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'LACTILLA TENDS HER FAV'RITE COW': DOMESTICATED ANIMALS AND WOMEN IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH LABOURING-CLASS WOMEN'S POETRY

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines issues of gender, class and species in the work of five eighteenth-century British labouring-class women poets, Mary Collier (1690-1762), Mary Leapor (1722-1746), Elizabeth Hands (*fl.* 1789), Ann Cromartie Yearsley (1752-1806) and Janet Little (1759-1813).

Using ecocriticism, which posits links between literature and the physical world, and ecological feminist theories, which emphasize the interdependence of women and nature as a feminist issue, the author interrogates the meanings of "nature" in the eighteenth century as they are represented in labouring-class women's poetry and in other relevant eighteenth-century texts such as Le Comte de Buffon's Histoire Naturelle (1749-1804), Mary Astell's Some Reflections on Marriage (1700), Bernard Mandeville's Fable of the Bees (1714) and Thomas Topham's Treatise on Cattle (1787). Fashioning new critical readings of labouring-class women's poetry which focus on nature at the intersection of gender, class and species rather than merely the scene of the narrative or the mirror of the protagonist's mind, the author exposes the ideological functions underlying particular conceptualizations of nature. For eighteenth-century labouring-class women poets, a poignant and potent example is the popular idea of the "natural Genius" as an uneducated "rustic" who composes poetry "spontaneously".

Chapter one begins by defining "domestication" -- of women in the family, animals, domestic servants and labouring-class women poets

-- in the context of Mary Leapor's poem "Man the Monarch" (1746). In chapter two, the relationship between a labouring-class woman poet and a mad heifer is read through the ecological feminist concept of "interlocking oppressions". In chapter three, the author explores the changing nature of farm labour as the division-of-labour is naturalized within the quintessential emblem of industry -- the beehive. Chapters four and five both focus on the forced artificiality of the domesticated pet as "essential" to the nature of a burgeoning consumer culture. The dissertation ends with a consideration of the relationship between literary criticism and environmental politics in the context of the twentieth-century environmental crisis.

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Can we, like shepherd's, tell a merry tale?
The voice is lost, drown'd by the noisy flail?

Stephen Duck The Thresher's Labour (1736)

Introduction

> Mycias, behold this bird! see how she tires --
> Breaks her soft plumes, and springs against the wires!
> A clown more rude than gracious brought her here
> To pine in silence, and to die in snare.
> Her haunt she well remembers: ev'ry morn
> Her sweet note warbled from the blowing thorn
> That hangs o'er yon cool wave; responses clear
> Her sisters gave, and sprang through upper air.
>
> Ann Yearsley "The Captive Linnet" (1796)[1]

These lines, from Ann Yearsley's poem "The Captive Linnet" printed in her third book of poetry, The Rural Lyre (1796), describe the plight of a caged bird who, removed from her natural environment, can neither communicate with her sister birds "who sit and call her near her fav'rite spray" (11) or fulfill the "Delicious toil" (17) of caring for her young. Rather than accept her entrapment, in an assertion of negative agency "she droops" (59), rejects her captor's offer of food and "dies resign'd" (59-60), a device Yearsley frames as Christian "VICTORY for the SOUL" (72).

I offer Yearsley's captive linnet as an emblem of my project, which brings together animals and women in the work of five labouring-class women poets -- Mary Collier (1690-1762), Mary Leapor (1722-46), Elizabeth Hands (*fl.* 1789), Ann Cromartie Yearsley (1752-1806) and Janet Little (1759-1813). A fairly direct symbolic relationship can be traced, for example, between the captive linnet and the situation

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[1]The full text of "The Captive Linnet" as well as other poems discussed in this dissertation are printed in the Appendix.

of the eighteenth-century natural genius circumscribed by a patron, often physically and mentally isolated from the natural landscape so important to her "natural" poetry. Though these poets express a sophisticated awareness of their position as "natural Geniuses" within the political and social hierarchy, they are often frustrated in their literary endeavors as they struggle to claim their places as poets. The anxiety of authorship they express in poems such as Mary Collier's "An Epistolary Answer to an Exciseman, Who doubted her being the Author of the Washerwoman's Labour" (1762), Elizabeth Hands "A Poem, On the Supposition of an Advertisement appearing in a Morning Paper, of the Publication of a Volume of Poems, by a Servant Maid" (1789), Mary Leapor's "Upon her Play being returned to her, stained with Claret" (1751) and Janet Little's "Given to a Lady Who Asked me to Write a Poem" (1792) suggests a constant concern with their status as poets.

Another intersection between Yearsley's poem and my project is the linnet's gender. The linnet's close relationship to her sister birds and her role as a mother mirrors the connection I make in my project in ecological feminist critical terms between women and animals in eighteenth-century labouring-class women's poetry. Especially worth noting from this feminist perspective is Yearsley's emphasis on the silencing of the linnet's "sweet note" (6) as a consequence of her capture. Voice as a sign of the linnet's presence, as self-expression, is denied. I look at places within this body of poetry where the voices of labouring-class women and animals are heard. In chapter five, for example, I consider the voice of the talking or writing dog in Janet Little's poem "From Snipe, A Favorite Dog to His Master" (1791). I

examine the relationship between the "I" of the dog-speaker of the poem and the "I" of the labouring-class woman poet. Through their respective cultural contexts they defy attempts by dominant discourses to "unvoice" them. In some other poems the "unvoicing" appears to have already occurred. Ann Yearsley's "Written on A Visit" (1787) features a spotless lamb who blissfully "forgets to bleat". Mary Collier champions a strangely quiet, albeit useful, beehive in "The Woman's Labour" (1739) to counter Stephen Duck's reading of labouring women as chattering sparrow pests in "The Thresher's Labour" (1736); and, while Mary Leapor appears to appreciate the power of the wild animals who elude man's monarchy in "Man the Monarch" (1746), she represents them doing so very quietly. This silence of the animals is significant not only in relation to issues of animal integrity but also as it reflects the cultural dilemma of the natural genius who writes in obscurity, sanctioned primarily by a patron who patronizes to please himself and not to "envoice" the labouring-class woman writer.

Another connection between "The Captive Linnet" and my larger project involves the alienation and hostility between the captive linnet and her male captor. While this hostility reflects, from the perspective of gender, the societal tension between the designation of husbands as "domestic kings" in the family and women who critique the alleged naturalness of this arrangement, Yearsley's scenario also emphasizes the class division between keeper and kept. Readers are accustomed to derogatory remarks directed at the lower classes, but Yearsley's speaker, obviously on the side of the linnet, takes advantage of this opportunity to speak out insultingly against the captor. She calls him "[a] clown

more rude than gracious" (3), a"barbarian," (51) with an "untun'd ear" (53) and "dull with vice"(54), implying that despite his social position, the aristocratic bird-keeper is in fact uncivil and "ill-natured" -- at odds with the natural world. Here, Yearsley intermingles issues of class with attitudes towards nature in the eighteenth century to underline the same kinds of complex relationships between class, gender and animal I explore in more detail in selected poems by Collier, Leapor, Hands, Yearsley and Little.

While I raise the issue of voice in the context of gender, it is also essential to consider the nexus of class, voice and species in "The Captive Linnet". Yearsley addresses the story of the linnet to a male listener called Mycias. Yearsley appeals to Mycias's reason and ethical sense of the "proper" relationship between humans and wild animals. In Yearsley's act of controlling the narrative, she devises subjectivities for herself, Mycias, the captor and the linnet, as well as a collective subjectivity that describes all four in relation to one another. The disparaging remarks made against the captor are not, then, just class-based, but project an environmental ethic that defines certain kinds of behaviours towards certain kinds of animals as socially and morally unacceptable. Yearsley's rhetorical strategy involves creating a subjectivity of the linnet that supports this environmental ethic. The imaginary status of this imagined animal subjectivity is a central topic of my larger project. Linking animal and woman together in a literary work enables a particular habit of interpretation which can lead to animal labels and animal fables that do nothing to enlarge or empower animals as agents. I acknowledge the difficulties of accessing the

subjectivity of animals and consider whether it is ever possible to write "respectfully" about animals without recourse to anthropomorphism and the stance of benevolent stewardship.

While "The Captive Linnet" cannot possibly serve to "capture" or encapsulate the myriad animal/woman relationships in the eighteenth century, the poem's denunciation of states of captivity, real or symbolic, suggests to me the ill-advisedness of "caging" the eighteenth-century natural world in any comfortable, compact and clever literary-critical enclosure. The eighteenth century is a period of active debate around rights of all kinds as well as an historical period during which the cultural meanings of nature and animal are changing. Many environmental historians and theorists interested in nature touch on the eighteenth century in passing but do not study the period in any detail. Donald Worster, for example, in his 1977 survey Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas identifies two threads of nature discourse in the eighteenth century -- one, an Arcadian strain exemplified by the work of Gilbert White and the other, an Imperial theme exemplified by the plant classification of Linneaus (Worster xi). But I perceive nature in the eighteenth century as far more complicated than Worster's theory suggests. Keith Thomas, Raymond Williams and Carolyn Merchant, of course, have written books that are obvious exceptions to the frustratingly general readings of nature in the eighteenth century that predominate. I have found Thomas's compendious survey of cultural attitudes toward nature in the eighteenth century invaluable. I owe even more to Williams whose insistent acknowledgment of "the wider system" and his view of history

as "active and continuous" (Williams 7) has guided my literary practice. As well, his knowledge of the cultures and cultural production of labouring-people in Britain helped to shape my initial interest in their work. But my work differs from both Thomas's and Williams's in its narrower scope, its slower pace and, especially, in its focus on gender issues. Merchant's work has been more helpful in this area, though not from a specifically ecological feminist perspective.

But so far, even perceptive ecological feminist readings of natural history have also tended to swoop through the eighteenth century pronouncing generalities such as the ones Josephine Donovan makes in her otherwise impressive and pioneering ecofeminist 1990 article "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory". While Donovan can confidently state that "many [eighteenth-century] women...seem to have felt a kinship to animals" (Donovan 366), she provides no details, or specific insights into the period. Rather, typically, Donovan's statement about the eighteenth century is sandwiched between one paragraph describing how Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle's (1623-1673) and Ann Finch, Countess of Winchilsea's (1661-1720) interest in women and animals in their writing can be connected to Michel Foucault's descriptions of the medicalization of the anomalous and another paragraph about middle-class nineteenth-century women and their activism in the anti-vivisection movement. While we are often told that the eighteenth century is an important period for animals, the detailed, analytical work on the relationship between women and animals in the years after Finch's death and before the first

animal protection legislation was passed in Britain in the early nineteenth century is still substantially to be done.

My critical approach, then is somewhat eclectic and experimental, drawing together historicist feminist practices in an effort to establish an ecocritical literary practice within eighteenth-century studies. The lack of guiding ecological feminist critics in eighteenth-century studies has meant that I have depended far more on Donna Landry's materialist feminist study of labouring-class women poets and the work of other critics who also study these poets than on the work of historians of nature. But I will reiterate that it was Raymond Williams' focus on labouring-class culture in the context of what he calls "the country and the city" that confirmed my sense that the relationship of labouring-class women poets to nature constitutes an important area of study, not only within eighteenth-century scholarship but also for environmental and feminist thought. I look particularly at the relationships between representations of nature, natural genius, and instrumentality, especially as they are positioned within a critical milieu that romanticizes "rural" poetry. I focus on animals as sentient beings whose status in the eighteenth century is in flux. I reassert that a close reading of women and animals grounded in ecological feminist theory enriches the scholarly treatment of the five labouring-class women poets included in this study.

My feminist perspective on eighteenth-century labouring-class women poets has been substantially shaped and encouraged by Donna Landry's groundbreaking 1990 study, The Muses of Resistance: Laboring-Class Women's Poetry in Britain, 1739-1796. Not only does

Landry bring eighteenth-century labouring-class women poets to the attention of a readership who had not read the work of these women, but she places their poetic labour, their labouring-class status and their gender together in an eighteenth-century political and social context. She also, importantly, by reading a large number of their poems, establishes shared themes and concerns among these writers. By permitting readers to view labouring-class women's cultural production in the eighteenth-century as a whole, Landry has drawn out larger perspectives that underline the important political and social conditions informing the poetry labouring-class women actually produced and disseminated within the eighteenth century.

Landry's enthusiastic readings of specific poems by eighteenth-century labouring-class women has led to a much wider interest in these poets' works, an interest to which Roger Lonsdale's anthologies Eighteenth-Century Women Poets (1989) and The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse (1984) have contributed enormously. Malcolm Rutherford credits Lonsdale with transforming "our view of English 18th century verse" (Rutherford x) and, Margaret Anne Doody applauds Lonsdale's contribution as "significant" in changing "our view of poetry reading and writing in 'the Augustan Age'" (Doody, 1989, 3). Lonsdale's anthologies have been a great help to my work -- all five poets I discuss here are represented in Eighteenth-Century Women Writers. Collier, Leapor and Yearsley are also included in The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse.[2] . Both books are particularly

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[2]The selections of Collier, Leapor and Yearsley's work are quite similar in both anthologies. Lonsdale selects the same excerpt from "The

valuable in making this work accessible for teachers of eighteenth-century poetry and affordable, in paperback editions, for students.[3]

But it is important to continue Landry's and Lonsdale's projects. Increasing opportunities for access to the work of labouring-class women poets is especially important. There has been, since 1990, an increased critical response and critical challenges to both Landry's and Lonsdale's approaches. Both Mary Waldron and Richard Greene have responded negatively to some of Donna Landry's political and sociosexual readings of Ann Yearsley and Mary Leapor's work. And Germaine Greer has dismissed Roger Lonsdale's efforts with a call to

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Woman's Labour" for both books and the three Leapor poems printed in The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse are also included in Eighteenth-Century Women Poets. It is only the single Yearsley poem in The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse that is not also printed in Eighteenth-Century Women Poets.

[3]Several other scholars in the field, most notably, Moira Ferguson, have also contributed to this effort. In addition to Ferguson's First Feminists, which includes poems by Collier and Yearsley, she has published nine previously unpublished poems by Ann Yearsley in Volume 12 of Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature. These poems were found written in Yearsley's hand in a copy of the first edition of Poems on Several Occasions held in the collection of the Bristol Records Office. As well, Ferguson is the editor of one of the two complete modern editions of Stephen Duck's "The Thresher's Labour" and Mary Collier's "The Woman's Labour". The other edition published in 1989, is edited by E. P. Thompson. Laura Mandell has made several of Mary Leapor's poems available on her website including, happily, the full text of "Crumble Hall" of which Lonsdale only prints an excerpt (Leapor 1751). Still, many of the works discussed in this dissertation are only available through the special collections of disparate university libraries. Microfilm copies of both Collier's Poems on Several Occasions and Hands' The Death of Amnon were made available to me through the interlibrary loan system. There is a limited edition facsimile version of Ann Yearsley's second book, Poems on Various Subjects, but with a price tag of over £100, I would hardly call it accessible. All of these efforts, though, suggest that eighteenth-century labouring-class women's poetry is more widely available creating the potential for its broader dissemination.

abandon work on these "undeserving" poets of the past.[4] In their critiques of Landry, Waldron and Greene separately suggest that Landry is motivated more by a twentieth-century political agenda than by a desire to read the content and context of the actual poems. Greene, for example, calls Landry's materialist feminist approach "decidedly teleological," warning that it "is dangerous in that it shapes what the scholar is willing to see" (Greene 50). For Greene, Landry "consistently overstates [Mary] Leapor's radicalism" (Greene 52). Mary Waldron is similarly concerned about Landry's analysis of the life and work of Ann Yearsley. In Waldron's view, Landry inaccurately "assumes a certain class position for Yearsley and extrapolates from that" (Waldron 287). And Waldron, quoting Elaine Showalter at some length, criticizes Landry's critical approach which she views as fundamentally theory-driven rather than derived from "close and extensive knowledge of women's texts" (Waldron 287). Waldron does not limit her criticism to Landry but also chastises Moira Ferguson and Morag Shiach for their political approaches to Yearsley's work. Like Greene, Waldron is concerned that feminist theory not distort or override "what women actually wrote" (Showalter in Waldron 287).

"Theory-driven," as Waldron uses it, vilifies materialist feminist criticisms; Waldron's political preoccupation needs to be recognized for its own ideological underpinnings before the work of such critics as Landry, Ferguson and Shiach is devalued. Though I see Greene's and

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[4]Ironically, Greer's access to the poetry of labouring-class women comes through the selections of their poems printed in Lonsdale's Eighteenth-Century Women Writers, an access she duly acknowledges in the notes to Slip-Shod Sybils.

Waldron's discussion as a positive sign of the variety of the critical work now being done on labouring-class women poets, I am not willing to turn away completely from Landry's or Ferguson's or Shiach's perspectives in favour of either sealed formalist readings of the works which conveniently efface context or readings completely dependent on the existence of "verifiable" historical evidence. Neither can I privilege literary history over labour history since labouring-class women poets clearly identify their literary labour as labour. I am, on the other hand, also sensitive to John Goodridge's concern regarding the poetry of Stephen Duck and Mary Collier, that reading their work primarily as sociological evidence denies them the serious critical attention they deserve as poets (Goodridge 16-17).

As much as all the poets I study here were labouring-class and engage with the labour and agricultural realities of their day, none of them wrote conduct books, pamphlets on economic conditions in rural England, or agricultural treatises. They all called themselves poets and by publishing asserted this identity publicly. This critical tendency to isolate the labourer from the poet facilitates the all too easy critical dismissal of the work of labouring-class poetry as "pretty good for a thresher or a cookmaid" and aids in the very compartmentalization of these poets as natural geniuses and autodidacts, a compartmentalization which the majority of twentieth-century critics imply, if not outrightly assert, that they want to challenge.

Germaine Greer is a notable exception and a critic neither Greene nor Waldron cite for the "radical" position she takes on Leapor and Yearsley. I find this curious in that, as a feminist critic driven by her

theory of "slip-shod sibyls," what Greer proposes is far more destructive to the study of eighteenth-century labouring-class women poets than Landry's theory of "sapphic textuality" which so offends Greene and Waldron. Both Greer's 1989 review of Roger Lonsdale's Eighteenth-Century Women Poets [5]and her 1995 book Slip-Shod Sibyls: Recognition, Rejection and the Woman Poet argue that women poets, victimized by a system that forces them to conceptualize themselves as victims, produce derivative poetry of inferior quality that is not worthy of twentieth-century efforts to recover and read it. Greer's snide remarks about Yearsley and Leapor -- she refers, for example, to Leapor as an "insignificant little piglet of poetry" (Greer 1995, 52) -- indicate a reactionary hostility towards them that does not come from any detailed assessment of their work.

In Slip-Shod Sybils, Greer does not perform any detailed critique of the poetry of Mary Leapor. As such, then, Greer's dismissal of Leapor is confounding in the context of critical communities -- both eighteenth century and twentieth century -- which unequivocally value Leapor's work highly, and not, as Greer would have it, because of her "novelty".[6] The very active critical community working on

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[5]Greer's review "No Laments for Dead Birds" appeared in The Daily Telegraph, 21 October 1989.

[6]Roger Lonsdale's inclusion of sixteen Leapor poems in Eighteenth-Century Women Poets underlines his confidence in her work. It is in part from the closer attention given to these sixteen selections that both the intrinsic value of Leapor's poetry as poetry and the complex issues that she discusses in her poems emerge. Leapor's complexity on many levels has led to a flurry of critical activity focussed on her poetry. Leapor's work and life is the subject of Richard Greene's 1993 book, Mary Leapor: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Women's Poetry. A number of fine critical articles by Donna Landry and Laura Mandell,

Leapor's biography and poetry has not been enough to counter Greer's attack on Leapor. Greer's cautions regarding the dubious products of women's literary labour align her with the very powerful academic and social forces that privilege the dissemination of "great works" and a canonicity that extends literary boundaries, if at all, very conservatively. Greer, though, confuses her own argument by first outlining that women writers are "victimized" and unable to produce works of quality because of gender and class-based prejudices and hegemonies and then by subjecting the "inferior" works of these "victims" to aesthetic judgments based on the very hegemonic models she has identified as victimizing. Greer's opinion is powerful, in part, because other critics writing about Leapor are subject to Greer's status as a feminist celebrity. The increased promotion and accessibility to the public of any work she publishes -- certainly in proportion to the attention that any other academic writing about unknown eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women would receive -- amplifies her critical voice. Boosters of marginalized poets are forced into a defensive position. It could be argued, indeed, that Greer's status as a literary critic in the twentieth century neatly exemplifies some of the issues of power and access to publishing that labouring-class women poets faced in the eighteenth century. As much as I concur that many labouring-class poets were taken-up and managed by patrons, I cannot agree, after several years of reading their poetry, that their work is, as Greer would have it, "second-rate, dishonest, fake poetry" (Greer 1995, xxiii-iv).

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among others, have been written recently about Leapor and a modern critical edition of her works is in progress.

Greer's pronouncements and her aggressive call to narrow the literary canon have the air of exclusivity about them. Indeed, Greer's argument revolves to a great extent around fame, and I think she mistakes or misplaces the imperative of the critic by locating it in a projected desire to make heroes of little-known eighteenth and nineteenth-century women writers. Yet none of the critical work done on labouring-class women writers in the eighteenth century makes hero-making its goal. Roger Lonsdale, for example, anthologizes women writers to more accurately reflect the variety of the published work as it appeared in the eighteenth-century. There may actually be a political neutrality to his project that is not evident in earlier anthologies which systematically excluded most women and labouring-class poets from their pages to make, dare I say, heroes of male poets. Neither does Donna Landry appear to be engaged in hero-making. Her work highlights subversivenesses and proto-feminisms that were actually present in eighteenth-century labouring-class women's poetry which through active critical processes, were erased or benignly neglected.

As I approach these critical concerns connected to the study of animals and women in the work of these five eighteenth-century labouring-class women poets, I prefer to foreground some of Donna Landry's political sensitivities and introduce some new issues even as I present a less comprehensive survey of the complete oeuvres of these women than Donna Landry, Mary Waldron, Richard Greene, John Goodridge, Betty Rizzo, Moira Ferguson and others have done. Locating myself within this critical community, I can assert that I am "with"

Greene and Waldron on the issue of close, careful reading of Yearsley's and Leapor's poetic works, and "with" Goodridge on the issue of balancing sociological readings with the respectful knowledge of the work as poetry. I am also "with" Landry, Ferguson, Shiach and even Greer on the importance of reading the work politically. I do not uncritically champion these "downtrodden" writers. I implicitly interrogate Greene's and Waldron's negative conceptualization of the "theory-driven" critic. While the test of whether theory dominates text for Richard Greene may be that a theory not "shape" what the scholar is "willing to see," I argue that all scholarly projects have their shape, even Greene's and Waldron's. Underlying their criticism of theory is both the assumption that there is a neutral critical practice and that the foundations of that neutrality lie in formalism and historical "fact". But the travesty of any twentieth-century scholarly shaping of the work of labouring-class women poets comes from not acknowledging the real-life shaping that some patrons and critics undertook in making these labouring-class women into poets in the eighteenth century. Twentieth-century critical shaping can also be seen as an exploitative practice, a practice of mastery which insidiously parallels and reiterates the earlier exploitation. While it may be easier to point to a critical approach like Landry's as "suspect," it is perhaps those approaches which claim balance and neutrality that most need to be addressed.

Ecocriticism and Eighteenth-Century Studies

In this dissertation I choose to foreground the place of nature in the poetic work of labouring-class women. While nature is very much a subject in labouring-class women's poetry, it has not, for the most part, been considered central to their work. Taking up the two competing discourses of nature that Kate Soper articulates in her 1995 book What is Nature?: Culture, Politics and the Non-Human, I suggest that the discourse of physical nature that Soper calls "nature endorsing" has been acknowledged in critical work that refers to "images of nature" in labouring-class women's poetry. But the other discourse that Soper calls "nature skeptical," which focusses on "the ideological functions of the appeal to 'nature' and on the ways in which relations to the non-human world are always historically mediated, and indeed 'constructed', through specific conceptions of human identity and difference" (Soper 5) has remained largely unread. In my readings of both "nature endorsing" and "nature skeptical" discourses, I have moved my literary critical practice, which has been primarily a materialist feminist one, into the area of environmental studies. My inquiries into ecocriticism, which posits links between literature and the physical world, and ecological feminism, which emphasizes the interdependence of all beings and articulates a common struggle against oppression amongst marginalized groups, have been useful. One way of discussing these issues effectively is to consider seriously the relationship between women and animals as a feminist issue.

While the approaches to the question of women's relationships to the natural environment are diverse, there is, as Victoria Davion points out, a general agreement "that there is an important link between the domination of women and the domination of nature, and that an understanding of one is aided by an understanding of the other" (Davion 8). Within this agreement, there are wide ideological variations, including the seemingly essentialist position that women have an intrinsic biological connection with nature which offers them an opportunity to retreat from the male-dominated hegemony of the "rational" world. While at one level I fear this notion of a natural connection between women and nature as a throwback to an oppressive conceptualization of women as "earth-mothers," I agree with Val Plumwood that rejecting this notion evades any examination of its origins and how it is perpetuated. As a strategy Plumwood suggests distinguishing between a woman-nature connection that is imposed upon women and "a critical ecological feminism in which women consciously position themselves with nature" (Plumwood 1993, 21).

One way I "consciously position" myself is by integrating the ecological feminist notion of "interlocking oppressions" into my work on eighteenth-century labouring-class women poets. "Interlocking oppressions" as a critical paradigm represents a relatively new focus for feminism, spurred in part by the apparent or anticipated failure of identity politics to address systemic inequities and, ultimately, the question of power. Where identity politics encourages a separation of specific groups and falls victim to the "divide and conquer" strategy of

the dominant discourse, "interlocking oppressions" recognizes, as Susanne Kappeler puts it

> that speciesism is not the simple binary opposition between "humans" and "animals," but the complex interaction of speciesism, racism, sexism, classism, nationalism, etc., which crystallizes a narrow yet historically changing group of masters who give themselves the name "human." The zoological (including the racist) continuum of classification blends with the classist instrumentalization of those classified, with the sexist division thrown in as and when required. (Kappeler 1995, 334).

There are, though, precautions to be taken before hurriedly embracing a feminism that investigates "interlocking oppressions". I concur, for example, with Carol Bigwood's view that to eliminate "woman" as a category is dangerous since "femaleness" (despite its construction in historical and cultural contexts) "possess[es] important cultural and transformative possibilities" (Bigwood 12). But "interlocking oppressions" allows me to legitimately make connections between groups I found almost impossible to disentangle anyway. Unlike "gender skepticism," which enables "the move from a masculine subject to the disseminated or multiple subject [to] bypass the possibility of a position of woman as subject" (Bigwood 12), "interlocking oppressions" neither seeks to erase "woman" nor does it enable underlying power structures to remain substantially unchallenged or underchallenged. This is an important political aspect of my project. "Interlocking oppressions" does not subsume one group to the other. In the interlocking of sexism and speciesism as twin oppressions, for example, the agencies of both women and animals are respectfully

considered. In fact, I would argue that the concept of "interlocking oppressions" offers a strength-in-numbers strategy which may be able to address more effectively and efficiently multiple inequities.

Possibly a greater challenge than this, though, is the question of how I relate a twentieth-century theoretical discussion of multiple inequities with its prescriptive encouragements and focus on the future to my historical project. While so much ecocriticism incorporates an ethic of liberation and is oriented towards resolving the ongoing environmental crisis of the late twentieth century in a manner that demonstrates respect for all living things, my project has a less utopian focus. I do not want to engage in a critical practice that passes judgment on the discourse of the past and/or the representations of non-human animals within these discourses from an apparently ecologically enlightened twentieth-century perspective. Nor do I want to participate in a selective looting of the past for answers to current problems. Indeed, I prefer to reverse the question I posed above about the relationship between historical projects and ecological feminist theory and suggest that ecocriticism and ecological feminism cannot thrive without historical projects such as mine. What I have to offer to both practices are "nature skeptical" readings that bring historical depth and perspective to issues that continue to perplex us.

Labouring-Class People in Nature versus the "natural Genius"

An acknowledgment of the instrumentality of the culture of labouring-class people, is complicated when read through nature. Even as I nod to the instrumentalism of labouring-class culture as a method of

recognizing these cultures within the literary establishment, Val Plumwood, among others, critiques the emphasis on the usefulness of nature as a "denial of [human] dependency on biospheric processes" (Plumwood 1993, 21). But the privileging of the instrumentality of labouring-class culture does not necessarily clash with Plumwood's ecocritical view. Indeed, it may not be instrumentality which is the problem but, rather, the narrow conceptualization of marginalized groups and processes. In the case of labouring-class people, then, it is the reluctance to admit creative expressions of their working realities as the subject of culture because this content does not fit with idealized notions of pastoral life that has come to define "nature poetry". If they write poetry, labouring-class people must, apparently, have been blessed with a "rustic Muse".

The phenomenon of the "natural Genius" reached its height in Britain in the eighteenth century. Largely a fantasy projected by would-be patrons and benefactors onto "unlikely" poets, the label denotes not only a poet who, as Joseph Addison puts it in Spectator 160, "were never disciplined and broken by the Rules of Art" (Addison, 2, 127), but a poet who as an uneducated "rustic" is perceived to live in a close relationship with nature. While Addison's intention, as Thomas Crawford points out, was to celebrate the accomplishments of the Ancients, especially Homer, "a contemporary or divagation of that sense [of "genius"], namely someone who could make a splash in any art or science without application and with the minimum of acquired knowledge" (Crawford 342) was increasingly extending the meaning of the word. Indeed, Stephen Duck's meteoric rise in the 1730s from

thresher to poet patronized by Queen Caroline characterizes the sense of natural genius I will discuss here. While natural genius as I have already defined it implies a lack of education, Joseph Spence celebrates labouring-class writers' attempts to achieve self-education, championing, for example, Robert Hill, "the Buckinghamshire Tailor" who taught himself Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Spence also documents Stephen Duck's struggle towards full literacy in English as integral to his becoming a poet (in Osborn 126). But in the twentieth century, Richard Greene outlines a conscious minimization by contemporary patrons and reviewers of Mary Leapor's actual education and access to books. These patrons and reviewers, Greene asserts, invent an uneducated Leapor so that she can be perpetuated as, in the words of John Duncombe, "a most extraordinary uncultivated genius, who warbled her native wood-notes wild" (Greene 163). Betty Rizzo suggests that Samuel Richardson used Duncombe as "the architect of Leapor's subsequent fame" (Rizzo 252) in order to promote natural genius as a proof that a classical education is not necessary for one to achieve literary greatness. According to Rizzo, Richardson hoped his own career, rooted in the non-classically educated mercantile class, would be buoyed by such a proof.

Dustin Griffin points out that it is unlikely that many poets (he speaks specifically of Mary Leapor) would have published at all without patronage of some kind (Griffin 193). But his position discourages critical examination of the terms of patronage, in particular, the prescriptions, cautions and even moral judgments that are attached to these poets' works and lives as a result of patronage. Many and various

qualities are assigned to labouring-class women poets which define and limit their ability to write freely; ironically, they are prevented from living as the very unencumbered beings they are promoted to be. As a patron, for example, Hannah More equates publication with moral degeneracy when she worries in a 21 July 1785 letter to Elizabeth Montagu about a rumour that Ann Yearsley, following the publication of her first book of poetry, "wears very fine gauze Bonnets long lappets, gold Pins etc." and then extrapolates to a concern about the now "fashionable" Yearsley's ability to care responsibly for her children (in Waldron 66). Other judgments are more aesthetic than moral, but similarly narrow the scope of labouring-class poets' lives. When the Scots Magazine in 1819, reflects on the "unlettered bards" of the eighteenth-century, it asserts that these poets, while capable of "[t]ragic and impassioned sentiments [perhaps] the more powerful, in proportion as they are more simply expressed," they are incapable of writing humour as "it requires a certain polish and refinement which unlettered bards can scarcely have had an opportunity of acquiring" (in Bold 22). This assessment reflects a very selective reading of the work of labouring-class poets.

But aesthetic judgments are not limited to the poetry. The poet is also aesthetized, often in an extended gardening metaphor. Margaret Ezell points out that the garden metaphor, used initially by John Locke in On Education (1693), "depicts the potential of women's moral and intellectual growth under proper management [and figures] women...[as] the products of the care and attention given them" (Ezell 118). Extending the metaphor from women to encompass the labouring

classes, Anna Seward, for example, attributes the rise of the labouring-class poets Chatterton, Yearsley and Bryant to Bristol's fertile soil "where poetic plants of wonderful strength and luxuriance, spring up amidst the weeds and brambles of vulgar life" (Seward 121). More common than Seward's image is one in which unruly nature is kindly tamed and tended by a patron gardener. The conceptualization of the poet as a flower or an animal is framed within a larger metaphor of nature, usually one of bringing the obscure poet out of darkness into the light. So enthusiastically engaged is James Paterson with this relationship between the garden and the labouring-class poet that he unselfconsciously exposes the pleasure of the patron in discovering and nurturing the labouring-class poet as the central motive for patronage.

> there is a pleasure to be experienced in tracing the obscure path of him to whom the fountains of knowledge have been only partially opened; and who, struggling in vain to wing his flight against the full "blaze of day," has nevertheless become the centre and the luminary of his own admiring though limited circle....The flower that is-------"born to blush unseen,/And waste its sweetness in the desert air," may, indeed, lose a portion of its perfume in the transplanting, but who would choose that it should rather perish in the solitude?...[H]e shall have more delight in rescuing the obscure from oblivion, or in leading forward those whose unfledged wings give promise of future strength of flight.
> (Paterson xii)

This pleasure of the patron in figuring the labouring-class poet as a product of nature reiterates the belief that the labouring-class poet has a "special" access to nature. But in Elizabeth Hands' poem "The Rural Maid in London to Her Friend in the Country" (1789), the pleasure that the poet experiences springs from her relationship with a nature

that she herself is part of. The poem begins with the rural maid's lament for the country:

> Rejoice, dear nymph! enjoy your happy grove,
> Where birds and shepherds warble strains of love,
> While banish'd I alas! can nothing hear,
> But sounds too harsh to sooth a tender ear.
> (1-4)

In subsequent lines, she imagines her return to the country in terms of her relatively respectful treatment of nature and her specialized knowledge of nature's proper cycles and schedules-- a contrast to the "strange disorders" (20) and "tinsel joys" (21) of the city where "their noon is evening, and their evening morn" (18):

> To make a wreath, I'd gather flow'rs full blown,
> But spare the tender buds, till riper grown:
> If I should see a black-bird, or a thrush,
> Sit on her nest within the hawthorn bush,
> She undisturb'd should hatch her little brood;
> Who fright her thence has not a heart that's good;
> (27-32)

While this behaviour constitutes the poet in nature, too often labouring-class women poets also describe nature in terms of their own sense of being "tended" out of this nature and into the culture of the "real" poet. Betty Rizzo views these expressions of gratitude toward the gardener patron as necessary posturing, part of a contrived abjection required by the patron (Rizzo 259). I see it more in terms of the relationship between nature and work organization which encourages the dual promotion of instrumentality as a dominant force. When the labouring-class woman poet emphasizes the use-value of nature, especially of her own nature, she inadvertently reinforces the patron's perception of her as a poet, a labourer and as a woman in the same instrumental terms. For example, while Hannah More was convinced

that it was dangerous to take "the milkwoman out of her station and that she should not be made 'idle' or 'useless,' she...'hired her a *little* Maid, to help her feed her pigs, and nurse the little ones, while she herself sells her Milk'" (in Lonsdale 1989, 393), in other words, allowing her to grow, but only within a highly controlled and circumscribed environment.

For labouring-class women poets such as Ann Yearsley, the label natural genius is one both embraced and abhorred. While it is nature that kindles the "light'ning of bright fancy" (11) in the Prologue to Yearsley's Earl Goodwin (staged in 1789, printed in 1791), the physical and mental isolation of the natural landscape paradoxically imprisons "nature's child in shades of darkness" (16) preventing her from "becoming" a "real" poet. Especially in her early work, she openly chastises the sun, rejecting nature as she abjectly looks to her patrons to "enlighten" her. In Yearsley's "On Mrs. Montagu," Yearsley naturalizes Montagu's role as gardener of Yearsley's rude, "dark soul" (39)

> When the bright Moralist, in softness dressed,
> Opes all the glories of the mental world,
> Deigns to direct the infant thought, to prune
> The budding sentiment, uprear the stalk
> Of feeble fancy, bid idea live,
> Woo the abstracted spirit from its cares,
> And gently guide her to the scenes of peace.
> (71-77)

Yearsley's conflicted identity as a natural genius erupts throughout her poetry. In "Night. To Stella" she refers to herself as "more savage than the nightly-prowling wolf" (193), acknowledging the radical unnaturalness of the apparent rejection of nature embedded in her aspiration to write. At another turn, in "Clifton Hill," she is "Lactilla,"

the quintessential pastoral rural maid "half sunk in snow/..., shivering, tend[ing] her fav'rite cow" (19-20) in a distinctly anti-pastoral working landscape. To contain a poet such as Yearsley with her varied and complex relationship to nature within the limited conceptualization of the natural genius is to condemn her to the fate of the captive linnet.

In the chapters that follow, I consider nature from ecocritical and ecofeminist perspectives in selected poems by Collier, Leapor, Hands, Yearsley and Little. Each chapters is in part theoretical, each presents a close reading of at least one poem, each chapter discusses a particular animal or process and each chapter examines some eighteenth-century non-literary discourse -- for example, Le Comte de Buffon's Histoire Naturelle (1749-1804), Mary Astell's Some Reflections on Marriage (1700), Bernard Mandeville's Fable of the Bees (1714), Thomas Topham's Treatise on Cattle (1787). Each chapter considers the place of the natural genius in relation to theory, poem, animal and discourse. While my approach is intertextual, I concentrate on specific poems by each author in order to explore each poem in depth. I take on a task that is both manageable and meaningful. Sustained readings of these poems, with the exception of Mary Collier's "The Woman's Labour," have not yet been made in any area of eighteenth-century studies.

Though food has not been a particular focus of my work, in a sense, it frames this study. I begin, with the captive wild linnet refusing "the crumb" (57) from her "gaolor" (54) and I end with Janet Little's poem "From Snipe, a Favourite Dog to His Master" in which an

aristocratic dog asserts the extraordinary agency of petitioning his Master in writing to return home and feed him. Between these images, I consider the process of domestication in the eighteenth-century as it applies to both women and animals through the exploited status of bees as producers of a valuable food commodity for humans, a spotless lamb aesthetized beyond any possible wild or agricultural function and a "mad heifer" who resists, for a moment, her "natural" position in the chain of eighteenth-century animal production and reproduction.

In my first chapter, on Mary Leapor, I discuss the process of domestication, the role of humans in the domestication of animals, domesticated women as subject to the rule of the domestic master and the creation of a "natural Genius" as a process of domestication. In chapter two, I utilize the concept of "interlocking oppressions" to unpack the potentials and pitfalls of "identification" as a literary tool used by women to connect with other female animals. In chapter three, I look at the enormous significance bees have in western culture and I read the bee-in-nature against the discourses of eighteenth-century bee box technologists and the concept of bees and labouring-class women as "industrious". In chapter four I show how Ann Yearsley enacts a strategical shift in the meaning of "wildness" through the representation of the hyper-docility of a spotless lamb in order to characterize her own development as an independent poet. Finally, in chapter five, I examine the phenomenon of the "talking animal" in literature and how language can be used to both enable and impede the human understanding of animal subjectivity.

Ideologies of Domestication in Mary Leapor's "Man the Monarch" (1746)

> No Golden Apples lay in view
> Across her Path -- and yet she fell:
> Mary Leapor "The Penitent" (1751)

> A peaceable Woman indeed will neither question her
> Husband's Right nor his Fitness to Govern.
> Mary Astell Some Reflections upon Marriage (1700)

This chapter investigates the ideologies of domestication embedded in Mary Leapor's 1746 poem, "Man the Monarch". Leapor (1722-1746) was a gardener's daughter who lived most of her life in Brackley, Northamptonshire, where she worked as a domestic servant. She died of measles at age 24. Her two volumes of poetry, Poems upon Several Occasions, Vols. I & II, were published posthumously in 1747 and 1751 respectively.[1] Donna Landry states that Leapor "transposes into poetry what had already been argued [regarding the domestication of women] in prose" (Landry 1990, 32). I demonstrate ways in which "Man the Monarch" contradicts, complicates and sometimes complements predominant views of domestication in the eighteenth century. I move away from Landry's focus on Leapor's "sapphic textuality" promoting, rather, Leapor's conceptualization of "wildness" and "slavery". I view these concepts not only as central to eighteenth-century debates on nature, marriage and the "naturalness" of marriage but also as products of Leapor's powerlessness as a labouring-class woman poet. I also relate Leapor's use of "wildness" and "slavery" to predominant internalized

[1]"Man the Monarch" appears in Vol. II.

notions of "animal" in the eighteenth century to discuss ways that ideologies of domestication within the family extend to the domestication of the natural world.

Drawing on the relationships between sexism, classism and speciesism, I consider an expanded definition of domestication. I understand domestication as a process in which the domesticator actively forces changes onto the domesticated being in order to satisfy the particular needs of the domesticator (see Noske 3). I also acknowledge conflicting discourses of domestication such as Lucretius' theory, popular in the eighteenth century, of a semi-contractual domestication in which animals "agree" that it is to their own survival benefit to come under the care of humans (see Glacken 138-9) and the view based on the work of Francis Bacon which locates domestication at the intersection between science and religion where it "compensate[s] for the damage caused by humanity's expulsion from Paradise" (in Noske 60). I use "domestication" not only to refer to the domestication of animals but the domestication of women within the home -- the process Nancy Armstrong calls "feminization" (Armstrong 91) -- and the conditions and conditioning of the domestic servant and labouring-class woman poet.

Despite generalized beliefs that early-modern women were silenced by the tyranny of family structures, Margaret Ezell, for example, concludes that "the model of domestic patriarchalism as a pervasive, restrictive blanket of strictly male control over women's education and marriage seems to be overstated" (Ezell 34-35) . I look at several early-modern texts which help to contextualize Leapor's poem

in a discursive world of texts and extrapolate not only a cultural milieu in which a young labouring-class woman could participate, but a culture in which the meaning and purpose of domestication is in flux. Aware, then, of Leapor's lively attention to reading and writing, I look at the ways in which Thomas Burnett's The Sacred Theory of the Earth (1681-9), Georges-Louis Leclerc, le Comte de Buffon's Histoire Naturelle (1749-1804), Mary Astell's Some Reflections on Marriage (1700) and John Locke's Two Treatises of Government (1689) "converse" with "Man the Monarch".

Jocelyn Harris has ascertained that "Man the Monarch" is a direct response, a "domestication," as she puts it, in poetry to Astell and Locke's works (Harris 18). I suggest, though, that Leapor's poem is quite consciously not a "domestication". Setting up a debate between her text and Astell's and Locke's, Leapor generates a tension which emphasizes her "wildness" in the context of Locke's rationality and Astell's precepts. Indeed, the effect of "Man the Monarch" is to "wild" Astell's and Locke's texts and render parts of them "unruly". Here, I use Burnett's text to help to locate Leapor's relationship to religion and nature. Burnett's text in many ways enables and sanctions Leapor to take "wild" action in "Man the Monarch". Buffon's Histoire Naturelle, though written and published after Leapor's death, provides detailed reflections of eighteenth-century attitudes towards nature, particularly, in Buffon's project to create "another living nature" through domestication. I note Buffon's faith in the power of human agency to make hideous wild nature into something "agreeable and living" (Glacken 663) and I suggest that Leapor's faith in women's agency inverts Buffon's model,

challenges the control of wild nature and the notion of the "agreeable" domesticated woman.

"Man the Monarch" begins with an acknowledgment of reading that openly admits the presence of other texts. Indeed Leapor is known to have "played with" other author's texts as an exercise integral to her own poetic practice. Katherine R. King, for example, notes that three poems by the seventeenth-century poet and clergyman, John Newton, were altered by Leapor (who substituted rhyme for blank verse) and published in her Poems on Several Occasions under the titles "Catharina's Cave by Mr. Newton," "Florimelia, the first Pastoral by Mr. Newton" and "Florimelia, the Second Pastoral" (King 15 & 25). While later rumours of Leapor's plagiarism seem based more on the general disbelief that always accompanies the subscription for or the publication of the work of a labouring-class poet, Bridget Freemantle's defense of Leapor against such rumours in her "To the Reader" which was prefixed to the second volume of Leapor's poems suggests that specific accusations had been made (see Greene 164). Freemantle, Leapor's patron and friend, defends Leapor by characterizing her as an innocent who read eclectically:

> [I would] dare venture...that [plagiarism] proceeded from the Impression the Reading those Passages some time before happen'd to make upon her Mind, without remembring from whence they came.
>
> (Freemantle qtd. in Green 164)

Richard Greene surmises that the intertextual depth of Leapor's work belies her status as a "natural Genius" and this may be what was really under attack.

Despite Leapor's apparent inability to remember specific sources, her phrase "[a]mazed we read" (1) at the head of the poem, identifies her both as a reader and as part of a "we," an apparent community of readers. The rhetoric of improvement elucidates Leapor's habit of working on other people's poetry as a kind of poetic exercise. Because she reads, in a sense, all texts "belong" to her. The boldness of her abridgment of Locke and Astell's work lies in her belief in improving through poetry and her interest in turning the argument to her own purposes. As Laura Mandell argues, Leapor audaciously employs a Lockean methodology in her observations of the conditions of the domesticated woman, weighing any theory as articulated by Astell and Locke against the situation as she sees it with her own eyes. Caryn Chaden, establishes Leapor as a public poet engaged in critiques of social and political institutions through her responses to discursive texts. In Chaden's examination of Pope's influence on Leapor, she discovers that as much as Pope "criticizes abuses in society...[he] consistently changes direction and leaves his readers with images of the social order and economic prosperity" (Chaden 44-5). Leapor, on the other hand, insists that

> the abuses she describes are not simply the result of individual failings...but endemic to a society where wives are, legally, their husband's property and property is all too often the standard measure of an individual's worth.
>
> (Chaden 45)

Though Astell and Locke's texts are obviously in the background of what "we read," the key text that "amazes" is Genesis. The "we" also resonates and represents a number of communities -- "we" as a

community of women who insist upon their inclusion as "man" in discussions of marriage or "we" as a labouring-class community of uneducated readers seeking sanction to enter one of the other, larger communities of readers. The amazement these readers experience also springs from several sources. It comes as a result of new literacy -- the opening up of worlds through texts -- and, as such, represents a new and independent way (through reading) of consuming God's works. The amazement also results from a troubled response to what this Christian text appears to say about women and the natural world.

If Genesis is read through Burnett's The Sacred Theory of the Earth, though, the idea of "text" is enlarged for what Burnett suggests is that once oriented to his manner of thinking about the Creation, no human-generated text is really needed for Nature itself serves as a text. Burnett prescribes its meaning within a highly circumscribed Christian context.

> The works of the creation shew us the Creator himself. These are nature's bible, wherein we plainly read a God which occasioned Plotinus to say, If the world could speak, and we could hear its voice, it would certainly utter these words, *God made me.*
>
> (Burnett 4, note (a))

Burnett's dynamic nature is under no obligation to man and, as a result, is available to anyone with the faith to "read" it. As a result, Burnett's projection of the ideal reader of "nature's bible" includes readers without formal education or a knowledge of the Ancients.

> It will be much to our interest that the reader of this theory should be of an ingenuous and unprejudiced temper; neither does it require book-learning and scholarship as good natural sense to distinguish *true* and *false*....It often happens that scholastic education, like a trade, does so fix a man in a particular way, that he is not fit to judge...and so his learning becomes a clog to his natural parts and makes him more indocile...than those that have only the talents of nature....[J]ust reasoning, and a generous love of truth, whether with, or without erudition, is that which makes us most competent judges of what is true.
>
> (Burnett 7)

Through Burnett's text Leapor is empowered to critique societal manifestations of the natural which she perceives as anything but natural. In "Man the Monarch" Leapor astutely notes, using the methods of observation Burnett suggests, that humans have tampered with Nature's "text". Wretched woman, then, is neither natural nor drawn from observations of nature, but inscribed on nature. This observation which appears to challenge the notion of the earth as a reflection of God's perfection, is also in keeping with Burnett's theory. As Basil Willey notes, Burnett views "the world in its present state....as a mighty ruin, a damaged paradise...[which] furnish[es] evidence of God's anger" (Willey 33). But while "Man the Monarch" reflects "God's anger," Leapor takes her observations of man's abuse of the natural world and connects them to her perception that a parallel abuse occurs within the family. Leapor's discussion of Mary Astell's Some Reflections on Marriage and John Locke's Two Treatises of Government complicates the debates around marriage and the family by connecting the image of

> The sceptre claim; and every cottage brings
> A long succession of domestic kings.

(64-65)

to man's dominion over nature. I suggest, as a result, that there is a connection between the project of rebuilding of a pre-lapsarian idyll of human-dominated nature through science and intense market-driven agrarian domestication processes.

In Some Reflections upon Marriage (1700), Mary Astell, emphasizes women's ability to choose a marriage partner wisely, though "[a] Woman indeed can't properly be said to Choose, all that is allow'd her, is to Refuse or Accept what is offered" (Astell 23). Astell, to some extent, blames women for poor judgment if their husbands do not prove good companions. If "Man the Monarch" is read through Astell's work, Leapor errs in even talking about unhappiness in marriage. Astell argues that a stoical, virtuous woman in an unhappy marriage internalizes her misery until one day she

> opens her Eyes, fixes her Attention, and
> diffuses such a Light, such a Joy into her Mind,
> as not only informs her better, but entertains
> her more than even her *Ruel* did tho' crouded
> by Men of Wit.
>
> (Astell 17)

Leapor's detailed description in "Man the Monarch" of women's descent into wretchedness after Nature has poured "roseate beauty on her favourite" (25) and "designed a queen" (32) does precisely what Astell argues against doing. Leapor is like the female reader whom Astell addresses at the end of Some Reflections Upon Marriage and from whom she must part company

> Men govern the world, they have Prescription on their side...yet...Heaven wou'd not have allowed the Man to Govern, but because he was best Qualify'd for it. So far I agree with her: But if she goes on to infer, that therefore if he has not these Qualifications, where is his Right? If he misemploys, does he not abuse it? And if he abuses,... he forfeits it, I must leave her there. A peaceable Woman indeed will not carry it so far, she will neither question her Husband's Right nor his Fitness to Govern.
>
> (Astell 97)

Though Astell understands tyrannized woman's anger, she fixes on the freedom of "the Mind" (Astell 47) and, as if in response to Leapor's question in line 23

> Then joyful birds ascend their native sky:
> But where! ah, where shall helpless woman fly.
>
> (22-23)

establishes "the Mind" as the place to which women can fly. Leapor's woman attempts this mental flight in line 47 when "to Wisdom's sacred help she flies" but it is "in vain," too late. Physical flight, on the other hand, is not an option in Astell's world for "neither Prudence nor Duty will allow a Woman to fly out" (Astell 32). While Leapor's experience of the bird is in the seemingly limitless "natural" medium of the wild sky, Astell's bird/woman is already clearly caged, fully domesticated and kept indoors.[2] Astell naturalizes the domesticated space, claiming it as not only women's proper "native sky" but also as a "new nature," perhaps the culmination of Buffon's "another living nature" in which Nature "acquires fresh vigour from culture" (Buffon 1797, X, 338).

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[2]McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb note the increasing popularity of caged birds in the eighteenth century (McKendrick 274).

Astell recognizes the male hypocrisy inherent in debates on tyranny

> For whatever may be said against Passive-
> Obedience in another case, I suppose there's no
> Man but likes it very well in this; how much
> soever Arbitrary Power may be dislik'd on a
> Throne, Not *Milton* himself wou'd cry up
> Liberty to poor *Female Slaves*, or plead for the
> Lawfulness of Resisting a Private Tyranny.
>
> (Astell 29)

But what Astell calls "Arbitrary Power" may not be, as Leapor points out, arbitrary at all. And, in fact, in "Man the Monarch" the arbitrary power of blind tyranny is replaced by a "doubtful rule" (60) where man steals power as a result of his "rational" conclusions based on his observations of nature.

> When our grandsire named the feathered kind,
> Pondering their nature in his careful mind,
> 'Twas then, if on our author we rely,
> He viewed his consort with an envious eye;
>
> (54-57)

While on the one hand Leapor documents the working of a empiricist "pondering [birds'] nature in his careful mind" (55), on the other hand, she ridicules man through the unflattering image of him "hugging the tottering throne" (58) and "roll[ing] his wise eyeballs" (61) in a more bitter and much less funny, clenched-teeth version of satires on virtuosi.

Clearly, the situation Leapor describes in which tyrannical man verbally attacks woman in order to achieve and consolidate his power is one from which women might hope to escape. Leapor's simultaneous association with and distance from non-human animals in "Man the Monarch" comes partly in response to "helpless woman's" inability "to fly," in line 23 or, more accurately, on not having anywhere to "fly" to

from male tyranny. While "fly" is also used figuratively to mean "run," Leapor's interest here is clearly with the image of the bird and its realm. Leapor tightly associates women and birds, creating an image in which the woman watches the joyous ascent of the birds in order to contrast their relative freedom. This association supports Keith Thomas's assertion that "[w]ild birds were a symbol of the Englishman's freedom" (Thomas 279), though Thomas's deliberate gendering of the Englishman may, however anachronistically, underline Leapor's point that men have worked with malice to exclude women from identification and access to even national symbols of freedom and agency.

This dilemma of the "caged woman" or the woman without recourse, without a "native sky" (22), becomes increasingly a part of women's discourse in the eighteenth century aided, ironically, as Katharine M. Rogers points out, by rationalist philosophy which unintentionally "laid essential foundations for [social change for women] by questioning the sacredness of traditional patriarchal institutions and exposing the sentimental falsifications that obscured their oppressive nature" (Rogers 53). While Leapor's poem can be contextualized as part of an eighteenth-century tendency in women's poetry noted by Terry Castle to be "caustic on the themes of love, sex and marriage"(Castle 1228), as an unmarried woman, Leapor's orientation towards the whole discussion is inherently critical. Unmarried women occupy an uncontrolled unnatural state. In part, "Man the Monarch's" response to Astell's work on marriage, and Locke's discussion of the duties of mothers reminds readers that both have excluded unmarried women from their discussion. There is also attached to the "maid" the

implicit cultural censure of her "failure" to fulfill her reproductive role. Nature's matronly lament for her daughter's degeneration is not directed against male tyranny. Instead Nature has been coopted to serve the ideology of the "naturally" reproductive female. Nature's disappointment is directed against her daughter "whom she designed a queen" (32), a reproductive female who has "neglected [her] charms" (37) and her womanly duty.

Though Leapor's use of the noun "maid" in line 49 underlines that, even for a woman who "opts out," complete freedom from male tyranny is impossible especially when the tyranny of "brothers, husbands and commanding sons" (63) is included[3] a woman's unmarried status can also be seen as a strategy to escape male tyranny. The unmarried woman's marginalization, at its most optimistic, parallels the "grinning" escape of the beasts to the margins where they occupy a rugged utopian landscape.

> Pards, tigers, wolves to gloomy shades retire,
> To humble valleys, where soft flowers blow,
> And fattening streams in chrystal mazes flow,
> Full of new life, the untamed coursers run,
> And roll and wanton in the cheerful sun;
> Round their gay hearts in dancing spirits rise,
> To craggy rocks destructive serpents glide,
> Whose mossy crannies hide their speckled pride;
> And monstrous whales on foamy billows ride.
> (11-21)

The embarrassingly plaintive tone of Leapor's question at the end of the first verse paragraph with its repeated "[w]here! ah where" (23) suggests that there is a rhetorical edge to Leapor's question of women's

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[3]As Greene and Landry both detail, Leapor writes of a difficult relationship with her father in "The Unhappy Father" and in her poem "The Cruel Parent" (Greene 67-73, Landry 1990, 103-106).

flight as if she knows, all too well, that she can "fly" from some forms of male tyranny and that "wretched woman's" folly is to be lured out of "wild" womanhood into marriage. Nature's mechanistic conceptualization of woman as "weak machine" (33) in the context of [t]he Cartesian emphasis on mechanism in nature...[and] later the inclusion of man among the mechanically regulated products of nature" (Rosenfield xxv) is challenged by the refusal to comply by the wild animals and a few of nature's daughters. Donna Landry reads Leapor's intention here as a critique of heterosexuality where "woman's Edenic body [is] her downfall for it made her both powerless to resist Man's oppression and threatening to his precarious sense of superiority...when he noticed that male birds had more splendid plumage than females" (Landry 1990, 86). What Landry calls Leapor's "sapphic textuality" projects, beyond Astell's promotion of a separate education for women, a community of women willing to "opt out" of the heterosexual contract. Landry's metaphor of "a pastoral green world of female outlaws, escapees from heterosexuality" (Landry 1990, 82) is supported in the context of the "tattling dame's" story. While women cannot "fly," retelling old stories containing new truths may offer an alternative.

Leapor's third verse paragraph brings together two distinct threads in the poem.

> A tattling dame, no matter where or who-
> Me it concerns not, and it need not you-
> Once told this story to the listening Muse,
> Which we, as now it serves our turn, shall use.
> (50-53)

While Leapor uses the observational tools of the empiricist, the poem as a whole embraces an allegorical, storytelling mode notable less for its scientific precision than its ephemerality.[4] Leapor's shift to the "tattling dame's" story at line 50, along with the implication that the dame's story is an old story much told "which we, now it serves our turn, shall use" (53), pits Leapor's attachment to rural historical traditions such as storytelling and Christian biblical narratives against her explicitly modern attitudes towards such "inaccurate" knowledges. While Leapor decries woman's uselessness in "Man the Monarch," first in terms of the "useless and neglected charms" (37) and "shortlived merit" (46) Nature imbued in her, and then in the "delirium" (49) woman experiences once she tries to use her wisdom and wit, she emphasizes the necessity of "making something" of the folk knowledges available to her. Leapor's introduction of the tattling dame's story interrupts the logical flow of the preceding formal couplets to mark both a division in the poem between past and future and to create a branch conduit through which women's history told by women can flow. The imposition of rhyming couplets on informal content and philosophical content, the questioning of the reliability and credibility of the narrator through the "tattling dame" (50) pejoratively pitted against Nature as "officious dame" (26), the foregrounding of a plebeian georgic figure who in a reversed poetic technique "tells her story" (52) to the classical muse figures Leapor as an "alienated insider". As such,

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[4]This quite accurately reflects the early-modern condition where "it is historically incorrect to pluck out the newly emergent mechanical philosophy of the seventeenth century and separate it from the continuing organic and hermetic models of nature" (Russell 22).

explains Valerie Rumbold, she has "a privileged view [and]...can, from her combination of knowledge and independence, risk a dissenting vision" (Rumbold 76). The superior power of storytelling is foregrounded in the strong hint that the tattling dame may be Eve telling her ancient story in her own words, encouraging its passage, via the classical Muse, to Leapor who retells it as poetry from the wild margins of the unmarried woman's perspective. The image of the Muse broadcasting this "explanation" to inspired poets implicates poetry as an important purveyor of cultural and political values.

The suspicion that wild animals may have found an empowering refuge for themselves on the margins of human society is a clear concern for Georges-Louis Leclerc, le Comte de Buffon. The movement of wild animals described in "Man the Monarch" is, in fact, just as Buffon describes it in his chapter "Of Domestic Animals" in the Histoire Naturelle.

> [H]is empire, then, over animals is not absolute. Many species can escape his power by the rapidity of their flight, by the obscurity of their retreats, and by the elements they inhabit.
>
> (Buffon, 1797, V, 90)[5]

While Buffon attempts to contain "wildness" within these "obscure retreats," he admits that wild nature exerts a powerful agency

> [F]ar from respecting their sovereign, [brutes] openly attack [man]. Besides these, he is insulted by the stings of insects, poisonous bites of serpents, and teased with many other unclean, troublesome, and useless creatures.
>
> (Buffon 1797, V, 90)

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[5]All quotations are taken from Barr's translation of Buffon's Histoire Naturelle published in 1797.

Buffon explains and justifies man's failure to eradicate wild nature completely by establishing an imaginary boundary between "real," "civilized" nature at the centre and an area "out there" where a gradually diminishing wild nature exists "to form a shade between good and evil and to make man comprehend how little respectable his fall has made him" (Buffon 1797, V, 90). Buffon's emphasis on the central role of wild animals in the human conceptualization of their relationship to the Fall entrenches and perpetuates notions of "wildness" and "slavery" that allow for certain animals with particular characteristics to be valourized and others to be denigrated.[6] In Buffon's view, "wildness" is equivalent to simplicity for "the wild animal, subject to nature alone, knows no other laws than those of appetite and liberty" (Buffon 1797, V, 88). Buffon's entry on the tiger in the Histoire Naturelle exemplifies the limiting parameters of the desire for the sublime he imposes on his "observations"[7] as he describes, based on nothing he sees with his own eyes, how the tiger's "indiscriminate fury" (Buffon 1797, VII, 58) and his "thirst for blood in excess" might cause him to "extinguish the whole race of monsters which he produces [since he will eat his own young]" (Buffon 1797, VII, 59). "The tiger is, [Buffon concludes], perhaps the only animal whose spirit cannot be subdued" (Buffon 1797, VII, 63).

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[6]These value-laden conceptualizations of animals have been carried-over and internalized within twentieth-century ecological thought. In her essay "Thinking Like a Chicken" (1995) Karen Davis points out, for example, that "domesticated animals, farm animals in particular are [considered] 'creations of man'" and, as a result, not worthy of ethical consideration by many deep ecologists (Adams and Donovan, 193-4).

[7]Buffon's chapters on the big cats rely heavily on evidence gleaned from viewing only the animals' skins which were brought back to Europe from Africa and India.

On the other hand, domesticated animals as "slave[s] to our amusements or operations" (Buffon 1797, V, 88) are, in Buffon's estimation, more complicated. Here the complication arises as a barrier to classification. Nature and culture, instinct and education are altered by man's "artful means" (Buffon 1797, V, 88) and this makes it more difficult to determine which factor predominates for a particular trait. But domestication, motivated at least on the operations side by a desire to simplify through specialization is a process removed from the being of the animal and, therefore, unable to encompass the complexity of animals. Despite this, Buffon does not shrink from projecting narrow conceptualizations onto domesticated animals. He claims that sheep, for example, possess a "weakness and stupidity...[so that] we shall be tempted to think, that from the beginning, [they] were confided to the care of man....The female [especially] is absolutely without resource and without defense" (Buffon 1797, V, 244-5).

This view of the defenseless female domesticated animal is culturally extended to the domesticated state of women in the family. In the realm of the family, John Locke takes pains to legislate against the possibility of women's wildness. In his First Treatise on Government, Locke's interest in questions of the family appears not to arise, as Mary Astell's did, from a concern about women. Rather, Locke presents his views as a rational response to Sir Robert Filmer's argument in Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings (1680) that kings are the direct heirs of Adam and that monarchy is a natural extension of the domestic authority of fathers. Taking Genesis as a text available for rational analysis, Locke carefully refutes Filmer's views, ridiculing the

idea of a lineage from Adam to the kings of every cottage as "the *Original Grant of Government* and the *Foundation of Monarchical Power*, [since] there will be as many Monarchs as there are Husbands" (Locke 192) . The error of this view, according to Locke, is in locating all forms of power in the figure of the father. Locke's close reading of Genesis 3 exposes flaws in Filmer's argument that God grants sovereignty to Adam over Eve and makes him "Universal Monarch over all Mankind" (Locke 190). As Locke points out, God's words "are the Curse of God upon the Woman, for having been the first and forwardest in the Disobedience....so that [Adam] had accidentally a Superiority over her" (Locke 190). Continuing his critique, Locke says it is unlikely that the Fall "was the time, wherein God was granting *Adam* Prerogatives and Priviledges, investing him with Dignity and Authority, elevating him to Dominion and Monarchy" (Locke 190). But Locke never rationally explains the traditional domestic powers of the Husband. Instead, he prefers to attribute this sovereignty to "what every Wife owes her Husband" (Locke 192, my emphasis). The origins of this debt are not probed by Locke even as they are asserted as natural.

Leapor, though, is interested in exploring this. In a refutation of or replacement of the Genesis story, she locates the genesis of women's subjection in the "tattling dame's" (50) tale of flawed paradise, a pre-lapsarian jealousy in which man snatches power from woman "to reign alone" (59). With this alternative discourse, Leapor "totter[s] the throne" (59) of Locke's whole rational project of promoting a civil society consisting of "those who are united into one Body and have a common establish'd Law" (Locke 342). Leapor demonstrates that Locke's

"one Body" represents only the body of Men. Because Locke's central concern is with the distribution of property, it is always in his interest to diminish the number of claims to property rights. One strategy he uses, according to Lorenne M. G. Clark, is to regard women as "naturally disadvantaged" in order to make them "naturally" dependent on men and convert them from potential agents into property. Using women's reproductive capacity as a sign of inferiority, Locke translates "a biological 'natural' difference between the sexes as a source of 'natural' inequality". (Clark 36). The "tattling dame" (50) reveals that women's inferior standing is not natural but wholly contrived by man. To confound women's position, Locke structures private powers -- what he calls "conjugal power" or "the power that every husband hath to order the things of private concernment in his family" (Locke 192) as separate from public powers such as "political power" which

> every Man having in the state of Nature has given up into the hands of the Society and therein to the Governours whom the Society has set over itself, with this express or tacit Trust That it shall be imployed for their good and the preservation of their Property.
> (Locke 399)

Women, as a result, are not only deprived of political power, they are structurally alienated from government.

It is not just Locke's writing on patriarchy that interests Leapor but also his discussion of slavery. The urgency of Leapor's plea for women in "Man the Monarch" reflects Locke's recognition of slavery's power to fundamentally threaten the enslaved.

> This *Freedom* from Absolute, Arbitrary Power is so necessary to, and closely joyned with, a Man's Preservation that he cannot part with it but by what forfeits his Preservation and Life together.
> (Locke 302)

By connecting physical to mental deterioration, and contrasting the animals' access to wildness with woman's suspension between states of cultivation and enslavement, Leapor concretizes Locke's assertion. Woman's enslaved state threatens her very being. But when Locke distinguishes between the "*Natural Liberty* of Man" determined by the law of nature and "*Liberty of Man, in Society*" that is "established by consent in the Common-wealth," (Locke 301), he neglects to consider that "consent in the commonwealth" is a consent mediated by men of privilege on behalf of women and other animals. While the image of the domestic king in every cottage appears rather pathetic and unthreatening, even anti-monarchical in its status as a symbol, Leapor uses this image to address the implication of slavery for women and others without a direct voice in the "commonwealth".

Leapor also uses "Man the Monarch" to connect man's misguided tyranny over woman to his tyranny over nature. In the Histoire Naturelle, for example, Buffon clearly outlines his conception of the relationship between Nature and man in his chapter "General Views of Nature" that promotes man and nature in an unequal partnership sanctioned by the Almighty. Buffon's Nature, comprises the Creator's "external throne," and she helps man to "advance by degrees to the internal throne of the Almighty" (Buffon 1797, X, 335) through his contemplation of her. Yet, while Nature seems primary and ascendant

in this aspect of their relationship, man as "the vassal of heaven and lord of the earth...gives [Nature] polish, extension, cultivation and embellishment" (Buffon 1797, X, 336), gaining ultimately, it seems, ascendancy over her.

Leapor extends this discussion of man's tyranny over women and nature further to show that class divisions are also marked. By figuring nature as a labourer, Leapor begins the poem with "Nature's throes" (1), an image of nature not just as mother giving birth to "the fair heavens" (2), "ponderous earth" (2), "blooming trees" (3) and "beasts" (4) but as a labourer manufacturing woman. Woman is "her work" (28) -- a daughter/product intended for reproduction. When Nature's daughter evades domestic tyranny like the wild nature that, near the beginning of the poem, gleefully escapes "to gloomy shades" (11), "purer gales" (12), to "humble valleys" (13), "craggy rocks" (19), mossy crannies" (20) and "foamy billows" (21), Leapor's maps the unmarried daughter's deterioration in a kind of anti-blazon -- mirroring Buffon's description of the sterility, uselessness and corruption of uncultivated Nature.[8]

> Here the earth, overloaded with the spoils of its productions, instead of presenting a scene of beautiful verdure, exhibits only a rude mass of coarse herbage, and trees loaded with parasitical plants...the low grounds are covered with putrid and stagnating waters; these miry lands being neither solid nor fluid, are not only impassable, but are entirely useless to the inhabitants of both land and water.
>
> (Buffon 1797, X, 336-7)

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[8]In Leapor's poem, man's relationship to woman is not that of an improver. Man is portrayed as envious and greedy for power and it is this that motivates him to subvert women.

One section of Leapor's anti-blazon refers specifically to physical labour of the kind upper-class women would be unlikely to experience.

> She suffers hardship with afflictive moans:
> Small tasks of labour suit her slender bones.
> Beneath a load her weary shoulders yield,
> Nor can her fingers grasp the sounding shield;
> (38-41)

Just as Stephen Duck in "The Thresher's Labour" (1730) and Mary Collier in "The Woman's Labour" (1739) work to present the reality of labouring people, Leapor strives to represent the "sorrows" (31) of the domesticated woman and the labours of Nature along with the usurpation by man of credit for those labours. Though Leapor does not clearly articulate the double day of labouring women subjected to tyranny both within their own homes and within the workplace (often someone else's home), her reference to "hardship" (38) and the fact that physical labour is required of Nature's "queen" turned "wretch," (32) clearly does not describe women of all classes.

In other poems, however, Leapor is aware of Collier's critique. Valerie Rumbold asserts, for example, that Leapor's "Crumble Hall" "reshapes traditional structures to express what such an estate might mean to one whose labour had helped to sustain it" (Rumbold 63). Speaking of the same poem, Laura Mandell points out how "Leapor parodies domestic ideology; she is trying to show that the ideal which represents women as working *only* for the love of men cannot be applied to women of the labouring classes" (Mandell 564). Donna Landry calls "Crumble-Hall"

> a rare artifact: a class-conscious plebeian country-house poem that undeniably mocks and seeks to demystify the values of the gentry, whose social power in large part depends upon the deference -- and the continued exploitable subservience -- of servants and laborers.
>
> (Landry, 1990, 107)

But while Leapor's class-based focus in "Crumble Hall" is significant, its fuzziness in "Man the Monarch" makes it easy for Leapor's remarks to be applied only to labouring-class marriages, to "men of low minds and vulgar habits" (Armstrong 91) so that Leapor's general critique is diffused and can be, as Laura Mandell puts it, "recuperated as mere reiteration of the status quo" (Mandell 564).

In terms of her own domestication as a poet, Leapor represents a "new breed" of poet -- the natural genius. Paradoxically, the "natural state" of the natural genius is contrived as "unbred" and "kept" between wildness and domestication. Though Leapor's patron, Bridget Freemantle, is seen by Betty Rizzo as "demonstrably as extreme an altruist as can be found in the roster of patrons" (Rizzo 253), Freemantle's description of Leapor's casualness toward her writing which meshes too perfectly with the quintessential image of the natural genius who creates poetry effortlessly

> She always called it being idle, and indulging her whimsical humour, when she was employed in writing the humourous parts of her poems; and nothing could pique more than people imagining she took a great deal of pains, or spent a great deal of time, in such composures; or that she set much value upon

> them. She told me that most of them were wrote when cross accidents happened to disturb her, purely to divert her from dwelling upon what was disagreeable; and that it generally had the intended effect, by putting her in a good humour.
>
> (Freemantle 27)

Freemantle uses this conceptualization of Leapor as a "casual" poet to exercise gentle control over Leapor's product and her image. Richard Greene asserts that Freemantle consciously held back Leapor's more controversial and proto-feminist work like "Man the Monarch" from publication in the first volume of Poems on Several Occasions. Greene surmises that "Freemantle strove to present [Leapor] to the publisher and potential subscribers as talented, pious, and humble....It seems that she was uneasy about poems which...made the poet look bad" (Greene 154).

"Man the Monarch" reflects an overall pessimism with its emphasis on language as a tyrannical tool. As much as Leapor engages in a discussion with Locke's text and in her act of response asserts an equality: the right to do to Locke's text what Locke has done to Filmer's text, she recognizes the difficulty of fleeing the patriarchal pejorative. Despite the apparent passion directed against injustice in "Man the Monarch," poetic form can be seen to enclose the animals in a kind of menagerie where "human structure [is imposed] on the threatening chaos of nature" (Ritvo 218). While "Man the Monarch" begins with a description of the loss of man's dominion over wild nature, by line 22 the gleeful wild animals have moved from the centre of the poem into the margins from which they do not return. Once the animals in the poem "act" by "glid[ing]" (19), "hid[ing]" (20), and "rid[ing]" (21), their

actions are contained within this first verse paragraph. Though wild women may grin from the margins, their deterioration is mapped onto the main body of the poem. And, once woman is pronounced "fool" by man in line 61, no rhetorical defense of woman is launched. There are only four lines in the poem left to conclude gloomily that over time man's domestic dominion has become fully naturalized.

In this way, language works as a domesticator. Leapor points out that man's "envious eye" (57) is not enough to destroy woman; he must use language to "name" her into submission. By pronouncing woman "fool" (61), man seizes sole possession of power and woman is "ridiculed into insignificance" (Landry 1990, 86), pushed down the hierarchy closer to the animals. This is not an uncommon strategy of domination. While Judith Butler asserts that "being called a name is...one of the conditions by which a subject is constituted in language" (Butler 2) and that this process, as Butler explains, is not always injurious precisely because it occurs in language, Carol J. Adams characterizes name calling as a form of verbal "battering" exposing the "contingent the status of women and animals in patriarchal culture" (Adams and Donovan 79).

Ironically man's impetus to name woman "fool" to seize power comes as a result of his observations of birds, through an apparent acknowledgment of his own animalness. But his easy willingness to extrapolate from bird to human behaviour comes only when the goal suits his purposes.[9] According to the story told by the tattling dame,

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[9] Referring to twentieth-century struggles within the scientific community, Donna J. Haraway has commented that "our nature has been

though man's assigned task was to name them, birds are not even called "birds"; rather, they are not named, only referred to as "the feathered kind" (54). This high literary use of kenning pushes man away from identification with animals. The archaic phrase suggests an emptiness in which figurative language fails to generate an expanded view of the "real thing" though it bestows a symbolic or mythological value upon it. Birds, then, fly completely out of man's reach and only represent a symbolic nobility to which he aspires. Though man comes to his decision through empirical observations of nature, birds are valuable only in their metaphorical identity, for what they stand for and for the expedient way in which they provide man with the irrefutable "evidence" found in nature for what he, as the vain tyrant, wanted to do anyway. First, by exposing his instrumental view of nature, then by allowing him to engage in natural scientific practices and, finally, by showing his failure to translate these practices into "appropriate" discourse, Leapor with acerbic wit exposes man's preference for tyrannical words over rational language. Graphically, as the only italicized word in the poem, "fool" resonates; its meaning ambiguously taints man too. Despite this, though, man's monarchy survives and Leapor connects man's observations of the birds to the image of the deteriorating female body to underline her culture's propensity for valuing women as property.

Part of Leapor's interest in the body arises from an awareness of her own fragile health. Leapor's need to get "out of the house," to create

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theorized and developed through the construction of life science in and for capitalism and patriarchy" (Haraway 68).

an external perhaps spiritually invested manifestation of freedom in her "native sky," is another reason why she concentrates in "Man the Monarch" on the deterioration of the female physical body to discuss the same issues Mary Astell, for one, addresses more abstractly. Astell believes that women can rise above and even flourish morally within a bad marriage; Leapor evokes the decay of the body politic by presenting the reader with physical, observable evidence that male tyranny leads to physical and, ultimately, mental ruin for women even as she opens the discussion of the "natural" family to the issue of the legal status, indeed the very womanhood of the unmarried woman. Margaret Anne Doody indicates that Leapor intentionally places the grotesque woman's body on display in order to "free herself from conventional claims of feminine proprieties" (Doody 1988, 79). While Doody claims that Leapor "takes up the Swiftian style of verse...[to] offer parodic ventriloquizing of the masculine voice and masculine pretensions and pretenses in some of her poems," Laura Mandell alerts us to the fact that Leapor does not use the anti-blazon in the same way as Swift; in "Man the Monarch" woman's body is not degraded (Mandell 575) in the way that it is in typical male-authored anti-blazons. Again, Leapor's experience of the toll labouring-class toil takes on the body informs the image of palpable physical damage she presents. Both Doody and Mandell see Leapor's representation of the body in a liberatory way that Richard Green plays down in his analysis. Doody points to "an ironic self-awareness of the gap between that cultural icon, the beautiful female, and the strange physical self" (qtd. in Greene 96). Mandell locates an ironic space in "Man the Monarch" where "the female body is neither idealized or

degraded....[but exists as a] "negative pregnant...a strategy of denigration -- for speaking within hegemonic discourses" (Mandell 575). Greene, less excitedly, characterizes Leapor's representation of the deteriorating woman's body as an attempt "to see beyond artificial appearance to what she believes is a more authentic femininity" (Greene 89). In Greene's view "[s]he does not wish to be valued for beauty, but for her wit and...her morals" (Greene 95). But Leapor's pairing of physical deterioration and the perception that wisdom is out of the reach of the unmarried woman belies Doody's, Mandell's and Greene's optimism.

Domestication attains the assent of women only in part through forceful male domination. Women also participate in what Nancy Armstrong refers to as "voluntary domestication". As part of their increasingly active and expanding role in eighteenth-century society, women are framed within domesticating activities such as the education of children, benevolence towards the poor, gardening, the keeping of pets and even reading. The amazement of reading which Leapor records from the start of the poem is indicative of how reading and discourses of natural history technologies such as the microscope and scientific methodologies in the eighteenth century begin to overshadow lived experiences of the natural world which Burnett advocates as essential to spiritual development. Increasingly, theoretical texts challenge the sublime of Genesis to entrench and shape some limited and dubious claims which nevertheless become widely disseminated and naturalized. Leapor's ambiguous portrait of women in nature can be read as a perpetuation of the very all-encompassing male despotism she

critiques. But while "Man the Monarch" apparently offers little hope for women and allows them little agency, there is irony in the production of a poem by a labouring-class woman about male tyranny. Leapor's use of a "Lockean methodology" may be, in one sense, audacious in developing a critique of domesticated woman's state but if a labouring-class women poet's agency is won at the cost of alienating her from nature and paradoxically internalizing an ideology of domination and domesticity that oppresses her, then it is a diminished victory.

Perhaps it is the pervasiveness of these domesticated and domesticating discourses in the eighteenth century that needs to be considered. As McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb point out, nature becomes increasingly commodified as part of the eighteenth century drive for a "consumer society". Motivated primarily by novelty, the "feeling of belonging to a changing and exciting world" (McKendrick 323), men, women and children engage in an increasingly wide variety of activities that enable domestications. In animal breeding, for example, Nicholas Russell charts the economic speculation that grew into a runaway enthusiasm for Robert Bakewell's Dishley sheep "which had far more to do with theatre and the cunning exploitation of fashion than any relationship with the breeding value of stock" (Russell 205). By the nineteenth century, the ideology of "natural selection" promotes a view of breed development "as an entirely 'natural' process in which deliberate human control over breeding has [apparently] played no part at all" (Russell 16). Human domination over animals through domestication deliberately effaces expressions of protest from animals

through structures, both social and physical, designed to circumscribe forms of animal self-expression. While protest becomes increasingly important for the labouring classes and women of all classes in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, expressions of concern for animals are increasingly sentimentalized and animals are "spoken for". As a result animal voices resonate not with the integrity of the animals, but with the sounds of human moral pronouncements and preoccupations.

What I described at the beginning of this chapter as a relationship between the market and a pre-lapsarian idyll of human dominated nature is perhaps more accurately described as a highly secularized and reified notion of domestication --nature "harnessed" like a domesticated animal, to increase productivity and generate ever-larger profits. Even Leapor participates in this domestication process as some of her detailed knowledge of nature comes from her involvement in her father's nursery business. While "[t]he gardener's idiom is distinctive and adds vigour to Mary Leapor's poetry" (Greene 131) surely a business such as this is implicated in the increasing domestication of the natural landscape. The increasing domestication of women within this cultural context paradoxically naturalizes women to ideologies of domestication. These ideologies play a role in "securing assent" from those most exploited. In this way, what Nancy Armstrong calls the "new domestic woman" (Armstrong 20) can simultaneously exist as the idealized image of a "model" woman with the positive traits of "moral depth, constant vigilance and a tireless concern for the well-being of others" (Armstrong 20) and be exactly the woman Leapor describes in

"Man the Monarch" as unjustly tyrannized by man. From her unusual perspective as a labouring-class woman poet, neither fully labouring-class or fully poet, Mary Leapor demonstrates in "Man the Monarch" that she can simultaneously perpetuate these deeply alienating processes even as she struggles to be free of them. Despite its pessimistic veneer, though, the poem is both witty and created by a woman to achieve the very goals the poem tells us are impossible for domesticated women. The simple existence of "Man the Monarch" signals that at least one woman has slipped through unnoticed and is willing to talk publicly about her experience. If the unmarried woman can be perceived as resisting her natural role in reproduction, in the next chapter a "mad heifer's" similar tendency disrupts, for a moment, the quiet life of a rural village.

Labouring-Class Women, Animals and Time in Elizabeth Hands' "Written, originally extempore, on seeing a Mad Heifer run through the Village where the Author Lives" (1789)

> Poor Ophelia
> Divided from herself and her fair judgement
> Without the which we are pictures or mere beasts
> Hamlet IV.v.84-6.

> This disorder [distemper] sometimes terminates in a Lethargy, which is a very unfavourable sign. If a Lethargy turn to a Frenzy, it Promises well; but if a Frenzy terminates in a Lethargy, the case is very desparate.
> Thomas Topham Treatise on Cattle (1787)

Mary Leapor adopts a subject position between labour and poetry to express her unique perspective on nature and domestication in her culture. Elizabeth Hands' (fl. 1789) poem "Written, originally extempore, on seeing a Mad Heifer run through the Village where the Author lives" (1789) represents another eighteenth-century labouring-class woman's view on women and complex agricultural realities -- in this case, around a Warwickshire village. "Mad Heifer" appears in the Appendix as one of the "other Poetical Pieces" in Hands' only published book, The Death of Amnon. A Poem. With an Appendix: containing Pastorals and other Poetical Pieces (1789). Very little is known of Hands' life except what emerges from a reading of her poetry and her brief dedicatory epistle addressed to the dramatist, Bertie Greatheed. In the letter to Greatheed, Hands refers to the difficult circumstances she "has to contend with -- born in obscurity, and never emerging beyond the lower stations in life" (Hands A). Her poetry reveals, further, that she

works or has worked as a servant-maid and is married. One poem, "On the Author's Lying-In," describes the birth of a daughter and "[t]he fondest husband's tender love" (11). Little more than this is known about her life.

Hands' 28-line poem "Written, originally extempore, on seeing a Mad Heifer run through the Village where the Author lives," ostensibly documents a fleeting moment, a one-time event. The poem describes a beautiful day which is suddenly disrupted by a "mad" heifer who strays from the herd and rushes through the village. But since the poem is a narrative representation, what we in the twentieth century might think of as a literary snapshot, it is neither fleeting, nor a moment, nor a one-time event. It is fixed in a printed time, reprinted currently in the context of Roger Lonsdale's Eighteenth-Century Women Poets. That the poem is represented by its title as "Written, originally Extempore" underlines its complex relationship to time. It is a poem announcing its own rewriting; it is not its own "original". It was perhaps but is no longer "to the moment". It announces and acknowledges the very fleetingness that its own representation disallows and denies.

Has Hands constructed this contradictory atmosphere or is contradiction inherent to extempore? "Extempore" implies, albeit as illusion, eye-witness observation and the writing of a poem as an act circumscribed not by the wit, skill and education of the occasional poet but by the limits of short-term memory and writing "to the moment." It is in this sense that extempore in the eighteenth century is related aesthetically to the sketch where the artist is encouraged to quickly "fix [his idea] upon the paper before it grows faint and dies" (Cozens 166) as

well as to the notion that spontaneity in art is superior to artfulness. The extempore may also be informed by theories of inspiration associated with radical Protestants and Divine poets such as the Dissenter, Isaac Watts, who contends "that poetry should be the immediate outpouring of the inspired soul, beginning when the Inspiration strikes and ending when it wanes" (Phillips 25).

Whether religiously motivated or not, extempore places special emphasis on the poet whose skill and "detachment" as an observer/eye-witness is partly assessed in terms of the truth of the poem. In Hands' case, this truth emanates not only from the facts that the poem records, but from the influence of fantastic animal stories in the eighteenth century[1] and from the conditions of literary labour for the labouring-class woman poet. Keeping Mary Collier's "The Woman's Labour" (1739) in mind, readers of labouring-class women's poetry are increasingly being made aware of labouring women's arduous double day, writing aside. Extempore, then, is a legitimate generic option for working

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[1]The "story" of the Worcestershire Heifer is a memorable example as a handbill dated 15 February 1781 attests:

"This is to acquaint the CURIOUS
that there is to be see (ALIVE)
At No 1 corner of *Shug-Lane* and *Picadilly*,
A Most Astonishing *Yearling* HEIFER
Being the most curious Production of Nature ever exhibited in this Kingdom
This very surprising Creature has two Heads, four Horns, four Eyes, four Ears, four Nostrils, through each of which it Breaths &c
One of the Heads together with the Horns represents that of the Bull, and the other of the Cow

The above Curiousity may be seen by any number of persons from ten in the morning 'till Eight at Night.
Ladies and Gentlement 1s. Servants, 6d".

women: writing on the fly. Donna Landry asserts that Hands and other labouring-class women poets must take their "moment" when they are able to, with "rural inspiration and the cessation of domestic labor making possible the moment of literary composition" (Landry 1990, 187). And if, as Susan Snaider Lanser proposes, the very act of authorship implies a project of self-authorization (Lanser 7), Hands puts the extempore and the heifer to subversive use.

This chapter highlights the subversiveness of the heifer and the woman poet especially in the face of Lucretius' conception of animal domestication (widely accepted in the eighteenth century) as a "self-conscious choice by the animals". As Clarence Glacken explains Lucretius' view,

> [d]omestication has survival value for certain kinds of animals who flee from the hard life of nature. Lucretius implies that there is self-conscious and purposive action by animals who weigh alternatives and that domestication is semicontractual on the part of the animals but is undertaken by men for utilitarian, not humanitarian purposes.
>
> (Glacken 138-9)

It is this apparent "semicontractual domestication" that Hands' poem audaciously challenges. Even twentieth-century writers on domestication such as F. E. Zeuner have internalized and naturalized this view of self-domestication, especially in its relationship to capitalism. Zeuner in his discussion of bees, for example, classifies humans and bees as "both 'self-domesticating' species in which some members live at the expense of others, forming a unit in which all benefit from division of labour" (Zeuner 506). In this way both the division of labour and capitalism are naturalized within natural history to become elementary

to definitions of a properly functioning nature. But while both Hands and the heifer self-consciously and purposefully assert their agency in the poem, it is asserted in a direction quite opposed to Lucretius' notion of semicontractual domestication. Hands and the heifer both appear willing to take on risks that actually threaten rather than maximize their potential for survival.

It is not only because she is presented by Hands as the occasion for the poem that I focus on the heifer. Superficially, she is the subject of the poem, indeed, the reason for the poem. As Hands writes the heifer, the heifer becomes inextricably linked to Hands through the performative act of authorship. Susan Snaider Lanser emphasizes the role of social relationships in narration. For Lanser, narration

> involves far more than the technical imperatives for getting a story told. The narrative voice and the narrated world are mutually constitutive; if there is no tale without a teller, there is no teller without a tale.
>
> (Lanser 4)

The choice of subjected animal is also of some significance. A heifer is in its first sense, a young cow that has had no more than one calf or a female calf; and secondly, a wife. Not only, then, is there a sense of the term heifer marking a particular moment in "female time," but by the mid nineteenth-century, through some cultural process, "heifer" becomes a derogatory term for a woman or young girl. "Heifer" as an epithet, holds connotations of youth and sexual readiness -- an expression of sexual interest. This cultural shift in meaning from "female calf" to "wife" conveniently underlines the emphasis on the

relationship between women and animals. Hands' poem, published in 1789, exists within this cultural process.

My discussion of Hands' poem will be framed by references to the agricultural fate of heifers and Hands' construction of village and interspecies relationships as viewed through the ecological feminist notion of "interlocking oppressions". Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan utilize this concept in a feminist activist context in which "all oppressions are interconnected: no one creature will be free until all are free" (Adams and Donovan, 3). Karen J. Warren more philosophically reiterates Adams' and Donovan's view while she emphasizes how ecofeminism's reconceptualization of oppression necessarily leads to a "reconception of feminism as *a movement to end all forms of oppression*" (Warren, 24). This brings about a radical realignment of feminism which, in the context of Hands' poem, positively links woman and heifer. This positive link upsets and upends the derogatory cultural associations. The positive connection of women and animals creates the liberatory possibility of

> a fundamentally different human attitude toward reality, and thus a radically different conception of the human self....an attitude that is not premised on the human subject in relation to an object world.
>
> (Kappeler 1995, 336)

In promoting the theory of interlocking oppressions, Susanne Kappeler advocates for a "fundamental reconception of human subjectivity" in order to not only redefine "the human" but as a political act which addresses fundamental flaws in human responses to what she calls "violations of the 'object world'". Such a violation in reading Hands'

poem would be to read the heifer only "in terms of" the woman poet. As Marian Scholtmeijer explains,

> The suggestion that the otherness of nonhuman animals can inform the otherness of women,...appears to be counterproductive, to pull women down into a condition of defeat along with the animals. It is, however, only from an anthropocentric perspective that animals are defeated. The otherness of the animals remains free and clear, despite human assaults.
>
> (Scholtmeijer 1995, 234)

In the case of the "mad heifer," it would be simple enough, initially, to postulate some kind of metaphoric relationship between the author and the mad heifer where the heifer stands for the oppressed woman (possibly a projection of the author's own psychological or physical oppression) or even as a symbol for all oppressed women. But underlying this possible reading, which many literary critical practices such as formalism and poststructuralism actively encourage, is the question of the heifer's representation. The heifer as an agent or potential agent completely disappears when she is read only as a symbol.

As this relates to my reading of Hands' poem, it is useful to examine the heifer-woman relationship in the context of ecocriticism, particularly through the contrast between deep ecology's notion of identification and ecofeminism's ideas of interlocking oppressions and the self-in-relation to nature. While those within the deep ecology movement understand identification as an individual psychic act rather than a political practice, interlocking oppressions promotes identity politics as a concept which both recognizes the political and

acknowledges the importance of mutuality. But Warwick Fox, a deep ecologist, challenges what he feels is ecofeminism's fixation with "personal identification" which "can slip so easily into attachment and proprietorship" (Fox 263). Fox de-emphasizes "personal identification" in favour of ontological and cosmological identifications[2] promoting "impartial identification with all entities" (Fox 265). This view, though, implies a disengagement with sociopolitical contexts that does not adequately address the interests of a poet like Hands who makes very specific use of her own place and time.

This difficulty in using twentieth-century critical theory to address eighteenth-century contexts and problems is not exclusive to deep ecology. While ecofeminist theory provides an adequate critique of rational forms of thought, it is necessary in using this theory to consider rationality in the context of one of ecofeminism's own most compelling tenets -- its recognition of the political. Not to acknowledge the likelihood that, in her cultural context, Hands would see reason as attractive, associated with intelligence, education and social ascendancy, results in a failure of historical mutuality that may even lead to a negative moral or aesthetic judgement of her work. Interlocking oppressions carefully applied does not ignore or deny

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[2] Fox defines personal identification as "experiences of commonality with other entities that are brought about through personal involvement with these entities" (Fox 249). Ontological identification "involves experiences of commonality with all that is that are brought about through a deep-seated realization of the fact *that things are.*"(Fox 250). The third type of identification, Cosmological, "refers to experiences of commonality with all that is that are brought about through deep-seated realization of the fact that we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality" (Fox 252).

such historical and cultural contexts. Indeed, the mutuality of this kind of ecofeminist practice enriches

> understandings of the destruction of nature, without attempting to reduce one to the other. This form of ecological feminism is not committed to the thesis that women's struggle is identical with the struggle for nature, or that fixing one problem would automatically fix the other.
>
> (Plumwood 1993, 197)

In other words, ecofeminism encourages formal structures and an emphasis on what Plumwood calls "counter-hegemonic virtues" such as "respect, sympathy, care, concern, compassion, gratitude, friendship, and responsibility" (Plumwood 1996, 160) which can replace the metaphor of men, women and animals as "links" in an hierarchical chain or other such metaphors of humans "in" nature with a more respectful model. It is important, though, when analyzing models and despite the complex relationship between rhetorics of individualism and anti-individualism in much ecocriticism, to consider the positions of the specific agents.

In critiquing the issues of interlocking oppressions in relation to Hands' "Mad Heifer" poem, I would like to explore in some depth two senses of connection between woman and heifer.[3] The first sense of connection "kills" the heifer or at the very least subsumes the identity of the heifer into that of the female poet. Related to this first sense of connection is the idea that any connection between women and animals

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[3]Trained as a literary scholar, I might have called this connection "identification" where readers, as Wayne C. Booth puts it, react variously "to authors, narrators, observers and other characters" (Booth 158).

is hegemonic by its very nature since it is imposed on animals by women. In other words, what humans (especially women) might gain symbolically, by creating a critical paradigm which allows women to express the personal oppression they might otherwise have to hide, through a representation of a mad heifer tearing down the street of a presumably otherwise quiet village, entails an equivalent (or greater) loss to the mad heifer, an animal whose identity (not to mention her body) is sacrificed for this "greater good" (i.e. the increasing awareness of women's oppression). This paradigm of identification lacks mutuality and mirrors the literary paranoia Hands projects in both what she imagines she is subjected to and what she actually is subjected to by the upper-class members of her community and the literary establishment.

The tone of the "Mad Heifer" poem at some level renders the heifer's mad dash as a trivial event. The heifer is simultaneously empowered as a symbol and emptied as an individual sentient being. But the heifer is not the only one damaged by this kind of conceptual diagramming. Like the heifer, Hands cannot escape the commodification of her labour and the alienation that inevitably results even by writing poetry. Betty Rizzo suggests, in fact, that the system of patronage has more to do with establishing or consolidating the reputation of the patron than with the quality of the sponsored poet's work:

> By judiciously encouraging a natural poet,
> patrons could exert their power, exercise
> their superiority, amuse themselves, do a
> charitable and fine thing, improve the world,
> advance science, and attest to their own taste
> and moral elevation
>
> (Rizzo 242).

In this way, like the heifer and indeed all cattle, Hands is "multi-functional". Heifers who are ultimately unable to calf become meat, and cows beyond their peak milking years are also perfunctorily slaughtered. Hands too can be sold publicly, literally sold through a newspaper advertisement, for example, as a domestic labourer or as a "natural" poet. Because she cannot transcend her gender or class position, she maintains her status as a commodity.

In a letter to Richard Bisse Riland, Henry Sacheverell Homer[4] clearly illustrates, through his own obliviousness to Hands' subjectivity, the dilemma she faces. In this long passage, Homer literally markets Hands to a potential subscriber.

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[4]Homer is the father of the minor poet Philip Bracebridge Homer who "discovered" Elizabeth Hands through several poems she published in Jopson's Coventry Mercury.

> She has been known by the Name of Daphne[5], under which signature some of her performances were some years ago published in Jopson's paper, but she had not and perhaps would not have obtained any other poetical name if a son of mine [Philip Bracebridge Homer, one of the Assistant masters of Rugby School d. 1838]...had not been led by curiosity to desire a sight of her poetry, which He obtained, and being himself much pleased with this particular performance, shew'd it to Dr. James [Thos. James D.D., Head Master of Rugby School 1778-1794] and the other critics at Rugby, who were unanimously of the opinion that its merit entitled it to be published by subscription, wch they immediately open'd, and it has had for the time a rapid progress in this Neighborhood. As the business from my Son before alluded to, and whose name is mention'd in the proposals, I wish to give it all the effect I can, and I shall take it as a favour if you'll interest yrself in procuring the names of some of the respectable inhabitants of Sutton, to whom if you please you may mention it, as a request of mine, to those especially in whose memory I may be suppos'd yet to live.
>
> (Riland Bedford 112-113)

Hands' own accomplishments as a poet seem nearly buried with this list of gentry reputations and favours owed. Indeed, to commend her, Homer Sr. relies very little upon the "merit" of her poetry. Rather, he focuses on the reputation of her former employers and their daughter, Miss Huddlesford of Allesly, "who speaks of her as a servant in terms of the highest commendation" (Riland Bedford 114). All, in fact, that he says of her poetry is that an extract from the proposed subscription will

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[5]In Greek mythology, Daphne was a "nymph, the daughter of the River Peneius in Thessaly...virgin huntress like Artemis"(Grant 102). It is significant in terms of the "Mad Heifer" poem that Hands takes on this name. Both her relationship to animals as a huntress and as the daughter of a river -- one who is engendered by water -- can be read in concert with the poem.

be published in the Coventry and Birmingham papers "so that you will from thence have one specimen of the style and spirit of it" (Riland Beford 114) and comments that despite the subject[6] "the manner in which she has decorated it will in my opinion get over the prejudices which it may have to struggle with" (Riland Bedford 113).[7] In the same vein, even following the publication of Hands' book, the reviewer, George Ogle, in The Monthly Review of November 1791, evades the critical issue of addressing the content of Hands' book. Rather, he writes that

> Whatever may be thought of the character of this poetry, we cannot but form the most favourable conclusions with respect to *that* of the writer, -- forming, as we do, our judgement from the uncommonly numerous list of subscribers: among whom are many names of persons of rank, and consideration. There could be no motive for extraordinary patronage, but a benevolent regard to merit of some kind.
>
> (Ogle 346)

It is almost as if Ogle has not or cannot read Hands' work because his interest so clearly lies with Hands' social position.

Though a connection between woman and heifer as commodity is clearly established and this connection informs an understanding of

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[6]The longest poem in Hands collection, "The Death of Amnon" is what Donna Landry describes as a genre of "versified Scriptural narrative" (Landry 1990, 188) and recounts a rather gruesome Bible story of incestuous rape.

[7]In fairness to the Homers, I should point out Paul Korshin's contention that "there are few serious patrons of literature in the [eighteenth] century who did not have an admiration for books and the arts" (Korshin 460).

their parallel struggles, it is not the kind of connection which allows either the woman or the heifer's subjectivity to emerge. As a result, I propose a second sense of connection which brings the animal and woman together without subsuming the identity of one into the other or both into a pattern of natural semicontractual domestication.[8] Extempore plays a role here. Hands' use of the extempore form establishes a mutuality between animal and woman because of the extempore's insistence that the events described in the poem are not imaginary. The fiction of the poem as "other to the Real," to borrow a phrase from Susanne Kappeler, "kills" the heifer in exactly the way that agriculturally, the heifer is "born to calve," "born to lactate," "born to burden" or "born to die". The fictionalization of the heifer is gratuitous,

> [i]t is the surplus of the real, it need have no function in the real, it need serve no purpose"....It is the leisure and the pleasure which complements the work and utility of the real.
>
> (Kappeler 1986, 9)

Fiction can protect Hands as she may be subject to "real" limitations as a labouring-class woman poet.[9] But extempore provides a means for

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[8] Ecofeminist critics like Theresa Corrigan & Stephanie Hoppe and Marian Scholtmeijer argue that "animal-positive" representations of animals by women writers subvert this sense of inevitably hegemonic relationships between women and animals.

[9] A fictional critique in the comic mode reduces the risks inherent to a non-fictional critique such as Ann Cromartie Yearsley's "To the Noble and Generous Subscribers, who so Liberally Patronized a Book of Poems, Published under the Auspices of Miss H. More, of Park-Street Bristol" (1787) in which Yearsley writes of her bitter split with her patron, Hannah More after More attempted to control the money Yearsley earned from her subscription. Yearsley suffered real censure as a result of her making her quarrel with More public.

Hands to straddle the fictional and the real. Here, the extemporaneity of the poem creates an imperative for recognition of the animal and her agency, just as it forces the reader to recognize the labouring-class woman poet in a new way -- because the event "really happened." Through an acknowledgment of the real inherent in the extempore form, both the heifer and the labouring-class women poet's political and social realities can emerge and gain recognition. The real enables a discourse of interlocking oppressions and allows for a consideration of the central real issues that characterize Hands' and the heifer's struggles.[10]

For Hands, the struggle involves the way in which so-called "natural Geniuses" were colonized by their patrons and even by the writers whose work they emulated. Roger Sales argues that this colonization by benevolence extended to the political imperative of quelling unrest among the labouring classes in the later decades of the eighteenth century by promoting the pastoral as a "propagandist reconstruction of history" (Sales 17). Certainly the mock heroic tone and the anti-pastoral stance Hands takes in "Mad Heifer" suggests a conscious challenge to such conceptual controls. Donna Landry's reading of the poem as "simultaneously neoclassically successful and absurdist" (Landry 1990, 193) emphasizes Hands' skill in handling complex rhetorical figures such as chiasmus and zeugma and her nuanced representation of the village moving "ominously towards a

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[10]A parallel in twentieth-century writing might be George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" where the temporary insanity of the animal clearly is used as a metaphor for the temporary insane act of the writer -- the unnecessary shooting.

general condition of decay and irreparability" (Landry 1990, 193), which Landry connects to the larger disappearance of the English countryside during this period. But the mad heifer does not have to stand in a metaphorical relationship to the potentially oppressed labouring-class poet in order to assert or enact an agency of resistance. Rather Hands constructs a dynamic between animal and woman in which the existences of the two work "together" to resist and disrupt a particular representation of the village. An examination of the heifer's actual struggle is crucial to an understanding of her metaphoric struggle and necessitates an acknowledgment and exploration of the causes underlying her "rage". In reading this resistance it is not enough just to view the metaphoric struggle as the only one relevant to literary criticism.

Thomas Topham's Treatise on Cattle: A New Compendious System of Several Diseases Incident to Cattle (1787) provides a potential physiological explanation for the heifer's "straying sudden from th' herd" (5). Topham describes a distemper-like disease called the "Frenzy" which

> is an inflammation of the Brain, and its membranes, occasioning a perpetual delerium, and a continued acute fever....The diagnostics of this Disorder are constant watchings, ravings, slow respiration's, a disturb'd and frightful countenance with the usual symptoms of madness; strong pulsation in the temporal artery: some times irregular, especially when the beast has been much agitated.
>
> (Topham 1)

Without trivializing the real hardships causes by this disease and the suffering experienced by those who contract it, it is curious to see in such a detailed and apparently well-observed scientific listing of symptoms the phrase "the usual symptoms of madness." Coupled with Hands' own designation of the heifer as "mad," the hint of a moral judgment emerges. In another section of Topham's treatise he describes a cow stricken with frenzy as an "animal ungovernable" whose "notions about external and sensible objects are depraved"(Topham 3) as if "governability" is the primary standard of the health of domesticated animals. Topham also arrogantly assumes a knowledge of the animal's "notions" and feelings. Indeed, as Marian Scholtmeijer points out, domesticated animals are little understood as subjects:

> From the perspective of the system that imprisons and kills animals, the act of releasing them appears absurd. On this score, the fate of the farm animal is unequivocal: since the farm animal's whole purpose in life is determined by her death, the idea of liberty cannot enter into conceptions of her being. Where would she go, what would she *be*, if not delimited by humankind and its plans for her? Liberating an animal whose only significance resides in her incarceration and death subverts cultural meaning in the most radical way imaginable.
>
> (Scholtmeijer 1995, 238)

One way to understand Hands' potentially radical use of the heifer is to read the heifer's madness not as "Frenzy," not as a "disease" at all. In the context of Hands' community, while distemper is a possible veterinary explanation for the symptoms displayed by the heifer, the implications of distemper for the community are quite horrifying and make it an unlikely subject for either a comic poem or the comical

response recorded in "A Poem on the Supposition on the Book having been Published and Read". Hands' poem becomes darkly cynical if the heifer's madness is read as distemper, a disease which spreads rapidly through herds not only killing the animals but destroying the livelihood of livestock owners, some of whom are presumably the very gentry mocking the representation of a mad cow in Hands' poems. Another problem with the diagnosis of distemper is that it is something which happens to the heifer and not, except symbolically, an act that she performs as an expression of her own agency. As a cynical metaphor for the malaise of village life, distemper viably exposes the contagion and deterioration Hands represents through the buffoon-like futile gesturing of her fellow labourers and the oblivious smugness of the gentry. The heifer is completely emptied by this reading, bled in the very manner prescribed by Topham and other veterinary practitioners for treating the "Frenzy". Read as a prescription for a cure, even the heifer's leap "into the pond" (26) "unable to withstand/Such force united" (25-6) aligns with Topham's treatment for the disease where

> no hot or stimulating medicines must be given, but such only as are of the cooling quality, and will powerfully dilute the blood so as to unload the arteries in the meninges of the brain.
>
> (Topham 10)

But another veterinary condition perhaps better explains the heifer's "symptoms" even as these symptoms function as an expression of agency and protest much more in keeping with the energy present in the central section of the poem. According to Topham's Treatise,

getting the heifer to "take the bull" can, if badly handled, cause her to bolt. Stephens, in his Book of the Farm (1844) describes the delicacy with which the heifer must be handled during the process preceding insemination.

> The heifers that are to be transferred to the cow-stock should be taken from the hammels...to the byre, about three weeks or a fortnight before their reckoning....When taking them into the byre, it should be remembered that a fright received at this time may not be forgotten for a long time to come.
>
> (Stephens 458)

Topham provides several "remedies" for a stubborn or reluctant heifer. While he stresses that "every due respect [be] paid to so valuable a creature" (Topham 108), he assures the reader that if the heifer is well-fed "nature will predominate over the animal's body" (Topham 108). If "nature" fails to "predominate" though, Topham also suggests getting the heifer drunk[11] will yield the desired "result". The "madness" of a heifer bolting from this kind of intrusion is of a wholly different quality than the "madness" of distemper. The heifer bolting from an attempt at insemination is decisive, energetic and fully subject over and above any reader's attempt to make her the object of ridicule.

But while I am calling for a consideration of historical and cultural contexts, there is inherent to extempore, in its to-the-momentness, a rejection of context. Whether the cause of the heifer's madness is distemper or a refusal to take the bull, Hands composes the

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[11]Topham's recipe for making a cow drunk is as follows: "one quart of good ale; then add aniseeds two oz., bay berries 2 oz., gentian root, 1 oz., turmeric 1 oz., grains of Paradise 1/2 oz. these to be boiled in either liquid, and given for one dose" (Topham 109).

poem and constructs the heifer and the villagers based on only what she sees or could possibly see in the moment that they fly past her. If the extempore is a rejection of context, it serves as a way for Hands to escape responsibility, albeit at the expense of all of the sentient beings represented in the poem. And this has implications for everyone involved, for example, the utter denial of subjectivity for the heifer and the villagers except through the circumscribed agency of the actions they perform within the moment of the poem. Even the viability of a literary "close reading" of the poem is called into question if removing the context has such negative implications for all of the other agents.

A close reading, though, does reveal some interesting things, not the least of which, are the limits of extempore. The artificiality of the first four lines of "Mad Heifer,"

> WHEN summer smiled, and birds on every spray
> In joyous warblings tuned their vocal lay,
> Nature on all sides showed a lovely scene,
> And people's minds were like the air, serene;

complete with pathetic fallacy, music, heightened omniscience and a strong sense of "no time," pave the way for the sudden disruption in line 5 of the heifer as she invades, tears open the boundaries of the poem and a prior, idyllic representation of the village. The heifer and the extempore poet make their respective marks -- physically (the writer's marks on paper, the heifer's footsteps) and historically (the poet writing a new story of the village, the heifer running herself out of her life-stage, into the process of being "cowed"). On the other side of the poem, the heifer exits and the extempore poet continues to write, further extending the boundaries. By emphasizing the elasticity of the

poem's boundaries, the labouring-class woman poet and the heifer simultaneously reinforce and undermine the "originality" or "original moment" apparently inherent to the extempore form. While the extempore paradoxically roots the poem in a moment, the flexibility of the boundaries created by the relationship between woman and animal and the open admission that the poem has been rewritten, pulls the poem out of its "little world" and places it "in the world," in classical terms, closer to Virgil's Georgics than the Eclogues. Hands' use of the extempore gives the heifer, as it does the writer both as a woman and as a member of the labouring-class, an opportunity to represent and by implication re-present village life.

Hands employs this re-representation, in part, to extract herself from the picture, to avoid becoming an object in or subject to a rural representation. The gesture of apology in the title of the poem ("written originally") can also be read in its very dissonance as a gesture of authority. Hands and other labouring-class poets make this gesture of apology in deference to their patrons' and subscribers' relatively elevated social status. The extempore derives its authority primarily from its relationship to the "real". In its original moment, the extempore is a document of the poet's process. The labouring-class poet, as eye-witness and scribe, as a person with little or no discretion or authority in her community is left fairly vulnerable. Hands wittily anticipates her own vulnerability to community censure for publishing this poem in "A Poem, On the Supposition of an Advertisement appearing in a Morning Paper, of the Publication of a Volume of Poems, by a Servant-Maid" and "A Poem, On the Supposition of the Book having

been Published and Read". The second poem makes a direct reference to the "Mad Heifer" poem:

> 'O law!', says young Seagram, 'I've seen the book, now
> I remember; there's something about a mad cow.'
> 'A mad cow! - ha, ha, ha, ha,' returned half the room;
> 'What can y' expect better?', says Madam Du Bloom.
> (88-91)

While such representations can be viewed as merely comic or satirical, in fact, in a review of her book in the November 1791 Monthly Review, George Ogle finds Hands' characters in "A Poem, On the Supposition of the Book having been Published and Read" so credible that he "gratefully" quotes them rather than articulate an original critique of his own. As Ogle puts it,

> We are always thankful when authors, by addressing the public on the nature and merits of their writings, diminish our labours; and especially also when, as in the present case, their opinions agree with our sentiments. Let Mrs. Hands, then, be judge in her own cause, while we, in the words of Miss Rhymer and the honest old rector, report her decree.
> (Ogle 345)

In this way, Hands is punished for, as Donna Landry puts it, "satiriz[ing] more acutely than anyone else the peculiar situation of the working-class writer in England on the eve of the French Revolution" (Landry 1990, 186). Ogle throws her satire back at her by quoting it as valid criticism and removes its sting. Contextualized, as it was originally, within Hands' satire, the lines characterize the Rector as one of the parodic gentrified characters who pedantically judge the servant-maid's poems:

> 'This book,' says he (snift, snift), 'has, in the
> beginning,'
> 'Some pieces, I think, that are pretty correct:
> A style elevated you cannot expect....
> (96-99)
>
> That "Amnon", you can't call it poetry neither,
> There's no flights of fancy, or imagery either;
> You may style it prosaic, blank verse at the best;
> Some pointed reflections, indeed, are expressed;
> The narrative lines are exceedingly poor:
> (102-106)

Ogle's appropriation of Hands' parodic lines neutralizes them and he turns them against her to validate and entrench the views of a character Hands had presented as ridiculous in the company of ridiculous characters. Ogle ignores, for example, earlier absurd pronouncements in the poem such as those made by Mr. Fribello and his wife on the servant-maid poet:

> "Tis pity the girl was not bred in high life,'
> (83)
>
> 'She doubtless might have wrote something worth
> notice.'
> (85)

These lines invalidate even The Monthly Review's decision to review Hands' book in the first place except to reinforce the futility of Hands' effort.

But in so quickly allowing Hands' "own words" to condemn her, Ogle misses clever subtleties connecting the mad heifer to other poems. For example, the narrative pattern of "A Poet, On the Supposition of an Advertisement appearing in a Morning Paper, of the Publication of a Volume of Poems, by a Servant-Maid" in fact parallels that of the "Mad

Heifer" poem. An idyllic scene is disrupted by a "madness" which is perfunctorily "cured" in the final few lines. Hands deftly illustrates the entrenched orderliness of the tea-drinkers' lives by moving rapidly through the voices of multiple characters who exclaim at the idea of a servant-maid author. Each speaker has a slightly different perspective, and in the rapid shifts Hands captures a credible tone of mounting hysteria over the mere suggestion that a book by a servant-maid could be published. It is only when Lady Pedigree, the oldest and highest ranked of the party, owns "that for poetry she has no taste" (54) that the poem resumes the orderly, regular tone with which it began. Like the impact of cold water on the "maddened" heifer's body, Lady Pedigree's pronouncement that "the study of heraldry was more in fashion/ And boasted she knew all the crests in the nation" (55-6), works to underline a commitment to hierarchy as inheritance and a reassurance that whether or not servant-maids write poetry, the poem can conclude with the order of things reestablished. Everyone is returned to their proper place as the hostess, Mrs. Routella, orders a servant to "take out the urn,/And stir up the fire, you see it don't burn" (57-58) so the ladies can sit down for cards.

While a similar pattern emerges in the "Mad Heifer" -- from docility to madness and then back to a reestablished order -- the difference in the relationship between the poet and the subject of the poem can be contrasted. In the "Mad Heifer" poem, the movement, the apparently emotionally detached voice vacillating between physical closeness and distance, may, in fact, be evidence of nascent authority. Straddling two communities, the labouring-class woman poet

experiences a double alienation. The poem as a map of the frenzied movement of a animal with a docile and still-staring reputation -- the heifer -- and the poet's movement in the poem particularly from "we" to "I" are signs of growth, assertions of authority. Working against this is the often apologetic tone of labouring-class women's literary production as a pre-admission that a poem by a servant-maid cannot be a very good one. This "rhetoric of apology," as Karen Davis calls it, insidiously leads away from the possibility for authority and constitutes a form of self-betrayal. Quoting Bruno Bettelheim, Davis describes apology as "an extension of the unconscious contributions to one's undoing" where "human victims often collaborate unconsciously with an oppressor in the vain hope of winning the oppressor's favor" (Davis 1).

This psychological tension between authority and apology surfaces in the poem particularly in Hands' ambivalent relationship to the community. In line 4, for example, she describes, to the moment, the serene state of "people's minds" as she sets the scene for the poem and presumes a knowledge beyond possible "real" knowledge. In subsequent lines, this highly authoritative but artificial omniscient view is tempered and the poet identifies herself as part of a community through the use of "we" (5) and a reference to "our village" (6). But by line 9, she has retreated again. In the confusion of villagers' and heifer's "bellows" (where Hands cleverly conflates human and animal) and the clouds of dust that act to alter nature and accelerate the change of the perceived season from smiling summer to "autumn's mists" (8), the poet extracts herself at a significant enough distance for "villagers"

to become anonymous or ambiguous figures -- perhaps due to the clouds of dust -- in a panorama. John Barrell has discussed the shrinking of labouring-class figures in landscape painting to support "the stability of an ideally structured economic and social order" (Barrell 149) and a deliberate attempt to avoid acknowledging these "figures" as living individuals:

> [i]f [the figures] became less symbolic, more actualized images of men at work, we would run the risk of focussing on them as men -- not as tokens of a calm, endless, and anonymous industry, which confirm the order of society; and not as the objects of colour, confirming the order of the landscape.
>
> (Barrell 149)

Hands' wide view of the frenzied panorama of labouring-class figures curtailing an out-of-control animal "fills in" one of the moments between what is usually depicted in idealized rural landscapes. On the one hand, then, Hands appoints herself the poet of these in-between moments. On the other hand, the disparaging way she documents the rural labourers sent to stop the heifer makes her appear less than a champion of the rights of the labouring classes. This can be seen as a sign of Hands' rejection of her own class position, even as it is a recognition of "the bigger picture," of Hands' "self-in-relationship" to the heifer. So, while Hands apparently mocks the labourers in a denial of class solidarity, her relationship to the heifer reveals a deeper, nuanced class consciousness that includes a consciousness of gender and species.

But while the poem becomes significantly woman-centered here, Hands remains emotionally aloof. The speaker's imperative[12] becomes journalistic as she describes how "some run" (11), "some pluck" (12), "here one" (13), "there another" (14) in the hurried, even violent, confusion as the villagers arm themselves against the heifer "enemy". In "poetic time", the poet moves the reader very quickly from serenity to chaos back to serenity again, selecting apt concrete details to describe along the way. Now, Hands places herself wholly outside the action of "the villagers". By line 20 she moves her attention away from the thus-far all-male villagers who in a mock mini-epic had so rapidly armed themselves for war that they mimic the very disruption they are battling with their own disruption. Lines 21-24 focus fully on village women -- a mother who "snatched her infant off the road/Close to the spot of ground where next [the heifer] trod" (21-22) and Camilla (the only named character in the poem) who "walking, trembled and turned pale:/ See o'er her gentle heart what fears prevail!" (23-24) -- as they intersect with the heifer. They stand, perhaps, for several of the significant stages of womanhood. The interaction or intersection of these three female animals is observed and represented by a woman poet who portrays them without mutuality, literally at cross-purposes.

The last four lines of the poem describe the cooling of the heifer's "madness". Significantly the only use of the pronoun "I" comes in the last line. The stretching of boundaries becomes particularly

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[12]This imperative may also be due to Hands' "real" relationship to the village and its inhabitants (they might be angry with her for making fun of them in any recognizable detail though enjoy the satire of the gentry).

acute and significant when the "I" is paired with its verb "presage". With her "I presage" the poet eludes closure and calls into question the extempore's existence as a document of a fixed time. Furthermore, the assertion of prior knowledge imbues the poet with special, even extraordinary, powers, and the "Written, originally extempore's" relationship to the real is shaken. The openendedness, the boundary stretching, the gap between fiction and its other is further complicated by the apparent resolution of the mad heifer episode and the content of the poet's prediction. While the very act of presage promises a future; her prediction is of the heifer's sealed agricultural fate.

This, though, may be ironic. The poet takes an almost disinterested attitude towards the heifer through the bemused tone of the poem and the sudden resolution of the crisis after only a few lines. On the surface this discourages a reading of connection. We are clearly not reading a "favorite pet" poem here. If there is a connection, it is at the level of recognition where Hands and the heifer "relate" as mutual agents in a landscape which traditionally or normally or "naturally" does not allow or, perhaps more accurately, does not represent the agency of these "characters". Although, even in their pastoralized relationship with one another, the labouring-class woman and the animal share a relationship, it is one that goes unrecognized in the dominant discourse.

The use of extempore underlines the poet's awareness of the subversiveness of her own and the heifer's acts. The two points at which identification or intersection occur are in the moment at which the heifer tears into the poem to disrupt and negate the poet's

construction of a timeless, pastoral world and in the moment when the heifer's "maddened rage" is cooled but the writing continues. Acknowledging these disruptions suggests that the poet is aware of the fallacy of her own prediction. And in the agricultural climate of the late eighteenth century, with an increasing rhetoric of control of animals not only through in-and-in breeding to maximize uniformity[13] and a new public health imperative to "sanitize" the dairy industry but through the control of labourers on the farm, the irony of the prediction is underlined. Hands' prediction, even as it documents her internalization of dominant agricultural and human-animal values, also points to the inevitability of mad heifers, the sense that these things happen from time to time, that nature, despite science and farm management, is not ultimately reliable, controllable or predictable.

Like the heifer's run, Hands' writing also attests to this unpredictability. For a labouring-class woman, writing an extempore poem means that the poet is engaged at a particular moment in literary labour, in the activity of writing, not in the work she should "really" be doing. How threatening this is to the social order is reflected in a number of different ways in "A Poem, On the Supposition of an Advertisement"

> 'For my part I think,' says old Lady Marr-joy,
> 'A servant might find herself other employ:
> Was she mine I'd employ her as long as 'twas light,

---

[13]See, for example, Cecil H. Pawson's Robert Bakewell: Pioneer Livestock Breeder. Bakewell's breeding principles became widely adopted in the eighteenth century. The four principles of Bakewell's method were: selection, inbreeding, crossing, culling (Pawson 55). As Bakewell asserts, "[u]niformity, provided it is at a reasonable level of merit, is a desirable attribute" (Pawson 93).

> And send her to bed without candle at night.'
> (21-24)

> I once had a servant myself ,' says Miss Pines,
> 'That wrote on a wedding some very good lines.'
> Says Mrs. Domestic, 'And when they were done,
> I can't see for my part what use they were on;
> Had she wrote a receipt, to've instructed you how
> To warm a cold breast of veal, like a ragout,
> Or to make cowslip wine, that would pass for
> Champagne,
> It might have been useful, again and again.'
> (45-52)

Beyond the issue of the usefulness of a servant-maid's writing, in "Mad Heifer," "Written, originally extempore" draws attention to the existence of at least two writing "sessions". The extempore session may even have taken place in Hands' head as it is unlikely that she would be equipped with pen and paper during her working day. Rewriting can be read positively here as an assertion of professional ambition, even professional status, despite what I have said earlier about the commodification of Hands as a literary labourer. Hands' implied control over time through the use of the extempore and her assertion of the right to write can be read against Marx's conclusion that "the regulation and exploitation of labour time is the central characteristic of capitalism" (in Urry 5). Hands' extempore writing and rewriting as a pre-industrial form of production belies capitalism's "denser forms of work in favour of the porous working day" (Urry 5). Hands' prediction for the heifer, then, may also refer to the increasing division of labour on the farm and what E. P. Thompson has documented as a movement toward task-orientation, greater synchronization of labour, the propaganda of time-thrift and the relationship between time and

morality[14] which is more than alluded to by Mrs. Domestic in "A Poem, On the Supposition of an Advertisement" when she insists that the only valuable activities of servants are those that are "useful, again and again" (52).

But rewriting is also an act of reinforcing the dominant discourse. The heifer disrupts happy village life. The disruption is brief and contained within "poetic time". The prediction at the end of the poem which eludes poetic closure by projecting into a future beyond the boundaries of the graphic existence of the poem underlines and reinforces a punitive closure within the content of the prediction. The ominous "no more" of the last line promises a quick end to the heiferness of the heifer. Either inadvertently drowned, killed for non-compliance or cowed, she will be changed. This biological relationship to time is fully rationalized within agricultural discourse even to the extent that the chase through the village can be read as precipitated by the community-sanctioned or collective "rape" of forced insemination as a natural agricultural practice.

Rewriting can, of course, be read in other ways, and Hands' assertion of originality is at least partly ironic because of the strong and obvious connections the poem has to literary history. But even this irony contains subversive possibilities. While the designation of natural genius implies a natural talent nurtured by a life lived close to nature, Hands' knowledge of literary texts, either through direct

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[14]It is perhaps, then, no coincidence that Coventry, near where Hands lived,"was one of the most important watchmaking centres in England in the early years of the eighteenth century" (Thompson 1967, 66).

reading experience or otherwise, belies her literary innocence. Even writing pastorals, which arguably Hands does only part-time, is the prescribed "first-step" for fledgling poets. This may be why, despite the contradictory fit, labouring-class women writers like Hands turn to Virgil and Pope for inspiration and guidance. In fact, by using the extempore form, Hands is asserting her potential or future place as a "great poet" composing in the manner of the great poets. Both Virgil and Pope, according to Samuel Johnson, composed "by pouring out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass[ed] the day in retrenching exhuberances and correcting inaccuracies" (Johnson in Tillotson, 1100).

Hands emulation of and debt to other poets is also reflected through intertextual links. The quelling of exuberance of extempore, for example, takes place in the apparently voluntary or possibly unhinged immersion of the heifer in water. Although water is presented as "successfully" taming the maddened heifer, Hands' conflation of madness and water could, rather darkly, suggest Shakespeare's "poor" Ophelia "divided from herself and her fair judgement" (IV.v.84-5). Like the heifer's, Ophelia's drowning is an unintentional immersion of a mad creature. In addition, Ophelia is a character whose presence and behaviour "disrupts" the "flow" of life and underlines the cultural dilemma virginity poses. Generally, in eighteenth-century readings of Hamlet, Ophelia is interpreted sympathetically, even sentimentally. For Samuel Johnson, Ophelia "fills the heart with tenderness" (Johnson 1968, 8, 1011) as the unnecessary

victim of a selfish Hamlet. As Johnson explains, he finds the "logic" of Hamlet's madness wanting especially as it impacts on Ophelia.

> Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.
>
> (Johnson, 1968, 8, 1011)

Henry Tresham's painting Ophelia vide Hamlet (1794) even isolates Ophelia as a tragic figure. Without any visual reference to Hamlet and his personal tragedies, Tresham places Ophelia within what Georgianna Ziegler calls the "French romantic tradition". While her madness, as Ziegler explains, makes "her disheveled and wanton in appearance...the wreath of flowers and her eyes raised to heaven suggest the divine inspiration of a poetic muse" (Ziegler 67).[15] This combination of

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[15]In the nineteenth century Hamlet's behaviour becomes justifiable within the paradigm of the alienated "tragic hero" and Ophelia's presence becomes increasing ethereal and marginal. As a result, William Hazlitt, in 1817, reads Ophelia as "a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon" (Hazlitt in Hoy 168) and Hamlet's behaviour towards her is perceived as "natural". As Hazlitt explains,

> [Hamlet's] habitual principles of action are unhinged and out of joint with the time. His conduct to Ophelia is quite natural in his circumstances. It is that of assumed severity only. It is the effect of disappointed hope, of bitter regrets, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the distractions of the scene around him! Amidst the natural and preternatural horrors of his situation, he might be excused in delicacy from carrying on a regular courtship. When 'his father's spirit was in arms,' it was not a time for the son to make love in. He could neither marry Ophelia, nor wound her mind by explaining the cause of his alienation, which he durst hardly trust himself to think of.
>
> (Hazlitt in Hoy 167-68)

madness, nature and the poetic muse is present in "Mad Heifer" as well. The heifer is not conceived as an individual body. Indeed, Hands provides no details of the heifer's body. In this way the individualized heifer is "sacrificed" for the role she can fulfill as a force and a voice. Hands muses on the heifer, conferring some level of muse-like status onto the heifer who can, as a result, act as Hands' muse or, at the very least, a springboard for Hands' launch as a writer.

As intertext with Hamlet, then, it is the immersion in water which "baptizes" both the heifer and Ophelia into an altered state related to anxiety around the loss of their virginity. Water and sexuality are linked. In the eighteenth-century folksong "Drive Hawky through the water," for example, the sexual innuendo of "driving a cow through the water" is obviously and openly stated.

> Hawky was a little Cow
> She was loath to wide the Water
> Since that things can be no better,
> Drive Hawky through the water,
> Kaw Hawky, drive Hawky thro the Water,
>
> Hawky was a pretty Cow,
> All the children does adore her,
> For she gives them all the Milk,
> Three's none they prize before her,
> Kaw Hawky, &c.
>
> My love promis'd me a Pint of Wine
> She paid me with a pint of Water,
> But I play'd her as good a trick,
> I made her shoes of rotten leather
> Kaw Hawky, &c.
>
> One shall go to make the Bed,
> Two and two shall lie together,
> And if there is not room enough,
> One shall lie upon another,
> Kaw Hawky, &c

The heifer's "madness" may, then, not be connected to the heifer's own consciousness of herself; her actions may be entirely sane. Madness is only how she is perceived by humans if and when she is reluctant to "take the bull". It is the conflict between what the heifer perceives as her natural functions and what humans with an economic stake in her, perceive as natural to a heifer. Similarly, in order for Hamlet's feigned madness to be convincing, he must mistreat Ophelia, an action which tragically contributes to Ophelia's "real" madness. There is also a vivid agricultural sense in which "taking the bull" and feigning the "natural" could save or prolong the heifer's life. A cow producing milk and calves is valuable on an ongoing basis; a barren cow or "martin" loses her essential femaleness. She is relabled, reclassified as "cattle" and sent up for slaughter.

Clearly Hands' ability to internalize relevant cultural materials is impressive. Camilla's presence strengthens the overarching intertextual links connecting Hands' poem with Virgil's Aeneid and Pope's "Essay on Criticism" and provides another connection with the heifer. Indeed, Camilla's classical function as Diana's attendant, as, in other words, a virgin huntress, contradicts a literal reading where Camilla's trembling, fear and paleness can construct an exemplary contrast between "proper" female deportment (Camilla's) and improper (the heifer's). Rather, Camilla's attitude can be said to stem from her classical function as the attendant at a sacrifice. In other words, Camilla's fear is not of the heifer, but for the heifer. As well, Camilla's level of alarm acts as a measure of how "mad" the heifer actually is. For

if Camilla is described "as so swift she runs over a field of corn without bending a blade [and] makes her way over the sea without wetting her feet" (Jobes 281), then her alarm at the heifer's rout through the village indicates a level of ferocity and velocity perhaps never seen before and a knowledge that the heifer may not be able to sustain her frenzy long enough to avoid "wetting her feet". In Pope's "Essay on Criticism" (1711), he refers to Camilla's light swiftness as a prescription for writers.

> True *Ease in writing* comes from *Art*, not *Chance*,
> As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.
> 'Tis not enough no Harshness gives Offence,
> The *Sound* must seem an *Eccho* to the *Sense*.
> *Soft* is the Strain when *Zephyr* gently blows,
> And the *smooth Stream* in *smoother Numbers* flows;
> But when loud Surges lash the Sounding Shore,
> The *hoarse, rough Verse* should like the *Torrent* roar.
> When *Ajax* strives, some rock's vast Weight to throw,
> The line too *labours*, and the Words move *slow;*
> Not so, when swift *Camilla* scours the Plain,
> Flies o'er th' unbending Corn, and skims along the Main.
>
> (362-373)

Hands' self-deprecation in referring to Pope is part homage to the master-poet and an assertion of her own poetic maturity. The reference to Pope's Camilla suggests Camilla is "wowed" not only by the heifer's speed but by Hands' poetic prowess.

That poetic prowess is convincingly demonstrated through Hands' management of Book III of Virgil's Georgics both as an agricultural treatise and through the deeper connection within Greek mythology between the story of Daphne, whose name Hands' used as a publishing pseudonym, and the story of the Inachian heifer as told in both Virgil and Ovid. This is a complex, embedded connection between

Hands and the heifer which recasts "Mad Heifer" as a sophisticated rewriting of Greek myth. Hands turns classical mythology into what appears a simple "moment" of life in an eighteenth-century English agricultural community using the shared images of madness, water and eroticism to affix the two worlds. In the Georgics, Book III, Virgil discusses the management of cattle with an eye to peak times of reproduction in cows and an ethics of breeding that can be compared to both the picture Hands presents of village life and eighteenth-century breeding practices:

> The bull's insult at four she may sustain;
> But, after ten, from nuptial rites refrain.
> Six seasons use; but then release the cow,
> Unfit for love, and for the lab'ring plough.
> Now, while their youth is fill'd with kindly fire,
> Submit thy females to the lusty sire:
> Watch the quick motions of the frisking tail;
> Then serve their fury with the rushing male,
> Indulging pleasure lest the breed should fail.
> (Dryden Book III, 72-80)

Virgil would entirely exclude heifers from breeding (since they are less than four years old) but promotes a form of selective breeding not unfamiliar to eighteenth-century breeders. Intermingled with this practical advice, though, is an evocative, mythological "knowledge". Subsequently, when Virgil warns that flies should be kept away from pregnant cows, he illustrates his caution not with agricultural science but with a mythological narrative.

> About th' Alburnian groves, with holly green,
> Of winged insects mighty swarms are seen:
> This flying plague (to mark its quality)
> Aestros, the Grecians call -- Asylus we --
> A fierce loud buzzing breeze -- their stings draw blood,
> And drive the cattle gadding through the wood.
> Seiz'd with unusual pains they loudly cry:

> Tanagrus hastens thence, and leaves his channel dry.
> This curse the jealous Juno did invent,
> And first employed for Io's punishment.
> To shun this ill, the cunning leach ordains,
> In summer's sultry heats, (for then it reigns),
> To feed the females ere the sun arise,
> Or, late at night, when stars adorn the skies.
> (Dryden Book III, 235-248)

Reading Hands, then through Virgil, the fly and not distemper or forced insemination becomes Hands' heifer's tormentor. In the story of the Inachian heifer as told by Ovid, Io, the daughter of the river Inachus, is pursued and raped in the woods by Jupiter. In order to hide Io from his wife, Juno, Jupiter turns Io into "a sleek heifer" (Ovid 45). Juno admires the heifer and asks Jupiter to give it to her as a gift. Once she is in possession of the heifer Juno causes the heifer to be continually stung by a gadfly and places her under the watch of the one hundred-eyed Argus. Jupiter sends Mercury to kill Argus which he does after lulling him to sleep with the story of Pan and Syrinx (a nymph who runs away from Pan and is transformed into marsh reeds when she asks the river Ladon to hide her). Juno's angry response to Argus' death is to

> conjure up a dreadful Fury, to torment the
> eyes and mind of her Greek rival [Io] and,
> implanting goads of madness in her heart,
> drove her all over the world, a terrified
> fugitive.
> (Ovid 48)

Reaching the Nile River, Io's lowings and bellowings draw Jupiter's pity and he negotiates with Juno who ends Io's sufferings and returns her to human form.

In Ovid, not only does the story of Syrinx within the story of Io tell a similar tale, the story of the Inachian heifer is immediately preceded by the story of Daphne, the nymph and virgin huntress, who is pursued by Phoebus. Both Daphne and Phoebus have been "darted" by Cupid in revenge for Phoebus' taunting. Daphne has been struck with the dull lead-tipped arrow that "puts love to flight" (Ovid 41) while Phoebus has been hit with the golden, shining and sharp-tipped arrow that kindles love. When Phoebus has nearly captured her, Daphne devoted to the ideal of "maiden bliss....sees the waters of her father [the river] Peneus" (Ovid 42) and begs him,

> 'Oh father', she cried, 'help me! If your rivers
> really have divine powers, work some
> transformation, and destroy this beauty
> which makes me please all too well!'
>
> (Ovid 43)

Daphne is quickly transformed into a laurel. Daphne, Io and Syrinx all undergo a physical transformation in order to escape a would-be lover or love rival and all use water in some part of their transformation. Even when they are saved, they are all ultimately used by their would-be lovers -- Io is raped by Jupiter, Daphne becomes the laurel tree, Phoebus' symbol, and Syrinx becomes the reeds which Pan uses to make his flute. Hands' "I presage" at the end of the "Mad Heifer" poem becomes, in this context, a glance backwards. Hands poem, as a rewriting of Greek myth, maps only Io's passing as a "terrified fugitive" and predicts only what she sees as inevitable. Or, as Daphne, the virginal, nymph huntress is transformed into Phoebus' laurel of victory, it may be Hands' own

perceived inability to uproot herself and run that she laments and sees reflected in the mad heifer's rout.

Despite their dual domestications, both Hands and the heifer exercise choices which suggest that their assigned roles are neither semi-contractual nor natural. The presence of "our village" in all the Hands' poems I have discussed here, as well as the tracking of the heifer's trajectory through the village in "Mad Heifer," indicates that communities play roles and enact responsibilities that impact on the "movements" of all living things within their boundaries. The heifer's leap into the pond and Hands' certain prediction may be inevitable based simply on the convenient location of the village pond at the end of the road. But while there is an organic sense to the notion of the village as a microcosm, the design of villages are certainly contrived to serve the needs of those who need the village to serve them and have the power and the means to achieve this goal. In the next chapter I will continue to explore ways in which structural and utilitarian ideologies inform eighteenth-century British rural life. I discuss, in part, how agricultural architectures -- both physical and methodological -- naturalize specific responses to animals, labourers, women and poets.

Gender, Class and the Beehive: Mary Collier's "The Woman's Labour" (1739) as Nature Poem

> The wisdom of God receives small honour from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about and with a gross rusticity admire his workes; those highly magnify him whose judicious enquiry into his acts, and deliberate research into his creatures, returne the duty of a devout and learned admiration.
>
> Sir Thomas Browne Religio Medici (1643)

This chapter looks at the cultural meaning of the beehive in eighteenth-century Britain as it is represented in a selection of literary and non-literary texts. The text at the centre here is Mary Collier's poem "The Woman's Labour," published in 1739. Collier, who was also known as the Washerwoman Poet of Petersfield and considered to be the first labouring-class woman poet published in England, wrote "The Woman's Labour" as a response to the 'pirated' 1730 edition of Stephen Duck's "The Thresher's Labour" (1736) "fancying he had been too Severe on the Female Sex in his Thresher's Labour" (Collier vi). Part of Collier's response is conceptualized in the image of the beehive, which she evokes in the final stanza of her poem

> SO the industrious Bees do hourly strive
> To bring their Loads of Honey to the Hive;
> Their sordid Owners always reap the Gains,
> And poorly recompense their Toil and Pains.
>
> ("WL" 244-247)

While identification between Elizabeth Hands and the mad heifer was problematic, Mary Collier uses a well-established and well-documented topos of human-animal identification -- the worker bee in

the hive. The presence of the beehive in Collier's poem raises several issues. One involves the tension between the beehive's potency as a symbol of industry[1] -- the poem's status (along with Duck's poem) as "a rare depiction of actualized rural labour" (Barrell 31) -- and the social inequities it exposes. I will argue that Collier's use of the beehive is not just, as Donna Landry suggests, "a Virgilian gesture" (Landry 1987, 115) but signals Collier's participation in debates around both the division of labour and the changing cultural meaning of the beehive.

But as much as this chapter locates the meaning of the beehive in Collier's poem within its sociopolitical context, and as much as the poetics of Collier's work structures the theme of the powerlessness of labourers through methodologies that are clearly sociological, it is also important to acknowledge that "The Woman's Labour" is a poem. John Goodridge surmises in the case of Stephen Duck that

> because Stephen Duck was a farm labourer it is assumed too easily not only that what he says about farm work must be true, but that in this truth lies the whole of the poetry's significance.
>
> (Goodridge 17)

As Goodridge points out, both Duck and Collier state in their autobiographical writings that they want to be poets and consciously attempt to produce poetry (Goodridge 16-17). Both use literary devices

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[1]Perhaps the very potency of this metaphorical relationship can be measured in relation to the internalization of the image within the discourse of twentieth-century natural science. For example, Bernd Heinrich appropriates the image for the title and conceptual frame of his 1979 book Bumblebee Economics which discusses bumblebees' management of resources (heat, in particular) to maximize productivity, profit and survival.

such as epic similes, satire, heroic and mock heroic to signal that their work is poetry.

Acknowledging "The Thresher's Labour" and "The Woman's Labour" as both sociology and poetry also helps to centre my discussion of the beehive metaphor within an ecocritical paradigm. This is important because it distinguishes my critique from a purely literary one which would contain the beehive metaphor within "culture" -- literary and historical -- without examining the hegemony of the enculturation of the beehive. The unexamined, anthropomorphic license with which humans use the beehive as a signifier can be examined in the context of the very natural world from which traditional literary criticism attempts to remove it.

There is also a connection with the "natural Genius" so central to the way that Duck and Collier are conceptualized as poets. While the status of these poets is often characterized by their allegedly unmediated relationship to nature, this lack of mediation is always located within their "unlettered" status where it is their lack of formal education that brings them closer to nature. Not only does this underline the "natural Genius" designation as a cultural construct, but it also denies the existence of a labouring-class culture and denigrates the value of informal educations. This produces a paradox in which a lack of education locates a particular group of humans "outside" culture even as they are enculturated and fixed within a specific cultural construct identifying them as "close to nature". Judged within the binary of culture/nature, labouring-class poets' often line-blurring and problematic actual relationship to nature is left unexamined. For

example, I will explore ways that Duck and Collier's self-identification as labourers brings about an enculturation of nature that is remarkably different in content but born out of the same context as the dominant culture. Even as writing about their labour extends the discourse of labour, Collier and Duck engage in a practice of literary cultivation in which actual agricultural cultivation and enclosure is "packaged," even sanctioned, as a cultural commodity. I am interested in examining ways in which Collier and Duck's "selves-in-nature" are confined between the expectations of dominated nature in the service of agricultural ends and a rationalized, idealized "natural" nature. Collier's appropriation of the beehive, then, for her own, however atypical, purposes does not necessarily liberate her from a human tendency toward speciesism. Collier rewrites the beehive to create a poetic description of actual rural labour. I would also like to consider her relationship to nature by examining the use of the beehive metaphor, the other images of nature in the poem and how Stephen Duck represents nature in "The Thresher's Labour".

One way to accomplish this is to put both "The Thresher's Labour" and "The Woman's Labour" forward for consideration as nature poems. Methodologically this means putting nature at the centre of two poems which have always been read with labour at their centre. This poses an immediate critical problem since I do not want to diminish labour-centred readings of two poems which so obviously offer insights into the subjectivity of the labouring poor. But if the importance of Duck's and Collier's work lies, in part, in the expression of their class position, their perspectives on and representations of nature arguably offer

another angle on nature poetry in the eighteenth century. In John Goodridge's comparison of Thomson's The Seasons to Duck's and Collier's labour poems, he suggests that while Thomson integrates labour as nature or labour as natural -- "a part of the 'natural' movement of the day" (Goodridge 28) -- Duck's and Collier's nature is both hostile and something neither labourer has much time for. But Goodridge's analysis charts, in part, the broader cultural movement from God's Dominion to Man's Dominion and tacitly underlines my assertion that the representation of nature is central to an analysis of both poems.

In "The Woman's Labour," Collier's nature is a cultivated nature which in one way completely complements the notion of the beehive as a domesticated space. Collier accepts the "new economy" of the managed hive by calling into question only the distribution of profits. Collier co-opts both mythology and nature, to "labour" in the service of labour. Titan and Orion mark the cycle of the passing days and seasons to reinforce fundamentally and historically the poem's theme of women's perpetual labour. But even as Collier sometimes refers to it as Titan, the sun plays a servile role by burning off the dew in the morning before work begins and drying the threshed hay while the labourers take a lunch break. As nature in the service of humans, this representation underlines man's dominion over nature.

Even Collier's reference to the "golden age" is not used to evoke an Arcadian landscape idyll. Rather it is specifically tied to her response to Duck's poem and his representation of women in "The Thresher's Labour". But Collier's use of mythological references can be confusing. Titan is domesticated and both men and women labourers

toil perpetually -- men cast as Sisyphus forever rolling the rock up the hill, women as the daughters of Danaus who must gather water in sieves.[2] On the other hand, while "lovely *Danae*" (26) is clearly cherished and coveted for her beauty, the story as told by Ovid and others really revolves around male attempts to control, possess and contain her. In the myth, the beautiful Danae is imprisoned in a brazen tower by her father because it had been prophesied that Danae's son will grow up to murder his grandfather. In Collier's version of the myth

> JOVE once descending from the clouds did drop
> In Show'rs of Gold on lovely *Danae's* Lap;
> ("WL" 25-6)[3]

Once he lands in her lap he impregnates her. Far from representing a golden age, the story of Danae is, at least from a twentieth-century perspective, essentially a rape story in which a god uses a natural phenomenon to facilitate his crime. When Danae's father learns that Danae is pregnant, he arranges for her murder to ensure that the prophesy cannot come to pass, but he is thwarted in his attempts and is eventually slain by Perseus, Danae's son.[3] Perhaps it is not the content of the story of Danae but the way in which Danae is represented that matters to Collier, especially as she can use that representation to highlight her message to Stephen Duck and challenge his representation of women:

> And you great DUCK, upon whose happy Brow

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[2]Donna Landry points out that "Collier's use [in lines 211-13] of the emphatic triplet...[also] has the added effect of a sense of labors prolonged" (Landry 1987 105).
[3]For the Danae story see Ovid Metamorphoses. IV, 611.

> The Muses seem to fix the Garland now,
> In your late Poem boldly did declare
> *Alcides'* Labours can't with your's compare;
> And of your annual Task have much to say,
> Of threshing, Reaping, Mowing Corn and Hay;
> Boasting your daily Toil and nightly Dream,
> But can't conclude your never-dying Theme,
> And let our hapless Sex in Silence lie
> Forgotten, and in dark Oblivion die;
> But on our abject State you throw your Scorn,
> And Women wrong, your Verses to adorn.
> ("WL" 31-42)

That Collier singles out Danae as a coveted and respected woman, exemplary in a "golden age" of relations between men and women, emphasizes how she idealizes the attention that a classical God pays to a beautiful woman and projects a universal idealization of women in past cultures. Collier uses the Danae story to enhance her critique of Stephen Duck, who is unrestrained in his disdain for women field labourers even as he, too, idealizes another archetypal woman -- the domesticated woman waiting devotedly at the cottage door at sunset for her labouring man to arrive home.[4]

While Stephen Duck also instrumentalizes nature, he is freer than Collier to imagine nature as other than in the service of man. This relative freedom unintentionally underscores Collier's points that the thresher's labour ends at night and that, while the domesticated woman is an ideal, her construction entails an intense continuation of her day labour:

> WHEN Ev'ning does approach, we homeward hie,

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[4]This image is an established topos which appears in works as various as Dryden's translation of Persius, satire 1, line 150 (1680), Thomson's "Winter" from the Seasons (1730) and Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night" (1786) and Gainsborough's painting "Cottage Door with Children Playing" (1778).

> And our domestic Toils incessant ply;
> Against your coming Home prepare to get
> Our Work all done, our House in order set
> *Bacon* and *Dumpling* in the Pot we boil,
> Our Beds we make, our Swine we feed the while;
> Then wait at Door to see you coming Home,
> And set the table out against you come:
> Early next Morning we on you attend;
> Our Children dress and feed, their Cloths we mend;
> ("WL" 75-84)

In contrast to Collier as well, Duck clearly represents ways in which humans are at nature's or "Fate's" service and even ways in which nature is completely out of man's control -- for example when a sudden rain forces the labourers to abandon their lunchbreak (a time, he points out, as Collier also does, allotted by the need for the sun to dry the cut grass) and take shelter.[5]

> Meanwhile the changing Sky begins to lour,
> And hollow Winds proclaim a sudden Show'r:
> The tattling Crowd can scarce their garments gain,
> Before descends the thick impetuous Rain;
> Their noise Prattle all at once is done,
> And to the Hedge they soon for Shelter run.
> ("TL" 185-190)

Again, Collier is able to turn Duck's words to her advantage. By closing off her access to nature as leisure, she heightens the sense of women's unending labour. In a sardonic mirroring of Duck's words, she answers his description of the "little Labour" (200) of Haymaking as "pleasing work" (202) performed under a "kindly sun" (201) culminating in his apparently labourless image, "[n]ext Day the Cocks appear in equal Rows"(203) with one that simultaneously critiques Duck and elucidates women's important role in the labour of haymaking.

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[5]This is not merely realism, though. As John Goodridge points out, a thunderstorm is a "familiar georgic convention" (Goodridge 19).

> I hope, that since we freely toil and sweat
> To earn our Bread, you'll give us Time to eat.
> That over, soon we must get up again.
> And, nimbly turn our Hay upon the Plain;
> Nay, rake and prow it in, the Case is clear;
> Or how should Cocks in equal Rows appear?
> ("WL" 57-62)

Duck's relative leisure, as is demonstrated by this example, allows him a subtlety of representation not available to Collier. For example, he poignantly acknowledges the role that misperception plays in human relationships to nature, what Raymond Williams calls "an alteration of landscape by an alteration of seeing" (Williams 87), when he happily describes the coming spring after a long, labourless (and presumably, impoverished) winter:

> BUT soon as Winter hides his hoary Head,
> And Nature's Face is with new Beauty spread;
> The lovely *Spring* appears, refreshing Show'rs
> New cloath the Field with Grass, and blooming Flow'rs.
> ("TL" 82-85)

Even as the poet/labourer effusively welcomes Spring, the labourer/poet reminds himself and the reader a few lines later of the real physical pain renewed employment will bring.

> Alas! that human Joys should change so soon!
> Our Morning Pleasure turns to Pain at Noon.
> ("TL" 102-103)

In their representations of nature, Collier and Duck do not obsessively taxonomize nature but they themselves are taxonomized through a division of labour which fragments their tasks. The very conception of an exploitative work system that only allows agricultural labourers to subsist results in part from a belief among owners and

economic theorists of the period that labourers are "naturally" lazy. Bernard Mandeville asserts this belief as "common knowledge":

> Everybody knows that there is a vast number of [labourers] who, if by four Days Labour in a Week they can maintain themselves, will hardly be persuaded to work the fifth....When Men shew such an extraordinary proclivity to Idleness and Pleasure, what reason have we to think that they would ever work, unless they were oblig'd to it by immediate Necessity?
>
> (i, 192)[6].

Collier's and Duck's taxonomies, then, encourage a way of thinking about nature filtered by methods of work organization. The wage gap keeps men underemployed, if not unemployed, all winter and women continuously overburdened. This, to reverse Raymond Williams' phrase, is an "alteration of seeing, by an alteration of landscape". The natural cycles of night and day and the seasons order an increasingly fragmented array of jobs in "The Thresher's Labour" to create a cacophony Duck hears but does not reinterpret in his description of the "noise" of women talking. He is able to reject this talk as bad behaviour in part because the taxonomies of nature complement similar divisions of labour along gender lines. This is Collier's whole point. Men of all classes denigrate certain tasks since they never perform those tasks. But where Collier is outraged by Duck's negative image of women as noisy and incomprehensible sparrows and converts it to a positive one of industrious bees, Collier's bees are unnaturally silent in their work. This movement by Collier from reaction to what Donna Landry calls "resignation," where Collier's "protests remain carefully circumscribed

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[6]All references to Mandeville come from F. B. Kaye's two-volume edition of The Fable of the Bees (1924).

and localized rather than becoming radically programmatic" (Landry 1987, 116), is indicative of an overall reservation on the part of labouring-class writers to challenge structures of containment. Even as the beehive metaphor connects women, labourers and bees, it also inscribes women labourers in a specific representation which perpetuates the very systems of work that are in part responsible for their unrelenting struggle as labourers.

In considering bees' reputation as perfect creatures functioning in a perfect community and producing a perfect product, it is important to acknowledge that this "reputation" exists as a form of human manipulation in which bee nature becomes bee culture. Language operates as a technology here in promoting an ethic of control through the process of classification. Assuming that the relationships within the beehive are necessarily social and subject to social interpretations, the meaning of the bee is arrogantly fixed within human parameters that in many ways are completely fabular. Even in the context of scientific technologies like the microscope which in the early-modern period, as Jeffrey Merrick indicates, radically upend emblematic and symbolic meanings based on Aristotelian science, eighteenth-century writers insist upon perpetuating a variety of fables of the bees that serve primarily, in Merrick's view, to describe "the inferiority of females and [prescribe] their subordination to male authority" (Merrick 10). Perhaps as a result of the relatively "disturbing" nature of some of the scientific discoveries -- first, that the "King Bee" is female and second, that the Queen is "promiscuous," the early modern period is a time when the meaning of the bee is particularly unstable and

vulnerable to rewritings. As well, the ascendancy of "science" over folk knowledges necessitates a rewriting which formalizes and systematizes bee behavior within a division of labour model that increasingly orders the lives of labourers such as Mary Collier. There is perhaps some value in considering simultaneously the ethic of control of the bees within apiculture to the ethic of control of labourers within agriculture. This involves demarcating a conception of the self within the dominant eighteenth-century ethic of improvement to locate notions of animal integrity framed within a paradigm of service to man.

The movement from God's Dominion to Man's Dominion underlines the important role religion plays in both eighteenth-century representations of nature and in the critique of the wage slavery farm and domestic labourers endure. Any critique of labour practices by a labourer entails a risky and audacious refusal to accept one's "place" in society. Connecting this resistance to nature questions God's providence. But the eighteenth-century concept of "natural Religion" serves as a rationalization for such apparently impious attitudes even as it enables an ethic of control -- a religious rationalization that, in Collier's context, affects both the conception of the early-modern beehive and the rationalization of labour practices. Natural religion replaces revelation as evidence of God's divinity at a time when science simultaneously proposed a model of the universe as a "Great Machine" and fashioned itself as a "pious pursuit" (Willey 11-12). The order that the new science brings to nature extends to the ordering of labour practices. For agricultural labourers, this connection is particularly direct.

Collier's exposure of the division of labour and the form of work organization she is, as a labourer, subjected to connects her poem to one of the best known extended uses of the beehive metaphor for human society in the eighteenth century -- Bernard Mandeville's The Grumbling Hive: or Knaves Turn'd Honest (1705), later amplified into The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Public Benefits (1714). Part satire, part fable, part philosophical/economic treatise, the Fable was highly controversial because Mandeville's "whole thesis undermines complacent contemporary thinking...that prosperity based on industry and commerce conduces to the "Common Good" of the world" (Kenny 36). Mandeville appropriates the beehive as an architectural framework on which to showcase his economic theories -- for example, the division of labour, laissez-faire politics and the relaxation of the appearance of social control, concepts which some later readers, like Adam Smith, considerably borrowed.[7]

Formally The Fable of the Bees builds on Mandeville's retelling of Jean de La Fontaine's "The Wasps and the Bees," which Mandeville published in his second book, Aesop Dress'd or a collection of Fables writ in Familiar Verse (1704). As Richard I. Cook notes, one of the primary differences between La Fontaine's Fables (1668-94) and Mandeville's imitations of them is in Mandeville's labelled and segregated "Moral" at the end of each tale which emphasizes "the fable's didactic function" (Cook 29) and makes explicit "the analogies and moral lessons to be

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[7]Both Dugald Stewart and Karl Marx cite Smith's plagiarism of a number of sections of Mandeville's work even as Smith critiqued Mandeville (in Hundert 220).

derived from his tales" (Cook 27). Mandeville's commitment to the moral explains why he is able to ignore rather blithely the "rules" of the fable which suggest that "we must...assign [animals] sentiments and language suitable to their several natures and respective properties" (Dodsley lxxi). Cook suggests that beyond beginning the poem with the architecture of a "Spacious Hive well stock'd with Bees," (1) Mandeville "treats his bees in exclusively human terms, and, accordingly, his poem functions as a fable only in the loosest sense" (Cook 37-8). In this way it is possible to read Mandeville's approach as purely literary; Mandeville understands that the literary beehive is only a signifier and any meaning can be injected into it. "The Wasps and the Bees," underlines the importance for Mandeville of the resolution of the dispute over the ownership of the honey through a determination by "Judge Hornet" about who -- the wasps or the bees -- is capable of building "such Combs and fill/With Honey each sexang'lar Cell" (Mandeville 1704, 47). In this way Mandeville asserts the morality of industry over idleness where the hapless wasps are exposed as usurpers by their lack of skill and their weaker work ethic.

Collier's connection to Mandeville is supported by both John Goodridge who cites "verbal similarities" (Goodridge 51) between Collier's bee stanza and Mandeville's use of language in Fable of the Bees and E. P. Thompson who assures readers that if Collier's beehive stanza does not allude directly to Mandeville, it shows an awareness of the "Luxury Debate" the book fueled (Thompson 1989, xiii). If Collier is responding to Mandeville, she is but one of hundreds who do so. Collier

may be uniquely positioned, though, as Mandeville's only labouring-class respondent. Collier metaphorically defends worker bees against owners who "always reap the Gains" (i, 246), even as she opposes Duck's view of women. Yet she stands with Duck against Mandeville's conceptualization of all workers within two particular economic theories -- one which argues that low wages encourage industry in the "naturally" idle labouring classes and another which projects enterprise and idealizes the opportunities available to a small number of labouring-class people with "the right stuff". While Mandeville's use of the beehive in the Fable is not fabular, it nonetheless appropriately supports his theories of the division of labour and allows him to naturalize simultaneously the idea of the division of labour and the domestication of the beehive. Mandeville also expands the cultural meaning of the bee by criticizing the bees.[8] By complicating the bee, he breaks free of one of the central tenets of fabular theory and the representation of animals generally, that animals convey "a simplicity we ourselves have lost" (Dodsley lxix), even as he harkens after a similar simplicity in his conception of the division of labour in which

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[8]Two other examples of negative depictions of bees are in John Gay's fable "The Degenerate Bees" (1738) and William Cowper's "The Pine-Apple and the Bee"(1779). Gay's negative image is located in the widely-held negative cultural view of the "lazy" Drone. Cowper's view, though, that bees are stupidly attracted to anything sweet challenges the dominant view of bees as harbingers of collective wisdoms by presenting an individual bee behaving badly.

> some Arts may be...raised by human Industry...tho' none but Men of ordinary Capacity should ever be employ'd in them...There are many Sets of Hands in the Nation, that...would be able...to produce, fit out and navigate a First-Rate [ship]: yet it is certain, that this Task would be impracticable, if it was not divided and subdivided into a great Variety of different Labours; and it is certain, that none of these Labours require any other, than working Men of ordinary Capacities.
>
> (ii, 141-2)

Through the bee metaphor, Collier similarly sets aside the distance created by the fabular to bring the bees closer in a direct comparison to labouring-class women.

What may be even more telling of the relationship between Collier's and Mandeville's texts is how Collier's poetic practice constructs by its very existence a critique of Mandeville's "An Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools". Both F. B. Kaye and Phillip Harth suggest that it was with the appearance of the expanded edition of Fable of the Bees in 1723 that included "An Essay on Charity and Charity Schools" "that [Mandeville's] satire [Fable of the Bees] attracted public notice" (i, xxxiv and Mandeville 1970, 11) and gained its controversial reputation. Mandeville's essay denounces, at length, the altruistic motives of the "charitable" and quite rightly foregrounds the more selfish and seamier motives of the "benevolent class". Mandeville is especially eager to expose what he perceives as the hypocrisy of the clergy. But while he complicates benevolence, he vastly oversimplifies the clients of charity schools and, as Phillip Harth points out, never challenges two central assumptions. The first is an economic assumption that society requires an uneducated workforce who must be exploited through low wages in

service of the greater good of boosting Britain's balance of trade with other European countries. The second is a moral assumption that the existence of the labouring poor as a class maintains a necessary balance between the idle and the industrious and that education breeds idleness (Mandeville 1970, 37-39). Knowledge, Mandeville asserts, increases desire; desire and fulfillment of desire produces idleness, and "[it] is impossible that a society can long subsist and suffer many of its Members to live in idleness" (i, 292). In his "Remark Y" appended to the Fable of the Bees, Mandeville reiterates this view within his thesis of the positive relationship between Luxury and Public Benefits. While he continues to promote Luxury, he underlines that it "is [not] to be made General" (i, 249). Mandeville's stated maxims here are that "the Poor should be kept strictly to Work and that it [is] Prudence to relieve their Wants, but Folly to cure them" (i, 248) and that "ignorance [is] a necessary Ingredient in the Mixture of Society" (i, 249). He reiterates this in "The Sixth Dialogue" in part two of The Fable of the Bees adding an element of "naturalness" to anyone's rise or fall within the class system

> But there is a prodigious Difference between debarring the Children of the Poor from ever rising higher in the World, and refusing to force Education upon Thousands of them promiscuously, when they should be more usefully employ'd. As some of the Rich must come to be Poor, so some of the Poor will come to be Rich in the Common Course of Things.
>
> (ii, 352)

While on the one hand, Collier criticizes the organization of the beehive and its reputation as a model for industry, on the other hand, she reiterates the imperative of industry versus idleness for the

labouring-class by presenting herself in, as Donna Landry puts it, "proud servitude" (Landry 1987,120) -- in one way the very labourer Mandeville wants her to be and in another way the aspiring worker Mandeville fears in the labouring poor and hopes for in the middle classes where class ascendency is deemed appropriate. Collier exemplifies Mandeville's "Diligent" labourer in her "Pains-taking" approach to work even as she mildly displays the qualities of "Industry" -- "a thirst after Gain, and an Indefatigable Desire of meliorating [her] Condition" (i, 242). It is in Collier's response to Duck as well as in her literary labour that she demonstrates the lack of "Content" which Mandeville sees as essential to one who "deserves the Name of Industrious" (i, 244). Through a description of her unceasing exertions as a field labourer in fair weather and a domestic labourer during the winter, she champions the cause of the woman labourer on the evidence of her hard work. Collier also displays the self-love Mandeville associates with Industry in her focus on chastising Duck. Her critique of class relations is less than consistent. She exposes herself as merely manipulative, forgetful or utterly truthful when she fails to consistently identify "our Mistress" (170) and the "sordid owners" (246) as the enemy. Needing Duck to be the unclouded object of her ire and wit to underline the perpetual exploitation of woman labourers, she exonerates "the honest Farmer" (45) whom she represents as practising an idealized equality in the workplace.

At another level, though, Collier's poem does function as a social critique. Collier's obvious literary labour complicates her connection to Mandeville who asserts in "Essay on Charity and Charity Schools" that

"[t]his forc'd Education is pernicious to the publick" (i, 292) and that "[e]very hour poor people spend at their book is so much time lost to the society" (i, 294). Class relations as a whole are challenged, then, by Collier's practice as a writer in the face of a charity school politics that aims to reconcile the poor to their lot via religion. This acts as a kind of confirmation of Pope's point in his attack on Duck in the Grub Street Journal that "real" work will not get done if the labouring class are "permitted" to become poets (in Zionkowski 91). But while Collier "appropriately" humbles herself by establishing early in the poem that

> No Learning ever was bestow'd on me;
> My Life was always spent in Drudgery:
> ("WL" 7-8)

she simultaneously answers Pope's concern and challenges him by writing about work. Distinguishing herself from the majority of women labourers as "an Old Maid," she establishes a sliver of regular leisure time which is her own and in which she can legitimately write. She repeats the concern which motivates her to respond to Duck's poem in the first place:

> Oft have I thought as on my Bed I lay,
> Eas'd from the tiresome Labours of the Day,
> Our first Extraction from a Mass refin'd,
> Could never be for Slavery design'd
> ("WL" 11-14)

Collier clearly has a "bee in her bonnet" that begins with a limited focus on her own abject state as "poor and low" (3), and "who ever was, and's still a Slave" (6). From here she slowly expands through a consideration of women's place of honour in history to find voice in a catalogue of the tasks that women perform on a daily basis. Even as she appears to prostrate herself to an exaggerated image of Duck as

> Immortal Bard! thou fav'rite of the Nine!
> Enrich'd by Peers, advanc'd by CAROLINE!
> ("WL" 1-2)

she also sharply monitors Duck's exercise of authority when it oppressively omits an accurate representation of woman's labour. She is doubly incensed by her suspicion that Duck's harsh critique of woman is performed, in part, for rhetorical or decorative effect. As in her critique of Mandeville's "charity school," Collier's response to Duck turns on her successful transformation of representations of women, labourers and women labourers from decorative to vital and three-dimensional. Collier's response even invites a counter-response but Duck never answers her. As Raymond Williams points out, Duck's voice shifts, under patronage from

> 'we' to 'the swain'...[eventually] writing, with the worst of them, his imitations from the classics, elevated and hollowed to the shapes of that fashionable culture which was not only a literary stance -- the 'high' tradition -- but, as always, a social ratification.
> (Williams 90).

By focusing on the labour practices of the beehive, Collier expands the meaning of the bees demanding, even if only metaphorically, a consideration of their agency and "de-naturalizing" the human industrial relationship by exposing it as ideological.

Collier's thematic and theoretical emphasis on the domestication of bees as an implicitly exploitative practice and on the injustice and imbalance of power between the bees and the owners of the hives suggests that the critical emphasis on her bee stanza can also be shifted towards eighteenth-century ideologies of agricultural and apicultural management. As domestic labour practices outlined by Collier

overburden and imprison labouring-class women, eighteenth-century apiculture's concern with controlling swarming, "tricking" bees into moving so that honey can be extracted, deciding how much honey the bees should be allowed to retain for their own survival, and preserving colonies to encourage profit and surplus value co-opt and commodify the very "wonderousness" celebrated in bee discourse. I argue that both Duck's and Collier's pictures of rural life depict an increasingly rationalized pattern of power and ownership more along the lines of the one John Barrell discusses in connection with Thomas Gainsborough's "The Harvest Wagon" (1767), a painting which portrays labourers on their way to the end-of-season harvest feast

> at which the essential solidarity of the English rural community is confirmed, as landlord, tenant and labourer sit together in a spontaneous celebration whose freedom is uninhibited by any obtrusive sense of social division.
>
> (Barrell 59-60)

Eighteenth-century apicultural technologies and practices institute a similar natural economy or a rigid cycle of control most commonly exemplified by the growing emphasis on controlling swarming but extending also to the design of bee boxes which "protect" bees from natural predators.[9] Collier's emphasis is also a more accurate reflection

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[9]By the nineteenth-century, this ethic of "protection" was so entrenched that Thomas Nutt bragged in his Humanity to Honey-Bees (1832) that his collateral bee-box design was "so contrived that ten thousand Bees can with ease leave their prison and their sweets in the possession of the humane apiarian, without the possible chance of a single intruder forcing it entrance to rob the magazine or to annoy the apiarian" (Harding 112). The reference to the hive as a prison certainly resonates with Collier's bee metaphor though Nutt's bright and positive tone suggests he has no sense of bee subjectivity as prisoners. Nutt's war imagery indicates a familiarity with Virgil's bees.

of the rapid changes the agricultural economy undergoes in the eighteenth century, when "rural labourers cease to be 'happy husbandmen' and become 'the labouring poor'" (Barrell 31). Despite the increase in apicultural knowledge and the veneer of science, the rhetoric of scientific discourse participates actively in perpetuating old fables and developing new ones.[10]

Eighteenth-century non-literary bee books reiterate this rhetoric of managed work patterns and increasing control. Motivated by the desire to fashion a "new" truth, apiculturists' use of figurative language in a scientific context paradoxically enables myths and misconceptions to escape the very scrutiny scientific practice would seem to demand.[11] Both Joseph Warder and Stephen White first transform folk culture into natural science and then turn empirical observation to utilitarian ends. This is easily illustrated with the title page for Joseph Warder's The true Amazons: or, The Monarchy of Bees (1713).[12] Subtitled a "new Discovery and Improvement of those Wonderful Creatures," Warder's title maps a movement from an older,

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[10]Ann Fairfax Withington writes in her article, "Republican Bees: The Political Economy of the Beehive in Eighteenth-Century America," of how the iconography utilizing the beehive as a symbol of the monarchy was adapted to serve republican ends in eighteenth-century America. Today the bee and beehive comprise the logo for that quintessential American business, Martha Stewart's mail-order division, "Martha by Mail".

[11]This perception,though, cuts both ways. Eighteenth-century scientific discourse differs from twentieth-century scientific discourse in ways that ecocritics might actually admire. While critics such as Linda Birke chastize scientific discourse for standing outside nature through the use of the passive voice, functioning as a missing agent or "a scientist [removed] from the sentence" (Birke 44), Warder's voice predominates as he participates in the eighteenth-century "exercise" of fashioning the scientific gentleman.

[12]A copy of this title page is printed in the Appendix.

emblematic evocation of bees -- bee as Amazon or Monarch -- to a natural scientific methodology "Wherein [the organization of the Beehive] is Experimentally Demonstrated". From there Warder guides his reader "naturally" toward "improvement" and mercantile concerns "so that with a layout of but Four or Five Pounds, in Three or Four Years, if the Summers are kind, you may get Thirty or Forty Pounds per Annum". Finally, Warder's recipe for mead promised on the title page supplies a nationalist subtext. Because mead is English and in "no way inferior to the best of Wines, coming either from France or Spain," it is a key to the Englishman's contentment, for

> if they will but try...and with me refresh themselves, with Drinking Your Majesty's Health in a Glass of such as our Bees can procure us; [they will] no more long for the Expensive Wine of our Enemies
>
> (Warder x).

But Warder does not encourage this particular expression of Englishness across classes. While he promotes beekeeping "to exceedingly help the poor" (Warder ix) who can supplement their meager incomes with hard work and the application of his methods, he creates a completely different milieu for gentlemanly beekeeping. Though there appears to be a move here to democratize honey production, this democracy is one which requires an acceptance of the domestication of the landscape (i.e. enclosure), paradoxically, the very practice which has unemployed many rural working people during this period. Warder emphasizes technologies foregrounding leisure and amateur science as entertainment to "delight the Rich; not only with various Observations and Speculations, by means of their Transparent

Hives ...but also with a Liquor" (Warder ix-x). The effect of this apparently leisurely approach toward beekeeping where the picture conjured up is one of gentlemen sipping Mead while watching the workings of the wondrous bees, is to transform bees, in keeping with eighteenth-century attitudes towards the natural world, into ocular entertainment, or in Michel Foucault's words, "the object of information" (Foucault 1979, 200). To read Warder through Foucault's analysis of the panopticon, then, glass-fronted bee-box technology enables the transformation of the beehive into "a laboratory of power" (Foucault 1979, 204) where the "cells" of the beehive are converted into "so many small theatres" (Foucault 1979, 200).

If the bees, then, are "never a subject in communication" (Foucault 1979, 200), the silencing of the bees becomes a subtle imperative present in early-modern bee treatises. When Joseph Warder claims that he has "with a Studious Delight, for near Twenty Years past, convers'd with these Innocent Creatures the Bees" (Warder iv), he has taken it upon himself to speak for the bees. While the strangeness of talking to animals needs to be tempered within its eighteenth-century context,[13] it is important to note how Warder unselfconsciously mediates the space between the bee and the rest of the world.[14] In this way he confidently naturalizes domestication at an even more fundamental level -- sanctioned, apparently, by the bees. In part, this

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[13]As Keith Thomas points out, "domestic beasts were frequently spoken to for their owners, unlike Cartesian intellectuals, never thought them incapable of understanding" (Thomas 96).

[14]Stephen White even discusses how the new bee-box technology effectively "protects" bees from predators.

naturalization comes through writing, through Warder and others' production of bee-books, books which, in Susanne Kappeler's words, "amplify particular aspects of the communicative act" (Kappeler 1986, 170). While messages are not, as Kappeler argues, "made interaction-proof", since subsequent writers such as Stephen White in his Collateral Bee-Boxes (1764) respond directly, albeit slowly, to Warder's text, communication occurs only between humans. The message becomes reified -- institutionalized and distanced from both previous forms (especially non-scientific forms) of human/bee interaction and from the bees themselves, despite Warder's idealized and illusory image of inter-species conversation.

But the idea of "telling the bees" harkens back to folk practices which Warder's scientific method belies.[15] One of the forms of knowledge Warder's book distances readers from is women's knowledge. In Chapter X, Warder laments that "most of the People of *England* will never attain to the keeping of [Bees] in Boxes, ...Because 'tis a hard thing to put them out of their old road, which every Old Woman thinks she understands" (Warder 105). He also disdainfully recounts, presumably as a cautionary tale, the "Old Woman's Mistake about her Bees". Interestingly, the tale includes an acknowledgment of matrilineal inheritance; Warder describes "the Daughters approving their Mothers

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[15]Both John Goodridge and E. P. Thompson point to folk culture around bees and women's traditional role in communicating with the bees . "Telling the bees" takes place when bees, in their cultural role as psychopomps, are told of a death in their human "family". This ostensibly ensures the bees' survival. (Goodridge 51). The custom is richly described in John Greenleaf Whittier's nineteenth-century American poem "Telling the Bees" (1858).

Politicks" (Warder 32) as they join her in burning a two-year-old hive under the mistaken belief that the bees inside are all too old to produce honey the following year. The "Objection"/"Answer" dialogue form Warder uses in this chapter as an authoritative device works to interrupt the narrative flow associated with the dissemination of folk knowledge. There is also, here and elsewhere in the book, an implicit sense that this women's knowledge is "owned" by the labouring classes. In undermining the old woman's knowledge of bees, Warder both fails to acknowledge how much he owes to this kind of knowledge[16] and naturalizes an industry of beekeeping modelled on the perception that bees are industrious, indefatigable and at the service of "Man, for whom they were created" (Warder 2). Bees, then, for Warder, come to define an industry within an industry. They model both the structure for this modern beekeeping industry and create honey, the product of that industry.

One structure the beehive supplies or sanctions for Warder is the monarchy.[17] The monarchical designation of the head-bee as "queen" is used to reiterate and reinforce the concept of the Divine Right of Kings.[18] In The True Amazons, Warder effuses in his dedication to

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[16]While Warder is quick to correct some "ridiculous" misconceptions of the past, he makes new errors which current readers, especially those knowledgeable about bees, would find quite amusing.

[17]Donna Landry cites Collier's poem "On The Marriage of George the Third, Wrote in the Seventy-Second year of her Age," to illustrate Collier's "problematical stance" in relation to "political and social authority". In "On The Marriage," Collier argues that "Kings should be militantly strong, if not explicitly expansionist, in the name of protestant liberty; royal couples should set the pattern of domestic virtue for their peoples" (Landry 1987, 116-7).

[18]One thing that natural science had firmly established by the early-modern period was that the gender of the head-bee is female. Prior to

Queen Anne[19] that "[i]ndeed, no Monarch in the World is so absolute as the Queen of the Bees (which pleads very much with me, that Monarchy is founded in Nature and approved by the great Ruler of Princes)" (Warder v). This naturalizing of the monarchy within God's dominion guarantees a permanence and a hierarchical social structure that is psychologically and politically necessary in the period following the Restoration. Perhaps unintentionally, it also extends the "usefulness" of the bee as metaphor beyond its obvious material benefit. The cultural meaning of the bee exceeds the profit it can turn for the owner of the beehive.

This symbolic, political value of the bee accounts, in part, for the positive, even adoring terms,[20] in which the queen bee and, in fact, bees in general are referred to in early-modern texts.[21] Warder's historical context partly accounts for his enthusiastic attitude toward the queen-bee. Warder's enthusiasm, though, must be tempered by an acknowledgment of his political and social obligations to his queen and

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that, the queen had been presumed male though writers regularly altered the gender of the head-bee to match the gender of the reigning monarch (Royds 60).

[19]This dedication first appears in the second edition of The True Amazons (Harding 71).

[20]Warder calls the bee the "most noble," and next to the silkworm, the most useful, of all insects (Warder 1).

[21]This positive linguistic association has not generally been examined in ecofeminist discussions of discourses which collapse the catagories of "animal" and "woman". In Joan Dunayer's "Sexist Words, Speciesist Roots," for example, there is only a substantial account and analysis of the pejorative uses of animal referents for women. While Dunayer cites "queen bee" as pejorative (Dunayer 12) and "busy as a bee" as complimentary (Dunayer 17), she does not discuss the complimentary, deferring to Halverson's assertion that "animal metaphors are overwhelmingly negative" (Dunayer 17).

his possible economic dependence on her favour.[22] Ultimately, Queen Anne may be a "queen bee" in the pejorative sense but Warder's social restraint does not permit the pejorative to emerge. Similarly, the "complimentarity" of "busy as a bee" (or "brisk as a bee" in eighteenth-century usage) hinges on an acceptance of a particular image of ideal industry that is from the labourer's perspective, perhaps, truly pejorative in the way that it internalizes a discourse of idleness and industry in the eighteenth century that has percolated through into our times. But Warder's text does not allow this point of view to emerge either.

"Busy as a bee" also highlights the fact that while much of the attention in Warder's discourse is given to the queen, the bulk of bees are either female workers or male drones. Though "busy as a bee" has typically described the ethic of the worker bee and neglected the drones, Warder enlists science and allows a great deal of space in his treatise to better explain the function of the drone whom he refers to as a "noble creature" with an "ignominious name" (Warder 6-7). In a significant move which underlines the central place of language in his treatise, Warder renames the drone the "Male-Bee" and devotes Chapter II, "The Description and Anatomy of the Male Bee, vulgarly Known by that ignominious Name of the Drone" recuperating the reputation of these linguistic losers in bee discourse through detailed and thorough documenting of how "Drones or Male Bees sit and hatch the Brood" and why "Drones or Male Bees [are] not to be killed in the Spring". Warder's

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[22]Dedication is usually a sign of existing or desired patronage.

seeming need to elevate the male bee's status here focuses even greater attention on the "gender politics" of the hive.

While in the cultural context of the human female monarchy, Warder has, apparently, no trouble praising a Queen-Bee, it is not so easy for him, despite scientific evidence, to proclaim the beehive predominately female and acknowledge that the drone is absolutely male and "absolutely under the domain of the females" (Warder 8).

> As to his Sex...'tis most probable that he is of the Male kind. I confess being subject to the other Bees, is an Argument against me, but...here I must beg Mr. Lilly's leave to assert contrary to Grammar, that the Feminine is more worthy than the Masculine amongst the Bees.
>
> (Warder 8)

This is not just a conceptual or ideological difficulty for Warder. By apologizing to William Lily, the author of the most well-known early-modern Latin grammar book in English,[23] Warder rightly notes that rewriting assumptions about gender must occur in language so that this new "truth" about a superior female society can be assimilated. Ironically, for a society praised by humans for its orderliness, this scientific refutation of the "normal" leaves Warder slightly disordered. The role of the term "Amazon" in Warder's title serves an important function here. By complimenting the female monarchy for its strength, orderliness and competence in war, but then making bees analogous to Amazons, he can simultaneously marginalize, mythologize and make foreign the notion of a female-dominated society.

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[23]Warder is referring to William Lily and John Colet's A Short Introduction of Grammar (1549).

Collier's critique of Duck's poem also focuses on disparaging representations of women but takes a very different stand. Collier's decision to use a bee metaphor as a proto-feminist gesture is also worth considering in the context of "The Woman's Labour's" status as a response. Response is a typical rhetorical mode, perhaps even a genre, in the eighteenth century. It is related to what Keith Thomas calls "the denunciation of 'vulgar errors' [which] became an increasingly obsessive theme [in the eighteenth century]" (Thomas, 79). The direct echo of Duck's title and the subtitle indicate that the poem is a response -- "An Epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck in Answer to his late Poem". But Collier states clearly in her "Remarks" that she "answer'd him to please my own humour, little thinking to make it Public" (in Ferguson 1985, 264). It was only when she allowed the "Spouse of a Gentlewoman" to transcribe the poem for her "with a promise to keep it private" that it became a "Town Talk" when he "exposed it" and "many advise[d] me to have it printed and at length I comply'd to have it done" (in Ferguson 1985, 264). It is only possible to speculate on whether it was modesty, fear of offending Duck or just a display of humility that encouraged Collier's desire for privacy. Similarly, the motives of the Gentlewoman's Spouse in publicizing Collier's poem against her wishes are unclear, but together, Collier's reluctant authorship confuses "The Woman's Labour's" status as a response.

Confusingly, too, the response to Collier's work and how Collier's response is read by others continues to complicate and unsettle the stability of her social critique. While the response is universally viewed as a protest, E.P. Thompson characterizes Collier's poem "in the

old folk mode of the 'argument of the sexes'" as a "rejoinder to Duck [that] is "witty" rather than "hostile" (Thompson 1989, x). This is in contrast to Moira Ferguson's reading of the response as "angry" and of Duck's poem as one that "infuriated" Collier (Ferguson 1985, 263). I agree that anger does not accurately describe Collier's tone in "The Woman's Labour" as much as it serves Ferguson's framing of Collier as a "First Feminist"[24]. But without a good working knowledge of the concept of wit in the eighteenth-century, Thompson's (and John Goodridge's, who concurs with him) reconceptualization of Collier as "witty" may ironically have the effect of completely depoliticizing the poem.[25] If "response" as a genre, though, can be conceptualized as dialogical, it is possible to perceive the poem as simultaneously angry, witty and even, authorative. Collier's response as a response reflects the tension between the idea of labouring-class authority and the rigid social hierarchy and circumscribed "natural" social roles which Collier reveals as a source of her own victimization. This revelation culminates in the beehive metaphor. Yet, while Collier's response expands the range for labouring-class poetic expression, her presence and scope is quickly circumscribed, contained and rendered conservative by critics such as Laura Mandell who, in promoting Mary Leapor's "radical" vision, sees Collier and Duck "functioning merely to put male and

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[24] Ferguson published the full text of "The Woman's Labour" in her 1985 book First Feminists: British Women Writers 1578-1799.

[25] Rose Mary Davis harshly judges labouring-class poets who come after Duck. She accuses Collier of being motivated to write her response to Duck's poem not by proto-feminist indignation or wit but by greed -- she hoped to emulate and capitalize on Duck's monumental success (Davis 1926, 66). This is an odd value judgement in a cultural context which would view Collier's "enterprise" positively.

female laborers (respectively) back into the prospect from which they had been removed" (Mandell 552) as if this act, in and of itself, cannot be perceived as "radical". Certainly, Raymond Williams sees Duck's "project" as coopted by the situation his patronage creates for him when he points out that fifty years later "Crabbe had...to begin all over again" (Williams 90), but it is a disservice to diminish the contribution Duck and Collier make to representations of labour from a labouring-class perspective.

Collier's bee metaphor responds directly to Duck's disparaging epic simile of women labourers as sparrows.

> THUS have I seen, on a bright Summer's Day,
> On some green Brake, a Flock of Sparrows play;
> From Twig to Twig, from Bush to Bush they fly;
> And with continu'd Chirping fill the Sky:
> But, on a sudden, if a Storm appears,
> Their chirping Noise no longer dins your Ears:
> They fly for Shelter to the thickest Bush;
> There silent sit, and All at once is hush.
> ("TL" 191-198)

Negatively connecting women and animals is a common strategy of denigration. Duck's metaphor of women as sparrows is used in this way. Bees, on the other hand, "were considered to be an intelligent and highly ordered community, and were treated with very great respect" (Goodridge 51-2). Collier presents a detailed and powerful picture of the labouring-class woman's double day of labour in "The Woman's Labour" and convincingly refutes Stephen Duck's portrait of lazy, twittering women in the field. By transferring the animal associated with women labourers from sparrow to bee, Collier does not reject the association made between animals and women. Rather, she transforms negative associations to positive ones. But it is also important to see the

contrasting similes of women and sparrows and women and bees within a broader context. Collier uses metaphor to create a relationship in language between the female labourers and the bees which, despite Mandeville and Warder, relies on the collective cultural "knowledge" of the bees' positive attributes.

Duck's specific reference to the women as sparrows evokes ambivalent cultural associations. Le Comte de Buffon, for example, recognizes an already established cultural prejudice against the sparrow when he suggests that "[t]his is not so despicable a bird as a great many imagine" (Buffon 1791, 67). Early-modern bird poetry presents a spectrum of attitudes towards the sparrow from the "pet," -- Philip Sparrow and Blake's "merry merry sparrow" in "The Blossom" -- to an oral tradition of the sparrow who readily, if not eagerly, admits to being the killer of poor "cock Robin".[26] On the negative side as well and in an agricultural context, E. L. Jones notes sparrows' reputation as cereal crop pests. They were considered threatening enough to the harvest that they were hunted by bounty in the eighteenth century (Jones 118), and this is the context within which Duck presents them. Coupled with Donna Landry's assertion that work-time was the only time when women could be social (Landry 1987, 113), the implications of Duck's comparison are harsh. Not only is women's work devalued but women's relationships with other women -- women's culture, in other words -- are portrayed in the image of sparrows who "with continu'd chirping fill the sky" (194) as threatening to the "balance" of cultivated

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[26]See Peggy Munsterberg, The Penguin Book of Bird Poetry (1980).

nature. Collier's response is important, then, not just in representing and itemizing the extent of women's labours, but in countering Duck's attack on women's culture. For if sparrows in the eighteenth-century agricultural context have come to signify "pest," then Collier's beehive signifies their cultural opposite. Indeed, Collier, in order to launch as able and witty defense of women as she has mustered here, may have found it necessary to reach hyperbolically for the beehive without considering all of the implications of this highly potent cultural symbol.

My view, then, is that Donna Landry is mistaken when she dismisses Collier's beehive metaphor as "a Virgilian gesture" (Landry 1987, 107). Collier's serious intent in using the beehive metaphor to describe woman's labour is a good deal more than gestural, and, unlike Virgil's, Collier's practical lessons of the beehive do not stand to celebrate the achievement of apicultural success. Neither is Collier's poem a georgic. Indeed, if Joseph Addison is accurate in his "An Essay on the Georgics," Collier would find it difficult despite her command of poetry to write a georgic since the "Precepts of Husbandry are not to be deliver'd with the simplicity of a Plow-Man, but with the address of a Poet" (in Dryden 145) Collier's dual role as poet/labourer and the subject matter of "The Woman's Labour" distances her rather than draws her closer to Virgil. While Addison praises Virgil's Georgics as "addressing its self wholly to the Imagination [raising] in our Minds a pleasing variety of Scenes and Landskips" (in Dryden 146) and warns against "the Poet...[encumbering] his Poem with too much Business" (148), "too much Business" is what Collier's poem is all about.

Virgil attempts from the very beginning of the fourth Georgic to "[show] us what station is most proper for the bees" (Dryden 239) and instruct both through husbandry and storytelling on how to "keep" bees. Collier struggles against the implications and power relations implicit in this "keeping". Virgil's metaphoric connections between bees and humans centre on war and business, not on labour. The early lines of the fourth Georgic are riddled with militaristic and mercantile images of bees -- "Embattel'd Squadrons" (4), "trading Citizens" (20), "vent'rous Colony" (28), "raw Souldiers" (32), "The Troops" (34) culminating in the description of a full battle between two "kings" for control of the hive (92-129). Collier's metaphor presents bees as workers rather than soldiers or entrepreneurs. While Collier may be guilty of anthropocentrically connecting the labours of women to those of the bees, she presents an early-modern perspective that both uses and opposes the technology of the microscope by presenting a close-up view of those who work within the beehive from the inside looking out. In part, Collier invokes the beehive in an appeal to "royal Clemency," a popular medieval and early modern proverb that "the king [of the bees] does not sting" (Merrick 11) which was extended to characterize human kings who ruled "by love, not terror" (Merrick 13) to shield her more direct critique of Duck's representation of women. Her witty and scathing critique, after all, is directed at someone who is directly patronized by the queen. While "royal Clemency" protects her, Collier's bee stanza enhances and does not deflect attention from "The Woman's Labour's" political message.

As Collier's metaphor helps to expose her own exploitative working conditions, so it exposes the exploitation of the bees. Though apiculture's obsession is not primarily with the well-being of the bee, Collier's suggestion of the ill-treatment of bees reflects a growing interest among apiculturists in preserving bees rather than destroying them during the extraction of honey (as was the necessary practice with straw hives). Stephen White's book Collateral Bee-Boxes (1764) criticizes Joseph Warder's and others' emphasis on beekeeping as an idle amusement for the curious. He emphasizes the technologies which make Warder's promises of enabling maximum extraction while preserving productive colonies possible. But even in White's book, this concern for the "rights of bees" is overshadowed by the higher concern for increasing honey yields and maximizing human profit from the honey yield.

White discusses innovations in bee-box technology through a critique of John Gedde's octagonal bee-boxes. In part, he aims to debunk Gedde's chief aim -- controlling swarming -- by demonstrating that this goal has already been largely achieved by the methods of the old Bee-Mistresses using straw hives. Even Gedde's goal in White's view is not appropriately innovative as it "deprives the poor Bee-Master of all the Profit, and one of the highest Pleasure he can expect from these useful and delightful insects" (White ii). Not only is the stress on profit here significant but White's shift in gender from Bee-Mistress to Bee-Master is relevant to "The Woman's Labour". Paid domestic labour overseen by a Mistress is one of the women's "hidden" labours Collier exposes in "The

Woman's Labour".[27] By virtue of her labouring-class position, Collier turns the private space of a great house into public space -- her workplace -- with a discussion of, presumably, one of the most private labours, washing underwear. The figure of authority in this part of the poem, is "our Mistress" (170). Collier uses this section to underline the brutality of the labour of the washerwoman --

> Until with Heat and Work, 'tis often known,
> Not only Sweat, but Blood runs trickling down
> Our wrists and Fingers; still our Work demands
> The constant action of our lab'ring Hands
> ("WL" 184-188)

-- underlining how work managed and performed by men is privileged by Duck.

But Donna Landry points out that, despite Collier's clear recognition of the managed "nature" of her own existence, "The Woman's Labour" has never emerged as a document for social change (Landry 1987, 120). In part, the poem is contained by its asserted generic identity as a response to Duck's poem which limits it from being read in any expanded context. Contributing to this is the way that Collier's bee metaphor justifies a methodology for owners that perpetuates exploitative labour practices. Collier's focus on the unfair distribution of profits, perhaps inadvertently, advocates a kind of normative control where real changes in power relations between owners and labourers do not occur. Owners merely placate labourers through measures such as profit-sharing and the annual harvest feast,

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[27]Donna Landry points out that this paid domestic labour is hidden, as well, because it takes place in the winter months. While men work seasonally, women's work is extended year-round (Landry 1987, 114).

but labourers continue to perform the same "inevitable" tasks. This feigned ethic of caring by owners echoes Warder's and White's specious concern for the bees which relates primarily to maximizing their potential for survival in order to maximize profits. Ann Fairfax Withington points out that Stephen White, as a selling point for his collateral bee boxes, even used compassion for the bees who "return home weary and laden" (Withington 59) as a motivation for owners to buy into the new technology. But in this there is no "true" compassion for bees generated within the culture of labour. Collier is left to create her own imaginative defense. If bees are, as Warder indicates, "The True Amazons," then Collier's call for "an Army of Amazons to vindicate the injured Sex" (Ferguson 1985, 264) brings metaphorical bees to the rescue. And women labourers are to some extent vindicated by her poem, at least, in so much as their labour is acknowledged.

Duck's poem received considerable attention <u>because</u> his poem was perceived as a novel and authentic view of a rural labourer's life. Yet Duck's and Collier's very authenticity becomes a two-edged sword which, even as it affords them a subject position, agency and authority within eighteenth-century discourse, converts them and their literary practice into objects of ocular entertainment for the rich. As labouring-class poets achieve, they are, like the bees, contained within a limiting architecture, collected and metaphorically pressed behind glass, where, as they labour they are admired or damned, subject to the controlling gaze, the surveillance of the powerful. Collier's fluency with metaphor and her witty ability to convert Duck's negative to her positive by exchanging sparrows for bees attests to her skill as a poet.

Collier positively connects bees and women and underlines a parallel oppression. But in neglecting to dismantle the framework of oppression and by not perceiving the oppression of animals and the oppression of women as the same oppression, she enables a more systemic containment in which she joins the daughters of Danaus to perpetuate her perpetual participation in rural labour.

It is difficult to privilege a new ecocritical reading of "The Woman's Labour" over the established readings that place labour at the centre of the poem. Even as I see both Duck and Collier's self-representations as radical in a way that perhaps others do not, I ultimately concur with the conclusion that Duck is "contained" and Collier is "resigned".[28] But Collier, by using the bee metaphor, creates the connection that draws out a reading of the poem as a nature poem and allows for its broader implications to be considered. Just as the meaning of the beehive in the eighteenth century cannot be firmly fixed, neither can the impact and significance of "The Woman's Labour" be fixed within its mode as response to Duck nor in its interpretation as a labour poem. Nor can the nature poem be fixed. Reading "The Woman's Labour" as a nature poem enlarges the definition of a genre which has its history, too, of excluding the voices of labouring-class people and the cultivated nature which has become their "natural" context and a measure of their human "nature".

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[28]See Linda Zionkowski "Strategies of Containment: Stephen Duck, Ann Yearsley and the Problem of Polite Culture" and Donna Landry's "The Resignation of Mary Collier: Some Problems in Feminist Literary History".

The Silence of the Lamb: Rapture and Release in Ann Yearsley's "Written on a Visit" (1787)

> But when my wants to CAROLINE were known,
> She bless'd me with a Pasture of my Own
> Stephen Duck, "Gratitude, a Pastoral" (1730)

> Such sounds as imitate the natural inarticulate voices of men, or any animals in pain or danger, are capable of conveying great ideas; unless it be the well known voice of some creature, on which we are used to look with contempt.
> Edmund Burke, "The Cries of Animals"
> A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757)

"Written on a Visit" from the second book, Poems on Various Subjects (1787), by Ann Yearsley -- "Lactilla, the Poetical Milkwoman of Bristol" -- is a poem of orientation in which Yearsley attempts to locate herself in a larger context, both literary and geographical. Yearsley's second book comes after the notorious break with her first patron, Hannah More, who had tried to maintain a custodial control over Yearsley's profit from the sales of her first book.[1] As her patron, More interfered with Yearsley's life and work in many other ways, for example, going so far as to correct "the grosser inadequacies of [Yearsley's] language" (Southey 128) without Yearsley's permission and

[1]Most Yearsley scholarship focuses on this dispute. There are excellent descriptions of the dispute in Waldron, Landry and Ferguson. Roger Lonsdale provides a useful, brief summary in Eighteenth Century Women Poets (392-3). See also Yearsley's own prefatory statement "To the Noble and Generous Subscribers, Who so Liberally Patronized a Book of Poems Published under the auspices of Miss H. More, of Park Street, Bristol" printed in the fourth edition of Poems on Several Occasions and her poem "To Those who accuse the Author of Ingratitude" printed in her second volume of poetry.

having the printer burn Yearsley's manuscript copies in order to prevent her from independently issuing another edition. It is not surprising, then, that in two advertisements in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, one on November 25, 1786 for the subscription for the second volume and another on July 21, 1787 announcing the publication of the second volume, Yearsley publicly promises no editorial interference. By 1786 Yearsley had found a new patron, Frederick Augustus Hervey, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry, who showed no interest in controlling Yearsley either as a person or as a writer. What readers are offered in the second book is "the produce of [Yearsley's] own uncultivated genius without any alterations or corrections....[for readers] who may prefer Nature's unclipt wing of poetic fancy" (in Waldron 132). It is presumably, then, this "unclipt wing" that Yearsley offers readers in "Written on a Visit".

"Written on a Visit" allegedly documents Yearsley's visit to Alexander Pope's estate at Twickenham. In the poem, Yearsley significantly figures the visit through the conflicts that occur when she attempts to experience Pope's Twickenham according to a concept of Pope as "the [traditional] master of all masters" (Landry 1990, 47). While Yearsley initially admires both Twickenham and

> Emma's spotless lamb [who] forgets to bleat;
> Nor heeds her native lawn, or wooly love,
> But gently breathes her thanks at Beauty's feet,
> (10-12)

she eventually comes to fear that remaining within Twickenham will restrict her despite the comfort it provides. Just as she rejects the stifling and pet-like subservience Hannah More as patron insisted

upon, Yearsley makes the trip through Twickenham but rejects Pope's literary legacy and "sighing [leaves] the scene" (56).

This conflict around Pope, in part, foregrounds twentieth-century critical positions which confound assessments of eighteenth-century labouring-class women's poetry. Undoubtedly, many labouring-class women poets read and admired Pope's work. But to read their work continually through Pope subsumes other possible readings and leads ultimately to the kinds of assessments based on originality and literary merit that may have prevented eighteenth-century labouring-class women's poetry from being widely disseminated and treated as anything but a novelty. Two of the most respected critics of Yearsley's work, Mary Waldron and Donna Landry, present, as they do on many other issues, substantially different opinions of Pope's influence on Yearsley. Pope's "Eloisa To Abelard" appears on Hannah More's "list" of poems that Yearsley apparently had read prior to patronage or publication, but Mary Waldron questions the accuracy of More's list. Based on what she characterizes as More's tendency to exaggerate about other aspects of Yearsley's "history," Waldron speculates "that Yearsley was better read than More assumed" (Waldron 29). Despite the fact that this might mean that Yearsley had been exposed to more than one of Pope's poems, though, Waldron never places much emphasis on Pope as an influence on Yearsley's work. In fact, she cites Edward Young as Yearsley's primary influence. While she notes, in passing, several points at which Yearsley's work intersects with Pope's, when Waldron discusses Yearsley's Poems on Various Subjects she does not comment on "Written on a Visit".

Donna Landry, on the other hand, makes a great deal of Pope's influence on Yearsley and several other labouring-class women poets devoting more than twelve pages of discussion in The Muses of Resistance (1990) to what she refers to as the "ravishing supplement." This is the surplus of homage and resistance to Pope manifested, according to Landry, as a nearly sexual pleasure in labouring-class women's texts. For Landry, who, it should be noted, wrote her Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Virginia on the later career of Alexander Pope, Pope is pre-eminent within "working-class women's poetic discourse" (Landry 1990, 47). This is despite a list of exceptions Landry herself provides which includes Janet Little, who was influenced by Burns and Johnson, Elizabeth Hands "who owes a large debt to Butler and Swift" (Landry 1990, 47) and, even, Ann Yearsley who "claims to be most inspired by a translation of the Georgics, and by Milton and Edward Young" (Landry 1990, 47). While Landry calls "Written on A Visit" "the clearest instance of plebeian homage to Pope's poetic influence transformed into rapturous appropriation" (Landry 1990, 52), she concludes, as I do, that Yearsley rejects Pope. I suggest, then, that Landry's emphasis on Pope limits the reading of "Written on A Visit".

Similarly, Landry's focus on the erotic aesthetic of "Written on A Visit" as a sexually-charged response to Pope misplaces the erotic energy of the poem to the "master-poet". While three natures -- Twickenham as an Augustan aesthetic idyll, a Virgilian fantasy and the "rustic" nature Lactilla imports with her into these two other natures -- function simultaneously in the poem, Landry conflates Pope into Maro

(Virgil) ignoring the unlikelihood that an eighteenth-century mind would link Pope with Virgil.[2] Despite Landry's focus in The Muses of Resistance on Yearsley's "rapture" and, in another chapter, on Mary Leapor's "sapphic textuality," she misses a crucial connection between sexuality, the woman poet and nature. Landry's critical emphasis on the erotic content of "Written on a Visit" and her suggestion that Yearsley is motivated "to feel the rapture Pope felt there, to have a sapphic tryst with his ecstatic muse" (Landry 1990, 52) successfully avoids what Greta Gaard calls a "rationalist erotophobia". But her emphasis on Pope constitutes a reading that plays into what Catriona Sandilands calls a "sex-death-redemption narrative" which is regulating rather than affirming (Sandilands 9). Indeed, Landry's concluding paragraph uses Freudian terms to suggest impossibly that Yearsley's poem functions as an act of transference onto Pope's texts (Landry 1990, 55). Clearly the break with More and the advertised promise of "nature's unclipt wing," suggest that Yearsley is not seeking regulation, but affirmation, especially self-affirmation. As Landry follows the linear trajectory of the poem, she traces Yearsley's rejection of "Rule" and the curbing of "Wild Ardour" by "Precept". But her insistence on an erotic link with Pope -- even in her liberal suggestion that Yearsley might sexually consort with a female muse -- stifles the very passion that fills the poem. A less linear reading and a reading that separates Pope from

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[2]I am grateful to Richard Morton for this insight. While Hannah More claims that Dryden "was quite unknown to [Yearsley], even by name" (in Yearsley 1785, ix), a copy of Dryden's translations of Virgil is listed as Number 469 in the "Catalogue of Books and Tracts Contained in Ann Yearsley's Public Library" (1793).

Virgil suggests that Yearsley sets aside Pope at the very beginning of the poem and explores the possibilities of nature and Friendship within and without Twickenham. This necessitates a refocussing on "Emma's spotless lamb" (10) and "each fair sister" (50) and a reassessment of the poem through Yearsley's representation of Lactilla's place in these natures.

I think it might be helpful in presenting this argument to return to Yearsley's "unclipt wing" to further emphasize representations of nature in "Written on a Visit" as central to an understanding of the poem. While Yearsley's use of the phrase is linked directly, in the Felix Farley's Bristol Journal advertisements, to the manipulation of language and the issue of outside editorial interference, the image of the wing is used, literally, to frame the poem. At the beginning of the poem Yearsley asks leave to hail Twickenham's "leafy shades" (2) where Pope had soared "full-pinion'd" (4) with "young ey'd Ecstacy" (3). By verse nine, she has adapted the image to her own purposes -- a desire not just to observe another's flight but to take flight herself. Connected to this movement from observer of flight to flier is Yearsley's struggle with Hannah More. The tension between More's attempt to contain Yearsley as an acceptable "natural Genius" and Yearsley's desire for social ascendancy that would make her a writer without constraints and "wild" in a much more socially threatening way, draws attention to notions of wildness and the ways in which wildness is defined according to the ideological needs of the definer. J.M.S. Tompkins, writing, in the 1930's, replicates the metaphorical gardening relationship between the "tender" patron and

the "tended" poet, in order to defend More's treatment of Yearsley before and after their quarrel. She reports that Hannah More

> was convinced of the genuine spirit in [Yearsley's] verses, but dreaded lest publication should unsettle the sobriety of Ann Yearsley's mind, and, 'by exciting her vanity, indispose her for the laborious employment of her humble condition...';she must not be seduced into devoting her time to the "idleness of poetry", nor transplanted out of her natural surroundings
>
> (Tompkins 65).

But even as Yearsley avoids More's circumscription by choosing to leave her patronage behind and uses the image of the "unclipt wing" to assert her independence, there is a sense in which her self-re-imaging reappropriates her to her own apparent rusticity. As such she can be viewed as one of Edmund Burke's "unpolished people" who

> have a great force and energy of expression; and this is but natural. Uncultivated people are but ordinary observers of things, and not critical in distinguishing them; but, for that reason, they admire more, and are more affected with what they see, and therefore express themselves in a warmer and more passionate manner.
>
> (Burke 160)

As a natural genius, Yearsley's wildness is positively associated with artlessness, freedom, as pleasingly unconventional or primitive and essentially passionate. But as a labouring-class woman seeking independence as poet through an assertion of the "right" to role transformation and social ascendancy, Yearsley becomes anything but Burke's "ordinary observer of things". Her wildness suddenly becomes definable in negative terms: as willful, unruly, wayward and disorderly.

In Ann Yearsley's account of her falling out with Hannah More, prefaced to her second book and called, "To the Noble and Generous Subscribers," a document which Mary Waldron recognizes as quite authoritative, Yearsley, quoting partly from More's own prefatory letter to Yearsley's first book, is able to succinctly summarize the shift in More's attitude towards her.

> [S]he had given me the most flattering character, in her letter to Mrs. Montagu, informing that lady, "That [while] it has been denied this poor recluse to drink at the pure well-head of pagan poesy;...her mind has been wonderfully cherished and enriched...[she is] industrious in no common degree, pious, unambitious, simple and unaffected in her manners...." These, with many perfections, are the ornaments with which this very consistent lady has thought fit to adorn the Milkwoman of Clifton! But alas! how fallacious is eloquence! how inconstant capricious affection, when steady principle is not the basis! -- From elaborate commendation, the elevated Stella descends to low scurrility, charging me with "drunkenness," "gambling," "extravagance," and terming me "wretched," base," "ungrateful," "spendthrift".
>
> (Yearsley 1786, xix)

While Yearsley implies that she finds More's change in attitude both incomprehensible and fickle, she is aware that it is her own insistence on controlling her career that threatens the relationship with More and alters the way that More perceives her.

Yearsley displays a wildness in her desire not to be "caged" by a patron; she also challenges the poetic order by writing beyond and outside of generic constraints. Yearsley's identity as a natural genius is connected, after all, to the neoclassical and pastoral conceptualizations of a poet who must reject "real" nature in favour of an idyllic and

artificial representation of the natural world. The debate between the neo-classicists and the rationalists pits the Ancients against the Moderns and much of the theoretical discussion focuses on the need (as the rationalists see it) for an "authentic" British pastoral. The impossibility of easily slotting Yearsley into either of these categories points to the inadequacy of the categories. There is much, for example, in Thomas Tickell's defense of the rationalistic pastoral position in his five Guardian papers of 1713 that Yearsley as both poet and "rustic" clearly does not accept. The complexity of her own poetic practice and the passion of the characters and personas inhabiting her poetry, for example, inherently challenges Tickell's view in Guardian No. 23 that "Simplicity is necessary in the Character of Shepherds [where] [t]heir Minds must be supposed so rude and uncultivated that nothing but what is plain and unaffected can come from them" (Tickell, 107). From the perspective of Yearsley's practice, as well, the concern and disapproval by patrons of the relative idleness of writing as a labouring-class occupation and the fear expressed by some that "real work" would be neglected, is ironically contrasted with the pastoral genre where representations of the idleness of rural labourers are encouraged.

But if the "unclipt wing" provides a frame for the poem, then Yearsley's interest in moving personally toward a more controversial "wildness" can be contrasted with a central image in the poem: the "spotless lamb". Yearsley heightens the artificiality of the "spotless lamb," overdetermining her as a figure who rejects her "native lawn" and "wooly love" (11) -- almost all that would keep her agriculturally alive -- to express her complete lack of faith in the eighteenth-century

pastoral project. The hyper-artificiality of the lamb also indicts the agricultural imperative especially as it applies to the forced reproduction of female lambs and allegorizes the forced reproduction of privileged male poetic forms by labouring-class women poets. In this context, twentieth-century critical speculation on Yearsley's agricultural accuracy read against Yearsley's maneuvering appears naive in its implicit acceptance of rural terms and conditions that Yearsley herself challenges.

Donna Landry and Mary Waldron, for example, are missing the point when they analyze Yearsley's work in terms of the accuracy of her representations of agricultural labour. In her analysis of "Clifton Hill," Landry accuses Yearsley of "writing [of labour] as if she were on holiday" (Landry 1990, 149), and, in discussing the same poem, Waldron, while acknowledging Yearsley's "intimate acquaintance with local animals and birds" (Waldron 110), ultimately describes Yearsley as "in the rural community but not of it" (Waldron 112). This expectation of agricultural discourse also constitutes a misreading of Raymond Williams's lament for labouring-class poetic integrity in Stephen Duck's work. Williams does not insist that the labouring-class poetic voice can be heard only through documentary representations of working life. He only asserts that Duck's work becomes increasingly derivative as he continues to appropriate conventions but no longer critically reflect his own labouring-class identity through those conventions. Yearsley, in contrast to Duck, powerfully and continually undermines convention and expectation.

H. Gustav Klaus, by including Yearsley in what he calls "the second wave of plebeian poetry, [in which] the theme of work was no longer of such significance [as it had been in the work of Duck and Collier]" (Klaus 15), correctly locates Yearsley's ambition in the development of her individual poetic voice. But when Klaus argues that poets such as Yearsley, James Woodhouse and Robert Bloomfield "make the poetic expression of their own experiences more abstract and distant....remain[ing] more isolated instead of channeling his or her individual experience into a feeling of solidarity" (Klaus 15) he, like Landry and Waldron, misses the subversive expression in Yearsley's treatment of nature especially in her interest in the transformative potential of nature, a theme powerfully evoked throughout her oeuvre. In "Night. To Stella," from her first book of poetry, she describes the transmigration of souls based on her sophisticated observations of nature.

> ... but my panting soul
> Now shivers in the agony of change,
> As insects tremble in the doubtful hour
> Of transmigration; loth to lose the form
> Of various tints, its fondly cherish'd pride;
> Disrob'd like me they fall, and boast no more.
> (195-200)

While Yearsley clearly perceives herself as part of a writhing, dynamic world, Klaus not only minimizes Yearsley's relationships within nature, he also neglects the real solidarity Yearsley expresses throughout her work for fellow labouring-class poets. In "To Mr. ****, a Unlettered Poet" the focus is entirely on mentoring a "fledgling

poet".[3] In "Written on a Visit" it is solidarity between women that is emphasized, expressed through Yearsley's "sigh" for "each fair sister" (50) and the "lovely maids" (51) who will follow her into Twickenham, tempted by "the friendly moon" (49). This image of a naturalized parade of virgins cyclically drawn by nature to Twickenham is undermined in part by Yearsley's "sigh" and perhaps more importantly by the existence of the poem itself. While Donna Landry's speculations centre on the notion that exposure to Pope's poetry produces something akin to a sexual awakening in the woman poet, I suggest that Landry does not sufficiently separate the aesthetic experience of reading Pope's works from the aesthetic experience of Twickenham as the physical trigger for Yearsley's awakening. "Delightful Twickenham" (1) not Pope begins the poem and foregrounds Yearsley's discussion as a discussion of place.

Twickenham as an Augustan aesthetic idyll presents an ideology of nature that highlights Pope's belief that "all must be adapted to the Genius and Use of the Place, and the Beauties not forced into it, but resulting from it" (Pope 586). As he elucidates the concept in "An Epistle to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington" (1731), nature or the natural site about to be gardened informs or teaches the gardener what to do. While his stated preference is for an irregular beauty in which he privileges

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[3]On a broader front, Moira Ferguson asserts that Yearsley's deep discomfort with her public image led her to seek less personal subjects and that, increasing, she engaged with political issues. Her "Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade" (1788) is an obvious example but Ferguson also characterizes much of Yearsley's third collection of poems, The Rural Lyre as engaged with international issues (Ferguson 1993, 24-26) .

"willing Woods" over "vast *Parterres,*" his advice to Lord Burlington is actually a reaffirmation of Burlington's already established approach. Pope also includes the labouring-classes in the whole question of landscaping, but objectifies them. Indeed, as much as he denounces the baroque style, he accepts its implicit power relations as natural, allowing in his "Argument" that "Providence is justified in giving Wealth to be squandered in this manner, since it is dispersed to the Poor and Labourious part of mankind" (Pope 587). Though Pope tries to deny the social role of such an ideology in relation to nature when he promotes nature as teacher, Yearsley is not afraid to assert that humans regularly control attitudes towards nature and they often do so through poetry. Yearsley also reveals the hegemony implicit in the notion that labouring-class people are available as elements in the natural landscape, subject to benevolent gardening. In her poem "The Indifferent Shepherdess to Colin," from her third book, The Rural Lyre (1796), for example, the shepherdess chastises "dull" Colin for failing to read her desire for "liberty" in nature though she has often taught him this lesson through her poetry:

> I ever taught thee how
> To prize the soul entire,
> When on the mountain's brow
> I tun'd my rural lyre:
>
> (17-20)

Colin's continual pursuit of her for purposes of earthy sexual intimacy, the shepherdess argues, is unnatural in their poetic context because, in poetry, she functions as an exemplary figure in an idealized, fictional landscape. Yearsley makes the same argument in "Written on a Visit". She cannot be herself within Twickenham, and while she happily

recognizes "the genius of the place" what she learns is that Twickenham is not the place for her.

The important role of the spotless lamb, then, is in standing apart from the otherwise eroticized landscape of Twickenham to demonstrate that, though gendered female, she is not "sistered" by Yearsley, but "othered". Yearsley's alienation from the lamb is an expression of her ultimate rejection of the pastoral fantasy but it also reflects the conflicted wildnesses I have already noted. The lamb has been isolated and dislocated as she becomes part of Pope's contained architectural fantasy. Yearsley also sacrificially naturalizes the domestication of the lamb in the context of rejecting such servile, suppliant domestication for herself. The effect on Yearsley of seeing the lamb as simultaneously beautiful and unnatural underlines Yearsley's transformation within Twickenham and her escape from it. The lamb is clearly not a working animal in the Twickenham environment, but in her unnatural conceptualization she labours figuratively for Yearsley. Perhaps an orphaned "cade lamb" -- the quintessential pet or a house lamb receiving special attention and feeding apart from the main body of the flock as she is specially prepared for the Christmas or Easter table -- she "gently breathes her thanks at Beauty's feet" (12) rather than standing on her own terms. Figured from without, the lamb is apparently denied what Barbara Noske claims for all living beings -- "an inner-directedness as well as a capacity for self-direction" (Noske 61). This life-force is what, for example, Elizabeth Hands' mad heifer momentarily claimed for herself during her brief rout.

But Yearsley's offer of agency to the lamb does not lead to "inner-directedness". Rather, Yearsley uses the lamb's choice of Beauty over sublimity to heighten her alienation from Yearsley. Both the lamb's status as a domesticated animal and the domesticated environment in which she is contained contributes to this alienation. By "forget[ting] to bleat" (10), the lamb underlines Yearsley's aesthetic preference for the large, loud terror of Burke's sublime over his "small," "smooth and polished," "light and delicate," pleasurable beauty (Burke 113). Yearsley's movement to and away from Pope, to and away from the lamb represents an aesthetic choice -- a movement from Augustan poetic values to Romantic ones.

The representation of the lamb in "Written on a Visit" differs radically from the sheep Yearsley presents in "Clifton Hill". In this poem, Lactilla wanders throughout the environs of Bristol to interact with her environment relying on both memory and her relationships with the natural world. Much of the poem takes place during poor weather, and when she meets flocks of sheep at St. Vincent's Rock, she connects with them in a way that she cannot within Twickenham

> Here nibbling flocks of scanty herbage gain
> A meal penurious fro the barren plain;
> Crop the low niggard bush; and patient, try
> The distant walk, and every hillock nigh:
> Some balk, some bound, nor terrors ever know,
> Save from the human form their only foe.
> Ye bleating innocents! dispel your fears,
> My woe-struck soul in all your troubles shares;
> 'Tis but LACTILLA - fly not from the green:
> Long I have shared with you this guiltless scene.
> (100-109)

Though Yearsley figures these sheep as "innocents" just as she does "Emma's spotless lamb," Lactilla both shares in their troubles and shares

the landscape with them. Lactilla's inability to connect with the lamb in "Written on a Visit" may, then, result from this lack of connection to Twickenham's landscape and Twickenham's inability to stand convincingly as a "guiltless scene". In "Clifton Hill," though they wander uncomfortably through wild nature in winter, the sheep are fearful and mistrustful of humans, "their only foe" (105). In "Written on a Visit," the spotless lamb is contained with a happy, human-rendered nature where an emblematic, stylized "natural" death is projected into a distant future.

The literary critical impulse is to read the spotless lamb as standing for something else, as allegorical or metaphorical. Indeed, Yearsley leads the critic to take this position by conflating the lamb's apparent physical spotlessness with a reference to the lamb as an "[e]mblem of whitest Innocence!" (13). In this way the lamb serves as a metaphor for Yearsley's practice as a writer. Yearsley rejects the "still glide away" (16) for herself, rejects slipping into a second layer of lament or elegy for the "hour that must demand thy breath" (17). The allegorical implication for Yearsley here is that if she cannot "age" as a poet, then life in Twickenham is "death" to her. The lamb's presence also highlights the symbolic representational value of Twickenham as a work of art and, by extension, Pope's oeuvre. If Twickenham represents Pope's works, then the idyll lies between the covers of a book where one can escape from the "cruel mastiff" (14) and "sanguine steel" (15) of Yearsley's own labouring-class existence.[4]

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[4]Yearsley's poem can be located within the "sub-species of poetry" Maynard Mack describes as having "fostered something like a Pope-

Through the language of the poem, Yearsley also creates a possible allegorical pattern of Lactilla as the lamb where the echo of the lamb's innocence reverberates in Lactilla's "blameless heart" (27). Yearsley's fear of the patron as a "cruel mastiff" who both shepherds her and devours her self-as-poet and her public quarrel with Hannah More is reflected strongly in this pattern. Indeed, Yearsley may recognize that she no longer needs the mastiff to shepherd her. While the "cruel mastiff" appears in the poem to reiterate a secure context where the "spotless lamb" resides as a contrast to the lamb's past, it is important to unpack the meaning of the mastiff's cruelty. Keith Thomas describes the mastiff as the shepherds' dog-of-choice, the protector of flocks in countries like France where wolves survived into the nineteenth century (Thomas 273). This locates the "cruelty" of the French mastiff in just "doing his job," in his "pure" relationship to commerce. The brutality of life for domesticated sheep exists within a concept of "reasonable" justice. But the predator was destroyed in England; wolves were systematically wiped-out in England before 1700 due, in great measure, to the importance of the fleece for English commerce and national identity. Yearsley's removal of the lamb from the "cruel mastiff," then, in an environment without wolves, locates the mastiff's cruelty not in needing to protect the flock but in his relishing the act of mastering.

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and-Twickenham legend during the first sixty-odd years after his death, till his villa was torn down" in 1808. Mack includes Robert Dodsley's "The Cave of Pope. A Prophecy" (1743), the unsigned "Horti Popiani: Ode Sapphica (1743), Pope's Willow: "The Muses' fav'rite tree" (1792), and Jacques Delille's Part of "Chant III" of "Les Jardins" (1801) in this "sub-species" (Mack, 266).

There are, though, literary critical practices that acknowledge figurative references as relationships that resonate outside the purely linguistic. Indeed, such approaches can sensitize readers to some of the assumptions about animals and nature deeply embedded in even the most apparently benevolent representations. The "spotless lamb" in particular suffers when Yearsley denies her a voice. This linguistic domestication as much as it clarifies the picture of Yearsley as the lamb oppressed by her "masters," violates the animal who is represented by such static images. Still, the resonance of metaphor, the ephemerality of linguistic comparison always offers the possibility for liberating the animal when perceptions that the metaphor occludes or suppresses are released and "given voice."

For example, it is difficult to critique the naturalness of the representation of the lamb within Twickenham unless the question becomes one of whether there is actually a "nature" or "state of nature" for the lamb.[5] With William Youatt, in the early nineteenth century, tracing the "great improvement of sheep" (Youatt 16) back to Jacob[6], the "blessed" state of the lamb in Twickenham is not less "natural" than its prior state, nor is it less circumscribed by dominant power relations. As Yi-Fu Tuan points out,

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[5]Le Comte de Buffon, as I pointed out in chapter one, suggests that the inherent stupidity of sheep necessitates their domestication.
[6]Jacob's "unsurpassed achievements in selective breeding" are documented in Genesis, the Psalms, The Song of Solomon and Isaiah (Youatt 19).

> affection is not the opposite of dominance; rather it is dominance's anodyne -- it is dominance with a human face....dominance may be combined with affection, and what it produces is the pet.
>
> (Tuan 1-2)

While a critique of the anthropocentric and essentializing view of animals as innocent asks if it is indeed a "blessing" -- to turn or be turned away from your own nature -- to "still glide away" (16) -- this question is dangerous especially in its implications for Yearsley as a female human animal in a cultural context which conceptualizes a labouring-class woman writer as one whose very novelty lies in deviating from her own nature. In "Written on a Visit," Yearsley is quite conscious of this danger. When Yearsley turns to Twickenham's "groves" (6) and "Soft Zephyr" (8) in lieu of a Muse, she turns to nature, a "natural" response for a "natural Genius". The artificiality of the Nature she turns to exposes both the artificiality of the response and the artificiality of the concept of natural geniuses who are "valourized in terms of their spontaneity and naturalness of their poetic voice, the 'wild vigor' of their rustic Muse" (Shiach 37).

But the implications for Yearsley as a female human animal in a cultural context which suggests the activities of the labouring-class woman writer involve a turning away from their "true nature" or "proper place" are significant if it can be said that her position as "labouring-class" establishes an existing or prior state of domestication. Her movement, then, from labourer to labouring-class writer becomes like the lamb's, one of degree and not of kind -- a movement from a domesticated animal outside Twickenham to a domesticated animal inside

Twickenham. Her rapturous exit from Twickenham at the end of "Written on a Visit" governed by Precept rather than by Rule, stands as a potential repudiation of both concepts of domestication.

The seemingly eternal domestication of the lamb in Western culture is complicated by the appropriation of the lamb as a cultural symbol. While the "whiteness" of the fleece is arguably a desirable characteristic from a commercial perspective, it also comes to represent values like purity and innocence which mask the commodification of animals and lead to such contradictions as the human capacity for simultaneously condemning cruelty to animals even as humans consume animal products generated as a result of human cruelty. Beyond this, all of these conceptualizations subject the lamb to a process of erasure hidden by the myriad of identities domestication and symbolization create for her. This commercial, symbolic ambivalence is charted, perhaps unconsciously, by William Youatt in his description of the early experiments of Jacob in which the colour of sheep was apparently altered from brown or dingy black to white by having ewes look at a white wall during mating. As Youatt explains,

> From the experiment or policy of Jacob, sheep of a new colour arose...and the better appearance of the fleece...would lead to a selection from those that had the most white about them, until at length the fleece was purely white.
>
> (Youatt 18)

While this description appears to reflect commercial and even scientific motivations, Youatt curiously concludes with the assertion that "whiteness became proverbial," quoting similes from Psalm 147.16 where God "gives snow like wool" and The Song of Solomon 4.2 in which

the lover's teeth are compared to "a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins and not one among them is bereaved" (Youatt 19). This "value" above and beyond science and commerce expands the lamb's potential for meaning and for exploitation in the service of meaning.

Complicating this analysis as well is the eighteenth-century British context, where the mercantile desire for "whiteness" rapidly diminishes as sheep husbandry is reoriented from wool production to mutton in order to "answer...the demands of the rapidly expanding cities, particularly London, for large amounts of cheap protein" (Goodridge 99). So while "whiteness" is no longer a priority for eighteenth-century animal breeders, whiteness still retains its powerful cultural allusions to purity, innocence and to Christ.[7] By the eighteenth century, "whiteness" has been naturalized ominously by writers like le Comte de Buffon who theorizes that "because man originates in a temperate climate, one can derive from the [white] peoples now living there an idea of the true original colour of man" (Glacken, 591).

The connection of "Emma" to the "spotless lamb" in "Written on a Visit" creates further interpretive challenges and complications. The "Emma" in question remains mysterious. While I can pinpoint some mild echoes between the language in "Written on a Visit" and Yearsley's

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[7]Christ is commonly referred to as the "Lamb of God". For example, in John 1. 29, John seeing Jesus says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". In Revelation 17. 14, it is predicted that "they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of Kings and those with him are called and chosen and faithful".

historical play Earl Goodwin (staged in Bristol and Bath in 1789, published in 1791) which may indicate that Yearsley had Emma -- the main female character in the play, based on the historical Emma of Normandy[8] -- on her mind while writing "Written on a Visit," the evidence is circumstantial at best. In Act II, Emma indignantly rejects Edward's assertion of woman's weakness

> *Insult*, well borne,
> When on the wing of purity she soars
> Above man's feeble thought

If this does not directly echo

> Where strong Idea may on Rapture spring:
> I mount! -- Wild Ardour shall ungovern'd stray;
> Nor dare the mimic pedant clip my wing.
>
> (34-36)

in "Written on a Visit" at least it reiterates Yearsley's predominate belief in strength of thought and her fondness for the bird as a symbol of freedom. Mary Waldron has not made a direct connection between

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[8]Emma married Athelred II, King of England, in 1002. After Athelred's death, Emma married Cnut, Athelred's successor in 1017. Emma's relationship with her two sons by Athelred, Alfred and Edward (later Edward the Confessor) and her third son, Harthcnut, from her marriage to Cnut, embroiled her in a series of struggles and political intrigues following Cnut's death. According to F. M. Stenton's historical account, these intrigues included Emma's support of Harthcnut's succession to the throne after Cnut's death. This support was challenged by Harold, Cnut's illegitimate son by Aelfgifu. When Harold was recognized as King of England in 1037, Emma "was driven from the country to find refuge in Flanders against the raging winter"(Stenton 414) . Emma returned to England when Harthacnut finally became king. He was succeeded by his half-brother, Edward the Confessor. It is certain that Yearsley used some version of this "history" in constructing Earl Goodwin. Mary Waldron speculates that Yearsley used John Speede's History of Great Britaine (1650) as her source because the spelling of the names, Goodwin, Swaine, Tostie, and Girth in Speede's book are consistent with Yearsley's play. The most readily accessible history for Yearsley, Oliver Goldsmith's The History of England (1771), omits the Emma story altogether (Waldron 193-4).

"Written on a Visit" and Earl Goodwin either. She has, though, in her critical discussion of the play, emphasized the importance of Emma, one of the play's central characters as a "really strong woman" whom Yearsley enjoyed portraying (Waldron 1996, 198). If Yearsley's reference to "Emma's spotless lamb" in the poem does refer to Earl Goodwin, almost none of the characters (or those associated with the characters) in the play can be identified as "spotless" in what Waldron calls "a confused and unstable period of English history" (Waldron 191). The exception is, perhaps, Emma's son, Alfred, who was "captured and fatally injured while attempting to visit his mother before her banishment" (Waldron 192). As a metaphor for an endangered child or Christ, the lamb is perceived as feeling so safe within Twickenham that she "forgets to bleat," even as the safety of Twickenham read in the context of Earl Goodwin emphasizes its tenuousness. The only other fitting character is Editha, Goodwin's daughter and Edward's wife, an "innocent" character whose marriage is never consummated and who is unjustly imprisoned.[9] As well, since Waldron notes Yearsley's reliance on historical texts while she wrote Earl Goodwin. Yearsley may have been aware that "spotlessness" refers to a disease-free lamb, for as William Youatt reports "[i]n 1041, at the assession of Edward the Confessor, a pestilential epidemic [of unknown causes] prevailed among cattle and sheep, which destroyed the greater part of them" (Youatt 197).

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[9]Historians such as F. M. Stenton suggest this was due to Edward's asceticism, but Yearsley portrays it as a political act in which Goodwin and his sons "were indignant enough to try to force the consummation of the marriage by an act of war" (Waldron 195).

Ultimately, Emma's relationship to the lamb may merely highlight a "benevolent" custody. But if Earl Goodwin does not finally provide the key to "Emma's spotless lamb," the play's prologue provides a partial explanation for Lactilla's movement out of Twickenham in "Written on a Visit." In the Preface to the printed version of Earl Goodwin, Yearsley calls herself "a rustic champion" and in the Prologue tells the story of Lactilla's "rise" from obscurity to recognition. While the "deep vale" (7) Lactilla emerges from clearly refers to her rustic roots and not to Twickenham, the route from rapture to release described in the Prologue has an intensity matched by the rapture Lactilla experiences in "Written on a Visit".

> 'Mid yon deep vale Lactilla rov'd unknown,
> With *fancy'd joy* and *real woe* of her own;
> There linger'd oft in the rough path of care,
> While torpid anguish bade her soul despair.
> Sudden the light'ning of bright fancy came;
> The hills, the hoary desarts, seem'd to flame;
> The rocks, the vales, old Avon's restless stream,
> Illumin'd, caught the heav'n directed beam.
> But ah! in silence must those raptures die?
> Must nature's child in shades of darkness lie?
> No kindred mind to nurse the spark that glows,
> Unfed by art, unquench'd by wintry snows?
> -Perish the thought! Here manly sense shall stand,
> Here beauty's tear obey the heart's command;
> Here *public candour* lifting *genius* high,
> Shall prove that *Bristol* is her friendly sky.
>
> (7-22)

Here, in the Prologue to Earl Goodwin, Yearsley tells the same story with many of the same images of darkness and light that she told of her early attempts at poetry in "On Mrs. Montagu" from her first book, Poems on Several Occasions. The difference, though, is that in "On Mrs. Montagu" coming into the light is associated with the "benevolent" patronage of Elizabeth Montagu and Hannah More. Patronized but uncontrolled, in

"Written on a Visit," Yearsley must literally "find her way" again as a poet. Her visit to Twickenham is part of this search. In the Earl Goodwin prologue, Yearsley appeals on Lactilla's behalf to "public candour" (21) and the applause of the citizens of Bristol to either "lift genius high" (21) or return her to the "refuge [of her] milking pail" (38). This rejection of the mediating role of the patron and Yearsley's interest in a direct relationship to the public through the theatre offers a significant insight into the choices Yearsley presents for herself in "Written on a Visit."

One of the choices is Yearsley's privileging of Precept over Rule. Yearsley's use of "swelling thought" (38) and "glowing Transport" (39) as a pregnancy and birth metaphor for poetry and the creative process underlines how Rule tries to interfere with regeneration -- a fundamental act of creativity which Yearsley views as natural. Extending the metaphor beyond the mother's body and the body of the poem, Yearsley further attacks Rule by sarcastically projecting a counter-sublime onto the concept in which Rule absurdly attempts to perform tyrannical and unnatural feats on and within the most awesome natural phenomena.

> As well command the hoary Alps to bear
> The Amaranth, or Phoebus-loving flow'r!
> Bid the Behemoth cut the yielding air,
> Or rob the Godhead of creative pow'r!
>
> (41-44)

Not truly an act of rejection but, rather, an act of creation, Yearsley's abandonment of Rule parallels her dismissal of Melpomene, the tragic muse. There, she does not deny the need for a muse; she merely prefers

an alternative emotional timbre and is justifiably cautious about adopting a Muse reputed to be the mother of the Sirens. Opting, then, not to be drawn-in and destroyed by "frozen" (40) and static Rule, Yearsley promotes Precept's sense of "to take beforehand" to describe and sanction a self-imposed discipline (as opposed to Rule's external, other-imposed discipline). This emphasizes that she is in control of her own writing. The use of "disown"(37) implies a familial connection, a past grappling with the structure of rules or even a past acceptance of "Rule's limits" (37) which Yearsley now has the spirit to reject.

In mapping and exposing her wrong turns, Yearsley highlights the inequity of the relationship between the classically-educated poets (or those, like Pope, who were self-taught in the classics) and those labouring-class poets whose education in the classics is initially non-existent or haphazard, then prescribed and circumscribed by patrons but ultimately mediated through their private reading of poets like Pope. Some, like Joseph Spence, focus on Pope's "natural genius" through the poet's "rise because of literary merit and good Character" (Osborn 142), but as I have pointed out throughout these chapters, labouring-class women poets are of consistently good character and are praised for their craft, yet none rise to Pope's level of fame.

In her advice to "Florus," for example, in "To Mr. ****, an Unlettered Poet, on Genius Unimproved," which also appears in Poems on Various Subjects, she distinguishes two poetic approaches, suggesting that unlettered poets should not write using a classical approach

N'er hail the fabled Nine, or snatch rapt thought

> From the Castalian spring; 'tis not for *thee,*
> (19-20)

But while she offers this advice against the Ancients to "Florus" and she knows her "grateful" place (as a "rustic" and as a Twickenham tourist) in "Written on a Visit," she sarcastically and angrily strikes out in "Addressed to Ignorance Occasioned by a Gentleman's desiring the Author never to assume a knowledge of the Ancients," another poem in the same volume, at the notion that

> ...Ign'rance forbids me in ambush to move,
> Or to feed on the scraps of the Sage.
> (13-14)

This poem continues for another fourteen stanzas through a cavalcade of classical figures intertwined with British figures, all integrated syntactically and incorporated into the London landscape. "Ignorance" plays a double role acting both as the assumed ignorance of the unlettered poet and the true ignorance of the critic who would arrogantly and patronizingly circumscribe the scope of knowledge available to a poet like Yearsley.

This is a pointed critique of controlling techniques tried on Yearsley by Hannah More who prefaced Yearsley's first book with details of the "state" in which Yearsley was discovered and how she is to be improved. More claims[10], that other than a translation of Virgil's Georgics, Yearsley has no substantial exposure to classical writing but what she "had taken from little ordinary prints which hung in a shop window" (Yearsley 1787, xii) but, as I noted earlier, Mary Waldron is

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[10]This letter to Elizabeth Montagu was printed as part of prefatory material to the third edition of Yearsley's Poems on Several Occasions and again in Poems on Various Subjects.

skeptical about the accuracy of More's assessment. In the more private correspondence between More and Elizabeth Montagu, More reveals her ambition to reshape Yearsley, in part, through a prescribed program of reading. In one letter dated "Sandleford 1784," More's helpful correspondent, Elizabeth Montagu, suggests the Bible would be more appropriate reading material for Yearsley than the work of the "pagan" Ancients. She specifies Job and the Psalms as well as the New Testament, which "would purify the heart". "Make room for the Bible and Milton," she continues, "when a poet is to be made" (in Waldron 53-54). More projects and perpetuates the fantasy of the natural genius by separating Yearsley from the corps of poets as a "genius [who is] antecedent to rules, and independent of criticism" (in Rizzo 259). While More does not see this as detrimental to Yearsley's development for

> though it has been denied to her to drink at the pure well-head of Pagan Poesy, yet, from the true fountain of divine Inspirations, her mind seems to have been wonderfully nourished and enriched
>
> (Yearsley 1787, ix-x)

Yearsley's poetic practice decries such circumscription. Her personality also lacked, in J.M.S. Tompkins' words, "the docile subservience that makes charity a pleasure" (Tompkins 82). This is especially true in this second book of poems in which she is so recently freed from More's proscriptive definition of her. As well, because the literacy of labouring-class poets rarely includes languages other than English,[11] their experience of classical works comes through

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[11]One exception I've found is the Buckingham tailor, Robert Hill (1699-1777), who taught himself Latin, Greek and Hebrew and published two

translation. Translation's role in canon formation as well as institutionalizing "great works" institutionalizes particular concepts of fame and this also contributes to maintaining a class-based distance between labouring-class poets and the Ancients.

Supporting this distance is the way in which these poets are held, even "translated" so that they "fit" within the category of natural genius. This category's emphasis on labouring-class poets' lack of formal education creates another kind of idyll, a fantasy the "lettered" project onto the "unlettered". In Spectator 160, Joseph Addison says there is something "nobly wild and extravagant" in those he calls "great natural Genius's who by the meer strength of natural Parts, and without the Assistance of Art or Learning have produced Works that were the Delight of their own times and the wonder of Posterity" (Addison 2, 127). But it is not merely a fantasy. Betty Rizzo's careful analysis of labouring-class poets and patronage exposes "a secret agenda having more to do with combating the patriarchy's proscriptive definition of literary excellence, a definition proscribing all contenders but privileged males" (Rizzo 262) where patrons "keep" poets almost as pets. In this context, Emma's spotless lamb as pet sits at Beauty's feet in a metaphorical replica of Yearsley's expected position in relation to both patron and master-poet. It is important, in this regard, to remember the connection Johnson makes in his Dictionary between "pet" and "petit" meaning "little" or "insignificant" .

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religious books, "Observations on the Essay on Spirit" (1751) and "Some Considerations on the Divinity of the Holy Ghost" (1753) (Osborn 133-4).

But just as the spotless artificiality of the lamb diminishes the lamb's potential as an agent, so does any attempt to contain Yearsley. The rigour of this notion of literary containment is reflected in Pope's emphasis in the "A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry" (1717) on imitating master poets and, in the context of "Written on a Visit," illuminates the semantic sense of Rule as "Ruler". Pope is clearly an exemplary figure for Yearsley and serves as a starting point for the poem and its symbolic mapping. But, by the end of "Written on a Visit," Yearsley's focus shifts away from Pope to her own engagement with herself as "Lactilla". As much as Lactilla can be viewed as a grotesque imposition of rural pastoral stereotypes and as a sign of Yearsley internalizing values which fundamentally denigrate or are intended to denigrate her identity as a labouring-class woman, "Lactilla" becomes a self-title. If a central precept of the pastoral is that the author must "hide what is wretched" (Tickell 106), then, "Lactilla" as persona does -- hide what is wretched in Yearsley's life. She transcends the wretched in this disguise and pastoral convention initially envelopes and protects Yearsley, perhaps, as it does the lamb. Yearsley's fashioning of Lactilla may also be viewed as a radical response to both pastoral and her own subject position -- a refusal to be named by others. More and others' emphasis on the story of Yearsley's difficult circumstances in the winter of 1783-4[12] prior to her being "discovered" as a poet continually

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[12]According to Hannah More's account, "in the severity of last Winter, herself, husband, babes, and her aged Mother, all got together in a Stable -- to die of hunger! -- the Mother actually perished; the rest were saved by a gentleman accidentally looking into the stable; they are now in a flourishing way, have nine Pigs and a Cow" (in Waldron 20).

contextualizes Yearsley within wretchedness. Always in control of Lactilla-as-persona, Yearsley fashions a Lactilla who rejects the wretched, experiences changes, grows and, significantly, makes her own decisions.

One way to understand the poem's relationship to the pastoral involves a consideration of Lactilla's function in the "theatre" of Twickenham.[13] By the time Yearsley visited Twickenham, it had become a "tourist site" and, by definition, a theatre in which visitors enact stylized responses of homage to Pope's memory. The construction of Lactilla as a character struggling to find her poetic voice within the idyllic and artificial environment at Twickenham casts Lactilla as a wayward pastoral character trapped within representations of pastoral, Pope's works and his garden at Twickenham. Lactilla's voice in "Written on a Visit" functions as a speech fragment wrested from its "true" generic context. As "rustic" and "visitor," Yearsley is forced publicly, through the designation of "natural Genius," to act the part of a rationalist figure asking leave to enter the neo-classical pastoral environment just as labouring-class writers feel compelled to "confess" their artlessness in their early writings.[14] Yearsley must also mimic

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[13]Both Maynard Mack and Donald Simpson discuss the tourist trade at Twickenham attributing even the demolition of Pope's house and garden to the subsequent owner, Sophia Charlotte, Baroness Howe's (also known as "Queen of the Goths") irritation with the site's popular, public status (Simpson 38).

[14]Some example of this sub-genre of labouring-class apology what Landry calls "the plebeian poet's crisis of confidence under the eye of patronage" (Landry 1990, 50) are Yearsley's "On Mrs. Montagu" (1785), Mary Leapor's "Upon her Play being returned to her, stained with Claret" (1751), Janet Little's "Given to a Lady Who Asked me to Write a Poem" (1792) and Mary Collier's "An Epistolary Answer to a Exciseman,

the convention of mourning as theatre and the highly ritualistic conventions of the pastoral elegy in acknowledging the death of the poet-master. As fledgling writer, Yearsley is expected to emulate the classical tradition which requires poets to try pastoral first, but she is clearly uncomfortable. Her discomfort, in part, is manifested in the deliberate manner in which she does not write a pastoral·

Evading what Ann Messenger has called "the pastoral trap" in which labouring-class poets mimic convention because they want to write about the natural world, modestly lack confidence and because they are expected to (Messenger 95-96), Yearsley's rejection of the constraints of the pastoral genre is best illustrated in her mock-pastoral poem, "The Indifferent Shepherdess to Colin". Not just a comic love poem, a shepherdess' rejection of "Colin," the poem highlights Yearsley's determination not to be constrained in either life or love. While both Waldron and Landry comment on the poem, they dismiss it as generally insignificant using language that echoes the patronizing diminishment of the natural genius in much critical discourse. Landry actually calls the poem "slight" (Landry 1990, 176) while Waldron confusingly labels the poem "delightfully subversive" (Waldron 270). To confound matters further, Waldron's claim that the poem mocks seventeenth-century pastoral contradicts Landry's view that it "perpetuates the genre of the female lyric refusal of love" (Landry 1990, 176). While both critics recognize the repetition of "liberty" at the end of each stanza as political, Waldron dismisses the rejection of marriage

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Who doubted her being the Author of the Washerwoman's Labour" (1762).

as "not much more than a joke" (Waldon 1996, 270) and certainly not feminist in a cultural context that, in Waldron's view, allowed women little latitude. Landry reads the shepherdess's cry for liberty as sapphic textuality, where "friendship among equals...supplants erotic intrigue altogether" (Landry 1990, 270).

But Landry's view of the shepherdess as "separatist" denies the connections the shepherdess foregrounds between nature and the soul. Recognizing the Christian sense of pastoral, the shepherdess integrates "Dominion" (10) and "Truth" (11) into an ethic of care for her "soul entire" (18) as part of an "eternal plan" (29). Nature presents itself as evidence of a dynamic constancy and eternity which is contrasted with wooing Colin's "servile art" (21)

> Yon woods their foliage wear,
> Be thou away or nigh;
> The warblers of the year
> Instruct me not to sigh:
> My tears ne'er roll the steep,
> Nor swell the restless sea,
> Except for those who sleep
> Bereft of liberty.
> (33-40)

The imperative of wholeness within nature that the shepherdess promotes and celebrates encompasses time and memory even as its promise is limitless. "Remembrance is my own" (9), the shepherdess argues, but, as she also tells Colin, he can never successfully woo her because "[he] ne'er canst know the way/My mem'ry to confine (27-28).

The conflict between memory, forgetting and eternity, between living in the past, letting go of the past and shaping the future, is a consistent theme in Yearsley's work. In "Written on a Visit," Lactilla leaves Pope behind even as she reminds the reader that her sisters will

follow her and repeat her motions. In "Clifton Hill," she travels through another landscape and apparently rejects memory through a process of naming and remembering local places that paradoxically underlines the impossibility of leaving her past behind. In "On Mrs. Montagu" she rehearses her old self as she reimagines a new self -- a poet cultivated by her gardener patrons. In "Night. To Stella," she is fascinated with the process of transformation itself. She recognizes her connection with other living beings engaged in change and she reinforces the cyclical nature of change in the relationship between earthly and spiritual transformation.

While Yearsley's aspirations as a poet drive her towards the achievement of sublimity in her work which Burke insists is "founded on pain" (Burke 113), Yearsley does not wish to dwell on the pain of her own past. Yearsley's ambivalence toward Twickenham entails both a moving forward and a looking back, a nostalgia for what is beautiful and sad and a reminder of beauty's and grief's power to suffocate when Lactilla "saw and sighing left the scene" (52). It is Yearsley's inability to connect with Emma's spotless lamb as an emblem of a human-planned nature that helps to explain Yearsley's decision to exit Twickenham. The "safety" of Twickenham, the security of belonging to Emma, lulls the lamb into a state of forgetting rendering the use of her voice and, by extension, her agency, unnecessary. Indeed, the lamb comes to resemble the garden statuary integral to aristocratic garden design. Yearsley suggests, then, that to take sustenance within Twickenham as a kind of Hades is to drink from the Lethe and forget the past. Despite any social disadvantages she has, Lactilla's limited agency allows her to "see"

and leave the "scene/seen" behind. Yearsley's inability and refusal to forget even as she is hesitant to remember, emphasizes that her voice is all she has. Forgetting, then, becomes a kind of re-membering, a way of putting herself back together again disassembled, as she has been, by patrons and well-wishers, by her own past-masters and past natures. The image of the unclipt wing that she offers to the subscribers and readers of Poems on Various Subjects contains both the narrative of a bird who was originally free and a bird, though captive and grounded for a time, who is free once more.

In the next chapter I move my discussion indoors to look at the domesticated pet through a poem that uses an animal narrator as a way of, apparently, understanding the inner workings of a country house in a new way -- from the low-to-the-ground angle of a very hungry dog as he relishes the harmony of the old order through his memories of regularly-tossed table scraps from an attentive master.

Dogs, Language and "my friend Jenny Little" in Janet Little's "From Snipe, a Favourite Dog, To His Master" (1791).

I never barked when out of season,
I never bit without a reason
Robert Burns "On a dog of Lord Eglintons" (undated)

...And dogs thy haunts betray
John Clare "To the Snipe" (c.1821-24)

"From Snipe, a Favourite Dog, To His Master" by Janet Little is a short comic poem in which a favourite dog petitions his Master to come home and feed him. The poem appears as part of her only published collection, The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid (1792). Little was born in 1759 in Nether Bogside, Ecclefecchan, Dumfries, where she received a common education and became a servant to a local clergyman. Several years later, she became a chambermaid to Frances Dunlop of Dunlop House, Ayrshire. Dunlop was a patron of Robert Burns. Little then went to work for Dunlop's daughter, Susan Henri, at Loudoun Castle, Ayrshire where she was eventually put in charge of the dairy. By 1788 she had acquired some "local fame" as a poetess (Paterson 83). Encouraged by Dunlop, Little wrote to Burns and enclosed one of her poems. It is not known whether he ever replied to her, though in a letter to Dunlop dated September 6, 1789, he refers to the difficulty he is having with a response:

> I had some time an epistle, part poetic and part prosaic, from your poetess Miss J. Little, a very ingenious, but modest, composition. I should have written her as she requested, but for the hurry of this new business. I have heard of her and her compositions in this country, and, I am happy to add, always to the honor of her character. The fact is, I know not well how to write to her: I should sit down to a sheet of paper that I knew not how to stain.
>
> (in Wallace, 301-2)

Despite Burns' difficulty in responding to Little, there was substantial enough interest in her work elsewhere in the community that a subscription for her poems was raised for the publication of The Poetical Works.[1]

As is the case with many of the poems written by eighteenth-century labouring-class women poets, "From Snipe" begins with a gesture of apology. Yet "From Snipe" distinguishes itself as a result of Little's assignment of the speaker's voice to a dog. In other poems I've looked at -- Leapor's "Man the Monarch," Hands' "Mad Heifer," Collier's "The Woman's Labour," and Yearsley's "Written On A Visit,"-- the assertion of authority is firmly controlled through the voice of the poet who observes, comments on and integrates animals into her broader themes. Little's poem complicates this formula and not only foregrounds the literary device of the talking animal but locates "From Snipe" within the larger early-modern discourse on dogs -- between

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[1]For brief biographies of Little see, for example, Valentina Bold, "Janet Little 'The Scotch Milkmaid' and 'Peasant Poetry'", Moira Ferguson "Janet Little and Robert Burns: An Alliance with Reservations" and "Janet Little and Robert Burns: The Politics of the Heart," Donna Landry The Muses of Resistance (221), Maurice Lindsay The Burns Encyclopedia (218-9). James Paterson The Contemporaries of Burns (78-91) provides the most substantial information on Little.

Johannes Caius' Of Englishe Dogges (1576) and Joseph Taylor's General Characteristics of the Dog (1804) and its 1808 sequel, Canine Gratitude. While Caius' work is one of taxonomy, organizing dogs by the specific characteristics of breeds and ranking their usefulness, Taylor's works are jumbled compendia of tales, many taken from the popular press, of wondrous dogs. These tales characterize the dog as an animal of feeling, Rousseau and Bentham's "sentient" being worthy of consideration, rationality aside, because of his capacity for suffering. As well, Taylor's books stress the dog's "strong attention and unshaken fidelity to his master" (Taylor 1808, 5). The formal differences between Caius and Taylor's works help to define shifts in the cultural meaning of "dog" in the early modern period from a rationalist position to a sentimental one. The sentimental position, though, is not as wholly jumbled and emotional as it is designed to appear. Here, the form of sentimental works like Taylor's mute their strong moral position and completely mask the widespread, calculated rationalist practices such as selective dog breeding which is far from sentimental. Little's poem's marks the shift precisely by referring to both traditions while refusing to be fixed by either.

Little's poem can also be read alongside Robert Burns' representation of talking dogs in "The Twa Dogs: A Tale" (1786). Little's familiarity with the Burns poem is definitively established by the mention of "Caesar and Luath" in her poem "Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns". In "The Twa Dogs," the reader is introduced by a storyteller/speaker to two dogs, Caesar, a "*gentleman* an' *scholar*...o' high degree" (14-15), and the ploughman's collie Luath, "[a] rhyming,

ranting, raving billie" (24). Despite their difference in degree, Caesar and Luath are friends, and the bulk of the poem consists of a dialogue in which they discuss their relative class positions with an ear to understanding one another better. Then, as fellow dogs, they unite in their reflections on human folly. Viewing "From Snipe" in relation to "The Twa Dogs" allows Little's work its place in an eighteenth-century Scottish literary context. While I have distinguished, for example, how Little's use of the talking animal complicates the discussion of issues of authority in the work of labouring-class women poets, Kenneth Simpson might see Little's use of the talking animal as a typical literary expression of the Scottish crisis of identity that came as a result of the Union with England in 1707. This crisis of identity, Simpson argues, is manifested in Scottish literature as a "multiplicity of voice, fragmentation of personality, and the projection of self images" (Simpson 1988, 2). In this way, Snipe's presence in the poem as a talking animal can be read as having nothing to do with talking animals.

But Little may well connect Burns' poem with hers in order to contrast the solidarity between Caesar and Luath with the isolated and hungry dog Snipe, who must petition his distant master in couplets. Read allegorically, then, Caesar and Luath claim Burns' place in the world of Scottish letters despite his tenant farmer roots, while Snipe reflects the labouring-class Scottish woman poet's relative sense of isolation. This comparison also aids in connecting "From Snipe" to Little's own letter to Burns, the one he apparently had no answer to. Little's letter, dated July 12, 1789, includes a copy of the "Epistle to Mr.

Robert Burns" as a letter within a letter -- double proof of her poetic prowess, her knowledge of Burns' work and her relatively abject status.[2] In the letter, Little, like Snipe in his petition to the Master, apologizes for her boldness

> my hand trembles as I write to you, conscious
> of my unworthiness of what I would most
> earnestly solicit, viz. your favour and
> friendship....If you would condescend to
> honor me with a few lines from your hand, I
> would take it as a particular favour.
> (in Paterson 79-81)

Little attempts to transcend her literary isolation by writing, however apologetically, to Burns with a request for "favour and friendship." Generically, Little boldly approaches Burns by writing to him personally using the familiar poetic epistle. Interestingly, Snipe does not use the private epistle form to address the Master. Rather he uses the genre of the public petition. If failed communication is a central issue in "From Snipe," the choice of the petition in a communication between supposed intimates -- in Joseph Taylor's terms, who could be closer than a man and his dog -- perhaps implies a prior communication, an earlier epistle between Snipe and his master, an

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[2]Valentina Bold remarks on the echo of the first lines of Burns' "To a Haggis"

> Fair fa' your bonnie, sonsie face,
> Great Chieftan o' the Puddin-race!

in Little's opening to "Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns"

> Fair fa' the honest rustic swain,
> The pride o' a' our Scottish plain;

as indicative of Little's knowledge of Burns work. (Bold 23) I wonder, though, whether Burns' work might be the "meat" Little had been long deprived of.

attempt that failed. Using the petition as a public forum, as a form of publishing, publicizes a private matter in a way that appears controlled even as it contains the bitterness and anger of the petitioner's cause and asserts the writer's right to publish. Reading the "petitioness" of "From Snipe" with Little's "Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns" suggests an embittered allegorical alignment between Little and Snipe on the one hand and Burns and the Master on the other.

As such, then, it is not surprising to note that both Moira Ferguson and Valentina Bold detect an ambivalence towards Burns in Little's work. While Ferguson characterizes this tension as specific to Little's perception of Burns, Bold views the tension more systemically. Ferguson reads a psychosexual attraction to Burns in Little's work and maps Little's poetic alliance with Burns against her disapproval of his immoral and irresponsible behaviour towards women. Bold articulates ways in which Burns' fame placed an inordinate pressure on labouring-class poets who published work in his wake to participate in what she calls a "mythology of autodidacticism" (Bold 28). This myth-making involves emphasizing autobiographical hardship and results, in Bold's assessment, in a reconstruction of "real biographical elements into conventionalized problems and predicaments" (Bold 28).[3] While Bold seems to suggest that removing Little from her labouring-class context would better allow for a "fair" assessment of her achievement, since treating her as "an autodidact has obscured her real worth" (Bold 29), I

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[3]Bold also locates problems in the interpretation of Little's work, pointing out that critics' eagerness to characterize Little as an "acolyte of Burns" (Bold 23) neglects the obvious influence of other Scottish poets, Ramsay and Fergusson in particular, on her work.

consider this a dangerous neo-formalist tactic. Autodidactic hyperbole aside, Little's class position, ethnicity and gender are central features of her work. Indeed, as Raymond Williams points out, reading the work of labouring-class writers within their sociopolitical context is a way of "drawing attention to an actual phase of our history [for Williams, the cooption of the voices of the countryside within capitalism] which has gone largely unrecorded but which was undoubtedly there" (Williams 270).

Little's work itself signals the critical neglect or narrowness Bold recognizes, especially where Little exposes a reluctance within critical circles and the upper classes to accept her as a poet of real merit. This concern with her status as a labouring-class woman poet is made obvious through other intertextual links. The first link is with her own poem "Given to a Lady Who Asked Me to Write a Poem," where Little contests Samuel Johnson's view that in this modern age any "dunce" (18) could try to "gain the bays" (2)

> 'But what is more surprising still,
> A milkmaid must tak up her quill;
> An' she will write, shame fa' the rabble!
> That think to please wi' ilka bawble.
> They may thank heaven auld Sam's asleep:
> For could he ance but get a peep,
> He, wi' a vengeance wad them sen'
> A' headlong to the dunces' den.
>
> (27-34)

Johnson's attitude as it is represented by the Critic in "Given To A Lady" coupled with the scenario of the petitioning dog in "From Snipe" recalls James Boswell's report in The Life of Samuel Johnson (1791) of Johnson's comment about women preachers

> Next day, Sunday, July 31, I told him I had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where I had heard a woman preach. JOHNSON. 'Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It's not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.'
>
> (Boswell, 1, 463)

In the context of Boswell's quotation, I would like to suggest that Little is highly critical of the low or "dunce-like" status afforded to women and labouring-class poets by Johnson and others. Little's insertion of a representation of herself, Jenny Little, into the poem underlines her personal stake in this critical discussion and reasserts the poem's interest in self-rendering and authority especially through the use of what Kenneth Simpson refers to as the Scottish "tradition of ironic self-revelation" (Simpson 1988, 2). But while Little's use of the talking animal offers her the opportunity to discuss her own social status, I would also like to consider the status of the animal whose body Little appropriates.

It is not illogical, considering the direct reference to Johnson in "Given To A Lady," that "From Snipe" may particularly house anti-Johnsonian sentiments. But in order to consider "From Snipe" a response to Johnson's remarks on women preachers, it is necessary to establish that Little would have perceived being called a dog or compared to a dog an insult. When William Empson refers to the duality of feeling contained in the word "dog" from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, he cites a group of meanings associated with the dog that pre-date the sentimental figuring of the dog. Earlier views clustered around the notion of the dog's conceptualization as cynic --

the dog's act of marking territory through urination was "mistaken by men for a symbol of contempt" (Empson 164-5). By the eighteenth century, this view softens into a picture of the dog as fundamentally sincere and connected to the materialist view that all men are animals and that "if the worst is the dog, humanity is still tolerable" (Empson 168). Little's characterization of Snipe as selfishly consumed by his own "animal needs" suggests that, despite the changing times, she prefers the dog as cynic and as such clearly recognizes the intention of Johnson's comparison as an insult. With speech defined in the early-modern period as one of the primary qualities distinguishing humans from animals, Little pinpoints the intersection of labouring-class Scottish woman and animal in "From Snipe" and mocks Johnson's incredulity by both writing a poem and allowing a dog to speak.

The literary device of the talking animal leads to a consideration of one of the very basic means by which we experience and create animals, animal agency and animal consciousness in our cultural products. Subjecting "From Snipe" to an analysis of the integrity of Snipe's representation may appear unfair and anachronistic, but it is important to note that concerns regarding the animal voice have been articulated prior to the twentieth century. In his "An Apology for Raymond Sebond"(1580), Michel de Montaigne asks and plausibly answers the deceptively simple question

> Why should it be a defect in the beasts not in us which stops all communication between us? We can only guess whose fault it is that we cannot understand each other: for we do not understand them any more than they understand us. They may reckon us to be brute beasts for the same reason that we reckon them to be so.
>
> (Montaigne 506)

While ecocritic Christopher Manes acknowledges the central place of nature in literature, when he reaches into the past, it is to "uncover" a pre-Christian animism which "allowed nature the status of a speaking subject" (Manes 15). Using his "discovery" to promote an environmental ethics that re-sources itself in the past, he tries to illustrate his point with the optimistic observation that children tolerantly read fairy tales, "most of which involve talking animals" (Manes 18) as a way of convincing us that, in the twentieth century, we, too, can return to our "childhood" and reconnect with nature. But Manes does not examine the content of this anthropomorphically constructed speech nor the motives of most fabulists (at least as these motives are articulated within "theories" of the fable). Even the sociopolitical function needs to be considered, for, as J. E. Lewis makes clear, in eighteenth-century England "fables were used to teach English to English schoolchildren, and to wrestle other languages into line with English grammatical patterns" (Lewis 3). The irony of such practices as using talking animals to teach schoolchildren to read and write a language they already speak is not lost on Marian Scholtmeijer, who is engaged in specifically assessing representations of animals in twentieth-century fiction. In a more careful and subtle analysis, she suggests that "there is...a qualitative difference between [a]

context...that presupposes animal speech and that of the animal fable which imposes speech upon personified animals" (Scholtmeijer 1993, 245).

Generally, Scholtmeijer views the use of talking animals in literature as a kind of violence "reflect[ing] human aggression toward the animal's natural being" (Scholtmeijer 1995, 242). Reversing this violence in Scholtmeijer's view must begin with a reconceptualization of "otherness" as powerful, and she articulates three steps toward achieving this. The first is to "wrest the victimization of both animals and women from the structures of thought that mandate victimization". The second step is to show "animal identity confronting and embarrassing cultural presuppositions about the state of the individual as a subject". The third is an envisioning of communities of animals and women to "show the way toward opting out of the dominant culture and joining up with the animals, who already occupy worlds apart from ours" (Scholtmeijer 1995, 235).

In many ways "From Snipe" reflects how Little is unable to perform this reconceptualization, as she merely enacts upon Snipe what has already been enacted on her through a representation of him as oblivious to his "proper place". Both the comic tone and the choice of couplets suggest that Little's conception of Snipe tends towards the fabular, a little like the "pathetic mechanism" Deirdre Dwen Pitts describes in which animals are blithely placed in an obviously incongruent human landscape (Pitts 172). On the other hand, Little challenges some structures and undermines cultural presuppositions. Generically, she plays "Luath" to Snipe's "Caesar" to produce an anti-

fable. Here she subverts the dyad of the able fablist and the exemplary animal who as Robert Dodsley's articulates it in "An Essay on Fable" (1764), confers "the Gift of Language [upon animals and] contrives to make their instincts more intelligible and their examples more determinate" (Dodsley lxix). Snipe with all of his obvious flaws can hardly be Dodsley's idealized animal. Unflattering as, though, Snipe's representation ultimately is, there is arguable realism in Little's picture of Snipe that challenges sentimental views of the dog. Simultaneously, though the play of abjection Snipe engages in can be related to Valentina Bold's notion of the myth-making of the autodidact, fantastic elements, like Snipe's ability to write a petition to his master, belie rational templates that would fix Snipe in another kind of figuration.

While it can be argued that Little's picture of Snipe as an animal motivated primarily by his "animal needs" and not by human emotion is a more respectful representation than the dramatic one writers such as Taylor and Jesse engage in and promote, Little uses "animal needs" to circumscribe and limit Snipe's subjectivity in order to assert her own limited mastery. As much as her admittance of animal language and her rejection of the sentimental supports an enlarged view of animal subjectivity, her description of Snipe as essentially ravenous fixes him and erects another boundary between human and animal. Little, in other words, permits Snipe a voice but only lets him talk about one thing, which is his "animal obsession" with food. Keith Thomas points out that the supposed insatiability of the dog was one of many attributes

used to support arguments of animal inferiority.[4] Dogs were, in the scientifically-grounded opinion of one early modern doctor, essentially, naturally and unavoidably

> ravenous creatures...who, minding only their belly, have their guts descending almost straight down from their ventricle or stomach to the fundament.
>
> (in Thomas 31-32)

In this case man's superiority is attributable to an intestinal configuration which allows for a slower digestion during which "he might so much better attend upon sublime speculations" (Thomas 32).

The discussion of the talking animal also focuses on the role language plays in constructing the animal. The self-construction of an animal identity through the use of the first-person is especially important in the context of Little's poem. Crucial, in turn, is the connection of this animal "I" to the "I" of the labouring-class woman poet[5] engaged in her own process of self-authoring or self-authorization. Significant as well is the shift in the cultural meaning of the talking animal in the eighteenth century. In Canine Gratitude, Taylor tells the story of a "countryman at Bristol [who] taught a dog [named Fox] to articulate several words" (Taylor 1808, 104). Taylor views Fox's achievement not only as a sign of animal intelligence but as a

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[4]Some cultural feminists and theorists might connect this impulse to control "insatiability" in animals by characterizing animals as inferior to similar attempts to control women based on their allegedly "insatiable" sexuality. See for example Michel Foucault's The History of Sexuality, Part I.

[5]Here, unlike previous chapters, I will have to prefix "Scottish" to "labouring-class woman poet".

measure of England's cultural and political progress -- as a sign of modernity for

> [h]ad the Bristol man lived in the dark times
> of Popery, and taught Fox in private, perhaps
> both master and dog might have been
> publicly burnt, for diabolical practises
> (Taylor 1808, 105)

Snipe[6] engages in an even greater modernity, for though we hear his voice exclusively, Snipe is not a "talking animal" as such. By asking the master to "read my petition" (2) he announces himself as an even more wondrous animal, a "writing animal" producing and creating graphically not only the content of the poem, but its form, its literariness, its poetics. While Robert Dodsley gives blanket licence to the Fabulist who

> has the authority to press into service every
> kind of existence under heaven....he may
> personify, bestow life, speech and action on
> whatever he thinks proper,
> (Dodsley lxix)

it may be more difficult for readers to accept the writing animal. The image of the writing animal, pen in hand and wax seal by his side, poses some challenges to credibility. Not the least of these challenges is that Snipe petitions the Master in writing precisely because he cannot speak, because except with the cat, Snipe's ability to communicate has broken down in the Master's absence. In fact, much of the content of Snipe's petition is taken up describing various crises in communication caused by the Master's absence from the Loudoun community. The

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[6]Curiously, both "Fox" and "Snipe" are given the names of other animals who are hunted with the aid of dogs.

kitchen in which Snipe is used to "kicking and switching" (6) is quiet. Even the usual signs of toil are absent and the cookmaid is not herself. There is neither food or fire in the dining room, and when Snipe attempts to consort with the other dogs, their "growling ill-nature" (20) deters him. His human "friend Jenny Little" (21) neglects him, and he has only the cat who "condoles" (34) with him but who, like Snipe, has no power to improve their unfortunate circumstances.

Snipe's turn toward the Master for assistance and his assumption that "your mild disposition/Perhaps will induce you to read my petition" (1-2) can be acknowledged as a reinforcement of the existing power relations. Snipe also asserts, that, as his master's "poor Snipy" (25), he can harness the Master's power and have it used on his behalf against others below his station. For example, Snipe's pointed accusations against the cookmaid, the brutes (who may or may not be non-human) and Jenny Little may be intended to expose them to the Master so that he will punish them. But Snipe's recognition of the limits of his access to the master are reflected in his formal choices. Rejecting the more intimate and private epistolary form, Snipe asserts that the petition is his choice, yet "From Snipe" is clearly a poem. It is unclear, for example, why Snipe chooses to address the master in couplets or, indeed, wearing the guise of the poet.[7] Part of the irony lies in the fact that Snipe does not address his master in Scottish dialect. Having already rendered

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[7]This formal ambivalence may reflect Little's own initial approach to Burns in which she writes him a letter and encloses a poem entitled "Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns". Later, when Little undertakes a visit to Burns at Ellisland, she is unable to meet him because that very day he falls from his horse, Pegasus, and breaks his arm. This second thwarted communication results in another poem, "On a Visit to Mr. Burns".

Snipe unnatural by making him a writer, rendered him un-doglike by forcing him to express himself in the insincere guise of the poet, Little ultimately renders him totally "freakish" by having him write in couplets.

But the use of English as the language of the poem is also connected to Little's desire to prove her virtuosity as a writer; not at all "common," she exercises her profession as a poet in "proper" English. The use of English confirms Snipe's self-asserted elevated class position, perhaps, his Englishness, or even his foreigness: James Henri, Little's master at Loudoun, was French. Valentina Bold points to the "misguided" influence critics had on Scottish poets such as Little, Burns and James Hogg by equating true poetry with educated English. Bold cites a review of Hogg's "The Mountain Bard" in which Hogg is praised for not "seek[ing] a refuge...in the obscurities of his native dialect" (Bold 27). Donna Landry notes that Little's "*Poetical Works* unfold at first in standard English, then erupt into Scots with the crucial emergence in her text of the figure of Burns as a national poet - and a plebeian genius". Landry points to Little's poem "Given to a Lady Who Asked Me To Write A Poem" as a turning point in Little's linguistic struggle. Part way through that poem "the texts shifts from standard English to a mild form of Scots dialect verse" (Landry 1990, 224).

This perceived need to linguistically "mask" Scottish regional identity in standard English and the struggle to reassert linguistically that identity manifests itself in Snipe's reference to "poetry" as an insincere profession. This self-image runs totally counter to the sentimental image of the dog as unflinchingly sincere, especially in

relation to his Master. Snipe possesses the self-awareness that poetry is a completely unacceptable, even unnatural profession for a dog due to his apparent essential and inherent sincerity. Read as an ironic critique of Johnson, Snipe brazenly walks "on hinder legs" from the first word of the poem to the last. He assures the master that he is "in earnest" (3) "tho' acting the poet" (3). Snipe's self-presentation as "only acting" does not merely justify the formal choice of simple couplets, the sense that Snipe is uncommitted to the profession and that "for a dog" this is a pretty good poem; adherence to the formal template of couplets also frees Snipe's poem from the charge of "doggerel". While the image of the "poetaster" -- the insulting term used for the eighteenth-century literary poseur -- arises, there is enough of the fop in Snipe not to be deterred by this possible assumption, and he stresses his unique versatility through the poem/petition. He acknowledges that though his scrawl may offend he has enough ambition to ascend Parnassus, the classical site of poetic inspiration. Simultaneously, and ever practically, he assures the master that if things do not work out poetically up there, he can quickly reassert his useful dog role and "drive down the Asses" (35).

But even this promise is tinged with wit, depth and intertextuality. Not only does this reference to "Asses on Parnassus" recall Little's own poem, "Given to a Lady Who Asked Me to Write Her a Poem," in which the Critic, mocking Little, promises that if Johnson were alive, he would quickly banish all peasant poets and other pretenders from Parnassus, but it also verbally echoes Burns's "Epistle to J. L*****k, An Old Scotch Bard," in which Burns, in solidarity with a

fellow labouring-class poet, mocks the role of education in the making of a "true" poet.

> A set o' dull, conceited Hashes,
> Confuse their brains in *College-classes!*
> They *gang in* Stirks, and come out Asses,
> Plain truth to speak;
> An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
> By dint o' Greek!
>
> (67-72)

Little's allusion to Burns' connects "From Snipe" to contemporary debates between Ancients and Moderns on the role education plays in the formation of genius. As well, Snipe's obvious versatility in the face of these multilayered discourses on the politics of aesthetics reflects positively and comically the extended benefits a labouring-class poet can offers to a willing employer.

There is a dark side, though, to this apparent bravado. Reasserting her "useful" role is presumably what Little senses she is obliged to do once she "fails" as a poet. As the Critic points out in "Given to a Lady," Little's more appropriate place is in her "dairy tent" (48) or "labour[ing] at her spinning wheel" (49), not trying to "gain the bays" (2) on "the hill" (3) with "that little fellow Pope" (7). Yet it seems too rushed to read the writing dog image allegorically, so that Snipe's comically depicted "unnatural" representation as a writer stands for Little's own position as an "unnatural" poet, or, at least, unlikely poet, "natural Genius" designation notwithstanding. "Given to a Lady," though self-deprecating and a prescient projection of the community response to Little who is, strictly speaking, outside the community of poets, differs from "From Snipe" in its dramatic structure. In "Given to a Lady" the voice of the Critic is contained by quotation marks. Outside

and beyond his "I," therefore, is the "I" of the speaker/poet who responds and reacts to the Critic's words. In "From Snipe," on the other hand, Snipe takes on the speaker's first-person voice and "Jenny Little" appears only as one character in a list of characters Snipe encounters and describes as he presents his "case" to the Master. Even Janet Little's authorial voice is subsumed within Snipe's voice since "Jenny Little" appears in "From Snipe" as a servant, not as a poet. In "Given to a Lady," the reader sees the poet/ "I"'s emotional response to the critic's harsh judgment.

> 'May she wha writes, of wit get mair,
> An' a' that read an ample share
> Of candour every fault to screen
> That in her doggerel scrawls are seen.'
>
> All this and more, a critic said;
> I heard and slunk behind the shade:
> So much I dread their cruel spite,
> My hand still trembles when I write.
>
> ("GL" 56-63)

In "From Snipe," reading Snipe as an allegory is only one way to view the relationship of voices in the poem. Each possibility disturbs well-established cultural borders, either between species or across classes. Reading these disturbances permits both an historicizing of the agents in the poem where proximity between humans and animals prior to the nineteenth century, as John Berger suggests, made "anthropomorphism integral to the relationship between man [*sic*] and animal" (Berger 1977, 505) and a twentieth-century ecocritical recognition of the animal as an independent agent. Eliding Snipe's writing voice with Little's, for example, does not necessarily relegate the animal to mere symbolic status to be used at Little's convenience

even as Little's cultural milieu and historical moment sanctions this use of animals to affirm man's dominion over nature as God-given. But Little's very attempt, for example, to capitalize on Snipe's "dogness" through the self-characterization of his "sniping," his territoriality and especially the way in which he is consumed by his pursuit of food, performs a "closing of human ranks" with an audacious and not a little ironic identification between Little and her Master and Mistress. Snipe's petition may in fact be Little's way of petitioning for an elevation of her own status.

The success of Snipe's petition turns on the Master's belief that Snipe has written the petition. Any realistic rendering of Snipe through language can only attest to Little's skill as a writer. An acknowledgment by the Master of Little's clever portrait of Snipe, especially if made publicly, elevates Little. In "Given to a Lady," for example, the Critic, lamenting the destruction of a poetic Order, established by and kept orderly by Johnson, wonders not only at Burns' lack of shame in "sous[ing] sonnets on the court" (23) but at his popularity with "[e]ven folks, wha're of the highest station./[who] [c]a' him the glory of the nation" (25-6). The humour in Little's portrait of Snipe addresses the Critic's perplexity directly and Johnson's disparagement obliquely. As the transparent and unattractive "I", Snipe constructs Little's transcendence of class boundaries by asserting human superiority and a shared "understanding" of the limited range of animal behaviours. Laughter between humans blurs class boundaries at the expense of the animal.

Little crosses another boundary, as well, by destabilizing the growing sentimentality between dog and master. She manages to capture quite succinctly the larger cultural ambivalence toward animal/human relationships in the eighteenth century. While, as Keith Thomas notes, "country folks believed in the intelligence of wild creatures" and openly communicated with them, educated people vacillated between hostility to fables as "vehicles of deception" and those who would credit animals with "a form of language"(Thomas 127). Not merely useful, dogs are praised increasingly in the eighteenth century for their "superior" animal qualities, foremost of which is their immutable loyalty to their masters. Tales of wondrous (and unbelievable) feats performed by dogs to save, protect and be close to their masters abound.

While Little clearly takes advantage of the popularity of this sentimental view by suggesting a Master/favourite Dog pairing, the "story" of the Master and Snipe hardly makes for an exemplary or wondrous tale. Rather, Little satirizes the closeness of the relationship by making it clear that Snipe's foremost concern is food. Indeed Snipe's affectations of affection for the Master and Mistress are formally "sandwiched" between demands for food.

> O haste back to Loudoun, my gentle good master,
> Relieve your poor Snipy from ev'ry disaster.
> A sight of yourself would affords me much pleasure,
> A share of your dinner an excellent treasure
> Present my best wishes unto the good lady,
> Whose plate and potatoes to me are ay ready:
> ("FS" 25-30)

Little's "realistic" portrait of Snipe, then, conveys a "reality" contrary to popular representations of dogs. By attacking the illusory

representation of the sentimental dog, Little challenges readers to take another look. In mocking the sentimental view, Little does not specifically champion the dog's agency, but she does recognize the dog's difference. Emotion is used to establish Snipe as a sentimental dog only so that Little can expose him as phony. When Snipe's "breast feels the smart," (4) and his heart "swells with grief" (11), the reader is encouraged to believe that Snipe has been emotionally damaged by the changes at Loudoun. But his "broken heartedness" (23) over his altered status with "Jenny Little" is only as a result of a change in his feeding habits: Jenny now eats her entire breakfast rather than sharing it with him.

Little's literary technique makes it impossible to read Snipe's emotion as sincere. This is facilitated in part by her decision to allow Snipe's voice to guide the entire poem. Little betrays Snipe's integrity by controlling that voice, creating a poem which emphasizes the estrangement between "Jenny Little" and Snipe rather than their solidarity. Little represents Snipe's "otherness" as marginal in the very concept of the poem where Snipe must take a highly conventionalized and formal process and use "techniques" such as flattery and cleverness in order to draw attention to his reality and his community. On the other hand, by using Snipe's voice and the petition genre, both the implied reader and presumably the intended reader, the master, are drawn into Snipe's world as he represents it and, as a result, his subjectivity -- or the notion that he might have a subjectivity -- is at least hinted at despite the illusory and contrived direction the poem takes. Snipe's writing voice at least opens the door to Loudoun to blur

the picture of the historically and architecturally "sound" country house and the prestige of the owners.[8]

Snipe's door-opening is achieved through language. J. E. Lewis argues that one of the primary functions of the talking animal in the Fable is in "align[ing] language with the sensible world" (Lewis 9). This fluidity of boundaries facilitated by the talking animal (or, the writing animal) also exemplifies one of the central paradoxes posed by human representations of animals. Both Deirdre Dwen Pitts and Marian Scholtmeijer refer to the power of this paradox. Even if, as a talking animal, Snipe conveniently "serves" a human motive, the ability of the animal to use human language brings the human and animal closer together, erasing one of the fundamental boundaries between kinds. In "From Snipe," for example, Snipe's petition to the master, his ability to pursue through language a foppish, sycophantic self-fashioning, to mount an eager exposé of the servants' neglect of him, to effect a wholesale marketing of his own pet-like qualities and reassert his usefulness, powerfully effaces speciesist boundaries to offer a third possible interpretation for this writing animal -- a reaffirmation of class as the ultimate determinant of "the natural". In fact, Snipe's central complaint is that the master's absence has brought about a fundamental imbalance in life as-it-should-be-lived at Loudoun Castle, and that this is what needs to be adjusted, altered, righted.

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[8]While I would hesitate to call "From Snipe" an anti-country-house poem, this attempt at making the reality of a great house strange does have something in common with Mary Leapor's "Crumble Hall" in which Leapor exposes the tensions in a great house through her perspective as a cookmaid who was fired for "scribbling" on the job.

Little's representation of this is, of course, ironic. Indeed, the larger irony is that Snipe will never truly benefit from loyalties which assert class over species. The danger in erasing boundaries comes from not knowing the impact of all the new alliances. If food is the issue, Jenny Little controls her own breakfast (meager as it may be) and decides if and with whom she will share it. Always generous with Snipe in the past, Jenny Little is clearly not getting enough to eat herself. As a dairymaid, Little is a "higher" servant in the household but this is of no value to her in straightened circumstances. Similarly, Snipe's status as "a Favourite Dog" is of no value to him since the "brutish" dogs exercise control over the "soss" (16). But when even the soss is gone, both Snipe and Little know everyone will starve without the master's intervention. And in this sense, Snipe becomes useful to Little not as a dog-subject but as a dog-object. Dismantling his subjecthood and reassembling a Snipe who literally "sings for their supper," Little fashions a Snipe who can potentially draw the master back to Loudoun and feed everyone without being seen as "stepping out of her station".[9]

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[9]Near the end of Joseph Andrews, Fielding pointedly refers to the often perilous lot of villagers dependent upon a wealthy patron in a description of Lady Booby's return to her country seat.

> She entered the Parish amidst the ringing of Bells, and the Acclamations of the Poor, who were rejoiced to see their Patroness returned after so long an Absence, during which time all her Rents had been to *London*, without a Shilling being spent among them, which tended not a little to their utter impoverishing; for if the Court would be severely missed in such a City as *London*, how much more must the Absence of a Person of great Fortune be felt in a little Country Village, for whose Inhabitants such a Family finds a constant Employment and Supply; and with the Offalls of whose Table the infirm, aged, and infant Poor are

In order to get food, Little "holds up" Snipe to protect her own reputation. But in rewriting Snipe as an "animal victim," Little forces him to "revert to the state of the sacrificial animal of the pre-modern past" (Scholtmeijer 1993, 92) and this is a direct betrayal of his subjectivity.

Despite Little's apparent willingness to sacrifice Snipe and exploit him to ensure her own survival, though, Little and Snipe are ultimately connected through their mutual struggle to upend the idea of the proper place versus the natural. There is a parallel, for example, between Snipe's perception of the imbalance at Loudoun and the Critic's perception, in "Given to a Lady," that the poetic world is thrown out of balance both by the attempt of poets like Burns and Little to climb "the hill" and by the absence of a strong critical voice like Johnson's to come home and right the balance. Little's assignment of voice to Snipe and to the Critic speaking about imbalance is ironically undercut by the imbalance inherent to the relationship of their voices: a writing dog and a critic promoting English decorum in Scottish dialect while the main object of his ire -- the native genius woman poet/speaker -- expresses herself in "proper" English.

Even the title "Given to a Lady who asked me to Write a Poem" suggests something of the freak-show. Little is forced to perform and prove herself, on demand. Not only that, but the situation clearly "requires" her to fashion herself through the disparaging language of the Critic as "a rustic country quean" (45), a "poor silly thing" (53) and

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> abundantly fed, with a Generosity which hath scarce a visible Effect on their Benefactor's Pockets?
>
> (Fielding 247).

characterize her poetry as "sic paultry stuff" (56) doomed to fail. This is much like the document signed by "9 Men of Petersfield" certifying "that we know *Mary Collier*, the washerwoman of *Petersfield*, and that she is the real author of an Epistle to *Stephen Duck* called the *Woman's Labour*"[10] and the headnote to the eighteenth-century African-American slave-poet Phillis Wheatley's poem "To the Right Hon! William Earl of Dartmouth" (1772) in which Wheatley describes how she was asked to write the poem "on the spot" because of doubts about her ability to write.[11] Little is put in a similar position as her patron Frances Dunlop reports to Robert Burns in a letter dated 13 July 1789.

> Tell me what you think of Jenny Little's "Looking Glass." The occasion on which she wrot it was to convince a young lady who doubted the authenticity of her having wrot something else she had shewed her, and asked her to write on a given subject. She said she had never done so, but, since she wished it, would try if she would give her one. She told her she had that forenoon broke a glass she was vext about, and bid her celebrate it. She did so, and a gentleman asked her on the same footing to make the acrostic on his name.
>
> (Wallace 275)[12]

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[10]This was dated 21 September 1739 and appeared in the third edition (1740) of Collier's poems.

[11]The headnote reads: "A Gentlemen who had seen several of the Pieces ascribed to [Wheatley], thought them so much superior to her Situation, and Opportunities of Knowledge, that he doubted their being genuine -- And in order to be satisfied, we to her Master's House, told his Doubts, and to remove them desired that she would write something before him. She told him she was then busy and engaged for the Day, but if he would propose a Subject, and call in the Morning, she would endeavour to satisfy him. Accordingly he gave for a Subject, The Earl of Dartmouth, and calling the next Morning, she wrote in his Presence [the poem]" (Wheatley 148-9).

[12]Both poems Dunlop mentions, "Upon a Young Lady breaking a Looking Glass" and "An Extempore Acrostic," appear in Little's Poetical Works.

Interestingly, Dunlop shows absolutely no interest in or sensitivity towards how Janet Little might feel about being doubted, reporting only a servant-like desire on Janet Little's part to cheerfully accommodate the requests made of her.[13]

Snipe is expected to perform in much the same way. The writing of the petition is a kind of proof, a trace, evidence of Snipe writing himself into a recognizable existence, an existence that can be recognized by literate society. Even formally, the production of a petition suggests certain conventional expectations -- the petition as "formal or humble request" inherently abject or subject to a higher power or a hierarchical structure, not an address, like an epistle, between equals. Snipe "masters" the petition-poem form admirably; he succinctly and cleverly depicts the house at Loudoun incorporating mapping, time and his species-specific territoriality to build an argument and an image of himself within a community. Despite "acting the poet" (3), Snipe goes "doglike" through the house, moving from the kitchen to "rang[ing]" (10) through the dining room. As his hunger increases he "ransack[s] ev'ry corner" (14) then "trip[s] down the stair in a terrible passion" (15) before he attempts unsuccessfully to feed with "the brutes" (17). Details of these disrupted routines and sudden changes in the characters of the servants, especially as their attitudes change toward him, work to destroy the household routine and build Snipe's case of a Loudoun clearly "going to the dogs". While in the end,

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[13]Burns was also entreated to engage in these kind of demonstrations but apparently took them on as challenges. One extempore poem, "The Calf" was written "on a wager with Mr. Gavin Hamilton that I would not reproduce a poem on the subject in a given time" (Ross 52).

Snipe's message is fairly base -- he is hungry and he wants the Master to come home and feed him -- this emotional mapping is designed and paced to elicit sympathetic responses from the Master (and Mistress). For example, "Range" as a hunting term is used to highlight his usefulness as a hunter; Snipe's indoor food-stalking is calculated to mirror his stalking-skills in the field -- another enticement for the Master's return.

Deirdre Dwen Pitts describes how literate society derives "pleasure" from seeing "the animal as a kind of court jester or comic figure" (Pitts 171).[14] Part of this inability to "see" the animal involves figuratively circumscribing his/her range, echoing, perhaps, the very geographical "range" that is established for purposes such as hunting. Though Little shows that she understands Snipe's potential for complexity in order to appeal to the master, she uses emotional mapping to limit Snipe and promote his "petness" over his usefulness or even his "dogness". In Ronald Paulson's discussion of Hogarth's use of the dog in his work, he argues that the dog "must be regarded as a prerevolutionary symbol [since] dogs reveal the unacknowledged underside of eighteenth-century life" (Paulson 62) in their role as marginal figures who regularly, in Hogarth's work at least, act from the periphery as disruptive forces of energy. Once, though, "actual revolution has taken place, the ruling-class takes charge of the dog and

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[14]This creation of the comic figure recalls James Paterson's remarks on Little where he describes her physical appearance as "no bad representation of some of Sir Walter Scott's gigantic heroines, but without their impudence" (Paterson 87-88).

renders him totally a-political by placing him in categories of aesthetic and sympathetic response" (Paulson 62).

To discover Little's motives for narrowing Snipe's role, it may be helpful to return to my earlier discussion of two possible alignments to the Master. In one reading I suggested that Little effaces Snipe's identity in order to create an interspecies identification between servant and master. On the other hand, I argued, the power of Snipe's writing voice promotes an inter-class connection linking Snipe and the puss with the Master and Mistress to leave the servants beyond the class divide, skulking in the margins. A third possibility arises from this current discussion of too narrowly representing Snipe. Rather than emphasizing interrelations between Little and Snipe, narrowing Snipe and even associating Snipe with the Master may enable Little's individual voice to ascend. With Snipe coopted to Paulson's category of "sympathetic response," it may be Little who is "barking" from the periphery. Little's humorous dramatization of a hungry household exposes the outrageousness of an aristocratic "normality where love of dogs is aligned with 'gentlemanliness'" and dogs are "often better fed than the servants, and ... sometimes better housed" (Thomas 104). By ridiculing Snipe through his representation, Little is, by implication ridiculing a Master who very well might respond to Snipe's petition in exactly the way Snipe hopes he will respond. Little, then, documents a disturbing face of "petness," one which has internalized a sentimentality towards certain animals as "natural" to humans with "breeding". This view is vigorously promoted where cruelty to animals is demonstrated by contrasting the refined kindness of the upper-class

English gentleman with the rough brutality of the lower classes and "foreigners".

The disparaging portrait of "Jenny Little" and the other servants drawn by Snipe is the source of a reading of the poem that emphasizes this antagonism between servants and pets. While the irony of a female poet writing a rather negative self-description in the guise of a male dog points quite obviously to the theme of the anxiety of authorship, the irony of "my friend Jenny Little" may lie in the use of the word "friend" and reveal servant relations with family pets especially the Master or Mistress's "favourite" as a potential site for subversive behaviours -- acting-out against the Master on or through the body of the Master's favourite pet. That this form of animal abuse is a "common," even normal, occurrence is the assumption, for example, throughout Francis Coventry's The History of Pompey the Little (1751), where the picaresque dog-hero, Pompey, is less than well-served by the servants in various households where he resides. When, for example, Pompey becomes separated from his mistress, Lady Tempest, in St. James Park, a distraught Lady Tempest orders the servants to search the park for the dog

> Many Times she rang her Bell, to know if her Servants were returned...but at length the fatal Message arrived, that *Pompey* was no where to be found. And indeed it would have been next to a Miracle, if he had; for these faithful Ambassadors had never once stirred from the Kitchen Fire, where, together with the rest of Servants, they had been laughing at the Folly of their Mistress, and diverting themselves with the Misfortunes of her little Darling.
>
> (Coventry 42)

Joseph Taylor also recounts in the "Biography Parodised in the History of Pero" in Canine Gratitude an instance in which Pero as "a parlour guest with his lordship by whose hand he was fed with the choicest bits" (Taylor 1808, 97) is abused by the servant maids who "were his bitterest enemies...plots were laid to poison him, many a good kick and blow he got when his master's back was turned." (Taylor 1808, 98). The dog's body and existence becomes the site of a class war in which the subjecthood of the dog is not an issue.

This more hostile reading of the poem is also supported by the fact that James Henri, the actual "Master" at Loudoun, died in June 1790 nearly a year before the date affixed to Little's poem. If the increasingly hungry household is a result of Henri's widow, Susan Dunlop Henri, giving up her tenancy at Loudoun Castle, the emotional gap between Little and Snipe widens. By emphasizing Snipe's obsession with his own hunger over everything else, not only does Little cast Snipe as an unsympathetic and disloyal "favourite" but also she underlines how little the dog understands of human behaviours and rhythms of life. Snipe may write to the Master but he clearly cannot hear or understand human language since the news of Henri's death would have been broadcast throughout the household. Little, then, is willing to give Snipe "the gift of language" only conditionally and does not seem to mind if this "gift" ultimately leaves Snipe appearing stupid. Again, the talking animal functions not to expand knowledge of animal subjectivity, but to limit animals to roles and meanings controlled by humans. Little rejects the possibility of sentimental relationships between humans and animals by refusing to represent Snipe

sympathetically. The comic tone of the poem supports Little's unsympathetic response. This is quite contrary to the familiar trope of the abjectly loyal dog faithful even after the Master's death that emerges strongly by the end of the eighteenth century. Joseph Taylor, for example, presents in Canine Gratitude the story of Daniel the gamekeeper and his dog Dash, who would not eat after his master died and died himself fourteen days later (Taylor 1808 37-8). Further into the nineteenth century, George Jesse asserts that this abjection is "natural" to the "canine race".

> The whole stream of his being flows in one direction; he rides by a single cable and his love is the sheet-anchor of his existence....Man is, in truth, his deity, his absorbing object; and when the tie between them is severed, agonizing must be the heart's pangs the poor animal has to endure.
>
> (Jesse 2)

The story of Ulysses' dog, Argus, who gratefully drops dead after being the only one to recognize his Master on his return from his Odyssey, becomes the literary touchstone for this "fact". Snipe's obliviousness to this cultural expectation as exemplified by his behaviour and the sense that while he might "drop dead" from hunger, the Master's return in and of itself would not move him enough to kill him, underlines Little's skepticism that sympathy and abjection are natural to dogs.

There is an argument, though, for Snipe's inability to access his own natural state, controlled as he is by a human culture that dictates not only his function to him but tells him how he feels. In this way, Snipe's name is crucial to his representation. Named, presumably, by the Master, Snipe is mastered by his name, which holds the deep irony

of both the hunter and the hunted. John Berger might connect this ironic doubling to the earliest human representation of animals -- cave paintings -- where "the depicted was the quarry" (Berger 1971, 1042) and the apparently seamless sense of man's dominion over the animals. As a hunting dog, Snipe's prey is potentially the Snipe, a commonly hunted wading bird. "Snipe" may reflect his physical resemblance to the snipe with a long snout, long legs and a slender body, or it could, ironically, signal the exact opposite.[15] The sense of self-consumption in Snipe's name, is further heightened by his status as a domesticated animal. Where the wild animal feeds on himself in this hunter/hunted scenario, the domesticated animal hunter delivers himself dead as meat for the Master's table. This is especially significant in a poem in which a hungry dog petitions for food. If the situation at Loudoun is so unnatural that dogs write petitions, then, presumably, if the household servants get too hungry they may eat the dogs (and cats). The Master's naming of Snipe inadvertently prepares the household for such an eventuality. And if a cultural taboo exists against eating dogs, then Snipe's name functions in part as "false naming" where the name works to mask reality, in this case by deflecting from the body of one animal to another animal.[16] In eating "Snipe," the dead, consumable flesh of the dog can be transformed through false naming into the more socially

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[15]Little's sense of self-depricating humour may be at work here in her naming of Snipe for, as James Paterson reports, Janet Little's own name was entirely a misnomer. "[S]he greatly belied her name; for she was a very tall masculine woman with dark hair, and features somewhat coarse" (Paterson 87).

[16]The suggestion I made earlier that the servants abuse the master's pet as a way of vicariously abusing the master may fit with this theme of corporeal transference.

acceptable and thus more palatable dead flesh of the wading bird. But Snipe disappears in this reading. This disappearance is contrary to both the comic tone of the poem and the poem's ending with Snipe hypothetically perched on the top of Parnassus happy either self-employed as a poet inspired by the Master or serving the Master directly and "driv[ing] down the Asses".

Naming also incorporates the domesticating tendencies of both the taxonomy of dogs in the work of Johannes Caius and their sentimental direction in that of Joseph Taylor. Snipe's dilemma, his crisis of identity between hunter, pet, prey and other possible roles, is reflected in the way that Caius ranks dogs. Beginning generally with four categories -- "the difference of them, the use of them, the properties and the diverse natures" (Caius 2) -- Caius then makes a tripartite division that emphasizes function over all other categories. The hunter, predictably, is the most useful of all. Caius's three groups comprise a kind of parallel to the human class system: "a gentle kind, serving to game, a homely kind, apt for sundry necessary uses, [and] a curious kind, meete for many toys" (Caius 2). Among the "gentle kind," Caius distinguishes between those who "findeth game on land" and those who "findeth game on water" (Caius 14) with the former ranked higher. Joseph Taylor emphasizes function too, but physical attributes are always subsumed to the emotional attributes of the dog's companionate function.

As much as he writes and "voices" the poem, Snipe is pointedly "named" by humans and is subtitled "a Favourite Dog". Not only does this naming influence reality, according to Toril Moi, "it also reveals a

desire to regulate and organize reality according to well-defined categories" (Moi 160). Naming defines Snipe's function; it also equally defines his status at Loudoun. Snipe is named both as a favourite pet and as an animal important enough to be named. Snipe is ranked higher (or ranks himself higher through the pet-name "Snipy" that he uses in line 25) than the other non-human animals in the house. "Old James" is ambiguously cast as either dog or servant who clearly fails or refuses to recognize Snipe's elevated class position by sending him to the "soss" with the brutes. The cat who is another animal favourite in the house, albeit the mistress' favourite, is the ubiquitous "puss," not fully named, not even warranting an upper-case "P" at least as Snipe writes her. Little also emphasizes her own domestication by naming herself in the poem. Here she does not completely sever her connection to Snipe but creates a recognizable, perhaps privileged, space for herself. Slightly elevated above the other servants through her naming, though potentially at risk due to Snipe's less than flattering remarks regarding her recent behavior towards him, "Jenny Little" is relegated to a special space reserved for the human friend of the Master's dog. Naming herself within the poem underlines her individuality and separates her from the rest of the servants. For example, in most of the references to Little in Dunlop's letters to Burns she is called "Jenny Little," but this might underline Little's connection to Snipe as "Favourite" where Dunlop's patronage of Little as poet and Little's high servant position as supervisor of Loudoun's dairy makes her unpopular among the other servants. While the diminutive-sounding "Jenny Little" may emphasize

her dependency, her "petness," it can just as easily reflect what she was actually called by the people around her.

Their calculated and meticulously organized household not only emphasizes hierarchy and connects Little to Snipe, it also points to the calculated skill of both human and dog poets. This is despite Snipe's own disparaging self-assessment at the beginning of the poem, despite Little apologetic letter to Burns, despite her cowering "behind the shade" (61) at the end of "Given to a Lady," and despite the ways in which animals and labouring-class women poets are continually defined within eighteenth-century culture. In my discussion in chapter two of the "written Originally Extempore" in Elizabeth Hands' poem, I stressed the importance of locating the poem in time -- if the extempore maps a moment, then the "written originally" means that the moment has been rewritten at another time. In terms of a class analysis, I said that extempore was both a practical and subversive choice of genre for working women, that they could write their poem quickly even as the act of writing or "thinking the poem," since they would likely be without pen and paper, employed them, however briefly, at something they were not, strictly speaking, supposed to be doing. The illusion of Snipe's petition, of a dog-composed poem, contains a similar act of subversion. Writing is clearly not what a dog is supposed to be doing even when the Master is away. But Snipe may be completely at a loss, completely without function, without the master. Little asserts through "From Snipe" that the achievement of her poem cannot ultimately be undone by any kind of attack on her credibility as a poet since a radical achievement already exists in the "fact" of the presence of the poem. Of

course this is always complicated by the fragile status of poetry as a presence within cultures. But as much as "From Snipe" resembles the spontaneous and heartfelt outpouring of a "Fav'rite Dog to his Master," behind Snipe's cheeky resolve and his literary grandstanding, Little sits writing, cleverly manipulating language and making that language public when she justifiably might be expected to be performing her sanctioned duties or, at the very least, sharing her breakfast with Snipe before she begins her working day.

Conclusion

Through the labour of this dissertation, I have insinuated myself into the community of academics who study the poetry of British labouring-class women in the eighteenth-century. In the introduction I attempted to position myself among these various critics and their critical approaches and distinguished myself primarily by my ecocritical approach to this cluster of poems. My ecocritical practice, as I have said probably too many times in these pages, highlights the notion of speciesism by carefully reading the representations of non-human animals in labouring-class women's poetry and promotes the ecofeminist concept of "interlocking oppressions" as a way of politically addressing issues of oppression across class, species and gender boundaries.

While the methods I use in performing an ecocritical reading have been restricted here to reading and interpreting these issues as they are raised within eighteenth-century labouring-class women's poetry and other related texts, I thought I would end this dissertation by reading two animal metaphors as they have appeared in twentieth-century critical writing about labouring-class women's poetry in the eighteenth century. My point here is that while an ecocritical literary historical practice cannot recuperate or reread the past to suit or serve the twentieth-century environmental movement, a twentieth-century ecocritical practice can nonetheless play a very valuable role within

environmental politics. Indeed, raising environmental awareness within all areas of literary studies and the integration of environmental thought into the literature curriculum could have an enormous social and political impact. Traditional critics have romanticized and distanced nature as other and have encouraged students of literature to read the natural landscape as a mere backdrop against which real stories, themes and techniques that are the "true" nature of literature are played out. In the context of our current environmental crisis, a literary critical practice which perpetuates the nature/culture dichotomy in this way enables continued social and political inertia.

It is in part, I think, this benign neglect of the natural world by literary critics that leads to the casual use of animal metaphors to describe writers or the activities of writers. Even when these metaphors are intended to be empowering, they often serve the expediency of the critic rather the needs of the woman and animal who are collapsed together. This is the problem, for example, with Donna Landry's image of the eighteenth-century labouring-class woman poet as a vulture. Landry uses the image to conclude her section on the responses labouring-class women poets make to "Master" poets, particularly to Pope. Landry's critique follows these women poets through a process by which they honour but ultimately reject the master. The vulture image is intended to reflect this pattern and underline the increasing independence of the labouring-class women poet. But the effect is altered by the image itself of labouring-class women poets -- Mary Masters and Ann Yearsley in particular -- "plundering Pope's text for their ravishing example and then leav[ing]

his corpus behind" (Landry 1990, 55). Not only is the entire image grotesque, it transforms Yearsley, who often figured herself as a bird or used birds to symbolize freedom, into a vulture who as a carrion bird carries negative cultural connotations of rapaciousness and opportunism. It is difficult to imagine, in the context of everything else Landry says in praise of Yearsley, that she really wants to characterize her in this way. Though Samuel Johnson wisely points out that it is often the folly of humans in acts of war and other bloody enterprises that create the opportunity for vultures, this has not culturally recuperated their reputation. As for the vulture, in Landry's metaphor, she is fixed narrowly in a damning Sisyphus-like perpetual and repeating image -- gathering in anticipation of a death and then picking the still-warm flesh from the bones. She is given no opportunity here for a fuller representation. This is ironic, even tragic, in the context of Landry's book which argues for a richer and more comprehensive critical treatment of labouring-class women writers. Like the captive linnet who introduced this dissertation, the vulture is imprisoned by fixed human stereotypes that erase her fuller life and make us unable to hear, for example, the cries of her sisters and children who, in addition to the stench of death, also call to her.

Germaine Greer, on the other hand, clearly intends to be insulting when she refers to Mary Leapor as an "insignificant piglet of poetry" and a "freak of nature" (Greer 1995, 52-53). The pig is another animal with a long-standing negative image in human culture (the recent popularity of "Babe" aside). It is difficult to know exactly what Greer means by connecting Leapor to the piglet as she only cursorily

discusses Leapor's life and work in Slip-Shod Sybils. The remark may just be off the cuff, a clever insult tossed after Greer refers to Leapor's "grotesque little" fable, "The Sow and the Peacock". But the pig carries cultural meanings that are significant in the context of Greer's overall argument against labouring-class women poets. Greer's use of the "piglet" and "freak of nature" epithets is a clear attempt to discredit Leapor and discourage readings of her poems. Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence suggests that it is the physical resemblance between piglets and human infants -- because of "their pigmentation, their sparse body hair and the expressivity of [their] face[s]"(Lawrence 323) -- that has led to the establishment of human-set taboos which simultaneously emphasize the distance between the two species and naturalize the superiority of humans. Characterizing Leapor as other than human and as an "inferior" piglet, then, serves Greer's purpose. But it also reveals an underlying critical anxiety for, as Lawrence adds, the pig as a "symbol of pollution" represents "anomalies -- elements that signify disorder" and that the response to these "symbols of pollution" is to condemn "any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications" (Lawrence 318). Greer's critical project sets-out to condemn poets such as Leapor as she promotes an ideal, a true feminist poet worthy of critical attention. This poet is one

> whose verse does not incessantly vibrate at the highest frequency[, who has] other subjects besides [herself], [and who does] not see [herself] as outcast and solitary or unique in [her] capacity to be miserable.
>
> (Greer 1995, 224)

But what Greer fails to acknowledge is that in her project's attempt to "civilize" feminist poetry she renders a value-judgement which makes the inclusion of labouring-class women poets impossible due to the inherent incivility of their social conditions.[1]

Greer's theory that scholarly work on labouring-class women poets only proceeds because "we" want our women poets to be victims is valid only if "we" read their texts as documents of the victimized. But this kind of critical practice is self-perpetuating in that it is itself a victimizing process. In my readings of domesticated animals, I point out continually that perceiving a sentient being as victimized is in itself victimizing and, as a critical practice used against both animals and women, it has become a bad habit. What my readings of a selection of eighteenth-century British labouring-class women's poetry reveals is a resistance to such conceptualizations. The unique insights of labouring-class women do not, despite Greer's insistence, utterly dissolve into derivative banality. My extended readings of several poems which have not been given this critical attention before attests to their complexity and depth. And, not insignificantly, what I have made room for here by insisting on detailed readings, are the resisting captive birds, the grinning wild beasts, the mad heifers, the disgruntled worker-bees, the innocent sheep and the hungry dogs who are present

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[1]In The Country and the City, Raymond Williams refers to this tendency for bourgeois value judgments to perculate into Marxist discourse on agrarian reform. As Williams points out, "implicit in the denunciation of capitalism...[is the notion that] the bourgeoisie had 'rescued' a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life; the subjected nations were barbarian and semi-barbarian, the dominating powers 'civilized' (Williams 303).

in eighteenth-century labouring-class women's poetry but whose presence has not until now been read, acknowledged and contextualized within a broader ecocritical vision of woman, class and species.

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The Captive Linnet

MYCIAS, behold this bird! see how she tires --
Breaks her soft plumes, and springs against the wires!
A clown more rude than gracious brought her here
To pine in silence, and to die in snare.
Her haunt she well remembers: ev'ry morn
Her sweet not warbled from the blowing thorn
That hangs o'er yon cool wave; response clear
Her sisters gave, and sprang through upper air.
E'en now (by habit gentler made), at eve,
A time when men their green dominions leave,
They sit, and call her near her fav'rite spray,
Meet no reply, and pensive wing their way.
This wound in friendship dear affections heal,
Their young require them: to their nests they steal;
Nurse them with warmth, with hope, with true delight,
And teach the danger of an early flight. --
Delicious toil! raptures that never cloy!
A mother only can define her joy.
Perhaps, dear Mycias, this poor mourner's breast
Was yesternight on her weak offspring prest!
The down scarce breaking on their tender skin,
Their eyes yet clos'd, their bodies cold and thin;
Waiting when she would kindly warmth impart,
And take them trembling to her gen'rous heart.
Where are they now, sweek captive? Who'll befriend
They mourning children, as the storms descend?
The winds are bleak, thy mossy cradle's torn --
Hark! they lament thee, hungry and forlorn!
Each shiv'ring brother round his sister creeps,
Deep in the nest thy little daughter sleeps.
Again the blast, that tears the oak, comes on:
Thy rocking house, thy family are gone!
One to an hungry easel falls a prey;
Another chirps, but not to hail the day:
Too weak to live, he seeks no casual aid,
And dies, rememb'ring thee, beneath the shade.
Where could thy daughter go? More weak and shrill
Her voice was heard. The ants forsake their hill. --
Through tHAt republic Addison display'd,
When he unsated hunger virtue made,
And gave, unwisely, ant-like souls to man --
The barb'rous rumour of misfortune ran.
Alike pourtray'd in hist'ry and in verse,
For prey industrious, obdurant and fierce:
Voracious columns move! The victim's voice
Invites her foes, who sting her and rejoice.
Keenly their riots on her frame begin:
She tries to shake them from her downy skin;
Their ograns touch her springs of being -- Strife
She holds not with her fate--she trembles out of life.

O Mycias! What hath yon barbarian gain'd,
Who with malicious joy this linnet chain'd?
Could she at morn salute his untun'd ear?
When dull with vice could she the gaoler cheer;
Hail him with strains of liberty; proclaim,
With harmony he hates, her maker's name:
Or peck from him the crumb withheld so long,
That her heart sicken'd e'en at freedom's song?
No: see, she droops, rejects his aid -- confin'd --
Her dreary cage she scorns, and dies resign'd
Mycias! thus spreads unseen more ling'ring woe,
Than e'en thy sympathising soul must know:
Wisely ordain'd! He mocks the proffer'd cure,
Who bids his friend one fruitless pang endure:
Since pity turns to anguish, when denied,
And troubles swell, which must in death subside.
Ah! fly the scene; secure that guilt can find
In brutal force no fetter for the mind!
True! Violated thus, it feels the chain,
Rises with languor, and lies down with pain;
Yet bless'd in trembling to one mighty WHOLE,
DEATH is the field of VICTORY for the SOUL.

Man the Monarch

AMAZED we read of Nature's early throes,
How the fair heavens and ponderous earth arose;
How blooming trees unplanted first began;
And beasts submissive to their tyrant, man:
To man, invested with despotic sway,
While his mute brethren tremble and obey;
Till heaven beheld him insolently vain,
And checked the limits of his haughty reign.
Then from their lord the rude deserters fly,
And, grinning back, his fruitless rage defy;
Pards, tigers, wolves to gloomy shades retire,
To humble valleys, where soft flowers blow,
And fattening streams in chrystal mazes flow,
Full of new life, the untamed coursers run,
And roll and wanton in the cheerful sun;
Round their gay hearts in dancing spirits rise,
To craggy rocks destructive serpents glide,
Whose mossy crannies hide their speckled pride;
And monstrous whales on foamy billows ride.
Then joyful birds ascend their native sky:
But where! ah, where shall helpless woman fly?

Here smiling Nature brought her choicest stores,
And roseate beauty on her favourite pours:
Pleased with her labour, the officious dame
Withheld no grace would deck the rising frame.
Then viewed her work, and viewed and smiled again,
And kindly whispered, 'Daughter, live and reign.'
But now the matron mourns her latest care,
And sees the sorrows of her darling fair;
Beholds a wretch, whom she designed a queen,
And weeps that e're she formed the weak machine.
In vain she boasts her lip of scarlet eyes,
Cheeks like the morning, and far-beaming eyes;
Her neck refulgent, fair and feeble arms --
A set of useless and neglected charms.
She suffers hardship with afflictive moans:
Small tasks of labour suit her slender bones.
Beneath a load her weary shoulders yield,
Nor can her fingers grasp the sounding shield;
She sees and trembles at approaching harms,
And fear and grief destroy her fading charms.
Then her pale lips no pearly teeth disclose,
And time's rude sickle cuts the yielding rose.
Thus wretched woman's shortlived merit dies:
In vain to Wisdom's sacred help she flies,
Or sparkling Wit but lends a feeble aid:
'Tis all delirium from a wrinkled maid.

A tattling dame, no matter where or who --
Me it concerns not, and it need not you --

Once told this story to the listening Muse,
Which we, as now it serves our turn, shall use.

When our grandsire named the feathered kind,
Pondering their natures in his careful mind,
'Twas then, if on our author we rely,
He viewed his consort with an envious eye;
Greedy of power, he hugged the tottering throne,
Pleased with the homage, and would reign alone;
And, better to secure his doubtful rule,
Rolled his wise eyeballs, and pronounced her *fool.*
The regal blood to distant ages runs:
Sires, brother, husbands, and commanding sons,
The sceptre claim; and every cottage brings
A long succession of domestic kings.

Mary Leapor, wr. 1746, pub. 1751

Written, originally extempore, on seeing a Mad Heifer run through the Village where the Author lives

WHEN summer smiled, and birds on every spray
In joyous warblings tuned their vocal lay,
Nature on all sides showed a lovely scene,
And people's minds were, like the air, serene;
Sudden from th' herd we saw a heifer stray,
And to our peaceful village bend her way.
She spurns the ground with madness as she flies,
And clouds of dust, like autumn mists, arise;
Then bellows out: the villagers, alarmed;
Come rushing forth, with various weapons armed;
Some run with pieces of old broken rakes,
And some from hedges pluck the rotten stakes;
Here one in haste, with hand-staff of his flail,
And there another comes with half a rail;
Whips, without lashes, study ploughboys bring,
While clods of dirt and pebbles others fling.
Voices tumultuous rend the listening ear:
'Stop her,' one cries; another, 'Turn her there':
But furiously she rushes by them all,
And some huzza, and some to cursing fall.
A mother snatched her infant off the road,
Close to the spot of ground where next she trod;
Camilla, walking, trembled and turned pale:
See o'er her gentle heart what fears prevail!
At last the beast, unable to withstand
Such force united, leaped into a pond:
The water quickly cooled her maddened rage;
No more she'll fright our village, I presage.

Elizabeth Hands, 1789

Written on a Visit

Delightful Twick'nham! may a rustic hail
  Thy leafy shades, where Pope in rapture stray'd,
Clasp young ey'd Ecstasy amid the vale,
  And soar, full-pinion'd, with the buoyant maid?

Ah! no, I droop! her fav'rite Bard she mourns
  Yet Twick'nham, shall thy groves assist my song;
For while, with grateful love my bosom burns,
  Soft Zephyr bears the artless strain along.

Through Maro's peaceful haunt with joy I rove:
  Here Emma's spotless lamb forgets to bleat;
Nor heeds her native lawn, or wooly love,
  But gently breathes her thanks at Beauty's feet.

Emblem of whitest Innocence! how blest!
  No cruel mastiff on thy heart shall prey,
Nor sanguine steel e'er rend thy panting breast;
  But life, with happy ease, still glide away.

Far be the hour that must demand thy breath;
  For, ah! that hour shall claim my Emma's tear:
E'en Maro's manly eye shall grace they death;
  Nor will the pang Lactilla's bosom spare.

But hence, Melpomene! to cells of woe;
  I would not now thy melting languours own:
Here Friendship bids exulting Rapture glow,
  While Sorrow, list'ning, stills her deepest groan.

Protected thus from ev'ry barbed dart,
  Which oft from soul-corroding passion flies,
I own the transport of a blameless heart,
  While on the air the pow'rless fury dies.

Hail! steady Friendship, stubborn in thy plea!
  Most justly so, when Virtue is thy guide:
Beneath your mingled ray my soul is free,
  And native Genius soars with conscious Pride.

See, Maro points the vast, the spacious way,
  Where strong Idea may on Rapture spring:
I mount! -- Wild Ardour shall ungovern'd stray;
  Nor dare the mimic pedant clip my wing.

Rule! what art *thou?* Thy limits I disown!
  Can they weak law the swelling thought confine?
Snatch glowing Transport from her kindred zone,
  And fix her melting on thy frozen line?

As well command the hoary Alps to bear
  The Amaranth, or Phoebus-loving flow'r!

Bid the Behemoth cut the yielding air,
  Or rob the Godhead of creative pow'r!

Yet, Precept! shall thy richest store be mine,
  When soft'ning pleasure would invade my breast;
To thee my struggling spirit shall resign;
  On thy cold bosom will I sink to rest.

Farewell ye groves! and when the friendly moon
  Tempts each fair sister o'er the vernal green,
Oh, may each lovely maid reflect how soon
  Lactilla saw, and sighing left the scene.

From Snipe, a Favourite Dog to His Master

O BEST of good masters, your mild disposition
Perhaps may induce you to read my petition:
Believe me in earnest, though acting the poet,
My breast feels the smart, and mine actions do shew it.

At morn when I rise, I go down to the kitchen,
Where oft I've been treated with kicking and switching.
There's nothing but quiet, no toil nor vexation,
The cookmaid herself seems possess'd of discretion.

The scene gave surprise, and I could not but love it,
Then found 'twas because she had nothing to covet.
From thence to the dining-room I took a range sir,
My heart swells with grief when I think of the change there;

No dishes well dress'd, with their flavour to charm me,
Nor even so much as a fire to warm me.
For bread I ransack ev'ry corner with caution,
Then trip down the stair in a terrible passion.

I go with old James, when the soss is a dealing,
But brutes are voracious and void of all feeling;
They quickly devour't; not a morsel they leave me,
And then by their growling ill nature they grieve me.

My friend Jenny Little pretends to respect me,
And yet sir at meal-time she often neglects me:
Of late she her breakfast with me would have parted,
But now eats it all, so I'm quite broken-hearted.

O haste back to Loudoun, my gentle good master,
Relieve your poor Snipy from ev'ry disaster.
A sight of yourself would afford me much pleasure,
A share of your dinner an excellent treasure,

Present my best wishes unto the good lady,
Whose plate and potatoes to me are ay ready:
When puss and I feasted so kindly together;
But now quite forlorn we condole with each other.

No more I'll insist, lest your patience be ended;
I beg by my scrawl, sir, you'll not be offended;
But mind, when you see me ascending Parnassus,
The need that's of dogs there to drive down the Asses.

Janet Little, 1791.

The Rural Maid in London to her Friend in the Country: An Epistle

Rejoice, dear nymph! enjoy your happy grove,
Where birds and shepherds warble strains of love,
While banish'd I, alas! can nothing hear,
But sounds too harsh to soothe a tender ear.
Here gilded beaux fine painted belles pursue,
But how unlike to village-swains and you;
At twelve o'clock they rub their slumb'ring eyes,
And, seeing day-light from their pillows rise;
To the dear looking-glass due homage pay,
Look o'er the play-bills while they sip their tea;
Then order John the chariot to prepare,
And drive to th' Park, to take the morning air.
When dusky ev'ning spreads her gloomy shade,
And rural nymphs are in soft slumbers laid,
Then coaches rattle to the ladies rout,
With belles within, and mimic beaux without;
The vulgar way of counting time they scorn,
Their noon is evening, and their evening morn.
But what is yet more wonderful than all,
These strange disorders they do-pleasures call:
Such tinsel joys shall ne'er my heart obtain,
Give me the real pleasure of the plain,
Where unmov'd constancy has fix'd her seat,
And love, and friendship, make their sweet retreat.
Their lives my friend, my dear Belinda gay,
Could I with her the fresh'ning vales survey;
To make a wreath, I'd gather flow'rs full blown,
But spare the tender beds, till riper grown:
If I should see a black-bird, or a thrush,
Sit on her nest within the hawthorn bush,
She undisturb'd should hatch her little brood;
Who fright her thence has not a heart that's good;
It surely is a pity to molest,
A little bird, when sitting on her nest.
Should love by chance invite your friend to rove,
I'd take a trip into the silent grove;
There if my swain should pipe, then I would sing,
And be as happy as the birds in spring!
No title but a nymph I'd wish to know,
Nor e'er commence a belle, to win a beau.

Elizabeth Hands, 1789.

THE

Woman's Labour:

TO

Mr. *STEPHEN DUCK.*

IMMORTAL Bard! thou Fav'rite of [the Nine!
Enrich'd by Peers, advanc'd by CAROLINE!
Deign to look down on One that's [poor and low,
Remembring you yourſelf was lately ſo;
Accept theſe Lines: Alas! what can you have
From her, who ever was, and's ſtill a Slave?

[6]

No Learning ever was beſtow'd on me;
My Life was always ſpent in Drudgery:
And not alone; alas! with Grief I find,
It is the Portion of poor Woman-kind.
Oft have I thought as on my Bed I lay,
Eas'd from the tireſome Labours of the Day,
Our firſt Extraction from a Maſs refin'd,
Could never be for Slavery deſign'd;
Till Time and Cuſtom by degrees deſtroy'd
That happy State our Sex at firſt enjoy'd.
When Men had us'd their utmoſt Care and Toil,
Their Recompence was but a Female Smile;
When they by Arts or Arms were render'd Great,
They laid their Trophies at a Woman's Feet;
They, in thoſe Days, unto our Sex did bring
Their Hearts, their All, a Free-will Offering;
And as from us their Being they derive,
They back again ſhould all due Homage give.

JOVE once deſcending from the Clouds, did drop
In Show'rs of Gold on lovely *Danae*'s Lap;

The

[7]

The ſweet-tongu'd Poets, in thoſe generous Days,
Unto our Shrine ſtill offer'd up their Lays:
But now, alas! that Golden Age is paſt,
We are the Objects of your Scorn at laſt.
And you, great DUCK, upon whoſe happy Brow
The Muſes ſeem to fix the Garland now,
In your late *Poem* boldly did declare
Alcides' Labours can't with your's compare;
And of your annual Task have much to ſay,
Of Threſhing, Reaping, Mowing Corn and Hay;
Boaſting your daily Toil, and nightly Dream,
But can't conclude your never-dying Theme,
And let our hapleſs Sex in Silence lie
Forgotten, and in dark Oblivion die;
But on our abject State you throw your Scorn,
And Women wrong, your Verſes to adorn.
You of Hay-making ſpeak a Word or two,
As if our Sex but little Work could do:
This makes the honeſt Farmer ſmiling ſay,
He'll ſeek for Women ſtill to make his Hay;
For if his Back be turn'd, their Work they mind
As well as Men, as far as he can find.

For my own Part, I many a *Summer's* Day
Have ſpent in throwing, turning, making Hay;
But ne'er could ſee, what you have lately found,
Our Wages paid for ſitting on the Ground.
'Tis true, that when our Morning's Work is done,
And all our Graſs expos'd unto the Sun,
While that his ſcorching Beams do on it ſhine,
As well as you, we have a Time to dine:
I hope, that ſince we freely toil and ſweat
To earn our Bread, you'll give us Time to eat.
That over, ſoon we muſt get up again,
And nimbly turn our Hay upon the Plain;
Nay, rake and prow it in, the Caſe is clear;
Or how ſhould Cocks in equal Rows appear?
But if you'd have what you have wrote believ'd,
I find, that you to hear us talk are griev'd:
In this, I hope, you do not ſpeak your Mind,
For none but *Turks*, that ever I could find,
Have Mutes to ſerve them, or did e'er deny
Their Slaves, at Work, to chat it merrily.
Since you have Liberty to ſpeak your Mind,
And are to talk, as well as we, inclin'd,

Why

[9]

Why ſhould you thus repine, becauſe that we,
Like you, enjoy that pleaſing Liberty?
What! would you lord it quite, and take away
The only Privilege our Sex enjoy?

When Ev'ning does approach, we homeward hie,
And our domeſtic Toils inceſſant ply:
Againſt your coming Home prepare to get
Our Work all done, our Houſe in order ſet;
Bacon and *Dumpling* in the Pot we boil,
Our Beds we make, our Swine we feed the while;
Then wait at Door to ſee you coming Home,
And ſet the Table out againſt you come:
Early next Morning we on you attend;
Our Children dreſs and feed, their Cloaths we mend;
And in the Field our daily Task renew,
Soon as the riſing Sun has dry'd the Dew.

When Harveſt comes, into the Field we go,
And help to reap the Wheat as well as you;
Or elſe we go the Ears of Corn to glean;
No Labour ſcorning, be it e'er ſo mean;

But

[10]

But in the Work we freely bear a Part,
And what we can, perform with all our Heart.
To get a Living we ſo willing are,
Our tender Babes into the Field we bear,
And wrap them in our Cloaths to keep them warm,
While round about we gather up the Corn;
And often unto them our Courſe do bend,
To keep them ſafe, that nothing them offend:
Our Children that are able, bear a Share
In gleaning Corn, ſuch is our frugal Care.
When Night comes on, unto our Home we go,
Our Corn we carry, and our Infant too;
Weary, alas! but 'tis not worth our while
Once to complain, or *reſt at ev'ry Stile*;
We muſt make haſte, for when we Home are come,
Alas! we find our Work but juſt begun;
So many Things for our Attendance call,
Had we ten Hands, we could employ them all.
Our Children put to Bed, with greateſt Care
We all Things for your coming Home prepare:
You ſup, and go to Bed without delay,
And reſt yourſelves till the enſuing Day;

[11]

While we, alas! but little Sleep can have,
Becauſe our froward Children cry and rave;
Yet, without fail, ſoon as Day-light doth ſpring,
We in the Field again our Work begin,
And there, with all our Strength, our Toil renew,
Till *Titan's* golden Rays have dry'd the Dew;
Then home we go unto our Children dear,
Dreſs, feed, and bring them to the Field with care.
Were this your Caſe, you juſtly might complain
That Day nor Night you are ſecure from Pain;
Thoſe mighty Troubles which perplex your Mind,
(*Thiſtles* before, and *Females* come behind)
Would vaniſh ſoon, and quickly diſappear,
Were you, like us, encumber'd thus with Care.
What you would have of us we do not know:
We oft' take up the Corn that you do mow;
We cut the Peas, and always ready are
In ev'ry Work to take our proper Share;
And from the Time that Harveſt doth begin,
Until the Corn be cut and carry'd in,
Our Toil and Labour's daily ſo extreme,
That we have hardly ever *Time to dream.*

[12]

THE Harveſt ended, Reſpite none we find;
The hardeſt of our Toil is ſtill behind:
Hard Labour we moſt chearfully purſue,
And out, abroad, a Charing often go:
Of which I now will briefly tell in part,
What fully to declare is paſt my Art;
So many Hardſhips daily we go through,
I boldly ſay, the like *you* never knew.

WHEN bright *Orion* glitters in the Skies
In *Winter* Nights, then early we muſt riſe;
The Weather ne'er ſo bad, Wind, Rain, or Snow,
Our Work appointed, we muſt riſe and go;
While you on eaſy Beds may lie and ſleep,
Till Light does thro' your Chamber-windows peep.
When to the Houſe we come where we ſhould go,
How to get in, alas! we do not know:
The Maid quite tir'd with Work the Day before,
O'ercome with Sleep; we ſtanding at the Door
Oppreſs'd with Cold, and often call in vain,
E're to our Work we can Admittance gain:

But

[13]

But when from Wind and Weather we get in,
Briskly with Courage we our Work begin;
Heaps of fine Linen we before us view,
Whereon to lay our Strength and Patience too;
Cambricks and Muſlins, which our Ladies wear,
Laces and Edgings, coſtly, fine, and rare,
Which muſt be waſh'd with utmoſt Skill and Care;
With Holland Shirts, Ruffles and Fringes too,
Faſhions which our Fore-fathers never knew.
For ſeveral Hours here we work and ſlave,
Before we can one Glimpſe of Day-light have;
We labour hard before the Morning's paſt,
Becauſe we fear the Time runs on too faſt.

At length bright *Sol* illuminates the Skies,
And ſummons drowſy Mortals to ariſe;
Then comes our Miſtreſs to us without fail,
And in her Hand, *perhaps*, a Mug of Ale
To cheer our Hearts, and alſo to inform
Herſelf, what Work is done that very Morn;
Lays her Commands upon us, that we mind
Her Linen well, nor *leave the Dirt behind*:

[14]

Not this alone, but alſo to take care
We don't her Cambricks nor her Ruffles tear;
And *theſe* moſt ſtrictly does of us require,
To ſave her Soap, and ſparing be of Fire;
Tells us her Charge is great, nay furthermore,
Her Cloaths are fewer than the Time before.
Now we drive on, reſolv'd our Strength to try,
And what we can, we do moſt willingly;
Until with Heat and Work, 'tis often known,
Not only Sweat, but Blood runs trickling down
Our Wriſts and Fingers; ſtill our Work demands
The conſtant Action of our lab'ring Hands.

Now Night comes on, from whence you have Relief,
But that, alas! does but increaſe our Grief;
With heavy Hearts we often view the Sun,
Fearing he'll ſet before our Work is done;
For either in the Morning, or at Night,
We piece the *Summer*'s Day with Candle-light.
Tho' we all Day with Care our Work attend,
Such is our Fate, we know not when 'twill end:

When

[15]

When Ev'ning's come, you Homeward take your Way,
We, till our Work is done, are forc'd to ſtay;
And after all our Toil and Labour paſt,
Six-pence or Eight-pence pays us off at laſt;
For all our Pains, no Proſpect can we ſee
Attend us, but *Old Age* and *Poverty*.

THE *Waſhing* is not all we have to do:
We oft change Work for Work as well as you.
Our Miſtreſs of her Pewter doth complain,
And 'tis our Part to make it clean again.
This Work, tho' very hard and tireſome too,
Is not the worſt we hapleſs Females do:
When Night comes on, and we quite weary are,
We ſcarce can count what falls unto our Share;
Pots, Kettles, Sauce-pans, Skillets, we may ſee,
Skimmers and Ladles, and ſuch Trumpery,
Brought in to make complete our Slavery.
Tho' early in the Morning 'tis begun,
'Tis often very late before we've done;
Alas! our Labours never know an End;
On Braſs and Iron we our Strength muſt ſpend;

[16]

Our tender Hands and Fingers ſcratch and tear:
All this, and more, with Patience we muſt bear.
Colour'd with Dirt and Filth we now appear;
Your threſhing *ſooty Peas* will not come near.
All the Perfections Woman once could boaſt,
Are quite obſcur'd, and altogether loſt.

Once more our Miſtreſs ſends to let us know
She wants our Help, becauſe the Beer runs low:
Then in much haſte for Brewing we prepare,
The Veſſels clean, and ſcald with greateſt Care;
Often at Midnight, from our Bed we riſe
At other Times, ev'n *that* will not ſuffice;
Our Work at Ev'ning oft we do begin,
And 'ere we've done, the Night comes on again.
Water we pump, the Copper we muſt fill,
Or tend the Fire; for if we e'er ſtand ſtill,
Like you, when threſhing, we a Watch muſt keep,
Our Wort boils over if we dare to ſleep.

But to rehearſe all Labour is in vain,
Of which we very juſtly might complain:

For

[17]

For us, you ſee, but little Reſt is found;
Our Toil increaſes as the Year runs round.
While you to *Syſiphus* yourſelves compare,
With *Danaus' Daughters* we may claim a Share;
For while *he* labours hard againſt the Hill,
Bottomleſs Tubs of Water *they* muſt fill.

So the induſtrious Bees do hourly ſtrive
To bring their Loads of Honey to the Hive;
Their ſordid Owners always reap the Gains,
And poorly recompenſe their Toil and Pains.

THE