

Caleb Williams *and the Smithian Spectator: Reading the “Reasonable Demand”*

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You are in the devil of a hurry [...] to guess my intentions, and tell your own.¹

I. Reverse Drive

William Godwin claims to have written *Things As They Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) in reverse, a claim famous enough for Charles Dickens to have reminded Edgar Allan Poe about it.² Nearly forty years after its publication, Godwin reflects upon *Caleb*’s origins, but also calls attention to the constructive activity of reflection itself. It is this time-lapse, we assume, that allows Godwin to recount the seemingly organic growth of the novel. He attributes its remarkable “unity of plot” (Poe extolled this as the result of keeping “the denouement constantly in view”) to his procedure of writing backwards, from volume three to volume two to volume one.³ This recounting, too, is literally a *re-counting*, a counting over again, of the time and method of producing the novel. Specifically, Godwin recounts his production of the narrative’s story (the actual events belonging to the time of the characters) and discourse (the author’s meta-organization of the story’s events) such that they, in the final count, “add up” or make sense.

But why take stock of how he composed, day-by-day, line-by-line – noting in particular how important it was for him to be in the right “mood” for composition? “I wrote only when the afflatus was upon me,”

remembers Godwin: “I held it for a maxim, that any portion that was written when I was not fully in the vein, told for considerably worse than nothing. Idleness was a thousand times better in this case, than industry against the grain. Idleness was only time lost; and the next day, it may be, was as promising as ever. It was merely a day perished from the calendar.”⁴ Godwin’s writing “perished” whenever sources of “afflatus” were in poor supply. Might we say the same for the character Caleb, who claims to need “excitement” in order to get anything done? His will to act is triggered by external stimuli: “my imagination must be excited; and when that was not done, my curiosity was dormant” (6). Caleb is “incited to the penning of these memoirs” by two aims: *distraction* (from how awful his present situation is) and *documentation* (to compete with whatever documents can be produced or retrieved in the future). The distractive function makes the present evaporate whilst the documentary function putatively serves to pin down observations and reflections as they occur to the writer.

Caleb’s narrative is at once historical and anticipatory in its imagining of how “posterity” will “render [him] a justice which [his] contemporaries refuse” (5). As this essay will show, his memoirs are an attempt to transcend his historical situation by occupying the role of an impartial spectator. We can see from the outset why this urge to be noticed in the future (however belatedly) is paradoxical. Caleb is relying on futurity for vindication: “My story will, at least, appear to have that consistency which is seldom attendant but upon truth” (5). Yet looking back for posterity – tracing the details of who did what where and for what reason – is always simultaneously an act of looking forwards. More than a straightforward autobiographical work, then, Caleb’s “memoirs” could be described as an *administration* of sorts. In particular, we could say that Caleb exercises what legal historian and media theorist Cornelia Vismann has termed “the principle of self-administration.”⁵ It is in the wake of the French Revolution, Vismann argues, precisely when the records of the *ancien régime* seemed noxious and worth destroying, that record-keeping is performed at a whole new level. The impulse to

archive becomes stronger than ever, and a nation "becomes the subject of the state by administering itself. By anticipating how it will be viewed by future history, the state becomes a subject of history." This "principle" is a *will* to self-administration that characterizes the modern subject, who mimics the very "behaviors" of bureaucratic state administration by "act[ing] as its own originator."⁶

This essay proposes to focus on one particular way of originating the self in writing and thinking. In theory, at least, Caleb *is* Caleb *sui generis* because he temporarily occupies – or believes himself to occupy temporarily – the position of the impartial spectator, famously articulated by Adam Smith. Taking Adam Smith's landmark theorization of sympathetic relations as a point of departure, I want to underscore the frequency and forcefulness of the period's demands for narrative demonstrations of remarkable – but remarkably banal and prescriptive – inner lives. It is precisely when characters like Caleb conceive of themselves as Smithian impartial spectators that troubles arise. When Caleb taps into this inner moral judge or censor, he has difficulty imparting what he is seeking in the first place. The problem of watching – and yet not participating in an interested, selfishly-motivated way – boils down to a problem of watching without caring to find out what happens in the end. That is, it becomes clearer and clearer in Godwin's novel that Caleb cannot watch his employer Ferdinando Falkland without thinking of him as, quite simply, *worth watching*; Caleb, too, aspires to make himself the sole object of Falkland's untrammelled notice.

II. "the station I was about to occupy"

Early in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith reminds us that the culture of sensibility was as interested in *extracting* stories about inner life as it was in telling them. He explains that we weigh the matter of entering into another's feelings, and hesitate at the threshold of sympathy, asking, first of all, "What has befallen you?"⁷ Until we are adequately moved by the tale that is brought forth, and however uncomfortable we may feel in "torturing ourselves with

conjectures about what it may be,” we withhold “our fellow-feeling.”⁸ And when it comes to our own feelings, Smith is explicit about the impossibility of properly seeing or “surveying” ourselves from a “certain distance”:

Whatever judgment we can form concerning them, accordingly, must always bear some secret reference, either to what are, or to what, upon a certain condition, would be, or to what, we imagine, ought to be the *judgment* of others. We endeavour to examine our own conduct as we imagine any other fair and impartial spectator would examine it.⁹

The long, nervous string of conditional “whats” describing precisely where our judgment should “bear some secret reference” – “what are,” “what, upon a certain condition, would be,” and “what, we imagine ought to be” – grows increasingly wary in its imaginative projection of what, finally, *ought to be* the impartial thoughts of others.

Significantly, in the 1789 sixth edition of *The Theory*, Smith replaces the term “sentiments” with the term “judgment.”¹⁰ It is as if, by the time of the French Revolution, the progression from sentiments to judgment were solidified in his theory of subjectivity. Entering into another’s feelings clearly had become a matter of seeking out “some secret reference” to a range of possibilities already determined by the imagined authority of the impartial spectator. Indeed, what sounds like a truism – “The first thing we ask is, What has befallen you?” – also operates as a demand that helps produce subjects who are answerable for their actions.

Smith suggests that holding out for such answers is a mechanism that *slows down* the headlong rush to sympathize. Yet this demand produces reverse effects. Instead of decelerating this rush to feel, this demand for qualities of “befallenness” in the sufferer’s narrative actually speeds up the very process Smith describes, ultimately collapsing distinctions between judgment- and sentiment-driven demands for narrative. For in order to exercise rational judgment at all, spectators

must first make the irrational, often heated, demand for narrative – “what has befallen you?” Following on the heels of Smith’s 1789 shift from sentiment to judgment as the basis of social cohesion, revolutionary-period writers question the forceful business of entering into the thoughts of another person. They demonstrate how the larger cultural demand for convincing narratives of “befallenness” not only speeds up judgment, but also feeds a passionate delight in instantaneously having what judgments of narrative are supposed to slow down or avert in the first place: “information.”

Ineffable and private, ostensibly tucked away out of view, psychological depth is the very thing that more and more often needs to be produced and put on display. I understand this paradoxical demand – to demonstrate and show everything that is interior – to be contemporaneous with, and mutually implicated in, the rise of what Frances Ferguson has described as the radically influential claims of utilitarian philosophers and social architects in the late eighteenth century. In Ferguson’s compelling account, Jeremy Bentham’s notion of “publicity and what we call publicness was crucial to a modern objectification of learning and working.”¹¹ This new emphasis on the “displayed value” of any action provided a means for individuals – through their very membership in a utilitarian social structure (i.e., a defined *group*) – to gain access to hitherto unavailable forms of recognition.¹² Actions count in a new way, Ferguson points out, when individuals can *see* the relative value of their actions within the framework of an artificial grouping (such as in the temporary grouping of a spelling-bee contest).¹³ The artificial grouping, then, makes it possible for the individual to mark herself off as an individual with a definite status or rank, but the clarity and concreteness of this publicly validated “displayed value” is meaningful only within that artificial, and transient, structure.

I read *Caleb Williams* as a case study in what it means to desire recognition – visible standing and ranking – within a structure whose contours remain blurry.¹⁴ Like a terribly dysfunctional *Bildungsroman*,

Caleb's narrative opens with "My life has for several years been a theatre of calamity," only to lead into the more innocuous lines that will describe Caleb's atypical, statistically improbable "improvement" in life: "I was born of humble parents, in a remote county of England. Their occupations were such as usually fall to the lot of peasants, and they had no portion to give me, but an education free from usual sources of depravity, and the inheritance, long since lost by their unfortunate progeny! of an honest fame. [...] My improvement was greater than my condition in life afforded room to expect" (5). He explains that it is the opportunity furnished by employment – and his proximity to Falkland – that "affords" such a fortuitous jump in rank. Yet what, exactly, is being ranked here? The artificial grouping into which Caleb and Falkland are thrown, I would argue, is the one to which *all* self-accounting subjects are thrown. This "relative depth" grouping is certainly hazier than the structure of a spelling-bee, but its basic demand for a convincing self-accounting (how deep and interesting *are* you?) shares with the spelling-bee its basis in the comparison of measurable skills and the ostensive benefits of having those skills recognized.

When Caleb exclaims that he "formed golden visions of the station [he] was about to occupy," he celebrates and rues his seemingly limitless ambition (7). The thing giving *shape* to his desires and aims, however, is Falkland's reciprocation of Caleb's increasingly amplified feeling of indispensability for Falkland. Although Caleb tries to escape the all-seeing eye of Falkland and his agents (Gines, especially), Caleb's ranking increases in the sense that he absolutely, uniquely occupies the category of "being most important to Falkland." It is in moments when Caleb feels that Falkland does not care to watch or keep tabs on him that Caleb loses his bearings; within the strange utilitarian structure of being useful to Falkland, Caleb clings just as jealously to his role of "worth watching" as does Falkland. This is why the fact of his being observed by Falkland or by Gines – so minutely, and all of the time – is so vital to Caleb's ability to describe exactly where he stands. By remaining the "uniform object of [Falkland's]

exertions," Caleb is consistently reminded of how to take stock of his value.¹⁵

Caleb takes a theoretical-philosophical question – how much is any one person intrinsically worth in relation to another? – and turns it into a narrowly self-historicizing one: how much have I materially affected the worth of another person? Caleb operates outside the purview of what Godwin recommends in his later essay "Of Frankness and Reserve": "We are all members of one great community: and we shall never sufficiently discharge our duty in that respect, till, like the ancient Spartans, the love of the whole becomes our predominant passion, and we cease to imagine that we belong to ourselves, so much as to the entire body of which we are a part."¹⁶ In his Postscript, Caleb reports the consequences of totally lapsing in his belief in "the love of the whole" and in preferring his own interests, his own security. Caleb succeeds in forcing the chief magistrate to summon Falkland on multiple counts of murder. After seeing the corpse-like Falkland, Caleb deeply regrets his decision; his self-preference is a death sentence to Falkland, who dies three days after this appearance in court. It is only at the end of his narrative that Caleb backtracks in his line of "impartial" reasoning, ruing that "There must have been some dreadful mistake in the train of argument that persuaded me to be the author of this hateful scene" (330). Built upon Adam Smith's model of the impartial spectator, Caleb's "fine-spun reasonings" about the calculus of impartiality ultimately fail him:

I believed that, if Mr. Falkland were permitted to persist in his schemes, we must both of us be completely wretched. I believed that it was in my power, by the resolution I had formed, to throw my share of this wretchedness from me, and that his could scarcely be increased. It appeared therefore to my mind to be a mere piece of equity and justice, such as an impartial spectator would desire, that one person should be miserable in preference to two; that one person rather than two should be incapacitated from acting his part, and contributing

his share to the general welfare. I thought that in this business I had risen superior to personal considerations, and judged with a total neglect of the suggestions of self-regard. (330)

He believes that the two individuals' right to be free from harassment would be equal, except that one person (Falkland) has forfeited his individual right by the fact of his crime. Falkland's crime places him in another category of culpability that does not include Caleb. Caleb's line of reasoning is far from objective, and, if nothing else, is rather scrupulously attentive to "the suggestions of self-regard." Whenever Caleb muses in a philosophical-political vein, raising himself above the fray of gritty circumstance, he ends up falling into what he describes as an "enthusiastical state, full of confidence" (163). Approximately mid-way through the novel, for instance, shortly after he leaves a "Dear John" letter for Falkland, Caleb recoils at his former state of subjection to his employer, and then extrapolates this disgust to a judgment upon the general folly of mankind in occupying either the role of tyrant or victim:

But I thought with unspeakable loathing of those errors in consequence of which every man is fated to be, more or less, the tyrant or the slave. I was astonished at the folly of my species, that they did not rise up as one man, and shake off chains so ignominious, and misery so insupportable. So far as related to myself, I resolved – and this resolution has never been entirely forgotten by me – to hold myself disengaged from this odious scene, and never fill the part either of the oppressor or the sufferer. (162)

Here, Caleb attempts to be the "free" agent, to determine his own ranking *sui generis*, outside the bounds of the larger political structure. What he learns, only "too late," is that he cannot occupy a "part" – "either of the oppressor or the sufferer" – except by competition with other agents like Falkland.¹⁷

The novel's alternative, original manuscript ending, in which Caleb is revisioned as the guilt-ridden persecutor of Falkland, is so curious because it entirely reverses Caleb's original ambitions to, first of all, *count* in Falkland's eyes, and then, second, *out-rank* Falkland. In trying to defend himself for posterity, Caleb ends up defending Falkland – ends up, in fact, substituting for Falkland. Gary Handwerk argues that this richly problematic rewrite by Godwin draws attention to the core paradox of his larger experiment in giving *Political Justice* legs in fictional form. As Handwerk notes, Caleb can hardly scrub his ethics of ideology or the power of "circumstance" when it is precisely ideology that swallows up or "absorbs" Caleb into the person of his oppressor.¹⁸

As Caleb himself demonstrates throughout his narrative, information about other people is too easily taken *as* feeling, as unassailable, privileged insight into interiority. Too often, subjects are carried away by a sea of official presumptions about what goes on in the minds and hearts of others. And the individual, however immune he may feel to being "ranked" among the many, is always at risk of being swept away. For instance, the first volume of the novel closes with a description of the brushfire of popular sympathy that spreads in support of Falkland's defense against charges of murder: "a general murmur of applause and involuntary transport burst forth from every one present. It was at first low, and gradually became louder. As it was the expression of rapturous delight and an emotion disinterested and divine so there was an indescribable something in the very sound that carried it home to the heart, and convinced every spectator that there was no merely personal pleasure which ever existed that would not be foolish and feeble in the comparison" (107). From the contagion of spontaneous sympathy to the casual abandon of any memory of criminal reproach, the spectacularly accelerated movement here sets out the pattern of confusion that Caleb will reinforce through the rest of the novel. He revolves from "animal revolution" to "animal revolution" just as quickly as official judgment "converts" public judgment into pure sentiment. This revolution signals the absence of rational judgment and the overwhelming sensation of

conviction. The court spectators lose focus on judgment and critical activity – “public examination upon a criminal charge” – and insensibly slip into a “sort of sympathetic feeling that took hold upon all ranks and degrees,” a vague but overwhelming feeling that things are as they should be, a smug satisfaction with “things as they are” (107). The scene blends together the community’s “emotion disinterested and divine” with the compelling energy of an “indescribable something.” It records not only the invisible exchange of damning tribunal for the beautiful force of “a sort of sympathetic feeling,” but also the more general business of obscuring injustice with the diffuse demand for greater and greater shows of feeling. In detailing this event with so much “attachment,” Caleb fails to recognize what Adam Smith’s theory about sympathy suggests: preformed judgment not only awaits narrative, but also generates it.

Defending his own politics against critics, Godwin similarly points to the infectious spread of information, which unfortunately looks just like critical understanding in an age of “informed,” media-hungry citizens. In his *Thoughts occasioned by the perusal of Dr Parr’s Spital Sermon* (1801), Godwin characterizes himself as “a silent, not an inattentive, spectator of the flood of ribaldry, invective and intolerance which has been poured out against [him] and [his] writings.”¹⁹ He dramatically steps out of the shadows to respond to various attacks on his ideas of human perfectibility and his critique of political establishments. In parrying Samuel Parr’s blows, Godwin argues that Parr’s criticism does not set out to open any new discussion about, so much as it rides an old tidal wave of loyalist sentiment against, the “new philosophy.” Parr “musters his troops, and sound[s] the trumpet of war” against Godwin precisely when it is the easiest to do so – when “Jacobinism was destroyed; its party, as a party, was extinguished; its tenets were involved in almost universal unpopularity and odium.” There is less of critique and more of an indulgent smear campaign in Parr’s belated attack, which is both self-perpetuating (“The abuse was so often repeated, that at length the bystanders, and perhaps the parties themselves, began to believe what they had so vehemently asserted”) and derivative (“[Dr Parr] has condescended to join a cry, after

it had already become loud and numerous").²⁰ Here we have an equally deplorable reversal of the "indescribable something" and "sort of sympathetic feeling" that sways Falkland's supporters into blind acceptance of his innocence. Parr's attack functions as a sign of the times for Godwin, who laments that the possibility of open critical discussion has been closed off not only by changes in legislation such as the Treasonable and Seditious Acts (1795), but also by the "general infection" of a literary commercial taste for denouncing the new philosophy. Detesting Godwin, in other words, sells books.

III. "I am not content"

The writers of *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes* (1907-21) cheekily describe the novels of the romantic period as a fleet of tiresome, forgettable works characterized by their penchant for overly detailed accounts of the sentiments and motives of characters. Taking Godwin's "considerable, if rather artificial, power of ornate writing" as a case in point, they set him aside as the producer of featureless novels, "of which even biographers have been able to say little or nothing, and which fail to leave the slightest effect on the most industrious searchers out of them."²¹ Even his best novel, *Caleb Williams*, could benefit from radical amendments to the plot, style, and diction: "To some tastes, however, not only is the 'nervous impression['] (as Flaubert called it, in a phrase of great critical value) disagreeable, but there is an additional drawback in the total inability which they, at least, feel to sympathize with either master or man." Indeed, they would have preferred that Falkland kill Caleb: "If, at about half way in the length of the actual book, Falkland could have been made to commit a second murder on Caleb and be hanged for it, the interest would, to these tastes, have been considerably improved." For all of the novel's "nervous" discourse, in other words, nothing much happens that elicits the reader's sympathy. Not unlike Godwin's contemporaries, these literary historians suggest that Godwin's "molelike patience and consecutiveness" has the unfortunate effect of spinning out the novel's "nervous impression"

while its characters endlessly defer (and frustrate) a satisfactory answer to Adam Smith's ruling question: "what has befallen you?"

Godwin approaches the problem of enforced depth by having his novel imagine the consequences of being caught between two reading practices that, while popular in the revolutionary period, were beginning to lose steam as narratives entered the age of information. For convenience, I will call these practices *sentimental transparency* and *romantic inference*. In contemplating the consequences of this phase-out period, Godwin exemplifies the period's larger concerns with exposing the demands for depth. He provides in Caleb the exaggerated profile of a late-eighteenth-century reader obsessed with extracting depth from "books of narrative and romance" as well as from people. From the outset of the novel, the eponymous hero embodies the passionate "curiosity" of the stereotypical member of the period's reading public: "The spring of action which, perhaps more than any other, characterised the whole train of my life, was curiosity" (6). Caleb begins his narration of events by rhapsodically unfolding, in virtually one breath, the train of automatic associations between his excitability, thirst for narrative, and quickness to assume what others are thinking: "It was this [curiosity] that gave me my mechanical turn; I was desirous of tracing the variety of effects which might be produced from given causes [...] I panted for the unraveling of an adventure with an anxiety, perhaps almost equal to that of the man whose future happiness or misery depended on its issue. I read, I devoured compositions of this sort. They took possession of my soul" (6). Notice here that Caleb meets the conditions of pure sympathy set out by Adam Smith. The most eager of Smithian spectators, Caleb faithfully lives by Smith's definition of the spectator, who "must, first of all, endeavour, as much as he can, to put himself in the situation of the other, and to bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer. He must adopt the whole case of his companion with all its minutest incidents; and strive to render as perfect as possible, that imaginary change of situation upon which his sympathy is founded."²² In his spectatorship, however, Caleb does not

heed Smith's crucial stipulation that sympathetic "panting" always be regulated by judgment and reflection.

Caleb Williams explores the consequences of adopting both sides of Smith's equilibrium between feeling and distance. The novel demonstrates that "judgment" – and the demand for narrative upon which it depends – blurs any reliable distinction between objective spectatorship and pressing inquiry. Caleb consistently mistakes one for the other. Specifically, he espouses *sentimental transparency*, the unfettered communication of feelings through looks and language; under the Smithian rubric of moral sensibility, this would mean the indiscriminate impulse to enter into the situation of others. When Caleb must build his defense against Falkland's false charges of theft, for instance, he reverts to the rhetoric of total transparency: "Why have we the power of speech, but to communicate our thoughts? I will never believe that a man, conscious of innocence, cannot make other men perceive that he has that thought. Do not you feel that my whole heart tells me, I am not guilty of what is imputed to me?" (178). In good sentimental fashion, he wears his heart on his sleeve and becomes a virtual mouthpiece for promoting the idea that speech should always convey truth, that speech is necessarily, as Godwin describes in "Of Frankness and Reserve," a "transparent medium through which the workings of the mind should be made legible."²³

In addition to championing this transparent model of communication, however, Caleb's self-defense also relies heavily upon his unrelenting reserve. He neglects the advice of Valentine Forester, who acts as Caleb's ad hoc attorney and judge when he advises Caleb to think of ways to satisfy his audience's appetite for streamlined narrative: "'If [...] you trust your vindication to the plausibility of your tale, you must take care to render it consistent and complete'" (177). Refusing to "complete" his narrative, Caleb instead leaves it open to his audience's presumption of his virtue from what he does *not* communicate: "'There are certain parts of my story that I have not told. If they were told they would not conduce to my disadvantage, and they would make the present

accusation appear still more astonishing. But I cannot, as yet at least, prevail upon myself to tell them” (177). In other words, he relies upon his auditors’ recognition of conventions of romantic depth. He adheres to this model of *romantic inference*, through which spectators wholly infer the inner thoughts and depth of others.

Between sentimental transparency and romantic inference, Caleb misses the point that it is only the quality of befallenness that his audience seeks. Caleb depends upon an outdated model of sentimental transparency when his audience expects a new form of self-positioning: newsworthy information. Between the more familiar positions of the credible sufferer who bares his entire soul and the impartial spectator who coolly seeks and judges narratives of suffering, Caleb’s narrative indicates that there is a new breed of self-positioning and subjectivity.²⁴ Godwin’s novel bears the mark of tensions inherent in the moral system of sympathy set up by Smith. Rather than achieve what Smith had hoped for – a slowing down of judgment, a true balance between identification and distance – Godwin’s work reflects the growing cultural taste for information, and information serving and counting as the new “depth.” Godwin inherits this problem after Smith, but treats it in an era that culturally privileges not only expressing one’s own inner life but also telling another’s. Like the conventions of sentimental transparency that predate it, information appears instantly legible to audiences. Disclaiming its roots in feeling, its close ties to the passionate demand for convincing pictures of inner life, information instead claims to come from fact, rational judgment, and deduction.

It makes sense, then, that a key part of Godwin’s argument for the right to private judgment in *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* should be his energetic point that “information” needs to be distinguished from “understanding.” Far from equalling understanding, information blocks our access to it. “Understanding,” Godwin writes, “is the percipient of truth. This is its proper sphere. Information, as far as it is genuine, is a portion detached from the great body of truth.”²⁵ Godwin protests the proliferation of such “information” because it enforces moral distinctions

as rules subjects must follow, or established truths that have an irrefutable, "intrinsic evidence of [their] own." When subjects are under a moral "sanction" to do right or wrong, he argues, they are flooded with "information" – propositions authorized to dictate what constitutes truth – but they are barred from reaching true understanding. Even worse, he suggests, information often *passes for* understanding because the ruling institution determines the starting and ending point of all legitimate judgment. Godwin quite explicitly associates information with institutionalized thinking and unthinking compliance with the law.²⁶ He regards "deep reflection" as diametrically opposed to governmentally sanctioned "information": "I have deeply reflected [...] upon the nature of virtue, and am convinced that a certain proceeding is incumbent on me. But the hangman, supported by an act of parliament, assures me I am mistaken."²⁷ In the political vocabulary of Godwin, being "informed" means being obliged to accept authority as truth.

Yet Caleb is hungriest for information. He is only too anxious both to "adopt the whole case of his companion," imaginary or real, and share his own situation as quickly and with as much rhetorical force as possible. Early in his career as secretary to Falkland, for instance, Caleb busily hunts for an explanation of his employer's fits of melancholy and irritable charges that Caleb is "spy[ing]" upon his actions. Within the span of a paragraph, Caleb moves from a kind of laissez-faire fear of Falkland's threats – evidenced by Caleb's brief time of quiet "dejection" – to the complete divulgence of narrative events and feelings experienced "between" the minds of Caleb and Collins:

I easily understood that secrecy was one of the things expected from me; and, indeed, my mind was too much disposed to meditate upon what I had heard and seen, to make it a topic of indiscriminate communication. Mr Collins, however, and myself happened to sup together that evening [...] I had been accustomed to view Mr Collins with considerable attachment, and I conceived from the nature of his situation that there could be small

impropriety in making him my confident in the present instance. I repeated to him minutely every thing that had passed, and concluded with a solemn declaration that, though treated with caprice, I was not anxious for myself[.] (10)

Collins simply “inflamm[s]” Caleb’s need for narrative by assuming that Falkland, if only he *really* were himself, would disclose the same information in the first place: “I requested [Collins] to enter into a more copious explanation. With this request he readily complied; as conceiving that whatever delicacy it became him to exercise in ordinary cases, it would be out of place in my situation; and thinking it not improbable that Mr Falkland, but for the disturbance and inflammation of his mind, would be disposed to a similar communication” (11).

Caleb and Collins’s confident presumption to know Falkland’s “dispos[ition] to a similar communication” – that they simply tell what Falkland, in a different state of mind, would want to share – squarely registers Adam Smith’s argument that spectators “enter into” others’ situations with full authority to feel what the other cannot feel. The best example of this sympathetic coup is the spectator’s relation to the dead, who serve as the limit case of subjects who are powerless to communicate what they really must feel.²⁸ Significantly, Falkland himself seems far from wanting anyone to occupy sympathetically – by imaginative proxy – his unique psychology of guilt-ridden anger and contempt for anyone slighting his reputation. He is reluctant to share such communications about his history with Caleb, whom he charges with trying to “extort[] all the treasures of [his] soul” (123). Already presuming Falkland’s guilt in allowing two peasants from his past – Hawkins Senior and Junior – to be tried and hanged for Falkland’s murder of his brutish enemy, Barnabas Tyrrel, Caleb makes numerous unsubtle attempts at compelling Falkland to admit his guilt. It is only after enduring Caleb’s sidewise questioning and snooping around Falkland’s letters and locked trunk that Falkland grudgingly shares a little information with him:

"Misery itself has nothing worse in store for me, except what you have inflicted: the seeming to doubt of my innocence, which after the fullest and most solemn examination has been completely established. You have forced me to this explanation. You have extorted from me a confidence which I had no inclination to make. But it is a part of the misery of my situation that I am at the mercy of every creature, however little, who feels himself inclined to sport with my distress. Be content. You have brought me low enough."

"Oh, sir, I am not content; I cannot be content! I cannot bear to think what I have done." (126)

Caleb's response to Falkland's charge (the "extortion" of his thoughts) and request ("Be content," that is, ask no more of him) is instructive on at least two counts. It suggests that Caleb cannot be "content" in the sense that he feels too terribly sorry about having offended Falkland by questioning his innocence. At the same time, however, it suggests that Caleb cannot be *satisfied* with what Falkland tells him because he is always in quest of more "content," more "depth" – specifically, a better handle on Falkland's psychological "content." That is, in order to manage true and complete sympathy with another soul, the sympathizer must fully occupy the contents of the other's position, must become content; utter sympathy demands utter contentment. Caleb cannot be content, since Falkland blocks off the sort of inhabitation of his person that a Caleb-type reader demands. Caleb cannot be satisfied, cannot "be content," because Falkland will not allow him complete access to his position, to occupy his narrative, to "be (Falkland's) content."

"Oh, sir, I am not content; I cannot be content!," then, sounds like Caleb announcing his business as a depth-seeker. This desire (for narrative satisfaction) makes sense in light of his accelerated pursuit of Falkland's inner thoughts every time he departs from these brief periods of compunction. When Falkland is called upon to act as a justice of the

peace, Caleb decides to “watch him without remission” in order to detect any signs of guilt in hearing the testimony of a peasant who is charged with murdering a “brute persisting in a course of hostility to a man of benevolent character, and suddenly and terribly cut off in the midst of his career” (132, 134). Along with noting the conventional “cut” of this tale – standard brute leaves a good man with no choice but to kill him – Caleb applies these conventions to Falkland in reading his thoughts when he observes Falkland rushing out of the courtroom. Caleb hurries into the symbolically deep and secret place of the garden, “plunged into the deepest of its thickets,” in order to make a pronouncement about Falkland’s mind (135). Thus when Caleb says, “My mind was full, almost to bursting,” his mind explodes with what sounds like Falkland’s voice admitting his guilt: “It is out! It is discovered! Guilty, upon my soul!” (135). In this scenario, after Caleb fully enters into the mind of Falkland (we cannot tell whose soul is “my soul”), he considers for a fleeting moment the kinds of questions he ought to consider before arriving at a reliable judgment: “If I had been disposed to turn informer, what had occurred amounted to no evidence that was admissible in a court of justice. Well then, added I, if it be such as would not be admitted at a criminal tribunal, am I sure it is such as I ought to admit? [...] Did it really contain such an extent of arguments and application, that nobody but I was discerning enough to see?” (136). Talking to himself in this way, Caleb rhetorically asks whether others could be “discerning enough to see” Falkland’s depths so clearly as he.

Caleb recognizes that he exerts extreme pressure upon Falkland to confirm what he presumes has psychologically “befallen” Falkland. Yet Caleb altogether fails to recognize that presuming to know Falkland’s inner life is his only way of giving any definition to his exceptional powers of seeing depth where no one else seems capable of seeing it. This is not detective work, as Caleb makes it out to be, but a kind of narrative *accreditation* work. In other words, he measures his own worth and capacity for finding depth against prescribed standards for recognizing credible tales of depth. Caleb seeks for the contours of Falkland’s mind as

though he were searching for what Godwin disparagingly calls "information"; Caleb's line of reasoning is entirely "formed" by narrative conventions that have an "intrinsic evidence of [their] own."

Instead of deliberating through time on Falkland's innocence or guilt, Caleb impulsively attaches a story of guilt to Falkland over and over again – until, apparently, the story sticks for good. This urgent, repetitive assignment of motives to Falkland shows how Caleb is caught within the grip not of what he calls "curiosity," but what I would call the force of information. Whenever he promises Falkland or himself that he will never "turn informer," he unsuccessfully battles against not only his "uncontrollable" "passions in their progressive career, the inquisitiveness and impatience of [his] thoughts," but also his delight in being informed – clairvoyantly, almost – of what is really going on in Falkland's mind (167, 136). He exults in assuming such exclusive rights to Falkland's most important and pressing thoughts. This is the *premium* jump in rank that happens because of the artificial grouping of Caleb amongst other employees of Falkland: "I could never enough wonder at finding myself, humble as I was by my birth, obscure as I had hitherto been, thus suddenly become of so much importance to the happiness of one of the most enlightened and accomplished men in England" (127). Caleb assesses the pumped-up value of his *individuality* here. We have in this "meditat[ion] upon [his] situation" a clear example of how an "individual" imagines himself to emerge, in the sense that Frances Ferguson outlines in her reading of utilitarian structures. Caleb surfaces as a unique individual defined through the very contest of holding Falkland's secrets. How well – or how poorly – Caleb retains these secrets determines his standing, his ranking, in Falkland's eyes. Caleb's depth comes into relief as he considers how worthy a mind he must have to be occupying so much space in Falkland's. It is against the backdrop of Falkland's unfortunate vulnerability to "circumstances" – and then Falkland's and Caleb's shared artificial grouping of secret-holding – that their inner lives beautifully materialize together as a single palpable unit of depth (143).

Yet this automatic merger of minds happens repeatedly from the beginning, when Caleb assumes – for the sake of convenience – authorship of Falkland’s history and much more: “I shall interweave with Mr Collins’s story various information which I afterwards received from other quarters, that I may give all possible perspicuity to the series of events. To avoid confusion in my narrative, I shall drop the person of Collins, and assume to be myself the historian of our patron” (11). Not one to do well with boundaries, Caleb’s “bleed[ing]” heart wholly adopts the miseries of Falkland’s history, “as if they were [his] own” (12). He acts as a sentimental editor of events by “drop[ping]” Collins from the chain of actors and positioning himself as the sole conveyor of direct and indirect testimony – i.e., “various information.” The fantasy of being the sole emissary of Falkland’s heart only grows from here. Caleb lays out a program of sentimental transparency, promising to convey the perfect point-by-point linkage between his life and Falkland’s – what has “befallen” both of them – and to “give all possible perspicuity to the series of events” (11).

As Caleb imagines fusing his life to Falkland’s in his narrative, he internalizes the literary convention that best embodies such fusion: free indirect discourse. He tells us upfront that his business is to weave together as seamlessly as possible the hard facts (“information”) and the “silent, as well as the articulate part of the intercourse between us [Caleb and Falkland]” (124, 194). Thus his interest lies in narrative control as much as it does in romantic conventions of inference; he makes the “silent” language of looks and gestures speak volumes for him. Frequently departing from his original model of sentimental transparency, Caleb vigorously applies a model of reading for depth:

At present I was satisfied with thus considering every incident in its obvious sense. But the story I had heard was for ever in my thoughts, and I was peculiarly interested to comprehend its full import. I turned it a thousand ways, and examined it in every point of view. In the original communication it appeared sufficiently

distinct and satisfactory; but as I brooded over it, it gradually became mysterious. (112)

Upon hearing Falkland's history from Collins, Caleb cannot help but alternately mystify and elucidate the story. Caleb eventually swings completely back to sentimental transparency, but, in the process, vacillates over whether to disclose or withhold Falkland's secret, and cannot tell whether his motives spring from actual "forbearance" or a selfish desire for "credit" and power. He calls upon the impartial spectator within him and unearths holes in his motives for managing Falkland's secret. In the end, however, he concludes that sentimental transparency – the unqualified pouring out of his soul – would have served everyone well, if only he had trusted enough in it from the very beginning:

I am sure that if I had opened my heart to Mr Falkland, if I had told to him privately the tale that I have now been telling, he could not have resisted my reasonable demand. After all his precautions, he must ultimately have depended upon my forbearance. Could he be sure that if I were at last worked up to disclose every thing I knew and to enforce it with all the energy I could exert, I should obtain no credit? (334)

As the self-narration continues, Caleb becomes more and more convinced of the power of his "frankness and fervour": "It is therefore impossible that he could have resisted a frank and fervent expostulation, the frankness and fervour in which the whole soul is poured out" (334). The whole problem, he suggests, began with the clash between two different models of communication. Falkland depended upon Caleb's "forbearance," or promise to keep reserved about his secret guilt. He presumed a model of romantic conventions of depth through which he inferred the guilty psychology of Caleb's dubious claims to "forbearance": "Your forbearance has proved, as I all along suspected, empty and treacherous" (291). Caleb, on the other hand, depended on sentimental conventions of immediately legible essences, of a transparent

sentimental interface. He expected Falkland and others to see into his heart. In the final courtroom scene, Caleb apparently gets what he wants. He claims that the legibly sincere “tokens” of his narrative effectively “melt” his audience, which is instantly awash with tears: “Every one that heard me was melted into tears. They could not resist the ardour with which I praised the great qualities of Falkland; they manifested their sympathy in the tokens of my penitence” (334).

By the end of the novel, Caleb still fails to realize his trial and error method of adopting sentimental and romantic models of self-representation: first transparency, then hidden depth, then transparency, and so on. This does not mean that Godwin himself unsuccessfully tries to critique conventional strategies for eliciting sympathy. Instead, I argue, it means that Godwin is only too aware of what the new age of information means to reading practices, especially in regards to our capacity to feel sympathy and make judgments. Caleb thoroughly imbibes and cross-wires two practices of reading for depth. Appropriately enough, it is a harbinger of the era of information – a faceless “bearer” of news, a machine-like proxy – that reminds Caleb he is just as integral a part of the new age of information as is the proxy. To Caleb’s spirited protest, “I guess your errand; but it is to no purpose [...] I am an Englishman, and it is the privilege of an Englishman to be sole judge and master of his own actions,” the news-bearer wryly replies: “You are in the devil of a hurry [...] to guess my intentions, and tell your own” (165). In other words, it hardly matters whether Caleb tells or withholds his story. He can employ all of the most conventional narrative strategies for eliciting sympathy now – whether sentimental or romantic in flavor – but they carry no charge. This is the case in almost every other encounter between Caleb and representatives of the law, as in this string of mantra-like examples:

I said that I had always protested my innocence, and must now repeat the protest.

“In that case,” retorted the senior magistrate abruptly, “what can you have to disclose? If you are innocent, that

Suzie Asha Park, "Caleb Williams and the Smithian Spectator"

is no business of ours! We act officially." (285)

"Why, are you such an ass as to suppose that the sort of story you have been telling can be of any service to you, either here or at the assizes, or any where else?" (286)

But the law has neither eyes, nor ears, nor bowels of humanity; and it turns into marble the hearts of all those that are nursed in its principles. (288)

In the new age of information, Caleb cannot move an audience without producing on demand the "information" of an immediately legible psychological depth.

This production on demand is clearly the case even within the novel's most sentimental episode. Just when he thinks he has found pastoral refuge in Wales from the relentless pursuit of Falkland's hired spy and "blood-hunter," Gines, Caleb finds himself the very subject of false information (270). Everyone in the Welsh village stops conversing with him because Gines circulates a paper entitled "the WONDERFUL AND SURPRISING HISTORY OF CALEB WILLIAMS," detailing his numerous jailbreaks and purported acts of crime against Falkland (311). This information becomes the official story, to which Caleb's attempts to use sentimental weapons make no difference.²⁹ Specifically, he plans to vindicate himself to his mother figure and sentimental confidante, Laura, by using the winning combination of the most familiar sentimental strategies:

"I will be clear, collected, simple in narrative, ingenuous in communication. I will leave nothing unsaid that the case may require. I will not volunteer any thing that relates to my former transactions with Mr Falkland; but, if I find that my present calamity is connected with those transactions, I will not fear but that by an honest explanation I shall remove it" (307-8).

To Caleb's complaint that she resolutely refuses to hear more than "one side of the story" before accepting the printed information as true,

Laura responds that there is no difference between information and truth:

“The maxim of hearing both sides may be very well in some cases; but it would be ridiculous to suppose that there are not cases that at the first mention, are too clear to admit the shadow of a doubt. By a well-concerted defence you may give me new reasons to admire your abilities; but I am acquainted with them already. I can admire your abilities, without tolerating your character.”
(309)

In this case, Caleb’s strategies lead only to the brutal conclusion that he has no “content,” that he is all strategy and empty “character” to be filled in by the official truth of information.

Recent criticism of the novel has opened discussion of questions of sympathy and power raised by the “magnetical sympathy” between Caleb and Falkland (117). John Bender argues that eighteenth-century theories of sympathy, in combination with the popularization of free indirect discourse as a narrative technique, lent authority to a violent way of looking at and representing the psychology of subjects. Godwin’s mode of constructing character, Bender points out, is hardly amenable to challenging contemporary understandings of character: “Godwin fundamentally undermined his project from the beginning because narration as he undertook it reproduced the constructions of character he was assailing and precluded any stable delineation of autonomous private judgment of the kind he idealized.”³⁰ Godwin tries to challenge normative sympathetic institutions, in other words, but ends up merely reinforcing their structures of power.

Yet Godwin seems more concerned to use these constructions of character to show that they no longer apply in an age of information. The fantasy of sentimental transparency – being able to express thoughts and be perfectly understood – has lost currency by the 1790s, especially in a time of political persecution. I argue that Godwin does not aim here to deliver a picture of a “stable delineation of autonomous private

judgment," although he certainly idealized the right to judge throughout his critical writings. Instead, Godwin tries to show just how pervasive and inescapable are the technologies for producing an on-demand depth. The conditions produced by government's "positive institutions" of law generally diffuse and cancel out the meaning and force of private judgment.

Unable to see that sentimental and romantic depth have passed into the age of information, Caleb continually uses its technologies, but, as we have seen in numerous examples, to no avail. His dismal rate of failure in actually finding an audience who will listen to him can be explained in part by the new age's impossible demand that he seem at once impartial and emotionally compelling in his delivery of "situation." The more stridently he declares his power to "force attention," in fact, the more condemning his auditors are of his calls for sympathy. In the thick of his failures to persuade, Caleb's conventional sentimental plea of "I have a right to your kindness; I have a right to your assistance!" is answered by a strangely recursive charge. Collins tells Caleb that he has no rights precisely because he is a socially produced "machine": "I consider you as a machine; you are not constituted, I am afraid, to be greatly useful to your fellow-men: but you did not make yourself; you are just what circumstances irresistibly compelled you to be. I am sorry for your ill properties; but I entertain no enmity against you, nothing but benevolence" (321). Godwin stages Caleb's starts and failures in order to expose the alarming spread of general unconsciousness to the powers of "information" and its increasingly efficient authority to determine what counts as psychological depth.

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Notes

¹William Godwin, *Caleb Williams, or Things as They Are*, ed. Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 165. All citations are to this edition and are noted parenthetically.

²Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," *Graham's*

Magazine, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (April 1846), 163-67.

³ Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," 163. William Godwin, Preface to reprint of *Fleetwood*, *Standard Novels No. XXII* (London: Richard Bentley, 1832), viii. This preface is conveniently available in the Broadview edition of *Caleb Williams*, ed. Gary Handwerk and A.A. Markley (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2000), 443-50.

⁴ Preface to *Fleetwood*, ix. Godwin continues: "But a passage written feebly, flatly, and in a wrong spirit, constituted an obstacle that it was next to impossible to correct and set right again. I wrote therefore by starts; sometimes for a week or ten days not a line. Yet all came to the same thing in the sequel. On an average, a volume of 'Caleb Williams' cost me four months, neither less, nor more" (ix).

⁵ Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 111.

⁶ *Files* 120.

⁷ *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1984), 11. Hereafter cited in the text, and abbreviated *TMS* in the endnotes. All subsequent citations are to this edition, which is taken by the editors from Smith's sixth edition (finished in 1789 and published in the following year) and represents a composite of the editions published in Smith's lifetime.

⁸ *TMS* 12.

⁹ *TMS* 110, my emphasis. Compare this with Godwin's version of Smith's impartial spectator: "We are able to go out of ourselves, and become impartial spectators of the system of which we are a part. We can then make an appraisal of our intrinsic and absolute value; and detect the imposition of that self-regard which would represent our self-interest as of as much value as that of all the world beside," *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its influence on modern morals and happiness* IV (10), (1796), 428, reprinted in *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: Penguin, 1985), 381. See Mark Philp's thorough discussion of Godwin's revisions to *Political*

Justice – especially in light of the moral philosophers' influence – from the first (1793) to the second (1796) editions, "The Ethical Dimensions of the Revisions," *Godwin's Political Justice* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 142-67.

¹⁰ See Raphael and Macfie's introduction (TMS 34-46).

¹¹ Frances Ferguson, *Pornography, the Theory: What Utilitarianism Did to Action* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2.

¹² I should add here that there are affinities between the pornographic "context" that Ferguson examines and the pornographic "culture" that Jean Baudrillard labels a "culture of monstration, of demonstration, of productive monstrosity," *Seduction* (1979), trans. Brian Singer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 35. Yet Ferguson is interested in recuperating some of the beneficial possibilities introduced by historically utilitarian "captures" of action from their eighteenth-century roots, whereas Baudrillard critiques our contemporary culture of "stereo-porno" for its totalizing insistence upon hyper-visible proof: "everything is to become real, visible, accountable; everything is to be transcribed in relations of forces, systems of concepts or measurable energy; everything is to be said, accumulated, indexed and recorded" (34-35).

¹³ See Frances Ferguson's "Canon, Poetics, and Social Value: Jeremy Bentham and How to Do Things with People" *MLN* 110.5 (December 1995): 1148-64, for her provocative comparison of personification, literary canon-formation, and individuation-via-Benthamite groupings: "What seems [...] most important about the Benthamite classification and the Panoptic structures that instantiate it is that classes are not diagnostic (statements of where you belong). Rather, they become instruments for individuation. The classroom that Bentham borrows from Joseph Lancaster, like the prison he devises, projects itself as an artificial environment in which the spelling-bee model of examination and the constantly changing groupings of prisoners make all individual actions occur as assisted actions and all individuals appear as palpable byproducts of their ongoing relationship of resemblance to and difference from their companions" (1162).

¹⁴ See Robert Lamb's careful discussion of Godwin, and his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* in particular, as utilitarian, "Was William Godwin a Utilitarian?" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70.1 (January 2009): 119-41.

¹⁵ Thus Falkland chastens Caleb for assuming that Falkland had lost track of him during and after his release from prison: "Were you so stupid and undistinguishing as not to know that the preservation of your life was the uniform object of my exertions? [...] I had my eye upon you in all your wanderings. You have taken no material step through their whole course with which I have not been acquainted" (291).

¹⁶ *Thoughts on Man, His Nature, Productions, and Discoveries* (1831), *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, Vol. 6, ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1993), 204.

¹⁷ Of special note is the irreversibility of Caleb's act of self-preference: "It was too late: the mistake I had committed was now gone past all power of recall" (330-31).

¹⁸ Gary Handwerk, "Of Caleb's Guilt and Godwin's Truth: Ideology and Ethics in *Caleb Williams*" *ELH* 60.4 (Winter 1993): 939-60. 954-55.

¹⁹ *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, Vol. 2, ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1993), 165.

²⁰ *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, Vol. 2, ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1993), 177. Godwin compares this anti-Godwin campaign with the spread of disease: "The cry spread like a general infection, and I have been told that not even a petty novel for boarding-school misses now ventures to aspire to favour, unless it contain some expressions of dislike and abhorrence to the new philosophy, and its chief (or shall I say most voluminous?) English adherent."

²¹ A.W. Ward *et al.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1907-21).

²² *TMS* 21.

²³ *Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin*, Vol. 6, ed. Mark Philp (London: William Pickering, 1993), 201. For a very

useful exploration of Godwin's views on speech, see Angela Esterhammer, "Godwin's Suspicion of Speech Acts," *Studies in Romanticism* 39.4 (Winter 2000): 553-78.

²⁴ The Jacobin novel, as David Simpson explains in tracing the history of what he calls "situatedness," foregrounds the "formulaic investigation of the power of circumstances over individuals." Departing from the concerns of the Jacobin novel, nineteenth-century literature would treat situation as backdrop to character, showcasing character depth – "some integrity that escapes the grip of social circumstances," *Situatedness, or, Why We Keep Saying Where We're Coming From* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 126.

²⁵ *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* 202.

²⁶ Tilottama Rajan reads Godwin's serious suspicion of and resistance to "positive institution" and its disciplining function: "Indeed, Godwin often uses 'institution' in the singular to connote the activity as well as products of normalization: 'positive institution' is the process by which obedience is compelled, sometimes through 'positive law' but sometimes in more invisible ways (I.175-78)," *Romantic Narrative: Shelley, Hays, Godwin, Wollstonecraft* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 118.

²⁷ *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* 205.

²⁸ "If the injured should perish in the quarrel, we not only sympathize with the real resentment of his friends and relations, but with the imaginary resentment which in fancy we lend to the dead, who is no longer capable of feeling that or any other human sentiment. But as we put ourselves in his situation, as we enter, as it were, into his body, and in our imaginations, in some measure, animate anew the deformed and mangled carcass of the slain, when we bring home in this manner his case to our own bosoms, we feel upon this, as upon many other occasions, an emotion which the person principally concerned is incapable of feeling, and which yet we feel by an illusive sympathy with him," *TMS* 71.

²⁹ For an incisive study of the relationship between the English court

system, the nineteenth-century novel, and sensational criminal broadsides, see Jonathan Grossman's *The Art of Alibi: English Law Courts and the Novel* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

³⁰ "Impersonal Violence: The Penetrating Gaze and the Field of Narration in *Caleb Williams*," *Vision and Textuality*, ed. Stephen Melville and Bill Readings (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 267.

