

2014

"For How Could We Do without Sugar and Rum?": The Semiotics of Abolitionist Aesthetics

James Patrick Padilioni
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Padilioni, James Patrick, "'For How Could We Do without Sugar and Rum?": The Semiotics of Abolitionist Aesthetics" (2014). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1539626746.
<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-yjay-e692>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

“For how Could we do Without Sugar and Rum?” The Semiotics of Abolitionist
Aesthetics

James Patrick Padilioni, Jr.

Ceiba, PR

B.A., West Chester University, 2012

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

American Studies

The College of William and Mary
August, 2014

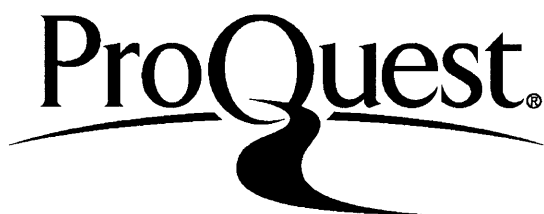
ProQuest Number: 10631675

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10631675

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

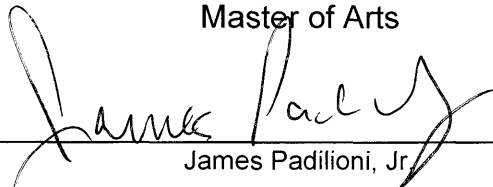
This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

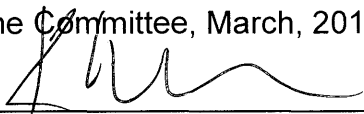
APPROVAL PAGE

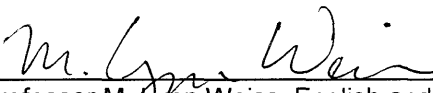
This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

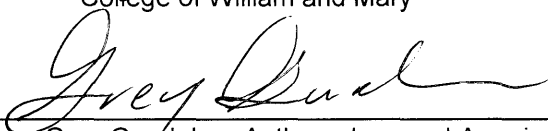
Master of Arts


James Padilioni, Jr.

Approved by the Committee, March, 2014


Committee Chair
Professor Karin Wulf, History
College of William and Mary


Associate Professor M. Lynn Weiss, English and American Studies
College of William and Mary


Dittman Professor Grey Gundaker, Anthropology and American Studies
College of William and Mary

ABSTRACT

This research examines Abolitionist discourse and praxis in Great Britain, France, and the United States during the period roughly spanning 1750-1865 and that correspond to the Anti-Saccharine and Free Produce Movements. To orient the line of this inquiry, this research emanates from the question: "In what ways did abolitionist discourse interrogate the prevailing ideologies of its time that supported the arguments and presented as natural the relations of power constituted within black chattel slavery?" From the time of Aristotle, who argued that slavery was a domestic relationship as natural as man and wife or mother and child, slavery existed unquestioned throughout world history. The emergence of a coordinated abolition movement in Britain at the close of the eighteenth century represents the creation of a constituency of overlapping discursive publics, ranging from Evangelical Christians to free market liberals to Romantic artists, all sharing the goal of the abolition of slavery, but differing in their specific motivations and tactics to achieve this end.

In particular, this research will uncover a semiotics of abolitionism, and will view abolitionist discourse as not limited to the written word, but exemplified in aesthetic forms such as poems and novels, visual representations such as prints and broadsides, and ephemera. Beginning chronologically with Adam Smith as a generative site of abolitionist ideology, a robust analytical interplay between ideology and materiality will be in focus during this investigation born out of the methodological impulse that material culture and aesthetic sources figure as useful sites for historical inquiry due to the implicit ideologies standing behind the form of their materialization and didactic function within society to do social work. Evidence of the Anti-Saccharine and Free Produce Movements exists in divergent sources located far from locations of explicit ideological discourse (treatises, polemics, etc.), and while these other forms will be discussed here, it will be to draw a richer field of reference for the semiotics of abolitionist discourse.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
List of Figures	iii
Introduction and Methodological Discussion	1
Chapter 1. Will the Real Adam Smith Please Stand Up?	8
Chapter 2. The Barbarities of West Indian Sugar	24
Chapter 3 The Semiotics of Moral Commerce	31
Chapter 4 Slavery on its Heels: The Revival of British Abolitionist Commerce	46
Chapter 4 Abolitionist Aesthetics Arrive in America	54
Conclusion Ethical Commerce, Yesterday and Today	60
Bibliography	66

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To reach the point of my academic career in which I am invited to write the acknowledgement for my MA thesis is surreal. Education and learning have always been important facets of my life, and I am both overjoyed and pleased that my pursuit of knowledge has not yet proven futile. Researching and writing this thesis has consumed much of my imagination throughout 2013, and has impacted my life in ways I could not have imagined possible at the outset of this project. I want to thank my professors here at the College of William and Mary, and particularly my advisor Dr. Karin Wulf, for the feedback, interest in, and development of my scholarship they have imparted to me. Dr. Wulf's redirections and historiographical discussions have added to the depth of analysis with which I have tried to approach this history.

On a personal note, I am compelled to express my gratitude to my parents, whose interest in my educational life and encouragement of my efforts have always formed the wind beneath my wings. As a child they frequently reminded me that "knowledge is power" and "education is key," and I am fully aware that the joy I take in historical scholarship is one they instilled in me first. Additionally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my younger brother, John, who was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes seventeen years ago as we were both young children. Growing up in our family, sugar occupied a poignant place in our minds and our cupboard, and its potential both to sweeten *and* sicken planted the seed that in many ways has blossomed into this body of research.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	"C'est à ce prix que vous mangez du sucre en Europe"	33
Figure 2	"Barbarities in the West Indies"	36
Figure 3	"Anti-Saccharrites, -- or – John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar"	39
Figure 4	Blue glass sugar bowl	41
Figure 5	"S is the Sugar, that the slave / Is toiling hard to make..."	57

Introduction and Methodological Discussion

I OWN I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.
I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?
Especially sugar, so needful we see?
What? give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea!
William Cowper, "Pity for Poor Africans" (1788)

On April 18, 1791, Parliamentary member William Wilberforce took the floor of the House of Commons to defend his bill for the abolition of the slave trade. Several years of inchoate abolitionist efforts and aspirations accompanied Wilberforce and his bill to the floor that day, mostly stemming from the community organizing and pamphleteering of Thomas Clarkson. Clarkson had toured England during 1787-88, stirring up abolitionist sentiments, and interviewing individuals with personal history tying them to the slave trade, and speaking to local chapters of the newly –founded Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade to encourage them in their efforts. Clarkson did not limit his campaign to the rhetorical strength of the word, written or spoken, but included the didactics of visual representation as well. This aesthetic focus led to the commission of Josiah Wedgwood's famous wood-carved logo depicting a kneeling slave encircled by the motto "Am I not a man and a brother?" as well as the print of the Liverpool slave ship *Brookes* depicting its over-packed hull and

the dehumanizing cargo techniques used to transport African slaves along the Middle Passage from Africa to the Americas.¹

For over three hours, Wilberforce sustained an argument presenting slavery as "contrary to every principle of religion, morality, and sound policy," and he knew that he spoke with the collective voice of a nascent, but growing, movement.² Between the years 1788 and 1792, these humanitarian activists had flooded Parliament with over six hundred petitions from every country in England (and some in Wales and Scotland) calling for the abolition of the trade.³ Wilberforce detailed, through a combination of anecdotal form and quantitative data, the abominable horrors of slavery, including slaves being thrown into boiling sugar vats, having their limbs and ears cut off, nursing mothers being beaten for suckling during work hours, and the extreme forms of corporal punishment meted against the enslaved for infractions as slight as making a noise. Though he believed his case to be both empirically rooted and solidly argued, Wilberforce was aware that he faced an uphill battle in the face of the West India Lobby – the sugar merchants, slavers, plantation owners, and other parties interested in the furtherance of the economic status quo. It was from this lobby that "an opinion had gone forth, that the measure of abolition would be attended with inevitable ruin to the West India islands," demanding of Wilberforce

¹ J. Pinfold, "Introduction," *The Slave Trade Debate: Contemporary Writings for and Against*, (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2007), 7-13.

² S. Tomkins, *William Wilberforce: A Biography*, (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007), 94.

³ W. Wilberforce, qtd. in *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*, (London: T.C. Hansard, 1817), 250.

all the rhetorical passion and indignation he could muster on the floor of the House that April day.⁴

Despite his pleas to humanity, The West India Lobby's relationship with Parliament exerted enough influence to defeat Wilberforce's bill. This political setback signaled a rupture point in the abolitionists' faith in the ability of political institutions *alone* to affect the type of social change they desired. As the abolitionists strategized new ways to circumvent the political protections blanketing slavery, they found in Adam Smith a figure whose own work provided a system of meaning that seemed to explain slavery as both a system of power and economics that metastasized itself to government under the guise of mercantilism. The resulting Anti-Saccharine Movement in Great Britain (and later the Free Produce Movement in the United States) borrowed heavily from the economic arguments levied against slavery in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Moreover *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Smith's first publication, provided a theory of sympathy that the abolitionists harnessed to render their arguments against slavery both *rational and affective*, and Smith's explanation of the work that imaginative empathy does to facilitate sympathetic connection between humans manifested in abolitionist aesthetic forms: their poems and novels, broadsides, prints, and ephemera.

This research pays particular attention to the aesthetic forms produced by the abolitionists that correspond with what will be deemed appropriations and interpretations of the Smithian paradigm communicated across his two main

⁴ William Wilberforce, 92.

tomes. Whether rhetoricized in language or visualized in its representation, aesthetic forms communicate ideas in a semiotic fashion. Roland Barthes took “*language, discourse, speech*, etc. to mean any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual” because they all belonged to “the province of a general science...which is *semiology*.”⁵ Semiology, or the study of significance and meaning, provides a researcher with the tools to read aesthetic forms as a text written in “*metalanguage*,” or level of communication where meaning is constituted metaphorically. Barthes described metalanguage as a “second language, *in which* one speaks about the first” and in which “the semiologist is entitled to treat in the same way writing and pictures... [for] they are both signs....”⁶ In particular, this paper analyzes the blood sugar trope that emerged in connection with the Anti-Saccharine Movement in Britain and later the Free Produce Movement in the United States for the diverse ways abolitionists employed its visual and evocative grammar. Because this research reads abolitionist aesthetic forms as performative sites in the spatial imaginary that opposed the web of power relationships constituting the institution of slavery, their semiotics will be read critically with an eye towards the shifting background context of their discourse. The rhetoric of blood sugar, though similar in word, found its meaning constituted in different ways by different abolitionist interpretations.

Abolitionism did not exist as a cohesive unity, but developed as a constituency of related interests in overlapping spheres, each developing lines of

⁵ R. Barthes, 110, 111

⁶ Ibid. 115

argumentation corresponding to the specific objectives of various interpretations of abolitionism. Christopher Leslie Brown interrogated this historiographical ontology, noting that “[t]he path to abolitionism was less linear [and] more crooked, than has been supposed....marked by false starts, routes not taken, initiatives that petered out.”⁷ As Michael Warner has detailed, the concept of a cohesive body politic often is accorded too much importance, with the reality being “an infinite number of publics within the social totality,” each with unique “space[s] of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself...the idea of a public, unlike a concrete audience or the public of a polity, is text-based -- even though publics are increasingly organized around visual or audio texts.”⁸ To properly account for the multiplicity of abolitionist publics, and to transverse the artificial divide between their “Art” and ephemera, this paper includes material culture sources and methodology into its scope in order to construct a *habitus* for the semiotics of abolitionism.⁹

Ideas, while powerful even when in the abstract, materialize in the world through forms that humans encounter through experience. Material culture embodies theory in historical actors, contending that culture is “something created and lived through objects” that provides a “crucial link between the social

⁷ C. L. Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*, (Chapel Hill: The University of NC Press, 2006), 27.

⁸ M. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2002), 67.

⁹ In *Outline of the Theory of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu defined *habitus* as the entire social and cultural environment in which one lived containing “structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures,” or as the “principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations” that enter, circulate, and become appropriated over time within a discursively or spatially defined location (72). The verbal and visual metaphors employed by abolitionists reflect the recursive nature and unstable signification of tropes within the *habitus* of the Anglophone Atlantic world.

and economic structure, and the individual actor....[O]bjects have the ability to signify things - or establish social meanings - on behalf of people” and as a result, they become “incorporated into, and represent, wider social discourses related to extensively held norms and values enshrined in norms and social institutions.”¹⁰ A history of slavery that fails to grasp the symbiosis between ideology and materiality, or that only relies upon economic logic for its explanatory power, is bound to be insufficient. Eugene Genovese cautioned that “[t]he isolation of the economic aspects of a social system is dangerous and, in the end, false....If we read the economic story in too narrow a context – if we miss the social context within which economic activity takes place – we are certain to misinterpret the economic activity itself.”¹¹ Grounding much of the evidence of this research in material culture forms helps integrate ideological and material understandings of the process of historical change under examination.

The discourse publics found within a *habitus* also inhabit some arrangement of shared material space. In order to plot the development of the blood sugar trope, this thesis situates the action of its narrative within three broad geographic locations: 1) Great Britain and France, 2) The Antilles, and 3) The United States. Comparative in scope, this research is situated within American Studies for several key reasons. Too often, “America” is used to refer to the political United States and not the continents. America includes the Caribbean as well, and within the realm of slavery studies, too often focus is placed upon

¹⁰ I. Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture*, (London: SAGE Publications, 2007), 4.

¹¹ E. Genovese, ed., *The Slave Economies: Vol 1 Historical and Theoretical Perspectives*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 1, 2.

slavery in the United States in a disproportionate quantity to the amount of slaves that arrived there after surviving the Middle Passage. “[W]hile Negroes were the overwhelming majority of the population and labor force of the Caribbean during most of the colonial era, they were always a minority of the population of the U.S. colonies, and for most of the colonial period a relatively small minority.”¹²

Furthermore, the historical development of the United States took place within a global context. Despite the political separation following independence, British intellectual and cultural institutions exhibited strong inertia upon the fledgling republic, as the United States remained in circuits of trade and discourse with Europe.¹³ The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 does not, and cannot, apply to American Studies scholarship. The development of political economy in France and Scotland, along with the emergence of a coordinated British abolitionist movement, all preceded and influenced abolitionism in the United States. All these reasons support a wide, comparative perspective when dealing with intellectual, cultural, and slavery history in the Americas broadly and the United States specifically. The Earth, and the humans that call it home, does not exist in sealed spaces.

With these theoretical perspectives in guiding, this thesis proceeds to exhume abolitionist discourse for the semiotics employed in the service of moral commerce. To begin, let us turn first to an orienting sign for much of their rhetoric and strategies: Adam Smith.

¹² *Time on the Cross*, 21, 22.

¹³ For the tenacity of European cultural influence on the United States in this time period, see K.A. Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Chapter 1: Will the Real Adam Smith Please Stand Up?

“Who is Adam Smith?” may seem like a trite question to open this genealogy of sorts for the semiotics of abolitionism, but in attempting to discover its answer, the researcher encounters an impenetrability disguised by the simplicity of that four-word phrase. With his death in 1790, Adam Smith’s significance existed in a field of unfixed meanings, remaining playfully enigmatic and always rendered different based on the location of the observer. To avoid reification or hagiography, and in the effort of drawing a “family tree” of Adam Smith’s ideas as they translated from his mind into his works, and from his works into discursive publics and abolitionist aesthetic forms. Smith here will be charted along the chronology of his life. We will experience Smith’s academic career, his travels, and the unfurling of his ideas over time as he first experienced them and then wrote them into the annals of history. This tight following of Smith’s life path will help us to avoid reading Adam Smith as the inevitable “father of classical economics” and in doing so will weave for us a tapestry of the generative possibilities discovered by the abolitionists in their interpretations and appropriations of his philosophy in the service of their moral crusade.

The Western world in 1759 was once again in the midst of conflict that showed no signs of abatement.¹⁴ In this third year of what would be called the Seven Years’ War, the perennial powers of Europe – Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, and Prussia, among others – each struggled to dominate in

¹⁴ For the backdrop of European warfare in the seventeenth century that framed the Seven Years’ War, see C.V. Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years’ War*, (New York: New York Review of Books, 2005).

trade and war. However, what made this war distinctive was the New World expansion that occurred in the two prior centuries. Driven by mercantilist policies that held that a nation's wealth derived from the amassing of precious metals, colonial landholdings in the Americas served an important role in promoting a favorable balance of trade for the metropolises. Raw goods would be produced or culled from the New World, sent to their respective mother countries to be refined into finish goods, and then returned to the colonies for sale. European governments attempted to accrue bouillon by limiting trade to geopolitical distinctions, through the levying of protective duties and tariffs and issuing legalized monopoly status to their respective commercial ventures. This view promoted a zero-sum perspective on trade and commerce, with each nation viewing its neighbors' industries as threatening and oppositional.¹⁵

Also in 1759, situated in Scotland and removed from the theaters of battle, Adam Smith published *Theory of Moral Sentiments (TMS)*, his first book. The thirty-six year old professor and friend of David Hume began his academic career first as a lecturer before earning his professorship at Glasgow University teaching lecture in 1751. Two years later, he assented to the head of Moral Philosophy.¹⁶ Smith's research paradigm into the nature of humanity corresponded with the general Scottish Enlightenment's preoccupation with devising a science of man. As records of his lectures testify, Smith focused on many valences of man as an object of study, including music, sculpture, painting, literature, linguistics, and

¹⁵ D.A. Baugh, *The Global Seven Years War 1754-1763: Britain and France in a Great Power Contest*: (London: Longman Publishing, 2011).

¹⁶ M. Bussing-Burks, *Influential Economists*, (Minneapolis: The Oliver Press), 2003.

astronomy. Smith's research was descriptive, not normative, for he believed that the unseen processes at work in and through human society and the natural world could be discovered through methodological observation.¹⁷

In *TMS*, Smith delivered a theory of human cognition, perception, and sympathy, and then from this explanation developed a framework of ethics facilitated by empathy. "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."¹⁸ This sentence forms the opening salvo of Smith's argument, and it contains an important clue for understanding the workings of his theory of sympathy, the reference to the faculty of sight. *TMS* is an account of perception first and foremost, and as such it is centered from the perspective of an individual. Each of us encounters and discovers our world perceptively: we see the blades of grass and observe their green hue, we smell the perfume of a rose, we hear the distant call of a whippoorwill, taste the sweetness of a raspberry, and feel the sun's heat shine upon our necks. Though perception is an individual endeavor, man does not live alone but within society, and in the overlapping perceptions that constitute the shared experiences of human events, it is an inescapable fact that the five senses of one human will perceive the presences of other humans. The well-being of one can only affect

¹⁷ See A. Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, J.C. Bryce, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce, eds. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982); and chapter 5 of N. Phillipson, *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life*, (New Haven: Yale, 2010) titled "Smith's Edinburg Lectures: a Conjectural History."

¹⁸ A. Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, (1790), I.I.1.

the happiness of another if she has “the pleasure of seeing it.” Smith’s theory of sympathy is rooted in the phenomenology of perception, but with the limits of time and space presenting formidable barriers to sympathetic knowledge, how can one see all things and all peoples in all places?

Smith proffered empathy as a tool to overcome the spatial barriers preventing widespread shared sympathy. Critical to the role that distance played in Smith's account was the belief that sympathy was as "a principle of judgement...impacted in very complex ways by the cultural, affective, and physical proximity of the person or object being judged."¹⁹ Thus, while sympathy hinged upon observational proximity, empathy transcended it, building an imaginary bridge that could connect one human to another when the five senses of perception were incapable of performing this work directly. In his example of a Chinese earthquake, Smith speculated how a “man of humanity in Europe” might react to the news of the “myriads of inhabitants” of the empire of China being “suddenly swallowed up by an earthquake.” Though this man in Europe may “express very strongly his sorrow for the misfortune of that unhappy people,” the preeminence and immediacy of his surroundings would soon distract him unless he fixated his mind upon the earthquake indefinitely. Otherwise, he would likely “pursue his business or his pleasure, take his repose or his diversion, with the same ease and tranquility, as if no such accident had happened....”²⁰

¹⁹ F. Forman-Barzilai, *Adam Smith and the Circles of Sympathy: Cosmopolitanism and Moral Theory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 6.

²⁰ *TMS*, III.I.46.

Smith continued that if this same man were to somehow know he would “lose his little finger” tomorrow, “he would not sleep tonight” as he tossed and turned upon his bed in dreadful expectation at the pain he will experience directly. However, even though his mind is filled with the knowledge of “the destruction of that immense multitude” in China, his sleep is not affected, and “he will snore with the most profound security.” Adam Smith further problematized his thought experiment, adding that if this man were given the plain choice between losing his finger or “sacrific[ing] the lives of a hundred million of his brethren,” even “provid[ing] he had never seen them... [h]uman nature startles with horror at the thought, and the world, in its greatest depravity and corruption, never produced such a villain as could be capable of entertaining it. But what makes this difference?” The crux of Adam Smith’s interrogation in *TMS* hinges upon this very question, the discovery of the factors that make “this difference,” the interworking of sympathy and empathy that constituted the individual within society as a moral being.²¹

In another passage highlighting Smith’s understanding of the work empathetic imagination does to facilitate shared sympathy, he elaborated that “though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers.” Perception is the only tool humans have to phenomenological experience and interaction with the world, but this limits us to “immediate experience” only, for our senses “never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person.” As a strategy around this, Smith

²¹ Ibid., III.I.46.

explained that “it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are [our brother’s] sensations....By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation,” or into his subjectivity, and by this we “conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him....” It is important to note that in Smith’s explanation, empathy is employed to transport the observer *into* the body of another human, not as a means for the observer to place *his* subjectivity onto a distant other. This directionality, from within to outside of the self, is important, because as we become one with our brother, “[h]is agonies, when they are thus brought home to ourselves, when we have thus adopted and made them our own, begin at last to affect us, and we then tremble and shudder at the thought of what he feels.”²²

Another important concept developed by Smith in *TMS* is the heuristic of the “impartial spectator” or the “man within the breast” that articulates an individual’s sentiments and behaviors on the stage of his society composed of spectators. Here, Smith’s understanding of how the self is constituted within society bears upon his theory of sympathy. “Were it possible that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he 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.” The impartial spectator for whom each individual performed and articulated

²² Ibid., I.I.2.

her sentiments and behaviors represented for Smith not the “eternal voice of conscience or of the deity, but...the world to which we belong.”²³

The impartial spectator spoke with the “voice of the people...the normative values of society, a relativistic social code...simply a hypothetical, abstract third person.”²⁴ Instead of figuring the individual in an atomized way, Smith’s individual exists in a web of reflecting and refracting relationships with other individuals. “Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with.”²⁵ The mirror of society and its discourse, its culture, norms, and mores, inscribed themselves upon the breast in the creation of the self. Smith’s self within society yearned to be sympathetically understood by her peers, and performed social behavior in a way that would best elicit their mutual feelings. As empathy’s directionality moved the individual outside of the self and into a connection with the outside world, the impartial spectator operated in reverse, bringing the gaze of the outside world interior, forming a connection between society and the moral center of an individual. “Whenever we are about to act so as to affect the happiness of others,” Smith believed, the “inhabitant of the breast...calls to us, with a voice capable of astonishing the most presumptuous of our passions, *that we are but one of the multitude...*” (emphasis added). For Smith, this critical understanding of the relational aspects between the self and

²³ D.D. Raphael, *The Impartial Spectator: Adam Smith’s Moral Philosophy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 156, 157.

²⁴ D. Marshall, “Adam Smith and the Theatricality of Moral Sentiments,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 10, No. 4 (1984):592.

²⁵ *TMS*, III.I.3

society, and sympathy and empathy, provided the raw material for building a theory of ethics that aimed towards human flourishing. “When we prefer ourselves so shamefully and so blindly to others [perceptively or imaginatively], we become the proper objects of resentment, abhorrence, and execration.”²⁶

In 1758, one year prior to the publishing of *TMS*, François Quesnay published his *Tableau économique* in Paris, which detailed his new economic theory about the creation of wealth. Quesnay’s theory espoused that a cycle of production existed between “trois sortes de dépenses” (three types of expenditures or consumptions of physical energy/resources): landowners, farmers, and the “sterile” class of artists who produced no surplus.²⁷ According to his table, Quesnay believed that agricultural production was primary because its surplus allowed for the cycle of production to begin again the next year, which contrasted with land left fallow or insufficiently cultivated, and the artist class that consumed on net. Quesnay and other intellectuals in France at the time were concerned with the origins of wealth, and this group of theorists came to be known as the Physiocrats, from the Greek terms *phýsis* (“nature”) and *krátos* (power). Thus, the Physiocrats believed that it was production in the land and trade that created wealth, and not a manipulated and regulated balance of trade found in mercantilism. As the Seven Year’s War drained Louis XV’s coffers, the Physiocrats blamed mercantilism for the increasing poverty of France,

²⁶ Ibid., II.II.11, III.I.16

²⁷ F. Quesnay, “*Tableau économique*,” (1758). Though later disproven, this work was groundbreaking for its time in orienting the study of economics towards free markets.

recognizing that mercantilism was “help[ing] establish the necessary pre-conditions for a modern class society.”²⁸

In 1764, one year after Great Britain’s victory over France in the Seven Year’s War, Adam Smith accepted the tutorship of the young Duke of Buccleuch and joined him for an educational voyage to the European continent, stopping first in Geneva where he met Voltaire, and next arriving in Paris during December 1765.²⁹ His reputation as one of the emerging philosophers from Scotland preceded him, as *TMS* was translated and printed in Paris under the title *Métaphysique de l’Ame*, and accordingly his name was already known among the French men of letters.³⁰ Smith met with several of the Physiocrats, including Quesnay, Joseph Necker, and Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot. One event that might have entered Smith’s discussions with these French economists was Great Britain’s passing of the Sugar Act in 1764, which aimed, on the macroeconomic level to levy a mercantilist blow against the French in the fierce West Indian sugar market. Following the “Sugar Revolution” of the middle seventeenth century, sugar production transformed the Atlantic basin, with Richard Ligon writing from Barbados in 1647 that planters were “so intent upon planting sugar that they had rather buy food at very dear rates than produce it by labor, so infinite is the profit of sugar works after once accomplished.”³¹ The supply of

²⁸ E. Fox-Genovese, *The Origins of Physiocracy: Economic Revolution and Social Order in Eighteenth-Century France*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 102.

²⁹ *The Impartial Spectator*, 182, 183.

³⁰ A. Smith, *Métaphysique de l’Ame, Ou Théorie Des Sentiments Moraux*, (Paris: Chez Briasson, 1764).

³¹ R. Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, K. O. Kupperman, ed., (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), 16. The term “sugar revolution,” while being supported across wide scholarship, has recently received more nuance from some scholars who

sugar increased as a result of the confluence of the acquisition of arable lands, the adoption of black chattel slavery as a cheap labor source, the emergence of the gang system of labor, and the conversion of the plantation as a self-contained production site. The maritime powers of Europe claimed for themselves nearly every inhabitable island in the Antilles prior to the year 1700 in fierce mercantile competition that formed the backdrop of the Seven Years' War.³²

Though the Sugar Act of 1764 in *word* was nothing new, a mere update of the 1733 Sugar and Molasses Act, in *deed* its enforcement would be different under Lord Grenville's Prime Ministership. In an effort to pay off war debt accumulated in its defense of the North American colonies, British trade officials ensured that the tax on sugar would be collected in North American ports. This revenue generating measure consequently represented an effort to increase the interdependent power relationship of Parliament with British sugar interests by cracking down on smuggling. Sugar smuggling stemmed from the mercantilist regulations prohibiting non-British sugar to enter the American colonies. The supply of sugar generated in the Caribbean exceeded the available markets in Europe, and as a result the Dutch and particularly the French sought to dump their excess products on the North American market. Even after the loss of

argue sugar production had early antecedence than the 1640s. For an argument supporting the sugar revolution thesis, see P. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), section 6, "The sugar revolution and the settlement of the Caribbean." For a more nuanced approach, see R.R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

³² K. G. Kelly and M. D. Hardy, eds., "Why This Volume?," *French Colonial Archaeology in the Southeast and Caribbean*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 3,4.

Acadia to Britain at the close of the war, the French colonies in the Antilles still were the chief producers of sugar, and by the 1770s Saint Domingue produced nearly 110,000 tons, or 40% of the world's entire supply. When combined with the output of Guadeloupe and Martinique, these three French colonies exceeded the raw sugar production of all the British Caribbean holdings combined.³³

In addition to raw sugar, derivative commodities of sugar such as molasses and rum equally spurred the creation of lucrative side markets, particularly in New England. Jamaica produced the lion's share of the 130,000 tons of sugar produced by British sugar colonies, but much of this was consumed in Britain itself as the average sugar consumption for a Briton increased fourfold from four to sixteen pounds over the duration of the eighteenth century.³⁴ Additionally, the gastronomic culture of France relative to Britain's and British North America meant that the domestic demand for sugar in France was lower, leading to larger surpluses of French sugar needing to find a market elsewhere, often turning to the New England rum industry.³⁵ The desire of British sugar interests to politically block French sugar from entering the New England markets was revealed by the testimony of the solicitor for the British sugar islands before the Board of Trade. He reminded the board that it was "well known to every one concerned in the Sugar Trade that the Profits of the Planter depend upon the Vent [market] which he finds for his Rum and Molasses." More than just

³³Rogonzinski, *A Brief History*, 121; Kelly and Hardy, eds., *French Colonial Archaeology*, 4.

³⁴J. Rogonzinski, *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and Carib to the Present*, (New York: Plume, 1999), 107-125; 78; *Time on the Cross*, 19.

³⁵R. J. Trethewey, *The Economic Burden of the Sugar Act*, *The American Economist*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1969): 67

producing sugar, it was necessary that British planters in the West Indies also sold molasses for rum distillation in order to make a profit in the face of the large “expense of Culture and making” involved with sugar’s cultivation. Representing the political voice of the planters, this solicitor concluded that “[c]onsequently as the Vent of Rum and Molasses is stopt or increased, the Sugar Colonies...must thrive or decline....”³⁶

With the sugar market’s political interests pushing world events forward in 1765, Adam Smith’s economic discussions with the physiocrats and their explanations of wealth creation and mercantilism’s stifling effects inescapably involved black chattel slavery as well. The eighteenth century witnessed the metaphors of Sugar Islands referring to the Antilles and “white gold” for sugar sprout and grow ubiquitous as Europe and America’s sugar craving turned insatiable. This expanding sugar demand came as a direct influence of slavery and mercantilism, and resulted in increased warfare and national debt.³⁷ Indeed, we know that Turgot identified the “abominable custom of slavery” as a “species of thieving” along the coast of Guinea that “Europeans encourage[d]...by going thither to purchase negroes for the cultivation of their American colonies.” Yet since the physiocrats believed that wealth stemmed from surplus, the wealth created through slave-cultivated sugar relied upon a surplus of human lives and cruelty. “The excessive labor to which the greedy masters force their slaves, causes many of them to perish; and it becomes necessary, to

³⁶ F. W. Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1763* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917), 415.

³⁷ For one example of the growth of sugar demand, see E. Leslie, *Seventy-Five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats*, (Boston: Monroe & Francis, 1835).

keep up the number requisite for cultivation, that this trade should supply annually a very large number.”³⁸

Turgot's essay appeared in *Éphémérides du citoyen*, an economic journal detailing physocratic theories. *Éphémérides* aimed, among several goals, to examine the influence of public writing upon the national spirit, correct the errors of the people, and investigate presumptuous, blind ignorance.³⁹ The journal grew more vocal against slavery when Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours became its editor in 1767. Du Pont's economic thought placed great emphasis on social, cultural, and political institutions as all being interrelated and contingent upon each other; fully understanding the processes at work within any one of these realms required a careful inspection of the symbiotic relationship that existed between them all.⁴⁰ In 1771, Du Pont also addressed the issue of slavery in the pages of *Éphémérides*, showing the relationship between the economics of sugar and the moral wrong of slavery that countenanced it. He called out “Les particuliers qui ont des esclaves, les Gouvernements qui les tolèrent, et rougissent en secret” (Individuals that have slaves and the governments that tolerate them, blushing in secret). After trying to calculate the cost of the French West Indian sugar trade, a cost that included “le prix d'achat d'un esclave, la perte pendant le voyage, le marronnage, la mort prématuré” (the price of buying a slave, the loss during the voyage [Middle Passage], marronnage and runaways,

³⁸ A.R.J. Turgot, “Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth,” Rfl.47, Rfl.48

³⁹ *Éphémérides du citoyen*, vol 1 (Paris, 4 November 1765), 15. The original text reads, « Examinez... quelle est & quelle peut être l'influence des écrits publics sur l'esprit national; comment ils peuvent corriger les erreurs du peuple, ressusciter les antiques vérités, investir l'ignorance aveugle & présomptueuse, l'oblige d'ouvrir les yeux à la lumière. »

⁴⁰ J.J. McClain, *The Economic Writings of du Pont de Nemours* (Cranberry, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1977), 9

and premature death), Nemours calculated that on average, 420 livres were spent per slave, per year.⁴¹ He compared this to the average French peasant, who, in these decades preceding the French Revolution, subsisted on only 30 livres per year.

In the face of the gross domestic poverty and the disproportionate suffering inflicted upon Africans, *Éphémérides* challenged its readers that “il faudrait se résoudre à payer le sucre plus cher plutôt que de violer les droits de l'humanité” (they must be resolved to pay for more expensive sugar rather than violate the rights of humanity).⁴² In France, the physiocrats opened up new understandings of the world that gained much attention among the intellectual class, so much so that M. de Vaublanc, visiting Metz in 1774, noticed that at gatherings the ambient conversations focused on political economy: “C'était alors à la mode. Tout le monde était économiste” (It was then in fashion. Everyone was an economist).⁴³

In 1766, Adam Smith left Paris and moved to London, where his exposure to physiocratic theories regarding wealth, mercantilism, and slavery motivated his research into the effects of British mercantilism and its relationship to the stifling of prosperity in Britain. The result, 1776's *Inquiry to the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, addressed members of the British public with Smith's “violent attack...upon the whole commercial system of Great Britain,” and contained a message of opposition crafted against the nexus of power established in the

⁴¹ *Ephémérides du Citoyen*, vol 4 (Paris, 1771).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ M. de Vaublanc, *Souvenirs*, I, p. 377 ; H. Taine, *The Origins of Contemporary France: The ancient régime*, (New York: Holt & Company, 1876), 297.

economic and political marriage of mercantilism.⁴⁴ Smith explained that mercantilism resulted from the “wretched spirit of monopoly” that had motivated specific legislation “prompted always by the private interest of particular traders.” He blamed the antagonistic trade policies of mercantilism for plunging Britain into the Seven Years’ War, noting that the “enormous expence” of “[t]he last French war cost Great Britain upwards of ninety millions,” resulting in the imposition of higher taxes and stronger trade protections in “distant countries” including “America...and [the] West Indies.”⁴⁵ Because mercantilist aims prompt a government to give “extraordinary encouragement to the industry of the country” and believing that, due to greed and special interest, “scarce any nation has dealt equally and impartially with every sort of industry,” Smith blamed this faulty economic understanding as a cause of poverty and a hindrance to the flourishing of society.⁴⁶

Combining physiocratic theory with his prior work on sympathy, Smith argued that free labor was profitable not only for economic wealth, but was crucial to the general happiness of society. Contrasting with the funneled wealth generated through mercantilist trade policy, Smith theorized that demonopolized markets would lead to a more equitable diffusion of wealth. “It deserves to be remarked, perhaps, that it is in the progressive state, while the society is advancing to the further acquisition...that the condition of the labouring poor, of the great body of the people, seems to be the happiest and the most

⁴⁴ A. Smith, qtd. in C. R. Fay, *Adam Smith and the Scotland of His Day*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴⁵ *Wealth of Nations* IV.1.38

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I.I.7.

comfortable.”⁴⁷ This societal acquisition depended on the expansion of markets, not their limiting through protectionism, as well as the gradual accumulation of agricultural surplus year over year. Mercantilism, however, channeled wealth to discrete interests as a result of the power extorted on the legislature by merchants and manufacturers. Smith did not mince words, declaring that mercantile laws “may be said to be all written in blood.”⁴⁸ The visceral conditions of society’s poorest weighed heavily in Smith’s economic attack against mercantilism because of the phenomenological affect wealth disparity produced upon the moral perception of an individual. More plainly, the stark material contrasts between those who amass riches through rapine and those rendered poor as its result should assault the senses of an individual properly imbricated within society. Smith drew upon his moral philosophy from *TMS* to buttress his argument that economic self-interest unhinged from sympathy was “hurtful to the general interest of society.” He stated further, “No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid., I.8.41 I.8.43

⁴⁸ Ibid., IV.8.17

⁴⁹ Ibid., I.8.35

Chapter 2: The Barbarities of West Indian Sugar

The industry most protected by Britain during the 1770s was the West Indian Lobby. Because of the competition France's sugar domination presented to British sugar interests, an elaborate system of laws emerged that nurtured the sugar trade, ranging from protective measures in the form of tariffs and prohibitions, but most nefariously encompassing the trade's market in human lives through legislated black chattel slavery. Smith's economic theory hinged upon wealth being the result of surplus production, but the nature of sugar cultivation in the West Indies made a naturally-occurring surplus impossible. When Smith interrogated the sugar trade from this line of questioning, he speculated that the enslaved had no incentive to labor above and beyond whatever level of work they deemed was necessary to procure a modicum of food and shelter, the basic necessities of their survival. Beyond this, if their additional labor could not directly or indirectly be seen as beneficial to their lot, then the additional work required from them to produce a surplus of sugar could "be squeezed out...by violence only."⁵⁰

The severe nature of the work and the violence associated with the slave system created a situation in the West Indies where more enslaved Africans died each year than were born. One economic history documented that in the West Indies "the death rate of slavers was so high, and the birthrate so low, that these territories could not sustain their population levels without large and continuous

⁵⁰ Ibid.

importations of Africans. The rate of natural decrease in the West Indies varied from 5 to 2 percent per annum during most of the eighteenth century.”⁵¹ The continuous importation of slaves, fueled by greed and protected by law, gave rise to power relationships that Smith viewed as stronger than any economic incentive promoting slavery alone. “The pride of man makes him love to domineer, and... [w]herever the law allows it, and the nature of the work can afford it, therefore, he will generally prefer the service of slaves to that of freemen.” West Indian sugar cultivation could “afford the expence of slave–cultivation” due to the artificial surplus it generated for reasons of power that spanning economic, social, and political institutions. This expense was an expense mercantilism passed onto British society overall, though the poor and enslaved bore its brunt most immediately.⁵²

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the ghastly conditions of the West Indian sugar trade was widely known throughout the Atlantic littoral, mostly through the form of travel accounts of wealthy gentleman or members of the clergy. Thomas Tryon described the sweltering experience of the “150 or 200 Negroes” required by the average sugar plantation and who daily sweat in the cane fields because “the Climate is so hot.” Beyond this, their “Labour [was] so constant” that their toiling continued “night and day...in great Boyling Houses, where there are Six or Seven large Coppers or Furnaces kept perpetually Boyling...night and day, during the whole Season of making Sugar, which is

⁵¹ R.W. Fogel and S.L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1977), 25.

⁵² Ibid., III.2.9, 10.

about Six Months in the year....⁵³ The Reverend James Ramsay, an Anglican minister on the island of St. Kitt, observed that there was no law or custom that “secure[d] to [them] the least humane treatment, or...save[d] them from the capricious cruelty of an ignorant, unprincipled master, or a morose, unfeeling overseer.” The punishments inflicted upon the enslaved were severe, as “a half starved negroe, may...be hacked to pieces with a cutlass” for the simple mistake of “breaking a single cane, which probably he himself has planted.” After laying out the horrors of slavery, Ramsay concluded in Smithian fashion that “[t]he people, whose improvement is here proposed, toil for the British state” and as a result, “[t]he public...has an interest in their advancement in society.” Of this improvement, Ramsay asked, “And what is here claimed for them? Not bounties, or gifts from parliament, or people; but leave to become more useful to themselves....”⁵⁴

James Anderson lamented the “heart-less indifference to the sufferings of the Negro slave,” and recounted the gruesome realities of sugar production, noting that “[i]f a stiller slip into a rum-cistern, it is sudden death: for it stifles in a moment. If a mill-feeder be catch'd by the finger, his whole body is drawn in, and he is squee's'd to pieces. If a boiler get any part into the scalding sugar, it sticks like glew, or birdlime, and 'tis hard to save either limb or life.” The extreme psychic and physical toll mounted upon the enslaved body in sugar cultivation, and “by many accidents are they disabled.” Anderson observed that additionally,

⁵³ T. Tryon, *Tryon's Letters, Domestick and Foreign*, (London: 1700), 201, 202.

⁵⁴ J. Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies*, (London: 1784), 63.

they will run away, and perhaps be never seen more, or they will hang themselves..." But despite his seeming understanding of the miserable conditions of West Indian slavery, the potentiality of suicide as resistance remained obscured for Anderson, who evidently deemed it illogical: "no one knows why..."⁵⁵ Anderson may have claimed to not understand why an enslaved individual might have viewed death with welcome relief, but enslaved West Indians probably understood the logic too well. On the island of Nevis at the Jennings and Balls Estate belonging to Sir William Stapleton, a female slave named Mimba had her hands "ground off," most likely while feeding cane through the mill.⁵⁶ Though however painful and horrific the experience must have been for her, Mimba "escaped" with her life, living to see another day.

But what did it really mean for Mimba to live through this freak accident? Living to see another day only meant the continuance of her legal status as expendable property, driven to work long hours in arduous conditions for the enrichment of an owner who probably lived a world away in England. Mimba's subjectivity is buried with her body on Nevis, silenced by a historical record that took no interest in asking for her opinion. But if we can attempt to excavate her experience by speculating into the historical record and reading it against the grain, in the face of such incessant toil, what would Mimba say in reply to James Anderson's incredulity regarding suicide? Would she hold up her wrists, showing

⁵⁵ J.S.M. Anderson, *The history of the Church of England in the colonies and foreign Dependencies*, Vol. 1, (London: F. & J. Rivington, 1856), 470.

⁵⁶ K. Mason, "The World an Absentee Planter and His Slaves Made: Sir William Stapleton and his Nevis Sugar Estate, 1722-1740," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, Vol. 75, no 1, (1993): 126.

him where her hands once were, before being hastened back to work by her cruel overseer?

In 1766, George Washington sent to Captain Joseph Thompson of the schooner *Swift* a letter along with his “Negro (Tom)...to sell in any of the Islands you may go to, for whatever he will fetch” in exchange for “One Hhd of best Molasses, One Ditto of best Rum...Two small [pots] of mixed Sweetmeats -- abt 5 lb. each.” Washington’s motivation for this sale to West Indies was to punish Tom for being “both a Rogue & Runaway...” After indicating that Tom should “sell well, if kept clean & trim’d up a little when offerd to Sale,” Washington instructed Captain Thompson to “keep him handcuffd till you get to Sea,” perhaps indicating a fear that Tom might try to fight and escape. Without any indication of guilt or ambiguity for writing what essentially was Tom’s death warrant, Washington closed his icy letter with warm salutations: “I wish you a pleasant and prosperous Passage, and a safe & speedy return, being Sir, Yr Very Hble Servt.”⁵⁷ This account vividly illustrates how, by the end of the eighteenth century, human life functioned as currency for the price of sugar and its derivative commodities. The slave trade relied on the dehumanization of Africans, evidenced in the fact that Washington deigned to call Tom by his name, placing it between parenthesis as an afterthought or secondary to Tom’s primary and overriding identification as an abstract “Negro.”

⁵⁷ “George Washington to Joseph Thompson, 2 July, 1766,” The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition, ed. Theodore J. Crackel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008, <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-02-07-02-0300>, accessed 2 May 2013

And there can be little doubt that Washington knew exactly what kind of lethal fate awaited Tom in the “Torrid Zone,” and his macabre calculus and demonstration of dominion over Tom’s body and life certainly factored into the choice of sale to the Antilles. Yet if we can step across the gap from where the historic record goes silent and into the realm of imaginative interrogation once more, we are invited to wonder if Washington’s memory ever resurrected the visage of Tom as he cracked open his cask of rum to “fill a bumper all round,” entertain guests, and drink their health.⁵⁸ As the sweetness of the sugary sweetmeats purchased with Tom’s life possibly aggravated Washington’s rotten teeth, his throbbing pain paled in comparison to the tortuous, grinding existence on some distant sugar plantation to which he banished Tom. Such questions, as in the case of Mimba, can only be explored in the spaces of historical questioning left uncharted by the archive, but nevertheless help to orient our view of West Indian slavery to a coordinate from the margins. It is critical that we try to look at this history through the eyes that slavery flooded with tears and stung with sweat, turning our heads towards the center of power in London from the marginality of the West Indies, and aligning ourselves with those whose necks have squarely felt the press of slavery’s heavy boot.

The transatlantic slave trade, with sugar as its main driver, transported over 12,500,000 Africans across the ocean into slavery between 1500-1866, a full six million being sold during the eighteenth century alone during the height of

⁵⁸ F. Hopkinson, “The Toast,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 4 April 1778. This song in honor of the general begins “’Tis Washington’s health, fill a bumper all round, for he is our glory and pride.”

the sugar trade.⁵⁹ It is clear that the Atlantic world and particularly the Anglo-American discursive public knew what historian Vincent Brown wrote about the Caribbean: it was “a death trap;” and as the market increasingly became a place where human lives were exchanged for inebriant spirits, molasses, sugar, and candied dainties, abolitionist indignation mounted.⁶⁰ But the demoralizing defeat of Wilberforce’s bill in 1791, one year after the death of Adam Smith, revealed to the abolitionists how powerful the political and economic interests backing slavery and arrayed against their cause truly were. If political abolitionism proved impotent in the face of mercantile protection of the slave trade, the abolitionists would have to circumvent this powerful collusion through other means. The Smithian vision circa 1790 was one that contained social harmony, sympathetic understanding, and prosperity, and its “analytical egalitarianism” stood in radical opposition to mercantilism and the status quo hierarchy of its day.⁶¹ The “propensity” of individuals “to truck, barter, and exchange” was tempered by the concomitant ethical responsibility that “we must not ruin” our neighbor in that process.⁶² For these abolitionists, their only recourse to stifling the slave trade seemed to lie in a boycott of sugar. And boycott they did.

⁵⁹ *Time on the Cross*, 15; “Assessing the Slave Trade,” Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,

⁶⁰ V. Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 13.

⁶¹ S.J. Peart and D.M. Levy, *The “Vanity of the Philosopher:” From Equality to Hierarchy in Postclassical Economics*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2005), 3.4. “Analytical egalitarianism” here is defined as the view that “everyone’s preferences count equally and...is equally capable of making economic decisions....all people, philosophers and subjects alike, are...all equally capable of making decisions.”

⁶² *Wealth of Nations*, I.2.1.; *TMS*, II.II.2.

Chapter 3: The Semiotics of Moral Commerce

As early as the mid 1750s, a growing awareness of the human price of sugar began to surface in the Atlantic discursive public. Radical Quaker John Woolman of New Jersey called for a boycott of slave-produced goods, calling sugar and molasses “prize goods” seized by force.⁶³ Though his rhetoric in many ways presaged the Anti-Saccharine Movement of Britain in 1791, his efforts were limited to his Quaker community in New Jersey and the Philadelphia region. However, during the Seven Years’ War, the argument for moral commerce received a large mouthpiece from Voltaire’s *Candide, ou L’Optimiste*, published in 1759. In this satire, Voltaire critiques the passivity of accepting human affairs as the best they could possibly be, and to this end, *Candide* featured a scene in which a maimed enslaved man explained to the eponymous protagonist how he came to lose his hand and his leg.

“Quand nous travaillons aux sucreries” (When we work in the sugar mills), he disclosed to Candide, “et que la meule nous attrape le doigt, on nous coupe la main” (and the wheel traps our finger, they cut off our hand). In this statement Voltaire used the voice of the enslaved man to critique the harsh labor conditions in the West Indies. But when describing the reason for his lost leg, Voltaire allowed the enslaved man to speak against the violence that maintained slavery as a system. “[Q]uand nous voulons nous enfuir, on nous coupe la jambe” (When

⁶³ P. Hinks, and J. McKivigan, ed., R.O. Williams, asst. ed. *Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 266–268.

we want to run away, they cut off our leg). After painting a visual image of the brutalizing experience of West Indian slavery, the enslaved man wailed to a distraught Candide, “C'est à ce prix que vous mangez du sucre en Europe” (It is at this price that you eat sugar in Europe).⁶⁴ When the 1787 edition of *Candide* was illustrated, Jean-Michel Moreau added syncretic affectivity to this scene, giving its readers a visual image along with Voltaire's powerful language to conjure their imaginative sympathy (Fig. 1).

It would not be until the push for abolitionism spurred by Clarkson and Wilberforce that the nascent impulses of a sugar boycott gained significant momentum. As Wilberforce delivered the closing remarks of his speech on the floor of the House on 18 April 1791, he professed that he was “comparatively indifferent as to the present decision of the House.” Knowing that the West India Lobby presented a Herculean challenge to the passage of the bill, he averred the indefatigable spirit of the abolitionist cause: “Whatever they [Parliament] might do, the people of Great Britain, I am confident, will abolish the slave trade....”⁶⁵ Within weeks of the Parliamentary defeat, William Fox voiced his moral indignation in *An Address to the People of*

⁶⁴ Voltaire, ed. and trans. S. Weller, *Candide: Ou L'Optimiste*, (Dover, DE : Courier Dover, 1993), 88-90.

⁶⁵ William Wilberforce, 95.



Figure 1, *Candide, ou L'Optimiste*. Illustration by J. M. Moreau le Jeune, 1787.

Great Britain on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum, explaining that “[t]he wealth derived from the horrid traffic, has created an influence that secures its continuance.” Fox expressed the jaded spirit of the growing abolitionist movement in their political institutions, observing that since “[t]he Legislature...refused to interpose, the people are necessarily called on....” This new strategy, called upon by the people in lieu of Parliament’s ability to address their petition, involved economic action. “West Indian Slavery” and the sugar market that it supplied “depend[ed] upon [the British market’s] support for its existence” he reasoned, as such, “it is in the power of every individual to increase, or to diminish its extent....” In an evocative rhetorical flourish, Fox echoed the indomitability Wilberforce predicted in the House: “They may hold [sugar] to our lips, steeped in the blood of our fellow-creatures; but they cannot compel us to accept the loathsome potion.”⁶⁶

Fox pointed out the irony that although they supposedly lived “in an enlightened age,” Britons only “pretend[ed] to the finest feelings of humanity,” and that “[t]he consumption of sugar in this country is so immense” that the average “family that uses 5lb. of sugar per week, with the proportion of rum” could “prevent the slavery or murder of one fellow-creature” if they abstained for twenty-one months. Further calculating the cost of moral inaction, Fox provocatively argued that every pound of sugar consumption “may be considered as consuming two ounces of human flesh.”⁶⁷ Over 250,000 copies of his *Address*

⁶⁶ W. Fox, *An Address to the People of Great Britain on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum*, (London: M. Gurney and W. Darton, 1791), 3,4.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

reached the minds and hearts of Britons and Americans, with the pamphlet reaching ten editions in Britain the same year it was published.⁶⁸ Fox's call to arms – a morally righteous boycott of West Indian sugar and slavery – was the most-distributed pamphlet of the eighteenth century, surpassing even Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.⁶⁹ In analyzing the impact of the sugar boycott called for by Fox, Charlotte Sussman argues that the agency of analytical egalitarianism found in Smithian economic rhetoric provided a power of "consumerism" or a kind of universal suffrage for its advocates that resulted in a political campaign that bypassed Parliament and granted power directly to the people, many of whom were of the lower and middle classes.⁷⁰ In this theater of British politics, the West Indian Lobby, including the members of Parliament in their pocket, was scripted as the antagonists, the elite villains. The abolitionists claimed for themselves the role of protagonist, claiming to speak as the morally righteous *vox populi*.

The art of political satire and caricature grew increasingly during the latter half of the eighteenth century in London. James Gillray, who "stands without dispute at the head of the English caricature tradition," used his bold etching skills to create two prints themed on the Anti-Saccharine Movement. On 23 April 1791, Gillray's first etching was printed and displayed for sale in the window of Miss Hannah Humphrey's shop in St. James' Street, and was titled "Barbarities in the West Indies" (Fig. 2). This print illustrated one of the evidentiary stories

⁶⁸ J. Jennings, *The Business of Abolishing the British Slave Trade, 1783-1807*, (London: Routledge, 1997), 69.

⁶⁹ "Sugar in the Atlantic World," William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, <http://www.clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/sugarexhibit/sugar06.php>, accessed 4 May 2013.

⁷⁰ C. Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender & British Slavery, 1713-1833*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). Chapter 4 is titled "Women and the Politics of Sugar," and highlights the gendered nature of the Anti-Saccharine Movement.

recounted by William Wilberforce during his testimony from 18 April. Gillray's scene depicts a bulging-eyed overseer in a West Indian sugar mill holding a whip in one hand and a large wooden spoon in the other, while in the process of pushing an enslaved man into a boiling sugar vat as punishment for being too sick to work. Gillray figured the vat in the central foreground of his print, with the enslaved man's appendages flailing desperately above the surface of the cane



Figure 2, "Barbarities in the West Indies," by James Gillray, published by Hannah Humphrey, 23 April 1791. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

juice as smoke billows around him. The maniacal overseer's speech bubble captured his taunts: "What you can't work because you're not well? - but I'll give you a warm bath to cure your Ague, & a Curry-combing afterwards to put spunk into you." In the right background, bits of flesh, an arm, and two ears can be seen nailed to the wall, testifying further to the macabre horrors of sugar production. Along the bottom of the print, Gillray quoted Wilberforce's Parliamentary account of this graphic scene:

Among numberless other acts of cruelty daily practised, an English negro driver, because a young negro through sickness was unable to work, threw him into a copper of boiling sugar juice, and after keeping him steeped over head and ears for above three quarters of an hour in the boiling liquid whipt him with such severity, that it was near six months before he recover'd of his wounds and scalding.

This print gave visual form to the emerging "blood sugar" trope, with part of its significance lying imbricated in sentimentality for the plight and agony of the enslaved purchased by the British sweet tooth. The blood sugar trope additionally provoked revulsion in the consumer by metonymically associating the enslaved with the products they produced. Britons using sugar to sweeten their palates were also possibly eating traces of the "blood, sweat, pus, and even flesh" of the enslaved, with this taint in the sugar moving in a direction from enslaved "pores and wounds to [British] mouths."⁷¹

Gillray located his second sugar-related print much closer to home for the British public. Published eleven months after "Barbarities...", "Anti-Saccharrites,

⁷¹ Ibid., 113.

- or - John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar” reveals his famed skill for visual satire (Fig. 3). This print humorously features the family of George III joining the boycott as if they were an average British family. Gillray’s use of the generic name for a Briton – John Bull – sets up the irony for the viewer. King George and Queen Charlotte are joined by their six princesses for their first drink of sugarless tea; a decision Gillray billed “this noble example of œconomy.” George, lips pursed at the edge of his teacup, exclaims “O delicious! delicious!” as a bony-fingered and worn-looking Queen Charlotte tries first to appeal to her bemused daughters sympathy: “ O my dear Creatures, do but Taste it! You can't think how nice it is without Sugar: - and then consider how much Work you'll save the poor Blackeemoors by leaving off the use of it!”

Queen Charlotte’s second attempt relied on economic reasoning, though here Gillray’s sarcasm shines as Charlotte frivolously implored “remember how much expence it will save your poor Papa!” - O its charming cooling Drink!” The six princesses, whose expressions range from shock to sullenness and anger, are not convinced and make no attempt to try their sugarless tea. Gillray’s two visualizations of the blood sugar trope communicate two different underlying perspectives. The first focuses on the depravity of West Indian sugar production, and seems to indicate a sincere support for abolition coupled with concerns over the purity of slave-produced products, both moral and hygienic. However, one year after the launching of the Anti-Saccharine



Figure 3, “Anti-Saccharites, -- or -- John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar,” by James Gillray, published by Hannah Humphrey, 27 March 1792. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Movement, a theme of futility or skepticism emerged in Gillray’s attitudes about its efficacy. The longer the boycott lasted without any real political success, a certain performativity or ostentation began to develop around the growth of the movement, detached from true sympathetic understanding of slavery’s ghastly reality.

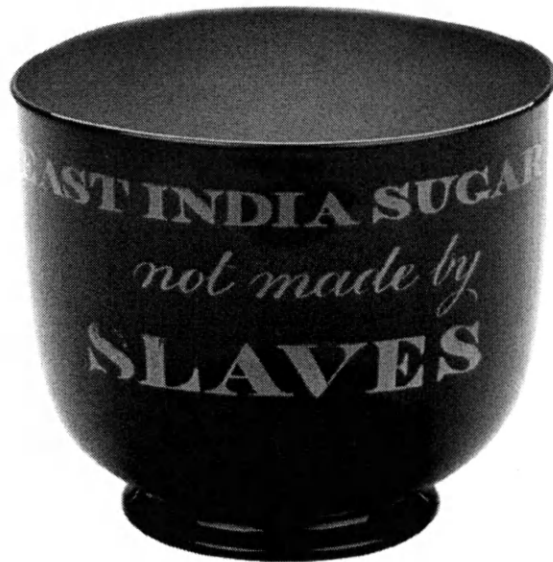
At its height in 1792, over 300,000 Britons partook of the boycott, which did reduce sugar profits by upwards of a third.⁷² But the performative sympathy alluded to by Gillray is mirrored in the advertisement placed by Haverhill merchant James Wright in the March 6, 1792 *General Evening Post*. This public utterance motivated by Wright's sentimentality and economic self-interest, declared in lower- and upper-case typesetting that he was "impressed with a Sense of the unparalleled SUFFERINGS of our FELLOW-CREATURES, the AFRICAN SLAVES in the WEST INDIA ISLANDS...." He confessed that "I am encouraging Slavery" due to his participating in the sugar trade, "a principal Support of the Slave Trade." Wright had given thought to the content and form his public confession would take, stating plainly that "I take this Method of informing my Customers that I mean to discontinue selling the Article of SUGAR," though his economic interests evidently outweighed any immediate moral apprehension, since he would not fully wash his hands of this trade until he "disposed of the Stock I have on Hand." As a way to further capitalize on the Anti-Saccharine Movement, Wright and other merchants did not stop trading in sugar entirely, but switched from West India sugar to that produced by the East India Sugar Company in Southeast Asia, "Channels less contaminated, more unconnected with Slavery, less polluted with Human Blood."⁷³

The profitable economic potential of the boycott captured the attention of manufactures as well, and soon sugar bowls exhibiting the words, "East India

⁷² A. Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 213, 193.

⁷³ "James Wright of Haverhill," *General Evening Post*, London, 6 March, 1792, http://gallery.nen.gov.uk/asset72644_1318-abolition.html, accessed 3 May 2013.

Sugar not made by Slaves” appeared on the tables of families that, instead of abstaining altogether, rewarded free labor with their business and switched to Indian sugar, increasing its sales tenfold (Fig. 4). A sugar bowl prominently displayed during an afternoon tea functioned as an item of conspicuous consumption, silently but unmistakably displaying the moral perspicuity of the owner. The sugar bowl, an item of the kitchen and parlor, showed the gendering of this type of economic activity and the domesticity implied in marketing to the primary



Blue Glass Sugar Bowl, circa 1800-1830, Bristol, England. © Trustees of the British Museum

shoppers of food and dishes for the home: women. In Lauren Berlant's discussion of the "women's intimate public" formed during the abolitionist movement, she defined this activity as "juxtapolitical" because it "operate[d] in

aesthetic worlds” alongside the discretely political.⁷⁴ In a society that excluded women from direct political action, a sugar bowl proclaiming the purity of its East Indian-derived contents sat as a symbol of their sentimental understanding of political economy. As Sussman observed, “women’s political power...lay in their ability to regulate the domestic space, keeping its contents separate from the economic dynamics of colonial trade.”⁷⁵

But this level of coordinated consumer action spurred out of true sympathy proved difficult to sustain, and by 1797, poet Robert Southey took to his pen, noting that while “individuals with enthusiasm banished sugar from their tables...[their]...enthusiasm soon cooled.”⁷⁶ The power of imaginative literature to stir the mind to contemplation (and social action) induced Southey to publish a book of abolitionist poetry.⁷⁷ The blood sugar trope in Southey’s poetry appears in provocative language, born out of his radical political views and frustration that boycott’s “slow but certain method” of ending slavery through “the disuse of West-Indian Productions” was not moving fast enough. In Sonnet III, Southey employed the metaphor of economic cannibalism in order to quicken and enflame indignation in his readers:

Oh he is worn with toil! the big drops run
Down his dark cheek; hold -- hold they merciless hand,
Pale tyrant! for beneath thy hard command

⁷⁴ L. Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), viii, 2-3.

⁷⁵ *Consuming Anxieties*, 129.

⁷⁶ R. Southey, *Poems*, (Bristol, 1797), 29; for more background on Southey’s anti-slavery views see T. Morton, “Blood Sugar,” *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780-1830*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 87-106.

⁷⁷ For the role that literature plays in promoting social sympathy in public discourse within a democratic system, see M. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

O'erwearied Nature sinks. The scorching Sun,
 As pityless as proud Prosperity,
 Darts on him his full beams; gasping he lies
 Arraigning with his looks the patient skies,
 While that inhuman trader lifts on high
 The mangling scourge. Oh ye who at your ease
 Sip the blood-sweetn'd beverage! thoughts like these
 Haply ye scorn: I thank thee Gracious God!
 That I do feel upon my cheek the glow
 Of indignation, when beneath the rod
 A sable brother writhes in silent woe.⁷⁸

In a bold move that signaling the emerging Romantic aesthetic, Southey picked up the metaphors of sugar, blood, and drinking in Sonnet V, but this time not in reference to tea, but instead to slave rebellion: "Did then the bold Slave rear at last the Sword / Of Vengeance? drench'd he deep its thirsty blade / In the cold bosom of his tyrant lord? / Oh! who shall blame him?.../ No more on Heaven he calls with fruitless breath, / But sweetens with revenge, the draught of death."⁷⁹ Written three years after Britain's forces invaded Haiti in an attempt to wrest the sugar colony from France's hands in the wake of the destabilization caused by the slave revolt, many sympathetic liberals were moderate and slow in the process of abolition for which they advocated.⁸⁰ An economic boycott could smoothly shut down the trade in a way orchestrated by white Britons. A slave rebellion, on the other hand, placed the agency in the hands of the enslaved

⁷⁸ Ibid., 35

⁷⁹ Ibid., 37. Romanticism's origins are found in elements of liberalism, as the Mme. de Stael (daughter of financier Joseph Necker) is regarded as a main theorist of the Romantic movement for her works *Sur l'influence des passions* (1796) and *Sur la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800). Additionally, she operated a salon at her chateau in Coppet, Switzerland that became a "who's who" of European liberals, in addition to keeping correspondence with many others, including the Marquis de Lafayette, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Constant, Jean Charles Léonard de Sismondi, Marquis de Condorcet, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Chateaubriand, and Lord Byron.

⁸⁰ W. Wilberforce: *A Biography*, 117.

themselves, as the events in France's former "Perle des Antilles" graphically illustrated. Once more, the French Revolution had ignited a type of liberal passion that conservative British society feared could spread within its empire.

Southey reoriented the direction of the blood sugar trope as one that placed enslaved West Indians in the agential foreground, conjuring mental images in stark departure to the docile settings of tea tables or the weak frailty of the enslaved in the sugar mills that dominated the preceding discourse. The same harsh labor that could grind hands and maim also built muscle and psychic resolve, forging a potent combination. The ideology of liberty and natural rights circulating Europe and the Americas at the close of the eighteenth century, when materialized in and through the Haitians overthrow of their French sugar masters, tempered the liberalism of some members of the British public while encouraging the radicalism of the younger generation of Romantics. Southey's poetry relocated the center of sympathy to the West Indies and showed how the wide divergence of Adam Smith's scholarly work could be mapped along different points between the axes of sympathy and economics.

In *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke placed the blame for the French Revolution at the feet of the "men of letters" who possessed "a spirit of cabal, intrigue, and proselytism." This group included the Physiocrats, who Burke termed "philosophical financiers."⁸¹ In the introduction to the 1805 edition of *Wealth of Nations*, publisher William Playfair issued a disclaimer which described Smith's "coincidence of reasoning with the French Economists," of

⁸¹ E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (London: Henry Frowde, 1881), 130, 132, 277.

whom Playfair sneered, "I must, and do attribute to them, and those with whom they associated, most of the terrible transactions of the last sixteen years."⁸² The association of elements of the abolitionist movement with the French Revolution extended beyond Adam Smith. As early as 1789, Thomas Clarkson, one of its original progenitors, traveled to France to petition the new government to abolish slavery, and in the process met Vincent Ogé, a black Haitian who shortly thereafter returned to St. Domingue and participated in the early start of the slave revolt. Increasingly, a sentiment emerged among the British elite that "abolishing slavery was a French idea, inseparable from ending the monarchy and washing the streets with aristocratic blood."⁸³

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, abolitionists reargued for a bill to abolish slavery as a tool to mitigate and control against violent revolution. However, the West Indian planters had no desire to gradually liberalize their operations, and they protested the British Colonial Office decrying what an abolition bill to end the trade would effect. "The Jamaican planters cautioned the British authorities not to surrender to the humanitarians...because it would drastically reduce their levels of production" at a time when their plantations were already in "financial distress." However, the Colonial Office insisted that the 1807 Abolition Act was an "economic necessity" that would force planters to enact major managerial and humanitarian reforms; by cutting off the endless supply of

⁸² W. Playfair, qtd. In *Economic Sentiments*, 18; For a detailed account of the French and Haitian Revolutions as well as French slavery during this period, see S. Desan, L. Hunt, and W. M. Nelson, eds., *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), particularly C. Walton, "The Fall From Eden: The Free-Trade Origins of the French Revolution," 44-56.

⁸³ *William Wilberforce*, 117.

new labor from Africa, at the bare minimum the staggering death rate would drop and the living standards of West Indian slaves would need to improve sufficiently to allow for natural increase.⁸⁴ These abolitionists shifted their coordinates more towards economic understandings of Adam Smith, viewing the ideas of supply and demand as the first gradual yet necessary step towards ultimate abolition. The destabilization caused by the wake of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars created a tension within Parliament that sided towards mitigating the extremes of both slavery in the West Indies and calls for radical abolitionism at home. Though pragmatic from the perspective of Britain, it marked the weakening of the influence of the West Indian Lobby in the intervening years since they defeated Wilberforce sixteen years prior. With the abolition of the trade in 1807 abolitionist fervor waned, though slavery itself in the Sugar Islands continued unabated.

Chapter 4: Slavery on its Heels: The Revival of British Abolitionist

Commerce

Desiring to reignite public attention towards the full abolition of slavery, Romantic satirist Thomas Love Peacock used his 1817 novel *Melincourt* to resurrect the blood sugar trope. *Melincourt* tells the absurd tale of Sir Oran Haut-Ton, an orangutan elected as a Member of Parliament, and while Peacock focused the majority of its critique on British electoral politics, chapter 27 is titled

⁸⁴ D. St. Aubyn Gosse, *Abolition and Plantation Management in Jamaica 1807-1838*, (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2012), 1, 2.

“The Anti-Saccharine Fête.”⁸⁵ Peacock set this chapter at a high society dinner party in which the characters are invited by the Anti-saccharine Society, an “illustrious assemblage” of upper class Brits, who have determined to “make luxury...subservient to morality, by showing what culinary art could effect without the intervention of West Indian produce.” At the conclusion of dinner, Mr. Forester rose to address the gathering, exclaiming that “culinary luxury could be carried to a great degree of refinement without the intervention of West Indian produce” if more consumers could “make so very slight a concession to philanthropy, to justice, to liberty, to every feeling of human sympathy” by abstaining from its purchase.⁸⁶

After continuing in this way, Mr. Sarcastic (the character Peacock used for his own personal voice) rebuts Mr. Forester, avowing that “we are very liberal of theoretical sympathy; but as to practical abstinence from the use of sugar, do you consider what it is you require?” Sarcastic questioned Forester if he understood that sugar produced a “very agreeable...sensation of sweetness in our palates.” “Do you suppose we would give up that sensation because human creatures of the same flesh and blood as ourselves are oppressed and enslaved, and flogged and tortured to procure it for us?” Peacock used Mr. Sarcastic’s voice to critique the *habitus* of his society, declaring that “Custom is the great lord and master of our conduct” and that no “feeling of pity, and sympathy, and charity, and

⁸⁵ T. L. Peacock, *Melincourt*, (London: 1817), 206.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

benevolence, and justice, will overcome the power of custom....”⁸⁷ Thomas Peacock and Romantic abolitionists increasingly viewed their culture as an equally constitutive plank of slavery along with Parliamentary gradualism or the West Indian Lobby’s economic motives.

Across the Atlantic, abolitionism in the United States as an organized movement remained inchoate and localized to groups such as the Quakers during the period between 1791 and 1820. After abolishing the slave trade in 1808, many American abolitionists believed that the limitation of slavery to the Southeast would contain and eventually snuff out the institution entirely. However, the expansion of slavery into Missouri with the passage of the Missouri Compromise dashed this false sense of optimism. Thomas Jefferson told a friend that the news, “like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union.”⁸⁸ The cancer of slavery, thoroughly metastasized into the soul of the United States, was fast spreading westward across the continent. This same bell that awakened Jefferson also awakened American abolitionists out of a certain state of apathy, though not as a death knell for the Union but rather a call to arms for the ending of slavery. This development brought the Anglophone abolition world into a common discourse, as the morphology of slavery in America and Britain was keeping pace with the evolution of cultural and societal norms, and demonstrated on both sides of the

⁸⁷ Ibid. 208-210. When Mr. Sarcastic mentioned “custom,” Peacock added a footnote containing a lengthy reference from John Milton’s 1643 *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. A short excerpt is presented here : “...hence it is that Error supports Custom, Custom countenances Error, and these two, between them, would persecute and chase away all truth and solid wisdom out of human life...”

⁸⁸ “T. Jefferson to J. Holms,” The Thomas Jefferson Papers, Series 1. General Correspondence, 1651-1827, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib023795>, accessed 3 May 2013.

Atlantic that strong coordination would be needed to mount an effective counter movement to slavery. American abolitionists starting new and the second generation of British abolitionists had thirty years of blood sugar semiotics - organization strategies and discursive metaphors - to draw upon as they devised new efforts to end slavery.

In Britain, the massive 1823 slave uprising in Demerara provided the spark that reignited fierce debate for complete abolition. Emília Viotti da Costa observed that distinct lines were drawn in the sand, with "a planter class, backward, arbitrary, and violent, almost feudal, holding onto traditional habits, defending slavery and the traditional social order" while in Britain the spirit in the air belonged to a "progressive, liberal-minded, reformist, legalistic, modernizing elite, fighting for emancipation and free trade."⁸⁹ Parliament pushed amelioration plans on the West Indian colonies that prohibited the whipping of female slaves, banned masters and overseers from carrying whips with them in the fields, dictated the establishment of banks for slaves to store their savings in order to help them purchase their freedom if they desired, and imbued slaves with the legal rights to acquire heritable property, among other provisions.

To the surprise and dismay of both gradualist abolitionists and absentee planters living in the metropole, the West India Lobby rejected the new laws and adopted a posture of obstinacy. The planter class from the colonies crafted arguments stressing the ignorance and lowered mental faculties of Africans. The rector of St. Paul's Antigua reasoned in 1826, "[l]et it be remembered that the

⁸⁹ E. Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 35.

slaves are in a state of the grossest ignorance...their minds are totally destitute of cultivation.”⁹⁰ The once powerful and protected monopoly of 1791 still enjoyed mercantilist protection in 1807, though they exercised a lesser degree of direct control over Parliament, succumbing to the trade’s ban. But by the latter 1820s, the “West Indian body” had miscalculated the full decline of their political clout since the defeat of the first abolition bill, in part due to the efforts of the first wave of sugar boycotts to change the political and cultural climate of Britain. By 1826 amelioration was deemed a failure due to the inflexibility of the West Indian Lobby, and the abolitionist mood in Britain turned towards full abolition as the only tenable plan moving forward.⁹¹

With the institution of slavery reeling in Britain, the blood sugar trope once again reappeared in aesthetic forms. Harriett Martineau published her 1832 *Illustrations of Political Economy* as a series translating the ideas of liberal economists like Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill into narrative forms that allowed for more people to grasp their content.⁹² Born in 1802 to a Unitarian family with a strong liberal and radical intellectual tradition, Martineau recalled that in her childhood she read “the *Globe*, in its best days, when, without ever mentioning Political Economy, it taught it, and viewed public affairs in its light....I

⁹⁰ G. Matthews, “The Other Side of Slave Revolts,” *The Society For Caribbean Studies Annual Conference Papers*, ed. S. Courtman, Vol. 1 2000, <http://www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk/papers/2000/olv1p1.pdf>, accessed 14 December 2013.

⁹¹ Ibid., 32-38; *Abolition and Plantation Management in Jamaica*, 11-21, St. Aubyn Gosse noted that these reforms were meant to prepare the enslaved for wage labor; C. Fergus, “The ‘Siete Partidas’: A Framework for Philanthropy and Coercion during the Amelioration Experiment in Trinidad, 1823-34,” *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1, (2008): 75-99.

⁹² The Reform Act of 1832 extended the franchise by 200,000 voters as well as eliminating many of the “Rotten Boroughs.” In the opinion of Sir Erskine May, the subsequent Parliament “was, unquestionably, more liberal and progressive in its policy than the Parliaments of old.” *The Constitutional History of England*, Vol. 1, (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1906), 431.

was...becoming a political economist without knowing it.”⁹³ Combining this base knowledge with her emerging literary career, her thirty-four volume series of short stories endeavored to teach the “utility and beauty” of political economy, which Martineau believed had “been less studied than perhaps any other science whatever, and not at all by those whom it most concerns, -- the mass of the people.”⁹⁴

Her second volume, *Demerara*, focused on the economic problems associated with unfree labor in the eponymous colony in which “ten to twelve thousand slaves rose up” nine years prior in “one of the greatest slave uprisings in the history of the New World,” an occurrence that no doubt influenced her chosen setting.⁹⁵ Britons in 1832 would have also associated the title with references to demerara as a specific type of raw-cane sugar.⁹⁶ In the story, Alfred, a planter’s son, returns to Demerara after being educated in England, and takes notice of the cruelty exhibited towards his father’s slaves, their lack of pride or enthusiasm in working his father’s fields, and the initiative with which they work for personal incentives. Alfred pointed out this difference to Cassius, an enslaved man who sold home-grown vegetables in an effort to save money towards purchasing his freedom, Cassius replied: “Why should I be industrious for him?”⁹⁷

⁹³ H. Martineau, *Autobiography*, (Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co., 1877): 54, 55.

⁹⁴ H. Martineau, *Illustrations of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, (London: Charles Fox, 1832), 8, 4.

⁹⁵ *Crowns of Glory*, xiii.

⁹⁶ “Demerara, *n*,” *OED Online*, June 2012, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/49643#eid7081046>, accessed 4 May 2013.

⁹⁷ *Demerara*, 36.

A damaged mill allows for Alfred to experiment with his theory on free versus slave labor, and he employs at a wage some of the enslaved workers to repair a mill as well as providing them with clothing and ample food rations. The workers embrace this new incentive structure, and when Alfred's father inspects the repair work, he is amazed at what he discovers. Alfred, in Smithian language, pointed out to his father that "[i]t is not often that we have an example of the two systems before our eyes at the same moment. I need not put it to you which plan works the best...." Martineau applied the Smith's analytical egalitarianism to her voicing of Alfred, using him in this scene to articulate that Africans contained faculties of rationality and economic calculus. "[L]abouring against self-interest is what nobody out to expect of white men, -- much less of slaves."⁹⁸

Martineau lined out her anti-slavery rhetoric according to its faulty economics, and represented for her readers that free labor would improve both the individual incentives for the workers as well as the overall yield for the capitalist. Her decision to cast Cassius as a Smithian "man of economy" alongside white men figured him as an equally autonomous market actor. In "Summary," Martineau addressed the reader directly and enumerated the "truths illustrated" in this volume. "As the agreement to hold man in property never took place" she reasoned, "Man has no right to hold Man in property." Her next point of argument hinged upon the equal reasoning faculty of all humans. "Human labour is more valuable than brute labour, only because actuated by reason; for human strength is inferior to brute strength" and for this reason should be left

⁹⁸ Ibid., 70.

free. Next, Martineau outlined that “[l]egislative protection...promotes ruin, misery, and death, in the protected colonies” through the continued sustenance of the slave system which “inflict[ed] an incalculable amount of human suffering.” Her argument quickly turns between sympathy and economy, noting that part of slavery’s toll was the “wholesale waste of labour and capital.”⁹⁹

Martineau found economic and sympathetic reasons to end slavery, but chose to locate black agency in the realm of the economic through Cassius, an employment of the blood sugar trope that differed from Southey’s location of black agency in the realm of the sympathetic, replete with his mental images of bloodthirsty machetes righteously plunging into the bodies of white masters. For Martineau, it was important to demonstrate to the British public in 1832 that free labor tended to happiness, slave labor to oppression and waste, especially on the heels of the Christmas Rebellion in Jamaica, an eight-day slave revolt that resulted in the deaths of fourteen whites but over five hundred enslaved Jamaicans.¹⁰⁰ A year after *Illustrations* was published, the liberal Reform Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, a momentous occasion that made Britain the first Western power to end slavery within its dominions in world history, and closing a forty-two year battle that in many ways received its life the day Wilberforce’s bill died. Three days after learning of the 26 July passage of the Abolition Act, Wilberforce passed away from influenza complications at the age of seventy-three years old. Thus, 1833 witnessed the conclusion of the life

⁹⁹ Ibid., 141-143.

¹⁰⁰ For details of the 1831 Jamaica Slave Rebellion, see M. Reckord, “The Jamaican Slave Rebellion of 1831,” *Past and Present*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (1968): 108–125.

and life work of William Wilberforce, forming a strong symbol of liberal abolitionist progress in the Anglophone world.

Chapter 5: Abolitionist Aesthetics Arrive in America

Galvanized by the British example, the nascent American abolitionist movement began to find a stronger voice. In 1821, Ohio Quaker Benjamin Lundy published the first abolitionist paper in the United States, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, from his Ohio home that also served as the location for his free produce store which only traded in goods not produced by slaves.¹⁰¹ Free produce, much like the British efforts against sugar, allowed American consumers the ability to signal their moral persuasion through commerce. After moving his operations to Baltimore due to its Atlantic seaboard location, he embarked on an 1828 tour of New York and New England, during which he met William L. Garrison, who he hired as the editor of *Genius*. Reflecting on this journey, Lundy explained that he "scattered the seed of anti-slavery in strong and luxuriant soil" that the "vivifying sun of free discussion...fructified."¹⁰² Lundy's efforts galvanized and gave mission to the American abolitionists, and the 1831

¹⁰¹ B. Higgins and B. Levy, "Benjamin Lundy House," National Registry of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, 30 Nov. 1973, ;

¹⁰² B. Lundy, *The Life, Travels, and Opinions of Benjamin Lundy*, (Philadelphia: W.D. Parrish, 1847), 23-26.

publishing of Garrison's *The Liberator*, declared to the world that this movement "WILL BE HEARD."¹⁰³

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, the American abolitionist movement adopted many of the tactics used by the British. The Free Produce Movement based in Philadelphia, declared, "there are many persons who, while they deplore the existence of Slavery, indirectly contribute to its support and continuance by using articles derived from the labor of Slaves."¹⁰⁴ Owing to the work of men like Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, the free black population of Philadelphia encouraged "colored capitalists" to invest in free black enterprises, founding the Colored Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania in 1830 and the Colored Female Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania the subsequent year.¹⁰⁵ One member remarked, "every individual who uses the produce of slave labor encourages the slaveholder, becom[ing] also a participator in his wickedness."¹⁰⁶ One distinction of the Free Produce Movement from their British counterparts involved purchasing alternative goods "as are raised by Freeman" in order to "establish a conviction in the minds of slaveholders to change the 'condition of their Slaves into that of hired Freeman...'"¹⁰⁷ When abolitionists Sarah Grimke

¹⁰³ M. L. Dillon, *Benjamin Lundy and the Struggle for Negro Freedom*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 54; W.L. Garrison, *The Liberator*, 31 Jan. 1831.

¹⁰⁴ "Constitution of the Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania," (Philadelphia: D. & S. Neall, 1827).

¹⁰⁵ B. Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 74.

¹⁰⁶ *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers*

¹⁰⁷ "Constitution..."; see R. Nuremberger, *The Free Produce Movement* (Durham:, 1942), 119-132, and "Free Produce Among the Quakers," *Atlantic Monthly*, XXII (1868): 485-494. The American abolitionists' addition of patronizing free black business in addition to their abstinence of slave-cultivated goods stemmed from the fact that slavery was endogenous to America but exogenous to Britain, and as a result free black labor was more readily accessible in the United States.

and Theodore Weld were married in Philadelphia in 1838, a black confectioner baked their cake using “free sugar” and Angelina wove her trousseau using “free cotton.” ¹⁰⁸

Philadelphia abolitionists sponsored a yearly “Anti-Slavery Fair” that functioned as a fundraiser and featured free labor products and other ephemeral items for sale. The 1846 fair included “an Anti-Slavery alphabet, written and presented to the Fair by Hannah and Mary Townsend, of this city.” This primer taught its spelling lessons by invoking the sentimental imaginations of children to marshal economic activity. Opening with a poem, it beckoned “Listen, little children, all” and informed that though they were “very young...there's much that you can do...you can refuse to take/ Candy, sweetmeat, pie or cake, / Saying 'no' -- unless 'tis free -- / 'The slave shall not work for me.’” The entry for the letter “S” echoed this instruction in moral political economy: “S is the Sugar, that the slave / Is toiling hard to make, / To put into your pie and tea, / Your candy, and your cake” (Fig. 5).¹⁰⁹

Despite the efforts of American abolitionists to build a strong movement galvanized by moral commerce and materialized in aesthetic and ephemeral forms and juxtapolitical action, slavery within the United States showed no signs of weakening. New lines of argumentation in support of slavery developed, and it is during this period that Smithian’s signification reshifted yet again according to

¹⁰⁸ G. Lerner, *The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Women’s Rights and Abolition*, revised ed., (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 166-69;

¹⁰⁹ H. and M. Townsend, “The Anti-Slavery Alphabet,” (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Thompson, 1846), Mississippi Department of Archives and History, http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/asa/, accessed 4 May 2013.



Figure 5, H. and M. Townsend, "The Anti-Slavery Alphabet," (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Thompson, 1846), Mississippi Department of Archives and History

the exigencies of the evolving times. The analytical egalitarianism and phenomenological descriptions of sympathy gave way to other schools of economic and social thought. Interestingly enough, Britain would once again furnish a discursive example that America would later follow, but this time it was in support of slavery, not against it.

Thomas Carlyle, a British reactionary, loathed the “loosen[ing] by assiduous wedges [of] the whole fabric of social existence” that resulted from “reduc[ing] whatsoever was compulsory to voluntary” when Britain abolished slavery in 1832. Carlyle believed that British emancipation was a failure for destroying twenty million dollars of property at the stroke of a pen that, in turn, he viewed as idle workers. For Carlyle, the emancipation of slavery stemmed from the “unhappy wedlock of philanthropic liberalism and the Dismal Science,” a derisive moniker for economics that has persisted to the present, though often unhinged from its original connotation with slavery. Contrary to presentist folk wisdom, what made economics “dismal” for Carlyle was not its cold calculation of humans and capital, but rather for the causal relationship he believed existed between liberal economics and slave liberation.¹¹⁰ In stark departure from the Smithian premise of free labor, Carlyle sneered, “[t]he idle Black man in the West Indies had, not long since, the right, and will again under better form, if it please Heaven, have the right...to be *compelled* to work as he was fit...”¹¹¹

In “The Nigger Question,” Carlyle addressed blacks, telling them, “you will have to be servants to those that are born *wiser* than you, that are born lords of you, servants to the Whites, if they *are* (as what mortal can doubt they are?) born

¹¹⁰ T. Carlyle, qtd. In H. Wish, *George Fitzhugh: Propagandist of the Old South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 73-77. For a detailed explanation of the pro-slavery origins of the phrase “dismal science” as an attack against the egalitarian, liberating conception of political economy as perceived in the nineteenth century, see D.M. Levy, *How the Dismal Science got its Name: Classical Economics and the Ur-Text of Racial Politics*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001).

¹¹¹ *George Fitzhugh: Propagandist of the Old South*, 75.

wiser than you.”¹¹² Though liberal economist John Stuart Mill answered Carlyle’s claims in the more-respectfully titled “The Negro Question,” Carlyle’s fierce opposition to liberal abolitionism quickly earned him the favor of Southern slaveholders in the United States. George Frederick Holmes of Virginia, praising Carlyle’s work, asserted in the *Southern Quarterly Review* that “political economy must not be regarded as the grand catholicon of social evils; admirable within its range, it is ruin, to body and soul, beyond it.”¹¹³ The most famous Carlyle disciple was George Fitzhugh, a descendant from an old slaveholding family in Virginia, who published two major apologies of slavery, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of a Free Society* in 1854 and *Cannibals All!, or Slaves Without Masters* in 1857.

Fitzhugh believed that “domestic slavery” was “the oldest, the best and most common form of Socialism” and that “for writing a one-sided philosophy no man was better fitted than Adam Smith” who was “absent, secluded and unobservant” about the true nature of humanity.¹¹⁴ Fitzhugh sneered that there was “no such thing as natural human liberty,” a claim he asserted on the authority that it was “the theory of Aristotle, promulgated more than two thousand years ago, generally considered true for two thousand years, and destined, we hope, soon again to be accepted as the only true theory of government and society.” Fitzhugh exempted Mr. Carlyle when he described “[m]odern social

¹¹² T. Carlyle, “The Nigger Question,” *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 379.

¹¹³ G.F. Holmes, “Latter Day Pamphlets,” *Southern Quarterly Review*, Vol. 1, No. 17-18 (Charleston: Walker and Richards): 354.

¹¹⁴ G. Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of a Free Society*, (Richmond: A. Morris, 1854), 72, 10.

reformers” who, “opposite of Aristotle, propose to dissolve and disintegrate society....”¹¹⁵ With Fitzhugh’s strong pro-slavery arguments, slaveholders in the South grew obstinate, and the peaceful political abolitionism produced by the interpretations and appropriations of elements of Adam Smith by British abolitionists could not be duplicated in the United States. The crucible of war, with its violence and destruction, proved the only force powerful enough to dislodge mindset of the Confederate slavocracy.

Conclusion - Moral Commerce, Yesterday and Today

As Viotti da Costa exhorted, the history of “capitalism” and “abolitionism” often rests upon reification more than allowing the historical record to speak for itself. From the publication of *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in 1758 to the outbreak of the American Civil War, the significance of the Smithian paradigm existed in shifting and contested fields of meaning, with neither abolitionists nor slavery supporters constituting a stable description of Smith. The abolitionist movement produced a semiotics of moral commerce, with the blood sugar trope emerging as a generative sight within the Smithian field. However, as we have seen, the blood sugar trope materialized in several variations, some stressing sympathy over economics, and some figuring Africans as sympathetic victims or subjective agents. Additionally, mercantile interests and racist slavery apologetics equally

¹¹⁵ G. Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!, or Slaves Without Masters*, (Richmond: A. Morris, 1857), 106, 107.

grew to associate Adam Smith with representing something that stood to challenge the furtherance of their status quo.

In the essay "Bleeding Humanity and Gendered Embodiments: From Antislavery Sugar Boycotts to Ethical Consumers," Mimi Sheller focused on the commingling of abolitionism and sentimentality as it materialized in the "blood-sugar" trope that emerged during the last decades of the eighteenth century and the gendered rhetoric associated with the Anti-Saccharine Movement. She richly detailed how abolitionists employed images of cannibalism and sugar impurity to stir sentimentality and provoke market action, but she takes a critical view of this rhetoric, noting the "deeply problematic" and "disempowering effects of sentimental humanitarian narrative."¹¹⁶ While this research does not challenge this position argumentatively, choosing instead to follow a genealogical description of the development of the blood sugar trope, perhaps we can problematize her problematic about sentimentality's disempowering narrative.

While it is true that Wilberforce's description and Gillray's print offer examples of sentimentality figuring Africans as helpless and maimed, the sentimentality trope did not always pivot the view of Africans this way. Indeed, Gillray's satire of the royal family shows that critical views of the blood sugar trope existed within the blood sugar trope itself. In Robert Southey's poetry, sentimentality is not set within the British gaze, but is centered in the black West Indian struggle for liberation. During Britain's war with France and Haiti, Southey

¹¹⁶ M. Sheller, "Bleeding Humanity and Gendered Embodiments: From Antislavery Sugar Boycotts to Ethical Consumers," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (2011): 171-72.

used blood sugar to stand as a metaphor for the killing of white overseers and masters by righteously indignant black hands. Thomas Peacock used the blood sugar trope to critique British society, politics, and culture, and his dramatic use of satire and the embedding of his narrative voice outside of the traditional protagonist enabled him to displace his reader from knowing with which character they should identify. This gradually turned their sentimental stare into a self-condemning frown when they reached the mirror of chapter 27's dinner scene. Harriet Martineau oriented her arguments along economic logic, and cast enslaved Africans as rationally choosing to work less when not incentivized. While problematic in that it can be interpreted as arguing that blacks are lazy, the abolitionist movement crafted this argument in dialog with the pro-slavery argument that blacks were cognitively inferior to whites.

Perhaps most importantly, it is crucial to point out that the semiotics developed by the abolitionists were not the sole products of their fashioning, but existed in history with the events and lived experiences of West Indian slavery. Slave revolts like Haiti, Demarra, Jamaica, marronage, work stoppages, the Underground Railroad, and many other tactics of resistance made liberation a personal project for many within the Diaspora. In addition to freedom as measured by some degree of movement across the land in linear directions, many enslaved individuals carved zones of spatial freedom upon the land in points and circles within the bounded space of the plantation slave quarters and

mountains of the Antilles, through their music, drumming, and dance rituals.¹¹⁷

The agency and resistance strategies adapted by blacks throughout the Americas during this time period profoundly influenced the shifting of political calculations and the interplay of abolitionist rhetoric and the meanings that could be imparted new each time the blood sugar trope returned.¹¹⁸ Whether in the form of treatises, broadsides, satirical novels, poems, caricatural images, or items of ephemera, the generative site of Adam Smith provided a hub for numerous spokes of abolitionist semiotics to turn in the Anglophone world. This first example of moral commerce movements in the modern period, now a closed chapter of human history, has in many ways become a metalinguistic signifier itself, deeply problematic and nuanced, that worked to the political abolition of slavery yet equally figured black subjectivity in troublesome ways.¹¹⁹ The enduring significance of the Anti-Saccharine and Free Produce Movements to discussions of moral commerce is revealed by contemporary discussions in our globalized twenty-first century.

¹¹⁷ For an example of a diasporic music form constituted in an Anglophone juxtapolitical environment, see Various Artists, *Drums of Defiance: Maroon Music from the Earliest Free Black Communities of Jamaica*, 1992 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

¹¹⁸ Black Panther Assata Shakur articulated in *Assata: An Autobiography* that, "Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who were oppressing them." (139). Other discussions of the various strategies employed by enslaved blacks to gain freedom of their own volition include E. D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); R. Price, ed. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 3d ed. With a new Preface. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996); A.O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas*, (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2006).

¹¹⁹ For another critical view of empathy in relation to abolitionism, see S. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). She explains, "At issue here is the precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator. Only more obscene than the brutality unleashed at the whipping post is the demand that this suffering be materialized and evidenced by the display of the tortured body or endless recreations of the ghastly and the terrible" (4).

In scholarship, discussions of Smith's significance to abolitionism continue to occupy a place of primacy within slavery studies. A panel at the 2012 American Historical Association titled "New Perspectives on British Abolition: Antecedents, Affections, and Activism" featured papers titled "'To Arouse Our Indignation and Our Pity': A Reconsideration of British Abolitionism's Emotional Appeal" as well as "Blood-Stained Commerce: Abstention and the British Slave Trade Debates."¹²⁰ Additionally, outside the discipline of history, recent work in ethics and psychology continues to analyze the concept of empathy, including both its origins in the Scottish Enlightenment tradition of Smith and its relationship to art and aesthetics, such as presented in the 2011 essay collection *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*.¹²¹ Paul Bloom, Yale professor of psychology and cognitive science, brought the discussion to the pages of *The New Yorker* in his May 2013 article "The Baby in the Well: The Case Against Empathy."¹²²

As Sheller noted in her essay, the moral economy of the abolitionist sugar boycotts "foreshadow certain contemporary versions of ethical consumption [and] fair trade...."¹²³ The proliferation of consumer consciousness around the dangers of commercial activity untethered from moral responsibility continue to contribute to marketing strategies. Starbucks assures its customers that they "take a holistic

¹²⁰ "New Perspectives on British Abolition: Antecedents, Affections, and Activism," AHA Session 41, *The American Historical Association*, <http://aha.confex.com/aha/2012/webprogram/Session6134.html>, accessed 28 August 2013.

¹²¹ A. Coplan and P. Goldie, eds., *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹²² P. Bloom, "The Baby in the Well: The Case Against Empathy." *The New Yorker*, 20 May 2013, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2013/05/20/130520crat_atlarge_bloom, accessed 15 Dec 2013

¹²³ Sheller, 172.

approach using responsible purchasing practices [and] are committed to buying and serving high-quality coffee that is responsibly grown and ethically traded."¹²⁴

John Mackey, the co-founder and Co-CEO of Whole Foods, released his 2013 book *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business* due to his belief that "voluntary exchange for mutual benefit...results in societies that maximize societal prosperity and establish [sic] conditions that promote human happiness and well-being -- not just for the rich, but for the larger society, including the poor," adding that "capitalism, while not perfect..." could still be "fundamentally good and ethical."¹²⁵

As the blood sugar trope demonstrates, discussions of moral commerce take place from oppositional and conflicting positions and locations. The discursive worlds that arise in spaces – the tropes, metaphors, and rhetorical devices making up the metalanguage within a market – make use of shared signifiers whose meanings are contingent upon where they fall upon the semiotic map. As long as moral questions continue to weigh upon economic motivations, the excavation of this Early Modern site of human memory will continue to provide a usable past for interrogating the metalanguage we encounter in our technological age.

¹²⁴ "Responsibility," *Starbucks*, <http://www.starbucks.com/responsibility/sourcing/coffee>, accessed 28 August 2013.

¹²⁵ J. Mackey and R. Sisodia, *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2013), 4.

Bibliography

- Alexander, A. "A Modest Proposal." <http://raikoth.net/deadchild.html>. Accessed 25 April 2013.
- Anderson, J.S.M. *The history of the Church of England in the colonies and foreign Dependencies*. Vol. 1, (London: F. & J. Rivington, 1856).
- Antsey, R.T. "Capitalism and Slavery: A Critique," *The Economic History Review*. Vol. 21, No. 2, (1968): 307-320.
- Appiah, K.A. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006).
- Ashworth, J. "The Relationship Between Capitalism and Humanitarianism." *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 92, No. 4 (1987): 813-828.
- Barthes, R. *Mythologies*, trans. A. Lavers, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957, 1972).
- Baugh, D.A. *The Global Seven Years War 1754-1763: Britain and France in a Great Power Contest*. (London: Longman Publishing, 2011).
- Beaumont, G. *Marie, ou L'Esclavage aux États-Unis*. 4th ed., (Paris, 1840).
- Berlant, L. *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
- Bloom, P. "The Baby in the Well: The Case Against Empathy." *The New Yorker*, 20 May 2013 http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2013/05/20/130520crat_atlarge_bloom, accessed 15 Dec 2013.
- Brogan, H. *Alexis de Tocqueville: A Life*. (New Haven: Yale University Press,

2007).

Brown, C. L. *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*, (Chapel Hill: The University of NC Press, 2006).

Brown, V. *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Burke, E. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. (London: Henry Frowde, 1881).

Bussing-Burks, M. *Influential Economists*. (Minneapolis: The Oliver Press), 2003.

Bourdieu, P. *Outline of the Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Carey, B. *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment, and Slavery, 1760-1807*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

Carlyle, T. *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Cateau, H. and S.H.H. Carrington. *Capitalism and Slavery Fifty Years Later: Eric Eustace Williams -- A Reassessment of the Man and His Work*. (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

Condorcet, M. *The Life of M. Turgot*, (London, 1787).

"Constitution of the Free Produce Society of Pennsylvania." (Philadelphia: D. & S. Neall, 1827).

Cook, J.W. "Hume's Scepticism With Regard to the Senses." *American Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. 5, No. 1, (1968): 1-17.

Coplan, A. and Goldie, P. eds., *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological*

- Perspectives*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- Curtin, P. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*. 2nd ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- Davis, D.B. *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).
- The Problem of Slavery in an Age of Revolution*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- "Reflections on Abolitionism and Ideological Hegemony." *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 92, No. 4 (1987): 797-812.
- "Demerara, n," *OED Online*. June 2012. Oxford University Press.
- <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/49643#eid7081046>. Accessed 4 May 2013.
- De Rosa, D.C. *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830-1865*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).
- Desan, S. L. Hunt, and W. M. Nelson, eds. *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).
- Dillon, M.J. *Benjamin Lundy and the Struggle for Negro Freedom*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966).
- Drums of Defiance: Maroon Music from the Earliest Free Black Communities of Jamaica*, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1992.
- Éphémérides du citoyen*, vol 1 (Paris, 4 November 1765).
- Fay, C. R. *Adam Smith and the Scotland of His Day*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011).

- Fergus, C. "The 'Siete Partidas': A Framework for Philanthropy and Coercion during the Amelioration Experiment in Trinidad, 1823-34." *Caribbean Studies*. Vol. 36, No. 1, (2008): 75-99.
- Festa, L. *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
- Fitzhugh, G. *Cannibals All!, or Slaves Without Masters*. (Richmond: A. Morris, 1857).
- *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of a Free Society*. (Richmond: A. Morris, 1854).
- Fogel, R.W. and Engerman, S.L. *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1977).
- Forman-Barzilai, F. *Adam Smith and the Circles of Sympathy: Cosmopolitanism and Moral Theory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- Fox, W. *An Address to the People of Great Britain on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum*. (London: M. Gurney and W. Darton, 1791).
- Fox-Genovese, E. *The Origins of Physiocracy: Economic Revolution and Social Order in Eighteenth-Century France*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).
- "François Quesnay," *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*. David R. Henderson, ed. Library of Economics and Liberty.
<http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Quesnay.html>. Accessed 1 May 2013.

“François Quesnay: Leader of the Physiocrats: Tableau Economique.

Economicae. University of North Carolina Dept. of Economics.

http://www.unc.edu/depts/econ/byrns_web/Economicae/quesnay.html.

Accessed 1 May 2013.

Garrison, W.L. *The Liberator*. 31 Jan. 1831.

Genovese, E.D. *The Political Economy of Slavery*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965).

-- *The Slave Economies: Vol 1 Historical and Theoretical Perspectives*.

(New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973).

-- *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

“George Washington to Joseph Thompson, 2 July, 1766.” *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. ed. Theodore J. Crackel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008.

<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-02-07-02-0300>.

Accessed 2 May 2013.

Hartman, S. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in*

Nineteenth Century America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Haskell, T.L. “Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility, Part I.” *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 90, No. 2 (1985): 339-361.

“Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2.” *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 90, No. 3 (1985): 547-566.

- Hinks, P. and J. McKivigan,, ed., R.O. Williams, asst. ed. *Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007).
- Higgins, B. and B. Levy. "Benjamin Lundy House." National Registry of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, 30 Nov. 1973.
- Hochschild, A. *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006).
- Holmes, G.F. "Latter Day Pamphlets." *Southern Quarterly Review*. Vol. 1, No. 17-18, (Charleston: Walker and Richards).
- Hopkinson, F. "The Toast," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 4 April 1778.
- Howard, C. "'The Story of the Pineapple': Sentimental Abolitionism and Moral Motherhood in Amelia Opie's 'Adeline Mowbray.'" *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 30, No. 3. (1998): 355-376.
- Hume, D. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. (London: 1777).
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/9662/9662-h/9662-h.htm>. Accessed 20 Aug., 2013.
- "James Wright of Haverhill." *General Evening Post*. 6 March, 1792.
http://gallery.nen.gov.uk/asset72644_1318-abolition.html. Accessed 3 May 2013.
- Jennings, J. *The Business of Abolishing the British Slave Trade, 1783-1807*, (London: Routledge, 1997).
- Jennings, L.C. *French Anti-Slavery: The Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in France, 1802-1848*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

- Jones, C. *Radical Sensibility: Literature and ideas in the 1790s*. (London: Routledge, 1993).
- Kaye, M. "The Tools of the Abolitionists." BBC History. http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/abolition_tools_gallery_07.shtml. Accessed 3 May 3, 2013.
- Kelly, K.G. and M. D. Hardy, eds., "Why This Volume?," *French Colonial Archaeology in the Southeast and Caribbean*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).
- Krantz, S.L. *Refuting Peter Singer's Ethical Theory: The Importance of Human Dignity*. (Westpoint, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002).
- Kriz, K.D. *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies 1700-1840*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
- Leibniz, G.W. *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*. (Chicago: Open Court, 1985).
- Lerner, G. *The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Women's Rights and Abolition*. revised ed., (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
- Leslie, E. *Seventy-Five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats*. (Boston: Monroe & Francis, 1835).
- Levecq, C. *Slavery and Sentimentality: The Politics of Feeling in Black Atlantic Antislavery Writing, 1770-1850*. (Lebanon: University of New Hampshire Press, 2008).
- Ligon, R. *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, Kupperman, K.O. ed., (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011).

- Lundy, B. *The Life, Travels, and Opinions of Benjamin Lundy*. (Philadelphia: W.D. Parrish, 1847).
- Mackey, J. and R. Sisodia. *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*. (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2013).
- Marshall, D. "Adam Smith and the Theatricality of Moral Sentiments," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 10, No. 4 (1984): 592-613.
- Martineau, H. *Autobiography*. (Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co., 1877).
- *Illustrations of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, (London: Charles Fox, 1832).
- Mason, K. "The World an Absentee Planter and His Slaves Made: Sir William Stapleton and his Nevis Sugar Estate, 1722-1740." *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*. Vol. 75, no 1, (1993): 103-131.
- Matthews, G. "The Other Side of Slave Revolts," *The Society For Caribbean Studies Annual Conference Papers*, ed. S. Courtman, Vol. 1,(2000).
<http://www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk/papers/2000/olv1p1.pdf>, accessed 14 December 2013.
- May, E. *The Constitutional History of England*. Vol. 1, (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1906).
- McClain, J.J. *The Economic Writings of du Pont de Nemours*. (Cranberry, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1977).
- Menard, R.R. *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).
- Milton, J. *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. (London, 1643).
- Morton, T. "Blood Sugar." *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire*,

- 1780-1830. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Nathans, H.S. *Slavery and Sentiment on the American State, 1787-1861*.
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- "New Perspectives on British Abolition: Antecedents, Affections, and Activism."
AHA Session 41. *The American Historical Association*.
<http://aha.confex.com/aha/2012/webprogram/Session6134.html>. Accessed
28 August 2013.
- Nudelman, F. "Harriet Jacobs and the Sentimental Politics of Female Suffering."
ELH, Vol. 59, No. 4 (1992): 939-964.
- Nuremberger, R. *The Free Produce Movement*. (Durham:, 1942).
-- "Free Produce Among the Quakers." *Atlantic Monthly*. XXII (1868): 485-
494.
- Nussbaum, M. *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. (Boston:
Beacon Press, 1995).
- Ostrander, G.M. "The Colonial Molasses Trade." *Agricultural History*. Vol. 30, No.
2 (1956): 79.
- Peacock, T.L. *Melincourt*, (London, 1817).
- Peart, S.J. and D.M. Levy. *The "Vanity of the Philosopher:" From Equality to
Hierarchy in Postclassical Economics*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan,
2005).
- Phillipson, N. *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life*, (New Haven: Yale, 2010).
- Pinford, J. "Introduction," *The Slave Trade Debate: Contemporary Writings for
and Against*, (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2007), 7-13.

- Pitman, F.W. *The Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1763*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917).
- Price, R., ed. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*. 3d ed. With a new Preface. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996).
- Quarles, B. *Black Abolitionists*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969).
- Quesnay, F. "Tableau économique," (1758).
- Ramsay, J. *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies*. (London: 1784).
- Raphael, D. D. *The Impartial Spectator: Adam Smith's Moral Philosophy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Reckord, M. "The Jamaican Slave Rebellion of 1831," *Past and Present*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (1968): 108–125.
- "Responsibility." Starbucks Corporation.
<http://www.starbucks.com/responsibility/sourcing/coffee>. Accessed 28 August 2013.
- Rogonzinski, J. *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and Carib to the Present*. (New York: Plume, 1999).
- Rothschild, E. *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- Shakur, A. *Assata: An Autobiography*. (Westport, Conn.: L. Hill, 1987).
- Smith, A. *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*. Wightman, W.P.D. and Bryce, J.C. eds. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982).

- *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*. Bryce, J.C., ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).
- *Métaphysique de l'Ame, Ou Théorie Des Sentiments Moraux*, (Paris: Chez Briasson, 1764).
- *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. (1790).
- *The Wealth of Nations*. (1776).
- Southey, R. *Poems*. (Bristol, 1797).
- St. Aubyn Gosse, D. *Abolition and Plantation Management in Jamaica 1807-1838*. (Kingston:University of the West Indies Press, 2012).
- "Sugar in the Atlantic World." William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.
- <http://www.clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/sugarexhibit/sugar06.php>.
- Accessed 4 May 2013.
- Sussman, C. *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender & British Slavery, 1713-1833*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
- "T. Jefferson to J. Holms." *The Thomas Jefferson Papers. Series 1. General Correspondence, 1651-1827*. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib023795>.
- Accessed 3 May 2013.
- Taine, H. *The Origins of Contemporary France: The ancient régime*. (New York: Holt & Company, 1876).
- Thompson, A. O. *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas*. (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2006).
- Tocqueville, A. *De la démocratie en Amérique*. (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1888).

- Tomkins, S. *William Wilberforce: A Biography*, (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007).
- Townsend, H. and M. "The Anti-Slavery Alphabet." (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Thompson, 1846). Mississippi Department of Archives and History.
http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/asa/. Accessed 4 May 2013.
- Trethewey, R. J. "The Economic Burden of the Sugar Act," *The American Economist*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1969): 63-71.
- Tryon, T. *Tryon's Letters, Domestick and Foreign*. (London: 1700).
- Tullock, G. "The Economics of Slavery." *Left & Right*. (1967): 5-16.
- Turgot, A.R.J. "Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth," Rfl.47, Rfl.48. <http://www.econlib.org/library/Essays/trgRfl1.html>. Accessed 2 May 2013.
- Vaublane, M de. *Souvenirs*. I.
- Viotti da Costa, E. *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Voltaire, ed. and trans. S. Weller, *Candide: Ou L'Optimiste*. (Dover, DE: Courier Dover, 1993).
- Warner, M. *Publics and Counterpublics* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2002).
- Wedgwood, C.V. *The Thirty Years' War*. (New York: New York Review of Books, 2005).
- Wilberforce, W. qtd. in *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*, (London: T.C. Hansard, 1817).
- Williams, E. *Capitalism & Slavery*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

- Wish, H. *George Fitzhugh: Propagandist of the Old South*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943).
- Woodward, I. *Understanding Material Culture*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2007).
- Wood, M. *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America 1780-1865*, (New York: Routledge, 2000).
- *Slavery, Empathy, and Pornography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Yokota, K.A. *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).