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Annotation VIII
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Linnaeus' "Oeconomy of Nature"

In "Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies," Hutchings discusses how the wide circulation of Linnaeus' "The Oeconomy of Nature" (1749) established a "holistic paradigm" concerning nature (177). Linnaeus establishes four main premises which constitute the paradigm. The first exposes the religious underpinnings of his science--the idea that nature interacts to "manifest the divine glory" of the "Creator" (41).¹ The following three intimate an interrelated ecology: "all living creatures should constantly be employed in producing individuals; that all natural things should contribute and lend a helping hand to preserve every species; and lastly, that the death and destruction of one thing should always be subservient to the restitution of another" (40).

But where is the human within Linnaeus ecological vision? Lisbet Rausing argues for Linnaeus' inclusion of the human. Though Linnaeus places humans in a "mediatory role between God and nature," Rausing contends that Linnaeus still saw humans "as a subordinate and mortal zoological part of that global equilibrium" (90). Linnaeus may very well have believed this, but culturally, the ideas that disseminated throughout the pre-Romantic and Romantic era--as Hutchings observed--came from "The Oeconomy of Nature." Poignantly, this text positions the human outside of the three basic premises of the interrelated oeconomy in three ways. First, when Linnaeus expounds upon the animal kingdom, he omits a discussion of the human. The human is not an animal. Humans follow different principles as overseers of nature. Second, Linnaeus contends that the three kingdoms (fossil, vegetable, animal) "seem intended by the Creator for the sake of man" (123). He continues,

Every thing may be made subservient to his use, if not immediately, yet mediately, not so to that of other animals. By the help of reason man tames the fiercest animals, pursues and catches the swiftest, nay he is able to reach even those which lye hid in the bottom of the sea...he obtains from vegetables whatever is convenient or necessary for food, drink, clothing, medicine, navigation, and a thousand other purposes. (123-124)

Linnaeus speaks of how humans obtain goods from the fossil kingdom, and transform all of these resources in order to "pass his life conveniently and pleasantly" (124). Implicitly, a grave contradiction lurks within these words. In order for the oeconomy to work--in order for their to be an equilibrium of energy and power exchange amongst all species--the destruction of one living entity must "always be subservient to the restitution of another." Linnaeus' work exempts humans from this budding law of ecology. Instead, "The Oeconomy of Nature" permits humans to destroy other living entities not for restitution but for a convenient and pleasant life.

The third way "The Oeconomy of Nature" situates the human outside of ecological principles is through Linnaeus' interpretation of carnivores as the Creator's wisdom to prevent

¹ Though Carl Von Linnaeus gets credit for "The Oeconomy of Nature," his disciple Isaac Biberg actually wrote it.

overpopulation. A species that multiplies without (what is called now) a regulating negative feedback loop to keep it in check threatens humanity's well-being : "For if it be true, as it is most assuredly, that the surface of the earth can support only a certain number of inhabitants, they must all perish, if the same number [of one species] were doubled, or tripled" (119). Linnaeus, however, seems unconcerned about human overpopulation.

Linnaeus' "Oeconomy of Nature" reinforces Hutchings' close read of the word "ecology" and its relation to "economy" (189). In both cases, humans oversee the interrelated exchange in both the house of economic goods and the house of the earth. Consequently, "The Oeconomy of Nature" becomes a treatise for perceiving nature as commodity and humans ruling over that commodity.

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ENG 521
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October 21st, 2010

What Makes a Life Writeable?

What made a life writeable in terms of science and travel during the Romantic period? While there might be no single answer to this question, it is definitely an interesting one to ponder in light of the myriad of travel narratives and scientific treatises that were published during this time. The question is then, what do all of them have in common? I personally believe that most of these narratives were striving to capture a sliver of the sublime, whether in science or in travel. However, for the purposes of this annotation, I will only focus on scientific narratives by referring to treatises on Galvanism and De Quincey's "Confessions of an English-Opium Eater."

In terms of the scientific, it is clear that Galvanism captured the minds and imagination of the people, writers, and philosophers of the Romantic period. In fact, in his treatise on Galvanism, Davy extols not only the ease with which investigators could pursue Galvanic research (and the low cost of these experiments) but also its potential to produce astonishment. In fact, he establishes a clear connection between Galvanism and wonder when he states that "... a discovery [Galvanism] so important as to excite our astonishment, cannot fail of becoming at some point useful to society" (208). Notice how Davy ties Galvanism's value and usefulness to its potential to awe and inspire and not the other way around. One would assume that once a particular discovery has proven to be of some use for society that would make it, in fact, valuable but not in this case. What matters is that this discovery is, in a sense, sublime and therefore wondrous in its shocking ramifications. After all, we must remember that Galvanism had a morbid appeal: it was a way to "play God" by making corpses seem to come to life for at least a few seconds. Herein lays Galvanism's dark side and, the same time, its appeal, which are two of the essential components of the sublime. In fact, the "scientists" themselves were, at the same time, repelled and attracted to the effects of Galvanism as it can be concluded from Corry's account of how Aldini, Wilkinson and Co., the researchers in the process of reanimating a corpse, "were so much affrighted that they threw down their instruments and took to their heels" (as cited in Morus 263). If this was the effect that Galvanism had on the scientists themselves, it is no wonder then that the public was both fascinated with these accounts and repelled by its implications.

Similarly, I believe that De Quincey's narrative approaches the sublime because the reader and De Quincey himself are both repulsed and mesmerized by his "experiments" with opium. In addition, De Quincey adds an interesting literary element that more "scientific" accounts lack: the description of his dreams and nightmares as scenarios populated by "phantoms" and "apparitions" and imbued with "darkness" (814). These dark and phantom-infested dreams are, by Burke's definition, essentially sublime. In addition, although De Quincey suffers from the horrible images present in these dreams, he's also able to distance himself from

them through his scientific inquiry. For instance, he keeps track of his “symptoms” and he even makes a list of “facts” (815) that he can deduce from his dreams.

To conclude, I have sought to give a very brief answer to an extremely complex question in this annotation. Besides linking it to wonder, the sublime, and science, I also believe that it would be interesting to explore how these types of Romantic narratives relate to other more mundane concerns such as publishing and popularity. In other words, what types of narratives sold at that time? From what I have read, the Romantic period also saw an important increase in literacy, especially on the part of women, who constituted the main market for many of the literature being published at the time. Consequently, research on this area may also prove fruitful in terms of providing an answer to such a complex question.

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21 October 2010

The Human as Enemy in Clare's "Summer Evening"

Continuing with my Clare preoccupation, I turn to a rather radical poem that introduces a concept for which I am not aware of a label. Aaron has spoken of the need for a closer examination of ecophobia, the hatred and fear of nature. Clare addresses this in "The Badger," "The Fox," and many others. His poem "Summer Evening," however, displays something altogether different. For lack of a better word, I will use *anthropophobia*, which is the fear of humans.

The poem relates the observations of the poet as he strolls a wooded path on a summer evening. Typical of a Clare poem, acute observation of the natural world is the primary mode. But unlike what I've read thus far, "Summer Evening" does not elucidate the poet's ecophilia or his fellow man's ecophobia. Instead, the poem expresses dismay at the anthropophobia exhibited by the inhabitants of the woods. As he strolls along, "the frog half fearful jumps across the path," fleeing his approach (1). Likewise, a nocturnal mouse hides with "timid dread" as he passes (3). And so on with all of his fellow creatures: the crickets stop singing, the rabbit flees his bed, a bird flutters from its nest. All fear the approach of man, making the speaker feel like an intruder: "my rustling steps awhile their joys deceive, / Till past, then the cricket sings more strong" (4-5). Only in the absence of humans is their joy possible, and only when humans are absent is there normalcy. The cricket even expresses a little pleasure that the intruder has moved on, singing a little stronger than before.

"Summer Evening" is a sonnet in the Shakespearean tradition, with the concluding couplet explicitly establishing Clare's point here: "Thus nature's human link and thrall, / Proud man, still seems enemy of all" (13-14). At first glance, this couplet seems a literal reiteration of the images presented by the preceding three quatrains. But working through the syntax complicates things greatly. Clare is saying that man is nature's thrall, or slave, and so the power dynamic of the rest of the poem is contradicted. The creatures fled the man; he certainly wasn't enthralled by nature. The last phrase, "seems the enemy of all," is more congruent with the themes of the first twelve lines, but the word "seems" complicates interpretation. Is Clare deliberately ambiguous here? Is it only illusion that man is the enemy?

It is hard to allow for too much ambiguity here, given the previous twelve lines. Clare is painting a picture of human intrusion and disruption. Certainly, his experiences taught him that the human presence was even worse than that; it was actively destructive. But wouldn't the reactions of the creatures in the poem have been identical had a badger or a bear walked down the path instead of a man? The species he encounters – rabbit, bird, frog, mouse, crickets and grasshoppers – are all prey species, after all. Wouldn't they act the same in the presence of any predator? Clare might be putting man in a position he doesn't deserve. Prey hiding from predators is natural and normal.

But the adjective "proud" is yet another complication. That little adjective might throw the preceding analysis out the window. Man may be "proud" because he feels special at the sight of creatures fleeing at his approach. This he interprets as evidence that he is the "enemy of all," hence putting him in an exalted position apart from "nature,"

perhaps a position of mastery. But didn't Clare say that it only *seems* as if he is the enemy of all? It is his pride that makes him see himself as one apart. A more humble view would place man in line with any predator as I did above, making him nothing special at all. Thus man descends to the level of the animal, a thrall to nature, not the powerful adversary he imagines himself to be.

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19 October 2010

Benjamin Robert Haydon's "The Immortal Dinner"

Haydon's short-story "The Immortal Dinner" serves as a snapshot into the life and times of the leading Romantic authors. His account is evidence of one of many meetings between these mutually proclaimed geniuses. In attendance on the night of this particular account were Wordsworth, Keats, and Lamb "with a friend", and then drop-in guests included a Mr. Ritchie and Comptroller of the Stamp Office, John Kingston (Wu 834). The "immortal" dinner takes place at Haydon's lodgings on December 28, 1817. This date is significant since it is long after Wordsworth published *Lyrical Ballads*, and thus Wordsworth's position in the literary scene is firmly solidified.

Haydon begins his explanation of the night by noting the merriment that was enjoyed by all in attendance. He explains how their conversation hit on the classics, Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Virgil, and then how Lamb proceeds to get "tipsy" "to [their] infinite amusement" (Wu 834). Their conversations consist of debating the merits of other intellectuals such as Voltaire and Newton, who are both met with resistance by one or more of the dinner guests. Haydon even observes how Wordsworth was in "good humour", "giving in to all our frolics without affectation and laughing as heartily as the best of us" (Wu 834). This statement by Haydon suggests that Wordsworth was not the usual candidate for merriment or silly behavior, which becomes a stark contrast to how Wordsworth must act in the latter half of the dinner party. A notation of Wordsworth's normal behavior is perhaps used as a way to make the reader understand the influence Wordsworth carries within this particular social circle. It is clear that Haydon sees Wordsworth as "immortal".

The first one-third of Haydon's account, then, is meant to build up to the last two-thirds, where two visitors drop by and de-rail the conversation. The first visitor is Mr. Ritchie, who is a surgeon and African traveler, and who Lamb asks after in a drunken stupor, "And pray, who is the gentleman we are going to lose?" (Wu 835) When asked, this question promotes laughter from all, even the "victim", as Haydon therefore dubs him. This situation is strange to me because Ritchie's impending death is described as imminent, yet still holds as a punch line. Given the evidence of disease and death amongst travelers, especially when trying to discover uncharted territory, (the footnote explains he was "in search of the source of the Niger") should not this inebriated question from Lamb be a source of sorrow? (Wu 835) My only explanation for their response of laughter is that they know he will most likely die, so the laughter must serve as nervous laughter. Is it possible that death is so imminent during these years of travel and disease that it could become a common refrain, even joke? I assume, however, they were no longer laughing once they heard of Mr. Ritchie's death at Murzuk, Libya in 1819 (less than two years after this dinner) (Wu 835).

While Mr. Ritchie's impending death is the first distraction from this "immortal dinner", the second distraction appears to weigh more heavily on Haydon's mind. After retiring for tea, the Comptroller of the Stamp Office, John Kingston, comes by and stays for what we can only assume, without further information, is the rest of the evening. Mr. Kingston's presence is so important to Haydon because he changes the power dynamic of the conversation. Before he

entered the room, the man with the highest authority had been Wordsworth, presiding over their conversation like a peer-elected judge, but after the Comptroller arrives, Wordsworth is demoted by him. This is not because of a mutual acceptance of his intellectual power or control over the other individuals, as it had been with Wordsworth, but the Comptroller possesses what Hayden calls “despotic control” over Wordsworth, due to his bureaucratic position above him. For Hayden, it is clearly difficult to watch Wordsworth as a servant rather than a master, and he relates this power dynamic to slavery when he explains; “I felt pain at the slavery of office” (Wu 835). Hayden’s connection reveals the difference between an implication of bureaucratic slavery, implying a self-slavery where supposedly you also gain, while also referring to forceful and violent slavery occurring during his time. The slavery metaphor is useful for understanding the loss of liberty in conversation that occurs for the duration of the evening. Everyone, at least everyone sober, must now agree with the Comptroller and not argue with his apparently idiotic opinions. This short story reveals an oppressive force for the free-minded literary minds of the early Nineteenth-Century, bureaucracy.

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Age of Wonder
Annotation 8
October 20, 2010

Still O'er Reaching, but with the Undead

Happy Halloween. Building on the veiled and vague promises I leveled last week, I'd like to resuscitate Byron's aptly named *Fragment of a Novel* to further explore, if only for a little while, the Promethean themes he attaches to transgression. Lord Byron barely answered his own legendary literary challenge via this fragment (which fostered the birth of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and John Polidori's *Vampyre*), though his particular response contains more than faint echoes of Promethean concerns.

Byron begins his fragment with a date—'June 17, 1816' (2)—a tactic used both in travel narratives and gothic horror stories alike. Both *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* contain specific references to times and dates, insisting both on documentation and veracity. Presumably, the horror resonates from something that has already passed, past all prevention and redemption. While ultimately most conclusions drawn from the fragment's ending are highly speculative, the story seems to concern an over-reaching nobleman who has learned, presumably through sorcery, how to cheat death. Polidori, incensed at Byron at the time, used this fragment as inspiration to compose *The Vampyre*, which went on to inspire an entire gothic subgenre that still persists (Ryan 1-2).

Byron describes Augustus Darvell, the fragment's presumably undead (anti?) hero, as "a man of great fortune and ancient family: advantages which an extensive capacity prevented him alike from undervaluing or overrating" (2). In several respects, this character sounds like an autobiographical caricature of Byron himself. The fragment's narrator, a young university student, junior to Darvell, accompanies the nobleman on a continental trek. The narrator describes their relationship: "I was yet young in life, which I had begun early; but my intimacy with him [Darvell] was of a recent date: we had been educated at the same schools and university; but his progress through these had preceded mine, and he had been deeply initiated into what is called the world" (2). This cheesy pontification paints the portrait of a man who actively asserts his presumed superiority, both through station and experience. Darvell's given name, Augustus, calls on the first Roman Emperor: of patrician heritage, and yet self-fashioned in the fires of experience. We should be thankful that Byron never gets around to resurrecting him.

The narrative's duo travel extensively in the east, with Darvell's constitution gradually waning to the notice and dismay of the narrator (3-4). "We had passed halfway toward the remains of Ephesus, leaving behind us the more fertile environs of Smyrna, and were entering upon that wild and tenantless tract through the marshes and defiles which lead to the few huts yet lingering over the broken columns of Diana—the roofless walls of expelled Christianity, and the still more recent but rapid illness of my companion obliged us to halt at a Turkish cemetery" (4). The scene is characterized by images of transgression, of border-stepping. The marshes they pass through are un-ground, the mosques "expelled Christianity"—Byron defines this place based on what it is not, rather than what it is. As he dies, Darvell extracts a promise from the narrator: to fling a ring with some Arabic characters "On the ninth day of the month, at noon precisely... into the salt springs which run into the Bay of Eleusis," later demanding that he wait one hour at the

ruined temple of Ceres the next day (5). After the tyrant levels his demands, a stork with a snake in its beak perches on a tombstone. The narrator tries to shoo it away, but Darvell appears amused, pointing to the creatures and saying ‘Tis well!’ (6). He then charges the narrator to bury him under the very spot where the stork landed, telling him to mark the writhing snake. The narrator responds incredulously, noting “there is nothing uncommon in it” (6), but Darvell retorts ‘It is not yet time!’ Then, Darvell dies. Loaded with Promethean symbolism that concludes the fragment, the stork’s “natural prey” is both hazardous and nourishing. The snake, according to the narrator’s perspective, is meant to be eaten. Darvell indicates otherwise, himself overreaching past his natural life (presumably), the writhing snake ready to strike the stork.

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ENGL 521

19 October 2010

Jane Austen and Yellow-backs

In 1849, Routledge and Company released *Sense and Sensibility* as an edition of their Railway Library series, which “initiated the style of publication in glazed paper boards ... with a wood-engraved illustration on the front board only” (Gilson 130). Known as a yellow-back, or a “mustard-plaster” novel, these books were originally developed to compete with the penny dreadful, a publication that featured serial stories that appeared in sections over the span of several weeks. Routledge’s Railway Library included over a thousand titles and was published over the course of fifty years; all of Jane Austen’s novels were included, demonstrating that these titles were simply reprinted fiction novels that were originally published as cloth editions. However, though it may seem as if Routledge honored and valued Austen’s work through the decision to publish all six novels, I contend that Austen’s novels were gendered and trivialized as a means to undermine her role as a female writer.

Using an inexpensive printing technique called chromo xylography, Routledge’s collection of yellow-backs depicts brightly colored covers advertised as “fancy boards.” Chromo xylography, or relief printing, was repopularized in the 1830s by George Baxter, an English artist, and was later advanced by Edmund Evans, who was eventually hired by Routledge. The process entailed engraving an image on a block of wood, carving away areas that were not to be inked, and using separate blocks of wood for different colors (Pankow 22). Although chromo xylography was used until early in the 20th century, the complexities of the printing process varied depending upon profit margins and marketable audiences. The copy of *Sense and Sensibility* located within Washington State University’s special collection has a green cover, which means that it took at least two wooden blocks to create as the printer would have had to mix two primary colors to achieve its hue. This is relatively rare because complicated color combinations generally were not necessary for inexpensive books and printers generally used primary colors and black; this seems to imply that Routledge believed that *Sense and Sensibility*, as a yellow-back, would prove to be a very profitable venture.

However, *Sense and Sensibility*’s green cover could also imply that Routledge felt the need to compensate for Austen’s role as a female writer. *Sense and Sensibility*’s cover first markets itself as a member of The Railway Library, only later including the novel’s title beneath a picture of a railway station. Although the title of the work is reemphasized in black, Austen’s name is lighter and her first name is replaced by “Miss.” Substituting Austen’s first name serves to highlight the notion that *Sense and Sensibility* was written by a female, essentially othering Austen’s novel from the rest in Routledge’s collection and implying an inferiority that was associated with female authorship. During the Romantic period, female writers such as Anna Letitia Barbauld recognized this projected inferiority and commented upon it within their work; patriarchal society’s neutralization

of female writers by way of gendering and trivializing their work extends to post mortem publications, emphasizing heteronormative society's need to undermine female authorship. Therefore, although the advertisement printed upon the other side of *Sense and Sensibility*'s cover includes Austen's first name as it lists other books available within The Railway Library, Austen is not only the only female author listed, but Routledge also clearly enforces patriarchal notions of public and private. After all, Austen's first name cannot be displayed on the public cover of her novel, but it can be revealed on the private, covered, inside flap. Relegating Austen's intimate first name to the realm of privacy associates her novel with domesticity and femininity, leaving the public realm available for representations of masculinity. In this way, *Sense and Sensibility*'s green cover may be Routledge's way of compensating for the fact that the novel was written by a woman.

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21 Oct 2010
Annotation #8

White and the Urge to Categorize

After observing a demonstration by his friend John Hunter on the differences in human skulls according to race, physician Charles White wrote *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man* in order to examine other differences between the races. Indeed, White completed this investigation to prove that “Nature would not employ gradation in one instance only, but would adopt it as a general principle” (217). Therefore, White, who was caught in the ideology of the Great Chain of Being, argued that there must be a “general gradation in man, the chief and lord of the creation” (217). Ironically, like Blumenbach and others who indulged in race science, White hoped that his work wasn’t used to further “the pernicious practice of enslaving mankind” (qtd. in Kitson 215). Indeed, he hoped for total emancipation, “a very radical stance for his time” (Kitson 215). Unfortunately, like most of his colleagues, White was caught in his own paradigm, which always proved Caucasians at the top of the gradations and people of African descent at the bottom.

White draws upon racist language and observations for his argument. For example, White explains that he keeps his observations “to the extremes of the human race: to the European, on the one hand, and, on the other, to the African, who seems to approach nearer to the brute creation than any other of the human species” (218). He reiterates this idea a number of times. When he measures jaws, White find “that the chin of the negro . . . retreats, or falls back, as in the ape” (219). When he examines a number of other features such as arm length, shape of sexual organs, menstruation, and skin texture, White always concludes people of African decent to be an intermediary between Europeans and monkeys. For example, skin “is well known to be thicker in the African than in the Europeans, and still thicker in monkeys” (233). White admits that around the world, “several tribes resembled the European, in many particulars, but that none of them united all his characteristics.” In fact, White concludes that “Whatever deviations from [European characteristics] are found to take place, they are generally in the line of gradation from the European man down to the ape” (232). Ironically, White claims to be against environment factors for differences in races, and yet he measures differences such as disease prevalence, body heat, and foot condition, all of which are very dependent on environmental factors. Furthermore, even in cases in which “it is said that negroes excel Europeans,” such as in memory, White dismisses the advantage, saying that domestic animals also “excel the human species in this faculty” (258). Although White claims to be objective, he obviously can’t escape his own paradigm that Europeans are better than Africans.

In addition to proving his own hypothesis, White makes two other blunders that today we recognize as scientifically problematic. Although White tries to remain logical and scientific by looking at a variety of human features, he bases his premises on faulty data. First, he takes data from the observations of “about fifty negroes,” but includes measurements from only twelve in his paper. He compares their measurements to “twelve Europeans,” most of whom come from his own family. In other words, his population is far too small to be significant. Second, White depends on the previous observations of others. White quotes heavily from Johann Lavater, the Swiss doctor who made physiognomy popular. White also refers to Pieter Camper invented the “facial angle” which was supposed to determine intelligence. Indeed, White creates his

explanatory chart based on Camper's diagram of facial angles. Finally, White uses Edward Tyson's observations of chimps. Tyson was so sure he'd found an intermediate species between humans and apes that in his illustrations he gave his sample chimp a walking stick because he recognized that its hands and feet weren't conducive to the desired bipedal motion (Gould 272).

In the end, White concludes that "taking the European man as a standard of comparison, on the one hand, and the tribe of simiae on the other. . . they may be so arranged as to form a pretty regular gradation . . . , the European standing at the head, as being farthest removed from the brute creature" (259). Although White may be against slavery, he's not against hierarchies. Unfortunately, such hierarchies only promote the prejudices that ensure slavery and other types of human degradation.

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 17 October 2010

Regression Theory and the Application of Cook's Final Voyage to *The Tempest*

Peter Burke makes a strong case in *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* for a type of historical analysis called the regressive method. First named by the French historian Marc Bloch, the regressive method allows critics and historians to “read history backwards” from the eighteenth century to the early modern period (Burke 122). Burke asserts, “There is a strong case for writing history of the popular culture backwards and for using the late eighteenth century as a base from which to consider the more fragmentary evidence from the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries (123). His claim is grounded in the idea that the improved technologies of the eighteenth century, to include mapping and recording of data, allow us insights into the early modern period. He provides folk art as one form of study that benefits greatly from this backwards-looking model. In this same vein, and by marginally employing Stephan Greenblatt's theories on Shakespeare and post-colonialism, we may glean certain insights by comparing an eighteenth-century travel narrative like William Ellis's *An Authentic Narrative of a Voyage* to William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. By applying the former to the latter, we gain perspective on early modern attitudes towards bestial representations of human sexuality and desire, specifically as they relate to the character Caliban.

In *An Authentic Narrative of a Voyage*, Ellis attempts to temper potential desire and fascination of the native other by representing it, specifically women, as bestial scientific specimens. His (arguably failed) attempt at scientific record makes this text especially useful as compared to, say, Sir Walter Raleigh's texts in this trans-century dialogue. As Greenblatt notes, Raleigh's sixteenth-century depictions-- which include men with eyes on their shoulders and mouths on their breasts-- are muddled by a confused reception of the “marvelous”(Greenblatt 20-21). Without having been intellectually paralyzed by a fantastical encounter with foreign bodies, Ellis provides a more levelheaded account of foreign cultures, and from this account we may more clearly perceive European attitudes, early modern and romantic alike, towards the relationship between native bodies and bestial desires.

Ellis depicts the Hawaiian women, who he claims are masculine and hypersexual, as objects of repulsion: “The women were rather ordinary, and in general masculine . . . Their dress is the same as that of the men . . . Their hair is cut short behind, and long before, but turned back like our toupees, which mode of wearing it does not set them off to the greatest advantage” (Ellis 170). He negates their potential for beauty by likening them to men. In this description, we are again reminded how dark-skinned women have no place on Edmund Burke's continuum of the beautiful and sublime. Ellis not only notes their abhorrent, masculine appearance, but also their sexually aggressive posture: “Many who were along-side in their canoes, pleaded hard to come on board, but Captain Cook had given strict orders, previous to his anchoring, not to suffer a single woman to be admitted into the ships, as there were several people in both, who still had the venereal disease” (170). He paints a grotesque picture of sex-crazed animals incapable of restraint.

More potentially horrifying is the suggestion that the crew has a carnal, bestial desire for these animalistic women. Ellis attempts to undermine the men's obvious desire by clarifying the consequence of consummation: an epidemic of venereal disease among the natives. He likewise associates this outcome with a failure to follow the Captain's order: "But, notwithstanding every precaution, many of our men contrived to have connections with them, in consequence of which we found this terrible disorder raging among them when we arrived there a second time" (170). Personal health is not the only topic in jeopardy; social order also appears to be in danger. By creating a negative association between venereal disease and bestial relations, Ellis attempts to control perceptions of desire between Europeans and the racial other. As an aside, Ellis rarely-- if ever-- reflects upon the hyper-sexuality of the island male. In his recollections, the reader may deduce that the perpetrators of masculine bestial desires are the sailors rather than the islanders.

His description henceforth suggests not only fear of the native other but also fear of unrestricted carnal desire in natives and Europeans alike. Through this last analysis, we may better understand representations in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In projecting the above-mentioned interpretation upon Prospero's hypersexual slave Caliban, we may perceive the half man and half fish in these dual parts. In his human side, we may comprehend his relationship to the European, and in his fish side, his relationship to the Island. On this liminal, un-socialized space, socialized man and beast alike express "savage" sexuality—an impulsive sexuality that refuses containment by social rule, law, and decorum. While Prospero contains Caliban's desire for Miranda by preventing its consummation, desire's very expression suggests that this containment is marginally subverted. We therefore understand in both Ellis's and Shakespeare's recollections that desire and human sexuality threaten social order.

Considering the impossibility of desire's containment, we may view both Ellis's ship and Shakespeare's Island as versions of Mikhail Bakhtin's Carnival—an idea discussed in *Rabelais and His World*. On the ship and Island, certain fantasies, to include indulging in sexual intercourse with androgynous women and making overt sexual overtures towards women of higher social class, are tolerated within a festival-like atmosphere that accompanies desire. However, both texts make plain that this desire cannot be fully re-contained once festival is complete; in Ellis's narrative, Cook's order to cease relations with the women is disobeyed, and in Shakespeare's play, the enslaved Caliban subverts containment through the verbal expression of desire to the audience. In both instances, we understand that human desire is frequently at odds with social expectation, and that this desire often prevails despite authoritarian intervention.

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Coleridge's "Constancy to an Ideal Object"

Amid Coleridge's obscure lyrics in this poem lies an intense longing to identify what could possibly be an ideal for him, but simultaneously it is negated in the very action of trying to interpret and perceive his own thoughts. The concept of an 'ideal object' for Coleridge is full of contradictions, and through the struggle of entertaining the concept, Coleridge displays his curiosity and complex frustration. His recognition that the ceaseless thoughts of the human brain may be the only 'constant' in the universe is summed up in his phrase "Home and Thou are one" (19); the idea of the Home as being a place where he desires to make a reality ("an English home") and a place of settling, Coleridge correlates the concrete foundation of a home to the constancy of his perpetual thoughts.

Coleridge's penchant to perhaps try to identify this abstract concept is noted: "Oh yearning thought, that liv'st but in the brain?" (4). In trying to objectify what it is that can be a constant for the past, present, and future, Coleridge meditates on the functions of every living thing and stresses what will seem to remain even in the future. He evokes a feeling of vitality in the elements that he believes will remain and eventually be confronted by the end of one's life: "Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm/ Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death!" (9,10). In this description, Coleridge seems to identify attributes of certain thoughts or feelings, and he maintains that they will be some of the final culminating thoughts that will end finally in death. Through further contemplation, the concept of death is identified only through its constituting the ending of these thoughts: "Yet still thou haunt'st me; and though well I see,/ she is not thou and only thou art she" (11,12). Adhering to Coleridge's view of objects only having an ideal existence through the relationships with other objects, this thought of death only being perceived in relationship with the end of thoughts is the primary example of this philosophical view.

Again the concept of having a 'home,'—a constant—is explored in Coleridge's poem and compared to a helmsman who "Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside" (24). It is through the ability to maintain an ease and calm amid the ongoing flux of life that Coleridge perceives is thoughts to both exhibit and be demonstrative of the ongoing contradictions. The last illustration is of the woodman who while traveling sees "an image with glory round its head" (30). The presentation of this woodsman being drawn to and captivated by such a (fleeting) abstraction is then noted by Coleridge that the 'image' is but his own shadow cast upon the clouds: "The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,/ Nor knows he *makes* the shadow he pursues!" (31,32). Coleridge demonstrates that the perception of a supposed ideal 'image' is thus disillusioned by the fact that it is the woodman's thoughts that are creating such an abstract and is the only reality that can fixed.

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Mary Robinson's "The Haunted Beach"

A huge fan of Coleridge's, female Romantic poet Mary Robinson published her poem, "The Haunted Beach" in her 1800 book of poetry, *Lyrical Tales*. The poem is about the guilt and psychological torment of the fisherman, but we are never really sure why he feels guilty. Arguably, the mariner who is murdered in this poem is the one Coleridge based his own mariner on, and we are left to wonder who his murderer is—is it himself? Is it the ocean? Is it the fisherman? Either way, the forceful waves of the ocean banging against the beach create a metaphor for the guilt which is pushing against the murderer's mind, and the fisherman's mind, if in fact these two are separate entities. We know guilt to be quite a common theme amongst Romantic literature about soldiers and mariners possibly diseased or involved in the slave trade, and this poem evokes some sort of guilt (whether it be for those reasons or not) as a haunting element forever in the fisherman's mind.

The poem begins with the natural world meeting the man-made world in violence, what with "the seaweeds gath'ring near the door" of the little shed on the beach that is being battered with waves (5). Nature appears to be determined to destroy this shed. We can imagine this scene as a metaphor for the destruction and decay of the mind by guilt. Even the "sea-birds" seem eager to destroy what is inside the shed; they are portrayed as hovering above and "craving" what is inside (11). The birds might even symbolize man's animal desire to give in to his wild urges or his most dreadful thoughts.

In the midst of nature's anger, we are introduced to the fisherman, who witnesses a "band of spectres gliding hand in hand" along the beach (25-26). The fisherman later suggests that these are ghosts of others who have died in the sea, and he relates them to the dead mariner, so this also suggests that the ocean was the mariner's murderer. Other lines lead to a similar conclusion, describing that "the mur'drer's liquid way/ Bounds o'er the deeply yawning tomb" (69-70). The ocean waves that have killed the mariner continue their cycle of violent crashing against the beach which acts as a constant reminder to the fisherman of the mariner (and the other ghosts') death. Why the fisherman feels guilty about the death, we do not know.

There is a sense of anxiety about travel in this poem, and this might explain some of the fisherman's guilt. Perhaps he too has traveled far from home and has been lost. Perhaps he feels guilty that he is the lone survivor of a shipwreck. Regardless, we are told in a rather melancholy tone that the mariner was "Doomed from his home to sever," despite that fact that he had sworn to someone that he would live "through wind and sea" (47-49). Travel and leaving our loved ones, therefore, seems to culminate in ruin. The guilt of abandonment could quite possibly be what is bothering the fisherman, and it could explain why the ghosts haunt the beach; their souls cannot rest from their guilt. We know that the fisherman is technically alone on this beach; we are told, "he wastes, in solitude and pain/ A loathsome life away" (80-81). These last two lines are telling—a "life away" from home is loathsome, painful, and will ultimately leave you like the mariner, ghosts, or fisherman—dead, haunted, or completely alone.

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Annotation #8: Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper"

In reading Wordsworth's poem "The Solitary Reaper" for the first time, I was particularly struck by the fact that the Highland lass sings in a language unknown by the speaker. As a poet, Wordsworth is concerned with the power of words and how they work together in verse to produce a song-like quality. If this is true, one can assume that to Wordsworth the words of a poem or song would be the "thing" that stirs the listener most. However, to the listener and speaker (Wordsworth?) in the poem, the barrier of language permits understanding thus making the melody of the song the "thing" that stirs the soul most.

This poem, then, is perhaps more of a study in the limitations of language and understanding. From the question "[w]ill no one tell me what she sings?" the speaker shows his trust of language (17). However, since the speaker is not able to rely on language to create meaning, he has to rely on how the melody and tone of the song create meaning; the unknown language and the eerie melody of the woman's voice work together to stir the speaker's soul.

This acknowledgement of beauty found in negation is worth noting; especially coming from the mind of a poet like Wordsworth. The negations found in the poem are the devices that create beauty. Nature is present in the poem in the form of the field in which the woman is reaping and the comparisons the speaker makes to birds and seas. But nature is not the thing that creates beauty; it is the unknown.

This idea of the unknown brings to mind ideas of the sublime. The speaker has no idea whether the reaper is singing about "battles long ago" or "[s]ome natural sorrow, loss, or pain" or some "[f]amiliar matter of to-day" (20, 21, 23). This language barrier creates sublimity through an idea of something unknown; something left to the imagination. Again nature has no role in employing sublimity. The unknown and the imagination are the only factors creating sublimity. To the speaker, there is something unnerving yet beautiful about the language barrier; it forces him to rely on another form of meaning making that may be terrifying but beautiful.

This poem has been one of the most interesting I have read because of the shift away from nature, the idea of sublimity being created through negation and the unknown, and the introduction of the claim that there are other ways of creating feeling and beauty other than words. In much Romantic poetry, nature has always been a character that endows poets and speakers with beauty and life. "The Solitary Reaper" is a refreshing reminder that nature and words are not the only forms of creating feelings of the sublime, beauty, and understanding.

Inertia and Insight in "The Eolian Harp"

A moment of stillness inspires Samuel Taylor Coleridge to examine the subtle motions that lend wonder to experience in "The Eolian Harp." Coleridge perceives a universal force operating on all earthly bodies, generating beauty from the mundane and unremarkable. This force is essential, yet also otherworldly, with characteristics that fall well outside the limits of human understanding. Contact between the "intellectual breeze" and physical matter approximates a creative process and a supernatural event (Coleridge 603.47). Coleridge valorizes the attachment of significance to objects via imaginative thought as he conceives an interaction between divine and physically sensible conditions. Accordingly, the poem assigns extraordinary power to the creative process, not only as a function of observation, but as a source of life and meaning.

Coleridge dedicates his first stanza to the description of his position and surroundings. Stasis predominates; while the poet appears comfortable, he extends his attention beyond the limits of the cottage and his wife, to consider the world around him. The poet engages several senses in his survey, to arrive at a seemingly unremarkable description. The stars move "slowly," the air smells "exquisite," and even the sea is "stilly" (601.7, 9, 11). The stanza ends with a seemingly unremarkable elaboration, as the sea "[t]ells us of silence" (601.12). This moment heralds a significant turn, as Coleridge deploys a poetic device—personification—to complicate his description. The scene acquires complexity in the form of a re-purposing of an otherwise mundane focus (the sea). At this stage, the poem stands on the cusp of an emergence into activity.

As he conceives places and states well beyond the confines of the physical world, Coleridge constructs a metaphor from the physical body of the eolian harp. At the same time, he assembles an argument, which terminates in a final, infinitely puzzling question. In one moment, Coleridge imagines the music of the harp as a "soft floating witchery of sound/As twilight elfins make when they at eve/Voyage on gentle gales from fairyland" (601.20-22). Soon after, he contemplates an even more abstract form, the inconceivable "one life within us and abroad," which is at once "a light in sound" and "a sound-like power in light" (601.26, 29). The next stanza sees a return to the immediate concerns of Coleridge's "indolent and passive brain," but the exit from the physical world has exerted an influence, as the poet compares his "fantasies" to "the random gales/That swell and flutter on this subject lute" (603.41-43). The final question marks an invitation to further journeys. Coleridge asks, "what if all of animated nature/Be but organic harps diversely framed [...] At once the soul of each, and God of all" (603.44-48)? By closing with a question that aggressively blurs "nature" and "thought" in one "plastic and vast" movement, Coleridge invites meditations of the sort that might lead to further abstraction (Ibid). In a single instant, he calls for the acceptance of "idle flitting fantasies" *and* the imposition of a creative "breeze" upon the subjects of concentration (603.40, 47). The same breeze that passes through the lute passes through its source. Coleridge links all forms of life, the imagined and the immediate, in the common reception of a universal potency: meaning, derived from imagination.

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Annotation of Dorothy Wordsworth's *A Cottage in Grasmere Vale*

In order to further my exploration of Wordsworth and the elements of place and space in his works, I decided to peruse his wife's work as well. Stereotypical hunches initially interested in me in Dorothy—I am interested in domestic spaces, and I figured that a wife would have a unique interest in domestic spaces distinct from a husband's interest. Dorothy dedicates her poem to praise a cottage nestled in a valley that she loves above all other cottages—and thus the poem is a dedication to a domesticated abode.

A dwelling is a place; defined and demarcated, a place is a location or setting that the place-occupant knows and fathoms. Dorothy exalts the very place-ness of the valley, first writing "Peaceful *our* valley" (line 1, emphasis mine)¹. While this initially seems to be a straightforward statement of entitlement, Dorothy creates complex relationships between herself, the environment, and the cottage. The complication appears in the second line, when Dorothy commends, "And beautiful her cottages", a statement that bestows the "ownership", fellowship, or even maybe genealogy, to the mountain rather than to herself. Dorothy repeats this stated relationship later in the poem; as much as a cottage is man-made, Dorothy paradoxically refers to it as "The very mountains' child", a description that further situates the cottage as the natural offspring of the environment (line 20). In this sense, I could infer that Dorothy Wordsworth considers it natural for humans to create domestic places in environmental spaces—the natural evolution of space to place and the natural parental relationship between 'nature' and inhabitation. But to re-think this issue, while the valley belongs to people and perhaps the Wordsworths, the cottage belongs to the valley.

In using words like "belong" and "entitlement", perhaps I have been throwing around words too flippantly that misconstrue Dorothy's connotations. Dorothy describes the relationship between the environment and the cottage as maternal and nurturing. Each cottage is in "its nook, its sheltered hold,/ or guarded by its tuft of trees" (lines 3-4). As seen here, nature offers shelter, seclusion, and security to each cottage—protection from outsiders. What is not clear in this poem is what form of outsiders the cottagedwellers need protection from, whether they be elements of wilderness, beasts and uncultivated nature, or prying, corrupt people. However, back to the main point, nature is domestic in nature in Dorothy's poem. Dorothy writes that the "craggy, steep and bare;/ Their fence is of the mountain stone", suggesting that the *form* of nature itself is similar of that to a dwelling place (lines 22-23). Not only is the structure the same, but it is a domestic place of harmony and peace that cannot be thrown into confusion and disorder by the passing by of the "storm" that "comes from the north" (line 25). The pastoral scene cannot be disrupted, and Dorothy writes that the storm can "range upon the pastures bare" (a *space*, rather than a place) "Until it reach that group of trees/ It may not enter there" (line 30, 31-32). The group of trees stand sentinel to the pastoral place, and elements of natural mayhem cannot enter into this bordered-off land.

¹ Wordsworth, William. "A Cottage in Grasmere Vale" Ed. Wu, Duncan. *Romanticism: An Anthology*. 3rd ed. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006. 588-589. Print.

Although this cottage is in a domesticated place surrounded by a maternal nature, Dorothy's description of her own self is occasionally unsettled. Even though she writes that her heart "settles" in the cottage, she also comments, "My fancy is unfettered, wild!" (line 12, 17). What does Dorothy mean by fancy, here? Could it be an allusion to the desire to explore and to see new land? Could it be an allusion to the joy in exploration? I am not certain, but it is worthy to note that Dorothy comments that her fancy is unbounded and undomesticated when talking about a domesticated house and home—a house and home that exists on a maternal, protecting, and also restricting environment. What can be taken away from this poem is a love of the domestic and a sense of the environment as domestic, a significant insight to Dorothy, and most likely her husband's, environmental consciousness.

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Narrative Favor in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

As a creative writer, I am always curious about the narrative choices of writers, including the narrator in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. The novel is a romance, but the narrator does not follow the traditional focus of the female being the sought after goal (Brownstein 82). In this novel, the hero, Captain Wentworth, is the prize to be won by Anne. It is interesting to me that though we see the novel mostly through Anne and her thoughts, the narrator shifts focus when a certain objective needs to be achieved. One objective is for Anne to win over Captain Wentworth in the almost painfully slow way that is common in Austen's novels. In the scene towards the end of the novel, Wentworth engages himself in writing a business letter, but is persuaded to profess his love to Anne by her debate with Captain Harville about the character of men and women. Using Anne as a vehicle for interpretation of Wentworth's struggle and feelings, the reader is made aware that the narrator's favor lies with Captain Wentworth.

The reader is repeatedly made aware of Wentworth's relationship and feelings about Anne, his betrothal to Louisa, and especially the final scene before and including the written declaration. The frustrations that plague Wentworth are also those of the reader. When Anne becomes interested in the conversation about "long" or "uncertain engagement[s]," Wentworth expresses his interest when his "pen ceased to move" and he gave "one quick, conscious look at" Anne (Austen 218). The intensity of that moment sets the stage for the rest of the scene as he tries to continue writing while simultaneously focusing his attention on Anne's conversation with Captain Harville. Anne's words cause an obviously distracted Wentworth to drop his pen, thus bringing Anne and Harville's attention to him (220). Such a focus on his reaction to the words in this scene is more important than the actual words spoken up to that point. This locking of eyes is the hint of the more formal declaration to come.

When the declaration is made, in the form of a letter, Wentworth's feelings are raw and heartfelt, causing the reader to focus attention more fully on his emotion without the means of Anne to act as a filter. The letter provides a sense of closure, because his thoughts are finally made perfectly clear, and the narrator's feelings toward Wentworth are even clearer. Throughout the story, the reader is guided by a narrator that briefly changes perspective, but the narrator's favor of Wentworth is most strongly felt in the letter writing scene that leads up to the final declaration of his love. As the reader cheers at the unfettered glimpse into Captain Wentworth's mind, the narrator can rejoice at finally allowing a release of the built-up tension that focused on and lived within Wentworth as Anne was almost constantly kept at a metaphorical arm's length away from him.

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