BEYOND SOCIAL CONTROL: THE EXAMPLE OF GERRIT SMITH, ROMANTIC RADICAL

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The concept of social control has long been the dominant paradigm among radical or left-leaning students of culture for explaining the persistent growth of capitalism and the lack of sustained opposition to a competitive, bourgeois ethos. Almost two decades ago, the British historian F. M. L. Thompson noted that "the concept of social control has leapt somewhat abruptly to prominence, eagerly and almost greedily adopted by historians anxious to escape from the `poverty of empiricism.'" The very phrase, "social control," he said, "is almost on every historian's lips" (190). Within the past few years, both Carl Degler and Leo Ribuffo suggested that historians and cultural critics who see class conflict and social control in most forms of social interaction have become "institutionally dominant" in American studies and American history (Ribuffo 447). Although the notion of cultural hegemony has had far less popularity among radical historians, it can be viewed as an instrument of social control, specifically one that induces or gives signs of consent to the existing bourgeois order. One of the tacit questions asked by historians on the Left who employ the paradigm of social control is why capitalism has grown so fast and been so pervasive over the past two hundred or so years. It is as though something went wrong; the masses, given a choice, would surely have preferred something else--implicitly, a quasi-socialist framework--and social control helps to explain why they were not able substantively to resist a competitive, bourgeois market ethos. The social control paradigm has been vigorously contested, but the debate generally centers around a binary opposition between capitalism and social controllers at one end, and some kind of socialist framework at the other end.

The career of Gerrit Smith, the radical abolitionist and preeminent antebellum philanthropist, offers an excellent opportunity for historians and cultural critics to test the social control paradigm by moving beyond its binary, capitalist/socialist framework. The social control paradigm has been especially useful for explaining how romantic reform accommodated and reinforced the market revolution in antebellum America. Smith is an extremely important but overlooked philanthropist and reformer; as a romantic radical, his ideas and actions do not fit the binary, capitalist/socialist framework of accommodating social control on the one hand or rejecting it for a quasi-socialist economic system on the other hand. Smith largely resisted a competitive, market ethos without rejecting a capitalist economy. He accepted commercial exchange but did not seek to maximize profits. For Smith as well as for other members of his rural community in upstate New York, there was no inherent conflict between commerce and a communitarian ethos. Capitalism and communitarianism existed side by side. After briefly tracing the genealogy of social control, and introducing Smith within the context of the social control paradigm, it will be necessary first to show that he did indeed resist competition without rejecting capitalism; and second, to explore how and why his philanthropy and reform took the forms they did.

Throughout its history the concept of social control has been used primarily as a framework for understanding social reform. From the early use of the term by John Stuart Mill, in his 1859 work On Liberty, until the late 1950s, social control was virtually indistinguishable from socialization. Socialization focuses on the ways in which a group or class instills its values and standards in its own members--especially individuals and outsiders like children and newcomers--whether through patriarchy, schools, or public opinion; and socialization ignores interclass relations and class conflict. This non-class based use of social control was first popularized by Edward Ross in a two part essay called simply "Social Control" that appeared in the first volume (1896) of The American Journal of Sociology. Ross associated social control with the Darwinian notion of the "natural order"; he used it to describe the various ways in which a "group" exercised control over the aims and acts of an individual within the same group.

Social control as it is now used refers specifically to inter-class relations, whereby one class--typically an elite minority--"imposes its notions of what are suitable habits and attitudes for another class upon that class," according to F. M. L. Thompson, and the subjugated class is generally larger but less powerful (190-1). Often social control encompasses the concept of cultural hegemony to explain the simultaneous protest and accommodation of reformers. In hegemony, consent and force coexist, so that rebels appear vulnerable or essentially non-threatening to the existing order. Most historians argue that abolitionists who vigorously protested slavery accommodated capitalism by embracing marketplace competition and downplaying or justifying the exploitation of factory workers. In spite of (or because of) a group's protests, dissenters accommodate and reinforce the attitudes and comportment of a dominant order, and their protests involve a certain degree of self-deception.

The transformation of social control from a meaning that explains how society influences its own members to one that invokes and emphasizes inter-class relations and class conflict began in the early 1950s, at a time when the Korean War and the rise of McCarthyism and anticommunism were contributing to a breakdown in Progressive history--a school of history that effectively "disarmed" Marxist history by "absorbing its most attractive elements," according to John Higham (463). In 1851 the sociologist Talcott Parsons defined social control as "those processes in the social system which tend to counteract the deviant tendencies" (250). Parsons' use of social control as a counterforce to deviance lacked a specific inter-class focus. Rather, conflict resulted from the power differential between individuals (especially deviants) and institutions. Significantly, though, as Higham notes, one of the "crucial" changes that brought Marxism "fully into American historiography" was an increasing tolerance for deviance (463). Once deviance was no longer considered intolerable it came to symbolize class consciousness, and for many historians and critics the concept of social control acquired its present, inter-class focus.

Clifford Griffin was apparently the first historian to use the concept of social control to describe class conflict in his 1957 prize-winning essay that focused, not surprisingly, on antebellum religious benevolence as a form of social control. Soon after his article a flood of historical essays and books appeared invoking inter-class based social control,

and by the early 1960s, there was "a hunger for deviance" according to Higham, a hunger "for some posture of radical dissent that could create new identities" (463). Although there have been skeptics, the growth of interclass based social control to explain nineteenth-century religious revivals and failed attempts at reform has paralleled the rise of the Christian right and the failure of the radicalism generated in the 1960s.

The tendency to see class conflict in most social relations has become so prominent that the boundaries separating social control and socialization have again become blurred; socialization itself is now often defined by class conflict inherent in the social control paradigm. For example, Paul Johnson, in his widely influential study of the Rochester revivals, argues that evangelicalism coupled with temperance was a "middle-class solution to problems of class, legitimacy, and order" and that the willing participation of the lower classes constituted "the most total and effective social control of all" (138). But if the lower classes willingly participated in an emerging bourgeois order, with no evidence of protest, how do we know that order had been imposed upon them, and how do we know that they perceived themselves as a separate and distinct class? Jackson Lears has suggested that "no organized society can exist without governance by a hegemonic group (137). If this is the case, then hegemony and social control together represent a fundamental organizing and socializing force.

Some historians and cultural critics have gone so far as to suggest that there is no way to escape the awesome power of commercial capitalism and a competitive, market ethos, especially among individuals. While the market is endowed with animate characteristics, individuals carry little or no weight as active, causal agents; try as they might to improve and reform society and to escape the far-reaching, octopus-like grasp of capitalism, individuals' protests only result in an accommodation and reinforcement of the market-based order--or so the argument goes.

Gerrit Smith is an especially suitable individual for examining the concept of social control. He was without question the most powerful individual in his community of Peterboro in Madison County, New York, and one of the wealthiest men in the country (if one includes the enormous sums of money he gave away). He was also one of the most ardent and dedicated reformers in the country. The immediate abolition of every sin was his most passionate desire, and he went to great lengths to effect it. His underwriting and complicity in John Brown's efforts to incite a massive slave insurrection represent the most extreme example of his efforts to root out sin and pave the way for the millennium. If there was ever an opportunity for an elite to mete out social control in his efforts to reform society, Smith epitomized it; he was in an ideal position to promote the bourgeois values of a competitive market order and coerce the lower classes into accepting those values. But he did not demand or expect the lower classes to conform to his social, political, and spiritual visions in return for favors, friendship, and work.

Smith effectively resisted an emerging market order and competitive ethos without rejecting a capitalist economy for a quasi-socialist framework and the strong state apparatus that accompanies it. For Smith, wealth, private property and "self-interest" were not necessarily the root of all evil and exploitation; it was how wealth was acquired

and used and how the self was conceived that mattered. His abolitionism and other reform efforts did not promote the cultural hegemony of market capitalism and an exchange value of existence, where values and identities are reduced to quantifying risks and rewards and maximizing profits. His influence in reforming society represented a highly tolerant form of socialization in his community rather than inter-class based social control, and the distinction is central to an understanding of social reform in America.

Part of Smith's ability to resist a competitive, market ethos stemmed from social conditions, specifically the community in which he lived. But he also made personal choices, and his resistance to a competitive marketplace arose from a combination of factors. First, he conceived of himself as an outsider in society; he embraced sacred self-sovereignty, turned inward, and repositioned the fundamental locus of value on internal spiritual impulse, instincts and passions, rather than on social status and existing conventions. He internalized God's sovereignty and considered the Kingdom of God to be within him and within all individuals. By conceiving of himself as a social outsider and liberating the inner spiritual forces of human nature, he did not define himself by wealth and social rank, and thus avoided the competitive individualism so rampant among white, antebellum men.

Second, Smith's spiritual passion spread into the secular realm, and he dismantled the distinction between the sacred and profane. David Brion Davis has applied the idea of a kairos to romantic radicals, whereby the Kingdom of God enters into human affairs, spawning an "eschatological leap," or a decisive moment in history independent of linear and chronological progress, allowing reformers to "transcend the limits of previous political, racial, and economic history" (128). The idea of a kairos helps explain how antebellum radicals sought a "broad sacralization of the world" (Abzug 7). Treating such material concerns as money and wealth, commerce and government as sacred facilitated Smith's ability to resist a competitive market ethos without accepting a quasi-socialist framework and the historical determinism that went along with it.

Third, Smith embraced new rituals as a way to control his passions and extend the sacralization of the world to his own body; he dismantled the distinctions between the sacred and profane, body and soul. Mary Douglass and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg have suggested that "anti-ritualism" represents a symbolic revolt against existing formal structures, as in antebellum religious enthusiasm or in the 1960s student movement; but their use of the term "anti-ritualism" can also be interpreted to mean new rituals, new symbolic representations of new beliefs. Smith's embrace of new rituals--ranging from diet and dress to temperance and the daily toil--facilitated his ability to blur the realms of body and soul and direct his passions outward, toward a vision of a non-competitive and nonauthoritarian, pluralist and communitarian society.

Fourth, by projecting his spiritual instincts outward, Smith blended the public and private realm. According to Jurgen Habermas, the emergence of a public sphere that was distinct from the private sphere coincided with the advent of competitive, bourgeois capitalism, and it easily led to examples of social control. Smith's ability to fuse public and private realms stemmed specifically from his capacity to internalize the kingdom of God and

blend the sacred and profane, body and soul; his vision of society became an extension of himself and he avoided the double standard of embracing one set of values while imposing another set onto "other" classes and groups in a separate public realm. Additionally, his self-conception as a romantic radical who relied on spiritual instincts fostered a profound empathic awareness that was crucial in helping him to affirm diversity, respect the self-sovereignty of those different from himself, and resist the encroachments of market capitalism without embracing a quasi-socialist framework.

The many dualisms that Smith attempted to dismantle--sacred and profane, body and soul, private and public--had long provided a source of order, structure, hierarchy, and meaning in Western culture. By attacking the great Aristotelian belief that some men were born to rule and others to serve and do the basic work of human society, he was led to question other dualisms--as opposed to more conservative abolitionists who contained the assault and legitimated the status quo by separating slavery from all other institutions. The attack on traditional dualisms led to the blending of black and white, masculine and feminine identities, and this helps explain Smith's profound black identification, close friendships with blacks, and embrace of woman's rights.

In his efforts to dismantle these traditional dualisms and define self and society as boundless and sacred, Smith resembled in many respects the world views of transcendentalists, especially Emerson and Whitman. Emerson captured something of Smith's belief in sacred self-sovereignty in his 1X54 "Fugitive Slave Law" speech: "Divine sentiments," he said, "are always soliciting us, are breathed into us from on high and are a counterbalance to an universe of suffering and crime"; thus, "self-reliance, the height and perfection of man, is reliance on God" (84). A year later, in 1855, Whitman went even further in dismantling dualisms by viewing the world in sacred terms in Leaves of Grass: "In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass," he chants in "Song of Myself" (83). Much like Gerrit Smith, Whitman closely identifies with individuals far different from himself: "I am the hounded slave.... I wince at the bite of the dogs, Hell and despair are upon me." His proclamation that, "l do not ask the wounded person how he feels. . . . I feel myself become the wounded person" (62-3), is strikingly close to Gerrit Smith's statement to Frederick Douglass in 1850: "The wound [that prejudice] inflicts on you, it inflicts on us who sympathize with you, and who have identified ourselves and made ourselves colored men with you. In your sufferings, we suffer" (McKivigan 213). Emerson's essays in the 1850s, Whitman's poetry, and Smith's radical reform vision describe a condition of being based on spiritual passion, a sense of oneness of body and spirit with all humanity. Their self-conceptions represent a "precipitant of the modern," to use Alan Trachtenberg's expression, an indigenous source of a highly subjective and psychological self in American culture (198).

We cannot understand radical antebellum reform without understanding Smith's and other reformers' inward turn and embrace of sacred self-sovereignty. Smith's reliance on his spiritual instincts and passions reflected the emergence of a modern, subjective and psychological self that embraced emotion over reason, passion over rationality; it was a conception of the self that was fairly widespread among romantic radicals in antebellum

America. As John Thomas put it in his seminal essay, "Romantic Reform in America": "Accepting for the most part Emerson's dictum that one man was a counterpoise to a city, the transcendentalists turned inward to examine the divine self and find there the material with which to rebuild society" (671). The turn inward and the emergence of a modern self represented a precondition for reform. A modern self certainly did not have to lead to reform, but all romantic radicals exhibited traits of a modern self. Not every reformer resisted a competitive, market ethos (probably most did not); but some did, including Gerrit Smith. The degree to which romantic radicals were able to dismantle the various dualisms that had traditionally provided a source of order, structure, and hierarchy to society paralleled the degree to which they were able to escape the dualism of the social control paradigm and resist a competitive market order without accepting a quasi-socialist framework.

Understanding how and why Smith resisted an emerging market ethos requires a preliminary look at his community in order to understand and appreciate the forms his resistance took. He was a product of his culture, and his resistance must be seen in the context of the village of Peterboro and its township of Smithfield in Madison County, about thirty miles southwest of Utica, where he grew up and lived his entire life. His father Peter Smith, the son of Dutch immigrants, established and named the town and village in 1795, two years before Gerrit was born. As a fur trader and business partner with John Jacob Astor, Peter Smith became enormously wealthy, amassing over a million acres of land. Gerrit's mother, Elizabeth Livingston Smith, came from the prominent Livingston family; her father was a Revolutionary War colonel.

Despite Smithfield's auspicious origins and the fact that the Erie Canal cut through the northern part of Madison County and lay about eight miles north of Smithfield, neither the town nor the county witnessed the explosive economic and social growth that surrounding communities in western New York experienced. In fact, from roughly 1830 to the Civil War, Madison County represented an extremely atypical Erie Canal community, and this complicates the conventional wisdom that religious awakenings and revivals accommodated and reinforced a competitive, capitalist ethos. Madison County resembled a premodern community but lacked the rigorous patriarchal and homogeneous social order generally ascribed to premodern communities. It was one of the largest (per capita) abolitionist communities in the country but had none of the frenzy of competitive market values that many historians have associated with abolitionism. The public sphere was often indistinguishable from the private sphere but the diversity within the community precluded any hint of a utopian society. Indeed, Peterboro resembled--in one respect at least--a village out of Washington Irving's stories of Dutch New York; these stories, as Bryan Wolf has shown, reveal "distinctively modern" characters living in premodern worlds and resisting "the encroachments of commercial society" (109).

Smith had the requisite wealth, power, and connections to turn Peterboro and Madison County into an industrial, market-based society, and to connect his town and county to the burgeoning national market economy. In the early twenties, before he began to sacralize the world, he owned a profitable distillery and glass factory; he paid his workers in both cash and barter, and provided them with housing. But he dismantled the distillery

and glass factory (rather than selling them), and gave away some of the property. By 1860, Smithfield, owing to its relatively self-contained economy, was the smallest town in the county. Smith sought to protect the household economy--what he called "the house and bed-chamber and ovens and kneading troughs" in an 1839 broadside on internal improvements--from the invasion of an industrial and commercial order (Infernal Improvements). He loathed large, commercial cities, genuinely loved "dear Peterboro," as he often called his village, and the small, frontier towns in general. He donated large sums of money to community projects ranging from draining swamps that he felt posed health problems, to an integrated and co-educational school that offered free tuition to "needy children," and a public library and reading room.

His generosity became well-known, and according to contemporaries, Peterboro became a haven for beggars, tramps, wandering drunks, and the disabled. "Beggars infested the county," Octavius Frothingham complained (375); and a Peterboro tavern-owner named Mr. Fay noted that people came from all around who pretended to "sympathize with Smith's political views" for the purpose of "bleeding him," since he was "always moved by a tale of distress"; everyone, Fay said, had a chance of "making money out of him" (Herald 2 Nov. 1859). A lot of poor people did come and go from Peterboro. In addition to the many fugitive slaves who found refuge in the Smith "mansion house" (many of whom settled in the area), Smith's diary is filled with accounts describing the arrivals and departures of a "deaf child"; a "beggar woman"; a "wandering pilgrim"; a "colored, illiterate man, calling himself a missionary"; a "poor old Dutch woman" and a "begging blind man"; an "insane literary colored man"; a doctor with "five deaf mutes and a blind child"; or an Indian and his "drunk friend." They all stayed a night or so, dined at the Smith table, and left with money, a few days worth of provisions, and passionate instructions to avoid all alcohol and tobacco and to serve God, the slave, and all humanity (Frothingham 139-43). Smith's home symbolized not an insular, private sphere, but a blending of public and private spheres. And Smith made little distinction between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor. "Does not Christ pity the sufferings of the vilest man on earth?" he publicly asked the townspeople in 1842. "Then must not his disciples do likewise? . . . The good Samaritan did not repress his indignation, and stay his ministering hand while he should inquire into the moral character of the wounded man" (Frothingham 130-3).

One of the most striking characteristics about Madison County was the intensity with which evangelical-based reform efforts and their voluntary associations penetrated the stable and rural community of mostly farm families. Historians have typically linked religious revivals and reform along the Erie Canal to the fact that these communities suffered from turbulent social change. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 ushered in twelve consecutive years of rapid economic and population growth and transformed the countryside. Oneida County, for example, which adjoined Smithfield's Madison County, more than tripled in size from 1820 to 1860. But the Erie Canal did not much change Madison County and Smithfield, at least in economic and demographic terms. Madison County more closely resembled Vermont communities within the Connecticut River Valley; these communities relied on voluntary associations to secure their sacred visions against the liberal forces of a competitive market ethos.

The widespread revivals among residents in Madison County and Smithfield helped prevent chronic social change and cutthroat competition from penetrating their community; people participated in the revivals they saw going on around them, and thereby helped preserve stability. In this respect, the community was suspended between a premodern and modern society; it remained largely a premodern community, inhabited by people of mostly "modern" sensibilities who projected their internal subjectivity and spiritual passions into the public sphere. Voluntary associations became an important source for blending public and private spheres and resisting the rise of a commercial society. Mary Ryan's description of the effects of voluntary associations on the residents of Oneida County partly applies to Madison County. For a brief but critical period in the 1830s and 1840s, she writes,

family history was suspended between the patriarchal household and the middle-class home. In that moment the men and women of Oneida County stepped outside their households and into [voluntary] associations where they collectively devised novel modes of social support and security as a counterpoise to the frenzy of a rapidly growing market town. (143)

The same phenomenon occurred in Madison County, but without the rapid compIetion of the cycle. Face-to-face association meetings and public letters and broadsides revealing private sentiments all represented a communitarian form of interaction and a blending of public and private spheres.

The increasing spiritual zeal of residents like Smith helped to arrest the invasion of a market ethos in Madison County. Immediate abolitionism became the most visible manifestation of that zeal, and it was rooted in a sustained effort at sacralizing the world. By the mid-1840s, close to half of Smithfield's citizens voted for Liberty Party candidates in annual elections (a party devoted to the immediate abolition of slavery that Smith had helped found), and this was a town with an overwhelming majority of farmers (Kraut). A number of other residents embraced immediate abolitionism without actually voting for Liberty Party candidates, and in 1852 the majority of voters in Madison and Oswego Counties elected Smith to Congress. The black abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet thought so highly of Peterboro after staying with Smith in 1848 that he said, "there are two places where slaveholders cannot come: Heaven and Peterboro" (Schor 100). The non-sectarian Church of Peterboro was fully integrated, and Smith boasted to General John Cooke in 1840: "I know not the family in our village that would reject a decent colored man from their table" (Letter Copy Book 1; henceforth, Letterbook). He called Madison County the "best" abolition county in the country, and continually urged residents to align themselves with God and take up the cause of the slave (Letterbook 1, 2).

While most studies of abolitionists argue that rank-and-file members came primarily from the ranks of merchants, clerks, and the emerging middle class, with few farmers, laborers, or poor people participating, Smith's correspondence suggests that farmers and the poor in general constituted the majority of abolitionists throughout Madison County and nearby areas. He became "more and more convinced" in 1841 "that these backwoods

towns are the very places to look to for aid in promoting a great moral transformation! There is more of unsophisticated common sense and genuine integrity" in the backwoods towns "than in many a whole city" (Letterbook 1). The prevalence of abolitionism among farmers and the poor can be directly linked to Smith's spiritual zeal: much like the transcendentalists, he identified the spirit of God with "Nature," the wilderness, and rural, premodern communities; and his passionate benevolence and efforts to sacralize the world brought a glimmer of the divine even to skeptical drinkers and other sinners. He believed that the large diversity of talents, skills, and sensibilities among the residents could be applied as easily to abolitionism as to farming.

Smith emphasized in his descriptions of fellow abolitionists that although they were poor, they were still respectable, despite widespread claims to the contrary. He claimed to be "personally acquainted" with "thousands of abolitionists" (none of whom, he said, drank any form of alcohol or used profane speech); and in 1841, in response to the assertion by the Honorable Kenneth Rayner of North Carolina that abolitionists were wild, "bloodthirsty" fanatics and anything but respectable, he "admitted" that "the mass of Northern abolitionists are plain people and poor people. Few of them have a liberal education. Few of them are wealthy. Few of them move in the circles of fashion. But I must repeat my claim to their reputation for integrity and kind intentions" (Letterbook 1). To Daniel O'Connell, Lord Mayor of Dublin and a British antislavery leader, Smith responded to assertions from Irish-American journalists that abolitionists "hated" Irish people by asking:

Is the abolitionist, who makes common cause with the American slave, with the poorest of the poor, and the most ignorant of the ignorant, the man to hate persons because of their ignorance and poverty? Surely not.... The abolitionists of our country are generally poor. The earliest advocates of a reform so radical and odious, as that in which they are enlisted, are, of course, drawn, for the most part, from the ranks of the poor. (Letterbook 1)

Smith's statement reveals his awareness of class conflict. He was careful to distinguish American from European--particularly British--abolitionists. He understood British abolitionists to be generally respected in society, but knew that American abolitionists were outsiders and considered "odious." "To be an abolitionist in America," he told O'Connell, "is to be hated and persecuted `for righteousness sake'" (Letterbook 1). By describing American abolitionists as "generally poor" and odious outsiders, he defended them against ill-founded assertions that they were social controllers and prejudiced against such lower classes as Catholic immigrants. He supported Catholic churches, Irish organizations, and immigrants in general with donations and pleas on their behalf in broadsides, journals, and newspapers. And by the mid-1840s he supported land reform and actively worked to mitigate the inherent conflict between labor and capital.

The development of Smith's views on labor and capital paralleled his increasing zeal at sacralizing the world, blending the sacred and profane, public and private, body and soul, and his increasing disdain for a competitive market ethos. His sympathy for laborers throughout the country and not just in Smithfield evolved quickly after an exchange of

letters with George Henry Evans, the labor leader and editor of the Working Man's Advocate and People's Rights. Evans considered land monopoly to be the primary cause of poverty; he advocated the free distribution of all public lands to the landless as well as severe restrictions on the amount of land any individual could own. In July, 1844, Evans introduced himself to Smith by excoriating him in his newspaper and sending him a copy. He called Smith "one of the largest Slaveholders in the United States"; every acre Smith owned, Evans charged, represented an acre denied to every "enslaved" northern worker. Smith was thus denying hundreds of thousands of northern white workers their freedom, and keeping them "in a worse state of ignorance, degradation, misery, and vice" than black slaves in the South (People's Rights 7 July 1844).

Smith responded immediately to Evans's charges: "So secluded is my life far from the world's track--that I never before heard of yourself, nor of these newspapers" that contained the attack on him. He sympathized with the plight of the worker, said the government "would do well" to give public lands to settlers, and believed that large landowners should give away small lots "to their poor brethren" (Working Man's Advocate 20 July 1844). And he hoped that the "Agrarians" and "Abolitionists" could work together, but emphasized his priority to the cause of the slave:

When you tell abolitionists that the order of doing good is, first, to those near you, and then to those afar off; they will. . . tell you, that an infinitely more important order of benevolence is, first, to labor for the total repudiation of the Heaven-forbidden idea of property in man, and for the establishment of man's right to himself; and then, for the establishment of his right to that which by Heaven's ordination, is the subject of property. (Working Man's Advocate 10 Aug. 1844)

His response to Evans, which represented Frederick Douglass' view towards labor as well, offers a compelling rebuttal to the claim that heand other romantic radicals promoted the hegemony of market capitalism by giving a priority to slavery and by downplaying or justifying the exploitation of labor.

Over the next few years Smith acted on "Heaven's ordination" to redistribute land. In 1846 he gave three thousand needy blacks in New York about fifty acres apiece, and over the next few years he gave away more land and money to both whites and blacks. He frequently expressed his desire to sell off his land, pay off his debts, and use whatever money was left over to aid the cause of the slave and humanity (Letterbook 1, 2). And in 1849 he included in the platform of the National Liberty Party (the successor to the Liberty Party after it was absorbed into the Free Soil Party in 1848) a resolution that "land-monopoly is to be warred against, not only because it is the most wide-spread of all oppressions, but because it is preeminently fruitful of other forms of oppression" (Frothingham 189). This was the same doctrine championed by George Henry Evans, and in the late 1840s many New York labor leaders aligned themselves with the National Liberty Party (Field 80-101). By 1858 Smith envisioned a land of "millennial knowledge and goodness" where everyone would own land; no one would be rich and no one poor (Peace 10). He believed land-owners could become largely self-sufficient and thereby insulated from the invasion of a competitive marketplace, but without rejecting the

principle of private property or concentrating the power needed to impose a socialist state.

George Fitzhugh, the proslavery intellectual from Virginia and a cousin of Smith's wife, Ann Fitzhugh Smith, testified to Smith's disdain for competition. Two years after visiting the Smiths in Peterboro in 1855, Fitzhugh admired Smith's "active charity and benevolence" in Cannibals All!, which he felt were "only exceeded in the greatness of their amount by the grossness of their misapplication." In Fitzhugh's estimation, Smith failed to understand that only slavery prevented the cannibalism resulting from competition. Despite Smith's "misguided" notions of liberty, he said his cousin "has the feelings and bearing of the Southerner" (89-92). Fitzhugh believed that while the "only motive of human conduct" in Yankee society was "selfishness," the Southern planter was "the least selfish of men." "Love for others is the organic law of our society" in the South, Fitzhugh claimed, "as self-love is of theirs" in the North (Singal 18). For Fitzhugh, Smith was a Southerner who embraced an organic, communitarian social ethic.

But while Smith disdained cut-throat competition, he differed sharply from the quasi-socialist views of Fitzhugh, who called all property "theft" (Cannibals 91). He embraced free trade and continually said that the only province of the government is to "protect--to protect persons and property"; "the building of railroads and canals and the care of schools and churches fall entirely outside of its limits" (Internal Improvements). He distinguished between the personal and combative warfare in localized competition from the more distant and abstract competition produced by free trade. He had personally experienced localized competition, and loathed it. Following the Panic of 1837, he was forced to pay creditors upwards of twenty percent per annum for the use of money, but in turn was unusually indulgent with those owing him money. "My own pecuniary straits . . . have the proper effect of teaching me to sympathize with others who are under pecuniary embarrassments," he wrote one debtor in 1840, who had asked for an extension on his note. "I shall cheerfully wait for your payment until the time you mention" (Letterbook 1). The more distant and abstract competition produced by free trade, Smith felt, would be checked by the natural right to own land. If, as he advocated, the government distributed vacant public lands to the landless in its duty to protect people against "death-dealing monopolies," individuals could remain isolated from the potentially expletive conditions produced by free trade (Speeches 76-7).

Smith's view of the limited role of government in checking the distant and abstract competition produced by free trade must be seen within the context of his broader vision of sacralizing the world. He considered government a sacred realm, and his motto, "Bible Civil Government," represented for him the possibilities and limits of the divine purpose of government in protecting all individual rights. A sacred government would facilitate the abolition of all sin and at the same time protect the sacred rights of all individuals. "I have the utmost confidence in the capabilities of the masses to care for themselves," he told Beriah Green in 1849, and then chided his friend for being drawn to the elitism of Thomas Carlyle and lacking confidence in the masses:

When Carlyle makes the masses cry out: "Govern us"-"Govern us": this cry, which is so humiliating and disgusting in my ears, is delightful music in yours.... Let government but cease to oppress its subjects, and . . . let it also, prevent them from jostling against each other in the race of life, and they will not fail to pursue their interests and happiness, successfully. (Sernett 128-9)

Part of Smith's opposition to state and federal government funding of everything from railroads to schools stemmed from his belief that government support of internal improvements had caused the Panic of 1837. State and federal spending on internal improvements produced waste, excessive speculation, "demoralization and profligacy," and ultimately brought about "a general bankruptcy," he said. Governments wasted money because they lacked individual "self-interest," which he defined as "the physical callings of this life and the higher purposes of [one's] spiritual nature." Self-interest represented God's interest; it fostered the kind of millennial goodness and benevolence that allowed slaveholders and drinkers to renounce their respective sins of slavery and drink and helped farmers exchange goods and services in a cooperative way. He lamented the fact that "humble agriculture was disparaged and overshadowed by the glories of 'intemal improvements,' and tens of thousands of laborers diverted from the cultivation of the earth to build the castles of enthusiasts and execute the designs of speculators." Internal improvements threatened to intrude and wreak havoc upon "sequestered communities" like his "beloved" Smithfield and Madison County. In a statement that resembles in spirit and tone the musings of Thoreau and Emerson in the 1850s, Smith noted that a government with a "meddlesome spirit," that "goes out of its sphere to mix itself up with, and control, the interests of its citizens" was tantamount to "vermin" invading the household economy (Internal Improvements). Although he never completely rejected the ethos of material progress and modernization, he hoped to preserve the non-competitive and mostly self-sufficient economies of small, rural communities like Smithfield.

While Smith's vision of moral progress was unwavering, his views of economic progress were ambivalent; and his ambivalence confounds the historical determinism implicit in quasi-socialist and competitive, free market frameworks, both of which demand consistency in the direction of moral and material progress. Smith hated cut-throat competition but endorsed a free-market economy, property ownership, and individual progress; he sought protection from competition through land redistribution but was unwilling to impose his standards of a and non-competitive household economy on others. His tolerance for competition by others mirrored his tolerance of anti-abolitionism and intemperance. The passions that led to slavery and drink, profligacy and waste, could best be controlled, he felt, through moral and spiritual persuasion, applied both to oneself and others. But he stopped short of reducing moral persuasion to a form of commodified market exchange, whereby money or work became the reward for temperance or abolitionism.

Smith immensely complicates the widespread view among historians that abolitionists were social controllers, apologists for a competitive market society and intense individualism. Eric Foner has summarized the position of most historians and cultural

critics: "that abolitionist thought was utterly individualistic and atomistic has by now become an axiom of historical writing" (23). And in a recent synthesis, Daniel Walker Howe calls social control a fundamental feature of antebellum reform (1218-21). Indeed, many abolitionists saw competition as fair and rewarding, and there were often heated debates between the labor and abolition movements. But the concept of social control does not explain the powerful manifestations of religious zeal that deviate sharply from a wholesale embrace of commercial values and material progress. Smith's ideas and actions departed significantly from the competitive and possessive individualism described by Tocqueville, and they were anything but "atomistic" Granted, his self-conception was individualistic; but much like the individualism of Emerson and Whitman, it was rooted in a sacred and internal locus of value and rights. His internal spiritual impulse and passionate instinct for freedom sought refuge from a "slave morality" of acquisitive and grasping men who embraced a competitive ethos and linked identity and selfhood to public opinion and profits. The means for resisting all forms of slavery and a "slave morality" came not only from his self-conception as an outsider in a sin-infested world, but from his vision of a broad sacralization of the world that endowed everyone with the same spiritual instincts and passions, and from new rituals to control and direct those passions. It was a vision that effectively dismantled the moral dualisms that had long represented an ideological basis for controlling the masses and preserving rigid hierarchies and inequalities.

Smith's tendency to apply his religious imagination and passion to worldly affairs developed in stages, and in order to understand the interrelationship between his evolving sacralization of the world and his resistance to cut-throat competition and a market society, it is important to examine his changing views in the context of a chronological narrative. He had not a always been interested in or moved by affairs of the spirit. As a young man he did not attend church regularly, and on more than one occasion he found comfort in a bottle of gin and late-night carousing. None of his efforts at reform could have occurred without a conversion experience, a repudiation of external authority and the status quo, and a turn inward, to spiritual instincts and passions.

In college he lived extravagantly, frequently asked his parents for money, and fashioned his hair and dress after his hero, Lord Byron. He saw himself as a cultured man of letters, planned on going to law school, and hoped for a career in politics. But a number of tragedies permanently disrupted his life and contributed to his spiritual awakening. On August 27, 1818, the day after he delivered the valedictory address at Hamilton College, his mother died. He felt extremely close to her and often referred to her as "sainted" (Letterbook 2). Within months of his mother's death, he married his college sweetheart; she died six months later. A few months after that tragedy, his father, still grieving over his wife's (Gerrit's mother's) death, decided to retire, and asked Gerrit to manage his vast property concerns. Gerrit did not particularly like business; but his older brother, already on his way to alcoholism, and his younger brother, "insane from birth," were in no position to manage anything. In little over a year after reaching "manhood," then, Gerrit Smith found himself back in his father's "mansion house," assuming responsibilities he disliked for a father he found cold and distant, with the two people he had loved most dead.

He remarried in 1823, and it was his second wife, Ann Fitzhugh Smith, who was instrumental in bringing about his spiritual awakening, fostering a broad sacralization of the world, and fueling his reform efforts. Women represented a leading force among converts in evangelical revivals in the adjacent county of Oneida, and the same phenomenon occurred, if not throughout Madison County, at least in the Smith home. Ann Smith's efforts and zeal led directly to Gerrit's conversion. On March 6, 1826, Gerrit's twenty-ninth birthday, Ann wrote to him from Richfield, where she had taken their two young children for health reasons, and expressed her fervent hope that a spiritual birth would accompany his birthday: "I wish you many happy returns of this day, my dear husband, but with how much more joy would I celebrate it if it were the anniversary of your spiritual birth!" (Harrow 51-2). Within two weeks, Gerrit and Ann Smith joined the Presbyterian Church in Peterboro, and made a public confession of their faith in Jesus Christ as their God and Savior. In the late 1830s and 1840s, when Gerrit was struggling to avoid bankruptcy, it was Ann's estate they relied on for abolitionist donations and for purchasing the liberty of slaves, beginning with slaves Ann had owned as a young girl. It was also Ann who initially encouraged Gerrit to give time and money to the cause of factory workers and the laboring class. She continually encouraged him to be tolerant of different points of view, and helped him ease the tension between his tolerance on the one hand and his excessive zeal for reform on the other hand.

Temperance reform represented Smith's first sustained effort at applying his religious passions and instincts to worldly affairs. Following Gerrit's conversion, temperance became a ritual he applied with increasing zeal to all facets of his life. In sacralizing the world, he tied drink specifically to sin. He blamed the high incidence of debauchery and death from drunkenness on "sober drinkers "-on those who could drink with impunity, and he called them "selfish" for ignoring those who could not control their liquor. Christian behavior and "natural compassion," he told the Reverend Hewitt in 1829, "should induce us to do all we can to prevent the circulation of spirits amongst us" (Letterbook 1). Abstinence was a test of one's inner, spiritual disposition.

Smith's development as a temperance reformer highlights his emerging awareness of class conflict within the American Temperance Society. As he increasingly blurred distinctions between the sacred and profane and body and soul, he began to embrace total abstinence, from rum and wine to cider, and his position placed him inopposition to the less zealous, bourgeois temperance reformers, or "that respectable class of men called 'temperate drinkers,"' as he called them (Letter, Delevan). For a while he tried to balance his belief in total abstinence with the Temperance Society's approval of fermented wines, but by 1837 he wholly repudiated the Society's tolerance for fermented liquors and came close to resigning (he later embraced the tee-totaling, Washingtonian movement of reformed, working-class drunkards that emerged in the early 1840s). In an 1837 broadside to Edward Delevan, the Secretary of the New York State Temperance Society, Smith attacked the Society for condoning wine drinking among the "refined and polite" "upper classes" while warring against the ardent spirits of the lower classes. Temperance reform "passed by the rich man's decanters and demijohns," he said, "to quarrel with the poor man's jugs and bottles." Only "more religion" would spawn "more temperance," and avoid inter-class based social control (Letter, Delevan).

Smith's early embrace of the Temperance Society, his later efforts at balancing the Society's tolerance of fermented liquors with his own belief in total abstinence, and his eventual renunciation of the Society's class based principles mirrored in many respects his early embrace of the American Colonization Society, his attempt to juggle colonization with antislavery, and his eventual repudiation of the Colonization Society's principles, which also occurred, significantly, in 1837. He joined the American Colonization Society in 1827, a year after joining the Temperance Society, and from about 1833 to 1837 he attempted to balance the principles of colonization with those of immediate abolition. The American Colonization Society, much like the American Temperance Society, was a highly respected organization, claiming for its members statesmen and elites from all over the country. Both organizations, according to George Fredrickson, "developed as part of a conservative response to a changing social situation"-the growth of democratic ideas and the breakdown of hierarchies-and they both drew most of their initial inspiration and support from two interrelated groups: "the Protestant clergy of the major 'evangelical' denominations and the adherents of the declining Federalist Party" (6). While the Colonization Society desired gradual emancipation by colonizing blacks in Africa, the Temperance Society sought gradual abolition of alcohol, in the sense that it forbade the poor man's booze while condoning the rich man's wine; in other words, the two societies' principles reflected racism and class bias.

Why did Smith move to the "immediatist" position in slavery and drink when he did? His attempt to balance the "gradualist" approach to slavery and drink with the "immediate" abolition of the two evils for so long was highly unusual, and virtually unique among antislavery advocates. At the risk of oversimplification, one might say that the world views of colonizationists and temperance reformers closely approximated a tradition of the Federalists and of the Enlightenment that embraced rational order and stability. The two groups emphasized in their visions of society harmony, organic unity, no competition, and distinct hierarchies of rank and order. By contrast, the world view of immediate abolitionists (both of slavery and of all forms of drink) emphasized sacred self-sovereignty, the repudiation of sin and subservience to worldly authority, the breakdown of hierarchies, and the affirmation of individual volition; it was also a world view that--if applied only to slavery and not to the breakdown of all institutions, dualities, and hierarchies--threatened to legitimate a social order defined by competition.

In effect Smith tried to combine these two world views from the early 1830s until his break with the Colonization and Temperance Societies in 1837. Colonization and the Temperance Society could be aligned with immediatism in drink and slavery to foster a competitive, organic society of members who controlled their passions to prevent competition and sin. Shipping blacks to Africa helped avoid competition, and attacking the hard liquor of the lower classes reinforced distinct hierarchies; but these views also conflicted with the idea of sacred self-sovereignty and equality, and they conformed to the prevailing sininfested social conventions. As his spiritual zeal increased, so too did his emphasis on sacred self-sovereignty, an egalitarian vision, and the repudiation of sinful social conventions. When he recognized the inherent class bias and racism of the two Societies, he renounced them, but retained his belief in organically unified

individuals who could control their worldly passions and thus arrest the proclivity for cutthroat competition.

Smith's final and complete break with the Colonization Society in 1837 corresponded with another important shift in his values and self-definition, a turn inward, further away from social conventions and status, toward spiritual instincts and passions. His inward turn evolved over a period of a few years; it was precipitated by the death of his five-year-old daughter Ann in 1835, the death of his twelve-year-old son Fitzhugh in 1836 (both from illnesses), and by the Panic of 1837. These tragedies forced him to question all social and moral structures and hierarchies, including the enormous chasm between rich and poor and black and white; they led to empathy and identification with the plight of slaves, Northern blacks, and the poor in general, and to heightened efforts at resisting the continued spread of a competitive market ethos without rejecting capitalism. Here is how it happened.

During Smith's spiritual evolution, his wealth increased at the same time he increasingly loathed business. In the 1820s he invested in Oswego County property and in stock in the Oswego Canal Company; he was soon the majority stockholder, and his Oswego investments became extraordinarily profitable. By 1835, as wild speculation drove up his property values by about 30% per month, he sought to free himself from the daily, mundane obligations of business. "I am still exceedingly desirous to wind up all my landed concerns, and to retire from business," he wrote an associate that October (Harrow 22-3). His father, Peter Smith, died eighteen months later. As one of the executors of the estate, Gerrit tried to convert land to cash to distribute to the other heirs. But in May, 1837, banks suspended specie payment; the Panic of 1873 was underway, and he decided to pay the heirs cash from his own account at pre-panic prices in exchange for their rights to the property. At the same time, he became liable for his tendency to endorse notes from friends and family, increasing his total debt to around $600,000 (Letterbook 1, 2).

As a result of his imprudent generosity, Smith was almost forced into bankruptcy. Only a loan for $200,000 from John Jacob Astor saved him from insolvency. Even with the loan, the scarcity of money kept him at the brink of bankruptcy and bound to his office, ledger books, and land he could not sell until the mid-1840s. Suddenly, it seemed, he could no longer rely on stability and direction from the outside world. The rational order, stability, and distinct social hierarchies inherent in the principles of the Colonization and Temperance Societies no longer made any sense to him.

The Panic and his children's deaths led directly to Smith's increasingly radical posture and spiritual transformation. His self-conceived identity as an outsider became more solidified. He permanently repudiated the American Colonization Society. He became by his own admission a "fanatic" and an "outlaw," with "no influence" because of his abolitionism. By 1842, he said his reputation had become "so battered and mixed" that it could not be any more "harmed" (Letterbook 1). With his status as a land baron so precarious, he turned to affairs of the spirit with heightened zeal. He became more exacting in applying his religious imagination and passion to worldly affairs. Regeneration for the individual came from being "born again," he noted in an 1841

broadside, which meant deliverance from the depravity of original sin and "membership into the family of Jesus on earth" (Nathan to David). Smith and other romantic radicals could not fully affirm their own sacred self-sovereignty and inner freedom, act on their passions and work to sacralize the world, until they themselves were free from sin. They could then attack the sins of the world, which threatened personal freedom and harmony between the individual and society.

The events surrounding the Panic of 1837 fueled Smith's increasing disdain for competition and a competitive market society. In fact he considered the entire breakup of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1840 as partly a result of competitive and therefore ruinous bickering among its members. Although he eventually joined the ranks and helped lead the efforts of political abolitionism, from late 1837 until the Society's breakup he sought to deflect controversies over women's rights (which he supported), Sabbatarianism, and disunionism. His desire to strengthen the local autonomy of the various anti-slavery societies offered a way to defuse what he called the "disgraceful and injurious wranglings." He refused to participate in the feuds, and always remained ready and willing to cooperate with abolitionists of all stripes, from heathens and "infidels" to militants, disunionists. He was so disgusted over the breakup of the American Anti-slavery Society that he "stood aloof" from the new "National Anti-slavery organizations" and "Benevolent Associations" in general until he became convinced that they had not become competitive "theatres on which my beloved abolition brethren will consume their time and energies in torturing and mangling each other." A spirit of competitive warfare had invaded the anti-slavery ranks and the "great Benevolent Associations," and he sought first to prevent it and then to avoid it (Letterbook 1).

In sum, the events surrounding the Panic of 1837 helped to solidify Smith's self-conceived status as an outsider, contribute to his empathic and introspective awareness, and sharpen his anti-authoritarian vision of cooperative exchange and brotherly love and affection. Not surprisingly, his own identity as a land baron changed as well. He adopted a mostly self-sufficient, household economy, partly out of necessity and partly out of choice. In 1842 he became delinquent on part of his $600,000 of debt, and was threatened with law suits. He put the "mansion house" up for sale, and although he never sold it, he moved a mile away to a much smaller house in Smithfield, where he resided off and on throughout the 1850s, long after he had recovered financially. And he pared his living expenses down to about $600 per year, roughly equivalent to a skilled laborer's annual wage.

Smith began to see the business he had inherited as a ritualized means to further his philanthropic and humanitarian efforts and thereby help to sacralize the world. By 1860 he no longer described himself as a businessman, as he had often done, but as a "philanthropist" (Autobiography). By the end of his life, he had given away as much as $8 million for the cause of sacralizing the world, a sum that in today's dollars amounts to somewhere between $500 million and $1.10 billion (Friedman 100).(n1) Private wealth, self-interest, and a capitalist economy were not inherently evil, as Smith realized; they could prove extraordinarily beneficial in promoting a sacred society based on communitarian and egalitarian values.

For a brief period from roughly 1855 to 1859, Smith used part of his wealth to underwrite violence as a means to end slavery. He gave thousands of dollars to aid the Northern cause in Kansas guerrilla warfare, and thousands more to help his friend John Brown carry out a grand, extra-legal scheme to end slavery that culminated at Harpers Ferry. Although his turn to violence as a means to reform is an extremely complex issue, it is important to understand how his acceptance of violence fits into the social control paradigm. His views of a market economy did not change when he accepted violence; but his attitude toward tolerance obviously did. By accepting violence he advocated a physical (but not economic) form of competition; although physical competition against the "Slave Power" does not conform to the paradigm of inter-class based social control, it represents a brutal form of coercive control. What is vitally important to understand about Smith's turn to violence is that it coincided with another fundamental shift in his religious vision and a reorientation in his efforts to sacralize the world. By employing violent means to end slavery, he also endorsed secular principles for sacralizing the world. Instead of sacralizing social progress he secularized religion; and rather than treating self-sovereignty as inseparable from God's sovereignty, he placed individual volition above the will of God. The shift reveals just how crucial his religion had been for resisting combative behavior and coercive control.

An important catalyst in Smith's turn to violence was his election to Congress in 1852 by a majority of voters in Madison and Oswego Counties. His election offers further evidence of the respect and admiration accorded him by the lower classes of his community. Smith made every effort to represent his constituents in the most virtuous manner possible, and for him that meant keeping "divinely busy," as he put it (Autobiography). In Washington he immersed himself in the daunting task of morally persuading congressmen to embrace immediate abolitionism, provide land to the landless, and root out all sin. But he felt entirely out of place; the culture of Congress, he decided, consisted largely of grasping, competitive men and unchristian-like behavior. He was laughed at for being "a sentimentalist, and not a statesman," as one congressman said of him (Speeches 36). He was ridiculed for refusing to participate in the endless battles of party politics. And he thought most congressmen were hard drinkers if not drunkards who swore profusely and squirted their tobacco juice "upon the carpet" (Speeches 411). Almost immediately after the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed in 1854, which effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise and opened northern territories to slavery, Smith quit. His experience in Congress virtually destroyed his belief in the efficacy of political abolitionism and his respect for political institutions. "Congress," he told his good friend Frederick Douglass after resigning, "preeminently needs to witness the achievements of the Temperance reformation, the Tobacco reformation, and the religion of Jesus Christ" (Speeches 411).

Following his frustrations with congressmen and his outrage over the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Smith's hope for a bloodless termination of slavery was all but shattered. The tension between the present, sin-infested reality and his boundless, millennialist vision reached a breaking point; he employed secular means to sacralize the world, and he secularized religion. His acceptance of violence coincided with another shift in his fundamental locus of value; but this shift left self-sovereignty no longer so

sacred. Over the next few years he developed a theology to accommodate his violent means to end slavery, which he published in a series of tracts in 1858 and 1859. His new religion was based solely on individual emotions and instincts that resided in "the spirit in a heart," and he admitted that his new religion would engender "great diversity of religious views" and varieties of religious experience. He denied that the Bible was the supreme authority, and essentially placed individual volition above God's sovereignty. Since the "Bible is the work of man," he said, it should be used as "the servant of reason. . . . Reason must sit in judgment upon the Bible" (Religion 4-9, 20, 33). Secular "reason" now became the means for judging sacred scripture, much as violence became the secular means for sacralizing the world. But slavery by its very nature depended upon violence, and Smith's newfound religious justification for violence also served as the very bolt other Christians used to support slavery.

By losing sight of God's sovereignty and relying on secular reason rather than sacred self-sovereignty, Smith's self-conception as an outsider and his blending of public and private spheres also began to lose their distinctiveness. Although he felt extremely alienated during and immediately following his Congressional term, by 1856 abolitionists were no longer considered such odious outsiders, and Smith became much more amenable to the idea of a discrete public sphere. He participated in and spoke at more large conventions in urban settings than ever before. He ran for President on a Radical Abolition ticket in 1856 and for governor in 1858, and in these elections his revulsion of public life largely disappeared. He campaigned heavily, traveled extensively, and no longer sought the "seclusion" of his sequestered and "beloved" Smithfield with such earnestness.

Smith's declension from his high moral and spiritual ground caught up with him after John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry became public. He felt "culpably responsible for all the lives that have been and will be sacrificed" on account of the raid, and shortly after his "dear friend" John Brown was sentenced to die on November 2, 1859, Smith experienced a complete mental collapse (Harrow 411). His family took him to the State Asylum for the Insane at Utica, and for three weeks he was treated with heavy doses of barbiturates. He returned home to Peterboro at the end of December, but he never fully recovered his earlier intensity as a passionate outsider and romantic radical who embodied moral rectitude and devoted his life to abolishing all sin and sacralizing the world.

Smith by no means abandoned completely his identity as a passionate outsider and romantic radical; but the effects of the Civil War, beginning with the guerrilla warfare in Kansas, and especially Smith's "inner war" and mental collapse, can be seen as the climax of a fervent effort extending over twenty-five years to affirm sacred self-sovereignty and stand at a remove from social norms and behavior. Embracing a sinless and sacred society meant living at the edge of an existing, sin-infested world; the Civil War and his "inner war" pushed him over the edge, and he lost a small but critical degree of emotional strength and spiritual zeal necessary to fully regain his steadfast vision of a perfect world. In a shift resembling that of other romantic radicals, he emerged from the war thinking that professionalism and an adherence to institutional order, hardly the defining standards of perfectionism, might now be effective in promoting a healthy society. As John Thomas

has noted, "The antislavery cause during the secession crisis and throughout the Civil War offered reformers an escape from alienation by providing a new identity with the very political institutions which they had so vigorously assailed" (679-80).

As a romantic radical, Gerrit Smith reveals how antebellum reformers could resist the spirit of competition without accepting a quasi-socialist framework, and thus stand outside the social control paradigm. To conceive of oneself as an outsider implies a renunciation of power and a respect for the dignity of the self; slaves, after all, were the ultimate outsiders, and they were the first "modern" people who, through their complete alienation, achieved a profound type of autonomy and subjectivity (Davis 14-16). And the ability to control and direct one's passions outward, onto humanitarian reform, requires some sort of faith that transcends the everyday world.

Smith's career suggests that the dualistic nature of the social control paradigm becomes extremely problematic when applied to the whole of antebellum reform. He was not alone in his romantic radicalism: Lewis Perry describes a communitarian and somewhat "anarchistic" wing of passionate Garrisonians who were totally antithetical to the social control paradigm; and Randolph Roth documents a group of radicals in Vermont who neither embraced the competitive marketplace nor a quasi-socialist economic framework. Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, and Leo Tolstoy were among the most famous romantic radicals, all of whom believed, like Smith, that "the kingdom of God is within you," to quote Tolstoy, and within all individuals. Their reform visions have generally been interpreted as either precursors to socialism or accommodations of the growing capitalist order. But the efforts of Smith and other romantic radicals do not fit the dualistic nature of the social control paradigm. Their reform visions encompassed a relatively benign and ethical form of capitalism, and it is important to understand the ethical distinctions and alternate visions that accompanied its growth.

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Notes

(n1) In determining how much money Smith gave away in 1990s currency, l used two sets of figures. The low end estimate is based on annual earnings of $600 for a skilled artisan in the mid-1800s compared to an annual family income of $36,000 in the 1990s. The high end estimate stems from "average" disposable personal income (DPI) levels of roughly $18/year in the 1840s and 1850s versus $2,500 in the 1990s.

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