

The Heart of Civilization

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Nothing is so delightful as to incorporate.

-- Shaftesbury 53.

I. Globalizing American Studies

What does it mean to do American Studies in a globalizing world?¹ For more than a decade now, even relatively mainstream American Studies scholarship and pedagogy has turned its attention to this pressing question. In response, scholars and teachers of American Studies have begun to think with growing precision about how the post-Cold War rise of neo-liberalism and neo-imperialism as global governing strategies has restructured transnational flows of people,

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goods, and capital within and across the political, social, and cultural borders of the United States and the Americas. This focus on neo-liberal and neo-imperial modes of governmentality has led, in turn, to a critical reexamination of the ways in which more conventional American Studies scholarship has framed its research questions and, in doing so, excluded other disciplinary and interdisciplinary forms of inquiry, including attempts in the "fields" of postcolonial and cultural studies to map longer, non-nationalist histories of anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist struggle. Most notably, the tradition of "American exceptionalism" and its central preoccupation with the "question of American identity" has now been displaced by a concern with the operations of "American" economic, political, and cultural power in a variety of global conjunctures. As Amy Kaplan, a past President of the U.S. American Studies Association, put it in her introduction to the landmark 1993 collection of essays *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, "foregrounding imperialism in the study of American cultures shows how putatively domestic conflicts are not simply contained at home but how they both emerge in response to international struggles and spill over national boundaries to be reenacted, challenged, or transformed" (16).

Like the essays in that volume, much of the most important work in the field of American Studies over the past ten years has charted the transnational histories of U.S. imperialism and anti-imperialism. Rather than asking and re-asking the age-old question "What is an American?", this new scholarship introduces a research problematic focused on how the concept of "America" and the practices of "Americanism" have produced and reproduced social inequalities, both locally and globally. At the same time, this "post-nationalist" turn within American Studies scholarship has done more than critique the long history of U.S. imperial discourses and practices, including those currently operating under the guise of "globalization," understood as a

mixture of neo-liberal economics, anti-statist politics, and commodity aesthetics. It has also introduced a second research problematic focused on the question of how to archive and narrate a counter-history of "globalization," one in which local struggles against and resistances to the history of U.S. imperialism have been and can be articulated to one another. A wide range of American Studies scholars have begun to collect data and formulate arguments intended to narrate pasts and imagine futures in which socially egalitarian political alliances travel through the circuits of U.S. imperialism without being hard-wired by them. While this new work circulates under a variety of names ("transnational cultural studies," "black internationalism," "polyculturalism," and even "empire"), it collectively indexes a shift toward a less insular and nation-focused American Studies.² In this context, even the late Edward Said, a figure whom (for a variety of bad reasons) one would rarely associate with the field American Studies, could argue *for* the establishment of more American Studies programs internationally in response to the global fallout from the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. The effect of such programs, Said suggested, could be to "excavate beyond the intimidatingly unified surface [of U.S. culture] to see what lies beneath, so as to be able to join in that set of disputes, to which many of the people of the world are a party" ("Other" 8).

I begin with this very brief overview of the intellectual and political turn toward a post-nationalist American Studies scholarship because it provides the context for the lines of inquiry and argumentation I will pursue in this essay. Specifically, I will illustrate and try to advance this post-nationalist turn within the field of American Studies by focusing on two texts that may seem, at first

² I adopt these coinages from recent studies by Michael Denning (2004), Brent Hayes Edwards (2003), Vijay Prashad (2001), and Michael Hardt/Antonio Negri (2000).

glance, to lie outside of the scope of these concerns. The first is an essay published in the context of early eighteenth-century British debates about the rise of market-oriented forms of sociability: Lord Shaftesbury's *Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor* (1709). The second is a novel published in the midst of debates in the early nineteenth-century United States concerning contemporary U.S. policy toward Native Americans: Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok: A Tale of Early Times* (1824). Both are texts that we categorize today as "liberal" and "sentimental." They are "liberal" because they tend to oppose direct governmental intervention into civil society, preferring instead to imagine that the mediation of social conflict is best achieved through consensualist means of public persuasion and civic engagement. They are "sentimental" because they ground their strategies of persuasion and theories of consent in the sensations of their readers' bodies. In this way, each participates in and influences the development of the discourse that I will refer to as sentimental imperialism a discourse that roots the abstract universalism of Anglo-American liberalism in the particularities of local practices of embodiment. As I hope to make clear, these specific and shifting articulations of liberalism's (globalizing) claims and its (localizing) procedures underwrite the theory and practice of Anglo-American imperialism. As should also become clear, however, I am not interested in simply demonstrating the ways in which this form of sentimental imperialism operates, but also in mapping some of its less predictable effects and genealogies.

II. The History of the Culture of Sentiment

Let me start with *Hobomok*. Published in 1824 and intended as an intervention into contemporary debates over various strategies for

resolving the "Indian problem" in the contexts of diverse U.S. nation-building imperialisms, Child's novel tells two stories at once. The first is represented as an historical account drawn from "old and forgotten manuscripts" (4) of the now canonical origins of the American republic in the sectarian controversies of the sixteenth-century British colony of Plymouth; the second is an interracial romance focused on a love triangle involving the daughter of a Puritan colonist (Mary Conant), an Episcopalian adventurer (Charles Brown), and the eponymous "untutored chief"(Hobomok) (84). Predictably, much of the novel involves a thematic exploration of the religious, racial, and sexual differences embodied by the three main characters, as well as the narrative synthesis of the historical and romance plots. The first leads to Mary's father's denial of Charles's request for her hand due to his Episcopalianism and, as a direct result, to Charles's self-banishment from Plymouth in search of "wealth" and "treasure" in the British East Indies (103). The second is nowhere better condensed than in the opening of one of the novel's pivotal chapters as the unnamed narrator reports that a "strange visitant" had "usurped empire" in Hobomok's "heart" (84). The "visitant" here is, of course, Mary, though Hobomok's attraction to her is attributed not to what we refer to today as "romantic love," but to her apparent divinity ("'twas but admiration for so bright an emanation from the Good Spirit") and her earlier good work of nursing Hobomok's mother back to health ("if something within him taught him to copy, with promptitude, all the kind attentions of the white man, 'twas gratitude for the life of his mother with she had preserved") (84). Similarly, Mary's largely unconscious attraction to Hobomok results from her "woman's heart" and its love of "the flattery of devoted attention, let it come from whatever source it may," as well as her tendency to "listen with too much interest, to [Hobomok's] descriptions of the Indian nations, glowing as they were in the brief, figurative language of nature" (84).

As indicated by these ambivalent etiologies of interracial desire, Child flirts with the possibility of naturalizing the eroticization of stereotypical differences other than sex. She even goes so far a few chapters later as to wed Hobomok and Mary in a union that potentially allegorizes a racially mixed future for the republic through the birth of their child, "Little Hobomok" (a national allegory that she plays out more fully in her 1867 novel, *A Romance of the Republic*). In this sense, *Hobomok* can and should be read as a progressive response to the period's better-known, more explicitly racist writers and politicians such as James Fenimore Cooper and Andrew Jackson. As Carolyn Karcher argues in her introduction to the novel, Child's "insight into the connection between male dominance and white supremacy" provides her with the "central theme of *Hobomok* and indeed of her entire life as a reformer and author: interracial marriage, symbolizing a natural alliance between white women and people of color, and the natural resolution of America's racial and sexual contradictions" (xx).³ While this sounds promising, Child ultimately draws up short of completing a national allegory of interracial republicanism both here and elsewhere in the novel by denaturalizing and de-eroticizing the differences that draw Mary to Hobomok as either excessive ("too much interest") or inappropriate ("let it come from whatever source"). These rhetorical hesitations have led Child's more recent critics to read her more skeptically and, in doing so, to implicate her "feminism" (a contested term here, as it was in the nineteenth century) in precisely the racializing nationalism that Karcher sees it as successfully critiquing. Ezra F. Tawil, for instance, notes that the absence of any "language of desire or love" between Mary and Hobomok implicitly naturalizes "a white woman's desire for a white man" (in this case, Mary's desire for Charles) ("Indelible" 111). Thus, Tawil concludes

³ For a longer version of this reading and a richer sense of Child's historical context, see Karcher (1998).

(contra Karcher) that "by making the reproduction of American culture seem to depend on the proper direction of the white woman's desire, domestic frontier fiction provided the conditions of possibility of an Anglo-Saxonist nationalism and the fateful articulation of race and nation" (119).⁴

Rather than continuing to flip this interpretive coin, I would suggest that both of its sides are accurate. Child's novel is oppositional within at least one of its historical conjunctures. It clearly takes on the period's patriarchal "Indian haters." And it also verifies recent observations by Amy Kaplan, Ann Laura Stoler, and many others that, as Kaplan puts it in a recent essay, the "feminist" idea of female influence, "so central to domestic discourse and at the heart of the sentimental ethos, was underwritten by and abetted the imperial expansion of the nation" (*Anarchy* 42). From the start, Child leaves little doubt that her intimate story of interracial romance and her (trans)national history of imperial expansion are both part of Hobomok's tutelage, what Homi Bhabha would call his lesson in colonial mimicry (how "to copy, with promptitude, all the kind attentions of the white man" without ever becoming or accessing the privileges of a "white man") (*Location* 85-92). The novel begins as Hobomok, "momentarily distracted from his pursuit of wild game," leaps into a magic circle drawn by Mary in order to conjure her ideal future husband, Charles Brown. Hobomok's disruption of that ritual and his prospective usurpation of Brown's romantic role evoke an "involuntary shriek of terror" from Mary (13-14). Her nerves are then calmed only by Hobomok's retreat, and the subsequent appearance in the circle of Brown himself. Following a series of plot twists, including Brown's voyage to the East Indies and his captivity for three years along the "African coast," the novel concludes as it fulfills this

⁴ For a complementary reading of the novel, see Vasquez (2001).

telegraphed plot (145). Child first weds Mary and Hobomok (the union that produces "Little Hobomok"), and then relies on the elder Hobomok's voluntary nullification of that marriage in order to enable the fated alliance of Mary and Charles (a union that results in the renaming of "Little Hobomok" as "Charles Hobomok Conant"). His "Indian appellation" gradually forgotten during a distinguished career at Cambridge, Mary's son comes to identify solely with his matronym and, through that identification, to embody a westward-leaning synthesis of Puritan New England and Episcopalian Old England. Along the way to this simultaneous resolution of both the "Indian" and the "national" problems, love tutors Mary to overcome her initial "terror" at Hobomok's "savagery" and renders Hobomok "civilized" enough to recognize Brown's superior claim to Mary's heart, even as it leaves him sufficiently "savage" to flee west where he "pursued with delirious eagerness every animal that came within his view" (140).

To conclude from this "tale of early times" that the pedagogies of sentimentalism, nationalism, and imperialism are interwoven is to state the obvious. And I might continue at this point by citing other sound-bites from the archive of sentimental imperialism that support and complicate the texture of that pedagogy. As Kaplan points out, mid-nineteenth century authors ranging from Sarah Hale and Catherine Beecher to Susan Warner and E.D.E.N. Southworth consistently embedded their sentimental and domestic narratives within racializing geographies of imperial expansion. While significant differences existed among the political positions staked out by these authors, the ground of those differences was a relatively stable ideology that Kaplan aptly terms "manifest domesticity": "'Manifest Domesticity' turns an imperial nation into a home by producing and colonizing specters of the foreign that lurk inside and outside its ever-shifting borders" (*Anarchy* 50). One of those "specters" is clearly Hobomok who functions within the (trans)national romance narrative of Mary Conant and Charles Brown

both to secure Child's critique of more militant "Indian-haters" (whom she aligns with the patriarchs of the Puritan past) and to confirm her insistence elsewhere that "Indians...*can* be civilized," but only if "we" evince "our" civility in abiding by the "Law of Love" in "our" relations with "them" (*Letters* 186). The persistence of this hegemony is nowhere more obvious than in its strategic redeployment in the official U.S. response to the publication of evidence in May 2004 of the abuse and torture of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. military personnel and civilian contractors. Just as Mary Conant's "involuntary shriek of terror" at Hobomok's appearance as her fated husband suggests that her aversion to the possibility of racial amalgamation is rooted in a bodily response that exceeds her conscious will, George W. Bush and his cohort universally expressed a reaction of physical "disgust" at the photos from Abu Ghraib, and then swiftly used that reaction to ground their claim that, in Bush's words, "that's not the way we do things" ("Horror" 3). Quick to recognize a ruse that spun evidence of prisoner abuse as a myth of national morality, Rob Corddry of Comedy Central's Daily Show wryly satirized the Bush administration's strategic dissociation of moral intent and historical fact: "Remember, it's not important that we did torture these people. What's important is that we are not the kind of people who would torture these people" ("Hawks" 10).

Further work on building and contesting this archive of sentimental imperialism continues to be one of the pressing concerns of the post-nationalist turn within American Studies, but it is not what I want to do in the remainder of this essay. Rather, I will continue by asking a question that seems to me more central to assessing the current state of critical studies of this brand of sentimentalism. Given the explicitness of Child's rhetorical interweaving of sentimental, national, and imperial themes, what does it mean that research conversations focused on these themes can be received as news within American Studies scholarship today? As I have already suggested, one important

answer to this question would trace this sense of novelty to the national paradigm that, until recently, has structured the field of American Studies and its often vexed relation to the research questions grouped under the headings of postcolonial and cultural studies. As Ann Stoler has argued, one effect of this national paradigm has been the isolation of questions of nation formation from histories of imperial expansion and intimate forms of colonial power. Conventional American Studies research thus tends to neglect what Stoler refers to as "strategies of exclusion on the basis of social credentials, sensibility, and cultural knowledge" that link "the making of an imperial body politic to the making of sexualized and racialized selves" ("Tense" 832). A second effect of this national paradigm has been the scholarly repetition of the nationalist allegory that structures Child's narrative. Since the point of this exceptionalist brand of American Studies has been to codify and market what is distinctively "American" about the United States, colonial and imperial dynamics prior to the moment of "national founding" tend to be seen, for good or bad, only as a pre-history of the nation. This second effect of the national paradigm has proven as damaging to the study of the culture of sentimental imperialism as has the first. With several significant recent exceptions, the study of that culture in the context of the United States has simplified, if not ignored its non-national and non-nineteenth century origins. It is in an attempt to counter these two tendencies that I turn now to Shaftesbury.

III. The Theory of the Culture of Moral Sentiment

Shaftesbury is not a new starting-point for this sort of inquiry, of course. First published in 1709, *Sensus Communis* is a text that seems to require a few paragraphs in virtually every historical account of the

rise of the eighteenth-century culture of sentiment. And there is good reason for this convention: Shaftesbury's writings do mark an important intersection of the philosophic discourse of sensationalism, on the one hand, and the emergence of contractual theories of liberal governmentality, on the other. As Lawrence Klein points out, Shaftesbury's treatise is best understood as the attempt of a Whig polemicist to provide a rich cultural justification for a ruling political faction that was often viewed by its Tory opponents as, in Shaftesbury's words, "unpolite, unformed, without literature or manners" ("Introduction" xix). In response, *Sensus Communis* deploys a concept of "sociability" intended to demonstrate that "the existence of natural affections meant that the human had impulses towards others which had no ground in self-referring affections or calculations" (*Shaftesbury* 59). In this relatively familiar context, "nothing is so delightful as to incorporate" because Shaftesbury wants to argue that "egotistical" political philosophies ranging from the monarchical statism of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651) to the social contractualism of John Locke's second *Treatise of Government* (1690) overlook the ontological grounding of human relations in a common history and culture of sociability. In place of such "self-interested" philosophies, Shaftesbury develops concepts of social affect and pleasure in order to argue that our common "sense of fellowship"—our "delight" in "incorporating"—provides expressive and autonomous norms of social behavior without the heteronomous intervention of either the church or the state (51). "Sensus communis" names the "love of the community or society, natural affection, humanity, obligingness, or that sort of civility which rises from a just sense of the common rights of mankind, and the natural equality there is amongst those of the same species" (48).

A page later, Shaftesbury locates this "common sense" in the privileged bodily locus of sentimental affect (the "heart, rather than

the head"), thus securing his status at the forefront of sentimental humanism (49). From here, it is only a small step to either Adam Smith's dual and contradictory assertions in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) that anyone lacking such "amiable passions" ought "like a wild beast... to be hunted out of all civil society," and that the same individual will be "secretly pursued by the avenging furies of shame and remorse" precisely because such passions can never be fully absent (40, 65), or Immanuel Kant's more abstract attempts in *The Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) to ground moral decision-making in a "nonsensuous interest" that is nonetheless evinced "in mixed companies consisting not merely of scholars and subtle reasoners but also of business people and women" (82, 156-57). As G.J. Barker-Benfield and others have observed (and as heart-less sentimental ur-villains such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's Simon Legree demonstrate), this contradictory account of a "sense" that is simultaneously expressive and regulatory, embodied and collective, an individual feeling and a social codification of that feeling, both isolates the generic coherence of the discourse of sentimentalism and accounts for a good deal of the cultural authority it wields. In each of these diverse cases, "sensus communis" announces the entrance of what the post-colonial critic Uday Singh Mehta refers to as the "anthropological minimums" that haunt even the most "universal" of Anglo-American liberalisms (*Liberalism* 63). Shaftesbury and his sentimental legacy thus amplify an existing tension within Locke an political theory between the universalizing ideal of a fully consensual social contract and the localizing procedures of tutelage and embodiment that underwrite judgments concerning any individual's "capacity" to consent to that contract. The marks of this tension are legible through the adjectives that modify and create functional oppositions within the otherwise universal nouns in each of the passages above: Shaftesbury's "sense of the common rights of

mankind" is specifically "just" Smith's universal "passions" are also "amiable" Kant's "interest" is explicitly "nonsensuous."

In reviewing this productive contradiction within the culture of sentiment, I realize that I am still traveling on relatively familiar ground. Studies of sentimentalism, including my own, have consistently argued that the culture and the politics of sentimentality intersect at the points where local practices of embodiment are regulated and policed through the production and circulation of national and imperial bodily norms. What I would like to gesture toward in the space that I have left are two less familiar contexts for Shaftesbury's adage. My purpose here is both to map and to expand the discursive fields that inform our genealogies of modern sentimentalism, nationalism, and imperialism; and I will to make this point by alluding briefly to two impressive histories of the long eighteenth century, each of which was published contemporaneously with the studies cited above, each of which casts Shaftesbury in a starring role, and each of which evinces a complete neglect of the other's subject matter. The first is Mary Poovey's *A History of the Modern Fact* (1998). Poovey's lucid and extremely detailed history begins with the rise of double entry bookkeeping in the late fifteenth century and concludes with the development of the sciences of the social in the mid-nineteenth century. In this account of the interplay between "facts" and "theories" of individual and collective self-governance, Shaftesbury's "experimental moral philosophy" stands at the origin of the idea of the "moral fact": "moral philosophers tended to discount what was singular about observed particulars and to see through them, as it were, to the universals they supposedly incarnated"(156). It is no coincidence that Poovey's play on the term "incarnate" echoes Shaftesbury's pun on "incorporation" since the novelty of this type of moral philosophy is not that the evidence it seeks is simultaneously particular and universal (a tension that Poovey

locates in all theories of the "modern fact"), but that it accesses a proto-scientific knowledge of society through the sensations of the body (Mary's "shudder of terror" Bush's "disgust"). In this context, "nothing is so delightful as to incorporate" because the sensation of bodily pleasure ("delight") provides the "factual" basis of Shaftesbury's anxious theorization of social relations and moral norms.

I refer to this theory as anxious because the immediate context of Shaftesbury's adage is his discussion of imperialism and the tendency of "powerful states" to send "colonys Abroad" (53). Understood as a form of "incorporation" that is both "natural" because "delightful," and "unnatural" because it tends to make the relations between the "magistrate" and the "people" "less sensible," such imperial ambitions demonstrate both the universality of the "associating genius of man" and the danger of "associations" that are either too broad or too narrow (53). While excessive breadth threatens to dismember the "body politic" by severing the "head" from its "limbs" and "members," extreme narrowness engenders "strong factions" or "wheels within wheels" (53).⁵ Though Shaftesbury is careful here to balance these two negative possibilities in order to position "men of moderation" as the mediators between the two poles, his choice of metaphors indicates an implicit asymmetry (53). Organic images of dismemberment suggest the potential failure of the "social sense" inherent in every body, while mechanistic images of wheels and gears indicate the emergence of a different paradigm altogether. The logic of the argument thus points toward a cosmopolitanism inclusive of the eclectic assortment of "nations" and "peoples" referenced in the treatise ("Ethopia," "Turks," "Brittons," "Dutch," "French," "eastern countries," "barbarous nations," "Jews," "Heathens," "Asia," etc.), but it is a cosmopolitanism regulated by the superior "sense" of the one

⁵ For a reading of this passage that focuses on the problematic of "faction" and its relation to the gender politics of Shaftesbury's essay, see Ellison (1999).

nation and people that Shaftesbury credits with a superior capacity for self-governance: "As for us Britons, thank heaven, we have a better sense of government delivered to us from our ancestors. Our increasing knowledge shows us every day, more and more, what common sense is in politics; And this must of necessity lead us to understand a like sense in morals; which is the foundation" (50-51). As Mehta would have predicted, the topography of this moral geography reveals the historical and anthropological contours of Shaftesbury's liberal imagination. The "facts" discovered by his "common sense" provides the outlines of (and the "foundations" for) a geopolitics that nicely maps (and morally justifies) contemporary British colonial holdings and rivalries.⁶

The second history in which Shaftesbury appears is Randolph Trumbach's *Sex and the Gender Revolution* (1998). In contrast to Poovey who focuses on the rise of the sciences of the social and their relation to liberal modes of governmentality, Trumbach is centrally concerned with the historical emergence of the modern Anglo-American sex-gender system. But in the resulting account of the emergence at the end of the seventeenth century of the idea of a "third gender" comprised of "mollies" and "sodomites," Shaftesbury serves again as a transitional figure. In his early writings (including a privately circulated libertine fantasy entitled *The Adept Ladies*), Shaftesbury aligned himself with a model of male libertinage that welcomed the erotic pursuit of both women and boys. As Trumbach observes, the implications of these writings were apparent to

⁶ The lines elided by the ellipses in this passage also confirm Poovey's argument concerning the tendency of moral philosophers such as Shaftesbury to gesture toward mathematics as a ground for their moral judgments since, as Poovey puts it, "mathematics was assumed to produce certain knowledge" (181). Those lines read as follows: "We have the notion of a public and a constitution, how a legislative and how an executive is modeled. We understand weight and measure in this kind and can reason justly on the balance of power and property. The maxims we draw from hence are as evident as those in mathematics" (50).

Shaftesbury's contemporaries, most notably in this context to Samuel Richardson who, in the best-known of all sentimental novels (*Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady*) (1748), has his arch-villain (Lovelace) dupe his virtuous heroine (Clarissa) into believing that he had never "in pursuance of Lord Shaftesbury's text (which is part of the rake's creed, and what I may call *the whetstone of infidelity*), endeavored to turn the sacred subject [of Christianity] into ridicule" (81). In his later writings, however, Shaftesbury moved away from a libertinism that confounds our current distinctions between hetero- and homoerotics, and toward a language of sensuality that was exclusively heteroerotic and homosocial. Trumbach accounts for this shift in two ways. First, he suggests that even Shaftesbury's later writings such as *Sensus Communis* are, in effect, libertine essays dressed in a sentimental drag: "there is no doubt that Shaftesbury's doctrine that it was from our senses and our affections, and not from an externally imposed rationalism, that a true morality arose must have come out of the libertinism of the 1670s" (78). Second, he argues that Shaftesbury's conversion from libertinism was strategic since it allowed him to fashion a successful career in politics by providing "a refined libertinism and sensuality with its greatest respectability" (81). Both explanations suggest that Shaftesbury participated in a general move in the period away from a system of erotic activity in which relations of subordination were maintained through a variety of status categories (age, class, sex), and toward one in which a "third-gender role" became available as a means of recognizing and regulating the homoerotic behavior of a minority of men (and later women) (9).

In this context, the interesting term in Shaftesbury's adage is not so much "incorporation" as it is "delight." In a long footnote to *Sensus Communis*, Shaftesbury cites scripture in order to applaud forms of friendship whose "love and tenderness was surpassing that of women": "Such were those friendships described so frequently by

poets, between Pylades and Orestes, Theseus and Pirithous, with many others. Such were those between philosophers, heroes, and the greatest of men. And such there may have lately been, and still perhaps are in our own age; though envy suffers not the few examples of this kind to be remarked in public" (46-47). Elsewhere in *Sensus Communis*, Shaftesbury is careful to balance this passage with counter-assertions concerning the "moral part" unknowingly played even by libertines (63). Just as "egotistical" philosophers such as Hobbes reveal their ultimate faith in sociability simply through the act of communication ("If they have hard thoughts of human nature, it is a proof still of their humanity that they give such warning to the world"), libertine "admirers of beauty in the fair sex" reveal, through that very act of "admiration," a "friendly social view for the pleasure and good of others" (44, 63). Still, Shaftesbury's privileging of male-male friendship invokes the displaced presence of an earlier and not exclusively heteroerotic libertine tradition associated most frequently with Rochester. The link to that tradition is displaced rather than severed, however, because Shaftesbury's insistence that the "common sense of fellowship" can be best nurtured in "contracted publics" where "men may be intimately conversant and acquainted with one another" and "better taste society" maintains its grounding in capacious categories of "sensation" and "delight" that exceed the narrower constraints of the subsequent deployment of "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality" (52). Where Poovey's history ought to push American Studies scholars to think more carefully about the forms of social knowledge that link the discourses of sentimentalism and imperialism, Trumbach's suggests that our genealogy of those discourses also may discover less familiar and predictable forms of affect, sensation, and pleasure.

IV. Nothing

In keeping with the speculative tenor of what I have argued thus far, I would like to end on a point that is more suggestive than conclusive. I have maintained that Poovey's history of the sciences of the social links the culture of sentimental imperialism to the development of diverse morally-grounded procedures of regulation and normalization, and that Trumbach's history of the modern Anglo-American sex-gender system locates the same culture at the origins of the deployment of a "third gender role" as a means of policing the body and its sensations as either homo- or heterosexual (but not both). And I have traced these histories to the predicates of Shaftesbury's adage ("incorporation" and "delight"), but I have said little of its subject. Why "Nothing is so delightful as to incorporate?" Why not "There is nothing so delightful as to incorporate," or "To incorporate is the greatest delight?" Poovey hints at one answer to this question. Experimental moral philosophy, she suggests, arose in league with strategies of liberal governmentality that applied only to individuals judged capable of becoming self-governing in both senses of the term: self-liberating and self-policing. And it contributed to these emerging forms of governmentality an understanding of the self-regulating individual as possessing an interiority constituted by affect and desire. "Nothing," in this context, needs to be read as the "subject" of Shaftesbury's adage with both the grammatical and the psychological meaning of that term in mind. Located at the sentimental core of the subject of the Anglo-American "modernity" that Shaftesbury helped to bring into being (the "heart"), "nothing" performs two related functions. It abstracts the individual from the local (political, legal, geographic, and economic) procedures of embodiment that structure the lived experience of everyday life, and it re-embodies that individual as a subject with desires that can be voluntarily negotiated.

Because those desires are understood as voluntary (or at worst, as open to tutelage), the subject can be held accountable for having willed them. Because the same desires are an effect of specific local procedures of embodiment (and forms of tutelage), they can be used to differentiate between those subjects who are capable of liberal self-governance and those who are not.

To return to Child's novel, we can see the work accomplished by Shaftesbury's "nothing" in the magic circle that Mary draws in order to prophecy a future that is simultaneously sentimental, national, and imperial. Though Mary acts as if those futures are in the making (as if the circle were truly empty) and though the narrator writes as if Mary's "shriek of terror" were spontaneous ("involuntary"), the reader knows that the events of Child's "tale of early times" are pre-inscribed (that the content of the circle is pre-determined and that Mary's "shriek" is Child's invention). The effect of this double vision is to induce the reader to hold characters responsible for actions that Child herself describes as "fated." Like Shaftesbury's predicating "nothing," the emptiness of Child's circle is thus crucial to the work of sentimental imperialism. It not only opens the individual onto processes of subjection and subject-formation, but also imagines that subject as formed through a (racializing) dialectic of corporeality and desire, of incorporation and delight. In turn, this dialectic manifests liberalism's historical and theoretical linkages to the "domestic" and "foreign" imperialisms that were (and are) contemporary with its (re)emergence. Just as Mary and Charles can be understood at the end of *Hobomok* as enacting a (trans)national allegory of imperial expansion simply through the expression of their reciprocal desire for one another (the "empire of the heart" as the "heart of civilization"), *Hobomok* should be read as the "specter" haunting their desire, as the subject of an alternative history strategically misrecognized by and within the generic conventions of Child's sentimental romance of liberalism and

empire. Without a longer and less nation-focused understanding of the history of sentimental imperialism, we risk missing the larger importance of both of these points.

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Abstract

The Heart of Civilization

Bruce Burgett

This article surveys, argues for, and advances the recent post-nationalist turn in American Studies scholarship by focusing on the emergence and persistence of the Anglo-American discourse of sentimental imperialism. Drawing specifically on the writings of Lord Shaftesbury (*Sensus Communis*) and Lydia Maria Child (*Hobomok*), the article suggests that the long history of Anglo-American sentimentalism needs to be understood in relation both to the rise of liberal strategies of governmentality in the late seventeenth century and to the increased focus on the body and its sensations as a ground for political debate in the early eighteenth century. Sentimental imperialism, in this context, roots the abstract universalism of Anglo-American liberalism in the particularities of local practices of embodiment. In turn, these specific articulations of liberalism's (globalizing) claims and its (localizing) procedures underwrite the theory and practice of Anglo-American imperialism. The article also suggests that scholars and critics of post-nationalist American Studies should be interested not simply in how this form of sentimental imperialism operates, but also in mapping some of its less predictable effects and genealogies.

Keywords: Sentimental imperialism, Post-nationalism, Shaftesbury, Lydia Maria Child, Globalization.