

# **Shakespeare's Sentiments: Scottish Moral Philosophy and Literary Criticism**

"Thus, the moralist becomes a critic: and the two sciences of ethics and criticism appear to be intimately and very naturally connected. In truth, no one who is unacquainted with the human mind, or entertains improper notions of human conduct, can discern excellence in the higher species of poetical composition."

William Richardson (*Essays*, 1797, p. 398)

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Scholars of the eighteenth-century thought have largely neglected Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) in favour of his better-known *Wealth of Nations* (1776). While *TMS* has recently begun to receive the attention it richly rewards, the focus of scholars has been to assess the philosophical roots and analytical innovations of *TMS* in general and its connection to *WN* in particular.<sup>1</sup> A serious limitation of many of these scholarly investigations is that they obscure the interdisciplinary nature of eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophy and overlook its connection to fields such as literature and genres like theatre and the novel. Subjects like ethics and literature were intertwined in ways that complemented reinforced one another. Enlightenment writers did not hive themselves off into the separate domains that characterize contemporary eighteenth-century studies.

The relationship between developments in literary criticism and Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759; major revision in 1790) is a fascinating case in point. In their painstaking introduction to the 1976 Glasgow edition *TMS*, D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie devote considerable attention to the influence of Mandeville, Hutcheson, and Hume on Smith's ethics, but entirely neglect the overwhelming influence of the dramatic arts in shaping his *spectatorial* approach. Smith's development of the concepts of sympathy and the impartial spectator arguably owed as much to his familiarity with the plays of Racine and Voltaire than to recent philosophy.<sup>2</sup> This omission is all the more puzzling since Smith himself suggested that, for understanding human sensibility, the "poets and romance writers...Racine and Voltaire: Richardson, Marivaux, and Riccoboni" were often "much better instructors" either ancient or modern philosophers.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, Smith's engagement with Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* – a system that “in some respects bordered upon the truth” – was entirely owing to the latter's “ingenious” account of the way spectators assess the sentiments of others in the human drama.<sup>4</sup>

Given Smith's explicitly dramatic approach, it is hardly surprising that *TMS* kindled intense literary discussion and analysis. This essay argues that *TMS* provided the foundation for an entirely new line in Shakespearean criticism illuminating the Bard's character development. The new Shakespeare criticism invited readers, theatre patrons and literary critics to explore the *sentiments* of his characters with a focus on delineating their complex *motivations*. In effect, Shakespeare was remodeled as an enlightened atomist of human nature. The rationale for this new direction in Shakespeare criticism was ethical, hence the link between Smith's and Shakespeare's *sentiments*. Its emphases and strategies were intensely social. Ironically and paradoxically, it also was an important signpost on the road to a *modern* and *individualistic* appropriation of Shakespeare that usually traces its evolution from romantics like Coleridge and Hazlitt up to our modern celebrants of Shakespearean *self*. Harold Bloom's “hyperbolic celebration” of Shakespeare as being responsible for the “invention of the human” demonstrates the extreme to which such *bardolatry* can go.<sup>5</sup>

This argument is not entirely new. A compelling case has already been made for situating one crucial starting point for modern literary criticism in enlightened Scottish culture and, particularly, in those influential eighteenth-century periodicals *The Mirror*

(1779-1780) and *The Lounger* (1785-1786). In these journals, a new generation of Glasgow and Edinburgh literati -- including William Richardson, Henry Mackenzie and William Craig -- explored Shakespeare's characterization of Richard III, Hamlet, Falstaff, Jacques and Timon of Athens.<sup>6</sup> The author of this perceptive analysis, Horst Drescher, provides valuable service by suggesting a connection between the new criticism and the writings and teachings of one of the pioneers of the Scottish Enlightenment, Henry Home (Lord Kames), whose *Elements of Criticism* (1762) recommended the *philosophical investigation* of "the *causes* of that pleasure which is derived from the productions of the fine arts...to trace the rules of criticism to their true affections."<sup>7</sup> More important for our purposes, Drescher singles out *ex officio* Mirror Club member and Glasgow Humanities professor William Richardson (1743-1814) for applying these principles of moral philosophy to Shakespeare's characters.<sup>8</sup> This article, therefore, builds upon Drescher's original, but largely undeveloped, insight by delineating several of the most striking aspects of the common discursive domain shared by Richardson's Shakespeare criticism and Adam Smith's *TMS*.

### **The Smith-Robertson Connection**

Drescher's study concentrated on the *Mirror* and *Lounger*, the last and arguably most worthy successors to Joseph Addison's *Spectator* (London, 1711-14).<sup>9</sup> While these journals clearly played a role in the new Shakespeare criticism, for our purposes it makes better sense to concentrate on the contributions of William Richardson. Five years before the *Mirror's* publication Edinburgh launch, Richardson had already made a wider British

name for himself by the publication of *A Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of Some of Shakespeare's Remarkable Characters*, (London, 1774). A decade later, Richardson published *Essays on Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters of Richard the Third, King Lear, and Timon of Athens* (London, 1784). Works on other Shakespearean characters followed in 1785 and 1789, including an essay *On Shakespeare's Imitation of Female Characters* that reveals the increased interest of the Scottish literati in expressly feminine feelings. All of these essays were combined in *Essays on Some of Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters, to which is added An Essay on the Faults of Shakespeare* (London, 1797) an extremely popular work that went through several editions in its first year. Richardson, therefore, was the acknowledged and arguably much more influential Shakespeare authority in Scottish, indeed in British, literary circles.<sup>10</sup>

Before leaving these prestigious Edinburgh periodicals in order to focus more tightly on Richardson's publications, however, it is worth paying attention to the powerful shadow that Adam Smith cast over the *Mirror* and *Lounger* and its literary criticism. Smith was the acknowledged leader of the Edinburgh literati and the new generation clearly regarded Smith as a mentor and energetically sought his stamp of approval. Henry Mackenzie, the dominant member of the Mirror Club and author of the cult novel *The Man of Feeling* (London, 1771), send two alternate opening essays of the *Mirror* to Adam Smith soliciting his preference.<sup>11</sup> His friend and fellow Mirror Club member, William Craig, was "a favourite student" of Adam Smith, occasionally exploited his platform in the *Lounger* to praise his teacher as an "ingenious philosopher, who possesses a singular power of illustration joined to an uncommon depth of thinking."<sup>12</sup> Even the

title of the *Mirror* was probably a reference to Adam Smith's treatment of sympathy as a *mirror* or *looking-glass* in *TMS*.<sup>13</sup> More significantly, the primary agenda of the Mirror Club was to reinterpret the eighteenth-century cult of feeling in the framework of Smith's analysis of the moral sentiments.<sup>14</sup>

The Edinburgh journals are also useful for illuminating the influence of Adam Smith and Smithean ethics on Richardson (also his student). Richardson's essay *The Mussulman's Mirror, Its Wonderful Properties* (*Mirror* 8), for example, describes a *Mirror* that accurately reflects "the propriety of your conduct" in ways that clearly appropriate Adam Smith's description of the social "looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct."<sup>15</sup> Another Richardson contribution *On the 'Poems of Hamilton of Bangour'* (*Lounger* 41), praises the "justness of the Poet's sentiments" in what appear to be Smithean terms. To be precise, Richardson echoes Smith's argument that, while the moral sentiments are innate, the passions themselves are dangerous, and virtue is impossible, unless sentiment is subject to self-control. Finally, Richardson's essay entitled *Criticism on a Scene in Shakespeare's 'Richard III'* (*Mirror* 66), although anonymous at the time, was well received by Smith who was certain that the author "must have been a student of his."<sup>16</sup> Presumably, Smith's approval was owing to Richardson's application of *TMS* to Shakespeare's characters, since he had precious little appreciation for the Bard himself.<sup>17</sup>

Richardson's article on the poetry Hamilton of Bangour did not merely allude to Smith's moral theory but also was a complement to the man himself. Although the *Mirror* and

*Lounger* have been credited with the discovery of native Scottish poets like Michael Bruce (*Mirror* 36), Robert Burns (*Lounger* 97) and Hamilton of Bangour (*Lounger* 42), it's particularly revealing that Richardson should have chosen to recommend this particular Scottish poet for attention. Adam Smith's first published writing was a preface to William of Bangour's *Poems on Several Occasions* (Glasgow, 1758). Despite not having any other publications at the time, Smith was already well connected in literary and fashionable Scottish society as a result of his Edinburgh lectures on rhetoric and *belles lettres*. The request that he write a preface came directly from a network that included Lord Kames, Crawford (a wealthy Glasgow merchant), and Sir John Dalrymple (the poet's brother-in-law).<sup>18</sup> In effect, therefore, Richardson's praise for Hamilton of Bangour was thinly veiled praise of his mentor and the powerful literary, social and political network to which Smith was connected. In eighteenth-century Scotland, it made good sense to have the rich and powerful on your side.<sup>19</sup>

Richardson's colleague John Millar, Professor of Civil Law at Glasgow and the author of *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1779), has gone down in posterity alongside William Craig as Adam Smith's "favourite student."<sup>20</sup> But, like many popular professors, Smith appears to have had a number of favourites. Richardson is typically mentioned alongside Millar as having a particularly close relationship with Smith. Both shared Smith's view, unpopular in Scotland, that the American colonies deserved great freedom within an expanded British empire.<sup>21</sup> Millar and Richardson worked collaboratively to ensure that Adam Smith would be elected unopposed as Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow in November of 1787. Richardson's comments on Smith's teaching style evidence a special

attachment<sup>22</sup> and Richardson's delight when this "worthy man" (i.e. Smith) was quickly elected Rector on 19 December 1787 certainly appears genuine. Smith reciprocated that emotion by appointing Richardson as Vice-Rector immediately after taking his oath of office.<sup>23</sup>

By this time, however, Smith did not have very long to live. In rapidly failing health, he set out to ensure that his philosophical legacy was consolidated. It may come as a surprise to those who consider Smith's major contribution to European thought to be *The Wealth of Nations* that he devoted his remaining days to significantly revising *TMS* (final edition published 1790). Nothing could better demonstrate Smith's concern to keep self-interest under control than his determination to update and complete his earlier project on the *moral sentiments*. While these revisions were substantial, significant and certainly problematize any caricature of Smith as an unqualified apologist for bourgeois individualism, they had little, if any, influence on the course of literary criticism and Shakespearean analysis. Richardson's final compendium of essays on Shakespeare's characters, published in 1797 was essentially a collection of works published earlier. He may have claimed to have *corrected* and *improved* the essays in the introduction, but textual comparison suggests that changes were primarily stylistic and that Richardson (or his colleagues for that matter) never came to terms with Smith's ethical shift from an analysis of sociability to a theory of conscience.<sup>24</sup>

Smith's lifelong concern with moral philosophy continued to include ample room for concerns that modern scholars would separate out as literary. Prior to recognizing his



“tenure of this life as extremely arduous” and struggling to complete the arduous revisions to *TMS*, Smith was seriously beginning to tackle the agenda first established by Lord Kames, namely “to illustrate the general principles by which they [i.e. the fine arts] please.” Indeed, in connection with his inauguration as Rector, Smith regaled the Glasgow Literary Society a two-hour “discourse” on the *Imitative Arts*.<sup>25</sup> His death, of course, precluded the completion of the project but the two discourses and a third fragment were included in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (1980).<sup>26</sup> The pieces contain some interesting ideas but no consistently developed thesis and their most revealing insight is the suggestion that music “has one great advantage over every sort of discourse” insofar as it accurately mirrors the “more animated passions.”<sup>27</sup> Whatever their merits, Smith’s activities late in life clearly reinforce our *general* thesis about the richly complex and interdisciplinary approach of his approach. It now behooves us to examine some *specific* characteristics of that connection in reference to William Richardson’s critique of Shakespeare.

### **Sentiments, Sympathy and Spectators**

Richardson’s breakthrough in Shakespeare criticism relied heavily upon Adam Smith’s moral theory and, especially, his teacher’s spectatorial account of the moral sentiments and sympathy. Smith followed Hutcheson in basing moral judgment on feelings or *sentiments* and Hume in locating the origins of ethical norms in *sympathy*. But Smith’s account of sympathy was far more subtle and complex than Hume’s in its analysis ethical motivation. Whereas Hume equated sympathy with the simultaneously aesthetic and

utilitarian pleasure that individuals obtained from behaviour contributing to social harmony, Smith argued that sympathy was the end product of an intricate emotional exchange between *agents* and *spectators*. Smithean sympathetic exchange was characterized by three distinct operations: 1) the natural propensity of spectators and agents to seek sympathy; 2) the necessity for agents to exercise self-control in order to obtain that sympathy; and 3) the mutual accommodation that privileged *propriety*. Smith entitled his work the *theory of moral sentiments* because he was convinced that ethical norms were plural; that the exact point of propriety varied depending on the particular characteristics of the emotional exchange; and ethical judgment ultimately was arbitrated by real or idealized spectators who assessed motive as well as action.

In Smith's ethical model, sympathy may have served a similar purpose to that of gravity in Newtonian physics. But it clearly was not some abstraction that could be reduced to a teleological (i.e., Kames, Hutcheson) or utilitarian (Hume) axiom. Both the emotional adjustments necessary to, and the psychological pleasure that derived from, sympathy needed to be analyzed in ways that conformed to real spectatorial relationships. Smith nicely captured these *natural*, rather than abstract or axiomatic, operations of sentiment and sympathy, in a musical analogy. In order to obtain spectatorial sympathy, the agent or "person principally concerned" needed to "beat time" to the "affections of the spectators."<sup>28</sup>

By lowering his passion to that pitch, in which spectators are capable of going along with him. He must flatten, if I may be allowed to say so, the sharpness of its natural tone, in order to reduce it to harmony and concord with the emotions of those who are about him.

Smith's sympathetic symphony was predicated upon an appreciation of human nature as intensely and irreducibly *social*. For Smith, society could never be rationalized into a collection of individuals or isolated agents; rather, all our ideas of the *self* were embedded within our relationships in society. Without "any communication with his own species," Smith maintained, a "human creature" would have no conception at all "of his own *character*:"<sup>29</sup>

Smith's account of character or the spectatorial self was as relevant to the study of aesthetics as it was to ethics. In the same passage where he introduced the influential metaphor of the social *mirror* or *looking-glass*, Smith argued that human standards of physical and moral *beauty* or taste were the result of "communication with his [i.e. the human being] own species." While these *ideas* might have their origin in an individual's emotional equipment, specifically the desire to achieve pleasure and avoid pain, they could not be understood and should never be analyzed in psychological isolation. "Bring him [the individual] into society," said Smith and:

all his own passions will immediately become the causes of new passions. He will observe that mankind approve of some of them, and are disgusted by others. He will be elevated in the one case, and cast down in the other; his desires and aversions, his joys and sorrows, will now often become the causes of new desires and new aversions, new joys and new sorrows: they will now, therefore, interest him deeply.<sup>30</sup>

We need to pay particular attention to this *reflective* account of human nature and *character* if we are to understand the Shakespearean criticism of protégés like Richardson, Craig and Mackenzie. It is for good reason that several recent commentators on Smith's *TMS* have suggested that his moral approach most closely resembles that of a

dramatic critic.<sup>31</sup> Several of Smith's students obviously appreciated his analogy between dramatic role-playing and the demonstration of propriety in ethical life.<sup>32</sup>

Richardson could not have been more explicit in outlining his Smithean ethical agenda in the introduction to his analysis of Shakespeare's characters. The principle by which we "determine the merit of demerit of human actions," he asserts is "the necessity we are under of measuring the dispositions of others by our own."<sup>33</sup> Unless the *dramatist* is able to accurately express "the language and sentiments of passion," Richardson suggested, "he fails in the sole end and purpose of his art."<sup>34</sup> This literary *imitation* of the natural direction of the passions, as distinct from mere *description*, provided an opportunity for the literary critic to "rectify and enlarge the sentiments of the philosopher" by illuminating the passions of "the agent or the spectator."<sup>35</sup> Dramatic performances that correctly imitated human character in all its complexity could illuminate could clarify and inform this spectatorial relationship in ways conducive to virtue. The dramatic poet had the ethical duty, not only to accurately mirror the sentiments of his characters but also to manipulate the sympathies and improve the moral sentiments of his spectators. For Richardson, Shakespeare was unsurpassed in imitation but occasionally derelict in moral cultivation. He lacked the "discernment of the philosophical, or the knowledge of the learned critic."<sup>36</sup> In other words, Shakespeare could take lessons in dramatic composition from Adam Smith and William Robertson.

Shakespeare's particular genius lay in characterization; in "the faithful display of character, he has not hitherto been surpassed."<sup>37</sup> According to Richardson, this genius

consisted not merely in “inventing the characters of Hamlet, Macbeth, or Othello,” but also in being able to “actually feel the passions and contending emotions ascribed to them.”<sup>38</sup> Shakespeare had unequaled “sensibility of soul” insofar as he was able both to “form characters” and to *imitate* “the passions and affections of which they are composed.”<sup>39</sup> What made Shakespeare even more impressive as an author writing in an unenlightened age was the acuteness with which the bard registered the spectatorial response to exhibitions of character. In the case of Macbeth, for example, the protagonist’s abrupt change of emotions resulted in a change of character:

Every variation of character and passion is accompanied with corresponding changes in the sentiments of the spectator...the conflict between vicious and virtuous principles renders him the object of compassion mixed with disapprobation.<sup>40</sup>

Even in his immorality, the character of Macbeth attests to this spectatorial imperative. He strongly feels the *disapprobation* of mankind, fears their just *resentment* of his behaviour, and “conceives a sentiment of universal hatred.”

In Smith’s moral theory, the sentiment of *resentment* is particularly pungent and indeed foundational for retributive justice, because of the natural tendency of spectators to simultaneously feel *compassion* for the victims and *anger* towards the perpetrators of injustice.<sup>41</sup> Richardson’s literary criticism drew heavily on Smith’s treatment of resentment and his analysis of Macbeth put a dramatic face on spectatorial resentment. Richardson suggested that by “reflecting on the sentiments of mankind and measuring them by our own, we *imagine* ourselves no less abhorred by the spectator, than by the sufferer.”<sup>42</sup> Similarly, in his discussion of Shakespeare’s character Imogen, Richardson

maintained that “cruelty and ingratitude are abhorred by the spectator and resented by the sufferer,” especially when the latter character is amiable.<sup>43</sup>

Smith’s analysis not only drew upon imaginative literature but also illuminated the *natural* powers of the imagination *per se*. His analysis of the imagination’s workings was theatrical in that it concentrated on the relationship between real life spectators and actors. The spectator of a social scene needed to make an *empathetic* act of the imagination in order to put himself or herself into the shoes of the social actor or agent.<sup>44</sup>

Smith insisted that this “imaginary change of situations with the person principally concerned,” is not something that “happened to me in my own person or character,” but involved changing “persons and *characters*” in a manner that was entirely self-displacing.<sup>45</sup> Smith’s student, Richardson, described this *temporary transfer* of character as natural and automatic.<sup>46</sup> While everyone was, in a sense, a student of human nature, however, relatively few were endowed with the kind of “exquisite sensibility” that Richardson attributed to Shakespeare. The Bard’s ability to “become the person he represents, clothe himself with his character, assume his manners, and transfer himself into his situation” suggested an “exquisitely fine and delicate” mind. Shakespeare was singular in the “warmth and facility of imagination” by which he was able to “retire from himself, become insensible of his actual condition, and, regardless of external circumstances, feel the very incidents he invents.” In a nice image, Richardson claimed that Shakespeare *trembled* before the *idols* and *demons* that he created.

Adam Smith's moral theory recognized, but did not depend upon, any exceptional ability on the part of spectators or agents to maintain such imaginative leaps. Indeed, while Smith suggested that *exquisite sensibility* gave rise to "benevolent affections" that a "redoubled sympathy renders almost always peculiarly agreeable and becoming," characters who exhibited this temperament were often too sensitive:

It is always with concern, with sympathy and kindness, that we blame them for the extravagance of their attachment. There is helplessness in the character of extreme humanity which more than any thing interests our pity. There is nothing in itself which renders it either ungraceful or disagreeable. We only regret that it is unfit for the world, because the world is unworthy of it.<sup>47</sup>

Smith's discussion of moral sensitivity was enormously influential. Its implications for eighteenth-century moral philosophy, however, have been better appreciated than its impact on literary criticism. Richardson's essays on Shakespeare's characters continually harp on the greater importance of "regulating our inferior appetites" than in "cultivating the principles of benevolence and magnanimity."<sup>48</sup> He suggests that the "man of mere sensibility, who has not established to himself, either in morals or in criticism," *rules, established principles* and *regular processes* will invariably either be "misled" or become unfit for social life.<sup>49</sup> Smith's moral strategy focused more on self-control than the cultivation of sensitivity. He totally opposed the *cult of feeling* then making the rounds in polite circles and impacting ethics and literature.

If Smith championed self-control in ethics, Richardson did the same for literary criticism. In his assessment of the character of Hamlet, Richardson made a clear and explicit break with the *benevolent system* of Francis Hutcheson. Richardson argued that Hamlet's capacity for sympathy was so *delicate, refined* and *excessive* that it "blows up in

imagination” all the circumstances related to turpitude in a parent.<sup>50</sup> While Hamlet’s “penetration and knowledge of human nature” would have “dignified a philosopher,” his moral standards were so artificial as to make him mentally unstable.<sup>51</sup> The “temper and state of Hamlet’s mind is connected with weaknesses” and he wavers precariously between the extremes of *rashness* and *indecision*. In a fascinating passage, Richardson sums up Hamlet as an example of Hutcheson’s approach to morality:

On reviewing the analysis now given, a *sense of virtue*, if I may use the language of an eminent philosopher, without professing myself of his sect, seems to be the ruling principle in the character of Hamlet.

Hamlet’s moral abstractions, like Hutcheson’s moral sense, while “amiable” and “recommended to us by a double sympathy” did not make room for any of the “inferior virtues of prudence, vigilance, circumspection, temperance, constancy, firmness” that should enter into a balanced assessment of *character*.<sup>52</sup> Richardson’s Hamlet, like Smith’s *man of exquisite sensibility* should “retire, or keep aloof, from situations of difficulty and contestation.”<sup>53</sup>

Richardson views and judges all of Shakespeare’s characters through the lens of Adam Smith’s moral philosophy. While this approach allowed Richardson go beyond traditional literary types and tropes and to explore the minds and motivation of literary characters, it also prevented him from viewing Shakespeare’s creations as anything like unique individuals. In Richardson’s hands, Shakespeare’s characters become agents for spectatorial *approbation* or *disapprobation*. Thus, Prince Henry’s mature *sentiments* with respect to his former buddy Falstaff are those which “every judicious spectator and reader is inclined to feel.”<sup>54</sup> Like Hamlet, King Lear is a lesson in the failings of any



moral philosophy that emphasizes benevolence over spectatorial reflection. For Richardson, Lear's tragic comeuppance is an object lesson in over indulgent parenting.

Richardson adopts Smith's language:

Those who perform beneficent actions from immediate feeling or impetuous impulse, have a great deal of pleasure. Their conduct, too, by the influence of sympathetic affection, imparts pleasure to the beholder. The joy felt by both the agent and the beholder is ardent, and approaches to rapture. There is also an energy in the principle, which produces great and uncommon exertions; yet both the principle of action and the pleasure it produces are shifting.<sup>55</sup>

Shakespeare shows us what happens to someone who is under the spell of "excessive affection" and who lacks "command" over those feelings. The archetypal *man of feeling* is not necessarily a *man of virtue*. Very often his judgment is *dazzled* by his imagination and "imagination becomes a traitor" to minds that are "undisciplined."<sup>56</sup> Lear's madness is what happens to a mind of "great sensibility" when its "extravagant desires" meet with disappointment.

The literary impact of Smith's analysis of sensibility was by no means exhausted by this kind of character analysis. A distinction needs to be made between literary creation and criticism. Exquisite sensibility might make someone "unfit for the world," but, because of our "redoubled sympathy" with the social passions, it tugged at the heartstrings of spectators. While it "exposed the person who is endowed with it as a prey to the perfidity and ingratitude of insinuating falsehood, and to a thousand pains and uneasinesses," its typical effect upon *spectators and readers* was to incite pity and compassion, feelings that could militate against excessive self-love and reinforce the values of community. Robert Cullen drew upon Adam Smith's analysis of sympathy in an essay for the *Mirror* entitled *The Silent Expression of Sorrow*, a pathetic story about the struggle for self-

command on the part of a man whose wife had recently died. (*Mirror* 27). Mackenzie caricatured David Hume as a closet *man of feeling* in the same periodical (*Mirrors* 42-44) and unwittingly fooled Adam Smith who took the literary anecdote for fact.<sup>57</sup> Mackenzie's influential novel *The Man of Feeling* (1771) was an attempt to carefully cultivate sensitivity in ways that were not inconsistent with Smith's preferred emphasis on propriety and duty.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, a major reason why the Scottish sentimental literature of the eighteenth-century appears so insipid and its characters so unconvincing may be because writers like Mackenzie were attempting to "stimulate their [readers'] sympathy without endangering their morals."<sup>59</sup>

Richardson appears to have lacked the creative juices of Mackenzie or the capacity for original thought of Millar. Ever the pedantic professor, his application of Smith's ethical theory to literature could be extremely monolithic, resembling some of our modern devotees of Foucault and Derrida. Richardson routinely lifted Smith's analysis of the spectatorial response to cruelty and kindness and applied it to literary criticism without concern for literary genre, context or convention. For him, the moral sentiments were universal "dispositions in mankind" that "affect us in the representation in the same manner as in real life."<sup>60</sup> This same lack of originality and crudeness of execution, however, allows us to document Smith's impact on Shakespearean criticism with unusual confidence and clarity.

### ***The Sense of Propriety***

Smith began *TMS* with a section entitled *Of the Sense of Propriety*. The wording suggests that Smith sought to invest the same authority in this notion of *propriety* as his teacher Hutcheson earlier attributed to the *moral sense*. The terminology is misleading, however, because propriety is not a distinct sense at all, but rather the result of a highly imaginative emotional balancing act. The imaginative process that concludes in an awareness of propriety is spectatorial in a very particular way. The emotional response of the spectator is anticipated and reflected by the agent who adjusts his/her own feelings *in advance* in order to achieve a sympathetic correspondence. For Smith, the desire of the *agent* for sympathy was critical to normative formation because it: 1) took into account the limited ability of spectators to achieve and maintain sympathy with agents and 2) underlined the imperative of *self-control* in the moral community. The “general rules of morality” and the imperative to duty owed more to our desire to be approved of by others than to abstractions like humanity or benevolence.

The only exceptions to the imperative of propriety were the “rules of justice” to which Smith argued the “most sacred regard” was due. But these more *precise* rules of justice were neither Smith’s concern in *TMS* nor did they enter into his treatment of moral *character*. “In the practice of the other virtues,” he maintained:

Our conduct should rather be directed by a certain idea of *propriety*, by a certain taste for a particular tenor of conduct, than by any regard to a precise maxim or rule; and we should consider the end and foundation of the rule, more than the rule itself.<sup>61</sup>

Smith’s ethical approach, therefore, differed sharply from that of Immanuel Kant, who believed that universal rules were possible. For Smith, with the notable exception of

justice, such ethical precision was inconceivable because it required absolute principles that could be “fixt (sp.) and determined.” Morality, however, located its origins in human sentiments and its standards in social practice. The “point of propriety” was “differently situated in different passions” and depended upon that “degree of any passion which the impartial spectator approves of.”<sup>62</sup> While Smith’s approach to ethics also underlined the imperative of duty, therefore, it was much more flexible and consonant with human feeling than Kant’s *categorical imperative*.

Virtue, for Smith depended upon spectatorial sympathy and consisted “not in any one affection, but in the proper degree of all the affections,” in other words *propriety*.<sup>63</sup> The propriety of an individual’s behaviour, did not depend “upon its suitableness to any one circumstance of his situation, but to all the circumstances, which, when he brings his case home to ourselves, we feel, should naturally call upon his attention.”<sup>64</sup> The appropriate judge of virtue was not the agent or “person principally concerned” because human beings are social creatures who define the propriety of their own behaviour with “regard to the sentiments of the spectator” and assess how their “situation will appear to other people, than how it will appear to himself.”<sup>65</sup> This intensely social definition of propriety has one crucial characteristic feature for Smith; it meant that morality was more about reflection on and control of individual emotions than the cultivation of feeling. Smith’s ethical starting point may be social feeling but his end point is *a proper degree of self-command* or *superior prudence*, which “when carried to the highest degree of perfection, necessarily supposes the art, the talent, and the habit or disposition of acting with the most perfect propriety in every possible circumstance and situation.”<sup>66</sup>

Using a more contemporary language, Smith's ethical system was explicitly designed to counter writers like Rousseau and Hutcheson's emphasis on *compassion* and *humanity* with a more traditional emphasis on *reason and reflection*. The "operations of reason," however, could not be imposed upon morality but needed to conform to *induction from experience*.<sup>67</sup> "Immediate sentiment and feeling" were the origins of morality but "liable to so many variations" according to our "different states of health and humour" that they required a capacity for judgment that Smith discovered in the norms that constituted propriety. In his critique of Hutcheson's moral sense theory, Smith underlined the dangers of unguided feeling: "Virtue", he insisted "requires habit and resolution of mind, as well as delicacy of sentiment" and the two qualities did not necessarily go together.<sup>68</sup> In a discussion of *humanity* that would have profound consequences for sentimental literature and literary criticism, Smith redefined the ideal type of virtuous character:

The man whom we naturally love and revere the most, is he who joins, to the most perfect command of his original and selfish feelings, the most exquisite sensibility both to the original and sympathetic feelings of others...The man of the most exquisite humanity, is naturally the most capable of acquiring the highest degree of self-command. He many not, however, always have acquired it; and it very frequently happens that he has not...Exercise and practice have been wanting; and without these no habit can ever be tolerably established...The man within the breast, the abstract and ideal spectator of our sentiments and conduct, requires often to be awakened and put in mind of his duty, by the presence of the real spectator; and it is always from that spectator, from whom we can expect the least sympathy and indulgence, that we are likely to learn the most complete lesson of self-command.<sup>69</sup>

Our sensibility to others – our "fellow-feeling" -- had to be moderated by a sense of propriety and duty.

Richardson's analysis of Shakespeare and characters bears the unmistakable imprint of Smith's elevation of propriety and problematization of feeling. "Extreme sensibility and exquisite nerves," Richardson suggests, are prey to every shifting mood. The man or artist of true *virtue* and *taste* needed to be capable of sounder judgment:

Our judgments and our conduct, must be established upon those maxims that may have been suggested by feeling, but which must derive their force and stability from reason and deep reflection...the man of mere sensibility who has not established to himself, either in morals or in criticism, any rule of immutable conduct, and who depends on feeling alone for the propriety of his judgments may be misled...<sup>70</sup>

According to Richardson, the Bard himself was sometimes misled by this very failing. His artistic *improprieties* reflected the fact that his judgment did not always match his remarkable capacity for fellow-feeling or ability to *hold up a mirror* to the minds and emotions of his characters.<sup>71</sup> Fortunately, Shakespeare's characters were so authentic, so true to human nature, that, in our capacity as spectators of their motives and actions, we can judge the propriety or impropriety of their behaviour for ourselves.

Nowhere is Richardson's reduction of Shakespeare to Scottish moral philosophy more clearly evidenced than in his comments on soliloquy. Not only do Shakespeare's characters reveal themselves in their *soliloquies*, but the act *per se* is an "inward contention of mind" reflecting a moral deficit. In a statement perfectly illustrative of the emphasis on the *other* in eighteenth-century Scottish social philosophy, Richardson observes the "children are often prone to soliloquy: and so are men of lively passions. In children, the association is vigorous and entire: in men of lively passions, habits are more tenacious than within men of a cooler temperament."<sup>72</sup> The passage can be read as a

literary interpolation of Smith's comments on the self-absorption of children, but it neatly underlines the Scottish suspicion towards the *self*.<sup>73</sup>

All of Richardson's characterizations, without exception, are literary illustrations of Smithean ethics and, typically, diatribes on the inadequacy of sentiment without self-control. In his essay *On the Character of the Melancholy Jacques*, for example, Richardson suggests that the most "striking character in the mind of Jacques" is that same "extreme sensibility" that Adam Smith dissected in *TMS*.<sup>74</sup> Jacques is a characteristic product of that "spirit of diffusive goodness which eloquent and benign philosophy recommends." Richardson echoes Smith's description of Hutcheson's benevolent system as one that *elevates and enlarges* "our conceptions." But he contends that this "fairy vision" of humanity is unsustainable in the "midst of a selfish and deceitful world."<sup>75</sup> Hutcheson's philosophy is "contrary to the rules of *prudence*, and the maxims of the world."<sup>76</sup>

Richardson's single original contribution to literary criticism was the concept of the *ruling passion*, which he argued dominated the mind of even the most subtle and complex characters. His single defection from Smith's moral theory was an appreciation for the sentiment of love that dominated Scottish writing in the late eighteenth-century. Thus, for example, the *melancholy Jacques*' ruling passion is excessive humanity or Hutchesonian benevolence, which, when thwarted, results in his character's paradoxical combination of *social* melancholy and *anti-social* misanthropy. Whereas Jacques's ability to function is completely undermined by his ruling passion and he attracts limited

spectatorial sympathy, the character of Imogen is much firmer and conforms to propriety. This character's ruling passion is *love* -- an emotion that Smith's dismissed in *TMS*, but that intrigued students and protégés like John Millar and Henry Mackenzie.<sup>77</sup> Imogen's love, unlike Jacques' benevolence, has been appropriately refined in accordance with propriety. Tragic events are not able to distort this ruling principle in her imagination and she earns the double sympathy of the impartial spectator as a paragon of female virtue:

Imogen softened by affection, and governed by a sense of propriety, exhibits a pattern of the most amiable and exemplary meekness.<sup>78</sup>

Despite her "disappointed passion" and "despondency", Imogen, unlike Jacques, remains a model of female virtue and an entirely sympathetic character.

Realistically drawn characters -- "according to nature" -- like Hamlet, Jacques, and even, to a lesser degree Imogen, necessarily provided spectators with ethical lessons. But Smithean ethics was predicated on *critical* and *informed* spectators. Its practice involved adopting a distinctly spectatorial "temperament" and its refinement a capacity for spectatorial "discernment".<sup>79</sup> Richardson interpreted Smith's discussion of propriety as offering an "important axiom":

It is a certain fact, confirmed by universal experience, and it may be laid down as an important axiom in the study of human nature, that our notions and opinions are ever influenced by our present temperament."<sup>80</sup>

Richardson compared the suitable development of the individual and artistic *temperament* to a garden that *improved* upon nature.<sup>81</sup> Unimproved by spectatorial judgment, like any other passions the moral sentiments invariably led emotional agents into error. Richardson repeatedly advised susceptible readers or "those whom nature has given



extreme sensibility” to “beware of limiting our felicity to the gratification of any particular passion.”<sup>82</sup>

The pitfalls of indulging passionate feelings without the checks of reason and reflection are extensively explored in Richardson’s analysis of King Lear. In his preamble to discussing this character, Richardson characteristically attacked benevolent ethical systems and uninformed sentimentalism. He insisted that, while it was the *fashion of the times* to celebrate *feeling*, it was the function of the moralist to propose a union of feeling and reflection. Being moved “by inconsiderate impulse to the performance of beneficent actions” might appear to entitle you to “the praise of fine sensibility, but unless sensibility was guided by “convictions of duty” it was totally unreliable.<sup>83</sup> Lear resembles Adam Smith’s “whining Christian” in that his feelings are unrestrained; “he longs to complain” and indulge in “sympathetic sorrows.”<sup>84</sup> He is a *man of feeling* but “not of virtue”. He completely lacks self-command, having no “secret counselor in his breast”.<sup>85</sup> Richardson concluded this analysis of Lear by claiming that “great sensibility” and “irregular feelings” leads to disaster “in minds that are undisciplined.” In effect, Lear’s madness was the direct result of his “misruled affections.”

Richardson further underlined the significance of propriety and clarified its relation to the moral sentiments in his analysis of several other Shakespearean characters. In an essay that originated as an article for the *Mirror*, *Richard III’s* Lady Anne is described as a fickle and vain creature who has an abundance of feeling but is totally incapable of “distinguishing the propriety of her impressions and expressions.”<sup>86</sup> Richardson’s

influential analysis of the character of Falstaff illuminated the crucial Smithean distinction between *praise* and *praise-worthiness*.<sup>87</sup> Falstaff is a confirmed sensualist. Although “constructed originally like the rest of mankind” and “moved by the desire of praise or distinction,” he is satisfied with the “appearance, of merit: about the reality, provide he appear meritorious, he is quite unconcerned.”<sup>88</sup> However, not all Shakespeare’s characters were designed to reveal propriety and impropriety in themselves; the primary function of Richard III was to reveal propriety and impropriety in others. Thus, this largely unsympathetic protagonist is “a glass that reflects every limb, every lineament, and every colour with the most perfect truth and propriety.”<sup>89</sup> The improprieties in Anne and Buckingham’s behaviour are mirrored in his strategies and “deportment”, while Richard’s atrocious behaviour and predictable downfall affirms the propriety of social resentment and vengeance. Smith’s spectatorial approach allowed him to depart from the enlightened *party of humanity* and to see some propriety in punishment. “As every man doth, so shall it be done to him, Smith argued, “and retaliation seems to be the great law which is dictated to us by Nature.”<sup>90</sup>

Richardson’s treatment on propriety could be explicitly Smithean right down to its particulars. He quoted or paraphrased directly from *TMS* in his analysis of the character of Hamlet and Cordelia. His discussion of Hamlet is particularly revealing because of the light it shows upon the paradox that was Scottish social psychology. On the one hand, Scottish writers were instrumental in stimulating an interest in interiority and the “I”. Writers like Hume, Smith and Reid<sup>91</sup>, were pioneers in the exploration of individual passion and the first to map out the *association of ideas* in the mind. At the same time, a major purpose of Scottish moral philosophy and literary criticism was to demonstrate

that, despite all of these complexities, human nature was remarkably constant; “outward signs and language”<sup>92</sup> reflected a shared reality; and the common goal of human improvement was achievable. The entire argument of *TMS* presumes a navigable symbolic universe of shared feelings. Richardson echoed his teacher’s conviction when he affirmed Hamlet’s common humanity, suggesting “there is a greater difference in the minds of men, in regard to the capacity of the understanding, than in regard to that of the heart.”<sup>93</sup> However complex the text, the writer or the character, a common understanding was achievable.

Hamlet, for example, if not transparent, becomes intelligible and his character consistent once the spectator understands that this Prince of Denmark had an “exquisite sense of virtue” and a “delicate sense of propriety”.<sup>94</sup> Paraphrasing Adam Smith’s discussion of the suppression of private grief in public situations, Richardson explains away what might otherwise appear inconsistent in Hamlet’s character:

In public he restrains it [agony] and welcomes his friends with that ease and affability which are the results of polished manners, good sense and humanity. Influenced by an exquisite sense of propriety, he would do nothing unbecoming (Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*); he therefore suppresses every emotion which others cannot easily enter into: he strives, as much as possible, to bring the tone of his own mind into unison with theirs...

Thus, according to Richardson, Samuel Johnson’s celebrated claim that Hamlet was a poorly developed character was entirely mistaken because he did not appreciate Adam Smith’s philosophical and Shakespeare’s poetic description of propriety. Hamlet was able to assume “an air of ease, familiarity, and cheerful unconcern” precisely because of his refined ability to “suit the complexion of his own mind to that of the unconcerned spectator.”<sup>95</sup>

Hamlet's moral excellence, however, suffers from a common defect carefully delineated by Adam Smith. Hamlet's sensibility is so very "delicate" and "refined" that it becomes a source of great personal pain. Not only is Hamlet never satisfied with the moral quality of his own conduct but also the improprieties of others fill him with genuine "horror". When he discovers "turpitude" in a beloved parent, his imagination blows it completely out of proportion. While there is no question of the "propriety of his resentment" to his new stepfather, Hamlet is too sensitive to translate that resentment into effective and appropriate action.<sup>96</sup> There is, suggests Richardson, a delicate balance between the internal and external world that needs to be maintained and without which contentment is impossible. While an artificial continuance of happiness should never be presumed:

The union between virtue and happiness, so highly vaunted by many moralists, is not so independent of external incidents as their theories would represent...<sup>97</sup>

most people can enjoy "ordinary tranquility" if they become "impartial spectators of his own situation."<sup>98</sup> Richardson's Hamlet was not constitutionally speaking *melancholy Dane* but a thoroughly Smithean character type -- an extremely social but overly sensitive person placed in admittedly "trying circumstances" and only "unfit for the world, because the world is unworthy..."<sup>99</sup>

A 1789, Richardson published his *Essays on Shakespeare's Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff, and on His Imitation of Female Characters* in London. Like all of Richardson's Shakespearean writings, it came highly recommended by the Edinburgh press. The anonymous reviewer noted Richardson's application of Smith's moral theory

as demonstrating how “sensibility” was moulded by “propriety.” In the book proper, Richardson applied Smith to a description of Cordelia “exquisite sensibility”; all of Lear’s daughter’s sentiments were governed by reason and guided by a sense of propriety.”<sup>100</sup> Cordelia’s *sense of priority* was suitably directed to behaviour that was “suitable, amiable, and interesting.” In any case, Richardson was eager to affirm the dignity and diversity of female character in explicitly Smithean terms. Thus, Richardson claimed, Cordelia’s *highly enlightened* “tone of thought” corresponded exactly with the “passage, in “the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*” where Smith described the “noble propriety and grace” of those who were able to:

Exert that recollection and self-command which constitute the dignity of every passion, and which bring it down to what others can enter into...we reverence that reserved, that silent and majestic sorrow, which discovers itself only in the swelling of the eyes, in the quivering of the lips and cheeks, and in the distant but affecting coldness of the whole behaviour.<sup>101</sup>

Richardson transformed Shakespeare’s suffering and silent Cordelia into a Smithean ideal of self-command. What Smith himself would have made of this adaptation is unclear, given the highly masculine tone of his philosophy and his offhand dismissal of *humanity* as the fickle “virtue of a woman.”<sup>102</sup> But it certainly evidenced the increasing interest of Smith’s students in the civilizing function of female sentiment. By the 1780s, the Scottish language and literature of sentiment arguably had shifted focus from *men of feeling* to their female counterparts. It also is interesting to note that, in contrast to Hamlet, Cordelia’s virtue is not sullied by her inability to act. By the late eighteenth-century, a novel division of labour was being constructed in which *male* action increasingly was being divorced from *female* feeling and ethical unity was maintained and nurtured in the private world defined by a loving relationship.<sup>103</sup>

### ***The Veil of Self-Delusion***

Adam Smith's moral theory bears more than a passing resemblance to Newton's concept of gravity. Its not only highlights the sympathetic forces that keep the moral universe in order but also recognizes the self-love that constantly threaten to tear it apart. Self-love or the "partial spectator" was always "at hand" while the "impartial spectator" was at a greater distance, exerting its power by modifying, rather than extirpating, our selfish passions. Smith's attitude towards the enormous human capacity for self-deceit was ambiguous as his phrase the "*mysterious veil of self-delusion*" suggests.<sup>104</sup> On the one hand, the difficulty people have in recognizing their own moral shortcomings is the "fatal weakness of mankind" and the "source of half the disorders of human life." Providing fuel for the poetic imagination of Robert Burns, Smith suggested:

If we saw ourselves in the light in which others see us, or in which they would see us if they knew all, a reformation would generally be unavoidable. We could not otherwise endure the sight.<sup>105</sup>

At the same time, the root cause of self-deceit, our excessive love for ourselves, was a constant in sympathetic exchange and foundational for an ethical theory based on the limited capacity of spectators to maintain emotional harmony with agents. Sympathy "humbled the arrogance of self love" but did not negate the natural tendency of every individual to "prefer himself to all mankind."<sup>106</sup>

Anyone familiar with Smith knows that selfishness was not always a bad thing. The selfish passions were a direct stimulus to human exertion and an indirect contributor to economic progress:

The selfish passions, according to what has formerly been observed, hold, in other respects, a sort of middle place, between the social and unsocial affections, so do they likewise in this. The pursuit of the objects of private interest, in all common, little, and ordinary cases, ought to flow rather from a regard to the general rules which prescribe such conduct, than from any passion for the objects themselves; but upon more important and extraordinary occasions, we should be awkward, insipid, and ungraceful, if the objects themselves did not appear to animate us with a considerable degree of passion.<sup>107</sup>

Ambition was “always admired in the world” even though it distorted moral judgment by “dazzling” the imagination with disproportionate hopes for happiness. The “disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and powerful,” in particular, illuminated the gravitational tension between the social and the selfish passions:

Though necessary both to establish and to maintain the distinction of ranks and the order of society, is, at the same time, the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments.<sup>108</sup>

The impulses that the social theorist and political economist must acknowledge, it was the task of the moralist to control. In both *TMS* and *WN*, Smith warned his audience to limit their ambition to the more “prudent, just, firm and temperate conduct” that he believed characterized the “inferior and middling stations of life.”<sup>109</sup>

Richardson was particularly fascinated by Shakespeare’s ability to delineate and dissect our natural capacity for self-deceit. Moreover, his analysis of self-deceit has an interesting Smithean twist insofar as Richardson was concerned to show how even the most *partial spectator* was moulded by sympathetic exchange. For Richardson, self-deceit occurred when the “nicely adjusted” harmony of “the internal system” is disturbed

by the “imaginary indulgence of a selfish passion.”<sup>110</sup> Once the mind has been corrupted by the “violence of any passion,” it redefines motives and behaviour in ways that mask them from the internal spectator. In his study of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, Richardson cited the example of a miser who “changes the windings of the river into a dead canal, and solicits wealth at the expense of beauty.”<sup>111</sup> Although the miser was really indulging his “lover of wealth, he says, and believes, that he follows the maxims of a laudable economy.” Similarly, Hamlet, who was actually incapacitated by the *weakness* of extreme sensibility, “indulges, and shelters himself under the subterfuge.”

He alleges, as direct causes of his delay, motives that could never influence his conduct; and thus exhibits a most exquisite picture of amiable self-deceit. The lines and colours are, indeed, very fine; and not very obvious to cursory observation. The beauties of Shakespeare, like genuine beauty of every kind, are often veiled...<sup>112</sup>

In this partly self-induced misery, Hamlet also demonstrated “another aspect of self-deceit,” namely an imagined indifference to his own happiness.<sup>113</sup> In his mind, Hamlet transformed his identity to better fit his situation.

It is not difficult to see how certain elements of Richardson’s exploration of self-deceit in Shakespeare anticipate thinkers like Freud and Sartre or novelists like Dostoyevsky, but Richardson’s purpose is that of a more traditional moralist. He wanted to train his readers to critically distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate spectatorial responses and judgments. Thus, Richardson’s Falstaff loses most of his appeal when the critical spectator dissects his ruling principle is gross *sensuality* that Adam Smith described as inherently unsympathetic and even “loathsome and disagreeable” to those of refined taste.<sup>114</sup> Despite all of its wit and humour, Falstaff’s banter with Hal “affords a



curious example of self-imposition, of an attempt to disguise conscious demerit, and escape from conscious disapprobation.”<sup>115</sup> The fat knight, whose primary interest lies in *appearing* rather than being meritorious, has his real character unmasked by Shakespeare when:

he views himself as he believes he appears to them: he sees himself in the mirror of their conception: he runs over the consequences of his humiliation: he translates their thoughts and their opinions concerning him: he speaks to them in the tone of the sentiments which he attributes to them; and in the language which he thinks they would hold.<sup>116</sup>

According to Richardson, Shakespeare was an expert at unmasking the self-deceit of his characters. His “morality is no less sublime than his skill in the display of character.”

For Adam Smith, the most typical perversions of moral judgment occurred when agents confused social approval or distinction with a more impartial and reliable spectatorial judgment.<sup>117</sup> Richardson spotted exactly this kind of “dangerous self-deception” in Timon of Athens. While Timon’s original disposition may have been more consonant with genuine “social affections”, he was increasingly exposed to “self-imposition, not only by the tendencies which all men have to deceive themselves, but by the flatteries and praises he is fond of receiving.”<sup>118</sup> Timon ends up losing touch with social reality, believing that his *beneficence* and *generosity* is greater and more genuine than it really is. In effect, Timon attempted to mask a self-interested passion with a more detached and disinterested one that he actually lacked. Timon’s character flaw, according to Richardson, is that he “assumes the social dispositions to be constitutional, and not confirmed by reason and reflection.”<sup>119</sup>

These social dispositions were innate but could easily be corrupted. Shakespeare's true genius for Richardson, and his correspondent Edmund Burke, was his ability to trace the "process of corruption, by which the virtues of the mind are made to contribute to the completion of its depravity."<sup>120</sup> The innate propensities of the mind are "seldom extirpated" completely; thus characters with failings as different as Richard III and Falstaff are sometimes forced to confront their image in the eyes of others. Whenever character moves beyond the bounds of propriety, it reflects a distorted spectatorial impulse. In his analysis of *Lear*, Richardson suggests that untamed passions invert a healthy spectatorial judgment:

Moved by an ardent mood, they regard the objects of their affection with extravagant transport; they transfer to them their own dispositions; they make no allowances for difference of condition or state of mind...This rouses a sense of wrong, and excites their resentment. The new feelings operate with as much force as the former.<sup>121</sup>

Similarly, Richard III supports himself in his cruelty by *transferring* his "own depravity to the rest of mankind, and believing that others are as little shocked with their crimes" as he is himself.<sup>122</sup> Timon of Athens also transfers his mistaken *sentiment* of beneficence "to the rest of mankind."<sup>123</sup> Every act of self-deceit, according to Richardson, requires a modification in the anticipated sentiments of the spectator. The spectatorial imagination needs to compensate whenever the "notices we receive from the senses are disregarded."<sup>124</sup>

Richardson deployed this principle of spectatorial inversion to tackle a problem endemic to any enlightened theory of human nature – the persistence of evil. It was one thing to explain Jacques' melancholy, *Lear*'s misanthropy and *Hamlet*'s paralysis as sentiment led

astray; it was quite another to apply the theory of the moral sentiments to historical villains like Nero. Richard III's horrible behaviour could be partly explained away as a literary device or the product of his character being "too hastily written."<sup>125</sup> What about real life historical villains like Lorenzo de Medici or King Herod, whose bloodthirstiness knew no bounds. After all, if cruelty is universally "abhorred by the spectator," how does one explain its persistence.<sup>126</sup> Presumably, one or more of Richardson's orthodox Calvinist colleagues at Glasgow and in the Church of Scotland put such questions to him from time to time.

Richardson's ingenious, if not entirely compelling, answer was that periodic examples of inhumanity actually reinforced Smith's theory of the moral sentiments. Individuals like "Herod" were originally "men of feeling":

Witness his conduct to Mariamne. At one time elegant, courteous, and full of tenderness; his fondness was as unbounded, as the virtues and graces of Marianne were unrivalled. At other times, offended because her expressions of mutual affection were not as excessive as the extravagance of his own emotions, he became suspicious without cause. Thus affectionate, fond, suspicious, resentful, and powerful, in the phrenzy of irregular felling, he puts to death his beloved Mariamne.<sup>127</sup>

Not one to waste an opportunity to hammer yet another Smithean nail into the coffin of Hutchesonian benevolence, Richardson argued that uncontrolled feeling could lead to extreme resentment and even malignance. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was a moral masterpiece of characterization precisely because the character illustrates how self-deceit can transform original sociability into violently anti-social behaviour. Richardson suggests that *Macbeth* once had all the "amiable and congenial sentiments of humanity and compassion, a sense of duty, and a regard to the opinions of mankind."<sup>128</sup> The natural

harmony of these sentiments, however, was usurped by his ruling passion of *ambition*. As long as Macbeth's actions met with success and social approval, he was able to hide from spectatorial judgment. Upon the first stings of social censure, however, his mind filled with "horror" and:

Alarmed by his feelings, now operating without controul (sp), reflects with astonishment on his conduct; and is confounded at the atrocity of guilt. He feels himself the object of universal hatred and indignation.<sup>129</sup>

Macbeth's imagination is all the more inflamed because of his ability to imagine himself "no less abhorred by the spectator, than by the sufferer."<sup>130</sup> In this disturbed and fearful state, Macbeth cannot say "Amen" but becomes a tyrant; he *wages war* with virtue, attempting at all costs to eradicate the shrill voices of censure amplified by his active imagination.

Richardson's assessment of Macbeth obviously drew upon Smith's analysis of the anti-social passions. Smith pointed out that such behaviours could "inspire us either with fear or aversion."<sup>131</sup>

Women, and men of weak nerves, tremble and are overcome with fear, though sensible that themselves are not the objects of the anger. They conceive fear, however, by putting themselves in the situation of the person who is so. Even those of stouter hearts are disturbed; not indeed enough to make them afraid, but enough to make them angry; for anger is the passion which they would feel in the situation of the other person.

In his discussion of the impact of fear and aversion on the mind of a disturbed agent, however, Richardson went much further than his mentor. Despite the significance he attached to self-interest in both the ethical and the economic domain, Smith clearly hesitated at the doors of the *self*. Leaning on the characterizations of his beloved Shakespeare, Richardson's exploration of self-deceit ventured further down the path

interior. A “man of uncommon sensibility” who “misled by some pernicious appetite” into committing “acts of “cruelty and oppression” would be:

More apt, by reflecting on his own conduct, to conceive the resentment and indignation it excites, than men of a different temper. Reflecting on the compassion and resentment that would have arisen in his own mind, on the view of crimes similar to those he has himself perpetrated, he becomes afraid of the punishment he would himself have inflicted. This instigated by his fears, and imagining himself universally hated, he conceives a sentiment of universal hatred: and, as his fears are directly proportioned to his feelings and sensibility, so are his hatred and malevolence.<sup>132</sup>

Thus, Richardson’s exploration of the motivations of an individual trapped in the web of self-deceit offered something quite novel in literature. While his fundamental ethical agenda may have been to reinforce the Smithean emphasis on propriety, and to underline his teacher’s distinction between prudential duty and the more fashionable cult of feeling, his exploration of the disturbed mind is, at times, not unworthy of literary development by a Dostoyevsky.

### Conclusion

Richardson’s popular essays may have marked a new departure in Shakespeare criticism in terms of character analysis, but they were deeply, and often slavishly informed by Scottish moral philosophy. In particular, Richardson forced Shakespeare’s characters into the Procrustean bed of Adam Smith’s spectatorial ethics and caricatured the Bard himself as a moralist of sentiment and sympathy. This Scottish enlightenment interpretation of Shakespeare focused on the moral judgment of the *other* rather than the *self*. It viewed individuals primarily as social actors connected to one another by an innate *sensibility*.

Moreover, it typically depicted *internal feelings* reflectively, as the result of social exchanges between *spectators* and *agents*.

The ethical emphasis of Smith's moral theory and Richardson's literary criticism was upon *propriety* in behaviour. Although mentor and protégé based morality the passions, their moral agenda was to make feeling subservient to social duty. Richardson explored Shakespeare's characters primarily with the purpose of illuminating the parallels between ethics and criticism and making the latter subservient to the former. He mined Shakespeare's characters to show how "maxims that may have been suggested by feeling" must "derive their force and stability from reason and deep reflection."<sup>133</sup> Thus, Shakespeare's characters typically were divided into those who provided model examples of propriety and those who were flawed by its deficit. Additionally, Shakespeare's tragic personae were atomized to demonstrate a dominating theme in *TMS*, namely the dangers associated with excessive feeling or what Smith and Richardson would have termed *exquisite sensibility*. This agenda reflected a deeply held fear that the philosophy of benevolence and literature of sentiment were negating the imperatives of duty.

Richardson's analysis was largely derivative, but his abiding conviction of Shakespeare's genius certainly encouraged a greater exploration of subjectivity. In order to make the Bard's characters consistent with his deep and enlightened understanding of human nature, Richardson was forced to present them as highly complex but internally consistent types. For Richardson, Shakespeare was "amazing" in his ability to run character traits into one another and "delineating their shades" to the point "where they

are gradually and almost imperceptibly blended together.”<sup>134</sup> Making Shakespeare’s creations conform to Adam Smith’s insights into human inter-subjectivity only added to their complexity.

Richardson was at his most original in his application of Smith’s account of corruption of the moral sentiments by “the veil of self-delusion.” Whereas Smith viewed self-deceit as a *mysterious* and problematic propensity, Richardson relates it to a tyrannical ruling passion. Furthermore, Richardson explores the progress of self-deceit in the human mind in ways that, despite his didactic agenda and insistence on the pervasive quality of spectatorship, problematizes the relationship between *self* and *society*. Whereas Adam Smith’s moral agents are clearly subservient to the judgments of spectators, whether or not these spectators or real or ideal, some of Shakespeare’s characters demonstrate a contrary capacity for projecting their own emotions on “the rest of mankind.” While Richardson interpreted this inverse emotional transference as a symptom of moral “deformity” and even “depravity”, his approach discovered the relative ease with which the *partial spectator* usurps the authority of its *impartial* counterpart.

In the 1790 revisions to his moral theory, Smith attempted to amend his moral theory in ways that reinforced the imperative of *impartial spectatorship*, arguably at the expense of real social spectators and their sensibilities. Despite the occasional reference to conscience in phrases like “the internal sensor” or “the viceregent of indulgent affection,” there is no evidence that Richardson or anyone else anticipated Smith’s development of a theory of conscience.<sup>135</sup> Given his close connection to Smith, Richardson’s fiercely

social interpretation of Smith's moral philosophy is telling evidence that Smith's development of the *impartial spectator* was not implicit in earlier editions but, rather, the result of social developments that he found disturbing. I have suggested elsewhere that by the late 1780s, this Scottish moralist's trust in communal consensus was dissolving as a result of egoistic tendencies associated with modernity.<sup>136</sup>

Smith's students like Richardson and John Millar addressed the problem of combative egos by shifting the focus from public to private life and focusing on the male-female relationship where moral character was increasingly believed to be formed. Richardson, for example, published extensively on Shakespeare's female personae in 1787, energetically attempting to rehabilitate them from *substitutable specimens* to a rich variety of *characters*.<sup>137</sup> Smith likely was not impressed by the project of his student. He had precious little faith in the character of women or in the stability of female feeling. But then again, Smith did not have much respect for Shakespeare either. He much preferred the *refinement* of Voltaire to the *savagery* of Shakespeare. For Smith, the French theatre was "the standard of dramatic excellence" and Voltaire was its apogee.<sup>138</sup> How ironical, therefore, that Smith was so instrumental in ensuring the Bard's reputation and rehabilitation for the modern world.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> David Raphael, V. Hope, and Knud Haakonssen were instrumental in opening up *TMS* to serious but excessively discipline-based scholarly analysis. See D.D. Raphael, "The Impartial Spectator" in *Essays on Adam Smith*, ed. Andrew Skinner and Thomas Wilson, (Oxford, 1975); V. Hope, "Smith's Demigod" in *Philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. V. Hope (Edinburgh, 1984); and Knud Haakonssen discussion of *TMS* in *The Science of a Legislator: The Natural Jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith*, (Cambridge, 1981) See also: N.T. Phillipson's "Adam Smith as Civic Moralist" in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge, 1983) and Richard Teichgraefer, "Rethinking Das Adam Smith Problem," in *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, ed. John Dwyer,



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Alexander Murdoch and Roger Mason, (Edinburgh, 1982).. Significant recent studies include Charles Griswold's *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1999) and Vivienne Brown's *Adam Smith's Discourse: Canonicity, Commerce and Conscience* (London, 1994). An earlier work that was more embracing of the multifaceted nature of moral philosophy, and remains the single best introduction to Adam Smith, is J. Ralph Lindgren's, *The Social Philosophy of Adam Smith*, (The Hague, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> I do not, of course, mean to deny the influence of these writers, only to suggest a problem with the philosophical attribution of influence. What is most interesting to me is the way that Smith's dramatic understanding of the relationship between actors and spectators allowed to extend Hume's analysis and forced him to engage his "beloved" teacher Hutcheson in some very serious criticism.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* [hereafter *TMS*], (Oxford, 1976), III.3.14.

<sup>4</sup> *TMS*, VII.ii.4-14.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, (New York, 1998). For a harsh but accurate assessment of Bloom's interpretation, see Richard Levin, "Bloom, Bardolatry, and Characterolatry," in *Harold Bloom's Shakespeare*, ed. Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer, (New York, 2001), pp. 71-80, esp. p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Horst W. Drescher, *Themen und Formen des Periodischen Essays im Späten 18 Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zu den Schottischen Wochenschriften 'The Mirror' und 'The Lounger'*, (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1971), pp. 115f.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Fraser Tytler, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames*, (Edinburgh, 1807), Vol. I, p. 273. Cited in Drescher, p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> Drescher also built on the work of Shakespeare scholars who had already identified William Richardson as the first to directly examine Shakespeare's characters. See *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, ed. D. Nichol Smith, (Oxford, 1963), esp. xxxiv. Smith points to the Richardson's "moral purpose". According to Earl Wasserman, this explicitly moral agenda allowed Richardson to see whatever he wanted in Shakespeare. See Earl. R. Wasserman, "Shakespeare and the English Romantic Movement," in *The Persistence of Shakespeare Idolatry*, (Detroit, 1964), pp. 84f. A more modern assessment of Richardson's "psychological account" can be found in Jean I. Marsden's *The Re-Imagined Text: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory*, (Lexington, 1995), especially, pp. 135f. Despite their various perspectives, all of these Shakespeare scholars view Richardson's 1774 publication, *A Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of Some of Shakespeare's Remarkable Characters*, as establishing the trend in Shakespeare character studies.

<sup>9</sup> In addition to Drescher, see also my account of the *Mirror* and *Lounger* in *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 2003; reprint of the 1987 edition), esp. pp. 14f. and 62f.

<sup>10</sup> The Shakespearean essays on Hamlet, Falstaff, Jacques and Timon by Mackenzie and Craig for the *Mirror* and *Lounger* were stylistically superior to those of Richardson; they were often reprinted and cited in later Shakespearean literature; but they did not deviate significantly in form or content to Richardson's analysis.

<sup>11</sup> *The Correspondence of Adam Smith*, ed. Earnest Campbell Mossner and Ian Campbell Ross, (Oxford, 1977), pp. 246-7. See also National Library of Scotland MS. 6376 f35 for insights into Smith's relationship with Mackenzie.

<sup>12</sup> *Lounger* no. 88. In this article, Craig prefers Smith to Hume as a literary and philosophical example. On Craig being a favourite of Adam Smith, see National Library of Scotland, MS. 2537 f.6.

<sup>13</sup> *TMS*, III.I.3. Smith writes: “Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror that he wanted before.” Hume also suggested that “the minds of men are mirrors to one another” (*TMS*, III.I.3 note). The preference easily can be given to Smith for three reasons: 1) the concept of social reflectivity is more central to Smith’s argument than to Hume’s; 2) several members of the Mirror Club were Smith’s students with no connection to Hume; 3) members of the Mirror Club explicitly criticized Hume’s account of sympathy as overly reductive.

<sup>14</sup> *Virtuous Discourse*, esp. 52f.

<sup>15</sup> *TMS*, III.I.5.

<sup>16</sup> See Henry Mackenzie’s 1779 letter to William Craig in National Library of Scotland, MS. 648 ff. 5-6; reprinted in Drescher, p. 266. Mackenzie in this letter alludes to the fact that the article helped the *Mirror* “gain converts at Glasgow.” Smith’s approval would explain why Mackenzie and Craig later sought to include their own contributions on Shakespeare even though Mackenzie originally believed that such topics were “too abstracted” for the majority of readers.

<sup>17</sup> Smith was a confirmed Francophile with respect to drama. For an entertaining description of the difference between English and French dramatic taste, see Henry Mackenzie’s *Anecdotes and Egotisms*, ed. Harold W. Thompson, (London, 1927), pp. 199-201.

<sup>18</sup> See National Library of Scotland, Laing MSS. 359 and W.J. Duncan, *Notices and Documents Illustrative of the Literary History of Glasgow*, (Glasgow, 1831). See also Ian Simpson Ross, *The Life of Adam Smith*, (Oxford, 1995), p.96.

<sup>19</sup> Sometimes Richardson went a bit too far in cultivating such powerful allies. See Mackenzie’s criticism of his servile and inflated *Epithalamium on the Marriages of her Grace the Duchess of Athol and of the Honourable Mrs Graham of Balgowan*, (Glasgow, 1775) in Henry Mackenzie, *Letters to Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock*, ed. Horst W. Drescher, (Munster, 1967), p. 179. The *Edinburgh Review* was guilty of the same practice and embraced Richardson’s poem as “so highly worthy of notice” in *Edinburgh Magazine and Review*, IV, (1775-6), p. 499.

<sup>20</sup> Smith’s correspondence certainly demonstrates the close connection between Smith and Millar. In a letter dated February 2, 1764, Millar wrote to Smith asking him to help make Thomas Young, rather than Thomas Reid, Smith’s successor at Glasgow, something he could not have asked without an intimate relationship because it meant going against the wishes of Henry Home, Lord Kames. See *The Correspondence of Adam Smith*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, his discussion of Smith’s oral examination style in *Discourses on Theological and Literary Subjects*. By the late Rev. Archibald Arthur, *Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow*, (Glasgow, 1803), pp. 507-8. Cited in Ross, p. 126).

<sup>22</sup> Ross, p. 126.

<sup>23</sup> Ross, p. 379.

<sup>24</sup> On the ‘impartial spectator’ or theory of conscience, see also David Raphael’s “Adam Smith’s Moral Philosophy,” *Nagoya International Symposium to Commemorate the Bicentenary of the Death of Adam Smith*, (Adam Smith Society of Japan, 1989), pp. 2-20. Raphael believes that this theory of conscience was implicit in Smith’s moral theory early on. I disagree and suggest that Smith was much more concerned with *propriety* in my *Virtuous Discourse*, chapter 7. The absence of any significant references to conscience in Richardson’s analysis of Shakespeare would appear to reinforce my contention that Smith did not have a developed theory of conscience until much later.

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<sup>25</sup> Ross, pp. 379-80. The manuscript materials cited by Ross include Glasgow University Library, MSS Gen. 178, 520, 526 and 1035.

<sup>26</sup> *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, ed. W.P.D. Wightman, J.C. Bryce, and I.S. Ross, (Oxford, 1980). The most developed argument in the essay on the *Imitative Arts* has to do with the relative *unnaturalness* of many works of art in refined societies because rich and powerful patrons demand an improvement on nature. Thus, some works of art relate more to each other than to any natural objects that they might represent.

<sup>27</sup> *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, p 191. Smith, of course, often used the musical metaphor

<sup>28</sup> *TMS*, I.i.48.

<sup>29</sup> *TMS*, III.I.3.

<sup>30</sup> *TMS*, III.i.3-5.

<sup>31</sup> See Charles Griswold, "Rhetoric and ethics: Adam Smith on Theorizing about Moral sentiments," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 24, pp. 213-37 and David Marshall, "Adam Smith and the Theatricality of Moral Sentiments," *Critical Inquiry*, 10, pp. 592-613.

<sup>32</sup> It should be obvious that one of Smith's contemporaries, in particular, would be horrified by an ethical model of this kind. I am, of course, referring to Rousseau.

<sup>33</sup> William Richardson, *Essays on Some of Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters. To Which is Added An Essay on the Faults of Shakespeare* [hereafter *Essays*], (London, 1797), p. 16. Since this edition combines Richardson's earlier essays, it is the only volume to which I will be referring here.

<sup>34</sup> *Essays*, pp. 26-7.

<sup>35</sup> *Essays*, pp. 20-1.

<sup>36</sup> *Essays*, p. 390.

<sup>37</sup> *Essays*, p. 397.

<sup>38</sup> *Essays*, p. 22.

<sup>39</sup> *Essays*, p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> *Essays*, p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> *TMS*, I.iii.1-8.

<sup>42</sup> *Essays*, p. 60.

<sup>43</sup> *Essays*, p. 191. Richardson's analysis of resentment is particularly interesting because he highlights the different degrees of resentment felt by those of average and those of greater sensibility and makes some acute remarks on the presentation of such ideals "models" in literature.

<sup>44</sup> Certainly it is possible to see empathy operating in sympathetic relations, but it is important to note that Smith's moral theory ultimately is sympathetic rather than empathetic. The spectator typically cannot achieve perfect empathy or sustain it. Sympathy, therefore, is more typically compromise between the feelings of the spectator and those of the agent. Both Smith and Richardson were careful about the ways they discussed the *exquisite sensibility* required for empathy because it was morally problematic. See the next section for a clarification of this point.

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<sup>45</sup> *TMS*, VII.iii.I.4.

<sup>46</sup> *Essays*, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> *TMS*, I.ii.4.3.

<sup>48</sup> *Essays*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>49</sup> *Essays*, pp. 375-6.

<sup>50</sup> *Essays*, p. 79.

<sup>51</sup> *Essays*, p. 115.

<sup>52</sup> *TMS*, VII.ii.3.13-15.

<sup>53</sup> *Essays*, p. 120.

<sup>54</sup> *Essays*, p. 287.

<sup>55</sup> *Essays*, p. 289.

<sup>56</sup> *Essays*, p. 305.

<sup>57</sup> National Library of Scotland MS 2537, f.6.

<sup>58</sup> *Virtuous Discourse*, ch.6.

<sup>59</sup> *Virtuous Discourse*, p. 164.

<sup>60</sup> *Essays*, p. 240.

<sup>61</sup> *TMS*, III.6.10.

<sup>62</sup> *TMS*, VI.iii.14.

<sup>63</sup> *TMS*, VII.ii.4.2.

<sup>64</sup> *TMS*, V.2.5.

<sup>65</sup> *TMS*, IV.I.8.

<sup>66</sup> *TMS*, VI.i.15. Although this quote comes from the 1790 edition of *TMS*, I have deemed it appropriate to use this because of the way it condenses and concentrates an emphasis on self-command that runs through the work. Unlike the concept of the *impartial spectator*, which cannot legitimately be read into the earlier editions, Smith's preference for self-command over benevolence was always at the heart of his ethical system.

<sup>67</sup> *TMS*, VII.iii.6.

<sup>68</sup> *TMS*, VII.iii.3.10.

<sup>69</sup> *TMS*, III.3.35-38.

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<sup>70</sup> *Essays*, pp. 373-5.

<sup>71</sup> *Essays*, p. 379.

<sup>72</sup> *Essays*, p. 50.

<sup>73</sup> *TMS*, VI.ii.I.

<sup>74</sup> *Essays*, p. 143.

<sup>75</sup> *Essays*, p. 145-6.

<sup>76</sup> *Essays*, p. 149.

<sup>77</sup> *Essays*, pp. 170f.

<sup>78</sup> *Essays*, p. 187.

<sup>79</sup> *Essays*, p. 390.

<sup>80</sup> *Essays*, p. 74.

<sup>81</sup> *Essays*, pp. 382-4.

<sup>82</sup> *Essays*, p. 196.

<sup>83</sup> *Essays*, p. 289.

<sup>84</sup> *Essays*, p. 300.

<sup>85</sup> *Essays*, p. 303.

<sup>86</sup> *Essays*, p. 210.

<sup>87</sup> *TMS*, III.I.6. This distinction was drawn more sharply in the 1790 edition than in earlier editions, but unlike the theory of *conscience*, it is implicit in earlier editions.

<sup>88</sup> *Essays*, p. 252.

<sup>89</sup> *Essays*, p. 219.

<sup>90</sup> *TMS*, II.ii.2.1. One of Smith's most interesting arguments is the propriety of retribution and its relation to retributive justice. See the interesting essay by Ferenc Horcher in *Scotland and France in the Enlightenment*, ed. Deidre Dawson and Pierre Morere, (Lewisburgh, 2004), pp. 305-29.

<sup>91</sup> For Richardson's description of Hume and Reid as atomists of mind, see *Essays*, pp. 16 and 201. To a more limited extent, Richardson also sees this approach at work in the historical works of Hume and William Robertson.

<sup>92</sup> For Richardson's view of language, see *Essays*, p. 17. His view of language is entirely Smithean; Smith's writings were all grounded in an understanding of human beings as symbolic communicators whose reality is intersubjective. See his essay on language in *The Early Writings of Adam Smith*, ed. J. Ralph Lindgren, (New York, 1973).

<sup>93</sup> *Essays*, p. 73.

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<sup>94</sup> *Essays*, pp. 75 and 87.

<sup>95</sup> *Essays*, p. 140.

<sup>96</sup> *Essays*, p. 120f.

<sup>97</sup> *Essays*, p. 95.

<sup>98</sup> *TMS*, III.3.29.

<sup>99</sup> *TMS*, I.ii.4.3.

<sup>100</sup> *Essays*, p. 358.

<sup>101</sup> *Essays*, p. 358. The corresponding passage is *TMS*, I.5.3.

<sup>102</sup> *TMS*, IV.2.10.

<sup>103</sup> See my *The Age of the Passions: An Interpretation of Adam Smith and Scottish Enlightenment Culture*, (Edinburgh, 1998), chapter 5.

<sup>104</sup> *TMS*, III.4.4.

<sup>105</sup> *TMS*, III.4.5.

<sup>106</sup> *TMS*, II.ii.2.1.

<sup>107</sup> *TMS*, III.6.

<sup>108</sup> *TMS*, I.iii.3.1.

<sup>109</sup> *TMS*, I.iii.3.5. There exists a more general debate as to whether comments like this evidence Smith's approval of a market and class society. For analysis along those lines, see Harvey Mitchell, "The Mysterious Veil of Self-Delusion in Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments," in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, (1989), pp. 404-21 and Michael Ignatieff, "Needs and Justice in the *Wealth of Nations*," in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 1-44. My own point of view is much closer to that of David McNally in *Political Economy and the Rise of Capitalism: A Re-interpretation*, (Berkeley, 1988).

<sup>110</sup> *Essays*, p. 53.

<sup>111</sup> *Essays*, pp. 41 and 132.

<sup>112</sup> *Essays*, p. 133.

<sup>113</sup> *Essays*, p. 139.

<sup>114</sup> *TMS*, I.ii.I.3.

<sup>115</sup> *Essays*, p. 252.

<sup>116</sup> *Essays*, pp. 284-6.

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<sup>117</sup> In the revisions that he made to the final 1790 edition, Smith was concerned to distinguish social praise from praise-worthiness to clear up this problem. But the construct of the *impartial spectator* was not satisfying in a number of respects and actually contradicts Smith's earlier analysis of the social construction of morality. For the 1790 changes, see *TMS*, III.2.1. For an assessment of these changes, see my *Virtuous Discourse*, ch. 7.

<sup>118</sup> *Essays*, pp. 322-3.

<sup>119</sup> *Essays*, p. 335.

<sup>120</sup> *Essays*, p. 395. Richardson is paraphrasing a letter from Edmund Burke on his analysis of Macbeth. This meeting of minds between Richardson and Burke is just one example of the extensive correspondence that Burke had with Scottish moralists. See my *The Age of the Passions*, pp. 13n, 168n, 185-6. Not surprising, Burke was a huge fan of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

<sup>121</sup> *Essays*, p. 296.

<sup>122</sup> *Essays*, p. 226.

<sup>123</sup> *Essays*, p. 315.

<sup>124</sup> *Essays*, p. 55.

<sup>125</sup> *Essays*, p. 237.

<sup>126</sup> *Essays*, p. 191.

<sup>127</sup> *Essays*, p. 306.

<sup>128</sup> *Essays*, p. 58.

<sup>129</sup> *Essays*, p. 59.

<sup>130</sup> *Essays*, p. 60.

<sup>131</sup> *TMS*, I.ii.3.5.

<sup>132</sup> *Essays*, p. 62.

<sup>133</sup> *Essays*, p. 373.

<sup>134</sup> *Essays*, p. 156.

<sup>135</sup> *Essays*, pp. 297 and 77.

<sup>136</sup> See *Virtuous Discourse*, ch. 7.

<sup>137</sup> *Essays*, pp 344, 358, and 362.

<sup>138</sup> See Ross, p. 336.