

Chapter 1

In the published ending of *Things As They Are: or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* the two protagonists, Falkland and Caleb, come to a long awaited meeting of minds. As a result of the almost supernatural persecution of Falkland's thug, Gines, Caleb is unable to settle anywhere or form relationships with anyone. Pushed to the breaking point, he determines to reclaim his freedom by exposing his tormentor. Galvanized by a consciousness of his own deeply wronged innocence, and passionately convinced of his right to a life and name untainted by false accusations, Caleb visits the magistrate of Falkland's county and accuses Falkland of murder, demanding that the two of them meet in court. After hundreds of pages of misunderstandings, mistrust, and mutual torment, these two finally meet face to face and clear the air. Caleb, prepared to publically denounce Falkland, repents of his passion and anger the moment he sees Falkland's fragile and decrepit state:

I can conceive of no shock greater than that I received from the sight of Mr. Falkland. His appearance on the last occasion on which we met had been haggard, ghost-like and wild, energy in his gestures, and frenzy in his aspect. It was now the appearance of a corpse. He was brought in a chair, unable to stand, fatigued and almost destroyed by the journey he had just taken. His visage was colourless; his limbs destitute of motion, almost of life. His head reclined upon his bosom, except that now and then he lifted it up, and opened his eyes with a languid glance, immediately after which he sunk back into his former apparent insensibility. ... There must have been some dreadful mistake in the train of argument that persuaded me to be the author of this hateful scene (329-30).

In this remorseful frame of mind, Caleb is able to articulate with conviction how much he admires Falkland, how he regrets causing Falkland mental anguish, and how, if left to himself and his freedom, he would never have revealed Falkland's guilt. Caleb sees himself as a monster and, for the first time, guilty of a horrible crime in thus contributing to the death of Falkland. Falkland, moved by Caleb's sincerity, admits his own guilt, both in the ancient crimes of murdering Tyrrel and allowing the Hawkins' to take the blame, and in his inability to trust Caleb's goodness. Finally, both characters understand and are fully able to enter into the feelings of the other. Falkland at last appreciates Caleb's sincerity, and Caleb realizes the torment, worth, and intentions of Falkland.

This moment of sympathetic engagement is reminiscent of scenes from the sentimental novels of Samuel Richardson. This is perhaps the less surprising considering Godwin's reading fare during the time that he wrote this novel. Beginning composition of *Caleb Williams* in the spring of 1793 and publishing it in the spring of 1794, Godwin bookends that year reading Samuel Richardson—*Sir Charles Grandison* in May 1793 and *Clarissa* as he revised his novel in April 1794. In Richardson's novels, as in most mainstream novels of the mid-eighteenth century, characters resolve differences (or not) and enter into society with each other as they are able to sympathize with one another. In the scene between Caleb and Falkland, the marks of sympathy are clear. The visual tokens of suffering exhibited by Falkland move Caleb to pity and revere him, recalling Caleb's early love for the goodness and merit his master. Caleb seeing Falkland's suffering triggers sympathy, a textbook case study for the way Enlightenment sympathy functions. Caleb's display of sincerity and remorse also affects the feelings of all who hear him. As he describes: "I poured [my feelings] out with uncontrollable impetuosity... 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). Finally even Falkland succumbs to sympathy: “as I went on he could no longer resist. He saw my sincerity; he was penetrated with my grief and compunction. He rose from his seat, supported by the attendants, and – to my infinite astonishment – threw himself into my arms! ‘Williams,’ said he, ‘you have conquered! I see too late the greatness and elevation of your mind’” (335). Again, seeing Caleb’s emotional authenticity allows Falkland, and everyone present, to sympathize with Caleb. However, although this scene patterns itself on similar scenes of reconciliation in the novels of Richardson, it also departs from them in key ways. In particular, while in Richardson’s novels these displays of sympathy lead to reconciliation and resolution, Caleb’s and Falkland’s demonstration of sympathy ends with anguish and death. This departure signals an attitude in Godwin’s novels that I call anti-sympathy and which I argue is an overlooked and potentially influential aspect of the novel as it reaches its maturity in the nineteenth century.

In this chapter I will examine *Caleb Williams* in order to provide a blueprint of the anti-sympathy novel. *Caleb Williams* develops the trappings of sympathy, like its novel ancestors by Richardson and others, and elevates the creeds of sympathy; however, unlike the eighteenth century novel, the anti-sympathy novel does this in order to then expose sympathy as ideology (rather than the natural science of man) and reveal its inherent dangers and limitations. *Caleb Williams*, and thus the anti-sympathy novel as a whole, is particularly unique and successful in its critique because it mounts an attack from within sympathy. By using the tropes of the sympathy novel, this novel doesn’t promote a competing ideology of the individual; instead, *Caleb Williams* suggests that the bedrock ideology of the Enlightenment is exactly that: ideology; and, like all ideologies, it can be manipulated to serve political ends. I will first turn to

Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* as a representative example of the sympathy novel, reading it in relation to eighteenth-century accounts of sympathy to show how novels adopted and disseminated sympathy as the natural science of man. I'll then turn back to *Caleb Williams* and examine it as, first, an actual reading of Richardson and secondly, as an exposé of sympathy.

Sympathy novels, of which *Pamela* is a prime specimen, both demonstrate and invite readers to participate in the act of sympathy. By this I mean that these novels depend upon readers, writers, and characters imagining others' feelings and imagining others imagining their feelings.¹ Sympathy novels accomplish this through two major characteristics. One, as described by Nancy Armstrong in *How Novels Think*, the protagonists of sympathy novels express an individuality in excess of their social class which is resolved through sympathetic exchange (characters imagine other character's feelings). Two, the reader sympathizes with the protagonist because the protagonist regulates his or her reactions to social situations in agreement with Adam Smith's philosophy on the subject; in effect, the protagonist is written as if he or she were imagining the reader imagining them.² Thus, as Rae Greiner says in her book *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, sympathy novels depend upon and are made up of sympathetic exchange, both character to character and character to reader. In this way, they suggest that sympathy is the innate foundation of society.

We see both of these sympathy markings in *Pamela*. Pamela, the eponymous protagonist, displays personhood well beyond her station as a servant and as the daughter of impoverished, working, parents. When Pamela writes home to announce the death of her "dear good lady," we learn that Mr. B's mother educated Pamela: "my lady's goodness had put me to write and cast accompts, and made me a little expert and my needle, and otherwise qualified me

¹ I get this idea from Rae Greiner—not sure how to give her credit.

² This may or may not have something to do with C. Gallagher's fictionality. I have yet to really think that through.

above my degree” (43). However, this education apparently only builds upon Pamela’s natural thirst for improvement and learning. She reads in her spare time, is a voracious writer, including poetry and psalms, and Mr. B compliments her spelling and handwriting. Pamela is also more beautiful than any lady in the country. Mr. B’s friends desire to witness Pamela’s famed loveliness throughout the novel, beginning at the death of her lady and lasting into her marriage to Mr. B. Along with this superabundance of brains and beauty, Pamela demonstrates high levels of refinement. She certainly exceeds her fellow servants in this area. Mrs. Jewkes thinks that Pamela ought to succumb to Mr. B’s advances as the natural course of things: “how strangely you talk! Are not the two sexes made for each other? And is it not natural for a man to love a pretty woman? And suppose he can obtain his desires, is that so bad as cutting her throat?” (148). Although Mrs. Jewkes is by far the most vulgar of the servants, her opinion suggests that masters seducing maids is not totally uncommon. Other servants, though perhaps not expressing themselves as strongly as Mrs. Jewkes, tacitly agree with her by helping to confine Pamela so that Mr. B can take advantage of her. Even Mrs. Jarvis, the most intelligent and gentle of Pamela’s peers, is less sensitive than Pamela to the danger for Pamela’s virtue, begging her to stay even though Mr. B continues to harass Pamela. In one instance, Mrs. Jarvis convinces Pamela to disguise herself in front of Mr. B., which ends with him taking freedoms with Pamela under the excuse that he doesn’t recognize her. Pamela is also more refined than the gentry and nobility in her neighborhood. Pamela blushes at the attention her beauty gets, while other ladies court notice and attraction and envy Pamela. When Mr. B and Pamela begin to plan on getting married, the gentlewomen of the neighborhood expect a huge party and ball, while Pamela piously feels that a marriage is too solemn an occasion for gaiety of that kind.

Thus, in every way, Pamela's individuality—moral, physical, and mental—exceed her station in life.

In the manner of sympathy novels, Pamela's excess of individuality is resolved and earns her a rightful spot in society through sympathetic exchange. This happens as Mr. B gets imaginative access to Pamela's feelings and experiences through her letters and journals. Mr. B first acquires Pamela's letters through stratagem and trickery, having his servants intercept them on the way to Pamela's parents, or by having her room searched on the sly. However, Mr. B imagining Pamela's experiences while reading her letters changes Mr. B and Pamela's relationship. The more he reads, the more his desire for Pamela's body is replaced by a desire to access her thoughts and feelings. We see this in what has been rightly called the most erotic scene in the book³ when Mr. B offers to undress Pamela in order to get at her letters hidden in her stays and garters. He confesses to being moved when he reads about Pamela contemplating escape and, failing that, suicide. He even resolves to let Pamela leave him, her virtue intact. As he says to Mrs. Jewkes, when she chastises him for failing to take advantage of Pamela: "what! when I have such proof, that her virtue is all her pride, shall I rob her of that? No" (280). This change is brought about by Mr. B reading Pamela's feelings—by sympathetic identification with her. This raises Pamela into a new station as they enter into a sympathetic relationship. Mr. B no longer threatens Pamela's virtue, and Pamela willingly gives herself to him as his wife. Mr. B's neighbors are also changed by sympathy. They accept Pamela as an equal when Mr. B tells them Pamela's story (322). Even Lady Davers, Mr. B's sister, who is incensed at the idea of Pamela as a sister-in-law, concedes that she will probably feel differently if Pamela will allow her to read the letters and journals. Thus, by imaginatively entering into Pamela's feelings

³ Nancy Armstrong, DDF p 120

through her “stories,” Mr. B and the surrounding gentry adopt Pamela into their ranks. Through sympathy, Pamela gains a place in society suitable to her individuality; the social relationships formed here are based on sympathy, and this novel offers sympathetic exchange as the natural basis of civilized and moral society.

Just as Mr. B and his friends sympathize with Pamela as they read her letters and journals, we as readers are also invited to sympathize with Pamela as we see her regulate her reactions to the people and situations that surround her. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith differentiates between the social and the unsocial passions and the differing degrees to which observers are able to sympathize with these passions. The unsocial passions such as hatred or resentment are more difficult for spectators to enter into and thus require a greater amount of regulation on the part of the injured party. Smith explains: “Our sympathy...with the man who has received the provocation, necessarily falls short of the passion which naturally animates him.... Before resentment, therefore, can become graceful and agreeable, it must be more humbled and brought down below that pitch to which it would naturally rise, than almost any other passion” (26-7). A person with a grievance to resent must control his feelings if he is to earn the sympathy of others. The more he masters this feeling, the more admirable he appears. However, Smith warns, this same person must also demonstrate that he understands the injury, or he forfeits the sympathy. He says, “Upon most occasions, the greater his patience, his mildness, his humanity, provided it does not appear that he wants spirit, or that fear was the motive of his forbearance, the higher their resentment against the person who injured him. ... A person becomes contemptible who tamely sits still, and submits to insults, without attempting either to repel or to revenge them. We cannot enter into his indifference and insensibility” (27). Pamela demonstrates exactly this kind of tempered resentment and understanding. For example, when

Mrs. Jewkes treats Pamela poorly or makes remarks that Pamela finds distasteful, Pamela shows spirit in defending herself. Mrs. Jewkes' offenses are severe. She plays a key role in the seduction of Pamela, secreting Mr. B into their bedroom at night and holding Pamela down to allow Mr. B the chance to rape her. Pamela's resentment could justly know no bounds. However, although Pamela defends herself and expresses her anger, she keeps her anger well within appropriate bounds, usually contenting herself with merely verbally expressing her disappointment. Pamela even forgives Mrs. Jewkes in the end and treats her kindly, to the point of allowing Mrs. Jewkes to continue as her roommate.

Pamela shows the same regulation and restraint in her treatment of and reaction to Mr. B. She consistently refuses his advances and protests against his freedom with her. She expresses anger that he treats her differently than he would treat a lady of birth and fortune. However, although boundless anger is again justified here since he's trying to rob her of what is most precious to her, Pamela continually prays for his soul and promises to always speak well of him if he would just let her go. She also shows the same controlled reaction to being confined against her will. While she does all she can to escape, she also endures it rather than taking her own life. In each instance, Pamela shows the sort of regulation that Smith deems necessary for observers to feel sympathy. Her anger is consistently tempered by reason, allowing her and the reader to enter into a sympathetic relationship wherein the reader recognizes the worth of Pamela. The reader interacts with Pamela and her story in the same way that he or she interacts with actual real people. This creates a reading experience that assumes sympathy as the basis for reality.

Through these two devices—character to character and character to reader sympathetic exchange—the eighteenth-century novel, as demonstrated by *Pamela*, presents social interaction

as inherently sympathetic. In fact, *Pamela* is Nancy Armstrong's prime example of how novels changed the game of social interaction in the eighteenth century. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction* Armstrong argues that *Pamela* shifts ideological power from the realm of politics to the domain of desire and sexuality, as defined through femininity. By creating a working class heroine who defies the advances of her employer and is right in doing so, Richardson changes how and where worth is signified and located. As Armstrong says, "Richardson's strategy of enclosing subjectivity and then endowing it with power in its own right was also an aggressive act of reclassification; it was the means by which all manner of political information could be turned into features of gender" (119). So, the power to craft individuals is no longer located solely in political markers such as birth, wealth, or rank, but rather in gender-marked virtues. Thus, Richardson's novel "is a struggle for control of the very terms in which political conflict will be understood and mediation accomplished" (122). In this instance, Armstrong's claims focus on the naturalization of a particular sort of individual by shifting power from politics to gender. My claim is similar: that novels, by presenting a social world and reading experience based on sympathy, naturalized the constructed and regulating nature of sympathetic ideology, thus becoming what they were: fictions that were meant to present life without a real-life referent. The act of creating such narratives naturalizes the workings of sympathy as the basis for civilization.

This association between the mechanics of sympathy and its naturalization in society and the development of the novel is well documented in the critical canon of novel studies. Sympathy, driven by imagination, and driving modern society, is seen by many scholars to be the basis of the realist novel, or in the case of the eighteenth century, the sympathy novel. This is one of the key arguments of Rae Greiner's *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century British*

Fiction. She states that, “sympathy produces realism; the protocols of sympathy are most fully realized there. Often thematized in the realist novel, sympathy is not merely a matter of content but a defining feature of novelistic form” (9-10). This is also the contention of Nancy Armstrong in *How Novels Think*. She investigates the connection between modern individuals and novels by turning towards sympathy as it was defined by Enlightenment philosophers. Armstrong shows that as a result of sympathy, the eighteenth century saw a shift in society: the body converted experience into good manners and self-restraint, replacing outward manifestations of birth and rank with these signals of knowledge acquired from experience. The worth of an individual came to be evaluated less in terms of his or her birth and blood and more in terms of his or her manifestation of sympathy: how he or she processed exterior impressions. Novels register this ontological shift, and imagine enlightened individuals as their protagonists, putting this sort of individual into circulation. For both Greiner and Armstrong, this relationship between sympathy and the novel that began in the eighteenth century was solidified in the nineteenth. In fact, the realist novel presents “sympathetic consciousness as the basis for reality itself” (Greiner 10). By the nineteenth century, then, novels have naturalized sympathy as the foundation of reality. Thus, histories of the novel rightly grant sympathy pride of place in the eighteenth century and conclude that sympathy wins control of the novel form in the end, developing the novel into the realist genre we recognize as such in the Victorian period.

Sympathy dominated the genre of the novel because it had been theorized as the organizing force of society. Through the philosophies of Hume and Smith, sympathy comes to both account for and regulate how men and women interact in modern civilization. Many tease out the nuances that separate Hume and Smith on this point; however, a major overlap between their sciences of sympathy is the imagination. In *A Treatise of Human Nature* Hume pinpoints

sympathy as the lens through which individuals experience and construct reality. For Hume, sympathy is an impulse on the part of the mind to interpret what it sees into impressions – in other words, humans translate visual or aural stimuli into personal experience. The most important factor here is the mind's ability conjure up occurrences, to literally imagine experience from sensory triggers. The imaginative basis of sympathy makes it unique among the forces associated with the science of man, and particularly powerful. As Hume says, "When any affection is infus'd by sympathy, it is at first known only by its effects, and by those external signs in the countenance and conversation, which convey an idea of it. This idea is presently converted into an impression, and acquires such a degree of force and vivacity, as to become the very passion itself, and produce an equal emotion, as any original affection" (206). The imagination, then, uniquely has the power to conjure up ideas so powerful that they become like actual experience. Hume goes on to argue that sympathy is the strongest human impulse: "No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own" (206). The power of sympathy to imaginatively create human experience connects individuals, and also controls individual access to and impressions of the world. Through sympathy, humans gain understanding, construct realities, and exercise their reason. It is the very basis of enlightened society.

The relationship between how humans build society and imaginative sympathy is also strong in Adam Smith's philosophy. Smith defines sympathy as "denot[ing] our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever" (9). This ability to feel with others rests squarely in the imagination. In fact, the more this sort of feeling depends on the imagination, the stronger it is. As he says,

A disappointment in love, or ambition, will...call forth more sympathy than the greatest bodily evil. Those passions arise altogether from the imagination. The person who has lost his whole fortune, if he is in health, feels nothing in his body. What he suffers is from the imagination only, which represents to him the loss of his dignity, neglect from his friends, contempt from his enemies, dependence, want and misery, coming fast upon him; and we sympathize with him more strongly on this account, because our imaginations can more readily mould themselves upon his imagination, than our bodies can mould themselves upon his body (23).

People more easily and more strongly imaginatively enter into feelings based on the imagination. This becomes the regulating principle of society. Men and women temper their own manifestations of emotion depending upon what they think others can sympathize with in order to gain the exceptionally satisfying experience of the sympathy and admiration of others. For Smith, this desire to retain sympathy is the chief driving force of the modern man. "But [a man] can only hope to obtain this [relief that comes from the sympathy of others] by lowering his passion to that pitch, in which the 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. ... In order to produce this concord, as nature teaches the spectators to assume the circumstances of the person principally concerned, so she teaches this last in some measure to assume those of the spectators" (18). Thus, civilized interaction is made up of people imaginatively putting themselves in the place of another and also of people imagining people putting themselves in that place. Sympathy is the gatekeeper of genteel and allowable action and interaction; it prescribes and describes how

individuals should act, and accounts for why they do and should. Through both Hume and Smith, then, sympathy becomes the same thing as humanity: sympathy is how modern individuals are in the world.

Although what we now call the realist novel became the dominant path the novel took, there was nothing inevitable about this in the 1790s. In addition, there were alternative paths – one of them worked out by Godwin. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction* Armstrong shows how the domestic novel conceals its own power to craft individuals by disconnecting that power from politics. By defining the individual through desire and sexuality, the domestic novel promises liberty from categories circumscribed by political power, while simultaneously concealing its own constructed and confining categories. As Armstrong states, “domestic fiction unfolded the operations of human desire as if they were independent of political history. And this helped to create the illusion that desire was entirely subjective and therefore essentially different from the politically encodable forms of behavior to which desire gave rise” (9). The domestic novel and the sympathetic novel alike label their own ideologies as natural by seeming not to have any. The anti-sympathy novel, however, does the opposite. It, too, melds with sympathy, but it does so in order to reveal, rather than conceal, its ideology. Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* parallels Richardson’s novel in several ways. It employs the tropes of sympathy and finally overturns them in order to expose them as exercising ideological power.

Caleb Williams follows the same sympathetic plot as *Pamela*. For example, the situation and selfhood of Godwin’s eponymous protagonist looks a lot like that of Richardson’s heroine. Like his female predecessor, Caleb overflows with selfhood beyond what is warranted by his condition in life. At the beginning of his story, Caleb tells us that his parents are peasants and portionless. They help him to an honest education, and Caleb capitalizes on every opportunity to

learn. He explicitly talks about this: “I was taught the rudiments of no science, except reading, writing and arithmetic. But I had an inquisitive mind, and neglected no means of information from conversation or books. My improvement was greater than my condition in life afforded room to expect” (5). Caleb, like Pamela, receives an education beyond what is usual for his social status. Along with mentally exceeding the bounds of his of his class, Caleb also blooms with an overabundance of physicality. He even channels this excess of physical prowess to pursuits beyond the sports and games typical to his peers. Joining in their athletic activities only rarely, Caleb’s excessive health manifests itself in a Pamela-like natural voraciousness for reading. Through this superfluity of both brains and brawn, Caleb clearly and explicitly joins ranks with the likes of Pamela and other eighteenth-century sympathetic protagonists.

The parallels between *Caleb Williams* and *Pamela* continue. Like Pamela, Caleb is a dependent. Both protagonists are favorites with their masters, and both of these masters have kind and generous qualities. The goodness of both Mr. B and Falkland, however, is accompanied by a major character flaw that cause each man to torment the protagonist. Mr. B.’s lust for Pamela drives him to seek to corrupt her virtue, and a large part of Richardson’s novel deals with Mr. B’s attempts to pursue and entrap Pamela, and Pamela’s efforts to elude and repel his attacks. In the midst of his harassment, as described above, Mr. B gains access to Pamela’s thoughts and feelings, feels sympathy for her, and they enter into a relationship that elevates Pamela socially and morally improves and satisfies Mr. B. Caleb finds himself in a similar situation. Like *Pamela*, the majority of *Caleb Williams* deals with Falkland hunting Caleb and Caleb trying to escape persecution. At the beginning of the text, we learn that Falkland has a sterling reputation for generosity, justice, and honor in his neighborhood. In his goodness, he takes notice of Caleb and makes Caleb a leader in his house. However, like Mr. B., Falkland has

a serious character flaw that compels him to imprison his dependent. While Mr. B. is driven by lust for Pamela, Mr. Falkland has a maniac love for and devotion to his reputation. Falkland quickly feels that Caleb threatens that reputation and the rest of the novel deals with Falkland pursuing and imprisoning (literally and figuratively) Caleb. Falkland first demands that Caleb never leave his service. When Caleb begs for other employment, Falkland has Caleb wrongfully imprisoned. When Caleb escapes jail, Falkland and his minions hound Caleb, driving him from place to place, creating mental and emotional prisons for him, and ruining any chance of Caleb finding safety or rest. Caleb and Falkland, tenacious victim and aristocratic pursuer, gentle servant and imperious master, are positioned like Pamela and Mr. B; as such, they are seemingly perfect candidates for the interposition of sympathy. They are ready to resolve their differences by entering into a sympathetic relationship.

As previously mentioned, Pamela's individuality, through her writing, propels her into her rightful place in the social collective. Mr. B reads Pamela's letters and journals, his sympathy is awakened, and he is morally changed to see value in Pamela's virtue. As a result, Pamela gains social status and he and Pamela enter into an equal and exemplary marriage. Godwin's novel also provides the structure for Caleb to fit his individuality into society through sympathetic relationships. This time, however, the direction of sympathetic "reading" is reversed; Caleb reads Falkland, and although this reversal causes its own problems, which I will address later, both men develop sympathetic feelings. At the first moment of meeting Falkland, Caleb shows a propensity to "read" his master, noting that, "every muscle and petty line of [Falkland's] countenance seemed to be in an inconceivable degree pregnant with meaning" (7). From the beginning, then, Falkland joins the books that so fascinated Caleb during his education. Caleb himself compares meeting Falkland with his reading, saying that although he has much

experience with books, Falkland is his first close encounter with mankind (7). Caleb quickly notices that his benefactor, with all his personal virtues of benevolence and intelligence, is often troubled; Falkland is plagued by fits of melancholy and irritation. Caleb is driven by a consuming curiosity to find the source of Falkland's moodiness and takes every opportunity to "read" his master's moods and physiognomy. Caleb himself comments on his new hobby: "Early in my life my mind had been much engrossed by reading and reflection: my intercourse with my fellow mortals was occasional and short. But, in my new residence, I was excited by every motive of interest and novelty to study my master's character; and I found in it an ample field for speculation and conjecture" (8). Caleb observes the emotions written on Falkland's face in great detail: "Sometimes [Falkland] entirely lost his self-possession, and his behavior was changed into frenzy: he would strike his forehead, his brows became knit, his features distorted, and his teeth ground one against the other." (9). And, Caleb admits, he was only able to interpret these emotions through extensive and lengthy practice. As he says, "It must not be supposed that the whole of what I am describing was visible to the persons about him; nor, indeed, was I acquainted with it in the extent here stated but after a considerable time, and in gradual succession" (9). Caleb becomes obsessed with deciphering his master's moods and discovering their cause.

Caleb finally asks Collins, a friend of Caleb's father and Falkland's steward, about Falkland's melancholy. Collins recounts to Caleb portions of Mr. Falkland's history, including public embarrassment by Tyrrell, Falkland's boorish neighbor, Tyrrell's death, and Mr. Falkland being put on trial for his murder. Falkland was acquitted, and Hawkins, an educated and honest laborer, confesses and was hanged. Collins says that this attack on Falkland's reputation has made him miserable, even though he was found innocent. After hearing this story, Caleb is filled

with compassion for Hawkins and can't help but suspect that Falkland is the real murderer, in spite of the confession. He determines to watch Falkland in order to try to discover the truth: "My thoughts fluctuated from conjecture to conjecture, but this was the centre about which they revolved. I determined to place myself as a watch upon my patron" (112). Thus, his "reading" of Falkland becomes more direct and intense.

Caleb gets a perfect opportunity to gauge Falkland's feelings when Falkland is called, as magistrate, to preside over a murder trial of a young man who killed his enemy in a fist fight. The young man insists that it was an accident, yet wants to die because he is a good person and his reputation is ruined. He only entered the fight to defend the honor of his sweetheart and ended up accidentally killing his opponent. Since the dead man was his known enemy, however, the young man fears that everybody will think he did it on purpose. Caleb sees the parallels between the situation of this man and Falkland's experience with Tyrrell and determines, Hamlet-like, to watch: "This man is arraigned of murder, and murder is the master-key that wakes distemper in the mind of Mr. Falkland. I will watch him without remission. I will trace all the mazes of his thought. Surely at such a time his secret anguish must betray itself. Surely, if it be not my own fault, I shall now be able to discover the state of his plea before the tribunal of unerring justice" (132). As the trial progresses, Caleb observes the effects of the case on Falkland:

These points perpetually smote upon the heart of Mr. Falkland. He at one time started with astonishment and at another shifted his posture like a man who is unable longer to endure the sensations that press upon him. Then he new strung his nerves to stubborn patience. I could see, while his muscles preserved an inflexible steadiness, tears of anguish roll down his cheeks. He dared not trust his

eyes to glance towards the side of the room where I stood; and this gave an air of embarrassment to his whole figure. But when the accused came to speak of his feelings, to describe the depth of his compunction for an involuntary fault, he could endure it no longer. He suddenly rose, and with every mark of horror and despair rushed out of the room (134-5).

Caleb closely watches Falkland and interprets every muscle movement and change of physiognomy. As a result of “reading” Falkland’s expressions and actions, Caleb is certain that Falkland is the murderer of Tyrrell and indirectly of Hawkins. However, even in the midst of believing that Falkland is a murderer, Caleb loves Falkland. Caleb’s close scrutiny of Falkland has led him to feel sympathy for his master, despite his foul crime. As in *Pamela*, Caleb’s access to the feelings of Falkland resulted in sympathetic identification. He says, “I felt what I had had no previous conception of, that it was possible to love a murderer” (136). Even later, after Falkland actually admits his crimes to Caleb and confirms that he killed Tyrrell and let Hawkins take the blame for it, Caleb still admires Falkland. In fact, the Caleb reads his master, the stronger his affection for Falkland grows: “With all his misfortunes and all his errors, I feel that my soul yearns for his welfare. ... I had known Mr. Falkland from the first as a beneficent divinity. I had observed at leisure, and with a minuteness which could not deceive me, the excellent qualities of his heart; and I found him possessed of a mind beyond comparison the most fertile and accomplished I had ever known” (143-4). Thus, just as Mr. B’s access to Pamela resulted in his feeling sympathy for Pamela’s plight, Caleb’s scrutiny of Falkland forged a sympathetic connection between the two men. Caleb notes this connection when he bates Falkland in order to get a “read” on Falkland’s emotions: “There was a magnetical sympathy

between me and my patron, so that [the effect of Caleb's words] was not sooner produced upon him, than my own mind reproached me with the inhumanity of the allusion" (117).

Caleb is not alone in cultivating sympathy. Mr. Falkland feels sympathetic to Caleb as well. While Caleb is a member of Falkland's household, Falkland enjoys his company and conversation. Falkland still cares for Caleb, despite Caleb's horrible suspicions and the threat Caleb poses to his reputation, looking out for him throughout the rest of the novel, protecting Caleb even while pursuing and persecuting him. This is mirrored in Pamela. Even though Pamela is being read, she begins to feel sympathy toward Mr. B, praying for his soul and praising his good qualities. She even begins to allude to her love for him before the end of her imprisonment. So too, Falkland, the read, feels sympathy for Caleb, his reader.

However, these sympathetic feelings built up between Caleb and Falkland do not end up resolving social conflict in the way it does in *Pamela*. While Richardson's novel achieves social and moral harmony, Godwin's novel devolves into chaos and misery. Caleb is first forced against his will to remain in the employ of Falkland. He is then imprisoned on false charges. Once he escapes, he wanders, destitute, and is attacked by bandits. Each time Caleb thinks he finds a safe haven, Falkland or his minions find him and force him to flee again. Caleb must assume several different disguises and eschew human contact. Each time he does find a friend, he must either abandon them, be rejected by them, or be betrayed by them. Even his attempts to leave the country are frustrated. By the end of the novel, all Caleb Williams wants is to settle down with peers among whom he can give and receive sympathy, and he decides to retire to Wales: "[there] I might be hidden from the world, recover from the wounds my mind had received in this fatal connection, methodise and improve the experience which had been accumulated, cultivate the faculties I in any degree possessed, and employ the intervals of these

occupations in simple industry and the intercourse of guileless, uneducated, kind-intentioned minds” (299). Although he feels certain that Falkland will again interrupt his plans, Caleb does all he can to seek this sort of peace. As it turns out, he finds an educated family with whom he becomes close friends. Finally, it seems that he has found people with whom he can have sympathy. Of course, however, Falkland discovers him again and poisons these friends against Caleb. Caleb vividly describes this loss of sympathy: “I felt a sudden torpor and sickness that pervaded every fibre of my frame. Was there no hope that remained for me? ... Was the odious and atrocious falsehood that had been invented against me to follow me wherever I went, to strip me of character, to deprive me of the sympathy and good will of mankind...?” (312). At every turn, Caleb’s potential happiness is turned to anguish. His sympathy for Falkland has not only not brought him a place in society befitting his mind and virtue, it is also arguably the cause of all his misery. His sympathetic connection with Falkland leads Caleb to not defend himself, at least initially, against false accusations since he is determined to keep Falkland’s secrets. It binds Caleb to Falkland when all Caleb wants is freedom to find a quiet life.

Falkland experiences similar misery. His reputation is his dearest possession and he sacrifices morality and peace of mind for it in murdering Tyrrell and Hawkins. As a result, he knows his reputation is built on false pretenses and that he is giving everything to uphold a worthless thing; this makes his reputation even more important to him, and upholding it even more miserable. As he says,

I was the fool of fame. My virtue, my honesty, my everlasting peace of mind, were cheap sacrifices to be made at the shrine of this divinity. But, what is worse, there is nothing that has happened that has in any degree contributed to my cure. I am as much the fool of fame as ever. I cling to it to my last breath. Though I be

the blackest of villains, I will leave behind me a spotless and illustrious name.

There is no crime so malignant, no scene of blood so horrible, in which that object cannot engage me. It is no matter that I regard these things at a distance with aversion; -- I am sure of it; bring me to the test, and I shall yield. I despise myself (142).

Everything must be sacrificed to his reputation, including his peace of mind and self-respect. He is terrified that he can't trust Caleb with his secret, so he must keep Caleb close, yet he can't stand the sight of the one person who knows his treachery. Thus he is wretched with Caleb, and even more wretched with Caleb free. He must endure the anguish of mistreating Caleb, whom he admires, and of suppressing his benevolent impulses. His sympathetic connection with Caleb therefore only intensifies his misery as he is forced to spend his life in worry and in the unlawful pursuit and persecution of somebody he actually admires.

Finally, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the two men meet in person. Caleb thinks he can secure a place in society by betraying Falkland. This violation of sympathy, he finds, makes him most miserable of all: He laments: "Never will I forgive myself the iniquity of this day. The memory will always haunt me, and embitter every hour of my existence. In thus acting I have been a murderer—a cool, deliberate, unfeeling murderer" (334). Falkland finds no relief either in this final meeting. In this scene, Falkland has the opportunity to "read" Caleb, as Caleb laments disclosing Falkland's crimes and extols Falkland's virtues. In fact, "Every one that heard [Caleb's speech]...was melted into tears. ...[everybody] manifested their sympathy" (334). Falkland concedes to Caleb: "you have conquered! I see too late the greatness and elevation of your mind. ... All my prospects are concluded. All that I most ardently desired is for ever frustrated. I have spent a life of the basest cruelty to cover one act of momentary vice,

and to protect myself against the prejudices of my species” (335). Here, like Mr. B, Falkland reads Caleb and as a result acknowledges Caleb’s virtues and his own vice. However, this moral change, rather than leading to resolution and harmony, only ends with Falkland’s almost immediate death and his realization that “You cannot hate me more than I hate myself” (335). No amount of sympathy, then, allows these two men to resolve and regulate their differences for their mutual benefit. In direct contradiction to *Pamela*, sympathy quite blatantly has no power in this relationship to alter Falkland’s morality or Caleb’s social station. In fact, it precipitates the ruin of both men.

This breakdown of sympathy, and particularly the manner of it, is the hallmark of the anti-sympathy novel. It happens both at the level of content and the level of form, and manages to expose sympathy as ideology from within sympathy itself; in other words, it raises a critique without totally destroying the object of that critique. First, I will examine the way that the content of Godwin’s novel critiques sympathy while retaining the trappings of sympathetic ideology, then I will examine the way the formal aspects of *Caleb Williams* make that same critique.

As pointed out above, Enlightenment philosophy and the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel team up to establish sympathy as the natural power that allows humans to build society. For Smith and Hume, mankind is naturally social and evolves together through established stages of history, the pinnacle of which is modern commercial society. In Godwin’s novel, Caleb and Falkland each have a fatal character flaw that disrupt sympathy’s ability to bring these characters into proper, optimal, and natural socialization; in fact, in the defining problem, Falkland’s love of fame, sympathy itself proves the downfall of both men.

Caleb's flaw is his insatiable curiosity. This flaw upsets the workings of sympathy by always trumping Caleb's ability to regulate his behavior in accordance with the feelings he interprets from Falkland. For example, when Caleb begins to suspect that Falkland is Tyrrell's murderer, Caleb manipulates situations and conversations with Falkland, faux-innocently mentioning ideas and people that mirror Falkland's crime. Then, Caleb deciphers Falkland's reaction to determine Falkland's guilt. According to Humean philosophy, sympathy flows more strongly and smoothly depending on the rank and the relationship of the sympathetic object; the closer and higher, the better. Caleb's close relationship to Falkland, and his station and his servant, would cause Caleb to easily internalize the emotions manifested by Falkland. Caleb's admiration and love for Falkland, and his share in Falkland's feelings, should cause him to want to soothe Falkland rather than provoke him. According to Adam Smith, Caleb's invisible spectator would motivate him to regulate his behavior so as to earn the admiration of his companions. However, because of Caleb's curiosity, the opposite happens. In fact, Caleb remarks the perversity of his own actions. He often says that he can't control this impulse to know the secret of Falkland's misery and that fate spurs him on again and again to continue teasing and surveilling his master. In one particular scene of the novel, Falkland confronts Caleb and demands to know why Caleb continually alludes to such a painful moment of Falkland's past. Caleb acknowledges his fault: "I cannot bear to think what I have done. I shall never again be able to look in the face of the best of masters and the best of men. I beg of you, sir, to turn me out of your service. Let me go and hide myself where I may never see you more. ... I could die to serve you! I love you more than I can express" (126). He realizes that his actions are totally out of sync with his sympathy for Falkland. And yet, in the very next paragraph, he is wondering "unaccountably" if Falkland is a murderer. Caleb's curiosity overpowers his

sympathetic inclination to regulate his actions to placate Falkland's reactions. In fact, in this case, Caleb even describes himself as out of his own regulatory control: he can't leave off his painful probing of Falkland's feelings even if he wanted.

Falkland's flaw, as already mentioned, is his love of fame. This quality is actually a hallmark of sympathy in both Smith's and Hume's philosophies. For both, sympathy reinforces a love of reputation by adding to an individual's own self-respect the feeling that he or she has earned the respect they feel from observers. For Hume, this is the evidence that sympathy powerfully turns ideas into actual impressions; our own self-admiration is compounded when we experience the admiration of others. This doesn't work, however, according to Hume, unless the individual actually deserves the praise. When an individual knows that she has done right, she feels sympathy with the admiration of others, thus heightening her own self-respect with these added ideas and impressions. For Smith, this process is even more self-regulatory. The internal spectator imagines how others would imagine one's own merit and adds that gratification to the gratification of being meritorious. Thus, according to Smith, not only do individuals want praise, they want to be praiseworthy. Sympathy, then, (or imagining others imagining us) causes individuals to actually be what they imagine others would find admirable. And, for Smith, when an individual has acted contrary to what the internal spectator dictates as praiseworthy, he or she feels intense misery. Receiving unmerited admiration only increases the anguish of a sympathy-sensitive individual as she imagines what others would really feel if they knew the truth. As Smith says,

[the] imagination...anticipates the contempt and derision from which nothing saves him but the ignorance of those he lives with. He still feels that he is the natural object of these sentiments, and still trembles at the thought of what he

would suffer, if they were ever actually exerted against him. But if what he had been guilty of was not merely one of those improprieties which are the objects of simple disapprobation, but one of those enormous crimes which excite detestation and resentment, he could never think of it, as long as he had any sensibility left, without feeling all the agony of horror and remorse... enough...to embitter the whole of his life. ... These natural pangs of an affrighted conscience are the daemons, the avenging furies, which, in this life, haunt the guilty, which allow them neither quiet nor repose, which often drive them to despair and distraction, from which no assurance of secrecy can protect them, from which no principles of irreligion can entirely deliver them (PG #).

Thus, merely imagining what others would feel about her crimes fills the guilty individual with agony. A love of fame, through the workings of sympathy, both encourage a particular kind of moral individual, and torture that individual if they violate their reputation. This passage from perfectly describes Falkland's situation. He loved fame so much that he was driven to horribly immoral acts to preserve it. He then was haunted both by the fear that others would find out about his crimes and he would lose his reputation, and also by the knowledge that the admiration he so craved was false. His internal spectator tortured him with what people would really think if they knew his true character. Falkland's inner distress leads him not only to act in the melancholy and distracted way that Caleb notes, but it also forces him to harass Caleb, a person Falkland actually loves and admires. Thus, the sympathy that in *Pamela*, and in other mainstream novels like it, resolves tensions and changes characters into individuals who can socialize together, only separates and isolates these characters in Godwin's novel. It is, in fact, sympathy itself that leads to chaos and unhappiness rather than resolution and satisfaction.

Finally, Falkland acts as Smith predicts: “Men...have sometimes been driven, by the horror of their situation, to discover, of their own accord [their crimes]. ... By acknowledging their guilt, by submitting themselves to the resentment of their offended fellow-citizens, and, by thus satiating that vengeance of which they were sensible that they had become the proper objects, rather of compassion than of horror, if possible to die in peace and with the forgiveness of all their fellow-creatures” (PG #). Sympathy drives Falkland to finally confess his guilt. But, he doesn't find peace. As he says, “death and infamy must seize me together” (336). Again, sympathy only ends in unhappiness.

Caleb, too, is driven by a love of fame that, in the end, only leads to sadness. In his section on the relationship of fame and sympathy Smith also investigates the impact of the internal spectator on an innocent man accused of a horrible crime. This individual, like the guilty man, is haunted by misery. Imagining others imagining horrible things about him exacerbate, through sympathy, his own anguish at his wronged innocence. Smith explains:

But an innocent man...is often, not only shocked, but most severely mortified by the serious, though false, imputation of a crime..... He is humbled to find that any body should think so meanly of his character as to suppose him capable of being guilty of it. Though perfectly conscious of his own innocence, the very imputation seems often, even in his own imagination, to throw a shadow of disgrace and dishonor upon his character. His just indignation, too, at so very gross an injury, which, however, it may frequently be improper, and sometimes even impossible to revenge is itself a very painful sensation. There is no greater tormentor of the human breast than violent resentment which cannot be gratified. An innocent man, brought to the scaffold by the false imputation of an infamous

or odious crime, suffers the most cruel misfortune which it is possible for innocence to suffer (PG#).

Caleb is a perfect case study for this category of individual. The novel starts with his seeking justice from the reader: he wants the reader to understand his maligned reputation and acquit him of guilt. Throughout the rest of the story, Caleb searches in vain for a place where, and friends among whom, he can prove his fame. His falsely sullied name always precedes him or catches up to him, however, and he is constantly hounded by the pain of thinking that others think he is wicked.

The content of Godwin's novel, then, brings sympathy under fire. Whereas in novels like *Pamela* and the realist novels that follow it, sympathy allows characters to blossom into socializing individuals, in *Caleb Williams* sympathy is catalyst for character failure. Thus, *Caleb Williams* is able to mount a critique of sympathy from within the bounds of sympathetic ideology. It brings the philosophy of Smith and Hume to life in Caleb and Falkland, in the manner of eighteenth-century mainstream novels, and then pushes that philosophy to its limits. The communication and regulation that sympathy ought to make possible crumbles in the face of human weakness: curiosity and love of reputation. Caleb and Falkland are blinded by their internal spectators. They cannot understand each other because they are too preoccupied with imagining what the other person is imagining about them. Mark Philips, in *Godwin's Political Justice* expresses this well. He calls the situation in *Caleb Williams* a "mixed-motive game" in which both parties realize there is a conflict of interest and in which both are waiting to see what the other will do and know that they both know they are waiting. So, the observation and assumptions compound: individual A's actions depend on what he or she thinks individual B thinks that individual A will think that individual B is thinking. Thus, "trust is unattainable"

(110). Philips says that creating this situation in the novel “shows how what is generally thought of as a problem of recalcitrant human nature is in fact the product of a corrupt social order”

(110). In other words, sympathy, which the novel helps naturalize as human nature, is exposed in Godwin’s novel as social ideology [discuss with Tony: I think Philips would disagree with me]. By placing Falkland and Caleb in a social relationship that ends up being totally anti-social because of sympathy, Godwin is showing that sympathy is actually a set of arbitrary rules that can’t fully account for or be human nature.

Godwin also critiques sympathy through the form of his novel. And, just as Godwin’s novel uses ideology of sympathy to critique sympathy in its content, this novel also pushes the limits of that ideology while retaining its form. This happens in two ways. Firstly, Godwin’s novel, like *Pamela*, is told from Caleb’s first person point of view. In *Pamela*, this perspective allows the reader to enter into the heroine’s thoughts. As already discussed, the reader is thus able to sympathize with Pamela as she embodies the ideology of sympathy. Pamela regulates herself as if for an audience, inviting the reader into the social reading experience of sympathy novels. As briefly pointed out above, Caleb petitions the reader’s sympathy at the very beginning of the novel and he courts it throughout his story, justifying and explaining his actions. However, this perspective on Caleb’s character doesn’t work like it does in *Pamela*. Because of his flaws of both curiosity and love of fame and the resulting strained sympathy between Falkland and Caleb, the reader is cut off repeatedly from the truth. Caleb’s narration is clearly flawed and biased as he voices assumptions about what Falkland feels and thinks, which are often patently unfair. Caleb sees that his confessedly kind, intelligent, wonderful master is melancholy and almost immediately decides that Falkland must be a murderer. He also assumes throughout the story that Falkland is out to get him; in fact, this is the basis of his compliant to

the reader. But, in the end, it turns out that Falkland was always looking out for Caleb. As Mark Philips says, “Much of [Caleb’s] behavior is understandable, and yet both Caleb and the reader come to recognize serious misjudgments. Caleb is not, then, an objective narrator: he offers and flawed subjective view of the world” (111). Caleb’s unreliability is exposed through the point of view of the novel, and this breaks down the social relationship of reader and protagonist. Just as the sympathy between Falkland and Caleb ends up isolating both characters, this first person point of view, which ought to connect the reader and character and naturalize the sympathetic experience, also isolates the reader. Therefore, the form of *Caleb Williams* invites the reader into a sympathetic relationship with Caleb only to uncover the limits of that kind of reading. [did I just open a can of worms that I need to address?]

Secondly, the narrative itself finally breaks down in end. In the unpublished ending, Caleb goes mad and the narrative structure of the novel collapses; the reader is literally denied access to Caleb’s feelings, disrupting the (albeit strained) sympathetic bond formed through reading the text. It also again exposes the limits of fiction by showing that the psyche of the protagonist is unreal and unreachable. The social world of the novel is exposed as a set of rules, rather than reality. In the published ending, Caleb himself creates distance from the sympathy of the reader, recognizing that he has forfeited his right to it when he sees that he’s misjudged Falkland and driven his master and pursuer to the grave. As he says, “I began these memoirs with the idea of vindicating my character. I have now no character that I wish to vindicate: But I will finish them that thy [Falkland’s] story may be fully understood; and that if those errors of thy life be known which thou so ardently desiredst to conceal, the world may at least not hear and repeat a half-told and mangled tale” (337). This ending, perhaps even more than the unpublished one, discloses the limits of sympathy. It invites the reader to rethink the entire

narrative: instead of Caleb's story it is supposedly Falkland's. All this does is reinforce the idea introduced by the last words of novel: that this is "half-told" and "mangled" and a "tale." All three of these denaturalize the sympathy built up by the narrative. Half-told and mangled both suggest that sympathy cannot and does not contain the entirety of what is to be human. It is, in fact, ideology naturalized as human reality. Tale implies a fiction: exactly the opposite of what Caleb asserts. This exposes sympathy as exactly that: the fiction that underlies the reality naturalized by the novel.

Thus, this novel uses the trappings of sympathy in order to expose it as ideology. Sympathy, according to the mainstream novel and Enlightenment philosophy, ought to have helped both Falkland and Caleb enter a collective with each other while also satisfying their own individual needs. Sympathy constitutes and cultivates the modern individual. In *Caleb Williams*, sympathy is strained to the point where it becomes the problem. Sympathy drives both protagonists to destruction, and in the end even the narrative cannot sustain the pressure. This is what the anti-sympathy novel offers: a way express anxiety about the novel, and thus the reality it presents, represents, and creates, from within the novel itself. Caleb concludes his memoirs on a rather sour note: "But of what use are talents and sentiments in the corrupt wilderness of human society? It is a rank and rotten soil, from which every finer shrub draws poison as it grows. All that in a happier field and a purer air would expand into virtue and germinate into usefulness, is thus converted into henbane and deadly nightshade" (336). However, this, like the rest of the novel, begs to be read critically. While the anti-sympathy novel stretches sympathy past its breaking point, exposing it as ideology, it still retains the trappings of sympathy. Although Caleb's tale is half-told and mangled, in the end the two men do come to a meeting of the minds. They both acknowledge each other's goodness. Sympathy allows them to enter, for

just a moment, into a mutually beneficial society. And, even though neither man really gets to profit from that society, perhaps their readers do. Perhaps the readers, even though they only get to read a tale, have the opportunity to at least partially understand both Falkland and Caleb and experience sympathetic exchange. Maybe the readers' experience of sympathy is more effective because it is a tale, and they know it.