *Mansfield Park* through many associations such as Mrs. Norris with John Norris a notoriously cruel overseer, with whom Austen would have been familiar from her reading of Clarkson’s *History*. “Power relations within the community of Mansfield Park re-enact and refashion plantocratic paradigms. . . . The cruel officiousness of protagonist Fanny Price’s aunt, Mrs. Norris, who is effectively Sir Thomas’s overseer and lives in the suggestively named white house ‘across the park’ from the Great House, underlines his plantocratic style of administration” (Ferguson 70). In a contrasting, although not necessarily mutually exclusive argument, Wiltshire refers to Hannah More’s pamphlet “The White Slave Trade” (1805). In the pamphlet More compares the “coming out” of young girls into society to slave auctioning (“Decolonising *Mansfield Park*” 308). Austen also subscribes to this rhetoric in *Emma* when Jane Fairfax makes the comparison between the “governess-trade” and the sale of “human-flesh” (300).

¹⁰³ An exception to anti-sentimental reading of Austen is Peter Knox-Shaw’s *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment*. Knox-Shaw offers an alternative to Butler’s conservative, anti-sentimental reading of Austen. Knox-Shaw does read Austen through the sentimental, moral and political theories of Hume and Smith; however, Knox-Shaw chooses to align Austen with the “sceptical tradition” (5) rather than sentimentalism per se, and, in so doing, emphasises both emancipation and self-command as the main tenets of Austen’s writing. Knox-Shaw also particularly associates *Mansfield Park* with Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* rather than *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. While Knox-Shaw’s readings are insightful and this paper is indebted to many of his interpretations, he does not address Smith’s idea of the sympathetic imagination in relation to sentimentalism and the construction of moral theory in relation to *Mansfield Park* any detail. In contrast, I contend that it is Fanny’s depth of feeling and her ability to sympathise with others that makes her a sentimental heroine and that also makes her the novel’s moral center.

light by public displays such as the Impeachment of Warren Hastings; the French Revolution; numerous slave rebellions, like the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804); Britain's ongoing struggles with America, for instance the War of 1812; the threat of Napoleon's imperial conquests; as well as Britain's own imperial expansions bring a greater sense of responsibility and urgency to questions of Britons' moral identity. In her study on empire, Mary Louise Pratt formulates the term "anti-conquest" to describe Britons' repudiation of earlier overtly imperialist rhetoric. She argues that in anti-conquest narratives Europeans "seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (9). Austen like other writers of the period negotiates between a belief in Britain's right to rule and a British commitment to liberty as a general moral ideal. She questions Britons' rights and duties as subjects of an imperial power that claims to be dedicated to justice, liberty and virtue.¹⁰⁴

In order to help define how the ideal moral British subject should act, Austen turns to the sentimental tradition laid out by the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment particularly Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and his idea of the impartial spectator. As mentioned previously, Smith argues the impartial spectator allows us to internalize standards of virtue that develop out of social interaction. Moral sentiments are not just benevolent impulses but are products of an exchange in which the subject cultivates sentiments of which an impartial spectator would approve. Smith's theories offer a way to illuminate Austen's thoughts about the means by which morality, self and society are shaped. In his *Theory*, Smith makes it clear that

¹⁰⁴ The final volumes of Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* were published in 1788. In the *History*, Gibbon uses Rome's collapse as a warning against luxury from imperial wealth and power. This imperial pursuit, Gibbon argues, led to moral corruption and political decay. The publication gave Britons serious pause on their own methods and morals in regards to their expanding empire.

corrupt self-love, love that does not heed the dictates of the impartial spectator, leads to mercenary mindsets which in turn lead to violations of liberty, the “most sacred rule” upon which “depend the whole security and peace of human society” (III.ii.3). *Mansfield Park* moves readers from questions surrounding individual virtue to questions about national virtue by demonstrating the imperative value of a “spectator” figure who can resist the lure of moral corruption. Fanny’s passivity, her meekness and her sensibility allow Fanny to exorcise the self-love, which Smith condemns, that leads us to violate duties of justice or important ties of benevolence. Her “outsider” status at Mansfield makes her the perfect impartial spectator. She becomes an idealization of her society’s moral judgment. Fanny’s embodiment of moral judgment enables Austen to construct a British national identity that distances itself from colonial violence and oppression yet also demonstrates its moral right to lead the world in imperial expansion.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Although there is no direct reference to Smith in Austen’s surviving letters it is likely she would have been familiar with his theories perhaps through Thomas Clarkson’s *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition* where Clarkson cites both David Hume’s and Smith’s theories in his celebration of the Mansfield decision—Lord Mansfield’s famous decision that the state would not recognize slavery in England and James Somersett could not be considered property and sent back to Virginia. For example, Clarkson writes, “About this time [1776] two others, men of great talents and learning, promoted the cause of the injured Africans, by the manner in which they introduced them to notice in their respective works. Dr. Adam Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, had, so early as the year 1759, held them up in an honourable, and their tyrants in a degrading light” (I.34). Clarkson also quotes from Smith: “There is not a Negro from the coast of Africa, who does not, in this respect, possess a degree of magnanimity, which the soul of his sordid master is too often scarce capable of conceiving” (I.34), and then goes on to praise Smith again for continuing his fight against slavery in *Wealth of Nations*. Austen was also evidently familiar with David Hume, who greatly influenced Smith. Both Hume’s and Smith’s works were recommended for educational reading during the eighteenth century. For a more detailed account of eighteenth-century didactic writers, such as the Earl of Chesterfield, who recommended Hume and Smith see Knox-Shaw p.7. Since Hume and Smith were so widely recommended for educational purposes it seems likely Austen’s father would have taught Hume’s *Essays and Treatises on several Subjects* (which included the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*) as well as his *The History of England*. Austen was at least familiar with this latter as evidenced in Miss Tliney’s statement on history in *Northanger Abbey* where she remarks: “If a speech be well drawn up, I read it with pleasure, by whomsoever it may be made—and probably with much greater, if the production of Mr. Hume or Mr. Robertson” (NA 77). Similarly, Austen was definitely familiar with the works of one of her favorite authors, Maria Edgeworth, whose eponymous heroine Belinda keeps a copy of Smith *Theory of Moral Sentiments* on her dressing table (see p. 288).

The disinclination to read Austen through a sentimental lens may stem from an inherited distrust of the genre. As I explain in Chapter 1, by the end of the eighteenth century, sentimental novels began to fall out of favour in Britain due, in part, to the commodification of sympathetic displays. For example, eighteenth-century discourses of sentiment revealed the physiological marks of an individual's inner moral virtue in their tears, blushes, sighs or nervous disorders. Readers who wept while reading novels like Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747-48) could claim their tears as signs of their innate sympathy and hence their moral worth, but critics of sentimentalism, like Sterne, worried that sentimental marks of distinction could be both easily faked and, more significantly, easily produced as moral signifiers without consistent moral action. As a result, by the time Jane Austen wrote her mature novels, sentimentalism and the corresponding sobriquet of sensibility were often associated with dissipation and excesses. Physical indications of mental sensitivity could no longer be relied upon to represent any genuine emotional state; sentimentality was not necessarily motivated by the impulses of humanity, but rather a self-serving projection of moral virtue without substance.

These negative views of sentimentalism or those views of sentimentalism which tend to emphasize, as Butler does, uninhibited feeling, spontaneous impulse and resistance to "rules imposed from without" (165) miss sentimentalism's early agenda, as posited by moral philosophers like Smith, of interrogating the self and the self's social world in order to determine the ideal moral subject. Austen, like Smith, argues that morality or virtue is not just about what is approved of by society; the impartial spectator can overcome social values that have become corrupt or act in a way that doesn't necessarily benefit society as a whole because the impartial spectator is not led by self-interest. *Mansfield Park* returns to this more rigorous Smithian sense of sentimentalism. Austen, like Smith, emphasizes the need for a disinterested self to overcome

self-partiality, self-love and corrupt social mores. Feeling impulses are crucial to the moral self, but so is rational disinterestedness. Austen is invested in constructing a British identity which, as Smith argues, depends on a conception of moral worth as an interest “in the fortune of others” which “render[s] their happiness necessary to [us], though [we] derive nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it” (*Theory* I.i.1). This position becomes important when Austen considers questions about the right to imperial rule. I will explore this question in more detail in the second half of this chapter, but first I will look at the ways Austen opens this topic for discussion when she commends Fanny as a sentimental heroine while also thinking about questions of human nature. Austen, like Smith, seeks to reconcile our competing traits of possessive individualism and benevolence—a question crucial to Austen’s historical moment of expanding empire.¹⁰⁶

Sentimental Fanny: Mansfield Park’s Impartial Spectator

In order to understand how Austen uses sentimentalism, it is useful to look at the sentimental context to which *Mansfield Park* belongs. As many critics have demonstrated, the rise of sentiment and sensibility in the early eighteenth century was an attempt to establish new social patterns, to “universalize the status of the common man” (Holmes 63), and to establish parameters other than birth and social status for determining an individual’s worth. Moral

¹⁰⁶ I take this term from C.B Macpherson who uses it to explain John Locke’s political theories and to establish his own theory of liberalism. Macpherson’s theory is complex, so it seems somewhat trite to reduce it to a single concept; however, in essence Macpherson defines possessive individualism as Locke’s conception of life and liberty as possessions not rights; the invention of market capital makes possessive individualism a theory of property which claims mankind’s tacit agreement to “a right to unlimited acquisition by any individual” (154) not just what can sustain each individual. In Smithian terms this would correlate with an individual unwilling or unable to see other people’s interests as equal in value to his own and who places his own interest above and at the expense of justice for others: “every individual, in his own breast, naturally prefers himself to all mankind,” but if he acts on this preference “[i]t is a violation of fair play, which they [spectators] cannot admit of. This man is to them, in every respect, as good as he: they do not enter into that self-love by which he prefers himself so much to this other, and cannot go along with the motive from which he hurt him” (*Theory* II.ii.2)

theorists like Smith, in an attempt to counter theories of selfishness by Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville, argued that moral virtues arise from feeling.¹⁰⁷ In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* Smith writes, “[i]n treating of the principles of morals there are two questions to be considered. First, wherein does virtue consist? . . . And, secondly, by what power or faculty in the mind is it, that this character, whatever it be, is recommended to us?” (VII. i. 2). Smith’s arguments in *The Theory* point towards the sympathetic imagination, the ability to feel another’s sentiment as one’s own, as the basic element of moral distinction, and he determines that an individual’s “virtue or vice must ultimately depend” on “the sentiment or affection of the heart from which any action proceeds” (I.i.3.). But Smith also concludes that in order to be moral our sentiments must appeal to the accountability of an idealized judge, so that while our feelings are the building blocks of virtue, they must be mediated by reason.

Smith’s theories go on to detail a more complex view of civic humanism: sympathy is more than feeling—“it is a critical and aesthetic doctrine” (McCarthy 2) based on ideas of spectatorship. In other words, our feelings must be approved by society *and* by our internal spectator who acts as the ideal disinterested self. However, in the ideology and literature of the eighteenth-century, the deep feeling that Smith identifies as the prime, but not sole, motivator of moral worth often becomes enmeshed in physical manifestations of deep feeling. These physical displays replace Smith’s claims for the morality of the disinterested self and transform into

¹⁰⁷ Much of the eighteenth-century’s preoccupation with sympathy, sentiment and feeling was a response to Hobbes’s and Mandeville’s claims that mankind is naturally selfish and any seemingly sympathetic actions really derive from love of self rather than from regard for others. To disprove this view, moral theorist like Shaftesbury, Hume and Smith argue that sympathy can in fact be selfless and therefore an indication of virtue or morality. Hume, for example, connects sympathy and morality by claiming that sympathy is the source of moral distinction: “The Sentiments of others can never affect us, but by becoming, in some measure, our own.” (Hume, *Treatise* 441). Smith follows Hume in his contention that sympathy allows his to know the other and once we know and are moved by him, then we can act as truly moral beings.

physical frailty that cannot act. Passivity in sentimental novels like Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* therefore paradoxically becomes an act of agency. As Scott Paul Gordon explains, the passive individual in sentimental literature becomes committed to "an existence in which the denial of self-interestedness is tantamount to a kind of agency" (17).

Sentimental novels, with their celebration of the feeling hero or heroine, therefore, contribute to the cultivation of passivity into a civic principle of social behavior. Passivity becomes a desirable social trait because passivity, in the sentimental tradition, doesn't mean weakness or apathy but rather the denial of self-interestedness. Therefore passivity becomes a moral marker for a national identity. For example, Scott Paul Gordon argues *Clarissa* promotes morality in Clarissa's and readers' demonstrable disinterestedness, even when it comes to herself:

It is these tears, which readers sympathetically catch from Clarissa's [tears], that testify to her disinterestedness and sincerity. But Clarissa's capacity to make readers weep scripts for them a position of passivity, of denial of desire, equivalent to Clarissa's own.

Richardson's great novel, then, grants readers belief in their own disinterestedness, in the sincerity of the tears they shed, and in the worth of their moral feelings, by enticing them to assume a model of the sensible body (306).

This sense of being acted upon rather than *active* is consistent with the moral theories of David Hume, but not precisely of Smith. Hume claims "the passions are so contagious, that they pass with the greatest facility from one person to another, and produce correspondent movements in all human breasts" (*Treatise* 605). Smith's view however, deviates from Hume's sense of feeling-contagion. Smith sees sympathy as an exchange. An individual may experience involuntary reactions to impressions created by others' feelings, but the individual is always in

the process of evaluating these feeling-responses and determining their propriety; the agent then modifies their behavior to meet the expectations of the spectator's judgment. Smith's spectator grounds morality in an immediate bodily response which must then be subject to a reasoned reaction to these engendered feelings. The individual who can become the proper impartial judge and who acts un-self-interestedly is not *acted upon*, as in Hume's model, but is *(re)-active*. The virtuous subject is therefore defined on a body figured as susceptible to others' feelings but also actively responsive—like Fanny.

The transformation of sentiment into an index of reflective and desirable behaviour becomes a mark of civility, an indication of Britons' views of themselves as moral, virtuous and a corresponding marker of "Britishness." Fanny's passivity, then, does not mean she is "little more than a fetishistic commodity, essentially bought and sold by members of her family, [and] encouraged to prostitute herself for rank and wealth," (Heydt-Stevenson 328), nor does it mean that Fanny's passive body acts as a stand-in for the helplessness of plantation slaves but rather that, like her sentimental predecessor Clarissa, Fanny's responsiveness guarantees both her disinterested self and her authenticity. By guaranteeing that Fanny does not act self-interestedly, Austen ensures that Fanny's views, whether on the ideal civil subject or on colonial roles, can be taken as morally right and can therefore open the door to reformatory action. In the sentimental didactic tradition, Fanny offers a moral model not only for the other inhabitants of Mansfield Park but also for her readers. As Fanny recognizes and struggles to maintain the disinterested self throughout the novel, she becomes the ideal impartial spectator and thus the novel's moral judge.

Smith's model for moral judgment begins with the spectator's ability to sympathetically identify with the actions and responses of others; in other words, the first step towards moral judgment is understanding another's sentiments. Smith argues that spectators, real members of

society, judge others as acting justly and properly when “the original passions of the person principally concerned are in perfect concord with the sympathetic emotions of the spectator” (I.i.3). If the spectator cannot imagine himself in the other’s position, or having imagined himself as the other he finds his feelings do not concur, then, he judges the other person to be acting unjustly. Once he has established that moral judgment arises from this sympathetic imagination, Smith quickly turns to the idea of the “impartial spectator.” As we have seen. Smith imagines the impartial spectator as a construct through whom the individual imagines how society would judge his actions or emotions. In this process the individual learns to distinguish between “the amiable and the respectable virtues, the virtues of humanity, on the one hand, and self-command, on the other” (*Theory* I. i. 5).

Consequently, for Smith, morality depends on both sentiment and judgment. Moral judgment develops from our capacity for feeling and the ability to sympathize, but also from our ability to regulate feeling, particularly feelings of self-partiality; “[w]e are immediately put in mind of the light in which [the spectator] will view our situation, and we begin to view it ourselves in the same light” (*Theory* I.i.4). Smith’s moral judge relies on sentiment, rather than the completely detached judge of, for example, Kantian moral theory. As we saw with Brown in the previous chapter, complete rationality, for Smith as for Brown, cannot lead to moral action. Smith’s disinterested-self must also rely on sentiment because it is “altogether absurd and unintelligible to suppose that the first perceptions of right and wrong can be derived from reason” (*Theory* III. ii.7); the “general rules of morality” must instead be formed “by immediate sense and feeling” (*Theory* III. ii.7). In other words, we are equipped with an innate moral sense that springs from feeling. That feeling is then judged in dialogue with the judgment of our

society and/or the impartial spectator.¹⁰⁸ For Austen, as for Smith, feeling is the bed-rock of moral judgment, but we must also learn to become more detached judges of the virtue of feelings and motives not only for our individual desires but also that we might evaluate the feelings and actions of others within our social context.¹⁰⁹

Austen believes the ideal moral subject must learn moral judgment, introspection and self-monitoring by developing the impartial spectator via sympathetic imagination. The impartial spectator, Smith's "man within the breast," allows us to over-come our self-love by showing us "the real littleness of ourselves" (III.iii. 5). Once we realize how unimportant we really are, we can put the "greater interests of others" (III.iii.5) ahead of our own instead of violating others' rights for our own benefit. Ultimately, this disinterestedness leads to moral benefit for ourselves and our society by abolishing the "deformity of injustice" (III.iii. 5). In *Mansfield Park*, those characters who are unable or unwilling to heed their impartial spectator are morally deficient. Those who can learn to listen for the spectator can redeem themselves and attain moral worth, while those, like Fanny, who can from the beginning "examine [their] own conduct with [the spectator's] candour and impartiality" (III.iv.4), act as the moral standard towards which society is held.

¹⁰⁸ This interplay between an individual's innate moral sense and social custom also becomes important for Olaudah Equiano; he uses this sense that morality can be recognized through impulsive feeling to argue for a universal moral standard that can be returned to when society's moral judgment fails. I discuss this topic more in Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁹ Smith ranks disinterestedness above sympathy in terms of virtue. "Self-governance" is "the result of an endeavour to restrain natural emotion" (*Theory* I. i. 5) and only when we practice self-governance can we attain true disinterestedness. Once we are able to practice "reason, principle, conscience" then our selfish impulses "and the natural misrepresentations of self-love" can be corrected (*Theory* III. iv. 5). However, feeling and sentiment are also crucial because without these virtues men who possess self-command and seeming disinterestedness, "whom no difficulty can discourage, no danger appal, and who are at all times ready for the most daring and desperate enterprizes[sic] . . . at the same time, seem to be hardened against all sense either of justice or humanity (*Theory* III.i.3)

Austen's model of the moral subject works out her vision of a civilizational ideal. *Mansfield Park* presents a facade of socially approved civilization, but Austen's novel reveals how a civilized appearance can mask moral decay. Austen's thoughts on the constituents of civilization complement Smith's questions, which we saw at the beginning of this chapter, about "wherein does virtue consist?" and "by what power or faculty in the mind is it, that this character, whatever it be, is recommended to us?" (VII. i. 2). Both Smith and Austen write in moments of social transition in the conflict between a pursuit of wealth and the expense of moral integrity. For Smith, in *The Theory*, this conflict centers on the emerging capitalistic and commercial enterprises of a market economy, while Austen examines the effects of the wealth derived by the expansion of Empire, but both are concerned with the compatibility between a moral civilization and certain sources of wealth.

Austen and Smith both contest the ideology of property-based moral worth which "assumes that only individuals free from all dependencies were capable of acting in the public good" and "prevent[ed] those officially denied participation [i.e. non land owners] from unofficially claiming that right [public beneficence and moral worth]" (S.P Gordon 125). *Mansfield Park* conceives of civilization as a process of sympathetic education and self-knowledge, not social status. Likewise, in Smith's view, our sentiments cause us to admire the moral virtues of "magnanimity, generosity, and justice," and we desire an individual possessed of these qualities to be rewarded with the economic benefits of property, wealth, power, and honours (III.5). On the other hand, "fraud, falsehood, brutality, and violence" offend our moral sentiments so much that we believe an individual who possesses these qualities should not be rewarded with property, wealth, power or honours even if they are born to them or lawfully acquire them (III.5). Accordingly, those who act disinterestedly are naturally rewarded—they

deserve their wealth and power, while those who pursue their own self-interest are naturally punished: “[Nature] bestows upon every virtue, and upon every vice, that precise reward or punishment which is best fitted to encourage the one, or to restrain the other” (*Theory* III.5). We can see this principle of “innate justice” at play in *Mansfield Park*. Characters who have economic worth but no moral virtue do not necessarily retain their property and status, while those who have moral worth attain social status and economic virtue.¹¹⁰ Austen rewards with property and wealth those characters who sympathetically identify with others and act for the greater good. The exception might be Tom Bertram, whose wastrel ways threaten to deprive Edmund of his living; however, Tom’s near fatal illness and subsequent sober behavior coupled with Sir Thomas’ increased moral attentiveness suggest the potential for Tom’s moral reformation and thus the justification for the retention of his status as heir to Mansfield.

The disinterested-self is the pre-requisite for self-knowledge and the corresponding ability to understand others. Self-knowledge and the sympathetic imagination become the conditions for Mansfield’s regeneration. Sir Thomas learns that displays of economic power in his wealthy estate are not enough to ensure domestic harmony. His family lacks the moral

¹¹⁰ Austen is able to apply this principle with the most exactitude to the women: Maria, Mary, Julia and Fanny. The men are not subject to quite the same financial pressures and confluence of virtue and economic standing. However, even though characters like Mr. Rushworth and Henry Crawford have more latitude in their financial independence than their female counterparts and do not lose their property because of their moral laxity, Austen indicates that the future may not be all rosy and their social status does suffer. Mr. Rushworth is already on a social descent. R.W Chapman in his Notes to *Mansfield Park* suggests that “Rushworth did not succeed his father, and ‘the late Mr. Rushworth’ was not this Mrs. Rushworth’s husband” (543). Additionally, Rushworth’s bid for a seat at Parliament and his chance to represent the nation will likely not come to fruition since Rushworth seems to depend on Sir Thomas for his appointment: Mary Crawford says, of Rushworth, “A man might represent the country with such an estate” (189). To which Mrs. Grant replies, “I dare say he *will* be in Parliament soon. When Sir Thomas comes, I dare say he will be in for some borough, but there has been nobody to put him in the way of doing anything yet” (189). After Maria’s elopement and Sir Thomas’ own reformation it seems unlikely Rushworth will advance in society. Similarly, while Henry Crawford will not lose his estate in Norfolk, Austen suggests he will suffer the same gradual loss of social reputation as his uncle Admiral Crawford, “a man of vicious conduct” (46) who lives with his mistress instead of maintaining his niece, and as the novel’s ending makes clear “we may fairly consider . . . Henry Crawford to be providing for himself no small portion of vexation and regret—vexation that must rise sometimes to self-reproach, and regret to wretchedness” (542).

education which Fanny, placed at the center of the family as the impartial spectator, provides. Fanny leads by example in the moral judgment of self and other to prevent the corruption and disgrace brought to Mansfield by the Crawfords. Fanny's moral sense, not her social status, is why she earns her eventual marriage into the upper-class Bertram family and the associated property.

Mansfield Park does not abolish social hierarchy, an important point for Austen's larger global vision. Hierarchy remains but it must be earned by moral superiority rather than a status conferred by birth, wealth or title. Austen aims for social reformation at the domestic level of *Mansfield Park*. As the novel makes clear, those who possess economic worth should be morally obliged to act disinterestedly since those that possess wealth are often objects of admiration. Smith similarly notes that those who possess wealth and rank "are observed by all the world. Everybody is eager to look at [them], and to conceive, at least by sympathy, that joy and exultation with which [their] circumstances naturally inspire [them]" (I.iii.2). Since, through our sympathetic imagination, we imagine the wealthy should be deserving of their wealth, power and general happiness, we attempt to emulate them; therefore, the wealthy and distinguished have a large influence on society mores.¹¹¹

This principle that status must be earned is important for *Mansfield Park* because the novel centers on the wealthy Bertrams and the potential corruption of Mansfield. Here we can return to the correlation between moral individuals and moral nations: the estate stands for the state, or in other words, Mansfield Park stands for Britain. Sir Thomas Bertram is not

¹¹¹ As Smith puts it: "Scarce a word, scarce a gesture, can fall from him that is altogether neglected. In a great assembly he is the person upon whom all direct their eyes; it is upon him that their passions seem all to wait with expectation, in order to receive that movement and direction which he shall impress upon them" (I.iii.2)

automatically a moral individual because he possesses an estate, just as Britain is not automatically moral because it controls overseas colonies. If Sir Thomas, as an individual to whom others look, “to receive that movement and direction which he shall impress upon them” (*Theory* I.iii.2) fails in his moral duties, his estate, and therefore by implication Britain, will also fail. It is only Fanny’s presence at Mansfield which prevents its ruin, and only if British subjects emulate Fanny’s sympathetic disinterestedness can Britain’s morality be upheld on a global level. This is the potentially radical message Austen offers through her sense of moral sentiment: all individuals, no matter their social status, are equally capable, or incapable, of achieving a moral virtue which trumps economic worth.

Austen, then, does not necessarily support, as Butler suggests, a conservative morality of manners against sentimentalism or sensibility in that “the old style of social responsibility is accepted” (105). True, Austen sees the aristocracy as important role models; however, *Mansfield Park* demonstrates one of sentimentalism’s aims, as defined by Stephen Holmes, “to universalise the status of mankind” in that all citizens possess the potential to be “motivated by virtue and devotion to the common good” (63). Austen does not simply overturn birth/worth ideologies—morality and virtue are not dependent on economic standing or social class, on either side of the social scale. Austen uses the histories of the three Ward sisters with which the novel opens to show morality and social status are not linked.

All three sisters fall into a different social class and all are equally morally deficient. Neither Lady Bertram, Aunt Norris nor Mrs. Price possess a sympathetic imagination; all three women try to justify their actions as moral when in reality they serve their own self-interest. Mrs. Price sends Fanny off to live with the Bertrams ostensibly to provide Fanny with better opportunities in life; however, Fanny is not Mrs. Price’s first choice to “elevate.” William, for

her, would be the better choice because his potential for advancement in the navy, his “use” to Sir Thomas in Antigua, or a position with the East India Company would benefit the family. Mrs. Price therefore perpetuates a system of dependence exploited by the ruling class. Mrs. Norris and the Bertrams, however, reject William and ask for a girl for their own selfish ends. In the mention of the West Indies as well as the East India Company, Austen almost immediately links the corruption of this system of dependence, exploitation and oppression with Britain’s imperial aims overseas. Both Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris proclaim their benevolence in sponsoring Fanny, but neither shows much sympathy for Fanny; she is more a means to an end for each woman.¹¹² In a similar way, Austen criticizes imperial ventures that proclaim benevolence but intend exploitation.

Instead of virtue/wealth dichotomy against which the history of the Ward sisters works, Austen suggests it is those individuals who are capable of sympathetic imagination who should be responsible for leading the nation, and, by extension, she suggests a moral nation should lead the world. In this sense, Austen’s social hierarchy is not fixed but fluid. Those who are morally superior may legitimately take over from those who are not—even if they are not born to wealth. This is why Fanny eventually replaces Maria in Sir Thomas’ affections and Mary in Edmund’s affections. Fanny’s moral actions and subsequent rewards thereby affirm Smith’s argument that the natural consequences of moral practices like “truth, justice and humanity” more than make up for the effort that goes into them (*Theory* III. 5).

¹¹² Additionally, in “Female Difficulty” Juliet McMaster suggests Mrs. Norris’ choice of Fanny is a self-serving wish fulfillment of her desire to have a child with Sir Thomas. Fanny’s stay with the Bertrams is organized between Sir Thomas and Aunt Norris, and since the Norrises have no children of their own, McMaster suggests Fanny is the surrogate child who enables Mrs. Norris to figuratively usurp Lady Bertram’s status in the house. Mrs. Norris must select a girl for her program because a girl poses no threat to the patrilineality of Mansfield and can be taken advantage of in all the domestic chores her two aunts impose on her.

Rather than making an individual's morality dependent on their socially ascribed class position, Austen emphasizes the moral need for the disinterested self. Fanny is Mansfield Park's impartial spectator; she is the purveyor of disinterestedness, sympathy and justice that Mansfield requires. As the corruption present at Mansfield indicates, Sir Thomas must learn, through Fanny's example, to be a sympathetic father to his own family and to the people of his Antiguan estate. In Sir Thomas' overseas interests we can imagine Fanny's disinterestedness, sympathy and justice as representing British values and interests in their colonies. Through Fanny's example and her eventual triumph over Mary Crawford, who can be associated with both urban corruption and the threat of French conquest, Austen demonstrates Britain's obligation to spread its moral influence and civilizational project thus endorsing benevolent imperial goals.¹¹³ Fanny's sense of propriety therefore becomes a national indication of virtue, and by persuading readers to see the truth of Fanny's morality, Austen can incite her readers to moral action.

Questions of moral virtue lie at the core of *Mansfield Park*. Again we return to Smith's two framing questions: what is virtue? and how do we determine it? *Mansfield Park* sets out to answer these questions which are particularly pertinent to Austen within the context of Britain's conflicts with America over colonial rule, abolition in the colonies, as well as the threat posed by a war with France.¹¹⁴ Austen's answers to "what is virtue?" and "how do we determine it?" on

¹¹³ Many critics, John Wiltshire in *The Hidden Jane Austen* for example, have commented on the Crawfords association with France. Their sexuality, their manners, language, choice of leisure activities and love of luxury all echo prevalent stereotypes associated with the French during Austen's life. I will indicate throughout the chapter instances where Austen condemns the Crawfords, particularly Mary, in association with traits associated with French corruption.

¹¹⁴ While slavery was abolished in Britain by 1807, before the publication of *Mansfield Park* (1814), slavery was not completely abolished in the colonies until 1838. The topic was still hotly contested during the period Austen wrote *Mansfield Park*. The British Slave Trade Act in 1807 abolished the complicity of Britons transporting slaves, but anyone already owning slaves, on plantations like Sir Thomas' for example, could still retain those slaves. The Slave Trade Act made it illegal to buy more slaves, but did not enforce legal ramifications for "breeding" slaves to increase slave numbers. For more on this topic see Christopher Brown *Moral Capital* chp.6

the individual level also extend to her vision for the nation. Austen, like Smith, particularly emphasizes the second question—what determines moral virtue; she interrogates an individual's social responsibilities and ethical commitments by presenting two contrasting potential heroines: Fanny Price and Mary Crawford. Fanny's moral virtue makes her the ideal sentimental heroine, and Austen directs readers to sympathize with Fanny rather than Mary. Austen's moral judgment is determined by the sympathetic feelings of spectators and, consequently, by social judgment. While Mary holds sway over Mansfield for a time, she is eventually found lacking. She is evicted, and thus Mansfield's moral integrity is restored.

Austen demonstrates how society plays a role in standards of moral civilization; each time we choose to ignore bad behavior we take a step away from civilization. If we continue to ignore what we know to be wrong, seemingly small lapses, for instance selfishly monopolizing a horse while someone who depends on the horse for their health is neglected, become no longer negligible and move society towards corruption.¹¹⁵ We are responsible through our actions and our responses towards others for creating rules of what is and what is not morally acceptable. In other words, morals are given meaning by society; we develop moral judgment once our own sentiments are revealed to us through the reactions of others.¹¹⁶ If society condones poor behaviour, society fails and becomes corrupt. Therefore, in choosing Fanny as a moral model, readers become active in the construction of a British morality which will ultimately strengthen

¹¹⁵ Mary professes an inclination to learn to ride. She stays out all day and in doing so deprives Fanny of her horse and the exercise she requires to maintain her health.

¹¹⁶ According to Smith's theory we are all anxious to attain the approval of other members of our society. In order to attain this approval we must begin to examine our feelings and conduct, and to consider how these must appear to others: "[T]o deserve love and to deserve reward, are the great characters of virtue; and to be odious and punishable, of vice. But all these characters have an immediate reference to the sentiments of others. Virtue is not said to be amiable, or to be meritorious, because it is the object of its own love, or of its own gratitude; but because it excites those sentiments in other men" (III. i. 7)

Britain's nationalistic sense of progress and civilization. On the other hand, Mary's moral model will lead readers down a path of self-interest, dissipation, tyranny and corruption which Austen associates with a national "other"—notably France.¹¹⁷ Britons must re-learn moral judgment by cultivating the proper emotions; Austen offers a way to do this by answering that second question of how we determine virtue: we are better equipped to discern and determine virtue when we can first develop our aesthetic judgment which will in turn help us learn moral judgment.

Aesthetic Judgment/ Moral Judgment

Austen, like Smith, consistently equates sympathetic imagination with an individual's aesthetic responses to reveal his or her moral status. According to David Marshall, aesthetics, moral judgments and civilized subjects are so closely linked in moral theories of the eighteenth century because of a focus on perspective. Marshall suggests that moral theorists like Hume and Smith and sentimental novelists are not so much concerned with the physical representation of feeling but "rather the experience of art, the perspective or point of view that frames aesthetic experience" (8).¹¹⁸ This emphasis on perspective becomes important when spectatorship considers the "how" and not the "what" of aesthetic judgment. According to philosopher Hannah Arendt the "how" is the "basic other-directedness of taste and judgment" (67). By the "other-directedness," Arendt means that the question of how an individual experiences becomes important because "we must overcome our special subjective conditions for the sake of others"

¹¹⁷ Austen's negative treatment of Mary's self-interest may reflect her brother Francis Austen's disparaging views on Napoleon who he believed "exalts" himself past bearing by "the unanimous suffrages" of "his creatures" (Hubback 122).

¹¹⁸ Marshall names Henry Mackenzie author of *The Man of Feeling* (1771) and Rousseau as two sentimental novelists who focus on feeling as perspective.

(68). In other words, as soon as we recognize that there might be multiple ways of experiencing the same object, we must acknowledge that others' opinions and feelings matter in assessing its beauty or significance. Once we have acknowledged the other's standpoint, we have already taken a step towards distancing ourselves from our self-preference. Therefore, those who are capable of making aesthetic judgments are also capable of distancing themselves from their selfish impulses because they are able to look outside themselves. This is why it is Fanny not Mary who is the heroine of *Mansfield Park*. Despite her vivacity, Mary is incapable of seeing the beauty of the world around her. She is unable to place herself outside her own interests. She is therefore incapable of seeing the true "beauty or deformity of [her] own mind" (*Theory* III.1).

The parallels and analogies Austen creates between aesthetics and virtue are especially clear in the comparisons between Fanny's and Mary's responses to the beauty of nature. Fanny enthuses, "The evergreen!—How beautiful, how welcome, how wonderful the evergreen!" (244), while Mary, disdainful towards Fanny's raptures and the source of them, remarks that she "sees no wonder in this shrubbery equal to seeing myself in it" (209).¹¹⁹ Fanny sees beauty in nature which grants her the ability for self-reflection which in turn stimulates her self-knowledge, and

¹¹⁹ Laura Mooneyham-White explains Mary's witticism. She notes that Mary's comment is a reference to Voltaire's biography of the Sun King: "The Venetian doge who had made the original comment to which Mary alludes was amazed that he was there at Versailles in the midst of all its baroque magnificence; Mary, reversing the trope, is amazed that she has been willing to forsake city pleasures for the country for "nearly five months" (125). Additionally, Warren Roberts sees this anecdote allied with the decadence and threat of revolutionary France. If Mansfield (the estate standing in for the state) cannot resist the charm and corruption of the foreign nation, then at the least the state will also fall into moral corruption and as an extreme foreign corruption may also instigate a British revolution. Roberts sees the Crawfords not so much modern English citizens but as individuals whose selfish tendencies represent the moral corruption of other nations and as threats to national harmony (97-100). Mary's association with France here suggests Austen's condemnation of the self-serving and unsympathetic conduct associated with Empires other than Britain.

consequently the ability to judge what is good and right. In contrast, Mary's aesthetic sense is not well developed; she does not see beauty in nature—only the reflection of her own selfish aims.

Mary's and Fanny's aesthetic responses reveal Austen's use of aesthetics as an analogy for social and moral experience. Again, this relationship between aesthetics and ethics can be understood from Smith's contention that both morality and beauty are based on sentimental impulse.¹²⁰ Moral judgments, like our aesthetic responses, arise from our feelings. This is why we must develop the impartial spectator—to mediate the bias towards ourselves that our passions dictate. Consequently, individual choices, either selfish or disinterested, move society away from or towards a moral civilization. For example, each time Edmund chooses to ignore Miss Crawford's impropriety, Mansfield becomes a little more corrupt. While Mary may initially seem the more attractive heroine, it is in fact Fanny who is the moral subject. She refuses to compromise her moral sense. She therefore attains the ability to judge outside her own interests.

When the novel opens, Mansfield Park shows itself, to follow in Rome's footsteps, to be primed for a fall. Mansfield is in danger of becoming uncivilized, and it is open to corruption since its inhabitants are, with the exception of Edmund, focused on their own desires rather than participants in a discourse of social justice. Mrs. Norris is consumed with a love of money and frugality rather than an affection for others; Lady Bertram is more concerned with her Pug than anyone else, including her own children, and Tom Bertram feels he is born "only for expense and enjoyment" (19). While Sir Thomas Bertram has a "general wish of doing right" (4), his pride

¹²⁰ Smith writes, "There is no appeal from the eye with regard to the beauty of colours, nor from the ear with regard to the harmony of sounds . . . The very essence of each of those qualities consists in its being fitted to please the sense to which it is addressed. It belongs to our moral faculties, in the same manner . . . The sentiments which [our moral faculties] approve of, are graceful and becoming: the contrary, ungraceful and unbecoming. The very words, right, wrong, fit, improper, graceful, unbecoming, mean only what pleases or displeases those faculties" (*Theory* III. iv.5)

blocks his sympathetic imagination and also prevents him from making accurate moral judgments especially regarding his children. Consequently, Maria and Julia appear “in person, manner, and accomplishments, everything” that they ought to be, but they are also “entirely deficient” in all moral markers: “the less common acquirements of self-knowledge, generosity and humility” (23).

In contrast to the other women, Fanny embodies all the sentimental traits Maria and Julia should possess, and she is consequently the ideal sentimental heroine. Fanny’s sympathetic capacity, in a gesture towards sentimental novels like *Clarissa*, is marked on Fanny’s body in ways that cannot be simulated. As many studies of sentimentalism have noted, physical frailty has often been associated with innate sensitivity, and from the beginning of the novel Fanny is consistently associated with ‘littleness,’ delicacy and poor health.¹²¹ Within the first two pages of meeting Fanny upon her arrival at Mansfield, she is described as “little girl,” “little cousin,” “little visitor,” “her little heart,” and “my dear little Fanny” (13-15). Sentimental novels of the eighteenth-century typically present virtuous heroes and heroines as people whose bodies involuntarily express deep feeling in contrast to a world of “self-interested hypocrites and tricksters—figures whose bodies conventionally conceal real character beneath a deluding mask of sociability” (Goring 143). Fanny’s body, her ‘littleness,’ her poor health, and her delicacy all reveal her delicacy of mind, her capacity for suffering and thus her virtuous nature.

Added to this projection of littleness and delicacy are descriptions of Fanny’s intense feelings contained by her small body— “the despondence that sunk her little heart was severe”

¹²¹ John Mullan has also argued that sentimentalism and new understandings of the nervous system in medical discourse linked physical frailty with the ability to feel. For Mullan, the sentimental hero or heroine is like a refined patient who nobly suffers through their physical weakness as a symbol of their moral sensitivity. See *Sentiment and Sociability* particularly Chapter 1.

(15).¹²² In a novel that argues the virtuous individual must possess a capacity for sympathy, it is notable that the Bertrams are unable to grasp Fanny's depth of feeling, nor are they able to place themselves in her shoes as per Smith's model of sympathetic exchange. During her time at Mansfield, Fanny's "feelings were very acute, and too little understood to be properly attended to" (15). The Bertrams do not have the proper aesthetic judgment to see in Fanny's sensitive body her moral value. In fact, the Bertrams and Aunt Norris misread Fanny's sensitive body. Julia and Maria Bertram translate Fanny's littleness as inferiority of the mind. Fanny is to be pitied for her "deficiency," for being "so odd and so stupid" (19). Since three of the four Bertram children commit serious moral offenses, and Edmund allows himself to be blinded to moral deficiency for a time, their moral judgment is clearly not the model Austen endorses.

The narrator, in contrast, shows readers the depths of Fanny's feelings and her capacity for self-consciousness: "[t]he little visitor meanwhile was as unhappy as possible. Afraid of everybody, ashamed of herself, and longing for the home she had left, she knew not how to look up" (14). The idea that Fanny is ashamed of herself demonstrates the fact that she can view and judge herself through others' eyes. Fanny embodies Smith's views of the ideal civilized subject since "to judge of ourselves as we judge of others . . . is the greatest exertion of candour and impartiality" (VI.iii.1). We must imagine ourselves not the actors, but the "impartial spectators of our own character and conduct" (*Theory* III.2). Fanny's capacity for self-reflection and self-

¹²² Austen continues to use conventional markers of sentimentalism that link superior moral feeling with physical frailty throughout the novel. As Fanny enters into young womanhood she, in contrast to both her cousins, continues to be delicate both physically and emotionally. Amy Pawl notes, "While [Fanny] remains childlike in many respects, she has acquired a series of behaviours appropriate to the fully developed heroine of sensibility: she blushes, trembles, weeps, and is often speechless" (289). Fanny's physical frailty is emblematic of her impeccable moral judgment.

surveillance makes her the only character capable of making sound moral judgments; Fanny is the ideal disinterested self.

In addition to the conventional markers of littleness, delicacy and deep feeling that mark Fanny as a sentimental heroine, Fanny also consistently places others' desires ahead of her needs to the extent that she suffers both mentally and physically.¹²³ This capacity for suffering, Kelly McGuire claims, is linked to notions of self-sacrifice and the development of national identity. McGuire argues that the link between female models of virtuous self-sacrifice and nation may date back to the Roman Lucretia, but with the publication of *Clarissa*, "[e]ighteenth-century England enshrined sacrifice as an act intrinsic to nation building"(148). McGuire argues that scenes of mourning that "aestheticize female suffering" (86) inaugurate through "constructed self-sacrifice" the "consolidation of national identity" (80) and ensure the memorialisation of British identity as a steadfast virtue.¹²⁴ The nineteenth-century historian Ernest Renan makes this connection between sacrifice and nation more explicit:

suffering in common unifies more than joy does . . . A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made . . . A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation. So long as this moral consciousness gives proof of its

¹²³ There are many, many example of Fanny's sufferance throughout the novel: her departure from her home, her attendance on Mrs. Bertram, her service to Mrs. Norris—cutting flowers in the heat until she is faint, her lack of a fire in her room, her willingness to let Mary Crawford ride her [Fanny's] horse at the expense of her own enjoyment. The novel is one big list of sacrifices that Fanny makes.

¹²⁴ McGuire argues that *Clarissa* is "a modern day Lucretia" (xv). Lucretia's suicide is a "shorthand or code to define absolute virtue"(69), and "Clarissa's invocation of Lucretia as a model is an attempt to salvage her reputation for virtue, notwithstanding her own awareness of blamelessness . . . that is integral to a larger sense of Englishness and community predicated on the 'republic of letters'" (69, xv).

strength by the sacrifices which demand the abdication of the individual to the advantage of the community, it is legitimate and has the right to exist. (19-20)

Fanny's suffering may seem inconsequential in the context of Lucretia and Clarissa's suicidal sacrifices for nation or Renan's discussions of the sacrifices made by the French during the French Revolution that subsequently shaped a national identity. However, Fanny's delicacy, her selflessness and her sacrifices mark her not only as the embodiment of the sentimental moral ideal at a domestic level but also as the embodiment of a new (or renewed) virtuous national ideal.¹²⁵ Austen urges her readers towards a national consciousness and shared moral standard that demands public virtue and private compassion be built on the engagement of the heart *and* the disinterested self. I return to this national ideal in more depth in the second half of this chapter.

While Maria, Julia and the rest of the Bertram family and friends at Mansfield Park provide a contrast to Fanny's sentiment and sacrifice, it is Mary Crawford who is the most striking negative foil to Fanny's morality and through whom Austen performs her cultural critique. A moral individual must be able to see herself through others' eyes, an immoral individual cannot. An immoral individual is, according to Smith, asocial because her inability to defer to the impartial spectator means she lacks any sense of "moral beauty and moral deformity" (III. 1.3– 5). It may seem odd to characterize Mary Crawford as "asocial" because she is so much a part of the social scene in London and at Mansfield; "her talents [were] for the light and lively," and "her attention was all for men and women" (94). Nevertheless, Mary

¹²⁵ The sense of sacrifice as a national ideal is an ideology shared across the Atlantic. Andrew Burnstein argues that in the national mythology of America's founding, Patriot spy Nathan Hale's comment, "'I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country' instructed posterity that there *was* a country, that it was bigger than the self and greater than a British colony" (22).

proves herself an “asocial creature” in her inability to participate in the social mirroring that leads to moral development.¹²⁶ Rather than exercising her sympathetic imagination to judge herself and others, Mary is all outward performance and no internal feeling. Mary uses aesthetics to mirror and augment her self-indulgence rather than to reflect on others and learn moral discernment.

Mary first exhibits her inability to sympathize with others when she tries unsuccessfully to commandeer a horse to transport her harp to Mansfield despite the farmers’ need for horses during the harvest. Mary complains that her request was not granted: “I found I had been asking the most unreasonable, most impossible thing in the world, had offended all the farmers, all the laborers, all the hay in the parish” (68). Mary here laughingly puts off the suggestion that her behavior and demands have been inappropriate. Edmund generously grants that perhaps, being from the city, she could not have known the farmers’ need, “but when you do think of it, you must see the importance of getting in the grass . . . in harvest, it must be quite out of their power to spare a horse” (69). However, Mary is not to be thwarted in her desires. She replies that she feels ““every thing is to be got with money,” (69) thus revealing her tendency to see everything, even people, as commodities. Much like Mary’s inability to appreciate the beauty of nature, her lack of sympathy is tied directly to her aesthetic experiences. Mary’s harp turns out not to be a symbol of refined taste but of her desire to be seen and appreciated without having to reciprocate; Mary’s social mirror only ever reflects her own desires.

Many critics have noted analogies between the aesthetic and moral significance of Mary’s harp. Tony Tanner has argued the harp is a symbol of Mary’s vanity, and “a fit accessory

¹²⁶ As I explain in Chapter 2, Smith argues that we can only learn to judge ourselves once we learn to judge others and then see our behavior reflected in the eyes of others. See p.112.

for the siren she is” (150). Juliet Wells suggests the harp reveals Mary’s “precarious balance of selfishness and generosity, self-absorption and self-display” (101), and, recently, Jeffrey Nigro discusses the many cultural meanings the harp could have held for Austen’s audience. He concludes that Mary’s harp directly reflects her character—an “open-ended symbol upon which her hearers are in danger of projecting their dreams and fantasies” (n.p); Edmund therefore “may be temporarily seduced into the fantasy that Mary is a muse (Greek or Celtic), a romantic heroine, St. Cecilia [virgin martyr and patron saint of music], or a female bard” (n.p).¹²⁷ Austen has, again, established an explicit parallel between moral and aesthetic judgments that demonstrate the need for the disinterested self. Edmund succumbs to his desires and is no longer able to accurately judge Mary’s moral character with the properly disinterested perspective of the impartial spectator.

Mary and her harp pose a seductive threat to the English morality of Mansfield Park; she becomes the dangerous image of sensual sensibility that critics of sentimentalism warn against. Mary is set up as a sentimental heroine, by herself and by the other characters based on her apparent sensitivity, but Mary is in fact participating in a commodification of feeling which Austen critiques as self-interest or self-love. Mary, aware of the potential in spectatorship stages a scene with her harp that is reminiscent of tableaux from sentimental novels:

¹²⁷ Returning to constructions of national identity, Nigro also adds that “Edmund will learn over the course of the novel, Mary is really more like a Marie Antoinette” rather than St. Cecilia which suggests Mary’s association not only with France, but the threat of revolution. Nigro explains that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the harp was particularly associated with the French due to technological developments by Sébastien Érard, while Marie Antoinette also popularized the harp in France. Emily Auerbach likewise notices the connection between Mary and Marie Antoinette in Mary’s insensitivity to the needs of the socially inferior: “as in the apocryphal story of Marie Antoinette suggesting that the poor eat cake, Mary Crawford has no compunction against demanding a cart for transporting her harp even if farmers need it for the harvest” (181).

The harp arrived, and rather added to [Mary's] beauty, wit, and good humour . . . A young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself; and both placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man's heart. The season, the scene, the air, were all favourable to tenderness and sentiment. (76)

Mary wants the Bertrams, particularly Edmund, to read her virtue in her becoming "expression and taste" (76), and they do. It is immediately after this scene that Edmund finds himself "a good deal in love" (76), and begins to attribute many moral characteristics to Mary based on her appearance and not her substance. He reasons Mary's moral character must be assured due to her "many virtues, from her obliging manners down to her light and graceful tread" (131). However, it is clear Mary is not truly a sentimental heroine. Mary's scenes of spectatorship are all that is objectionable to critics of sentimentalism: they are all superficiality and no substance. Her virtues consist of those aesthetic marks of distinction that are easily faked and easily produced. Austen's lesson against the performance of sentiment persuades readers to think of themselves as part of a national lineage that values the purity of sentimental action and a willingness for personal sacrifice in the development of a moral nation.

Mary consistently projects rather than reciprocates feeling in order to manipulate other people, particularly Edmund. Edmund's moral judgment is clouded by Mary's beauty, but her beauty is not true beauty, only a glamour that hides moral decay. Edmund "gave [Miss Crawford] merits which she had not; her faults were what they had ever been, but he saw them no longer" (307). As Smith observes, beauty can be both enlightening and deceiving. If an individual does not find a way to distance himself from his feelings, he can become so "intoxicated . . . [with] the immense superiority of [his] own judgment" that he is led to treat

people without sympathy and as a result loses all moral perspective on the beautiful (VI.ii.2.).

Without the scrutiny of the impartial spectator, beauty can thereby diminish to glamour and from there to moral decay. In resisting Mary, and the degeneration of virtue she represents, Britons could reaffirm their superiority over petty, self-interested pursuits and conflicts. According to Austen, Britons should not be corrupt like the French, nor should they mouth platitudes of feeling while institutions like slavery flourish in the colonies promoting pride, greed, violence and debauchery. Instead Austen asks her readers to prove the British could achieve moral progress by returning to a rigorous account of sentiment as moral judgment from a feeling heart.

Fanny, in contrast to Mary, is consistently associated with spontaneous bursts of true feeling that her perception of beauty naturally produces. Her raptures on evergreens are only one of many outpourings of feeling which nature provokes in her. For instance, while star-gazing with Edmund, Fanny rhapsodizes:

‘Here’s harmony! . . . Here’s repose! . . . When I look out on such a night as this, I feel as if there could be neither wickedness nor sorrow in the world; and there certainly would be less of both if the sublimity of Nature were more attended to, and people were carried more out of themselves by contemplating such a scene.’ (132)

Here we see Fanny’s innate morality through her natural, emotional and spiritual responses to beauty; Fanny’s morality aligns with Smith’s argument about the connection between aesthetic and moral appreciation: “[t]he wise and virtuous man is . . . deeply enamoured of the exquisite and divine beauty,” (VI.iii.23). Because her response to nature is not calculated, it is Fanny’s belief in the divinity of the natural world that sets Mansfield Park’s moral tone and the standard to which readers and the characters of the novel should aspire.

This scene also demonstrates the necessity of the impartial spectator; the lure of beauty and impulsive feeling can lead to self-indulgence if they remain unchecked. The constellation which provokes Fanny's sentiments is Cassiopeia. In Greek mythology Cassiopeia was a vain queen who boasted that she and/or (depending on the variation of the myth) her daughter Andromeda were more beautiful than the Nereids (sea nymphs). In order to appease the sea gods Andromeda was offered as a sacrifice to a sea monster while Cassiopeia was placed among the stars so that she would be forced to spend half the year upside down to teach her a lesson about the perils of vanity.¹²⁸

The irony in Fanny and Edmund's star gazing is that while Fanny is appreciating the beauty of Cassiopeia, Edmund is busy observing Mary Crawford and admiring "[h]ow well she walks" (131). In her light tread, her remarks about seeing herself reflected in bushes and in the staging of her harp tableau, Mary displays a vanity that is anything but natural and spontaneous. Edmund neglects the natural beauty of the world, buys into Mary's commodified sentiment and neglects to consult either his own impartial spectator or Fanny's opinions of Miss Crawford. Edmund's infatuation blinds him to Miss Crawford's self-interest. He mistakes her selfishness for sentimentality; he remarks to Fanny, "Miss Crawford has a right to be felt for, because she evidently feels for herself" (181). Like Cassiopeia, both Edmund and Mary are punished for their vanity. Edmund in the near moral destruction of his home and Mary in her loss of one "who could satisfy the better taste she had acquired at Mansfield, whose character and manners could authorise a hope of the domestic happiness she had there learnt to estimate" (543).

¹²⁸ There are many sources for this myth. I have referred to Malcom Day's *100 Characters From Classical Mythology* (48).

Fanny on the other hand expands her aesthetic judgment; knowing how to make an aesthetic judgment is the foundation of moral judgment. Samuel Fleischacker explains: “[b]ecause I experience beauty independently of other people-alone, or in disagreement with others-I become aware that individual experience matters, that I as an individual may have as much to contribute as anyone else to how the world should be interpreted” (86) and vice-versa—others have as much right as any one individual to contribute to interpretative judgments. The same principle applies to moral judgment: the individual becomes aware of the validity of others’ judgments and so to judge correctly he or she must become self-conscious about the importance of disengaging our partial feelings. Fanny epitomizes moral judgment because she is able to distance herself from her emotions. Consequently, she earns the “right of judging . . . Miss Crawford’s character” (307). Fanny remains the only one who is able to judge moral character accurately.

Fanny proves to be the moral authority for Mansfield not only because she observes and judges others, but because she can observe and judge herself in the way Smith advocates. Fanny’s negative reaction to Mary has been read by critics like Roger Sales as Fanny’s self-absorbed jealousy.¹²⁹ Similarly, although Knox-Shaw sees Fanny as a character through whom Austen works out a developing moral consciousness, he nevertheless concludes that “Fanny prefers . . . almost anything to the exact truth [which] is enough to warp many of her judgements” (177). However, Fanny is not self-absorbed, nor does she err in her judgments; on the contrary, “she [is] inclined to suspect the truth and purity of her own scruples” (179). Fanny examines and interrogates her feelings in a way which the other characters, even the morally

¹²⁹ See Sales’ discussion of *Lovers’ Vows* and Fanny’s views on the theatre p. 127.

upright Edmund, do not: “she would endeavour to be rational . . . she felt it to be her duty to overcome all that was excessive, all that bordered on selfishness” (307). Moral judgment is not about the inhibition of feeling, but the educational process. In a truly virtuous individual the sympathetic imagination teaches the feelings what is proper and improper to desire by comparing our experiences and feelings to those of others. From the development of our sympathetic imagination we create a stronger impartial spectator who is fundamental to our understanding of others, to our self-knowledge and hence to our ability to judge morally.

While Fanny is a discerning judge of both moral character and beauty in the world, Mary embodies Smith’s idea of “selfishness” in the sense of being confined to our own selves. Mary cannot place herself in another’s position through the act of sympathetic imagination, and this is why, ultimately, she is not a heroine and cannot, in a just world, win Edmund. After Maria and Henry Crawford’s elopement is discovered, Mary reveals her true character in both her lack of indignation and shame at the elopement as well as the blame she places on Fanny for her brother’s poor behavior.¹³⁰ Mary knows she behaves badly and knows that Henry also behaves badly, but she blithely jokes that “selfishness must always be forgiven you know, because there is no hope of a cure” (80). But both Austen and Smith suggest that there *is* a cure—it is the impartial spectator who can “correct self-love.”

Mary’s most serious moral offense is her reaction to Tom’s illness which runs counter to Smith’s very definition of the moral, civilized and humane subject. Once we begin to make excuses for our self-preference, once we “prefer ourselves so shamefully

¹³⁰ Mary refers to Henry and Maria’s scandalous, adulterous elopement as only “an *étourderie*”, a moment of thoughtlessness or harmless folly. Mary again associates herself with France in her choice of language, and thus extravagance, luxury, irresponsibility, seduction and moral corruption.

and so blindly to others, we become the proper objects of resentment, abhorrence, and execration,” and there is “no enormity so gross of which we may not be capable” (*Theory* III.iii.4, IV.ii. 2).¹³¹ While we all have selfish tendencies, no moral person would harm someone only to benefit himself, but this is essentially what Mary does when she expresses her wish that Tom should die of his illness. Mary couches her death wish for Tom under the pretense of a kind of utilitarianism in that by Tom’s death Edmund will inherit Mansfield and he will be the better heir:

Fanny, Fanny, I see you smile, and look cunning, but upon my honour, I never bribed a physician in my life! Poor young man!—If he is to die, there will be *two* poor young men less in the world; and with a fearless face and bold voice would I say to any one, that wealth and consequence could fall into no hands more deserving of them . . . Varnish and gilding hide many stains . . . I put it to your conscience, whether ‘Sir Edmund’ would not do more good with all the Bertram property, than any other possible ‘Sir.’ (502-3)

Here Mary once again reveals her mercenary mindset; she values people based on their wealth and status.¹³² Mary’s tendency to reduce people to their monetary value has

¹³¹ Smith’s example here is that of the adulterer: “The adulterer imagines he does no evil, when he corrupts the wife of his friend, provided he covers his intrigue from the suspicion of the husband, and does not disturb the peace of the family” (IV.ii.3). Compare this sentiment with Henry’s justifications “He was entangled by his own vanity . . . without the smallest inconsistency of mind toward [Fanny].—To keep Fanny and the Bertrams from a knowledge of what was passing became his first object. Secrecy could not have been more desirable for Mr. Rushworth’s credit than he felt it for his own” (541). Mary and Henry violate the laws of justice and thus become villains “the moment [they] begin even in [their] own heart[s] to chicane in this manner” (*Theory* IV.ii. 4).

¹³² In *Jane Austen in the Context of the Abolition*, White makes the connection between Mary and her support for slavery when Mary writes to Fanny: “[Maria] will open **one** of the best houses in Wimpole Street. I was in it two years ago, when it was Lady Lascelles’, and prefer it to almost any I know in London” (456). The reason Mary prefers it is of course because it is one of the most expensive houses in town, too expensive for Henry to buy. White notes the Lascelles were a real family Austen would have been aware of since they were publicly criticised for their absentee planter landlordism. At the time *Mansfield Park* was written “the Lascelles family at the time would have

particular significance in light of the novel's historical context and the debate over slavery. I will return to this subject in the last section of this chapter, but it is worth considering that Mary's incapacity for sacrifice and her propensity for viewing people as property suggests that she would be a supporter of the slave trade. Since Mary is evicted from Mansfield at the end of the novel, it seems Austen is also hoping to reform the immorality of a nation that continues to support slavery in its colonies.

The comparison between Fanny and Mary serves many purposes. Most obviously, on the narrative level, it justifies Fanny's marriage into the Bertram family, but critics have argued over the level of irony attached to Fanny's victory over Mary. Fanny's triumph is typically read, often with a negative connotation, as a capitulation to conservative values or as a reaffirmation of Austen's religious principles. Even Claudia Johnson, a critic who hedges towards a more revolutionary reading of Austen, concedes Austen "may slacken the desperate tempos employed by her more strenuously politicized counterparts," but that she nevertheless "shares their artistic strategies and their commitment to uncovering the ideological underpinnings of cultural myths" (27). But even though Johnson recognizes a revolutionary bent to Austen's works, she has difficulty reconciling *Mansfield's* ending with a "progressive middle ground" (166). Therefore, in order to avoid reading the novel as "let[ting] conservative ideologues have it their way" (120), Johnson sees the conservative elements of the novel as "a bitter parody of conservative fiction"

been associated with the most expensive addresses in London, and that the Lascelles—Wilberforce electoral struggle in Yorkshire of 1807 would also have publicized the Lascelles family as pro-slavery" (20). For more on the Lascelles and the election see Laurie Kaplan's "The Rushworths of Wimpole Street." Another connection may be made here between Mary's mercantile world view and slavery. Clarkson in his *History* (1808) calls slavery mercenary murder: slavery is based on "fraud, robbery and murder" offered up "at the shrine of our idolatry" (II.139, 277). The fact that Mary wants Tom Bertram to die so she can marry Edmund and inherit Mansfield seems suggestive.

(96).¹³³ Knox-Shaw on the other hand does not see *Mansfield Park* as parodic, but he does claim Fanny is a revivalist heroine whose marriage to Edmund is her reward: “Born to struggle and endure Fanny undoubtedly is, and she seems herself to adopt the view that hardship is destinal . . . [her] suffering [is] an instrument of redemption” (176).¹³⁴

However, Fanny’s marriage is not simply a nostalgic idealisation of “inherited social hierarchies which insist on proper subordination” (Pawl 314) and duty in social relationships. Instead, the novel’s conclusion comes closer to realizing Knox-Shaw’s suggestion that Fanny and Edmund’s marriage captures the Romantic “‘vale of soul-making’—that world of pains and troubles which could ‘school an Intelligence and make it a soul’” (Knox-Shaw 177).¹³⁵ In other words, struggle is the only way to truly know yourself and therefore the only way to achieve salvation. Nevertheless, critics who read *Mansfield Park* as a parody, or as a revivalist text miss the presence of Austen’s sentimental inheritance through which she imagines a community tied together through shared institutions and morality. Mansfield’s society links together the personal and the national. Fanny’s sacrifice is not about achieving an individual religious redemption. Her sacrifice is the national model for a society in need of moral reformation. Fanny’s reward is the

¹³³ Johnson argues the novel ends with formulas derived from conservative fiction: the demon aunt is cast out . . . the offending daughter is banished . . . the impious seductress is righteously spurned . . . the giddy heir is sobered, and the modest girl . . . is vindicated and rewarded with everything (114).

¹³⁴ Knox-Shaw follows Boyd Hilton’s lead in arguing that in *Mansfield Park* Austen plays with economic theories like Malthus’s, and, as a consequence, Austen seems drawn to Evangelicalism’s “distinctive middle-class piety” which “fostered new concepts of public probity and national honour, based on ideals of economy, frugality, professionalism, and financial rectitude” (Hilton 7). Knox-Shaw uses ‘revivalist’ in the sense that he sees Austen as endorsing the “sequence of sin, suffering, contrition, despair, comfort and grace—so common in moderate evangelical homiletic” (Hilton 7) that shows pain and suffering as essential to life and God’s plan as bound up with the machinery of judgment, conversion and redemption. Therefore, Fanny’s constant struggles “contributes to the reader’s sense of Fanny as a revivalist heroine” and Austen’s “preoccupation with the darker face of humanity” (Knox-Shaw 176-77).

¹³⁵ Knox-Shaw quotes from Keats here to explain that Austen, like, the Romantics was preoccupied “with the darker face of human experience” (177). ‘The Vale of Tears’ refers to the Christian perception of the original sin and the promise of God’s salvation. Keats rejected the idea that redemption from this valley of suffering was dependent upon ‘a certain arbitrary interposition of God’ (*Letters*, 17,18 April 1817, 232). Keats suggested instead that redemption is only achieved through a process of a heightening of consciousness and healing self-knowledge.

peace and prosperity which returns to Mansfield at the end of the novel; however, this self-sacrifice indicates Austen's demand for the disinterested self as a defining national characteristic which legitimizes Britain's imperial aims.

Sentimental Fanny, Sentimental Britain: The Atlantic's Impartial Spectator

At the time Austen was writing and revising *Mansfield Park*, Britain had lost the American colonies, had watched with horror the ramifications of the French Revolution and was struggling to hold off Napoleon. Britain's sense of itself consequently became bound by patriotism and tied to civilian heroism and private virtue.¹³⁶ *Mansfield Park* participates in this movement to define the British moral subject. In the novel the language of sacrifice as a marker of disinterestedness develops as an ethos of nationalism: self-sacrifice as a social action becomes the disinterested ideal for the good of the nation. Austen, like Smith, thinks about morality as a process of sociability. Both individual and national identity are grounded in everyday social interactions. Austen wants her readers to imagine ideal standards for a moral subject, and like Smith, she identifies self-interestedness, a lack of sympathy, as well as sentimental performance over sentimental action, as embodied by the Crawfords, as fuel to the continued oppression of other peoples.

In *Mansfield Park*, Austen questions the colonial status quo particularly important for her historical moment in the context of the British abolition movements, debates over slavery and imperial ventures. Barbara Alice Mann suggests Austen also had a particular familial investment in debates over the slave trade. She claims the Austen household may in fact have been divided

¹³⁶ Patriotism in the sense that, as Charles Pasley, a writer much admired by Austen, argues, not everyone needs to go to war to be a patriot, but everybody should feel united in support of their nation and the war effort against Napoleonic France (*Essay on the Military Policy and Institutions of the British Empire*).

over the question of abolition. Jane and her brother Francis were definitively pro-abolition, while her father and brother James as supporters of the Anglican Church and the British government, “could live with slavery” because the religious “rationale on Antigua was that Christianity would train ‘tractable’ slaves” and secure their salvation and happiness (*Cooper Connection* 177).¹³⁷ I agree with Mann that Austen supports abolition, however, her anti-slavery stance is not the same as an argument for racial equality, as is Equiano’s for example. While Austen might agree with Francis that the ideal empire should, “pay equal attention to the unalienable rights of all the nations, of what colour so ever they may be” (Hubback 164), her argument for abolition and the abolition of colonial oppression focuses on how Britain may distinguish its moral right to power and influence in the global context.

Austen works through the tensions inherent in a moral position that desires liberty for all but also wants Britain to lead the world. Austen thinks about cultural difference in terms of levels. Smith also talks about the development of culture in terms of gradations. Smith’s stadial theory argues societies develop through four stages. These stages are differentiated by their methods of sustenance and these differing stages also have corresponding moral developments.¹³⁸ While I argue later in this project that Smith’s stadial theory is actually a qualified system of cultural pluralism that gestures towards a cosmopolitan ideology, Austen

¹³⁷ Mann goes on to suggest that Austen’s condemnation of the Bertrams for their continued reliance on Antiguan slavery to support their lifestyle may also be a “dig” that turned inward on the Austens “for Austen had to have faced that her own family subsisted, however lightly, on Antiguan slavery” (177); James Austen married Anne Mathew daughter of an Antiguan plantation owner who left a large bequest to James’s and Anne’s daughter, Austen’s niece. Mann also points out Austen’s father became the “principle trustee” for John Nibbs’ Haddon plantation in Antigua, a plantation that “brought in £500[in agent’s fees], which would supposedly provide for Mrs. Austen after her husband’s death [and] . . . helped enable [George] Austen’s retirement to Bath” (176).

¹³⁸ “the four stages of society: hunting, pasturage, farming, and commerce” (Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence* 149). As society passes through these stages there is a corresponding cultural and moral trajectory of “savagery,” “barbarism,” and finally “civilization.” For a more detailed description of these stages see O’Neill. *The Burke–Wollstonecraft Debate: Savagery, Civilization, Democracy* pp.10,45.

accepts that Britain, assuming it does not fall into the profligacy embodied by the Crawfords, has attained a higher level of civilization than other nations. Because of the war with France and debates about colonial slavery, Austen is particularly concerned that Britain does not fall into the moral corruption she attributes to France, and she believes Britons can demonstrate their superior morality by supporting abolition and showing their sympathy for the colonial other. Britons' superior moral position enables them to spread their message of civilization and their system of liberty in a benevolent overseas rule that will bring other nations up to Britain's moral example.

In the first sections of this chapter I describe how Fanny acts as the impartial spectator for Mansfield Park and is therefore able to reform her uncle's household; the domestic model represents the national and international models—moral subjects create a moral nation which in turn can create a moral empire. This position is not new to Austen's work; in her Juvenilia work *Catherine* (1793) Austen writes, “[t]he welfare of every Nation depends upon the virtue of its individuals” (*Catherine* Volume the Third 232). In *Mansfield Park* Austen shows how dependent the welfare of the nation really is on the virtue of its individuals. For both Smith and Austen “humble modesty and equitable justice” (*Theory* I.iii.3) are the foundations of virtue. This virtue whether on a familial, communal, social or national scale involves the consideration that what is due to the self is also due to others. Thus, the idea of moral, social benefits as products of self-denial, constraint and the struggle against selfishness become intertwined with Britain's self-image as the guardian of advanced civilization.

Austen participates in the common nineteenth-century discourse that sees feminine sentiment as a civilizing force and crucial to nationalist discourses of social progress; however, Austen equalizes the importance of female and male self-sacrifice in domestic and national progress. Fanny's self-sacrifice finds a correlation in William Price's willingness to sacrifice

himself for his country. We are told William is on active service in the Royal Navy in both the West Indies and the Mediterranean. He has “known every variety of danger, which sea and war together could offer” (245). William’s service to his nation is crucial. Fanny’s home town is Portsmouth, and it is from Portsmouth that William enters the Royal Navy. Portsmouth holds national and imperial significance since it was a key naval port and one of Britain’s gateways to the world. White notes Austen’s readers would automatically pick up on the novel’s emphasis on nationalism: “[a]fter the publicity given to Portsmouth on the return to Spithead of the *Victory*, following the Battle of Trafalgar, with the body of Nelson prior to his state funeral, a quiet assumption that the reader does not need detail draws the contemporary reader to shared experience” (28).¹³⁹ Consequently, in her reference to William’s connection to Portsmouth Austen suggests William performs his duty to the nation with his willingness to promote British ideals through sacrifice. Again, his disinterestedness, like Fanny’s, proves his aims are not selfish, and that France’s defeat and any incidental colonial conquests for Britain are done with the *other’s* best interests in mind.

William is heroic in a way even the unpatriotic Crawfords recognize. William describes the “imminent hazards, or terrific scenes, which such a period at sea, must supply” (241). His experience means he “had a right to be listened to; and . . . [Henry’s] heart was warmed, his fancy fired, and he felt the highest respect for a lad who, before he was twenty, had gone through such bodily hardships, and given such proofs of mind. (242). Just as Mary is unfavorably

¹³⁹ White here builds on Roger Sales’ arguments that Portsmouth is of particular national importance. Sales writes, “[l]ocations such as the dockyard and the Garrison Chapel . . . were inextricably linked with the war effort and were thus used to celebrate what turned out to be a premature peace in the summer of 1814 . . . War was one of the major industries of this period and Portsmouth was one of its shock cities. Just as social tourists flocked to Manchester in the 1840s, so they came to marvel at Portsmouth in the Regency period” (90, 112).

compared with Fanny— “[Mary] had none of Fanny’s delicacy of taste, of mind, of feeling” (94)— Henry is unfavourably compared with William: “The glory of heroism, of usefulness, of exertion, of endurance, made [Henry’s]own habits of selfish indulgence appear in shameful contrast” (242). William’s patriotism is in direct contrast with Henry’s who, despite living with his Admiral uncle, does not serve his country. The closest Henry comes to serving his country, as Sales notes, is his role of Fredrick the war-weary soldier in *Lover’s Vows*.¹⁴⁰ Henry’s performance of soldiering has nothing to do with national duty, and is really an aggressive pursuit of self-indulgence—the seduction of Maria. The Portsmouth connection is more than a tool for an unfavorable comparison between William and Henry; it is a comparison between British heroism and French corruption. William arrives in Portsmouth and anchors at Spithead (237). As Sales notes, readers “familiar with Portsmouth itself, or the extensive newspaper coverage about it, would have known that the ships [at Spithead] were used to hold French-prisoners of-war” (113), so William is again associated with performing a national duty that protects Britons from the threat of the French. The Crawfords have already been associated with the French, and so when Henry observes that William’s “heroism,” “usefulness,” “exertion,” and “endurance” make “his [Henry’s] own habits of selfish indulgence appear in shameful contrast” (242) so close to Austen’s indirect references to French prisoners, the contrast between William and Henry takes on larger nationalist tones.

¹⁴⁰ Sales’ argues, “Henry plays the part of a soldier for his own enjoyment at a time when others had to fight against the Napoleonic armies in the Iberian Peninsula and elsewhere” (90). Sales’ focus here however is not on either Henry’s potential Frenchness nor on the Henry as the antithesis to William’s moral example; Sales’ larger argument is that *Mansfield Park* deals with the Regency crisis, and the “image of the regent as a lord of misrule” (101). He goes on to argue against readings of Austen as anti-Jacobin and anti-theatre. Henry is a Regency dandy, but “the text’s fascination with Henry Crawford and its relative lack of interest in the much more marginal William Price” (91) mean that “[n]arrative interest and energy are reserved for the dandy rather than for the sailor. Henry’s performances [and theatricality in general] can be seen therefore as being celebrated at the same time as they are repudiated” (116).

Henry declares his love for Fanny at the Portsmouth dockyards, but he breaks faith with Fanny as easily as he disregards his patriotic duty. In *Mansfield Park* sacrifice on domestic and national levels, both Fanny's and William's, becomes a means of self-determination against a hostile "other"—the Crawfords and France. The way to overcome the "other" is paradoxically through sacrifice. Fanny determines she will relinquish her love for Edmund to secure his happiness, "as she felt it to be her duty, to try to overcome all that was excessive, all that bordered on selfishness in her affection for Edmund . . . She had all the heroism of principle, and was determined to do her duty" (307). Heroism for William is also defined by duty. His duty is to his country. He will do whatever is required for the larger war effort rather trying to enrich himself by pursuing and taking prizes—which is Henry's primary motivation in both his pursuit of Fanny and his conquest of Maria. William's sacrifice is performed at sea; Fanny's is performed in the privacy of her own mind, but both William and Fanny demonstrate the moral qualities that should shape a nation.¹⁴¹ The novel thus reflects and shapes British ideologies surrounding self-sacrifice: disinterestedness becomes the ethics of private responsibility.

Fanny's example as an ideal moral subject can be extended to Austen's hopes for British subjects in general. However, in condemning imperial ventures like France's, Austen does not necessarily condemn British imperial power. Indeed, British national identity in *Mansfield Park* depends on Britain's imperial power, but only when British subjects embody the reasoned benevolence occasioned by the impartial spectator rather than the passionate possessive

¹⁴¹ John Wiltshire in *The Hidden Jane Austen* chp.5 and Elaine Bander both draw attention to Fanny's similarities with Lord Nelson. Bander suggests that Austen applies "the masculine qualities essential to heroic professionalism"(n.p) to Fanny, while Wiltshire argues that the permanent physical and psychological effects on Fanny of traumatic displacement in childhood and her heroism of principle parallel Nelson's naval career. Wiltshire's and Bander's argument that Fanny does in fact resemble one of Britain's leading national heroes supports my view that Austen is consciously creating a model national subject in Fanny.

individualism Austen associates with revolutionary nations like France and America.¹⁴²

Mansfield Park is in many ways imperial text, but not in the ways that have been previously described by other critics.

Edward Said's condemnation of Austen for her complicity in imperial conquest and implied approval of slavery is perhaps the most famous, but by no means the only study of Austen and colonialism. David Aers suggests that, "having acknowledged the existence of slaves, Jane Austen drops the subject without examining the links it has with the baronet's affluence in England or its morality" (127). In a similar vein Wiltshire argues, "Austen knew about slavery in the West Indies but it did not preoccupy her" ("Decolonising," 314). Wiltshire suggests it is only our own post-colonial desires which allow "imperialist motifs and meaning" to be "squeezed out of what would otherwise be merely domestic notations . . . Since the references to Antigua and to slavery in the text are apparently slight, it is vital that *Mansfield* estate itself, the real site of the action, be redescribed" by critics in order to achieve "great latitude of interpretation" in how concerned Austen really is with slavery ("Decolonising" 307-8). Despite doubts over Austen's depth of investment to abolition, Wiltshire and many others, have noted *Mansfield Park*, "is explicitly set in the years after the abolition of slavery in 1807" ("Decolonising" 305-6), a fact which has sparked counter-arguments from critics like White who suggest *Mansfield Park* is in fact an explicit critique on the slave trade and plantocracy:

¹⁴² In this chapter I focus on Austen's sense of revolutionary and Napoleonic France as moral threats to Britain, but Austen was also aware of America as a revolutionary nation. *Mansfield Park* does not mention America directly, but she was aware of American wars and Revolutions. Austen lived through the turmoil of American Independence and *Mansfield* was published only two years after America declared war on Britain in 1812. Austen's *Emma* (1815) makes the connection between the Eltons and the port of Bristol, a port famous for its "involvement in the slave, rum, sugar and tobacco trades between England, Africa, America and the West Indies" (*Jane Austen's Letters*, Le Faye 595). Austen would also have been up to date on American news from her brothers Charles and Frank, both navy men. In her letter *Tuesday 27-Wed 28 December 1808*, Austen mentions "the extravagant terms of praise Earle Harwood [a marine lieutenant and son of a Steventon neighbor] speaks of [Charles]. He is looked up to by everybody in all America." (*Letters* 168).

“[*Mansfield Park*] presupposes the British outlawing of its transatlantic slave trade, but also undermines the status quo of chattel slavery, the most extreme form of slavery” (1). I agree *Mansfield Park* does condemn slavery and those who practice it, but Austen’s condemnation stems less from a desire to establish colonial others’ equality and more from the desire to vindicate Britain’s commitment to liberty and virtue.

Austen is invested in Britain’s colonial implications, but I do not think, as Ferguson suggests, “[p]ower relations within the community of Mansfield Park reenact and refashion plantocratic paradigms” (*Colonialism and Gender* 70). Fanny’s life is not meant to mirror slave history. Fanny is certainly mistreated by Aunt Norris, and often insensitively treated by the rest of the family, but the text also implies that Fanny is regarded, if selfishly by the Bertrams, with a thoughtless affection. She is undervalued but that does not make her an “indentured servant” (Said 88) or a slave. Her younger sister Susan’s acceptance into Mansfield and the extent to which she thrives there indicate Fanny’s feelings of oppression are more a consequence of her “natural timidity” and sensitivity than any real exploitation comparable to the tyranny of slavery.¹⁴³

Austen is concerned with the joint arguments of emancipation for women and slaves; Austen is against any violations of liberty, and her commentary against oppression works for any individual under the yoke of tyranny.¹⁴⁴ There is also enough evidence in the text to indicate that

¹⁴³ Bander also argues that Fanny’s “servitude” does not need to be taken as a literal translation of slavery. She points out the many kindnesses bestowed upon Fanny by the Bertrams: “when Fanny retreats in distress to the East Room, she is surrounded by gifts (however casually bestowed) as well as her plants and books purchased with funds provided by Sir Thomas; there too she recalls her consoling memories of respectful or affectionate treatment: “her Aunt Bertram had spoken for her, or Miss Lee had been encouraging, or . . . Edmund had been her champion” Fanny may be “the least and the last, but she is not a slave” (n.p).

¹⁴⁴ Mann notes, “we should notice that the nineteenth-century abolition fight correlated strongly with the incipient European’s women’s movement”(171). Austen’s interest in women’s rights is clear from her life and letters. The

Austen is very aware of “the intricate ironies of the British imperial project” (Ford, “Fanny’s ‘great book’” n.p), but Austen’s main motive is to distinguish moral performance from moral action, and warn against the former; she highlights the need for a British virtue that divides the perception of moral wrongs from the action of seeking to remedy these injustices. Austen rejects slavery as morally unworthy of British subjects and she redirects her readers to a moral regeneration that promotes liberty for all. *Mansfield Park* is concerned with creating a new British national subject who is capable and worthy of taking up imperial agendas. Questions surrounding slavery, abolition, the West Indies and plantocracy are significant subtexts to *Mansfield Park*, but African slavery was not the only morally questionable imperial venture. Austen aims for a general moral reformation based on, and concurrent with Britain’s growing self-identification as a nation of liberty for all.

During the 1780s the Impeachment of Warren Hastings for corruption and oppression drew Britain’s awareness to questions of imperial power and moral corruption in India. Political players such as Edmund Burke, William Pitt, Charles Fox and William Wilberforce questioned imperial agendas of violence and control, but they also helped re-legitimize the British imperial activity that had been publically questioned, and to some extent deconstructed, by applying terms such as benevolent governance and paternalistic protection to imperial ventures. As Burke

connection between the oppression of women and colonial others may have crystalized for her in her reading of Claudius Buchanan’s “*Christian Researches in India* (1811). In a letter to Cassandra in 1813, the year Austen was working on *Mansfield*, Austen jokingly mentions Buchanan as a love interest—Cassandra and Jane often shared a joke about marrying authors whose works they particularly admired. Buchanan, a social critic, discusses converting India to Evangelical Christianity, but he also makes a case for women’s equality. He uses Christianity to claim women’s “equality”: “[Christianity] give[s] due honour to the character of WOMAN, and [can] exalt her to her just place” (56-57). Buchanan, by today’s standards wrongly, assumes Christianity is the polemical opposite to patriarchy, but his arguments are forward thinking for the period since he connects women’s rights and colonial others’ rights to liberty and equality. Buchanan assumes the path to recognizing universal humanity and universal rights lies with Christianity. As Mann suggests, Austen’s attraction to Buchanan was likely based on his dual arguments for slaves’ and women’s emancipation.

declared in 1783, “all political power which is set over men” is “in the strictest sense a *trust* and it is of the very essence of every trust to be rendered *accountable*” (*Writings and Speeches* V.385). Britons’ moral and political obligations and their power around the world were linked in the public eye. British control in India continued to be an issue, and in 1813, a year before *Mansfield’s* publication, the Charter Act re-affirmed British rule over territories held by the East India Company. Austen was familiar with the East India Company through her brother Francis; Francis was outspoken against the treatment of slaves held by company functionaries in St. Helena.¹⁴⁵ This public concern over Britain’s moral presence centered first on the East India Company, but the idea of trusteeship also spread to concerns over all of Britain’s imperial practices including the Atlantic Slave Trade. William Cowper, Austen’s favorite poet captures this idea in *The Task* (1785).¹⁴⁶ He writes, “Of all your empire; that where Britain’s power/ Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too” (46-47).

Mansfield Park is set specifically during the abolition years, and Britain’s stance on slavery acts as a rallying standard for virtue and Austen’s views on empire.¹⁴⁷ Austen was aware of Britain’s other imperial ventures such as Britain’s place in India, Britain’s ongoing conflicts with France, Napoleonic expansion as well as continued conflicts with America leading up to the

¹⁴⁵ See Hubback 192.

¹⁴⁶ Cowper was a known advocate for abolition. Fanny quotes from *The Task* throughout the novel. As I also note in my essay “I Sing of the Sofa” “Fanny quotes from *The Task* “Ye Fallen Avenues, once more I mourn your fate unmerited” (*Task* I.338-39) in response to Mr. Rushworth’s proposed improvements at Sotherton. She also quotes from Cowper’s “Tirocinium” a poem which addresses education in terms of the conditioning of the “receptive spirit.” Fanny’s quotation “with that intense desire she wants her home” comes during her stay at Portsmouth. Fanny’s love and knowledge of Cowper suggests her affiliation with anti-slavery movements.

¹⁴⁷ Knox-Shaw aptly summarizes scholarship on *Mansfield Park’s* time-line along with his own view: “The post-abolitionist perspective is there no matter whether Sir Thomas’s visit to Antigua post-or pre-dates the passage of the law, and his outgoing voyage has variously been placed at 1810, 1807, and 1805. In fact, Jane Austen carefully laid out a scheme, making only one departure from it. Everything in the opening chapters is precisely consistent with Sir Thomas’ visit to Antigua taking place between the autumns of 1807 and 1809 . . . placing him in Antigua over the critical period of transition, it looks very much as if Austen arranged her narrative round the date of abolition—the bill became law early in the summer of 1807” (181).

War of 1812; the emphasis the novel places on moral virtue and the necessity for sympathetic exchange is crucial to any kind of imperial venture. Austen acknowledges the potential for empire's degenerative influence on the civilized self, but she also demonstrates how the scope of Britain's moral community may be regenerated under the influence of sentimental virtues and moral sentiments.¹⁴⁸

Austen, like Smith, recognizes that in a society where universal self-interest dominates, individuals may be so caught up in the pursuit of wealth that moral sentiments become corrupt and individuals will no longer recognize virtue or act sympathetically. While self-interest may be more "glittering in its colouring," virtue "is more exquisitely beautiful in its outline" (*Theory* I.iii.3). Austen's criticism of self-interest and commercialism, apparent in her treatment of the Crawfords' mercantilism and Maria's marriage to Rushworth, can be applied to her criticism of the type of self-involvement and commerce which leads to institutions such as slavery, and imperial expansion, like France's, based on a desire to dominate and subdue.¹⁴⁹ Instead, Austen praises Fanny's virtue as an example of British liberty and moral responsibility: by following Fanny's example individuals and societies may morally regenerate themselves.

Mansfield's regeneration, and Sir Thomas' realization of the value of natural goodness over "ambitious and mercenary connections" (545), share with Smith's *Theory* a belief in the

¹⁴⁸ In the sense that as Smith consistently puts it throughout his oeuvre, power leads to corruption: "the pride of man makes him love to domineer" (*Wealth* 210); man's nature has a tendency toward the "love of domination and tyrannizing, and the "love of domination and authority over others" is "natural to mankind" (*LJ* iii. 117, 130). This is why we must foster disinterestedness in order that we can mediate between our desire for superiority and justice and humanity.

¹⁴⁹ Again, here it may be worthwhile to notice the association the Crawfords have with France. Mary and Henry bring a moral sickness to Mansfield particularly associated with French luxury and dissipation which is repeated in Austen's other works. For instance in *Emma* Mr. Knightley condemns Frank Churchill for behaving like a French aristocrat: "your amiable young man can be amiable only in French, not in English. He may be very 'aimable', have very good manners, and be very agreeable; but he can have no *English delicacy towards the feelings of other people*" (166; emphasis added).

potential for reformation through the recuperation of sympathy and virtuous habits. In order to achieve these reformations both Austen and Smith value educative reading on both private and political grounds. For Smith, literature is an important step in moral education. Literature of the right type helps readers exercise their sympathetic imagination by weighing the competing claims of the characters; therefore, learning how to feel, how we ought to feel and how to judge can teach us true moral sentiment as opposed to just displaying emotion for emotion's sake. However, the wrong kind of reading, reading that is self-indulgent and that allows sentiment to run wild, will only foster self-interest because the reader indulges the pleasure of feeling his own emotion.¹⁵⁰ He is therefore incapable "of forming any just judgement" (*Wealth* 50). On the other hand, reading that promotes disinterestedness by "increase[ing] our feeling for others" (*Theory* III.iii.7) will promote moral judgment. Fanny's reading teaches her to judge correctly and models correct reading habits for Britain's readers. Readers of *Mansfield Park* learn moral judgment and become moral examples for the world.

Fanny's reading draws a parallel between domestic and imperial spheres. During the disastrous rehearsals of the play *Lover's Vows* Fanny retains her moral judgment even as Edmund capitulates to Mary's requests that he perform in the morally suspect theatrical. Edmund comes to ask for Fanny's approbation, which she cannot give, and acknowledges her good judgment in wanting "'to be reading" rather than participating in the play: "You in the meanwhile will be taking a trip into China, I suppose. How does Lord Macartney go on?"' (182). The book Fanny is reading is significant and has been identified by editors of *Mansfield Park* as Lord

¹⁵⁰ The 'wrong' type of literature according to Smith is literature that consists of "whining and melancholy" or that "attempts to diminish our sensibility to ourselves rather than increase our feeling for others" (*Theory* III.iii.7). Smith's note refers to James Thomson's *The Seasons: Winter* (1727) as an example.

Macartney's *Journal of the Embassy to China*, published in 1807. Macartney's *Journal* is a travel narrative which in addition to describing the British attempt to expand trade with China, details the expedition's encounter with the exotic other. Macartney "was strongly committed to the Enlightenment ideal of reciprocal exchange in international relations" (Knox-Shaw 186). However, Macartney also became notorious for his refusal to kowtow to the emperor of China; "his refusal was a challenge to . . . the mark of feudal arrogance that was all too familiar at home" (Knox-Shaw 86).¹⁵¹ While Macartney is in many ways a sympathetic observer of Chinese culture, his refusal to kow-tow stems from his belief in British superiority in terms of their "independent spirit and freedom of action" (Knox-Shaw 14), a superiority that Fanny also possesses.

Austen envisions Britain's imperial role in the same way Fanny demonstrates her superiority. Britain's role is not one of oppression and tyranny; instead, Britain should model ideal behavior by bringing religion, customs and morals to her colonies. In this way Britons could tend to the oppressed or enslaved, and their moral authority would justify their authority. Similarly, Fanny's moral authority is constructed through her negative assertions of her right to liberty. Fanny's liberty is constructed negatively in the sense that her resistance is predicated on what she doesn't do i.e. she doesn't participate in the play, she refuses to give her approbation to Edmund for his and Mary's participation in the play, and she won't marry Henry. Many critics read Fanny as the epitome of dutifulness and subjugation, but Sir Thomas recognizes the strength of Fanny's assertion of her right to freedom when he chastises her for refusing Henry's proposal.

¹⁵¹ This idea of "feudal arrogance" at home and in other countries may also be relevant in Fanny's readings of Cowper. In Book II of *The Task*, Cowper refers to Lord Mansfield's decision and asks: "We have no slaves at home—Then why abroad?" Both these works then reinforce the idea of reciprocal exchange and a recognition that values could/should be shared even with those designated as "other".

Fanny's actions are passive but morally significant. She reminds readers of the importance of the disinterested self, the impartial spectator. Fanny's "independence of spirit" (318) is not individualistic. Her resistance to tyranny in fact supports the social cohesion of Mansfield Park because she rejects the implementation of corrupt social mores. Consequently and paradoxically, Fanny does not aim to gain her independence; she aims to secure her freedom. This paradox is equally applicable to the way Austen sees Britain's imperial role—Britain's colonies have a right to their liberty in order to support a cohesive empire under Britain's care. Austen's view combines notions of freedom and the common good which make slavery an evil, but also promotes Britain's authority in a way that increases colonial reliance. To illustrate, it is likely Austen shared her brother Francis' view that, "slavery however it may be modified is still slavery, and it is much to be regretted that any trace of it should be found to exist in countries dependent on England, or colonized by her subjects" (Hubback 192).

The associations generated from Fanny's reading of Macarteny's *Journal* can help us understand how Austen and Austen's readers, including readers like Fanny, could fashion Britain's relationship to the global community. Austen mentions Macarteny's *Journal* in a letter to Cassandra in January 1813, the same year Austen was writing *Mansfield Park*. In the same letter Austen also praises Charles Pasley, Claudius Buchanan and Thomas Clarkson, whom she does not mention in her novel but whose influences nonetheless permeate *Mansfield*. Austen writes:

We are quite run over with Books. *She* [her mother] has got Sir John Carr's Travels in Spain from Miss B. & I am reading a Society-Octavo, an Essay on the Military Police & Institutions of the British Empire, by Capt. Pasley of the Engineers, a book which I protested against at first, but which upon trial I find

delightfully written & highly entertaining. I am as much in love with the Author
as I ever was with Clarkson or Buchanan.¹⁵² (24 January 1813)

All three of the authors named here advocate for colonial expansion, but only under certain conditions, and all three oppose slavery.¹⁵³

Pasley in particular encourages abolition because it would be conducive to Britain's imperial project, and he also sees colonial expansion as way to secure British liberty. He argues slaves make Britain vulnerable to French invasion since the slaves have no vested interest in protecting British interest. On the other hand, "the West Indies, if inhabited by free men, and united under . . . a government, to which they were attached, would offer by no means an easy conquest" (74-75). Gratitude towards Britain would provide insurance against conquest by other nations. Although Napoleon had been defeated by the time *Mansfield Park* was published, the threat of France in the Napoleonic Wars was quite real during the period Austen was writing and revising *Mansfield Park*. France continued to be viewed as a threat throughout Austen's lifetime. Pasley warns, French Conquest would lead to "a second race of imperial monsters and idiots . . . [and] a renewal of the history of the dark ages"¹⁵⁴ (477-9). The more colonies Britain can rule by

¹⁵² "in love" refers to a running joke between Austen and Cassandra rather than any serious intentions. Austen and Cassandra "used to pretend" they were "quite prepared to marry" various men in the public eye, or whose writings they particularly admired (Austen-Leigh *Life and Letters* 238).

¹⁵³ Frank Gibbon (300), Moira Ferguson ("*Mansfield Park*"), and Ruth Perry ("Austen and Empire") all identify Clarkson's *History* and his description of the morally repugnant Captain Norris as the source for Aunt Norris in *Mansfield Park*: "Knowing Clarkson's history of the slave captain Norris gives a sinister edge to Mrs. Norris' [sic] unreflecting selfishness" (Perry 99). Claudius Buchanan published *Christian Researches in Asia* in 1811. He was an Anglican missionary and an advocate of Christian imperialism. Bander notes that Austen may have been "impressed by Buchanan's account of Lt.-Col. Alexander Walker, who succeeded in persuading local community leaders to abolish the cruel practice of female infanticide" (n.p) despite Britain's official policy of toleration. Austen's admiration for Buchanan again confirms her belief in the morality of resistance rather than complicity by approval with social immorality.

¹⁵⁴ Clarkson also comes down pretty heavily on the French. Volume II in particular dwells on the French's betrayal of abolition's cause in favor of their own revolutionary agendas: in a great revolution, like that of France . . . France would first take care of herself" (II.85). Additionally, in 1802 Napoleon had reinstated old slave laws that didn't put restrictions on the number of new slaves imported to France's colonies. Clarkson's *History* appealed to Briton's

sympathetic identification and gratitude, the more secure Britain, and her values, will become.¹⁵⁵

The colonies will become strong if the inhabitants feel they are part of the same community as their colonizers: “the natives will, in all cases, as they cannot possibly be actuated by the strong incentive of national pride, take little concern in the contest; unless their existing government should have shown a fellow feeling for their prosperity” (64). Pasley applies the theory of sympathetic exchange to produce a mutual sympathy of benefit to both colonizer and colonized.

Pasley cautions against a mercantile view of the world and against a view of humans as property. He warns, “Every thing [sic] will be calculated by notions of profit and loss. Valour and learning will be trampled under foot, or may altogether desert such an ungenial soil; and the laws will be destroyed either by a foreign conqueror, or by a domestic tyrant” (472). Pasley believes that more important than overseas conquests are national virtues of prudence, justice, benevolence and liberty in the form of good laws. He goes on to argue that these “good laws” need to be enacted by “men of *liberal education*” with “minds cultivated by study and reflection, but that they also must have a “prudent governor” to direct them (my emphasis 234). If this central governor is in place, Britons can face outside threats, like the French, “in a manner worthy of the ancient renown of the British nation, and of the sacred cause in which we should fight, for the last remains of liberty to be found in the world” (8).

Sir Thomas must learn to become Mansfield’s ideal moral leader. In the comparison of Fanny’s virtue and steadfastness with the disastrous and immoral behavior of his own children and the Crawfords, he comes to regret his pursuit of “ambitious and mercenary connections”

sense of patriotic morality—abolition is a nationalist and Christian value in opposition to the dissipation and immorality of the French.

¹⁵⁵ Austen participates in the nationalist, and imperialist, move to define Britishness, often in contrast with Frenchness, as sympathetic, selfless purveyors of justice and civilization.

(545). He realizes “he ought not to have allowed the marriage [between Rushworth and Maria] . . . that in so doing he had . . . been governed by motives of selfishness and worldly wisdom” (534). In the pursuit of wealth “[s]omething must have been wanting *within*” (535). In Sir Thomas’ failures, Austen reinforces a similar ideology to both Pasley’s and Smith’s ideas regarding the slave trade in that slavery and mercantilism are part of the same immoral mindset which needs to be abolished: slavery, like mercantilism, results from a damaging vanity or desire to be admired: “the pride of man” causes “the love of dominion and authority over others” (*Wealth of Nations* 769).¹⁵⁶ Moral “blindness” may occur in a society where the “imagination of men” has become habituated to dreadful customs.¹⁵⁷ *But*, Smith stresses, this blindness does not mitigate moral blame.

Fanny’s reading of Macarteny’s *Journal*, then, provides several interrelated political contextualizations which I will discuss in order. Firstly, Macarteny’s refusal to bend to social pressures parallels Fanny’s refusal to participate in a play which she *feels* to be immoral; Austen thus stresses the importance of leading by example. Secondly, with the contexts surrounding Fanny’s reading we can see Austen’s interest in Britain’s global reputation and role. And finally, Fanny’s reading of Macarteny’s *Journal* comes at a pivotal point in the novel—Sir Thomas’ return from Antigua which in conjunction with the interest about Britain’s role in the world allows us to understand the context for Fanny’s all important question about the slave trade and which is greeted by “dead silence” (157).

¹⁵⁶ See also *Wealth* 638,664-65, 689, 773,813

¹⁵⁷ To illustrate this point Smith uses the example infanticide in Greece where abject poverty and imminent starvation necessitated infanticide which then continued past the time of need.

When Sir Thomas returns from Antigua he finds a production of *Lovers Vows* is underway. Edmund, unlike Macartney and Fanny, does not stand by his principles in regards to the play. Since Edmund's moral failure is linked with Sir Thomas' return from his plantation. Sir Thomas is not, as Edward Said puts it, "Crusoe setting things in order" (86). Sir Thomas is part of the problem not the solution. Sir Thomas is an absentee-landlord, a practice coming under increased scrutiny during Austen's lifetime. The connotations associated with absentee landlords were negative: lavish tastes, extravagance and social climbing (Sheridan, "Rise" 341). Once they had amassed their fortune, absentee landlords, often appointed an agent, as Sarah Robinson Scott's Sir George Ellison does, to run their estates. However, unlike Ellison who takes the time to select an estate manager who will live up to his standards, absentee landlords had the reputation for choosing notoriously corrupt and brutal managers (Sheridan, "Rise" 342). Because absentee landlords "preferred living fabulously in England to living hotly in the West-Indies" (Mann *Cooper Connection* 180), they often stayed away from their plantations too long which allowed for the degeneration of their estate and the abuse of their slaves in their absence (Sheridan "Rise" 342). Life expectancies for slaves living on plantations were not high; Gwendolyn Hall claims the mortality rates under well-run, "humanitarian" plantations expected a ten percent death rate per year, while "crueler" masters expected seventy-five percent of their slaves would die within three years (14-15). Sir Thomas's blindness to his children's shortcomings presumably transfers to his blindness to what is happening on his plantation in his absence.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Austen makes other national-international comparisons in regards to absenteeism. Henry—immoral, "French," Henry—is an absentee landlord from his estate in Everingham and he complains of "underhand dealing" that ruins his estate. On a more substantial note, Austen also discusses church absenteeism, another issue of the day. Edmund thinks it is a clergyman's duty to live amongst his parishioners and preach regularly. Mary disagrees, mostly because

Sir Thomas must learn to participate in sympathetic exchange, rather than imposing his views—perhaps emulating Pasley’s plan for a new familial model for colonial projects. The “dead silence” (157) with which Fanny’s question about the slave trade is met ties together the Bertrams’ self-involvement and mercantilism with their ignorance and moral blindness to geographically distant others. Sir Thomas has previously not considered his slaves, while his family continues to disregard the immorality associated with their wealth. They don’t know and don’t want to know how this wealth is procured. Fanny’s aesthetic grounding, in contrast, helps her overcome this distance—she does want to know what is happening in the far reaches of the world, in China or in the West Indies. Like Smith, Austen feels that moral justice is dependent on our ability to bring geographically and/or culturally distant others closer to our own experiences. The cultivation of sympathy will counter self-partiality and we learn to share in a common human world. Fanny feels herself to be a member of a global community through her personal sympathies and domestic obligations. This global-familial, imperial model becomes both economically and morally expedient in the context of Britain’s 1807 Slave Act.¹⁵⁹

1807 is an important date in the context of *Mansfield Park* because after 1807 Antiguan plantations were experiencing an economic decline due to their difficulty maintaining slave

she does not want to live poorly in the country. Mary wonders what value a clergyman really has since a couple of sermons a week cannot have so much influence, and the London practice has been to forgive absenteeism. Edmund replies that the London model should not be idealized. “We do not look in great cities for our best morality . . . and it certainly is not there, that the influence of the clergy can be most felt” (66-67). Edmund believes the clergy are responsible for setting the character of the nation, and without a clergyman in place the country will fall to corruption. On the global level this argument can be extended to the global level and the argument that each colony requires constant and benevolent attention from a paternal figure to ensure moral behavior—for both colonials and the colonized.

¹⁵⁹ As I explain in chapter 5, Equiano and other abolitionists, including Clarkson, build on Smith’s economic arguments, to use the dual economic-moral argument to support their claims for the expediency of eradicating slavery. The 1807 Slave Act made slavery illegal on British soil but did not abolish the slave trade. Slave-trading became a felony in 1811, but abolition in all Britain’s colonies did begin until 1833.

numbers (Mann, *The Cooper Connection* 180).¹⁶⁰ Consequently, if Sir Thomas's return to Antigua is precipitated by the estate's floundering (*MP* 36), the only means to improve "such poor returns" from the estate (34), short of illegally importing new slaves, is to improve its slaves' conditions. This is likely what Sir Thomas has gone to do in Antigua. Sir Thomas must learn to be concerned about the welfare of others: sympathy for others in the end results in the common good. The resulting amelioration on his estate may account for why Sir Thomas would be "pleased" to be "inquired of further" (231) about his overseas interest, why Fanny "love[s] to hear [her] uncle talk of the West Indies and why she "could listen to him for an hour together" (230).¹⁶¹

Said misreads the "dead-silence" that meets Fanny's question as an indication of Austen's status as "white, privileged, insensitive, complicit," in order "to suggest that one world [Europe] could not be connected with the other [colonial slavery] since there simply is no common language for both" (96), but Austen uses the "dead silence" (157) to condemn the slave trade in two ways. The dead silence highlights the immorality of those people whose apathy condones slave trading by not actively opposing it. It also demonstrates, through Fanny's

¹⁶⁰ Mann states, "However Antigua's reputation for creating astounding wealth might have lingered, it was common knowledge that, after 1807, the island's economy was in serious decline . . . due to Parliament's two earlier acts of 1789 and 1799, which had included severe penalties for smuggling in new slaves under the flags of neutral countries" (180). For more on Antigua's economics see Sheridan *Sugar and Slavery* chps.4,5 and 9.

¹⁶¹ Amelioration tallies with Edmund's religious vocation, and his encouragement of Fanny to talk to Sir Thomas about his plantation. Christianity became for many reformers the first step towards amelioration: "Church ministers had long taught that Christianity would improve slavery" (C.Brown 73). Mary Crawford tries to insult Edmund by saying he will become "celebrated [as a] preacher in some great society of Methodists, or as a missionary," (530) but the Methodists and Anglican Evangelicals were foremost in the campaign for abolition. The editors' note: "Mary derides what she perceives as the Evangelical tendency in Edmund's reproaches . . . Mary is thus mocking both Edmund's religious fervour and his descent into a lower class" (735). Austen was Anglican. We know she did not support the dissenting aspects of Methodism, such as Itinerism which "holds that one walks the face of the earth seeing new souls to save" (Mooneyham White 26) rather than keeping the parish at the center of religious life as Edmund insists is proper, but she did support the Evangelical commitment to abolition. Her brother Henry became an Anglican Evangelical, and, as I have already mentioned, Austen was an admirer of Buchanan another Evangelical. For more on Austen's religion see Laura Mooneyham White *Jane Austen's Anglicanism*.

example, that a refusal to participate in ventures we know to be immoral can be just as effective as active resistance—Fanny’s refusal to marry Henry on a larger scale could become a refusal to purchase sugar, for instance, or even a refusal to manage a slave plantation.¹⁶² Fanny’s reading of Macarteny’s *Journal* thereby signposts Austen’s position on the process of moral education and colonialism. There is evidence that Sir Thomas will learn to overcome his attachment to worldly goods, his prioritization of wealth over virtue and that he will learn to sympathetically rule his house and his plantation in a way consistent with Britain’s self-ascribed commitment to liberty and paternal imperial venture. But he cannot do it without Fanny.

Fanny compensates for Sir Thomas’s errors by being the impartial spectator for Mansfield. When we do not stand by our principles, those principles may become corrupted. It is only Fanny who, in her refusals, demonstrates her ability to practice disinterestedness. She becomes the impartial spectator Mansfield Park needs in order to prevent its inhabitants from moral collapse in the face of group-forged attitudes. Sir Thomas owns that at Mansfield “here had been grievous mismanagement” (535), but with Fanny now “the daughter that he wanted,” her moral model becomes the distinguishing estate/planter ethos of British nationalism. Through Fanny, Austen shapes a sense of British national character as the purveyor of justice, liberty and moral sentiment. With the threat posed by Napoleonic France, the loss of Britain’s colonies in the aftermath of the American Revolution and the subsequent dispute with America in the War

¹⁶² To build on note 39, perhaps this is a criticism that hits close to home for Austen. Her father, while he did not own slaves, was the trustee for James Langford Nibbs’ Haddon’s estate in Antigua. According to Gibbon and Richard B. Sheridan, the Nibbs family owned around 370 slaves and would have made approximately £2,555.00 profit per year, a fairly significant sum. For details and calculations on the Haddons estate as well as more information on the relationship between George Austen and James Langford Nibbs see Richard B. Sheridan *Sugar and Slavery* pp.269-270 and Gibbon “The Antigua Connection” pp.299-305. The criticism here is that even those who do not actively participate in immoral ventures like the slave trade may perpetuate their practice. Even a refusal to participate in any way, as Fanny refuses to participate in both the play and Sir Thomas’ marriage schemes, will help set a moral standard.

of 1812, Britons began to be more aware of the pitfalls of empire and the need for reforms. Austen suggests injustices overseas will bring down the British Empire. She consequently stresses the need for the disinterestedness of the impartial spectator. *Mansfield Park* and *Fanny* show readers the social foundations of social change that will preserve Britain's moral virtue and her empire of liberty.

In *Mansfield Park*, Austen emphasizes the need for Britons to develop their sympathetic imagination and disinterestedness in reaction to the moral corruption produced by unregulated imperial wealth and power. Austen recognizes potential corruptions that result from imperial designs. She points to imperial violence, like slavery, occasioned by immoralities, like excessive self-preference, that are inflicted on colonial others, but Austen never questions Britain's moral obligation to spread civilization. In this sense Austen uses sentiment to support a particular national identity. She sees British identity as an exemplar of liberty, justice and benevolent paternalism. However, as soon as the "other" is introduced into the dialectic relationship between self and other or nation and nation, a singular identity or political position becomes harder to maintain. Consequently, using Smith to illuminate the transatlantic connections Austen makes, helps us see how Austen navigates the distinctions between Britain's local and global identities. In the next chapter I look at the way James Fenimore Cooper also deals with the tensions that arise from a single nation's multiple identities. Where Austen asks what it might mean to extend sympathy to a geographically distant other, Cooper asks how sympathy can bridge differences not only between individuals who are physically distant but also how sympathy might bridge difference between individuals living within the same geography. Re-situating Cooper within a transatlantic context raises questions of how and whether this difference is worth preserving.

Chapter 4: New World Universalism: James Fenimore Cooper's Theory of Sympathetic

Land

In the previous chapter I argue that Jane Austen, like Adam Smith, is interested in the social factors that influence morality. In *Mansfield Park* Austen reflects on the morality of imperial ambitions and asks her readers to cultivate a national virtue that defines Britons as sympathetic, selfless purveyors of justice and civilization. Social change depends upon the renewal of this social stratum by subjects who can improve without imposing and achieve independent thought without abstracting themselves from community

James Fenimore Cooper was a professed admirer of Austen, and his first published novel *Precaution* (1820) is explicitly modelled on Austen's oeuvre.¹⁶³ Cooper critics openly admit *Precaution's* obvious debt to Austen, but they tend to dismiss the novel as an aberration or "a misstep before [Cooper] found his 'true' course and created the great American epic, the Leatherstocking tales" (Wegener 45).¹⁶⁴ If there is any connection drawn between Austen and Cooper, it is that both novelists have come to represent their respective national literatures.¹⁶⁵ It is true that in the introduction to *The Spy: A Tale of Neutral Ground* (1821), Cooper's second

¹⁶³ First published in New York. The novel combines many Austen-esque characters and plot lines. *Precaution* opens with the Mosley family's unmarried girls and their excited reactions to new additions to town: the military rake Henry Egerton and the reserved and unlikeable, but rich, George Denbigh. The novel's many plot lines include a seduction and elopement, negligent fathers who learn to pay more attention to their daughters and the final resolution in the marriage of the youngest Mosley daughter, Emily, to George Denbigh who, after Denbigh saves the day by revealing Egerton's true character, comes to appreciate Denbigh's true worth and moral character. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is here the obvious model, but many of the subplots take clearly recognizable elements from her other works, particularly *Persuasion*.

¹⁶⁴ Daniel Peck similarly writes Cooper only "found his form, materials, and indeed, his audience" once he turned to "American subjects" (Peck "Introduction" 1).

¹⁶⁵ As Tim Fulford and Kevin Hutchings note, nationalism is a "current paradigm that many agree to be outdated but that still *de facto* operates because literary studies are institutionalized and organized along disciplinary boundaries. This paradigm presumes the existence of separate British, American, and Canadian national literatures (with American and Canadian literatures projected back to the pre-independence or pre-Confederation periods in the interest of setting out incipient forms of North American literary nationalism" (18).

novel, Cooper writes that *The Spy* is intended as a novel of “patriotism” (3). In order to offset the “reproache[s]” he received for *Precaution* “drawn from a state of society so different from that to which he . . . an American in heart as in birth . . . belonged” (3), *The Spy* is meant to record “the very inscription of America” (3). Cooper seemingly achieved his goal. Both *The Spy* and Cooper’s subsequent Leatherstocking Tales were lauded as capturing a quintessential American spirit from contemporaries like William Prescott; Prescott proclaimed Cooper’s writings were “instinct with the spirit of nationality” (*Letters and Journals* I, xvii). Thus the myth of Cooper the American patriot was born, but this myth of a singular American essence ignores the complex national identities Cooper’s writing explores. If we place Cooper within a transatlantic framework however, we can replace the traditional reading of Cooper as a white misogynist, racist and American exceptionalist with a reading of Cooper that recognizes his cosmopolitan ideology. If we continue to ignore Cooper’s transatlantic connections, then it is our reading that is at fault. We perpetuate the racism critics attribute to Cooper by creating false binaries—American/British, White/Red—binaries that Cooper never endorses.

Reading Cooper as part of a transatlantic exchange is a new approach. It is not only Cooper’s contemporaries who have claimed Cooper as “the most thoroughly national” of American writers (Parkman, “Works” 147). Cooper critics from the early-nineteenth century to today have made similar claims. D. H. Lawrence in *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) states Cooper’s Leatherstocking Tales enact the “true myth of America” in its continuous sense of re-birth and unlimited potential. Leslie Fiedler in 1968 called Cooper, “the most mythopoetically gifted of all American writers” (*Return* 122) because Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook’s cross racial love upholds the ideal that all men are created equal, but their sexless love creates an American identity that is male, white and racially “uncrossed.” Jane

Tomkins' in *Sensational Designs* (1985) asserts Cooper's novels appeal to Americans' "deeply felt national exigencies" in that "the ideal form of human society consists . . . of a proper respect for the 'natural' divisions that . . . maintain America's image of itself as a white man's nation" (116, 110). John Cawelti (1993) argues Cooper's works "enact that moving elegiac myth of the Vanishing Native American, whose mysterious power must yield to the further development of civilization" (153-54). These accounts describe Cooper as participating in an American literary history dependent on myths that see white supremacy as inevitable, desirable and ultimately nationally defining.¹⁶⁶

More recently scholars like Wai-Chi Dimock have questioned the validity of seeing literature and/or literary characters as "the product of one nation and one nation alone, analyzable within its confines" (*Through* 1). Yet even contemporary Cooper critics like Ivy Schweitzer and Dana Nelson who recognize the limitations of seeing American literature as "a world apart, sufficient unto itself, not burdened by the chronology and geography outside the nation" (Dimock, *Through* 1), continue to read Cooper as a nationalist who "shapes an emerging, ironically monoracial American national identity" (Schweitzer 134). Or, in Nelson's words, Cooper's works support "the notion of [America's] white Anglo-Saxon destiny" ("Leatherstocking" 130).

¹⁶⁶ Andrew Jackson's Second Annual Message to Congress (1830), for example, describes Indian Removal and dispossession as, although lamentable, natural and inevitable because true civilization was taking its place: "Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country, and Philanthropy has been long busily employed in devising means to avert it, but its progress has never for a moment been arrested . . . To follow to the tomb the last of his race and to tread on the graves of extinct nations excite melancholy reflections. But true philanthropy reconciles itself to these vicissitudes as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another" (*Papers and Messages of the Presidents*. II.520-21). In Jackson's political rhetoric Americans' claims to land were absolved from accusations of violence despite the obvious evidence and any dissenting protests to the contrary.

While theorists of the novel now generally reject novels as “exclusive” products of the “rationality of the nation-state” (Dimock, *Through* 7), prevailing Cooper criticisms paradoxically continue to read Cooper myopically as “unburdened” by “geography,” “chronology,” or ideology outside the nation (Dimock, *Through* 1). Thus Cooper is read as unambiguously demonstrating the “American” conflict between non-white “savagery” and white “civilization” (Nelson, *Commons* 106). This mythic conflict supposedly “proves” the moral unworthiness of indigenous and other non-white populations and thus authorizes European settlement as a moral process pursued by moral individuals. The narrative that justifies Euro-American land appropriation and the erasure of others has become the dominant critical reading for Cooper’s vision of America as an “Anglo-American triumph” (Cheyfitz 121).

Cooper however tells us we can’t read his works as defined by American borders. He tells us explicitly that Austen, a British author very much concerned with Britain’s imperial role, is his most immediate influence, and not just for *Precaution*. During the height of his popularity, Cooper, annoyed with continuously being called “the American Sir Walter Scott,” publically protested the title and his presumed rivalry with Scott;¹⁶⁷ in his “Review of *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*” (1838), he claims not Scott, but Austen, among other “realist” novelists, as his most immediate inspiration.¹⁶⁸ In the “Review” Cooper claims Austen’s novels were “more

¹⁶⁷ Cooper was at his most popular after the publication of *The Spy* and the first three Leatherstocking Tales: *The Pioneers; or The Sources of the Susquehana* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757* (1826), and *The Prairie* (1827). *The Pioneers*, sold 3, 500 copies the morning of publication. For more information on Cooper’s publication numbers and records see W.M Verhoeven’s “Introduction” in *James Fenimore Cooper: New Historical and Literary Contexts*.p.8-9.

¹⁶⁸ Although Cooper was frequently referred to as “The American Scott,” Cooper almost equally frequently protested the comparison, stating that it was “offensive to a gentleman to be nicknamed at all,” he had never entertained “the idea of rivalry,” and the nickname gave him “more disgust ... than all the abusive reviews that were ever written” (*Correspondence* 1:227)

true to everyday nature,” and Cooper aspired to both her “truthfulness” and her “everyday” standards (363).

This revelation may surprise those accustomed to Cooper’s critical history as an American “upper class white male, trapped in his culture’s assumptions about race and sex and imperial destiny” (Axelrad, 33), but *Precaution* is, by Cooper’s own admission not his only Austen connection.¹⁶⁹ It is easy to dismiss connections between Austen and Cooper’s novels as superficial devices to forward plot or provide comic relief, a treasure hunt for Austen fans, but a hunt that provides no critical change to views of Cooper as an apologist for America’s imperial history. However, Cooper, like Austen, creates subtextual commentaries on the state of society, national interests and the political implications of empire. Nor is Austen Cooper’s only transatlantic connection. While it is undeniable that Cooper glorifies the republican ideal he associates with America, if we attribute only a nationalist impulse to Cooper, we ignore the complex and multi-cultural identities Cooper’s writing celebrates. Cooper’s sense of America cannot be understood without a transatlantic and intercultural context; Cooper destabilizes nationalist assumptions by paradoxically developing an American nationalism out of a transatlantic, cosmopolitan and hybridized identity.

America’s emerging nationalism may be traced to colonists’ rebellion against the perceived tyranny of British rule. This rebellion consequently drew attention to the moral

¹⁶⁹ It is easy to list the ways Cooper adapts Austen’s plot devices: sister pairings that exemplify opposing qualities—Cora and Alice from *Mohicans* and Elinor and Marianne from *Sense and Sensibility*, for example; satirical portraits of the clergy—Cooper’s David Gamut the singing psalmist and Austen’s Mr. Collins the ridiculous sycophant; fathers who are completely useless or completely absent—Colonel Munro expects his daughters to cross hostile territory to reach him while Sir Thomas Bertram’s initial moral negligence as double absentee plantation owner and father, opens the way for potential financial/moral ruin for his estate and realized social ruin in his daughters’ affairs and elopements; daring (by early-nineteenth-century standards) portraits of female sexuality—Judith Hutter’s explicit sexual past, and Maria Bertram’s affair; as well as both authors’ propensity for inscribing morality onto the landscape.

character of colonial institutions and promoted Americans' renewed interest in questions of individual and collective virtue. Thus the American constitution developed in part as a reaction against Britain's imperial claims as well as in response to Enlightenment rhetoric which articulated ideas of universality in principles of thought, feeling and the common capacities of the human mind. As I explain in Chapter 2, the Enlightenment's agenda about the commonality of human sentiment contributed to developing theories of equality and fraternity for the new Republic. Cooper's works, despite their publication dates, should be read within the context of American Independence and the drafting of the constitution because Cooper urges his readers to think again about the nature of their rights and duties as citizens rather than subjects. Cooper's writings are informed by the moral philosophy which sanctioned American Independence.

Cooper works through questions of personal and civic morality exemplified by Adam Smith's concepts of the impartial spectator and disinterestedness. Cooper, like Brown before him, is particularly concerned with the connection between republican virtue as disinterestedness and America's promises of equality. Brown envisions a more democratic and egalitarian nation than the one he sees developing, but he, like Austen, never really questions the Euro-centrism of his ideal moral society. For Brown, America should provide equal rights and liberties to women and people of color but these "others" will join a single-standard ideal that supports democratic principles. Cooper goes further than Brown in thinking about the implications of a unilaterally imposed national identity. While Cooper's works do contain some unresolved tensions between recognition of universal humanity and insistence on racial difference, he makes an effort to recognize and develop dialectical models of social value that overall support a cosmopolitan model of political and cultural cooperation.

While Cooper does not claim all people are equal, he does claim equality of principle: individuals may not necessarily be equal in wealth or social status, but each individual is equal in his or her capacity for virtue and his or her fundamental entitlement to liberty, in the sense of self-governance. In his conception of equality Cooper adds to Smith's arguments that inequalities are often socially constructed. Smith's *Theory* describes differences between different societies and points to different levels of civilization between cultural groups, but he is clear that cultural variation is only possible within a universal human nature.¹⁷⁰ For example, Smith claims Native Americans tend to exemplify the noble but harsher virtues of magnanimity¹⁷¹ and self-command, but even if a "very different genius . . . appears to distinguish men," these differences "arise not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education" (*Wealth* 10).

¹⁷⁰ In Smith's history of civilization manners, morals, laws, and other human institutions change in accordance with the development of economy. Society begins from a savage state and "progresses" through herding and farming to a culmination in metropolitan commercial culture. Smith's stadial theory can be used to promote a more egalitarian view of the world—all races and societies are equally human and possess the same potential and thus are entitled to the same rights, but it is also possible to read stadial theory as promoting social, and often racially based, hierarchies. Critics who read Cooper as an imperialist or national apologist often assume Cooper's stadialist ideas imply a racial hierarchy that doesn't differentiate between racial societies. Critics think Cooper assumes some races and cultures can never achieve the same levels of intelligence, civilization and general worth that white Americans can. Critics that see Cooper as using stadial ideals to enforce white supremacy therefore assume that Cooper justifies the narrative of the vanishing Indian because Indians are a "lesser" racial society and inherently possess so many human deficits. For example, Timothy Sweet argues, "the vanishing Indian subsumed local, tribal specificity within an overarching national narrative, so that Cooper's account of English and French settlers' relations with Lenape and Iroquois in *Last of the Mohicans*, for example, could be taken to represent white America's relation to all indigenous peoples" (94). Essentially Sweet argues that Cooper thinks all Native American societies are doomed to fail because the Native Americans' intrinsic failings prevent them from attaining the same destiny or level of civilization as those Euro-Americans who possess reason, sentiment and morality.

¹⁷¹ Magnanimity may not seem a "harsher" virtue from contemporary connotations of the word. Smith is using "magnanimity" in the sense of nobility or stoicism. Consequently, he sees Native Americans as particularly magnanimous because they can control their emotions out of respect for others' indifference, particularly in regards to pain, and they are unswayed by "softer" emotions. For example, "the man who under the severest tortures, allows no weakness to escape him, vents no groan, gives way to no passion . . . commands our highest admiration. His firmness . . . [is a] magnanimous effort" (I.ii.2). Although Smith sees Native societies as less developed than European societies, in many ways Native Americans, in the way Smith describes them, embody the ideal principles of the impartial spectator.

Cooper, like Smith, acknowledges that while every individual possesses the same human potential, inequalities continue to exist between individuals and between social groups. In order to rectify inequalities, both Cooper and Smith cultivate disinterestedness in their readers. Once we stop believing in our superiority, we can recognize that “we are but one of the multitude, in no respect better than any other in it” (*Theory* III.iii.1). Therefore, Smith’s conception of disinterestedness has radical potential for egalitarian movements like universal suffrage or abolition because once we are able to disengage from blinding self-partiality, we can see other people’s interests as equal in value to our own. The disinterestedness of the impartial spectator also engenders affective connections. These connections once recognized, possess the radical potential to reveal humanity’s universality in the sense that we all possess the same fundamental feelings.¹⁷² If we possess the same humanity, then we must acknowledge inequalities, including racial inequalities, are “not upon many occasions so much the cause, as the effect of” social divisions (*Wealth* 11). Consequently, for Cooper, as for Smith, moral corruption and inequality occur when we try to impose, often violently, our sense of superiority in a way that violates others’ rights to liberty.

The right to liberty, the right to equality and, importantly, the right to own land are rights implicit in the American ideal of citizenship, but Cooper recognizes that these rights can become complicated and corrupt within a colonial or imperial relationship particularly when physiognomy is the marker that ascribes or denies individuals the liberties promised by

¹⁷² Otherwise we could not “enter as it were into [the other’s] body and become in some measure the same person with him” (*Theory* I.i.2).

“universal” humanity.¹⁷³ Cooper is concerned with the moral right to liberty based on land possession, but he does not unequivocally or unthinkingly grant a clear conscience and/or a sense of cultural superiority to Euro-Americans who dispossess Native Americans from or enslave African-Americans to the land. Critics who claim Cooper’s America “is secured for the propagation of a white population” (Decker, “Africanist” 29) have not given Cooper enough credit for recognizing equal and competing land claims from different racial groups or for offering solutions for communal land possession.

Cooper should be read as part of a transatlantic conversation about and informed by a tradition of moral sentiments; in Cooper’s hands the Smithian social impulse becomes a cosmopolitan foundation for a stable society. Cooper did not, as many critics claim, assert an unbridgeable cultural distance between Euro-Americans, Native Americans and African Americans; his sense of American national identity grows out of points of contact between different cultures. The corresponding need for transcultural sympathetic bonds that Cooper promotes then upholds America’s framing rights of liberty, and equality—each person has the right to self-governance and each person’s voice must have political weight. Cooper sees America’s role as that of transatlantic conversational participant; nations in this conversation are partners free from internal or external forces or coercions. Cooper’s international conversational paradigm is meant to generate the regulating force of the impartial spectator: attaining moral

¹⁷³ America’s founding documents and principles, as I describe in Chapter 2, profess the nation’s commitment to equality. “The Virginia Declaration of Rights,” for example, adopted on June 12, 1776 and an influential precursor to “The Declaration of Independence” (1776) famously claims equality for all men based on a rhetoric of fraternity that signifies America’s democratic difference from corrupt European societies: “all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights. . . ; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, *with the means of acquiring and possessing property*” (1). But as we saw in Chapter 2 there are fundamental problems with views of equality based on fraternity, namely they all too easily become exclusionary.

civilization is about the best social model for the greatest good, not power or status. Cooper also transfers this international model to the way he believes America's domestic policies should operate: all those who might be affected by national policies have a right to reasoned dialogue. His works question the contradictions he sees within American claims of liberty and equality that are based on theories of universal human rights but that in practice are founded on the appropriation of Native lands and the slave labor of Africans who work the land.

Neutral Territory or Sympathetic Territory: The Land and the Principles

Critics have noted the importance of land in Cooper's novels, but they tend to overlook Cooper's anxiety about land proprietorship. Instead these critics focus on the idea of "neutral" or "middle" ground.¹⁷⁴ Readings that address Cooper's "neutral ground" may acknowledge Cooper's attempt to describe a place where diverse cultural groups can facilitate social and cultural exchange, but these readings ultimately see Cooper's neutral ground as a justification for Euro-American imperialism—the neutrality of land becomes an act of erasure by dismissing both previous ownership and territorial dispute.

Laura Mielke claims Cooper's "middle ground" doesn't reach a cultural accommodation between "whites and Indians" (39) because Cooper's "historical narrative of western progress condemn[s] . . . the doomed Indian and Natty Bumppo, [who] represent the passing of the middle ground[,] . . . to a prairie grave" (60). W.M Verhoeven also argues Cooper's neutral ground neutralizes ideological or moral conflicts not to reconcile cultural conflict but so Cooper can fill

¹⁷⁴ These terms are taken from *The Spy: A Tale of Neutral Ground*, "The law of the neutral ground is the law of the strongest" (Spy 109), but these terms have been appropriated by critics and applied to all of Cooper's fiction particularly Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales.

his “neutral ground” with “an American identity that could denounce servitude, oppression, and inadequate representation while concerning [itself] least (if at all) with the most enslaved, oppressed and inadequately represented groups in the land” (“Neutralizing” 73-74). In this way, Verhoeven and Mielke argue, Cooper’s white national identity is preserved by negating any elements of difference that threaten Euro-American interest or colonizing impulses.

In early American political rhetoric, land and liberty were linked: the cultivation of land could guarantee independent income, liberty and hence a political voice. Thomas Jefferson wrote that America’s uncultivated land offered equal economic opportunity to all—an “empire of liberty” (*Papers* 238).¹⁷⁵ This new land would provide a remedy for moral corruption by offering equal voting rights to all property owners.¹⁷⁶ Simultaneously, however, landscape discourse became racialized. In American founding narratives that justified colonization, Native Americans or African slaves were generally depicted as either part of the landscape or as lacking a capacity for aesthetic appreciation.¹⁷⁷ The boundless possibility of America’s landscape can continue to support a rhetoric for equality, but at the same time this boundlessness also becomes the basis for exclusion; racial others are denied citizenship because they are described as analogous to, rather than appreciative of, the landscape.¹⁷⁸ Thus in American colonization narratives, a genre in which Cooper’s works are included by critics like Shirley Samuels, the ability to appreciate the

¹⁷⁵ “Jefferson to George Rogers Clark,” December 25, 1780.

¹⁷⁶ These property owners were implicitly understood to be white males.

¹⁷⁷ As we saw in Chapter 3 with Jane Austen, the capacity for aesthetic judgment was seen as requirement for moral capacity and as an indication of civility.

¹⁷⁸ Mielke reads Cooper’s depictions of landscape as doubly justifying imperial agendas; Cooper first demonstrates his aesthetic capacity for landscape appreciation in his writing which authorizes, by proxy, Euro-American moral superiority and right to land possession; secondly, scenes of violence over land are defused by this aesthetic appreciation. Mielke’s argument is a variation of the Vanishing Indian argument. She argues Cooper justifies European invasion by showing how the “natural law” of progression will always replace barbaric or savage states with civilized states. In Cooper’s novels the “Indian was joined or superseded by fur trader, soldier, frontiersman, and settler, the progressive development of human society could be mapped on an east-to west axis” (40) that followed European settlement patterns.

aesthetic pleasures of the land became a precondition for the right to own, settle and cultivate the land.¹⁷⁹ Civilizational progress in these narratives is needed and even moral; violent encounters with racial others are justified by Euro-Americans' superior capacity for aesthetic appreciation and superior values that will naturally replace indigenous savagery.¹⁸⁰ Savagery is contained and then erased or tamed by white civilization's superior sentimental capacity in unions like Chingachgook and Natty's enduring friendship, or Cora and Uncas's triracial romance in *The Last of the Mohicans*.¹⁸¹ Thus neutral ground becomes an imperialist design.

The famous massacre of Fort William Henry in *Mohicans* is read by Samuels and Allan Axelrad as a prime example of neutral ground that obfuscates colonial violence and erases indigenous land claims. The massacre is precipitated when Magua betrays Colonel Munro as well as Munro's British troops and settlers to the French army led by General Montcalm. The British surrender, but Indian allies of the French slaughter the British as they leave the Fort while the French watch. This slaughter includes a newborn infant and its mother. According to Samuels the resulting bloodbath orgy from which "many among [the Indians] kneeled to the earth, and drank freely, exulting, hellishly" (*Mohicans* 176) allows Cooper to justify the "elimination or replacement" of Indians by a "fantasy of national identity" embodied by the

¹⁷⁹ Samuels, for example, criticises Cooper for precisely this type of racism that conflates Indian bodies with animals or landscape. In response to a scene where Duncan Heyward describes how the "naked, tawny bodies of the crouching urchins, blended so nicely, at that hour, with the withered herbage, that at first it seemed as if the earth had, in truth, swallowed up their forms" (*Mohicans* 232), Samuels argues "such distinctions are certainly part of a familiar scheme in which a white author both mythologizes and denigrates Native Americans" (102). What Samuels overlooks however is that Duncan Heyward is consistently proven to be both extremely race conscious and he also subscribes to an elitist theory of civilization, wherein European Americans are at a more advanced and superior stage of development and others cannot ever achieve this height of civilization—a position Cooper does not endorse.

¹⁸⁰ Dimock summarizes this mode of thought: "[i]maged in developmental terms as the succession of 'childhood' by 'maturity,' the conflict between whites and Indians over land possession ceased to appear as conflict and became instead a painless process of growth" which "obviated the idea of victim . . . Stuck in their anachronistic 'childhood,' [Indians] ended up being the victims of progress itself" (*Empire for Liberty* 18).

¹⁸¹ Cora's maternal African heritage means that "were Cora to marry Uncas, they would produce triracial children—the incarnate 'e pluribus unum' of the American national seal" (Baym, *Feminism* 27).

“uncrossed” Natty Bumppo (108). Axelrad similarly argues that after the massacre the disappearance of the Native Americans is simply justice “obtained by conquering the enemy that committed the outrage” and “annexing their lands” (34).¹⁸² The deaths of Cora, Chingachgook, Uncas and Natty uphold the ultimate impossibility of sympathetic accommodation: civilization must replace savagery even if that savagery is mourned.

Mourning affirms Euro-Americans’ legitimate claims to the land and the legacy of nationhood because neutral ground relegates colonial violence and indigenous inhabitants to the past even as they remain present.¹⁸³ However, these readings do not take into account the way Cooper expresses anxiety about the stability of colonial life, and this anxiety is born out of Cooper’s recognition that under American political rhetoric land ownership and citizenship are intimately connected. Euro-Americans did not have the only, nor even the best, claim to American land, and these claims were often based on a series of injustices.

The Massacre at Fort William Henry is not simply evidence of Native savagery that needs to be neutralized. Cooper spreads responsibility for the incident across all racial and cultural groups involved. Many critics have seen Magua as the undisputed villain of *Mohicans*, but Magua’s betrayal is initiated by British betrayal and then sanctioned by the French. Magua, once an ally to the British, enacts his revenge for being whipped “like a dog” (103) by Munro.

¹⁸² Even critics like Schweitzer who see the potential for racial tolerance and inclusivity in Cooper’s interracial friendships like Natty and Chingachgook’s or interracial romantic pairings like Cora and Uncas, read Cooper as ultimately justifying an “un-crossed,” white America achieved by the “natural” disappearance of indigenous populations without any colonial violence: Chingachgook “realizes that interracial friendship requires his death as an agent and his final, willing resignation, like one of Aristotle’s “natural slaves,” to being marked by a dominating, if not superior, whiteness” (Schweitzer 160). Schweitzer reads this resignation in Chingachgook’s description of himself as “a blazed pine, in a clearing of the pale faces” (*Mohicans* 349).

¹⁸³ As Verhoeven claims, “Cooper’s myths [about] the frontier’s [conflicts] . . . become *mythologized* moments of ideological balance, of national consensus” (“Neutralizing” 76).

Magua publically asserts the injustice of his treatment. He asks, “is it justice to make evil, and then punish for it! . . . Who made him a villain? ’Twas the pale-faces” (117). This incident draws attention to the imperial aspects of Munro’s betrayal by implying that Europeans’ greed for land upholds “cold and selfish polic[ies]” (1) that precipitate immoral actions. Cooper directs his readers’ sympathy towards Magua here because the sense that Native Americans have been taken advantage of is repeated by the “good Indian” (Peck, “Introduction” 13) Chingachgook:

[Europeans] landed, and gave my people the fire-water . . . Then they parted with their land. Foot by foot, they were driven back from the shores, until I, that am a chief and a Sagamore, have never seen the sun shine but through the trees, and have never visited the graves of my fathers. (39)

The repeated instances of Europeans abusing the terms of their alliances with Native Americans implies that it is European greed for land and power that creates violence.

Once the massacre begins the British and French soldiers are equally culpable for the slaughter that ensues. General Webb, another British commander who represents the interest of “the king in the northern provinces” (19), refuses to send reinforcements to the Fort, while General Montcalm and his French troops stand in “cruel apathy” and watch the killings occur: “[Montcalm] was deficient in that moral courage, without which no man can be truly great. [His example] shows how easy it is for generous sentiments . . . to lose their influence beneath the chilling blight of selfishness” (204). The implication is that competing interests over land claims have taken precedence over a common humanity.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ The British and the French had a long standing rivalry over land claims of which Cooper would have been aware. During the Seven Years War, the period when *Mohicans* is set, land grants in Ohio Country enabled British settlement, but angered the French who saw the Ohio Valley as vital to their connection with Louisiana. The French

Cooper's colonial critiques are not subtle or hidden, and it is significant that characters from opposing alliances (French-British, Mohican-Mingo, white-Indian) all express them—criticisms of empire, violence and illegitimate land ownership are a constant. However, critics, even those who disagree with or who see the limitations of labeling Cooper as a nationalist, cannot shake assumptions set by early Cooper readings. Critics like Schweitzer argue that Cooper creates a mythic past and neutral ground in order to justify white settler land appropriation with a benign paternalism¹⁸⁵ “whose logic of younger sons displacing older ones, as the biblical Jacob displaced Esau, foreshadowed the ‘vanishing Indian’ of the early nineteenth century” (63).¹⁸⁶ To read Cooper this way, outside both Smith's sentimental tradition and the

used their Native allies to remove British settlers and successfully waged war against the “British” during the mid-1750s. Montcalm's apathy may be a comment on this land rights-based violence. However, Britain's eventual victory at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763 cost France New France and all North American territories east of the Mississippi River and opened Quebec to British settlement and further Native dispossession. For more on British and French rivalry in America see Klooster *Revolutions in the Atlantic*: Introduction and Chp.2.

¹⁸⁵ Paternalism was built into America's founding rhetoric. For example Jefferson assures the Native Mandan Nation in 1806 that Europeans will no longer trouble them because Americans will look after their interests from now on: “My children . . . the French, the English, [and] the Spaniards” have left and “we are now your fathers” (*Writings* 8: 187-89, 200-202).

¹⁸⁶ Early Cooper critics like Fiedler, Lawrence and R.W. B Lewis emphasize Natty as an individualistic, Adamic figure, the quintessential American hero. Lewis completely ignores the importance of Natty and Chingachgook's interracial friendship. Lawrence and Fiedler note the friendship, but relegate it to a mythic past and “national archetype” (Fiedler, *Love* 182). While current criticisms have recuperated Cooper as more liberal than Lewis', Fiedler's and Lawrence's analyses suggest, and, they, rightly, often reject this group's readings as euro-centric, misogynistic, racist and generally outdated, few critics seem to reject their premise that Cooper endorses the Vanishing Indian myth despite evidence to the contrary—Cooper was in fact criticized for his sympathetic portrayals of Native Americans and his support for their right to govern themselves. Schweitzer admits Cooper may critique colonialism because he rejects racist models that argue for natural slavery. She writes, “Chingachgook bows only to the Whites' superior *force*” (160), not his superior reason, but Chingachgook nonetheless “agrees to ‘vanish,’” (36). Mielke also claims that, despite “moving the spectators and readers to tears” over the fate of Indians in America, Cooper wants readers to “witness the victory and ascension of one party over the others” to cement Euro-Americans' claims to America (36). Jeffrey Walker writes, “While Cooper may grudgingly recognize the humanity of his nonwhite characters. . . He opposes [colonial oppression], but he balks at recognizing in his [racial characters] a humanity that will allow them to become citizens” (4-5). Despite the fact that all these critics recognize Cooper's propensity to problematize violence associated with empire, they don't seem to be able to get past the image of Cooper as “white American male.”

transatlantic context with which Cooper identifies, is reductive.¹⁸⁷ Cooper consistently argues that national strength is achieved by facilitating networks that support democratic liberties across national, domestic and racial borders.

Both Cooper and Smith make imagining other people's sentiments crucial to moral action and justice. Therefore, in passages like those cited above of Chingachgook's speech or Magua's tale of abuse, readers should be open to the possibility that Cooper's deliberate presentation of others' situations have a moral function. The implications of America's nascent republicanism demand political recognition for women, Indians, and people of color as fully fledged citizens, but these implications were unrealized during Cooper's lifetime. Cooper specifically draws attention to the rhetoric of conquest in order to reveal the failures of empire that do not reconcile with notions of universal natural rights and America's self-identification as repository of republican equality and morality.

In order to undermine domestic imperialism, Cooper questions the validity of Euro-American claims of disinterested virtue in land disputes across his *Leatherstocking Tales*. *The Pioneers* (1823) critically examines imperial abuse of the land's original occupants; at the center of *The Pioneers* are issues of freedom and land entitlement. Judge Temple is often read as a benign patriarch who preaches America's dictums of equal opportunity and equal citizenship: "here, all are equal who know how to conduct themselves with propriety . . . [A]ll men are equal in the eye of the laws, as they are by nater [sic]" even though "some may get property . . . they

¹⁸⁷ While I acknowledge that there are unresolved tensions in Cooper's works where Cooper does not always endorse his ideals, we can't ignore the presence of these ideals because they aren't always consistent or in keeping with a dominant image of Cooper. If we acknowledge the importance of the transatlantic context and Smith's influence, then Cooper's writings outside the *Leatherstocking* tales look less like marginal outliers and more like reiterations of transatlantic and transcultural themes present within his earlier and more popular works.

are not privileged to transgress the laws any more than the poorest citizen in the State” (107, 146). Yet Temple, the “king” (25) of Templeton lives on land that is not technically his. Critics like Eric Cheyfitz have assumed Cooper supports Judge Temple’s position on land possession and general governance. Cheyfitz writes, Cooper “represents Judge Temple as an authority on the law . . . *The Pioneers* asked and asks its readers to take this authority seriously” (119).¹⁸⁸ However, Cooper draws attention to Templeton’s various transgressions and hypocrisies, like colonial violence, slaveholding and his general reneging throughout the novel; Cooper wants his readers to question Temple’s authority.¹⁸⁹

Judge Temple must continuously defend his land titles against both Indian claims and those of his erstwhile business partner Major Effingham, but none of Temple’s defenses are a strong case for his ownership. In one such defense Temple claims he holds his lands under the “doctrine of discovery” and “the patents of the Royal Governors, confirmed by an act of our own State Legislature” (168), but he opens the legitimacy of his claims to debate because he goes on to say that these patents would be legal *even if* the Indian title to the lands “had not been at all . . . extinguished” (168). Temple’s case then rests purely on his occupation and the fact that he has a piece of paper to say the land is his. He does not have any documentation signed by both himself and the Indians to recognize proof of purchase or an exchange or transaction, and he claims to have “forgotten what [Natty] said” about the injustice “of the tenure by which the whites hold the

¹⁸⁸ Cheyfitz’ assumption in regards to Temple’s authority may be biographically related: Templeton and Judge Temple have long been identified with Cooperstown and Cooper’s father respectively.

¹⁸⁹ Temple shoots Oliver, the heir for whom he is supposedly keeping lands in trust, after mistaking him for a deer—a colonial violence however minor the wound; he keeps a slave but rents him out so he can claim he doesn’t participate in slavery; he breaks his promise to Natty that Natty can continue to live on the land; and he lies about shooting the deer, and angers the peaceful Chingachgook enough that Chingachgook is tempted to kill Judge Temple.

country” (168). This incident becomes particularly suspicious in light of Temple’s treatment of Natty and Temple’s behaviour towards his partner Effingham.

In an incident that parallels the story of Temple’s patents, Temple visits Natty’s land. Temple reports that Natty is a gracious host until he learns that Temple is there with a team of surveyors with a view to “People the land” (168). Temple believes that Natty’s ensuing coldness is unwarranted because Temple believes the land is already his, not Natty’s. However, Temple promises that Natty may remain on the land unmolested and without paying rent, but he later reneges this promise and throws Natty in prison. For this, and Temple’s other transgressions, Natty holds out hope that retribution will come to Temple: “the day will come when right will come and we must have patience” (116). Cooper hints that this day may arrive; Temple is eventually replaced as Templeton’s leader by Temple’s daughter Elizabeth, who defies her father and frees Natty, and Oliver, the novel’s hero who identifies as part Delaware.

While Oliver identifies as part Delaware, his legal father is Major Effingham. The Judge’s Will states he is holding the land for Effingham’s heir, but Temple has not been at all proactive in finding this heir, and, although he does not know his identity at the time, Temple shoots Oliver, the heir. It seems Temple’s tendency to conveniently “forget” or “not nearly comprehend” (168) other people’s claims on property he desires for himself, supports Oliver’s initial assessment that Temple used the Revolution to break faith with Effingham and amalgamate the estate for himself. Temple does give the estate to Oliver, but the original circumstances of Temple’s land appropriation remain unexplained. Additionally, although Temple claims “all men are equal” (107), the appellation “king,” a title and role Americans had definitively and forcefully rejected with the Revolution, suggests Temple’s “rule” over the land is not as equitable as he professes.

Temple's land claims are dubious in light of his misappropriation of his business partner's lands, but the text also questions *any* settler's rights to the land in Temple's treatment of Young Eagle/Oliver Edwards, Templeton's true heir, who identifies as part Native Delaware.¹⁹⁰ After being shot by Temple, who mistakes him for a deer,¹⁹¹ Oliver reluctantly consents "to serve Marmaduke Temple—to be an inmate in the dwelling of the greatest enemy of my race" on the condition that his "servitude" is not long (147); however, Natty cautions him to be wary, "[t]hey say that there's new laws in the land . . . I must say I'm mistrustful of such smooth speakers; *for I've known the whites talk fair when they wanted the Indian lands most*" (147 emphasis added). Since Judge Temple is already living on misappropriated lands Natty's comment seems poignant.¹⁹² Oliver challenges Temple's authority throughout the novel and eventually takes over from him with a lineage that, if it does not explicitly re-establish Indian ownership, at least recognizes these prior inhabitants as legitimate occupants.

Cooper continues to cast doubts on European land claims by linking Native dispossession with African oppression. The Temple household employs a slave, Agamemnon, despite Temple's Quaker "religious scruples" (35). Technically "Aggy" is Temple's cousin's slave, but

¹⁹⁰ Even without any additional evidence, the fact that Temple's dubious land claims are raised continually and Temple must defend himself numerous times smacks of "protesteth too much" syndrome. As Oliver says "coldly," "*Doubtless, sir, your title is both legal and equitable* . . . [he then] rein[ed] his horse back and remain[ed] silent till the subject was changed" (170). Oliver's "doubtless" casts considerable doubt. Temple is not the morally upright, virtuous and squeaky clean "equal" citizen he professes to be.

¹⁹¹ Prime example of seeing an Indigenous person as analogous to the landscape, but this is not Cooper who is saying Oliver is like a Deer. It is Temple who makes this mistake and it is Temple who is replaced at the end of the novel.

¹⁹² Natty is, in *The Pioneers*, sometimes depicted as a relic of a past who futilely wishes to "convert these clearings and farms, again, into hunting-grounds" (280). Natty therefore occupies a somewhat liminal position inside and outside Templeton's social culture. However, his liminality does not neutralize his position or his criticism of imperial projects. Both Elizabeth Temple and Oliver Edwards, the hero and heroine of the novel who marry at the novel's conclusion, support Natty's position against the dominant social opinion and against Judge Temple. Elizabeth directly opposes her father's wishes and frees Natty from jail once he has been imprisoned for violating Temple's imposed laws of property and the right to hunt on Temple's lands. Natty is thus not the only one to challenge Temple's land claims and his authority to enforce laws that violate prior occupancy rights.

while Richard may wield the whip that dominates Aggy, “when any dispute between his lawful [Richard] and his real master [Temple] occurred, the black felt too much deference for both to express any opinion” (35). Richard interprets Oliver’s reluctance to become part of this household as “the natural reluctance of a half-breed to leave the savage state” (202), but Oliver’s language is revealing. He worries, “I will forget who I am. Cease to remember, old Mohegan, that I am the descendant of a Delaware chief, who once was master of these noble hills, these beautiful vales, and of this water, over which we tread. Yes, yes—I will become [Temple’s] bondsman—*his slave!*” (206 emphasis added). Without land Oliver cannot claim equality and citizenship within Templeton, but Temple’s claims to both his land and his proclamations of equality are shown to be hypocritical. Therefore, through Oliver’s ambiguous racial identifications, Cooper questions the justice of a national ethos that recognizes land-ownership as the key to defining citizenship, but that excludes racial others from ever possessing that land.¹⁹³

The Prairie (1827) deals with the results of The Louisiana Purchase (1803) and the Western explorations of Lewis and Clark in 1804 which brought more diversity to the nation with Native and Creole populations, both African and Spanish.¹⁹⁴ These events initiate Cooper’s reflections in *The Prairie* on the ongoing encroachment of Americans into Native lands. These

¹⁹³ Oliver’s racial status is ambiguous throughout the novel. He identifies himself as a Delaware; his identity becomes conflated with Agamemnon’s when he joins the Temple household; the other characters identify Oliver as a half-breed throughout the narrative until it is revealed that he is in fact fully white. Critics may argue that it is Oliver’s white identity that allows him to inherit Templeton, but the fact that nobody can tell what Oliver’s race is without documentation suggests deterministic notions of race predisposition are both socially constructed and a bunch of hoey. Barbara Alice Mann goes even further and suggests Oliver’s pedigree is forged and his Delaware status is real, but Cooper couldn’t blatantly bequeath Templeton to a “half-breed” without being lynched by his public. See “Race Traitor” p.160-62.

¹⁹⁴ As Leland Person reminds us, Cooper wrote during a time when the concept of the United States was unstable and rapidly changing: “Only eleven states had ratified the Constitution when Cooper was born in 1789, and U.S territory extended only as far as the Mississippi River. By the time he died in 1851, California had joined the union as the thirty-first state, and the United States and its territories looked the same as the continental United States does today (except for the “Gadsden Purchase territory, acquired from Mexico in 1853)” (12).

events also once again allow him to connect dispossession with slavery. Although Cooper believes the Louisiana Purchase assures the nation “a neighbour that will possess . . . our sense of political justice . . . on terms of political equality” (9), he also displays anxious ambivalence about the legitimacy of the purchase. Cooper acknowledges the implicit injustices perpetrated by “white adventurers” who encounter the different cultural groups already occupying the prairie: “The semi-barbarous hunters from the Canadas . . . the metiffs [sic] or half-breeds [and] the different Indian tribes” are “by no means safe from the inroads of white adventurers” (83). The “purchase of the empty empire saw an already populous and sovereign state parceled [sic] from its inhabitants” (11).

The Prairie displays Cooper’s usual roster of villainous and noble characters, but the most villainous of all are the encroaching white settlers, the Bush family. The Bushes are looking for a new place to settle because Ishmael Bush, the family patriarch, is suspected of murdering a sheriff’s deputy in their home-state of Kentucky (58). The Bush family is also guilty of kidnapping. They hold Inez de Certavallos, a Spanish Creole, for ransom. Inez’s capture raises questions about slavery and the African-American presence in America. This interpretation initially may seem far-fetched, but much as Cooper uses Oliver’s complicated racial identity to link the injustices committed against Native Americans and African slaves, Inez’s racial identity works on multiple levels.

Cooper’s text never explicitly states that Inez is of African descent, although Barbara Alice Mann makes a compelling argument that we as contemporary readers are simply too far removed from the nineteenth-century’s racial signifiers to recognize the signs Cooper’s readers would have immediately recognized that designate Inez as a triracial Spanish, Native and African

creole.¹⁹⁵ Mann argues that although Inez is ostensibly Spanish-American, she is most likely also a descendent of the Spanish-French colonial slave system on her mother's side. Even if we do not accept Mann's evidence that Inez is part African, Cooper still identifies her with a racial charge. Inez is not like the Bushes; In contrast to Ellen, the Bushes' niece, who is described as "the light-hair" (129), Inez is referred to as "dark-eye" or "dark-hair" (129). Inez, like Cooper's subsequent and explicitly mixed-race heroine Cora from *The Last of the Mohicans*, is also much admired by the Native Americans for her beauty, while tellingly Ellen and Alice from *Mohicans*, both unquestionably all-white, are not. Even if Inez's dark colouring comes from a Spanish rather than African heritage, the fact that Cooper explicitly tells his reader that Inez's "dark" beauty is threatened by a man, Abiram White, who is "a dealer in black flesh" (68) is significant. Abiram White, who "took that name to show his enmity to the race of blacks!" (130), kidnaps Inez, in order to "sell" her back to her family at a great price. White exhorts a promise of Inez's obedience and threatens to rape her if she does not obey. So while Inez is not technically an African slave, her capture and forced journey across the land by a known slave trader raises questions about slavery in the new nation.

It is Abiram White and the Bushes, the invading white settlers, not the Native Americans who pose the greatest threat to America's peace and prosperity. As Natty states, "I often think the Lord has placed this barren belt of Prairie, behind the States, to warn men to what their folly may yet bring the land!" (24). Despite Mielke's claims that Natty's death at the end of *The*

¹⁹⁵ Mann argues that: "Cooper hinted at his intention of discussing inter-racial sex in terms of the Certavallos . . . the fact that Don Augustin had inherited "a rich succession" in Louisiana intimated a family history of hanky-panky . . . most tellingly of all the reader learned that Don Augustin did not live in the more populous New Orleans, but in a backwater little-town" which was code for Native village" ("Fancy Girls" 227, 226). Louisiana was well known for its triracial population. Mann argues that while Cooper exposes the *male* lineage of Don Augustin, he never mentions Inez's *female* lineage. Mann suggests Inez's mother was probably a Native-African cross.

Prairie demonstrates Cooper's belief in the inevitability of Euro-American expansion in the twinned doomed fates of the middle ground and American Indians, *The Prairie* ends with the imperialistic white settlers leaving. In place of these white settlers, Inez's marriage to Duncan Uncas Middleton represents the union of different cultural and racial groups and the future of America.

Cooper continually raises questions about Euro-American claims to American land. The persistence of these questions makes it hard to read Cooper as "legitimat[ing] the new nation by . . . justifying violence against indigenous peoples as 'self-defence,' and privileging certain white racial and Protestant religions over the full demographic diversity of the US nation" (Rowe, "US Novels" 815). We must instead re-frame the conceptual boundaries we use to think about Cooper's engagement with American identities. Close examination of Cooper's works reveals that Cooper's concern with the development of America as upholding white imperialist values is not as straightforward as critics have implied. Cooper offers not only a critique of the way control over land and territorial borders became a way to pit the interests of Native Americans, African Americans, and Euro-Americans against one another but a solution: the creation of Smithian-like sympathetic bonds between cultural groups and nations to invoke the presence of an impartial spectator and mitigate self-love.

Cooper sees America as participating in a conversation that grants equal agency to all parties, rather than, for example, what Austen imagines Britain's role to be, a paternalistic model of benevolent interest that sees others, particularly colonial or racial others, in need of guidance and control. Because previous criticism has obscured the way Cooper opens the borders of his writings to decentralize nationalist and imperialist tendencies, I start with the most obvious

examples of Cooper's vision for America within a transatlantic and transnational context as a web of sympathetic bonds.

Cooper: Cosmopolitan Man of Sympathy

Cooper can display imperially enabling ideals of global citizenship like his unswerving belief that republicanism was the best, perhaps the only, way to govern a nation. He also believes republicanism can provide a universal system that will reconcile opposing individuals, societies or nations.¹⁹⁶ For example, Cooper was quite outspoken about the necessity of supporting other nations' efforts to establish a republic.¹⁹⁷ Similarly, in a two-part article in *The Patriot* in 1823 entitled "On National Defense," the author "Fabius" expresses support for the revolution in Spain arguing that the "crusade against liberty in Spain" is characterized as a war against "the rights of man," a war that might eventually compel Americans to "sustain by force of arms the great doctrine of man's natural equality" (June 16 1823 and June 18 1823).¹⁹⁸ Despite this colonial bent in Cooper's thinking, Cooper moves towards a cosmopolitan rather than imperial ideology; where, for example, Austen, imagines Britain as initiator, rather than recipient, of moral virtues and social renewal in the transatlantic flow, Cooper's cosmopolitanism is conceived in collaborative conversation designed to highlight the incompatibility between republican values and imperialism. Republicanism promises liberty and equality for its members,

¹⁹⁶ This belief is evident throughout his works particularly in his political writing. In his *The History of the Navy of The United States of America* (1839) Cooper also writes about defending America against any threat to their system of republicanism. Cooper is disappointed with America's policies on national defense in the lead up to the War of 1812. He believes America's "great interest [equality and liberty] was treated with a neglect that approached fatuity" (1:92).

¹⁹⁷ Most notably Cooper writes against monarchy in France in 1832 during the French Finance controversy and he supports Poland's revolution in 1830-31 in what he sees as a bid for establishing a republic. More on this controversy later in the chapter.

¹⁹⁸ This article was published under the anonymous "Fabius," but Geoffrey Sanborn has uncovered strong evidence to suggest Cooper did write the article. See *Whipscars and Tattoos* p.153.

but in reality, as Brockden Brown highlights in *Ormond*, these benefits were generally extended only to Euro-American men. Cooper criticizes this imperialist tendency to not extend liberty and equality to “others” at a less “advanced” state of civilization. Instead he emphasizes the need to develop new, cosmopolitan models of moral agency.

Cooper engages with Smith’s stadial theory to develop a cosmopolitan consciousness. Smith’s stadial theory creates a culture spectrum on which, despite local specificity and difference, all societies could be placed; this notion of social spectrum encourages Cooper to imagine the rights and liberties due to a universal humanity that will enable a global civil society.¹⁹⁹ Although Cooper is usually associated with a nationalistic, if not imperialist perspective, Cooper is interested in the transnational equality associated with cosmopolitanism from the perspective of the colonized not the colonizer. Cooper’s awareness of America’s status as a former British colony instigates his distaste for imperial corruption and his interest in a global society. As I describe in more detail later in the chapter, Cooper in *Gleanings in Europe* (1838) describes some of the injustice suffered by America as a British colony and wants to prevent such injustice from occurring elsewhere in the world. In *Gleanings* Cooper describes a cosmopolitan relationship between America and other European nations that is meant to initiate a universal political system. In his other political writings like his “Letter to the American People” (1830) and his writing in support of the Cherokee Nation’s petition for independent territory,

¹⁹⁹ Cooper was part of a transatlantic movement that defined liberty and equality as “the right of every individual to free choice in matters of religion, marriage, intellectual pursuits, and electoral politics” (Appleby 1). These concepts were premised on the idea “that the affirmation of inalienable natural rights, such as the pursuit of truth and happiness, would help stem the tide of injustice” (Kamrath *Historicism* 227) and the “rule of law is binding on all citizens as long as its positive statutes conform to the natural law protection of life, liberty, and property” (Appleby 1).

Cooper remains committed to a model of national independence which relies on the cooperation of a network of nations that makes up a global society.

The creation of a global civil society is necessary, according to Cooper, to realize the potential in republicanism's tenets of liberty and equality. Again, while Cooper's emphasis on liberty and universal ideals can come under scrutiny for his Euro-centric approach, it is important to remember that Cooper did not see America as the sole purveyor of moral values. Throughout his career Cooper sees morality as the product of conversation between different nations and different races. In *Gleanings* America learns from Europe and Europe learns from America, and in his novels characters who have mixed heritages are often the most heroic: in *The Prairie* Natty unites the best "qualities of the two people" (89). Cooper does claim different cultures or races may have different "gifts" (*Deerslayer* 528), but, like Smith, Cooper also emphasizes these gifts are products of society rather than nature. Cooper also emphasizes the commonality of moral sentiments over difference. For example, Natty claims, "no matter their original tribe or nation, [or] be their skins of what colour they might" (*Prairie* 88), it is a sense of justice that determines morality not race. Cooper, like Smith, recognizes the difficulty distance, isolation and self-interest pose to creating a global society. Smith writes that social and moral identification are founded on an "extensive regard to kindred" (VI.ii.1), and Cooper understands the validity of Smith's argument that there is a correlation between the degree of our perceived resemblance to others and our capacity for compassion and sympathy with them. Cooper's solution is to find a way to reduce our perceived differences by establishing common moral values. Smith is writing

here about the effects of stadial progress on the family, but his interpretations are equally applicable to the differences between nations and cultures which Cooper addresses.²⁰⁰

Smith describes how “[e]very individual is naturally more attached to his own particular order or society, than to any other” (*Theory* VI.ii.2.7). This is beneficial because it binds individuals to social groups, but if individuals or nations allow this partiality to dominate in the tension between the conflicting loves of individual/national superiority (self-love) and of humanity (disinterestedness), then these individuals or nations will destroy “all liberty, security, and justice” (*Theory* II.ii.1). Smith’s solution to the corrupting effects of self-love is the impartial spectator. The impartial spectator is meant to regulate social behavior, but, as we have seen throughout this project, to different readers the impartial spectator’s moral mediation is interpreted differently. In Austen’s hands Britain takes on the role of impartial spectator—Britain is a legislator for the world; for her, Smith’s theories lead to a benevolent paternal empire dedicated to the regulation and preservation of morals. For Cooper, the impartial spectator is created by a coalition of individuals or nations. For him the impartial spectator takes on the social aspects of Smith’s theory and develops when individuals or nations meet in conversation as equals.

²⁰⁰ Smith observes that in commercial cultures sympathetic identification decreases because individuals “separate and disperse” (VI.ii.1) due to their self-interest. Smith doesn’t endorse a feudal system or pastoral society over commercial society as the pinnacle of social development, but he does recognize the moral benefits associated with “less advanced” societies. For instance, Feudal Scottish Highland societies functioned via a form of familial acceptance that facilitates sympathetic connection because “even a highland chief would recognize “the poorest man of his clan, as his cousin and relation” (VI.ii.1). It is this sense of family that Smith and Cooper want to extend to commercial society and overseas relationships respectively. Smith observes, “those persons most excite our compassion and are most apt to affect our sympathy who most resemble ourselves, and the greater the difference the less we are affected by them” (*LJA* iii.109). For both Smith and Cooper, then, the job is to get people to remember “their common origin, and of the connection which took place among their ancestors” so that both distance and difference are reduced and “sympathy” and “connection” are increased (*Theory* VI.ii.1).

The parallel between Smith's and Cooper's writings grow from their local circumstances, but both are concerned with how the individual is connected to larger social networks. Cooper's networks connect cultural or national groups to both the nation and the international community to which the nation belongs.²⁰¹ Cooper never focuses on only one individual, or one family, or even on one cultural group, but rather on how diverse peoples can share one space. Even Natty whom most critics see as exemplifying America's individualist tendencies, mostly because Natty lives outside "civilized" society, is rarely, if ever, alone. He is always connected to Chingachgook, if not by his physical presence then by a sympathetic one, and often he is connected with diverse, if small, groups of people, on whom he depends as much as they depend on him. Moral action in international relations as well as in domestic politics requires, as per Smith, transcending individual, cultural or national interests. Therefore, for Cooper, the solution to the corruption created by imperial injustice is to increase the "resemblance" between cultural groups by emphasizing a common, if distant, ancestry and a common humanity.

Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales all emphasize the diverse cultural groups who now occupy the same land. In *The Last of the Mohicans* Cooper acknowledges each group's competing claims and then uses the sympathetic friendship between Natty and Chingachgook to represent the political possibilities in an equal relationship that brings different people together in close affiliation: "every story has its two sides: so I ask you, Chingachgook, what passed

²⁰¹ Although Cooper's focus in the development of his international cosmopolitanism is mostly directed at the relationships between European nations, he also includes non-European nations within his global community. Cooper was outspoken in his support for The Monroe Doctrine, issued in 1823, which officially recognized the independence of Latin American colonies previously owned by Spain. Under the Monroe Doctrine, America would remain neutral in European wars over territory, but would also not accept re-colonization by European powers. History may not vindicate Cooper's support of the Monroe Doctrine as anything other than support for a policy that led to America's justification for dominating other countries in the name of "global justice," but Cooper did not see America as initiating any imperial claims. America should support movements that had already begun and should support other nations' rights to liberty.

according to the traditions of the Red Men, when our fathers first met?” . . . God has so placed us as to journey in the same path . . . Sagamore, you are not alone!” (37, 393). Cooper’s solution to unjust hierarchy is the universalization of moral and political norms by binding national histories via sympathetic bonds into the creation of a cosmopolitan civil society.

In order to see Cooper as an advocate for cosmopolitan impulses, it is necessary, as Dimock suggests about American literature in general, to read against “the official borders of the nation” and beyond “allegedly founding moments” (Dimock, *Through* 2). If we can detach Cooper from parochial nationalistic readings that demand American literature or its authors are the “product[s] of one nation and one nation alone” (1), then we can shed new light on Cooper. A transatlantic approach illuminates literary, cultural and political connections in his novels that might otherwise be obscured. The tendency to see Cooper’s works as bound by national borders and founding dates may have developed because of the specifically American history and landscape of Cooper’s most popular novels. However, it is reductive to read these novels as both separate from and representative of his whole body of writing and to dismiss those works that do not obviously deal with America’s history or landscape. The intense American focus often attached to Cooper also conceals Cooper’s true transatlantic context; Cooper was not always celebrated as an “American” author by his reading public nor by the American press, nor did Cooper court an exclusively American audience.

Cooper did not write for an exclusively national readership. He wrote for a transatlantic republic of letters. His novels were widely read and set on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1826 after the publication of *Mohicans*, and although he continued to write novels set in America, the

Cooper family moved to Europe where they remained until 1833.²⁰² Despite attaining an appointment as U.S consul to Lyon, France, Cooper protested against American journals and newspapers that thereafter presented him as “going over to the enemy” (*Gleanings: France* 270), a view perhaps confirmed by the publication of *The Bravo* (1831), set in the Venetian Republic and the first of his European novels.²⁰³ The novel was rejected by his American audience; Cooper was criticized for putting on airs and celebrating a corrupt social system. Cooper responded in *A Letter to His Countrymen*. In the *Letter* he complains of unfair criticism, for, he argues, despite its European setting, the novel celebrates America’s democratic impulses in its implicit contrast between America’s liberty and Europe’s oppressive, feudal past and therefore is the “most American thing I ever wrote” (98).

Cooper’s propensity for engaging America in conversation with other countries in his novels, as he does in *The Bravo*, is even more apparent in his five-volume *Gleanings in Europe* (1838).²⁰⁴ *Gleanings*, adapted from Cooper’s journals and letters from his time abroad, considers European nations in comparative analysis with America. In *Gleanings* Cooper celebrates and critiques both visitor and home nations; Cooper here conforms to the Enlightenment global impulse to know the world and the self by knowing the “other.” Like Smith’s *Theory*, Cooper’s *Gleanings* acts as an exposition that fulfills the obligations of the social mirror—to truthfully describe the nature of the individual’s or the societies’ failings in order to stimulate moral

²⁰² The American set *The Prairie* (1827), *The Wept of Wish-ton Wish* (1829) and *The Water Witch* (1830).

²⁰³ Cooper completed three novels set in Europe: *The Bravo* (1831), *The Hiedenmauer* (1832) and *The Headsman* (1833).

²⁰⁴ *Gleanings: Europe (or Gleanings: the Rhine)*, *Gleanings: England*, *Gleanings: France*, *Gleanings: Switzerland*, *Gleanings: Italy*.

reformation.²⁰⁵ By comparing America to other European nations, Cooper's *Gleanings* operates along parallel lines—by revealing faults as well as virtues in America and other nations, Cooper develops a model of the cosmopolitan civil society that depends on common moral and social goals and the assumption of a single, common humanity. Cooper's praise and censure for both American and European values promotes mutual moral growth, while also promoting similarity and equality across national divisions.

Cooper's professed aims in *Gleanings* are to correct both Europeans' and Americans' misperceptions of each other as well as to reform America. He states the greatest obstacle to America's self-realization is the "tendency to repel every suggestion of inferiority [and]... the disposition to resent every intimation that we can be any better than we are at present" (*France* 170). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Cooper was attacked for being un-American; in a review of *Gleanings: England*, Cooper was denounced as "narrow-minded," possessed of a "scalding vanity" as well as "jealous, captious [and] sour" (Lockhart 327). The book itself was "ill-written—ill-informed—ill-bred—ill-tempered, and ill-mannered" (Lockhart 327). For American reviewers, the idea that Cooper's American literature might be written and set outside America's boundaries became enough for an indictment of "bad" writing.

Cooper took exception to these negative reviews, but, importantly, his censure was directed at his reviewers' inability to see past America's borders or geographical features for

²⁰⁵ Smith's idea of the social mirror argues that society is the "mirror" through which we first see ourselves; the mirror "is placed in the countenance and behavior of those he lives with . . . ; and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions, the beauty and deformity of his own mind" (*Theory* III.i.1). When we use the mirror to view ourselves we can then judge ourselves and set standards for how we should feel and act. As I describe in Chapter 2, early Americans understood Smith's mirror theory as the basis for sympathetic friendship. Individuals who developed affinities for one another could inspire virtue by providing a mirror for the other in order to encourage them to act in the broader national interest.

ways in which America could improve via its networks with other nations.²⁰⁶ He criticizes his readers for their tendency to ignore networks created by the topical events of other nations that connect those cultures to America's development. Most of all he wants to position America within a transatlantic circulation of political morals. Consequently, he criticizes his detractors for "uphold[ing] an inferior writer, so long as he aids in illustrating the land and water, which is their birthright" (*England* 154). Readers who imagine America as only defined by geography betray "a total and most culpable indifference to the maintenance of American *principles*" like liberty and independence (154).²⁰⁷ For Cooper what makes an American novel American is qualities and values not flora and fauna. Why does this matter? It matters because Cooper believes American literature must do more than simply describe a local scene; Cooper's main subjects in his novels as well as his other writings are political and social issues *as they pertain to America within a global context*.

Cooper can display an imperialist mindset in his belief that republicanism is the ideal end-point in stadial theory's social progress. In *Gleanings: France* Cooper most vehemently condemns monarchies; monarchies "exploit the machinery of power" and pervert the legal system; they foster "the grossest injustice, illegality, and oppression" (98). Cooper critiques Charles X's reign, noting in 1828, before the 1830s revolution, that with a monarch in place "further revolutions are inevitable. The mongrel government which exists neither can stand, nor

²⁰⁶ Cooper was involved in many lawsuits against the American press for libel as he fought back against his reviewers.

²⁰⁷ For example, Cooper was critical of Charles Brockden Brown's novels. He writes in the preface to *The Spy* that Brown in his novel *Edgar Huntley* panders to English critics because *Edgar Huntley* is not really a novel of America but merely sensationalist, a crowd-pleasing, novel of "Indian Manners" that bear no resemblance to nature especially his famous cave scene containing "an American, a savage, a wild cat and a tomahawk, in a conjunction that never did, or ever will occur" (8). Part of this critique may be based on professional rivalry, but it does demonstrate that Cooper's emphasis is less on America's geography and more on the disposition and virtues of America's inhabitants.

does it deserve to stand. It contains the seeds of its own destruction” (233).²⁰⁸ But while Cooper views America’s *ideal* as “what nature wills human society finally to become” (Natterman 279), importantly he does not think Europe *or* America has yet achieved this manifestation of liberty and equality which he associates with republicanism. This is why Cooper emphasizes the need for interdependence between individuals and nations: each nation may compare their ideas and experiences to achieve a universal, but not yet realized, common moral code that promotes liberty and equality.

For Cooper, as for Smith, an individual or national moral code must derive from disinterestedness. Smith acknowledges that while we naturally love both ourselves and our own country best, the moral individual must act in accordance to the impartial spectator’s judgments to overcome self-preference. Similarly, the nation’s interests cannot come at the cost of violating the interests or liberty of other nations.²⁰⁹ For both Cooper and Smith, the greatest injustice is the violation of liberty (*Wealth* 138, 405, 530), and they see the defense of liberty as a universal duty. While Smith claims “universal rules of justice” will create the liberty that should inform the moral behaviors and political institutions “of every nation” (III.vi.iii.11), Cooper writes, “true liberty [has] no abode” (*Switzerland* 146). In this way Cooper does not pursue an exceptionalist agenda born from America’s clear superiority; he sees America as participating in a conversation that builds the justice and freedom necessary for a morally sound society.

²⁰⁸ Like Smith who claimed a capitalistic system that relies on trade rather than feudal system was the lesser of two evils and evidence of a civilized society, Cooper claims republicanism is the lesser “choice of evils” (*France* 253) among forms of polity, particularly in comparison to monarchies.

²⁰⁹ The moral man sees “himself in the light in which the impartial spectator naturally and necessarily views him . . . of no more consequence than any other in it, but bound at all times to sacrifice and devote himself to the safety, to the service, and even to the glory, of the greater number” (*Theory* VI.ii.2). Similarly, the moral nation “ought not only to endeavour itself to excel, but, from the love of mankind, to promote, instead of obstructing, the excellence of its neighbours (VI.ii.2).

Cooper, like Smith, sees morality as a product of social experience—morality is determined by the collective. Consequently, for Cooper, a cosmopolitan civil society depends on sympathetic international relationships; he disapproves of a nationalism that exaggerates one nation's virtues over other nations' shortcomings. In *Gleanings* Cooper acknowledges the value of connection with foreign cultures that both influence and learn from America. For instance, in *France* Cooper praises the French for their lack of mercantilism while criticizing Americans' worship of money as "the base of all distinction" because it causes Americans to "*corrupt themselves*, in the rapacious pursuit of the gain" (213 emphasis in original). On the other hand, he claims America offers a better democratic model than Europe. Cooper's "goal" in *Gleanings* is to dismantle "colonial subserviency" (*England* 233) to any *thing* (money) or any nation, like Britain. Cooper promotes America's true liberty by trying to foster America's capacity for independent judgment; he asserts America's position as a friend and equal to European nations.

Cooper's intense focus on liberty and equality stems from his awareness of America's history of "colonial subserviency" (233) to Britain, which allows him to argue for liberty for all other colonized nations. Like Smith, Cooper sees imperialism as a violation of a shared humanity. Throughout his writing career, Cooper supports social movements that rebel against one nation's domination over another. In *The Rhine* Cooper claims that selfishness and systems of subservience created by imperial powers justify rebellion and revolution from the oppressed. He repeats this sentiment in *England* when he claims that colonies like the West Indies will eventually "belong to the blacks" because "it is opposed to the right of mankind to allow a small territory in Europe to extend its possessions and its commercial exclusion over the whole earth"(329). He continues this indictment of imperial conquest saying, "as the world advances in

civilization, this exclusion will become more painful until all will unite openly or secretly to get rid of it” (*England* 329).

Establishing a global moral code is important to Cooper; he believes it is the only way to create an impartial spectator whose moral mediation will prevent imperial oppression. Cooper endorses the “American” impulse that instigated the American Revolution, but fears that without a universal moral code, without an impartial spectator to promote equality, America, among other nations, will fall back under European control and tyranny. He fears this is already happening. Cooper complains that Americans are “decidedly worse now” (*Rhine* 267) in moral character than in the years immediately following the Revolution: “so long as the impetus of the revolution and the influence of great events lasted, we had great men, in the ascendant” (161). However, after the deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in 1826²¹⁰ Americans returned to a state of subservience in foreign affairs because they were represented by the “indomitable selfishness” (236) of sycophantic diplomats overseas who, he believed, disparaged American democracy in order to gain favor with the French monarch—Charles X and then Louis Phillipe.²¹¹ As detailed in *Rhine* letter XXV Cooper’s fears about France’s “disposition towards

²¹⁰ Cooper’s anxiety over the degeneration of “national pride and national character” (*Rhine* 236) leading up to and after the deaths of Adams and Jefferson was shared by many other Americans. For example, just before the deaths of Adams and Jefferson and at the end of James Monroe’s presidency term, *The New York Patriot* published an article in 1823 entitled “The Crisis” where Charles K. Gardner expresses a nationalist anxiety that the last of America’s founding revolutionary spirit was ending: “We have no longer a Washington to cement the Union as its chief—we have no longer, in political existence, a Jefferson, a Madison, or a Monroe, to bind us by the commanding and endearing associations with days of trial and peril” (“The Crisis” qtd. in Sanborn 153). For more on America’s sense of loss, disconnect and melancholia after the loss of Adams and Jefferson see George B. Forgie *Patricide in the House Divided*. Forgie examines orations and eulogies for the founding fathers to reveal America’s sense of loss. Edward Everett, for example, declared, “The Revolutionary age of America was closed up,” while Daniel Webster’s eulogy lamented the fact that, “a great link, connecting us with former times, was broken” with the deaths of Adams and Jefferson (qtd. in Forgie 52)

²¹¹ Smith too argues that the only way to remain “free, fearless, and independent” is to “never to barter your liberty for the lordly servitude of a court” (I.iii.2). Smith’s point here is that ambition can quickly corrupt our self-love to a love of dominion and the corruption of our morality. Smith claims that corrupted societies are those where the appearance of and reality of merit have been separated: “success and preferment depend, not upon the esteem of

America and her institutions” (28) stem mainly from The French finance controversy of 1832.²¹² The finance controversy developed in the context of the July Revolution of 1830 and the new reign of Louis Phillippe. Cooper initially supported the Revolution because Louis Phillippe claimed to establish a “popular throne with republican institutions” (*Letters and Journals* II. 72-73). However, by 1832 Cooper believed Louis Phillippe was moving toward, “the worst form of government”: an oligarchy under the name of republicanism which he perceived as a threat to American democracy (*Letters and Journals* II. 72-73). He warns readers against governments or individuals who would ride roughshod over minority rights; “those who, under the shallow pretence of limiting power to the *elite* of society, were contending for exclusive advantages at the expense of the mass of their fellow-creatures” (*A Letter to His Countrymen* 11-12). He worries about France’s influence over America, for while “*Nations* are not easily destroyed,” they are susceptible to “mutations” (*Rhine* 139).

Cooper’s involvement in the French finance controversy shows his fear of imperial rule at the expense of America’s liberty. In *England* he again takes up the theme of colonial or

intelligent and well-informed equals, but upon the fanciful and foolish favour of ignorant, presumptuous, and proud superiors” (I.iii.3.). A society not founded on equal opportunity, but one that must pander to the whims and power of an elite ruler(s) engenders duplicity and deceit and is inimical to that society’s liberty. The parallel with Cooper’s distaste for sycophantic diplomatic pandering is clear: Cooper sees a relationship where America must appease France, rather than being seen as an equal, as threatening to America’s independence.

²¹² Letter XXV describes Cooper’s involvement in the French finance controversy. Cooper wrote to participate in the “controversy concerning the cost of government . . . [A] writer in the employment of the French government, produced a laboured article, in which he attempted to show that, head for head, the Americans paid more for the benefits of government than the French . . . he, and others of his party, even went so far as to affirm that a republic, in the nature of things, must be a more expensive polity than a monarchy . . . [I must] expose the errors that abounded in this pretended statistical account . . . The controversy has, at least, served to remove the mask from this government” (26, 28). Cooper was outspokenly pro instituting republicanism in France and was upset the American minister to France, William Cabell Rives, had supported a rebuttal to Cooper’s essay on the benefits of republicanism. Cooper believed the lack of support for his position meant a decline in republican sentiment in America. His supporters believed America should actively support the spread of republicanism in the world, while Cooper’s detractors believed America should lead by passive example and not interfere in other nations’ politics. The idea of a republic masking an oligarchy is the theme of *The Bravo*: “Venice, though ambitious and tenacious of the name of a republic, was, in truth, a narrow, a vulgar, and an exceedingly heartless oligarchy” (90). For more on the French finance controversy see Anne C. Loveland “James Fenimore Cooper and the American Mission.”

aristocratic tyranny. While he commends England for its independent thought and “comprehensive unity of feeling and understanding” (264), he recommends England model their political system on America’s republic in order to prevent “revolution” (59). The same “parliamentary tyranny” he fears will lead to domestic revolution in England, he also fears will lead to talk of “recolonization” (287) in America. Cooper, like Smith, sees threats against liberty as the greatest injustice against civilization because liberty—self-determination—is a right that acknowledges our shared humanity. While “events of July 4, 1776” were “a declaration of political independence,” only “mental emancipation” can “render the nation” truly free (1). Cooper’s sentiments echo Smith’s explanation about the preciousness of liberty: “what chiefly enrages us against the man who” violates our liberty is “the unreasonable preference which he gives to himself above us . . . by which he seems to imagine, that other people may be sacrificed at any time, to his conveniency or his humour” (*Theory* II.iii.1). Without liberty there can be no equality; Cooper’s investment in principles of liberty and equality are integral to his protests against imperial authority in America as well as in other nations. Cooper believes all nations should support each nation’s right to self-governance.

It is from within this cosmopolitan frame of reference that Cooper publically supports political liberation movements around the world. Cooper wrote in support of the liberation of Spanish colonies in Latin America and President James Monroe’s stance on European colonization in Latin America, the July Revolution in France 1830 and the Polish Revolt in 1830-31.²¹³ Cooper emphasizes that moral sentiments connect all humans and that advocating on behalf of liberty is the only way to support human rights. The best example of Cooper’s

²¹³ Cooper’s close friend General Lafayette asked Cooper to fundraise for rebels in Poland during its revolt against Russia in 1830-31 the result of Lafayette’s petition was Cooper’s “Letter to the American People.”

argument for cosmopolitan solidarity is his public campaign for Americans' support for the Polish Revolt. In "Letter to the American People" Cooper attempts to unite Americans and Poles by appealing to America's commitment to liberty through the obligation of fraternal bonds:

People of America! . . . The religious emancipation of millions has quite recently been effected, more by a strong exhibition of your feelings, than from any other cause . . . Be not, then, unworthy of your trust . . . Remember that not a freeman falls, in the most remote quarter of the world, that you do not lose a brother who is enlisted in your own noble enterprise. Your gold will assuage many griefs . . . but your sympathy will be dearer than all. Let it not be said, that while cold and heartless traffickers in human rights are combining their means to overwhelm twenty millions of men, struggling and worthy to be free, that thirteen millions, animated by the same qualities, looked coldly on, because an ocean lay between them. (qtd. in Spiller 68)

Cooper's letter in many ways makes the same point as Smith's explanation of universal impressions of harm. It is easier for us to recognize injustice than it is to recognize virtue; consequently, justice arises from "the general fellow-feeling which we have with every man merely because he is our fellow-creature" (*Theory* II.ii.3.10). For Cooper, then, because Americans, as spectators, have no personal stake in the revolution, their natural sympathy for the oppressed can only result from humanity's common moral predisposition; therefore, we possess a common sense of injustice against oppressors of man's "natural rights" that bridges geography and links us.

As we have already seen in the historical example of the Monroe Doctrine and in the example of more contemporary events like George W. Bush's war in Iraq, the argument for enabling other's liberty can easily become corrupt: America's liberation efforts became a cover

for imperial interests. This is why, for both Smith and Cooper, individuals and nations must cultivate disinterestedness. Smith believes that nations and races are entitled to self-determination. He claims “natural liberty” is a pre-requisite for “natural laws of justice” (VII.iv.1), and he sees imperial ventures as a perversion of a natural self-preference into “folly, injustice” and “avidity” (*Wealth* 317, 305). Smith does not fully explain how we prevent this perversion. He recognizes that outside of theory it is hard to maintain perfect disinterestedness and he is obviously aware of Britain’s historical record of phases of bad corruption violence and injustice, but in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence* Smith does refer to a “legislative power,” a central organization like the modern UN, that would oversee free trade as a “system of natural liberty and perfect justice” (*LJ* 339). This common legislative power would act as an impartial spectator stand-in in order to counteract national self-interest and any acts of war that might ensue when “two nations are at variance” and the “partial spectator is at hand” (*Theory* III.3). This is significant because it is this model of conversation and collaborative international policy for which Cooper advocates.

Throughout Cooper’s works liberty is the most important individual right. What makes Cooper’s thought cosmopolitan is the way he believes equal liberty and social justice are not singular privileges reserved for only one culture or one nation; what ties his cosmopolitan thought to Smith’s theories is the way Cooper believes equal liberty and social justice are not just theories or good things to think about: moral words must be followed by moral action. Nations’ moral values must be constantly evaluated and balanced against social mores and the disinterestedness of the impartial spectator. In *Gleanings* Cooper argues that America has fallen from its initial values of liberty and equality and is moving back towards a “pecuniary cupidity” and a “dishonesty of sentiment” (*England* 213). This potential for corruption is why Cooper

believes the impartial spectator must be created by a coalition of nations who exchange values and judgments, as *Gleanings* demonstrates.

Cooper, like Smith, recognizes local specificities or differences in national thinking; he encourages independent thought, but he also desires a common dedication to universal moral principles.²¹⁴ In a Smithian move Cooper urges Americans to move away from the nationalist pride, self-interest and selfishness he reports in *Gleanings*. Cooper insists in *Miles Wallingford*, a novel sympathetic to abolitionist causes, “the vulgar prejudice of national superiority,” is one of “the strongest of all the weaknesses of our very weak nature” (203).²¹⁵ Americans, himself included, must therefore overcome self-partiality; he tries to overcome national boundaries by never writing “of *American* courage,” or “*American* honesty,” nor yet of “*American* beauty,” nor haply of “*American* manliness,” but rather he wants to recognize and call plainly “virtue, virtue—and vice, vice” (*The Heidenmauer* 67). Cooper aspires to disinterestedly judge, without prejudice or partiality, nations or individuals based on their principles: virtue is virtue, liberty is liberty and equality is equality.

Cooper hopes that by comparing national ideas and experiences a transnational political and moral society may be created. America’s emerging national identity, for Cooper, grows out of “that comprehensive unity of feeling and understanding, that renders a people alive to its true dignity and interests . . . as well as independent in their opinions” (*England* 264). Here Cooper recognizes the universalism of natural rights can create sympathetic bonds not just between the

²¹⁴ This cosmopolitan impulse is one shared by Smith who recognizes that man has a natural preference for our own society over other societies, but, Smith insists, we must overcome our natural selfishness to extend our sympathy to “a wider society than that of our own country” (*Theory* III.vi.ii.44)

²¹⁵ In *Afloat and Ashore* and *Miles Wallingford* Miles first abets an escaping slave, approves a formal marriage between slaves and then frees all of his own slaves making sure to “procure places for them all, as ambition or curiosity carried them into the world” (455). Cooper’s politics here came under attack by the American press.

members of one nation but for a global humanity. National or individual pride, self-interest and selfishness, Cooper believes, threaten America's status as a moral nation in both its international and domestic relationships.

Cooper: Domestic Man of Sympathy

The way Cooper thinks about problems of citizenship, racial tension and land ownership stem from his awareness, as a colonial subject, of America's history, its growing international power, and imperial designs at home, but Cooper's views were not shared by all. General Lewis Cass the governor of Michigan (1813-1831), Andrew Jackson's Secretary of War (1831-1836) and superintendent of Indian affairs, worked against the kind of inclusive cosmopolitan nation Cooper envisioned. Cass, Jackson's director of Indian Removal, solidified America's imperial project. For his entire political career Cass worked to prove that different races did not share a common ancestor and specifically targeted both Cooper and Cooper's ethnographic source John Heckewelder as traitors to the American people.²¹⁶ Cass publically criticized Cooper's novels as unpatriotic "romanticizings" of Indian intellectual and moral development that "elevate the Indian character far above its true standard, and . . . depresses that of the frontier settlers as far below it" ("Art.V." 94). Therefore, despite current scholarship that maintains, "Natty Bumppo has become an icon of monoracial American national identity" (Schweitzer 163), within the context of the Indian removal debates of the 1820s and 1830s in which Cooper wrote, Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* were not celebrated as universally representative of American feeling nor

²¹⁶ John Heckewelder was an American Moravian missionary who lived with the various Native populations he tried to convert. His *A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren: Among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians* (1818) and *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations* (1820) are major sources for Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*.

of a white national identity. Of course just because prominent political figures like Cass, “the man who had called for a ‘war of extermination’ against ‘the savages’ in the War of 1812” (Harvey 514), publically set out to destroy Cooper’s literary reputation, does not mean Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales* are free from imperial ideologies. However, the fact that critical receptions from Cooper’s contemporaries focus on his sympathetic portrayal of Native Americans as sharing a common moral sense with Euro-Americans suggests we should re-examine the way Cooper highlights the interweaving of American nationalism and its imperial designs.

Read from within a transatlantic context and through the lens of Smith’s *Theory*, Cooper’s thoughts about America’s national identity become more nuanced than has previously been credited. We can instead re-read Cooper as an author engaged with the early-nineteenth-century’s ethnological debates on whether non-Euro-Americans could enjoy social “progress,” whether they and whites shared a common ancestor and whether governing assumptions of Euro-American imperialism were justified in furthering white settlement. As I discuss in the first section of this chapter, Cooper was particularly invested in the debate about Euro-American land appropriation. Cooper’s views oppose beliefs that non-Euro-Americans and Euro-Americans could never share the same concept of civilization. Cass, for instance, maintains that some “inherent difficulty” in “their moral and their intellectual condition,” has left Indians “stationary” in their development and made their extinction inevitable (“Art. III” 71–72). Cass’s arguments break from Smith’s stadial theory to suggest Native Americans are not on a common spectrum of social development; Cass frequently stresses “Indian savagery” as the intrinsic reason Native

Americans were incapable of “ris[ing] above” their present condition (“Art. III”).²¹⁷ Cass supports theories of polygenesis, or separate racial origins, prevalent in America’s emerging race science or biological essentialist claims. In contrast, Cooper remains committed to the potential for equality inherent in Smith’s stadial model.²¹⁸

Stadial theory offers the potential to re-emphasize a common humanity and therefore offers a way to include non-Euro-Americans in a cosmopolitan America and the means to achieve a coherent and united national whole. Natty and Chingachgook’s enduring friendship, for example, and their sympathetic bond contradicts Natty’s insistence on race-based gifts which other critics have emphasized. Even though Natty continually claims Indians and whites have separate “gifts,” in practice Natty always prioritizes common *feeling* over common biology. For example, he claims Uncas as his adopted son in *Mohicans*, and in the *Deerslayer* Natty’s position on the interracial power of feeling is stated most clearly: “God made [white, black and red] alike . . . he made us, in the main, much the same in feelin’s . . . They have their gifts and their religion, it’s true, but that makes no difference in the end, when each will be judged according to his deeds, and not according to his skin” (528, 537).

²¹⁷ During the Indian removal debates, questions “regarding Indian mental traits and whether they were fixed . . . [shed] new light on the philosophy of the mind, even as Heckewelder’s noble savagism and Cass’s Indian hating each possessed undue sway among policy makers and the public” (Harvey 523). Heckewelder and, I argue, Cooper believed that unity, rather than diversity, characterized both races.

²¹⁸ Just what traits marked Natives as different and whether these traits reflected Native Americans’ social conditions or something more innate was a topic of public debate. Those of Cass’ school of thought saw Native Americans as intrinsically inferior, utterly different, and inassimilable. Another divisive train of thought believed Native Americans were descended from the ancient Hebrews. Henry Schoolcraft, Indian agent at Sault Ste Marie and Cass’ correspondent, believed it showed the inevitability of Indian extinction because they had degenerated from a civilized ancestor into a savage subsistence, while others like Native Speaker William Apess, who spoke on behalf of First Nation inclusion as political citizens of America and challenged Americans to “imagine civic friendship more broadly than ever” (Nelson, “Leatherstocking Conversations” 134), used Hebrew ancestors as a way to prove common ancestry

While it was *Mohicans* that instigated Cass's vilification of Cooper as an "Indian-Lover" who "thought, and reasoned, like an Indian" (Cass to David B. Douglass, June 7, 1821 qtd. in Harvey 514), it may be difficult from a twenty-first century perspective to see the cosmopolitan and sentimental impulses that spurred Cass's attacks.²¹⁹ Consequently, before I turn to *Mohicans*, I discuss Cooper's more easily detectable cosmopolitan views in his Littlepage trilogy (1845-46) and his philosophy of republicanism in *The American Democrat or Hints on the Social and Civic Relations of the United States of America* (1838).²²⁰ An examination of these later works reveals the consistency with which Cooper's belief in sympathetic bonds of liberty for which he advocates on the international level also become his moral solution to the divisions within American borders.

In *The American Democrat* Cooper claims, "[property] is desirable as the ground work of moral independence, as a means of improving the faculties, and of doing good to others" (140). The fact that Cooper's white characters generally end up owning property supports common perceptions that Cooper "suppresses [the issue of miscegenation] vehemently" in order to legitimize land ownership for the civilized "white" over the savage "red" (Scheckel 134); however, Cooper consistently expresses a fundamental ambivalence about Euro-American rights to landownership. He stresses "property is the base of all civilization" (135)—property that usually ends up with white characters, but he is also deeply critical, on both economic and

²¹⁹ Mann argues that part of what made racist critics of Cooper so mad was his sympathetic portrayal of Natty Bumppo, who, she persuasively argues, would have been clearly recognized by early nineteenth-century readers as a metis, but the "tells" Cooper included in his novels are now read "ahistorically" ("Race Traitor" 158) and have been lost to modern readers removed from Indian history: "so accustomed are critics to Natty's man-without-a-cross mantra that they take it at face value, never asking the obvious question: Was Natty *really* a man without a racial cross? I say, not a chance. Seen against the backdrop of Lenape (Delaware") colonial history, of which Cooper was intimately aware through his source, John Heckewelder, Natty could only have been a mixed blood" (158).

²²⁰ *Satanstoe* (1845), *The Chainbearer* (1845), and *The Redskins* (1846).

humanitarian grounds, of arguments against common and communal claims to property. Like Smith, Cooper often expresses anxiety about social “progress” that encourages individualism. For example, in *The Theory* Smith debates the advantages of a commercial civilization. On one hand, Smith believes commercialization allows for greater social equality. On the other hand, he believes commercialization encourages injustices and tyranny by at the same dissolving sympathetic identifications in favor of individualistic self-preference. Similarly, Cooper also reveals his anxiety over the tensions between republican ideals and imperialist goals. In the *Democrat* he writes that democracy is meant to ensure the “equality of rights among citizens,” but that the danger is that no voter majority “is qualified to decide the most correctly on any thing [sic]” outside of its experience” (47, 129). Cooper recognizes the problems associated with a limited definition of citizen: there are large groups of Americans not represented by voters. Republican goals promote greater social equality, but at the same time there is a tendency to make that equality exclusive thus encouraging the injustices and tyranny of imperial conquest in national or racial partiality and preference.

Smith’s *Theory* shows the ways in which an individual can overcome or mitigate self-preference through disinterestedness and moral action: “Man was made for action . . . He must not be satisfied with indolent benevolence, nor fancy himself the friend of mankind, because in his heart he wishes well to the prosperity of the world” (*Theory* II.iii.3.). He must “strain every nerve, in order to produce those ends . . . as may seem most favourable to the happiness of all” (*Theory* II.iii.3.). Likewise, Cooper advocates for revolutions or rebellions—moral action—that secure liberty and equality for all cultures. He recognizes the right to liberty, which he understands as established by the possession and “security” of property (*Democrat* 135), as

universal, not racially or nationally specific; therefore, Cooper emphasizes the common rights of the many over and against individualist or nationalist arguments.

Just as Cooper warns imperial conquest overseas will lead to justified rebellion, he also warns Americans against the dangers of domestic imperial conquest—slavery. The oppression of slavery, Cooper argues, dissolves sympathetic bonds of good will; consequently, “two races will exist in the same region, whose feelings will be embittered by inextinguishable hatred, and who carry on their faces, the respective stamps of their factions” (222). Unless something is done to re-establish a common humanity, “[t]he struggle that will follow, will necessarily be a war of extermination” (222) on one side or the other.²²¹ For Cooper slavery represents America’s failed ideals. In a passage where Cooper describes the merits of a democracy over an aristocracy, he clearly states that it should not be those who possess the most wealth or property who “shall alone be free,” but that *all* “men are just as free to aim at the highest attainable places in society” and the “liberal acquirements” promised to Americans (153).

Cooper sees slavery as antithetical to republican ideals, and he also expresses concern over Native dispossession. He supports Native American bids for independent territories with his contempt for Jackson’s Indian removal policies and his disregard for the Supreme Court decision in *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832).²²² Cooper writes, “if provisions such as an organization of a

²²¹ Cooper’s sentiment here is consistent with both Brown’s and Austen’s indictments of slavery and imperial conquest. As we saw in chapter 2 Brown’s *Address to the Government of the United States on the Cessation of Louisiana to the French* claims that America is actually weaker for its colonial pursuits and violence against others. See chapter 2 p. 102. Similarly, Austen supports Pasley’s belief that slavery makes Britain more vulnerable not more powerful. See Chapter 3 p. 187.

²²² In 1832 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cherokee nation which denied that the state of Georgia had any authority over the sovereign Cherokee. In 1827 the Cherokees established a constitutional government meant to protect their rights to remain on their lands as an independent and sovereign nation. Georgia state retaliated by disavowing the Cherokee government and establishing a process for seizing Cherokee land and distributing it to the state’s white citizens. The Cherokee nation refused to move from their lands and appealed to the Supreme Court to uphold their rights. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cherokee nation, but Jackson refused to enforce the

republican, or as it is termed a Territorial Government for them [the Indians], such as now exist in Florida, Arkansas and Michigan; protection by the presence of troops; and a right to send delegates to Congress, similar to that now enjoyed by the other Territories” (490) are provided, then “there is reason to think that the constant diminution in the numbers of the Indians will be checked, and that a race . . . will be preserved. Indeed, some of the Southern tribes have already endured the collision with the white man, and are still slowly on the increase” (491). Cooper’s views on Native independence do not excuse the inherent racism associated with stadial views of civilization which Cooper expresses in his assumption that once “the dangerous point of communication [between Whites and Indians] has been passed . . . [Indians] may continue to advance in civilization to maturity” (491), but his defense for independent Native territory does support his fundamental belief in every individual’s right to land and liberty as well as his belief that America could operate as a multicultural nation.

Contrary to criticisms that argue Cooper sees the “crossing of ethnic, national, and class boundaries” as a morally repugnant miscegenation that leads only to “bloodshed” (Tompkins 94), Cooper claims that should an Indian “Territory be formed” in the West, it might be possible to “mingle white and red blood” (*Notions* 490). Axelrad points out the limits of Cooper’s liberalism here in regards to racial mixing: “[i]n this scenario, amalgamation of the two races would occur in Indian territory, but not in any of the states” (55). Axelrad attributes an imperial mindset to Cooper in Cooper’s desire to see the Native Americans disappear by swallowing them up in the white race. It can’t be denied that Cooper saw “civilization” and “republicanism” as synonymous terms and that he believed all societies should progress towards this ideal;

decision and instead told the Cherokees to relocate or submit to Georgia's retributive jurisdiction. For more on the Seminole War and slave rebellion see Milton Meltzer *Hunted Like a Wolf: The Story of the Seminole War*.

nonetheless, where Cass, for example, was among those whose belief in racial fixity supported the claim that “somewhat like mules, people of mixed races would over time be less and less fertile and eventually unable to reproduce” (Nelson, “Conversations” 130), Cooper’s belief in the success of interracial marriages, however geographically limited, offers an inclusive vision for a multiracial republican polity.

While critics suggest the tragic conclusions to Cooper’s interracial romances “offer little hope for interracial community building in the larger society” (Axelrad 45), Cooper criticizes, rather than celebrates, America’s failure to live up to its republican promises. The tragic conclusions to interracial marriages are the fault of Euro-Americans whose failure to recognize a common humanity fractures the potential of an integrated nation. Even in early novels like *The Prairie*, it is important to note that the degeneration critics have picked up on in Cooper’s portrayal of “half-breeds,” is very specifically relegated to “men born of Indian women by white fathers” (29 n.). These men are degenerate because they have “much of the depravity of civilization and none of the virtues of the savage” (29 n.). The specificity of Cooper’s criticisms here suggest he is targeting imperial violence and specifically rape by drawing attention to the relatedness of slavery and dispossession. Mann explains: “[i]n 1719, African slaves began to be imported as supplemental workers for the hinterland plantations, with Native women soon put to the further task of populating the slave huts, sometimes with the new African slaves, or if they caught a French man’s eye, with male colonists” (“Fancy Girls” 227). The suggestion is thus that Cooper disapproves of forced interracial liaisons that perhaps possess an eye to future slave labor. As the multiple cross-racial—white women and Indian fathers—romantic relationships of

Cooper's novels demonstrate, Cooper was not averse to interracial relationships; in fact, as I have been arguing, Cooper saw interracial communities as integral to national solidarity.²²³

In his Littlepage trilogy Cooper again targets Americans' belief that they can dominate others with impunity. Critics often claim Cooper imagines America's land as an inheritance bequeathed to a civilized people from a dying race, but these are sentiments more in keeping with Cass than Cooper.²²⁴ These readings consequently miss Cooper's critique of imperial domination—bloodshed is what happens when sympathetic bonds *can't* be made:

[B]loodshed has come to deepen the stain left on the country by the wide-spread and bold assertion of false principles. This must long since have been foreseen . . . when the chances were, and still are, that [violence] will extend to civil war . . . [T]he sense of right of much the larger portion of the country has been deeply wounded. (*The Chainbearer* 1)

For Cooper, the threat of bloodshed, violence and civil war is tied to imperial oppression that begins with questions of land rights he hints at in his early Leatherstocking novels and makes more explicit in his later writings.

Territorial displacement is a key theme of the Littlepage novels and draws together questions of race and nationality. The trilogy details the struggle for supremacy between English, Dutch and American colonials who all lay claim to the land.²²⁵ In each of the novels Cooper ends

²²³ Cora and Uncas—*Last of the Mohicans*, Elizabeth and Oliver—*The Pioneers*, Ruth and Conanchet—*The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish* (1829), Inez and Duncan—*The Prairie*.

²²⁴ For example, Anna Krauthammer sees the Littlepage novels as evidence of Cooper's "assumption that Indians, as racially inferior, were doomed to vanish" (24), while David Cody reads the trilogy as Cooper's "eternally recurring Anglo-American imperial fantasy in which "the Black, the savage, the sexual, and the Red are doomed to give way before the civilized, the domesticated and the White" (313).

²²⁵ Almost all Cooper's novels draw attention to the diversity of the population. This goes for his Leatherstocking Tales as well. At the beginning of *The Last of the Mohicans* Cooper opens the novel by describing the numerous cultures that have converged to create America, not only among the European nations battling over land disputes but he also remarks on the diversity among the First Nation Tribes and suggests the possibility of Asiatic influences among them. The only exception is the Lenape people—the Mohicans—whose name means "'Lenni Lenape,' which

the dispute by connecting the various nations in marriages between men and women representing competing national claims to the land. In the overall narrative arc of the trilogy, Cooper mitigates the threat posed by imperialist claims on the land by emphasizing cross racial bonds established by the Littlepage family's Black slave/servant Jaap, the Indian guide Susquesus, and the Littlepage family. Cooper is very aware of America's triracial relationships and, as I discuss in the first section of this chapter, Cooper often draws attention to questions surrounding the injustice of land removal policies and imperialist policies like slavery by conflating Native-American dispossession with African-American oppression. These questions became "racialized by the context" because property, ownership and entitlement were often represented as "conflicts between racially incompatible groups" (Tawil 5).²²⁶

Liberty is tied to equality and disputes over land ownership. Cooper sees the contrast in liberty between those who possess property with those who are oppressed, dispossessed or enslaved as a "hypocritical aspect of 'human rights'" (*The Redskins* 202). Cooper sees how easily America's claims to liberty and equality can become corrupt when one group or faction believes in their superiority; questions of land ownership "have been the pretext for violating some of the plainest laws of morality that God has communicated to man" (*Santastoe* 33). Those "plainest laws" include every individual's right to "true liberty" (4). Cooper was committed to American principles of liberty and equality, but he also recognizes them as universal rights.

of itself signifies, an 'unmixed people'" (*Last of the Mohicans* 4). Not coincidentally the Mohicans—proud of their unmixed heritage—are the "first to be dispossessed by the whites" (4), and they are the tribe who will die out with the death of Chingachgook. Cooper suggests diversity is the key to survival.

²²⁶ For example, anxiety over the potential insurrection of slaves became conflated with Indian land-rights particularly in the context of the Second Seminole War (1835-1842) which linked slave rebellion and Native American military resistance. See footnote 64. The Seminole War was a result of removal policies. In 1835 when the American government tried to forcibly remove the Seminoles from their land in Florida they began a conflict that lasted until 1842. For more on the Seminole wars as well as other removal policies see John Ehle *The Trail of Tears*.

Cooper highlights the possibility for racial war if Euro-Americans refuse to benefit from the possibilities offered by sympathetic bonds. In the Littlepage trilogy, Cooper draws attention to the life-long friendship between Jaap and Susquesus. In order to play on a common settler fear that Native Americans and African slaves might join forces and rebel against Euro-Americans, Cooper draws attention to the racist settler myth that a “known antipathy [exists] between the races of the red and the black man” (*Chainbearer* 60).²²⁷ He then proceeds to undermine it.²²⁸

Not only are the two men friends but, Cooper tells us, Susquesus censures Jaap’s contentment “to live in bondage” (60), and his feelings on the subject “often made themselves manifest in the course of their daily communion with each other” (60). Issues of slavery and the displacement of indigenous people become central despite the narrative’s focus on “the struggle for supremacy between the English and the American colonials” (D’Haen 188). The narrative emphasizes the need for land-ownership in order to be considered a valid member of the community and then draws attention to those who do not own either land or possess liberty. William Decker remarks, “[c]onsidering that Cooper might have sidestepped the issues [slavery and the extinction of the native peoples] by excluding blacks from his dramatis personae, it is only the more intriguing that he should depict an Africanist presence” on the edges of the tale

²²⁷ During the American Revolution many escapee African-American slaves looked for and received safe shelter with Native American tribes. During the period in which Cooper wrote many Euro-Americans were appalled by Indian-Black alliances that had resulted in groups like the Seminole Nation. As Mann comments, “By the early antebellum period, planters had begun having second thoughts about the wisdom of having mingled Native Americans and Africans in their slave huts. More and more, the result was insurrection, not the accretion of new slaves” (Mann, *The Cooper Connection* 215). For more on this topic see also J. Leitch Wright *The only Land they Knew: The Tragic Story of American Indians in the Old South* and David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler *Old Hickory’s War: Andrew Jackson and the Quest for Empire* Chp. 2.

²²⁸ Contemporary criticism still holds the view that Cooper believed in these racial divisions. James Sappenfield claims that Cooper’s characters work to maintain their racial distinctions: “Delawares despise the Iroquois and Hurons from Canada; whites hold themselves above Indians; Indians (and Duncan Heywood) hold themselves above blacks; the English of course hate the French, and Scots privately hate the English” (126). It is when these lines are blurred that “interracial violence,” “fear,” “thrilling atrocities” and “sexual anxiety” (126) occur.

(“The Africanist Presence” 13). Susquesus’ recognizes that human bondage contradicts American principles bringing to the fore questions about the justice of imperialist conquest.

Susquesus’s critiques of slavery also reflect Cooper’s appropriation of Heckewelder’s reports on Native indictments of slavery, particularly their condemnation of whipping slaves. In his *Narrative* Heckewelder records a warning to the Lenapes and Mohicans against seduction by white missionaries whose purpose it was to have “them transported as slaves, where they would be harnessed to the plough and whipped to work” (116). The injustice of whipping and its association with imperial conquest is a theme repeated throughout Cooper’s works particularly in *The Pioneers*, *Wyandotté* (1843) and *Satanstoe*, but the theme takes on the most significance in *Mohicans*, which I will return to in the next section. Jaap and Susquesus’ friendship underlines Cooper’s point that interracial bonds are possible and necessary to mitigate oppressive forces. By not making themselves equals in friendship, Euro-Americans leave themselves open to the liberty-seeking revolts Cooper condones in international colonial disputes.

Sus, Jaap and the Littlepages are bound together in “brother/sisterhood” as each is accepted into the others’ family. In a scene that recollects Smith’s scale of virtues where cultural variation is only possible within a universal human nature, Jaap is inducted into Sus’ family:

The pale men come from the rising sun, and were born before the heat burned their skins. The black men came from under the sun at noon-day, and their faces were darkened by looking up above their heads to admire the warmth that ripened their fruits. The red men were born under the setting sun, and their faces were colored by the hues of the evening skies . . . What of that? We are brothers. . . [Susquesus and Jaap] have lived in the same wigwam, now, so many winters, that their venison and bear's-meat have the same taste.

They love one another. Whomsoever Susquesus loves and honors, all just Indians love and honor. (*The Redskins* 330)

Jaap also remains bonded to the Littlepage family. Even though as an old man he has lost most of his faculties and memory, he recognizes family: “he knew [Patty Littlepage] . . . as one might say, by blood” (102). Familial sympathetic bonds can overcome intercultural violence.

Jaap dies at the end of the trilogy, but Susquesus survives although he disappears back into his forests. Susquesus’ disappearance is typical evidence for arguments that claim Cooper is happy to see Native presences fade, but Cooper complicates this inevitable vanishing by linking Susquesus’s removal with not only the narrator’s hope that “contrition and shame” will attend the “politicians among us” who contributed to the removal of the Indians (*Redskins* 364) but more significantly with the Littlepages’ exodus as well. The Littlepages explain their desire to live in a place that does not work “its evil under the cry of liberty, while laying deeper the foundation of a most atrocious tyranny” (365). They look instead for a refuge where they can “reside among the other victims of oppression . . . as refugee[s] from republican tyranny” (365).

In his later works Cooper explicitly draws attention to the hypocrisy attendant in the conflict between America’s claims to liberty and equality and its history of dispossession and slavery sustained by acts of imperial violence at which he hints in his early novels. Instead of an imperial justification over competing interests, Cooper’s America follows from his commitment to Smithian universalism; he envisions the creation of sympathetic bonds that can uphold America’s commitment to liberty and equality and offer an alternative to the violence of cross-racial encounters that tear America apart.

Re-Reading Cooper's "American" Novel: *The Last of the Mohicans*

Novels like *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) have come to represent both Cooper's career as an American writer and his vision of America that "maintains a 'whites only' ideology by regarding Native Americans as all but extinct and African Americans as a human subspecies" (Decker, "The Africanist Presence" 30). However, by placing Cooper's works, including his "American" novels, within a transatlantic context we can see Cooper thinking about the right to individual liberty. Cooper's thoughts about liberty often parallel Smith's claims that a moral society can exist only when all its individuals, "breathe the free air of liberty and independency" (*Theory* VII.II.1). Rather than relations between non-equals that result in either "servile and fawning attention" or malignant" and "savage" "natural enemies," a civilized society exists only when it is characterized by equal, "fair and deliberate exchange" (*Wealth* 25-26) and sympathetic bonds occasioned by the presence of the impartial spectator. In *Mohicans* Cooper makes sympathetic bonds, and their implied liberating and equalizing effects, the key to creating both international and interracial friendships that overcome the divisive geographical and cultural barriers that betray America's founding principles.

The massacre scene at Fort William Henry has been seen as the "historical centerpiece of the novel" and "the heart of its meaning as well" (Axelrad 34). This "heart" of meaning is usually tied to Magua's betrayal of both his own people and the European settlers. Magua's purpose, in these readings, is to provide an antithesis to Uncas' "noble savage" and to justify Natives' "replacement by white European-Americans with their superior values" (Axlerad 34).²²⁹

²²⁹ Jane Tompkins, for example, argues that "Magua is a 'bad' character . . . because his position in the social organization of the novel violates the boundaries that must be kept intact in order for social harmony to exist. (Tompkins *Sensational Designs* 119). James Franklin Beard calls Magua "[s]elfish, greedy, ambitious, lustful, ruthless, revengeful and sadistic" ("Historical Introduction," *Last of the Mohicans*). Even critics who recognize

However, when *Mohicans* is placed within the larger context of Cooper's commitment to liberty, Magua's history raises questions about Euro-American "rights" to imperial conquest and land appropriation—even if these questions are never entirely resolved.

Magua betrays the English at Fort William Henry because he wants vengeance for what he sees as Britain's betrayal when Colonel Munro whips him. Magua relates the history of his whipping twice during the novel, once to Cora and once to the French Commander Montcalm. In both instances Magua relates his story right before he commits his most "villainous" acts, first leading the massacre and then before he kidnaps Alice. The fact that Magua emphasizes the indignity he suffered at the hands of Munro, who was supposed to be his "father" (192), before he commits these violent acts, suggests he is justified in his anger rather than simply an ignoble savage stereotype, treacherous and brutally violent. Magua's identification as Munro's "son" suggests Cooper wants his readers to sympathize with Magua. Leading up to and during the American Revolution, American political rhetoric justifying the Revolution also often described Britain's relationship with America as that of a parent that has betrayed its child. For example, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) is full of family metaphors for imperial relations.²³⁰

Cooper's nuanced treatment of Magua's vengeance still tend to view him as "ignoble." Robert Lawson-Peebles compares Magua to Milton's Satan, "a superb warrior, a subtle speechmaker, and an effective and resourceful leader" ("The Lesson the Massacre at Fort William Henry," and Terence Martin claims Magua develops as the strongest character because of "Uncus, whose nobility of character demands a significant antagonist" ("Ruins"228). Notable exceptions to these types of readings are Mann who argues "critics have gone with a Euro-centric and worse, racist depiction of Magua . . . [T]hey downplay this complaint [Magua's unjust treatment by Colonel Munro] as a whine of personal animosity" (*The Cooper Connection* 216), and Geoffrey Sanborn who claims, "Magua is not the villain of the novel . . . he is intelligent, charismatic, and a gifted leader. He belongs to the category of persons that Cooper values most, the category of 'chiefs' and 'gentlemen,' and everything he does is, for Cooper, an understandable effort to reclaim his rightful place in the 'aristocracy of nature'" (45). Sanborn's overall argument is that Cooper based his depiction of Magua on a Maori chief, Te Ara, who, after being whipped, massacred a whole ship of white explorers and whose story was in American newspapers in the spring of 1825.

²³⁰ Paine claims England cannot justly use the "phrase, *parent* or *mother country*" (35), and if the "King and his parasites" try to use the epithet then "the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families . . . This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and

Paine's message was essentially that every child should be able to gain its independence and no parent should behave with tyranny. In this context it seems Americans who betray the trust between themselves and Native Americans are no more virtuous than the "corrupt" society they fought against. They have become the oppressive and tyrannical parent who has abused his child.

Cooper adds another layer to the corrupt relationship between England/parent/Munro and Native Americans/children/Magua when he names Magua "Prince of Darkness" (320), Milton's title for Satan in *Paradise Lost*. The comparison between Magua and Satan has led critics to read Magua as the typical "bad Indian" the "ignoble, Satanic savage imagined in Puritan literature" (Krauthammer 18); however, the distinction is not so clear. Magua, like Satan, is charismatic, his words are full of "dangerous and artful eloquence" (282), but most importantly, as Paul Giles notes, Milton, in America, was associated with "republican principles" (*Atlantic Republic* 506). *Paradise Lost* signified the "American impulse to escape British oppression. This, of course, is to understand Milton as a poet of the sublime, a prophetic harbinger of freedom" (Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections* 17). In this context, then, Magua becomes a tragic and heroic figure. He has been betrayed by his "fathers," and the "same tyranny" which Paine claims drove "the first emigrants from home" is equally applicable to the tyranny "their descendants" perpetrate against the Native Americans already occupying the land (Paine 35). Everything Magua does is, for Cooper, an understandable effort to reclaim his rightful place. Thus even though Magua may be the villain of the novel, readers are meant to sympathize with him. Cooper indicates that

religious liberty . . . Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster" (35).

Magua's speeches raise legitimate issues about colonial abuse, natural freedom, and geographical displacement and are meant to be taken seriously.²³¹

Magua may betray his "fathers" (192) but it is clear his actions stem from their betrayal of him. The night before the massacre General Montcalm, the French commander, tells Magua he cannot hurt the English troops because "does not my son know, that the hatchet is buried between the English and his Canadian father?" (191), but Magua reveals the hypocrisy of European peace. He recalls that he was told the hatchet had been buried between Natives and their "Canadian fathers," and so "the tired Indian rested at the sugar tree, to taste his corn!" but he was taken advantage of; "the hatchet was out of the ground, and his [father's] hand had dug it up" (103). Magua reminds Montcalm that the peace was broken by Europeans: "who filled the bushes with creeping enemies! who drew the knife! whose tongue was peace, while his heart was coloured with blood!" (103). Montcalm tries to tell Magua that Magua is "too brave to remember the hurts received in war, or the hands that gave them!" (103). Magua agrees that he doesn't remember hurts given in war, but he then proceeds to tell Montcalm why he cannot forgive the English. Magua shows Montcalm the scar from a bullet of which he is proud to boast and then turns around and asks Montcalm to identify the scars on his back: "'This!— my son, has been sadly injured, here! who has done this?' 'Magua slept hard in the English wigwams, and the

²³¹ Oluadah Equiano, whom I discuss in the next chapter, also appropriates Milton. At the end of Chapter V he adapts Milton's lines: "No peace is given/ To us enslav'd, but custody severe;/ And stripes and arbitrary punishment Inflicted—/ What peace can we return?/ But to our power, hostility and hate; /Untam'd reluctance, and revenge, tho' slow,/ Yet ever plotting how the conqueror least/ May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice In doing what we most in suffering feel" (112). The verse comes in support of Equiano's claim that making men slaves creates monsters. Both Cooper and Equiano are of the opinion that it is circumstance and not nature that begets violence and vengeance from Native Americans or Africans who are dispossessed or enslaved. Vincent Carretta notes, "[b]y quoting lines spoken in *Paradise Lost* by Beelzebub, one of Satan's followers, Equiano appropriates a voice of alienation and resistance from within the very culture he is demonstrating that he has assimilated" ("Oluadah Equiano: African British Abolitionist" 51). Both Magua and Equiano then offer resistance to colonial oppression.

sticks have left their mark” (193). Magua does not mind violence, or even the scars he earns in battle, but the scars he earns from being whipped at the hand of his “father” require retribution.

Magua later again tells the story of his whipping to Cora, and this recitation is even more nuanced. Magua hopes to appeal to Cora’s sympathetic disinterestedness and sense of justice; he tells his story because he feels a kinship with Cora: “the Great Spirit has given [her] wisdom!” (117). Magua again recounts how his “Canadian fathers” gave him whisky to make him drunk, and how he is whipped for his transgression. Cora is uncomfortable with Magua’s story. She tries to justify her father’s actions. Even though she tries to make sense of her father’s actions “in a manner to suit” (118) Magua’s comprehension, she struggles for “she knew not how to palliate this imprudent severity on the part of her father” (118). Even the dutiful Cora cannot justify the bonds her father has broken. Magua reveals that he has gone “against his own nation” (117) to help Munro and the English, but Munro quickly forgets those ties. When he publically shames Magua, Munro ensures Magua no longer has a place as either a “European” or as an Indian. Magua is condemned to be ever apart from either group. Cooper suggests Magua is driven to betrayal because he has no choice. As Magua demands of Cora, ““is it justice to make evil, and then punish for it?” (117), Cooper asks his readers to think about the nature of justice and in doing so he creates sympathy for Magua.

Rather than seeing Magua’s narrative as an indictment of European hypocrisy, some critics have suggested Magua’s confidence in Cora results from his attraction to her. This attraction, critics claim, is due to Cooper’s racist sexualized stereotype of Cora’s mixed race: “the only language by which Cooper seems able to inscribe Cora’s female blackness confirms her status as a sexualized captive” (Decker, “Surely Cora” 214). Cooper however repeatedly emphasizes Cora’s virtue and instead of playing to Cora’s sexuality, Magua appeals to her moral

sense of justice. Cora's superior virtue makes her the most likely character to recognize the injustice committed. Cora is not blinded by racial prejudice as are Alice and Heyward; she lives up to Smithian ideals of universal humanity. When Alice and Heyward are dubious about following the lead of an Indian, Cora chastises them, "should we distrust the man, because his manners are not our manners, and that his skin is dark!" (26).

The exchange between Cora and Magua is not just about sexuality versus virtue. Cora's race does matter, but not because of her sexuality. As he does throughout his writing career, Cooper draws attention to the oppression, subjugation and resulting potential for violence that comes from imperial conquest of both Native Americans and African slaves. Magua appeals to Cora's sense of justice because she too is the victim of racial oppression and in their potential alliance Cooper gestures towards a potentially troubling common racial cause that, if Americans refuse to accept that American nationalism goes hand in hand with foreign affiliations, and if they refuse to see other nations and races as entitled to equal rights, will tear the nation apart by that "war of extermination" he mentions in *The American Democrat* (222).

Magua recognizes the threat Cora's blood poses to her subjecthood and tries to recruit her to his cause. As Mann points out, Cora as a mixed race African in America is *legally* Munro's slave and not his daughter. Additionally, Cora's light skin tone marks her as a potential concubine should she be recognized and denounced as part African ("Fancy Girls, 299).²³² Cora,

²³² Mann writes:

"Concubinage turned into an accepted practice in the American South as an indirect result of attempts to end slavery. The Constitutional Convention of 1787 agreed to end the slave trade, as Number 1 under Article I, Section 9, effective in 1808, with strict penalties imposed under anyone caught cringing in contraband shipments. The official end of the international slave trade did not, however, signal an end to American Slavery. It just meant that, no longer able to import "fresh" slaves from Africa, planters started making them at home. Too many critics and historians still slink awkwardly past the fact, but "breeding" became a regular and furtively acknowledged planter activity" ("Fancy Girls" 228).

under America's "one-drop" laws, would have been vulnerable to enslavement in America. What Magua recognizes is that Cora's moral arguments, her ideals based in the Smithian model of sympathy that insists individuals of disparate experiences and social/racial backgrounds can find an affinity with one another, are informed by her own racial position. Like Magua Cora occupies a peripheral and tenuous position. Major Heyward's desire to wed Alice and not Cora brings home Cora's isolating racialized standing.

When Colonel Munro accuses Heyward of racism in his desire to marry Alice, Heyward exclaims, "Heaven protect me from a prejudice so unworthy of my reason!" (180). Munro astutely remarks however, "Major Heyward, you are yourself born at the south, where these unfortunate beings are considered of a race inferior to your own!" (180), and Heyward acknowledges that he is "conscious of such a feeling . . . as deeply rooted as if it had been engrafted into his nature" (180).²³³ Colonel Heyward's assumptions though, on just about everything, are regularly proven to be wrong-headed—Cora is clearly the superior choice over Alice. Cooper reproaches Heyward, and through Heyward America, particularly the American South, for his prejudiced attitudes: racial purity in fact endangers moral purity.²³⁴ It is men like Heyward, and not men like Magua, who pose the biggest threat to moral virtue.

²³³ In Cooper's 19th century America the view that "creoles," "mulattos" and "half-breeds" represented degeneracy was a prevalent one. Popular literature often demonized interracial characters. Francis Parkman in his 1846 account of his travels on the Plains and through the Rocky Mountains writes, "the half-breed [is] a race of rather extraordinary composition, being according to the common saying half Indian, half white man, and half devil" (256). These racist attitudes also applied to African-American/White pairings as well. For more on nineteenth-century arguments for the degeneracy of the mulatto see Catherine Boeckmann *A Question of Character*.

²³⁴ Maybe because Heyward, along with Alice, ends up surviving where Magua, Uncas and Cora, the racialized characters do not, many critics do not seem to recognize that Cooper frequently makes fun of Heyward and frequently shows just how much of an ass he is, as I will demonstrate later. In this scene Cooper criticises both Heyward and American slave policies in the South. When he identifies Heyward as a southerner and therefore as one who has particular knowledge of slavery, he is referring to the political state of Cooper's contemporary America since abolition in the northern states was not complete until 1808. As William Decker notes "The year 1757 predates the abolition of slavery in the northern states; as well, it predates the invention of the cotton gin and rapid expansion

Many critics have remarked on the potential triracial coupling between Cora and Magua and they see Cooper as stereotypically representing Magua as a lustful savage. These readings seem to be based primarily on the “wavering glances” Magua directs at Cora (119). Nina Baym, for example, claims, “[Cora] is attractive to Indians as Alice is not. She is the object of a lustful appraisal from Magua that Alice could never inspire . . . [It] bode[s] ill for any white woman who might become his victim . . . in his open display of lust for Cora” (75). If this were true, then when Magua demands Cora become his wife, Cora and readers might expect to have their “ears wounded by some proposal still more shocking than the last” (119), presumably a proposal of a sexual nature; however, although it is clear Magua does admire Cora, as does Heyward incidentally, Magua never threatens either Cora or Alice’s virtue. In fact Magua states he wants Cora to become his wife in recompense. He loses his first wife after being whipped by Munro and disgraced in the eyes of his tribe. Heyward on the other hand could pose a threat to Cora. By refusing to consider Cora as a wife because of her “rich blood” (24), Heyward withdraws protection against slavery after Cora’s father dies. In contrast, Magua’s proposal is to be his wife; he never poses any sexual threat to either of the girls. Magua’s primary motivation is equal recognition.

When Munro whips Magua “like a dog” (103), Magua becomes, like Cora, Colonel Munro’s property. Both Magua and Cora are symbolically slaves, an intolerable position for Magua. Heckewelder in his *Narrative* reports threats of insurrection from the Lenapes after they received reports from the Tuscorora clan “of the Virginian people beating the negroes so

of the slave population that took place in the first decades of the nineteenth century” (“Surely Cora” 221). For Heyward to be particularly familiar with slavery has more to do with 1826 than 1757 and means Cooper is singling out a particularly racist attitude associated with America’s contemporary south for criticism.

unmercifully” (207) and threats of imminent removal from their own lands.²³⁵ Consequently, it is Magua’s sense of oppression and violation, not the injury itself, which prompts Magua’s revenge.

Magua makes it clear that when he kidnaps Alice and coerces Cora to join him, his actions are a direct result of the whipping he receives and not racial depravity. Magua wants to hurt Munro, as Munro hurt him, by removing his family ties.²³⁶ Magua once again draws attention to his numerous scars in order to show Cora he is not afraid of injury; he is proud of his battle wounds. The “scars given by knives and bullets— of these a warrior may boast before his nation,” but he cannot forgive the “marks on the back of the Huron chief, that he must hide, like a squaw, under this painted cloth of the whites” (117). Cora tells Magua she thought warriors prided themselves on their ability to withstand pain. Magua agrees, but tells Cora that the marks from the whip left marks on his spirit: “when he felt the blows of Munro, his spirit lay under the birch” (117) because they mark him as property.

Cora protests that Magua perpetuates the injustice by revenging himself on Alice and herself rather than facing her father directly, but Magua disagrees. He says the best way to seek justice, ““good for good; bad for bad!”” (118) is to crush Munro’s spirit the way he crushed Magua’s; consequently, justice is harming Munro’s spirit: “the body of the gray-head would sleep among his cannon, but his heart would lie within reach of the knife of le Subtil” (120).

Cora’s proposed marriage to Magua and her eventual death is not the result of Magua’s racial

²³⁵ Heckewelder also relates the tale of his attempted assassination by a Lenape after he was accused of being Heckewelder’s “slave” and warnings that Heckewelder “would whip him also, if he did not obey his commands” (227).

²³⁶ Magua loses his claims to autonomy and hence personhood when Munro whips him, but he also loses his wife along with status among his clan. Like many slave narratives, like Equiano’s, that emphasize the ruptures of family under slave law, Magua has also lost his family, his tribe and his wife, and consequently, for him, in order that justice be served Munro must also lose his family.

malignancy, but is directly the result of her father's actions. The deaths of all racial others are the result of the imperial presence Munro represents. Munro fails to uphold American principles; he fails to treat others as though their natural rights entitle them to liberty and equality.

Taken in conjunction, Magua's refusal to countenance the significance of the scars on his back and the massacre he leads indicate a link in Cooper's mind between oppression and dispossession. Cooper gestures towards a racial union between "red and black" (*Chainbearer* 60) in Cora's potential union with either Magua or Uncas. Cora chooses to identify with her father's Scottish heritage, rather than her mother's creole heritage. She rebuffs Magua's proposals for a union of interests, but Cooper once again acknowledges the potential problems for white settlers who cannot find an affinity with either African-Americans or Native-Americans. A common racial cause is not only possible but likely in the face of imperial oppression. This common cause could spell trouble for American settlers if they cannot let go of their isolationist principles and also participate in these friendships as equals.

Critics like Baym and Nelson argue it is Alice and Heyward and not Cora and Uncas who survive to carry on the American race, and therefore Cooper endorses the myth of the "Vanishing Indian" as well as erasing the presence of the African-American. Baym argues Cora's death represents Cooper's fantasy of an imperial and white nation: "Cora's Negro-ness [means] Cora is an extra heroine, fated for death. . . [Heyward] is . . . protector and progenitor of American civilization. The plot . . . rescues [Alice] . . . and thus decrees that the future nation will be peopled by whites only" (74). Similarly Nelson argues that Cora's, Uncas' and Magua's deaths are Cooper's way of supporting the argument "against racial intermarriage that was just becoming prominent in the late 1820s and early 1830s" ("Conversations" 130). She goes on to say that Cooper is on the leading edge of the trend of racial science and the idea "that the races

could not successfully interbreed . . . Like Cora and Uncas they would ‘fall off’”

(“Conversations” 130).

It is important to remember that while Alice and Heyward may inherit America, they are not really the heroine and hero of the novel. As Axelrad states, “Cooper clearly intended Cora and Uncas to be characters of great nobility and extraordinary virtue . . . In the context of the story, their deaths are a tragedy; in the larger historical context, they are an American tragedy” (53). In contrast to Cora and Uncas’s nobility and virtue, Alice is fairly useless and Heyward is, despite his pretensions to chivalry, blinded by prejudice. Heyward is almost always wrong about anything important. The most famous of Heyward’s mistakes is the scene with the beavers. Natty and Heyward are on the trail of the kidnapped Cora and Alice. Natty disappears to do some scouting and Heyward uncovers what he thinks is an Indian camp:

A hundred earthen dwellings stood on the margin of the lake, and even in its water, as though the latter had overflowed its usual banks. The whole village, or town . . . appeared, however, to be deserted. At least, so thought Duncan for many minutes; but, at length, he fancied he discovered several human forms, advancing towards him on all fours, and apparently dragging in their train some heavy, and, as he was quick to apprehend, some formidable engine. Just then a few dark looking heads gleamed out of the dwellings, and the place seemed suddenly alive with beings. (248-49)

Duncan becomes alarmed and alerts Natty to imminent danger, but Natty soon uncovers Heyward’s mistake: “His lurking Indians were suddenly converted into four-footed beasts; his lake into a beaver pond; his cataract into a dam, constructed by those industrious and ingenious quadrupeds; and a suspected enemy into his tried friend, David Gamut, the master of psalmody” (252). It seems impossible that anyone could mistake beavers for Indians, but this is just one of

the *many* incidents where Heyward's judgment is clouded by his prejudice. Heyward also imagines himself "a knight of ancient chivalry, holding his midnight vigils before the tent of a re-captured princess" (147), but he promptly falls asleep. He misjudges Cora because of her racial "taint" saying to Alice, "be [not] offended, when I say, that to me [Cora's] worth was in a degree obscured—" (260). Given that the chapter in which Heyward's mistake is revealed is given an epigraph from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a conversation between Bottom and Peter Quince, two of the play's clowns known for their wrong-headedness, it seems unlikely that we are supposed to take Heyward seriously as a hero.

Alice is not much better. She is frequently "nearly insensible" (82), and after the massacre she drops "senseless on the earth" (199) instead of fleeing to safety, a lapse that allows Magua to abduct her. Nor does she possess Cora's superior morality. When Cora tells Alice that Alice and Heyward can go free if Cora agrees to live with Magua, Alice seriously considers the proposition before disapproving of the deal. Heyward and Alice inherit America, but Cooper criticizes the imperial impulses that make this inheritance possible. A democratic, egalitarian and free America, the America Cooper believes it should be, should not allow a "bright example of great qualities" (62) like Cora to die. Nor should they be subject to slave laws. If America's principles are to flourish, they must be applied universally.²³⁷ America cannot boast of its liberty

²³⁷ It is also important to remember that Cora is not the only "half-breed" protagonist. Elizabeth Temple from *The Pioneers* (1823), one of Cooper's strongest heroines besides Cora, is not racially mixed herself, but she speaks sympathetically, in both senses of the word, when her friend Louisa suggests she might have Indian blood: "It would be a great relief to my mind to think so; for I own that I grieve when I see Old Mohegan walking about these lands, like the ghost of one of their ancient possessors, and feel how small is my right to possess them" (202). Elizabeth also marries the racially questionable Young Eagle/Oliver Effingham. Elizabeth and Oliver, Inez, perhaps Natty (See Mann "Race Traitor.") and Cora all represent Cooper's recognition and even celebration that pure blood, "the man without a cross" is an imperial myth and America should accept its cross racial history and future.

and equality if it restricts these doctrines to the exclusion of individuals like Cora who, though of mixed blood, embody morality.

Cora speaks and enacts the principles of natural rights and universal equality made possible by sympathetic disinterestedness. Her very Smithian morality is her capacity for selfless love and willingness for self-sacrifice. After the friends' hiding place at Glen Falls is discovered, Cora urges Natty, Chingachgook and Uncas to leave herself and Alice. Magua does not intend to harm the girls, but the men risk death. The sisters are captured, but Cora's sacrifice allows the others to live. As we have seen throughout this project, Smith's notion of disinterestedness becomes tied up with political notions of self-sacrifice. For Smith self-sacrifice is the highest order of morality. He writes that it is our impartial spectator, "the inhabitant of the breast, the man within," our moral sentiment that "prompts the generous, upon all occasions, and the mean upon many, to sacrifice their own interests in the greater interests of others" (*Theory* III.iii.4). For British and American national identities, as we have seen in earlier chapters, self-sacrifice becomes associated with the birth of the nation in the sense that subjects/citizens are willing to perform this selfless social action for the greater moral good of the developing national ethos.

Cora's willingness to sacrifice her liberty both at Glen Falls and again in the Wyandot camp in order that her friends and sister might go free as well as her willingness to sacrifice her life for her friends, again unites African-Americans and Native-Americans to a common cause. Cora's sacrifice marks her as a true American.²³⁸ Cora reminds readers that her blood, like Magua's and Tamenund's, makes her a victim of oppression: "Like thee and thine, venerable

²³⁸ Alice on the other hand is no patriot; Alice never offers a similar sacrifice. Cooper also condemns Europeans for this lack of selflessness. Montcalm clearly violates Cooper's Smithian influenced definition of patriotism. He puts the interests of himself and his nation above those of common humanity when he stands aside and allows the Wyandots to massacre the English.

chief,' she continued, pressing her hands convulsively on her heart . . . 'the curse of my ancestors has fallen heavily on their child!'" (344), but her self-sacrifice also marks her, according to Smith's theory and American conceptions of virtue, as the ideal citizen. The American Revolution emphasized equality and politicized self-sacrifice because self-sacrifice becomes a means of active resistance that, for Cooper, could overwrite a history of oppression, racial intolerance and dispossession. In *Mohicans* self-sacrifice is a patriotic act that, despite its significance for America, grows from a transatlantic and transracial context. Cora's sacrifice repudiates the insularity of Americans' racist attitudes and foregrounds their forgetfulness regarding America's commitment to support liberty and equality universally.²³⁹ Cora's death, her sacrifice, creates a national memory that advocates for the cultivation of sympathetic bonds that then enable greater historical self-consciousness and social change.

Cooper is best remembered for his Leatherstocking novels, *The Last of the Mohicans* in particular, because these novels seem to capture an "American" spirit. However, if we read Cooper's works within the context of his literary oeuvre as a whole, his historical milieu, his inheritance from the intellectual environment of the Enlightenment and specifically Adam Smith, we can reveal Cooper's cosmopolitan belief in an American identity based on the strength of its multiplicity, sympathetic and trans(national)/racial bonds. Reading Cooper within these larger contexts shows Cooper's serious engagement with the connections between race, national identity, and America's place within a transatlantic and transnational world. Cooper challenges

²³⁹ Cooper ties question of Native rights in *The Last of the Mohicans* to the concurrent War of Independence in Greece against the oppressive Ottoman Empire. Cooper prefaces the chapter about Uncas' death with an epigraph that connects American issues of oppression with the larger world.—A poem written by Cooper's friend Fitz-Greene Halleck, that quickly became famous after its publication in *The New York Review and Atheneum* in 1825, celebrates the life and patriotic death of a young Greek military leader. The connection between Uncas' death and the Greek cause demonstrates, again, Cooper's dedication to principles of liberty and independence for all nations. For more on Cooper's relationship with the Greek cause see Sanborn particularly Chapter 2.

older European social structures, but he also challenges America to live up to its conception of itself as a nation that promotes liberty and equality. While not all of Cooper's questions or anxieties about land-rights, identity and race have an easy answer, his novels open the way for individuals to discover a more humane and equal vision of racial commonality. Cooper's writings invoke both a sense of national betrayal and a sense of national belonging. In the way Cooper thinks about the "equality, liberty, security and justice" (IV.ii.1) to which Adam Smith aspired in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he offers America the ability to participate in a cosmopolitan global society by both reinforcing and transcending nationalist principles.

In this chapter I argue that Cooper uses Smithian notions of sympathy to move away from parochial definitions of national identity, and instead he uses sentiment to think about how a cosmopolitan ideology might help individuals negotiate between their individual or local identities and their national or even global identities. Cooper's cosmopolitanism promotes solidarity between nations and between cultures. He asks readers to recognize the wider nature of their community and how this wider frame of reference must incorporate multiple frames of reference. Cooper's cosmopolitanism and his notion of sympathy go hand in hand because both concepts arise from the sense that all humans are equally important and valuable. It is this definition of sympathy that unites Cooper and Smith: sympathy denies that some differences are better than others and insists that we must distance ourselves from our world view to understand the world through the eyes of others. In the next chapter I look at Smith and Olaudah Equiano as writers who also combine sympathy and cosmopolitanism. Equiano's cosmopolitanism points to our need to be aware of the way in which identities are informed by context. It is Equiano's position of sympathetic cosmopolitanism that can also help us understand Smith as a cosmopolitan thinker.

Chapter 5: Adam Smith, Olaudah Equiano and the Situatedness of Sentimental Cosmopolitanism

In the previous chapter I argue that reading James Fenimore Cooper's works in conjunction with Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* provides a means for understanding Cooper as more than a parochial nationalist writer in favor of imperialism. The universalist strands of thought in Cooper are revealed when his works are read with Smith's conception of natural jurisprudence in mind.²⁴⁰ The fact that Cooper's writings so pointedly describe an understanding of the nature of multiple social identities that look both inside and beyond the borders of nationalism suggests the need to read Cooper as a cosmopolitan author.²⁴¹ Cooper's cosmopolitanism asks what moral obligations we owe not just to our fellow-citizens but to our fellow human beings by examining the rights of individuals who reside within a nation but who are excluded from its polity.²⁴² Because he assumes each individual's basic moral rights include rights to self-ownership and land ownership, Cooper's arguments raise specters of unredressed

²⁴⁰ Smith believes in a natural jurisprudence: the idea that mankind has an instinctive and universally recognizable aversion to harm. He argues that it is harder for individuals or societies to agree on a universal definition of morality or goodness, but some moral violations, notably those violations of individual rights of freedom and self-ownership "are what no custom will ever reconcile us to, what no fashion will ever render agreeable" (IV.v.2). This sense that each society is entitled to its own moral particularisms grounded within certain moral principles whose ultimate foundation is universal, lead towards a global language of ethics that offers, an offer Cooper takes up, the potential for cosmopolitanism.

²⁴¹ Immanuel Kant is usually associated with the universalist moral project of cosmopolitanism, rarely Smith and hardly ever Cooper. Kant is most often credited with working out and expanding the Stoics' cosmopolitan theory. Kant argues the innate right of all humans is the right to freedom by virtue only of their humanity; he calls this the "cosmopolitan right" ("Perpetual Peace" 99-105). But I argue that we need to change the way we read Cooper and Smith in order to better understand them.

²⁴² Cooper's concern with cosmopolitanism and the tensions he explores, sometimes unintentionally, between the promises of universalism and the realities of national/cultural/racial borders come remarkably close to modern philosophies of cosmopolitanism. Seyla Benhabib, for example, describes cosmopolitanism as a "renegotiation of the boundaries between *ethnos* [a community bound together by the power of shared fate, memories, solidarity and belonging] and *demos* [the citizens and voters who are authorized to determine the content of democratic law] such that the core nation reconstitutes itself in more universalistic terms" ("Reply" 174). In other words, Benhabib advocates for forms of democratic authority that act independently from the historical specificity of national boundaries, so that democratic decision making "can be exercised at local and regional as well as supra- and transnational levels" ("Reply" 172).

acts of European imperial conquest and exploitation against America's indigenous populations and enslaved Africans. Therefore, the questions Cooper raises about the difficulty of negotiating between a moral universalism and the particularity of national boundedness make his work an ideal, if unexpected, complement to Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African Written by Himself* (1789). In the *Narrative* Equiano expounds on the issues Cooper raises about the injustices perpetrated when freedom is founded on the possession of property. In his attempt to disentangle the "conflation of liberty and property" (Gould 123), Equiano asks how we can construct a global or cosmopolitan identity that extends past the boundaries of either individual property or the borders of a nation. Equiano questions how we can overcome our geographical and cultural situatedness—our blindness to our moral particularities generated by our social and cultural expectations—and acknowledge that each individual's identity is hybrid, fluid, can vary according to context and relies on a transnational community.

My chapter on Equiano follows my chapter on Cooper because each author's treatment of cultural situatedness illuminates the other's relevance to cosmopolitan thinking and therefore justifies my break with the otherwise chronological organization of this project. I also end with Equiano because Equiano's concern with hybrid identity and increasing global economic interaction has particular relevance for twenty-first century cosmopolitan thinking. At first glance Cooper and Equiano may seem to inhabit opposing social positions. The former is generally held to be an apologist for white, imperial domination in nineteenth-century America, while the latter is seen as a champion for blacks caught up in the eighteenth-century's transatlantic slave trade. Yet we could, as we did with Cooper and Jane Austen, make a list of superficial similarities. For instance, Cooper and Equiano use Milton's *Paradise Lost* as a way to

both demonstrate and refute European assimilation, and both describe episodes in which innocuous animals are mistaken for “savages” intent on destroying the protagonists—beavers for Cooper and flamingoes for Equiano.²⁴³

More substantial comparisons would note that Equiano, like Cooper, has not been free from criticisms that charge him with an imperial agenda. A binary opposition organizes criticism of Equiano. He is either a revolutionary who fashions a “‘transgressive’ narrative self that deliberately undoes the binary oppositions of racial essentialism” (Warren 94) or an “accommodationist” (Fichtelberg 460) who, although clearly working to subvert racist “theories of tropical degeneration and native indolence” (Murphy 562), is nonetheless implicated “in the imperialist project despite himself” (Murphy 567). Critics who read Equiano as complicit with an imperial agenda see Equiano as tied to and shaped by British values that he cannot escape; they see Equiano as unable to transcend his situatedness. These critics cannot find a way to reconcile Equiano’s dual identity. Instead they claim Equiano’s Englishness “constitute[s] Equiano as the bourgeois subject [,] . . . [complicit with] the imperial gaze as well as western modes of knowing” (Murphy 567,553).

In many ways criticisms of Equiano that see him as complicit with imperialism or that see him as an accommodationist reiterate criticisms leveled at sentimentalism and cosmopolitanism. As I discuss in Chapter 1, critics of sentimentalism allege that despite the claim that sentiment universalizes human experience to promote equality, constructions of “universal human nature often bore all too markedly the imprint of European culture and history”

²⁴³As we saw in the last chapter, Heyward spies a group of beavers and their dams which he mistakes for a village of murderous Indians. In Equiano’s *Narrative*, Equiano and his crew discover some flamingoes that “appeared to us, at a little distance, as large as men . . . [O]ur captain swore they were cannibals. This created a great panic among us . . . [but] when we approached them, to our very great joy and no less wonder, they walked off one after the other very deliberately; and at last they took flight, and relieved us entirely from our fears. (152)

(Anderson 282), and therefore sentimentalism actually helps buttress cultural and racial divisions.²⁴⁴ Bonnie Honig similarly argues against cosmopolitan theory that “cosmopolitan norms do not dispense with the need for membership; they just change the venue of membership” (107). Honig continues her critique: cosmopolitanism as the “political (re)formation” of “a site of belonging is surely a way to resecure and not just attenuate or transcend national belonging” (114).

In other words, critics of sentimentalism, cosmopolitanism and Equiano argue that all three are shaped by a “foundational ethnocentrism” (Gilroy 55) that precludes any space for the voice or participation of the “other.” However, following Philip Gould’s lead that writers like Equiano push at “unstable semantic boundaries” (116), I argue that Equiano, despite clear and numerous protestations of love and loyalty to Britain that no doubt pander to Britain’s imperialistic “humanizing” and “civilizing” agendas, purposely transcends and obscures reductionist categories to look beyond the borders of national allegiances and recognize that cultures are not isolated units. Equiano’s *Narrative* marks a transition between sentimentalism as a marker of moral and thus political/imperial authority for Britons and sentiment as a cosmopolitan argument against inequality.

Equiano’s *Narrative* does present apparently conflicting views on attaching value to characteristics like ethnicity, race, or nationality. For example, readings that judge or criticize Equiano for collaborating with imperial aims frequently focus on Equiano’s association with the

²⁴⁴ Or as Lynn Festa explains, sentimentalism “disguise[s] the labor of making the object [the other] in one's own image . . . It admits select individuals rather than whole classes of persons into the community of feeling, while withholding the recognition of equal rights” (65)

Sierra Leone project²⁴⁵ or on his plan for “civilizing” Africa via an imperial economic plan. Critics typically censure Equiano’s comment that “[i]ndustry, enterprise, and mining, will have their full scope, proportionably as they civilize . . . [They will] lay open an endless field of commerce to the British manufacturers and merchant adventurers. The manufacturing interest and the general interests are synonymous [sic]” (335). Geraldine Murphy states, “[w]ith postcolonial hindsight, we wince at such sentiments” (561), and Srinivas Aravamudan similarly notes Equiano’s colonial indoctrination. He writes, despite Equiano’s “trenchant critique of slavery,” he is trapped with “the cultural particularity of British imperial agendas which thus leads him to the position of “black British entrepreneur . . . [who] occasionally collaborat[es] with the slave trade itself” (236). But while these examples demonstrate that conflicts between perceptions of moral value, civilization and race are not easily resolved, they do not demonstrate the failure of Equiano’s cosmopolitan aims. Equiano urges his readers not to see themselves as beholden to particularized social standards; he wants his readers to judge the institution of slavery from outside its British social and economic contexts, and he asks his readers to find

²⁴⁵The Sierra Leone Project was an attempt to resettle in Africa the poor blacks living in London, as well as Africans living in Nova Scotia and American slaves who fought for Britain during the American Revolution, or slaves who had escaped to Britain from America. The Sierra Leone project expressed the abolitionists’ desire to emancipate Blacks by means of resettling them in an African homeland. The project lasted only four years from 1787 to 1791, although the colony was reestablished in 1808 as a Crown colony. Carretta notes, “Equiano was the only person of African descent to be involved in the organization of the project . . . [H]e was to act as the official representative of the British government in dealings with the local African authorities in Sierra Leone” (*Interesting Narrative* iv). Ostensibly the hopes for Sierra Leone were to establish an asylum that recognized Africans as freemen and royal subjects. As I state in the introduction of this chapter, new institutions or policies that search for an institution that supports human rights find it difficult to achieve their aims without creating additional injustices. Initially black loyalists lobbied “the administration of William Pitt to insist on the land and supplies they had been promised on embarking from New York. When that did not work they petitioned for transportation to Sierra Leone” (C.Brown 295). However, these same lobbyists, including Equiano fought the Sierra Leone project over its corruption and their growing concerns about the government’s true intentions—a renegeing on promises that blacks had legitimacy in the eyes of the state and promises of freedom. The project was ultimately a failure. For more on the Sierra Leone project see Christopher Brown *Moral Capital* pp.279-322, Deirdre Coleman *Romantic Colonization*, and Stephen Braidwood *Black Poor* pp.102-103, 149-58.

their place in a universal human community by extending their moral sentiments beyond national prejudices and geographies.

Equiano needs to be read through a cosmopolitan framework. This framework is best accessed through Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* because Smith's complicated thoughts on the way morality is both subject to and separate from social judgment illuminate the way Equiano invokes the sympathetic imagination to acknowledge commonalities between all cultures and races as well as, importantly, to insist on the acceptability of their difference.²⁴⁶ This Smithian framework allows us to deconstruct models of Equiano's imperial complicity and reconstruct him as a cosmopolitan author who demonstrates that the ability to navigate multiple identities and allegiances will become a necessity for all individuals within the eighteenth-century's increasingly global network.

I argue that Smith can help us understand Equiano as a cosmopolitan author. However, the purpose of this chapter is two-fold. I also argue that Equiano's complex economic and moral ideology helps us understand the cosmopolitan potential in Smith's thought.²⁴⁷ Reading Smith

²⁴⁶ To build on my comment in the Introduction, there is no written record that Equiano read Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* or his *Wealth of Nations*. However, based on facts that both of Smith's texts were widely available, both texts were recommended reading for any "gentleman," a status to which Equiano aspired and achieved, and that both texts were widely quoted in support of abolitionist propaganda, it seems to me very unlikely Equiano would not have been familiar with Smith's work. Equiano was a friend and correspondent to Thomas Clarkson who used Smith to bolster his own abolitionist arguments. Additionally, other critics, like Christine Levecq, have argued that many of Equiano's arguments were adapted from the economic/abolitionist arguments of Anthony Benezet. Benezet was a Quaker and part of the Quaker lobby "to litter the press with selections from anti-slavery literature" (C.Brown 429). This literature included "excerpts from a variety of genres and authorities[including] antislavery texts by Rush, Warton and Ignatius Sancho . . . They drew on the intellectual authority of such renowned philosophers as Montesquieu, Hume and Adam Smith,[and] recent critiques of the Spanish, French and British empires . . . written by John Campbell, Abbe Raynal and Thomas Parker" (C.Brown 430). Benezet's own work also draws on Smith. The point here is that even if Equiano had not read Smith directly, which I think unlikely, Smith's thoughts on slavery and empire were well recognized, well established as a reputable authority and widely disseminated in some form.

²⁴⁷ The preceding chapters show how Smith's *Theory* can illuminate connections of understanding between Smith and the authors I discuss as well as across chapters, but in this chapter I make it explicit that the exchange of ideas between Smith and these authors can also reveal new ways of understanding Smith.

and Equiano together as cosmopolitan thinkers changes how we view both authors. Smith is not often discussed in relation to cosmopolitanism, but Smith's sense that affective connections form moral allegiances that trump national, ethnic or class allegiances resonates with the questions Equiano's *Narrative* raises about the tensions between an individual's moral responsibility to particular local and universal global affiliations.

As I have demonstrated throughout this project, the search for an institution that supports human rights without engendering new forms of injustice, particularly with respect to the disempowered and disenfranchised is problematic. Robert Post notes, "[e]ven after endless reiterations, human society seems to remain recalcitrantly divided. Perhaps this is because persons tend to inhabit solidarities produced by . . . the social embodiment of temporal modalities (9).²⁴⁸ Both Smith's and Equiano's projects consider how we might extend our sympathy to those who do not move our self-interest, those who, as Post describes, live outside our particular "temporal modalities" (9), and by studying Equiano's moral sentiment, we can better understand Smith's insistence on the necessity of disinterestedness and the necessity for moral mediation between the particular and the universal as part of his cosmopolitan impulse.

The first half of this chapter examines how Smith and Equiano think about conflicts of situatedness as step towards a cosmopolitan ideology of common humanity; the second half uses sentiment as a way to understand how both Smith and Equiano create fluid rather than bounded national identities. The attention Smith and Equiano pay to the relationship between physical space and affective space for moral action resonates with twenty-first century concerns about

²⁴⁸ By "temporal modality" Post means the solidarities produced by shared cultural and historical memories as well as anticipated achievements in the solidarity's (i.e. a national, local, familial etc. group's) future; "the social form of these orientations toward past and future" (9).

cosmopolitanism, for example, the ways in which ideas about ‘race,’ ethnicity, nationality and universal justice/rights are constructed by an appeal to Western particularity. Even potentially troubling aspects of Smith and Equiano’s thoughts like stadial theory or the benefits of free-trade can be seen as cosmopolitan when we read Smith and Equiano together contrapuntally. The cosmopolitan implication of the sentimental trope of disinterestedness is that if the sympathetic imagination allows us to transcend our own situatedness, our own cultural particularity, then we may be in a position to formulate global rules that don’t ask us to choose between the local and the global but can generate basic rules for egalitarian justice and the protection of human rights.²⁴⁹

The Situatedness of Equiano’s and Smith’s Cosmopolitanism

Granville Sharp in his *The Law of Retribution: or, A serious warning to Great Britain and her colonies* (1776) epitomizes the eighteenth-century’s cosmopolitan sentiment. He states, “we are absolutely bound to consider ourselves as *Citizens of the World*; that every Man whatever, without any *partial distinction* of Nation, Distance, or Complexion, must necessarily be esteemed *our Neighbour, and our Brother*” (6). Sharp here highlights two cosmopolitan

²⁴⁹ Of course reality is never this easy. Critics of cosmopolitanism argue that despite the claims of cosmopolitans to be truly interested in the needs of all humans, these needs are almost always defined by Western standards and this ethnocentric position therefore undermines any claims to truly universal ideals. Elitism is another argument against cosmopolitanism. That privileged individuals who do have the freedom to move around the globe fail to value “place-bound traditions and the ways in which ‘people are moved by commitments to each other’ in particular contexts” (Calhoun 893). Advocates for cosmopolitanism, however, like David Held, argue that there are principles that are universal in scope. Held claims there are eight universal principles that express the idea of each individual’s right to self-worth: “1. equal worth and dignity; 2. active agency; 3. personal responsibility and accountability; 4. consent; 5. collective decision-making about public matters through voting procedures; 6. inclusiveness and subsidiarity; 7. avoidance of serious harm; and 8. sustainability” (12). Equiano and Smith both recognize the complications of a cosmopolitan position in their complex views on social and racial hierarchies, but fundamentally they both believe in the possibility of a cosmopolitan social structure that treats individuals as equals regardless of their nationality or race. For both, national interests can be pursued as long as these interests do not violate the underlying global code of justice, and as Amanda Anderson reminds us, even an idealised cosmopolitanism can allow “dominated groups to struggle for inclusion under the rubric of the Rights of Man” (282).

ideologies: the cosmopolitan desire to transcend geographical, national or political categorization and the sense of “mediated solidarity between strangers, emerging from our shared humanity” (Paquet 84). Equiano also makes the same claims. He considers himself among “the citizens of the world” (337). As a citizen of the world he can create a space for himself in a world that traditionally denied political recognition to Africans by embracing the transnational identity of the cosmopolitan traveler. Equiano’s abolitionist agenda also depends on the cosmopolitan message of “brotherhood,” the belief that each human being in the world is of equal value and importance.

In both these instances Equiano’s cosmopolitanism is a function of his identity: either the acceptance of a dual national identity or the proclamation of a larger global identity. If critics talk about Equiano in terms of cosmopolitanism, it is this sense of identity they discuss. Michael Scrivener writes, “[f]ew writers could have the cosmopolitan credentials of Equiano, world traveler and transatlantic citizen” (*Cosmopolitan* 3); Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould argue that Equiano’s dual identity and transatlantic voyages create a narrative of “diasporic movement and cultural encounter” (Carretta and Gould 2), and Robert Desrocher talks about the Atlantic experience as a cosmopolitan gateway that allowed Equiano, among others, to freely travel the world and experience a space where “without any *partial distinction*” (Sharp 6), every man could be considered a brother. The “Atlantic maritime culture flowed with egalitarian undercurrents that mediated the ways race worked aboard ship . . . [black sailors] rubbed shoulders with whites who cherished fragile “liberty” almost as much as they did, and who resisted attempts to deprive them of it” (Desrocher 155). As a result of this Atlantic space, Equiano can create a persona that tests “the limits of national, colonial, imperial, and racial boundaries” (Desrochers 165).

Additionally, Carretta and Srinivas Aravamudan see Equiano's physical narrative as the manifestation of Equiano's cosmopolitan identity. Carretta argues that Equiano's title and his frontispiece portrait allow Equiano to assume, unlike other black writers of the period like Ignatius Sancho and Phyllis Wheatley, authority over his self-representation.²⁵⁰ In this self-representation, Carretta argues, the *Interesting Narrative's* very title is a way of signaling Equiano's multiple identities: the *Narrative* is "interesting" since "[Equiano's] audience can sympathize or even empathize with his life because it is emblematic of the human condition, and . . . his audience shares at least part of his cultural identity" ("Property"140). But, Carretta continues, Equiano's "*Narrative* is at the same time interesting in the more familiar modern sense of arousing curiosity and fascination because of his difference from his readers" ("Property"140). Similarly, Aravamudan remarks on the transformations to Equiano's portrait over subsequent publications and some American editions. Equiano's coloring is lightened but the engraver, Cornelius Tiebout, "styles his hair to make him appear typically African American. Equiano's features in the American edition seem to have been altered with the goal to make him seem more multiracial and thereby less alien to a differently racist audience from that addressed by the British editions" (246-47). These changes are clearly meant to reflect Equiano's ability to represent and speak to a global audience.

²⁵⁰ Carretta's chapter "'Property of the Author'" explains how Sancho and Wheatley did not have control over how they were represented, and the subsequent portraits of both cement their roles as privileged and educated African-Britons, but Africans who nonetheless remain outside and subservient to Anglo-Britons or Anglo-Americans. Carretta notes, however, that Equiano on the other hand was able to publish his *Narrative* "without any of the authenticating documentation or mediation by white authorities that prefaces the works of Wheatley, Sancho and other eighteenth-century Black writers to reassure readers that the claim of authorship is valid and to imply that their words have been supervised before publication" (140). Consequently, Equiano in the process of writing, publishing and distributing his book makes a claim for equality and cultural integration that other Black writers, like Sancho and Wheatley, do not achieve.

The way(s) in which Equiano chooses to identify himself is/are of course a large part of the import of Equiano's abolitionist agenda, but Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* is not, or not only, cosmopolitan because of its vast geography or Equiano's multiple national identities;²⁵¹ instead, for Equiano, cosmopolitanism is a sociocultural *practice*, a way of organizing the world to accommodate otherness: a way of moving individuals towards the disinterestedness of the impartial spectator and for detaching individuals and nations from cultural particularity. This distinction is important because while no critic would deny Equiano's "importance to abolition" or his place as "a crucial eighteenth-century Anglo-African" (Wheeler 350), readings that focus on Equiano's dual selves also often see Equiano as complicit in imperial ventures. In these readings Equiano's dual selves must result in a "powerful bifurcation of possible identities, an oxymoronic opposition between being loyal to nation or to negritude" (F. Nussbaum 56) that necessarily denies the possibility of Equiano's cosmopolitan practice.

Thus for critics like Roxann Wheeler and Emily Field, "the more troublesome aspects of [Equiano's] narrative, such as when he is ambiguous about slavery or praises Europeans" (Wheeler 351) mean Equiano cannot be truly cosmopolitan. Rather, he has subsumed his loyalty "to negritude" (Nussbaum 56), and he has assimilated to colonial ideologies in his desire "to be master of others" and his need to gain "ascendancy over the primitive" (Field 28). Consequently,

²⁵¹Scrivener dedicates much of his chapter on Equiano in *The Cosmopolitan ideal* to teasing out Equiano's contesting identities. He explains Equiano uses an African identity to establish his authenticity as a spokesperson for abolition and African humanity. However, I argue Equiano's text is cosmopolitan because he enacts identity as a social process. Thanks to Vincent Carretta's work on Equiano, it is now well known that Equiano was in all probability born in South Carolina rather than Africa, although Scrivener contests this view. See Carretta's "Three West Indian Writers of the 1780s Revisited and Revised" (85). Adam Potkay also argues that Equiano's "true" identity doesn't really matter "because its importance lies in "its role in the cultural archive" (602-3). Equiano's birthplace may not matter to contemporary critics so much as the historical effect and political import of his *Narrative*, but the process of Equiano's fluid identity is crucial to our understanding. Equiano nonviolently negotiates conflicting national allegiances and moves away from narrow national interests; cosmopolitanism is the most viable and moral form for international relations.

readings that focus on Equiano's identity as a simple Afro-British hybrid or criticisms that claim Equiano does not successfully negotiate his transnational identity miss the way Equiano asserts the social constructedness of identity. The acknowledgement of social constructedness leads Equiano to question the moral significance of national boundaries in order to create a cosmopolitan alternative to empire. Equiano thinks about cosmopolitanism as a method, and we can better understand his cosmopolitanism as a means of moving individuals away from culturally bounded identities by studying Smith's thoughts on situatedness and the process of developing the sympathetic imagination.

In his *Theory* Smith recognizes the difficulty of transcending the situatedness of our cultural bias. Each individual comes to know himself via the social "mirror" through which we first see ourselves (III.i.1). As a result, we learn how we should feel and act based on a socially determined "point of propriety" (I.i.1) that conditions our moral judgments. Smith demonstrates this principle of social conditioning with aesthetic and moral examples. The social influence on aesthetic judgment reveals that, "different ideas are formed in different nations concerning the beauty of the human shape and countenance! A fair complexion is a shocking deformity upon the coast of Guinea" (V.1). From this aesthetic example it is easy to see the similar effects of society on moral sentiments. Different social circumstances create different moral values that each culture believes "the most beautiful" because they are "customary" (V.1). To illustrate his point, Smith describes how the hardships Native Americans face in daily life produce a "heroic and unconquerable firmness" (V.2), and therefore this society values magnanimity over displays of emotion.²⁵² In fact, Native Americans would disdain the weak and effeminate passions a "young

²⁵²As I explain in Chapter 4, Smith uses "magnanimity" in the sense of nobility or stoicism.

French nobleman” might exhibit when he “weeps in the presence of the whole court, upon being refused a regiment” (V.II).²⁵³ Smith details the variability of values and beliefs across cultures in order to promote disinterested self-reflexivity. This disinterestedness allows us to see that human nature, while possessing fundamental similarities and values, cannot be judged according to one standard.²⁵⁴

The implication of Smith’s thought here is a sort of cultural pluralism that offers potential for cosmopolitan thinkers like Equiano.²⁵⁵ If different societies value different aesthetics and even different morals, then morality is not a fixed entity but a social condition that is dynamic and fluid. This means that even if a society has fallen into a corruption that has become normalized—slavery, as an example, where slave owners are reinforced for their behavior by society— that cultural identity is not static and those social values can be changed. Society can come to value another system, free-trade for instance, over slavery. For both Smith and Equiano, the key to social change is the sympathetic imagination which then enables the impartial

²⁵³ As I’ve mentioned, Smith uses a stadial view of history here that can be problematic because it contrasts cultures like Native American societies with “civilized” European cultures in a cultural trajectory that passes from “savagery” through “barbarism” to “civilization” (*LJ* 149). However, Smith uses these examples to reveal the partiality we are conditioned to employ when making moral judgments against those who do not share our cultural experiences. Smith uses this cultural pluralism to demonstrate the relative term of “savagery” and the hypocrisies of European society.

²⁵⁴ This is part of the reason why Smith is a pluralist rather than a relativist. Smith supposes universal values “self-love,” “benevolence,” “impartiality,” “courage,” “awe” toward “sacred” rules,” “gratitude,” and “self-command,” (*Theory* see particularly V.ii), but depending on historical circumstances these values are displayed in varying degrees.

²⁵⁵ Neither Smith nor Equiano uses the term “pluralism” directly, but it is what they describe. Twenty-first century definitions primarily suggest cultural pluralism means: “The presence or tolerance of a diversity of ethnic or cultural groups within a society or state” (OED 4.). But the OED also defines cultural pluralism as “(the advocacy of) toleration or acceptance of the coexistence of differing views, values, cultures, etc.” It is this second definition to which Smith refers: what is proper in one culture may not be so in another, but neither culture should be judged entirely against the standards of propriety of the other. While this may seem closer to relativism, Smith is not a relativist. He does believe there should be some universal moral standards. Although we should be careful about the way we judge other individuals and other cultures because we are not situated within the same context, it is not sufficient to say every culture or moral standard is equally valid. As Smith notes in his example about infanticide in Greece (n. 22), moral standards may become corrupt; therefore, we must constantly evaluate our culture and other cultures from the perspective of the impartial spectator. It is a tricky line to walk, but ultimately Smith’s pluralism is a way to acknowledging deep cultural diversity without resorting to relativism.

spectator to help enlarge our perspective and refine our moral judgments. This is one of the reasons Equiano spends so much of the first half of his *Narrative* describing his life in Africa—he hopes to expose readers to other cultures in order that we might recognize the limitations of our social ideals. The development of our impartial spectator via the sympathetic imagination can detach us from our social values in order to overcome the cultural bias our situatedness produces.

Equiano questions whether it is possible to judge individuals or societies that are unfamiliar to us without judging them via our own frames of reference. Equiano, like Smith, believes we can overcome our situatedness, and as a result Equiano demonstrates throughout his *Narrative* the constructedness of social values, and, importantly, he also demonstrates how these values can and do change. The section of the *Narrative* that describes Equiano's childhood, his kidnapping and his early years as a slave among whites is meant to change his readers' perceived frame of reference so that Equiano can later develop this evidence for pluralism into a cosmopolitan method for removing the justifications for slavery.

Equiano stresses that his people possess the natural and spontaneous impulses of the European understanding of "the man of feeling": "we are almost a nation of dancers, musicians, and poets" (34). But he also points out that the "chief employment in all these countries [within Africa] was agriculture, and both the males and females, as with us, were brought up to it, and trained in the arts of war" (55). In his descriptions of the Africans' sentimental refinement and their idyllic agrarianism, Equiano deliberately constructs Africa as a nation that, save for the capitalist and commercial opportunities waiting to be realized, corresponds with what white readers on both sides of the Atlantic would have recognized, from texts like Smith's *Theory*, as a

description of the ideal civilization.²⁵⁶ Equiano offers Britain a vision of a society possessing the qualities to which an ideal civilization should aspire: industry, modesty, cleanliness, “hardiness, intelligence, integrity, and zeal” (38) without the “feminized” corruption of luxury commerce and excessive refinements.²⁵⁷

The purpose of Equiano’s description here is, as critics like Scrivener have noticed, “to oppose the racist images of African society and to establish the humanity of Essaka’s people” (*Cosmopolitan* 114). This purpose is particularly apparent in contrast to Equiano’s description of the inhumanity of the first whites he encounters. They are “horrible” in appearance, so peculiar that Equiano believes they might be evil “spirits” (55), and he expects “to be eaten” at any moment because they “looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty” (56).²⁵⁸ However, Equiano’s

²⁵⁶ In the *Theory* Smith is of course an advocate for British commercial society, but he also criticizes the potential of commerce to corrupt self-interest and to weaken the attachment of citizens to the common good, ultimately rendering them effeminate and incapable of the martial virtues necessary for civil defense (*Theory* IV.ii.1). Christine Levecq argues that Equiano describes the ideal Republican state that would have resonated with American readers. Equiano’s text represents Africa as a repository for “republican or civic humanist values of virtue, citizenship, and devotion to the public good”(28). Equiano “represents a society organized around clearly republican principles. It is built on a communitarian ethic . . . as the embodiment of a pre-liberal state . . . that was still holding onto the national political imaginary” (21).

²⁵⁷ As we saw in Chapter 1, in my discussion of Sterne’s starling, the eighteenth-century was concerned, even as it embraced, the effects of commercialization. Festa argues that critics of empire believed that “the influx of luxury goods would spawn effeminacy, enervation, decadence, and corruption, epitomized in the reviled figures of the luxurious West Indian Creole and the nabob”(49). While Lori Merish explains the contradictions attendant with an emerging consumer culture that “instated a particular form of liberal ‘political subjectivity’ and an identificatory logic interior to that subjectivity” (2). The “social and political value of consumption have focused on gender as a primary analytic: consumer goods were widely depicted as ‘feminizing’ material forms, instrumental in the production and representation of gendered forms of subjectivity (8). Consumer “artifacts became essential to [the] ‘civilized subject’” (25), but also were “dismissed as apolitical and a form of disparaged women’s work”(9). While at the same time abolitionists and other humanitarian and religious organizations argue that by “[i]nscripting a realm of ‘civilized’ materiality, consumption” (12) perpetuates “injustices by ‘rendering invisible those who are not consumers’”(8)

²⁵⁸ Equiano continues to reverse racial expectations throughout his Narrative. As another example, in his description of the abhorrent treatment of slaves in the West Indies, he asks, “do not the assembly which enacted it, deserve the appellation of savages and brutes rather than of Christians and men? It is an act at once unmerciful, unjust, and unwise; which for cruelty would disgrace an assembly of those who are called barbarians; and for its injustice and insanity would shock the morality and common sense of a Samaide or a Hottentot” (109). Carretta explains,

descriptions don't just demonstrate African humanity. Like Smith, Equiano shows how aesthetic and moral values are dependent on social conditioning; he overturns the European sense of superiority in moral and religious righteousness. As his audience read about themselves as cannibals, "nominal Christians!," and how they sacrifice "every tender feeling" to "avarice," "luxury and lust of gain" (61), they must to confront how they must appear to others. By changing the frame of reference by which readers judge Equiano, Africans and themselves, Equiano asks his readers to recognize the way social conditions shape social values. And by conflating and confusing supposedly "national" characteristics—who are the savages? who are the enlightened? — Equiano constructs Africa not as a land to be exploited but a nation in its own right, a nation that shares similarities with Britain. With the revelation of these similarities, Africa becomes part of an international dialogue that suggests exchange and not exploitation between the two nations will re-connect each nation with the common-good.

Equiano continues to reinforce how situatedness affects moral judgment. Like Smith and his argument, previously cited, that "different ideas are formed in different nations concerning the beauty of the human shape and countenance" (V.1), Equiano moves through the social influence on aesthetic judgment and then links social aesthetics with social morality. He recalls, "while in Africa to have seen three negro children, who were tawny, and another quite white, who were universally regarded by myself and the natives in general, as far as related to their complexions, as deformed" (38). European expectations are again reversed: blackness is valued

"Equiano is probably trying to sound unbiased by using examples from the geographical and racial extremes of humankind, commonly thought to be neither Negroes nor Caucasians" (272). Carretta's note further supports my claim that Equiano resists reconstructing a black/white binary but rather he wants individual value to be defined through egalitarian morals rather than solely through racial or national identity.

over whiteness. Therefore, “ideas of beauty are wholly relative” (38) and socially constructed. Equiano then shows how if we are oblivious to our socially conditioned standards, we may misjudge value. He gives two main examples that link aesthetic and moral judgments by showing how external appearance and internal capacity do not necessarily correlate. The first he quotes from Dr. Mitchel about Spaniards becoming “as dark coloured as our native Indians of Virginia” (44).²⁵⁹ In the second example he observes how the children of the Portuguese who settled in Sierra Leone “are now become, in their complexion, and in the woolly quality of their hair, perfect negroes, retaining however a smattering of the Portuguese language” (44). Equiano is explicit that these examples show how prejudice based on skin colour is simply a social construction that needs to be dismantled: “Surely the minds of the Spaniards did not change with their complexions!” (45). If the minds of the Spaniards remained the same even though their skin color darkened, then, Equiano hopes, “the prejudice that some conceive against the natives of Africa on account of their colour” (45) may be removed.

These examples are important because they demonstrate how Equiano approaches abolition as a cosmopolitan method of social reform: the first step is to recognize how biased our socially entrenched perspectives really are, and the second step is learning how to cultivate moral judgment at a critical distance from ourselves. To help us more fully understand Equiano’s process, Smith’s views on the social nature of morality are helpful. For Smith, social interactions are how we come to know who we are, and how to interpret the world. Individuals learn morality through their immersion in society and therefore morality is, in large part, the product of

²⁵⁹ John Mitchel wrote a paper on the “Causes of the Different Colours of Persons in Different Climates,” presented in 1744. As Carretta notes “Mitchel’s paper is found in *The Philosophical Transactions (From the Year 1743 to the Year 1750) Abridged and Disposed under General Heads. . . .* By John Martyn [1699-1768] (London, 1756), 10: 926-49” (246-247).

society.²⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Smith believes it is possible to overcome societal influence. Smith argues that even though each individual internalizes his or her society's rules and morals, mankind possesses a universal recognition of harm: the idea that humanity's aversion to cruelty is "natural," "instinctive" and thus universally recognizable (I.ii.3).²⁶¹ It is this impulse of feeling enabled by our sympathetic imagination when we observe harm that allows us to overcome social conditioning or laws of reason that might condone a harmful action.²⁶² He writes, "the characters and conduct of a Nero, or a Claudius, are what no custom [or fashion] will ever reconcile us to. . . [T]he sentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation . . . may be somewhat warped, [but] cannot be entirely perverted" (V.2).

Of course it is difficult for us to accept Smith's claims about a universal recognition of harm in light of mankind's history of culturally sanctioned atrocities including slavery, but Smith also explains these deviations. He explains that when self-interest, or national interest, gains the upper hand, we sever, or fail to cultivate, affective connections and acts of cruelty against others can become normalized. It is not that we fail to recognize cruelty, but that we fail to recognize others as similarly human. Once this dehumanization occurs then we "too often extinguish

²⁶⁰ Smith claims that without society, an individual "could no more think of his own character, of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face" (III.i.1). Smith calls this process of mediation between our sentiments and our social interactions—"sympathy."

²⁶¹ According to Smith cruelty is universally recognizable, but in contrast morally "good" actions are impossible to hold to a universal standard.

²⁶² There may seem to be a problem in asserting that all individuals recognize harm and then claiming some societies might condone harmful activities. Smith recognizes that some practices (his example is infanticide in ancient Greece) begin as measures of necessity, but become established norms: "by attempting to save [the infant], [the parent] could only hope for the consolation of dying with it" (V.2). We may deceive ourselves that our actions are good and suppress the moment of horror we have before killing a child, but we nonetheless all experience that instant of feeling that tells us our actions are wrong. For similar reasons Smith was not a utilitarian. The principle of universal harm counteracts theories of utilitarianism. While reason might tell us that harming one person for the sake of saving many is the best option, Smith argues that our feelings tell us harming the one is morally wrong.

altogether, that sacred regard to [life and property], which is the foundation of justice and humanity” (III.3).

Thus we can see why Equiano works so hard to establish a common humanity. A shared humanity means a shared conception of cruelty. Equiano acknowledges that every culture possesses different “manners and customs” (54), but these differences are not as important as each nation’s cooperation towards “the common support of life” (104) and “the honour of our common nature” (232). Additionally, and importantly for his larger cosmopolitan argument to which I will turn in the last section of this chapter, Equiano also stresses the commonality of each nations’ shared economic aspirations; everywhere he travels in Africa, “in all the places where I was, the soil was exceedingly rich; the pomkins, eadas, plantains, yams, &c. &c. were in great abundance, . . . and every where a great deal of tobacco. The cotton even grew quite wild; and there was plenty of red wood” (55). Equiano’s examples demonstrate that it is Europeans’ “mistaken avarice” that “corrupts” their “milk of human kindness” (110) and prevents them from recognizing slavery as the universal harm that it is.

The fact that Equiano’s *Narrative* focuses on standards of essential personhood that transcend national boundaries in an effort to abolish slavery is not original, which is the point: he employs the sentimental discourses of a common humanity circulating during this period. What makes both Equiano and Smith different is the way they use this common humanity narrative to move individuals towards universal moral action that emphasizes the particular. Like Smith, Equiano believes that social corruption can be overcome by changing the society’s current

values.²⁶³ Morality for both Equiano and Smith is a social process. The only way to overcome the “contagion” of moral corruption is to develop and educate our sympathetic imagination. It is this ability to imagine ourselves in another’s place which allows us to correct for the limits of self-interest by first detaching us from the particularities of cultural entanglements and then allowing us to judge ourselves as we judge others. This process in turn develops our impartial spectator.²⁶⁴ The truly moral person relies on the judgments of his or her impartial spectator rather than externally imposed rules. Thus moral standards ultimately become something each individual can judge independently from other people’s opinions. Because the sympathetic imagination is always developing in response to changing social dynamics and experiences, moral judgment is a process which is constantly under revision and can therefore lead to social reform.

This moral revision is what Equiano hopes to achieve. Equiano’s examples are intended to reveal that affective bias is developed from local self-interest and is the most significant impediment to moral development and justice. By deconstructing the constructedness of national/racial prejudice in his examples of the Essaka’s industry, European “savagery” and his examples of the Spaniards and the Portuguese who remain themselves but look like others, Equiano asks his readers to understand their own situatedness in order that they value the “other.”

²⁶³ Smith admits that “though commonly but a very few” in a corrupt society manage “to preserve their judgment untainted by the general contagion” (III.3), it is not impossible. Those few individuals who remain “untainted” can eventually reform social corruption because they represent the views of the impartial spectator: the impartial spectator is not misled by partial passions or selfish interest. The impartial spectator is an idealization of our society’s moral values; fundamentally individuals desire not praise but praiseworthiness—“to be that thing, which, though it should be praised by nobody, is, however, the natural and proper object of praise” (III.2.). Consequently, we are capable of being “praiseworthy” based on our own internal standard in a way that does not require external approval and disapproval. This is how we overcome our situatedness.

²⁶⁴ Even though we begin our moral development based on the opinions and reactions of others, eventually, the impartial spectator becomes, not an actual spectator who approves or disapproves of our conduct, but rather a creation of our imaginations.

Equiano argues that by imagining themselves as the other, individuals can develop their sympathetic imagination and overcome self-love particularly in the face of divisive geographies or cultural understanding.

Even as Equiano systematically deconstructs assumptions about the fixity of cultural or racial identity to place Africans within a common humanity, he is open to charges of accommodationism; critics like Wheeler argue, Equiano is “work[ing] on the assumption ‘of Africa’s unpolished state’” (266). Wheeler’s reading is based on statements from Equiano that claim Africa has not achieved civilized status. For example, his plea that a lack of civilization or even barbarity is no excuse for enslavement: “Let the polished and haughty European recollect that *his* ancestors were once, like the Africans, uncivilized, and even barbarous. Did Nature make them inferior to their sons? and should they too have been made slaves? Every rational mind answers, No” (45). Wheeler argues that although Equiano argues cultural differences between Africans and Europeans are focused on Africans’ situation and not their capacities, he “puts Africans on the bottom of a different binary related not solely to skin color but also to enlightenment” (226). But readings like these miss the cosmopolitan dimensions of Equiano’s over-arching argument.

It is true that Equiano makes statements that seem as though they adhere the European sense that Africans were “below the common level of humanity” (“Review” qtd. in Carretta *Interesting Narrative* x). For instance, in another of Equiano’s claims for a shared humanity, he argues that Africans are descendants of Old Testament Hebrews. Critics see this comparison as Equiano’s capitulation to Eurocentric and imperialist agendas that place Africans within the early stages of civil development; Equiano claims the pastoral state “which is described in Genesis” in which the ancient Jews lived, is a “strong analogy” that prevails “in the manners and customs of

my countrymen” and those of the Jews, before they reached the Land of Promise . . . — an analogy, which alone would induce me to think that the one people had sprung from the other” (43-44).

Equiano’s detractors see Equiano as implying that Africans, while they have the potential, have not yet progressed to the same level of civilization as modern Europeans. In a related argument, critics of cosmopolitanism argue that by collapsing circles of difference we open the door to imperial and oppressive policies. Uday Singh Mehta, for example, contends, “cosmopolitanism of reason” results in the argument that “the strange is just a variation on what is already familiar” (20). In other words, differences for both sets of critics become only “past points on the scale of civilizational progress” not as places in which “peoples lived and had deeply invested identities” (21). Since Equiano does fall back on stadial theory to, in part, explain social difference, and he argues for a cosmopolitan pluralism where “the strange is just a variation” (Mehta 20), it may seem that his line of thinking relies on an Eurocentric “scale of civilizational progress” (Mehta 21) that enables imperial agendas.²⁶⁵ But Equiano’s argument about common origins actually reinforces Equiano’s relevance to cosmopolitan and transatlantic ideologies in his belief that cultures and traditions are not isolated, but rather they “interpenetrate, interconnect and intermingle” (Beck 7).²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ As Festa argues, the extension of sympathetic identification in practice often only allows “allows the happy few to achieve provisional likeness of soul through human feeling . . . Despite the fact that [sympathy] appears to be all-embracing, it proceeds on a case-by-case basis, focusing on extraordinarily moving exemplars” (65) thus allowing for moral equality but not political or civic recognition.

²⁶⁶Equiano claims Africans were descended “from Afer and Afra, the descendants of Abraham by Keturah his wife and concubine” (44), and he draws on stadial theory categories when he compares his childhood Igbo society to ancient Hebrew society in their laws, governmental policies, and religious practices. Equiano’s choice of ancient Israelites as Africans’ common ancestors also refers to Exodus 6.6 and the Hebrew’s enslavement and divinely ordained freedom. The parallels Equiano sees with the Israelites not only places Africans as children of God, but also suggests the end of slavery is a heavenly decree.

Equiano's use of stadial theory to argue for African equality also makes more sense if we take the time to fully appreciate Smith's arguments about civilizational development. As critics of the Enlightenment point out, the stadial model of progressive civilization "could be read as an account exclusively of *Europe's* historical development, thereby supplying the rationale (for the Scots and others) for seeing Europe, in its progressive advancement, as enjoying the destiny of 'world empire'" (Carey and Trakulhun 242). Smith does see European societies as further along on the civilizational scale. He also believes all societies will eventually come to resemble European civilization, but, crucially, Smith also believes non-European societies will develop *without* colonial or imperial interventions. In contrast to many other writers of the period, including Austen, whose "benevolent" schemes of sympathy and inclusiveness rely on paternalistic models, Smith actively encourages independence for each nation.²⁶⁷ Smith is committed to political equality; he regards individual "natural liberty" and national "independence" as essential to systems of justice. In order to create a system of global ethics, "the natural laws of justice . . . which ought to run through and be the foundation of the laws of all nations" can only be created "without regard to the particular institutions of one nation" (VII.iv.1). Smith's thinking points towards contemporary ideals of cosmopolitan thought as an obligation to uphold the "equal moral standing of all human beings, and their entitlement to equal liberty and to forms of governance founded on deliberation and consent" (Held 26).

²⁶⁷ The paternalistic model depends on social hierarchies. Societies/peoples/races lower on the civilizational scheme are seen as similarly human, but as immature children. They are alike but must be "taught" what is right or what is harmful and therefore must rely on a higher power to educate them. Again, while Smith is undoubtedly Eurocentric in his belief that European societies are further along on the civilizational scale he actively opposes imperial rule and paternal benevolence over other nations. He reminds his readers not to judge others without living their experiences. For example, see *Theory* V.1 on the hypocrisy of British civility for condemning the practices of other countries, such as foot binding in China or some Native Americans' practice of binding the heads of their children to make them square, as "barbaric" when Britons themselves engaged in many similar practices like the corseting of women or slavery. Here as in other places Smith asks readers to be aware of the social influences that shape their thinking and asks them to step back from this situatedness.

Equiano wants equal moral standing for Africans and his stated end goal is to establish African right to self-determination. He believes the time will come “when the sable people shall gratefully commemorate the auspicious era of extensive freedom” (232), but Equiano’s ultimate vision is for more than emancipation. Although he appeals to Britain’s interests and sense of moral justice as a nation that could disperse “light, liberty and science” (233) around the world, Equiano makes an argument for Africa’s national independence within a framework of international exchange. His desire for economic partnership with Britain and, again, his initial involvement in the Sierra Leone project indicates Equiano’s desire for Africa’s inclusion as member of a global network without being dependent on or exploited by colonial powers.

Discussion of the Sierra Leone project can be problematic because in hindsight the project embodied some of the worst impulses of imperialism and a racially separatist ideology, and as some critics argue, a version of ethnic cleansing.²⁶⁸ Nonetheless, Equiano’s brief involvement in the project as commissioner, despite his initial reluctance to take on the project due to “some difficulties on the account of the slave-dealers, as I would certainly oppose their traffic in the human species by every means in my power” (226), further demonstrates Equiano’s cosmopolitanism. Equiano remains committed to the principle of self-governance and the cosmopolitan obligation to defend the fundamental interests of the oppressed in light of universal criteria, yet also in accordance with particular principles of self-help and local knowledge.

Equiano’s experience, representative of all black slaves, “as an object of exchange rather than the possessor of property” (F. Nussbaum 59); eighteenth-century rhetoric, influenced by John Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*, that “served to conceptually reduce humanity to

²⁶⁸ See C. Brown *Moral Capital* 302, 318.

property” (Gould 123),²⁶⁹ and the ideology of the American Revolution that understood land as the basis of a new and virtuous nation independent of the depredations of a “tyrant” bent on placing them “under absolute despotism” (Jefferson, *Life*, 22) delineates the connection between liberty and land. It is easy to see how Equiano, assured that the Sierra Leone project was an opportunity for an independent African/British colony that recognized Africans as freemen and whose very existence would challenge the slave trade, could initially support this settlement. He possibly saw Sierra Leone as a new America, a place where enterprising emigrants could possess land that would yield crops, support permanent settlement and be linked to the transatlantic market.²⁷⁰ Consequently, Equiano explains he was “agreeably surprised” at the benevolence of the initiative of sending blacks to “their native Quarter” (226).²⁷¹

This sense of “native Quarter” (226) to which Equiano appeals at the end of his *Narrative* becomes particularly significant in light of his early African section in which Equiano describes Africa as full of potential to enter into the world stage as a trading partner for Britain. Coupled with his sense that “blacks [should be] permitted to remain in their own country” (235), Equiano’s African section, particularly in light of his reference to the Ancient Hebrews as common ancestors, demonstrates to his readers evidence that he, and by extension other Africans, do possess an historic memory that contains appreciation for both liberty and

²⁶⁹ To support this claim Gould quotes from Locke: “In the West, property, in that tangled space where the physical and metaphysical mix, is the very mark of identity, of that which is identical to itself: what we typically call a ‘self’ or an ‘individual’” (*Two Treatises* 50)

²⁷⁰ The sense that Sierra Leone could be a new America is also supported by the fact that many of the proposed immigrants from London’s black poor “were made up of refugees from the American war” (Brion Davis 254) and Henry Smeathman’s (naturalist and instigator of the project) prediction that Sierra Leone “would extend a saving influence . . . wider than even *American Independence*” (*Substance of a Plan of Settlement* 1783. qtd. In C Brown. 315).

²⁷¹ As Carretta points out, Equiano’s sentiments here were not those of the majority of potential black settlers. Africans living in Britain originally envisaged places like Nova Scotia or the Bahamas for emigration where black loyalists had already settled. There was no “back to Africa” ideology at work here, since the vast majority of the black loyalists had never been to Africa, and their sense of ‘home’ was in the Americas” (*Equiano, the African* 221).

democratic forms of government.²⁷² His description of warrior farmers, those trained from childhood in the “arts of agriculture and war” (46) reiterates familiar images of the Roman republic and the civic virtue of Cincinnatus, Roman model of the soldier-farmer.²⁷³ The Sierra Leone project in theory offered Africans liberty, land and through that land an opportunity to claim political subjectivity. Due to “flagrant abuses” (227) and the continuation of seeing his “countrymen plundered and oppressed” (228), Equiano removed himself from the project which eventually failed. In the early stages of the project it seems likely Equiano envisioned the Sierra Leone colony as a way for Africans to keep their independence, but instead the project indicated a regression for black immigrants by “returning” them to a nation they had never known under the control of Western colonial conquest. However, Equiano did not give up on the “humane and politic” aspects the project’s initial “design” represented. Instead he uses his *Narrative* to advocate for African participation in the world as equal subjects in the world and by urging Africa and Britain to become nations open to difference and open to trade.

Consequently, while Equiano does recourse to the four stages model of civilization with Africa currently occupying a “pastoral state” (43), he also argues for cultural pluralism. Individual societies may function differently, but particularities do not prevent individual nations from participating within a global commercial network. Equiano, like Smith believes commerce will lead to the independence and complete liberty that will allow all nations to achieve self-

²⁷² One common argument amongst pro-slavery advocates was that Africans, either because of a natural temperament or because they were conditioned to slavery, did not have the mental capacity or the self-knowledge and refinement to handle or even appreciate liberty the way “civilized” races could.

²⁷³ The legend of Cincinnatus claims that Cincinnatus left his farm to defend Rome from a force of savages. Upon his victorious return he was offered leadership of Rome but he refused and opted instead to return to his fields. Cincinnatus came to embody the founding values of Republican Rome: citizen service, selflessness, warrior ethos, self-denial, courage and patriotism. Cincinnatus’ ideal was also used to describe George Washington after the American Revolution. For more on Cincinnatus see Gary Willis’ *Cincinnatus* and for more on George Washington and Cincinnatus see John Avlon’s *Washington’s Farewell* pp.17 and 286.

governance.²⁷⁴ It is this sense of the right to self-governance in Smith's brand of morality that offers Equiano a cosmopolitan system that can transcend both national borders and established racial hierarchies by emphasizing both local and global moral obligations. They move towards contemporary conceptions of cosmopolitanism by emphasizing both the particular and the universal of human experience.²⁷⁵

For both Smith and Equiano universalist morals can be reconciled with the self-understanding of local particularities because true sympathy is not simply a spontaneous emotional connection that validates feeling simply by being felt, but rather a social *practice* that begets conversation and moral reformation. As Richard Madsen and Tracy Strong claim about ethical pluralism, our understanding is limited by our unexamined assumptions, but if we engage with other cultures and experiences, we produce a “fusion of horizons’ in which we gain a broader set of terms to reflect critically on our identity” (11). The greater our experience, the more information we have and the more accurate our moral judgments. However, both Equiano and Smith recognize that the mere fact of confronting otherness does not necessarily produce understanding. Physical proximity without affective proximity can even potentially present the danger of erasing rather than valuing difference.²⁷⁶ This is why both Smith and Equiano do not

²⁷⁴ As Smith writes, “participation in market exchanges fosters the virtues of self-reliance and self-government, virtues that are crucial to the development of good character in general” (LJ 333)

²⁷⁵ As David Held's contemporary (2005) take on cosmopolitanism states, “[i]n a world marked by a diversity of value orientations, on what grounds, if any, can we suppose that all groups or parties could be argumentatively convinced about fundamental ethical and political principles? . . . The elaboration of cosmopolitan principles is not an exercise in seeking a general and universal understanding on a wide spectrum of issues . . . Rather, at stake is a more restrictive exercise aimed at reflecting on the moral status of persons, the conditions of agency, and collective decision-making” (16). For example, to summarize Smith from previously discussed examples: We shouldn't judge cultures who bind their children's heads as “savage,” especially in light of the European practice of corseting (n.27), but we can all agree that killing babies is wrong (n.22 and n.15). Similarly, Equiano argues that there should be a universal standard for human rights, but each culture/race/nation should be at liberty to make its own choices.

²⁷⁶ Uday Singh Mehta in *Liberalism and Empire* demonstrates the way difference is erased in order to promote imperial agendas. He points out the “liberalism” narrative of British thought led to many atrocities in the name of

rely on sympathy alone to overcome distance and difference. Equiano recognizes that appeals to morality alone may not suffice in the campaign against slavery, so he details a global economic plan to accompany moral appeals—the positive and unifying aspects of free trade. Equiano and Smith argue that free trade will benefit the *economic* particularities of each nation involved and will also add incentive for *moral* behavior that is applicable to all despite cultural and regional difference. In order to balance the particular with the universal, the partial with the impartial, Equiano combats colonial violence by demonstrating that open and equal exchange, both culturally and commercially, between individuals is the only means of recognizing a shared humanity. In order to change the way we see both Smith and Equiano, the next section focuses on Smith’s sentimental economics as a way to move towards a cosmopolitan ideology.²⁷⁷ Smith’s sentimental economics is crucial to understanding my later argument about Equiano’s cosmopolitanism.

Smith: Twinning Sentiment and Economics

In the need to balance tensions between the particular and the universal, Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, argues that sympathetic imagination and the resultant impartial justice of the internal spectator can counteract moral insularity. This insularity blinds us to

human sameness and assimilation.pp.17-23. These typical justifications of empire rely on the “civilizational” aim that humanity is the same. The empire erases difference and remakes colonized subjects in the empire’s image, but these intentions are presented as enlightenment and prosperity not conquering and domination. Lynn Festa also addresses this paradox: see my Chapter 1 pp. 48-50.

²⁷⁷ History shows that Smith was wrong about the equalizing effects of commerce; he didn’t fully predict how imperial aims could corrupt what he saw as a “system of natural liberty” and “perfect justice” (*Wealth* 373, 366), despite his own observation in *Wealth of Nations* that “[c]ommerce, which ought naturally to be, among nations, as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship, has become the most fertile source of discord and animosity” (264). As Muthu puts it: “The institutions of global commerce were now helping to fuel global wars, hardly the enlightened *doux-commerce* that transnational trade was sometimes said to produce” (“Adam Smith’s Critique” 199). However, Smith’s theories do offer the potential for international cooperation and peace, if not modern conceptions of cosmopolitanism, and his thoughts on the subject help other anti-imperial eighteenth-century thinkers redefine the expectations of international relations

injustices perpetrated against others. Many critics of Smith have found Smith's emphasis on sympathy in the *Theory* irreconcilable with the emphasis on self-interest found in Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776).²⁷⁸ However, while Smith acknowledges in *Wealth of Nations* that the self-interest attendant with capitalism can be productive because it motivates individuals to "better [their] condition" (186), he continues to use language of virtue and corruption to emphasize the importance of feeling and imagination within commercial endeavors. Even in his discussions on the benefits of commerce, Smith continually warns against the negative effects of a capitalistic or individualist pursuit of wealth. He warns that these economic systems can easily lead to partiality, tyranny and indifference.²⁷⁹

Indifference becomes more difficult to overcome the further we are removed from others. However, for Smith, sympathetic distance is not just about geography; he defines sympathy as a principle of moral judgment, a judgment that relies on the imagination. Smith's definition of sympathy differs from that earlier moral philosophers like David Hume and Francis Hutcheson

²⁷⁸There has been critical work on Smith that works to "reconcile" the "Adam Smith-Problem" most notably Donald Winch's *Adam Smith's Politics*, Emma Rothschild's *Economic Sentiments*, Ryan Patrick Hanely's *Smith and the Character of Virtue*, and Forman-Barzilai's *Adam Smith and the Circles of Sympathy*. However, the general perception of Smith continues to predominantly see him as "the founding father of liberal capitalism" (Forman-Barzilai 5), a "commercialized Hobbes" (Cropsey 72), or mercantile.

²⁷⁹As I explain in Chapter 3, Smith worries commerce will lead to the fragmentation of society because it encourages individualism while inhibiting our capacity for sympathy and making us indifferent to the conditions of others. See *Theory* II.ii.3. There is some critical division on the extent of the moral impulse behind Smith's theories of commerce. Fonna Forman Barzilai argues that in his theories of commerce Smith is closer to Hobbes than Smith would want to admit. She claims his free commerce is not "not motivated by anything we can describe in ethical terms as 'humanitarian,' but is rather the sociable by-product of selfish activity" (217). Allan Silver on the other hand, argues that in Smith's thought commerce enables genuine sympathetic exchange. For more details on the general connection between free trade and humanitarian values of equality and justice in eighteenth century thought see Thomas J. Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought* and Laurence Dickey, "Doux-Commerce an Humanitarian Values: Free Trade, Sociability and Universal Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century Thinking." At the other end of the spectrum John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson in their seminal "The Imperialism of Free Trade," discount any connection between free trade and humanitarian values. Although their study focuses on British imperialism after 1880, they argue that free-trade was the enabling main agent of imperialism due to Britain's unrestricted access to ports around the world; "the most common political technique of British expansion was the treaty of free trade and friendship made with or imposed upon a weaker state" (11).

who claimed sympathy and sentiments were transferred like a contagion and which weaken or intensify depending on the physical proximity of another: “Sympathy, we shall allow, is much fainter than our concern for ourselves, and sympathy with persons remote from us, much fainter than that with persons near and contiguous” (Hume, *Enquiry* 49). For Hume and Hutcheson physical proximity was a *requisite* for the transference of feeling and therefore of any kind of moral judgment. What makes Smith’s theory so potentially radical is that he views sympathy as an act of the imagination, so physical proximity or intimate knowledge is not necessary. For example, an individual who corresponds with a person who lives in a different country might imagine they have more in common with their correspondent than with, say, their neighbor. Consequently, for Smith, if an individual can imaginatively place themselves in another’s place then that individual could conceivably be affectively closer to someone across the Atlantic than someone in the same room with whom they cannot sympathize. Without the sympathetic imagination our sense of moral concern weakens even toward people with whom we live in close physical contact.²⁸⁰

Without the imagination, the sympathetic response becomes weaker over distance (geographical or cultural). This is what both Equiano and Smith claim happens to Africans within the system of slavery. If individuals are not confronted by an affective proximity, it is easy to ignore our moral responsibility, come to view those we are not affected by as less than human, and thereby deceive ourselves into justifying “the violation of humanity” for “even of a small conveniency of [our] own” (*Theory* II.ii.3). Smith argues that we can strengthen both our

²⁸⁰ Smith’s example is the nobleman who, despite his physical proximity to his servant, is too “far removed from the conditions of his servant” to “feel with him” (*LJ* A.iii.109). Only when the nobleman can consider “his servant as almost an equal with himself” (*LJ* A.iii.109) will he be able to sympathize with him.

ability to sympathize and our sense of moral obligation to those outside our immediate affective circle by training our imagination via either experience or experience by proxy, reading for example.

However, Smith also recognizes the impossibility and impracticability of feeling and morally acting for the entire universe all the time. Critics like Fonna Forman-Barzilai argue Smith was distinctly “anti-cosmopolitan” because he emphasizes local moral responsibility over any universal obligations. Forman-Barzilai bases her localist reading of Smith on the passage in the *Theory* where Smith asks, “To what purpose should we trouble ourselves about the world in the moon?”(III.3). In this passage Smith details the uselessness of anxiety over the “fortune of those with whom we have no acquaintance or connexion [sic], and who are placed altogether out of the sphere of our activity” (III.3). Smith does believe we should focus our attentions on those we can help most, generally those closest to us. Nevertheless, Smith does not put forward the idea that we should feel or do nothing for those outside our immediate circle. He goes on to say, “our good-will is circumscribed by no boundary” (VI.ii.3). So *if* we have the opportunity to act, then we “should, therefore, be equally willing that all [our] inferior interests should be sacrificed to the greater interest of the universe” (VI.ii.3).

Smith is not rejecting cosmopolitan aims but rather the same pitfall later critics of sentimentalism reject: the appearance of feeling without corresponding moral action. In addition to training our sympathetic imaginations to cross geographical and cultural boundaries, Smith offers a practical alternative to sympathy as a way to extend past immediate proximity. For Smith, commerce provides the tools that enable individuals to act on their moral feeling within an expanded circle of influence. He encourages sympathetic interaction outside local circles, but he recognizes that we are sentimentally near-sighted. Individuals’ pre-occupation with selfish

interests, however, does not necessarily cause society to collapse. When individuals “address themselves to their self-love . . . the society, though less happy and agreeable, will not necessarily be dissolved” (II.ii.3). A society can function without “generous and disinterested motives” as long as there is a mechanism to replace them; society “may still be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation” (II.ii.3), but no society can survive “among those who are at all times ready to hurt and injure one another” (II.ii.3). Smith believes that commerce can take the place of sympathy and may even lead to the development of the sympathetic imagination: “Commerce ... ought naturally to be, among nations, as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship” (*Wealth* 306). His *Theory* therefore provides a framework for global human connection that takes into account our natural self-interest as well as our natural sociability. This framework is commercial cosmopolitanism.²⁸¹

History tells us that Smith’s plans for free-trade agreements did not produce international cooperation, peace between nations or the unification of all humankind. The free-trade movement of the eighteenth century has been criticized for enabling imperial and colonial oppression. For example, Simon Gikandi notes that anti-abolitionists in the eighteenth century argued in market terms that “slavery [was] the engine driving the train of progress . . . [T]he business of selling African bodies had led to the creation of wealth and prosperity in the whole of the United Kingdom (113). Lisa Lowe similarly argues that while market economy “civilizes and

²⁸¹ Smith was not the only enlightenment thinker to believe in the uniting and civilizing powers of free trade. In his article “Benjamin Vaughan on Commerce and International Harmony in the Eighteenth Century,” Andrew Hamilton describes the role free-trade plays in “the most utopian expression” of cosmopolitan thinking. He describes both British and American thinkers interested in economics as a universalizing moral standard. For example, “The Model Treaty, which John Adams drafted in 1776 to be used as the basis for American negotiations with France, called for no political connections to be made, envisioning instead a relationship based solely on free trade agreements” (102).

develops freedoms for ‘man’ in modern Europe and North America,” it relegates “others to geographical and temporal spaces that are constituted as backward, uncivilized, and unfree” (2).

From the perspective of the twenty-first century, Smith’s and Equiano’s comparable thoughts on the liberating potential of free trade might be criticized as at best naïve and at worst complicit in imperial ideologies. But it is important to remember two things: Smith has been long misappropriated as endorsing capitalism as the means to endless economic expansion, and our historical hindsight should not take away from Smith or Equiano’s genuine attempts to alleviate and prevent colonial imperatives and national monopolies.²⁸² Their “failure” does not take away from either the importance or the influence of Equiano’s or Smith’s thought for anti-imperial and abolitionist movements. Colonialism and nationalism did not and have not disappeared, but we shouldn’t criticize Smith and Equiano for the inadequacies of their thought; their critiques of the colonialist and nationalist ideologies that perpetuated imperial institutions like slavery did contribute in a traceable way to the transformation, eventually, of these oppressive systems.

Smith did recognize the potential problems of “uniting, in some measure the most distant parts of the world” (*Wealth* 339) via commerce. He complains that the “superiority of force on the side of the Europeans” enables them “to commit with impunity every sort of injustice in those remote countries” (*Wealth* 339). Smith does believe free-trade can balance military power so “the inhabitants of all the different quarters of the world may arrive at that equality . . .

²⁸² This project has neither the space nor the intent of thoroughly dissecting Smith’s economic theories. Smith the uber capitalist is a product of modern concerns and the long-held, although now changing, belief that *The Wealth of Nations* was an ideological break from *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. However, even in *Wealth of Nations*, Smith’s economic system is based on social and political aims for counteracting the corruption of central governments. His view of the market is: “to supply the state . . . with a revenue sufficient for public services . . . to provide a plentiful . . . subsistence for the people, or more properly to enable them to provide such . . . subsistence for themselves” (*Wealth* 455). Smith believes that unregulated accumulation of capital overtime will bring economic expansion to an end. For a thorough and detailed account of Smith’s economic thinking and how it has impacted our current economic thinking see Giovanni Arrighi’s *Adam Smith in Beijing*.

[which] can overawe the injustice of independent nations into some sort of respect for the rights of one another” (339). Smith’s belief in commerce stems from the importance he places on independence. He writes that, on the local level, “commerce and manufactures gradually introduced . . . the liberty and security of individuals . . . who had before lived almost in a continual state of war with their neighbours, and of servile dependency upon their superiors” (*Wealth* 221). He also observes that commerce allows for an increased standard of living for the majority of subjects and enables them to have more independence because as each person accrues more material means they depend proportionally less on any single other person or small group of persons.

This logic of gaining independence by means of commerce is what Smith brings to his global free-trade argument, and his logic of independence is the hope that Equiano uses to argue for free trade as a means to abolition. According to Smith, free trade between nations offers the potential for international stability and peace because it “enable[s] them to relieve one another’s wants . . . [,] encourage[s] one another’s industry” and relieves dependency (*Wealth* 49). For Smith, commercial cosmopolitanism holds the potential for wide-scale wealth and international benevolence that is anti-empire and anti-paternalistic.²⁸³ He dismisses the British imperial mentality that considered Britain the arbiter of civilization as an example of the corruption that attends “the mean principle of national prejudice” and “savage patriotism” (*Theory* VI.ii. 2). He sees free-trade as the means to a common cosmopolitan law, and without a cosmopolitan law

²⁸³I take this term from John Hobson’s *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics* (2012). Hobson argues that while contemporary post-colonial critics may indict Smith as adhering to an imperialist, if at the very least an *informal* imperialist, mindset, Smith was in fact against imperialism because he saw in free trade the opportunity for different societies to develop without a one way relationship of dependence, or to use Boulukos’ term, without a “grateful slave” mentality. Hobson explains: “In [Smith’s] imaginary [non-European]peoples are granted a *derivative* agency, wherein non-European societies will in the fullness of time *auto-generate* in the *absence* of a Western civilizing mission (60).

national self-interest will lead nations to “foresee, or imagine [they] foresee, [their] own subjugation in the increasing power and aggrandisement of any of [their] neighbours” (VI.ii. 2). This aggrandizement will in turn lead to military conquest, colonialism and militant acts of empire like slavery, which violate basic human rights (*LJ* 178).²⁸⁴ Smith is insistently opposed to all these corrupt aspects of colonial mercantilism which he sees as directly opposed to the aims of free trade, and he sees mercantilist claims as motivated by “avidity,” “folly and injustice,” and the “sacred thirst of gold” (*Wealth* 305,317,302). He offers commercial cosmopolitanism as a way to promote tolerance as well as political change.

The same social practice that guides individuals in a society to moderate their selfish desires by learning “the propriety and impropriety of [their] own passions, the beauty and deformity of [their] own mind[s]” via the sympathetic imagination” (*Theory* II.iii.1), is also applicable on the global level. Global commerce under conditions of free-trade will filter each nation’s desires and behavior through a cosmopolitan expectation. This expectation forbids pursuits of self-interest that cross the boundaries of other nations’ moral rights. The aim for this commercial cosmopolitanism is to orient national sentiment around common civilizational goals as well as to stimulate national wealth in the flow of goods and services. Free-trade will balance national self-interest with international disinterestedness and will therefore emulate sympathetic identification on a global scale.

²⁸⁴ In his *Letters on Jurisprudence* Smith argues that self-interest is the only reason slavery has not yet been abolished. Britons hold that “personal liberty” (*Theory* III.iii.3) is the mark of a civilized society, so the fact that Britons enslave Africans, the fact that Britons puts Africans’ “lives and their property . . .and their liberty . . .entirely at the mercy of another” (*LJ* 178) is a mark of British corruption, its inability to act disinterestedly and its failure to live up to its claims of superior virtue and morality.

Smith perhaps underestimated humanity's ability to overcome self-interest or the extent to which wealth translates into political power.²⁸⁵ Smith argues that high wages for the poor were not harmful at all, but a sign and a cause of economic health: "Where wages are high, accordingly, we shall always find the workmen more active, diligent, and expeditious, than where they are low" (*Wealth* 44). He makes a similar argument against slavery: "the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any. A person who can acquire no property can have no other interest but to eat as much and to labour as little as possible" (*Wealth* 238). His free-trade theory contributed to free wage labor and industrialization in Britain, even while slave labor remained highly profitable in the colonies.²⁸⁶ In colonies like the West Indies, racist ideologies sustained white colonists' freedom by arguing that some peoples—Africans for instance—because of their fundamental natures required supervision and should not be free.²⁸⁷ As a "solution" to anti-slavery and free-labor movements in Britain, indentured labor was introduced in the colonies as a practice that could be represented as part of "a system of free labor that appeared commensurate with ideas of free labor at home" (Lowe 45). Consequently, the promise of freedom "came to discipline and

²⁸⁵ In *Wealth of Nations* Smith explains how commerce was able to topple the influence and violence of the great lords and kings in a feudal system. Albert Hirschman summarizes how Smith emphasizes the displacement of power from those who controlled the means of violence to those who controlled wealth was the most positive effect of commerce. See *The Passions and the Interests* particularly pp. 11-19 and 60.

²⁸⁶ Samuel Fleischacker notes the radicalness of Smith's thought: "Before Smith wrote, common wisdom held that the poor needed to be kept poor . . . Although Smith was not the first to oppose this position, he was by far the most influential, arguing forcefully that high wages for the poor were not harmful at all, but a sign and a cause of economic health" (164). Smith brings this same logic to slavery. See *Wealth* 45 and 210. For whatever reasons commerce did not work, as Smith imagined it would, to relieve inequalities on the global scale, but we can still see his attempts to implement an economic argument that would make slavery unnecessary.

²⁸⁷ Thomas Holt notes the imperial impulse of this plan: the "problem of freedom"—understood as the task of socializing ex-slaves to respond to the work incentives of freemen—could be addressed only by thoroughly reforming the ex-slaves' culture so as to make them receptive to the discipline of free labor . . . which ushered in its own embedded coercive forms, ideological and systematic" (xxii).

organize varieties of social subjects, those enfranchised and those not or never to be, working in conditions of coercion and exploitation” (Lowe 46).²⁸⁸

While his economic model may not have led to abolition, what makes Smith unusual in his thought for the period is the underlying equal opportunism. His belief in the poor economics of slavery is part of his larger economic plan that does not distinguish between European and non-European countries and the potential offered by commerce to create a nation that “thriv[es]”, and that will “advance with much greater rapidity to the further acquisition of riches” (*Wealth* 69). Commerce assures freedom from dependence, and Smith never distinguishes non-European peoples as incapable of self-government from Europeans with the capacity for liberty. It is this egalitarianism in his views of human capacity and judgment that set Smith apart from his contemporaries. Each individual is capable of making their own moral judgments and each nation is capable of its own governance that will eventually lead to an equal state between nations: “Had human institutions . . . never disturbed the natural course of things . . . [the] natural order of things must have taken place . . . in every society . . . The progressive wealth and increase of [civilization] would, in every political society, be consequential” (*Wealth* 206). Not only are all individuals or nations—civilized or uncivilized—capable of making their own judgments they are more qualified to dictate their own interests than a second party outside the local particularity as long as our behaviour accords with the general “system of jurisprudence” (VII.iv.1). Consequently, according to this logic Western imperialist intervention, for Smith, actually hinders the development of less civilized societies and colonial rule directly contradicts British claims of justice and liberty. He refuses to grant any natural superiority to one human

²⁸⁸ For more on indenture as a replacement for slavery in the colonies see Lisa Lowe *The Intimacies of Four Continents* particularly Chapter 1 and Thomas Holt *The Problem of Freedom* Chapters 1,2,4 and 6.

being, or society, over another. Smith's commercial cosmopolitanism helps us better understand Equiano's cosmopolitan aims.

Equiano: Twinning Sentiment and Economics

Equiano is grounded in his celebration of a British identity, but Equiano nonetheless offers a cosmopolitan ideology that promotes a new relationship between Britain, Africa and the world. His *Narrative* creates a powerful argument for the humanizing aspects of commercialism that can extend local circles of sympathy to create a global world via commerce. In the later chapters of his *Narrative*, particularly Chapter V, Equiano presents a vision of a transatlantic and mutually beneficial relationship between Britain and Africa that rejects slavery and imperial conquest in favor of equalizing trade relations. Like Smith, Equiano realizes the difficulty in overcoming situatedness: it is one thing to theoretically accept that we have universal moral obligations and another to act on those obligations if to act seemingly counteracts self or national self-interest. Equiano's *Narrative* appeals to the sentimental discourse of a shared humanity as well as to Britons' perceived sense of moral benevolence, but he also demonstrates how the universal moral obligations can be put into practice without compromising self-interest. Free trade, for Equiano, helps individuals understand how their interests are interconnected with those of others. Therefore, his *Narrative* builds on Smith's suggestion that commerce can be used as a sympathy surrogate. Commerce engenders sympathetic identification across national borders and promotes universal standards of liberty; Equiano suggests commerce can lead to independence because in order to participate in commercial trade an individual must own property to exchange,

and property-ownership is a mark of a being a free citizen rather than a slave.²⁸⁹ He suggests the slave trade interferes with Britain's true commercial interests in Africa, and abolishing the slave trade would further commerce, promote the nation's manufacturers, reinforce national strength and vindicate British virtue.²⁹⁰

Like Smith, Equiano argues free trade can provide independence for previously colonized nations, while at the same enhancing global relationships and Britain's economic interest. Equiano claims the abolition of the slave trade will increase British economy because the African population will demand goods from Europe made accessible only by free trade:

Supposing the Africans, collectively and individually, to expend 5 £ a head in raiment and furniture yearly . . . an immensity beyond the reach of imagination! . . . In proportion to such increase will be the demand for manufactures. Cotton and indigo grow spontaneously in most parts of Africa; a consideration this of no small consequence to the manufacturing towns of Great Britain. (235)

However, it is in economic plans like this that critics see Equiano's "continued collaboration with colonialist commerce" (Aravamudan 236) on the grounds that this commerce exploits non-European economies. Equiano might, like Smith, be read as Eurocentric in his belief that Africa should adopt European economic practices, but his aim shouldn't be called imperialistic. His

²⁸⁹Smith praises commerce because of "the independency which it really affords," and he uses America as an example stating that their property allows them to enter into a system that allows practically everyone to become "a master, and independent of all the world" (III.i.3, 5).

²⁹⁰These arguments were not of course unique to Equiano and became commonplace for late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century abolitionist tracts. The most detailed elaboration of these arguments was Thomas Clarkson's *Essay on the Impolicy of the African Slave Trade* (1788). Clarkson was very influential in British abolitionism and his *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament*(1808) was also influential to writers like Jane Austen as I explain in Chapter 3.

ultimate goal is to implement a cosmopolitan trading network that removes the need for imperial interference on any grounds including “benevolent” civilizing missions.²⁹¹

Equiano uses his *Narrative* to bridge the problem of sympathetic proximity by describing his homeland as one whose values correspond to those of Britain. Equiano begins with an application to British moral sentiment. Throughout his *Narrative*, and in “Chapter V *Various interesting instances of oppression cruelty, and extortion*” (95) in particular, Equiano describes the various forms of torture slaves endure. He concludes this section by claiming slavery depresses the virtue of both slave and colonial master. The slave trade is “like an infectious disease,” which spreads from Europe inland, while Equiano’s “treatment becomes increasingly more dehumanizing . . . the closer they [the slave owners] are located to the source of the infection” (Carretta, *Interesting Narrative* viii). Equiano offers a solution to the infection; he claims that by “treating your slaves as men, every cause of fear would be banished. They would be faithful, honest, intelligent and vigorous; and peace, prosperity, and happiness would attend you” (112). Equiano draws on the sentimental view that all races possess the same humanity and should therefore possess the same rights, but he combines his sentimental demand with an appeal to economic self-interest.²⁹²

²⁹¹ For Equiano, free trade will enable Africans’ liberty and is also a factor in spreading common morality. In the section previously quoted in which Equiano claims, “[i]ndustry, enterprize, and mining, will have their full scope, proportionably as they civilize” (234), and to which Murphy objects, that with “postcolonial hindsight, we wince at such sentiments” (561). We may “wince” at Equiano’s use of the term “civilize” if we read Equiano as imagining a unilateral imperial relationship between Britain and Africa, but he doesn’t. The relationship between Britain and Africa is a reciprocal conversation that increases independence in Africa and humanity in Britain.

²⁹² Equiano also draws on similar logic to Smith’s claim that dependence is the root of both moral and economic corruption and commerce can relieve both evils. In terms of economic dependence, Smith claims, one person’s, or nation’s, control over another’s basic needs will only lead to violence, while mental dependence is just as detrimental. See Chapters 1 and 2 for Smith’s quote about mental dependency (*LJ* 333).

Following his sentimental appeal, Equiano cites the negative economics of slavery and argues that the abolition of slavery will in fact promote British commercial growth: “abolition is most substantially their [British manufacturers’] interest and advantage, and as such the nation’s at large” (234). Equiano makes a point of commenting on all the commodities his society has to offer, particularly those that might appeal to a European audience: “perfumes,” “Indian corn, and vast quantities of cotton and tobacco,” “pine apples,” “calico and muslin,” “spices of different kinds, particularly pepper; and a variety of delicious fruits which I have never seen in Europe; together with gums of various kinds, and honey in abundance” (37). His description is both sentimental and economic: Africa is both morally equal with Britain and ready to enter global markets. Equiano offers a cosmopolitan system of mutual economic benefit. Both nations benefit from the commercial opportunities offered by free trade agreements.

While Equiano’s vision of liberty and equality for Africans via free trade agreements was not realized, this does not change the fact that his *Narrative* contributed to abolitionist campaigns and new ways of viewing the effects of empire. Writers like Smith and Equiano help change the way empire and imperial conquest are represented by offering a disinterested alternative. Instead of regarding empire as a part of insular mercantilist policies, they reveal colonial exploration and enslavement to be the products of a national predatory self-interestedness. Smith and Equiano ask their readers to transcend their situatedness and their self-interest to realize that imperial policies of domination are both economically and morally unsound. In addition to expounding on the economic benefits of abolition, Equiano appeals to British moral sentiment by explaining how colonialism and slavery corrupt Africans and Europeans alike.

Equiano lends his voice to an increasingly popular abolitionist movement: a moral cause in the language of Britain’s commercial interest that describes the “hidden treasures of centuries”

that “will be brought to light and into circulation’ for an “endless field of commerce to the British manufacturers and merchant adventurers” (234).²⁹³ He attempts to overcome the association of slavery with imperial wealth by offering a practical alternative. His alternative combines the sentimental argument about a common humanity that collapses the problems geographic distance might cause in imaginative sympathy with an economic plan that will increase Britain’s profits. The combination of these factors will “renovat[e] liberty and justice” in Britain and “vindicate the honour of our common nature” (232); consequently, “in a short time” abolitionist sentiment will “prevail, [in Britain] from motives of *interest* as well as *justice and humanity*” (emphasis added 234). Equiano emphasizes that an individual’s or a nation’s position on slavery provides a legitimate standard for evaluating moral politics. Only those who do not support human bondage have a right to claim their own political liberty.

Of course other critics have noticed Equiano’s use of moral and economic arguments; however, what is important to notice here is the way Equiano, like Smith, uses a language of commercial cosmopolitanism as a way to unite particular and universal interests. While other abolitionist writers of the period appealed to the economic or moral benefits for *Britain*, Equiano and Smith combine the benefits of a universal moral code with the benefits of particular economic interests. Smith argues that we can overcome our situatedness if we exercise our sympathetic imagination by entering into unfamiliar contexts of meaning; Commerce can help create affective proximity from geographical distance. For Smith, the more we can attempt to

²⁹³For a detailed account of economic arguments in favor of abolition see Christopher Brown *Moral Capital* pp. 214-18, 310-14). Brown discusses the contributions of Malachy Postlethwayt, The Earl of Shelburne, Henry Smeathman, Anthony Benezet, Thomas Clarkson and Maurice Morgann among others. Not all of these authors were anti-empire, in fact many of them were primarily concerned with expanding British rule overseas, but all were anti-slavery and they all made their arguments in economic terms. Equiano’s use of economic arguments falls in line with many common arguments for abolition during the period; however, Equiano, like Smith, criticizes the implications of empire, not just slavery, and offers a more egalitarian and cosmopolitan world view than these abolitionists.

understand others, the more “our moral judgment is likely to improve as our circle of comparison broadens” (Pitts 43). This is what Equiano does. He puts Africans and African slaves on view via his autobiography so their appearance, their emotions and their feelings might act as affective connections to increase proximity despite no change in geographical distance.²⁹⁴ Equiano’s narrative counts on the sympathetic imagination to bridge both cultural and geographical distance between his readers and the African slaves he wishes to help. But once he makes his moral argument for abolition he recurs to an economic argument because he recognizes the difficulty in sustaining sympathy and overcoming situatedness in the face of physical absence.

Equiano’s successful assimilation within Britain’s commercial empire is not indicative of imperial collusion. His commercial cosmopolitanism initiates a dialogue with the unfamiliar that resists dependence and subordination. This cosmopolitan disposition asks readers to recognize that we can learn not only from the others with whom we come in contact but also about ourselves; it asks for the formation of the impartial spectator and disinterested judgment. Thus in contrast to readings that see Equiano as complicit in the colonial project by taking on “colonizing roles . . . once he has acquired his freedom” (552), and in contrast to readings that see Equiano as taking on an African identity “to transform a mere autobiography into political evidence for ending one of the most lucrative commercial enterprises in Britain” (Scrivener, *Cosmopolitan* 113), reading Equiano as using Smithian sympathy as a social practice offers a new reading of Equiano as a cosmopolitan writer. Equiano believes his readers’ moral judgment can improve as

²⁹⁴Smith’s *Theory* of course emphasizes the importance of spectatorship and the ways that we “view,” “observe,” “see,” “gaze at” and “look at” others. The way their “very appearances” convey their feelings and that we rejoice or despair with others by “observing” fellow-feeling in them. Smith’s theory in large part depends on the way seeing, being a spectator, stimulates our sympathy. Nevertheless, Smith did not assume proximity was essential for sympathy; he recognizes that literature and a vivid description of emotion can stimulate the imagination and thus produce sympathy and the same sentiments an actual spectator might feel in the presence of the “agent’s” emotions—the imagination can bridge sympathetic distance.

their sympathetic circle broadens. His *Narrative* organizes social relations through commerce and a recognition of situatedness—acknowledging that his identity, as is every individual's, is “multifaceted, contested, hybrid and fluid, varying according to context” (S. Richardson 68). His affirmation of the desire for political economic right underlies his assertion that all nations and races are members of the brotherhood of man.

Europeans, Africans, Indians and “Our Common Nature”

For Equiano cultural identity is never constant but part of a nation's continually changing self-knowledge in relation to shifting global connections. Equiano demonstrates throughout his *Narrative* that individual identity can vary according to context and yet a single humanity connects disparate peoples. Equiano's travels bring him in contact with many nations and he notes the similarities between all. He compares Africans and Turks then makes comparisons between Turks and Europeans, and finally he sees similarities between Africans and Greeks. Equiano describes his native Africans as, “vigour[ous]”, “healthy” “active[e]” and “comel[y]” (38). He comparably describes the Turks as “well-looking and strong made [who] treated me always with great civility” (167). He makes similar connections between cultures in the way Africans are treated by Europeans with the way Greeks, Christians and Franks are treated by Turks (167). But he also makes a connection between Africans and Greeks in the way Greeks “dance here in the same manner as we do in our nation” (167-168). All nations are connected and alike in some way even as they celebrate their uniqueness. Equiano articulates multiple allegiances: he claims a British identity, and in his example of the Spaniards and Portuguese he claims Europeans can become as Indians or Africans; he claims an African identity, and in his example of the Hebrews he claims Africans share a cultural heritage with Europeans; he claims

an enlightened economic identity, and in his descriptions of free trade advantages he claims a shared identity with the world.

By focusing on multiple allegiances, Equiano demonstrates that not only can individuals belong to or connect with multiple cultural groups at any one time but also that these groups cannot be defined just by their ethnicity or nationality; “natural” racial or national characteristics are in actuality “ascribed to their situation” (44). Equiano’s point is cosmopolitan because he acknowledges the importance of each individual’s cultural rootedness—their individuality—but he employs the sympathetic imagination to demand we acknowledge all our attachments and all our connections. He argues that we need to recognize that our community extends further than our immediate social circle; despite human diversity, each individual possess equal moral worth. Even though one individual might be “carved in ebony” his sentiments and capacities “are not confined to feature or colour” (45). Sentiments and capacities depend on their social environment and can and do constantly change. Equiano, like Smith, uses the theory of sociability to explain both diversity and similarities between national groups; again, if different social conditions lead different social groups to adopt different values, then unfavorable social conditions for one group can be changed by changing social values. This is what Equiano hopes to accomplish. Equiano hopes to abolish slavery, and he hopes to abolish slavery by changing the social conditions that support slavery in favor of a cosmopolitan ideal. Africans no longer represent unassimilable savagery nor intellectual incapacity that requires removal or paternalistic supervision but individuals who are potential friends, trade partners, others selves and equals.

Equiano does not limit his description of the sympathetic imagination to the relationship between Africans and Europeans. Equiano also intervenes in European colonizers’ relationships with indigenous populations particularly in his encounter with the “Musquito” Indians of Central

America and the Mi'kmaq Indians in Nova Scotia.²⁹⁵ Equiano's interactions with these indigenous populations have brought significant criticism for his complicity in imperial venture. Emily Field argues Equiano's interactions with both the Mi'kmaq and the Miskito are meant to "instruct his white readers to be more benevolent and efficient conquerors" (17); despite his intent to subvert the imperialist narrative, Equiano ultimately endorses the "civilizing efforts of Europe" (32) and takes on the colonizing role himself "when as an overseer of a plantation he controls Natives' actions with a trick he learned from Columbus" (28).²⁹⁶ Both Field and Wheeler claim Equiano uses these indigenous populations as a way to separate Africans' "enlightened difference" (Wheeler 278) from "savage" societies who cannot be considered equals. This enlightened difference demonstrates Africans' readiness to participate in "civilized" society as the beneficiaries of Britons' paternal guidance at the expense of indigenous populations. But these readings ignore how Equiano uses a cosmopolitan approach in the way he acknowledges the range of loyalties that both distinguish and universalize cultural groups. He also uses the cosmopolitan approach to open humanity's sense of belonging; for example, in the way he compares the characteristics of different cultural groups in his comparisons of Africans, Europeans, Greeks and Turks. He uses this technique again in his encounters with indigenous populations.

²⁹⁵Carretta's note: "Musquito Indians: a corruption of "Miskito," a people living on the Caribbean coast of Central America who, although their king was nominally under the authority of the governor of Jamaica, were in effect military allies of Britain against Spain and rebellious slaves" (292-293).

²⁹⁶Field expands on Henry Louis Gates' theory of the talking book. Gates argues Equiano's use of the African American trope of literacy in the "talking-book" is an allegory for a "non-person" to reclaim their subjecthood. Field adds to this argument by stating that in addition to the talking book trope Equiano also adapts the story of Columbus' manipulation the Taino of Jamaica taken from Fernand Colon's *Historie*. (27). Equiano revises Columbus' story so he takes the place of the conquering imperialist and takes the power of the Bible into himself to dominate the Miskito Indians, but unlike Columbus Equiano doesn't use violence he "only practices coercion, not force, defusing the possibility for violence out of the sight of the white man" (28).

Equiano finds many so-called “British” or “European” markers of civilization like justice, industry, sympathy and intelligence among the many diverse societies he visits. Equiano is able to associate these qualities and the varying degrees to which they are present with differences in social situation rather than in race, skin color or nationality. Equiano has already made the sympathetic connection between Britons and Africans. When he describes Africans as descendants of the Hebrews, he asks his readers to see themselves as more closely related than they had previously imagined thus bridging geographical and cultural sympathetic circles. Equiano then describes all the ways African economy intersects with British economy, thus asking his readers to reconstruct Africans as allies and trading partners. Equiano highlights the possibilities of a cosmopolitan society where value is constructed in a reciprocal interplay of sympathetic imagination. Equiano uses this pattern of sympathetic identification throughout his *Narrative* in order to endow cultural others with equal value. He returns repeatedly to the subject of social development and a sense of harmonization that can resolve cultural divisions in a new sense of cosmopolitan identity.

For example, during Equiano’s encounter with the Miskito, having already made the connection between Africans and Europeans, he then makes a connection between Indians and Africans to bring the sympathetic imagination full circle. The Natives build a house “exactly like the Africans” (205), they are “well made and warlike” like Equiano’s people, the women of both groups are modest and chaste (38, 206), both groups place little value on “ornament in their houses” (34, 206), both groups work as a community to build and cultivate (34, 206), and, as Tim Fulford explains, Equiano’s insistence on the connection of Africans to Jews repeats assertions about Native Americans by white writers like James Adair, who argued in 1775 that contemporary Native Americans were also descended from ancient Hebrews (*Romantic Indians*

76).²⁹⁷ Equiano is quick to assert particularisms, such as the Miskito's Indians' preference for the color red and their taste for alligator (203, 206), but he also brings the Miskito affectively closer to Europeans by universalizing their strong sense of morality: the Indians "acted towards me more like Christians than those whites I was amongst the last night" (213-14).²⁹⁸ Equiano goes on to describe how common sentiments can transcend superficial differences; the time Equiano and his crew spend amongst the Miskito is spent "without the least discord in any person in the company, although it was made up of different nations and complexions" (210).

Once he has established the potential for sympathetic connections between diverse groups, Equiano then continues to promote an agenda of cosmopolitan free-trade by emphasizing the goods the Indians have to trade: "turtle oil, and shells, little silk grass," and "a good deal of silver" (206). Equiano thus uses commerce and culture to socially define cosmopolitan citizens. As Simon Gikandi explains, "commerce enabled culture, art, and taste, which were, in turn, deployed as modes of cultivation and politeness, differentiating the subject of taste from the savagery and barbarism of a previous time and of other cultures and experiences" (661). Correspondingly, Equiano, suggests both Africans' and Indians' ability to provide commerce, which as the center of all social relations, will also enable their entry into culture as equals.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷This assertion was taken up by Native writers like William Apess whose ideas on race typology and Native independence are also of importance to the way Fenimore Cooper perceives Indian relations. I discuss Cooper in Chapter 4. See Apess' *The Son of the Forest* 74-77.

²⁹⁸Equiano's comment here is also an admonishment to white so-called Christians. The Miskito welcome Equiano and treat him with kindness directly after Equiano relates an incident where Captain Hughes ties Equiano up by his waist, wrists and ankles "without letting [his] feet touch or rest upon any thing. Thus [he] hung, without any crime committed, and without judge or jury," (212) because Equiano questions Hughes' rights to sell him.

²⁹⁹ Equiano and Smith believe the potential for trade is important because it can transcend cultural variations by granting each culture independence in the form of active agency as long as this action does not curtail others' freedom. Smith's thoughts here are very similar to contemporary definitions of cosmopolitan rights. Smith explains that an individual has the right to work as hard as he can to "outstrip all his competitors" as long as he does not violate others' rights in the process. (II.ii.2). Hillel Steiner explains this principle in modern cosmopolitan terms: the

Equiano foregrounds the idea that despite the fact that each individual is shaped and defined by their immediate society, and despite the wide variability of tastes, beliefs and values across cultures, all individuals are also part of wider global networks that entitle them to equal liberty and independent governance founded on conversation and consent.

Here we return to Smith's sense of the sympathetic imagination as a way of bridging geographical distance. Equiano creates a cosmopolitan ideology by describing circles of sympathy that cultivate social relationships between self and cultural others as sites of construction or restoration, not pre-determined identities. For example, Equiano relates his encounter with the Mi'kmaq who sided with the French against the British during a battle in Nova Scotia in the course of the Seven Years War. The British defeat the French and the Mi'kmaq, and Equiano comments on the spoils of the battle: "I had that day in my hand the scalp of an Indian king, who was killed in the engagement: the scalp had been taken off by an Highlander. I saw this king's ornaments too, which were very curious, and made of feathers" (73-74). This episode, although brief, shows the complexity of Equiano's cosmopolitan ideology.

On one level, as critics like Aravamudan, Muthu, Boulukos and Field have noticed, Equiano reverses, as he does elsewhere in the narrative, the notion of racial others' savage cruelty. Early in his *Narrative* Equiano reverses European notions of African savagery. He explains that after he is first kidnapped by white slavers he is extremely afraid of their savage looks and "I asked them if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair? (55). Equiano's extreme fear of white cannibalism reverses common

basic moral right from which all our other moral rights are derived, is a right to equal freedom," but only so long as the pursuit of freedom does not "cross the boundaries demarcating other persons' moral rights" (32).

prejudices about the savagery of Africans. Similarly, in Equiano's account of the Mi'kmaq it is the European colonizers and not the Indigenous population who have acted "savagely" in scalping the Mi'kmaq king.³⁰⁰ Equiano's emphasis on the commercialization of both the scalp³⁰¹ and the king's ornaments in conjunction with the violence of this colonial encounter—a battle over territory—highlights the cruelty of European dominance and the regression of civilized behavior in colonial disputes. On another level, the fact that it is a Highlander who kills the Indian king makes Equiano's judgment here more complex. Highlanders, for Equiano's readers, were outside the echelons of "civilized" society. Nonetheless, despite their less civilized status, Highlanders played an important role in the British imagination as embodiments of "natural man" and precursors to enlightened European society;³⁰² clan culture is accorded an aesthetic value by way of the sympathetic imagination.³⁰³ Equiano's specificity in mentioning the

³⁰⁰Cooper does a similar reversal in his later Leatherstocking novels. In *The Deerslayer* Hurry Harry, one of the novel's most reprehensible characters, claims that "scalping" a "savage" is "pretty much the same as cutting off the ears of wolves," because the "Colony has offered a bounty" for both savages' scalps and wolves' ears (41). Rivenoak, the Huron leader, points out the hypocrisy: We are "beasts if we take the scalp of a warrior killed in open war," but the Anglo-American colonial government offers white hunters "gold for the scalps of our women and children" (194). Hurry Harry does in fact kill an Indian girl for her scalp and his action is indeed sanctioned by the government. Cooper shows Europeans possess the savagery with which they condemn the Native Americans.

³⁰¹British authorities in Nova Scotia had revived the scalp-bounty system at this time, offering twenty pounds per Mi'kmaq scalp (Prins 149). Additionally, although Equiano does not specify what becomes of the scalp, presumably the scalp would be brought back to Britain as a curio.

³⁰²During the Enlightenment, identity, personhood and civilization were closely aligned with aesthetic judgment—an equivalence which continued to be important into the nineteenth-century, as I discuss in Chapter 3 in regards to Jane Austen. Despite cultural diversity that could divide societies, aesthetic judgment could re-unite them. As Roy Porter puts it, "[r]efinement would polish a person's true mettle, for art, after all, was nature refined, just as the civilized man was the natural man burnished" (303).

³⁰³Despite their outsider status, Highlanders were endowed with a sense of national romanticism; "Celtic communities in the Highlands of Scotland made safe, and ushered in, new fascinations with the Celtic fringe of Great Britain" (Buzzard 43). In 1785 James Boswell in his *Tour of Hebrides* cites Samuel Johnson as referring to Highlanders as "different" from "the civilized south," but embodiments of nature, "Simplicity and Wildness" (161). And, in 1814 Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* romanticizes the Highlanders' feudal and loyal way of life to "disrupt any inexorable connection between any single ethnicity or religion and Britishness" (Scrivener, "Literature and Politics" 48). Smith, although he approved of the "progress" of European civilization and disapproved of the Highlander feudal system, valued the intimate ties created by Highland clans. (*Theory* VI,ii.1)

Highlander returns to a stadial sequence of the stages of society. He reminds his readers again that even “the polished and haughty European” has his roots in the “uncivilized, and even barbarous” (45). He reminds his readers that cultural values can change.

The Mi’kmaq’s association with the French had ended in defeat, but in the similar alliance between English, Highlander, and African that Equiano describes, Equiano reminds his readers of past imperial violence and coercions but also suggests the potential benefits of such relationships if conducted as a relationship of equals. The act of Union between Scotland and England in 1707 is another history of exclusions and oppression for Highland society, but the Highlander alliance with British troops was productive for both parties. The Highlanders benefited from their relationship with Britain—the Union ensured free-trade and as a consequence Scottish trades and industry thrived. On the other side, for the British, the Highlander’s participation helped ensure British victory over the French. This free-trade agreement after a history of oppression is what Equiano desires for Africa and what he offers for the benefit the Mi’kmaq in place of imperial persecution. Equiano thereby constructs a transatlantic community; he aligns Highlanders, the Mi’kmaq, the Miskito, himself, and by association Africans, with the benefits of cosmopolitan alliances.

Critics like Wheeler, see Equiano’s use of stadial theory to “position [Africans] among the unpolished societies” as a “tacit agreement” to “British eminence” in the cultural hierarchy (261, 251). However, Equiano makes a point of the commercial opportunities available when cosmopolitan relationships are developed—he points out the aesthetic value of the Indian king’s ornaments. He also indicates the national benefits, such as military power, that alliances among cultures could provide. Equiano challenges both the assumption of stagnant primitive cultures and the importance of national borders; he demonstrates that despite their differences, different

cultures have the same desires and can work together. By appealing to his readers' imaginations, he argues that given equal opportunity, Africans and Native Americans could participate in a fruitful alliance with European nations. Like Smith, Equiano demonstrates the way affective connections, shared experiences, and shared interests can positively impact our sympathetic imagination and overcome the apathy or self-interest created by geographical distance and/or cultural difference.

Equiano's approach is cosmopolitan in its implications, rather than as Wheeler Field and Aravamudan argue, an alternative form of imperialism; Equiano argues for a moral practice that will allow individuals or nations to transcend differences. Cosmopolitanism reveals the basic humanity in all others and achieves outcomes that benefit all. Wheeler argues that "although *The Interesting Narrative* praises the Indians for their simple way of life, it carefully avoids any personal identification with them" (277). The argument that Equiano does not identify with the Indians is tied to the way critics claim Equiano is complicit with imperial ventures. Wheeler claims Equiano doesn't identify with the Indians he meets in order that he can show how far Africans like himself can advance in civilization. He thereby moves Africans up the social hierarchy and re-establishes Indians as unable to develop towards Europe's civilizational standards. Other critics like Field point to Equiano's failure to convert Prince George of the Miskito to Christianity and the way Price George identifies Equiano as white as the lack of identification between racial groups³⁰⁴. Field claims Equiano specifically emphasizes his failure

³⁰⁴Equiano tries to convert George to Christianity on board the ship. He teaches him to read from the Bible, but, some of Equiano's fellow sailors "seeing this poor heathen much advanced in piety . . . teased the poor innocent youth, so that he would not learn his book any more! (203). George does not convert to Christianity because he sees the sailors as hypocrites. He notes that even though the sailors are supposedly Christians they still "swear, lie, and get drunk, only excepting [Equiano]" (204). George therefore places Equiano with European culture rather than as an outsider.

to convert George, Prince of the Miskito, so he can contrast his own conversion to Christianity and therefore make “a bid for Africans, not Native Americans, as the people most worthy of the civilizing efforts of Europe” (32). Critics claim this scene indicates Equiano’s assimilation, endorses Equiano’s self-interest by presenting “his integrity and Christian commitment as superior to Europeans” (Wheeler 278) and demonstrates his desire to make African civilization culturally homogeneous with European civilization.³⁰⁵ This is not accurate. Equiano never detaches himself from his origins. His African roots are essential in defining who Equiano is: he depends on his African identity to legitimize his arguments for the abolition of slavery. However, he also makes a general appeal to humanity’s “common nature” in order to prevent any one race or national group from treating others as property.

The lesson Equiano teaches with his history of George is that humans are socially conditioned to use partial criteria when judging outside of their experience; instead of seeing a shared human potential, Britons oppress cosmopolitan potential when they treat Indians as property, just as they treat African slaves as property; George was brought to London “by some English traders for some selfish ends” (202) to become a curio like the Mi’kmaq King’s scalp and ornaments. We must learn impartiality by expanding our cultural knowledge and educating our sympathetic imagination. Equiano makes a point of connecting, rather than distancing, Africans, Native Americans and Europeans. Equiano’s identification as both African, European and Indian is a social construction, a construction that allows him to control multiple frames of

³⁰⁵ Wheeler, Field, and to some extent Aravamudan all suggest that in his quest to overcome national boundaries and demonstrate Africans’ humanity, Equiano accepts the need for colonialism and social/national hierarchies. Aravamudan claims Equiano’s emphasis on his literacy is “occasionally shown up as knowingly self-interested and complicitous” (241), because while he “secur[es] a voice for himself and other free blacks within hostile political institutions(238), he doesn’t pursue the matter past the “neocolonial ethos of the abolitionist debates” (237).

reference and present multiple, yet equally valuable, ways of viewing the world—the ultimate cosmopolitan goal.

For Smith and Equiano cosmopolitanism doesn't require individuals or nations to relinquish their local loyalties, but rather to extend these loyalties across geographical and cultural divides in order to maintain multiple cultural loyalties. Both authors explain how cosmopolitan attachments can overcome the destructive power of self, or national, interest resulting from situatedness. Cosmopolitanism in the hands of Smith and Equiano becomes a mode of social practice where self and society can be continually reconstructed to accept the other and to reject social customs that promote inequality. Both Equiano's and Smith's use a discourse of economically enabled cosmopolitanism to outline the benefits of a global society created via the sympathetic imagination and places both these authors in a conversation of global morality that continues to be important today.

A Brief Conclusion: The Transatlantic Cosmopolitan-Self and Society

In this study I resituate Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and various authors within a transatlantic framework. These authors need to be understood as part of a conversation about the roles sympathy and disinterestedness play in the creation of national and transnational identities and how sympathy and disinterestedness allow authors and readers to think critically about imperial projects. By reading these disparate texts together as part of a transatlantic network and a sentimental tradition we become more aware of their internal tensions. We can question the conventional boundaries of national histories and literatures.

Because these authors recognize social mores and morals as the consequence of historical processes that can be changed, from Samuel Richardson to James Fenimore Cooper, each author teaches their readers to distance themselves from their society and their self-interest. The social critiques these authors offer raise doubts about the relevance of national and cultural boundaries to principles of global justice; these critiques ask whether moral judgments can transcend situatedness.

If the answer is yes, we can transcend situatedness, then these texts open up other questions: to what extent can we construct a universal standard of humanity or a cosmopolitan standard of justice that doesn't impose a unity that actually suppresses or erases otherness? For example, as I describe in Chapter 5, Olaudah Equiano wrestles with the construction of national and racial identity. By arguing for the equality of Africans by demonstrating that Africans might achieve political equality and liberty as a result of mastering the British economy, does Equiano perpetuate a Eurocentric hierarchy by erasing indigenous difference? How do you create a universal humanity or even a universal justice when even one person's multiple identities and allegiances are not considered equally politically valid in the eyes of the world?

The problems associated with determining global definitions of civilization, humanity, or justice with which Smith and the authors I discuss here contend are relevant for the twenty-first century. Our world is increasingly global and to interact within diverse neighborhoods and nations we, ideally, should learn to tolerate and respect the values and habits of others. But to what degree should we, or are we obligated to, tolerate diverse identities that many see as a threat to the unity, wealth and, some argue, even safety of the nation? To what degree should national borders be permeable? And to what degree do immigrants need to transform in order to become equal within or acceptable to their host nation?

The news at the moment is full of these types of questions, questions of immigration: isolationism vs. cosmopolitanism. I may risk dating this project by naming specific events like Canadians' mixed reactions to the Canadian government's resettlement of nearly thirty thousand Syrian refugees in 2015 and 2016 (Government of Canada), Britain's recent "Brexit" vote to leave the EU, a recent newspaper article that defends Western ideology in general against Islamic states by asking, "how can a civilization unwilling to defend itself against barbarians endure?" (Den Tandt NP5), and the 2016 American presidential campaign which seems to turn on issues of immigration, borders and international trade agreements. As one political leader protests, "the enduring symbol of America is not a barbed wire fence. It is the statue of Liberty" (NP2 nationalpost.com Calgary Herald, Thurs July 28 2016). However, history shows the fundamental issues underlying these contemporary events are not unique to our current time. Michael Scrivener describes how "the so-called 'Jew Bill' of 1753" intended to ease naturalization procedures for Jewish immigrants in Britain, but which "had to be withdrawn after popular protests" (*Cosmopolitan Ideal* 147). Lisa Lowe discusses the Page Law of 1875 which argued for "the prohibition of Chinese female immigration in the United States, while to further

end Chinese immigration the “Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882” emphasized that Chinese laborers recruited to work in mining, agriculture, and railroad construction in the mid-nineteenth century were precisely ‘unfree’ and therefore ineligible for citizenship” (206). Scrivener also mentions George Bush’s isolationist tendencies in his “‘reversal’ [of] American policy from internationalism to unilateralism . . . under [his] ‘contempt for one of the greatest achievements of human civilization’ – namely, cosmopolitan structures of international relations” (214). And as I have demonstrated throughout this project, Brown, Cooper and Equiano all deal with variants of these issues. The point is while my examples belong to a particular year, the underlying fundamental issues are timeless in scope.

As the authors discussed in this project recognize, engaging with Smith’s thought is productive for thinking through what ‘equal rights’ means. Consistently, for these authors, questions about equal rights inevitably lead to questions about the obligations each individual and each society owes to immediate and to distant others. These questions help authors and readers reconsider the meaning of nationality and whether national boundaries possess an intrinsic legitimacy and/or moral significance. For some authors like Sarah Scott Robinson or Jane Austen, the borders of nations continue to hold moral value, a value revealed through a nation’s capacity for sympathy. For others like Cooper and Equiano, sympathy instead reveals the need for a global system that recognizes that national boundaries matter, but not exclusively; Cooper and Equiano induce a more inclusive and multicultural conception of nation, and they move towards a cosmopolitan ideology that remains current. Gillian Brock and Harry Brighouse state in their introduction to *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* that the focus of cosmopolitan thinking “is on the content and weight of obligations beyond national (or, sometimes, state) boundaries, relative to the content and weight of those obligations to which

national and state boundaries give rise” (3). Smith’s thoughts on how we overcome the physical and affective distance created by boundaries like national borders continue to be relevant for a world that still struggles with issues surrounding human rights and the extent to which universal rights are possible or even desirable within the diversity of “the great, the immense fabric of human society” (*Theory* II.ii.3).

As I explain in the introduction to this project, Smith is now famous for his *Wealth of Nations* which is, generally, seen as a break from his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in that it endorses an individualistic and capitalistic ideology. Yuval Noah Harari, summarizes this divisive thought on Smith: “What Smith says is, in fact, that greed is good . . . *Egoism is altruism*” (311). But reading Smith with the other sentimental authors I discuss reveals that Smith’s thoughts on economics and sympathy are closely related; by reading Smith as part of a transatlantic network we can understand the cosmopolitan implications of his theory and the continued importance of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*’ to our historical moment.

As an illustration, Apple and Samsung, in celebration of the 32 Olympiad, released similar ad campaigns to remind their consumers of our shared humanity and to endorse the way their products will help connect us all. Apple uses Maya Angelou’s reading of her “Human Family” for its “shot on iPhone” campaign to proclaim, despite “the obvious differences between each sort and type/ . . . we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike,/“We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.” These lines reflect Smith’s concern with the process through which individuals understand, value and/or integrate the values and actions of others into their own world views. Smith recognizes the difficulties we have in understanding others who, in Angelou’s terms, present “obvious differences” from ourselves. For Smith, sympathy is the process of social learning that helps us appreciate and transcend difference to recognize “that we

are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike” (Angelou). Smith emphasizes that morality entails a commitment to disinterested moral judgment that resists the distortion of our perceptions of others to fit our own partial views. Angelou’s poem asks us to recognize that despite our differences we possess a shared humanity—exactly what Smith’s account of sympathy asks us to do: sympathy produces understanding. Or as Stephen Darwall explains, Smith’s account of sympathy entails “identification with, and thus respect for, the other as having a different point of view . . . [It creates] “a framework of moral community among independent equal persons” (132).

Samsung’s television ad for their Galaxy S7 Edge, similarly, combines multiple national anthems into one anthem ending on the phrase “united we shall stand” and the slogan “Proud Sponsor of a world without barriers.” Much as Apple uses Angelou’s poem to claim that despite our differences we can understand and appreciate one another because we are actually all the same in issues that matter (implicitly our feelings and our moral rights), Samsung’s ad wants its audience to recognize that even though we belong to different nations or races, our shared humanity makes us members of a global community that can achieve consensus on moral issues without necessarily sharing the same social foundations. Both these ads thus tap into “the cosmopolitan rhetoric of human solidarity” (Scrivener, *Cosmopolitan* 202). These ads say we can overcome the difficulties of transcending cultural bias and cross-cultural understanding to create a global community if we recognize our shared humanity, and the instrument of this recognition is their product (cell-phones). The underlying commercialism which targets Western values as well as a select group of consumers above a certain income level reveals the systematic inequalities that present obstacles to achieving any kind of transnational harmony or equality.

The ads endorse the positive, globally uniting aspects of a universal humanity in the conceptual language of sympathy, or in Smith's words these ads endorse the disposition "to accommodate and to assimilate, as much as we can, our own sentiments, principles, and feelings, to those which we see fixed and rooted in [other] persons" (VI.ii.1): we are fundamentally the same. But these ads also use the economic language of commerce: we are all alike, so buy our product and you can be connected to the world. As we saw with Equiano and, to a lesser extent, Scott and Cooper commercialism, even commercialism in the name of cosmopolitanism, raises moral questions: commercialism cannot ensure that profits are gained in a fair or ethical way. Smith and Equiano envision commercial cosmopolitanism as a way for colonized nations to achieve independence, liberty and equal status with imperial nations, but history shows that in reality the commercialism of the free-market enabled the slave trade via laws of supply and demand.³⁰⁶ Apple and Samsung are not perpetuating the buying and selling of enslaved individuals, but the danger in free-market capitalism, a danger both Smith and Equiano recognize and address, is that self-interest, the craving for profit, that "rapacious pursuit of gain" (*Gleanings: France* 213) as Cooper puts it, or the "avidity," occasioned by the "sacred thirst of gold" (*Wealth* 302) that Smith describes, blinds individuals to anything or anyone who might stand in the way.

³⁰⁶ As Harari explains, "the Atlantic slave trade did not stem from racist hatred towards Africans. The individuals who bought shares, the brokers who sold them, and the managers of the slave-trade companies rarely thought about the Africans. Nor did the owners of the sugar plantations. Many owners lived far from their plantations, and the only information they demanded were neat ledgers of profits and losses" (331). Harari's explanation illustrates that when economic growth or profit becomes the ultimate goal, unrestricted by any moral considerations or the recognition of the other, then as Smith states, "there is no there is no enormity so gross of which we may not be capable" (*Theory* III.6).

The danger of self-interest is why, even in *Wealth of Nations*, Smith continues to emphasize the need for sympathy and disinterestedness. Apple and Samsung embody a Western view of the world that promotes a self-interested consumerism and forces an image of global connectedness that represents the cultural elite, but they also donate a percentage of their profits from every phone sold to humanitarian charities.³⁰⁷ Smith would have recognized these campaigns as the epitome of humanity's economic and social experience in the tension between selfish materialism and social sympathy. Where the tension between national or individual self-interest and cosmopolitan and charitable impulse appears is in the question of whether handing over resources satisfies cosmopolitan moral obligations. Yes, it is nice and commendable that Apple and Samsung donate part of their profits towards helping less fortunate nations achieve Western standards of equal opportunity and equal rights attendant with increased resources, but how much are these companies, their policies, and Western consumer mentality in general implicated in creating and enforcing and benefiting from the conditions that produce inequalities in the first place?

The cosmopolitan quality of the ads brings up the tensions each of the authors I discuss encounters: to what extent is cosmopolitanism critical of or complicit with cultural erasure? To whose standards do concepts of universal justice or human rights adhere? Does cosmopolitanism or transatlantic movement enable a double standard where a cultural "elite" can move freely between nations as men and women "of the world," while immigrants or "others" who require international passage to escape subjugation continue to be marginalized in their new nation? Or

³⁰⁷ For some articles on Apple's and Samsung's philanthropy see:
<http://www.samsung.com/us/aboutsamsung/sustainability/socialcontribution/>;
<https://www.philanthropy.com/article/After-Steve-Jobs-Apple-Steps/228899>;
http://appleinsider.com/articles/12/02/02/tim_cook_exposes_the_lie_that_steve_jobs_ignored_philanthropy_

can we learn to listen to our impartial spectator and employ our sympathetic imagination to extend our interest past the borders of our self or nation? Can we accept otherness in different contexts in order that our identities become increasingly inclusive? In other words, can we accept that one individual might have several equally valuable identities and can we accept otherness in ourselves, others, and our nations?

While not all of the authors or novels I discuss in this project are concerned with cosmopolitanism (in fact none of them explicitly use cosmopolitanism as a term), it is fair to say that they are all concerned with questions of equal human dignity and the legitimacy, or lack of it, of using national boundaries to defend intrinsic moral significance. For all, self and society are not pre-determined but are constructed. This is important because although human frailty may lead to corruption, we are also capable of self-correction, and we are capable of regenerating our societies to counteract injustices. So while there are many arguments against the cosmopolitan agenda towards which Smith's thinking gestures, it is also worth acknowledging his achievement in thinking through questions of sociability and explorations into human morality. Smith's thinking helped other authors concerned with social reform in the eighteenth and nineteenth transatlantic world reveal divisions and asymmetries in the liberties that are reserved for some but denied to others. These authors think through what equal worth really means and they explore what universal promises of rights might entail.

In a world that is characterized by transnational movement and increasingly defined by the global in all aspects of our lives, Smith's thinking can help twenty-first century readers. His thought foregrounds methods that can broaden our sympathetic circles, so we can learn to balance local and global loyalties. The problem with this balancing act in cosmopolitan, or any human rights discourse, is the degree to which universal claims are possible. Smith's thought is

relevant here because he navigates between the particularity of moral culture and the universal conception of good. Smith's theory of justice grounds universal criteria for moral judgment for the protection innocents. This theory continues to be relevant to contemporary concerns about our ability to articulate, and assess the minimal conditions of a flourishing human life.³⁰⁸

Smith asks us to question how much importance we should place on individual achievement versus our social responsibility and how far that social responsibility extends. He asks us to recognize the moral obligations we have to those whom we do not know and with whom we are not necessarily familiar but to whom we remain connected as free and equal individuals by the framework of humanity. What these obligations are is a question that, so far, has been very difficult to resolve, but Smith's writing is a solid foundation from which to push towards solutions for moving beyond local or national boundaries to the global.

³⁰⁸ Christine Sypnowich defines flourishing as “an objective measure, insofar as we can set out universal constituents such as health, education, political participation, friendship, and family . . . [H]uman flourishing is defined by not just lack of resources or opportunities but also by oppression. We have the moral duty to “seek not just the redistribution of wealth but also the furtherance of fundamental human rights” (73). Smith writes, “man is taught to reverence the happiness of his brethren, to tremble lest he should, even unknowingly, do any thing that can hurt them, [even] . . . if he should, without design, be the unhappy instrument of their calamity . . . [S]o, by the wisdom of nature, the happiness of every innocent man is, in the same manner, rendered holy . . . ; not to be wantonly trod upon, not even to be, in any respect, ignorantly and involuntarily violated, without requiring some expiation, some atonement in proportion to the greatness of such undesigned violation” (II.iii.3). For Smith, oppression is still oppression whether we do it on purpose or by accident. We must always look beyond our selves to see how our actions effect and are received by others—the cosmopolitan point here is that we must see how our actions effect and are received by *all* others not just those with whom we are intimate.

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