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Corpses and Cogitos and the Sympathetic Self: Exhuming  
Sovereignty and its Sympathetic Subjects

by

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## Abstract

### *Corpses and Cogitos and the Sympathetic Self: Exhuming Sovereignty and its Subjects*

This dissertation offers a comparative reading of the of the literary and philosophical place of affect and sympathy within pivotal writings by Chaucer, Adam Smith, Kant, Locke, Emerson, Lewis Carroll, and Artaud, offering, specifically, a rereading of time as a necessary element within Enlightenment and Romantic and Modernist narratives on affect and sympathy. In offering close readings of salient literary and philosophical narratives on sympathy and affect during these periods, I question dominant understandings of the relation of time to sympathy, showing, *pace* these author's own readings, that it is time, rather than space, that accounts for the possibility of sympathy. By reading these authors' writings on sympathy and affect in relation to time, we gain a better understanding of the literary and historical periodicity of sympathy, and in particular a keener insight into the way in which a figure traditionally understood as the province of the British Enlightenment can be understood to have its nascent and concluding analogues in Chaucer and Emerson (as figured, for instance, in these various narratives on personal identity, memory and imagination, self and other, mourning and loss, estrangement, redemption and forgiveness, all of which could be said to be linked on the basis of their troubled affinity to time and its inevitable passings). Following Derrida's writings on hospitality, time, and friendship, and Laclau's and Mouffe's on community and politics, I do not so much politicize sympathy as show sympathy as the basis for the political.

My first chapter, an outline of the structure of sympathy in Adam Smith, Kant, and Locke, focuses on the philosophical and anthropological relation between sympathy and politics, principally as staged within the early-modern tradition of the social contract, but then turns to sympathy and affect, principally, as the troubled basis for the social-contract and the equally-

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troubled spatio-temporal confluence it stages between consent, language, and subjectivity—ultimately to suggest that it is time, moreso than space, that is the existential angst that grounds and questions the possibility of personal identity. Or, the chapter reinstalls the problem of solipsism and politico-anthropological anthropology as in fact Smith’s primary subject of investigation, even though Smith, himself, would never realize the political viability of his anthropological project, at least in *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, despite antecedents in Locke, Kant, and Rousseau. Beginning with the troubled relation staged between subjectivity, imagination, affect and time, earlier prepared for by our first chapter, my second chapter, on Chaucer’s “Merchant’s Tale,” focuses on the necessary place of the imagination within sympathy, and yet how time and memory work to prevent a truly sympathetic encounter between May and January. And this even as the incommensurability between the two is what allows May to restore the libidinal prelapsarian covenant she transgresses. For what May restores and gives back to January is less the word, still less the covenant, than the narcissistic fantasy of January himself, even as the successful restoration of this prelapsarian time (if only for January) discloses the spatio-temporal infidelity inscribed within the covenant itself: in order to guarantee the prelapsarian fantasy of their standing still in time, the logic of their covenant, as the narrative unfolds, likewise necessitates that January never really sees May in time, or, more correctly, out of time, asynchronous with him, for if so, January would realize that he is out of (prelapsarian) time, too, and, most important, out of synch with himself: in wishing to absent the difference that makes a difference between himself and May, January also absents the difference that allows January to see himself, which is why finally, January not only never sees, but in fact was blind from the beginning. I outline the intrinsic relation shared between sympathy and time and the imagination in order to show, in my third chapter on Antonin Artaud and Jacques Derrida and

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Gilles Deleuze on the question of reading and interpretation, that the relation between sympathy and the imagination is both temporal and structural. The import of this disclosure lies in our reconsideration of the Artaudian scene of writing between self and other as the necessity and yet very impossibility of a relation to another besides oneself, inasmuch as Artaud, in desiring the experience of the absolute singularity of being, absents the spatio-temporal inadequation that remarks the possibility of being in the first place—and thus that which forever insulate the artist from the critic and judgment, even as it also forever separates artist from artist, and artist from work. In putting such a premium on the imbrication of life and life, Artaud, finally, succumbs to the very law he sought to transcend, undone not so much by the principle of difference as that of the necessity of repetition and iteration constitutive of the *difference* between artist and work, the fact that the artist must always entertain a sense of loss and mourning in relation to their work, if only so that s/he may actually *experience* the imbrication in the first place. Taking as my point of departure the encounter staged by Lewis Carroll between nonsense and philosophy, and specifically the influence of this genealogy in shaping literary and philosophical accounts of Carroll's *Alice* books, my fourth chapter, which is also a return to Artaud and the 'task of the critic' on the relation between madness and literature, synthesizes the relation between affect and time thus far threaded throughout the dissertation, Taking as my point of departure Emerson's thesis on love as the basis of the state, my fifth and final chapter, on Emerson and politics and affect, shows that inscribed within any promise of democracy and hospitality must be their antithesis. For Emerson, though, it is on the basis of this dialectical antagonism that democracy and hospitality are possible. For Emerson, the other to whom I would open myself must retain the freedom to *be*, even if this means being my foe. Because we only encounter one another through time, prior to an encounter with the other, I'm as much other to the other as the other is



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to me: neither knows, beforehand, whether one is friend or foe, though a decision is made. What Emerson shows us is that we're never not punctuated by time and thus by memory and history. And yet through we're not, it is precisely on the basis of this interminable negotiation between self and other and time that we locate the significance of time in grounding being and community, and, hence, that we also locate the intrinsic relation shared between finitude and ethics: we must always negotiate our relation to the other, who, like me, and until the encounter, may be either friend or foe, and thus always that which puts into question (rather than affirms) any gesture toward universal or unconditional hospitality. Read through these lights, I offer less a philosophical solution to an historical problem (sympathy) than reveal philosophy's usefulness as an index to sympathy and its historical and cultural contexts, which I demarcate in terms of 'anticipation' and 'inheritance,' with the former epitomized in Chaucer and the latter in Emerson.

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## Introduction

Sympathy turns on our being able to achieve an affective commensurability with another, our hearts beating time with another's. But to the extent we are temporal, or mediated by time, achievement of this affective synchronicity is always barred. Sympathetic identification, such as found in Hume's and Smith's accounts, for instance, is possible on the condition that it occurs without change and alteration. But to this end, it is impossible, inasmuch as the sympathetic identification would occur without duration and thus outside that which ground sympathy's possibility in the first place: movement through space *and* time. Any sympathetic identification with another is meaningful to the extent it takes place both within space *and* time. Sympathetic identification, for these authors, is the finding and securing of affective affinities and congruencies between myself and another through time. But insofar as sympathy is indeed defined as this spatio-temporal relation with another, legible within sympathy is its greatest limitation. Because the sympathetic affinities I would find between myself and another are found through time, they are found only through change and duration. Consequently, we are, always already, outside the reach of that 'perfect pitch' (Smith) or 'hearing' (Kant) or 'presence' (Chaucer) or 'unity' (Emerson) or 'consensus' (Locke) or 'feeling' (Artaud) which would ground an affective synchronicity with another. What sympathy demands, as in Smith, is an absence of the spatio-temporal duration and difference that mediates the relation between myself and another. Yet which is problematic, since sympathy only ever occurs within the horizon of that spatio-temporal difference. Sympathy only takes place within time: the experience of approximating myself, ever so closely, to the pitch or hearing or presence or unity of another. The temporal immediacy sympathy wants, finally, it cannot have, as it's on the basis of that

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suspended immediacy between myself and another that sympathy finds its possibility as indeed a sympathetic experience with another beside myself.

Sympathy's possibility thus actually turns on the impossibility of ever fully achieving an affective synchronicity with another, for inasmuch as mine and another's heart would indeed 'beat as one,' and so insofar as the experience of another would be 'brought home to myself,' they would beat without the mediation that remarks the event of a sympathetic encounter (intertwined hearts) in the first place. Indeed, the achievement of a temporally congruent 'we' (you and I) would actually be the undoing of any 'we.' Indeed, if such temporal congruence were achieved, and contra Smith's account, for instance, but in fidelity with Emerson's, we would be just as dead as the "dead" we sympathize with, and this to the extent that we would be outside the periodicity of time, and thus difference, both of which are the minimal conditions of possibility for our being at all, let alone 'alive' (Smith) or with 'friends' (Emerson). Inasmuch as we're temporal, any sympathetic relation between myself and another will always be a relation out-of-joint with another, even as this temporal disjuncture redounds upon sympathy as its very possibility—but then a possibility undercut by mediation. As I discuss in the last two chapters, for instance, on Smith and Emerson, and in the latter especially, which is an in-depth reading of Emerson's "Politics," at any one time, we're either "flow" or "freeze," with or without "roots" and "centres." But then insofar as we are, we are never both, or both simultaneously: we're never not punctuated by time, which, in its spatial and imaginative determinations qua the distance between myself and another, figures as the (im)possibility of a sympathetic identification with another.

Following Derrida and Nancy, whom I introduce in my fifth chapters on Emerson and affect and their relation to the political, and prepare for in my first chapter on Smith and Rousseau and

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Locke, we are always already more and less than ourselves, where this ‘more and less’ is the possibility of our being ourselves—even where our ‘being ourselves’ is ‘being another’. For Nancy, the internal difference that remarks me qua myself is likewise what remarks the impossibility of my ever being (with) myself: because of the spatio-temporal mediation within myself, I’m as much apart from as close to myself, but, and no matter how close, never ‘with’ myself. Inasmuch as I have access to myself at all, I have it only insofar as the self to which I have access is a self other than myself. In short, access to ourselves is impossible. And yet, following Nancy, it is this difference between me and myself that grounds the possibility of my being with another besides myself. As I demonstrate in Smith’s and Emerson’s writings, for instance, it is on the basis of this move, what Derrida refers to as auto-affection, that we can understand the modern subject as both giver and benefactor of her affection, its provider *and* recipient. And we can do so, inasmuch as that love and affection is an affection always already, *a priori*, “withdrawn” from the subject.

Present in these thinkers’ writings on sympathy and affect, therefore, and especially in relation to community and politics, is a profound impasse, one legible precisely at the level of sympathy itself: namely, that the relation between myself and another is in fact threefold: sympathy as a relation between myself and another (and) another. Likewise, it is on the basis of this irremediable dialectic that this dissertation discloses the ethical and semiological crisis at the heart of personal identity and politics: the constitutive impossibility of securing another’s identity, including our own, as either friend or enemy, inasmuch as what defines such relations, on my side or another’s, is the possibility of the question in the first place: namely, time. Prior to an encounter with another, and following Kant’s meditations, I’m as much a stranger to the stranger as the stranger is to me, either potentially friend or enemy. And yet, inevitably, a

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potentiality giving way to a decision, one way or another. Crucial in my reading is the elaboration of fact that this friend/enemy dialectic, inherited from Nietzsche and Schmitt (respectively!), is always at work, imaginatively and structurally, and thus that, though ultimately in the form of a particular decision for or against hospitality, is something intrinsic to and indeed *even before* the question of hospitality, what Derrida defines as the necessary and unavoidable violence of judgment itself.

In sum, the twist inscribed within sympathy is this: insofar as sympathy finds its possibility only within the spatio-temporal difference between myself and another, it finds as well its very impossibility. Because the relation between me and myself is mediated by another, the relation between myself and another must also be this doubling: the relation between myself and another qua the relation between ourselves *and* another. But to this extent, what is similarly disclosed is the impossibility of knowing either, myself or the other, save qua a stranger both present and yet to arrive qua other. That is, an other who, as temporal and so contingent, must always be negotiated and hence understood as other than me. And yet, not left 'as the other,' either, a decision which would just reinstall the violence already at work in a judgment toward another, who, as other, must retain the freedom to be, even if this means not being good.

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## Chapter 1

### Adam Smith, Kant, Locke, and Rousseau: Enjoying Our Well-Ordered Bodies and States

This self-deceit, this fatal weakness of mankind, is the source of half the disorders of human life. If we saw ourselves in the light in which others see us, or in which they would see us if they knew all, a reformation would generally be unavoidable. We could not otherwise endure the sight.

Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*

#### I

Acknowledging the marginalized role sympathy plays within traditional political readings of the writings of eighteenth-century economist-philosopher Adam Smith, in particular his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, this essay argues for a re-evaluation of the political thrust of Smith's treatment of sympathy, where what is at stake are the political opportunities afforded by Smith's reading of sympathy. This orientation is political insofar as it seeks to enlarge a dimension of sympathy that conventional readings of Smith have ignored: the notion of sympathy as socio-political critique. The justification for the following reading thus turns on the premise that we might better understand modern notions of social-contract theory in general and sovereignty in particular by turning to sympathy. My argument is that underlying the moral and philosophical contours of Smith's sympathy is a political philosophy, whose origin is located within eighteenth-century morality, but whose destination, and thus whose understanding and

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explication, may be located within post-modern political thought. While we should, for instance, acknowledge those eighteenth-century philosophical and moral contexts that inform Smith's discussion of sympathy, contexts most notably influenced by the writings of Hume and Kant, Addison and Hutcheson, we nonetheless ought not foreclose the possibility that we may locate a *political* critique within those philosophical and imaginative contexts, one that eighteenth-century readers, Smith included, may not have recognized *as* political.

Indeed, adherence to a rigid historicism may have the ironical effect of occluding rather than bringing into relief those political dimensions tacitly embedded within the philosophical architecture of Smith's sympathy. What I propose to offer, therefore, is a reading cognizant of the extent to which sympathy is implicitly rather than overtly political, a distinction grounded on the understanding that the difference between the two valences of sympathy is a difference less of kind than of type. It is this overlooked province of sympathy *qua* political that, in my opinion, might be brought into greater relief, particularly insofar as it is a province whose determinations have largely been understood as exemplary of a difference in *kind* rather than *type* with the more philosophical determinations of Smith's sympathy. My justification of this reading, consequently, is twofold. First, if we begin with the traditional understanding sympathy as less the province of the 'political' than that of the affective, we can perhaps understand certain tendencies to locate Smith's 'politics' less within sympathy and more within his more well-known writings on contract-theory and politics. Indeed, if the political possibilities found in Smith's sympathy have been neglected, both in Smith's period and our own, one explanation may be found in the character of sympathy itself. Perhaps, it is sympathy's innocuous appearance *qua* sympathy, as the proprietary province of moral philosophy, that grounds its

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determinations qua sympathy even as it questions sympathy as anything *more* than the province of more philosophy.

In other words, the diffusiveness and secrecy of sympathy could be said to be that which complicates attempts to locate an explicit political praxis within sympathy. Yet while this may be so, I would argue that this problem exists only to the extent that conventional political theory believes there to be an explicit political theory within Smith's discussion of sympathy. Indeed, it is perhaps because conventional readings of Smith locate the politics of sympathy outside the horizon of sympathy—within Smith's more overtly political discussions—that traditional readings of Smith would overlook sympathy as political. It is this elision, though, that unfortunately puts into question rather than clarifies, the possibility of locating a critical political project within Smith's writings. This occlusion is exacerbated by the overshadowing politico-philosophical genealogy of which Smith's writings are a part and in which they are found. Though there is a long-standing tradition of taking up Hobbes' (or even Machiavelli's) rationale as the guiding principles on which are grounded modern understandings of political sovereignty, such cannot as easily be said about similar interventions into Smith's writings, which by comparison have heretofore provided few opportunities for those interested in questions of sovereignty and subjectivity. Exemplary about these unfortunate interventions is a certain philosophical amnesia, a certain unwillingness, to confront those modern and complimentary inheritors of that above-mentioned politico-philosophical genealogy, namely Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, and Michel Foucault. Because readings of Smith assume traditional renderings of the problem of sovereignty and civil society, the usefulness of Smith's writings on these questions find themselves usually extinguished in favor of Hobbes's and Locke's and others' more explicitly political overtures. The stances evocative of these positions



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(on sovereignty and civil society) are problematic to the extent that they locate consensus, governmentality, *nowhere*. Hobbes's and Locke's formulations, for instance, betray a certain tautology at their foundations: citizens obey the sovereign because the sovereign is sovereign; the sovereign is sovereign because people obey him. Absenting Apropos a rejection of fear, rationality, the desire for preservation, conventional political thought cannot effectively explain how a society might come to be. *Sympathy*, though, as I will argue below, may perhaps be recuperated as that which explains these relations between individual and state.

## II

Before beginning, let us first observe a crucial distinction otherwise overlooked in this discussion. It is not my intention to offer a facile schism between the 'good' and 'duty,' a distinction here rendered between politics and morals; and I do not insofar as such a schism would merely occlude—rather than clarify—the location of that ideological and political space in the subject from which a sense of duty springs. Such a maneuver would prevent us from identifying that which vindicates the pleasure one takes in carrying out one's juridical and political duty *qua* citizen. By taking up Smith's sympathy within the context of the writings of Kant, Rousseau, and Locke, my aim is to offer a re-reading of the relation between sovereignty and subjectivity and in particular the ideological negotiations therein between what Kant terms the tensions between duty and pleasure. Though this question in different ways finds itself addressed by these thinkers, by reformulating the question in the context of Smith's writings and sympathy specifically, I want to suggest a reconception of our understanding of contract-theory and sovereignty during this period, a reading that acknowledges yet also reads as problematic, Locke's, Hobbes's, and Rousseau's formulations. Whereas Hobbes and Locke, for instance,

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conceive the social contract as an agreement between sovereign and subject(s), a majoritarian agreement in which one's will is given over in favor of the majority, Smith's "social-contract" relies on a discursive and spatial configuration of governmentality. In Smith's hands, sovereignty consists of so many Foucauldian points and adjacencies, none of which located within a single individual, but rather within each and every individual.

Consequently, despite the discursiveness construction of sovereignty, for Smith, no one individual or group possesses sovereignty over others. Each individual, rather, is obliged to govern only himself. And though sovereignty is not consolidated in any particular individual, the political thrust of sympathy turns precisely on individuals' tendency and predilection to extend their personal sovereignty over and to others. Smith's project is predicated on the premise that the goals and ends possessed by one individual (i.e., self-governance) are in fact goals and ends uniformly shared by all, such that though sovereignty is not guaranteed by any individual, it nonetheless possessed within and constituted through each and every particular individual: a state comprised entirely of self-governing individuals. Smith's task is to figure out how such an endeavor may be undertaken. Our question, however, is slightly different: how might sympathy be understood as political? But also, how might it serve as that instrument of subjectification?

### III

Though a discussion of Adam Smith is admittedly absent from Foucault's later writings, we nonetheless might turn to Foucault's interventions on this question of sovereignty and power, which are nuanced enough to respond to these questions, but, at the same time, clever enough to reject orthodox configurations of the state-subject-sovereign trifecta. Foucault is arguably most

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clear on this configuration in his *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, in which we find that the “network of relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them” (HS 96). Foucault’s argument is that power relations emerge from the “support which force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system . . . [constituted by] the disjunction[s] and contradiction[s] which isolate them from one another” (HS 96). Consequently, for Foucault, and following Slavoj Žižek’s reading, we should not understand power as “emanat[ing] from a unique summit: . . . the very semblance of a Summit (the Monarch or some other embodiment of Sovereignty) emerges as the secondary effect of the plurality of micro-practices, of the complex network of their interrelations” (Žižek Reader 66). The significance of Foucault’s genealogy of power/knowledge lies in its response to the fact that “despite the differences in epochs and objectives, in political thought and analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king” (HS 89). The deployment of these general mechanisms into the social body discloses, *a priori*, the fact that “power is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatuses” (HS 89). At the same time, insofar as Foucault takes up the power/sovereignty accord, he rejects it as precisely that top-down paradigm of sovereignty within which all discussions of power have heretofore been held hostage. As Foucault observes, it is “this image that we must break free from, that is, of the theoretical privilege of law and sovereignty, if we wish to analyze power within the concrete and historical framework of its operations” (HS 90).

Foucault thus provides an answer to how we might understand sympathy in its more utilitarian determinations as a form political praxis. And he does so by identifying its mode of deployment: secrecy. If sympathy succeeds as a kind of sovereignty, it does so “only on

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condition that it mask a substantial aspect of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms . . . secrecy is not in the nature of an abuse [but], it is indispensable to its operation (*HS* 86). Though I'll return to this discussion below, here I merely would like to highlight the poignancy of Foucault's point. More specifically, I would like to delineate more clearly the implied relationship here between power, ideology, and sympathy, where ideology is that mechanism by which the subjectifying structure of sympathy is masked or otherwise concealed. By so doing, I hope to put at stake the politico-philosophical architecture of sympathy. According to Foucault, power is effective because we misrecognize our relation to it: we take as given rather than subversive those matrices of domination that tacitly and continually constitute our identity as interpellated subjects. And these modes of domination and production are effective, as Slavoj Žižek notes, insofar as we fail to concede the possibility that "it is possible to *lie in the guise of truth*" (*The Žižek Reader* 61). For if we "were entirely cynical," if we did not see it "[power] as a mere limit placed on our desire, leaving a measure of freedom intact" (*HS* 86), we would not accept power or would otherwise not legitimate its undertaking. For Foucault, if power and domination succeed as modes of subjectification, it is because they obey a logic in which the "legitim[ation] of the logic of the relation of domination [is] . . . concealed" (*Žižek Reader* 61). Domination and truth, for Foucault, are inextricably tied together. Perhaps, then, the more important point to be taken away from this discussion, is that at all times the former is a function of the latter.

#### IV

Taking as our point of departure our brief exegesis of Foucault above, if sympathy succeeds as political praxis, it does so by bypassing the necessity of a material sovereign; though

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sovereignty exists, for Smith, its incarnation lies less in an embodied figure than in dispersal through a multiplicity of individuals.

The all-wise Author of Nature has . . . taught men to respect the sentiments and judgments of his brethren; to be more or less pleased when they approve of his conduct, and to be more or less hurt when they disapprove of it. He has made man . . . the immediate judge of mankind; and has . . . appointed him his vicegerent upon earth, to superintend the behaviour of his brethren. They are taught by nature to, to acknowledge that power and jurisdiction which has thus been conferred upon him, to be more or less humbled and mortified when they have incurred his censure, and to be more or less elated when they have obtained his applause (*TMS* III; 2.32; 130).

For Smith, there is a higher law within the subject finds himself subjectified, a law termed by Smith as the Author's Law or Divine Law. As Smith observes, "it belongs to the moral faculties . . . to determine when the ear *ought* to be soothed, when the eye *ought* to be indulged, when and how far every . . . principle of our nature *ought* either to be indulged or restrained" (*TMS* III.5.6). What is "agreeable to our moral faculties, is fit, and right, and proper to be done; the contrary wrong, unfit, and improper. The sentiments which they [moral faculties] approve of, are graceful and becoming . . . The very words, right and wrong, fit, improper, grateful, unbecoming, mean only what pleases or displeases those faculties" (*ibid*). Sympathy occasions a potent socio-political critique of governmentality. Sympathy puts at stake those inter and intrasubjective

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mechanisms of subjectification which the subject(s) takes on and assumes under the pretensions of self-governance—pretensions engineered thorough what Smith calls our ‘internal spectator’:

When we first come into the world, from the natural desire to please, we accustom ourselves to consider what behaviour is likely to be agreeable to every person we converse with, to our parents, to our masters, to our companions. We address ourselves to individuals, and for some time fondly pursue the impossible and absurd project of gaining the good-will and approbation of every body. We are soon taught by experience, however, that his universal approbation is altogether unattainable. As soon as we come to have more important interests to manage, we find, that by pleasing one man, we almost disoblige another, and that by humoring an individual, we may often irritate a whole people. In order to defend ourselves from such partial judgments, soon learn to set up in our own minds a judge between ourselves and those we live with. We conceive of ourselves as acting in the presence of a person quite candid and equitable, of one who has no particular relation either to ourselves, or to those whose interests are affected by our conduct, who is neither father, nor brother, nor friend, either to them or to us, but is merely a man in general, an impartial spectator who considers our conduct with the same indifference with which we regard that of other people (*TMS* III.2.31).

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Crucial to a political recuperation of sympathy is an understanding of the interconnected relationship between desire and duty, between desire and the good, negotiations that ground the condition of possibility for a just and virtuous society. In Smith, we find fulfillment of one's juridical duty (or the desire toward that fulfillment) follows from a separate though correlative duty, which redounds upon the first through its continual inadequation to the subject: namely, the duty to achieve virtuous and utopic existence. Self-affirmation and approbation serve, in Smith's formulation of sympathy, as the general conditions of possibility for a just and virtuous society, a possibility itself predicated on the idea that all of its members share in a common goal: to be (and want others to be) just and virtuous beings. The vision of society that materializes in Smith's writings is thus one framed by communal duplicitousness, and yet a duplicitousness productive and provocative in its concealment from each and every member of that society *qua* being duplicitous: the idea that the attainment of happiness or virtue could somehow be a goal or duty separated or otherwise outside of, the trappings of political praxis. Of concern for us is elucidation within Smith's text of that ideological and psychic mechanism by which one's duty (and the propensity towards it) may be (and is) subjectified and internalized within the subject. Smith writes:

But if without regard to these general rules, even the duties of politeness, which are so easily observed, and which one can scarce have any serious motive to violate, would yet be so frequently violated, would become of the duties of justice, of truth . . . of fidelity . . . But upon the tolerable observance of these duties, depends the very existence of human society, which would crumble into nothing if mankind were not generally

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impressed with a reverence for those important rules of conduct (*TMS*  
III.5.2)

What Smith proposes is a society that carries out its duties and, thereby, acknowledges *and* carries out both their duty and the good. Smith writes:

And hence it is, that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature; and can *alone* produce among mankind that harmony of sentiments and passions in which consists their whole grace and propriety (*TMS* I.i.5.5; 25).

## V

We can most productively investigate the politico-philosophical implications of the above passage by now turning to the writings of Kant and Rousseau, who may shed light on the way in which sympathy may simultaneously enunciate and conceal its mechanisms of interpellation and subjectification. Specifically, I want to examine the extent to which we may recuperate Smith's sympathy as the answer to the question sought by Locke and Rousseau (respectively: "if man is left free and under no other ties than he was in before the state of nature, what appearance would there be of any compact?") Over Locke and Hobbes, but within the tradition of Rousseau, Smith's sympathy suggests more than the ordered and rationalistic society. Indeed, what it suggests is the well-ordered society, one turning on justice, virtue, and decency.

Understood either within the tradition of moral or political philosophy, Smith's sympathy may thus be read as fashioning a certain kind of totalitarianism, the uniqueness of which lies not



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