"THE FACE OF THINGS":
THE POSTHUMANIST IMAGINATION IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

BY

IN HYE HA

DISSERTATION

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Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Anthony Pollock, Chair and Director of Research
Professor Robert Markley
Professor Mark Blackwell
Associate Professor Dana Rabin

Abstract

"The Face of Things: The Posthumanist Imagination in Eighteenth-Century Britain" examines how eighteenth-century British subjects negotiated their identities in response to the increased contact with nonhuman agents—plants, animals, diseases, and automata—facilitated by global networks of commerce and science. Throughout the project, I argue that such transactions that reckon the agency and vitality of "things"—the broadly construed nonhuman— led British writers to question anthropocentric and Eurocentric ideas and practices, by collapsing key conceptual distinctions between the human and the nonhuman, the British and their colonial others. Building on the new-materialist understanding that "things" exhibit an agency independent of human intent, this project reveals British subjectivity in the period as anxious and unstable, contradicting the image of enlightenment writers as asserting a confident, rational mastery over their environs. Each chapter of the dissertation epitomizes different kinds of enlightened attempts and failures to contain the nonhuman: Chapter 2 charts Britons' strenuous efforts to domesticate the elephant through a broad range of cultural artifacts, including poems, anatomy reports, it-narratives, and automata. Focusing on the *Journal of the Plague Year* and *The Storm*, Chapter 3 examines Defoe's attempts to impose order on the force of disasters through his construction of an idealized but ultimately compromised "information manager." Attending to how Swift's eponymous protagonist is turned alternately into a golem and a toy doll, Chapter 4 reads *Gulliver's Travels* as a fearful meditation on the potential interchangeability of humans and machines. Chapter 5 reveals how Barbauld's poems imagine the aesthetic appreciation of animals as a catalyst for ethical action, theorizing an empirical foundation for inter-special, transnational community. "The Face of Things" engages with recent turns toward posthumanism and environmental ethics in literary studies by highlighting both the autonomy of marginalized objects and animals and the interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman. The ultimate stakes of the project are therefore both political and ethical.

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION: BRITISH SUBJECTHOODS, THINGS, AND POSTHUMANISM
IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

> Yet all things everywhere are not held in packed tight
> In a mass of body. There is void in things.
> … By void I mean intangible empty space.
> If there were none, in no way could things move.
> For matter, whose function is to oppose and obstruct,
> Would at all times be present in all things,
> So nothing could move forward, because nothing
> Could ever make a start by yielding to it.
>
> Lucretius, *De Rerum Naturae* (c. 50 BCE)[1]

> For the essence of words and images is formed of bodily motions alone, which involve in no
> way whatever the conception of thought.
>
> Baruch de Spinoza, (1677)[2]

> Matter is always already an ongoing historicity.
>
> Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity" (2003)[3]

Taking 'Things' Seriously

Rather than adhering to the formal conventions governing the introductory chapter as a

genre, I want to begin with a brief detour through two literary vignettes from contemporary

novels that elucidate the central concerns and methodology of my dissertation: Martin Page's *La*

libellule de ses huit ans (2003) and Ian McEwan's *Solar* (2010). Page's *La libellule de ses huit*

ans, a mediocre social satire of the modern art world in France, has one undeniably redeeming

virtue: it puts forth as its protagonist Fio Régale—a social outcast invested in doing justice to a

world that appears to have passed the point of correction in her eyes, both by stealing overpriced

artworks and by punishing pieces of furniture and everyday machinery populating her domestic

space. More importantly, Régale's twofold ways of serving justice indicates the degree to which

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[1] Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, Trans. Sir Ronald Melville (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997),
13.
[2] Baruch de Spinoza, *The Philosophy of Spinoza,* ed. Joseph Ratner (Tudor Publishing Company, 2007),
195.
[3] Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to
Matter" *Signs* 28.3 (2003): 801-31, 821.

she takes the agency of objects seriously. On the one hand, she interferes with the modern art trade, where art objects are elevated to the status of fetishes in a way that enables artworks to exert overpowering authority over curators, auctioneers, and collectors—the wide-ranging human subjects obsessed with determining the value and price of artworks. Probably the telling irony implicated in this process of artistic and commercial assessments, of which the protagonist is critical, is the way pricing overrides the actual value of artworks. Régale's criminal intervention in high culture can thus be understood as an attempt to curb the already well-established circulation of fetishes. As another part of her performative justice, Régale shoots a refrigerator that refuses to close properly, and physically punishes a chair upon which she stumbles. In her mind, the agential power of machinery and furniture works as a synonym for the wrong that runs deep in the world. She also displays in a ludicrous way the somatic and bodily relationship owners have with their everyday objects, pieces of furniture or electronic devices that are supposed to be static and accommodating. In Régale's small universe, the refrigerator is perceived as intentionally resisting its owner's desire to close it, and the chair as having a will to flip her over. These seemingly random bouts of aggression acted upon inanimate mundane objects suggest a magnitude of absurdity attending to any kinds of efforts to treat nonhuman objects as entities with their own volition and agency; at the same time, these acts function as a significant reminder that agency always entails accountability.[4]

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[4] Nothing might better illustrate the vexed relationship between the agency of nonhuman species and accountability than animals on trial in early modern England. See Kathryn Shevelow, *For the Love of Animals: The Rise of the Animal Protection Movement* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008), esp. Ch. 5. Shevelow maintains that the "[p]rosecution and execution, as well as the religious penalty of anathematization … of animals" has been prevalent particularly from the fourteenth century to the Renaissance (91). The eighteenth century, by contrast, saw the dwindling number of juridical actions against animals. But what is pertinent to my dissertation is Shevelow's point that such pervasive recognitions of animals as legitimate legal subjects accountable for their actions in the early modern era were prompted by the close proximity between human and animal in living space: "These prosecutions

McEwan's *Solar* presents a satirical portrait of what interdisciplinary academics attempt to accomplish when they are faced with pressing issues like global climate change. McEwan's fictional narrative, which centers on the disheveled life of Michael Beard (a weathered, Nobel-laureate physicist), underscores one of the key concepts in posthumanist theory and environmental humanities—the principle of interconnectivity—and it conveys a cautionary tale about interdisciplinary methods. The edge of McEwan's satire is aimed at humanities scholars trying to develop an interpretive frame grounded in combining scientific knowledge with humanist fervor, the kind of interdisciplinary method that appears too tenuous and naïve for the physicist. At the start of the novel, Beard is invited to a talk where he witnesses numerous scholars strive to reach a general consensus across disciplines as to how to stop or, at least, slow down climate change. During the conference Beard's mind, half attentive and half distracted, hovers over individual talks charged with a profound sense of urgency and his failing private life: the imminent demise of both Beard's fifth marriage and his career is interwoven with the prospect of the end of the earth. Beard skeptically views the environmental crisis as nothing more than "one in a list of issues, of looming sorrows, that comprised the background to the news."[5] The comical (at times twisted) parallel McEwan draws between the equally urgent concerns of the protagonist's private life and the desperate fate of the earth underlines the interconnectivity between humans and the environment. In both the domestic and the global contexts of McEwan's novel, human inaction aggravates problematic existing conditions: Beard's decision not to remedy his fast-collapsing marriage is juxtaposed effectively against a more general human indifference toward taking practical action to slow down the global warming whose symptoms are detectable everywhere. In his idiosyncratic way, McEwan

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took place in the context of other human-animal connections, … and the widespread belief that animal behavior reflected or predicted something of consequence for human society" (91-92).

[5] Ian McEwan, *Solar* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 15.

questions the very possibility that human subjects can correct past wrongdoings in either the personal or the public realm.

Like Page's novelistic account of mundane objects that demonstrate a certain degree of agency over the humans who would control them, my dissertation is largely concerned with "evocative objects" that display their autonomy, vibrancy, and agency in a wide range of eighteenth-century literary texts.[6] This dissertation investigates how British subjectivity is shaped in response to the fast-shifting material, physical world of the long eighteenth century. It attempts to propose an alternative reading of British subjectivity, which runs counter to both the anthropocentric and the Eurocentric cultural norms at work during the period.[7] To that end, this project takes issue with a set of ideas and practices that privilege human and/or European experience and knowledge-making in eighteenth century Britain and its colonial sites—locations which underwent major shifts in terms of the sheer number of commodities, zoological and botanical specimens, and even human bodies that circulated across national, epistemological, and ontological borders. With a particular focus on disparate eighteenth-century bodies as a locus onto which existing power systems get projected—in short, as entangled things—I contend that the social relations minted by the growth of imperial and commercial networks in eighteenth-century Britain fostered a heightened awareness of subjectivity.

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[6] I borrow the phrase "evocative objects" from the title of Sherry Turkle's edited collection, *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), whose contributors analyze everyday objects—including a cello, keyboards, ballet sleepers, and a rolling pin—to acknowledge their status as "companion[s] in life experience." These individual objects produce an affect of nostalgia, and a "sense of erotic possibility." Turkle, *Evocative Objects*, 6. These collected essays, along with Susan Stewart's *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) and Elaine Freedgood's *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), are indicative of the material turn in current literary scholarship. For a similarly autobiographical examination of the interrelationship between an object and a human subject, see also Miguel Tamen, *Friends of Interpretable Objects* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[7] It should be noted that the cultural norm in the context of this project touches on the gender norm as well.

The Posthuman in Long Eighteenth-Century Britain

This dissertation explores a complicated and multifarious array of British subjecthoods: Gulliver's porous, anxiety-ridden identity as a machine in unfamiliar cultures; Defoe's narrative figures, who embody Enlightenment ideals by displaying a rational, taxonomic, classificatory drive to secure certainty in response to their fast-shifting physical environments; and Barbauld's ethical subject, who espouses our moral obligation to care for vital, nonhuman objects that convey their individual 'thingness.' Despite my attempt to categorize the distinctive characteristics of each subject, the different components of subjective identity represented by these figures are entangled and manifested in British identity throughout the long eighteenth century. The writers analyzed in this project—Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, and Anna Laetitia Barbauld—envision British subjectivity not as a completed product, but as a continuously negotiated construct in response to their bodily encounters with the unfamiliar and vital objects that inundated Britain during this period. Each chapter examines an instance of the making of subjectivity at work in the encounter zones between British imperial subjects and the various objects that challenge and overwhelm them. Pivoting on such encounters and their ramifications, I argue that eighteenth-century British subjectivity is seldom the embodiment of unabashedly confident and rational selfhood—as has often been claimed—but is constantly in tension with things that display agential power and narratorial autonomy.

In order to understand what is at stake—ethically and ontologically as well as epistemologically—in the making of disparate subjectivity in the long eighteenth century, I draw on productive intersections between the posthumanist turn in critical theory and the material turn that has grown strikingly visible and substantive in eighteenth-century literary studies. McEwan's *Solar* offers a useful qualifier concerning my deployment of interdisciplinary

methods, at the same time that it resonates with my primary concerns regarding interconnectivity and the feasibility of environmental justice, within and beyond the parameters of traditional literary analysis. Though I am not as skeptical as McEwan's protagonist about the payoff of using interdisciplinary approaches to address pressing issues like global environmental justice, I am acutely wary of the pitfalls of applying scientific terminology to analytical work in the humanities—of extending scientific terms as metaphors for more general uses in humanistic discourses. For instance, I am cautious of the use of quantum physics as a springboard for humanities scholars to engage in interdisciplinary research, a practice which might give us the misguided idea that the core of quantum physics can serve as a foundation for solving problems grounded in humanistic frameworks of study. Obviously, new materialists and posthumanists are indebted to the paradigmatic changes entailed by quantum physics, and interdisciplinary approaches to the issues like environmental justice, ecological crisis can prove effective and fruitful in setting up an agenda. And yet, from the beginning of this dissertation I want to pay particular attention to the caution Beard provides in *Solar*: my interdisciplinary approach to the recently recognized agency of things/objects in eighteenth-century narratives and the making of British subjectivity is a quite modest method to delve into what various encounter zones between human subjects and nonhuman life-forms entails in terms of our understanding of eighteenth-century British cultural, political, and gender identity. At the same time, towards the end of these chapters—where my work is informed by such recent object-oriented thinkers as Lorraine Daston, Cary Wolfe, Levi R. Bryant, Samantha Frost, and Anna Tsing—I will attest to what is at stake in eighteenth-century ecological discourses regarding human encounters with nonhuman species, based on the evidence discernible in contemporary poems about the natural world. The ethical stakes of this nonhuman turn will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Therefore, before I lay out the specific contours of the four chapters of this dissertation, I want to present a broad picture as to what the posthuman is and why it matters for our understanding of the long eighteenth century. The posthuman is everywhere. As a sticky theoretical concept or as a discrete identity that embraces broad-ranging nonhuman subjects, the posthuman, over the last few decades, has taken center stage in myriad debates across disciplines, and even across often-territorial periodic distinctions. The plasticity of the term 'posthuman' has enabled scholars to examine from a new methodological perspective the allegedly nonhuman, such as animals, plants, machinery, along with racialized and gendered bodies, and the entangled relationship between human subjects and the material environment. Among the disparate camps affiliated with posthumanism, Donna Haraway's study of nonhumans effectively envisages the epistemological, ethical, and political stakes of this particular branch of studies, not to mention its broad trajectory. Despite Haraway's downright refusal to identify herself as a posthumanist—"I am not a posthumanist; I am who I become with companion species, who and which makes a mess out of categories in the making of kin and kind"—the emphasis on "species interdependence" throughout her works has unarguably set the tone for posthuman studies.[8] Haraway defines the material presence of nonhuman species and our imbrications with them as "significant otherness," which underlines "emergence, process, historicity, difference, specificity, co-habitation, co-constitution, and contingency."[9] Particularly, her claim that "[w]e are, constitutively, companion species" by constituting each other "in the

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[8] Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 19. A similar refusal of affiliation with posthumanism can be found in Haraway's most recent article, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin," *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015): 159-65, 161.
[9] Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003), 7.

flesh" beautifully epitomizes not only the material, but also the affective dimension of an interspecies community.[10]

What then is the posthuman? Particularly in the context of late eighteenth-century literature, what are the stakes of foregrounding the posthuman? To answer the first of these questions, I turn to the concept of the posthuman as it has undergone multiple redefinitions since the late twentieth century. N. Katherine Hayles defines the posthuman as "an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction."[11] She also postulates that the core of the posthuman lies with "an agency, desire, or will belonging to the self … clearly distinguished from the 'wills of others.'"[12] Such autonomy of nonhuman species is the defining characteristic of the posthuman, the feature translated as either "thingliness" or "vitality" in the different varieties of new materialism.[13] While Hayles is invested in formulating the posthuman particularly in terms of mechanical entities, Cary Wolfe's notion of the posthuman is geared toward nonhuman animals, the study of which has since branched into multiple interdisciplinary studies, including environmental ethics and ecofeminism. Building on the studies of Levinas, Derrida, and Agamben, Wolfe recognizes anew animals as sentient and feeling subjects capable of speaking in their own terms. In doing so, he agrees with Hayles's idea that the posthuman is characterized by multiple points of origin and variegated directions. Similarly, Brian Massumi explores animal play as equally significant to human speech in order to deprivilege the

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[10] Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 16.
[11] N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Jane Bennett defines "vitality" as "the capacity of things … not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own. See *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), viii. Catherine Packham nicely posits the vitality of nature in the context of the Romantic period. See *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism: Bodies, Cultures, Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), esp. 2-3.

longstanding supremacy of human language: "Its aim [the goal of Massumi's book] is to construct the concept of an animal politics and carry it to the limit of what it can do, with sympathy and creativity, starting in play and ending in play."[14] Karen Barad, in her seminal study of posthumanism, asserts that "[m]atter is always already an ongoing historicity" in order to articulate a much broader range of implications for the posthuman, highlighting the idea that it is a form of subjectivity operating independent of human history, will, or projection.[15] Her notion of "posthumanist performativity" makes it possible to acknowledge nonhuman agency, through cutting loose the nonhuman from the representational grid of power, because "performativity is linked not only to the formation of the subject but also to the production of the matter of bodies."[16]

In conversation with these practitioners of either posthumanism or the nonhuman turn, this project has several aims. Primarily, my engagement with posthumanist theory enables me to read far too familiar literary eighteenth texts from a new angle. I draw renewed attention to the nonhuman life forms embedded in eighteenth-century literary and nonliterary representations; in so doing, I demonstrate how these nonhuman objects—including a pachyderm, an epidemic disease, a natural disaster, a small insect, and other animals—manifest their own irreducible vitality, which in turn affects human understanding of the relationship between the self and its environment. By paying attention to the corporeality of these novel objects, or their material representations in the period, I also contend that the body is a site where existing power relations are inscribed but simultaneously defied. The kinds of power I analyze—as manifestations of material force that works upon the bodies of nonhuman life forms—can be numerous, but within

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[14] Brian Massumi, *What Animals Teach us about Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 3.
[15] Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28 (2003): 801-31, 821.
[16] Ibid., 808.

the trajectory of my dissertation, I will focus on the Eurocentric, anthropomorphic, and colonial power in play in the long eighteenth century. Finally, the overlap between posthumanist theory and the material turn within eighteenth-century literary scholarship enables me to flesh out the ethical concerns authors articulate in the face of the ever-changing material world in eighteenth-century Britain. I contend that one of the most distinctive aspects of these eighteenth-century texts—and one that establishes their continuity with the present—has to do with their serious concerns about nonhuman life-forms and their ensuing emphasis on human responsibility for the vitality of things.

WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT 'THINGS': POSTHUMANIST THEORY, NEW MATERIALISMS, AND ETHICAL GROUNDS

If the historical backdrop of eighteenth-century material culture occupies a significant place in my discussion of the making of British subjectivity, the nonhuman turn in critical methodology, with its attention to nonhuman life forms, sheds a new light upon the eighteenth-century literary treatment of nonhuman entities and the human subjects who actually encounter them, as the following chapters will illustrate.[17] Over the last three decades, we have seen the body come under rigorous critical scrutiny across disciplines. The body has become a frequently referenced and primary subject of interdisciplinary studies, as evidenced by recent work in phenomenology, post-Marxist materialism, affect theory, and disability studies—the last two of which are fundamentally lodged in the phenomenological underpinning of the body.[18] Indeed,

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[17] The nonhuman turn can be defined as a critical response to the long reign of deconstruction, which was fundamentally built on the linguistic turn. By its nature, this newer critical move has implications for several disciplines and subdisciplines, from anthropology to phenomenology, affect studies to disability studies. In many cases the nonhuman turn functions as a synonym for posthumanism based on the fact that both methodologies depart from the assumptions of representationalism, and both dismantle the notion of a great chain of being, thereby denouncing anthropocentrism.

[18] Sarah Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, eds. *Thinking Through the Skin* (London: Routledge, 2001); Jane Bennett, "The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter," *Political Theory* 32.3 (2004): 347-

the body has long drawn intense and sustained attention from literary critics, historians (social, cultural, and technological), and cultural theorists, and particularly in the wake of Michel Foucault's influential analyses in *The Order of Things* and *The History of Sexuality*. Poststructuralism and feminism have also respectively attempted to account for the human body as something that is inscribed by but simultaneously goes beyond the imposition of existing sociocultural entanglements.[19] What is at issue in this renewed attention to the body and to the possibility of an emancipatory move from the confines of the body and its corporeal inscriptions, however, can be found on three fronts, each of which merits our attention, particularly in relation to the various eighteenth-century representations of bodies which we will have occasion to consider in this study. First, in the new methodological frameworks with which this dissertation engages, the materiality of the body acquires its own historicity, as Karen Barad duly points out throughout her works.[20] Second, the trajectory of the body put into analysis is extended to nonhuman agents, including animals, scientific units like atoms, and mundane objects. Third, the body begins to be construed as contingent, flexible, and porous.

　　To examine the multiple aspects of bodies—mechanical, zoological and botanical, and thing-like human—represented in eighteenth-century texts, I draw on posthumanism as an

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72. In this article, Bennett employs the term "body materialism," not only to articulate a particular strand of post-Marxist materialism, but also to underline what she calls the "thing-power" immanent in a vast constellation of nonhuman entities.

[19] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), esp. Chs. 1 and 2; Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflection on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Steven Shapin and Christopher Lawrence, "Introduction: The Body of Knowledge," *Science Incarnate*: *Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge*, ed. Christopher Lawrence and Steven Shapin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 1-20.

[20] Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter" *Signs* 28.3 (2003): 801-31, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

umbrella term.[21] Admittedly a broad and fraught formulation, posthumanist theory works in this

study as a way to redefine entangled human conditions in the context of the eighteenth century,

particularly in relation to natural law, and to commercial and colonial networks. I have found

Posthumanism to be an apt tool for examining and contesting conventional dichotomies between

the mechanical and the organic, the animal and the human, objects and subjects, exteriors and

interiors, the environment and the human. It is originated from the acknowledgement that being

human is not so much a constant, fixed condition as has often been imagined. As such, we should

first begin with the definition and semantic boundaries of posthumanism at work in this

dissertation. As Cary Wolfe writes, the term, in striking contrast to the clear-cut definition of

humanism, is fraught with manifold points of origin, and variegated directions.[22] What is

posthumanism? How does it actually manifest itself in eighteenth-century literary, cultural texts?

What new light does it shed upon our understanding of the texts and the imagined subjectivity

during the period? My use of posthumanism focuses on the nonhuman or liminal subject's

potential to destabilize the constitution and boundary of the human and nonhuman by

emphasizing the agential power of nonhuman entities. To elaborate further, I should situate

myself in relation to scholars who have been labeled as posthumanists and/or new materialists.

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[21] Despite Richard Grusin's theoretical distinction between posthumanism and the nonhuman turn, based on the argument that the former is more concerned with the teleology of the concept of human and its evolution to posthuman, I categorize scholars like Bruno Latour, Brian Massumi, Donna Haraway, and Jane Bennett as practitioners of posthumanism. This is because the posthumanist turn also delves into the fundamental Latourian question as to whether we have ever been human. Even Grusin himself acknowledges that some of the "best work on the posthuman seeks to avoid such teleology" (ix). For more of Grusin's pointed but unfruitful attempt to distinguish the terms, see his "Introduction" to *The Nonhuman Turn* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), esp. viii-x. I am also aware of the profound fatigue and exhaustion that can be produced by critical terms that are followed by the prefix *post*, as well as the deep-seated skepticism often borne against moves toward theory more generally. Even so, posthumanism as a method is pronouncedly versatile, not only as a means for contesting existing conceptual binaries but also for attesting to the possibility of emancipatory and ethical moves away from existing social, cultural, and epistemological inscriptions.

[22] Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

One of the most compelling accounts of (and justifications for) posthumanist

methodology can be found in the works of Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad.[23] Braidotti elucidates

in a nuanced way that posthumanism can be equated with a deliberate "de-centering of 'Men,'"

an epistemological and ontological stance that robs the anthropocentric subject of its privileged

status as a primary spectator and adjudicator.[24] Even though such de-centering involves a certain

degree of anxiety and uncertainty, it is an effective method for effacing the binary opposition

between what is socially constructed and what is originally given. Braidotti neatly illustrates the

merits of the posthumanist approach:

> In my view, the common denominator for the posthuman condition [is] an assumption
>
> about the vital, self-organizing and yet non-naturalistic structure of living matter itself.
>
> This nature-culture continuum is the shared starting point for my take on posthuman
>
> theory. Whether this post-naturalistic assumption subsequently results in playful
>
> experimentations with boundaries of perfectibility of the body, in moral panic about the
>
> disruption of centuries-old beliefs about human 'nature' or in exploitative and profit-
>
> minded pursuit of genetic and neural capital, remains however to be seen.[25]

A similar attempt to transgress conventional ontological and epistemological boundaries is

discernible in Karen Barad's beautiful articulation of "posthumanist performativity," which calls

into question the fiction of representationalism, which Barad describes as a logical fallacy

stemming from an undue reliance on Cartesian dualism.[26] Barad argues that the assumption that

there exist "two distinct and independent kinds of entities—representations and entities to be

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[23] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013); Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity"; Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, esp. Chs. 2 and 4.
[24] Braidotti, *The Posthuman,* 2.
[25] Braidotti, *The Posthuman,* 2.
[26] Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity," 802.

represented" is a supreme fiction to justify existing categorical biads.[27] In an effort to defy

methodologies privileging and centering on the linguistic turn, in which representationalism is

lodged, Barad offers "physical optics" as an alternative to what she calls "geographical optics."[28]

For Barad, physical optics functions as a synonym for what she terms "diffractive

methodology."[29] In a way akin to how eighteenth-century natural philosophers or experimental

scientists were inspired by and emulated the frame of Epicurean and Lucretian materialisms,

Barad is informed by the paradigm of quantum physics, which enables us to recognize the

granular composition of things beneath their glossy surface. This reversal of the established

subject-object relation is articulated from the beginning of Barad's essay: "In this article, I offer

an elaboration of performativity—a materialist, naturalist, and posthumanist elaboration—that

allows matter its due as an active participant in the world's becoming, in its ongoing 'intra-

activity.' It is vitally important that we understand how matter matters."[30] Even further, Barad

illustrates posthumanism's interdisciplinary origins through her deployment of the concept of

"agential realism":

> Agential realism is an account of technoscientific and other practices that take feminist,
> antiracist, poststructuralist, queer, Marxist, science studies, and scientific insights
> seriously, building specifically on important insights from Niels Bohr, Judith Butler,
> Michel Foucault, Donna Haraway, Vicki Kirby, Joseph Rouse, and others.[31]

Although sweeping in its breadth, Barad's definitional essay enables us to see in what particular

disciplines posthumanist methodology (in the form of agential realism) is rooted. It is a call for a

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[27] Ibid., 804.
[28] Ibid., 802.
[29] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 135.
[30] Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity," 803.
[31] Ibid., 810.

departure from social constructivism. It is a call for foregrounding the materiality and agency of things over classical notions of human subjectivity.

Those who are committed to envisioning the material world under the flag of the new materialisms—Diana Coole, Samantha Frost, and Jane Bennett, to name a few—have a similar understanding of the method's weighty ontological, political, and ethical implications.[32] The new materialisms, according to Coole and Frost, are designed to recognize the material dimension of the world we have taken for granted. The new materialisms depart from their famous materialist predecessors, including Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud, by reevaluating the "the most fundamental questions about the nature of matter and the place of embodied humans within a material world"[33] More importantly, the exigency of the particular form of new materialisms rests on the fact that they are a timely response to fast-shifting scientific and technological advances in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries, which have entailed ethical issues concerning human relations to the ecosystem. Thus, they ask for a comprehensive reappraisal of preceding materialisms in order to reposition human subjects from their normative status to that of an allegedly ethical, more responsible one equipped with "sensitivity [to] contemporary shifts in the bio- and eco-spheres, as well as to changes in global economic structures and technologies."[34] Strict and precise evaluation of daily human interaction with the corporeal world is another responsibility. Crucial to this approach is a renewed understanding that nonhuman entities demonstrate equally significant agency independent of humans. What is fundamentally new and central in this branch of materialism is found in the following claim:

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[32] In addition to Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds. *The New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) and Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), recent publications on the object culture should be acknowledged. See Levi R. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2011); Sherry Tuckle, ed. *Evocative Objects*; and Miguel Tamen, *Friends of Interpretable Objects*.
[33] Coole and Frost, *The New Materialisms*, 3.
[34] Ibid., 3.

According to the new materialisms, if everything material is inasmuch as it is composed of physicochemical processes, nothing is reducible to such processes, at least as conventionally understood. For materiality is always something more than "mere" matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable. In sum, new materialists are rediscovering a materiality that materializes, evincing immanent modes of self-transformation that compels us to think of causation in far more complex terms; to recognize that phenomena are caught in a multitude of interlocking systems and forces and to consider anew the location and nature of capacities for agency.[35]

Posthumanists and new materialists start from a shared recognition that matter is vital and that it transgresses anthropocentric underpinnings. At the same time, they commonly acknowledge that the denunciation of Cartesian dualism is the precondition for collapsing human-animal, human-machine, and human-nature binaries through their respective pursuits and rearticulations of the material world. To tackle Cartesian dualism—which draws an arbitrary, unstable line between the interior and exterior, the metaphysical and physical—it is inevitable to return to Lucretius and Epicurus. These ancient materialists suggest that such dualities are bridgeable.[36] The rediscovery of atoms has made it possible for human subjects to give objects what is due to them.

The acknowledgement that posthuman entities have their own historicity and agency is resonant in the works of several eighteenth-century literary scholars whose analyses influence the methods explored in this study. Laura Brown, for instance, attempts to reread familiar novelistic accounts of the eighteenth century from a posthumanist angle: her examination of

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[35] Ibid., 9.

[36] In regard to the chasm between the material and metaphysical, although Lucretius suggests the possibility of bridging it, a radical, half-jocular materialist like Julien Offray de la Mettrie proposes we stick to the only realm our sensorial experience can register. See *Man a Machine and Man a Plant*, trans. Richard A. Watson and Maya Rabalka (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).

primate narratives produced from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century marks a posthumanist turn in eighteenth-century literary studies.[37] Focusing primarily on representations of imaginary animals and increasingly intimate human-animal proximity, Brown argues that the period experiences a kind ontological shock, and she explores the way existing anthropocentric frameworks of understanding are contested. We cannot discuss the eighteenth-century posthumanist imagination without citing Bill Brown's seminal formulation of the "thingness" of nonhuman entities. Brown's "Thing Theory" in *Things* marks a watershed moment in our understanding of the allegedly fixed, static objects that are imbedded in narratives. Brown's first and foremost contribution to matter-oriented literary analysis lies with his careful distinction between things and objects, a concept pervasive in ensuing scholarly works: for Brown, *things*, in striking contrast to *objects*, are entities which can defy anthropocentric projections and can thus work on their own, independent of human needs and intentions. Brown pays due attention to how encounters with things are actually "occasions of contingency—the chance interruption— that disclose a physicality of things."[38] With a particular focus on the consequences of such encounters with things, he argues that "[t]hings lie beyond the grid of intelligibility the way mere things lie outside of museal exhibition, outside of the order of objects."[39] In so doing, Brown suggests that the thingness intrinsic to things disrupts established understandings of subject-object relations based on human-centered, social-constructivist premises; more importantly, thingness registers a moment of human failure to take control of the material environment. In either case, thingness produces uncertainty and anxiety in human subjects.

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[37] See Laura Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes: Humans and Other Animals in the Modern Literary Imagination* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010). Brown's last chapter in *The Fables of Modernity: Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003) also touches on the impact of nonhuman animals upon eighteenth-century British perceptions of self and other.

[38] Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 4.

[39] Ibid., 5.

More specifically relevant to eighteenth-century studies, the essays collected by Mark Blackwell in *The Secret Life of Things* pay critical attention to a long overlooked literary genre in the period, texts that can be categorized either as it-narratives or object-narratives, by emphasizing the arcane operation and narrative power of things.[40] Jonathan Kramnick also focuses on the agential power of things and their impact on human identity within the interpretive framework of causal relations in eighteenth-century fiction.[41] Jonathan Lamb's publication of new materialist readings of eighteenth-century literary texts has provoked renewed interest in it-narratives as well. Lamb's articles collected in *The Things Things Say* resonate with the aforementioned scholars' concerns with the agency of the nonhuman—what he terms its "thingness"—within early modern literary texts.[42] Although broad in its subject matter, the gist of Lamb's argument can be located in his opening claim that "things have their say in the eighteenth century."[43] Recognizing the voice, agency, and vitality of things is the starting point of these literary scholarly works. In relation to the rise of experimental philosophy and new science in the early modern period, literary critics like Helen Deutsch and Marry Terrall have drawn our attention to the configurations of life and vitality in the period, attempting to "locate the history of materialism within a larger history of ideas, as well as in a range of cultural, literary, and scientific practices."[44]

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[40] Mark Blackwell, *The Secret Life of Things*: *Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007).

[41] Jonathan Kramnick, *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[42] Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), .

[43] Lamb, *The Things Things Say*, 33 and 115.

[44] Helen Deutsch and Mary Terrall. *Vital Matters: Eighteenth-century Views of Conception, Life, and Death* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012). In the introduction to their collection, Deutsch and Terrall make clear that the primary subject of their interdisciplinary discussion touches on "life, living bodies, and organic matter," which overlaps with late eighteenth-century, or Romantic literary attention to living matter. For more specific analyses of life matters and their vitality in the period, see Catherine Packham, *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism: Bodies, Culture, Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2012); Sharon Ruston, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s* (New

ENCOUNTERING THE MATTER OF 'SCALE'

Though my individual chapters will account for what is at stake in the use of posthumanism as a primary method of reading eighteenth-century literary texts and culture, I want to discuss here the way the posthumanist approach, broadly construed, opens up the possibility of discussing major ethical concerns that have been exigent since (at least) the eighteenth century. Elizabeth Grosz underscores the significance of establishing a new kind of a humanities where "the human is no longer the norm, rule, or object, but instead life itself, in its open multiplicity, comes to provide the object of analysis and poses its questions about man's— and woman's—specificity as a species, as a social collective, as a political order or economic structure."[45] Here Grosz echoes other posthumanists discussed earlier in that she equally underlines that the task of decentering human subjecthood within humanist discourses is the precondition for new humanist (or posthumanist) discourses; at the same time, she indicates a degree of skepticism toward attempting to deliberately dethrone the human subject from its former privileged centrality. The posthumanist imagination and the nonhuman turn inevitably raise the question as to whether such decentering actually helps to reinforce a human-centered perspective, even when we are talking about nonhuman life forms, life matters, or things. Can the human be decentered, as has been suggested, at least on a discursive level? If so, what happens then? What is at stake when we draw on object oriented ontology?[46]

York: Palgrave, 2013); Janelle A. Schwartz, *Worm Work: Recasting Romanticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2012); Denise Gigante, *Life: Organic Form and Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[45] Grosz, *Becoming Undone*, 16.

[46] Object Oriented Ontology (OOO) is a form of revised ontology built on the premise that the human subject is displaced from its central, privileged position in the metaphysical world. For more on the details and stakes of OOO, see Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007) and *Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2013), 19, 43; and Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or*

The collapse of the great chain of being enables us to recognize that humans and nonhumans are interconnected, sharing and thus jointly responsible for the lot of our common ecological systems. Persistent emphases on interconnectivity underline this particular recognition that not a single nonhuman, or subhuman subject can be dismissed as the other. Samantha Frost, in a similar vein, contends that "[w]ith the human displaced as a central figure, the environment is conceived as intricate and extensively interconnected ecologies in which individual and collective social, economic, and political activities provoke creature and habitat adaptations that in turn require transformations in activity and habit from social and political actors."[47] Once the normative anthropocentric hierarchy is removed, the grid of power relations is altered, rescaled, and reapplied. When this takes place, human subjects can witness the very "historicity" (Barad) or "reality" (Frost) of an object, namely the recognition of what Lamb terms its "thingness," or what Morton calls the "astonishing autonomy" of nonhuman entities, which is irreducible to either abstraction. The very granular, discrete, and raw corporeality of objects presents itself within the new ecology and then claims itself as a "matter of coexistence."[48] What responsibility is entailed in our recognition of matter's coexistence? In the particular context of the twenty-first century, such a recognition reinforces our sense of urgency to remedy the impact of humans upon the environment as "a force of nature in the geological sense."[49] Undeniably this kind of moral stance is prompted by the premise that the scale of human impact upon the environment is much more enormous and detrimental than human subjects have generally imagined. This presumption has in effect provided an impetus for the green movement as well. But what does all

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What It's Like to Be a Thing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), where Bogost defines OOO as a philosophical position that "puts *things* at the center of being"(6).

[47] Samantha Frost, "Challenging the Human X Environment Framework," *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory*, ed. Teena Gabrielson, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 178-92, 184.

[48] Timothy Morton, *Realist Magic*, 45.

[49] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009): 197-222, 207.

of this have to do with eighteenth-century perceptions of human subjectivity, nature, and ethical

action?

To answer this question, I propose a brief reading of Tobias Smollett's *The History and Adventures of an Atom* (1769), mainly because this convoluted political satire in the guise of an oriental tale demonstrates the intimate cohabitation of human subjects with matter.[50] *Atom*, as anticipated by its genre, begins with the mock-heroic speech of an atom to its human narrator, Nathaniel Peacock. Calling Peacock three times and identifying himself as "part of thyself [the narrator]" (5), the atom goes on to say:

> What thou hearest is within thee—is part of thyself. I am one of those atoms, or
>
> constituent particles of matter, which can neither be annihilated, divided, nor impaired:
>
> the different arrangements of us atoms compose all the variety of objects and essences
>
> which nature exhibits, or art can obtain. Of the same shape, substance, and quality, are
>
> the component particles, that harden in rock, and flow in water; that blacken in the negro,
>
> and brighten in the diamond; that exhale from a rose, and stream from a dunghill. (5-6)

In a manner similar to the apparition of Hamlet's father, Atom's presence evokes a certain

degree of awe and fear. Uncannily it also commands the human narrator to "[t]ake up the pen, …

and write what I [the atom] shall unfold" (6). Then in the matter of a second, the atom provides

at length his itinerary from Japan to the Cape of Good Hope, to London inside Peacock's body.

The detailed itinerary of atom matters to us, for it not only registers the mobility of a British

sailor in the eighteenth century, but it also recognizes the circular movement of atoms from rice

to a human body, and vice versa. Of course, the Swiftian excremental pun is not absent here. The

global, cyclical eclogue of the atom evinces two things. First, eighteenth-century Britons

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[50] Tobias Smollett's *The History and Adventures of an Atom*, ed. O. M. Brack, Jr. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989). Hereafter the text will be cited as *Atom*.

demonstrate a renewed interest in the atom as is indexed in the contemporary revival of

Epicurean and Lucretian materialism. Even Swift notes that "the Universe was formed by a

fortuitous concourse of Atoms."[51] The close proximity between this scientific unit—what the

OED defines as "a hypothetical, … minute and indivisible, … ultimate particle of matter"—and

a fictional character suggests a new way of perceiving the material world in eighteenth-century

Britain.[52] More importantly, that the smallest particle of matter speaks and literally cohabits with

the human narrator suggests a change in the scale of human perception detectable in the period,

particularly as it-narratives gained ascendancy in the literary marketplace. This signals a shift in

the scale, in the size of the kinds of objects deemed worthy of literary, scientific, and ethical

attention.

Smollett's *Atom* also reveals how such small particles are entangled in the intersection

between global commerce and the century's increasing popular understanding of science and

technology—thus it is a proper index for the nonhuman bodies I will discuss in the following

chapters. If we return to the question of ethics and responsibility I posed earlier, this increased

understanding of small particles, along with the attention paid to other talking animals and

objects in contemporary it-narratives, helps to expand the gambit of human concerns during the

period. *Atom*, a landmark object narrative of the eighteenth century, therefore registers both the

ethical and the cognitive recognition of how things are implicated in the colonial network, which

in turn demands a careful understanding of their agency and their entangled condition. Hence,

the speaking atom opens up the possibility of thinking *with* nonhuman life matters even within

the eighteenth century context, as has been analyzed by Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman:

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[51] Jonathan Swift, "A Tritical Essay Upon the Faculties of the Mind," *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock Treatises: Polite Conversation, Directions to Servants and Other Works*, ed. Valerie Rumbold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17-34, 22.
[52] See "atom," *OED*.

"Thinking with animals can take the form of an intense yearning to transcend the confines of self and species, to understand from the inside or even to become an animal."[53] As Barad suggests, the way to think with animals is predicated on human efforts to remove the animal body from the representational network, and to focus on its performance. Daston and Mitman contend that animals are not so much "just one symbol system out of many" or "one of the innumerable possibilities to externalize and dramatize what humans think" as they are "privileged" and "performative."[54]

Informed by posthumanist thinkers, I attempt to pay cautious attention to the way nonhuman life matters speak, act out, and perform within and outside eighteenth-century underpinnings of nature and matter. In so doing, I chart the way human subjectivity is contested and reconstructed in close relation to its shifting material conditions. At the risk of anachronism, I contend that the kind of subjectivity manifested in select literary texts and other contemporary primary materials from the eighteenth century rather acknowledges its porous, unstable, contingent, hybrid condition as an ineluctable part of its constitution. Ultimately, increased encounters with the material world beyond the confines of national, epistemological, and ontological borders challenge eighteenth-century Britons to rearticulate their identity and their relationship to the material world surrounding them.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

This dissertation begins with a theoretical introduction (Chapter 1) to the posthuman, followed by the four substantive chapters, each focusing on different contact zones with a nonhuman agent, and each highlighting a different aspect of affects elicited by such encounters.

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[53] Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman, *Thinking with Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 7.
[54] Ibid., 12.

Chapter 2 begins with my examination of multifarious representations of the elephant body in a range of different cultural —an anatomical report, an animal narrative, automata, and broadsides—circulating in long eighteenth-century Britain. This chapter functions as a test case for understanding a series of encounters between nonhumans and humans in an effort to examine their impacts on the anthropocentric, Eurocentric norms of Britishness and selfhood which undergird Enlightenment ideals during the period. By focusing on these particular representations of the elephant, I demonstrate how the British public's initially imaginary conceptions of this exotic species and their classificatory scientific systems were challenged by the animal's material presence. The materiality of the elephant represented in these diverse texts functions as a proper site for discussing corporeal interchanges and newly emergent human-animal and human-chattel/slave relationships in the period, for these interconnections present not only the modern subject's intention to incorporate new knowledge into existing epistemological fields, but also the slippage of subject-object relations more generally.

Chapter 3 captures a period of crisis as depicted in Daniel Defoe's disaster writings, *The Storm* (1703) and *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722). This comparative analysis of Defoe's well known calamity writings examines the ways in which objectivity is discursively constructed in the face of unruly natural forces. Defoe envisages the information manager as a form of enlightened subjectivity capable of narratively containing unruly material things that demonstrate agential power. These two early eighteenth-century texts chart a gradual erosion in Defoe's belief that empirical methods can apprehend the vitality of disasters, revealing how his epistemological stance changes from one of relatively strong confidence to one characterized by skepticism. While Defoe's reliance on new scientific instruments and rhetorical strategies evinces his investment in creating an aura of objectivity, Defoe's idealized information manager

simultaneously attends to the potentially unreliable embodied dimensions of knowledge-making

in ways that foreground both the subversive thingness of nonhuman entities and the empirical

observer's own thing-like position in the face of incomprehensible disasters.

Chapter 4 fleshes out Swift's posthumanist imagination as it is manifested in *Gulliver's*

Travels (1726). Swift's radical anatomy of Gulliver's body represents him as conceptually

deconstructed, inventoried, appraised, and reassembled in different ways throughout his four

voyages. As the narrative is filtered through Gulliver's contingent positions, we can glimpse

Swift's eighteenth-century brand of posthumanism by examining how the intersection of

technological, cultural, and intellectual endeavor culminates in multiple constructions of Gulliver

as a kind of man-machine. Swift's text deepens our understanding of eighteenth-century

perceptions of both the human and the animal body, and it reveals much about his culture's

anxieties in the face of technological advancement. In light of Julien Offray de La Mettrie's *Man*

a Machine (1748), I attempt to examine Gulliver's man-machine, man-animal body. My

examination of Gulliver's body is informed by recent scholarship on the advancement of

mechanics, engineering, and technology in eighteenth-century Britain.[55] In addition to showing

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[55] Throughout this chapter, the automaton functions as a metonym for other similar types of machinery including cyborgs, intricately designed machines, and prosthetic devices. For critical work exploring eighteenth-century automata culture and the history of technology, see Otto Mayr, *Authority, Liberty, and Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Adelheid Voskhul, *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Minsoo Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines: The Automaton in the European Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), Chs. 3-5; Julie Park, *The Self and It*: Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Jessica Riskin, "The Defecating Duck, or, the Ambiguous Origins of Artificial Life," *Things*. ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 99-133, "Eighteenth-Century Wetware," *Representations* 83 (2003): 97-125; Simon Schaffer, "Enlightened Automata," *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*. eds. William Clark, Jan Golinski, and Simon Schaffer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 126-65; Julie Park, *The Self and It*, esp. Ch. ; Kevin LaGrandeur, *Androids and Intelligent Networks in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Artificial Slaves* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013). Susan Stewart's work does not exactly fall into the category of technology studies, but her insights on the doll and the doll-house and her analysis of Gulliver's position in *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*

how Swift denaturalizes or defamiliarizes the human body, I link Swift's posthumanism to

contemporary discourses related to inventorying, automata, and cybernetics. At the same time,

this chapter is also enriched by a close dialogue with scholars interested in the agency of

things.[56] In conversation with critics who explore the posthumanist, mechanical discourses of the

period, I argue that Swift displays profound anxieties concerning the fine line drawn between the

human and nonhuman (or/and Posthuman), which is neatly underlined by his description of the

human as a "topsy-turvy" creature.

My closing chapter analyzes Anna Laetitia Barbauld's nature poems as her way of

articulating ethical subjecthood in the face of the vitality of things. Her recognition of the

vibrancy and beauty of natural objects—including a caterpillar, a mouse, and a dog—should be

viewed as both a cognitive and an aesthetic event. By examining her speaker's sensory

registering of the vitality of these things and the way each moment of encounter creates a

community of care, albeit momentarily, I argue that Barbauld's sustained attention to the

nonhuman objects that populate the natural world manifests an ethical imperative. Central to

Barbauld's concern with nonhuman objects is her focus on the beauty of living matter, as

represented in "The Caterpillar" in particular. My analysis of Barbauld's poems is informed by

eighteenth-century formulations of beauty postulated by Francis Hutcheson and Joseph Addison,

as well as Elaine Scarry's seminal work on the relationship between beauty and ethical action.

(Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) illuminate Gulliver's machine-like position. Be sure to mention some collected essays in *Early Modern Things*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York and London: Routledge, 2013).

[56] Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011; Mark Blackwell, ed. *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007).

Chapter 2
ENCOUNTERING THE ELEPHANT:
ANIMAL AGENCY AND BRITISH SUBJECTIVITY IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

> Who doubts that elephants are found
> For science and for sense renown'd?
> —John Gay, "The Elephant and the Bookseller" (1727)[57]

> If a lion could talk, we wouldn't be able to understand it.
> —Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953)[58]

Eighteenth-century Britons saw objects on the move. Material things unheard of, unknown, and perhaps unknowable flooded into the British Isles at a bewildering speed and in massive quantities. Indian calicoes, Chinese silks and porcelain, monkeys, and parrots, for instance, inundated British cultural and economic daily life throughout the long eighteenth century. The pace and volume of these supposedly static objects gave many British observers the sense that things themselves had taken on agency in relation to their human counterparts.[59] One reason for this commonly held perception was that many of these objects in transit obscured the human actors and socio-economic relations that had made such encounters possible in the first place. Just as we are often oblivious to the child labor behind the glossy packages of coffee beans conveniently at our disposal, the circulation of objects in eighteenth-century Britain underscored the materiality of consumers' encounters with commodities while making invisible their imbrication (and possible complicity) with existing networks of colonialism and international trade. When social relations are effaced, the objects we encounter from all parts of the globe appear to have their own agency. More specifically, the mediated forms of eighteenth-century nonhuman objects convey a sense of their own autonomy by challenging existing orders of

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[57] John Gay, *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*. Vol. 2. ed. Vinton A. Dearing (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 314.

[58] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 235.

[59] Throughout this chapter, the terms "thing" and "object" will be used interchangeably unless otherwise noted, as in the case of the terms 'thingness' or 'thingliness,' which bespeak the autonomy of nonhuman entities.

categorical distinction and epistemology. Tellingly, the sporadic but persistently meaningful presence of the elephant in eighteenth-century Britain serves as a particularly productive test case for understanding the dynamic agency of the nonhuman.

Focusing on the elephant enables us to study a number of consequential transcultural encounters that call into question normative, anthropomorphic, and Eurocentric distinctions between the human and the nonhuman. Looking at eighteenth-century material and textual representations of the elephant, this chapter attends to the ways in which encounters with this enormous animal—nonhuman matter that raises questions of scale in human perception— engendered ontological and epistemological shock. In so doing, I demonstrate how British subjectivity is shaped through the recognition of the vitality inherent in the elephant as a force that exceeds human attempts to contain it. Exploring the function of the elephant in British epistemology, I claim that the increasing presence of the elephant redefined British subjectivity by provoking its mediation through the figure of the colonial nonhuman. My primary task is to chart different aspects of British subjectivity in relation to encounters with nonhuman, non-European bodies. Yet I am by no means gesturing at a grand, coherent historiography of British subjectivity. The elephant body works rather as an ideal site to discuss knowledge-production at the center of the British empire in the sense that it touches on the relationships between art, science, and commerce on a global scale. At the same time, I want to locate a moment of rupture in anthropocentric understandings of nature and self; put another way, this chapter attempts to identify cultural sites where correlationism, the long-held conviction that nonhuman subjects are configured "in relation to (human) minds or language," is contested.[60] In dialogue with recent critical work that has turned toward the nonhuman and the animal, I contend that the elephant

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[60] Timothy Morton, "Here Comes Everything: The Promise of Object-Oriented Ontology," *Qui parle* 19.2 (2011): 163-90, 164.

body is a thing, an object that demonstrates what Jane Bennett terms "thing-power." The thingness of the elephant body suggests that nonhuman entities have their own will irreducible both to human will and to anthropocentric categorization. I emphasize the thingness of the elephant, not like Descartes, who dismissed animals as kinds of machines, but to foreground the extent to which these particular nonhumans are not always compliant to human needs.[61]

Why choose out the elephant from among so many other nonhuman species? Historically, the elephant's sheer bulkiness and its status as an exotic, wonder-evoking object have defied efforts to contain it as a pet, making it difficult for human subjects to be easily sympathetic toward it. Unlike parrots, cats, dogs, and monkeys—all of which became wildly popular in eighteenth-century households—elephants hardly fit into the category of pets, which are generally thought of as creatures that are supposed to be small, cute, portable, and potentially humanoid. In relation to such criteria, elephants have often failed to evoke any degree of sentimental reaction in the publics that have consumed representations of them. The elephant's tangibility and its increasing proximity to eighteenth-century British readers demanded, however, that the public correct their romanticized or phantasmagoric views of the species. By singling out the elephant among the various animals that brought ontological shock to eighteenth-century Britain, I contend that textual attempts to contain this particular species register the culture's concerted efforts to forge a range of modern "enlightened" subject-positions: the credible eyewitness, the objective observer, the reliable traveler-empiricist, the taxonomist, and the conforming spectator.

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[61] See Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), where he elucidates the convoluted relationship between subject and object, noting that we face "the thingness of objects when they stop working for us," implying that objects become things once they take on agency against or independent of human will (4). On the thingness of objects, see Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, where she elaborates the 'vitality' of things.

Reading eighteenth-century discourses on the elephant through the lenses of thing theory, new materialism, and posthumanist theory, I argue that the elephant is a thing enmeshed in different scales across species and across borders. This method enables us to dissociate elephant bodies from existing representational networks and anthropocentric systems of meaning. While tracking its impact of the making of enlightened British subjectivity, I also ask whether the elephant has a say about its own experience in its own terms. In doing so, I complicate current discussions of the classificatory systems that have long been construed as the brainchild of the Enlightenment. Exploring the cultural tension between the British subject and the elephant, I historicize the development of enlightened subject-positions, from the vociferous virtuoso to the anatomist who silently craves social recognition, to zoo-goers and audiences of luxurious spectacles. In the process, I am able to elucidate the relationship between knowledge-production and the material culture of the eighteenth century, building on recent work in animal studies. Travelling across the long eighteenth century with the elephant as it is represented in disparate texts and forms, I connect the development of British empire to the dissemination of scientific knowledge, mechanical engineering, artworks, and exotic animals.

The Elephant at the Juncture of Knowledge-Making and Empire (1660-1760)

SAMUEL BUTLER'S *THE ELEPHANT IN THE MOON*

It is not uncommon to come across literary satires ridiculing virtuosi in the long eighteenth century, a period before the rigid disciplinary line was drawn between gentlemanly polite science and science as a systematic discipline.[62] The rise of experimental philosophy in the late seventeenth century inspired a huge number of amateur male scientists, some of whom were

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[62] Gimcrack in Thomas Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* (1676), and Valeria in Susanna Centlivre's *The Basset-Table* (1706) are exemplary representations of virtuosi that invite mockery and half-hearted sympathy.

affiliated (or aspired to be affiliated) with the Royal Society.[63] *The Elephant in the Moon*, a

satirical poem by Samuel Butler (1613-1680), exemplifies contemporary responses to what

Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin term the "modest witness," mainly because the speaker in the

poem mocks both the gravity the virtuoso assumes and his misuse of scientific instruments.[64]

This relatively unknown work by Butler serves as an apt point of departure for discussing the

status of the elephant in early modern British understandings of both the natural world and the

colonial subject. The poem, which directly addresses the cultural status of the Royal Society,

suggests that seemingly neutral sites of knowledge production turn out to be intricately tied up

with the colonial project of enterprises like the East India Company.[65] Butler's poem depicts

Royal Society members' momentary fuss over the daunting task of visiting the moon and

planting a British flag there in a way that helps to contextualize Patrick Blair's *Osteographia*

Elephantina (1713) and to clarify the nature of the knowledge Blair aims to produce within and

outside his text. No one in Butler's poem seems willing either to give up or to seize the rare

opportunity to set foot on the moon. Butler's Royal Society members, comprised almost

exclusively of virtuosi, offer wild guesses about the nature of the moon's inhabitants. One

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[63] For more on the formation of the scientist since the early modern period, see Steven Shapin, "'A Scholar and a Gentleman': The Problematic Identity of the Scientific Practitioner in Early Modern England," *History of Science*, 29 (1991): 279-327.

[64] Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 59.

[65] The two supposedly independent engines of British modernity—the Royal Society and the East India Company—were linked through their shared interest in expanding Britain, each aiding the other's project. Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* (1667)*, which came only a few years after the launching of the Royal Society, presages its symbiotic relationship with chartered enterprises like the East India Company. His description of the Society as "Royal Corporation" indicates some significant overlaps between the Royal Society and Royal chartered companies (52). See Sprat, *History of the Royal Society*, eds. Jackson I. Cope and Harold Whitmore Jones (St. Louis, MO: Washington University Press, 1958). Miles Ogborn also points to the Royal Society's kinship with the East India Company by pointing to Robert Boyle's engagement with the Company's practical and administrative business as a member of the Court of Committees. See *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), xvi.

particular virtuoso, after looking through the telescope, claims to have seen an elephant running

amok on the moon's surface, and offers this "rational" explanation for what he has witnessed:

> That Elephants are in the Moon,
>
> Tho' we had now discover'd none,
>
> Is easily made manifest,
>
> Since, from the greatest to the least,
>
> All other stars and constellations
>
> Have cattle of all sorts of nations,
>
> And heaven, like a Tartar's hoard,
>
> With great and numerous droves is stor'd:
>
> And if the moon produce by nature,
>
> A people of so vast a stature,
>
> 'Tis consequent she shou'd bring forth
>
> Far greater beast, too, than the earth, ….[66]

This fanciful reference to the elephant is confirmed by another Society member's claim to have

also observed the elephant, thus sealing their communal bond as scientists. This seemingly

random reference to the elephant is rich with implications on many fronts. First, Butler indicates

the way in which a scientific fact is established.[67] However tongue-in-cheek the virtuoso's

personal observations might sound, they can be construed to be true, as long as there is an

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[66] Butler, Samuel. "The Elephant in the Moon," *The Elephant in the Moon and Miscellaneous Thoughts* (Coventry: N. Merridew, c. 1800), 8.

[67] On fact-making mechanisms in the period, see Mary Poovey's *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Steven Shapin, *Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison's *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), especially for their discussion of the insecurity of objectivity as subject to personal intuitions or imagination. See also Barbara J. Shapiro's wonderful work on the production and dissemination of knowledge in *A Culture of Fact, England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000).

empowered group of people endorsing those observations.[68] Secondly, since what the virtuosi

firmly believe to be an elephant turns out to be a mouse on the surface of the telescope, Butler's

poem can also be read as mocking the lack of rigor among these self-anointed scholars. Lastly,

this antic portrait of seventeenth-century experimental philosophers hints at the imaginary

popular understanding of the elephant in British culture. An animal that is difficult to identify

becomes associated with an elephant in the moon, and its enormous body makes it seem

naturally located on the moon amid mythic battles. The virtuosi's discussion indicates that the

elephant still remains at the crossroads of the imaginary and the empirical. Butler's

representation of the elephant seems informed by the early modern conceptualization of the

species as evidenced in the following visual representations.

Conrad Gessner's "Elephant" (1551) and Wenceslaus Hollar's "A large elephant with a

monkey on its back and various flowers and insects" (1674) bear a close affinity with each other

despite a gap of more than a century, in the sense that neither of these elephants corresponds to

actually existing elephants except in the contour of their bodies, suggesting both that Gessner

and Hollar are still grounded in the imaginary and that early modern Europeans had little

opportunity to directly observe living elephants. Gessner's woodcut presents an elephant with a

disproportionately large head and an incredibly large and shell-like ear.[69] The entire facial

structure of the elephant imitates that of a boar, and its four straight legs and webbed feet

intimate that Gessner had no firsthand experience with elephants. In a similar vein, Hollar's

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[68] Shapin's account of the social adjudication of facts/truth holds true in the Royal Society members'
heightened discussion over the existence of the elephant. Shapin suggests that "solutions to the problem
of knowledge are embedded with practical solutions to the problem of social order, and that different
practical solutions to the problem of social order encapsulate contrasting solutions to the problem of
knowledge." See *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*, 15.
[69] Probably to Butler's contemporaries, an accurate rendering of an actual elephant might have been
baffling, as Caspar Henderson duly notes that "many real animals are stranger than imaginary animals" in
The Book of Barely Imagined Beings: A Twenty-First Century Bestiary (Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 2013), x.

etching offers another inaccurate rendering of an elephant. Compared to Gessner's woodcut, Hollar's animal appears more natural due to the slightly improved proportion between the elephant's head and the rest of its body, and the more detailed description of its feet. However, the shape of its ears—which look similar to the drooping petals of the flower next to the elephant—along with its feet like bear paws, its bluntly described joints, and the exaggerated but inaccurate shape of its trunk altogether demonstrate that this etching is not based on empirical observation of the elephant. It should be noted, however, that the elephant's alignment with a monkey, a grasshopper, and other flowers within one frame can be interpreted as an index of the gradual refinement of natural history. At the same time, this framework suggests the difficulty inherent to classifying different species as a set in a convincingly coherent order. Diana Donald, drawing on John Locke's sense of bewilderment at the sight of even seemingly trivial plants or animals, notes that late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century "naturalists were humbled by their own bafflement in trying to order and make sense of the extraordinarily varied and intricate forms of animal life and behaviour."[70] The fauna (elephant and monkey) juxtaposed with botanical specimens embody the epistemological difficulty in articulating the staggeringly complex relations between newly discovered elements of the natural world.

Butler's lampoon both represents and foreshadows the relations between the colonial project and the import of exotic animals, unwittingly suggesting the logic of colonialism lurking beneath the elephant body in the poem. From the outset of the poem, Butler's speaker points to a close affinity between lunar exploration and the colonial project. This seemingly ambitious and preposterous project is similar to that of the East India Company, in the sense that the moon is presented as a possible colony, in which the British would eventually establish "new

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[70] Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain, 1750-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 32.

plantations."[71] Admittedly, this is a satire against the Royal Society with respect to the object and

mechanisms of their ostensibly serious empiricism.[72] And yet "The Elephant in the Moon"

engages a range of issues outside of the formation of the Royal Society. The elephant as a

centerpiece of this poem suggests the way Butler's late seventeenth-century English

contemporaries perceive the elephant. The Royal Society members gathered on the site—

presumably representative of the general public in terms of the degree of their curiosity and their

understanding of the supposedly exotic animal—focus primarily on its gigantic body and its

impenetrable nature. As opposed to Pliny's and Topsell's accounts of the elephant, which point

to the intelligence located below its thick skin, the virtuosi's remarks on the elephant register

their sense of wonder at the elephant's body *per se*. This may be a result of the classical

reference to the use of elephants in battle. And yet the blissful ignorance of the virtuosi

concerning the elephant body demonstrates the extent to which contemporary perception of

pachyderms reflected both the public's curiosity and their epic failure to grasp the "barely

imagined being"—to borrow Henderson's witty twist on Borges's twentieth-century bestiary

encyclopedia. Indeed, Butler's satire provides helpful context for understanding the cultural

significance not only of Blair's empirical report on the body of the elephant, *Osteographia*

Elephantina (1713), but also of a satirical it-narrative published much later in the century, *A*

Letter from the Elephant to the People of England (1764).

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[71] Butler, "The Elephant in the Moon," 3.

[72] Lisa Jardine nicely captures the sense of exuberance in the London Royal Society. Such stellar figures as Robert Hooke and Isaac Newton were invested in exhibiting scientific spectacles as a way to draw focused attention from the monarch as well as from lay people in an effort to secure funding for their ongoing experiments. What is notable in Jardine's account is their individual need to deploy scientific instruments—air-pumps, microscopes, and telescopes—as a focal point of this public display. For further contextualization, see Jardine's *Ingenious Pursuits: Building the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Anchor, 1999), 50-65.

According to Christopher Plumb, three elephants were imported into Britain during the Restoration and early eighteenth century: one in 1675, another in 1683, and a third in 1720.[73] Although it is not clear whether Butler himself witnessed the elephant brought to Britain in 1675, the arrival of these elephants coincides with and further fuels a more scientific approach to the pachyderm. Patrick Blair (1680-1728) had been immersed in surgery and botanical observations before he finally stumbled upon a chance to anatomize a female Indian elephant, which drowned near Dundee in 1706.[74] His anatomy report, *Osteographia Elephantina: or, A Full and Exact Description of all the Bones of an Elephant* (1713), is essentially a medical attempt to come to terms with this unusually bulky species. It exemplifies how the early eighteenth-century British understanding of animals is tied to the empiricist desire of the previous century, as is found in Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1667), where Hooke makes two passing references to the elephant as an antithesis to his primary subject matter—the most miniscule insects, rendered visible only via the microscope. Blair's detailed structural dissection of this rare zoological specimen bears affinities with Hooke's own investment in breaking things down into more manageable and understandable units at the price of reducing that which is under the lens to a passive object of human observation. Concomitant with these scientific projects is the making of a British subjectivity: an objective witness aiming to distinguish itself from the virtuoso's more superficial, speculative interest in things. Thus, this early eighteenth-century report on the dead elephant can be interpreted as part of an Enlightenment project that persistently labels things of vitality, thereby turning them into static objects, independent of their own history. The report's

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[73] Christopher Plumb, "'Strange and Wonderful': Encountering the Elephant in Britain, 1675-1830," 525.

[74] "Blair, Patrick (*c.*1680–1728)," Anita Guerrini in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: Oxford University Press, http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/view/article/2568 (accessed September 15, 2012).

visual addendum showing the individual body parts of the elephant is emblematic of scientists'

technical training with regard to examining and thus properly looking at animals.[75]

In order to articulate the nature of the knowledge Blair aims to produce by anatomizing

the elephant, it is important to understand the kind of recognition that Blair seeks from the Royal

Society. Does Blair aim to participate in so-called gentlemanly science, which by definition

primarily involves polite conversation? Are the methods and conclusions of Blair's anatomy

compatible with what Anita Guerrini terms "polite science"?[76] If so, then what exactly do Royal

Society members aim to achieve through this kind of inquiry? How do they differ from their

predecessors, such as the early modern pedant? What particular role does the elephant serve in

relation to the making of gentlemanly knowledge in Blair's text? Primarily, Royal Society

members distinguish themselves from pedants by demonstrating themselves to be "sociable,

pliant, and polite."[77] As a group, they are invested in forging a new identity, one which is

fundamentally grounded in experimental philosophy as a method, and in the aristocracy as a

class.

From the start of the report, Blair solicits the attention of a particular audience—and

acknowledgement by the Royal Society—by dedicating his work to John Arbuthnot (1667-1735),

the well-known physician and satirist. From its inception, the Royal Society aimed to conjoin

new science (intertwined with experimental philosophy) and gentility, and Blair's anatomy

manifests precisely this dual pursuit. As Shapin points out, the Society's predilection for new

science is not easily compatible with the gentlemanly preoccupation with polite conversation.

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[75] See the collection of articles in the special edition of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (46.1) for discussion of eighteenth-century collectible objects, especially with regard to their aesthetic value. See also Sachiko Kusukawa's *Picturing the Book of Nature*: *Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
[76] Anita Guerrini, "Anatomists and Entrepreneurs in Early Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 59.2 (2004), 219.
[77] Steven Shapin, "'A Scholar and a Gentleman,'" 297.

Hence, Blair's text evinces not only the tension between the Royal Society's two disparate goals, but also the historical conflict between the ancients and the moderns. Interestingly, in his dedicatory letter Blair clarifies the genealogy of the empirical knowledge he both consults and vies with, starting with references to Tavernier, and then continuing on to Aristotle, Moulin, and Leewenhock. He explains how his own anatomical text concurs with and contradicts these previous authors on the physiology of the elephant. In an effort to be part of the community of scientists who confirm and disseminate scientific discourses, Blair juxtaposes the actual body of the elephant with these classical texts.

In opposition to Butler's farcical account of the Royal Society and its virtuosic forms of knowledge, Blair wants to produce objective knowledge gleaned from the elephant's actual body: his text idealizes a modern way of learning focused on the unmediated experience of the natural world, and it suggests a new way of looking at animals, wrenching them from the realm of the mythical and the imaginary to understand them as part of the material world. Blair's approach is modern partly because he deals with actual corporeality of the animal, and partly because he does not organize his report around the utility of the elephant to humanity, a value commonly found in contemporary taxonomies and hierarchical systems.[78] In the history of science, Blair's work suggests a way of putting the seemingly arcane, wondrous body of the elephant into

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[78] As many scholars have demonstrated, the eighteenth century can be viewed as an age of classification which culminated in particular with Carl Linnaeus's system. It is a widely accepted fact that both zoology and botany in the period were heavily affected by Linnaeus. Yet Jeff Loveland points to historical precedents in order to contend that "[c]lassification was hardly unique to or ubiquitous in eighteenth-century natural history." See Loveland, "Animals in British and French Encylopaedias in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33.4, 508. More importantly, Loveland elaborates that what makes the eighteenth century unique lies in the fact that its classificatory systems "acquired a new generality and a new, self-conscious rigour . . . notably in Linnaeus's botanical works," which were later superseded by classificatory systems based on anatomy and physiology (508). See also Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan, eds. *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2004) for discussion of how British commercial expansion propelled the introduction of newfound (zoological or botanical) specimens from the New World.

rational order, by examining its skin, organs, and bone structure. Furthermore, his way of

organizing this information is grounded in multiple underlying traditions. This whole project of

skinning and dissecting the entire elephant body follows traditions of medical training prevalent

since the sixteenth century.[79] The overall organization of the anatomy report and his later

addition of pictures of each body part suggest that Blair is quite conversant with this kind of

medical training.[80] If the sixteenth century was flooded with publications on human anatomy, the

eighteenth century sees more systematic attention to animal anatomy. The visual aids in the last

section of Blair's report suggest an objective way of looking at the animal, thus training a certain

readership in the visual practices of empirical science. Lastly, Blair's insistent consciousness of

his Royal Society audience indicates that even his own supposedly objective, scientific research

resonates with a patriotic drive.

Considering that the Royal Society in London was launched as a corporate body seeking

out permanency against the backdrop of the political ramifications of the civil war, it seems

inevitable that Blair's anatomy project—through which he aims to be accepted both by the public

and by the Society's quite selective membership—is rooted in similar ideologies. Michael

Hunter rightly points out that there are both affective and political factors in the Royal Society's

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[79] For an examination of the kinship between anatomy and the making of enlightened subjectivity, see Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, *Morbid Curiosities: Medical Museums in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), especially Ch. 1. For a comprehensive overview of animal/human vivisection, see Anita Guerrini, *Experimenting with Humans and Animals: From Galen to Animal Rights* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); and Elizabeth Stephens, *Anatomy as Spectacle: Public Exhibitions of the Body from 1700 to the Present* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011).
[80] Sachiko Kusukawa in *Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany* notes that sixteenth-Century medical training involved both botanical studies and dissections, a development made possible by the "establishment of new locations of learning—the botanical garden and the anatomical theater" (1). She goes on to remark that the monumental works of Leonhart Fuch and Andreas Vesalius mark the watershed of the century. For the historiography of botany and anatomy in the sixteenth century, see Andrew Cunningham, *The Anatomical Renaissance: The Resurrection of the Anatomical Projects of the Ancients* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1997); and Katherine Park, *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (New York: Zone, 2006).

pursuit of impartial science, highlighting that the Royal Society in a way responds to their culture's need for a "healing, consensual philosophy."[81] It is equally clear that this research institution is deeply embedded in state politics. As is reflected in Boyle's links with the East India Company, the Royal Society's new science definitely serves to reinforce the expansion of Britain. This connection is evident in Thomas Sprat's seminal publication, *The History of the Royal Society* (1667), where Sprat illuminates the role of patriotic drives in contemporary scientific pursuits. Sprat explains how Society members' primary concern lies in the "care of an Universal Intelligence," and he goes on to contend that London is the ideal site for producing such universal, objective knowledge, referring to it as "the head of a *mighty Empire,* the greatest that ever commanded the *Ocean*: It is compos'd of *Gentleman*, as well as *Traders*: It has a large intercourse with all the Earth; It is, … their *House of Fame*, a City, where all the noises and business in the World do meet"[82] Although Blair does not explicitly mention either the origin or the itinerary of the elephant, his report unwittingly articulates how the elephant embodies colonial subjection, and his attempt to understand its exotic body structure—in objective or systematic terms—is intricately tied up with the expansion of Britain. Blair's anatomy report reveals how the making of facts and the establishment of objectivity rely upon the embodied knowledge of the silent colonial subject.

The main body of Blair's anatomy report is addressed to Hans Sloane (1660-1753)—one of the two major figures in conflict within the Royal Society.[83] Although modest in its rhetoric, Blair's project seems quite ambitious in that he aims to produce an exemplary anatomical work that requires unpleasantly gory and stinky dissection. From the outset of the report it becomes

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[81] Michael Hunter, *Establishing the New Science: The Experience of the Early Royal Society* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 1989), 10.
[82] Sprat, *The History of the Royal Society*, 86-87.
[83] See Michael Hunter, *The Royal Society and Its Fellows, 1660-1700: The Morphology of an Early Scientific Life* (Oxford: Alden, 1982, 1994), 51.

evident that Blair has been grappling with the very physicality of the elephant, subject to decay under the treacherous weather. And yet he makes clear that his project is to "satisfy the World in such Things as were of Moment in this rare and curious Animal" and to "observe . . . Particulars" (2). In other words, Blair is invested in translating the mysterious elephant into an object accessible to everyone's factual understanding. It is worth noting that Blair actually offers a brief account of the elephant's history: the elephant travels all over Europe as an exhibit before it comes to England, ultimately facing its death in a tragically ironic way. According to Blair, the elephant drowned in a ditch English people had created to alleviate the elephant's fatigue. It is not exactly clear if Blair is aware of the elephant's origin; he simply states that the elephant is on tour, ostensibly for public entertainment. Once the carcass is handed over to Blair, he notes that circumstances are not ideal for his dissection: the day is reportedly "too hot," and Blair is surrounded by a big crowd (4). Hence he has to embark on anatomizing the whole body instantly. Although Blair would prefer to examine the intestines the next day, he realizes that the heat has already dried them up.

The detailed descriptions he offers at the beginning of the report enable modern readers to conjure up the material conditions of anatomy in the early eighteenth century: on a warm April Sunday, a surgeon surrounded by a curious and vociferous audience waits anxiously for his turn to examine an elephant's body from its surface to the depth of its muscles and intestines with the help of a butcher. After discussing the elephant's general characteristics in a way that endorses long-held perceptions of the species, Blair moves on to examine every detail of its body in dialogue with Moulin's previous anatomy of an elephant. In his examination of "Cuticula and Cutis," Blair contrasts his elephant to Moulin's (which was preserved relatively intact), noting the following specific material conditions:

I had not an opportunity of making tryal upon any of it green; for on the Monday, while I

was oblig'd to go out and take care of the Bones, the Workmen were busied in salting and

preparing it, and afterwards I had not time: So that what Accounts I can give you are

taken from it, as it now stands dry. But that I may give you all the satisfaction I can, I

shall transcribe what of Dr. Moulin's Account I find agreeable to that I see in this

Subject, and add my own Observations. (18)

This short note on the physical conditions of his vivisection—in addition to the way he engages

in conversation with his predecessor through the tangible and visible evidence of the elephant at

hand—encapsulates Blair's methodology through his simultaneous corroboration and refutation

of previous scholars. In contrast to vicarious observations of the specimen, Blair's report is

unusually humorous because he intermittently complains that he has been battling with the

elephant's speedily rotting body.[84] Expediency and exactness matter in times like this, and Blair

can generate only a report on the elephant's bone structure due to the unfavorable conditions.

Blair does count the number of bones in each section of the elephant, however, and his exact

accounting of these bones is emblematic of the way in which a more systematic form of

knowledge was produced in the early eighteenth century.[85] Still more striking is the fact that

Blair provides a visual representation of every single bone he successfully pulls out and

reassembles. (See Figures 1 and 2.) The tables showcasing the whole body of the elephant before

and after the dissection indicate that Blair's task of examining, fleshing out, labeling, and thus

containing the supposedly arcane body of the elephant has been to a significant extent

successfully executed as planned at the outset, despite circumstances.

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[84] See *Osteographia Elephantina*, 32.
[85] Ibid., 90-91.

Blair's tables mark the historical moment when the elephant can no longer be placed in the realm of imagination or mystery. Now its physical mystery has been disclosed and disseminated to the group of scientists in the Royal Society. The representation of the elephant's bone structure—which Blair painstakingly describes and rearranges both textually and visually—suggests a watershed epistemological moment when the once exotic nonhuman body is reduced to manageable parts and safely contained in the form of a lab report. At this point it is worth revisiting the fact that Blair never shows any interest in the actual origin of the elephant. He appears content to seize on the fortuitous chance that an elephant has happened to pass by his town in England as a part of its rigorous European tour, yet this striking neglect of the creature's origin seems significant: the vehicle that has made it possible to bring an elephant to Britain was surely part of a carefully laid-out trade network, which would be fully set in motion in the following decades. In part through its obliviousness to the broader network of global commerce, British subjectivity is being gradually forged as an impartial observer of things. And the elephant body, as evidenced in Blair's *Osteographia Elephantina*, falls into the category of a colonial subject, stripped of its mystery and laminated in the repository of so-called objective or systematic Enlightenment knowledge.

The Elephant and the Expanding British Empire (1764)

In contrast to Blair's elephant placed flat on the anatomy table, the elephant in *A Letter from the Elephant to the People of England* (1764, *Letter* hereafter) is presented as a loquacious body with a glorious past and diverse travel experiences. The *Letter* is unusual in many respects. It foregrounds a nonhuman narrator who spends much of the text bragging about himself. Its subject matter is divided essentially into two sections, one which foregrounds the elephant's past

feats and the knowledge he has acquired through his travels, while the other attempts to provoke specific actions from his target audience. The *Letter* is an ideal site for examining not only the agency of nonhuman subjects, but also the function of speaking animals within mid- and late-eighteenth-century it-narratives. Of what particular social, cultural, economic changes are these animal speakers symptomatic? How do they differ from the fabular representation of animals? Does the conspicuous presence of animal narrators indicate—as many easily assume—increasing eighteenth-century interest in animals or non-human subjects? To address these questions, I place the *Letter* in relation to other contemporary animal it-narratives and fables as a way of figuring out whether these narratives can function as a vehicle for social, political, or economic satire.[86] To what degree does an animal narrator complicate these texts' potentially satirical purposes? My primary purpose in this section is to view the elephant narrator in the *Letter* as a colonial savant, a colonial specimen, and a fundamentally ironic spokesman for British empire—a subject who has fallen into the bewildering dissemination of things and knowledge that was fueled by British commercial and political expansion during the second half of the eighteenth century. In order to contextualize this particular text, however, I begin with a brief literary history of the it-narrative. After exploring the formal conventions of texts narrated by animals, I will demonstrate how the *Letter* uses an elephant narrator both to critique current English treatment of the Scots, and to offer a wide range of commentary on Britain as an emergent empire.

     The *Letter* is intriguingly complex, in part because of its generic and historic ambiguities. No narrative comes out of a vacuum, and this text borrows from multiple formal conventions of

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[86] Francis Coventry's *The History of Pompey the Little; Or the Life and Adventures of A Lap-Dog* (1751) is perhaps the most often cited it-narrative employing an animal narrator, primarily because it marks the boom of animal narratives inundating the literary marketplace since the mid eighteenth century. See Heather Keenleyside, ed. *British It-Narratives, 1750-1830, Vol. 2* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012) for selections of representative it-narratives produced in the period.

the period, sharing generic characteristics with fables, it-narratives, and travel narratives. Yet the

text eludes attempts easy generic definition within existing conventions. The *Letter* shares the lot

of other it-narratives from mid-century in that it touches on the circulation of a nonhuman

subject and "presents a particular vision of the social system."[87] It-narratives almost always open

with a succinct but clear account of the origin of their nonhuman narrator, as exemplified in

Tobias Smollett's *The History and the Adventures of Atom* (1769).[88] In some cases, the particular

convention offers a vicarious experience of alterity by centering pivoting around the mobility,

experience of nonhuman actors as found in Francis Coventry's *The History of Pompey the Little*

(1751). The *Letter*, however, presents an elephant narrator who does not bother to offer any

autobiographical details of his early life. Given the historical fact that the elephant is imported

from India, this omission suggests that the anonymous author of this satirical piece may have

aimed to efface the context of Britain's imperial project. Interestingly enough, the elephant

narrator starts off in a flamboyant manner, and even his name—Maximus et Potentissimus

Elephantus—sets the tone of this narrative and anticipates the primary characteristics of its

protagonist. The elephant narrator starts from the claim that his celebrated body and presence

have been ceremoniously welcomed in several places around the world—everywhere but

England, which we will discuss later in this section. Along with his name, the narrator highlights

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[87] See Liz Bellamy, "It-Narrators and Circulation: Defining a Subgenre" in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, edited by Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP), 117. Bellamy also fleshes out some general characteristics of it-narratives that have gained ascendancy since the mid-eighteenth century. According to Bellamy, animal narratives are one among a group of prose fictions loosely associated with it-narratives, and while "there were no animal narratives in the first half of the eighteenth century, these made up 27 percent of the total in the second half, rising to 45 percent between 1801 and 1850, and declining to 37 percent from 1851 to 1900" (130).

[88] Laura Brown also notes that "the canine protagonist emerged in the eighteenth century as the specifically modern agent of a distinctive formal itinerary"; see Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes: Humans and Other Animals in the Modern Literary Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2010), 117. I interpret the speaking elephant narrator as an agent of global colonial transactions.

the fact that he is of "Genius, Taste . . . and Learning" (2), signaling that he is sophisticated enough to comment intelligently on the politics, science, or culture of any country he has visited. As part of his self-fashioning as a citizen of the world—an experienced and sagacious traveler—he reports that he has been endowed with honors he believes to be his due. As an idealized colonial savant, the talking elephant models how British subjects should behave in the face of their expanding empire; to a certain degree, this text therefore functions as a conduct manual for British readers.

The *Letter* also functions as a convoluted political satire resonant with multiple ironies derived from the unconventional self-fashioning of the nonhuman, non-European narrator. Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721) had set the pattern for using an oriental figure in to foreground commercial and intellectual exchanges relevant to the French imperial project and, more importantly, to provide nuanced social commentary on the center of a European empire in the making. But employing a nonhuman narrator whose body is imbedded in British trade to India, I claim, is a bolder and more effective choice to critique and to defamiliarize what had been taken for granted in mid-eighteenth-century Britain. The elephant narrator serves multiple functions: he is the index of an encounter zone made possible by increasing global trade, and he also serves as a colonial savant whose primary task is to report detailed information—usually natural history, geography, or language—about the colonized country to the colonists. Although satirical in tone and structure, this narrative is designed to police and to refine English audiences—not necessarily British, as is implied by the specific target named in the text's title—by suggesting more sophisticated colonial ruling techniques the English should implement. Speaking in the wake of the Seven Years War (1756-1763), which expanded Britain's colonial territories, the elephant narrator might be an ideal mouthpiece for discussing England's

encounters with diverse colonial others, and for offering conduct advice to a country in charge of an increasing number of subjects around the world.

During his stay in Paris, the elephant resides in a French palace thanks to the King's proper assessment of his nonhuman guest's intelligence and knowledge. Elephantus is further accepted as an honorary member of the (French) Royal Academy of Sciences:

> [I]n Consideration of My prudent Conduct, [the French monarch] was pleased to honour Me with a very valuable Present; and his grateful Subjects, sensible of My discreet Behaviour upon this Occasion, gave Me repeated Proofs of their Friendship and Esteem for Me. — I was soon created a Knight of the Order of St. Louis, and a Member of the Royal Academy of Sciences. I diligently visited the Academy for the Improvement and Refinement of the French Language, and speedily became an incomparable Proficient.
>
> (3)

This social recognition is significant particularly because a supposedly exotic and foreign animal actually participates in the society of elite European men. Contrary to the historical fact that animals from colonial territories were imported to the metropole and treated as objects of new European knowledge, Elephantus stands as a producer of science proper within the Royal Academy of Sciences. He makes remarkable progress, quickly acquiring a new language and knowledge of European fine arts. Elephantus boasts about this intellectual versatility, which assures him equal treatment among the elite and polite society of the metropole.

Similarly, in his typically boastful way, the elephant stresses that he is "universally respected" in Rome as well (3), welcomed even by the highest echelons of the church hierarchy. In the center of religious authority, Elephantus tours the modern architecture of the city—the crowning achievement of Western modernity—including theaters, palaces, convents, temples,

colleges, hospitals, aqueducts, obelisks, catacombs, and sepulchers. He expresses his

appreciation for the advancement of the city in which he is traveling, and in return for the

Romans' enthusiastic hospitality, the elephant offers them his valuable "collar" (4). Although it

is only briefly described, this moment of gift giving is rich with implications. In Cynthia

Klekar's account of the gift economy, she duly points out that "the underlying motivations for

gift exchange and the social networks that the exchange mediate can be described as calculated

social practices," primarily because the gift is tied up with the principle of self-interest.[89] The gift

serves to forge "nonmaterial values" between two parties—values like "alliance, diplomacy,

friendship, kinship, sacrifice, and marriage"—but it also disguises the element of calculation or

economic negotiation that such exchanges set in motion.[90] Elephantus's gift of his collar to the

Romans thus epitomizes the moment of cultural exchange that on a surface level can be

interpreted as a benign practice of friendship, but that simultaneously reinforces the elephant's

position in the sense that he believes he actually honors the city by giving them his dear

possession, which is later preserved in an Obelisk in the Castle of St. Angelo.

Elephantus's two-year stay in Persia engages more explicitly with dimensions of nascent

imperialism, especially through the narrator's direct military involvement. Indeed, the elephant

narrator demonstrates his military prowess in a way that bears resemblance to Gulliver's

participation in the battle initiated by the Lilliputians in *Gulliver's Travels*:

> … [F]or *Persia* I worked wonders.—Having given many signal Proofs of My Courage, as
>
> well as of My Experience in the Art of War, the great and renowned *Kouli Khan*, the then
>
> reigning Sophi, was pleased to appoint Me *Generalissimo* over all his Forces,

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[89] See Cynthia Klekar, "Obligation, Coercion, and Economy: The Deed of Trust in Congreve's *The Way of the World*" in *The Culture of the Gift in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Cynthia Klekar (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 128.
[90] Klekar, "Obligation, Coercion, and Economy," 129.

commissioning Me to protect and direct his People, and to defend, upon every Occasion,

his Royal Person, Dignity, and Honour.—Now it happening that My Royal Master had

received many unpardonable Insults from the *Mogul*, respecting My Lord's Inheritance of

a small Spot of the Earth, lying West of the great River *Oxus*, to stifle the Wretch's

Arrogance and Haughtiness, I furiously hurried forth, with a small Detachment of my

Slaves, into the Heart of his Country, where I triumphed in Rapine and Destruction,

conquering all that was to be seen, heard, felt, or smelt!—I slew forty Generals; hung

seventy Priests; drowned three hundred Buffalos; swallowed three Nabobs; and kick'd

down the Walls of *Babylon*. (5)

Elephantus's participation in the war on the side of Persia alludes to the Persian invasion of

Mughal India (1738-39) led by Nadir Shah: in an attempt to restore his authority and military

prowess, Nadir Shah invaded Mughal India, who actually defended themselves by drawing on

2,000 elephants. Resorting to elephants in civil or international battles is a commonplace military

strategy, but the fact that the elephant taking on the anthropomorphic body and voice in this text

engages in the war suggests something else. Central to this account of Elephantus is the fact that

he considers himself a miracle worker. He has no trouble presenting himself just as another

human subject. Elephantus's substantive support of the Persian army suggests that his sympathy

goes to the victor of history: ultimately, his military engagement and his identification with the

victors of history paves the way to Elephantus's attempts to quell any potential dissension within

the English nation.

After performing these brilliant military feats, Elephantus's own curiosity leads him to

England. His reference to "rambling curiosities" as the major trigger to this particular visit

echoes commonplace rhetoric used in contemporary travelogues, such as *Robinson Crusoe* (5).

Supposedly, curiosities function as a neutral trigger for further knowledge and travels, but curiosity can also serve as the engine for financial or political interests at work in the colonial project. The elephant narrator expects that his visit to England will be identical to his visits to other nations where he has been invariably welcomed and treated as an eminent guest. In striking contrast to his expectations, however, Elephantus finds everything in England disappointing: "I was received with less Gentility, less Politeness, less Civility, less Hospitality, and even with less Humanity, than I should have met with in an untaught, savage Country" (6). What upsets Elephantus is that he is provided with "an ugly, dirty, dark, dismal Hovel," "stinking water," and a straw bed. Given that what he receives is the customary human treatment of an animal, England functions as the first country in his text that treats the elephant as an elephant. For the first time, the anthropomorphized animal character faces the possibility of being seen as nonhuman, marking the sharp discrepancy between Elephantus's perception of himself and English perceptions of animals. If the elephant represents a colonial subject who visits the colonizing country, like the four Indian chiefs who visited London in 1712 (as recorded in *The Spectator*), then the initially inhuman treatment he receives—based on the appearance of his body—indicates the nature of English responses to non-English subjects.

Soon redress is made, and Elephantus's understanding of the English people is immediately transformed. On receiving better treatment, he flip-flops his position and describes the English as "prudent, obliging, and pleasingly agreeable," in opposition to other nations who believe the English to be "opprobrious" (6). Without giving evidence of this general consensus that English people are considered disgraceful, the elephant continues his favorable opinion of them, though

he reserves the right (and assumes himself qualified) to criticize English society and to impart his

unsolicited advice:

> In short, I am well acquainted with the Situation of your Affairs. The Political System is
>
> my Looking-glass, and the Republic of Letters my Elbow-chair. I am a Philosopher; I am
>
> a Geographer; and an Orthographer; and an Astronomer; and an Astrologer. I am likewise
>
> a Physician, as well as a Musician. I understand Architecture, Law, Botany, Pharmacy,
>
> Anatomy, and so forth. I am also compleatly versed in Mathematics, Metaphysics,
>
> Hydrostatics, Pneumatics, Niddinoddinatics, and so on. Physiognomy is the bright Mirror
>
> of my Penetration. (7)

After cataloguing the long list of his professions—abilities usually taken to be the exclusive

province of European scholars and merchants—the elephant urges the English to promote him as

"a Minister of State," endowed with full control of the nation (8). To resolve existing factions

and dissent in England, Elephantus demands the English relegate all their rights to him—an

autocratic idea resonant with colonialist rationalizations. His demand that the English people

elect him as their sovereign is punctured by a sense of exigency stemming from his stresses on

the word "immediately" in his speech (9). He repeatedly refers to England's "domestic Cavils,"

and although Elephantus does not articulate what particular historical event serves as the

backdrop of this letter, it seems clear toward the end of the narrative that it has much to do with

the Act of Union (1707) and with English discrimination against the Scottish in the course of the

two states becoming one.[91] It is highly significant the elephant narrator brings up the issue of

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[91] Christopher Plumb briefly notes that this is a satirical commentary on "despotism, autocracy and the maltreatment of Scots" (531). Only toward the end of the narrative does it become clear that it is the general English treatment of Scots that is in the elephant's mind. And yet Plumb does not link the *Letter* to the bewildering speed of British expansion after the Seven Years War.

England's expansion as a nation-state through the integration of Scotland, Ireland, and remote colonies overseas.

The narratorial functions of the elephant are linked to the marked changes occurring in and outside Britain as an expanding nation-state. Satirical texts often foreground a foreign traveler at the heart of a metropole, observers who eventually offer a critique of the country they are visiting. In light of similar tropes employed in *Persian Letters* and *The History and Adventures of Atom*, this speaking elephant serves double functions. On the one hand, Elephantus (like other foreign narrators) touches on sticky political issues surrounding the nascent British empire, whose identity rests on commercial and military encroachment upon other states. On the other, his self-fashioning as a magnanimous and refined sovereign suggests his embodiment of a facet of British empire predicated on technological and scientific advancement, refined aesthetical taste, and the production of awe and (military) terror. When Elephantus describes himself as "*Freedom*'s firm advocate, Liberty's gracious Lord, the Courageous, the Faithful, the Beloved, the Wise and Instructive Ruler of Mankind, [and] the oracular Insignia of a Multiplicity of future Joys," it is evident that his rhetoric echoes the self-conception of British empire as a benevolent protector of political stability and freedom (9). The elephant elaborates that he has been "the mighty-mighty Wonder of this Wonder-working Age, the Pride of Valour, the Joy of Industry, the Terror of your Enemies, and the Envy of the whole World" (9). These characteristics are emblematic of British national virtues as an empire toward the late eighteenth century, as will be materialized in the last section of this chapter. The political implications of the elephant's speeches become clear when he touches on "domestic Cavils" (9). After the Seven Years War,

the elephant asserts that domestic political turmoil will sabotage the reputation as well as the prosperity of England, and therefore must be prevented:[92]

> The late general Uproar concerning the great Cause of *Liberty*, occasioned by the successful Artifice and unlimited Effrontery of a graceless Member of the community, more effectually injured this Nation than any other Evil that has happened within this Century past. At the conclusion of an ever-memorable and most glorious War, when it essentially became your Duty to endeavor to remove its consequent Irregularities and Disorders, and to re-establish the Comforts and Blessings of Peace, a ridiculous Cabal, upon a ridiculous Subject, ridiculously threw every Thing into Confusion, and rendered you the Ridicule of the whole World.

In Elephantus's lexicon, excessive calls for liberty are associated with a kind of dissent not far removed from factionalism or even treason. Hence he advocates the creation of a united political entity presumably under the Union Jack. Despite his origin as a colonial subject, Elephantus's argument here suggests he represents the vested rights of the English, not even the British. His specific suggestions to the English people indicate the nature of the imminent empire-in-progress. In order to successfully establish this ideal of empire, the elephant suggests a draconian rule that squashes any bud of political subversion. The text's closure, in which Elephantus insists the Earl of Jack-Boot's station be restored as a way to ensure the permanence of English governance, shows that the elephant works as a spokesperson for English commercial and political interests.

And yet a central question still remains surrounding the overarching purpose of this satire. Satires often function as literary contrivances to tackle objects that are difficult to pull

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[92] Still it strikes me strange that the elephant narrator addresses only "the people of England" when he actually addresses issues in ever-expanding Britain, which might indicate that the author points toward the implicit (or explicit) Anglocentrism of the commonwealth.

down in reality. If the *Letter* is emblematic of an animal satire, what is its intended target: English mistreatment of the Scottish, the rebellious group undermining the path to a greater Britain, or perhaps the colonial figure who engages ambitiously in the production of knowledge at the expense of other colonial subjects? The anonymous author, by means of an elephant narrator, relates at length Britain's key characteristics as an expanding empire, promoting itself on the basis of its scientific and mechanical advancement, its artistic sophistication, and its military power. That's the insignia of Britain displayed to outsiders; inside the country, however, it grappled with political factions and the germs of subversion, nicely described by the elephant narrator. By putting weighty commentaries on British political affairs in the mouth of the elephant traveler, the author might be suggesting that British citizens should abandon subversive factionalism because it is not amenable to the consolidation of the nation as a terror-inspiring empire. Thus the elephant's emphasis on tolerance can be viewed as a refined way of governing non-English bodies inside Britain.

In constructing this nuanced satire, the author makes the most of the epistemological status of the elephant, drawing on a particular species that had long intrigued European onlookers through its sheer size, the hardly imaginable geographical distance it had to cover to get to Britain, and its association with Asiatic cultures. The representational itinerary of this particular species from Butler to the *Letter* historicizes the deployment of the elephant throughout the early modern period and the eighteenth century, presaging the moment when every English person could easily go and see the body of the elephant, thus reducing colonial subjects to the status of an everyday spectacle. In portraying the elephant—both a foreign body and a colonial, nonhuman subject—as a sagacious but ambitious and military figure, the author of the *Letter* highlights what goes unsaid about the imperial project both in and outside Britain.

By letting the elephant speak, this satirical piece successfully articulates the treatment of colonial subjects and the web of empire that actually makes it possible to introduce the elephant body into England in the first place.

Becoming-Animals, Becoming-Things: The Things Elephant Automata Say

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, what used to be novel lost its novelty. What was once deemed to be exotic became commonplace, competing with duplicates of its own kind. This is the case with the status of the elephant in late eighteenth-century British perception. The natural body of the elephant, stripped of its mysterious aura, began to be deployed as a decorative motif in British commodities, or as the centerpieces of early British zoos. Focusing on the "mutability of things," Nicolas Thomas rightly argues that "objects are not what they were made to be but what they become," and consequently, objects enmeshed in commercial exchanges tend to go through changes in terms of their value and their reception depending on the material conditions of trade.[93] My archive of the elephant—James Cox's elephant clocks with automata, Hubert Martinet's musical automaton, and two late eighteenth-century broadsides showcasing the elephant as a way to attract audiences to Exeter-Change (Figures 3 and 4)— registers such mutability because these objects' primary functions shifted over time and space. In this section I argue that these visual and material representations of the elephant signal, on the one hand, the containment within British epistemology of the potentially unsettling force of these exotic imports, brought in from the countless corners of the expanding empire. On the other hand, these objects evince a tension emerging out of British commercial engagements with Asian countries, revealing two peculiar conditions of British expansion that bring about imperial

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[93] Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 4.

ironies. First, the more intimately developed these trade networks became, the more indifferent

Britons seemed to the very global contexts that actually propelled these imports. Second, and

perhaps more strikingly, despite the imperial and commercial ambitions of British merchants and

chartered company operators in India and China, some British exports returned to the home

country without producing their intended sensations in foreign markets, often not even a sputter

of interest. These returned cargoes of goods supposed to embody the advancement of British

mechanical arts and manufactures signify no economic gains for British merchants and thus an

asymmetrical trade relationship.[94] Asymmetry became an issue only when the European empires

who initiated these transactions failed to make expected gains. The exhibition of Cox's and

Martinet's musical automata epitomizes both the asymmetries and the gift culture inherent in

global trade.

I pair the automata of Cox and Martinet with "Tipu's Tiger" archived in Victoria and Art

Museum, in order to examine the gradual acclimatization of exotic things within the British isles,

and how increasing encounters with such things shaped British subjectivity toward the end of the

eighteenth century. While I chart British commercial engagements with Asian countries with a

particular focus on the logistics of elephant automata, I demonstrate how British empire more

generally rests on the nexus of commerce and scientific knowledge. My claim is that the

circulation of automata in and outside Britain contributes to disseminating both the local

knowledge of what British empire construed as peripheries and relatively advanced knowledge

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[94] For the growing imbalance in East-West trade, see Roger Smith, "The Sing-Song Trade Exporting Clocks to China in the Eighteenth Century," *Antiquarian Horology and the Proceedings of the Antiquarian Horological Society* 30 (2008): 629-58. Smith demonstrates how such an imbalance arose from the fact that the European obsession with Asian goods (textiles, porcelain, and tea) could not be offset by a reciprocal demand for British goods. Notably frustrated, British merchants confronted two problems. First, since purchases of Asian goods/chinoiserie were made in silver, this imbalance entailed a huge silver drain. Second, British merchants who operated on the prospect of profits through international trade were completely disenchanted. Amid the bleak vision of global trade, Smith notes, luxurious mechanical toys popular in Asia compensated for the deficit (629-30).

on mechanical engineering. Animal-shaped automata reveal how the undertakings of the

emerging British empire rest largely on the advancement of scientific and mechanical

knowledge, in a way that precedes the period of rigorous specialization in the field of science. I

attempt a metonymic reading of Cox's and Martinet's automata to indicate that these luxurious

mechanical toys were inextricably tied to the production of commercial and scientific

knowledge.[95] This process, in turn, engenders a divide within imperial subjectivity in the sense

that those who engage in overseas trade acquire a moderate amount of knowledge of new things

while the majority of domestic British subjects who appreciated the spectacle of imported things

were essentially turned into passive consumer-spectators. Ultimately, I contend that these Asiatic

animal-shaped automata embody a political agenda that engages with the asymmetrical power

relations between Britain and various Asian nations. Precisely put, in this section I ventriloquize

the things automata say in order to illuminate both the status of things and the making of later

eighteenth-century British subjectivity within a matrix of commercial, mechanical, and political

contexts.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE AUTOMATON HYPE AND ITS PROPONENTS

     To understand the social meanings of these particular late eighteenth-century animal-

shaped automata, we should first examine the broader context of early-modern discussions of

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[95] I am indebted to Elaine Freedgood's metonymic reading of Victorian things in *The Ideas in Things: Figurative Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). Here Freedgood salvages things from their immediate association with commodities or props in Victorian novels, through paying renewed attention to the origin and vitality of things implanted in the narratives. Likewise, my reading of elephant automata is an effort to hear what these things say about imperial and commercial networks other than as an objects of exchange. Also, I expand on the impact of things by suggesting that things actually help to construct human subjectivity in the long eighteenth century.

automata.[96] Descartes (1596-1650) and Boyle (1627-1691) can be singled out among their

contemporaries for their heavily reliance on the figure of the automaton as a way to explain

natural phenomena. As is widely known, Descartes likens nonhuman species to machines,

drawing on language steeped in the mechanical philosophy of his age. Likewise, Boyle compares

nature to a "great and admirable automaton," describing nature's more arcane undertakings as

"the subordinate engines comprised in it."[97] Boyle's analogy rests not only on the commonplace

mechanical understanding of the universe, but also on the desire to establish order and certainty.

Leibniz (1646-1716) uses similar metaphors in his own philosophy, noting that "each organic

body of a living being is a kind of divine machine or natural automaton which infinitely

surpasses all artificial automata."[98] This passage from Leibniz's *Monadology* (1714) echoes

Descartes in that it imagines the organic body as superior to human-made devices. In

seventeenth-century philosophical discourse, automata work as an effective trope for making

sense of the world, especially in the face of newfound knowledge and political turmoil.

The eighteenth century—the period Kang describes as experiencing an "automaton

craze"—was rife with frequent exhibitions of automata.[99] Both French and British mechanics

significantly contributed to the making and distribution of automata throughout Europe during

the period. Jacques de Vaucanson (1709-1782) deserves particular attention given his lasting

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[96] For a comprehensive technological history of automata, see Silvio A. Bendini, "The Role of Automata in the History of Technology," *Technology and Culture* 5 (1964): 24-42; for the general condition of pre-modern automata making, see Anthony Grafton's case study of Giovanni Fontana, the sixteenth-century Italian mechanic in "The Devil as Automaton: Giovanni Fontana and the Meanings of a Fifteenth-Century Machine," in *Genesis Redux: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Artificial Life*, ed. Jessica Riskin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 46-62.
[97] Quoted in Kang, *Sublime Machines,* 113.
[98] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *G. W. Leibniz's Monadology : An Edition for Students*, ed. Nicholas Rescher, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press), 25.
[99] Kang, *Sublime Machines*, 9.

impact on the manufacturing industry in England.[100] In 1742, Vaucanson exhibited a set of three automata, among which the duck-shaped automaton generated a great degree of excitement. Diderot's account of the exhibit registers a sense of wonder, with a particular focus on the structure of the duck automaton:

> Anatomists will find nothing to criticize about the construction of the wings. All the bones have been copied. All those protuberances called apophyses are faithfully followed as are the different joints, hollows, and curves. The three bones that form the wings are quite distinct. The first is the humerus and rotates in all directions with a bone that serves as the shoulder blade. The second is the cubitus of the wing and moves with the humerus by means of a joint that anatomists call the hinge-joint. The third is the radius that turns in the hollow of the humerus and is attached at its terminations to the small bones of the wing tip, just as is the case with the real animal. In order to show that the motions of these wings are in no way like those that one sees in the great masterpieces, such as the cocks of the clocks of Lyon and Strasbourg, the mechanism of the artificial duck is visible, the intention of the inventor being to demonstrate rather than merely to show the machine.[101]

Vaucanson's contemporaries (like Diderot) were struck by his intricate duplication of the organic system of a living duck in the form of an automaton. The mechanical duck is reported to "flap its wings, drink water, swallow grain, and even excrete little pellets from its rear."[102] Just as Blair was preoccupied with reorganizing the bone structure of the elephant in *Osteographia*

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[100] For an account of Vaucanson's technical ingenuity, see Bendini, 36; Kang, 108-111, 121, 129, 139-145.

[101] *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*, trans. Nelly S. Hoyt and Thomas Cassirer (Ann Arbor: MPublishing, University of Michigan Library, 2003). Web. 25 Aug. 2013. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.140>. Trans. of "Automate," *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers,* vol. 1. Paris, 1751.

[102] Kang, *Sublime Machines*, 104.

Elephantina (17), Diderot's detailed descriptions indicate a similar degree of intellectual passion

for figuring out the intricate design of things. The elaborate working of the joints and the

digestive system copied in the duck-shaped automaton were thus a source of wonder and marvel

at mid-century.[103]

Vaucanson's automata came to London in 1742, thereby impacting the making of

mechanical toys as well as the public consumption of such mechanical spectacles in Britain.[104]

But Vaucanson's legacy was not limited to the manufacture of extravagant toys. Taking

advantage of Frederick II's offer to serve in "the position of royal inspector of silk manufactures

in 1741" Vaucanson reveals that his automata manufacture and exhibitions are tied up with his

desire for economic gain and social recognition.[105] Five years later, Vaucanson became a

member of the Académie Royale des Sciences, emblematizing the link between mechanical

industries and the established scientific academy. Though his work is associated primarily with

mechanical ingenuity, Vaucanson's automata and his ensuing success as a self-made gentleman

scientist—a position to which Blair had aspired in earlier eighteenth-century England—

foreground the connection between mechanical spectacles and the personal desire for social

elevation in the period. As we shall see, James Cox's mechanical toy industry quite faithfully

follows Vaucanson's legacy.

Indeed, automata manufacture embodies the *Zeitgeist* of the eighteenth century, often

called the age of projects, and Vaucanson was not without predecessors of his own.[106] In a period

when rigid professionalization had yet to be realized in these disciplines, there was a fine line

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[103] To see how the notion of experienced wonder shifts over time, see Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998). Chapters 2 and 9 are especially relevant to my discussion of the elephant.
[104] Kang, *Sublime Machines,* 104.
[105] Ibid., 106.
[106] Novak, *The Age of Projects*.

between ostensibly serious scientist-engineers and those who exhibited merely to profit from

public shows. Performing scientific spectacles for the public increased a manufacturer's chances

not only to establish his credibility, but also to draw attention from prospective investors. The

exhibitions that Johann Bessler, a.k.a. Orffyreus (1680-1745) produced at mid-century best

illustrate the nature of the period's public shows and its receptions of automata. For instance, *An*

Account of the Automaton, Constructed by Orffyreus (1770) is comprised of correspondence

between key scientific figures—'sGravesande and Newton, Baron Fischer and Desaguiliers—as

well as other testimonials on the Orffyreus machine which highlight its outstanding

characteristics. These letters show the intellectual network that had been established within the

circle of scientists across Europe, and they also reveal that the hype surrounding the Orffyreus

wheel arises from its association with perpetual motion. Although an end product of human

craftsmanship, the automaton engenders wonder and curiosity because it is construed to move

permanently based on an uncannily self-motivated power.[107] Given that the automaton's

hydraulic and pneumatic mechanisms were rendered invisible to the lay public, it is no wonder

that paying audiences took the myth of perpetual motion at face value. Orffyreus designed his

public shows as an opportunity to intrigue potential investors, and the promise of high returns on

investments in his wheel prompted Londoners to establish a joint stock company for that

purpose. Even after seeing the epic failure of the South Sea Company, these stockjobbers

anticipated the initial gross investment of £1,000,000 would guarantee substantial returns.

Despite the wheel's heightened market value, this stockjobbing eventually failed, but the craze

surrounding Orffyreus's wheel shows that the period was rife with feverish illusions concerning

scientific advancement and the financial market. More importantly, the collapse of speculative

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[107] Simon Schaffer delineates the ups and downs of Orffyreus's venture in "The Show That Never Ends: Perpetual Motion in the Early Eighteenth Century," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 28.2 (1995): 157-189.

markets and the ensuing disillusionment about the rampant circulation of things suggest that the

automata industry was subject to the broader logic of the political economy.

JAMES COX AND THE EXPANDING BRITISH EMPIRE

Among eighteenth-century automata craftsmen, James Cox is one of the best documented

goldsmiths and entrepreneurs who determined the fabric of international trade in the mid- and

late eighteenth century.[108] His countless engagements with China and India have drawn attention

from art historians, curators, and historians of science, mainly because Cox's project provides a

rich mine for understanding the material conditions of trade between East Asia and Britain in the

period.[109] Cox's intricate and luxurious timepieces were renowned not only for their aesthetically

appealing design, but also for his ambitious attempt to integrate "changing barometric pressure"

in his mechanical devices in an effort to generate perpetual motion.[110] My interest in Cox's

automata stems primarily from the fact that he embodies the culmination of longstanding efforts

in eighteenth-century British mechanical design. Moreover, the fact that Cox was closely

involved with the vagaries of Sino-European trade, which became more fraught due to the

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[108] Catherine Pagani singles out three major automata craftsmen in the eighteenth century. James Cox, Jacquet Droz and Leschot of La Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland) comprised the holy trinity of automata manufacture in the mid and late eighteenth century. It should be noted that Droz et Leschot, a corporation run by the two Swiss partners, experienced greater success than Cox in China by producing less expensive but equally magnificent clocks appealing to European tastes. They made enormous profit by increasing their range of clientele, which included the Chinese elite, officials, and nouveaux riches. Pagani thus suggests that Cox's narrower marketing, which targeted only the Quianlong courts, resulted in the demise of his enterprise. For more details about these European automata producers, see Pagani, *Eastern Magnificence and European Ingenuity: Clocks of Late Imperial China* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), especially Ch. 3.

[109] Clare le Corbeiller, "James Cox and His Curious Toys," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 18 (1966): 318-324; Marcia Pointon, "Dealer in Magic: James Cox's Jewelry Museum and the Economics of Luxurious Spectacle in Late-Eighteenth-Century London," *Economic Engagements with Art*, ed. Neil De Marchi and Crafurd D. W. Goodwin (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Simon Schaffer, "Instruments as Cargo in the China Trade," *History of Science* 44 (2006): 217-246; Clare Vincent and J. H. Leopold, "James Cox (ca. 1723-1800): Goldsmith and Entrepreneur," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010) Web. 3 Aug. 2013. <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/jcox/hd_jcox.htm>

[110] Pagani, 100.

undertakings of East India Company and an increasing number of private traders, sheds new light upon the very mutability and vitality of elephant-shaped automata.[111] The itineraries of these automata evince the extent to which British empire is located on "the nexus of machine and industry," to borrow Larry Stewart's apt phrase.[112] To highlight the nature of commercial entanglement between Britain and East Asia, I center on Cox's elephant automaton alongside Martinet's equivalent and "Tipu's Tiger." In so doing, I argue these particular representations of Asiatic animals signal a tension borne out of asymmetrical international trade relations between east and west.

Cox and his industry must have stood proudly under the flag of British mechanical advancement, though he himself went through the ups and downs of the high-end mechanical toy industry, which was susceptible to fluctuations in Sino-British relations. From the moment Cox first entered into trade with China in 1762, he enjoyed an almost invincible position as a world-renowned craftsman and businessman. His products—boasting "their intricate detail, fine movements, rich materials, and abundance of colored stones and painted enamels"—fascinated the Chinese consumers Cox targeted, including members of the Quianlong empire.[113] Cox's superbly created 'sing-song' mechanical toys, clocks, and watches served both as gifts that facilitated international trade and as commodities that incurred profits.[114] And yet, his semi-monopoly in China did not last long. Once the East India Company gave approbation to private traders, a flood of British manufactures inundated both China and India. As a consequence, heated competition among British merchants undermined Cox's standing in East Asia. To make

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[111] Ironically, the wane of Cox's operation in China was accelerated by the East India Company, whose admission of private traders to engage in transactions with the Quianlong court engendered heated competition.

[112] Larry Stewart, "A Meaning for Machines: Modernity, Utility, and the Eighteenth-Century British Public." *The Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998): 259-94, 264.

[113] Pagani, 102.

[114] Pagani; Smith, 638-44.

things worse, his shipment of luxury goods to China was banned in 1772.[115] Faced with the possibility of bankruptcy (which actually occurred in 1778), Cox had no other option but to dispose of the proud collections housed in his famous private museum in Spring Gardens near Charing Cross—a disposal nicely encapsulated in *A Descriptive Inventory of the Several Exquisite and Magnificent Pieces of Mechanism and Jewellery* (1774).

This document, which anticipates the form of the auction report as it developed in the following century, is made up of two parts. In its preface, the anonymous author relates at some length Cox's contribution to the wealth of the British nation, while the second lengthier section catalogs individually numbered items, drawing on effusive language to make each product desirable in the eyes of prospective buyers. If we attend to the probable motto of the Cox enterprise—the sentence, "Growing ARTS adorn Empire"—we can see that Cox's efforts at producing mechanical goods were to be construed as arts that actually beautify the empire, including both Britain and its colonies overseas. The hard labor Cox put into the making of mechanical toys gets elevated to the status of creating art, and the dissemination of British mechanical toys becomes synonymous with an art project that embellishes the ever expanding empire. The ensuing Latin phrase, "Labor et Ingenium," indicates both what was crystalized in these automata, and what activities provided the firm foundations on which the expanding empire stood: human labor and the ingenuity on which Cox had drawn constitute the perfect empire. Hence this auction report is not just a primary document that informs us about the specific automata of which Cox was trying to dispose. Rather, the *Descriptive Inventory* can be viewed as an archive in which the major components of empire are listed and described in detail. To that end, the author elaborates how the Cox industry functioned as a vital source of employment in Britain and Switzerland.

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[115] For a brief overview of Cox's industry, see Clare Vincent and J. H. Leopold.

In addition to the political and economic implications of the report, one of the peculiarities of the *Descriptive Inventory* can be found in its references to automata: what brought these automata, which had been primarily designed as exports, back to London to be housed in their creator's private museum? As the Act for Enabling Cox to Dispose of His Museum indicates, Cox's manufactures were initially designed to be exported to Asia via the East India Company's commercial engagements with India and China. Yet, for some obscure reason, some of the exports were shipped back to Britain and exhibited to the British public. These returned 'sing-songs' best demonstrate the fate of many international cargoes in the period. Simon Schaffer, tracing the course of European goods exchanged in the so-called "sing-song" trade—trade dealing in exquisite mechanical manufactures—notes that European artifacts often underwent a metamorphosis in which otherwise neutral goods acquired a secondary function as an emblem of exchanges across cultures.[116] As precisely such a go-between, British mechanical toys were obligated to facilitate potentially seedy transactions across irreducible cultural differences.

Indeed, it became a common practice to offer exquisite mechanical toys as gifts or tributes to emperors and high-ranking officials in the countries with which Britain aimed to trade. To elucidate the function of automata at the intersection of opposing Asian-British commercial interests, we must first discuss the role of civility in these exchanges. In his study of British engagements with the Far East, Robert Markley underlines the wide use of the word 'civility' by trading partners "to override linguistic, religious, and cultural differences, [and] to convince themselves that a mutual understanding of economic, social, and military interests

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[116] Schaffer, "Instruments as Cargo," 218.

exists between European merchants and Chinese and Manchu authorities."[117] On the one hand, in light of Markley's definition of civility, we can construe automata clocks and watches as both a catalyst and an embodiment of such civility—a collective phantasmagoria that reduces the irreducible differences (even in taste) to a manageable size and scale. On the other hand, automata manufactured in Britain inspired a profound sense of wonder in Asia, making consumers perceive such things as marvels.[118] And yet, as the actual number of such goods in the market increased over time, these products gradually failed to fascinate their target audience in Asia. Unfortunately for European traders, some unpredictable emperors never bothered to open their gifts, and the degree of a culture's interest in such commodities inevitably depended on the vagaries of their initial receivers. Hence, as an attempt to maintain Asian consumers' interest, goldsmiths like Cox began to draw on Asiatic animals. To better appeal to their audiences, European manufacturers integrated such Asian elements as the figures of Asian emperors, as well as elephants and tigers. Hence Cox's and Martinet's elephant automata embody Europeans' anxious desire to continue selling their mechanical toys. At stake for British tradesmen was far less the perpetual motion of the product, than the perpetual stream of exports to target countries. As Schaffer notes, the British goods were supposed to appeal to local officials by being "distinctively British yet universally meaningful," and they were supposed to be "seductively and theatrically impressive while displaying the principles of civil rationality and utilitarian

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[117] Robert Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination*, 1600-1730 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 105.

[118] If a sense of wonder akin to the sublime experience is occasioned by the discovery of pronounced differences in scale, size, or in color, experiencing wonder is in effect antithetical to the imagined commonality/shared taste materialized in the concept of civility. Seeing or possessing European automata can therefore be read as experiencing seemingly incompatible affects.

commerce."[119] Appropriating Asian animal bodies was an inevitable choice for mechanical craftsmen like Cox and Martinet.

THE THINGS ELEPHANT AUTOMATA SAY

The deployment of Asian animals in automata epitomizes British efforts to maximize profits, but this particular form of cargo—either those automata ready for being shipped or those being returned rejected or unsold—also impacted British audiences and consumers in terms of their understanding of exotic commodities and the expanding empire. The elephant automata created by Cox and Martinet provide excellent case studies for examining eighteenth-century British perceptions of things, particularly non-British objects. Though it is obviously not a representation of an elephant, "Tipu's Tiger" (1793) is aligned with these two automata in my analysis mainly because its depiction of a life-size man-devouring tiger resonates with contemporary critiques of British imperialism; my juxtaposition of these artworks thus provides an opportunity to listen what eighteenth-century things say in relation to British expansion in the period.[120] My interpretation of these automata serves several purposes. First, it shows that the circulation of mechanical devices contributes to the creation and dissemination of British knowledge regarding the body of the colonial other. At the same time, the incorporation of Asiatic animals into the body of these automata materializes British desires to create the illusion of their own abundance and of their profit in Asian markets. Further, my metonymic reading of elephant automata traces the containment of once-exotic things within familiar British paradigms

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[119] Schaffer, "Instruments as Cargo," 220.

[120] Lately, many scholars have drawn attention to the narratorial as well as agential power of things in eighteenth-century Britain. See Mark Blackwell, ed. *The Secret Life of Thing*; Lorraine Daston, ed. *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science* (New York: Zone Books, 2007); Jonathan Kramnick, *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson*; and Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say*. Although slightly remote from my subject matter in terms of the period, Elaine Freedgood's metonymic reading of nineteenth-century objects informs my analysis of elephant automata.

of perception and consumption. Central to the perceptual shifts in this period is the way in which the act of seeing and understanding things becomes interchangeable with consuming them. In the course of British attempts to consume and ingest intricate commodities bearing resemblance to Asian animals, even an automaton like "Tipu's Tiger"—which appears to question British expansion—gets reduced to a source of entertainment. Lastly, my reading suggests that these objects say something about the material conditions of manufacturing and imperial expansion that exceeds their intended purposes and functions.

Among the many surviving machines created by Cox and his disciples, his life-size swan automaton best exemplifies the pinnacle of his craftsmanship in terms of aesthetic execution; indeed, many historians of art and science have pointed out this machine's exquisite appearance and structure. Yet equally marvelous are Cox's representations of elephants, machines which survive both in printed accounts of their initial reception and in the restored elephant clocks with automata. In the *Descriptive Inventory*, the anonymous cataloger describes in detail Cox's 'Piece the Fourth,' which is "a very large and rich Elephant, supporting a magnificent double Gallery and sumptuous Temple."[121] This automaton displays Cox's signature technical rhetoric: in addition to the staple element of its heavily ornate surface, the elephant is accompanied by other exotic animals, such as crocodiles, lizards, and serpents, among others. Additionally, the effusive depiction in the catalogue shows that the elephant figure supports a gallery in which a conqueror boasts his prowess, while yet another gallery holds a swan along with two cygnets. This particular item shows the extreme hybridity of Cox's imagination: in effect, he created a miniature zoological garden holding a constellation of animal species, including a dragon next to the aforementioned animals. Within the gilt and lavishly decorated railings reside what Cox believed to be non-European bodies. His incorporation of a Turkish lady and a Turkish officer

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[121] *A Descriptive Inventory*, 19.

into an automaton populated by a variety of animal species is baffling, and thus engenders a few possible conjectures. As Smith suggests, Cox's machine was associated with an orientalism prompted by his marketing notion that including oriental figures would be an effective strategy for appealing to his target audiences.[122] Alternatively, however, the inclusion of Turkish figures can also be read as a sign that Cox saw little or no difference between non-Europeans and the animals he populated on top of the elephant.

Besides this elephant automaton preserved in print, the only other surviving elephant automata created by Cox would be the elephant clocks.[123] The height of the elephant clock (250 cm) is quite astounding. The two bronze patinated elephants, each carrying a clock and an automaton, make a symmetrical set which features the signature grammar of the high-end mechanical toy industry: a lavish use of gold and precious stones, combined with the intricate mechanical system, constitutes the automaton proper. Zooming in on the elephant pair, who is not exactly identical, we can see that they stand on a gilt brass mound which imitates the look of natural leaf. The contour of the elephants precisely follows a naturalistic style with the exception of the ears, whose surface imitates that of a leaf. Atop the elephant bodies sits a golden draped saddle, on which stands a large pagoda-shaped clock. Amid the signature effusive style of these automata, the background of the fitted clock stands out, primarily because it portrays the idealized landscape of a British country house that evokes a sense of balance and harmony. The

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[122] Considering Smith's observation that the amalgam of "exotic beasts and buildings" is a signpost of automata exported to China during the eighteenth century, this seemingly random collection of animals is indicative of such efforts. See Smith, especially 631, 649-56.

[123] For a brief historical survey of the elephant automaton as a royal gift, see Sophie Valles, *The Gift of an Elephant*. 2012. Web. 3 Sep. 2013. <http://www.elephantclocks.com/books/gift-elephant/index.html#/0> For more on the detailed mechanical structure and appearance of Cox's elephant clocks with automata, see the press release of the 2012 exhibition, "Automates and Merveilles," at the Musée international d'Horlogerie in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland: http://www.elephantclocks.com/books/press1/index.html The press release and the extracts organized in the online booklet indicate a kind of revival of the automata craze. For more extracts of the exhibition, see http://www.elephantclocks.com/books/automates/index.html.

fitted clock is located right above the vanishing point on the miniature landscape painting, which neatly divides the left and right sections that are lined with well-groomed trees. In front of a gate situated at bottom center is a woman walking to the right. A pair of swans symmetrically foregrounded in the lake hints at the established order of Britain. The use of perspective that effectively secures a broad range of country house within this painting conveys what Britishness ought to be. The neatly organized garden and trees—as well as the balance borne out of the organic body of nature, exemplified in the swans—also serve as effective visual tools to conceptualize Britishness. Although the two elephants carrying the clocks outsize the very small landscape painting as a part of the fitted clock, I view this painting paired with the intricately designed mechanism behind the clock as an emblem of expanding British empire.[124] Presumably intended as a gift or a luxurious item to appease the vagaries of target consumers, the automata paired with clocks on top of Indian elephants suggest that Britain and its exports, however small, can dominate the global marketplace through their consumption by Asian subjects.

Martinet's musical automaton (c. 1768-1772) displays intricate design and a subtle rendering of nature, humans, and animals. The elephant takes center stage just like in the other elephant automata we have discussed. The elephant—whose trunk, ears, and pointed tusks are covered in gilt cloth—stands on a foundation which at first glance bears affinity to the forests of India. On top of the forest-like foundation stand a retinue around the elephant. As with Cox's machines, this elephant also carries a lavishly decorated gallery, where an Indian emperor triumphantly stands. This emblematic Asiatic regalia must have been designed to appeal to a

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[124] For further discussion of landscape painting in relation to the notion of Britishness during the period, see P. M. Harman, *The Culture of Nature in Britain, 1680-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), especially Chs. 4 and 5. For nuanced discussion of the socio-cultural meanings of objects emerging from the scale/size difference in literary representations, see Susan Stewart's seminal work, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

local official. Moreover, the heavily ornate and gilt look of the machine—as with many automata—embodies the seductive and theatrical elements of the commercial engagement between the parties involved. Hence, the elephant automaton is an apt index of British efforts to negotiate the apparent incommensurability of opposed conceptual categories: the natural and the artificial, the Indian and the British, the commercial and the artistic. The historical evidence that this particular automaton was commissioned by the East India Company suggests that we might read the elephant automaton as "cargo" in Schaffer's sense of the word. According to Phillipa Plock, Martinet's automaton stayed in the British Isles for quite a long time, perhaps signaling either its inaptitude as a gift, or the failure of the EIC's marketing strategy.[125] Taking into consideration the common lot of cargo in British trade with Asia, this particular mechanical toy might have been returned, along with other failed or unsold goods which might be enthusiastically welcomed by British or French spectators, either as part of exhibitions held across Europe or as additions to private cabinets of curiosity, emporia, or museums.

This dilemma leaves us with a number of questions. What epistemological or social impacts would these returned cargoes make on British audiences? What proportion of the British public would enjoy or be informed by exhibitions, zoos, and museums? Among those museum-, zoo-, exhibition-goers, how many would be cognizant of the link between these exhibitions and the expansion of Britain? To what degree would the general British audience be aware of the scope of the commercial web lying between Britain and East Asia? Ultimately, what paradigms

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[125] Phillipa Plock, "Musical Automaton Commentary," *Waddesdon*.
<http://collection.waddesdon.org.uk/search.do?id=39244&db=object&page=1&view=detail >
As both Smith and Pointon point out, these customized luxurious toys at times failed to satiate the vagaries of taste among the officials and rulers of China. Because we don't have the minutes of these transactions, these arguments can sound largely conjectural. Indeed, Smith acknowledges the trouble inherent in tracking the transactions between the British East India Company and either China or India. The fact that the East India Company during this period drew much on the work of privateers thwarts historians' attempts to trace a major single trade channel between pertinent national entities. To be sure, India's case is worse in terms of the number of records that are still available.

of British subjectivity were formed in these domestic encounter zones? Although it is not easy to comprehensively track the popular reception of things putatively exotic and spectacular in the long eighteenth century, we do have some evidence that can help us to describe the general British perception of things as well as the forms of British subjectivity that emerged from the global context of British expansion.[126]

To understand British perceptions of things, we can start with Cox's museum, in which he showcased his own exemplary mechanical artworks. Despite the fact that few took his museum as a genuinely artistic venue, Cox's pride and conviction led him to insist that his museum deserved respect equal to that offered to the Royal Academy and the Royal Society of Arts.[127] Though contemporaries called Cox's museum "a model of corrupt centralized government"—to borrow he terms of William Mason's satirical accusation—the museum still attracted popular audiences.[128] Beautifully crafted mechanical toys operating under the illusion of perpetual motion brought the public in. However, just as its creator's enterprises were subject to the fluctuations of political economy, so Cox's museum had its ups and downs. Those who engaged in international commerce became more wary of any signs of collapse or bankruptcy that might cut the streams of cash and credit. In a way, the fate of Cox's enterprises represents the persistence in the later eighteenth century of the values espoused in Daniel Defoe's works on the 'complete tradesman.'

At the other end the spectrum of British subjectivity—in contrast to manufacturers and purveyors of commodities like Cox—lies the identity of the public who consumed these wares. Because of the difficulty inherent in defining the primary characteristics of a collective body, I

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[126] Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), Chs. 2, 5, 16, 23, 25-26.
[127] Pointon, "Dealer in Magic," 439, 447.
[128] Quoted in Pointon, 426. Altick references the same accusation in *The Shows of London*, 71.

attempt to read the British public in relation to the material conditions of the mid- and late eighteenth century entertainments they consumed. As Altick shows us, eighteenth-century Britain witnessed a flood of various kinds of spectacles: waxworks, clockworks, mechanical engines, artworks, panoramas, and a variety of animals were on view in London to entertain anyone willing and able to pay for it. These shows also served to provide some degree of education primarily by piquing audiences' curiosity of audiences and simultaneously displaying recent and advanced knowledge in a way that the public could grasp. In response to the influx of returned Asiatic animal automata or similarly refined mechanical toys, they were likely to be inured to seeing elephants and other supposedly exotic animals to such an extent that they no longer functioned as objects of wonder. The broadsides released in the late eighteenth century, however, suggest lingering public curiosity both in the bodies of animals and in mechanical science as a way to make sense of nature.

Two broadsides printed in c. 1797 and 1800 demonstrate that the trope of *cuorioso natural* still effectively drew audiences' attention in late-eighteenth-century London. The 1797 broadside foregrounds the elephant as the centerpiece of the so-called grand menagerie, using a rhetoric that demonstrates the contemporary notion of nature as a mechanical engine, as is nicely captured in the text's reference to "Nature having shewn the most exquisite workmanship and contrivance in tis wonderful structure and magnitude."[129] This text hints at historical shifts from understanding nature as an organic body to viewing it as a manufacturer like Cox. Near the dawn of the nineteenth century, the notion of nature itself is undergoing major changes in the sense

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[129] A similar account of nature as an automaton is found in Robert Boyle's *A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notions of Nature.* The trope is derived from the overall mechanical understanding of nature in the eighteenth century. For discussion, see Kang's *Sublime Machines*, especially Ch. 3, where he notes that nature, "a creative being, was replaced by a machine that operated strictly according to its original programming" (113). See also Harman's *The Culture of Nature*, in which he discusses how experimental philosophy and mechanical engineering shifted the eighteenth-century understanding of nature.

that nature is no longer seen as a source of natural life, but as an artificial space in which an astounding array of human interventions takes place. The establishment of zoological gardens and the day-to-day spectacles of animals within the confines of such spaces were likely to help the British public to easily accept the fact that nature is a product of manmade investment and artificiality. The modifiers deployed to describe the elephant's origin, physical traits, and intelligence bear close affinities with imaginary descriptions from the late seventeenth century: adjectives like "astonishing," "amazing," "surprising," and "curious" are planted to intrigue this early generation of zoo-goers. This integration of newfound knowledge in mechanical engineering with the early modern rhetoric of wonder suggests that the late eighteenth century echoes the earlier period in terms of its language and affect toward the exotic animal. Indeed, the contour of the elephant body in the broadside is reminiscent of Gessner's sixteenth-century depiction of the elephant in the sense that the rendition is by no means accurate. Although the proportion between the head and the rest of the body is close to that of an actual elephant, this inaccurate visualization of the elephant may have stemmed from a strategy to defamiliarize the elephant, which would have become quite ordinary by this time period, in order to elicit more enthusiasm and "admiration" from the British public.

In a similar vein, the 1800 Exeter-Change broadside, composed of a list of animals with disparate origins, embodies the bare face of nature represented at the heart of the expanding British Empire: animals with extremely diverse backgrounds and behavioral patterns are transported into a single space and put into display for public entertainment. Despite the obvious fact that the broadside indicates the individual origin of each species, it still remains questionable the degree to which target audiences would be aware of the operation of imperial logistics. In addition, what is notable in the 1800 broadside is that the list of animals is presented without

indicating what brought the animals to London in the first place, helping turn Enlightened British subjects into consumers ignorant of the networks of commercial and imperial expansion Britain had successfully created. At the risk of oversimplification, I argue such encounters with animals signal the happy massification of British subjects; that is, most Britons tended to enjoy local knowledges from the corners of the expanding empire in heavily embellished material form. Thus, the introduction of "Tipu's Tiger" is crucial to understanding not only the self-fashioning of British empire, but also British perceptions of Asian peoples and animals, along with a fundamental divide within the formation of British subjectivity. In his study of the operation of British empire in late eighteenth century, Daniel O'Quinn notes that countless representations of Tipu as a demonic despot predominated the theater of the period.[130] The Mysorean conflict, according to O'Quinn, precipitated a particular need for Britain to stage the sexualized and racialized body of Tipu and his Indian subjects; the bloody wars consequently reduced to spectacles obscured British "military techniques employed in breaking down colonial resistance."[131] Also the 1790s saw the "consolidation" of the empire through military triumphs over India and other Asian countries, which propelled the myth of British supremacy.[132]

"Tipu's Tiger" entered London, where consumers of such spectacles resided in an urban bubble of scientific advancement, aesthetic refinement, and military triumphalism. In striking contrast to the automata created by Cox and other European artisans, the life-size Bengal tiger attempting to devour "a prostrate European body" is unsettling in many ways. First, it was

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[130] See Daniel O'Quinn, *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770-1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 314-15. O'Quinn demonstrates that a good number of plays bearing the name of 'Tippoo' showcased the Third and Fourth Mysore Wars in a highly spectacular manner.

[131] O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, 314.

[132] Ibid., 313.

commissioned by the (in)famous Tipu, Sultan of Mysore, to decorate his palace in 1793.[133]

Because Tipu is well known for his obsession with the tiger as an "instrument of God," the

coupling of a menacing tiger with a European male figure conveys a highly politicized

message.[134] Chatterjee discusses the notion of the tiger as a divine instrument, explaining that the

tiger functioned as "the presiding deity of the kingdom of Mysore."[135] Tipu might be suggesting

that it is in the hands of God to avenge not only the commercial but also the political

encroachments of Britain in South India.[136] Murphy references the 1793 Treaty of Seringapatam

as the major backdrop against which this automaton was produced. Interestingly enough, the

automaton is a musical one whose sound originated from the pipe-organ body of the tiger. The

sound the tiger automaton makes is by no means aesthetically appealing. The deep bellowing of

the tiger (made possible by the use of control handle pumps) set against the European subject

hints at the degree of resentment and bitterness which Tipu felt toward British armies.[137]

Additionally, the fact that Tipu put a wailing sound in the mouth of a prostrate British figure is

representative of the degree of his animosity toward Britain. The dominant posture of the tiger,

accompanied by a menacing snarl, provides the intended message against the increasing

encroachment of Britain in the territory of Indian sultans. After Tipu was killed in 1799, this

tiger automaton came to Britain and is still on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum in

London. Although it is not clear whether *"Tipu's Tiger"* was put on display for public audiences

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[133] Susan Stronge's *Tipu's Tigers* (London: V & A, 2013/forthcoming)

[134] Partha Chatterjee shows that the "tiger motif was ubiquitous on the uniforms and weapons used by his soldiers, and on Tipu's coins, flags, and throne" in *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 93.

[135] Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire*, 93.

[136] Veronica Murphy, "Tipu's Tiger," *Victoria and Albert Museum*. <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/tippoos-tiger/>

[137] For more on Tipu's demonstration of military prowess against the British, see Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), Ch. 3.

at that moment, the fact that this particular automaton—purposely created to voice resistance against the British empire—was eventually transported to the metropole manifests the web of empire, which grew substantive and visible toward the end of the eighteenth century. It also indicates how the British come to enjoy newfangled luxuries—mechanical toys including chinoiserie and newly imported animals in zoological gardens—without bothering to think about the imperial logic operating behind such manmade mechanical toys, clocks, zoos, and automata.

Coda: Elephants in the Web of Empire

In John Gay's fable, "The Elephant and the Bookseller," a bookseller encounters an elephant client who knows ancient Greek. The elephant criticizes philosophers' wrongful descriptions of animals, alluding to early anthropocentric understandings of animals that insist upon a binaristic distinction between the human and the nonhuman. Fascinated by the elephant's linguistic ability and the broad scope of his understanding, the bookseller asks him to write "a history of *Siam,*" ensuring him good pay. The elephant, however, curtly dismisses the offer:

> E'en keep your money, and be wise;
>
> Leave man on man to criticise,
>
> Among the senseless sons of men,
>
> They unprovok'd will court the fray,
>
> Envy's a sharper spur than pay,
>
> No author ever spar'd a brother,
>
> Wits are game-cocks to one another.[138]

Primarily, this short fable criticizes the fraught eighteenth-century literary marketplace, where authors attacked one another out of envy and the desire for fame and money, but there is an irony

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[138] John Gay, *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*, ed. Vinton A. Dearing (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 2: 315.

in the fact that Gay draws on an animal character to criticize human business. In a way, my charting of the elephant throughout the long eighteenth century similarly adopts animals to examine the material conditions of British knowledge production in the context of its global expansion. However, instead of leaving "man on man to criticise," I attend to what the elephant says about the making of British subjectivity, empire building, and the dissemination of commercial and scientific knowledge.

In tracing the treatment and deployment of the elephant from the late seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century, I demonstrate how British subjectivity was shaped. Butler's portrait of seventeenth-century amateur gentleman scientists shows how virtuosi are both the heirs and the emulators of experimental philosophy, prefiguring the enlightened subjectivity manifested in Blair's anatomy report. In the course of forging modern subjectivity, the elephant is put in a range of different positions. In the case of Butler's poem, despite the male scientists' attempt at making sense of this barely imagined being, the elephant remains beyond the grasp of human understanding, as is evident in the sixteenth- and seventeenth renditions of the elephant. Blair's *Osteographia* can be taken as a watershed in terms of his success in taxonomically describing the elephant as he initially planned: his anatomy report indicates that the arcane and opaque body of nature is being demystified in the early eighteenth century. The course of this demystification was occasioned by the influx of newfound specimens and knowledge from around the world, although Blair seems unaware of this himself. The *Letter*, using the conventions of it-narratives and animal satires, suggests that the elephant figure works as an apt critic of expanding British commercial and imperial engagements. Though Britain is never fully conceptualized in the *Letter*, this satire narrated by the elephant emissary (from nowhere or everywhere) indicates the advent of British ascendancy in global trade. Bolstered by unparalleled

advancements in science, technology, and engineering, Britain engaged other nations with the illusory goal of infinitely increasing its wealth. This move is tellingly captured in the logistical history of automata. Due to the unpredictable nature of global commerce, automata for export often returned to the heart of British empire, and were consumed by British subjects along with exotic animals in Exeter-Change.

In short, the elephant represented in these cultural materials works as a thing located at the crossroads of British subjectivity and empire making. It fascinated people. It sparked popular and scientific imagination. It stole the heart of target audiences, from the emperor of Qing China, to the high-ranking and elites of Asian societies, to the British consumer of everyday spectacles. In addition to being a source of wonder, knowledge, and entertainment, the elephant equally embodies a thingness that defies designs. The vitality of the elephant encapsulates the slippage of human-nonhuman and center-periphery relations, complicating the fabric of eighteenth-century material culture.

Chapter 3
WINDS, EPIDEMICS, AND BUBBLES:
VITAL OBJECTS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN DEFOE'S WRITINGS

> Trade, like Religion, is what every Body talks of, but few understand.
> Defoe, *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1728)

> . . . [I]n the wilderness I find myself regarded by being other than humans—the wolves, bears, and so on—and in a field of languages and signs that I scarcely understand. … In the wilderness I am no longer a sovereign or master, but a being among other beings.
> Levi R. Bryant, "Wilderness Ontology" (2011)[139]

Near the end of 1703, not long after his release from the much-dreaded pillory, Defoe's England was struck by the ferocious storm of the century, a natural disaster whose sheer magnitude put in perspective the petty personal and political charges that had been filed against him.[140] Over the course of two tumultuous days (26-27 November 1703), the tempest moved across the British Isles, ravaging particularly the southern and central parts of England and Wales. The unrelenting power of the storm fueled fear, horror, and despair. With the memory of his own unmediated, anxiety-ridden experience of the event still vivid, Defoe published a report wherein he illustrates the unprecedentedly horrifying scale of the storm as well as the impossibility of identifying its causes. Re-situating himself and his readers in the moment the gale struck, Defoe writes:

> Horror and Confusion seiz'd upon all, whether on Shore or at Sea: No Pen can describe
> it, no Tongue can express it, no Thought conceive it, unless some of those who were in
> the Extremity of it; and who, being touch'd with a due sense of the sparing Mercy of their

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[139] Levi R. Bryant, "Wilderness Ontology," *Preternatural*, ed. Celina Jeffrey (New York: Punctum Books, 2011), 21.

[140] For more on Defoe's experience of the humiliation attendant upon the pillory, see John Richetti, *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), esp. 11, 22-24, 35, and 64.

Maker, retain the deep Impressions of his Goodness upon their Minds, tho' the Danger be

past: and of those I doubt the Number is but few. (53)[141]

Drawing on the topos of inexpressibility, Defoe modestly recognizes his limited knowledge by

referring to the unknowable aspects of nature as "*Terra Incognita*" (13). His nonfiction disaster

narrative, *The Storm* (1703), captures the great degree of "Concern and Consternation" (31)

Britons must have felt that particular night, creating a kind of template for disaster writing which

sparked many competing firsthand accounts of the earthquake and the thunder. Defoe's writing

not only registers the immediacy of the event, but also expresses the author's confidence that he

might narratively contain the unruly, unrelenting power of the natural disaster. In the face of the

tempest's apparent inexplicability, Defoe devises his text as a discursive mechanism for

explaining and taming the vital force of this frightening nonhuman agent. Indeed, he suggests the

necessity of creating a particular narrative form, one whose frame and methods might enable him

to contain the storm's "impetuous Course" (49), anticipating a similar desire for establishing

narrative order evident in Defoe's later and now better-known foray into disaster writing, *A

Journal of the Plague Year* (1722).

I argue that Defoe's firsthand experience of two major disasters—the 1703 storm and the

1720 South Sea Bubble—prompted him to experiment with a model subjectivity that I refer to

here as that of an information manager, exemplified in Defoe's editorial persona in *The Storm*

and in the narrator figure H.F. in *A Journal of the Plague Year*. Defoe's version of the

information manager is engaged in empirical data collection and ordering gathered information

in print; as importantly, he acknowledges both the corporeal dimension of allegedly objective

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[141] Daniel Defoe, *The Storm*, ed. Richard Hamblyn (New York: Penguin, 2005). Future references to the *Storm* will be to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text. In response to the relentless storm, Defoe produced two more pieces in the same year: *The Lay-Man's Sermon upon the Late Storm* and *An Essay on the Late Storm*.

information and the human body's entanglements with nonhuman agents. The novelty of Defoe's

information managers lies in the way they combine the traits required for natural philosophers

and clerks, such as shop owners or what Defoe elsewhere calls the 'merchant-scholars' of the

period.[142] These idealized figures inherit the legacy of Baconian experimental science in several

important ways: they ground their reasoning in empirical observations, they gather first-hand

information and knowledge from a wide range of sources (and "specimens"), and they eventually

put their findings in dialogue with others through print.[143] Defoe's disaster writings, on the one

hand, underscore his culture's urgent need for properly compiling, discerning, and disseminating

information in order to contain the destructive power of nonhuman phenomena that elude human

comprehension, from natural forces like extreme weather and infectious disease, to

uncontrollable manmade systems like the unstable financial market and the credit economy.

Defoe's archetypal information managers demonstrate how credibility and factual accuracy are

constructed in early eighteenth-century British culture, embodying Defoe's distinctive way of

both engaging in and questioning empirical knowledge making.[144] On the other hand, read

through the lens of posthumanist theory, Defoe's disaster writings signify the eighteenth-century

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[142] For more on Defoe's inheritance of Baconian ideals and the new science emerging from the late seventeenth century, see Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth*, esp. chs. 1-3, 5-6; Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Ilse Vickers, *Defoe and the New Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[143] The word "information manager" comes from Jacob Soll's work on the unprecedented feats of Jean-Baptiste Colbert in establishing a centralized system of information in the court of Louis XIV. See Soll, *Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 3. Proper equivalents to the information manager in Defoe's works would be what he calls a universal scholar, or a merchant scholar.

[144] In his construction of the information manager, Defoe borrows extensively from seventeenth-century Baconian (natural) philosophers, such as Samuel Hartlib, William Petty, Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, and John Wilkins. It is plausible that Defoe encountered Baconian ideals—including corpuscular theory, the concept of exact observations, data collection and classification—through Charles Morton, his mentor at Newington Green Academy.

recognition of nonhuman forces that are situated outside of the representational network, something fundamentally unknowable.

Hence I approach Defoe's construction of the information manager from two directions. First, Defoe's experience of major disasters underlines the historically specific necessity of attaining comprehensible knowledge and objectivity amid a deluge of misinformation and/or an absence of information proper. Published against the historical backdrop of both the South Sea Bubble and the Marseilles Plague, Defoe's *Journal* portrays plague-stricken late seventeenth-century London as a site infested by "Fortune-tellers, Cunning-men, and Astrologers" who "made the Town swarm with a wicked Generation of Pretenders to Magick, to the *Black Art*" (44).[145] For Defoe, the advent of a scientific modernity-to-come is significantly hampered by irrational and superstitious responses to disorienting phenomena like the plague. Similarly, with regard to the South Sea Bubble, he describes the nation's mathematical failure to compute the risks involved in its investment practices as a "National Infection" (49), thereby suggesting that the viral epidemic of the plague and the unprecedented financial havoc of the market collapse are semiotically intertwined.[146] My argument is that Defoe's information manager emerges as a kind of enlightened antidote to these social and epistemological problems, but one whose limitations ultimately illustrate how manifold human attempts to contain unruly nonhuman forces are likely to fail.

Second, taking seriously the affective dimension of anxiety and failure apparent in Defoe's project, this essay argues that these intense, phenomenal incidents foreground the

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[145] Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* in John Mullan (ed.), *The Novels of Daniel Defoe* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009). Future references to the *Journal* will be to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text.

[146] See Jonathan Swift, *The Bubble* (1721) for a similarly sharp critique of the complete failure of computation practices reliant on probability: "That Nation then too late will find, / Computing all their Cost and Trouble, / Directors Promises but Wind, / South-Sea at best a mighty *Bubble*."

"thingliness" (Levi R. Bryant), "hyperobjectivity" (Timothy Morton), "thing-power" or

"vibrancy" (Jane Bennett), "thingness" (Jonathan Lamb), or "vitality" (Catherine Packham) of

modern disasters as either intractable to human attempts to comprehend, contain, and police

them, or excessive beyond the scope of human understanding.[147] By analyzing together the

agential power of infectious disease, the credit economy, and the storm, I provide a more

comprehensive account of Defoe's complicated relationship to such 'things' than has been

offered by studies that have treated these disasters in Defoe's work separately, using

methodologies specifically appropriate to each—a nonhumanist analysis buttressed by either

object-oriented ontology or speculative realism in relation to the storm, for example, or

epidemiology and histories of science for the plague, or economic history as a way of

illuminating Defoe's response to the South Sea Bubble.[148] While I will borrow insights from

these approaches (and others) during the course of my argument, my central focus will be to

understand Defoe's construction of the information manager as a response to what thing theorists

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[147] Even though all of these terms are emblematic of different stakes and philosophical backgrounds, they in common acknowledge the autonomy of nonhuman entities. In this paper, I will primarily use the term "thingliness" as a way to indicate such agential power of nonhumans. As is well known, Bill Brown has offered a new definition of "things" as a complicated category opposed to "objects," which in most cases serve human needs or function as a projection of human desire. For the definition and broader implications of 'things,' see Brown, "Thing Theory," *Things*, 4-5; Paula Findlen, ed., *Early Modern Things*: *Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2013), which reflects the renewed, widespread interest in rereading objects that are both imbedded in the narrative order and enmeshed in the material culture of their respective historical periods; Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter;* Catherine Packham's *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism: Bodies, Cultures, Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2012).

[148] Another methodological approach developed by this renewed recognition of 'things' has been characterized as the "nonhuman turn" in interdisciplinary interpretive practice. See Levi R. Bryant, "Wilderness Ontology," in which he entirely denounces the topographical distinction of civilization and wilderness by arguing that dethroned humans occupy the same ontological space as nonhuman species. To examine the gist of speculative realism or object-oriented ontology, commonly based on the premise that humans are nothing but objects, see Bryant, *Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2011); Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman, eds. *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism* (Melbourne: re.press, 2011); Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2013) and *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), where he suggests re-scaling of our thoughts in the face of ecological crises as well resituating human subjects in relation to nonhuman subjects.

have described as the autonomy and resistance to human intentionality of nonhuman entities like

Defoe's disasters. Jonathan Lamb has argued that "the incomplete state of knowledge" in

eighteenth-century British culture resulted in the production of "credible fictions" as the "only

defense against vaporous fancies," the latter of which I take as a metonym for misinformation.[149]

Defoe's information manager and the apparently coherent empiricist narratives he develops in

his disaster writings function as precisely the kind of "credible fiction" Lamb refers to in his

study. Even so, Defoe's disaster writings foreground the tension between the credibility of such

fictions and the embodied, vital dimensions of nonhuman entities, calling into question his

narrators' confidence in human agency through the threat that human subjects might become

thing-like themselves.[150]

Ultimately, Defoe's texts chart how his narrators' desires for what Lamb calls the

"absolute cognitive possession of [the] thing" are thwarted by the autonomy of the objects they

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[149] Lamb, *The Things Things Say*, 130. For contrasting accounts of nonhuman "vitality" in eighteenth-century culture, see Catherine Packham's *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism*. Packham questions the long-established gulf between the Romantic 'vitalist' view of nature and the rather mechanical view of eighteenth-century materialism through her study of the prehistory of vitalist elements in earlier eighteenth-century natural philosophy and political economy. Packham identifies the "autonomous power of matter" in her reconceptualization of vitalism within the context of long eighteenth century scientific, literary, and philosophical discourses, but delimits the range of her discussion to forms of specifically organic matter in a way that would exclude from her purview 'things' like the credit economy or even the storm. See also Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, "Spectral Currencies in the Air of Reality: *A Journal of the Plague Year* and the History of Apparitions," *Representations* 87 (2004): 82-101. Lewis notes the thingness inherent to the eighteenth-century understanding of apparitions, arguing that eighteenth-century apparition narratives "did not conceive of their subject as necessarily supernatural" but as potentially taxonomizable under "the category of the natural and its attendant laws" (86).

[150] In regard to Defoe's knowledge-making in the face of unexplainable phenomena, previous scholarship has noted Defoe's dual reliance on Providentialism and empiricism, situating him in the line of seventeenth-century empiricists for whom such contrasting modes of explanation were not necessarily incompatible or mutually exclusive. While Defoe does occasionally draw on the language of Providentialism in his disaster writings, my primary concern lies with his interrogation of conflicts internal to the methods of empiricism itself, as revealed particularly through his interest in how the corporeal dimension of data gathering undermines his epistemological confidence and thus gestures towards skepticism.

would command.[151] But not without a great deal of effort: Defoe's information managers in both *The Storm* and *A Journal of the Plague Year* are committed to a full-fledged engagement with the new science and its empirical vision as potential means of containing the apparently incomprehensible through narrative forms that borrow from the related rhetorical conventions of natural philosophy and early eighteenth-century accounting practices. At the same time, however, Defoe acknowledges the problematic corporeal dimension of the kinds of information and knowledge ordered in the catalogues, tables, and charts epistemologically idealized by the new science—a corporeality that refers *both* to the fallibility of the human sensorium charged with apprehending the natural world, *and* to the often inscrutable human body as one of the objects about which information is being gathered. In Defoe's *Journal* the failure to attain cognitive mastery is represented in the form of failing government policy, from which the information manager ultimately derives a sense of humility toward human agency more generally. Attendant to the complex dialectic of confidence and skepticism in these works, I align Defoe's *The Storm* with the *Journal* to trace the development of the information manager as a newly emergent subjectivity, a rational empiricist subject who enacts Defoe's strategies for containing disasters in print. The last section of this chapter focuses on the mobility of three men in *Journal*, providing a coda which considers how the failure of eighteenth-century public policy is fundamentally related to the vibrancy of nonhuman agents.

Managing Networks of Letters in *The Storm*

Defoe's initial sketch of an information manager is discernible in *The Storm*, which from the outset positions Defoe as the primary compiler, arbiter, and editor of the eyewitness accounts sent in by correspondents. This editorial subject-position illustrates the nature of Defoe's

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[151] Lamb, *The Things Things Say*, 130.

engagement with empiricist processes of collecting and ordering information, processes that

eventually enable him to produce knowledge in the face of disaster. As Richard Hamblyn notes,

London at this historical moment was "in throe of meteorological inspection," as were other

parts of the nation (xi), and it is in this cultural context that Defoe's preoccupation with

collecting meteorological data serves as a timely model for assessing the scope and progress of

the storm, a disaster whose excessive agential power seems to outsmart human efforts at

comprehending it.[152]

The kind of knowledge Defoe manages and produces in *The Storm* is multi-faceted. First,

by conjoining his pursuit of scientific objectivity with his participation in print, Defoe grounds

his empirical reasoning in the organization of collected materials from select local

correspondents across the country. Defoe uses and transforms a primary convention of early

modern knowledge-making by soliciting and containing diffuse firsthand accounts of the storm.

Like his empiricist forerunners, Defoe is invested in establishing verifiable knowledge,

emulating the model of Baconian natural philosophers, including systematic botanists and

zoologists, but Defoe's journalistic agenda ultimately expands the cultural power of natural

philosophy through his confidence in print culture as a medium for the dissemination of truth. At

the same time, Defoe's empirical vision does not undermine Providentialism outright. He echoes

his seventeenth-century predecessors by attributing the inexplicability of nature to the realm of

the divine: "Nature plainly refers us beyond her Self, to the Mighty Hand of Infinite Power, the

Author of Nature, and Original of all Causes" (12). Indeed, Defoe's occasional reliance on

Providentialism in the course of marshaling empirical observations of the storm reveals an

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[152] For more on the consistently unpleasant, unpredictable weather during the early eighteenth century, see Robert Markley, "'Casualties and Disasters': Defoe and the Interpretation of Climatic Instability," *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 8.2 (2008): 102-24. Markley situates Defoe's text and the gale in the particular context of the Little Ice Age (c. 1300-1850) and thus in the nascent development of climatology in the period.

epistemological tension between the longstanding authority of Christianity and the increased

significance of natural philosophy. But apart from understanding Providentialism as a contrasting

mode of explanation, Defoe's writing envisages two challenges to the persuasiveness of

empirical methodology that are generated from within empiricism itself: first, Defoe's statement

that "all Nature has its Cause within it Self" (13) implies the primacy of nature's thinglike

agency, potentially independent of God's intervention and certainly of human comprehension;

and second, Defoe's emphasis on the corporeal dimension of collected information—its

dependence upon human beings' potentially fallible sensory systems—suggests the insistent

possibility of scientific error through lapses and inaccuracies in our unavoidably embodied,

human observations.

From the outset, Defoe vouches for his truthfulness in the milieu of print culture by

saying "if a Man tells a Lye in Print, he abuses Mankind" (3). This solemn statement reveals an

enigmatic relationship between print and the facticity of disaster writing in particular. Primarily,

Defoe aims to promote an aura of objectivity in his methods by assuming that no one would offer

the 'useless Banter of an Untruth' in print, a relatively enduring medium in which individual lies

would be permanently recorded and would invite derision from posterity (65).[153] Defoe

insistently argues that printed materials guarantee factual accuracy, objectivity, and thus

truthfulness, because he believes that the permanence of print will proscribe attempts at falsity or

misrepresentation.[154] However, he admits that the correspondence about the storm solicited from

all over Britain could be subject to editorial revision from Defoe himself, as the one responsible

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[153] In his examination of *The Storm*, Markley emphasizes that the text is committed to "empirical verification" (103) and religious discourses (Providentialism). See Markley, ''Casualties and Disasters.''
[154] For more on Defoe's relationship to eighteenth-century British print culture, see Paula McDowell, "Defoe and the Contagion of the Oral: Modeling Media Shift in *A Journal of the Plague Year*," *PMLA* 121 (2006): 87-106; and also McDowell, "'The Art of Printing was Fatal': Print Commerce and the Idea of Oral Tradition in Long Eighteenth-Century Ballad Discourse" in Patricia Fulmerton and Anita Guerrini (eds.), *Ballads and Broadsides in Britain, 1500-1800*, (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010), 35-56.

for soliciting, gathering, reviewing, editing, cataloguing, and publishing the vast array of first-hand accounts. In effect, despite Defoe's reassurance that the collected letters are "dressed in their own Words" (8) and "kept close to the matter of fact" (65), he does not completely dismiss his own editorial intervention, explaining that 'if I tell a Story in Print for a Truth which proves otherwise, unless I, at the same time, give proper Caution to the Reader, by owning the Uncertainty of my Knowledge in the matter of fact, "tis I impose upon the World: my Relater is innocent, and the Lye is my own" (4-5).

One of the distinctive elements in Defoe's reconstruction of the storm lies in the way he contrasts the function of the natural philosopher against that of the man of Christian faith. Defoe elucidates that his editorial position is analogous to that of a botanical anatomist, highlighting that "in Nature the Philosopher's Business is … the Wood; there grows the Plant he looks for; and 'tis there he must find it. Philosophy's a-ground if it is forc'd to do any further Enquiry" (14). In order to define the significance of this method, Defoe constructs one of the more famous binary oppositions in his text: "The Christian begins just where the Philosopher ends; and when the Enquirer turns his Eyes up to Heaven, Farewell Philosopher; 'tis a Sign he can make nothing of it here" (14). Confronting the excessiveness of nature, Defoe acknowledges that we have two (not necessarily incompatible) modes of explanation at our disposal: on the one hand, we can assume the role that Psalmists used to play by appreciating and praising the mystery of nature, attributing it to God's work; or, on the other hand, we can empirically elucidate the workings of nature in the manner of a natural philosopher or an anatomist. Though he acknowledges both realms of knowledge, Defoe's emphasis falls on the function of natural philosophers whose guiding principle is to attend to the material evidence available to them. In his additional commentary, Defoe repeatedly underscores the responsibility of the anatomist—a kind of

metonym in Defoe's work for any modern objective thinker—for delving into the core of nature, arguing that it is "not enough for an Anatomist to know that he is fearfully and wonderfully made in the lowermost Part of the Earth," because that mode of understanding is the province of poets or religious thinkers (15). In contrast, Defoe insists that an anatomist 'must see those lowermost Parts' and "search into the Method Nature proceeds upon in the performing the Office appointed, must search the Steps she takes, the Tools she works by; and in short, know all that the God of Nature has permitted to be capable of Demonstration" (15). In the same manner, Defoe underlines the significance of objective thinking with a particular focus on the "Chain of Cause and Effect" imbedded in the way things manifest themselves in the natural world (15). Simply put, Defoe distinguishes an empiricist enquirer's job from that of a religious person who can merely appreciate the sublime, or the "Arcana of the Sovereign Oeconomy" (12). Natural Philosophers, according to Defoe, must explore the mechanisms of nature shrouded in what he calls a "thin Veil of Natural Obscurity" (15).[155]

Appearing in a kind of preamble to the collected first-hand accounts of the storm, Defoe's manifesto for natural philosophers illustrates not only a particular technology of observation, but also the philosophy governing his compiling of individual observations, a set of principles couched in what Ilse Vickers terms the "Baconian mentality" or "Baconian ideals," in that sense-oriented observations, and the use of plain, clear language are deemed pivotal rules.[156] At the same time, Defoe's method and frequent use of the word 'specimens' resonates with the way early modern natural philosophers exchanged their new specimens found mostly in remote,

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[155] In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, however, natural philosophers' or empiricists' individual efforts at attaining facticity were often understood to reveal and/or to reinforce God's design.
[156] Vickers, 4. For more on the period's widespread fervor regarding projects, see Maximillian Novak (ed.), *The Age of Projects* (Toronto: The Regents of the University of California, 2008), which also supplies contextual background explaining how the advancement of commercial knowledge went hand in hand with that of its scientific counterpart.

exotic countries and counterchecked the novelty of their discoveries through engagement with

other scientists in a select community. As Brian Ogilvie mentions, natural philosophers and

botanists in particular were always searching for novel specimens about which they could chart

and establish their findings in relation to existing genealogies.[157] Just as botanists were engaged

in identifying, collecting, and arranging new specimens, Defoe is invested in locating diverse,

but coherent specimens of the disaster in the form of letters sent in by correspondents. Defoe

himself refers to the letters from Littleton in Worcestershire and Middleton in Oxfordshire as a

"Specimen of what those whole countries felt" (86). Defoe uses the word 'specimen'

interchangeably with 'example' again in *A Journal of the Plague Year* when he catalogues

quacks and mountebanks as a "Specimen" of fraud and chicanery (47). From Defoe's empiricist

reasoning, we can see that his collection of disaster correspondence is envisioned as a way to

understand the seemingly arcane working of nature; and, at the same time, it provides a narrative

frame to make sense of an overwhelming large-scale event. Faced with the need to produce

proper language to contain the recent disaster, Defoe's weather writing visualizes the progress

and ramifications of the recent tempest through his resort to print. By means of printed letters,

tables, and lists, Defoe reconstructs the track of the storm in terms both of locale and of

temporality.

In addition, Defoe strives to standardize knowledge about the causes and consequences of

the tempest by establishing gentlemanly consensus and by applying supposedly reliable,

quantitative methods to his specimens. Through his deliberate selection of letters, Defoe neatly

reduces the myriad descriptions of the event to a pattern. To be sure, Defoe passingly

acknowledges the occurrence of wondrous, even ridiculous, events that might elude the

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[157] Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008), Chs. 4-5.

explanatory efforts of his "very serious Observation" (46)—as exemplified in cases where the Thames is blown up into the air, where fish and birds are respectively blown away from one place to another like raindrops, or where an oak which has once collapsed comes to be erect again. Even so, the overall structure of Defoe's reportage rests primarily on general patterns: the selected letters consist mostly of accounts of collapsed church roofs or spires, damaged buildings, and fatalities as proof of the storm's impact. Defoe painstakingly fleshes out the means of constructing credibility throughout his collection of various testimonials by using a conspicuous set of rhetorical gestures toward objectivity. One such strategy involves his insistence that his maintaining of "very Authentick" (104), "impartial" (104) and "particular" (115) accounts guarantees that all the recorded events took place as related. Additionally, to bolster the credibility of his select authors, Defoe heavily draws on the testimonies of clergymen and "Gentlemen … of Piety and Reputation" (64). As Defoe's method nicely exemplifies, in his cultural context the construction of objectivity and reliability in print often relied upon the consensus endorsement of a society of reliable men of a certain social stature. Barbara J. Shapiro has shown that "Membership in some of these 'fact'-establishing circles required little more than honesty, sharp eyes, and an ability to describe or illustrate what had been viewed," arguing that scientific credibility is determined "on the basis of a range of considerations that included social status but also the experience, skill, fidelity, and impartiality of the observer and the number of supporting observers."[158] A consensus among respectable gentlemen—what Shapiro terms the "gentlemanly thesis"—was a crucial component in the construction of truth.[159] Steven Shapin also articulates the centrality of "gentility," in such processes, as a "massively powerful

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[158] Shapiro, 118.

[159] Ibid., 139. For an elaboration of these gentlemanly observational practices, see Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), Ch. 2.

instrument in the recognition, constitution, and protection of truth."[160] The way Defoe gleans

local eyewitness accounts of the storm predominantly from clergymen reveals that his method is

resonant precisely with such recourse to the "gentlemanly thesis"; his additional insistence on the

reliability of individual accounts by framing each report with the clause "It is credibly reported"

(45, 47) also evinces the lingering influence of the gentlemanly science in Defoe's

epistemological practices.

Moreover, Defoe's numerous references to barometers (26) and the thermometer (28)

reinforce this ethos of objectivity and exemplify his compulsion to quantify and to standardize

knowledge about the storm. Indeed, he displays his staunch faith in the kind of objective

universality that Shapin contrasts against "locally credible knowledge."[161] Despite his own

personal experience of the storm, Defoe the editor is more invested in producing standardizable

knowledge about the extent of the event than he is in particularizing it. His insertion of the

"Table of Degrees" signifies that Defoe's conversance with new scientific methods and its

standardizing language provides the fundamental groundwork for understanding and establishing

the objective knowledge that can be derived from diffuse sets of sense-based experience (24).

Defoe's inclusion of the table from Reverend William Derham, in which he compares and

contrasts the varying air pressure in Townely and Upminster (29), indicates his interest in precise

measurement.[162] Despite lingering uncertainties in his culture about the cause of the storm,

Defoe displays his confidence in the instruments of 'modern' technology for measuring its

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[160] Shapin, *Leviathan and the Air Pump*, 42.

[161] Ibid., 3.

[162] Defoe's methods might also resonate with Robert Hooke's impressively detailed illustrations of the observations made possible by his use of the microscope. Defoe is also indebted to Hooke's introduction of scientific instruments into his culture's discursive matrix. Hooke's illustrations and his use of the microscope emphasize the human capacity for looking at things in terms of their radically different scales and sizes. See also Lisa Jardine, *Ingenious Pursuits: Building the Scientific Revolution* (New York: AnchorBooks, 1999).

effects, and he works on the assumption that the advancement of science depends on the

supposedly accurate, error-free measurement such instruments can provide. In short, Defoe

produces an aura of objectivity through his inclusion of various tables, including the "Table of

Degrees" of winds (24), "A Table shewing the Height of Mercury in the Barometer" (29), and

"A List of such Her Majesty's Ships' lost in the storm" (146).[163]

Through these empiricist procedures and rhetorical strategies, Defoe carefully builds up

his public persona as an impartial journalist-cum-anatomist, overwhelmed momentarily by the

sheer scale of the disaster, but undaunted by the volume of information on his desk. Defoe

successfully captures in his narrative the latest national event, containing the overwhelming,

transgressive 'thinglike' agency of nature.[164] His serious attempt to generate reliable reportage

indicates his investment in facticity and objectivity concerning sense-based observations, an

investment which cohabitated perhaps uneasily but not impossibly with Providentialism.[165] If

Defoe's *The Storm* is his first major attempt at rendering visible the invisible force of things, his

retrospective fictional account of the plague year can be read as an analogous effort to contain

the vibrant agency inherent in nonhuman entities. In the later text, Defoe complicates the vitality

of the nonhuman by affiliating the 1665 epidemic with the more immediate ramifications of the

financial crisis brought about by the South Sea Bubble in the early 1720s. In the face of unruly,

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[163] For the conceptualization of objectivity in early modern Europe, see Lorraine Daston, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representations* 40 (1992): 81-128; and see also Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

[164] Defoe's procedure is also reminiscent of English pneumatic chemists committed to visualizing the "material and quantifiable properties of the air" and toiling with the task of balancing empirical findings with the existing apparition narratives and residual concepts of faith: see Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *Air's Appearance: Literary Atmosphere in British Fiction, 1660-1794* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 3. Defoe's efforts to illuminate the invisibility of the strong winds is parallel with his similar compulsion to render visible the progress of the plague through his depiction of the flows of humans directed out of London.

[165] Defoe's conceptualization of empiricism cohabited with his belief in Providence. Vickers construes the eclecticism as Baconian Puritanism, 2, 69; see also Vladimir Jankovic, *Reading the Skies: A Cultural History of English Weather, 1650-1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 56-59.

transgressive, and contagious things, Defoe's later model of the information manager requires a more systematic, classificatory method for establishing order. As we shall see, what is distinctive in Defoe's figuration of this model subjectivity in *A Journal* lies with the fact that its managerial persona—named H. F. in Defoe's text—in the end acknowledges the corporeal dimensions of empirical knowledge making, aspects of empirical method which resist containment in charts and tables. Paradoxically, even the faultiness of modern instruments—such as the barometers and thermometers upon which Defoe draws—nicely illustrates how things resist complying with the needs of human subjects.

Managing Networks of Plague and Trade in *A Journal of the Plague Year*

Though Defoe's *Journal*, on a surface level, appears to have been spawned by the widespread epidemic that devastated London in 1665, the text has been recognized as a topical response to the ramifications of the South Sea Bubble. Max Novak notes of the *Journal* that 'the chaos Defoe really had in mind was that of 1721,' namely, the "plague of avarice" which refers to the financial crisis.[166] Pat Rogers, drawing on journalistic pieces Defoe published between 1720 and 1722, similarly asserts that collective anxieties emerging from the fiasco of the South Sea Bubble lurk in Defoe's *Journal*.[167] Perhaps nothing can better illustrate the exact discursive context in which Defoe's *Journal* is situated than the opening of the 12 November 1720 issue of *Cato's Letters*, where the narrator pinpoints the South Sea Bubble as a more serious "Contagion" than the plague that had recently hit Marseilles.[168] Furthermore, Trenchard and Gordon highlight

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[166] Max Novak, "Defoe and the Disordered City," *PMLA* 92 (1977): 241-52, 244.

[167] Pat Rogers, "'This Calamitous Year': *A Journal of the Plague Year* and the South Sea Bubble," in *Eighteenth-Century Encounters: Studies in Literature and Society in the Age of Walpole* (Sussex, UK: Harvester Press, 1985), 151-67.

[168] John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, "Selections from Cato's Letters: Saturday, November 12, 1720. No. 2" in *Great Bubbles*. ed. Ross B. Emmett, Vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000), 254. For

that the vast majority of Britons were affected by the financial bubble in some degree: "That a Multitude of Families are ruined, and suddenly sunk from plentiful Circumstances to abject Poverty, is affecting and lamentable; though perhaps all owing to their own rash Confidence in the Management of known Knaves."[169] Such insistent juxtapositions of the epidemic with the financial bubble are cogent, mainly because both function as nonhuman agents that are highly contagious, excessive, and practically impossible to contain.

Further, the plague as a metaphor for the financial havoc complicates the parameters of Defoe's understanding of disaster by highlighting its thingness and by extending it from the kind of natural calamity discussed in *The Storm* to a rather manmade one. As the credit economy advanced and started working independently of the deliberate design of its architects, the unparalleled financial crisis resulted partly from pervasive investor ignorance as to its workings. In his examination of British cultural anxieties triggered by the agency of things, Lamb notes the invisible entity eighteenth-century Britons labeled as credit was a "mystery that left their ability to order the chain of events at the mercy of Fortune," which in turn "perplexed considerably their ideas of identity and human agency, not to mention reality."[170] In other words, the apparently vital 'thingness' of the speculative credit economy arises in part from the widespread craze over the prospect of profit, which disables human subjects from grasping the implications of the their own inventions.

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more on the Marseilles plague, see Daniel Gordon, "Confrontations with the Plague in Eighteenth-Century France," in Alessa Johns, ed., *Dreadful Visitations: Confronting Natural Catastrophes in the Age of the Enlightenment* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 3-29. Gordon's examination of the Marseilles epidemic reveals meaningful parallels with its seventeenth-century London equivalent in that the city itself "was a site of intensive reflection on the causes of the plague and on the relationship of epidemic disease to commercialization" (5). Gordon persuasively argues that the devastating impacts of plague make it a "shorthand for everything that was excessive and irremediable" (6).

[169] John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon in Ross B. Emmett (ed.), *Great Bubbles*, Vol. 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto), 255.

[170] Lamb, *The Things Things Say*, xxi.

Towards the end of the *Journal*, H.F., suspicious of the 'new Face' of the city manifested by many telling signs of its apparent recovery (196), acknowledges that because he fails to understand the cause of the disease, he cannot speculate as to the cause of the recovery: "Nothing, but the immediate Finger of God, nothing, but omnipotent Power could have done it" (208). In a similar emphasis on the limited human capacity to understand the overwhelming event, H.F. comes to the conclusion that "it was evidently from the secret invisible Hand of him [God]" (209). This acknowledgement sounds as like the signature Defoean leap to Providentialism we noted earlier in *The Storm*, but here it contradicts H.F. extensive efforts to establish narrative order in the rest of the *Journal* leading up to these admissions. Rather than reading these references to Providence at the end of the *Journal* as a conventional rhetoric of authorial modesty, I argue that such moments function as an index of Defoe's complicated negotiation between the poles of his dual identity as both a Protestant observer who respects theological explanations for events beyond our empirical understanding *and* an empirical thinker who acknowledges the agential power of things that work in defiance of human designs, needs, and interpretations.

The *Journal* concludes with a modest and devout acknowledgement of the impossibility of understanding either the workings of the credit economy or the progress of the plague, in a way that seems to negate the empiricist project Defoe initially takes up. Indeed, the text is organized around a central tension between H.F.'s initial ambition to pinpoint the possible origins of the plague by relying on "the Letters of Merchants" (25) as disseminators of certain knowledge, and his ultimate recognition that attaining comprehensive cognitive containment of the epidemic is almost impossible. Contrary to his nascent ambition for producing a neat balance sheet— in the manner of Robinson Crusoe's spiritual ledger at the beginning of his stay on the

island—H.F.'s project is doomed to failure, mainly because what is facing this hardly

dispassionate observer is a fundamentally disrupted cityscape. The streets, supposed to function

as channels for disseminating information, are entirely emptied of people, with the occasional

exceptions of mad men running about, or corpses and carcasses abandoned and eventually

dumped in a nameless pit—an abyss that continually expands due to the dire necessity of

containing the increased number of dead bodies. Witnessing such a pervasively gory reality in

the city, H.F. questions the fine line drawn between rationality and madness in times of calamity:

"What cou'd affect a Man in his full Power of Reflection; and what could make deeper

Impression on the Soul, than to see a Man almost Naked and got out of his House, or perhaps out

of his Collection Alleys, Courts, and Passages, in the Butcher-row in *Whitechapel*" (153)? If

Defoe's editorial self attempts to categorize the damages incurred by violent weather with his

recourse to visible patterns and objective measurement in *The Storm*, the *Journal* cannot reduce

the variegated signs of madness, delusion, misinformation to such comforting abstractions. Just

as government-produced data and Bills of Mortality signal one strategy at organizing the

epidemic's statistical phenomena, H.F., besieged by the sensory signs of collapse, develops his

own form of managing the many-headed plague: a memorandum.

Through the notes in his ledger of memoranda, H.F. strives to establish his own archive

of information and knowledge in the face of utter devastation. Expanding the editorial model

developed in *The Storm*, H.F.'s paradigm of information management resonates with that of

Defoe's "complete English tradesman" who enacts the ethos of contemporary merchants.[171] H.F.

continues the project of Defoe's editor in *The Storm* in that he initially shares both the earlier

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[171] See Defoe's praise of the "universal scholar" whose scholarship outsmarts that of classical scholars in *The Review* Vol. 2, no. 2 (3 January 1706). Defoe's stress falls on the merchant scholar's practical knowledge and comprehensive understanding of the global network of trade: "he [the merchant scholar] sits in his Counting-House, and Converses with all Nations, and keeps up the most exquisite and extensive part of human Society in a Universal Correspondence."

character's passion for compiling a comprehensive version of knowledge and his confidence in empirical observations. Exploring the multiple semiotic dimensions of contagion, Defoe's *Journal* addresses both the financial crisis and the ensuing necessity of containing eddies of invisible information as well as plague.[172] H.F. functions as the kind of information manager one might call interchangeable with a "merchant-scholar," someone who attempts to establish narrative and economic order based on empirical reasoning and observation. H.F.'s account is characterized by his use of the term "memorandum" as a primary tool for framing his narrative: in his conclusion, he retrospectively describes the text as a series of "ordinary memorandums" (211), attempts to capture the material conditions of the excessive and unruly plague. More importantly, Defoe's deployment of the word memorandum signals the text's engagement with class-oriented, empirical methods of ordering information. As the *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests, the memorandum functions in context primarily as a kind of memento—"a record of events, or observations on a particular subject."[173] Indeed, Defoe's plague tract encapsulates both H.F.'s particular memoryscape of London *and* his effort to record relatively objective data in the form of personal observations and government-issued orders and bills. In addition to framing the narrative as a means of commemorating the calamity, Defoe's insistence upon its status as a 'memorandum' stresses its comparability to a tangible record of commercial transactions. Just as a merchant's memorandum supplies a comprehensive view of debits and credits on one page, the

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[172] Katherine Ellison explores Defoe's information management in the *Journal* with a focus on H.F.'s engagement with print culture. See Ellison, "Infectious Information: Sings of Collective Intelligence in Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*," *Fatal News: Reading and Information Overload in Early Eighteenth-Century Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 89-108. Leah Price and Paula McDowell discuss the making of an enlightened subjectivity in response to the circulation and policing of particular forms of knowledge and information. In her study of how print culture quickens the demise of orality, McDowell articulates the gendered associations of oral/print cultures: hearsay and rumor were associated with the unreliable and the feminine, while objective, printed information affiliated with the masculine. She construes H.F. as a figure enmeshed in both traditions during a transitional period. See McDowell, "Defoe and the Contagion of the Oral"; Price, "Introduction: Reading Matter," *PMLA* 121 (2006): 9-16.

[173] See "Memorandum," *OED*.

aforementioned bills and orders charting the fatalities of London citizens render visible the surviving and the lost human subjects in the wake of the plague.

Viewing H.F.'s narrative as a series of memorandums evokes its connections to the ledger and to the ethical and epistemological dimensions of bookkeeping, apparent in eighteenth-century merchants' methods of recording their transactions in plain English. For instance, Defoe's conduct-manual on the *Complete English Tradesman* (1725) stresses the significance of adopting plain language (as a staple of the ideal merchant's prose style) and of generating a precise inventory.[174] Indeed, Defoe argues that the art of bookkeeping is "absolutely necessary" for an apprentice tradesman—so necessary, in fact, that the would-be merchant's domestic and eternal destinies depend upon that single skill (45). In one instance, Defoe compares the tradesman who has an imperfect knowledge of bookkeeping methods to "a bride undrest … not fit to be married" (45), while in another passage he compares the tradesman's books to a "Christian's conscience," arguing that any merchant who fails o keep both of these things "clean and clear" can "give but a sad account of himself either to God or Man" (208). Outside of this Christian framework, of course, bookkeeping is more generally defined as a way of "analyzing, classifying, and recording transactions, according to a preconceived plan, as the basis for reporting the financial condition and all operating results of a business enterprise"—a definition entirely consonant with Defoe's methods in the *Journal*.[175] Defoe's methods for laying out statistical data and government publications, including the bills of mortality (60, 109, 112-13, 140), and specific orders concerning the treatment of infected citizens and households (55-58), demonstrates his investment in bookkeeping methodology. Encapsulating the actual loss of life

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[174] Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, Vol. 1, ed. John McVeagh (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007). All references are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text.
[175] James Don Edwards, "Early Bookkeeping and Its Development into Accounting," *The Business History Review* 34.4 (1960): 446-58, 447.

and the spread of the infectious disease in the same kinds of numeric terms found in contemporary periodicals, Defoe painstakingly attempts to establish an aura of objectivity, which simultaneously echoes the method he had previously developed in *The Storm*.

What cultural historians have noted as particularly distinctive in double-entry bookkeeping lies in its capability of providing information about both assets and liabilities at one glance.[176] The overview of balance and credit on a single page came to be associated with a sense of the "merchant's moral rectitude" and thus endowed middle-class men with a sense of what Mary Poovey refers to as "transparency and impartiality."[177] This particular way of recording information, according to Poovey, offers a new social identity, "mercantile honesty," to those engaging in commerce, by publicizing what was once deemed private and secret.[178] Such historical shifts in managing information, in short, have far-reaching cultural and epistemological implications. The new bookkeeping idealizes the facticity and credibility of numeric data, and it expands the relevance of 'objectivity' as an evaluative standard into other social realms. Rebecca Connor uses the term "social accounting" to describe a predominant trend in long eighteenth-century British culture toward combining empiricism with the class-oriented ethic of mercantile transparency.[179] Defoe's integration of numeric data and government orders suggests that the *Journal* in its entirety can be read as just this kind of ledger.[180]

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[176] Edwards, 456; Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 29-91.

[177] Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact*, 11, 5. For a general overview of the epistemological development of accounting, see James Don Edwards, "Early Bookkeeping and Its Development into Accounting," *The Business History Review* 34.4 (1960): 446-58. See also Jacob Soll, *The Information Master*, for more on Colbert's compulsive drive of compiling vast volumes of information relevant to state centralization. Colbert's design of a pocketbook for the crown in an effort to effectively provide Louis XIV with an exact account of debit and credit in one page exemplifies the perfect amalgam of double-entry bookkeeping and state governance.

[178] Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact*, 30.

[179] Connor, *Women, Accounting, and Narrative: Keeping Books in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 2004), 102. Connor illustrates that Defoe deploys the sensibility of social accounting throughout his major prose works. She argues that accounting, as represented in Defoe's texts, is "by no

Implicated in these epistemological shifts, H.F.'s memorandums evince his particular

aptitude as a credible information manager, a position buttressed by his profession as a saddler.

H.F.'s networks of trade make him especially aware of the global passage of the disease, the

domestic operation of small-scale commerce, and the circulation of money. H.F.'s profession

supplies him with a perspective on global-scale transactions, and the intricately structured

connections between commerce and disease. As noted earlier, H. F. relies upon networks of

merchants as a means of collecting and sorting out information. Through his note taking, H.F.

produces a particularly commerce-oriented knowledge—a branch of modern knowledge

supposedly characterized by rigorous taxonomy and classificatory systems—that actually

embraces the possibility, even the inescapability of fragmented facts. His business network is

reportedly linked to the "Merchants trading to the *English* colonies in *America*," where he yields

major profits even though he has been stationed in London (31).[181] This is a marker that

identifies him as a man who has enough business acumen to grasp the impacts of the plague

upon both domestic and global markets. H.F. reveals his responsibilities for the overseeing "not

only of my Trade, but of my Goods, and indeed of all I had in the World" (31). Furthermore, his

recognition of the existing network of international correspondence among merchants indicates

that this commercial web plays a pivotal role in disseminating information, a method yet to be

entirely replaced by printed media. Defoe underlines that his writing is governed by facts and

buttressed by the global correspondence network among merchants, which must compensate for

means confined to money" but can be connected to the work of his predecessors in demographic statistics, such as John Graunt, William Petty, and Gregory King. Similarly, Nicholas Seager focuses on H.F. as a "compiler of evidence and the assessor of its reliability." Seager, "Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistic: Epistemology and Fiction in Defoe's 'A Journal of the Plague Year,'" *Modern Language Review* 103 (2008): 639-65, 640.

[180] Not coincidentally, Crusoe registers the mysterious working of God's providence in the form of balance sheets as well, nicely exemplifying Defoe's immersion in the rhetoric and ideology of bookkeeping.

[181] See Mullan, *A Journal*, 223. (footnote 21)

the absence of newspapers (25). If Defoe's editorial persona in *The Storm* attempts to build up a domestic correspondence network through his soliciting letters of eyewitness accounts, in the *Journal* H.F. reiterates this method by trusting the network between merchants as a crucial medium of information.

H.F.'s acute interest in the commercial network is highlighted in two significant ways. First, when he addresses the link between international trade routes and the transmission of the epidemic, he speculates as to whether the "parcel of silks imported from Holland, and first opened in that [infected] house" might be the outbreak's point of origin (178). In a similar vein, H.F. appraises the epidemic's economic effects. Just as Defoe assesses the damage to the British Navy towards the end of *The Storm*, H.F. articulates the ruined "State of Trade" (185) after embargoes are imposed against British exports. Imagining a complete halt to international commercial transactions, H.F. fears that British "woolen Manufactures are as retentive of Infection as human Bodies, and if pack'd up by Persons infected would receive the Infection, and be as dangerous to touch, as a Man would be that was infected" (185). From that point, H.F. underlines how commercial trade passages overlap with those of the plague: "the Plague was carried into those Countries [Spain and Portugal] by some of our Ships, and particularly to the Port of *Faro* in the Kingdom of *Algarve*, belonging to the King of *Portugal*; and that sever Persons died of it there, but it was not confirm'd" (186). But H.F.'s preoccupation with economic networks is also manifested in his examination of how Londoners avoid direct contact with one another in day-to-day commercial transactions. Global trade increases the possibility of unwitting contacts with foreign bodies: disparate parts of the world become connected like a close-knit community by sharing a common cause of infection.[182] H.F. notices that the epidemic

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[182] As Carswell points out, London's geographical proximity to such major European cities as Amsterdam and Paris makes it easier to create a commercial block (than with any other cities in Britain): "From the

is passed between random subjects through their inevitable daily interactions in the marketplace,

commenting that "as this was a Necessity which renew'd it self daily, it brought abundance of

unsound of People to the Markets, and great many that went thither Sound, brought Death to

home with them" (83). He notes that servants function as go-betweens and thus become the most

likely carriers of the disease. H.F. also draws particular attention to the circulation of money as a

possible medium of the epidemic, since it facilitates direct contact between random individuals.

H.F. sees in a marketplace that a butcher refuses to touch money directly, but puts it in a "Pot full

of Vinegar" as a way to mitigate or inhibit the progress of infection (83); likewise, buyers

attempt to minimize direct contacts with people by always carrying "small Money to make up

any od Sum, that they might take no Change," a little sign that "all the Means that could be us'd

to prevent the spread of disease through commerce 'were us'd" (83). In short, Defoe consistently

foregrounds evidence of increased contemporary awareness of how trade networks perpetuate

the plague.

H.F.'s reference to memorandums thus effectively fleshes out his epistemological

standing and his self-consciously middle-rank concern with networks of domestic, global

commerce. The memorandum displays H.F.'s inventorying of relatively objective statistical facts

(as in *The Storm*), his personal meditations on God's providence (as in the journal entry in

Robinson Crusoe, *The Storm,* and *Serious Reflections*), his firsthand observations, and his

anxieties about misinformation.[183] H.F.'s sets his memorandum as an antithesis to the profusion

of inaccurate information circulating during the plague year. From his first entry it can be

deduced that H.F. is invested in cataloguing facts to counteract the misinformation produced by

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seaward side London was one unit in the ever more closely integrated commercial system disposed along
both sides of the waters which connected Britain, the Netherlands, and France" (3). This geographical
advantage, in turn, makes London more susceptible of the plague originated from other European parts, as
is conjectured by H.F. from the beginning of the *Journal*. See Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble*, Ch. 1.

[183] Such eclectic aspects of the *Journal* indicate Defoe's connection to Baconian notebook culture.

sorcerers, astrologers, psychics, fortunetellers, and quacks who are at pains to offer competing explanations for the unusual circumstances. At an early stage of the plague, H.F., besieged by such misinformants, notices the way in which they reassemble random, disparate natural events to propagate a "horrid Delusion" (45). Referring to the appearance of a comet before both the 1665 plague and the 1666 Great Fire, propagators of false information attempt to make a connection between the brightness of the stars and the ensuing events. In response to these homespun, arbitrary accounts of causality, H.F. acknowledges his own uncertainty about the relationship between the stars and the disasters only to criticize the fact-making process of the group of sorcerers and fortunetellers as one deliberately "calculated" in hindsight to reinforce their appearance of credibility (39). H.F. is generally not shy about exhibiting his animosity against quacks who take advantage of the desperate, calling them "a Set of Thieves and Pick-pockets" (48) who shamelessly display their trade cards containing false expertise in curing "multitudes of People, that actually had the Plague upon them" in Holland, or in "having a choice Secret to prevent Infection" (47). Amid the deluge of misinformation generated by such unreliable subjects, H.F. articulates that his registers "take notice only of the fact, and mention only that it was so" (49). He simultaneously makes clear that his records are based on his empirical observations: "I am only relating what I know, or have heard, or believe of the particular Cases, and what fell within the Compass of my View, and the different Nature of the Infection" (175). Through this combination of empiricist methods—providing a ledger-like statistical account of the plague's progress, clarifying its relationship to networks of commerce, and stemming the proliferation of opportunistic falsehoods—Defoe's information manager attempts to counteract the vital force of the 'thinglike' epidemic agent that threatened to destroy the very fabric of English society.

Bodies in Motion: Narrative Containment and Governmental Failure

Defoe does not rest at merely pointing out the disruptive vitality of nonhuman forces in the *Journal*: near the end of this disaster tract, H.F.'s account of the three men from Wapping, which has been pointedly neglected by most scholarship on Defoe, illustrates the connection between the failure of human efforts to understand the workings of the plague and the ineffectual nature of the government's measures to contain its effects.[184] This particular episode, in which three working class men with different occupations and life experiences strive to escape the confines of London, highlights both the mobility of liminal subjects and the biopolitical failure of British public policies toward disease control. The journey of the three men points to a site of tension between governmental authority and corporeal subjects who defy the grid of power. On a textual level, the success of three men in fleeing and establishing a makeshift community outside of London embodies the corporeal residue that is not contained in print, taken here as a metonym for Britain's representational network or its system of signification. Given Defoe's efforts at establishing a model of rational, normative subjectivity in the narrative and his rhetorical reliance on empiricist techniques (charts, tables, and printed newspapers, etc.), this account is particularly compelling in that these men on the move are not contained either by the government's authority or by its representational strategies for quantifying the manifold corporeal dimensions of its population.

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[184] One exception to this claim can be found in the work of Carol Houlihan Flynn, who pays due attention to the story and argues that the key to understanding the anecdotal status of the "three men" episode, which has usually been read as a praise of their "stalwart and dogged virtues," can be found in the Act of Settlement. See Flynn, *The Body in Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 146. Max Novak links the presence of these laboring-class men to Defoe's larger concern with commoners. See Novak, "Defoe and The Disordered City," *PMLA* 92.2 (1977): 241-52.

In the *Journal,* the "three men" episode enhances our understanding of Defoe's thoughts about viral culture and the circulation/management of information in the early eighteenth century, and it clarifies how Defoe imagines himself as a kind of social projector. It should first be noted that the information about the gravity of the plague reaches these men quite late. They decide to leave London only after "the Plague was exceedingly advanced, and the Number greatly increased," i.e. when the bill of mortality records 2,785 deaths (118). The three men function as a kind of anomaly in relation to similar plague-tract tropes at work in Defoe's text. Unlike characters in the other anecdotes compiled in the *Journal* these men are given specific names and occupations: John the biscuit baker and former soldier, Thomas the sail maker and former sailor, and Richard the joiner. Admittedly, such specificity is conflated with some fairytale elements in their representation, particularly the use of the magic number three and their story's ultimate message of restoration

These men's professions indicate that they belong on the lowest rung of the social ladder, outstripped of the means of sustenance especially in a time of crisis like the plague. As H. F. admits in many places, the poor in need of employment and bread do not have the luxury of choice in a circumstance like this.[185] Somewhat belatedly, these men decide to flee London and find a safe haven elsewhere:

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[185] See the following passages:

> …So when it was increased to such a frightful Extremity as I have related, the middling People who had not Friends, fled to all Parts of the Country where they cou'd get shelter, as well those that had Mony to relieve themselves; as those that had not. Those that had Mony always fled farthest, because they were able to subsist themselves; but those who were empty, suffer'd, as I have said, great Hardship,s and were often driven by Necessity to relieve their Wants at the Expense of the Country: By that means the Country was made very uneasie at them, and sometimes took them up, tho' even then they scarce knew what to do with them and were always very backward to punish them, but often too they forced them from Place to Place, till they were oblig'd to come back again to *London*." (137)

From the River they travelled towards the Forest, but when they came to *Walthamstow*

the People of that Town denied to admit them, as was the Case every where: The

Constables and their Watchmen kept them off at a Distance, and Parly'd with them; they

gave the same Account of themselves as before, but these gave no Credit to what they

said, giving it for a Reason that two or three Companies had already come that Way and

made the like Precedents, but that they had given several People the Distemper in the

Towns where they had pass'd, and had been afterwards so hardly us'd by the Country,

tho' with Justice too, as they had deserv'd… (125-26)

Indeed, lodging emerges as the most critical issue for the three men because neighboring citizens

and townspeople will not allow those from London to stay either in their houses or in

neighboring places. In response to the fear and lack of hospitality prevalent in cities located near

London, the three men come up with the idea that they will build a temporary shelter outside the

town and will stay harmonious with the townspeople whose collective health they happen to

threaten. It is worth noting that the three men are equipped with a tent, which they can build any

time under the soldier's guidance, and "a small Bag of Tools" (120), so that the joiner work can

work as a handyman when necessary. In a way, these men build up a self-sufficient economic

community immune to external forces, such as possible rejection from city officials or

townspeople, and the contingent nature of finding proper lodging within the town.[186] As such,

the triad exemplifies what Defoe and H. F. believe to be a workable "pattern" for the poor to

emulate. H. F. himself elucidates the purpose of the interpolated story at length, saying that it is

meant to identify "a Pattern for all poor Men to follow, or Women either, if ever such a Time

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[186] Defoe tells us that the three men flee London with "one Tent, one Horse, one Gun" (120),
simultaneously indicating that the current biscuit baker regains his old identity as soldier.

comes again" (116).[187] This statement can be read as a sign of Defoe's profound and continued

interest in the wellbeing of the socially underprivileged, which is best fleshed out in his *Due*

Preparations, published in the same year. In light of McDowell's point that Defoe's plague tract

is an amalgam of familiar plague tropes circulated in the early modern period, this account could

otherwise be dismissed as just another story that dramatizes the socio-economic impacts of the

plague.[188]

On a discursive level, the men's flight from London elucidates a collapse of the binary

opposition between wilderness and civilization, to borrow Levi Bryant's terminology. According

to Bryant, the conventional spatial distinction between civilization and wilderness is predicated

on the conviction that civilization builds on human populations and their meaning-making

systems, while wilderness is imagined to be that which is not civilization. Yet if we recognize

that the human being is nothing more than another object within a larger system of objects—

which is the crux of object-oriented ontology and other posthumanist critical theories—this

binary opposition is shredded. That is, humans and nonhumans are placed on the same footing

and civilization becomes nothing but a wilderness in which human subjects are stripped of their

sovereignty or mastery, as is suggested in Byrant's epigraph. In a nuanced way, Defoe's men on

the move epitomize the experience of an alterity that defies governmental attempts at biopolitical

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[187] Before departing London, the three men establish an economic community grounded securely on common funding to which they all contribute and have equal access: John, the former soldier, whose contribution was the largest at the outset, "was content to what they had should all go into one publick Stock, on Condition, that whatever any one of them could gain more than another, it should, without any grudging, be all added to the same public Stock" (119). This unusual microeconomic unit can be construed as a complete antithesis to the feverish private speculative market in Britain, where every private or corporate investor risked his/her fate in the South Sea enterprise.

[188] Defoe's *Journal* comprises eleven episodic fragments, almost a half of which are concerned with the condition of the poor: see the stories of the piper (94), the poor waterman isolated from his family (104), and the three men (68, 118-137). It is notable that the account of two brothers and their kinsmen is repeated twice within the narrative. These episodes focused on the poor are deployed primarily to dramatize the tragic effects of the plague. McDowell points out that Defoe "drew on some oral sources for his knowledge of the plague," and these accounts of the London poor might exemplify such diverse oral sources. See McDowell, "Defoe and the Contagion of the Oral," 95.

control. Despite its length and its richness in terms of detail and thematic significance, the account of the three men has drawn little critical attention. Indeed, such critical oversight is quite surprising if we consider that the story itself runs the longest among many of the plague topoi Defoe deploys in the *Journal* and that it demonstrates Defoe's treatment of the London poor while criticizing the imposition of confinement upon the bodies of Londoners. More importantly, this account encapsulates the mobility of liminal subjects in times of crisis and thus deserves thorough critical attention.

The marching, encamping, and returning of the men can be interpreted as a physical embodiment of the waxing and waning of the epidemic. Given that the men's movement is stunted by city officials demanding their health certificate and pass, it is evident that the flow of human subjects has fallen under an attempt at) state control. Their mobility is persistently checked either by government officials or by townspeople who fear further contagion. Governmental efforts to circumscribe, pathologize, and criminalize vagrant subjects (and the epidemic itself) run parallel with state control over the flow of information. The moment when the Walthamstow constables check the three men's passage indicates primarily a clash of conflicting self-interests in a time of crisis, but it also indicates the embodied dimension of the spread of the disease.

The presence of the vagrants is associated with an impending epidemic threat, and it is not so uncommon for liminal figures to mobilize despite multiple authorial attempts to contain them. In information management or media studies, predicting and controlling the flow of bodies matters. It is government administrators' primary job to grasp, predict, and control such embodied flows and movements. When they fail to keep track of such movement, the whole system is subject to epic failure. The account of the three men indicates both physically and

metaphorically how unexpected and unwanted movement (seen from the top down) elides

multiple attempts to curb the itinerary itself. Also the development of plot surrounding the three

men shows that liminal subjectivity is associated with a thing-like state. Yet Defoe offers another

twist, by showing that the very objects of control—pathogens, vagrant human carriers,

information, and credit—actually take on a vitality that contradicts their usual association with

that which is static, graspable, and thus safely contained within the grasp of anthropocentric

epistemology and information management.

Coda

Although the threatening particulars of each disaster in *The Storm* and the *Journal* seem

to be neatly contained by Defoe's efforts to produce discursive or statistical order, the

information managers' projects get consistently undermined by the corporeal aspects of

receiving and producing information. This subversively embodied dimension of knowledge

making is particularly discernible in H.F.'s portrayal of the pit, his encounter with a ghost-like

man, and his description of the disembodied sound of groans and cries throughout plague-

stricken London. H.F.'s empirical research in the city does provide some statistical anchors for

understanding the epidemic, but it also indicates what is left unsaid in most of the 'objective'

data, namely, the material and corporeal dimensions of information management.[189] Initially,

H.F. deploys the term 'memorandum' to describe a way of recording daily occurrences within

the city, indicative of his process of reflection on the things he notices: H.F. is 'employed in

reading books and in writing down my memorandums of what occurred to me every day . . . out

of which afterwards I took most of this work, as it relates to my observations without doors'

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[189] It is evident where Defoe's critical interest lies when we compare his description of the pit with the burial register, a document that neatly records the number of buried bodies. In striking contrast to its neatness and error-free objectivity, H.F. is more invested in depicting what can be neglected in such data.

(82). This fleshes out H.F.'s role as an information manager who has keen eyes for gathering objective empirical details and for fact-making—activities made possible by his mobility. Indeed, his peripatetic information gathering is foregrounded when he measures the approximate dimensions of the great Pit, which in many other plague tracts might function merely as a symbolic marker of London's abysmal, abject condition. H.F., by contrast, not only walks around the pit, but provides its approximate dimensions, which are 'about 40 Foot in length, and about 15 or 16 Foot broad, and … about nine Foot deep' (68). His additional note on the need to deepen the pit as the severity of the plague reaches its culmination also exemplifies his interest in the material conditions within which information is collected. Rather than taking the gaping hole figuratively as a metonym for the stark abjection brought on by the plague, H.F. demonstrates his very practical concerns regarding the corporeal dimension of the infectious disease. As the number of the dead increases over time, H.F. senses that the plague might culminate in the pit itself devouring the land of the living.

A few days after this first expedition, H.F.'s curiosity leads him to the pit to make a better observation of it. This time his memorandum is filled with more sense-based, horrifying encounters with actual dead bodies and with a man who is barely still alive. His conversation with this man, burdened with a 'dreadful Weight of Grief' after having the bodies of his wife and child carried away by the dead cart, underlines the impersonal treatment of the dead bodies as they are 'shot into the Pit promiscuously' (71). H.F.'s nighttime encounter with this utterly lost man renders visible the degree of human suffering that actually escapes the attention of printed bills and newspapers. Just as Defoe the editor is focused on the degree of public consternation and confusion in *The Storm*, here H.F. pays particular attention to the 'mournful Scene' in which no proper respect is paid to the bodies—disposed of *en masse*, stripped naked, erased of their

social ranks (71). This particular scene thus illustrates that in the face of the relentless power of the plague human bodies are themselves reduced to the very condition Jonathan Lamb describes as 'thingliness.'

Some of H. F.'s most intense bodily experiences with the plague involve the audible agonies of the living and the muted agonies of the dead accentuated through the working of the dead carts. In some ways, the stark reality of misery is conveyed more effectively through sound than through sight: because individuals are required to confine themselves in their houses, H. F. is often unable to see the suffering, though he can almost always hear their cries. H. F. observes how the suffering of the infected is often mediated to outsiders through the 'most dismal Shrieks and Outcries of the poor People terrified, and even frighted to Death, by the Sight of the Condition of their dearest Relations, and by the Terror of being imprisoned as they were' (101). He indexes his own absorption of their agony, remarking that '[i]t often pierc'd my very Soul to hear the Groans and Crys of those who were thus tormented' (86). The distant but distinct sound of human suffering amplifies the degree of pain by reminding H.F. of the fact that simple, everyday human interactions, even efforts to offer comfort to the afflicted, have been completely severed by the passage of the plague. The muffled sound of dead carts at night—and the silencing of the carts that ensues when even the shipping back and forth of dead bodies becomes risky—permeates H. F.'s observation of the completely devastated city, clarifying the extent to which his empirical records cannot adequately capture the force of the epidemic as a nonhuman agent.

Due to the corporeal dimension of disasters that paralyzes or nullifies human efforts to circumscribe their progress—efforts Defoe exemplifies through his information managers in *The Storm* and the *Journal*—these texts illustrate the uncontainable and incomprehensible vitality of

what David Hume has termed 'convulsions in nature, disorders, prodigies, miracles.'[190] In effect,

Defoe anticipates Hume's epistemological skepticism. Hume's 'convulsions' bear an affinity

with financial and natural disasters in the eighteenth-century British imagination in that all of

these events foreground the failure of human understanding. Extending the early modern

conception of *theatrum mundi*, Hume duly expresses the profound sense of helplessness human

subjects might feel as in 'perpetual suspense' when confronted with the vitality of things: 'We

are placed in this world, as in a great theatre, where the true springs and causes of every event

are entirely concealed from us; nor have we either sufficient wisdom to foresee, or power to

prevent to those ills, with which we are continually threatened.'[191] Hume's analysis of the origins

of natural conversion here suggests that our incomplete apprehension of events stems from the

agency of nonhuman things which cannot be subsumed within the confines of existing

knowledge systems. Hume's conceptualization of nature as a theater nicely encapsulates natural

philosophy's glaring failure to grasp what is beyond human control; indeed, it is precisely this

failure that leads many, including Defoe's information managers, to explain unresolved, residual

mysteries—as to the operation of both natural systems like weather and epidemic, and manmade

systems like the financial market—by reference to the inscrutable workings of God.

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[190] David Hume, *Natural History of Religion and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. A. Wayne Colver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 33.
[191] Ibid.

Chapter 4
GULLIVER THE MAN-MACHINE, MAN-ANIMAL: SWIFT AND THE POSTHUMAN BODY

> Again, it helps to notice the force, power and consequences of discoveries, which appear at their clearest in three things that were unknown to antiquity, and whose origins, though recent, are obscure and unsung: namely the art of printing, gunpowder and the nautical compass. In fact these three things have changed the face and condition of things all over the globe: the first in literature; the second in the art of war; the third in navigation; and innumerable changes have followed; so that no empire or sect or star seems to have exercised a greater power and influence on human affairs than those mechanical things.
>
> Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1620)[192]

> But a *Broom-stick*, perhaps you will say, is an Emblem of a Tree standing on its Head; and pray what is Man but a topsy-turvy Creature? His animal Faculties perpetually mounted on his Rational; his Head where his Heels should be, groveling on the Earth.
>
> Jonathan Swift, "A Meditation upon a Broom-Stick" (c. 1710)

> The human body is a self-winding machine, a living representation of perpetual motion.
>
> Julien Offray de La Mettrie, *Man a Machine* (1748)

> One man's magic is another man's engineering.
>
> Robert Heinlein, *Time Enough for Love* (1973)

During his short stint as in-house lecturer and reader at the Berkeley residence, Jonathan Swift inserted his reflections on a humble, domestic object within the compendium of Robert Boyle's *Meditations*, a text deeply appreciated by Lady Berkeley. When Swift read his own "Meditation" out loud to her in a solemn manner as if it were a part of Boyle's own writing, she reportedly enjoyed it and believed that it was actually Boyle's.[193] His argument that a human being is nothing but a "topsy-turvy Creature" indicates that human faculties often operate in ways contrary to the governing of reason, and it anticipates Swift's more complicated treatment of human nature within the material world in *Gulliver's Travels*, which was originally titled

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[192] Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, eds. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 100.

[193] Although Lady Berkeley construed Swift's insertion of the "Broomstick" text in the Boyle volume as "harmless mirth," according to Thomas Sheridan's later account, some, including Lord Orrery, felt offended by Swift's "spirit of sarcasm" against as "good a man as Mr. Boyle." For more comprehensive background on Swift's meditation, see the "Headnote" in *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock Treatises: Polite Conversation, Directions to Servants and Other Works*, ed. Valerie Rumbold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 3 and 5. Barry Slepian's account of the same episode slightly differs from Sheridan's in that the target of Swift's hoax is not Lord Berkeley's wife, but his daughter. And this is also contained in *Parodies*.

Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World (1726).[194] Swift's commentary on how our

"animal Faculties [are] perpetually mounted on [our] Rational" highlights the ridiculousness of

our codified, supposedly rational world, which is often subject to unexpected disorder and

disruption.[195] Affiliating the withered broomstick with a mortal man, Swift creates a homology

between an object and the human body through their apparent physiological affinity,

foregrounding a structural similarity that elicits the idea of comparative anatomy. This episode

reveals how Swift's interest in materiality gets imbedded in his satiric strategies by

foregrounding the connection between a neglected trivial object and a human body drained of

sap, indicating the extent to which both can become lifeless. At the same time, Swift makes it

clear that his conceit rests on a number of meaningful distinctions—upside-downside,

rationality-irrationality, and human-animal, human-machine—which he will eventually call into

question in the works analyzed in this chapter. In *Gulliver's Travels* and many of his poems,

Swift underlines the potential "thingness" of the human body as a sheer wooden engine, a

possibly irrational being bordering on both animality and machinery. Although Swift cannot be

neatly categorized as a materialist proper, his preoccupations with corporeal and material

contingencies and the linkage between material conditions and human subjectivity are quite

persistent.

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[194] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Claude Rawson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Future references to *Gulliver's Travels* will be to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text.
[195] Jonathan Swift, "A Meditation upon a Broom-Stick" (c. 1703) in *Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock Treatises: Polite Conversation, Directions to Servants and Other Works*, 13-15. Swift remarks how the senses easily succumb to corruption, thus interrupting the operation of reason: "the *senses* in men are so many avenues to the fort of *reason*, which in this operation is wholly blocked up." He then goes on to argue that we put effort into clearing the channel of reason. Here what is noticeable is that he associates the senses with the material, reason with the metaphysical. See Swift, "Mechanical Operation of the Spirit," *Jonathan Swift: Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 169, 171. Claude Rawson also notes how human restlessness derives from the fickle operation of human rationality, arguing that the human condition signifies that "it is a prey to subversion and unhappiness from within, … and to false needs." See Rawson, *Order Sprung from Confusion: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Literature from Swift to Cowper* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1985), 3.

This chapter argues that Swift uses Gulliver to exhibit a radical anatomy of the human

body in ways that demonstrate his anxieties about the implications of both experimental

philosophy and modernity more generally. The eponymous character's body is conceptually

deconstructed, inventoried, appraised, and reassembled in different manners throughout his

voyages—with the exception of his third voyage, in which Gulliver enjoys a rare moment of

observing machine-like bodies that are not his own. Focusing on Gulliver's contingent positions

in the cultures he encounters, we can glimpse Swift's posthumanist imagination, particularly

through his representation of how the intersection of his technological, cultural, and intellectual

feats culminates in Gulliver's identity as a kind of man-machine.[196] At times, Gulliver's body is

negatively construed as an animal (untamable, unruly, and feral), while at others he is viewed as

an automaton slave performing tricks for the pleasure of onlookers in Brobdignag. In the third

voyage, Gulliver stumbles across the prosthetic extensions of Laputanian bodies in the form of

Flappers. His fourth voyage is, as has been much discussed, punctured by Gulliver's outright

dismissal of humanity and by his solemn pronouncement that he has a closer affinity with

Houyhnhnms than with Yahoos.

Heavily charged with satirical components as *Gulliver's Travels* is, Swift's aims in

representing numerous, disparate bodies in the text should not be thought of as merely

satirical.[197] Swift's depictions of the body provide substantial clues for expanding our

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[196] Although my use of posthumanism as a central interpretive frame and methodology can run the risk of anachronism, the way in which Swift plays out mechanical inventions and hybrid bodies—both mechanical and organic nonhumans—can be read fruitfully in the light of posthumanism. Also his relatively pure mechanical imagination manifests a marked difference from La Mettrie's work.

[197] Unarguably, Swift had been critical of the contemporary practices of experimental sciences, particularly the making of esoteric scientific knowledge within exclusive societies. *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) and the third part of Gulliver's voyage aim at those invested in modern science. Still, in order for Swift to critique early eighteenth-century modern scientists, he had to draw on the rhetoric and mechanism of the very scientific discourses he strove to tackle. In this paper, I pay attention to the literal level of the mechanical, technological discourses with which Swift engaged.

understanding not only of eighteenth-century perceptions of the human and nonhuman, but also

of Swift's anxieties in the face of technological advancement. Exploring the various

representations of Gulliver's body across his voyages, I contend that Swift's engagement with

the discourses and practices of mechanical engineering suggests his wariness that the

longstanding man-machine distinction is not as fixed as is often imagined—an aspect of Swift's

work which has been largely overlooked by eighteenth-century scholarship. Gulliver's man-

machine, man-animal body can be fruitfully examined in light of Julien Offray de La Mettrie's

radical, occasionally outrageous materialist manifesto, *Man a Machine* (1748), which came out

two decades after the publication of *Gulliver's Travels*. In this corrective to the dualistic

Cartesian notion that an animal is an unfeeling machine based on the premise that nonhuman

beings have no souls, La Mettrie enthusiastically contends that man is nothing but a machine and

an animal through his valorization of the intricate mechanism and agency of human-made

technological products. In his reformulation of the human, La Mettrie does not reduce the human

to a pure mechanical abstraction, but rather underscores the vitality of the soul which is closely

predicated on the material condition of the body.[198]

My examination of Gulliver's body is largely informed by posthumanist theory and by

recent scholarship on the advancement of mechanics, engineering, and technology in eighteenth-

century Britain.[199] *Gulliver's Travels* exhibits a kind of eighteenth-century posthumanism by

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[198] I will discuss at length La Mettrie's vital materialism towards the end of this chapter. David Skrbina examines La Mettrie's *Man-Machine* along with Leibniz, Diderot, and Kant within the genealogy of panpsychism, which is pertinent to my reading of the posthumanist underpinnings of the works of Swift and La Mettrie. See Skrbina, *Panpsychism in the West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), esp. Chs. 3 and 4.

[199] Throughout this paper, the automaton functions as a metonym for other similar types of machinery including cyborgs, intricately designed machines, and prosthetic devices. For critical work exploring eighteenth-century automata culture and the history of technology, see Otto Mayr, *Authority, Liberty, and Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Adelheid Voskhul, *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self*

denaturalizing and defamilarizing human bodies, a posthumanist turn related to contemporary

discourses of inventorying, automata, and cybernetics. This chapter is also enriched by close

dialogue with scholars who delve into the agency of *things*.[200] In conversation with historians

and literary critics who explore the enlightened posthumanist, mechanical discourses of the

period, I argue that Swift displays profound anxiety about the blurring of the fine line drawn

between the human and nonhuman (or/and posthuman), which is neatly underlined by his

description of the human being as a "topsy-turvy" creature.

Gulliver the Man-Machine: Imagining an Eighteenth-Century Posthuman Body

   Gulliver's four voyages are marked by somatic contingencies. Differences in size and

species, and radical reversals of perspective become a constant theme both between and within

the journeys.[201] Susan Stewart's argument that the body "becomes our mode of perceiving scale"

(Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Minsoo Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines: The Automaton in the European Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), Chs. 3-5; Julie Park, *The Self and It*: Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Jessica Riskin, "The Defecating Duck, or, the Ambiguous Origins of Artificial Life," *Things*. ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 99-133, "Eighteenth-Century Wetware," *Representations* 83 (2003): 97-125; Simon Schaffer, "Enlightened Automata," *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*. eds. William Clark, Jan Golinski, and Simon Schaffer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 126-65; Julie Park, *The Self and It*, esp. Ch. ; Kevin LaGrandeur, *Androids and Intelligent Networks in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Artificial Slaves* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013). Susan Stewart's work does not exactly fall into the category of technology studies, but her insights on the doll and the doll-house and her analysis of Gulliver's position in *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) illuminate Gulliver's machine-like position. See also the collected essays in *Early Modern Things*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York and London: Routledge, 2013).
[200] Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011; Mark Blackwell, ed. *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007).
[201] Melinda Alliker Rabb examines "fascination and experimentation with size" in the long eighteenth century, focusing on the production and appreciation of miniatures. In her examination of Samuel Johnson's use of Swift's experiment with the miniature, Rabb argues that miniaturization poses fundamental questions about "representation, cognition, and the material world." See Rabb, "Johnson, Lilliput, and Eighteenth-Century Miniature," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46.2 (2013): 281-98, 281 and

is therefore central to our understanding of *Gulliver's Travels*.[202] Oscillation between inside and outside, between symmetrical balance and oblique inclination, and between normative and grotesque bodies is pronounced throughout this text. More importantly, since the narrative is filtered through Gulliver's perspective and his embodied experiences, materiality and corporeality centrally shape his voyages.

Swift vividly displays both his mechanical imagination and his satirical edge in the voyage to Lilliput. From the beginning, Lilliput is described as a nation grounded in its mechanical, scientific accomplishments, and its national military prowess hinges on the successful culmination of its technological advances. Indeed, Swift keenly indexes different societies' technological developments and compares their varying degrees of improvement consistently throughout Gulliver's four discrete journeys. According to Gulliver, Lilliputians are the "most excellent Mathematicians" and the land itself boasts a "great Perfection in Mechanicks" (22). After this cursory observation comes his unusual portrayal of the war machine of the Emperor of Lilliput, a man better known as a "renowned Patron of Learning" (22). The device custom-designed to carry Gulliver's humongous body is described as "a Frame of Wood raised three Inches from the Ground, about seven Foot long and four wide, moving upon twenty-two Wheels" (22). Apart from providing exact accounts of the measurements and the amount of labor required to make this particular machine, this initial description introduces the device's invention along with the other war machine the Lilliputian monarch is reportedly in the habit of making, evincing Lisa Roberts's argument about the relationship between war and technological development: "Necessity or not, war was the mother – as well as the child – of

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293. On the comparative analysis of the treatments of the body in Daniel Defoe and Swift, see Carol Houlihan Flynn, *The Body in Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chs. 4-5.
[202] Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, .

much invention in Renaissance and early modern Europe."[203] The Lilliputians' use of technology as a key instrument of military power and aggression represents the more general purpose of mechanical instruments in Lilliput, as is later nicely illustrated by their use of Gulliver as a war machine pitted against Blefuscu. Before moving on to discuss Gulliver as a war machine, the Lilliputians' inspection of his exterior and interior should be discussed, since his overwhelmingly gigantic body is perceived and inventoried as if it were a national property.

In Lilliput Gulliver's body is subjected to a wide range of material conditions: first adrift during the shipwreck, then maimed on the cusp of Lilliput, only to go from being a bulky spectacle to an inventoried one. Gulliver's body is construed as a kind of inanimate object that initially conveys only surface—a kind of spectacle, a mechanical body whose inner design is to be precisely mapped out. With a particular focus on Gulliver's body under rigorous scrutiny, I ask whether an aggregate of particularized bits of property or prostheses can count as selfhood. Indeed, Gulliver's pockets—a container of his property—function at the same time as a mechanical and prosthetic extension of his self.[204] Analyzing these elements of Swift's text enables us to pose the question as to what precisely constitutes and determines human subjectivity in the narrative, especially in the first voyage. Held captive in Lilliput, Gulliver is defined by an excessiveness associated with his bulkiness and appetite. Gulliver notes that the Lilliputians demonstrate a "thousand Marks of Wonder and Astonishment at [his] Bulk and Appetite" (19). The enormous size of his body turns Gulliver into a devouring machine in the

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[203] Lisa Roberts, "Introduction," Lisa Roberts, Simon Schaffer, and Peter Dear, eds. *The Mindful Hand: Inquiry and Invention from the Late Renaissance to Early Industrialisation* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2007), 1.

[204] As a meaningful parallel with Gulliver's pockets, see Ariane Fennetaux's work on eighteenth-century women's pockets and their function as a private space. Fennetaux, "Women's Pockets and the Construction of Privacy in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 20.3 (2008): 307-34.

Lilliputian imagination, but after their initial phase of wonder comes a moment of mutual gazing and surveying.

Despite his attempts to situate himself as an active observer and describer of things, it is evident that Gulliver is subject to Lilliputian "survey" and thus that the power dynamics between the two inclines to the side of Lilliputians. Gulliver is endowed with an epithet due to his size, *Quinbus Flestin*, translated as "Man Mountain," a term that in itself stresses his excessiveness, his transgression of the bounds of normalcy among the diminutive Lilliputians.[205] Gulliver's hugeness causes confusion, fear, and terror on the receiving end of this encounter. Gulliver's body falls under the rigorous scrutiny of Lilliputian officers, his corporeality symbolically dissected into quantifiable and thus graspable units. Upon his receipt of the royal command, Gulliver is keenly aware of the fact that he cannot evade such prying and anatomical eyes. Though the royal command is executed based on Gulliver's "Consent and Assistance" (28), he is essentially compelled to let the Lilliputian inspectors into his pocket. It is notable that Gulliver spares two small spaces of privacy—his fobs and his secret pocket—from the eyes of the Lilliputians:

> I took up the two Officers in my Hands, put them first into my Coat-Pockets, and then into every other Pocket about me, except my two Fobs, and another secret Pocket which I had no Mind should be searched, wherein I had some little Necessaries of no Consequence to any but my self. In one of my Fobs there was a Silver Watch, and in the other a small Quantity of Gold in a Purse. (28)

The Lilliputian inspection of Gulliver, resonant with the autopsies commonly practiced since the early modern period, abstracts him as quantitative data. A limited section of Gulliver's body is

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[205] Given Gulliver's tendency to transgress established boundaries, one could easily connect his body to the grotesque. This echoes Stewart's association of the grotesque with huge body size. See Stewart, *On Longing*, Chs. 3-4.

neatly mapped out and thus rendered visible to the monarch of Lilliput.[206] Gulliver's dimensions,

his personal possessions, and his daily excrement are all deemed significant markers of his

selfhood. Such autoptic scrutiny is also indicative of an assumption that the assemblage of

discrete body parts aggregates to a whole, sensible organic entity, namely Gulliver in this case.

Hence Gulliver's efforts to maintain private spaces can be read as an act of deflecting such an

anatomical vision; at the same time, Gulliver's evasiveness hints at the impossibility of attaining

complete knowledge about the Other regardless of what empirical and objective instruments

scientific observers apply. Gulliver's denunciation of such an objectifying gaze through his

attempt to maintain his private pockets can be interpreted as an effort to salvage his humanity.

Exactly what kind of interiority is envisioned by Gulliver under the heavy surveillance of

Lilliputians, and how is that conception of interiority linked to Gulliver's particular personal

identity?

Gulliver translates their catalogue of his possessions at some length, enacting Swift's

deliberate rhetorical deployment of defamiliarization. In the translation, Swift represents the

logic at work in cultural interchanges from various eighteenth-century encounter zones—

exchanges in which an object deemed mundane in one culture can sell as a *curioso* at a higher

market value in another—but he also underscores the idea that the sum of Gulliver's partitioned,

dissected body parts leads only to epistemological nonsense. Gulliver's size makes the

Lilliputian inspection of his pockets a parody of contemporary ethnographies by transforming an

otherwise ordinary activity into a daunting and fraught task involving both physical toil and

intellectual guesswork. Furthermore, the fact that his list of possessions is comprised of mostly

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[206] This logic is working on the assumption that the pockets are a natural extension of Gulliver's body. Given that the surface of Gulliver's body is already subjected to complete surveillance, it is a very natural corollary that Lilliputian authority comes to be interested in looking at his pockets, the only locus remaining invisible and mysterious to them.

mechanical instruments—clock, pocket watch, gunpowder—indicates a zone of cohabitation between the organic and the mechanical. That such mechanical devices define Gulliver's identity in Lilliput suggests he is bordering on the boundary between the human and the machine in their imagination. The inspectors describe the process of examining Gulliver's uncannily huge, intricately constructed metal objects:

> In the right Coat-Pocket of the *Great Man Mountain* (for so I interpret the Words *Quinbus Flestrin*) after the strict Search, we found only one great Piece of coarse Cloth, large enough to be a Foot-Cloth for your Majesty's chief Room of State. In the left Pocket, we saw a huge Silver Chest, with a Cover of same Metal, which we, the Searchers, were not able to lift. We desired it should be opened; and one of us stepping into it, found himself up to the mid Leg in a sort of Dust, some part whereof flying up to our Faces, set us both a sneezing for several Times together. In his right Waist-Pocket, we found a prodigious Bundle of thin white Substances, folded one above another, about the Bigness of three Men, tied with a strong Cable, and marked with Black Figures; which we humbly conceive to be Writings, every Letter almost half as large as the Palm of our Hands. In the left there was a sort of Engine, from the Back of which were extended twenty long Poles, resembling the Pallisado's before your Majesty's Court; wherewith we conjecture the *Man Mountain* combs his Head; for we did not always trouble him with Questions, because we found it a great Difficulty to make him understand us. In the large Pocket on the right Side of his middle Cover, (so I translate the word *Ranfu-Lo*, by which they meant my Breeches) we saw a hollow Pillar of Iron, about the Length of a Man, fastened to a strong Piece of Timber, larger than the Pillar; and upon one side of the Pillar were huge Pieces of Iron sticking out, cut into strange

Figures; which we know not what to make of. In the left Pocket, another Engine of the same kind. In the smaller Pocket on the right Side, were several round flat Pieces of white and red Metal, of different Bulk: some of the white, which seemed to be Silver, were so large and heavy, that my Comrade and I could hardly lift them. In the left Pocket were two black Pillars irregularly shaped: we could not, without Difficulty, reach the Top of them as we stood at the Bottom of his Pocket: one of them was covered, and seemed all of a Piece; but at the upper End of the other, there appeared a white round Substance, about twice the bigness of our Heads. (30)

Despite its length, the entire report deserves a full citation here: given their penchant for scientific, quantifiable data and descriptions, the Lilliputian officers demonstrate their acute interest in Gulliver's overwhelmingly huge machinery as objects situated beyond their grasp. Despite their failure to deduce coherent meanings out of the particulars stored in Gulliver's pockets, the items that attract the Lilliputian officers' attention beg our attention: pocket watches, gunpowder, and guns. These objects are emblematic of the advance in military technology made possible by engineering.[207] Gulliver's possessions listed in the catalogue above work to underline once again the military ethos pervasive in the land. Especially important to my argument here is the fact that Gulliver's private self is intimately linked to the mechanical inventions he sneaks inside the pocket. Read against his nickname—"Man Mountain"—which carries a connation of organic monstrosity, the way he is inventoried in the passage cited above suggests Gulliver is rather transmuted into a mechanical monstrosity, an identity that defines him throughout his stay in Lilliput.

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[207] On the complex and multidimensional interrelationship of the Scientific Revolution, military technology, and imperial expansion in early modern Europe, see Brett D. Steele and Tamera Dorland, eds. *The History of Archimedes: Science and the Art of War through the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

If Gulliver is figured as a hybrid body through his possession of eighteenth-century weaponry and watches, his use value as an instrument of Lilliputian military prowess resonates with the image of both the golem and the crane. If the former epitomizes the organic realization of the human maker's wildest fantasy or imagination in the way it imitates that of a creator, the latter represents the zenith of civil engineering. Under assignment to significantly undermine the military power of Blefuscu, Lilliput's archenemy, Gulliver describes at some length how he provokes wonder and surprise from the Blefuscu army with the "strongest Cable and Bars of Iron" (45), thereby depicting himself as a terror-inducing war machine:

> I walked to the North-East Coast over against Blefuscu; where, lying down behind a Hillock, I took out my small Pocket Perspective Glass, and viewed the Enemy's Fleet at Anchor, consisting of about fifty Men of War, and a great Number of Transports: I then came back to my House, and gave Order (for which I had a Warrant) for a great Quantity of the strongest Cable and Bars of Iron. The Cable was about as thick as Packthread, and the Bars of the Length and Size of a Knitting-Needle. I trebled the Cable to make it stronger; and for the same Reason I twisted three of the Iron Bars together, bending the Extremities into a Hook. Having thus fixed fifty Hooks to as many Cables, I went back to the North-East Coast, and putting off my Coat, Shoes, and Stockings, walked into the Sea in my Leathern Jerken, about half an Hour before high Water. (45)

Much has been discussed about the passage quoted above, for it is rich with manifold symbolic and literal devices.[208] However, in the context of Gulliver's perennial machine-like status in Lilliput, it might be more illuminating to link his specific military undertakings to the operation

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[208] Pat Rogers interprets Gulliver's care of his own eyes as an emblem of the persistent emphasis on vision as the primary sensory experience in the eighteenth century. See Rogers, *Eighteenth-Century Encounters: Studies in Literature and Society in the Age of Walpole* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1985), esp. Chs. 1-2.

of similar devices of early modern civil engineering. Indeed, the golem and the homunculus might be the singled out as close kin to Gulliver the machine in Lilliput. Yet the exact details of how Gulliver performs his military prowess also suggest that he is emulating a modern crane, another military engine that the Lilliput emperor might have dreamt of. Regardless of whether he is imagined as a golem, a homunculus, or a crane, the quick association of Gulliver's body with these nonhuman instruments underlines his subhuman state in Lilliput, which is almost a given in most of his voyages, perhaps except for his trip to Laputa.[209] He functions as a Lilliputian puppet intended to evoke a sense of wonder and terror through the sheer size of his body, his use of power, and his possession of the gunpowder and mechanical devices within his pocket. He is at times identified with his own property, then reduced to a war-machine, and generally subject to indiscriminate disposal, as is evidenced by Lilliput's decision to execute him. Admittedly, the figuration of Gulliver's body and the nature of Lilliput in general are intent on satirizing contemporary British politics, including colonial expansion and extortion, but Swift's recourse to the discourses and practices of mechanical engineering indicates the author's acknowledgment that the longstanding man-machine distinction is not fixed.

During his second voyage, Gulliver figures rather as a talking, walking automaton—the perfect embodiment of a humanoid robot from the perspective of the Brobdignagians—due primarily to his miniature size.[210] Although the transition from functioning as a terrifying war

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[209] LaGrandeur observes the subhuman state of these early modern imaginary servants: "As with the homunculus, the association of the golem with automata, as well as its subhuman status, implies a servile status for the creature. By the sixteenth century the golem does in fact come to be represented mainly as an artificial servant, rather than the mere product of a devotional exercise." LaGrandeur, *Androids and Intelligent Networks in Early Modern Literature and Culture,* 67.

[210] Concerning Gulliver's miniature size, Douglas Lane Patey shows that the Brobdignagians' recognition that Gulliver does not fit into the categories of either the "Embrio, or abortive Birth" or the "dwarf" facilitates the process of reducing him to a "monster." See Patey, "Swift's Satire on 'Science and the Structure of *Gulliver's Travels*," 814. I concur with Patey's argument that Gulliver is abstracted into a

machine to an intricately structured doll is striking to readers, Gulliver embraces such adverse

circumstances without much protest; rather, he demonstrates quite docile assimilation into the

given culture by willingly performing his prescribed role as an automaton. Gulliver's

performance, on one level, as a "Sight" and as a "publick Spectacle" (87)—along with such

spectacular animals as a green eagle, a Splacknuck (88)—underlines that he is literally bordering

on an animal state in his condition as a spectacle. On another level, however, this episode evokes

the eighteenth-century craze for automata. Gulliver's body—minuscule, covered in smooth skin,

and well mannered—points to the individual components in automata that fascinated Swift's

contemporary audiences. Just as Jacques Vaucanson's transparent, defecating duck provided

audiences with a mechanical marvel by displaying an unusual combination of the organic and the

android, Gulliver the tiny humanoid works as a source of entertainment and wonder. If the

wetware, the life-like external material of the automata produces the effect of the real and the

organic, Gulliver's ability to speak, to give courtesy, and to move produces a similar effect.

Gulliver's travel box underlines his abstraction into the status of an automaton, for it

embodies two representative spatial constructions of the early eighteenth century: a male

domestic space and a dollhouse.[211] The travel box is initially designed by Glumdalclitch's father

as a vehicle for carrying him around, after which it is settled as both his dwelling place and

transportation during his stay in the Brobdignag court. As with the custom-designed carriage in

Lilliput, it is usually the medium that characterizes his status within each land. In the absence of

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monster – an oft-used metaphor for an aberration, but I want to highlight that Gulliver's monstrosity is closely tied to mechanical inventions such as automata and wind-up toys in Swift's age.

[211] Cynthia Wall writes that the long eighteenth century saw an increasing number of tourists and consequently heated interest in the "construction of interiors . . . across class lines" (177). See *Prose of Things*, especially Ch. 7 for discussion of the material conditions that made possible this particular interest in furnishing interior spaces in the period: "The mass production of pottery, fabrics, carpets, and furniture paradoxically made interiors more individuated, at least in the quantity and, therefore, the possible patterns of arrangements of their things" (177).

detailed descriptions of Gulliver's first box, we might guess that it bears only practical value, or fails to impress him. Interestingly enough, however, the box evolves into a luxuriously refurbished room in which Gulliver can enjoy his privacy thanks to the royal command:

> The Queen commanded her own Cabinet-maker to contrive a Box that might serve me for a Bed-Chamber, after the Model that *Glumdalclitch* and I should agree upon. This Man was a most ingenious Artist; and according to my Directions, in three Weeks finished for me a wooden Chamber of sixteen Foot square, and twelve High; with Sash Windows, a Door, and two Closets, like a *London* Bedchamber. The board that made the Ceiling was to be lifted up and down by two Hinges, to put in a Bed ready furnished by her Majesty's Upholsterer; which *Glumdalclitch* took out every Day to air; made it with her own Hands, and letting it down at Night, locked up the Roof over me. A Nice Workman, who was famous for little Curiosities, undertook to make me two Chairs, with Backs and Frames, of a Substance not unlike Ivory; and two Tables, with a Cabinet to put my Things in. The Room was quilted all sides, as well as the Floor and the Ceiling, to prevent any Accident from the Carelessness of those who carried me; and to break the Force of a Jolt when I went in a Coach. (94-95)

Gulliver's description of the exact dimensions of the room, its overall structure, and the layout of its furniture and interior decorations evokes the Lilliputian inspection of Gulliver's pockets. The same hyper-precise language is used to document and catalogue the bulk of the room. Swift's anatomical vision, I argue, is still lurking behind this kind of detailed description of things and then extended to the text's spatial understanding of things. Under this rigid scrutiny, little seems left to preserve the interior, private, secretive, or uncanny.

Moreover, we can conjecture that the particular domestic space offered to Gulliver is situated contiguously with other similar types of spaces—dining-room, dressing-room, or antechamber, to name a few—that get created, redefined, and put on full display in the eighteenth century. An antithesis to the pompous, huge, intricately ornate country house, Gulliver's space embodies rather a diminished (in terms of size), and thus manageable space for gentry men. For one thing, this room particularly evokes the making of a dining-room—a room of luxury and leisure created exclusively for men—even though the room is initially designed as Gulliver' bedroom.[212] At the beginning of Gulliver's quite exultant record of his newfound room, he indicates that the room has a "sash window," which Wall argues is a class marker. In her analysis of the spatial relations envisioned in Richardson's *Pamela*, Wall writes that the sash window is "a signature feature of gentry housing, pointing to high ceilings" which in turn signifies "a luxury of space ostentatiously unoccupied."[213] The twelve foot high ceiling definitely ensures a regal space. Both Richardson and Swift, it turns out, are acutely conscious of the way pieces of furniture are arranged within the spaces they depict in their fictions. Apparently, too, such domestic details are associated with male activities without much contradiction in contemporary gender norms. Despite its small size, however, Gulliver's box is the ultimate product of a collaboration between Brobdignagian craftsmen; hence, the box represents both the culmination of Brobdignagian taste as well as a mimetic rendering of their architectural and furnishing style, which in turn is indicative of the eighteenth-century practice of dollhouse

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[212] In her study of the eighteenth-century gendered division of domestic spaces, Wall shows that the English created "a space not simply 'masculine' in design or decor (a trope long known in classical architecture), but a space designed *for* men." See "Gendered Rooms," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 5.4 (1993): 349-372, 352.

[213] Wall, *Prose of Things*, 186. See also Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley, *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House, 1660-1880* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2000); Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); and Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

making. It is worth attending to the particular furniture items arranged in the very small, but

ornate box—two closets, a bed, two chairs, tables, and a cabinet—all of which are commonplace

objects stocked and arranged in eighteenth-century men's domestic spaces.[214] As Elizabeth

Burton has argued, the collaboration of plural cabinetmakers and upholsterers illustrates the

actual material conditions and social relations that dictated certain types of domestic space.[215]

Gulliver's box evokes dollhouse-making conventions, through which we can better trace

both the division and the blurring of interiority and exteriority. Vivien Greene, in her seminal

history of English dollhouses, argues that eighteenth-century English dollhouses originated from

seventeenth-century Dutch counterparts, and she specifies key features of these dollhouse

models. First, toymakers promoted some of their products as being a kind of "actual *replica*

house" or at least as emulating distinctive features of the old merchant houses.[216] Second, the

dollhouses of the century were furnished mostly with elaborate and luxurious miniature items,

which in turn provoked a craze for dollhouses. As the trade card of one eighteenth-century

toymaker indicates, most of these dollhouses are easily foldable and portable.[217] Gulliver's travel

box emblematizes all of these features of an eighteenth-century dollhouse, being both portable

and stocked with elaborately designed items. Swift's representation of the interplay between two

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[214] It should be noted that such furniture was not available to everyone during the period. As Burton notes, houses of people without means usually displayed bare walls, devoid of even necessary items, such as chairs or tables.

[215] See Burton, *Georgians at Home*, especially Chs. 3, 4, and 8. For more on the study of eighteenth-century furnishing style and consumer culture, see *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (New York: Palgrave, 2003); and *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century: What Furniture Can Tell Us about the European and American Past*, eds. Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg (New York and London: Routledge, 2007).

[216] Vivien Greene, *English Dolls' Houses of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: B. T. Basford, 1955), 31. As for the actual collection of extant dollhouses produced between 1700 and 1900, see Vivien Greene with Margaret Towner, *The Vivien Greene Dolls' House Collection*, photo. Nick Nicholson (New York: The Overlook Press, 1995). For further works on early modern dollhouses, see Flora Gill Jacobs, *A World of Doll Houses* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965); Caroline Clifton-Mogg, *The Dollhouse Sourcebook* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993).

[217] Ibid., 31.

sets of design conventions—those related to the dollhouse and those related to gentlemanly

domestic space—underscores Gulliver's position as a kind of automaton.

In marked contrast to the rest of his voyages, in which Gulliver's subject position is

precarious enough to reduce him to either a mechanical or an organic object of observation, his

visit to Laputa restores Gulliver's status as a primary observer who does not need to readjust his

sense of scale, size, or identity. This privileged position enables Gulliver to observe an unusual

embodiment of prosthetic extension that functions as an android servant. The way Laputan

servants aid their masters functions as the centerpiece of Swift's mechanical imagination in the

third voyage. In Laputa, Gulliver runs into a group of people bearing self-imposed gravity in an

outlandish dress.[218] It is notable that Laputans are described as people with mild deformation in

the first place: their heads are tilted either to the right or the left, and one of their eyes turns

inward while the other upward. Apparently, this physically distorted body is Swift's means of

parodying self-important virtuosi of the period, as the subsequent use of flappers and bladders

serves a similar purpose as a rhetorical device. Still, Swift's use of the deformed body as a

manifestation of equally malformed cognitive functions deserves our attention. These particular

people, rapt in their own books and what Gulliver believes to be "intense Speculations" (146),

inevitably need an extra, external body either to awaken them or to alert them to any imminent

danger.[219]

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[218] Gulliver's third voyage has been read as an outright satirical attack on the practices of virtuosi. See Douglas Lane Patey, "Swift's Satire on 'Science and the Structure of *Gulliver's Travels*," *ELH* 58 (1991): 809-39; Marjorie Nicolson and Nora Mohler, "The Scientific Background of Swift's Voyage to Laputa," *Annals of Science* 2 (1937): 299-334; Dennis Todd, "The Hairy Maid at the Harpsichord: Some Speculations on the Meaning of *Gulliver's Travels*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 34 (1992): 239-283; Kristin M. Girten, "Mingling with Matter: Tactile Microscopy and the Philosophic Mind in Brobdignag and Beyond," *The Eighteenth Century* 54 (2013): 497-520.

[219] Needless to say, this portrait of serious scholars is one of many satirized portraits of contemporary British scholarship (specify), but I want to pay attention to the use of bladder and flapper as a device of cognitive and haptic recognition.

Hence the Laputans employ a servant class of "Flappers" who carry "bladders" meant to rouse the attention of self-absorbed passers-by through the mechanical action of hitting them on the mouths and ears. Slapstick in nature and ridiculous in shape, the stick might function as the "symbol of the jester or fool,"[220] just as the name of the stick associated with the pig bladder implies the act of flapping one's mouth or ears—both potential meanings are insulting, and thus the situation is intentionally satirical. Along with Laputans' distorted body, their everyday dress—"adorned with Figures of Suns, Moons, and Starts, interwoven with those of Fiddles, Flutes, Harps, Trumpets, Guittars, Harpsichords, and many more Instruments of Musick, unknown to us in *Europe*"—also indicates that Swift's satirical attack targets those invested in the new science (146). Despite Swift's satirical goals, the establishment of prosthetic embodiment in Laputa is worth our critical attention:

> With these Bladders they now and then flapped the Mouths and Ears of those who stood
>
> near them, of which Practice I could not then conceive the Meaning. It seems, the Minds
>
> of these People are so taken up with intense Speculations, that they neither can speak, nor
>
> attend to the Discourses of others, without being roused by some external Taction upon
>
> the Organs of Speech and Hearing; for which Reason, those Persons who are able to
>
> afford it, always keep a Flapper, (the Original is Climenole) in their Family, as one of
>
> their Domesticks; nor ever walk abroad or make Visits without him. And the Business of
>
> this Officer is, when two or more Persons are in Company, gently to strike with his
>
> Bladder the Mouth of him who is to speak, and the Right Ear of him or them to whom the
>
> Speaker addresseth himself. This Flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his
>
> Master in his Walks, and upon Occasion to give him a soft Flap on his Eyes; because he
>
> is always so wrapped up in Cogitation, that he is in manifest Danger of falling down

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[220] David Womersley, ed. *Gulliver's Travels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 227.

every Precipice, and bouncing his Head against every Post; and in the Streets, of jostling

others, or being jostled himself into the Kennel. (146-47)

Based on the way in which Flappers function in Laputa, they can be interpreted as human

prostheses. Flappers are very unusual in that they exist independent of the body for which they

provide intended assistance or service. While most prostheses work as implements or inserts, as

if they were authentic integral body parts, these Flappers in Laputa apparently exist and function

outside of the people whose cognitive, emotional functions they are designed to enhance.

Compared to the series of artificial body parts that constitute Corinna—the unfortunate figure in

Swift's "Beautiful Young Nymph" poem, which we shall have occasion to analyze later in this

chapter—Flappers are distinctive in their disconnection from the body they serve, despite their

main function as an artificial limb for cognitive awakening. Given its function and external

location, the Flapper is implicated in the discourse of the humanoid servant, which hints at a

further development from Corinna's relatively small prosthetic extensions. Gulliver himself

affirms the fact that these Flappers belong in the class of servants and are therefore responsible

for accompanying their masters while the latter are immersed in the train of their own thinking or

daydreaming. Cyborgs exist even in the early modern period, so the idea of artificial limbs or

prosthetic embodiment would not be so rare.[221] The sixteenth-century artificial iron arm and

hand, designed by Amborise Paré, for example, indicates that Europeans were already familiar

with imagining such tactile contact with machines. Riskin describes how after the simulation of

"quintessential natural human act[s]," such as speech and defecating, eighteenth-century

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[221] Further historical context of early modern cyborgs will be illustrated in the section on Swift's dressing-room poems.

engineers attempted to produce human-like, or life-like prosthetic devices.[222] Thus we can infer

that Swift's satirical commentaries are actually engagements with such contemporary

technological, mechanical developments and discourses.

The neat demarcation between Flappers and their masters in a strange way embodies

Cartesian dualism—one body is held accountable for kinetic movement, while another operates

as a cognitive function—and their apparent class distinction suggests that Swift is toying with the

Cartesian hierarchy between the soul and the body. Flappers embody an animal-like body that

functions, removed from where soul resides. Given that Swift's satirical edge aims at Laputan

scholars, it cannot be argued that he endorses Cartesian dualism, but it is telling that Flappers are

characterized by their subservient functions. The way these Laputan scholars are entirely

absorbed in the kinds of cognitive activities that Elizabeth Grosz calls "private, subject, invisible,

[and] amenable only to first-person knowledge" implies that the scholars themselves are like

machines trapped in the confines of their own bodies, as if they suffer from locked-in

syndrome.[223] Grosz also points out that within the Cartesian divide, this untranslatable firsthand

knowledge reduces others to "complex automata, androids or even illusion, with no psychical

interior, no affective states or consciousness."[224] Swift's Flapper-master distinction therefore

underscores the impasse in transmitting emotions or knowledge across the rigidly set Cartesian

dualist world. Indeed the animal-nonhuman dualism gets more complicated in Gulliver's next

voyage.

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[222] Jessica Riskin, "Eighteenth-Century Wetware," *Representations* 83 (2003): 97-125, 108. For a similar critical interest in the technological development, see Reed Benhamou, "The Artificial Limb in Preindustrial France," *Technology and Culture* 35 (1994): 835-45.

[223] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 7.

[224] Ibid.

Gulliver's visit to the land of the Houyhnhnms demonstrates Swift's most prominent subversion of the traditional Chain of Being through Gulliver's unusual valorization of the culture and civilization of Houyhnhnms. It should be noted, however, that the posthumanist imagination noticeable in the last voyage is not so much related to machinery as its organic, nonhuman counterpart.[225] Because of its pronounced reversal of the longstanding boundary between human and animal, this particular voyage has provoked manifold attempts to read it as Swift's own comments on racial difference.[226] Despite the relevance and critical weight that these previous studies carry, I focus on species difference, primarily because Gulliver's cohabitation with the horses attests to what constitutes the human more generally. More importantly, this particular voyage underscores the unknowability and untranslatability of animal experience in human terms.

The murky divide between human and animal is first suggested by Gulliver's observation that animal footprints are mingled with those of humans: "I fell into a beaten Road, where I saw many Tracks of human Feet, and some of Cows, but of Horses" (208). The ensuing encounter between Gulliver and the Yahoos is deliberately set up to confuse a reader's perception as to whether Gulliver is being faced with humans or animals. Gulliver's gaze is typical of that of an ethnographer, responsible for maintaining objective distance. And yet, Swift's redeployment of the language of defamiliarization functions to associate what eventually turns out to be Yahoos with animality as well as with physical deformity: "Their Shape was very singular, and deformed, which a little discomposed me, so that I lay down behind a Thicket to observe them

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[225] Ann Cline Kelly reads Gulliver's position in the last voyage as both a "pet and pet keeper." See "Gulliver as Pet and Pet Keeper: Talking Animals in Book 4" *ELH* 74 (2007): 323-349, 323.

[226] Laura Brown, "Reading Race and Gender: Jonathan Swift," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23 (1990): 425-43; Cristina Malcolmson, "*Gulliver's Travels* and Studies of Skin Color in the Royal Society," *Humans and Other Animals in Eighteenth-Century British Culture: Representation, Hybridity, Ethics*, ed. Frank Palmeri (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 49-66.

better" (209). Gulliver goes on to report that the body in question is "covered with a thick Hair" of multifarious colors (209). Even when these entities who later turn out to be Yahoos demonstrate nimbleness, that quality is readily associated with animality. In this dubious ethnographical account, Gulliver gives the impression that he has observed nonhuman, native animals that behave like horses. He does not hide his disgust and loathing at the sight of despicable horse-like humans throughout the voyage.

Under the topsy-turvy circumstances, Gulliver willingly subjects himself to the established order of Houyhnhnms. Although this kind of voluntary submission has produced many debates on the status of Gulliver's subject position, this act, in the light of panpsychism in particular, can be read as a radical denunciation of anthropocentric value, however ridiculous it appears.[227] Rather, Gulliver's apparently preposterous, willing assimilation into the horses' culture duly underscores the ontological anxiety inherent in the task of imagining the psychic complexity of animal life. Steven Shaviro, in his witty and neatly organized genealogy of panpsychism, underscores the human tendency to deny that the nonhuman actually has experience independent of its human counterparts.[228] At best, the animal works as a metaphor, mainly because nonhuman life is characterized by the absence of language. The human world dictated by representational, semantic rules, according to Shaviro, cannot make sense of the species that has no language to describe and convey its own experience and feelings. However, drawing primarily on Whitehead and tweaking Wittgenstein's well known proposition, Shaviro

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[227] Panpsychism is defined as an ontological and epistemological attempt to actively imagine that nonhuman life forms and even static ones have their own life and experience that is hardly knowable to human subjects. For more on the history and genealogy of panpsychism, see David Skrbina, *Mind That Abides: Panpsychism in the New Millennium* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2009) and *Panpsychism in the West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).
[228] Steven Shaviro, "Consequences of Panpsychism," *The Nonhuman Turn*, ed. Richard Grusin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 19-44.

argues that animal life/experience is "not a Something, but not a Nothing either."[229] This implies that making sense of animal life in human terms is always fraught, but that this difficulty cannot entirely renounce the existence of such life. Panpsychism provides an opportunity to see that there is "no evidence that there is something ontologically unique about human beings."[230] The panpsychic stance thus engenders a kind of humility on the side of a human subject. Gulliver's deliberate attempt to be part of what the Houyhnhnms represent can be read as an act of humility, which in itself is rare, even though it cannot be easily overlooked that he demonstrates ready subservience and readjustment to the host culture throughout his voyages. Nonetheless, it can be argued that Gulliver's willing acculturation to the horse culture is indicative of Swift's derision toward anthropocentric values, given the extent to which his lengthy portrait of the upside-down world epitomizes the horse as the form of ultimate rationality. The country of the Houyhnhnms is a ridiculous, but simultaneously plausible form of animal world imagined in the early eighteenth century. Swift underscores human cruelty toward this animal world by interjecting Gulliver's realistic reportage on the British treatment of horses in general within this predominantly speculative world. Indeed, the report that most horses are subject to forced labor for and mistreatment by human masters baffles the Master Houyhnhnm. As with the collapsed human-animal categorical distinction, Swift questions human centrality here again through defamilarizing the act of brutality against a species deemed to have no rationality.

The contingencies inherent to the divide between the rational and irrational are rather nicely illustrated by Gulliver's own vulnerable position. His aspiration for Houyhnhnm-becoming, or horse-becoming is in constant jeopardy when his human body draws unwanted attention. The constant tension between his physical affinity with Yahoos and his outright

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[229] Originally from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, and quoted in Shaviro, "Consequences," 26.

[230] Skrbina, *Panpsychism in the West*, 53.

denunciation of their irrational and thus brute state leads Gulliver to be obsessed with how his own "skin" distinguishes him from the Yahoos. His fear of undressing, which both reminds the master Houyhnhnm of Gulliver's hairless state and is associated with Yahoo-ness, draws more attention to him. This particular moment is depicted in a manner similar to Corinna's undressing, and to the body measurements performed in Lilliput and Brobdignag. A voyeur-observer wields authority to watch the entire process with "great Signs of Curiosity and Admiration" (221), which effeminizes and eroticizes Gulliver's body. More striking is that the "Whiteness, and Smoothness" of Gulliver's skin and physiology are immediately translated into the physical attributes of Yahoos.

Gulliver's attempt to maintain his dress, a visible marker for his civility and gentleness, is subject to voyeuristic encroachment. While Gulliver's "performance" of undressing in front of the master horse seems minimal in its salaciousness, a female Yahoo's accosting of him during his bath is brimming with comical and salacious intentions. During his bath in the river, Gulliver reports that a young female Yahoo embraces him until a sorrel horse intervenes. The harmless fuss is understood as a "Matter of Diversion" to Gulliver's master and other horses (249), but the incident itself indicates that the boundary between what Gulliver believes to be rationality, humanity, and civility and what the female Yahoo stands for is easy to collapse. His following recognition that he is a "real Yahoo" in terms of his physiological features—based on this sexualized encounter with the young female—underlines the very fine line between the animal and the human, the rational and the irrational. Overtly ridiculous, Gulliver's desire to be completely accepted in Houyhnhnmsland, his denunciation of humanity, and his complete withdrawal from his own family are indicative of an unusual eighteenth-century posthuman undercurrent, which decenters the human and its rationality.

Swift's Dressing Room Poems and the Imagining of the Female Android

Like the insistently mechanical constitution of Gulliver's body, Swift's representations of

fragmented, half-machine/half-human female bodies in his dressing-room poems provide us with

a revealing glimpse into the eighteenth-century posthumanist imagination.[231] By intentionally

collapsing distinctions between human bodies and their perfunctory, functional somatic

extensions, Swift poses a fundamental question concerning the corporeal, material constitution of

human subjectivity. This blurred distinction and the persistent theme of dismemberment bespeak

a larger anxiety regarding the making of male subjectivity. Though I use the term 'posthuman' as

a way to frame my analysis of Gulliver's bodies, Swift obviously did not have the emancipatory

pleasure of reading Donna Haraway's landmark work, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs." In it,

Haraway posits the cyborg as an entity pulled away from the gravity of genesis, unity, gender or

natural impositions. The cyborg, Haraway claims, is characterized as "resolutely committed to

partiality, irony, intimacy [and] … perversity," and as "oppositional, utopian, and completely

without innocence."[232] Such "boundary breakdowns" inherent to the cyborg are validated

because they emancipate human subjects from the confines of conventional cultural, social, and

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[231] Swift's persistent rhetoric of mechanical de/construction is discernible in his poems and in the second and third voyages of Gulliver. In "Dr. S— to Mr. P—e, while he was writing the *Dunciad*," an autobiographical poem depicting rather self-consciously how the poet composes his own poems, Swift rather underlines the progress of composition drawing on mechanistic language:
> Now Backs of Letters, though design'd
>   For those who more will need'em,
> Are fill'd with Hints, and interlin's,
>   Himself can hardly read e'm.
>
> Each Atom by some other struck,
>   All Turns and Motion tries;
> Till in a Lump together stuck,
>   Behold a Poem rise! (lines 9-16)

[232] Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs." *Feminism/Postmodernism*. ed. Linda J. Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1990), 192.

political impositions.[233] Admittedly, the application of Haraway's twentieth-century frame of the

cyborg to the reading of Swift's works risks a certain methodological anachronism. And yet,

Haraway's claim that cyborgs are everywhere, from the ancient Greek period to contemporary

science fiction to modern medicine to modern war, implies their conceptual usefulness for

understanding eighteenth-century texts. Eighteenth-century Europe in particular saw the

production of automata including Vaucanson's theatrical animal automata, the chess player.

Even less theatrical, ornamental versions of automata were employed almost on a daily basis in

the form of the windmill and watermill.[234] This kind of human cohabitation with the cyborg

sheds light on Swift's increased anxiety toward boundary transgressions across spaces and

species.

The desire for creating automated machinery dates back to the ancient period.[235] Aristotle

posits a machine-like slave to deflect his complicity with institutionalized human slavery and to

cater to his dislike of involving in humans in general.[236] LaGrandeur, in his study of how the

early modern posthumanist imagination is implicated in the making of so-called "artificial

slaves," duly notes that "modern cybernetics is at least partially the product of a very old

archetypal drive that pits human ingenuity against nature via artificial proxies," which he traces

back to the age of Aristotle and the ancient Jewish cabala tradition.[237] Otto Mayr also writes

about how machinery in general is the manifestation of "interaction between a society's practical

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[233] Ibid., 193.

[234] Jonathan Sawday also points to the fact that early modern life was replete not only with machinery but also with the noise it produced. See Jonathan Sawday, *Engines of the Imagination: Renaissance Culture and the Rise of the Machine* (London: Routledge, 2007), esp. Ch. 1.

[235] Alfred Chapuis and Edmond Droz provide a comprehensive historiography of the development of automata. See A*utomata: A Historical and Technological Study*, Trans. Alec Reid (New York: Central Book Company, 1958).

[236] Cited in LaGrandeur, *Androids and Intelligent Networks in Early Modern Literature and Culture*, 9-12. See also Aristotle, *Politics*, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 2, Trans. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), esp. 6 (1253b24-1254a17).

[237] LaGrandeur, 1.

technology and its intellectual and spiritual culture."[238] Simon Schaffer illuminates how the

human body is perceived as a machine in the enlightenment age.[239] Minsoo Kang remarks that

the eighteenth-century craze over an automaton signifies the intersection of popular interest and

the culmination of technological advancement. If Vaucanson's automata—the centerpiece of

Kang's examination of the eighteenth-century European automata craze—"embodied some of

the central philosophical, scientific, and medical ideas that were being hotly debated at the time,"

Gulliver's corporeal status, Corinna's body, and the Flapper's unusual functions in Laputa evince

early eighteenth-century interest in hybrid human entities as well as the vulnerability of human

subjects. Similarly, Adelheid Voskuhl's work on the origin and reception of enlightenment

machinery (circa 1730-1790) touches on how machines drew intense attention from the public as

automated, mechanical marvels. Jessica Riskin's case studies of Vaucanson's unprecedented

feats as a craftsman/engineer neatly describe the careful techniques employed to create a

seemingly organic machine. She traces the development from the Jaquet-Droz family's use of

such "lifelike materials" as "leather, cork, and papier-mâché" to the work of Vaucanson, who

successfully created a defecating duck. His success epitomizes, Riskin argues, the "simultaneous

enactment of both the sameness and incomparability of life and machinery."[240]

As noted earlier, Swift's own dissective vision and his long-standing interest in the

construction of interiority are manifested in his dressing-room poems.[241] The quantified,

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[238] Mayr, *Authority, Liberty, and Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe,* xvii.

[239] Simon Schaffer, "Enlightened Automata," 134.

[240] Jessica Riskin, "The Defecating Duck," 610. The meaningful parallels between Vaucanson's defecating duck automaton, defecating yahoos, and the similarly identified women in Swift's poems will be discussed in the section discussing Gulliver's last voyage.

[241] For further discussion of Swift's treatment of the female body in his excremental poems, see Margaret Anne Doody's "Swift Among the Women" in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Swift*, ed. Frank Palmeri (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 13-37; Ellen Pollak, "The Difference in Swift," Palmeri, ed. *Critical Essays*, 207-227, "Swift and Women" in *Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*, ed. Christopher Fox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 87-111; and Louise Barnett, *Swift in the Company of*

fragmented body in Swift's famous "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" (1731) has long

been at the center of controversies surrounding his treatment of women, since it hints at Swift's

alleged misogyny.[242] My interest here, however, lies with how the dissective viewpoints and

partitioned bodies pervasive in Swift's dressing-room poems point to anxieties regarding the

progress of self-making and self-representation within the milieu of technological advancement.

Striking in this poem is the prying male gaze that fragments Corinna's body into divisible,

tangible prostheses. Corinna's body, in addition, is denaturalized to the extent that it is rendered

as an unusual hybrid of organic body parts and small particles of machinery. In her comparative

study of Pope and Swift, Ellen Pollak writes, contrary to Pope, who "accommodates women

comfortably within his texts by objectifying them in such a way that they give him back the

image of himself he wants to see," within Swift's works the women "represent the *active

principle of difference* itself, and this principle in turn becomes the motivating structure of

Swift's art."[243] As such, Pollak argues that Swift's poems display both the specific way in which

masculine fear is displaced as well as the existence of male anxiety prompted by sexual

difference. My concern here focuses on human anxiety in the face of species difference, which

includes sexual difference in that Swift envisions women's bodies using mechanistic language.[244]

I read Swift's recurrent poetic motifs of defecating, fetishistic displacement, and disfiguration as

metaphors for his anxieties about blurred categorical divisions, particularly between the human

and the machine.

Women (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also Frank Palmeri's introduction to *Critical Essays on Jonathan Swift*.

[242] See Joseph McMinn, "Swift's Life," *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*, ed. Christopher Fox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14-30, exp. 27-28; Margaret Anne Doody, "Swift and Women," *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*, 87-111; J. Paul Hunter, "*Gulliver's Travels* and Later Writings," *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*, 216-40, 235.

[243] Ellen Pollak, 207. The emphasis is mine.

[244] See Flynn, *The Body in Swift and Defoe*, esp. Chs. 4,5, and 8.

In "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed," the onlooker's eye begins by cataloguing the particulars that comprise Corinna, who

> . . . seated on a three-legg'd chair,
>
> Takes off her artificial hair;
>
> Now picking out a crystal eye,
>
> She wipes it clean, and lays it by.
>
> Her eyebrows from a mouse's hide
>
> Stuck on with art on either side,
>
> Pulls off with care, and first displays'em,
>
> Then in a play-book smooth lay'em.
>
> Now dext'rously her plumpers draws,
>
> That serve to fill her hollow jaws,
>
> Untwists a wire, and from her gums
>
> A set of teeth completely comes;
>
> Pulls out the rags contrivd to prop
>
> Her flabbydugs, and down they drop. (lines 9-22)

The catalogue of prostheses listed above, it turns out, is indispensable to the "lovely goddess" maintaining and augmenting her beauty and youth, both of which have long vanished in a way that apparently invites male derision (line 23). What is distinctive in this unflattering portrait is the way Corinna is presented as a sum of haphazard body parts—aged, wrinkled, and soon to decay. Such mechanical constituency at times indicates her status as an automaton or "eighteenth-century cyborg" subjected to disembodiment.[245]

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[245] For a further discussion of eighteenth-century disembodiment and enlightened selfhood, see Allison Muri, *The Enlightenment Cyborg: A History of Communications and Control in the Human Machine,*

Moreover, animal attacks in this poem tellingly signify the fragmentariness inherent to the making of subjectivity. "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" registers this anxiety through the way Corinna's body parts are attacked by animal assailants, such as a rat, a cat, a pigeon, and fleas.[246] Human vulnerability gets emphasized by these moments of animals assuming superiority over human volition and needs. Corinna's irreplaceable prosthetic body parts are under a series of attacks by animals' natural behavior, producing what the speaker calls respectively a "dreadful sight" (line 57), "the ruins of the night" (line 58), and her "mangled plight" (line 65). The speaker elaborates:

> A wicked rat her plaster stole,
>
> Half eat, and dragg'd it to his hole.
>
> The crystal eye, alas! was miss'd;
>
> And puss had on her plumpers p—st,
>
> A pigeon pick'd her issue-peas:
>
> And Shock her tresses fill'd with fleas. (lines 59-64)

Although beset by such corporeal predicaments, Corinna is required to "unite" her limbs, "re-collect the scattr'd parts" (line 68) and "[gather] up herself again" (line 70). Due to her animal assailants, Corinna's daily task of reuniting herself ultimately fails. This, I argue, represents not only gender- or class-oriented predicaments when it comes to securing one's social identity. Rather, Corinna's corporeal disorientation hints at a universal human vulnerability in establishing personal identity and maintaining interiority within an increasingly mechanized scientific understanding of our material condition. In Gulliver's case, he is able to shield himself

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1660-1830 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). For more on the concept of the cyborg, see Rosi Braidotti, "Posthuman, All Too Human: Towards a New Process Ontology," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 23.7-8 (2006): 197-208.

[246] This also makes a parallel with the similar animal attacks Gulliver receives during his second voyage.

from external stimuli that might disembody him by hiding in the box offered by his benevolent, gigantic patrons.[247] Through his disintegration of Corinna's body, Swift continues asking whether Corinna is merely the sum of her artificial eyeball, her set of fake teeth, and her emaciated hips and breasts. If so, then where does her sense of interiority reside? Under the onlooker's investigative eyes, there is no room for Corinna to possess the kind of interiority or privacy that Gulliver strives to preserve. She is presented as a sheer sum of shabby objects that materially index her disheveled life. In this bleak portrait of a prostitute, Corinna's interiority is saved and disrupted by the nightmare of being sent to jail or Jamaica. Corinna embodies a central cultural anxiety concerning the nature of selfhood and interiority in a period which saw the ascendancy of empiricism's anatomical, objective approach to things.

Similarly, in "The Progress of Beauty" (1719), Swift employs the technique of disfiguring a woman's body to the degree that a female character—the object of a male speaker's voyeuristic observation—is reduced to the status of an unnatural, nonhuman entity. In effect, Swift reverses the order of disintegration as depicted in Corinna's bedroom to dramatize the process of female masquerade. Here, the speaker carefully parallels two different models of how women reconstruct their beauty. The poem begins with the moment Diana rises from the bed; the poet, in his habitually malicious manner, portrays how her "artificiall Face" is restored from her shabby look (line 6).[248] The earlier look is marked by wrinkles, sweats, "Cracked Lips, foul Teeth, and gummy Eyes" (line 15). With the aid of "Soot or Powder" (line 17) in the case of Diana, and of "Pencil, Paint, and Brush" (46) in the case of Celia, these two women respectively

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[247] Probably the most extreme version of Lilliputian attempts to quantify and inventory Gulliver can be found in Gulliver being forced to go naked in front of the horse inspectors in his final voyage. During Gulliver's engagement with Houyhnhnms, his bare skin without fur/hair is equated with his savageness, which is always associated with Yahoos. Thus his attempts to hide his "Secret of [his] Dress" (220) entail much trouble.

[248] Jonathan Swift, "The Progress of Beauty," *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 225-229.

efface the signs of aging and fatigue. The careful makeup applied to each of their faces leads to

the construction of a new woman:

> She [Celia] know her Early self no more,

But fill'd with Admiration, stands,

As Other Painters oft adore

The Workmanship of their own Hands.

> Thus after four important Hours

Celia's the Wonder of her Sex;

Say, which among the Heav'nly Pow'rs

Could cause such wonderfull Effects. (lines 49-56)

In addition to the speaker's cheeky admiration of the feminine accomplishment— "such

wonderful Effects"—he quickly shifts his interest to a material that helps enhance female beauty:

the white lead, a substance which "was sent to us to repair / Two brightest, brittlest earthly

Things / A Lady's Faces, and China ware" (lines 62-64). Presumably an eighteenth-century

version of light powder or a porcelain color primer, white lead allegedly works effectively and is

emblematic of the aesthetic prosthesis used in the period.[249] Striking, however, is the poet's

juxtaposition of a woman's face with china, which serves double purposes. On one hand, the

china's smooth, glossy exterior underlines the effects of the application of the white lead and

highlights the enhanced beauty of the woman in question. Second, as has often been noted, it

abstracts a woman's body to the status of a fetish. "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed"

and "The Progress of Love" reveal Swift's anxieties about selfhood through his fixation on

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[249] Julie Park, for instance, notes that the use of mechanical devices to enhance beauty was commonplace in the eighteenth century: "Such so-called 'machines' of eighteenth-century fashion, as the cork rump for women and artificial calves for men, indicate that the realm of the frivolous was not so far removed from the scientific in in its prosthetic approach to objects." See Park, *The Self and It*, 42.

female bodies comprised of mechanical parts whose sum would not make a whole, organic body. These poems register Swift's interest in the material conditions that make possible the appearance of unfractured human identity. He finally interjects a jocular, but pointed reflection on the relationship between form and matter in the latter poem, saying

> But, Art no longer can prevail
>
> When the Materialls all are gone,
>
> The best Mechanick Hand must fayl
>
> Where Nothing's left to work upon.
>
> Matter, as wise Logicians say,
>
> Cannot without a Form subsist,
>
> And Form, say I, as well as They,
>
> Must fayl if Matter brings no Grist. (lines 77-84)

In the context of a poem commenting on the fleeting beauty of women, the lines cited above can be read as a fair warning that even the diligent and deliberate application of makeup as a prosthetic technology is destined to fail due to the material perishability of human life.

Swift notoriously toys with women's bodies in an effort to blur the fine line between the human (natural) body and the hybrid (unnatural; machine-like) in his poems. Sexual difference gets conflated with species difference, as the apparently discrete female body is represented in the form of a machine. Despite Swift's aversion to modern science, the language he deploys is heavily saturated with the discourses of prosthetic technologies and mechanical engineering.[250] The author's own anxiety about newfound technologies in the early eighteenth century

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[250] That Swift uses the word 'engines(s)' twenty times throughout Gulliver's Travels imply the undercurrent of his interest in the modern technology despite his protests.

paradoxically led him to create a world populated by hybrid entities: man-machine, man-animal

hybrids.

Coda: The Age of Dissection and Technological/Medical Enlightenment

Eighteenth-century Britain saw a continued but complicated version of what Sawday

terms the "culture of dissection" and the so-called age of the machine (before the dawn of the

Industrial Revolution). Given the broad range of definitions of "autopsy" listed in the OED, from

unmediated eyewitnessing to the "actual inspection" of a dead body, it is evident that the act of

dissecting worked fundamentally both as a faithful heir to the kinds of empirical observations

theorized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The rise of the new science, reinforced by

the improvement of scientific instruments and by the institutionalization of scientific

investigation itself (predominantly in the form of the state-sponsored laboratory), facilitated

more general cultural dissemination of the concepts of anatomy, dissection, and disintegration.[251]

In addition, anatomical theaters open to the general public, along with the production of

anatomical figures, simultaneously fostered the culture of autopsy.[252] Sawday explores the

etiology of particularly Western interest in interiority by dint of "dissection or anatomization,"

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[251] See Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986) for the interrelationship between fact-making and the institutionalization of the laboratory. For more on advancements in scientific instruments and their popular reception, see Hasok Chang, *Inventing Temperature: Measurement and Scientific Progress* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jan Golinski, "Barometers of Change: Meteorological Instruments as Machines of Enlightenment," *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*. Eds. William Clark, Jan Golinski, and Simon Schaffer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 69-93.

[252] Richard D. Altick's classic work on the various forms of public, scientific, and educational entertainment in early modern England describes at length the dissemination of empirical knowledge and enlightened forms of public entertainment. See Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), Chs. 4-5, 16, 25-28; see also Anita Guerrini, "Anatomists and Entrepreneurs in Early Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 59 (2004): 219-39; *Experimenting with Humans and Animals* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); and *The Courtiers' Anatomists: Humans and Animals in Louis XIV's Paris* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015); and Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*.

and points to the fear imbedded in manifold attempts to approach and pry into interiority within the corpus of Renaissance literary texts.[253] According to Sawday, early modern anatomy achieved two things: 1) it shed light on bodily interiors that had long been associated with the dark, and in doing so disintegrated and reassembled interiority in accordance with new standards of order and discipline; and 2) it recast bodily interiority in spatial terms.[254] In the course of mapping out the body interior in three-dimensional terms, anatomists and natural philosophers had to acknowledge that even scientifically objective, prying eyes still met with a degree of resistance from the very corporeality into which they delved.

The fact that there still remained elements of lingering mystery, the sublime, or even fear emanating from the body suggests the potential usefulness of thing theory to examining these early modern practices of placing the body and other objects under the objectifying eyes of scientific observers. If the strangeness, mystery, or autonomy attendant on the interior of things (including the human body) stems from our relative ignorance of anatomy before the early modern period, eighteenth-century affects surrounding the body interior originate from a more widely recognized sense of the autonomy of things that seem to defy human control. That is, the divide between the interiority and the exteriority of the body that falls under disciplined examination in the early modern period demonstrates that the early modern body itself becomes a contested site where the imposition of prying eyes reduces the object of dissection to a thing—demystified, object-like, and at times feminized. In many ways, the pursuit of objective knowledge propelled by the scientific revolution entails a shifts in the definition of the human body from something "fearfully made" into an intricately organized machine. P. M. Harman likewise points to a watershed change in eighteenth-century understandings of nature caused by

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[253] Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, 1.
[254] Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* offers a similar attempt to perceive the segments of human bodies as part of a spatial construction. See also Sawday, 86.

the "visualisation of the universe as a clockwork mechanism comprising cogs, wheels and pulleys rather than a living organism"[255] In a way, the new anatomical knowledge regarding human interiority reinforces the Cartesian mechanical understanding of organism. At the same time, it amplifies the fear imbedded in the making of the self, in part because selfhood in the new epistemological paradigm is subjected to such mechanical disintegration, and in part because human subjectivity remains faced with the residual autonomy of nature despite scientific attempts to pin down its workings.

If enhanced techniques of observation engendered the culture of dissection, another dimension of empirical culture was predicated on the use of machinery, including automata as well as the aforementioned scientific instruments.[256] As Sawday duly notes, the eighteenth century was by no means a pastoral, pre-industrial age devoid of mechanical noise.[257] Cohabiting with machinery, Britons in the eighteenth century came to accept Technē as the characteristic episteme that determined the fabric of their daily life. This exposure to technological devices affected British understandings of both nature and the self, and it conditioned the way in which they described and demarcated space and time: for instance, the kinds of temporal demarcation made possible by the increased use of more technologically advanced clocks shows that even the abstract unit of time came to be rendered in spatial terms.[258] Descriptive technique refined by the

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[255] P. M. Harman, *The Culture of Nature in Britain*, 3.

[256] See Adelheid Voskhul, *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Jessica Riskin, "The Defecating Duck, or, the Ambiguous Origins of Artificial Life," *Things*. ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 99-133; and "Eighteenth-Century Wetware," *Representations* 83 (2003): 97-125; Jonathan Sawday, *Engines of the Imagination: Renaissance Culture and the Rise of the Machine* (London: Routledge, 2007). Pat Rogers also points to Swift's preoccupation with mechanical devices. See Rogers, in *Eighteenth-Century Encounters: Studies in Literature and Society in the Age of Walpole* (Sussex, UK: Harvester Press, 1985), Chs. 1-2.

[257] Sawday, *Engines of the Imagination*, 4-6.

[258] See Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660-1760* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) for the relationship between time telling and temporality conveyed in narratives.

advancement of technology therefore produced a re-conceptualization of time and space, interior and exterior, characteristic of the Enlightenment. The classificatory impulse prevalent in both Linnaeus and Buffon thus goes hand in hand with concurrent practices of spatializing, and of fragmenting things previously conceived as whole, continuous, and abstract. Such ordering practices imposed on both the natural world and human interiority influenced a number of cultural discourses—not only in the predictable realms of anatomy and autopsy reports, but also in auction catalogues, and many other forms of lists which often became a structural narrative component of early novelistic discourse.

The predominantly mechanical underpinnings of the human body, however, opened up the possibility of establishing rather radical claims about the thingness or the machine-like status of the human in positive terms. Dissociated from the traditional notion of God's manifestation within nature, increased knowledge of human physiology aligned the human with the machine, by taking the material, mechanical constitution of the body seriously. Such materialist discourse is perhaps best represented by Julien Offray de La Mettrie. When Swift's treatment of Corinna's body (perhaps unknowingly) articulates an eighteenth-century understanding of hybridity—of an entity bordering uneasily on the human/machine divide—it prefigures Julien Offray de La Mettrie's proposition that the "human body is a self-winding machine, a living representation of perpetual motion."[259] La Mettrie's materialist monism, the outright dismissal of long-held Cartesian dualism, is predicated on his premise that the workings of the soul cannot be dissociable from its material conditions: "The soul follows the progress of the body, as it does education."[260] To fend off predominantly outraged contemporary responses to his argument, La Mettrie argues that when the container of the soul perishes, the soul faces the same fate:

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[259] La Mettrie, 32.
[260] Ibid., 34.

> Without food, the soul languishes, goes into a frenzy, and exhausted, dies. The soul is a candle whose flame is relighted the moment it is put out. But feed the body, pour powerful juices and strong liquors into its pipes, and then the soul arms itself with proud courage, and the soldier, whom water would have made run away, becomes ferocious and runs gaily to his death to the beat of the drum.[261]

Since his primary concern centers on what is tangible, visible, and thus knowable, La Mettrie limits his discussion to pure material conditions. He modestly acknowledges that the metaphysical is located beyond the reach of human understanding. It is hardly surprising that he tackles the notion of *a proiori*, arguing that "[o]nly *a posteriori*, by unraveling the soul as one pulls out the guts of the body, can one, I do not say discover with clarity what the nature of man is, but rather attain the highest degree of probability possible on the subject."[262] He contests the long-held Cartesian boundaries distinguishing the human from the animal and the machine, underscoring that the soul as prime mover is "only an empty word to which no idea corresponds" and that the human is a "well-enlightened machine."[263] Half jocular, half serious about the way he applies comparative anatomical perspective to the status of human faculties, he writes that "man is but an animal" and comprised of a "contraption of springs." [264] In so doing, he compares the human body to an "immense clock, constructed with so much artifice and skill."[265] With automata flooding the European popular imagination, La Mettrie, equipped with precise knowledge of comparative anatomy, argues that an unbiased mind could only conclude that "man is a machine, and that the entire universe contains only one single diversely modified

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[261] Ibid., 32-33.
[262] Ibid., 30.
[263] Ibid., 59.
[264] Ibid., 65.
[265] Ibid., 69.

substance."[266] Preceding La Mettrie's radical materialist manifesto by twenty-two years, Swift's

treatment of Gulliver's body significantly anticipates the French philosopher's contestation of

the boundary between the human and the machine.

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[266] Ibid., 76. It is also notable that his equal treatment of the human and the animal in the treatise echoes the development of anatomy. Initially, anatomical knowledge originates from the comparative approach to the structure of the human body and of plants. Then it delves into the inner structure and organization of both the human and the animal. La Mettrie's treatise, touching on both aspects of the human body, ultimately shows that humans are seldom superior to or distinct from either machines, animals, or plants.

Chapter 5
"Dear faithful object of my tender care":
Ethics and the Nonhuman in Anna Laetitia Barbauld's Nature Poetry

> Glory be to God for dappled things –
> – Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Pied Beauty" (1877)
>
> The subject of science is the beautiful (that is to say order, proportion, harmony) in so far as it is suprasensible and necessary. The subject of art is sensible and contingent beauty discerned through the network of chance and evil.
>
> The beautiful in nature is a union of the sensible impression and of the sense of necessity. Things must be like that (in the first place), and, precisely, they are like that.
> – Simone Weil, "Beauty"[267]
>
> Beauty always takes place in the particular . . .
> – Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*[268]

In Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Pied Beauty," "dappled things" prompt the speaker's sense of wonder. His poem depicts a range of living forms that represent quirky aspects of beauty in nature—described alternately as "counter, original, spare, strange, . . . fickle, [and] freckled" (lines 7-8)—as a visible manifestation of the divine. Hopkins shrewdly integrates the small details of nature into the language of the sublime. Simone Weil, in her aphoristic articulation of beauty as the disparate end of science and art, underlines the concept of beauty in nature as an unusual, seemingly incompatible amalgamation of sense perception and utility. And Elaine Scarry, examining how the discernment of beauty entails action and our sense of justice, remarks that our perception of beauty rests on the recognition of particulars: sustained attention to objects is a precondition for discerning beauty, argues Scarry, and such beauty by nature arrests a perceiver's attention. Taken together, these epigraphs illustrate the sensorial horizon of beauty,

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[267] Simone Weil, "Beauty," *Gravity and Grace*, Trans. Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 148.

[268] Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 18.

and, more importantly, the cognitive and aesthetic dimensions of our perception of the beautiful, which are quite central to poets and scientists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In this chapter I examine primarily the nature poems of Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825) along with those of Charlotte Turner Smith (1749-1806), focusing on the links between the pervasive practice of empirical observation and the underpinnings of beauty, sympathy, and ethical judgment in long eighteenth-century Britain.[269] Throughout my exploration of Barbauld's works, I argue that her empirical sublime serves as a prelude to ethical attention and care. In contrast to scholars who have focused on the relationship between aesthetic pleasure and the observation of nature in order to account for the development of aesthetic judgment in the period, I examine how the accumulative knowledge of nature leads to the making of ethical subjecthood—a form of subjectivity characterized by its engagement with the moral, aesthetic, and empirical aspects of the natural world. I argue that the (primarily) organic life forms that draw each poet's attention are deemed by them as objects of vibrancy and beauty. Informed by the work of posthumanist thinkers, I demonstrate how these objects alert human observers to their vitality particularly through their sensorial registers in the human mind. Barbauld and Smith produce what I would call "encounter poetry": poetic texts in which a human observer stumbles across an unexpected life form to which she pays momentary or prolonged attention in a way leads to a cognitive and aesthetic event. Recognizing the multifarious objects embedded in nature

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[269] My choice of Barbauld and Smith is deliberate. Both poets presage Romanticism and its preoccupations with nature, but have been largely overlooked until recent revivals. However, my treatment of Smith's poem serves more as a point of reference to Barbauld's work than as the kind of comprehensive study her poems deserve. For her literary accomplishments as a Romantic poet, see Stuart Curran's "Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism," *South Central Review* 11.2 (1994): 66-78; Curran centers on Smith's formidable literary accomplishment "against all odds" (66) and on her distinctive, uncompromising political perspective:

> Charlotte Smith is not, of course, the only missing link in the chain of succession between the poets of the second and third generations of the eighteenth century, but because of the breadth, the artistry, and the impact of her achievement, hers may well be the single most important voice that has been until quite recently suppressed form the historical record. (71)

often functions as an aesthetically pleasing encounter, of course, but Barbauld and Smith do not

stop at merely remarking novelty, beauty, or the sublime in the natural world; rather, they extend

their speakers' reflections to a more general consideration of our ethical responsibility to the

particular "race" of each of the objects they encounter.[270] My primary tasks in this chapter are,

first, to analyze Barbauld's and Smith's articulations of the link between ethical action and the

perception of beauty in seemingly insignificant natural life forms; and second, to consider their

poems as engagements with contemporary discourses of ethical and aesthetic judgment, and

particularly with the work of Joseph Addison and Francis Hutcheson. In so doing, I also point to

the fact that poetic objects are in many cases enmeshed in the period's colonial networks. Further

details regarding these objects' complicated entanglements will be illustrated in my close reading

of Barbauld's "The Caterpillar."

This chapter therefore attempts to answer to the following questions: 1) what are the

implications of discerning beauty in an age which transitioned from understanding nature in

mechanistic terms to engaging in analyses of chemical components and eventually of the

foundation of life?; 2) how do these poets imagine the process of discerning beauty (and the

sublime)?; 3) how do Barbauld and Smith view the recognition of beauty as leading to ethical

acts or justice—usually couched in the language of care and sensibility—in terms of the human

treatment of nonhuman species? To elucidate the cognitive dimensions of empirical and aesthetic

experience, I build upon the work of Elaine Scarry and Gabrielle Starr.[271] My argument about

eighteenth-century concerns with animal welfare draws on the work of Christine Kenyon-Jones,

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[270] It is intriguing to find both poets use the term "race" when addressing nonhuman species, a term which rather highlights their alterity. See Barbauld's "The Caterpillar" and Smith's "To a Geranium which Flowered during the Winter."

[271] Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*; G. Gabrielle Starr, *Feeling Beauty: The Neuroscience of Aesthetic Experience* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2013).

Moira Ferguson, David Perkins, and Marjorie Spiegel.[272] Moreover, because I am interested in

the renewed attention to eighteenth-century nonhuman species from the perspective of the very

objects of human observation, this chapter is also in conversation with Bill Brown's formulation

of "thingness" or the agential power of nonhuman objects that defy human needs and/or desires.

My methodology is also shared by Theresa M. Kelley, who foregrounds the very thingness of

botanical specimens and their baffling power by stressing the "embededness of plants as

matter."[273] Also, scholars like Catherine Packham, Robert Mitchell, and Sharon Ruston articulate

how Romantic writings are intimately concerned with the acknowledgement of natural vitality.[274]

To contextualize Barbauld's poems, it is important to acknowledge that long eighteenth-

century British poetry is rife with a broad spectrum of nature poems that dealt with a variety of

nonhuman species and nature in general, well before William Wordsworth's landmark fin-de-

siècle turn to everyday natural objects and his emphasis on "ordinary language" in his 1802

preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.[275] Ann Finch (1661-1720), for instance, produced poems that testify

not only to her interest in natural phenomena, but also to the vital agency of nature. "Spleen"

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[272] Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-Period Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Moira Ferguson, *Animal Advocacy and Englishwomen, 1780-1900: Patriots, Nation, and Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); David Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights*; Mark Canuel, *Justice, Dissent, and* the *Sublime* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (New York: Mirror Books, 1996).

[273] Theresa M. Kelley, *Clandestine Marriage*, 2.

[274] Catherine Packham, *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism: Bodies, Culture, Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2012); Robert Mitchell, *Experimental Life: Vitalism in Romantic Science and Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); Peter Hanns Reill, *Vitalizing Nature in the Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Sharon Ruston, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s* (New York: Palgrave, 2013) and *Shelley and Vitality* (New York: Palgrave, 2005).

[275] Even though Wordsworth's first preface was published in 1798, his more developed thoughts on poetic diction were included in the 1802 and 1805 editions of *Lyrical Ballads*. C. V. Deane suggests a possible continuity between eighteenth-century nature poetry and post-Wordsworthian poetry despite their marked differences in poetic diction. Deane demarcates the period from Thompson's more obvious nature poems in order to stress the differences between neo-classical poetic diction and its Romantic counterpart as realized in Wordsworth's and his contemporaries' poems. See *Aspects of Eighteenth Century Nature Poetry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1935).

(1701) exemplifies Finch's effort to endow the spleen with a kind of agency so that she can identify unexplainable symptoms of illness as willful acts of the bodily organ. "Upon the Hurricane" (1703) also articulates the baffling force of a storm primarily through Finch's personification of the natural catastrophe:

> No more such gentle Methods you pursue,
>
> But marching now in terrible Array,
>
> > Undistingush'd was your Prey:
> >
> > In vain the *Shrubs*, with lowly Bent,
> >
> > Sought their Destruction to prevent;
> >
> > The *Beech* in vain, with out-stretch'd Arms,
> >
> > Deprecates th'approaching Harms . . . (lines 10-16)

It is notable that Finch, witnessing the vitality of nature, is invested in demonstrating how such organic forms as trees or plants respond to the succumbing power of the storm in order to underline the indiscriminate power of the chaos which must have confounded her to the same degree it affected her other contemporaries, including Daniel Defoe.[276] Finch's most acclaimed poem, "A Nocturnal Reverie," registers the speaker's meditation on the unfolding of time and the arrival of night in a way that altogether anticipates the Romantic treatment of nature. John Gay (1685-1732) also composed many poems about vital nonhuman entities—deploying a bee, a butterfly, and other species—particularly in his *Fables*. Gay's eulogy of a pet dog, "An Elegy on a Lap-Dog," echoes the pet-mourning culture of early eighteenth-century Britain, which is also evidenced in the end of Francis Coventry's *The History of Pompey the Little* (1745). James Thomson (1700-1748) composed *The Seasons* (1746), in which he reveals that the poet's faith unarguably rests on both poetic imagination and scientific knowledge, such as Newtonian optics.

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[276] See Defoe, *The Storm, The Lay-Man's Sermon upon the Late Storm*, and *An Essay on the Late Storm*.

John Dyer's "Fleece" (1757) demonstrates the eighteenth-century afterlife of Virgil's *Georgics*. Juxtaposing artifacts like sheep-dip, dye-vats, and spinning machines with a more pastoral landscape of rivers and waterways, Dyer illustrates his high hopes for the future of a Britain driven by labor and trade:

> … Ev'n nature lives by toil:
>
> Beast, bird, air, fire, the heav'ns, and rolling worlds,
>
> All live by action: nothing lies at rest,
>
> But death and ruin: man is born to care;
>
> Fashion'd, improv'd, by labor. (lines 22-26)

Christopher Smart (1722-1771) also records his close observation of his "Cat Jeoffrey." In his fragmentary, almost list-like register of feline characteristics, Smart describes how Jeoffrey's natural, carefree behavior makes him "the servant of the living God" (line 2). Likewise, William Cowper, best known for *The Task* (1785), also produced a pet eulogy entitled "Epitaph on a Hare" (1784).

In the context of these longstanding conventions of nature poetry, I stress the fact that Barbauld's work embodies a significant transition in terms of literary taste, perceptions of novelty, and understandings of the beauty of nature. Furthermore, Barbauld's poems capture the process whereby the accumulation of knowledge produces an ethical subject. Of course, Barbauld's works can be explained as either pre- or proto-Romantic poetry, but my contention is that her works are simultaneously in conversation with early- and mid-eighteenth-century poetry in that they embody and complicate the concepts of sympathy and care. Barbauld's nature poetry epitomizes a move from the pejorative representation of botany as a simple, passive, isolated, and gender-inflected pastime to an appreciation of it as a serious, rigorous pursuit of sensorial,

aesthetic, and ethical knowledge. Barbauld and Smith illustrate that botany does not occupy a separate sphere—one in which women can be contained while pursuing assigned, 'proper' forms of knowledge—but provides an arena in which women can exhibit their agency, ultimately developing a new form of subjectivity which calls for less hostile cohabitation with nonhuman species. Though I foreground the terms 'care' and 'attention' in an effort to articulate the main characteristics of the poems I discuss here, these words should not be understood as predominantly feminine attributes of human nature. Rather, Barbauld expands the conceptualizations of these terms in immediate conversation with contemporary political, religious, and moral debates, largely reflecting her dissenter background.

Another aspect of Barbauld's empirical sublime and her sustained attention to the particulars of nature rests on eighteenth-century scientific discourses, particularly botany and zoology. Recent studies of eighteenth-century natural history, knowledge production, and its participants can be divided roughly into several categories. First, there are scholars invested in the task of establishing taxonomy and nomenclature while embracing incremental knowledge of what appears to be just novelties.[277] These scholars pay attention to the tense relationship between particular, local knowledge and universal knowledge. Second, scholars like Jill Casid and Londa Schiebinger have been committed to articulating the overlaps between British

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[277] Scholars belonging in this group tend to complicate Michel Foucault's thesis in *The Order of Things*. See Joanna Stalnaker, *The Unfinished Enlightenment: Description in the Age of the Encyclopedia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); Brian Ogilvie, *Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). See also Theresa M. Kelley, *Clandestine Marriage*: *Botany and Romantic Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), esp. Chs. 1 and 2. Kelley's remark on Foucault's rupture theory is worth noting:

> Foucault's analysis of modern systemic protocols veers repeatedly toward what they cannot control, even as they attempt to do so by identifying and then economizing difference as either the work of classification or an evolutionary project not yet fully understood but to be resolved in some taxonomic future. As a material, literary, and cultural practice, romantic era botany foregrounds what Linnaeus and later taxonomists put aside and Foucault cannot: that plant nature occupies the disputed middle kingdom of nature, neither fully mineral nor fully animal but disturbingly in between. (4)

colonial and commercial expansion, which significantly fueled the circulation of exotic

zoological and botanical specimens all over the world.[278] Within this camp, there is a general

tendency to focus on distinctive male individuals, such as Joseph Banks (1743-1820) and

Captain James Cook (1728-1779), whose business was clearly bound up with late eighteenth-

century British colonial expansion.[279] Third, some have worked on the print circulation of

knowledge about novel specimens and how the dissemination of such knowledge confounded the

hierarchical distinction between scholars and the general public: scientific discourses targeting

both the lay public and the inner circle of trained botanists (such as the Lunar Society), along

with botanical illustrations, contributed significantly to the dissemination of knowledge during

this period. Scholars like Desmond King-Hele, Stephen T. Jackson, and Patricia Fara focus on

seminal male botanists of the period, such as John Ray (1627-1705), Erasmus Darwin (1731-

1802), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), and Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859).[280]

Fourth, as both a corrective and a supplement to this kind of male-centric historiography of

botanists, some recent scholarship has focused on 'botanizing women' in an effort to illustrate

female, feminine, and feminist engagement with botany.[281] Women's participation in botany can

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[278] See Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[279] Elizabeth Gilbert's acclaimed novel, *The Signature of All Things* (New York: Viking, 2013), nicely reconstructs the way in which botanical specimens were circulated across the Atlantic, a process through which Joseph Banks institutionalized newfound gems of knowledge in botanical gardens.

[280] Desmond King-Hele, *Erasmus and Romantic Poets* (New York: Palgrave, 1986); Patricia Fara, *Erasmus Darwin: Sex, Science, and Serendipity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Donald M. Hassler, *Comedian as the Letter D: Erasmus Darwin's Comic Materialism* (The Hague: Springer, 1973).

[281] See the special issue of the *Journal of Literature and Science* 4.1 (2011) entitled "Women and Botany" edited by Sam George and Alison E. Martin. Articles collected in this volume demonstrate respectively the historical contexts of female engagement with botany. Sam George's monograph titled *Botany, Sexuality and Women's Writing 1760-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) is an attempt to shed light on women's participation in the making of knowledge throughout a broad range of botanical studies. See also Alix Cooper, "Picturing Nature: Gender and the Politics of Natural-Historical

be again subcategorized into gardening (as a limited version of the kind of landscaping readily

associated with masculinity), botanical illustrations, rigorous research in botany and vivisection,

and literary productions that anticipated and epitomized the Romantic representation of nature.

In each of these fields eighteenth-century women, notoriously labeled as "unsex'd females" by

Richard Polwhele (1760-1838), produced many scholarly works.[282] Fifth, informed by

eighteenth-century debates on sensibility and imperial expansion, attempts to revisit the scene of

botanical knowledge through the lens of eighteenth-century material culture and animal welfare

have been made.[283] Last but not least, the circulation of botanical and zoological specimens

across the Atlantic and accounts of eighteenth-century American women's participation in

knowledge production are part of this scholarly turn.[284]

"Every thing that is Great, Strange, or Beautiful":
From Aesthetic Enjoyment to Ethical Action

When Franz Kafka came across Søren Kierkegaard's sharp distinction between aesthetic

enjoyment and ethical experience, he dismissed outright such a neat "Either-Or" choice by

stressing that the "aesthetic enjoyment of life" could only result from "humble ethical

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Description in Eighteenth-Century Gdansk/Danzig," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36.4 (2013): 519-30.

[282] The famous botanical illustrations Mary Granville, aka Mrs. Delany created exemplify safer and sanctioned form of female engagement with knowledge making in the eighteenth century. Still, her aesthetical accomplishments manifested in her collages stand out even by twenty-first century standard. See *Mrs. Delany's Flower Collages from the British Museum* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1986).

[283] See footnotes XX.

[284] Sue Anne Prince, *Stuffing Animals, Pressing Plants, Shaping Knowledge: Natural History in North America, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003); Karen L. Kilcup, *Fallen Forests: Emotion, Embodiment, and Ethics in American Women's Environmental Writing, 1781-1924* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013); Tina Gianquitto, *"Good observers of nature": American Women and the Scientific Study of the Natural World, 1820-1885* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

experience."[285] Indeed, Kafka nicely spells out the entangled (and sometimes causal) relationship between ethical action and aesthetical response in a way that seems applicable to much literary work from the Romantic period. Barbauld' nature poetry and her deliberately chosen subject matter—nonhuman, organic forms as well as landscapes—surely demonstrate the keen interest in the novel, the pleasurable, and the sublime that developed near the end of the eighteenth century. Late-eighteenth-century preoccupations with the interconnectedness of our perception of beauty and our capacity for ethical action anticipate Kafka's own complaint that a neat division between them is not plausible. My goal in this section is to show how the language of Barbauld's nature poetry was informed by contemporary discourses regarding sublimity, beauty, and justice. Her commitment to an ethics of care and attention is lodged in the language of beauty and moral judgment circulating in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

In order to contextualize Barbauld's demonstration of how the sense of beauty entails an ethical move on the side of the perceiver/observer, it is worth examining the influence of Francis Hutcheson's *Two Treatises* and Joseph Addison's formulation of the "pleasure of the imagination"—not only because Hutcheson's language and logic are echoed and complicated in Barbauld's own works, but also because he nicely articulates how the human understanding of beauty prompts an "ethical experience of life." As has been much discussed, the discursive history of the sublime dates back to Longinus, who was focused on how the rhetorical sublime could serve the ends of eloquent speech. Many centuries later, John Locke put forth the centrality of the senses to our understanding of sublimity and set the tone for discourses on aesthetics for the rest of the eighteenth century. External stimuli and bodily receptions become predominant, for example, in the work of Hutcheson. Thus, what Emily Brady categorizes as the "empirical sublime" is an apt term to articulate relationship between sensorial registers and the actual

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[285] Gustav Janouch, *Conversations with Kafka*, Trans. (New York: New Directions, 1971), 81.

objects which evoke a sense of the sublime.[286] No longer is sublime experience limited to being a part of or a response to speech, but it comes to have relevance to our description of objects and the natural world. It should be noted that Joseph Addison attempted to expand the range of sublimity from the confines of materiality by re-introducing the term imagination. In his oft-cited piece, *Spectator* No. 412, Addison defines the "Pleasures of the Imagination" as the end result of witnessing the "Great, Uncommon, or Beautiful."[287] By couching pleasurable experience predominantly in terms of sight-oriented experience, Addison anticipates Burke's more physiological, bodily underpinnings of the sublime. This particular piece is significant for understanding Barbauld's work, mainly because the author singles out three sources of the sublime: "everything that is Great, Strange, or Beautiful."[288] Addison, in the form of a reader's letter, discusses another dimension of the sublime. In *Spectator* No. 489, the inserted letter from a reader notes that his firsthand experience with the tumultuous sea has entailed a sense of horror.[289] The ensuing commentary of the reader is noteworthy because in it he summarizes how his recognition of the vitality of nature rather compelled him to reflect on the existence of God, who created even the "troubled Ocean" and is "neither circumscribed by Time nor Space."[290] This issue registers a moment of transcendence to the divine when faced with the vitality of nature, which in itself signifies a staple early modern aesthetic, epistemological response to the inherent unruliness of nature. This piece also works, however, as a reference point to the way late eighteenth-century Britons or Romantics responded to similar natural phenomena.

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[286] Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13, 14.

[287] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* No. 412 (1712), Donald F. Bond, ed., *The Spectator* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), Vol. 3, 540.

[288] Ibid., 544.

[289] Addison, *The Spectator* No. 489, ed. Donald F. Bond, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 233.

[290] Ibid., 234.

Before we move on to late eighteenth-century understandings of nature with a focus on

the sublime and vitality, Hutcheson's *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and*

Virtue in Two Treatises (1726) demands a careful reading in relation to Barbauld's formulations

of human perceptions of beauty, novelty, and justice. In it, Hutcheson champions religious,

humanitarian ideals of beauty and justice; Barbauld's poetry resonates with his influence,

particularly in her treatment of similar subject matter. Hutcheson starts from the Lockean

premise that the mind can be a passive receptor of a broad spectrum of external stimuli: external

objects act upon the body and the whole process is termed sensation.[291] He puts forward three

causes of pleasurable experience—beauty, regularity, and harmony—in a manner similar to

Addison. Hutcheson goes on to list the kinds of things—both concrete and abstract—from which

a subject can draw pleasure, ranging from nature to arts, and even to mathematical theorems (§

1.1.10-1.1.12, § 3.1.2, 3.1.4-3.1.5). Once he lays out the foundations of the sensorial experience

of pleasure and the perception of beauty, Hutcheson underlines that this whole process is not

merely aesthetic, but also cognitive: "For Beauty, like other Names of the sensible Ideas,

properly denotes the Perception of some Mind":[292]

> Hence it plainly appears, 'that some Objects are immediately the Occasions of this Pleasure
>
> of Beauty, and that we have Senses fitted for perceiving it; and that it is distinct from that
>
> Joy which arises from Self-love upon Prospect of Advantage.' Nay, do we not often see
>
> Convenience and Use neglected to obtain Beauty, without any other prospect of Advantage
>
> in the Beautiful Form, that the suggesting the pleasant Ideas of Beauty? Now this shews us,

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[291] Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, and etc*, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in Two Treatises* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), 19.
[292] Ibid., 27. This is later contradicted by Kant's claim that aesthetic judgment is neither cognitive nor logical. See Immanuel Kant's "Analytic of the Beautiful" in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 89-90.

that however we may pursue beautiful Objects from Self-love, with a view to obtain the

Pleasures of Beauty, as in Architecture, Gardening, and many other Affairs; yet there must

be a Sense of Beauty, antecedent to Prospects even of this Advantage, without which Sense,

these Objects would not be thus Advantageous, nor excite in us this Pleasure which

constitutes them advantageous. Our Sense of Beauty from Objects, by which they are

constituted good to us, is very distinct from our Desire of them when they are thus

constituted: Our Desire of Beauty may be counter-ballanc'd by Rewards or Threatenings,

but never our Sense of it; even as Fear of Death, or Love of Lie, may make us chuse and

desire a bitter Potion, or neglect those Meats which the Sense of Taste would recommend as

pleasant; and yet no prospect of Advantage, or Fear of Evil, can make their Potion

agreeable to the Sense, or Meat disagreeable to it, which was not so antecedently to this

Prospect.[293]

In the passage cited above, Hutcheson analyzes the way in which the human mind registers a

beautiful object: the object functions as a trigger for our perception of beauty, and the external

stimulus leads the human subject to choose a certain form of beauty. That is evident so far. The

process becomes complicated, however, when Hutcheson suggests the idea that we have an *a*

priori perception of beauty—a preordained understanding of beauty common to all human minds,

which is resonant with Kant's account of aesthetic perception in his third *Critique*.[294] After

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[293] Ibid., 25.

[294] This premise that the human subject is equally endowed with a common faculty of discerning beauty is central to moral sense theory in eighteenth-century Britain. As Starr points out, "the investigation of beauty [serves] as a way to discover the basis of community standards and the bonds that link us together." Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, xiv. This view is reinforced by Hutcheson's ensuing emphasis on the unity of the universal. Given the primary function of beauty perception as a way of determining community ethics, and a kind of anthropocentric one, I argue in the following section that Barbauld's poems suggest a departure from
anthropocentric aesthetic and ethical investigation through her acknowledgement of the very vibrancy of nonhuman species.

laying out the premise of our *a priori* understanding of beauty, Hutcheson then suggests that the

actual choice of beauty associated with the good in this context can be affected by either

"Reward" (i.e. pleasantness) or "Threatenings" (unpleasantness). With regard to the decision-

making process surrounding the good and the beautiful, Gabrielle Starr, drawing on the

methodology of cognitive neuroscience, notes that perceiving beauty, which actually had long

been overlooked in the Western canon, does not actually provide a neat, cohesive picture of

human mind. Rather, she argues that "[t]here is yet more discontinuity, and even

fragmentation."[295] Despite Hutcheson's attempt at providing a coherent understanding as to how

human subjects perceive beauty, the diverging results of actual human choices of beautiful

objects hints at the very fragmented, socially inflected dimension of aesthetic judgment and

ethical action.

In addition, what is distinctive in Hutcheson's first treatise is his consistent claim that the

multiplicity of particulars ultimately conforms to the unity of the universal as divinely ordained.

This kind of frame in which particulars serve the "unity" of the universal is also found in

Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790). Goethe's botanical specimens collected in the book

work as the tangible index of God's creation. Since Hutcheson's theory of beauty never goes

beyond the trajectory of his Christian belief, the sum of particulars or the seemingly "infinite"

number of sources of pleasure especially found in nature is understood to serve the unity of the

world. Lastly, in the second treatise Hutcheson departs from his analysis of beauty perception to

discuss the realm of virtue and justice. In doing so, he posits virtuous, just actions as void of self-

interest: "none of these Affections which we call virtuous, spring from Self-love, or Desire of

private Interest."[296] He rather underlines that benevolence, the "desire of or delight in, the Good

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[295] Starr, *Feeling Beauty*, xiii.
[296] Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, and etc*, 102.

of others" should be disinterested. Moral action, according to Hutcheson, is promoted by "Love to rational Agents" and joined by "Love of Esteem and Complacence."[297] Towards the end of the second treatise, this intersubjective moral imperative is extended to the discussion of rights. Scarry echoes this move in her examination of the link between the recognition of beauty and the realization of justice.[298]

This understanding of the link between beauty perception and the ethical imperative becomes much more complicated when a human perceiver is faced with the vital forces of nature. Indeed, as many have pointed out, the late eighteenth century was a transitional period from a mechanistic, physics-oriented universe to a life-filled, biology-centered one. Catherine Packham, for instance, defines vitalism and the period that incubated and further developed the notion as the "transitional period between the rejection of earlier mechanical models and the formalization of the modern sciences of life, including the discipline of biology, at the beginning of the nineteenth century."[299] Denise Gigante likewise defines the Romantic age as the period in which Britons were invested in grasping the "unifying principle of organic form" when faced with the "unpredictable vitality of living form."[300] Admittedly, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be read as the age of vitality. Robert Mitchell explores experimental vitalism in the Romantic period when shifts in the "[s]cientific understanding of living beings change significantly," along with changes in "aesthetic norms and artistic practices."[301]

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[297] Ibid., 104, 105.

[298] Scarry argues that beauty creates a site in which justice is performed and attained through its primary functions to create a symmetry and equality. See *On Beauty and Being Just*, 90-98, 108, 112-13.

[299] Catherine Packham, *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism: Bodies, Culture, Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 2.

[300] Denise Gigante, *Life*, pp. 3, 4.

[301] Mitchell, *Experimental Life*, 2.

Every thing that is Small, Strange, and Still Beautiful:
Ethical Subjectivity and the Nature Poetry of Barbauld and Smith

Late eighteenth-century Britons learned to explore a wide range of living organisms

through the new lens of experimental philosophy, which enabled them to recognize how the

vitality of nature can work independently of human needs or designs. Britons recognized afresh

various facets of the natural world for many reasons: more frequent encounters with nature or

with representations of it, increasingly precise knowledge of the body of nature owing to

advancements in observational technologies, an increase of both zoological and botanical

specimens brought into Britain, the popularity of anatomy theaters, and publications of botanical

illustrations and anatomical reports.[302] At the same time, attempts to illuminate more mysterious

aspects of nature often involved a degree of violence or cruelty in the form of experimental

animal vivisection.[303] The widespread mistreatment of animals therefore went hand in hand with

the refinement of observational technologies. This development, in turn, prompted ethical action

for protecting, or at least improving the status quo of animal treatment protocols. Before Mary

Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and H. G. Wells *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), eighteenth-

century Britons were, to some degree, aware of such practices.[304]

In this section I single out three poems to explore how Barbauld's attention to nonhuman

species develops from imagining them as objects of curiosity and beauty, to becoming objects of

care and moral attention, and finally to being considered companion species. To examine

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[302] Hence, it is no surprise that some literary critics and historians of the eighteenth century are committed to exploring the overlaps between British colonial and commercial expansion and the circulation of exotic zoological specimens all over the world.

[303] Anita Guerrini, "The Ethics of Animal Experimentation in Seventeenth-Century England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50.3 (1989): 391-407; David Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), esp. Ch.1; Kathryn Shevelow, *For the Love of Animals*.

[304] John Lawrence in *A Philosophical and Practical Treatise on Horse* puts forward his distaste for animal vivisection, calling it as "experimental tortures." Quoted in Perkins, 14.

Barbauld's moral and literary concerns with nonhuman species, I start with "The Caterpillar" (c. 1816) as a means for understanding her ethics, to which her dissenter sentiment and her empirical approach to natural objects are integral. This is a poem of encounter that captures the moment when a cognitive event takes place. Once a caterpillar enters the horizon of the speaker's perception, it brings about many changes on the side of the observer/speaker of the poem. "The Caterpillar" is an important piece within Barbauld's oeuvre in that it demonstrates the culmination of the poet's ethical, aesthetic concerns with a nonhuman species. It is already a well established fact that Barbauld engaged with the animal rights movement, as is manifested in her earlier poems like "The Mouse's Petition" and "To a Dog," which I will discuss after this section on "The Caterpillar."

Barbauld's attention to the caterpillar is unique in that it involves appreciating a "lower" being within the chain of beings. Her poem starts with the speaker's assertion that she will let the small insect go unharmed: "No, helpless thing, I cannot harm thee now" (line 1). This firm, albeit sudden ethical action, it turns out, is prompted by the particulars of the caterpillar. The speaker's deliberate, studious examination of the caterpillar yields a bulk of new knowledge about the object to her attentive eyes. It is even quite notable to see Barbauld's speaker deploy the word "scan" to indicate the degree of her curiosity as well as to illustrate her mode of observation:

> For I have scanned thy form with curious eye,
>
> Noted the silver line that streaks thy back,
>
> The azure and the orange that divide
>
> Thy velvet sides; thee, houseless wanderer,
>
> My garment has enfolded, and my arm
>
> Felt the light pressure of thy hairy feet;

> Thou hast curled round my finger; from its tip,
>
> Precipitous descent! with stretched out neck,
>
> Bending thy head in airy vacancy,
>
> This way and that, inquiring, thou hast seemed
>
> To ask protection; now, I cannot kill thee. (lines 3-13)

At first glance, the intensity of the speaker's curiosity and her ensuing attention resonates with Leibniz's notions of "prolonged scrutiny" as a "potentially more voluntary" act of attention.[305] At the same time, it evokes the longstanding underpinnings of perception and aesthetics well grounded in the form of an object, as exemplified in the works of John Locke, Lord Shaftesbury, and Francis Hutcheson. In *The First Treatise* of *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, Hutcheson neatly illustrates the correlation between the idea of the beautiful and an encounter with novelty. Hutcheson attempts to prove that "an infinite Multitude of particular truths" (36) should correspond to the universal, saying "Novelty is generally very agreeable, and heightens the Pleasure in the Contemplation of Beauty; but then the Novelty of a particular Truth, found out by measuring … gives no considerable Pleasure, nor Surprize" (40) because it should fit with the "Unity amidst such a great Variety" (40).

In the passage quoted above, Barbauld's speaker's attentive gaze leads her to acknowledge the color variations—silver, blue, orange—and the texture of the caterpillar's body surface, which is velvety. More importantly, the living body of the caterpillar exerts pressure, no matter how slight it might be, upon the speaker's arm. It is not a static nonhuman, trivial life that simply boasts vibrant colors, but also a mobile, active life that indicates its own agency. In the course of registering each sensory dimension of the caterpillar, the speaker's attention to the

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[305] Quoted in Margaret Koehler, *Poetry of Attention in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 25.

colors of the caterpillar is worth noting in that it embodies the particularity and individuality of the insect. As in Scarry's analysis of the correlation between particulars and the perception of beauty, Barbauld's speaker perceives particular elements of an object hand as a fundamental step toward recognizing its beauty. Such recognition, in turn, is a portal to further ethical action. In this poem, colors are key components that display the caterpillar's beauty. In "To Mrs. P[riestley] with Some Drawings of Birds and Insects," Barbauld notes an identical moment of recognition:

> What atom forms of insect life appear!
>
> And who can follow nature's pencil here?
>
> Their wings with azure, green, and purple gloss'd,
>
> Studded with colour'd eyes, with gems emboss'd,
>
> Inlaid with pearl, and mark'd with various strains
>
> Of lively crimson thro' their dusky veins.
>
> Some shoot like living stars, athwart the night,
>
> And scatter from their wings a vivid light,
>
> To guide the Indian to his tawny loves,
>
> As thro' the woods with cautious step he moves.
>
> See the proud giant of the bettle race;
>
> What shining arms his polish'd limbs enchase! (lines 103-114)

While the lines suggest Barbauld's conversance with Lucretian materialism, the speaker's recognition of the insect's individual colors resonates with the degree of her admiration at the wondrous novelty of nature, with which a painter/poet cannot compete. Within Barbauld's universe, governed as it is by Christian humanity, such vibrant colors as "azure, green, and

purple" that adorn the insect's body work as a tangible marker of beauty imbedded in God's creation. Barbauld pays persistent attention to the colors of the insect body to stress its individual beauty independent of its utility.

If particular colors function as an index of the individuality of the nonhuman specimen, apprehension of these particulars also works as the precondition for further sympathy and moral action. After witnessing the bodily details of the caterpillar, the speaker eventually reaches a moment of empathy when she is explicitly worried if the caterpillar might fall, imagining the potential harm to be caused by its "Precipitous descent" (line 10). Within ten lines or so, the caterpillar in question is depicted as an autonomous but still vulnerable creature. Of course, it is notably anthropocentric to assume such movement as a call for "protection," but the brief moment of encounter and the speaker's ensuing observations of the caterpillar definitely lead the speaker to take action *for* the "houseless wanderer." The speaker's identification with the caterpillar leaves room for political interpretation, yet my primary concern lies with the way in which acquisition of particular knowledge results in the speaker's outright admission that the insect has its own life, vitality, and individuality:[306]

> A single wretch, escaped the general doom,
>
> Making me feel and clearly recognize
>
> Thine individual existence, life,
>
> And *fellowship of sense* with all that breathes,—
>
> Present'st thyself before me, I relent,
>
> And cannot hurt thy weakness. … (lines 24-29, my emphasis)

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[306] See Felicity James and Ian Inkster, eds. *Religious Dissent and the Aikin-Barbauld Circle, 1740-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) for more on the broad religious and political implications of Barbauld's life and works as a liberal dissenter.

This short poem about an unusual encounter aptly illustrates how so-called "fellow-feeling" is

evoked as a result of the observer's gaining particular knowledge about the object of her

attention. The act of *beneficence*, to borrow Adam Smith's term, is invoked not by force, but by

the vitality of the nonhuman being.[307] Thus, what is most distinctive in the series of observations,

expressions of care, and ethical decisions Barbauld articulates in this poem lies in how the

caterpillar is depicted. It is rife with color, mobility, and even a certain weight, all of which calls

for both responsibility and care from the human observer. Barbauld's own short piece on

sympathy argues that appropriate sympathy ought to be prompted by "a degree of complacence

mixed with our sorrows."[308] Furthermore, the object of sympathy, Barbauld suggests, should be

represented as a being of "grace and dignity."[309]

The train of perceptions lodged in Barbauld's firsthand observations and empirical

attention resonates with eighteenth-century theories of human perception and moral taste. Francis

Hutcheson in his *Inquiry* writes that "enumerating … sensible Ideas [particular components or

sensorial dimensions of an object]" is the foundation of moral and aesthetic action.[310] When a

human mind receives, ingests, and eventually abstracts the particulars from an object, that

process can lead to further action. And the sense of beauty quite matters to incite such acts within

Hutcheson's *Inquiry*. Elaine Scarry takes a similar position: paying attention to the particulars of

an object of beauty prompts ethical action on the part of the human observer, and it ultimately

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[307] For more on the large array of circumstances that provoke sympathy, and for Adam Smith's own understanding of benevolence, see *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Knud Haakonsssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 12, 13, 15-16, 41-42, 47, 53, 70, 82, 85-89. See also, T. A. Roberts, *The Concept of Benevolence* (London, Basinstoke: Macmillan, 1973).

[308] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, An Enquiry into Those Kinds of Distress which Excite Agreeable Sensations (1773) in Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose, ed. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2002), 200-01.

[309] Ibid.

[310] Hutcheson, *An Inquiry*, 20.

paves the way for justice.[311] Surely, the overall observation of the mobility and appearance of the caterpillar rests on gazing and staring. Yet it is worth tracing how the mechanism of sympathy develops within the poem: how does the speaker/observer elevate a seemingly undeserving object to a status which demands our sustained attention and sympathy?

In *An Enquiry into Those Kinds of Distress which Excite Agreeable Sensations* (1773), Barbauld provides a glimpse into how sympathy is provoked and effects a chain of further action. Here she notes that nothing ignoble or petty can elevate the sense of pity; only something "agreeable," something that is aesthetically pleasant can evoke the feeling of pity:

> A judicious author will never attempt to raise pity by any thing mean or disgusting. As we have already observed, there must be a degree of complacence mixed with our sorrows to produce an agreeable sympathy; nothing, therefore, must be admitted which destroys the grace and dignity of suffering; the imagination must have an amiable figure to dwell upon; there are circumstances so ludicrous or disgusting, that no character can preserve a proper decorum under them or appear in an agreeable light.[312]

Echoing Hutcheson's ideas about the relationship between perception, beauty, and morality, Barbauld argues that a pleasant object tends to draw more attention and sympathy from an observer. Hence, the speaker's sudden interest in the seemingly ignorable insect rather highlights the dilemma of attention: which objects deserve and require a longer duration of human interest? What is the proper object of human care? At least according to the argument made in Barbauld's *Enquiry*, the caterpillar is a rather unusual choice. The vibrant colors and the motility of the

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[311] Scarry, pp. 67, 78. I concur with Scarry's insistent counterargument that gazing does not necessarily result in either objectification or reification of the said object of human observation. She rather demands a careful reading of the consequence of gazing, depending on the "object of perception" (72).

[312] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *An Enquiry into Those Kinds of Distress which Excite Agreeable Sensations* in *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2002), pp. 200-01.

caterpillar, as noted previously, can definitely serve as important markers of life, agency, and vitality. Still, does the caterpillar definitely pass as a novelty?

If we take into consideration what Lord Kames discusses in his treatise, the mechanism of sympathy gets all the more complicated. Lord Kames illustrates that the degree of emotional response to a novelty depends on the significance of the object of observation. That is, a chain of being predetermines the degree of human sympathy:

> Novelty in the individuals of a low class is perceived with indifference, or with a very slight emotion: thus a pebble, however singular in its appearance, scarce moves our wonder. The emotion rise with the rank of object; and, other circumstances being equal, is strongest in the highest order of existence: a strange insect affects us more than a strange vegetable; and a strange quadruped more than a strange insect.[313]

This helps readers better understand the position of the caterpillar, apparently undeserving of either attention or redemption. Yet Barbauld's choice of the caterpillar echoes contemporary fascination with "'non-organic' living beings such as polyps and fertilized eggs, which clearly lived but at the same time lacked the organs that characterized all other living things."[314] As Londa Schiebinger duly notes, the caterpillar embodies "metamorphosis" and various "life cycles" which ultimately intrigue the speaker/observer of Barbauld's poem.[315] The caterpillar's in-between state might have provoked the speaker's intellectual curiosity. The small body frame of the caterpillar contains all kinds of potential for bodily maturity, unknown or unknowable development. Further, the caterpillar, like a bee—a more oft-cited insect in eighteenth-century literature—epitomizes utility, the potential for producing silk and threads. Although it is unclear

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[313] Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, Vol. 1, ed. Peter Jones (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 191.
[314] Robert Mitchell, *Experimental Life*, 3.
[315] Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire*, 34.

to what degree Barbauld would have been conscious of the use value of the caterpillar, its utility

is surely an important component facilitating human attention and sympathetic reaction.

Barbauld's keen interest in the caterpillar therefore mirrors her shared enthusiasm for the life

matter and vitality of a small object.

Even more importantly, the materiality of the caterpillar suggests the possibility of

reading it as an object entangled with existing commercial and colonial networks. Against the

backdrop of the caterpillar hype, as suggested by Schiebinger, Barbauld's caterpillar takes on a

new meaning within the web of European colonial projects. Schiebinger's account of Maria

Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) shows how an early modern female botanist's research was

enmeshed in commercial ventures. Simultaneously, this portrait reveals the way in which

scientific institutes (The Royal Society and the Academy of Sciences in Berlin) funded the

potentially lucrative business of specimens collecting:

> Like many male naturalists Merian also joined commercial interests to her scientific
>
> voyage. In the same way that Sloane sought a substitute for the valuable Peruvian bark in
>
> Jamaica, Merian sought other varieties of caterpillars in Surinam that, like silkworms,
>
> might produce fine thread. Silk was, in this period, big business. In 1700, the Academy of
>
> Sciences in Berlin tried (unsuccessfully) to fund their scientific endeavors through a silk
>
> monopoly; Merian's own stepuncle was in the silk trade in Frankfurt. Silk indeed became
>
> important in colonial manufactory: in the late eighteenth century, the 'Lady Governess'
>
> of the English East India Company in India, for instance, directed a plantation of
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> mulberry tress at the female orphanage in Madras where at least one hundred girls were
>
> profitably engaged producing silk.[316]

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[316] Ibid., 34.

In this early eighteenth-century context, caterpillars in Surinam drew attention due primarily to their utility, their practical use value. Caterpillars in Surinam are associated with the potential for enormous profit through their production of silk, another word for money. Even though it is not exactly clear to what degree Barbauld would have been knowledgeable about the early hype surrounding Surinam caterpillars, Merian's own empirical observation of the caterpillar—asserting that it created a thread of distinct color—surely supports my claim that the caterpillar can be interpreted as a natural object (or a commodity in Merian's context) implicated in the web of European colonialism. Just as Elaine Freedgood articulates the colonial context behind the mahogany desk in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), I want to foreground that this seemingly wondrous natural object also indicates a possible connection to the colonial context. Given her keen interest in political issues, such as the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and the abolition of the slave trade, Barbauld might well have known about the itinerary of Surinam caterpillars.

Charlotte Smith's *Beachy Head* (1807), wherein the speaker keeps track of time and of shifts in the natural world throughout the course of a day, registers a moment of recognition about the speaker's connection to British commercial engagement with the rest of the world:

> Afar off,
>
> And just emerging from the arch immense
>
> Where seem to pat the elements, a fleet
>
> Of fishing vessels stretch their lesser sails;
>
> While more remote, and like a dubious spot
>
> Just hanging in the horizon, laden deep,
>
> The ship of commerce richly freighted, makes

> Her slower progress, on her distant voyage,
>
> Bound to the orient climates; where the sun
>
> Matures the spice within its odrous shell,
>
> And, rivaling the gray worm's filmy toil,
>
> Burst from its pod the vegetable down;
>
> Which in long turban'd wreaths, from torrid heat
>
> Defends the brows of Asia's countless casts.[317]

Barbauld's boundless curiosity about world geography and her semi-encyclopedic knowledge of zoological habitants are revealing in her poem "Animals, and Their Countries," in which the speaker, in the tone of a nursery rhyme, matches animals with their respective origins. The lion, for example, belongs in Africa boasting of his pompous walk. The boar belongs in German forests. Lapland is described as the habitat for a peasant working with reindeer. Through this list, the speaker suggests a kind of world travel by pinpointing some signature, apparently exotic species to her British audience. Some poems conjectured to be Barbauld's own—"India," "Lapland," and "Canada"—bespeak the poet's keen interest in the expanding British colonies.[318]

Such poems might be connected to Barbauld's long-held interest in those who suffer the most in the status quo. Barbauld produced many works that demonstrate her profound engagement with current affairs that demand sympathetic and practical resolution: take, for example, poems like "The Rights of Woman" and "To the Poor," Barbauld's spirited political response entitled *An address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts* (1790), and even more aesthetic and ethical prose works like *An Enquiry into those Kinds of*

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[317] Charlotte Smith, *Elegiac Sonnets, Volumes I and II, The Emigrants, Beachy Head: With Other Poems, Uncollected Poems*, The Works of Charlotte Smith, Vol. 14, ed. Jacqueline M. Labbe (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007), 156.
[318] McCarthy included these poems at the end of his collection of Barbauld's poems.

Distress which Excite agreeable Sensations (1773). Barbauld continuously attempted to identify who exactly was suffering from preventable, unnecessary forms of inequality and mistreatment, regardless of distinctions based on species, political allegation, and gender. The range of her objects of care can be read as quite expansive.

Charlotte Smith's nature poems envisage similar encounters with nonhuman life forms, encounters which register the speaker's recognition of the other's beauty as well as its novelty, her profound sense of care, and even her mild reprimand.[319] *Beachy Head* holds a prominent position within Smith's body of poetic work; it is undeniably Smith's masterpiece, illustrating what Kelli M. Holt calls a "world of such microscopically exact beauty in which no human, even the observer of honoring it, can participate," positioning Smith as "one of the first social ecologist poets." As such, it deserves sustained critical attention.[320] My analysis here, however, focuses on Smith's shorter works because they are indicative of her acute interest in rather trivial objects—such as a bee, a butterfly, a moth, a violet, and so on—and because these short pieces so neatly register emotional, cognitive details at the moment of encounter that we can easily discern in them the perceptive frame of the poet. Let me begin with "The Glow-worm," a poem that captures the moment of a child's mesmerized wonder at the sight of beauty. When noticing the glow-worm for the first time, the supposedly innocent speaker compares it to an object placed on a planetary scale:

He sees before his inexperienced eyes

The brilliant Glow-worm, like a meteor, shine

On the turf-bank; – amazed, and pleased, he cries,

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[319] Interestingly enough, her poems are rich with a sharp imperative reflecting her concerns about the circumstance of the object of her observation.

[320] Stuart Curran, "Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism," 77; Kelli M. Holt, "Charlotte Smith's *Beachy Head*: Science and the Dual Affliction of Minute Sympathy," *ABO*: *Interactive Journal of Women in the Arts, 1640-1830* 4.1 (2014): n.p.

"Star of the dewy grass! – I make thee mine!" (lines 5-8)

The lines are punctuated by the child's excitement at the beauty of a brilliant insect, which leads to his desire for possession. Smith's nature poems often extend sympathy to organic life form that are exposed to natural adversity (like coldness) or some other kind of delimiting, circumscribing condition. Unfortunate early harbingers of a coming season—butterflies, snowdrops, violets—fall into the ambit of Smith's concern and sympathy. For instance, in "The Early Butterfly" her sympathy flows into a butterfly that comes out "in a luckless hour" (line 9) mainly because in its "unexperienc'd rashness" it appears too soon, which precipitates its premature death. On a similar note, in "Violets," the poet pours her concern toward an insignificantly small flower heralding spring. In a way akin to Barbauld's attention to the caterpillar, Smith's gaze inclines to the small flower situated in its "humble beds / Among the moss, beneath the thorn" (lines 1-2). In this poem, Smith reveals the degree of her empathy through interjecting a direct imperative: her deployment of verbs like "stay" (in the case of "Violets") and "go" (in case of "To a Butterfly in a Window") indicates her sense of urgency and empathy at the predicaments of each species. Though Barbauld's characteristically lingering attention to the physical form of each nonhuman species is not so much fleshed out in Smith's poems, her particular attention to the material condition of each registers a similar account of sympathy.

A more developed form of sympathy stemming from Smith's reflection on the ramifications of human intervention in nature is pronounced in poems like "A Walk by the Water" and "The Hedge-hog Seen in a Frequent Path," where Smith not only demonstrates her sympathy toward a particular animal, but also voices her critique of human cruelty. Towards the end of "A Walk by the Water," the speaker asks fish not to fear her and her companion(s):

> Do not dread us, timid fishes,
>
>   We have neither net nor hook;
>
> Wanderers we, whose only wishes
>
>   Are to read in nature's book. (lines 17-20)

The net and the hook are tools for fishing and thus pose a huge threat to the fish. While acknowledging the possibility of this threat to the nonhuman species, the speaker emphasizes that her primary task as a "wanderer" of nature is to "read" it carefully. Her suggestion of the careful reading of nature as an alternative to the "net" and the "hook" can be interpreted as an embodiment of her ethical stance toward nature. In "The Hedge-hog" Smith's ethical stance takes a more active form because she happens to witness the way in which a human hunts a hedgehog for entertainment. From the beginning the poem is marked by a sense of urgency and anger:

> Wherefore should man or thoughtless boy
>
> Thy quiet harmless life destroy,
>
> Innoxious urchin?—for thy food
>
> Is but the beetle and the fly,
>
> And all thy harmless luxury
>
> The swarming insects of the wood. (lines 1-6)

It is notable that the hedgehog's life is limned as modest and harmonious with nature, as it is living on the "beetle and the fly." Thus the noted human invasion is rather prominent and fundamentally malicious. In response to this human cruelty, Smith alerts readers that humans are endowed with God-given reason, underlining that it is nonsensical for man to "use his power in waging war / Against his brethren of the earth" (lines 11-12). Her use of "brethren" is couched in

the contemporary discourse of sympathy, especially evoking its relationship to the abolitionist and animal rights movements.[321] Smith's moral judgment here is nicely juxtaposed with Barbauld's identical concerns about the life of a lab mouse.

"The Mouse's Petition" (1773) belongs in Barbauld's earlier work and has been considered perhaps her most popular piece. From its initial publication, the poem sparked heated debates on Barbauld's agenda in relation to Joseph Priestley's engagement with animal experiments.[322] Many associated the voice of the mouse with Barbauld's criticism of human cruelty perpetrated against animal life.[323] Barbauld, baffled by such a one-side reading of her poem, argues that she "is concerned to find, that what was *intended as the petition of mercy against justice*" has been taken as a "plea of humanity against cruelty."[324] Despite the fact that Barbauld's well-intended defense of Priestley in the face of such criticism against the animal abuse that was quite rampant in experimental philosophy did not succeed, her letter shrewdly spells out the key concepts surrounding animal experiments and the broad moral debates in the late eighteenth century around the conceptual definition of justice, mercy, cruelty, and humanity.

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[321] For further details, see my discussion of the rhetoric of brotherhood in my following analysis of "The Mouse's Petition."

[322] Of course it is not Priestley alone who experimented with animals, but Barbauld's friendship with him and his wife as discerned in her poems—such as "To Mrs. P[riestley], with some Drawings of Birds and Insects," "An Inventory of the Furniture in Dr. Priestley's Study," and "To Dr. Priestley. Dec. 29, 1792"—made it easier for literary critics to single out Priestley as a ready target.

[323] Julia Saunders argues that Barbauld appropriated the language of science and conflated it with that of sensibility—what Saunders terms the "potentially explosive combination of verse mixed with chemistry in the cause of radial politics"—in an effort to offer her own political and scientific critiques. See "'The Mouse's Petition': Anna Laetitia Barbauld and the Scientific Revolution," *The Review of English Studies* 53 (2002): 500-516, 502. Mary Ellen Bellanca remarks that "Petition" works as "an entry point for exploring late-century dynamics of science and gender." See Bellanca, "Science, Animal Sympathy and Anna Barbauld's 'The Mouse's Petition,'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37 (2003): 47-67, 49. Both critics understand the "Petition" poem as a window to examine Barbauld's attempts to participate in male-dominant science while providing an alternative ethical perspective. See also Felicity James, "Religious Dissent and the Aikin-Barbauld Circle," *Religious Dissent and the Aikin-Barbauld Circle*, 1-27. Here James argues that the engraving that captures the plausible image of the "Petition" actually belies the scale and significance of the public image of both Priestley and Barbauld.

[324] Quoted in McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft, ed. *Anna Laetitia Barbauld*, 69.

Again, saturated in the language of Hutcheson and Adam Smith, Barbauld's poetics underline how the language of care is implicated in both humanist and animal discourses. Hutcheson once notes that virtuous life—the culmination of happiness—is predicated on benevolence, which results from free will. Thus for him liberty is the primary condition for a happy virtuous life, to which Barbauld attests by extending benevolence to animal life in her poetry.

If "The Caterpillar" registers a cognitive event wherein a small insect draws sustained attention from a human observer, "The Mouse's Petition" is mainly mediated through the voice of the mouse. The desperate mouse from the beginning calls for readers' attention by identifying its petition as a "pensive prisoner's prayer" (line 1). Identifying itself as a prisoner, the speaker stresses its abject condition by insistently mentioning its confined state: "for here forlorn and sad I sit, / Within the wiry grate" (lines 5-6). Because of its unwanted, undue imprisonment, the mouse calls for "liberty" (line 2) from the "tyrant's chain" (line 10) and from "strong oppressive force" (line 11). Apparently, given the diction conspicuous in this poem, "Petition" conveys a distinct political innuendo, as if the mouse represents the confined state of dissenters in general. Though this interpretation is valid and cogent, I read the poem as an animal manifesto. The mouse's petition claims that the natural state is one of the "common gifts of heaven" (line 24), a state the speaker in "Epitaph on a Goldfinch" (1774) describes as providing "native and inalienable rights" (line 20):

> The cheerful light, the vital air,
>
> Are blessings widely given;
>
> Let nature's commoners enjoy
>
> The common gifts of heaven.

Echoing Barbauld's own spirited inculcation in *An address to the Opposers of the Repeal*, here the reference to political liberty is more resonant with contemporary legislation concerning animal welfare at the dawn of the nineteenth century.[325] Throughout the poem it is evident that the poet's concern lies with the undeniable fact that animals can suffer. There have been manifold debates as to whether animals have souls or reason in order to justify or remedy the status quo treatment of animals, but Barbauld's agenda as manifested in "The Petition" has more to do with animals' ability to feel and thus suffer pain: her authorial attention falls squarely on the imprisoned state of the laboratory mouse, which can be interpreted in numerous ways, as Barbauld's contemporaries did.

To unravel the semantic layers of the poem, we should start with what constitutes the tyranny both inside and outside of the poem that suppresses the mouse. This term might refer to systematic forms of oppression: animal experimentation, slavery and the slave trade, and anti-Dissenter bills. The oppressors themselves can easily be interpreted as a group of people or a collective body that denies "native and inalienable rights" to either non- or subhuman species in the eighteenth century. And yet, to narrow down the scope of my discussion to animal discourses, I will return to the grounds of moral action that the mouse calls for:

> Beware, lest in the worm you crush
>
> A brother's soul you find;
>
> And tremble lest thy luckless hand
>
> Dislodge a kindred mind.

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[325] The Anti-bull-baiting Bill provoked many debates in 1800 and 1802. The first society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was founded in 1809. For more on legislation concerning animal rights in the nineteenth century, see Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes: Animal in Romantic-Period Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Moira Ferguson, *Animal Advocacy and Englishwomen, 1780-1900: Patriots, Nation, and Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); David Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights*; Mark Canuel, *Justice, Dissent, and* the *Sublime* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

> Or, if this transient gleam of day
>
> Be *all* of life we share,
>
> Let pity plead within thy breast
>
> That little *all* to spare. (lines 33- 40)

In these two stanzas, the mouse highlights a bond forged across species by arguing that the mouse himself is a "brother" and a "kindred sprit." His use of brotherhood definitely echoes the contemporary abolitionist rhetoric widely circulated in the British Isles, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" Like the widely circulated image of an African slave pleading for his liberty and equal treatment, "The Petition" carries a suppliant tone, urging the voluntary extension of care and attention to the mouse's seemingly undeserving species. Barbauld, keenly aware of contemporary abolitionist thought and rhetoric, lodges the language of the mouse within the critical discourse against human chattel, thereby underscoring uncomfortable truths about widespread practices of slavery and imprisonment in the century. What is unusual in Barbauld's treatment of the mouse stems from the evidence the mouse provides in an effort to convince readers to release him from his current confined state. The speaker underlines the fact that his animal life and human lives are alike fleeting. Set against the scheme of divine temporality, their time is equally measured. If it is only a modicum of time that is left both to humans and to animals, that time should be committed to demonstrating benevolence and virtue. It is notable that Barbauld draws on the distinction between the natural timeline and the divine timeline to stress how creaturely life is dictated by the same temporality as human life, and eventually subject to divine judgment. It is not as explicitly stated as in Barbauld's *Hymns*, but Barbauld situates this particular poem and her defense of humanity and justice in the working of divine

temporality. In an age when humans attempted to justify their dominance over animals (and other non- or ostensibly sub-human species) based on God's command in Genesis, Barbauld reminds her readers of another important biblical passage indicating that God evenly takes care of both humans and animals:

> Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens;
>
> your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds.
>
> Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
>
> your justice like the ocean depths.
>
> You care for people and animals alike, O LORD. (Psalms 36:5-6, New Living Translation)

Barbauld's "Petition" offers a corrective to an anthropocentric understanding of nature through her emphasis on God caring for animals as well as humans.

In addition to Barbauld's recourse to biblical passages, to better contextualize this poem, we should explore the intersection of animal rights discourses, anti-slavery rhetoric, and the making of British or English subjecthood in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Moira Ferguson has argued that in this transitional, revolutionary period certain acts of benevolence were understood as markers of civility readily associated with Englishness. According to Ferguson, women writers actively participated in propagating humanitarian discourses concerning slavery and animal abuse: "National character and racism were popular topics at the time. Animal protection, moreover, was a strategy for engaging in discussion of political ideas, national identity, and foreign policy. Women writers not only attacked cruelty against animals but complicated it to entwine the concerns of slaves and other subjugated communities."[326] Likewise, Christine Kenyon-Jones demarcates the turn of the nineteenth century and the following Romantic period as a watershed moment in which "humankind first

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[326] Ferguson, *Animal Advocacy and Englishwomen*, 1.

seriously began to question its own centrality to the world in relation to animals"[327] She also goes on to argue that the Romantic era is a fertile ground rife with "a new emphasis on nature" and debates about "animals' difference from human beings and also about their similarity."[328]

Barbauld's "To a Dog" can be taken as a minor piece compared to the two poems I have discussed earlier in terms of its subject matter, length, and the degree to which the speaker pays attention to the object. In it, the speaker catalogues canine virtues she happens to observe (or maybe just hears about), virtues one can readily identify in eighteenth-century animal eulogies—both serious and satirical. Despite its excessively affectionate opening, the poem does not convey any intimate, personal bond between the owner and the dog itself. It may be partly because it is not about 'the' dog, but about a dog—a pet one can easily imagine. Even though the poet strives to flesh out the particulars of a dog, as if it were her own possession, the long list defies her attempts. The list rather treats very generic qualities that might characterize any dog: a canine penchant for sociability, a permanently domesticated state, and begging for human affection. It starts with an obviously affectionate opening, addressing the dog in question as the "dear faithful object of my tender care" (line 1). Nothing can be more exceedingly indulgent than this address. Yet the overall tone of the poem is condescending, suggesting that the speaker takes for granted the hierarchical power relations between humans and animals. What is fundamentally missing, in striking contrast to "The Caterpillar" in particular, is that we know nothing particular about the dog, but a handful of typifying canine characteristics, such as its "beseeching eyes" (line 9) that might seek for human affection, and a general tendency to please its master(s). No specific colors, shapes, or any other physical attributes are listed even after the speaker of the poem suggests she might own the dog for a certain period of time.

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[327] Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes*, 1.
[328] Ibid., 2.

The speaker rather points to the function of the dog's eyes, which work as a primary medium of communication. In so doing, the speaker underlines the fact that the dog has no language. In the long history of debates about animals, their alleged lack of language and soul almost always serves as a pretext for affirming human dominance over nonhuman species. Hence, it appears surprising that Barbauld would underline how the dog is unequipped with language proper in this poem. Seen through the overall threads of Barbauld's personal, political, religious interests, this poem—predominantly condescending and indulgent, generic—appears to be an outlier. Where has her liberal sentiment gone? Her liberal engagement with contemporary political affairs as envisioned in "Corsica," "The Rights of Woman," and "To the Poor" does not stand out at all in this poem. Towards the end of the poem, the speaker reaffirms the dog's inferior status by addressing it as a "safe companion, and *almost* a friend" (line 13, my emphasis). Barbauld's emphasis on the dog's companionship and her unusual insertion of the adverb "almost" might indicate not only the poet's ambivalence toward the position of the dog, but also the extent of her self-censorship. As Ingrid Tague remarks in her study of eighteenth-century pet culture and anti-slavery discourses, even if many eighteenth-century Britons pets are treated as friends, the "language of friendship, service, and slavery coexisted in eighteenth-century discussion of animals."[329] Eighteenth-century pet culture in a way built on so-called animal slavery whose operation is justified by the longstanding, diehard belief in animal inferiority. However affectionate and sympathetic the human-pet relationship appears, it is predicated on the reactionary position that human superiority is always tenable. Also, given the fact that eighteenth-century British women were susceptible to derogatory criticism concerning their supposedly excessive, intimate bonds with pets, Barbauld might rather be opting for austere

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[329] Ingrid H. Tague, "Companions, Servants, or Slaves?: Considering Animals in Eighteenth-Century Britain." *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 39 (2010): 111-30, 112.

poetry when it comes to unfolding her feeling towards a dog. Hence, her poem significantly

lacks the keen interest in the particulars of the object of attention and care that is discernible in

"The Caterpillar."

This discontent about the moral ambiguity of the poem arises in part from the fact that the

exact context of the composition is not clear.[330] The poem's rhetorical development as well as

the title itself suggests that "To a Dog" falls into the category of animal eulogies that flooded the

eighteenth-century literary marketplace. Barbauld's own "Epitaph on a Goldfinch," which might

have been written two years after the composition of "To a Dog," definitely belongs to this

genre, thereby suggesting that she is aware of the convention of animal eulogy which was quite

popular in her period. John Gay, for instance, composed "An Elegy on a Lap-Dog" (1720) to

commemorate his pet.[331] Gay seizes on the pet's death as an opportunity to reminisce about his

time with the dog and to display his sense of the loss, just as early modern poets used the

occasion of a friend's death as an opportunity to boast about their poetic craftsmanship in the act

of commemorating the loss of human life. In this way, *Lycidas* (1637) functioned for Milton

analogously to the way pet eulogy functioned for some eighteenth century poets. In Gay's

"Elegy," the speaker relates the degree of grief he feels at the death of his dear pet. The speaker's

somewhat overdramatic tone, and the churning of his various emotions would be taken as staple

elements of this kind of poetry. The speaker clearly invites female mourners to respond to the

death of his pet dog. Female mourners have been a common, gendered trope since ancient

Greece, but this eighteenth-century animal eulogy indicates the heavily gendered vogue of pet-

keeping during the period:[332]

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[330] McCarthy suggests that the date of composition would be around 1772, but does not provide any occasions to contextualize this poem.
[331] John Gay, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: Jacob Tonson and Bernard Lintot, 1720)
[332] Greek tragedies and medieval literature are filled with women mourners. e.g. Chaucer, Knight's Tale.

> Shock's fate I mourn; poor Shock is now no more,
>
> > Ye Muses mourn, ye chamber-maids deplore.
> >
> > Unhappy Shock! yet more unhappy fair,
> >
> > Doom'd to survive thy joy and only care! (lines 1-4)

As opposed to Barbauld's list of the canine's general qualities in "To a Dog," Gay's speaker begins to register a set of particulars about which he reminisces, including the dog's favorite ribbon, and the way Shock combs his hair and the back of his ear (lines 5-8). Near the end of the poem, however, it becomes clear where the target of the poet's criticism lies: it is the excessive care its female owner cultivated surrounding the dog. The speaker, echoing contemporary male detractors of female pet-owners, reminds his readers that it is only a dog, not a male lover that is now deceased: " Why should such fears bid Celia's sorrow rise? / For when a lap-dog falls no lover dies" (lines 23-24). Thus, excessive mourning should be moderated, suggests the speaker. Francis Coventry also inserted an epitaph of a pet dog near the ending of *The History of Pompey the Little* in a heavily satirical manner.

In her work on the eighteenth-century practice of commemorating the deaths of pets, Tague argues that pets serve to articulate "human virtues" instead of "human follies" by underlining our "special bond with animals."[333] In addition, Tague notes that animal eulogy also went through rhetorical shifts from serving as a catalogue of the animal's universal virtues (as an exemplary tale) to becoming a literary form depicting human-animal friendship with an emphasis on the particulars of such relationships. Barbauld's "To a Dog" can thus be read as a transitional poem in which the poet/speaker, on the one hand, acknowledges the symptomatic cultural trend toward pet-owners' excessively cultivated care. On the other hand, the poet attempts to avoid the

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[333] Ingrid Tague, "Dead Pets: Satire and Sentiment in British Elegies and Epitaphs for Animals." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41.3 (2008): 289-306, 290.

pitfall of excessive sentimentalism usually associated with female pet-owners by maintaining distance from the dog. Still the pronounced lack of particulars attributed to the dog—the centerpiece of Barbauld's habitual attention and care in poems of this kind—cannot be fully explained.

Coda

In an era characterized by sensibility, sympathy, and vitality, Barbauld paid particular attention to nonhuman or "subhuman" life forms throughout her poems. By analyzing the arc of her poetry in deliberately reverse order, I articulate the way Barbauld's sustained attention to the corporeality of the caterpillar demonstrates that the perception of beauty leads to ethical action. This poem nicely captures how inter-special encounter can be a cognitive as well as an aesthetic event through which a human observer seizes the opportunity to appreciate and discern the beauty of a small insect. The speaker's decision to release the caterpillar despite her previous history of killing other insects without much self-consciousness indicates that a sensorial recognition made possible by the encounter can actually result in an act of attention and care. "The Mouse's Petition" rather works as a case study of justice and animal mistreatment. Even though the poem is charged with relevant political implications related to Barbauld's dissenter sentiment, my argument is that it actually is preoccupied with common forms of animal abuse and mistreatment in the long eighteenth century. By closing the section with "To a Dog," I attempt to situate Barbauld's poetry with other contemporary animal eulogy and it-narratives mainly because her work has long been associated with pre-Romantic aesthetics and literary taste. By linking Barbauld's works to long-eighteenth-century conventions of nature poetry and it-narratives, I want to underline the unique place she occupies in British cultural history, in

terms of her understanding of the relationship between aesthetic beauty, ethical judgment, and the vitality of organic beings.

Epilogue
Toward Blended Ontologies:
Conceptualizing the Posthuman, Embodied Subjectivity, and Affects in Long Eighteenth-Century Britain

> Touch, regard, looking back, becoming with—all these make us responsible in unpredictable ways for which worlds take shape.
>
> Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (2008)[334]

> Along with decoupling humankind's material needs from nature, establishing an enduring commitment to preserve wilderness, biodiversity, and a mosaic of beautiful landscapes will require a deeper emotional connection to them.
>
> *An Ecomodernist Manifesto* (2015)

An Ecomodernist Manifesto—a 31-page long, web-based document penned by a good number of scholars across disciplines and released in April 2015—is a collective response to the fast-deteriorating natural environment due to about a century of unprecedentedly rigorous human intervention into the natural world. Its stated purposes are deceptively simple and ring with far too familiar notes: the manifesto is aimed at emphasizing and promoting the "belief that both human prosperity and an ecologically vibrant planet are not only possible but also inseparable."[335] The *Ecomodernist Manifesto*, more importantly, chimes in a steady stream of recent scholarly publications that concern planetary, environmental, or ecological understandings of the present and the past, as evidenced in the 2016 special issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.[336] Although these examples deal with different subject matters, such orchestrated efforts that began to inundate academia for the first two decades of the twenty-first century mark a watershed, wherein scholars are invested in identifying and sharing responsibilities for global

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[334] Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 36.

[335] John Asafu-Adjaye et. al., "An Ecomodernist Manifesto," accessed 3 February 2016, http://www.ecomodernism.org/manifesto, 31.

[336] The special issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 49.2 (2016) articulates various environmental concerns imbedded in eighteenth-century texts. Each article collected in the special issue purposefully puts forth the way eighteenth-century human subjects were enmeshed in the natural world, thereby reemphasizing the aesthetic, epistemological, and ethical significance of texts analyzed in each piece.

environmental crises that confront all of us.[337] It is also noteworthy that the 2015 *Manifesto*

registers the same sense of exigency discernible in Haraway's landmark manifestos—"A

Manifesto for Cyborgs" (1983) and *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003)—mainly because

manifestoes by nature are designed to present precise articulations of the most pressing concerns

of the period to which they are addressed. If we recall, just as each of Haraway's manifestos

formulates a new subjectivity called for by the time of its publication, the kind of subjecthood

conceptualized in the *Ecomodernist Manifesto* is a relational and ethical one.

Prominent in this recent ecological manifesto, and directly pertinent to my dissertation is

its proposal for "decoupling"—for promoting only the least invasive human engagement with

nature—and its consistent emphases on the necessity of reinforcing an affective dimension in

ecological ethics, namely a "deeper emotional connection."[338] This solution for the current global

environmental concerns proposed in the *Manifesto* is firmly anchored in the assumption that

humans are also part of natural assemblages—admittedly crucial, but hardly superior to any of

our fellow species. Nothing can therefore better illustrate the interconnectivity between the

human and the nonhuman than the suggested efforts at minimizing human influences upon

nature. Since my dissertation informed by posthumanism, broadly construed, has investigated

British culture's affective relation to nonhuman subjectivity and agency in the context of the long

eighteenth century, it has examined the way the multifarious subjectivities represented in the

works by Defoe, Swift, and Barbauld in particular epitomize meaningful moments of collapse in

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[337] In that sense, the recent surge of elaborating and solving issues related to the anthropocene and climate change—the latter is such a problematic term because it dilutes the intensity of environmental crisis we all are facing with, as Morton rightly criticizes—leads us back to McEwan's fictional representation of a similar kind of conference Beard the protagonist visits, the one that I discuss at some length in Chapter 1. Timothy Morton criticizes the alternate employment of the term "climate change" that came to replace "global warming" as it diluted the urgency of the current climate crisis. Morton rather justifies his insistent use of the latter because "[w]hat we desperately need is an appropriate level of shock and anxiety concerning a specific ecological trauma." See Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 8-9.

[338] Asafu-Adjaye, et. al, "An Ecomodernist Manifesto," 27.

which the ontological and epistemological distinctions drawn between human subjects and nonhuman agents become blurred. In doing so, my dissertation has presented a new avenue toward two distinctive areas within eighteenth-century British literary and cultural studies: ecocriticism (concerning environmental enmeshment) and postcolonial studies (addressing historically specific British imbrications with commercial, scientific, and colonial networks of the century).

I have found my methodological focus on posthumanist methodology, one of the major critical turns of our era that significantly coincides with new materialisms and the nonhuman turn, to be tremendously useful when discussing both the affective and the epistemological aspects of human-nonhuman interchanges as represented in the wide-ranging literary and non-literary texts produced from 1670 to 1812 that are the focal point of this dissertation.[339] Each of the four chapters engages with recent turns toward posthumanism and environmental ethics in literary studies by highlighting both the autonomy of marginalized objects and animals and the interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman. Throughout these four chapters, I have charted a broad arc of British subjects from an anxiety-ridden observer, one that can be read as the opposite side of a supposedly rational enlightened figure, to a caring subject who exhibits sympathy, benevolence, and ethical actions towards nonhuman species. But I want to highlight the fact that such shifting subjectivities—identities I have called "porous," "anxious," or fluid throughout this dissertation due primarily to their respective encounters with nonhuman agents— detected in each chapter do not suggest either historically coherent development or some kind of organic evolution of so-called eighteenth-century subjecthood: I am not proposing a model for

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[339] This dissertation is bookended by the publication of Butler's *The Elephant in the Moon* (c. 1670s) and by Barbauld's "The Caterpillar" (1812).

the historically congruous development of British subjectivities throughout the eighteenth century.

Rather, the ever-present undercurrent of the four chapters that respectively covered disparate historical periods and different literary genres is the focused examination of embodied relationships between humans and nonhumans: visual, tactile, olfactory, and aural registers abound in and define these various contact zones. These sensorial registers, in turn, contribute to dismantling anthropocentric underpinnings of subjecthood, for "embodiment," observes Alex Wetmore, "resists full incorporation into language."[340] Admittedly, scholarly efforts to dethrone human centrality, a privileged subject position firmly grounded in linguistic and representational systems, have long been criticized mainly because such efforts are inevitably implicated in representational systems. And yet, I believe any attempt to identify slippages and fissures within human subjects is a fundamentally ethical interpretive move. Not only do such readings reveal the extent to which nonhuman subjects actually shape human identity, they attest to the possibility of dissociating nonhuman bodies from the existing representational web—the main target posthumanist thinkers like Barad vehemently and successfully attacked—and they enable us to think about "who and what can count as the subject of ethical address."[341] Frost's recent article similarly registers a degree of well-reasoned uncertainty about the actual outcome of decentering the established practices of endowing certain groups of people with privileges—as is found in anthropocentrism, Eurocentrism, and racism—even when she astutely acknowledges the

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[340] Alex Wetmore, *Men of Feeling in Eighteenth-Century Literature*: *Touching Fiction* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 167. Wetmore's remarks here are prompted by his consideration of the achievements of affect studies scholarship by figures like Hayles, Mark Hansen, and Brian Massumi. Wetmore's own focus on what he calls "embodied sensation" in his study of the affective dimension of eighteenth-century formulations of sensibility and attendant sensibility discourses beautifully articulates the way affective studies meets posthuman studies.

[341] Cary Wolfe, *What is the Posthumanism?*, 49.

ethical and aesthetic dimensions of our renewed interest in human-nonhuman, human-environment relationships:

> But exactly how these ethically or aesthetically transformed relations might vivify or energize environmental politics is unclear. The reason is that in elaborating the interconnectedness of humans, non-human creatures, and their habitats, and in elucidating the forms of agency or effectiveness that non-human creatures and habitats have irrespective of human intention, these approaches diminish the human as an agent—just as (human) collective political action is urgently needed.[342]

This ethical, methodological dilemma noted above is quite pervasive in the writings of posthumanists, for any attempts to displace human subjectivity from its privileged, central position involves human intention, and the immediate outcome would not be entirely free of human-centeredness. However, my manifold efforts to tease out literary evidence of displaced, decentered human subject positions from the texts analyzed here has enabled me to identify blended ontologies as well as blended epistemologies in eighteenth-century culture. For example, in Chapter 3, on Defoe's nonfictional and fictional accounts of the 1703 storm and the 1665 plague, I investigated the way corporeal experience with natural calamities undermines the enlightened methods deployed to understand the disasters' origin and scope because of the excessiveness inherent to nonhuman agents. Defoe's eighteenth-century disaster writings thus reveal precisely where the fundamentally anthropocentric, enlightened project of understanding the natural world fails.

In the last two chapters, I investigated the way a vast array of human affects—wonder, anxiety, terror, sympathy, and benevolence—are occasioned by nonhuman agents. Chapter 4 analyzed Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* to examine how the normative configurations of humanity

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[342] Frost, "Challenging the Human X Environment Framework," 179.

and rationality border on animality and machinery. Gulliver's own troubled interaction with yahoos and his family members exemplify the prominent aspect of his affects: anxiety and fear. My juxtaposition of *Gulliver's Travels* with La Mettrie's *Man a Machine* enables us to see how seminal eighteenth-century literary texts anticipate current posthumanist intervention in cybernetics and hybridity. Chapter 5 focused on Barbauld's animal poems in order to investigate late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century formulations of ethical subjecthood in conjunction with contemporary scientific, aesthetic, and ethical discourses. It is notable that this chapter was more focused on emotions that carry a positive connotation, such as the perception of beauty, sympathy, and fellow-feeling, in sharp contrast to the first three chapters exploring anxiety and terror. My ultimate task in the chapter was to argue that Barbauld's disciplined attention to the autonomy and beauty of nonhuman animals provides a glimpse of an expanding intersubjective community as well as the interconnectivity between humans and environs, humans and animals across the globe. Ultimately, this last chapter laid out foundations for elaborating further the ecological, colonial network of the eighteenth century.

As this dissertation has examined the agential power of nonhuman colonial subjects, it points the way toward a broader investigation into what might be called the "colonial nonhuman" in eighteenth-century culture, a new form of postcolonial critique focused on the overlooked agency of marginalized subjects. Chapter 2, a lengthy case study of interrelations between the circulation of elephant representations and the formation of British subjectivity, traced natural philosophers' disparate responses to the elephant, as illustrated in Samuel Butler's satirical portrait of the Royal Society virtuosi and Patrick Blair's hands-on experience with the elephant. It also analyzed an elephant speaker who offers social commentary on mid-eighteenth-century English colonial policies, and late eighteenth-century elephant automata. The chapter thereby

presented a wide-ranging picture of British identity, from an amateur natural philosopher unable to use modern scientific devices to an enlightened subjectivity, and then on to mundane British consumers oblivious to the network of commerce, trade, and colonial projects in play in the historic period.

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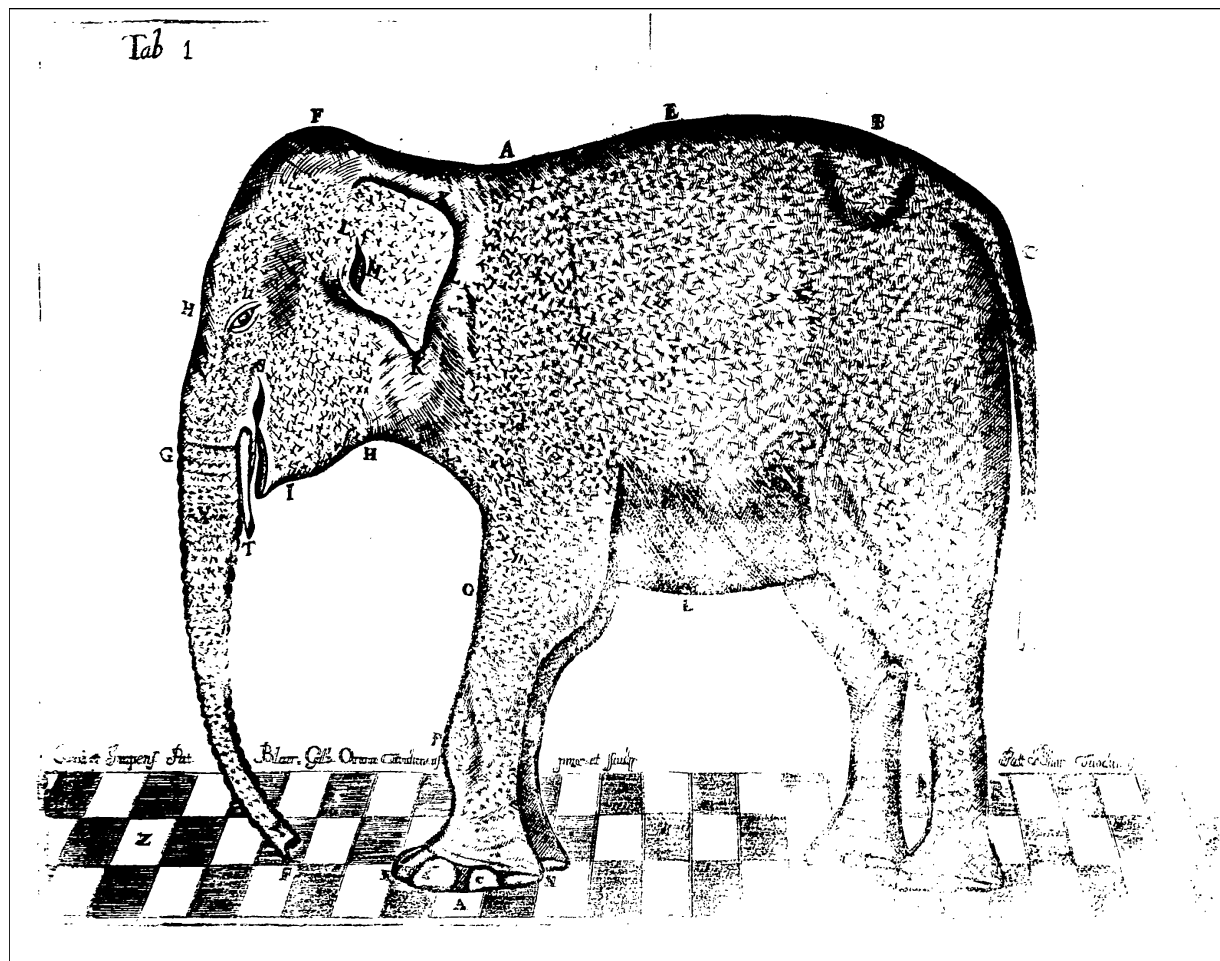
Appendix. List of Figures

Figure 1. An excerpt from Patrick Blair, *Osteographia Elephantina*

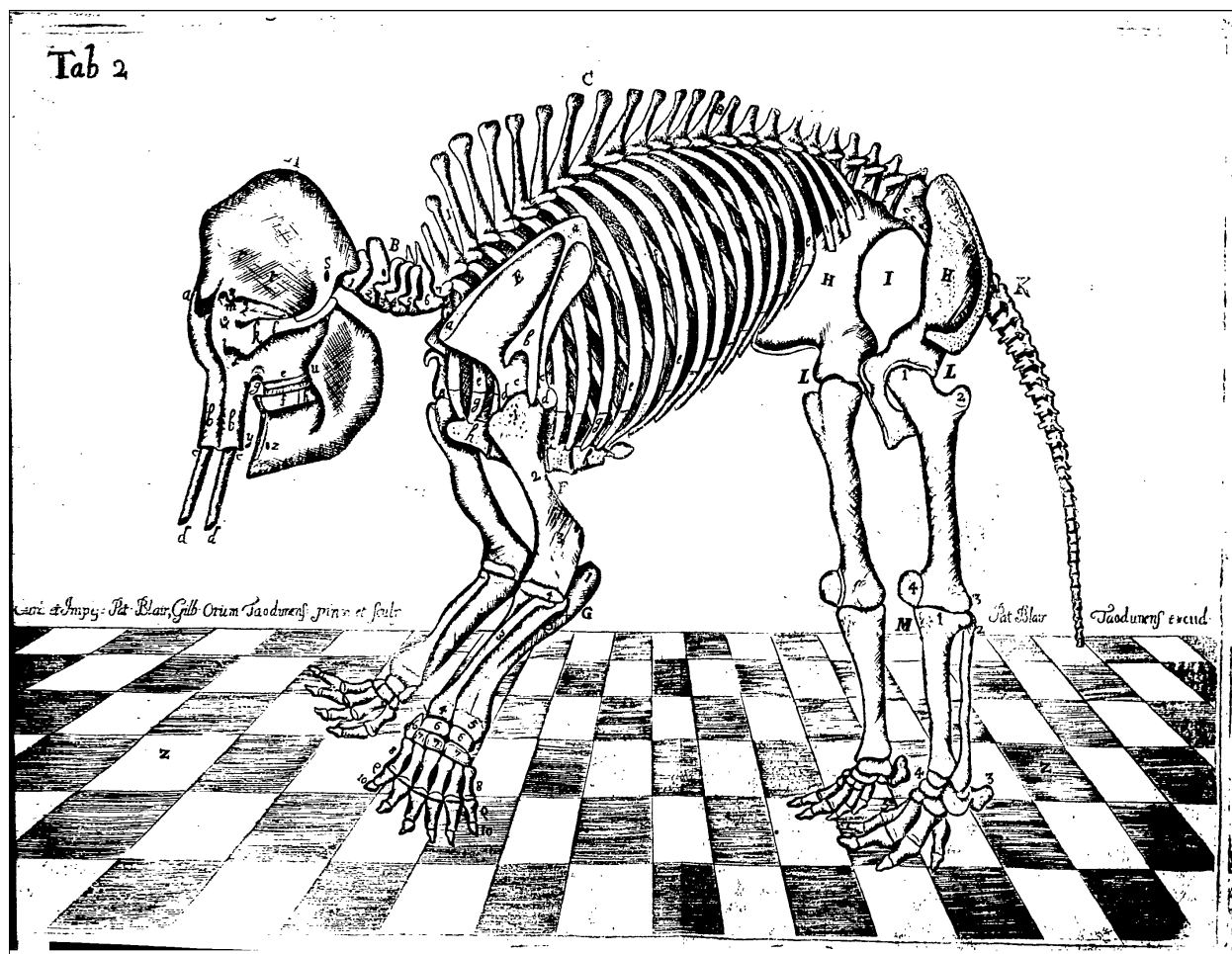**Figure 2.** An excerpt from Patrick Blair, *Osteographia Elephantina*
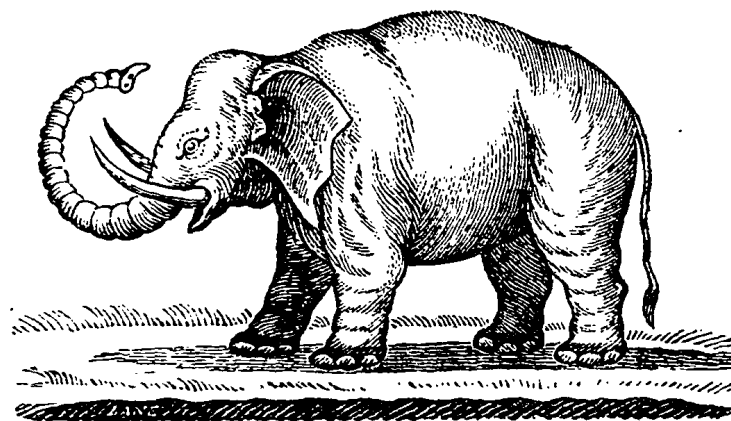
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Figure 3. Pidcock's Exhibition of Wild Beasts, 1797 (?)

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Admittance, ONE SHILLING *each*.

Alfo, in an Apartment under the Great Room, is to be Seen from Obfcurity,

BY A CURIOUS APPARATUS,

Variety of Pleafing Perfpectives and Public Animation, Far excelling any thing of the kind yet invented.

Admittance One Shilling, or the Three Exhibitions for 2s. 6d.

N. B. Foreign Birds and Beafts bought, fold, or exchanged, by G. PiDCOCK, as above

Figure 4. *Exeter-Change*. London, 1800 (?)

EXETER-'CHANGE.

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The following is a CATALOGUE

Of PART of the CAPITAL COLLECTION of

BIRDS AND BEASTS

NOW EXHIBITING at the GRAND MENAGERIE,
in the GREAT ROOM, as above:

A Royal Bengal Striped Tyger and Tygress, being the First ever exhibited at the above Place, much superior to any of the Kind in this Kingdom.— The Tygrefs was landed from the Duckingfield-Hall Indiaman, on the 14th of September, 1796.

A ravenous Hun'ng Tyger, from Bengal.

An Afiatic Panther, from ditto.

A beautiful Spotted Leopard, from Africa.

A ravenous Laughing Hyæna.

A wonderful Polar or Sea Lion; an amphibious Animal, which cannot live without being wafhed with Water every Day.

A Jackall, or Lion's Provider.

A ravenous Wolf, from Siberia, in Ruffia.

A beautiful Antelope, from Afia.

A large Tyger Cat; and a Mufcovy or Civet Cat.

A large Wild Man of the Woods, that walks upright, and is fo extremely fagacious as to underftand every Word the Keeper fays to him.

A Long-armed Baboon; and a curious Ape, from Ape's-hill, in Barbary.

A ftupendous Ostrich, Nine Feet high, from the Coaft of Barbary.

A Pelican of the Wildernefs,—a Bird fo remarkable as to be mentioned in Sacred Hiftory, that feeds it's Young ones with it's own Blood.

A Royal Crown Crane, or Bird of Paradife.

Two Condor Minor Vultures, very rare and fcarce.

An Imperial Vulture, the largeft ever feen in this Kingdom.

A Golden Eagle, from Santa Cruz; and a Horned Owl, from Bohemia.

And a Variety of other Animals and Birds, too numerous to infert.

Admittance 1s. each Perfon.

In an adjoining APARTMENT, is

A wonderful Maif Elephant, which, although the largeft Animal in the Creation, is fo fagacious and tractable, as to be obedient to every Command of it's Keeper; and is fo exceedingly tame, that Children frequently ride on it's Back with the greateft Safety, as the Den is well conftructed for that Purpofe.—Admittance 1s. each Perfon.

In an Apartment UNDER the GREAT ROOM, is to be Seen from Obfcurity, by

A curious Apparatus, Variety of Pleafing Perfpectives and Public Animation, far excelling any thing of the Kind yet invented.

Admiffion One Shilling each Perfon, or the Three Exhibitions for Half-a-Crown.

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