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“The Nations of the Field and Wood”: The Uncertain Ontology of Animals in Eighteenth-Century British Literature

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“The Nations of the Field and Wood”: The Uncertain Ontology of Animals in Eighteenth-
Century British Literature

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
with a concentration in Literature
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College of Arts and Sciences
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DEDICATION

For Megan and Velo.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the relationship between important intellectual discourses of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries and the ontological status of non-human animals. The Enlightenment marks a distinct change in the ways in which humans gather knowledge and interact with the world, a change that forms the foundation for modern relationships between human and non-human animals. Through a theoretical framework that draws from animal studies and ecofeminism, I analyze the ways in which the status of non-human animals is shaped by the intersection of multiple anthropocentric concerns. In doing so, this dissertation probes the foundation of what defines the animal apart from the human. I use the metaphor of the chain of being to chart the relative ontological status of animals across multiple discursive paradigms and literary texts. The first chapter explores animal status within the changing epistemology of the Enlightenment. As humans rely on a combination of reason and sensory perceptions to know and describe the world, human reason becomes the source of human specialness and superiority. Rochester's *A Satyr Against Reason and Mankind* questions the privileged status claimed by humans based upon the lauding of reason. Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* exposes the complex ramifications for animal status within a narrative that relies on sensory perceptions for its truth-making strategy. The next chapter analyzes animal status in relation to human aspiration. Pope's *Essay on Man* urges humans to use their reason to restrain their ambitions. This results in a relatively secure ontological status for animals. However, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* celebrates human ambition, which results in a lower and more tenuous status

for animals. I then turn to the status of animals within the emergence of natural philosophy. Plays by Shadwell and Centlivre include virtuosi, who act as comic practitioners of the new science. Though the plays use science as a source of comedy, they reinforce the strict species hierarchy that rests at the heart of Baconian science. The analysis then turns to Thomson's *The Seasons*, which employs natural philosophy in a manner that establishes a more egalitarian relationship between human and non-human animals. The final chapter analyzes the ways in which Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* imbricates each of the three discourses discussed in the previous chapters. The overarching trend that emerges throughout this research is that in texts that celebrate the human and human potential, animals occupy a much lower status relative to humans. In texts where human nature and behavior are met with skepticism or downright pessimism, the distance between human and animal shrinks, and animals occupy a relative status that is higher than in more anthropocentrically optimistic texts.

INTRODUCTION: DOUBTING DEFINITIONS AND DUALITY

Present day advances in genetics, cognitive psychology, and comparative psychology (to name only a few) have called into question old assumptions about the divide between human and non-human animals. Culture, language, empathy, and reason: the simple answers once given as evidence to the question “What separates man from beast?” have steadily been complicated and shown inadequate to justify a definitive difference between species. The instability of human/animal distinctions has even prompted legal attempts to establish the personhood of chimpanzees¹ held captive in New York. Though this probing of traditional definitions has not yet reached a large scale cultural cry for change, it still calls into question long-held beliefs about the nature of the human and the animal. The question of separation of species carries consequences for even larger concerns about human interaction with the planet. How we define ourselves contributes to how we treat non-humans and the environment as a whole. On the importance of theorizing about animals, Marianne Devoken notes, “The turn toward animals is also based on a more broadly generalizing premise: the idea, or conviction, that the human species is destroying, and perhaps has irretrievably destroyed, the planet” (367). The site where the human meets the animal provides an important intersection for analysis that carries ramifications for human interaction with the rest of nature. Speaking of the way present day “animal oppression interconnects with all other forms of oppression,” Susanne Kappeler argues that “we need to look at the common factors of power that not only connect these different

¹ The Nonhuman Rights Project continues to work to establish personhood and protection for Kiko and Tommy, chimpanzees kept in deplorable captive conditions.

oppressions but which through their intersection point to an accumulation of power in the hands of those whose interests are being served by all forms of oppression” (323). Analyzing the human relationship with non-human animals requires an intersectional attention to the interlocking modes of oppression and the matrix of hierarchies that they create. However, an obvious and insurmountable ontological assumption is required in order to analyze human/animal interaction: that human and animal² are distinct and separable.

The foundation of human/animal relationships is not static and is always shifting, complicated by the diachronic replication of and resistance to the way humans and animals interact. Broad cultural and social changes - including industrialization, mechanization, and digitization - modify previously established modes of interactions between species, which is to say that human/animal relationships are dialectical. As divisions between human and animal expand or contract over time, we must look backward if we are to see the cracks we have sutured over in the largely confident contemporary justification of mastery over animals, particularly in Western cultures. While modern attitudes toward animals are certainly not monolithic, animal protection remains fairly isolated and focused on a few species. Though any point of analysis risks being arbitrary, the early modern period represents incredibly important epistemological and social breaks with its predecessors. Emerging narrative paradigms and the resituating of the foundations of knowledge in the Enlightenment form the basis for modern understanding of humans and their place in the world. The late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries shape

² In a work that is focused on the ontology of animals and humans, linguistic choices carry consequences. As a matter of style and readability, I vary terms throughout. “Human” and “animal” will act as shorthand for “human animal” and “non-human animal” throughout the text. I will also variably refer to the whole of human animals as “humans,” “humankind,” “mankind,” and “man.” I include the masculine terms not to the exclusion of the feminine, but because they also signify the patriarchal traditions that have seen men dominate women as well as the environment.

important intellectual and cultural traditions that define the human apart from the animal. These discursive lines persist, even if they are occasionally questioned.

Enlightenment writers, both directly and indirectly, confront the elements that define the human and non-human animal. The literary milieu of the long eighteenth century offers numerous representations of non-human animals that expose the variances in what it means to be a human or non-human animal. As Erica Fudge argues, “In historical terms the animal can never be studied in isolation, it is always a record by and of the human” (2). Fudge adds, “Reading about animals is always reading through human, and ... reading about humans is reading through animals” (3). This central insight employs the persistence of the human/animal binary, but it also identifies the necessary imbrication of the two categories. At a time when the understanding of what it meant to be human occupied philosophers, writers, and scientists alike, the non-human animal was always subsumed in the answer, either directly or through implication. Most of the scholarship that examines animals in the eighteenth century either analyzes literature sparingly or it keeps human concerns as the focus of the investigation.³ That is to say, the work looks to animals to better understand human issues. My aim is to address both of these gaps in analysis: to make literary representations of animals the primary focus *and* to carefully contextualize these representations in order to understand the complex status of animals.

By analyzing the ontological implications of literary representations of animals in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, this project employs a framework drawing from

³ There is a growing volume of ecocritical and animal studies work being conducted with eighteenth-century texts. However, these works tend to be cultural histories that include some discussion of literature (see Keith Thomas’s important work *Man and the Natural World*), analyses that view eighteenth-century concerns through a particularly modern paradigm (see Philip Armstrong’s *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*), or investigations that analyze animals to complicate human issues (see Laura Brown’s *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes*, Anne Milne’s ‘*Lactilla Tends her Fav’rite Cow*’, Donna Landry’s *Noble Brutes*, Ingrid Tague’s “Dead Pets” and “Companions, Servants, or Slaves?”).

ecocriticism, animal studies, and ecofeminism. In his essay about ecocriticism in eighteenth-century studies, Christopher Hitt asserts that ecocriticism “should assume an overtly ethical stance” (125). To be successful in this endeavor, Hitt argues that the essential element of ecocriticism focused on the eighteenth century “is the recognition of complexity” (125). He continues:

When environmentally-minded critics, teachers, and students hunt too diligently for the ways in which old texts seem to anticipate new attitudes and values ... they run several risks. These include projecting present-day ideas onto the text; reading the text too selectively; and reading it too literally, accepting at face value its self-representations or ostensible themes. In each case, the result is a distortion of the text or a neglect of what is often most revealing about it: its internal tensions and contradictions, both thematic and rhetorical. (126)

An ecofeminist insistence on intersectionality provides the theoretical framework to account for the complex and multiple discursive and cultural issues that affect the status of animals. No single cultural or discursive issue can account for the relationship between human and non-human animals. In remaining committed to an intersectional approach, I analyze the consequences for animal ontology in multiple discourses, which accounts for the diversity of authors and texts I will discuss. The focus of my analysis will be to explore the ways in which defining the animal becomes dependent upon other cultural, social, and intellectual concerns of the work in which the animals appear. Because the animal is necessarily defined against the human, the status of animals relies upon social and intellectual issues that are largely concerned with the humans in a given literary text. As such, my exploration is driven by the following questions: How are animals defined in eighteenth century literature? How does the ontology of

the animal differ from one text to another? How does the status of the animal shift in relation to the social or intellectual concerns of a text? The importance of these questions is that they explore not just a singular explication of the ontological status of animals, but instead unpack the range of ontological statuses of the non-human animal, which are embedded within a discursive matrix that makes them inseparable from seemingly distant social, philosophical, and political meanings. The works to be analyzed may not directly invest themselves in the representation of animals, but their inclusion of animals necessarily contributes to the understanding – even if it is multiple, fluid, tenuous, or contradictory – of the ontological status of animals. Uncovering the range of distinctions between human and non-human animals exposes fissures in the foundation of contemporary attitudes about not only animals, but nature as a whole. The constructed ontological superiority of humans is built upon a shaky distinction that may eventually collapse in upon itself, if humanity does not reconsider its attitudes toward the natural other.

The dominant way of thinking about humans and animals assumes a binary relationship between the two categories. Even as humans recognize their animalistic elements, the category “human” is distinct from the “animal.” The relationship between them is one of contradiction, where overlap is seen as grotesque, humorous, or inconceivable. When a person behaves “like an animal,” they are placing themselves outside of the accepted social norms of behavior. When a dog is dressed to look like a person, they are humorous and silly. We accept momentary transgressions of the distinct categories, but permanent or ontological imbrication is alien. However, Montaigne questions the ease with which these two categories constitute natural or justifiable separation. Hassan Melehy summarizes:

The terms *human being* and *animal* are not classifications in a universal system of knowledge, but rather nominalist designations that admit no more than the

possibility of a partial knowledge of each object designated. The names we assign to objects are signs that, rather than signifying fully and exhaustively, point to what the objects might be. Even if animals' faculties are not directly communicable to us, but instead available only in the form of sign or names that point more or less in their direction, human reason must acknowledge that it can't extend its reach into the reason of animals nor even to a clear knowledge of its own border. (273)

The fallibility and limits of human reason render absolute knowing unreachable. The always/already nature of our anthropocentrism makes knowledge of animals partial and provisional, relying on anthropocentric assumptions. Melehy continues, "The work of interpreting takes place precisely in the procedure of ordering the words signifying animal gestures in a new discourse, that of the present text, so that they signify in a certain fashion and produce certain concepts. Hence the signs are removed from their prior context and their meaning is produced in the removal" (275). Attempting to interpret animal behavior removes the behavioral signs of the animal from the original context. In doing so, we produce meaning in a new anthropocentric context. For example, Descartes locates humanness in reasoned speech (to cite just one attribute of "humanness"). However, it is clear that some animals communicate and "speak." To deny animal communication the same status as human speech, Descartes assumes a context for the animals' signification that is removed from the initial utterance. Descartes applies an anthropocentric context to an animal's speech, which necessarily prohibits the potential for "reasoned" speech that is not anthropocentric. When reason is defined as distinctly human, non-human speech will always lack reason. This move creates a partial knowing, allowing anthropocentrism to shape the ordering of animal signification. However, this partial knowing is

unavoidable, as human understanding will always be anthropocentric. Without fully understanding the extent of animal signification because we are trapped in anthropocentric language, we apply that partial knowledge to create a value laden hierarchy of existence.

Unfortunately, the anthropocentric bind of signification is inevitable, if not entirely impossible to escape, even if for a moment. Inescapable anthropocentrism combined with limits of human knowing establish the foundation for questioning the basis for clear binaries between human and animal. Built on limited and flawed understanding of animal signification (of speech, emotion, reason, or any other distinctly human attribute), definitions that distinctly separate the human from the animal are tenuous. Given this condition, I do not propose to escape the anthropocentric bind and solve the problem of defining the human apart from the animal. Instead, I will analyze representations of animals (and humans) in order to locate sites of definition and complication of the human/animal binary. I recognize that the status of the animal is dependent upon human attitudes. Therefore, I investigate anthropocentric representations to problematize the hierarchy they assume. As representations and definitions of an animal or animals more broadly are incredibly diverse, ontological assumptions about the nature of the animal vary greatly.

Literary representations offer an especially useful site for analysis. These representations, fictional and dramatic, are yet another step removed from the signification of living animals. In this way, they are even more distinctly anthropocentric. Literary representations can contain no pretense to offering animal behavior in its original context because all representations operate as metaphor on some level. They exist as anthropomorphized descriptions of behaviors that have already been anthropomorphized. However, animal representation captures human attitudes toward the ontological status of animals, both lived and fictional. According to Steve Baker, “To

emphasize questions of representation is not therefore to deny any particular animal's 'reality,' in the sense of that animal's actual experience or circumstances. Instead, the point is to emphasize that representations have a bearing on shaping that 'reality,' and that the 'reality' can be addressed only through the representations" (xvii). Human attitudes and definitions of animal ontology carry real consequences for the lived experiences of animals, but literary representations offer possibilities to reveal the cracks in the anthropomorphized assumptions behind casting animals as separate from humans. The extent of a text's anthropocentric optimism helps account for the variance in animal ontology across different texts. Literary representations show animals within complex discursive matrices, allowing ontological assumptions to be probed and analyzed. In doing so, we may see the tenuousness of an anthropocentric ontology that operates as the foundation for affecting the lived experience of "real" animals, especially when that effect is one of destruction.

The late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries provide an especially fertile ground for complex representations of animals, representations that shape the human/animal relationship of modernity. Not only do these texts grapple with the intellectual and social concerns that define modernity, but they exist within a paradigm that is particularly concerned with ontology. On the Enlightenment's desire to cast the world as a plan or system, Joanne Cutting-Gray and James Swearingen identify two driving forces: "First, the revolutions in biblical hermeneutics and, second, the new science, each seizing upon the methodizing impulse to project the world as a system or picture" (483). The picture of the world that dominated the early-modern period was the great chain of being. In his influential study of the chain of being, Arthur Lovejoy explains:

It was in the eighteenth century that the conception of the universe as a Chain of Being, and the principles which underlay this conception – plenitude, continuity,

gradation – attained their widest diffusion and acceptance. ... There has been no period in which writers of all sorts – men of science and philosophers, poets and popular essayists, deists and orthodox divines – talked so much about the Chain of Being, or accepted more implicitly the general scheme of ideas connected with it, or more boldly drew from these their latent implications, or apparent implications. (183).

The pervasive acceptance of the chain provides a valuable and apt paradigm for analyzing the ontological status of animals. In the metaphor of the chain, man occupies the “middle link,” connecting the spiritual world above with the material world below. However, the chain of being was neither monolithic nor universally interpreted. Though non-human animals always occupied a link below human animals, the implications of these relative positions varied widely. The human position could be emphasized in two directions. Some thinkers focused on man’s closeness to the spiritual world, and thus God. Like the Baconian scientist, these thinkers celebrated human animals and saw non-human animals as beings meant to be understood and controlled. In this case, the chain also represents a ladder, where man is to aspire to greater existence. However, others focused on man’s distance from God and proximity to non-human animals. For writers who focused downward, like Pope, the chain was a metaphor of static order to be respected, and to inspire humility in humans.⁴ The position atop the material portion of the chain could be seen to place humans on the precipice to greater things or mire them in the world of non-human animals. This flexibility of meaning, and its widespread influence, makes the

⁴ Lovejoy cites four specific ways in which the chain tended to undercut the extent of man’s assumed superiority. These include establishing each link’s existence for its own sake, the notion that the “middle link” position is merely a point of transition and that there is far more above than below humans, the principle of continuity suggesting that the difference between man and the next lowest creature is very small, and the scale sharpening the realization of man’s conflicted dual nature (186-200).

chain of being a powerful metaphor for analyzing the resultant ontological status of animals. Because the metaphor of the chain cuts both ways, I use it to plot the relative ontological status of humans and animals across different texts. As humans recognize (or downplay) their dual nature, the chain charts the relative difference between the categories of “human” and “animal.” The chain allows for the understanding and expression of separation *and* overlap between species. The ability to emphasize difference or similarity in the description of ontological status makes the chain and the early-eighteenth century particularly suited for analyzing the fissures that occur when representing the human/animal binary.

To analyze the range of ontological statuses afforded to non-human animals, I turn to a wide variety of late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century texts. Because the status of animals is defined through the intersection of political, social, religious, and philosophical discourses, I have selected texts that represent animals alongside these concerns. While most of these texts do not directly investigate the status of animals, their inclusion of animals necessarily establishes animal ontology alongside that of humans. The very act of representing animals relies upon an underlying assumption about human/animal ontology. This investigation adds an important consideration to the foundation of modern human/animal interaction by questioning assumptions about ontological human superiority. But it also works to broaden the already fertile intellectual exploration of early-modern literature. These texts grapple with important philosophical and moral questions as a result of their inclusion of animals. Though the exploration is not always overt, early-modern writers tackle questions about the nature of the relationship between human and non-human animals.

The first chapter, “Sense and Reason,” charts important philosophical and epistemological trends during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Enlightenment’s

break with Scholasticism places a great deal of faith in the ability of the senses and reason of individuals to form the basis for knowledge. This foundation produces large variances in the relative emphasis and importance of sensory perception and reason and their roles in creating knowledge. After tracing these major philosophical positions, the chapter turns to John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester's poem "A Satyr Against Reason and Mankind" (1674). Rochester directly addresses the nature of reason and the senses and debates the privileging of human reason. In doing so, he blurs species distinctions in order to make a larger critique of the worship of human reason, that which is supposed to define humanness. Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) builds its narrative on emerging epistemological emphasis on sensory perception and details. In doing so, Behn exposes a double bind for animals in a world understood through the combination of sense and reason. Animals occupy a dual status: objects to serve as the foundation for human truth and living metaphors to enlarge the meaning imbued in human actions. Both works expose the tenuousness of ontological distinctions between humans and animals.

The next chapter, "The Chain of Being and Human Aspiration," groups works that take different stances on the ability of humans to increase their status in the world, the difference between the chain as ladder and the chain as determinant structure. Perhaps the most sustained investigation of the chain of being, Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733-34) urges man to know and respect his limitations. As such, Pope decenters the human, proposing that each link in the chain exists for its own sake. In doing so, Pope establishes a secure ontological status for animals that should free it from the whimsy and destruction of humans. Daniel Defoe provides a useful counterpoint to Pope's caution. Defoe affords humans much more agency in deciding their place in the world, as well as their ability to improve that place. *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) expresses the optimistic possibilities for the individual, given the appropriate spiritual and

economic motives. In this context, the status of animals on Crusoe's island is much more fluid and tenuous. Optimism in the human predominantly operates negatively for the animal.

The third chapter, "Dramatizing Natural Philosophy," considers the powerful discourse that emerges with interest in natural philosophy. Baconian scientists assumed the role of superior humans, meant to understand and then control the rest of nature. The position was clearly dangerous for animals that could find themselves on a table at the receiving end of a scalpel. However, the dramatic representation of the virtuoso in a number of plays highlights the diminished status of animals, even when the scientific character is being mocked. The chapter first explores this consistency in Thomas Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* (1676) and Susanna Centlivre's *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* (1718) and *The Basset Table* (1705). The analysis then turns to James Thomson's long poem, *The Seasons* (1726-30/1746). Thomson offers a useful counterpoint to the hierarchy assumed in new science discourse. Greatly influenced by and interested in the discoveries of natural philosophy, Thomson's poem attempts a robust description of the elements of each season. However, rather than using science to justify human dominion, Thomson employs a Popean respect for the larger order of nature, of which man is only a small part. In doing so, Thomson employs a great deal of scientific discourse without applying the assumed species hierarchy of the Baconian practitioner. Thomson uses scientific discourse to justify the existence of animals for their own sake.

To conclude the project, I look to Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726/1735). *Gulliver* proves an excellent concluding text because it brings together each of the major discourses discussed in the previous chapters. Because of Swift's misanthropy, he satirizes the optimism of human reason, aspiration, and science to elevate man's place in the world. By

undercutting human claims to superiority, Swift also subverts clear distinctions between humans and animals.

What emerges is a pattern of ontological consequence for non-human animals. Across discourses, belief in the exceptionalism of humans and faith in their “unique” capabilities presents consequences for the ontology of animals with often devastating implications for the lived experiences of animals. Furthermore, this pattern reveals the tenuousness and often collapse of the foundations of man’s claim for ontological superiority over other living creatures.

SENSE AND REASON: ANIMAL EXISTENCE AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS IN ROCHESTER AND BEHN

Though the term “Enlightenment” encompasses a diverse and varied set of positions, the intellectual advancements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reflect a distinct shift from the epistemology of the Middle Ages. The rejection of Scholasticism altered the foundations upon which knowledge was built. Ronald Love explains, “The leading spokesmen of the developing Enlightenment combined their new confidence in the power of human reason with an equal confidence in rational criticism to defy the authority of tradition” (2). The power of Church dogma receded as intellectual discourse became rooted in reason and empirical evidence. Denis Diderot remarked, “When we are beginning to shake off the yoke of authority and tradition in order to hold fast to the laws of reason, there is scarcely a single elementary or dogmatic book which satisfies us entirely” (287). In discussing Newton, Voltaire also established the new basis for certainty, “He saw and demonstrated but never substituted his imagination for the truth. What our eyes and mathematics demonstrate to us we must hold to be true. For all the rest we can only say: ‘I do not know’” (87-8). The unifying elements of Enlightenment thought revolve around the application of human reason to data derived from experience. Sense and reason replace dogma and traditional authority.

As faith in the abilities of the human mind and senses established a marked change in the epistemological foundations of truth, Enlightenment writers also grappled with defining the essence of being that makes humans uniquely qualified to know, and ultimately shape, nature. If

sense and reason are the faculties that form human knowledge, then how each ability is defined and the ways in which one is privileged carry consequences for the distinction between human and non-human animals. In the human/animal binary, both beings had sensory perceptions, but only the human had an access to reason. Thus, the relative importance given to either sense or reason carries ontological consequences for the human/animal divide. The varied, and often tenuous, status of animals results directly from the interplay of sense and reason. A relatively brief and selective overview of several nodes in the philosophical discourse will show the disparity between the statuses afforded to non-human animals.

These changing attitudes about the basis of human knowledge (and in many cases, human superiority over all other living beings) create fertile ground for the literary exploration of the distinctions between human and non-human animal. John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester and Aphra Behn share the intellectual context of breaking from Scholasticism during the Restoration. They offer works that rely on the new intellectual foundations for their existence while simultaneously probing the complex consequences for the line that separates the human from the non-human animal. After an overview of the philosophical discourse and its direct effect on the status of animals, I will turn to "A Satyr Against Reason and Mankind." In the poem, Rochester analyzes the forces that drive humans in a Hobbesian critique of rationalism. The poem presents an extended discussion of the supposed privilege that mankind claims because of an access to reason, as opposed to an animalistic reliance on sensory inputs and instinct. Though Rochester's ultimate aim is to discredit absolute worship of reason, he also does not fully embrace sensory desires as the best practice for forming a human ethic. The poem instead asks for a revised ethic based on reason, but exposes the difficulties in drawing clear lines between human and non-human animals based on the privileging of human reason. I will then highlight the connection

between reason and animal status by analyzing two verse responses to Rochester's poem. These critiques of Rochester's position rely on clear ontological difference between humans and animals in order to reinstate reason as the foundation for human superiority. As these poems praise reason, they make the line between human and non-human animals more definitive. As Rochester probes the place of reason in the new epistemology, Behn employs the new epistemology as the foundation of her narrative. *Oroonoko* employs a complex imbrication of genres, but ultimately depends on a notion of objective truth provided through eye-witness accounts. The narrative relies on sensory details to provide verisimilitude. The work is particularly important because it crystalizes the ramifications for animal ontology within the new epistemological order. In the novella, animals serve a dual role: as material objects meant to establish objective narrative truth and as anthropomorphic metaphors meant to enhance narrative meaning. Using animals in these dual roles, *Oroonoko* exposes the fluidity with which humans can be animalized and animals can be anthropomorphized, particularly within the context of slavery. I will first analyze the narrative's epistemological foundation, before explicating the way animals become a part of the work's truth-making. I will then turn to the ways in which animals function as metaphors, destabilizing clear ontological difference between humans and animals. Through the representation of animals in a narrative that employs an epistemology reliant on sensory perception and reason, Behn's work reveals the ontological consequences for non-human animals.

The importance of sense and reason may best be summarized by the positions of René Descartes and John Locke.¹ Descartes' insistence on pure reason and Locke's subsequent valuing

¹ Hobbes offers an important third position in this discussion. However, Descartes and Locke more accurately reflect the dominant intellectual movement of the seventeenth century. Hobbes' strict materialism was less influential. As such, the current discussion will focus on Descartes and Locke.

of the senses as epistemologically important offer touchstones that help contextualize a key spectrum in Enlightenment notions of truth. These thinkers are directly driving the intellectual discourse in which Rochester and Behn are working. Though Descartes' inclusion here may seem anachronistic and geographically displaced for the English writers being discussed, his work pervades Enlightenment thought. As Peter Schouls argues, "We should see Descartes as a progenitor of the Enlightenment. Indeed, we should recognize him as more than that; in crucial respects he is himself a full-grown Enlightenment thinker" (7). Descartes' influence spread quickly and widely in England. G.A.J. Rogers notes that Descartes' writings "almost from their inception had begun to make a significant impact on English thinking" (11). Schouls argues that Descartes influence is pervasive and foundational. He writes:

Descartes had already articulated the Enlightenment's idea, and these concepts occupy as central a position in his thought as in that of the eighteenth century. ... The truth of the matter is that the eighteenth century's Enlightenment thinkers did little more than widely disseminate an inherited ideal. Many received their inheritance directly from Descartes; some received it from Descartes by way of John Locke. (4)

While Locke's philosophical connection to Descartes is complex, Schouls argues that the basis of Locke's work owes a great deal to Descartes. The influence is such that thinkers who repudiated Descartes often replicated his ideas through their reliance on Locke. "Through Locke, Cartesian methodology and epistemology returned to their native soil. Through Locke, Cartesian reductionism and foundationalism came to be generally accepted by the *philosophes*" (Schouls

However, I will address Hobbes alongside Rochester, as their positions contest the normative ideas that more broadly characterize the newly emerging epistemology.

10).² The legacies of Locke and Descartes both served as major influences to the new epistemologies of the Enlightenment. Peter Gay captures the extent of Locke's influence:

He repudiated the self-denying ordinances of Christian ethics, and like Bacon and Descartes, called for liberation from the shackles of antique and medieval rules of thought. As a results, his impact on the Enlightenment was so pervasive that to analyze it fully would be to write another book ... It was his decisive repudiation of the Scholastics that allowed the philosophes to malign them in their turn without troubling to study them. (321).

Descartes and Locke offer powerful examples of the ways in which Enlightenment thought represents a distinct break from the religious traditions of Scholasticism.

Their positions also serve as important reminders that rejections of Scholasticism were neither monolithic nor uniform. Though Descartes and Locke both call for new foundations of truth that operate autonomously from religious dogma, their differences carry significant effects for the ways in which humans privilege reason over the senses, and thus define the animal apart from the human. To begin with, Descartes and Locke set about their philosophical programs with different intentions. "Descartes tells us that what he was attempting to produce was a philosophy founded on the granite foundation of certainty. From impeccable premises the argument would proceed with ineluctable force to conclusions that could not be challenged" (G. Rogers 14). The quest for certainty carries high stakes. As Susan Bordo explains, "For Descartes, there are only two possibilities: absolute certainty or epistemological chaos; that is, purity or corruption" (17). Descartes insistence on the possibility for broad certainty represents a primary point of departure

² For further discussion of Locke's methodology vis-à-vis Descartes, see Schouls, n14 (10). H.A.S. Schankula's "Locke, Descartes, and the Science of Nature" also focuses on Locke's assessment of Descartes' epistemology.

for Locke. “Locke began with a quite different purpose. For the whole of his life he was quite sure that for large sections of human enquiry the outcomes could never be anything other than provisional. The state of ‘mediocrity’ ... in which we find ourselves was for him central to the human condition, and with it came a very clear view about the fallibility of the human intellect” (G. Rogers 14). The contrasting views on the ultimate power of human intellect creates one of the initial departures between their philosophies. The resultant understanding of the role of the intellect, senses, and the relationship between them forms important differences. “Although Locke accepted the certainty of the existence of the self (Descartes’ *cogito*), it was not for him, as it was for Descartes, taken as a foundational truth. Nor did he ever accept the very sharp dualism between mind and body that Descartes inferred from his first premise” (G. Rogers 14). Both men recognize the importance of sense and reason in breaking from the Scholastic tradition, but their view of human knowledge contrasted in how they explained the construction of that knowledge.

The most important distinctions between Locke and Descartes (for our purposes) stem from the solidity of the separation of mind and body, and the resultant trust (or lack thereof) in sensory perception. Love explains that in the Cartesian system “certainty in knowledge results from the application of the pure light of reason as opposed to the evidence of the senses, which Descartes rejected because they too often deceived” (29). Locke, however, approaches knowledge with a more comprehensive inclusion of both reason and sensory perception. G. Rogers explains Locke’s “early commitment to the empirical principle in epistemology. ... The two great faculties of knowledge, Locke claims, are reason and sense experience, but they have to work in tandem to produce knowledge” (23). The use of reason cannot operate a priori without the senses. As Michael Ayers further explains Locke’s position, “Locke’s account of perceptual

knowledge can be read as a deliberate and often subtle attempt to be systematically different from Descartes” (I: 156). For Locke, sensory perception is foundational to human knowledge. The intellect cannot act alone. Ayers continues, “Thus, while it is true and important that what Locke proposed as ‘sensitive knowledge’ corresponds to Cartesian natural belief, it is no less important that he carefully and deliberately transformed its epistemological status” (I: 157). In describing Locke’s reaction to Descartes’ assertion that humans are born with innate ideas, Love reiterates the importance of the senses: “To Locke it appeared ludicrous that a person could have ideas, in fact, without having any consciousness of them. This was a very serious problem. He argued instead that knowledge was derived from the senses. A child enters the world at birth as a *tabula rasa*, upon which is inscribed the knowledge gained through experience and reflection on that experience” (31).³ This distinction between Locke and Descartes rests in the consideration of the bodily senses and their role in either deceiving or helping to inform the mind. Descartes largely discounts the role of the body and sensory perception. Locke, however, argues that reason relies on the senses. Descartes’ insistence on the pure, immaterial soul/mind results in an epistemology that disavows the epistemological importance of the body. Locke’s belief in the fallibility of the human mind creates a much more co-dependent relationship between reason and the senses. Knowledge cannot stem from pure reason alone.

The privileging of reason over the senses and a definitive separation between mind and body carry significant consequences for the ontological status of animals. Descartes vigorously defends the immaterial nature of intellect and reason, while Locke maintains an agnostic stance

³ Love attributes Locke’s interest in an experience-based human psychology to the influence of Newton. He argues that Newton “correct[ed] Descartes’ method by uniting empiricism with Cartesian rationalism” (30). However, G. Rogers notes that much of the *Essay* had been written prior to the publication of Newton’s *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (30). Instead, Rogers places a good deal of importance on Locke’s time at Oxford and the presence of Robert Boyle and the aims of the newly founded Royal Society (17-22).

on immateriality. For Descartes, the immaterial soul is the defining element of the human animal. “Because the subject of all forms of consciousness is immaterial, the mind is indivisible. A notorious corollary of this doctrine is that animals, lacking intellect, are not conscious, despite having corporeal mechanisms corresponding to sense and imagination” (Ayers I: 28). Stephen Gaukroger specifically addresses Descartes explanation of animal responsiveness:

His aim is to show that the structure and behavior of bodies are to be explained in the same way that we explain the structure and behavior of machines, and in doing this he wants to show how a form of genuine cognition occurs in animals and that this can be captured in mechanistic terms. He does not want to show that cognition does not occur at all, that *instead of* a cognitive process we have a merely mechanical one. (200)

The distinction between mechanical and mental processes also serves as the primary distinction between human and non-human animals. Descartes explains a good deal of human action in terms of mechanical responses, but it is the exceptional use of the intellect⁴ that sets them apart from non-human animals. “Descartes considered many of the actions of humans and animals to have common explanation. He could maintain that there are such explanations despite the fact that he believed humans have minds and animals do not because he also held that many human actions take place without mental guidance” (Gary Hatfield 345). The denial of a non-human animal mind grants a distinct privilege to humans. As Melehy considers the ramifications of the uniqueness of the human mind, “The ascendancy of reason, which depends on fixed and consistent meanings, is coincident with the superiority of man over all other creatures” (278).

⁴ In his chapter, “Cartesian Dualism,” John Cottingham explores Descartes mechanical explanation in great detail. He also analyzes the role of language as defining the intellect and the ways in which animal speech (e.g. a bird talking) differs from human speech (245-52).

Bordo echoes this point: “Both Baconian empiricism and Cartesian mechanism have been explored in terms of domination, aggression, and the impulse to control” (3). In the material world, only humans possess immateriality in the form of their soul/intellect/reason. This forms the basis for Descartes’ strong anthropocentrism.

Agnostic on immateriality and less mechanical in explaining non-human animal behavior, Locke’s philosophy establishes a much less stringent form of anthropocentrism. By way of refuting strict Cartesian rationalism as well as the counterpoint of Hobbes’ firm materialism, Locke remains uncommitted on immateriality. “Locke was saying that, because we do not know the essence either of spirit or of matter, we cannot know whether the human soul is material or immaterial. We know ‘that we have in us something that thinks’, but ‘we must content ourselves in the Ignorance of what kind of Being it is’” (Ayers II: 43). Unconvinced on the nature of the soul, Locke frequently turns to animals to expose the uncertainty of immateriality and immortality. Ayers remarks that “an important weapon in Locke’s agnostic arsenal was the question of the status of animals” (II: 173). The vigorous debate over the nature of the soul was accompanied by a similarly contentious debate over the possible existence and nature of a non-human animal soul. Ayers captures the major positions on the status of animals: “Locke’s contemporaries (apart from Cartesians) were ready enough to ascribe consciousness, yet (apart from Cambridge Platonists) were slow to assign an immaterial soul” (II: 43). However, Locke ultimately refrains from staking out a clear position on the issue and instead prefers to use the status of animals as an example of enduring uncertainty about the absolute nature of beings.⁵

These contrasting views of the nature of humans, animals, souls, reason, and sense establish a broad spectrum that directly shapes the ontological status of animals. Both Descartes

⁵ Ayers provides an in-depth analysis of Locke’s discourse on this issue, particularly in the context of Locke’s discussion of personal identity (II: 254-259).

and Locke, along with their respective contemporaries and successors, work to reinvent the epistemological foundations of human knowledge. However, the key elements of the new foundation quite often differ, and in these differences we see complexity for the status of animals. While anthropocentrism still defines the broader relationship between human and non-human animals, the degree and severity of the distinction between the categories varies. Descartes' worship of pure reason results in an anthropocentrism that considers animals as automata, lacking cognition associated with senses. Though his position was not widely accepted, Hobbes' strict materialism denies any great distinction between human and non-human animal. As such, he still sees dominion as necessary for survival, but not indicative of anthropocentric order. "Humans in a state of nature must control and kill animals in order to survive, he said, but we are able to do that not because of God's anthropocentric ordering of the world, but because of the superiority conferred upon us by our reason, language, and dexterity" (Kathryn Shevelow 37). The material effect on non-human animals is roughly the same, even if the ontological statuses differ. Locke represents a position that resists the absolute certainty of Descartes and Hobbes. As such, he remains uncommitted and fairly quiet on clearly delineating the status of animals. He does, however, briefly address cruelty to animals by children. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke writes:

One thing I have frequently observed in Children, that when they have got Possession of any poor Creature, they are apt to use it ill: They often *torment*, and treat very roughly young Birds, Butter-flies, and such other poor Animals, which fall into their Hands, and that with a seeming kind of Pleasure. This I think should be watch'd in them, and if they incline to any such Cruelty, they should be taught the contrary Usage. For the Custom of tormenting and killing of Beasts, will, by

Degrees, harden their Minds even towards Men; and they who delight in the Suffering and Destruction of inferior Creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate, or benign to those of their own kind. (178-9)

Like so many other Enlightenment discussions of the mistreatment of animals, Locke's condemnation of cruelty focuses on the effects of the cruelty on the child, and eventual potential abuses of other people, not the animal being abused. Given these relative positions, which are by no means exhaustive or entirely inclusive, but do offer important points of comparison, the relative treatment of sense and reason creates shifting lines for the barrier between human and non-human animal. The degree to which reason is prized roughly correlates with the positive uniqueness of human existence, and greater distance between human and animal. At the other end of the spectrum, a material understanding of sense and reason collapses both qualities into one another, along with the ontological distinction between human and animal. The literary works discussed in this chapter explore these distinctions.

Rochester's "A Satyr Against Reason and Mankind" expounds upon the material understanding of sense and reason as it attacks the worship of absolute or pure reason. Philosophically, the satirist aligns himself with the materiality with Hobbes as he critiques both reason and mankind's inflated sense of superiority to the rest of the material world. The debate takes place between the satirist and a person of the clergy who defends people as a privileged thinking species. The poem employs a complex web of satiric aims,⁶ but the concluding thought is one that shifts the initial critique of reason. Rather than faulting reason, the speaker redefines reason and blames the inability of people to justly and rightly live according to their reason. Hypocrisy is mankind's failing. Though the poem eventually accepts a hierarchy where humans

⁶ Ford Russell's "Satiric Perspective in Rochester's *A Satyr against Reason and Mankind*" attempts to trace the satirical elements as they relate to Epicurean philosophy, Hobbesian philosophy, and libertinism.

do reside above beasts, the distinction between the two is destabilized and questioned. By emphasizing the importance of material sense to the faculty of reason, Rochester orders the world in such a way as to emphasize the common animality of human and non-human animals. The pessimistic view of humans and the importance of sense contribute to minimizing the distance between the ontological status of animals and that of humans.

As part of his satirical strategy, Rochester connects the Satyr's critique to Hobbes' materialist philosophy. This alignment contextualizes the poem against the zeitgeist of reason. Rochester's irreligious libertinism grates against the dominant ideologies of his contemporaries. Pro-religious arguments "strongly urged emphasis on the reasonableness of Christian, and more especially of Protestant, belief and hence on the crucial importance of reason – man's crowning faculty" (Gillian Manning 103). This emphasis spread widely through the literate population. The changing foundations of knowledge and truth brought reason to the forefront. "It was the philosophers' method, rather than the propositions deduced by it, which appealed to a wider audience and fuelled the rage for 'reason'" (John Spurr 564). At this time, Hobbesian materialism was the most well-known, if not widely disapproved, counter-position to the emphasis on reason. His influence remained strong during the Restoration and into the eighteenth century. As Manning explains, "In addition, for instance, to the efforts of some of the 1650s writers to answer Hobbes, there is evident also in works of this decade [the 1670s] a more general perception of Hobbes as a dangerous influence" (102). Jusik Park reiterates the philosophical context: "Rochester created the 'Satyr' in an atmosphere that was still humming with reactionary criticism of Hobbes" (1000). While the exact specificity and extent to which Rochester utilizes Hobbes' philosophy can be debated,⁷ the Satyr's shared philosophical and

⁷ While Park's work joins a good deal of criticism in attempting to fix Rochester's relationship to Hobbes, my aim is to situate Rochester's philosophical premises within the broader spectrum discussed in the

epistemological foundations with Hobbes' materialism help the poem clearly situate itself against the broader intellectual emphasis on reason, religion, and immateriality.⁸

Rochester shares with Hobbes a generally pessimistic and grim view of humanity, originating with the belief that fear is one of man's most primal motivating forces. In the Satyr, the speaker addresses human motivation. The satirist clearly outlines a dire formulation of what drives people:

Wretched man is still in arms for fear;
For fear he arms, and is of arms afraid,
By fear to fear successively betrayed:
Base fear, the source whence his best passions came,
His boasted honour, and his dear-bought fame. (140-44)⁹

Not only is fear a driving factor, it is the foundation for both fame and honour. These positive attributes stem from a motivation that is more base than altruistic. The satirist continues to discuss fear: "The good he acts, the ill he does endure, / 'Tis all for fear, to make himself secure"

opening of this chapter, rather than explicate the specific degree to which Rochester emulates Hobbes. By highlighting some of the key elements in Rochester's poem, I plan to establish Hobbes as the most proximate corollary to the ideas put forth in the Satyr, and thus a key expression of the ways in which materialism and the devaluation of reason affect the ontological status of animals. For more specific analyses of the extent to which the Satyr makes use of Hobbes' philosophy, be it literal or impressionistic, see Park's "'The Estate of Hostility': Hobbesian Philosophy in Rochester's 'A Satyr Against Reason and Mankind,'" Thomas Fujimura's "Rochester's 'Satyr Against Mankind': An Analysis," and K.E. Robinson's "Rochester and Hobbes and the Irony of 'A Satyr against Reason and Mankind.'"

⁸ Rochester's materialism placed him in the philosophical minority. Manning points out that the playfulness and scoffing of the satirist in the poem mimics the rhetorical style of the complaints of Rochester's Orthodox religious opponents. The speaker is acting out the behaviors and attitudes that believers ascribe to the irreligious (111). Charles Knight argues that Rochester's "basic interest not merely in disguise but in the put-on, in a deception that derives from a basic awareness of society and of motive, and in a posing that embodies that awareness in wit" must inform an analysis of the Satyr (255).

⁹ All citations of Rochester refer to David Vieth's *The Complete Poems of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*. Parenthetical references are to line number.

(155-56). The human reliance on fear leads to a distrust of the innate goodness in people.¹⁰ Reba Wilcoxon notes that fear affects the entire range of human behavior, for “Rochester focuses on the source of all vices, fear” (191). Proceeding from these claims, the satirist moves directly into expressions of misanthropy. The critique revolves around dishonesty. The satirist succinctly claims that “Mankind’s dishonest” (161). When fabrications form the primary interactions between people, he reminds his auditor that “nor can weak truth your reputation save” (164). He finishes the section of the poem:

Most men are cowards, all men should be knaves:

The difference lies (as far as I can see)

Not in the thing itself, but the degree;

And all the subject matter of debate,

Is only, who’s a knave of the first rate? (169-73)

Dishonesty defines the basest element of human existence. There is no hope for escape, only minimization. The satirist focuses on the failings of people. Wilcoxon identifies in the poem a “scorn for misled divines and philosophers and for mankind’s inability to live up to his commitments of office and friendship” (189-90). Rochester echoes a good deal of the pessimism that characterizes Hobbes’ view of humanity and human nature. Specifically driven by fear, people dissemble their way through life, with the only distinction being the degree to which one is willing to deceive.

Rochester’s satire turns from fear to target reason. The attack on reason employs a largely materialist philosophy that quite clearly echoes that of Hobbes. In satirizing reason, the senses

¹⁰ Interestingly, in discussing Defoe’s distrust of human nature, Maximillian Novak points to Rochester as the standard bearer of such an outlook. Defoe believed people likely to be corrupted by power because he distrusted “human goodness as much as Rochester” (*Defoe* 18).

become the primary foundation for knowledge. As Wilcoxon summarizes, “Rochester’s epistemology is congruent with that of Hobbes on at least two scores: knowledge is derivative from the senses, and words for which there is no correspondent in perception have no reality” (195). In a broader philosophical context, “Rochester draws from skepticism and empiricism a distrust of *a priori* reasoning and favors a theory of knowledge based on evidence of the senses or perception” (Wilcoxon 200). The importance of sense necessarily grounds humans and limits the knowledge to be gained via reason. The respondent in the Satyr clings to the possibilities afforded by reason. He exclaims:

Reason, by whose aspiring influence
We take a flight beyond material sense;
Dive into mysteries, then soaring pierce
The flaming limits of the universe. (66-69)

The satirist, of course, denies the power of reason, claiming “’Tis this exalted power, whose business lies / In nonsense, and impossibilities” (88-89). The satirist sees the danger in privileging the faculties of pure reason to attain knowledge that aims above that which is anchored by sense. A.D. Cousins explains, “He is in fact attacking the neoplatonic idea of reason as being ultimately the means by which we come to perceive the intelligible; that is, he attacks the idea of the mind as having a higher rational faculty than one which just organizes sense-perception” (436). For the satirist, sensory perception is necessary to provide a sound anchor for knowledge. He disavows the Cartesian notion that pure reason can lead to knowledge that may “pierce the flaming limits of the universe.” Furthermore, in addition to doubting the potential of reason without sense, the satirist goes further in proclaiming such pursuits as “nonsense” and “impossibilities.” As James Gill expands, “Reason is seen as the will-o’-the-wisp which misleads

men in the interior wilderness of the mind where it creates obstacles which it then strives vainly to surmount” (“Mind” 562). Not only can reason not carry humans “beyond material sense,” the emphasis on reason without sensory foundations creates phenomenological barriers for human existence. Life must be grounded in the senses.

Rochester’s satire of both reason and mankind relies on philosophical materialism for its critiques. His reliance on sensory foundations of knowledge and pessimism toward human nature contextualize the poem within the realm of philosophical positions discussed in the opening of this chapter. The poem’s epistemological affiliations directly impact (and even require) the extensive use of animals to execute its critique of reason and mankind. The role of reason, the quality thought to separate man from beast, shapes the ontological status of animals. Rochester’s critique of reason questions the orthodox view that man’s intellectual faculties place him atop the hierarchy of the material world. Cousins notes that the satirist “provokes us to look afresh at our place in the chain of being” (434). The poem complicates the “traditional comparison between rational man and irrational animals” (Manning 103). Rochester’s satire necessarily explores the ontological status of non-human animals as the satirist takes aim at human kind.

Rochester’s primary rhetorical strategy in destabilizing the supremacy of mankind and the definitive nature of such a hierarchy is to elide distinctions between categories of human and non-human, provisionally providing an elevated ontological status for animal. Rochester refutes the tendency for people, especially those in the newly emerging scientific community, to view animals and nature as existing for the pleasure and curiosity of humans. According to Keith Walker, “Rochester’s view was different: animals exist for many purposes but also to point up the folly and presumption of Men, whom they so closely resemble, and who consider they are so superior” (81). In levelling the species hierarchy, Rochester also diminishes claims of differing

value amongst humans with more or less wit, more or less reason. The failing of mankind is in its “Leading a tedious life in misery, / Under laborious, mean hypocrisy” (151-2). Pessimism drives the satirist’s analysis: “Be judge yourself, I’ll bring it to the test: / Which is the basest creature: man, or beast?” (127-28). The heart of the matter is a competition in baseness, not exultant possibilities. As the satirist closes the poem with a description of the person who avoids hypocrisy, he requires one final concession: “If such there are, yet grant me this at least, / Man differs more from man, than man from beast” (224-5).¹¹ The final comparison notes that the distinction between a “good” person, hypocrites, and beasts is one of degree, not kind. The clear categories of “man” and “beast” are not sufficient enough to account for the failings and possible successes of people. Instead, the construction of this final hierarchy establishes a spectrum of supremacy, one in which people are eventually reinstated above animals. However, the satirist is only able to come to this position through eradicating clear distinctions between man and beast. In other words, to make a point about the “goodness” of people, the poem must question “people” as a privileged, special group. As Peter De Gabriele reiterates the implications of the passage, “This comparison of man to beast works to undermine the coherence of ‘mankind’ as a category ... the action of man is precisely to betray man, to undo his own universality or categorization, as much as it is to betray his individual fellow man” (5). The baseness of individuals eradicates a special, idealized category of “man.” Once the delineation of man falls apart, so does the line between species. Diminishing the divide between species denies man the right to exercise dominance over animals, as his privileged status in the chain is questioned. Man cannot justify diminishing animal status when his ontological superiority is subverted.

¹¹ Gill identifies the lineage of this passage as “a paradox from Plutarch repeated by Montaigne” (“Fragmented Self” 34).

The erasure of clear boundaries between man and beast begins with the opening lines. As the speaker announces his desire (if he could exercise it) to be a “dog, a monkey, or a bear” (5) and not “one of those strange, prodigious creatures, man” (2), he implies a much more profound philosophical stance. His desire to have his “spirit” in the flesh of “anything but that vain animal / Who is so proud of being rational” (6-7) implies that all creatures are capable of housing a spirit. Though presented quite subtly, this concept immediately eradicates one of the primary privileges of humans: that of a soul. The satirist’s clerical counterpoint in the poem even boasts of “blessed, glorious man! To whom alone kind heaven / An everlasting soul has freely given” (60-61). In examining the connection between enslaving animals and enslaving people, Ingrid Tague cites arguments for the “immortality of the animal soul,” but these largely exist toward the end of the eighteenth century (“Companions” 117). I would not suggest that Rochester is arguing for the existence of the animal soul, but the ease with which his speaker claims a preference for his soul to be housed in another species does elide clear value-laden distinctions between man and beast. It is through this erasure that Rochester satirizes reason, that which helps man “dignify his nature above beast” (65). This is not a poem about the elevation of animals, but rather the devaluation of mankind. Part of this devaluation stems from the paradox exposed by the opening wish for the speaker’s free spirit to be housed in a non-human animal. Based on the understanding of the chain of being, man’s basic existence is impossible to classify without contradiction. As Nancy Rosenfeld describes the conflict,¹² “Man’s rank between angel and animal, involving as it does the expectation that the human will adopt the morality of the divine while bearing the mortality – the senses and impulses – of the animal is a challenge to the human

¹² Rosenfeld also gives a nice analysis of the poem’s title. Rochester and subsequent editors have not modernized the spelling of “satyr,” emphasizing both the literary form and the half-man and half-goat creature from mythology. In particular, see paragraphs 10 – 11.

mind's ability to interpret and make sense of the seeming incongruity" (par. 6). Gill provides further consequences for the dual nature of humans:

The missing of these two orders of being in man has resulted in a monstrosity possessing neither the hypothetical freedom of incorporeality nor the certainty and 'unanimity' of the beasts. ... [A]scent up the chain of being from man to free spirit would entail the choosing of a lower bodily form since if the 'cost' of being a man is great, then the cost of being a free spirit may paradoxically even be greater. ("Mind" 561)

The complexity of the human condition rests in the both/and nature of being animal and spirit/soul. By stretching categories, the singular category "man" tends to collapse under scrutiny. As such, the traditional order of the chain of being, from corporeal to immaterial being, becomes confused and forever dialectical. The categories as well as their relative status become blurred.

The potency of Rochester's satire rests in the devaluation of reason and subsequent lauding of sensory pursuits. Rochester unsettles the unquestioned anthropocentrism that justifies using reason, a quality assumed to be possessed only by humans, as the litmus test for supremacy. His speaker presents a paradox to destabilize this position: "His wisdom did his happiness destroy, / Aiming to know that world he should enjoy" (33-34). In this couplet, wisdom and knowing are set in opposition to happiness and enjoyment. Establishing thinking as mutually exclusive to enjoying revokes the privilege placed on reason by anthropocentric fiat. The language that diminishes the value of thought continues:

This supernatural gift, that makes a mite
Think he's the image of the infinite:

Comparing his short life, void of all rest,
To the Eternal, and the ever-blessed. (76-79)

Man's "thinking" allows the inflation of his own place in the world, and this is an act based on a false premise. It assumes that man's reason has a reach that is impossible to justify. Melehy reminds us of the intellectual limits of anthropocentrism: "It is a matter of not knowing why animals do what they do, because human understanding doesn't extend to what one may refer to as their experience and world, and even less to the workings and purposes of nature" (272). As the clergy respondent balks at the equivocal valuation of people and beasts at the beginning of the poem, these lines render the status quo of assuming man to be in God's image to be even more absurd. The gap between bodily human and bodily creature is much less significant than the breach between deity and human. The speaker continues to resituate the location of thought in the importance of life:

But thoughts are given for actions' government:
Where action ceases, thought's impertinent:
Our sphere of action is life's happiness,
And he who thinks beyond, thinks like an ass. (94-97)

As the satirist values action as the substantive end that thinking is meant to create, he further undercuts any claim to superiority based on the ability to think and reason. Reason is only that which should serve as support to the tangible actions of life.

The poem subverts the primacy of reason and creates a vacuum of value. Reason must be replaced as the primary attribute of human superiority. The satirist attacks right reason, "the faculty which fused man's knowledge of what is good with his desire to be good, and so raised him towards knowledge of and participation in the nature of God" (Spurr 570). Because the

ability to reason is no longer the defining trait of human goodness, the satirist turns to animals to show further limitations of reason and suggests an alternate paradigm for defining reason. The proposed paradigm revolves around actions based on sensory needs. The speaker argues that the “reason that distinguishes by sense, / And gives us good and ill from thence” (100-01) is the true reason to follow. The satiric humor of the poem exposes the paradox of diminishing the importance of desires based on physical needs. As the speaker’s “reason” responds to hunger by eating, the respondent’s reliance on thinking offers a far more ridiculous action: “Perversely, yours [reason] your appetite does mock, / This asks for food, that answers, ‘What’s o’ clock?’” (108-9). In order to satirize reason, the speaker turns away from complicated social behavior and looks to basic physical needs for his examples. As Gill identifies the philosophical context for this move, “The traditional shift is, of course, one from *logos prophorikos* or ‘uttered reason’ to *logos endiathetos* or ‘the reason inherent in nature.’ One is discursive reason, whereas the other is the reason of things implicit in them” (“Mind” 559). Right reason follows sensory needs rather than socially constructed rules about when to eat. In this way, he changes the paradigm in which “right reason” is operating.

The satirist’s reliance on sensory guidance finds justification in a simplified ethic, one in which he must venture outside of human experience for explication of it. It is at this point in the poem that he must return to animals to prove his position. The speaker directly confronts the notion that man is “wiser” than animals: “For all his pride, and his philosophy, / ‘Tis evident, beasts are in their degree / As wise at least, and better far than he” (114-16). Because the speaker has refigured the basis for wisdom, beasts now match man, but the absence of false reason necessarily places them above and “better” than humans. This inversion makes use of the

theriophilic paradox,¹³ which is “the single most important historically identifiable paradoxical argument contributing to the poem” (Gill “Mind” 558). In brief, the theriophilic paradox argues:

The primitivistic disassociation of human nature and human reason from nature and the reason implicit in it – from the Logos, which is immanent in the orderly behavior of animals. Thus, while theriophiles argue that beasts are more natural, and therefore that they are better than man, they can also contend that beasts are more reasonable than men, even, paradoxically, if beasts do not reason as well as men or if they do not reason at all. Human reason in such cases is often seen as indirect, complex, abstract, and remote from the simple natural life (Gill “Mind” 558).

By shifting the paradigm through which reason is evaluated, the poem upends the traditional hierarchy established by the chain of being. The reversal offers an incredibly direct attack on the supremacy of pure reason divorced from the senses. The most damning comparison questions the very civility and superiority that people place on society:

Birds feed on birds, beasts on each other prey,
But savage man alone does man betray:
Pressed by necessity, they kill for food,
Man undoes man to do himself no good. (129-32)

In this comparison, reliance on instinct can justify killing another creature because it is necessary to fulfill a basic need. But the human stands in opposition because his betrayal of another person is committed through “voluntary pains” (137) and “not through necessity, but wantonness” (138). The satirist portrays animals as devoid of selfishness and motives that rely on

¹³ For a full historical accounting of theriophily, see Gill’s “Theriophily in Antiquity” and Boas’s foundational *The Happy Beast in French Thought of the Seventeenth Century*.

machinations outside of simple instinct. Though he does not seem interested in a discussion of animal behavior, beasts adequately provide a point of comparison for humans. It allows him to cast all humans as worthless. His dismissal of wits announces that “wits are treated just like common whores, / First they’re enjoyed, and then kicked out of doors” (37-38). He adds, “Women and men of wit are dangerous tools” (41). The relative social stations of wits and whores are equivocal in the misanthropic perspective espoused in the poem. The cerebral desires of people render their actions far more “brute” than the instinctual and sensory-derived behaviors of animals. In critiquing humans, the satirist inverts the traditional species hierarchy captured by the chain of being.

In order for Rochester to evaluate humanity, he must turn to animals. In order to question the growing emphasis on human reason, he must rely on eliding a categorical difference that is fundamental to the privilege of human reason: the human. The instructive power of the poem grows from the blurring of this line between human and beast. However, this fluidity of human-animal understanding never completely erases the species barrier. For all of the satirist’s complaints about reason, he cannot deny the fact that man is a reasoning animal, and reason was culturally limited to humans. The immovability of this assumption exposes the tenuousness of anthropocentrism by relying on using beasts as a rhetorical anthropomorphic straw man. Animals are assumed to experience and react to biological and physiological needs the same way as people do, but without reason to interfere. This simple formulation (man = animal + reason) maintains the focus on the human. It is a formulation that, for all of its destabilization of assumptions of human supremacy, still holds the human above the non-human. When man betrays his fellow, he acts “Unhumanly” (136). Rochester does not entirely undo species barriers, but the poem must make use of uneasiness with these barriers in order to focus on a discussion of

reason and humanity. The resultant ontological status for animals is one that competes with the status of humans, even if the status of animals remains subordinate in the end. The rejection of reason and emphasis on the shared animality, via the senses, between human and non-human animals raises the status of the animals. A wide gap between animal and human ontology cannot be sustained because man's unique quality, reason, is faulty.

The clear connection between devalued reason and the relatively augmented ontological status of animals also shapes the verse responses to Rochester's poem. Their disputation of Rochester's position relies on a worship of reason and man's potential in order to emphasize the difference between human and non-human animals. Two of the most relevant verse responses were written by Richard Pocock¹⁴ and Thomas Lessey.¹⁵ In each case, the argument departs from Rochester by reverting to a cohesive, idealized category of "man." Reason is restored to its lauded place and the distance between human and non-human animal is emphasized, resulting in a lowered ontological status for animals. Lessey emphasizes that reason is perfect, but application of it is not. He argues one "Cann't blame y^t reason w^{ch} he would not use" (24). He echoes Rochester's opening rhetorical question, but chooses differently:

I'd be, what I to my joy already, am,
One of those glorious, & brave creatures man,
Who is from reason justly nam'd y^e bright,

¹⁴ Attribution of this poem is somewhat disputed. One manuscript attributes the poem to "The Reverend Mr. Griffith." The version I will be referencing is attributed to Richard Pocock. However, Nicholas Fisher notes that authorship by Edward Pococke, an Oxford divine, "is generally accepted today" (190). However, as I cannot confirm this attribution, I have chosen to keep my references to Richard Pocock, as listed in *Early English Books Online* for their digitization of the manuscript from the Bodleian Library.

¹⁵ The entire text of Lessey's version appears as an appendix to Fisher's "The Contemporary Reception of Rochester's *A Satyr Against Mankind*." All references are to this text and parenthetical citations will be to line numbers.

And perfect image, of y^e infinite. (3-6)

Lessey chooses the vain position and uses it to emphasize man's dominion over the rest of the material world. "Whence man makes good his title to y^e throne, / And th' whole creation his dominion own" (11-12). Lessey's defense of man and reason continually points to the idealized concept of man, rather than the flawed, material beings that Rochester attacks. Lessey rejects the impossibility of escaping the paradox of human existence. Lessey makes his definition clear:

Hee's no true man, who's thus compos'd of fear,
He o're whose actions reason does preside,
Who makes that radiant light his constant guide,
Vain fear can never o're his mind prevail. (100-03)

Rochester places fear at the heart of human motivation. Here, Lessey insists that "no true man" could be driven by such fear. Instead, the "radiant light" of reason operates as the primary driver of human action. This position remains comfortable with the idealized category of man, even if individuals fall short of reaching the prescribed heights of behavior. Lessey relies on self-supporting optimism regarding human nature. Even when it fails, it only fails to live up to its potential. He ignores the necessary existence of the material, fallible human being. This allows him to continually assert a clear distinction between the concept of "man" and the existence of beasts. He mentions the "large & handsome sort of apes, / Whom nature denyd souls, but gave our Shapes" (372-73). The line is drawn based on the existence (or denial) of the immaterial, be it reason or soul. Lessey's optimism toward human potential and the unproblematic unity of the idea of "man" creates a greater distance between the ontological status of human and non-human animals. The value-laden hierarchy of the chain of being remains intact.

Pocock's position closely resembles Lessey's. Opening with the same rhetorical question about material embodiment, Pocock asserts, "I'de be Man, not as I am the worst; / But Man refin'd such as he was at first" (3-4). He overlooks the irony in selecting a "corps" that is idealized and pre-lapsarian. In rejecting "the speechless state of Brutes" (5), Pocock aligns himself with those who value spoken reason. His reference to the speechless brutes imbricates his position with that of Descartes, for whom speech was the prime distinction between man's cognition and an animal's automata response. He holds great hope for the power of reason, maintaining that it will "make Sense more profuse" (20). Not only does reason improve sense, it can act as a substitute: "Reason reserves this Remedy at last, / To think those Pleasures, which it cannot tast" (37-38). Carrying the importance of reason even further, Pocock outlines the greater ontological difference between humans and animals by returning to idealized potential for each creature:

Though he doth not his higher end pursue
So well as doth the more Ignoble Crew
Of Birds and Beasts (that little have to do.)
The difficultly of his lofty end,
Above the others doth his cause defend,
And in the means a disproportion pleads,
Choyce sways the one, instinct the other leads. (77-83)

Both Lessey and Pocock address incredibly flawed humans, but they cast them as poor examples of people who have simply failed to live up to their potential. For them, this failing is not ontological. Thus, in this passage, Pocock reiterates that though man may have a good deal of room to improve, it is a choice that can lead to a greater self-actualization. However, for the

animals, they are already near to their perfect state because it is considerably lower than that of man and requires less work to achieve. Again, the privileging of reason and the ultimate optimism toward human nature creates a relatively lowered ontological status for non-human animals.

These responses simply reiterate the intrinsic connection between the philosophical position toward reason and the ultimate rigidity of the hierarchy described in the chain of being. Rochester aligns himself with the materiality of Hobbes and exposes contradiction between the category of man and the material existence of men. He looks toward the common animality of all living beings as the main defining trait of existence. Lessey and Pocock lean more toward Descartes, continually casting their gaze toward the immaterial soul and the boundless possibilities of reason. They cast man decidedly above animals, focusing on that which separates human from animal. They assume that reason allows them to fully know the limitations of animal cognition and existence. In directly engaging in the philosophical debate around the role of reason and sense in making knowledge, they each show the consequences for the ontological status for non-human animals.

In an emerging epistemology based on the application of an individual's sense and reason, Rochester questions the privilege of reason. He argues for an ethic that channels reason through sense. Rochester employs a Hobbesian critique of a Cartesian worship of reason in order to end up closer to Locke's middle ground. The powerful epistemological shift of the seventeenth century provides the intellectual foundation that makes Aphra Behn's narrative possible. While Rochester directly questions and explores the interplay between sense and reason, Behn applies this interplay in the shaping of her narrative. In *Oroonoko*, a narrative rife with with exoticism, Behn relies on an epistemology founded in individual sense and reason. The

novella becomes particularly important for investigating the effects of the epistemology on the ontology of animals. I will first explore the complexities of truth-making in the narrative, as individual sensory perceptions provide the basis for objective truth. Then, I will analyze the consequences for the ontology of animals as they become part of this truth-making strategy. From there I will move to the ways in which the novel directly reveals the ontological uncertainty for animals as they operate as both lived creatures and metaphorical tools in the narrative.

Aphra Behn's rich and complex novella, *Oroonoko*, explores issues of race, class, succession, political authority, colonialism, and empire. As a proto-novel, *Oroonoko*'s narrative success owes a debt to the Enlightenment's shifting epistemological foundations. Though the novella doesn't fully reject some of the language and convention of romance, the narrative is built upon the narrator's insistence on witnessing a good deal of the events she describes. Michael McKeon argues that new emphasis on empirical thought¹⁶ shapes the framing of "true histories" and tales of travel. "The demand for quantitative completeness in narrative was, of course, entirely consistent with Baconian method and the ideal of 'natural history'" (McKeon *Origins* 106). Narrators establish their authority via a claim of personal observance. As McKeon explains, "It is a generally accepted principle that the credibility of a travel account is enhanced by the confirmation of other travelers, but a far more important principle is the superiority of eyewitness to hearsay testimony, however reputable the source" (*Origins* 108). Behn's narrator relies on physical presence in the opening of the story: "I was myself an eye-witness, to a great part, of what you will find here set down" (75). The same claim to credibility is repeated when

¹⁶ As part of the framing of his argument, McKeon discusses his dialectical revision to Ian Watt's formal realism, which shares "epistemological premises" with the philosophies of Descartes and Locke (*Origins* 2-4).

she asserts that she had “often seen and conversed with this great man, and been a witness to many of his mighty actions” (80). The narrator continues to remind the reader of the primacy of her subjective sense experience to the credibility of the tale with introductory clauses like “I have often heard him say” (82). Because of the narrator’s insistence on being present in Surinam, much twentieth-century criticism focuses on the biographical elements of Behn, aiming to establish the extent to which the narrative is “true.”¹⁷ However, this notion of truth is immaterial to the epistemological foundation of her story telling. The importance of Behn’s narrative is that its claim to truth, be it historical or narrative credibility, hinges on individual experience. McKeon discusses Behn’s multiple roles by noting that “no tension exists in her dual role as narrator and character, because both roles are dedicated to the single end of physically witnessing, and thereby authenticating, a central character whose personal history is distinct from her own” (*Origins* 112). The narrative authority of *Oroonoko* rests in the privileging of personal observation of the events being described.¹⁸

The importance of describing sensory experiences spreads through the generic complexity of *Oroonoko*. In addition to establishing narrative authority, the emphasis on the material and the physical specifically locates the feats of Oroonoko. In analyzing the theatricality of the novella, Marta Figlerowicz argues that “Behn’s reliance on mass sensory experience and spectatorship allows her to dramatize the historicity and high tragic nature of Oroonoko’s life” (322). When the narrator isn’t physically present, she relies on the witness testimony of others, forming a web of demonstrable details. “The masses of witnesses she consistently evokes are

¹⁷ For the problems associated with empiricism, see McKeon, 105-18 (*Origins*).

¹⁸ Though the narrator is not present for all of the events described, she carefully notes that those who have related the events to her were witnesses to them.

receptors and projectors of spontaneously transmitted, empirically verifiable physical sensations ... confirming her credibility by the sensory perceptions they collectively share” (Figlerowicz 324). The final torture and death of Oroonoko exemplifies the making of truth via associated witness and physical description. Not physically present for the brutalizing of Oroonoko, the narrator carefully reminds the reader that “[her] mother and sister were by him all the while” (140). The scene contains some of the most gruesome physical details:

The executioner came, and first cut off his members, and threw them into the fire. After that, with an ill-favoured knife, they cut his ears, and his nose, and burned them; he still smoked on, as if nothing had touched him. Then they hacked off one of his arms, and still he bore up, and held his pipe. But at the cutting off the other arm, his head sunk, and his pipe dropped, and he gave up the ghost, without a groan, or a reproach. (140)

The scene shows the complexity of the narrator’s strategy for truth-making. Absent, she must present the specific details gathered from her surrogate witnesses as a way of establishing believability. Cynthia Richards notes that Behn “provides this graphic scene to make more real her secondary and largely fictional power” (672). The importance of sensory details functions on multiple levels. They help establish the believability of the narrator, while also historically and materially placing the story in a specified context. All of these elements work to construct the utility of Behn’s act of writing, in order to establish “a larger and more speculative narrative truth” (Richards 672). Sensory details provide the narrator with credibility and Behn with fictional power regarding the text’s larger aims.

Much of Behn’s physical descriptions owe a rhetorical debt to travel writing and emerging scientific discourses. However, these discourses rely upon sensory details in order to

convey truth, and sensory details can complicate the intended symbolic or metaphorical meaning of a description. This tension will be seen in the descriptions of the Carib war captains. The recording of details stems from the emerging practices of travel writing and scientific observation. J. Paul Hunter argues that Robert Boyle's epistemological stance contributes to narrative authority in the novel: "He thinks that virtually all knowledge of the world can and should be derived from personal experience" (285). McKeon notes that the Royal Society's guidelines for observation require the author's internalization of broader ideas to stem from the physical observations of the author. "The authority and criteria for this self-examination derive not from the overarching truth of a great Author but from the principles of a materialist epistemology, and that the truth of this epistemology is available not through the renunciation, but through the exploitation, of merely sensuous human powers" (McKeon *Origins* 104). The narrator's descriptions of the Carib war captains uncovers the sometimes complicated relationship between metaphorical meaning and purely physical description. Initially, the Indians represent a pure people, untouched by European hierarchies. The narrator is quite direct: "These people represented to me an absolute idea of the first state of innocence, before man knew how to sin; and 'tis most evident and plain, that simple Nature is the most harmless, inoffensive and virtuous mistress" (77). They live in a state of nature characterized by peace and tranquility. Laura Brown further explains that "the natives are the novella's noble savages, absolutely innocent and without sin, immodesty, or fraud" (*Ends* 42). However, the later descriptions of the war captains belie this sense of innocence. Though "the account of the Indians belongs in part to the tradition of travel narrative" (Brown *Ends* 42), the requisite physical details of the captains undercut their existence as noble savages. The narrator explains, "For my part I took them for hobgoblins, or fiends, rather than men. But however their shapes appeared, their souls were very

human and noble, but some wanted their noses, some their lips, some both noses and lips, some their ears, and others cut through each cheek, with long slashes” (123). The recollection of the specifics of their disfigurement strains the narrator’s previous description of the Indians’ innocence. The brutality of their embodied and material struggles for power and position requires the narrator to accept the lack of unity between physical appearance and the quality of their souls. Her qualification regarding their souls stems from the compromising nature of the visual details she relates as part of her authority derived from the conventions of travel narrative. The power of the scene is clear. Ramesh Mallipeddi casts the scene as “constituting almost an experiential event” (480). “For Behn’s narrator, seeing the Carib war captains is a rare moment of self-discovery, an epistemological event” as “their self-mutilation defies interpretation in terms of the familiar” (Mallipeddi 481). In this case, the physical aspects of the scene cause the narrator to have to reassert the metaphorical importance of the Indians as a race of noble savages, untouched by sin and corruption. Their material and metaphorical statuses remain in tension with the brutality of the visual details used to bolster the narrator’s authority. Epistemological reliance on sensory perceptions problematizes the relationship between metaphorical and material truth.

The narrator’s eye-witness accounts also establish the location and historicity of her story, and these accounts in part rely on animals. The objectivity of the travel narrative accounts for the lists used to build the exoticism of the narrative, while also rendering those exotic objects familiar. Further connecting Boyle’s epistemology to narrative, J.P. Hunter notes “that events but especially *things* encountered in even the most ordinary life were clues to basic truths in the universe” (283). Behn establishes the credibility of the narrator as well as the setting with the rhetorical strategy of a travel narrative. Judy Hayden explains that she “offers a significant view of the flora and fauna, the geography, the indigenous peoples and so forth. In adopting this

narrative strategy, Behn portrays herself as a collector of specimens” (“Far” 131). Often as asides to the plot, the narrator offers descriptions of Surinam and life in the colony as matter-of-fact observations. She even extends these details to include diet: “The very meat we eat, when set on the table, if it be native, I mean of the country, perfumes the whole room, especially a little beast called an armadillo, a thing which I can liken to nothing so well as a rhinoceros. ‘Tis all in white armour so jointed, that it moves as well in it, as if it had nothing on. This beast is about the bigness of a pig of six weeks old” (116). Behn fills the explanation with objective, verifiable descriptions to contextualize the exotic armadillo within the typical world view of those back in England. McKeon notes that often in travel narratives the “plainness of style seems almost a precondition for the documentary authenticity – the truth – of the text” (*Origins* 109). The opening of the novella employs extensive lists to bolster the narrator’s objectivity. She aims to present the material details of Surinam with simplicity tinged with wonder. Trade on the continent partially consists of “little parakeets, great parrots, macaws, and a thousand other birds and beasts of wonderful and surprising forms, shapes, and colours. For skins of prodigious snakes, of which there are some threescore yards in length; as is the skin of one that may be seen at His Majesty’s Antiquaries” (75). The descriptions aim to connect the reader to the exotic locale. Karen Gevirtz explains that “*Oroonoko*’s descriptions also self-consciously appeal to the visual memory of her readers through allusions to England and the London theater” (93). These digressions and observations frame the narrative and serve the novella’s project of establishing truth reliant on the scientific objectivity of travel narratives. The believability of the narrator relies on the copious recording of sensory perceptions. Her experience is historically and geographically fixed via these observations. Her truth operates from an epistemology that relies on the individual.

For all of the narrator's insistence on credibility via these descriptions, the reliance on empiricism poses problems for any claim to objectivity. Her credibility isn't established via description alone. Hayden argues that "she references her social rank not merely to insinuate herself into a society of genteel collectors of artifacts ... but rather to establish her own credibility as a witness" ("Far" 127). As an embodied participant in the events she relates, the narrator cannot maintain a pure objectivity. She begins and ends her narrative by owning her purpose. Gevirtz succinctly explains, "Despite her claims to absolute reliability because she is an eyewitness, she declares that she writes with a particular agenda: to justify and immortalize Oroonoko" (94). The observations in the story are selected precisely for their fictional power. They all are meant to serve her purpose of conveying the greatness of Oroonoko. However, the complexities of objectivity extend beyond the rhetorical purpose of the narrator. J.P. Hunter notes the paradox of claiming an objectivity based upon subjective observation and interpretation (290). The narrator's presence necessarily includes limits on her observational power. Gevirtz synthesizes the narrative technique in *Oroonoko* with these problems of empirical objectivity:

It is not possible ultimately to be the objective, impartial observer that the New Scientists describe, and it is a fallacy to think of oneself so. The narrator is both in the middle of everything and on its margins as observer, both a part of primary groups and uncomfortably unlike them. She cannot be pinned down, yet the ideas of reliability introduced by experimental philosophy require that, without a set identity, a person cannot be acknowledged as an authority. (95)

The narrator's perspective is unique to her rank, class, gender, body, and purpose. Each of these shape and limit the extent of her reliability. She is not by necessity unreliable, but her objectivity is limited and subjectively established.

As the narrator's observations rely on her subjectivity, they carry a unique version of truth that exposes specific difficulties in objectivity. The specimens "collected" through observation become classified and named for the reader. However, in rendering the unfamiliar familiar, the narrator exposes the uncertain ontological status of the animals she describes. The list of animals that are "little rarities" rests in a language of anthropomorphism that figures the importance of the animals in a context of establishing narrative authority along with human dominion. This use of animals operates on several levels. Srinivas Aravamudan notes that lists such as these "disclose a mixture of allegorical and realist modes and rely on aesthetic amazement alongside mercantilism" (40). Brown echoes this point, noting that "the marvels here are all movable objects, readily transportable to a European setting, where they become exotic and desirable acquisitions. Behn's enumeration of these goods belongs to a widespread discourse of imperialist accumulation" (*Ends* 43). To adequately support the commodification of the animals, the narrator must figure the "amazement" in necessarily anthropocentric terms. The animals operate as commodities, exotic pets, and objects of empirical authority. However, this cannot be achieved without simultaneously casting the pets as exotic, animalistic other *and* familiar anthropomorphized creature. The narrator describes the objects of trade as "little rarities: as marmosets, a sort of monkey as big as a rat or weasel, but of a marvelous and delicate shape, and has a face and hands like an human creature: and cousheries, a little beast in the form and fashion of a lion, as big as a kitten; but so exactly made in all parts like that noble beast, that it is it in miniature" (75). Each description posits the exotic creatures within the animal world, but also pushes its wonder through a language that goes beyond the animal and imbues each creature with human qualities. The marmoset is situated between the form of a monkey and the size of a rodent. This is the empirical description, but the narrator expands the language to heighten

interest in the animal. The “marvelous and delicate shape” offers a descriptive wonder that stands in contrast to the strict physical descriptions that open the passage. Proof of this wonder rests in the anthropomorphic description that it “has a face and hands like an human creature.” Animal qualities make the marmoset comprehensible, but human qualities make it fascinating. In a similar way, but to a lesser extent, the description of the couseries performs a parallel rhetorical move. The animal is contextualized in form and size, but the significance of the creature is raised to the symbolic. The reader is reminded that it is a miniature of the “noble beast.” The human assignation of qualities like “noble” to the lion can now be applied to the couseries to raise the status of the small animal for the readers in England.

The empirical authority of the narrative cannot be built exclusively through sensory description. Instead, the narrator relies on anthropomorphic descriptions. It is as if the creatures can only serve the narrator’s purpose by becoming both exotic non-human and familiarly human. The narrator attempts to rely on descriptions of “reality” and that which is viewed by an “eye-witness,” but these descriptions expose the limits of empirical authority. The narrative relies on the narrator’s ability to name and classify the exotic animals she has encountered, but her position as a species with dominion becomes blurred by the need to imbue these creatures with human-like qualities. Doing so diminishes the distinction between human and animal, subject and object. As the marmoset has hands and a face like a human, so the human is marmoset-like. As the couseries are miniature noble beasts, noble humans become permeated with couserie qualities. The power of empiricism is limited by the narrator’s need to infuse the physical descriptions with figurative connections to that which makes her human. To observe and name is to exert ontological control, but these animals resist easy classification.

While the narrator's "specimens" reveal the problematic ontological consequences from subjective observations, the exoticism further exposes broader inconsistencies in status. Eventually located in the colonial Atlantic, Oroonoko's circumstances bring these tensions to the forefront. Catherine Molineux observes "that at the Atlantic intersection of race, gender, and status Behn could raise new questions about political authority and subjectivity. ... At the core of this novella is a crisis of representation" (457). The liminality of the setting works to strain and potentially invert established cultural hierarchies. Molineux describes the setting as "an emerging moral geography of empire located the outer edges of civility in the colonies, where planters turned heathen and heathens proved more ethical than their purportedly Christian masters" (460). The political authority in the colony is in flux. The exotic setting places an uncertainty over status, be it political, social, or ontological.

Oroonoko's arrival triggers a crisis of categorization, forcing the examination of previously naturalized hierarchies. The eponymous hero serves as the locus for a matrix of statuses. He is variously figured as human, noble human, debased human, more than human, and animal. Joanna Lipking notes that his status is not solely determined by race: "White colonists and black slaves do not face each other across a colour bar but divide along class lines around Oroonoko" (177). The imbrication of class with race complicates the social order. Black slave, black royalty, noble white colonists, and treacherous white slave owners thoroughly prohibit a simple linear hierarchy of status. Oroonoko serves as the test case that creates this confusion. "When Oroonoko is associated with the Romans of history, when he feels an allegiance to the Stuart royal line, he is not only showing a refined affinity with two prestigious European cultures but deepening the paradox of his status as 'Royal Slave'" (Lipking 174). His actions and moral codes expose the disconnect between status and honor. Though a slave owner himself, Oroonoko

necessarily eschews a slave/owner relationship revolving around race. Instead, his concept of slavery entails the subjugation of people through war and conquest. He asks his fellow slaves, why “should we be slaves to an unknown people? Have they vanquished us nobly in fight? Have they won us in honourable battle? And are we, by the chance of war, become their slaves? This would not anger a noble heart, this would not animate a soldier’s soul” (126). Their defeat would make them slaves, not their skin. In Oroonoko’s practice of slavery, the enslavement does not necessarily dehumanize the victim, as their position is the result of “honourable battle” and they maintain “noble hearts” and a “soldier’s soul.” However, the institution employed in Surinam makes Oroonoko’s view unique. His fellow slaves do not maintain his defiant insistence on status and self-worth. After the failed rebellion, he laments attempting “to make those free, who were by nature slaves” (130). Oroonoko’s position subverts the colonists’ use of race as the primary determinant for subjugation because he doesn’t ground a justification for slavery in ontological difference. For Oroonoko, slaves can maintain their honor and humanity, but not their freedom.

As opposed to Oroonoko’s definition of slavery in Africa, Surinam’s institution of slavery casts most slaves as inescapably less than human; the inevitable metaphorical comparisons to animals are eventually employed as part of the rhetoric of slavery. This rhetoric not only works to define and place human slaves in the larger chain of being, but it also carries implications for the status of the animals that are anthropomorphized in the process. Oroonoko’s discussions of the appropriate grounds for enslavement illustrate the difficulty in maintaining a clear distinction between human and non-human animal, as well as the uncertain metaphorical values assigned to particular animals. Oroonoko exclaims, “We are bought and sold like apes, or monkeys, to be the sport of women, fools and cowards, and the support of rogues, runagades,

that have abandoned their own countries, for raping, murders, thefts and villainies” (126). He considers the colonists “the wildest salvages”¹⁹ and “a degenerate race, who have no one human virtue left, to distinguish them from the vilest creatures” (126). Oroonoko’s language connects the commerce of the slave trade to the mercantile collections that characterize the narrator’s lists of animals at the beginning of the novella. Part of the slave’s function is as an ape or monkey meant for the amusement of “women, fools, and cowards.” They are, in part, exotic wonders collected as curiosities. In their economic function, slaves are used by the colonists, who are cast as “degenerate” “vilest creatures.” Having been tricked into slavery, Oroonoko exposes a divide between the status due to him by virtue, honor, and birth and that of the status assigned by slavery. His treatment belies his status and simultaneously debases those who treat him as a slave. The sufferings of the slaves “were fitter for beasts than men; senseless brutes, than human souls” (125-6). The power of Oroonoko’s critique rests in the employment of Cartesian dualism. The debasement of the slave is emphasized when his treatment is worse than that of a “senseless brute.” Oroonoko’s formulation denies the animal soul and suggests a Cartesian automatism. When the slaves “suffered not like men who might find a glory, and fortitude in oppression, but like dogs that loved the whip and bell,” they “lost the divine quality of men” (126). Oroonoko’s emphasizes the immaterial quality of the human to emphasize their behavior and debasement fitting of unthinking animals.

Oroonoko’s critique of enslavement carefully navigates a species hierarchy that holds a sharp human/animal divide. The royal and noble Oroonoko rejects his status as slave, which carries with it the treatment of an unthinking and unfeeling animal. The debasement of the slave is absolute when all semblance of humanity is erased in their treatment. However, Oroonoko’s

¹⁹ In this case, the text employs this spelling for “savages.”

position relies on a fairly traditional understanding of status. He does not grant a priori human status to all of the slaves. In the elements of his speeches, discussed above, he uses the provisional granting of humanity to the slaves to stir them into action and rebellion. However, when their actions betray his appeal to their dignity, he considers them “dogs, treacherous and cowardly, fit for such masters” (130). The novella’s critique of slavery rests primarily in the mistreatment of Oroonoko, not necessarily the rest of the slaves. Oroonoko’s royalist understanding of status renders *his* treatment objectionable. His attitude toward the other slaves ultimately undercuts the strict gulf between human and animal. In their actions, the other slaves have relinquished their claim to “divine quality of men.” The distance between human and non-human animal is not decidedly ontological. In this case it is behavioral. Oroonoko grants them agency as humans, but they elect to give it over through their inaction.

While Oroonoko’s view of his status is quite clear, the narrator’s descriptions of his behavior complicate the interaction of sense and reason, where reason is an exclusively human power. In doing so, the narrator’s descriptions also muddy clear distinctions between human and animal. Upon hearing of Imoinda receiving the royal veil from his grandfather, Oroonoko is “raised to a storm,” but “first force prevailed, and then reason” (85). After he has sacrificed Imoinda and spent two days mourning by her side, “He found his brains turn round, and his eyes were dizzy, and objects appeared not the same to him” (137). Both reason and sense shape the reactions of Oroonoko in these instances. In the first, the power of reason eventually helps subdue his rising emotions. In the second, both reason and sense are hindered by his two days of grief. Other descriptions expand the breadth of status and identity. Casting Oroonoko as more than human, the narrator describes him “like some divine power,” who was “beloved like a deity” (100, 101). In other circumstances, emotional responses are cast in animalistic terms, “the

prince resented this indignity, who may be best resembled to a lion taken in a toil; so he raged, so he struggled for liberty” (103). In this case, it is impossible to cast the lion as a senseless unthinking brute. Oroonoko’s actions can best be conveyed via allusion to a lion struggling for freedom. In another instance, “He tore, he raved, he roared, like some monster of the wood, calling on the loved name of Imoinda” (136). Immediately following Oroonoko’s brutal sacrifice of Imoinda, his emotional outpouring situates him as a wild beast. However, in defying another element of the Cartesian beast machine, Oroonoko’s reaction couples extreme emotional expression with the corresponding invocation of Imoinda by name. The combination of passion and linguistic expression prohibits any dehumanizing effect of the simile. Oroonoko and the narrator offer competing paradigms for the employment of animal metaphors. Oroonoko’s dualism when addressing the slaves uses the non-human animal as a metaphor of debasement and dehumanization, while the narrator’s usage of animal metaphors highlights emotional overflow and symbolic nobility. However, the narrator’s employment of animal metaphors is not purely symbolic. The meaning relies on the status afforded to the animals employed in her descriptions. Oroonoko’s metaphors employ a divide between divine human and material animal, while the narrator locates much more fluid and overlapping identities in the character of Oroonoko.

Oroonoko’s existence in the colony intentionally resists easy categorization. He is brought to Surinam as a “royal slave,” who “endured no more of the slave but the name” (109). In his excellent chapter on *Oroonoko*, Aravamudan discusses Oroonoko’s existence through a discourse of pethood. In doing so, Aravamudan powerfully shows the complexity of Oroonoko’s status: “Whereas one process, such as slavery, involves the dehumanization of Africans, pet keeping anthropomorphizes the animal world. Oroonoko, renamed Caesar, is forced to

participate in a logic that entails the investiture as well as the divestiture of subjectivity. For the female narrator he is a human pet as well as an enslaved African prince” (39). Oroonoko’s complex status requires a fluid and contingent understanding of the ontological overlap between human, human slave, animal, and pet animal. The necessary anthropomorphism of pet-keeping elevates and humanizes the pet. In this case, it is Oroonoko’s role as animalized slave that makes him eligible for status as anthropomorphized pet. The status of the pet is greater than that of the slave. However, the making of Oroonoko’s status undercuts any certainty in that status.

Aravamudan writes:

As pet-king, Oroonoko resists appropriation through the very forms and visible material marks that delimit his status. To sketch this process out in literal terms is also to expose such investiture as ludicrous. In the rush to affirm Oroonoko’s humanity, the narrator disavows her specific cathexis of him as pet. Her empathy flows through both anthropomorphism and identification. Both processes are delusive, as the former involves reducing human beings to animals and then paradoxically retrieving them as pets, whereas the latter is a political fantasy of aristocratic self-fashioning by secondary revision a quarter century later. (44-5)

Oroonoko’s status is contingent and shifting throughout the text. Perhaps the inability to fix Oroonoko’s place in European hierarchies does more to undermine the epistemological base of those hierarchies than it does to revise the mere order within the hierarchy. Molineux argues that the novella investigates the “transitory nature of conquest ... illuminating the instabilities of social and political bonds by emphasizing the instability of signification” (471). The inability to firmly delineate status and political authority extends beyond Oroonoko. “The narration’s ruptures and ambiguities highlight the contingencies of representation and the storyteller’s

political power. In so doing, they trouble any final evaluation of the narrator's character, enacting the representational crisis that lies at the heart of this exotic tale" (478). The novella problematizes and questions established hierarchies through the constant revision of status and the way it is contingently represented. The instability of value relations functions through several paradigms: male/female, slave/master, European/African, *and* human/animal. Ultimately, Behn leaves many of the problematized relationships unresolved (or at least debatable), as evidenced by the myriad positions available in decades of criticism. The crisis of representation includes that of showing a clear ontological hierarchy for humans and animals. Animal ontology is destabilized as animals become metaphorical devices and objects that support objective truth.

However, these ambiguities regarding signification do have material consequences for Oroonoko, which stem from his status as metaphorical pet. Ultimately, his ability to transgress the limits imposed upon him by some of the colonists leads to his execution. Status inconsistencies pervade the description of Oroonoko's judgement. The governor's council "consisted of such notorious villains as Newgate never transported, and possibly originally were such, who understood neither the laws of God or man, and had no sort of principles to make them worthy the name of men" (133-34). His execution is meant to serve as a warning to the other slaves, dissuading them "from daring to threaten their betters, their lords and masters" (134). These descriptions continue to highlight the problematic status hierarchies that have been explored through Oroonoko throughout the story. He is a better person than the governor and his council, yet they hold political authority over him. Oroonoko's execution is politically expedient. However, the execution also operates in accordance with Oroonoko's status as royal pet to the narrator. "The entire colony is aware of Oroonoko's pethood and the special dispensation his supporters demand for him. Like the many cruel attacks on dogs, horses, and deer leading up to

the Black Act of 1723, Oroonoko's especially barbaric execution is a deliberate violation of live property" (Aravamudan 46). Oroonoko's punishment serves not only as retribution for his rebellion, but also as multiple warnings. "The callousness with which he is mutilated sends a very deliberate message – to the surviving slaves, warning them against rebellion, but also to the pretensions of the narrator's opposition to Byam" (Aravamudan 46). Though Oroonoko's status as pet is metaphorical, it carries material consequences. His execution may have been juridical, but it is also symbolic. Even as the warning is intended for the narrator, it is Oroonoko's body that suffers the consequences.

Oroonoko's role as pet, slave, rebellion leader, and prince situates his status as transcategorical, which proves enlightening for the questioning of colonial authority and slavery. Further, this status complexity frames the particular difficulties of defining what it means to be human, and what it means to have dominion. Oroonoko's encounters with two separate tigers offer an intersection of human and non-human animals where the narrative struggles to maintain clear distinctions between categories. The narrator opens the passage about Oroonoko's slaying of the second tiger by describing the havoc that the tiger has been creating for the livestock of the colonists. It begins, "Another time, being in the woods, he killed a tiger, which had long infested that part, and borne away abundance of sheep and oxen, and other things, that were for the support of those to whom they belonged" (118). It should be no surprise the livestock "belonged" to the colonists. However, the very presence of the tiger questions this ownership. The tiger's dominion over the livestock presents a competing basis for dominion. In this case, domestication serves not only the domesticators, but also the predator that remains untamed. The uncertainty of dominion cannot be divorced from its setting in Surinam. The distance of the colony from the locus of British power also distances the level of civilization from that of the British Isles.

However, the moderate liminality of Surinam is precisely the place where British citizens must confront their position in the chain of being. The narrator notes that an “abundance of people assailed this beast, some affirming they had shot her with several bullets quite through the body, at several times, and some swearing they shot her through the very heart” (118). The people of Surinam are unable to exercise dominion over the tiger. Because of this inability, some colonists assumed her to be “a devil rather than a mortal thing,” but Oroonoko soon disproves this assertion. The tiger competes with the people of Surinam for any claim they may make for being superior beings, but Oroonoko supplants the dominance of the tiger with his own prowess.

The physical confrontation between Oroonoko and the tiger represents both Oroonoko and the tiger with a fluidity of language that casts each as both beast and human. The tiger is anthropomorphized and animalistic, while Oroonoko is heroic and dehumanized. The grotesqueness of the tiger “muzzling in the belly of a new ravished sheep” (118) contrasts the other details noted by the narrator. “They heard her voice, growling and grumbling, as if she were pleased with something she were doing,” and she “set a very fierce raging look on Caesar ... for fear ... of losing what she had in possession” (118). The narrator also notes that the tiger is “more eager of her prey than of doing new mischiefs” (119). The comment adds a strange meaning to the actions of the tiger. She implies that the tiger’s poaching of livestock is merely doing mischief. The “mischief” is an anthropomorphized recasting of the tiger’s normal desire to eat. The anthropomorphism is arbitrarily applied to actions that have already been represented as proof of the tiger’s predatory instinct. Though these descriptions are in keeping with the gory consumption of a dead sheep, they anthropomorphize the tiger and add a measured consideration to her actions. She is “fierce and raging” to warn Oroonoko and “fears” losing her kill. The “courageous animal” is anthropomorphized to raise the prestige of Oroonoko’s conquest over the

tiger. While the animal's human qualities enhance the valor of Oroonoko's actions, he is simultaneously dehumanized in the process. His skill with an arrow and triumphant return cast Oroonoko as the hero of the anecdote. However, immediately after Oroonoko kills the tiger, he "cut him [the tiger] open with a knife, to see where those wounds were that had been reported to him, and why he did not die of them" (119). In this moment, Oroonoko's exploration of the tiger's dead body mirrors the "muzzling in the belly of a new ravished sheep" that had taken place moments earlier. Though the actions mimic those of the tiger, the motives are different. Oroonoko is also converted into dissecting scientist, exploring a specimen in order to improve knowledge. Oroonoko performs the paradox of dominion and empirical science. Through his domination of the tiger and his search for evidence of the truth of the stories that were told by failed hunters, he becomes dehumanized in the process. Oroonoko is made animalistic by mirroring the image of the tiger digging through the sheep's belly. The impression created by this story is heightened through the fluidity of the each actor's role as human and animal. In doing so, the distinction between the two categories becomes fluid by extension.

The dehumanization of Oroonoko in this interaction may be attributed to his status as a slave, and hence, less than human. But as Aravamudan and others have suggested, the importance of Behn's narrative is that it resists simple acceptance of a distinction between slave and owner. Oroonoko is a royal slave who is both more human and less human than the colonists, with all of the complex implications that come with such a formulation. Further, the role of this interaction is as much about narrative truth as it is a symbolic example of Oroonoko's greatness. The narrator closes the story of Oroonoko's interaction with the tiger: "This heart the conqueror brought up to us, and 'twas a very great curiosity, which all the country came to see; and which gave Caesar occasion of many fine discourses, of accidents in war, and strange

escapes” (119). This action affords Oroonoko the opportunity to narrate further heroic exploits to the awaiting audience. The tidy end to the anecdote still mingles the grotesque with the scientific. The heart of the creature is presented as both evidence of Oroonoko’s killing, but also as empirical evidence of the tiger’s longevity and resistance to bullets. The spectacle of a dissected heart is balanced with the proof of narrative truth that it supports. Oroonoko re-enacts the narrator’s establishment of credibility through the power of the collector. Instead of the narrator’s offering of detailed lists of plants and animals, Oroonoko presents those gathered with the disembodied heart of the tiger. The organ legitimizes the stories of the colonists and proves Oroonoko’s valor and skill.

Oroonoko’s encounter with the first tiger exhibits similar fluctuations in the status of human and non-human animal alike, initially switching the roles of the tiger and Oroonoko. In one of her characteristic asides, the narrator offers tales of the “sports,” after announcing that “all things by Nature there are rare, delightful and wonderful” (117). Ironically, what follows is a description of the colonists disturbing and abusing nature. She writes, “Sometimes we would go surprising, and in search of young tigers in their dens, watching when the old ones went forth to forage for prey” (117). Their “sport” prefigures the complaint about the second tiger. Instead of subverting the ownership of livestock as the tiger does, the colonists and Oroonoko threaten the motherhood of the tiger. The associated “mischief” of each party comes together in this confrontation: “[Oroonoko] was with us, who had no sooner stolen a young tiger from her nest, but going off, we encountered the dam, bearing a buttock of a cow, which he had torn off with his mighty paw, and going with it towards his den” (117). As the tiger returns from stealing a portion of livestock, Oroonoko is caught stealing a cub. Oroonoko and the tiger both drop their prizes as the cat races toward Oroonoko. He manages to assert his dominant position through his

gaze²⁰ and physical presence. The former establishes metaphorical control while the latter exercises physical supremacy. As the narrator describes, “Fixing his awful stern eyes full upon those of the beast, and putting himself into a very steady and good aiming posture of defence, [Oroonoko] ran his sword quite through his breast down to his very heart, home to the hilt of the sword” (117). Though Oroonoko wins the physical duel against both tigers, the second tiger threatens Oroonoko through her gaze when she “set a very fierce raging look on [Oroonoko]” (118). Of this passage, Kelley Wezner explains that “this assertive movement out of the object position also leads to the unsettling of a traditional dominant role ... A tiger and Oroonoko both return gazes that wrest power away, disturbing an established hierarchy. A female tiger menacing the countryside is described in terms of gaze and resistance to gaze” (18). In these two encounters with tigers, Oroonoko serves as the mischief maker and the executioner of a mischief maker. Even as Oroonoko emerges “victorious” in each encounter, the subject and object positions fluctuate between the tigers and Oroonoko. The exchanges simultaneously valorize and dehumanize Oroonoko. The consequences for the tigers destabilize their ontological status by exposing the tensions resultant from their material presence and their metaphorical importance. As physical beings, they are anthropomorphized nuisances. As symbolic conquests, they are beastly and menacing, yet elevated in status as to make Oroonoko’s conquest more impressive.

Immediately following the anecdotes about the tigers, the narrator reveals Oroonoko’s fragility at the hands of an eel. More than simply threatening via gaze and gestures, the eel upends the dominance that had just been conveyed through Oroonoko’s killing of the tigers. More than simply for sport, Oroonoko seeks out the numb eel as an act of direct scientific

²⁰ In “Trouble in the Empire of the Gaze,” Larry Riggs connects the importance of the gaze to the seventeenth-century obsession with optics and perspective (125). The power of the gaze stems from the epistemological changes happening during the Enlightenment.

experimentation. As the colonists tell Oroonoko about the debilitating powers of the eel, he “used to laugh at this, and believed it impossible a man could lose his force at the touch of a fish ... However, he had a great curiosity to try whether it would have had the same effect on him it had on others” (119). This episode imbricates the epistemological need to know through personal experience and the application of sense experience to scientific exploration. McKeon describes Oroonoko in this scene “as gentleman virtuoso of the Royal society” (*Origins* 113).²¹ As Oroonoko rejects the stories of the numb eel and seeks the answers for himself, he displays “the credulous faith that human inventions may thus be replaced by immediate perception and experience” (McKeon *Origins* 113). Already imbued in the act of scientific study, asserting dominion over the eel is the primary goal of Oroonoko. He seeks out the eel in order to satisfy his disbelief that an eel could exercise such control over a man. Further, he questions the power and control of the people who were reportedly overcome by the shock, suggesting that it may not have the same effect on him. Of course, this attitude of dominance aligns with the overall status of Oroonoko, a prince who vanquishes men and tigers alike, due to his superior valor and honor. However, this episode ends differently: “For experiment sake, he grasped [the eel] but harder, and fainting fell into the river” (120). The shock almost leads Oroonoko to death. “If [Oroonoko] were almost dead, with the effect of this fish, he was more so with that of the water, where he had remained the space of going a league, and they found they had much ado to bring him back to life” (120). In these moments, the hierarchy of dominion is subverted as even Oroonoko succumbs to the eel. The very process meant to justify man’s dominion, the scientific exploration and knowing of nature, instead leads to the uncovering of his frailty. Oroonoko is “not a little

²¹ Hayden makes a similar claim about Oroonoko, adding that his scientific role is granted by Behn because the female narrator could “hardly be accepted as ... a ‘scientific’ adventurer and explorer” (“Far” 131). However, Behn and her narrator have clearly established observational and narrative authority through “scientific” sensory observations, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

ashamed to find he should be overcome by an eel, and that all the people, who heard his defiance, would laugh at him” (120). Of course, once the colonists become involved, the ethic of human dominion is re-established, suggesting that nature (or in this case, an eel) may overcome a single person, but the weight of people will eventually triumph. The narrator assuages Oroonoko’s embarrassment by cooking the eel for dinner, allowing him to “reassert his master over that which nearly destroyed him” (Aravamudan 61). The status of the eel and Oroonoko are rightfully ordered once again.

The scenes with the tigers and the eel reveal the tenuous and shifting status of animals in Surinam, but it is also important to note that these occasions are not directly included in the larger narrative arc of the story. They fill out Oroonoko’s character, but they primarily exist as anecdotes providing details of historicity and credibility to the narrator’s tale. The sporting and exploring exploits of Oroonoko contribute to the veracity of the narrative much in the same way the narrator’s lists of rarities and claims of witness help establish believability. Interestingly, it is the reliance on first person account and sensory-derived claims to truth that provide the context for representing these complex interactions between human and non-human animals. An empirical epistemology creates the difficulty of maintaining clear ontological division when imbuing the interactions with meaning. The metaphorical and material schisms that occur when the tigers are anthropomorphized in metaphor and made beastly in material description stem from the story’s grounding in empirical epistemology. The attempt to scientifically know (and presumably conquer) the eel directly leads to the temporary suspension of human dominion. The reliance on sensory perception and the grounding of truth in that perception create the context for exposing the instability of the ontological status of animals.

The changing foundations of knowledge arising from the epistemological shifts of the seventeenth century create a paradigm where clear distinctions between animals and humans are blurred, and at times inverted. Behn's story exposes this fluidity through its reliance on sensory perceptions to make narrative truth. The sensory corroboration works with anthropomorphic metaphors to create a dialectic of truth, which results in a dialectic of status relations between human and non-human animals. An epistemology that was often seen to grant humans special status and reinforce their dominion because of reason (particularly in the hands of Descartes or in the case of the Royal Society, which will be discussed in a later chapter), ultimately renders animal ontology tenuous and shifting. *Oroonoko* narratively exposes the more direct implications discussed in Rochester's "Satyr." The role of sense in making knowledge necessarily highlights the common animality of all material beings. We all share sensory perception. The degree to which these perceptions are prioritized structures the relationship between man and beast. When Rochester questions the primacy of reason, he directly subverts the primacy of humans in the chain of being. The interaction between sense and reason comes to define the emerging epistemology of the age, and because reason is (thought to be) exclusively the purview of humans, the new epistemology shapes animal ontology and human/animal divides. As Locke and Descartes (and Hobbes) describe the roles of sense and reason differently, they also disagree about the nature of animals. Rochester's investigation and Behn's application of a sense-reason epistemology further expose the range of consequences for animals as humans reshape the way they understand the world.

THE CHAIN OF BEING AND HUMAN ASPIRATION: ANIMAL USAGE IN POPE AND DEFOE

The chain of being provides a powerful paradigm for understanding the relationship between species in the eighteenth century. The metaphor proves particularly apt due to the flexibility with which it can be interpreted. Because it is variously used to explain man's dominion over all other creatures and to emphasize man's fallen nature, the chain offers a flexible measure for analyzing the relative ontological status of humans and animals. The relative status of animals within the chain depends upon humans. Human aspiration is an important determinant in which way the chain metaphor cuts. Belief in upward human mobility emphasizes human specialness, while less optimistic views of human potential emphasize man's animal nature. The view of human status carries direct consequences for the ontological status of animals, as humans directly shape the status and lived experience of animals. An inflated view of human status grants greater power to the human. This power can be used justify dominion over animals, lowering the ontological status of the animal. Man's view of himself within the chain of being provides an important point of analysis for determining animal ontology.

Alexander Pope and Daniel Defoe offer different views of the extent to which humans submit to their place in the larger order or aspire to improve it. Pope continually urges submission and an acceptance of the limitations of man. Defoe has a similar respect for the larger order of beings, but often focuses on submission to not necessarily hierarchy, but to the dictates of providence. Because of this, Defoe can often be seen supporting a greater degree of mobility

for a person's station in the world. While Pope continually requires a person to submit to the intellectual, artistic, and social order as well as the more grand cosmic hierarchy, Defoe's Dissenting religious affiliation places much more emphasis on the ability of the individual to decide their place in the world or to seek to alter it.

The contrasting positions of Defoe and Pope show that their differing attitudes carry consequences for the representation of animals in their works. Pope's urge to limit human aspiration is accompanied by a call to avoid directly hindering the lives of non-human animals. Because human knowledge is limited, Pope insists that only God, not man, can determine the ontological status of animals. For Pope, animals exist for their own sake. Defoe maintains a more optimistic view of human aspiration. Because humans occupy a definitively higher ontological status, Defoe's animals tend to maintain a relatively lower and more tenuous status. The trend that emerges is that when humans are viewed with caution, skepticism, and pessimism, non-human animals maintain relatively equivocal status alongside human animals. Conversely, when humans see themselves as either elevated in a value-laden hierarchy or optimistically hope that they may significantly improve their station in life, animals occupy a relatively lowered status.

In this chapter I will explore the different ontological status of animals in the works of Pope in Defoe. Human aspiration and the resultant strength of the human/animal binary forms an investigative framework for understanding animal ontology within the chain of being. Elevated human status enforces the binary and deepens it. Raised human status does not pull animals up, too. Diminished human status has the opposite effect. Human ontology is lowered, but animals are not depressed further in order to reinforce the human/animal binary. Thus, their relative ontological position with respect to humans remains higher. I will begin with Pope's *Essay on Man*. Based on his demand to submit to the larger order of chain, Pope calls for humans to

respect not only their limitation, but the right of other creatures to exist according to their God-given nature. Pope rejects anthropocentric determinations of animal ontology. As a result, Pope minimizes the importance of the human/animal binary, resulting in a more free lived experience for animals. I will then look to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as a contrast to Pope's rejection of anthropocentrism. Crusoe's narrative is driven by aspiration that is religious, economic, social, and political. The narrative develops a strong human/animal binary, effectively rendering a lowered and more tenuous animal ontology because it is determined by human needs. Human aspiration or restraint directly shapes the ontological status of the animals in these texts.

Pope's *Essay on Man* is perhaps the most comprehensive and widely discussed work for the eighteenth-century concept of the chain of being. In his design for the poem, Pope announces that "to prove any moral duty to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what *condition* and *relation* it is placed in, and what is the proper *end* and *purpose* of its *being*" (270).¹ Though Pope primarily deals with the nature and state of man, the poem does so through the larger cosmic order, inherently shaping the state and role for "any creature whatsoever." In Pope's construction of the chain, what emerges is an order that properly places divided and flawed humans in a material existence alongside non-human animals. In focusing the moral argument of the *Essay* on knowing and keeping one's place in the cosmic order, Pope also reaches the conclusion that each place on the scale of being must exist for its own end. As such, focusing on the limitations of humans results in a stable and independently validated status for non-human animals.

At the heart of Pope's *Essay* rests the dual nature of humans, forever "in doubt to deem himself a god, or beast; / In doubt his mind or body to prefer" (II.8-9). It is the acknowledgment

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all references to Pope are from *The Major Works* Oxford edition (ed Rogers). Poems will be referenced by line number.

of this dual nature that has led in part to much of the criticism of the poem, concluding that as a philosophical text it is contradictory and inconsistent.² However, in his book-length study, Harry Solomon critiques these attacks as being limited by either a Logocentric or Aesthetic discourse. Instead, Solomon insists that Pope's correct recognition of man's dual nature requires a more complex, dual hermeneutic. Solomon explains:

Modern criticism cannot sympathetically share Pope's "fundamental intent" because it does not acknowledge his Academic dialect; instead of respecting his "bounds," it erects interpretative borders of its own. The "fundamental intent" of most criticism, I argued earlier, is to put Pope in his place, to stop a disorienting dissemination of meanings, to pronounce the final word on the *Essay*. That proving impossible, Pope is pronounced out of bounds and stigmatized as a philosophical simpleton oblivious to incoherence and self-contradiction." (147)

Pope's detractors elide the importance of the poem to his contemporaries and respected subsequent readers. Notably, Voltaire, Hume, Rousseau, and Kant granted the large impact of the poem. Solomon argues that Pope's varied use of metaphor and contradiction strengthens his philosophical vision and the poem as a whole. He concludes, "Pope's Academic Skepticism admits the recalcitrance of reality to our human categories; but, within the limits of that regulative proviso, Pope creates a compelling metaphorical world of great density and comprehensiveness" (181). However, the comprehensive richness of Pope's metaphors reside in observation of the material world. As Fred Parker argues, "Pope's philosophical poetry declines the purity of abstraction, but insists on the incarnation of thought as experience, in a way that flows from the exercise of an essentially skeptical intelligence" (87). As Solomon succinctly

² Most notably, see A.D. Nuttall's *Pope's "Essay on Man."*

explains, “Far from indicating argumentative inconsistency, Pope’s doubleness of tone is his consistent working out of a rhetoric suited to man’s middle state” (95). Duality, tension, contradiction, and provisional understanding of human knowledge function at the foundation of Pope’s description of the cosmic order.³ Ironically, these attributes of tenuousness eventually serve to solidify and justify the ontological status of animals apart from dependence on and use by humans.

Most important to the establishment of ontological order in the *Essay* is the flawed and divided nature of humans. Pope continually highlights the proper placement of people within the scale. Near the end of Epistle I, Pope summarizes, “Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree / Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee” (I.283-84). The insistence on knowing one’s proper place consistently rests in the suppression of human exceptionalism. Knowing “thy own point” requires the acceptance of a Heaven-bestowed weakness and blindness. Pope captures the inherent, inescapable bind that humans must confront. Solomon expands the situation, noting that “ultimate questions are undecidable because the aporia – the point of doubt – in the world’s great text is human nature itself. The self is an interpretive impasse, source of opposing and incompatible perspectives” (64). Solomon notes that the answers generated by the objective self and the subjective self necessarily differ. As such, “Unless it arbitrarily chooses to privilege one perspective over another, the honest self must speak against itself in, literally, ‘self-contradiction’” (Solomon 64). For Pope, this difficulty is not one to be overcome. Man’s contradictory state is an inherent feature of being. He explains:

Then say not Man’s imperfect, Heaven in fault;

³ Mark E. Wildermuth’s “‘And Anarchy without Confusion Know’: The Dynamics of Chaos in Pope’s an ‘Essay on Man’” acknowledges Solomon’s critique of the complaints against the poem. However, Wildermuth suggests that current work in chaology and its precursor in eighteenth-century thought provide a more complete way of reading a coherent metaphysics and ethics in the *Essay*.

Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge measure to his state and place,
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
The blessed to-day is as completely so,
As who began a thousand years ago. (I.69-76)

The opening of the passage reinforces the imperfection of human knowledge. In being “as perfect as he *ought*,” man falls short of his self-described notion of perfection. Any attainment of perfection is only that which remains appropriate for a particular sphere. Further, appropriate placement spans temporal considerations. The current state is as it was “a thousand years ago.” Pope emphasizes that the problem for man is ontological in nature, not developmental. The measure of knowledge appropriate to man is static. Granting the imperfection of knowledge, Pope disavows that any advancement of humans can alter their being in kind. This position is echoed in a letter Pope wrote to Addison in December of 1713. He writes, “Good God! What an incongruous Animal is Man? how unsettled in his best Part, his Soul; and how changing and variable in his Frame of Body? ... What is Man altogether, but one mighty Inconsistency! Sickness and Pain is the Lot of one half of us; Doubt and Fear the Portion of the other!” (*Letters* 203). In his assertions, Pope extends the divisiveness of being to the elements of Cartesian dualism. The subjective-objective tensions of thought and feeling are put further at odds with the material sensations of the body. Even within a pessimism that classifies human existence as driven by sickness, pain, doubt, and fear, Pope maintains the impossibility for cohesive and coherent existence. The faults of human existence rest in these eternal inconsistencies.

Because humans are by creation and status within the chain necessarily flawed, Pope holds that the proper mode of existence is to submit to the larger order of the scale. In the oft cited passage that concludes Epistle I, Pope explains:

All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony, not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, 'Whatever is, is RIGHT.' (I.289-94)

Notably, each element combined through Pope's anaphora unites contradictory notions as part of the unified, proper order. What is "right," as ordained by God, consists of the inclusion of the binaries nature/art, chance/direction, discord/harmony, partial evil/universal good. Further, these coexisting dichotomies operate outside of the human understanding of truth. They are variously "unknown to thee," "which though canst not see," and "not understood." In proclaiming the propriety of "whatever is," Pope both captures the seemingly contradictory nature of the world and the limits of human understanding of that same world. The attitude of humanity within its placement in the chain should be acceptance. Pope asserts, "Submit – in this, or any other sphere, / Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear" (I.285-86). The qualifier of "any other sphere" extends Pope's edict beyond the consideration of the role of humans in the cosmic order. Submission and acceptance of God's will become a tenet of faith. In a letter to Swift in 1733, as Pope laments the loss of Gay and considers the possibility of not seeing Swift before one of them should pass, he replicates the line from the *Essay*:

I now vehemently wish, you and I might walk into the grave together, by as slow steps as you please, but contentedly and cheerfully: whether that ever can be, or in what country, I know no more, than into what country we shall walk out of the grave. But it suffices me to know it will be exactly what region or state our Maker appoints, and that whatever *Is*, is *Right*. (309-10)

Even in matters of friendship, Pope recognizes that he can hope for no more than what is appointed by the Maker. Moreover, whatever may be appointed by God is right, suggesting that to hope for anything other than what is appointed is to desire what is wrong. Submission to what *is*, no matter its seeming incoherence or contradiction, is the role of man.

Given the imperative to submit, Pope focuses his corrective ethic on halting the impulse to raise one's sphere. He characterizes the competing human impulses: "Two principles in human nature reign; / Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain" (II.53-54). This formulation emphasizes the staid characterization of man. Reason, considered to be that which separates human from non-human animal, serves primarily to limit aspirations of humanity, not serve as the foundation for those aspirations. Earlier in the poem, Pope asserts that "to reason right is to submit" (I.164). The consistent aim throughout much of Pope's polemic is to restrain the hopes of human advancement toward a higher portion of the scale. "Pope's admonition to 'Reas'ning Pride' is not to submit to revelation but to acknowledge the limits of its competence" (Solomon 76). The limits of reason cannot be overstated. It is man's faith in reason that frequently leads to the sort of aspiration Pope warns against.

Were humans to achieve the objects of their yearning, the rightness of the chain would be violated. Destruction of the ontological order must be avoided. In one of the *Essay's* most powerful passages, Pope warns:

In pride, reasoning pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blessed abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel;
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of ORDER, sins against th' eternal cause. (I.123-30)

Understood through the metaphor of the scale, God's will requires the stable existence of each link in the chain. Without the proper application of reason to restrain man's self-love, the cosmic order becomes inverted. Here, the sin is not just in traversing the cosmic order, but even in the aspiration to advance up the scale. Pope's logic begins with reasoning pride. Simply giving into reasoning pride, man commits the sin of quitting his sphere. Man's rebellion rests in simply "aspiring" to be angels. The fault also works in the other direction in the chain:

Now looking downwards, just as grieved appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the powers of all? (I.175-78)

The same violation of harmony occurs if man captures the attributes of those below him on the scale. The completeness of the chain requires each scale to maintain its different attributes. Man's aspirations cannot be directed toward fulfilling faults or lacks in the ordained human condition of weakness and division. Pope later warns that Heaven laughs at the "vain toil" of those who attempt "still to rise" and eventually "buries madmen in the heaps they raise" (IV.73-

76). Pope's warnings serve to limit the aggrandizement of human potential. "Pope creates a context that 'abates self-esteem' and encourages 'lowliness of mind'" (Solomon 99). Pope continually represents a deflated sense of the human position. He consistently curbs expectations and cautions against the devastating effects that necessarily follow the refusal to submit.

As the *Essay* punctures the bubble of a heightened view of human reasoning and pride, it strengthens a diminished view of man. It examines the qualities unique to man and subverts the power of those qualities to provide great separation from the other animals of the material world. The placement of man as the link between beast and angel rhetorically flatters through its connection to the higher beings, but objectively challenges that adulation when scientific enquiry looks for empirical evidence of man's place in the chain. Geoffrey Tillotson explains:

The attempt to come to see what was common to all men led in the eighteenth century, as in earlier ages, to the quasi-scientific search for a differentia marking off man from his neighbours inferior and superior on the Scale of Being. These neighbours and the creatures who occupied the rungs stretching in both directions farther and farther away from man did not offer a like solid material for investigation. Accordingly animals and insects, apes and "the green myriads in the peopled grass", were explored more earnestly than the angelic creatures occupying the rungs higher than man. (27)

That which can be observed and studied necessarily suggests that man's material nature is more easily reinforced than his connection with ethereal beings. Pope echoes this reality in the *Essay* as the distinctions between the material rungs on the chain become ever so slight. According to the argument of Epistle I, "The gradations of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason; that reason alone countervails all the other faculties" (272). However, the explanation in the poem

belies the apparent confidence of the summarizing assertion. Though reason acts as the barrier between human and non-human animal, the separation is minimal: “What thin partitions sense from thought divide” (I.226). Much of the section is devoted to praising the unique talents of different animals. Noticeably, Pope praises “the spider’s touch, how exquisitely fine!” (I.17) and “the nice bee, what sense so subtly true / From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew” (I.19-20). As the passage concludes, Pope reinforces the supremacy of reason, but he can only do so through questions:

Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected these to those, or all to thee?
The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these powers in one? (I.229-32)

Though Pope manages to maintain the importance of reason, these passages reflect the role of reason as a restraint to human ambition, rather than a driver of it. The representation of reason is consistently muted while the attributes of “lower” creatures are praised beyond the corresponding abilities in people. While Pope may be inverting the presupposed position of eighteenth-century convention, this sort of rhetorical inversion remains fairly consistent throughout the *Essay*.

While Pope grants the uniqueness of human reason, he also constructs further limits to the extent to which it grants human superiority to other animals. In order to clarify the boundaries of reason, Pope can only turn to analogous limitations of animals. Pope draws the parallel:

When the proud steed shall know why Man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o’er the plains;

When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god;
Then shall Man's pride and dullness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's, use and end;
Why doing, suffering, checked, impelled; and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity. (I.61-68)

The steed, ox, and man are all connected through their unknowing. Even man's reason, shaped by "pride and dullness" cannot afford him any more ability to know final causes or justifications than the "proud steed" or the "dull ox." The parallel usage of pride and dull to variously describe the horse and the ox grants man the possession of both characteristics. However, the combination does nothing to distinguish man's knowing above that of the other animals. The unity of comprehension is that of *not* knowing. A similar limitation is drawn regarding more distant knowledge, that of the afterlife. Pope presents a levelling of earthly creatures: "The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed today, / Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?" (I.81-2). The lamb's lack of knowledge is not unique, though:

Oh blindness to the future! Kindly given,
That each may fill the circle marked by Heaven;
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall" (I.85-88)

The passage suggests that the "blindness" pertains to those creatures below man on the scale. However, the sense of hierarchy in the scale is levelled by the final two lines. God's view sees all equally, and as such, a synthesis of equality is achieved by equating the ends of a hero and a sparrow. Pope extends the equivocation through metaphor as he instructs the reader to wait "with

trembling pinions” (I.91) because “what future bliss, [God] gives not thee to know, / But gives that hope to be thy blessing now” (I.93-4). The future remains uncertain to human and non-human animals alike. In Pope’s usual style, the assumed separation between hero and sparrow dissipates in the span of a single line.

Though Pope maintains that the role of reason is to restrain the aspirations of humans, he further argues that reason is in itself only a minor distinction between the human and non-human animal. Pope looks to examples from nature to undercut the insistence of science that reason is the foundation of man’s ability to know and learn. He asks, “Who taught the nations of the field and wood / To shun their poison and to choose their food?” (III.99-100). Examples of nature’s ability include the spider’s “parallel design” (III.103) and the stork’s “Columbus-like” exploration (III.105). These comparisons work within the dual paradigm of man’s driving nature, the tug between reason and sense, or instinct. In an extended comparison, Pope devalues the supremacy of reason over instinct:

Reason, however able, cool at best,
Cares not for service, or but serves when pressed,
Stays till we call, and then not often near;
But honest instinct comes a volunteer;
Sure never to o’er-shoot, but just to hit,
While still too wide or short is human wit;
Sure by quick nature happiness to gain,
Which heavier reason labours at in vain. (III.85-92)

The contrast shows reason a fickle and sometimes flawed attribute “not often near,” while “honest instinct” stands ready to “volunteer.” Stemming from man’s flawed and divided nature,

any human attribute is destined to be fallible. Even the frequently lauded wit remains “still too wide or short.” While reason may “o’er-shoot,” instinct reliably hits its target. The final line reinforces reason’s inability to do more than serve its limiting function. In this passage, Pope not only undercuts, but reverses any assumed hierarchical function of the chain. The trait, reason, that separates human from non-human can only labour in vain to gain happiness.

The distinctions between human folly and animal purity shape the relationship between Belinda and her lapdog, Shock, in *The Rape of the Lock*. While Pope satirizes the world of Belinda, Shock simultaneously becomes a part of the perverseness of high society while also revealing his distance from it. However, Pope’s satire is not without complexity. As Maynard Mack notes, “Pope represents the absurdities of the fashionable world with affection, and with an eye to the delicate beauties that its best graces unfold” (255). In many ways, Shock’s existence becomes tied up in the absurdities of Belinda’s world. “Shock is equally ineffectual: the dog may be fond and fawning, but he cannot protect Belinda; in fact, he is simply one of her many objects of beauty. ... Pope’s sense of the uselessness of such dogs (and hence of their owners) can be seen in the way he heaps them together with other rare objects that mean little beyond adornment” (Kevin Gardner 228). However, Shock seems to be affected by the perversions of Belinda’s world without being fully implicated in them. As Pope describes in the opening lines, “Now lapdogs give themselves the rousing shake, / And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake” (I.15-16). The dogs’ circadian rhythms are equally skewed along with their owners’. However, Shock resists the shift. Ariel explains that “Shock, who thought she slept too long, / Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue” (I.115-16). Though Shock is one of the adornments of Belinda’s world, he still possesses an agency and awareness no longer held by the pieces of tortoise and elephant that make up her combs. His awareness works against Belinda’s desire to

sleep all day. Later in the poem, the animals appear to sense the danger that surrounds Belinda. Pope includes the animals amongst other omens: “Nay Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind! / A sylph too warned me of the threats of fate, / In mystic visions, now believed too late!” (IV.164-66). As Belinda notes that a “sylph *too* warned” of the “threats of fate,” Shock’s behavior serves as the caution that precedes the sylph. In Belinda’s supercilious world, the dog’s instinct operates more effectively than her ability to spot danger. However, unable to see the value in his initial warning, Belinda renders Shock ineffectual through her problematized high-society worldview. Belinda’s powers of perception and distinction are limited: “Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast, / When husbands, or when lapdogs breath their last” (III.157-58). A similar parallel is drawn later in the poem: “Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall, / Men, monkeys, lapdogs, parrots, perish all!” (IV.119-120). In each passage, the value of life is leveled as the frivolity of Belinda’s life creates death and destruction in Pope’s mock-heroic poem. To the satirized wealthy classes, man, dog, and monkey carry equal distinction as adornments to society life. However, within the poem, the animals display a common sense and agency that is missing from any of the human characters. Shock’s instinct and behavior are more knowing than Belinda’s ability to understand.

In the *Essay*, Pope makes clear the relationship between reason and instinct as he further degrades the preeminence of reason. Instead, Pope stresses the primacy of nature and the ways in which reason owes much to what was granted naturally to animals through instinct. He writes, “See him from nature rising slow to art! / To copy instinct then was reason’s part” (III.169-70). The voice of nature then commands man to “go, from the creatures thy instructions take” (III.172). Nature lists the many lessons to be taken from various animals (birds, beasts, bees, moles, worms, nautilus) and captures the expanse of knowledge to be gained by following the

lead of instinct: “Here too all forms of social union find, / And hence let reason, late, instruct mankind” (III.179-80). The knowledge of man becomes secondary in this passage. Marjorie Nicolson and G.S. Rousseau note the inverted hierarchy: “Far from counting himself lord and master of the lower orders, let Man consider the extent to which man in the past put himself to school to animals” (101). More than simply learning skills from the instincts of animals, humans owe a greater debt to the natural world. Because the skills learned from animals include what food to eat, how to plow, build, and weave, Courtney Smith extends the foundational reach of nature and instinct:

Nature is an agent two times over. Nature’s “voice” is all imperatives ... Nature provides these insights, so the resulting society has a foundation in God’s plan for creation. Humans play a role as well, but when all is working according to God’s design – as here – nature is doubly active and humans are doubly subordinate. People passively receive orders to actions that require them again to subordinate themselves. (618-19)

Far from being the source of favor in the eyes of God, reason simply serves as a tool for the proper placement and survival of humans. After arguing for the existence of reason as an instrument to restrict ambition, Pope shows reason’s reliance on nature and instinct. However, in doing so, Pope doesn’t suggest a different hierarchy. Rather, he presents these attributes as proper parts of the whole.

In focusing on the system designed by God, Pope necessarily decenters man’s place in the world. Rather than seeing himself as the focus of creation, man becomes another necessary link in the chain. In neo-classical epistemology, “nature” represents the perfection of God’s creation. Because man is only “as perfect as he ought,” he simply occupies the appropriate place

on the scale. As such, the certitude of human happiness must be tenuous. Pope posits, “If the great end be human happiness / Then nature deviates” (I.149-50). Pope takes the human-determined value out of the chain metaphor. As Cutting-Gray and Swearingen explain the change, “In a subtle departure from a long tradition that interprets nature hierarchically, Pope projects his theoretical model upon nature and divides systemic thought from the tradition” (487). Pope manages to maintain the system of the scale as an organizing principle, but he cleaves from the scale differing values attached to the relative links on the chain. In doing so, human existence can no longer be the center of the universe.⁴ Instead, Pope emphasizes the way in which God’s love and favor extends equally across all of creation. He proclaims, “To him no high, no low, no great, no small; / He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all” (I.279-80). The universality of God’s concern is echoed in Pope’s letter to Addison. He asks, “Who knows what Plots, what Atchievements [*sic*] a Mite may perform in his Kingdom of a Grain of Dust, within his Life of some Minutes? and of how much less Consideration than even this, is the Life of Man in the Sight of that God, who is from Ever, and for Ever!” (*Letters* 204). The vastness of God renders the difference between man and mite imperceptible.

Cleaving the hierarchy of importance from the chain metaphor inevitably results in a reserved view of human ontology and specialness. No longer the focus of God’s favor, they must be content with operating as a part of the divine whole. Pope makes no mistake in subverting any attempt to see human life as especially grandiose:

What a Bustle we make about passing our Time, when all our Space is but a
Point? What Aims and Ambitions are crowded into this little Instant of our
Life...Our whole Extent of Being no more, in the Eyes of him who gave it, than a

⁴ Solomon also analyzes the manner in which Pope rejects the human-centric understanding of nature by situating the *Essay*’s argument against the ideas of Blackmore and Lucretius (76-82).

scarce preceptible [*sic*] Moment of Duration. Those Animals whose Circle of living is limited to three or four Hours, as the Naturalists assure us, are yet as long-lived and possess as wide a Scene of Action as Man, if we consider him with an Eye to all Space, and all Eternity. (*Letters* 203-4)

In an age where the potential of the human mind is frequently celebrated, Pope can't help but present a more cynical view of human life. However, his stance is not that humans are unimportant or insignificant. Human and non-human life are indistinguishable given the extent of God's knowing. With the backdrop of "all space" and "all eternity," the qualitative difference between man and mite, between human and non-human animal, becomes insignificant. However, each being retains its equal share of importance.

In displacing the prominence of humans and equally distributing inherent value across the spectrum of the chain, Pope also critiques the way in which man interacts with the other creatures of the world. In staking claim over which animals shall live and which shall die, man assumes an authority beyond his sphere. Pope warns that when humans "destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust" (I.117) they "snatch from his hand the balance and the rod, / Re-judge his justice, be the God of God!" (I.121-22). Only man's false sense of himself enables a justification for absolute dominion. Only Pride may claim "'tis for mine: / For me kind Nature wakes her genial power" (I.132-33). Rather, the relationship between creatures should be one of respected interdependence in service of the unity of all creation. Pope explains the purpose and source of harmony:

Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;
One all-extending, all preserving soul
Connects each being, greatest with the least;

Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;

All served, all serving! nothing stands alone;

The chain holds on, and where it ends; unknown. (III.21-26)

The existence of the chain is predicated on God's creation of a world perfect in its totality. Man's place cannot be defined by viewing the rest of the material world as fodder for his pursuits.

Doing so fails to use reason in its proper manner. Pope argues that "short of reason he must fall, / Who thinks all made for one, not one for all" (III.47-48). Reason's limiting power is ignored when casting the world as made for man's use. These lines echo the earlier discussion of right reason. Reason's role is to restrict and restrain ambition, so the person claiming dominion necessarily falls short of reason in his claims. Given the extent to which humans rely on non-human animals, Pope carefully complicates this relationship, particularly in cases where the reliance requires the death of the animal (i.e. food, hunting). He exposes the motivation behind acts that may be seen as "care" of animals: "For some his interest prompts him to provide, / For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride" (III.59-60). Rather than evidence of man's superiority, Pope's conclusion notes the equivocation brought about by death. Man's pride in pampering animals in order to enhance their usage is doomed to the same fate. To emphasize the link between human and animal, "The creature had his feast of life before; / Thou too must perish, when thy feast is o'er" (III.69-70). Recalling the relative equal value of each being's life, Pope reminds prideful man that his end is the same as "the pampered goose." Any assumed dominion of animals is deemed transitory and insignificant.

In the absence of a value-laden hierarchy, each link in the chain exists for its own sake. The value of each part of the scale is intrinsically given by God. As man is properly placed, so too are all other beings. In not seeking to move beyond their specified sphere, animals find

contentment: “Each beast, each insect, happy in its own” (I.185). Though Pope anthropomorphizes his view of nature, he makes very clear the ethic that should follow in a system where each participant is granted the right to exist for its own end. Pope commands, “Look round our world; behold the chain of love / Combining all below and all above” (III.7-8). The interdependence of species is meant to be characterized by love, not dominion or domination. The elements of the world are to work together for the “general good” (III.14) of the whole system. This view suggests that the intrinsic value of any being is not to be diminished or erased by another being, especially humans. Interdependence of species should be carried out with respect, not pride. This promotes a stable ontological status for animals, one to be respected by humans.

Pope contrasts the existence of social man outside the state of nature to the original existence intended by God. According to God’s plan, harmony characterizes the relationship between human and non-human animals. “Nature’s State” operates as such:

Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
Man walked with beast, joint tenant of the shade;
The same his table, and the same his bed;
No murder clothed him, and no murder fed.
In the same temple, the resounding wood,
All vocal beings hymned their equal God;
The shrine with gore unstained, with gold undressed,
Unbribed, unbloody, stood the blameless priest. (III.151-58)

In the state of nature, neither pride nor art drive the actions of man. The existence is one of harmony for all. Pope makes no mistake in moralizing and lauding this mode of being, absent of

“murder” for clothing and food, and devoid of worship including “gore,” “gold,” bribery, and blood. However, the divided and fallen nature of humans has fundamentally changed the basis of man’s interaction with the natural world. Once man makes his sphere the primary end of existence, he makes himself “that proud exception to all Nature’s laws, / T’invert the world, and counter-work its cause” (III.243-44). Discord mars the resulting existence of man: “Altars grew marble then, and reeked with gore: / Then first the flamen tasted living food; / Next his grim idol smeared with human blood” (III.264-66). In the absence of right reason and the supremacy of pride, human existence becomes predicated on death and destruction. As Nicolson and Rousseau succinctly capture, “What the animal world has become to man is the inevitable result of what man has made of man” (103).

Pope laments the state of human and non-human animal interaction. The philosophical and moral argument put forth in the *Essay* finds its compassionate foundation in Pope’s contribution to *The Guardian* in 1713 where he directly addresses the barbarity frequently practiced upon non-human animals. He begins, “Mankind are no less, in Proportion, accountable for the ill Use of the Dominion over Creatures of the lower Rank of Beings, than for the Exercise of Tyranny over their own Species. The more entirely the Inferior Creation is submitted to our Power, the more answerable we should seem for our Mismanagement of it” (“Against” 233). This sort of mismanagement includes such exercises of cruelty as bear-baiting and cock-fighting. Pope rues the extent to which these “sports” have come to characterize the English character.⁵ As Hogarth would later represent visually in his *First Stage of Cruelty*, Pope connects bear-baiting and cock-fighting to the ways in which children often interact with animals. He explains, “We should find it hard to vindicate the destroying of any thing that has Life, merely out of

⁵ For a discussion of the difficulty in outlawing bear-bating, cock-fighting, etc and the way in which these activities were deeply ingrained in English culture, see Kathryn Shevelow’s *For the Love of Animals*.

Wantonness; yet in this Principle our Children are bred up, and one of the first Pleasures we allow them, is the Licence [*sic*] of inflicting Pain upon poor Animals” (“Against” 233). The ethic Pope aims to express finds much of its power in the kinships between human and non-human animals. Throughout the *Essay*, the minimal advantages of human reason are continually questioned and subverted. Pope can turn to the physical similarities in order to provide pathos: “Perhaps that Voice or Cry so nearly resembling the Human, with which Providence has endued so many different Animals, might purposely be given to them to move our Pity, and prevent those Cruelties we are too apt to inflict on our Fellow Creatures” (“Against” 236). Pope continuously expresses the need for care of and respect for the other beings that inhabit the earth. He even goes as far to condone the killing of “noxious animals” only when necessary, as it is usually man who “seeks out and pursues even the most inoffensive Animals, on purpose to persecute and destroy them” (“Against” 233). As Pope codifies man’s role in the world in the *Essay*, each link on the chain exists for its own sake and deserves respect. The lowered status of man (or divorcing of value from relative positions on the scale) creates a more stable and secure ontological status for non-human animals. Pope argues that the chain established God’s order for the world, and man simply exists within that order. For Pope, God’s prescription does not grant man the ability to decide the existence or destruction of other creatures, unless absolutely necessary. Pope argues to limit the extent to which humans exercise control over other living beings. This grants those living beings a secure status that mostly guarantees life.

Pope’s critique of killing animals becomes muted in the context of hunting, however. Pope writes, “I dare not attack a Diversion which has such Authority and Custom to support it, but must have leave to be of Opinion, that the Agitation of that Exercise, with the Example and Number of the Chasers, not a little contribute to resist those *Checks*, which Compassion would

naturally suggest in behalf of the Animal pursued” (“Against” 234). Unwilling to directly critique the act of hunting, Pope fully recognizes the difficulty that would arise in condemning the “authority” and “custom.” On the legalities of hunting grounds, Pat Rogers notes that “throughout the entire forest of Windsor, or at least that part within Berkshire, the monarch was solely entitled to hunt game, except where he or she granted a specific warrant to an individual. This applied even to land in private ownership” (*Symbolic* 149). Careful not to offend, Pope makes the critique more subtle. Rather than say hunting is wrong, he notes that the manner of the hunt creates a situation that reduces the hunter’s natural inclination toward compassion for the hunted. Man is made less than his potential through the imbalance of power in the hunt. Pope walks a line between offending the monarch (and the hunting classes as a whole) and maintaining his ethic of not harming animals.

Instead of directly attacking the brutality of hunting, Pope provides a much more subtle critique of human domination in *Windsor Forest*. Pope presents three different hunts in *Windsor Forest*. While an overtly political poem,⁶ *Windsor Forest* exposes ways in which hunting devalues God’s creations, both human and non-human. The hunts undercut Pope’s call to value animals for their own sake. As Mack notes, “None of the usual eighteenth-century field-sports is actually disapproved” (73). Instead, the hunt results in the eliding of distinctions between human and non-human animal. Tobias Menely argues, “Although the hunt ought to stabilize the distinction between human and animal, as an act of sovereign violence it renders indistinguishable justice and tyranny, as well as reason and passion, the very terms that secure ontological species difference” (572). In one of the most oft-cited passages of the poem, a “whirring pheasant” finds “Short is his Joy; he feels the fiery wound, / Flutters in blood, and

⁶ For an exhaustive study of the political and symbolic dimensions of the poem, see Pat Rogers’ *The Symbolic Design of Windsor-Forest*.

panting beats the ground” (113-114). The following lines recount the bird’s “purple crest,” “scarlet-circled eyes,” “shining plumes,” and “painted wings.” The beauty of the bird dominates the passage. However, the vivid details only become important as the speaker asks “what avail” these attributes in the bird’s death. Mack argues that in focusing “on the slain, not the slayer,” the passage becomes “less of a single mind’s moral experience than of some ultimate irony or contrariety in the nature of things that renders us helpless to save what is precious from that in ourselves which does not prize it, or from that which prizes it ... only as a prize” (75). The scene exposes the dangers of not valuing the beauty of the pheasant for its own sake. When its value is determined by the “prize” of the kill, the magnificence is lost. The hunt requires man to assume his value, and the value of his sport and pleasure, to be of greater significance than the existence of the hunted. The perversion of the situation is highlighted when Pope describes the “well-breathed beagles” as “beasts, urged by us, their fellow-beasts pursue, / And learn of man each other to undo” (123-24). Only through the meddling of man, in service of hunting, can the beagles be trusted to “undo” “their fellow-beasts.” Rather than the harmony of the state of nature, discord and destruction reign as a result of the hunt. Without condemning the act of the hunt, Pope shows the resultant cacophony inserted into the chain and its intended mode of harmony. The critique of the hunt remains present, though it operates below the overt political heraldry of the poem. In hunting, the chain of being, and God’s ordained order, is disrupted. Disruption of the chain critiques the action of the hunt without Pope having to overtly condemn the hunter (and the monarch).

Given the egalitarian status that should be afforded human and non-human animals, Pope notably expressed horror at the use of animals in scientific research, another mode of human domination over non-human animals. Dissections and vivisections were popular events amongst

Royal Society members. Nicolson and Rousseau note that “scientists were aware that they were inflicting severe pain on sentient creatures, but considered that their experiments must be continued because – in phrases of their spiritual father, Francis Bacon – they would prove for ‘the benefit and use of mankind’ and ‘the relief of man’s estate’” (95). Pope’s charge that reason should emphasize the limit of man’s pursuits disallows this sort of justification for cruelty. Pope famously decried the use of animals for research. In a conversation recorded by Joseph Spence, Pope admits his misgivings about the activities of his neighbor, Dr. Hales. Pope explains, “Yes he is a very good man, only – I’m sorry – he has his hands imbrued with blood.” Spence asks if Hale “cuts up rats,” to which Pope responds, “Aye, and dogs too! Indeed, he commits most of these barbarities with the thought of its being of use to man. But how do we know that we have a right to kill creatures that we are so little above as dogs, for our curiosity, or even for some use to us?” (118). Pope’s disapproval stems from the tenets put forth in the *Essay*. He reiterates that not only is the difference between humans and dogs quite small, but also that distance in no way justifies killing dogs for human knowledge. Though the relationship between dogs and humans may at times be mutually beneficial, Pope does not sanction a relationship that deprives the animal of its own right to exist happily.

Pope’s diminished view of the specialness of humans results in a greater value given to animals. Human existence “above” animals in the chain does not equate to a higher value or more prominent role in the whole scope of being. For Pope, placing the greatest value in the completeness of all of God’s creation simultaneously decenters human importance and augments the value and status of animals relative to the material relationships characterized by eighteenth-century society. Pope’s position is one that speaks against the status quo of his time. His moral and ethical tenets call for a change in the way humans interact with non-human animals. Pope’s

representation of animals ranges from overtly to subtly polemical. But the critique of human domination of and dominion over animals remains steady. Pope's emphasis on the perfection of the whole system grants animals an ontological status that *should* improve the lived experience of non-human animals. The call for humans to restrain their aspirations to control nature preserves the ability of animals to live with minimal human interference.

Less critical and perhaps more indicative of widely accepted human-animal relations, Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* presents a complex matrix of human/animal interaction that grates against Pope's call for restraint and respect toward non-human animals. Pope separates hierarchical value from the ordering concept of the chain of being. Man's inability to fully comprehend the totality of God's creation results in Pope's call for conservative attitudes toward human aspiration. As such, man must respect his place, as well as the ontology of other creatures. The core tenet of human/animal relations is that man should not be the determinant of animal ontology. That is God's purview. However, *Crusoe* focuses on the individual human's place and aspiration within the larger order, rather than emphasizing the perfection of the whole order. Interaction with nature is much more liberal as man's aspirations allow more direct determination of not only the ontological status of animals, but also their resultant lived experience based on that ontology. Man has the power to shape animal existence as he sees fit. Crusoe's actions illustrate the anthropocentric order that Pope works to avoid. In Defoe's work, the ontological status of animals remains lower and less secure than the idealized harmony in Pope's vision of nature.

Crusoe offers a valuable context for examining the range of statuses afforded to animals within a narrative that keeps man's divine and providential position as its narrative focus. Crusoe's aspiration and unrest drive the narrative. In Pope's language, Defoe's narrative focuses

on the urging of self-love, rather than the restraint that reason should provide. Crusoe attempts to rise while Pope urges submission. Reason never constrains Crusoe's wandering. In order to examine the resultant ontological consequences for animals, I will first outline the complexities of aspiration in *Crusoe*. Aspiration operates as a unifying urge, connecting the economic, religious, and political discourses in the novel. After examining the extent to which aspiration both structures Crusoe's story and provides departures from Pope's ethic, I will explore the consequences for the ontological status of animals in the novel. What emerges is a tenuous, and often lowered, ontology for animals, as their status will be directly linked to Crusoe's needs and ambition. Defoe reveals the often devastating effects on the status and lived experience of animals in a context where human aspiration is fostered and ultimately rewarded.

The chain of being operates as a discursive linchpin, connecting the themes of aspiration that run throughout the novel. One of the primary concerns of the novel is Crusoe's religious conversion. P. Rogers notes that "centrally, for its author, the theme is divine providence" (*Robinson* 16). Though other scholars have expanded this relatively new, but pervasive reading of Defoe's most enduring work, the religious awakening and musings of Crusoe consistently shape the narrative.⁷ In the novel, providence functions for Crusoe as the delivery into improved status. The end result is God-sponsored aspiration rewarded. Crusoe's religious awakening revolves around the appreciation and acceptance of his improved status as a result of divine providence. As such, the text often employs language steeped in the concept of the chain of being, marking his desire to move up the ladder. Crusoe's aspirations are not just religious; they are also economic, social, and political. The language of the chain provides significant flexibility

⁷ For the shifting of critical attention toward *Crusoe* from that of adventure story/new journalism to that of religious development, see P. Rogers' *Robinson Crusoe* (51-58).

to note not just religious or ontological implications, but to also capture social status. Lovejoy notes:

The universe, it was assumed, is the best of systems; any other system is good only in so far as it is constructed upon the same principles; and the object of the Infinite Wisdom which had fashioned it was to attain the maximum of variety by means of inequality. Clearly, then, human society is well constituted only if, within its own limits, it tends to the realization of the same desiderata (206).

However, Lovejoy also cautions against overemphasis of the chain's requirement of inequality when applied to political thought in the eighteenth century. "Subordination, indeed was essential, but it was a subordination without subservience ... Each [creature] had its own independent reason for being" (207). In this way, the language of the chain provides a way to analyze the intersection of the spiritual and sociopolitical elements of *Crusoe*. Crusoe's aspiration operates along several axes (religious, political, economic, social), each of which affect Crusoe's position within the chain of being. His place in the hierarchy is determined by an ontology that accounts for all of these discursive registers.

Throughout the narrative, Crusoe's string of calamities stem from repeated rejection of acceptance of his station. He continually describes himself as reaching for something more, something higher than his current state, which runs counter to Pope's call to know and respect one's place. The oft analyzed speech by Crusoe's father in the opening pages reveals what the younger Crusoe considers his "original sin."⁸ McKeon emphasizes the complex signification of this particular phrase by noting that it "gains it religious overtones only with hindsight, through

⁸ This is often read to reference economic mobility, the original sin being connected to capitalism. In particular, see Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*, and Maximillian Novak's *Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe*.

the retrospective viewpoint of the Narrator. In the present tense of the narrative action it is primarily a social *rather* than a religious meaning” (*Origins* 320). Crusoe laments this choice whilst on the island: “For, not to look back upon my primitive Condition, and the excellent Advice of my Father, the Opposition to which, was, *as I may call it*, my ORIGINAL SIN” (152). The elder Crusoe’s advice focuses primarily on the acceptance of his “middle State or what might be called the upper Station of *Low Life*” (6). However, his father adds two notable elements to the condition of acceptance of the middle state. First, he notes the dangers of aspiration when he warns that “it was for Men of desperate Fortunes on one Hand, or of aspiring, superior Fortunes on the other, who went abroad upon Adventures, to rise by Enterprize, and make themselves famous in Undertakings of a Nature out of the common Road” (5-6). This would suggest that the acceptance of one’s place is the foundation of the advice. The elder Crusoe’s second justification complicates the reason for acceptance. He adds that the middle state:

Was the best State in the World, the most suited to human Happiness, not exposed to the Miseries and Hardships, the Labour and Sufferings of the mechanick Part of Mankind, and not embarrass’d with the Pride, Luxury, Ambition, and Envy of the upper Part of Mankind ... this was the State of Life which all other People envied; that Kings have frequently lamented the miserable Consequences of being born to great things, and wish’d they had been placed in the Middle of the two Extremes, between the Mean and the Great (6).

The continuation of the advice clearly relies on the economic and social connotation of “middle state” as pointed out by McKeon. In doing so, Crusoe’s father destabilizes the concept of a social hierarchy, whereby those “above” are somehow better off than those “below.” For him, the

middle state is the apex to which one should aspire. Social mobility is not the primary problem, only social mobility that aims for a place other than the middle state.

While the original sin marks the beginning of his troubles, a great deal of Crusoe's difficulties are caused by choices marked with the language of aspiration. In the early stages of his seafaring, he laments not going aboard as a sailor, where he may have worked harder, but learned the trade. Instead, Crusoe admits, "But as it was always my Fate to choose for the worse, so I did here; for having Money in my Pocket, and good Cloaths upon my Back, I would always go on board in the Habit of a Gentleman: and so I neither had any Business in the Ship, or learn'd to do any" (15). Posing above his station limits his knowledge and disallows the formation of a solid foundation of skills for a life at sea. Upon returning from his first (and only) successful voyage to Guinea, Crusoe is filled "with those aspiring Thoughts which have since so compleated [his] Ruin" (16). Once established on his plantation in Brazil, Crusoe is driven by similar desires to leave: "I could not be content now, but I must go and leave the happy View I had of being a rich and thriving Man in my new Plantation, only to pursue a rash and immoderate Desire of rising faster than the Nature of the Thing admitted" (32). The desire for more also pushes Crusoe to take to the sea to tour around the island. He undertakes this task after noting that the previous five years had brought relative ease and little incident of note. Once in his boat, a strong current threatens to take him away from the island. Once back ashore, Crusoe explains, "Then I reproach'd my self with my unthankful Temper, and how I had repin'd at my solitary Condition; and now what would I give to be on Shore there again. Thus we never see the true State of our Condition, till it is illustrated to us by its Contraries; nor know how to value what we enjoy, but by the want of it" (110). Crusoe blames his actions driven by the desire for more and his rejection of the status quo. He is unwilling to accept any of his stations and

continuously describes each alteration of circumstance as a calamity caused by aspiring for more. However, Crusoe does steadily accumulate more wealth and ends up with quite a comfortable fortune. For Crusoe, providence still provides for him in spite of his wandering, or perhaps *because* he is ambitious. In doing so, providence implicates the religious awakening in the economic discourse in the novel. Crusoe's monetary successes stem from his aspiration and providential design.

Crusoe's monetary desire motivates decisions that drive the plot, but Crusoe's restlessness acts as the pervasive, underlying motivation throughout the narrative. Crusoe's wandering spirit is a failing of being human. However, providence and Crusoe's religious awakening do more than mitigate the consequences of his wandering. They ultimately reward him, restoring faith and optimism in the human condition. For all of Crusoe's insistence on his sin, God seems to provide for him rather adequately in the end. Though not as rich as he would have been had he stayed to grow his Brazilian plantation, Crusoe ends up with a fairly sizable fortune that affords him a higher social standing than his father. The content and consequences of Crusoe's sin stretch beyond a desire for monetary gain and his rejection of a previously ascribed social order. Once returned to England and comfortable, his family now gone, Crusoe must leave. He remarks, "I was inur'd to a wandering Life" (236). Of course, this echoes part of the reason he rejects his father's advice and is asked to provide reason for leaving that goes beyond "meer wandring Inclination" (5). P. Rogers argues Crusoe's wandering "transcends the simple ambition to travel as it does the mere pursuit of monetary gain" (*Robinson* 65). He continues, "The restlessness which drives Crusoe is the very spirit of his being. It will be extirpated not by the end of his actual travels, or by the accomplishment of any economic goal; it is part of man's fallen nature, and will survive until he achieves salvation in death" (*Robinson* 65-6). That Crusoe

ends up with sizeable wealth is complicated by the heart of the narrative, that of a man alone on an island. P. Rogers notes, “But if he is a symbol of social mobility, then the book is far from avouching unalloyed confidence about the legitimacy of such expectations” (*Robinson* 75). Further, reinforcing the deeper drives that characterize Crusoe’s quest for more, P. Rogers also point out that “his story is clearly that of an adventurer *rejecting* the bourgeois comforts held out to him by his father” (*Robinson* 76). The “wandering inclination” suggests that Crusoe’s actions need to be understood not just as an economic fable. Because providence plays such a major role (according to Crusoe) in Crusoe’s economic success, the economic cannot be divorced from the religious.

Defoe constructs Crusoe’s world to operate within the “laws of nature,” solidifying the way in which providence shapes the narrative. Maximillian Novak argues, “The world in which Defoe’s characters move is one which operates almost exclusively by second causes ... Whatever happens in the world is ultimately the act of God ... But Defoe’s Providence works entirely through nature and is often indistinguishable from nature” (*Defoe* 6). He continues, “If any of Defoe’s fictional characters fall into difficulties, Defoe will present a variety of natural causes to explain the situation, but the final cause is God” (Novak *Defoe* 7). Crusoe’s calamities are variously caused by storms, tides, weather, and currents. Crusoe certainly underlines this position when he comments on his shipwreck:

I had dismal Prospect of my Condition, for as I was not cast way upon that island without being driven, as is said, by a violent Storm quite out of the Course of our intended Voyage, and a great way, viz, some Hundreds of Leagues out of the ordinary Course of the Trade of Mankind, I had great Reason to consider it as a

Determination of Heaven, that in this desolate Place, and in this desolate Manner I should end my Life (51).

God, through providence, metes out punishments as he sees fit. Crusoe, as with Defoe, cannot attribute the acts of nature to chance or whimsy. The acceptance of God's providence becomes a central concern for Crusoe as he attempts to overcome his wandering, cast as lack of appreciation for what God has seen fit to give him. But his inability to do so speaks to his fallen nature. As Novak characterizes Defoe's position on human nature, "Defoe's theory that the human race was 'one corrupted Mass' was good Calvinistic theology, but it was in distinct opposition to the thought of his time. ... Corruption, not virtue, is natural to man. Betrayed by his passions, man learns that without the aid of religion reason is not strong enough to guide him to virtue" (*Defoe* 10-11). Crusoe cannot help but return to his wandering inclinations, which work in concert with providential events to determine his future.

Though he continues to err, Crusoe continually looks back to recognize his falsely driven aspirations. However, the manner in which he does this necessitates a religious doctrine devoid of clergy. The religious awakening celebrates the individual. In a substantial passage, Crusoe remarks how salvation came to him and Friday simply through personal interaction with scripture. The "Doctrine of Salvation by *Christ Jesus*, is so plainly laid down in the Word of God; so easy to be receiv'd and understood: That as the bare reading the Scripture made me capable of understanding enough of my Duty, to carry me directly on to the great Work of sincere Repentance for my Sins, and laying hold of a Saviour for Life and Salvation" (172). Crusoe then asserts, "As to all the Disputes, Wranglings, Strife and Contention, which has happen'd in the World about Religion, whether Niceties in Doctrines, or Schemes of Church Government, they were all perfectly useless to us; as, for ought I can yet see, they have been to

all the rest of the World” (173). For Crusoe, salvation lies neither in a church nor in the guidance of clergy. As a dissenting Presbyterian, Defoe believed in the individual’s duty to value the personal interpretation of scripture over established doctrine. As Katherine Clark summarizes Defoe’s belief, “If in ‘consulting his Bible and his Conscience’ a man were to discover ‘some Things in the Establish’d Way of Worship which do not seem to correspond with the Rule he has found out in the Scripture’ then dissent was justified; it was even incumbent upon him, as every Christian had an ‘Obligation ... to seek the best Guides for his Soul’” (36). Robert Merrett carries Defoe’s emphasis on the individual beyond simply spiritual matters into the social sphere:

The standards of divine law were far more rigorous and precise than those of civil law. That earthly justice could not implement divine law proved to Defoe that true moral value could be realized only by the individual conscience. This explains his basic assumption that the moral conscience must guide itself by imperatives that society’s laws are incapable of embodying. (31)

Defoe held faith in the ability of the Word, along with reason, to adequately guide individuals in their quest for redemption and salvation. Though humans are ultimately flawed and corrupted, the influence of Scripture can provide salvation, as Crusoe shows us.

Defoe’s devotion to the ability of the individual ultimately provides an optimistic view of the nature of the human. Though flawed, a person may elevate themselves with only the help of the Word. Defoe’s representation of this elevation contrasts Pope’s doctrine that belief in God should lead to an emphasis on limitation of the human position. However, Defoe’s belief in elevation brings back the complication of Crusoe’s sins versus his “rewards.” Crusoe is never absolved of his “original sin,” that of continuously giving in to his urge to wander. He experiences several spiritual breakthroughs and comes to know God and the power of

providence, but his mobility, both geographic and social, is simultaneously his sin and his reward. The tension becomes clear in a passage surrounding his admission of the “original sin.” Crusoe laments, “I have been in all my Circumstances, a *Memento* to those who are touched with the general Plague of Mankind, whence, for ought I know, one half of their Miseries flow; I mean, that of not being satisfy’d with the Station wherein God and Nature has plac’d them” (152). He then explains that his original sin was ignoring his father’s “excellent advice” to remain home in the comfort of his prescribed “middle station.” The sin was his wandering nature. In England, with a career in law, appears at first to be where God had “placed him.” However, he continues:

For had that Providence, which so happily had seated me at the *Brasils*, as a Planter, bless’d me with confin’d Desires, and I could have been contented to have gone on gradually, I might have been by this Time; *I mean, in the Time of my being in this Island*, one of the most considerable Planters in the *Brasils* ... if I had stay’d, I might have been worth an hundred thousand *Moydors*. (152)

The consequences of being able to accept his place and the fruits provided by providence quickly shift to his plantation in Brazil, not a law office in England. Crusoe’s “confined desires” needed to be confined to growing his plantation. It was his desire to increase the rate of his accumulation of wealth that lead him on his ill-fated journey away from the plantation, not necessarily just the pursuit of more wealth than his father. Crusoe’s lament suggests an assumed adherence to the desires and drives of the individual. In this context, the dictates of “being satisfied with the station wherein God and nature has placed” him allows for both social mobility and the rejection of his original place, of his father’s “excellent advice.” Had he remained in Brazil, the dictates of

providence would have justified his original sin. Again, the religious and economic trajectories of the text are united. They work together cooperatively, not necessarily in opposition.

Crusoe's insistence on the justice of providence stems from an underlying optimism about the place of man in the cosmic order. He does not seem to carry any of the pessimism potentially implied in the chain of being. Even through his repeated "sins" against his father and whatever station he happen to occupy, providence continually provides for the well-being of Crusoe. Though some critics have attempted to read *Crusoe* as personal allegory for Defoe,⁹ P. Rogers points out a clear distinction: "It must be admitted that the elder Crusoe reflects both Defoe's own attitudes, as visible elsewhere, and some of the dominant ideologies of the age" (*Robinson* 74). In an echo of the advice of Crusoe's father, Defoe writes in *The Compleat English Tradesman*, "I know no State of Life, I mean in that we call the Middle Station of it, and among the sensible Part of Mankind, which is more suite to make Men perfectly easy, and comfortable to themselves, than that of a thriving Tradesman ... He is below the Snares of the Great, and above the Contempt of those that are call'd Low" (I: 106-7). This difference between author and narrator downplays the pretension to the novel as a triumph of the capitalist spirit and instead points to Defoe's larger religious, and somewhat conservative views of society. However, Crusoe's own attitudes embody the projecting spirit characterized in Defoe's earlier works, including his *Essay on Projects*. In spite of his setbacks, Crusoe continuously seeks his next scheme. For every calamity, tragedy, or wretchedness he endures, he maintains his urge to wander and his desire to do/make more.

Crusoe's actions and desires reveal an attitude that runs counter to Pope's. Crusoe relentlessly seeks more, partially justified by providence, and looks upward within the chain.

⁹ See Rogers, 66-70 in *Robinson Crusoe*.

Pope urges humility and restraint. This provides a crucial point of departure, forming the key difference that shapes the resultant ontological status of animals. While Pope outlines a clear status for animals, Crusoe determines much more tenuous and fluid positions for non-human animals. Crusoe's aspiration is the source of this difference.

Crusoe's dogged determination for improvement is perhaps no more evident than in the way he is able to transform his island surroundings in a manner that enables him to live a life of relative material comfort. Crusoe manages both the flora and fauna of the island. Ilse Vickers argues that Crusoe's scientific approach to management "defends an attitude to reality that can be directly related to the Royal Society" and the Baconian desire to achieve dominion over nature (102). "As we watch Crusoe plant, harvest, grind corn, bake bread, make pots and baskets, build his fortification, and so on, we watch him command nature, bringing her 'to be serviceable to [his] particular Ends' (Boyle)" (I. Vickers 104). This attitude toward nature aligns with Defoe's concept of man's place in the world. "Defoe was no friend of the earth. He believed that man was the dominant species, and the only one who had been granted revelation of God's purposes; it was man's prerogative to bend nature to his will" (P. Rogers *Robinson* 84). However, Defoe did suggest limits to this prerogative, but these reservations were meant to curb man's vanity and excessive pursuit of luxury. In *The Complete English Tradesman*, Defoe makes the case as follows: "What Rapes are committed upon nature in the production of Animals as well as Plants? making the Ewes bring Lambs all the Winter, fattening Calves to a monstrous size, using cruelties and contrary diets to the poor Brute, to whiten its Flesh for the Palates of the Ladies, and to gorge the dainty Stomachs of those that lay up their felicity in Eating fine, as they call it? (II: 107). Defoe's language certainly speaks to the horrors of meat production,¹⁰ but these

¹⁰ Thomas addresses this passage in the context of growing disgust and public concern over cruelty to animals, 177-78

horrors are not his primary aim. Defoe continues, “It is not my business here to write a Satyr upon Luxury, and therefore I go no farther in my Exclamations against these horrible Excesses” (II: 107). The fault in the treatment of the animals is not in the degradation of the animals being abused, but in the excesses of the people doing the abusing. The caution against excess does little to shift the way in which dominion is defined and the relative status of the animals. Pope’s admonishment of “*Gluttony*” focuses much more on the “inhuman” aspects of such excess. He cites “*Lobsters roasted alive, Piggs whipp’d to Death, Fowls sowed up*, are Testimonies of our outrageous Luxury ... I know nothing more shocking, or horrid, than the Prospect of one of their Kitchens cover’d with Blood, and filled with the Cries of Creatures expiring in Tortures” (“Against” 234-35). Pope’s description aims to decry the barbarity inflicted upon animals, while Defoe’s chief concern seems to be for curbing the appetites of humans. Pope adds, “If we kill an Animal for our Provision, let us do it with the Meltings of Compassion, and without tormenting it. Let us consider, that ‘tis in its own Nature Cruelty to put a living Creature to Death” (“Against” 235). For Pope, the treatment of the animals is the problem, while Defoe treats the cruelties as simply symptoms of an anthropocentric problem. The contrast between these positions provides distinct difference for the resultant ontological status and lived experience for the animals. Pope values the lives of the animals for their own sake, while Defoe merely critiques the excesses of human appetite for their effect on the human.

Crusoe displays the sort of mastery over nature that highlights man’s position atop the earthly portion of the Chain. Crusoe’s agricultural activity frequently highlights the distance between human and non-human animals on the chain of being. The animals function as the raw material by which he aims to forge the agricultural infrastructure that will allow him to not only survive, but do so with a moderate amount of comfort. He manages this relatively quickly. “The

plain fact is that his dominion is established before the end of the first year on the island” (I. Vickers 111). Crusoe’s dominion ensures his livelihood by supporting his nutritional needs. However, his position rests within a larger food chain on the island. Because that chain includes cannibals, Crusoe’s control of the environment also provides his shelter and defense. He must establish absolute dominion over the island. “If there is to be an eating chain, he must be the one ordering it. For not to order it is to become consumed” (Carol Flynn 154). Crusoe’s survival relies on his ability to control his environment: human, plant, and animal.

The importance of control and the resultant treatment of animals as objects appear before Crusoe lands on the island, in the episode where he and Xury encounter a lion on a shore via which they aim to search for water. However, several elements of the narration appear curious. Once they notice the lion, they could have easily moved on to another spot or simply waited until the shore was clear. There seems little urgency in Crusoe’s narration: “And once in particular, being early in the Morning, we came to an Anchor under a little Point of Land which was pretty high, and the Tide beginning to flow, we lay still to go further in” (24). He also manages to remain quite calm amidst Xury’s fright as he pronounces the fate of the lion. “*Xury*, says I, you shall go on Shoar and kill him; *Xury* look’d frighted, and said, *Me kill! He eat me at one Mouth*; one Mouthful he meant; however, I said no more to the Boy, but bade him lye still” (24). Crusoe goes on to calmly load several guns before taking aim at the lion. Further, is it Xury, not Crusoe, that is moved to go ashore to deliver a fatal shot as the lion “lay struggling for Life” (24). After Xury does so, Crusoe then considers the efficacy of the kill: “This was Game indeed to us, but this was no Food, and I was very sorry to lose three Charges of Power and Shot upon a Creature that was good for nothing to us” (25). As he does not mention a subsequent search for water at this site, the reason for the kill (other than as “game”) is still unclear and creates more harm than

good, due to the loss of powder and shot. Even the use of the skin arises as an afterthought to Crusoe. Xury fails to remove the head and successfully removes a paw. As Crusoe then notes, “I bethought myself however, that perhaps the Skin of him might one way or other be of some Value to us; and I resolved to take off his Skin if I could” (25). Even if the reason for killing the lion was in service of creating a safe passage to retrieve fresh water, the incident shows Crusoe powerfully, and relatively glibly, bending and breaking nature to his will. This is behavior that resurfaces throughout the novel. After just over a month on the island, Crusoe kills another wild cat and describes the result of the act in a strikingly similar manner. “This Day went abroad with my Gun and my Dog, and kill’d a wild Cat, her Skin pretty soft, but her Flesh good for nothing: Every Creature I kill’d I took off the Skins and preserv’d them” (58). The extent to which either of these killings were vital or immediately required is unclear, but the scenes provide context for Crusoe’s attitude toward his surroundings on the island, when survival is much more tenuous.

The most enduring and labor intensive interaction with animals on the island is between Crusoe and the goats he domesticates. The first thought of domestication arises almost three months after he lands on the island. After killing one young goat, and maiming another, he considers the usefulness of the goats beyond being wild prey for hunting. Regarding the lamed kid, “I took such Care of it, that it liv’d, and the Leg grew well, and as strong as ever; but by my nursing it so long it grew tame, and fed upon the little Green at my Door, and would not go away: This was the first Time that I entertain’d a Thought of breeding up some tame Creatures, that I might have Food when my Powder and Shot was all spent” (61). He later continues the explanation for domestication, “I consider’d the keeping up a Breed of tame Creatures thus at my Hand, would be a living Magazine of Flesh, Milk, Butter and Cheese, for me as long as I liv’d in the Place,” and doing so “depended entirely upon my perfecting my Enclosures” (120). The

purposeful nature with which Crusoe discusses the animals within the context of an agricultural endeavor suggests the objectification of the creatures he hopes to, and eventually does, tame. In this context, the material production of goods for consumption renders the animals as mere means to an end: more useful than the lion, but similarly considered by what good they can provide. The purpose of the animals' lives rests in their use-value for Crusoe. An animal's ontology is anthropocentrically defined. This is the key difference between Pope's argument for self-evident animal value and Crusoe's consideration of animals. Pope places animal ontology in the hands of God and directs humans to refrain from shaping that status, whereas animals on Crusoe's island are at Crusoe's mercy for determination of their status and value.

However, the situational context for Crusoe's agricultural exploits complicate what at times appears a very cold attitude toward the animals he encounters. Though Crusoe often mentions the bounty and excess provided by the island, it is difficult to see him as the manufacturer of "luxury" who commits "rapes upon nature," as Defoe characterizes in the *Tradesman*. Crusoe's interactions with the goats are often shaped by his sympathy for them, affording them considerations beyond that of the raw materials of agricultural production. However, this sympathy is not uniform. The tenuousness of the goats' lived experience is based on Crusoe's needs at any given time. The shifting of the goats' status highlights the human determination of animal ontology. Upon his first attempt at hunting the goats, Crusoe explains, "The first shot I made among these Creatures, I killed a She-Goat which had a little Kid by her which she gave Suck to, which griev'd me heartily" (50). Flynn describes Crusoe's connection with the goats: "Traditionally associated with the unregenerate qualities of fallen man, restless, unruly, and 'in some pain,' the goats on Crusoe's island reflect his vulnerable condition" (153-54). Flynn further argues that when Crusoe does distance himself from the goats, as when he

sacrifices one in order to wean Friday from human flesh, it is in the name of survival. “When he separates himself from the goats to save his own skin, he does so to remain intact, to preserve his own most vulnerable body from dismemberment” (Flynn 154). However, Crusoe’s complex and shifting attitude toward the goats operates on a more pervasive level and not only when he is in danger of dying. The relation of the demise of the she-goat’s kid from above is devoid of the sentiment he felt whilst bringing it back to his habitation along with its dead mother. Once the kid is secured in his enclosure, Crusoe explains that he “hopes to have bred it up tame, but it would not eat, so [he] was forced to kill it and eat it [him]self” (50). The ease with which he moves from hopes of taming the kid to simply slaughtering it denies a more lasting emotional attachment. Interestingly, Crusoe is not “grieved” by this as he was the initial discovery of the kid. This incident captures both his connection and disconnection with the goats. Crusoe’s closeness or affinity shifts with ease, leaving the status of the animal dependent upon Crusoe. Their lived experience depends on Crusoe’s needs, not the inherent self-evident value Pope determines based on the chain of being.

Crusoe’s affinity for at least one of the goats shifts his classification of it from livestock to pet. This animal was saved from his dog during one of their outings. He leads it to an enclosure where he leaves it tied for a week. In concern for the “poor kid,” Crusoe goes to provide it with food. “It was so tame with being hungry, that I had no need to have ty’d it; for it follow’d me *like a Dog* (emphasis added); and as I continually fed it, the Creature became so loving, so gentle, and so fond, that it became from that Time one of my Domesticks also, and would never leave me afterwards” (89). He later reminds us of the goat: “I had ... kept a young Kid, and bred her up tame, and I was in hope of getting a He-Goat, but I could not by any Means bring it to pass, ‘till my Kid grew an old Goat; and I could never find in my Heart to kill her, till

she dy'd at last of meer Age" (114). The treatment of the goats on the island displays the shifting position of each animal with respect to Crusoe. Some goats serve as milk production factories for butter and cheese, while others offer the promise of domestication before they are simply killed and eaten when they refuse to eat. Then still another goat acts as a lifelong domestic animal in Crusoe's household. They variously serve as creatures that become emotional kin to Crusoe *and* animals to be used for survival.

The shifting status of the goats stems from the complex status occupied by Crusoe on the island. The fluid connection between Crusoe and the goats is also illustrated by his interaction with the dying old he-goat that surprises him in a cave. The goat's status vis-a-vis Crusoe shifts several times in the two days of their interaction. Initially, the goat is a potential threat. Crusoe explains, "I saw two broad shining Eyes of some Creature, whether Devil or Man I knew not" (138-39). Upon hearing "a very loud Sigh, like that of a Man in some Pain," he "stepp'd back, and was indeed struck with such a Surprise, that it put [him] into a cold Sweat" (139). Once he realizes the source of his fright is a dying goat, Crusoe's approach softens, but also turns to the potential utility of the animal. He remarks, "I stirr'd him a little to see if I could get him out, and he essay'd to get up, but was not able to raise himself; and I thought with my self, he might even lie there; for if he had frighted me so, he would certainly fright any of the Savages" (139). It is difficult to ascertain the motivation for attempting to move the goat, but once that proves unworkable, Crusoe finds the goat a convenient guard while he explores the remainder of the cave. Initially, the goat is first a danger, "devil or man," and then worthy of some concern, only to end as barricade created by death. However, the greatest indicator of the fluctuating connection between Crusoe and the animal comes the following day when the goat has died. In disposing of the body, Crusoe explains, "I found it much easier to dig a great Hole there, and

throw him in, and cover him with Earth, than to drag him out; so I interr'd him there, to prevent Offence to my Nose" (140). The passage begins with what seems to be a concern for the burial of the animal, but ends simply with the solution to the stench of decaying flesh. However calculating they may seem, Crusoe's actions are certainly understandable. It would seem odd to leave a fairly large carcass to decay at the mouth of his new storage space. But a curious alignment between Crusoe and the goat follows when he remarks that could he be sure that he would remain free from disturbance at the hands of savages. As he notes, "I could have been content to have capitulated for spending the rest of my Time there, even to the last Moment, till I had laid me down and dy'd, like the old Goat in the Cave" (141). This moment of reflection by Crusoe affords him the opportunity to contextualize his existence on the island, now 23 years long. Given his growing concern for the threat of cannibals, dying alone in the cave as the goat did now seems a perfectly respectable way to pass on. In these few brief mentions of the goat, Crusoe sees in him a potential threat, a useful (though only through the throws of death and no real agency or action) guard, a potential noxious smell, and finally a metaphor for himself. The status granted by Crusoe and resultant role of the goat remains fluid, changing with the circumstance of the encounter. Notably, Crusoe's closest sympathies only occur when the goat causes self-reflection. The goat's highest status is as an anthropocentric metaphor for Crusoe's death, which does little for the lived experience of the goat.

The very presence of goats on the island carries symbolic significance for Crusoe's position. The island goats would most likely be feral, rather than wild goats.¹¹ As such, the status

¹¹ While domesticated goats have been traced back thousands of years, there are relatively few species of truly wild goats. They largely exist in the Middle East and parts of Asia and Europe. Apart from these few exceptions, goats found outside of agricultural enterprises would have been domesticated goats turned feral, a transformation that happens fairly quickly. See John Long's *Introduced Mammals of the World* and *Mammal Species of the World*, Eds James Honacki, Kenneth Kinman, and James Koepl.

of the goats is already shifted and continually shifting. The domesticated animals have become feral, only for some of them to again be domesticated by Crusoe. Further, before he manages successful domestication, the goats are hunted as wild game. These would be three distinct ontological categories that become muddled on the island. In his socio-ecological analysis of early modern hunting, Martin Knoll establishes a clear distinction between “the agents ‘man,’ ‘the game hunt,’ ‘wildlife’ and ‘livestock’” (12). Each of these determinants differently affects the environment and their interactions with one another. Crusoe experiences the problems associated with the multifaceted interplay between the goats as game, wildlife, and livestock. He must take careful consideration to keep his agricultural lands separate from his hunting areas, which also serve as home to the feral goats (treated as wildlife in the narrative). The presence of the goats on the island challenges any possibility of establishing a fixed or static ontological status for the animals. They are domesticated animals turned feral, but still not wild, treated as wild animals, game, cattle, and pets. It follows that Crusoe can metaphorically identify with the creatures, for he is a man of society, removed from society, longing for the return of previous comforts, while attempting to survive in a malleable, but wild and natural environment.

Crusoe’s story is not just one of survival, but one of attempting to find an element of English normalcy on an isolated island. Novak discusses the initial fright experienced by Crusoe as he spends his first nights on the island: “Fear, Defoe was clearly saying, is the dominant passion of a man in Crusoe’s condition. His isolation identifies him with the state of nature which precedes society” (*Defoe* 26). However, Novak also points out:

For both Defoe and Locke the state of nature was, more or less, theoretical and always implied a level of civilization beyond that associated with the savages of Africa and America. Leo Strauss remarked that for Locke “an example of men

who are in the state of nature under the law of nature would ... be an elite among the English colonists in America rather than the wild Indians.” (Defoe 37)

The tension between these two positions highlights the complexity of what constitutes the “state of nature” and man’s place in that state. Novak argues that Defoe disagreed with Hobbes’ idea that in a state of nature man would be defined by a solitary life (Defoe 16). Instead, Novak cites Defoe’s *Serious Reflections*: “‘Here is invincible patience recommended under the worst of misery, indefatigable application and undaunted resolution under the greatest and most discouraging circumstances.’ Behind this statement lies Aristotle’s view of man as a social animal, for whom loneliness was a terrifying condition” (Defoe 25). This element of Crusoe’s position underscores the difficulty of fixing his perspective on his surroundings. Crusoe must survive his time on the island, but in doing so, he continually confronts his status as not merely man in nature, but man removed from society. Crusoe’s labor goes not just into survival, something that comes fairly easy to him, but instead into creating a comfortable survival on the island. In his early years, much time is spent creating tables, chairs, and other items of comfort. This extends to his eventual creation of pots, with which he could make broth. Crusoe isn’t just a man left to survive nature. He attempts to shape and master nature in order to establish some of the comforts of the society from which he has been isolated.

Crusoe’s position as both surviving man and comfort-seeking man creates a particularly telling fulcrum for the position of certain animals. Though only receiving a handful of mentions throughout the narrative, Crusoe’s dogs serve as a crucial example of the plural function and position of animals within Crusoe’s existential tensions. The presence of Crusoe’s first dog and its use underscores Crusoe’s position as both survivor and man removed from, but longing for, society. In this dual role, the canine fulfills three functions: a tool for survival, a symbol of ease

and excess, and a surrogate family for Crusoe. Each function carries a different status, affecting the lived experience of the dog. Being shipwrecked along with Crusoe, the dog follows him ashore after his second visit to the vessel. “He jump’d out of the Ship of himself, and swam on Shore to me the Day after I went on Shore with my first Cargo” (52). Though the animal receives relatively few references, it appears that he accompanies Crusoe most everywhere he goes and acts to assist and defend him during any journeys abroad. Early in the journal, Crusoe remarks, “This Day went abroad with my Gun and my Dog” (58). Later Crusoe explains another hunting episode: “The next Day, I went out with my Dog, and set him upon the Goats; but I was mistaken, for they all fac’d about upon the Dog, and he knew his Danger too well, for he would not come near them” (61). The dog is also responsible for capturing the goat that would become Crusoe’s long-serving domestic: “In this Journey my Dog surpriz’d a young Kid, and seiz’d upon it, and I running in to take hold of it, caught it, and sav’d it alive from the Dog” (88). The presence of the dog functions as one of Crusoe’s tools for survival. The description nicely parallels the implements necessary for venturing throughout the island: “my gun and my dog.” As Crusoe attempts to hunt the goats, the dog not only functions as the means of capturing the goats, but further proof of the dangers and difficulties the goats may pose to Crusoe. As he previously remarked, “I found there was plenty of Goats, tho’ exceeding shy and hard to come at, however, I resolv’d to try if I could not bring my Dog to hunt them down” (61). In each of these cases the dog acts as protection and weapon for a man trying to find the means necessary to survive on the island.

The dog functions as a tool for Crusoe, but in that function he also symbolically connects Crusoe to the leisured class for which his monetary schemes were meant to gain him entrance. The previous examples show Crusoe out on the hunt with his trusted dog. While it was not

uncommon for men across the social spectrum to have hunting dogs, hunting in Western Europe still functioned as an activity closely associated with the wealthy classes. “Hans-Wilhelm Eckardt describes Old Regime hunting privileges as the exclusive rights of a privileged minority to go hunting. They belonged only to members of the upper social and political ranks” (Knoll 16). In England, debates about a dog tax persisted throughout the eighteenth century. In these debates, the privilege of hunting frequently shaped the discussions. According to Tague, “For most of the eighteenth century, discussions of a tax on dogs were inseparable from ideas about the game laws, a complex web of regulations about who could hunt, where one could hunt, and what one could hunt, designed to maintain the sport as the privilege of the elite” (“Eighteenth” 904). Tague also analyzes the manner in which the hunting classes worked to secure their privilege: “By the early eighteenth century, there were thus already serious restrictions on dog ownership by anyone not qualified to hunt, with penalties not only for poaching with dogs, but also for possessing dogs that *might* be used for poaching” (“Eighteenth” 905). While the breed or type of dog is never specifically discussed by Crusoe, the act of hunting with the dog at least metaphorically presents Crusoe as a man of leisure and wealth. Further, at no point does Crusoe’s hunting and exploring with the dog seem a new or uncomfortable activity for him. Born into the middle state of life, it is unclear to what extent Crusoe should or could be familiar with these activities. Given the context of hunting with dogs in the early part of the eighteenth century, Crusoe’s dog serves as the pivot point between Crusoe the survivor in need of food and Crusoe the merchant in search of a life above that of the middle station. In doing so, the dog’s status as tool also operates on two levels. He is an aid for survival and a living, regulated (in England) symbol of hunting rights for the privileged.

Crusoe's canine companion functions in a third manner that imbricates his dual role as survival tool and symbol of English wealth. Crusoe's stranded condition also leaves him lonely and often longing for companionship. Social connection is both a substantive element of human life, and thus survival, and a component of society life. Until the arrival of Friday, various animals function as domestic companions to Crusoe, but the dog is Crusoe's first. Upon first mention of the dog when Crusoe relates how he swam ashore from the wreckage, he adds that the dog "was a trusty Servant to me many Years; I wanted nothing that he could fetch me, nor any Company that he could make up to me, I only wanted him to talk to me, but that would not do" (52-53). Later in the narrative, he remarks, "My Dog was a very pleasant and loving Companion to me, for no less than sixteen Years of my Time, and then dy'd, of meer old age" (141). In the absence of human companionship, the dog becomes an important stand-in for human friendship and aids Crusoe's emotional well-being on the island. It is also worth noting that Defoe sees fit to provide Crusoe with another dog once the original companion has died. As he approaches the wrecked Spanish ship, Crusoe remarks, "a Dog appear'd upon her, who seeing me coming, yelp'd and cry'd; and as soon as I call'd him, jump'd into the sea, to come to me, and I took him into the Boat" (149). Once his first long serving companion passes, he is soon fortunate enough to find another.

However, the status of companion animals on the island is not without complication. As much as Crusoe appears to appreciate the presence of the dog, he never sees fit to give him a proper name or to reveal what he calls the dog to the reader. Richard Nash explains that Pope's practice of naming each of his successive Great Danes "Bounce" was not uncommon. "The idea of circulating names repetitively is standard fare: animals are named as embodied properties and attributes, but not as discrete individuals" (Nash 109). There are also passages where Crusoe

seems to have little consideration for the dog, or at least less consideration than that of the “trusty servant” he so fondly describes early in the text. Perhaps indicative of a broader cultural context where domestic pets are kept at a significant emotional distance, Crusoe seems to easily conflate an animal’s status as a pet with that of nuisance vermin. Upon describing the bounty available on the island, Crusoe comments, “I had enough to eat, and to supply my Wants, and, what was all the rest to me? If I kill’d more Flesh than I could eat, the Dog must eat it, or the Vermin” (102). For all of Crusoe’s fondness for the dog, he strangely equates the dog eating scraps with vermin doing the same.

The ontological difference between domestic and vermin is also complicated by Crusoe’s treatment of his feline pets. While the dog followed Crusoe to shore of his own volition, the cats required more exertion. As Crusoe attempts to salvage anything of use on his wrecked ship, he takes the time to carry both cats to safety. Though he seems quite fond of the cats, his language regarding them and their offspring is strange. Early in his time on the island, Crusoe explains:

In this Season I was much surpriz’d with the Increase of my Family; I had been concern’d for the Loss of one of my Cats, who run away from me, or as I thought had been dead, and I heard no more Tale or Tidings of her, till to my Astonishment she came Home about the End of *August*, with three *Kittens*! ... But from these three Cats, I afterwards came to be so pester’d with Cats, that I was forc’d to kill them like Vermine, or wild Beasts, and to drive them from my House as much as possible. (82)

Crusoe’s language conflates the status of the cats as implied domestic pets, family, and finally vermin. As his only companionship prior to Friday, the various animals he keeps do act as surrogate family, but what is striking is the way they so quickly come to be considered “vermin”

or “wild beasts.” The cats “pester” Crusoe, but it is unclear what constitutes pestering. This ontological slippage and the accompanying language appear elsewhere in the narrative. As he describes his table surrounded by his dog and two cats, he clarifies: “But these were not the two Cats which I brought on Shore at first, for they were both of them dead, and had been interr’d near my Habitation by my own Hand” (117). As these cats continued to reproduce, he adds, “these were two which I had preserv’d tame, whereas the rest run wild in the Woods, and became indeed troublesom to me at last; for they would often come into my House, and plunder me too, till at last I was obliged to shoot them, and did kill a great many” (117). As he reiterates his condition later in the narrative, “But at length, when the two old Ones I had brought with me were gone, and after some time continually driving them from me, and letting them have no Provision with me, they all ran wild into the Woods, except two or three Favourites, which I kept tame; and whose Young when they had any, I always drown’d; and these were part of my Family” (141). The position of the cats in Crusoe’s hierarchy is incredibly tenuous. The implications of his family metaphor belie his fondness for the creatures. In two passages he refers to the animals as his family. However, the offspring of family should also be considered family, but in the context of life on the island, they become “vermin” to be automatically drowned. The final passage cited above syntactically underscores the fragile status of the cats. He moves from the “two or three favourites” to their offspring, which are exterminated. The imprecise use of the pronoun in “And these were part of my family” leaves the status of inclusion in family open-ended. Though the drowned kittens would seem to be excluded from being part of the family, Crusoe’s language leaves the distinction unclear. The cats’ situation further shows the extent to which Crusoe controls the status of animals. Their consideration is

not a matter of an external or inherent ontology, but instead results from anthropocentric concerns.

For many of the animals on the island, their status either shifts dependent on context or remains incredibly tenuous. Crusoe's roles as survivor, agriculturalist, and man removed from society shape the status of the animals of the island and create material differences for the lives of those animals. Crusoe's alteration of animal status contrasts with Pope's desire to limit the extent to which humans negatively affect animal lives. While Pope urges that "whatever is, is right," Crusoe works from an attitude that suggests "whatever can be aspired to and obtained, is right." Crusoe makes frequent interventions in the order of the island, which affect the status of the animals living on it. Particularly for the goats and cats, the relative status determined by Crusoe and his situation means the difference between living freely in the wild, living as a domesticated animal or pet, and dying. These different statuses show the fluidity and uncertainty of each animal's place within the chain of being. While the structure of the hierarchy remains intact, the ramifications for each animal and its resultant classification within the chain remains uncertain and ever-changing based on the narrative and material purpose of the animal within the novel. Anthropocentric needs and desires determine the ontological status of animals.

In addition to Crusoe's story of survival, the novel employs a discourse of politics and power in the ordering of the island. The political discourse employs the chain of being as an organizing principle, but it also provides another example of the ways in which animal status are tenuous and wholly dependent upon Crusoe. The animals that surround him serve as his surrogate family, but they are also considered subjects within his new kingdom. Crusoe's language easily moves between the filial and the political. He remarks, "It would have made a Stoick smile to have seen, me and my little Family sit down to Dinner; there was my Majesty the

Prince and Lord of the whole Island; I had the Lives of all my Subjects at my absolute Command. I could hang, draw, give Liberty, and take it away” (116). Crusoe’s attitude toward his non-human animals follows his declarations about the island as a whole. Upon surveying the island, Crusoe muses that “this was all [his] own, that [he] was King and Lord of all this Country indefeasibly, and had a Right of Possession” (80). Though this political vocabulary is quite conspicuous, Manuel Schonhorn asks, “Defoe’s critics have found nothing but histrionics and humor in Crusoe’s fantasy of politics or in his vocabulary of rule. But can we so facilely overlook how quickly his thoughts generally return to a rhetoric of magistracy?” (144). Exploring the political elements of the novel, Alex Mackintosh argues that the preoccupation with cannibalism “is shown to be inseparable from the broader questions raised by the novel around sovereignty, conquest and citizenship” (24). The political elements of the novel only become expanded when other humans enter into Crusoe’s world.

That politics is an important aspect of the narrative is neither a new nor particularly contentious claim. However, the manner in which political discourse enters *Crusoe* works to reinforce the prominence of the chain of being as an organizing principal in Crusoe’s world. As such, the function of non-human animals within the political discourse of the novel reveals yet again the instability of relationships between Crusoe and the other living beings on the island. Though Defoe has at times been claimed by modernity as a radical political leveler, Schonhorn argues that his position was indeed more conservative. He explains, “Confronting a nation that seemed on the verge of parliamentary constitutionalism, Defoe turned to traditional royalism. It is a royalism in which the king was the indispensable keystone in the arch of society, but yet a royalism that retained its scriptural, medieval, and English antecedents” (Schonhorn 4). Defoe’s dissent was not one that jettisoned the notion of a divinely appointed monarch, a practice that

functions within the paradigm established by the chain of being. Schonhorn's study finds "a Defoe who did not share a Whig and Lockean preoccupation with the evils of executive power, but a Defoe who was a vigorous defender of monarchical control" (3). Defoe's position looks to find a middle ground between the positions that locate political power with the people and those who place it solely in the divinely ordained monarch. Instead, "Defoe resolved his age's most extreme political contradictions. Anachronistically, his people elected whom God has selected" (Schonhorn 129). This political stance still maintains the hierarchy implicit in organizing the world according to the chain. In his overtly political *Jure Divino*, Defoe notes that people shall select God's "Chosen Heroe be their King," as "Almighty Light is pleas'd to show, / The strange Connexion secret Matters know / Between the things above, and the things below!" (II.29). In highlighting the "above" and "below" relative to the monarch, this passage makes clear the presence of the divinely ordered scale in Defoe's political thinking. As Defoe works between political extremes, the chain of being remains an organizing concept.

The political elements of *Crusoe* factor most strongly once other humans enter the narrative, but Crusoe begins his claims to rule the island in the absence of other people, substituting instead the animals of the island as his subjects. However, though the animals become elevated through their metaphorical status as subjects, their material conditions undercut their anthropomorphic role in the political hierarchy of the island. Their status as subjects functions very differently from the status afforded to Crusoe's human subjects. He has no problem declaring his power over the lives of his animal subjects: "I could hang, draw, give Liberty, and take it away" (116). But he has much more difficulty in claiming the right to judge the cannibals:

What Authority, or Call I had, to pretend to be Judge and Executioner upon these Men as Criminals, whom Heaven had thought fit for so many Ages to suffer unpunish'd, to go on, and to be as it were, the Executioners of his Judgments one upon another. How far these People were Offenders against me, and what Right I had to engage in the Quarrel of that Blood, which they shed promiscuously one upon another? (134)

Crusoe later adds that “the Thoughts of shedding Humane Blood for my Deliverance, were very Terrible to me, and such as I could by no Means reconcile my self to, a great while” (156).

Though Crusoe has claimed right of possession over the island and all that it holds, he falls short of exercising, or at least claiming, the same right over the human lives that he does over the animal lives.

Crusoe's treatment and consideration of the savages works to broaden the gap between human and animal on the island. Though he easily considers the cannibals “savages,” Crusoe ultimately finds little difference between himself and the people he has so greatly feared. Apart from his inability to justify rendering judgment on their behavior, Crusoe's description of Friday downplays race as a substantive distinguishing characteristic among people. “He had a very good Countenance, not a fierce and surly Aspect; but seem'd to have something very manly in his Face, and yet he had all the Sweetness and Softness of an *European* in his Countenance too, especially when he smil'd” (160). In reflecting upon the God-given natural characteristics of the savage soul, Crusoe proclaims, “He has bestow'd upon them the same Powers, the same Reason, the same Affections, the Same sentiments of Kindness and Obligation, the same Passions and Resentments of Wrongs; the same Sense of Gratitude, Sincerity, Fidelity, and all the Capacities of doing Good, and receiving Good, that he has given to us” (163). This similarity does nothing

to stop or dissuade Crusoe from his colonizing and controlling project for the island, but it does work to elide any great distinction between Crusoe and the place of the other humans in the chain of being. Though he acts as governor and ruler of the island, he lacks substantive ontological separation from his human subjects. This connection and commonality among the humans of the island creates a firmer distance between the human and non-human animals.

The firm distance between the status of human and non-human animals diminishes the power of the animals as metaphorical subjects. The animals of the island experience the harsh consequences of the dissolution of their status as subjects. Their metaphorical role becomes unnecessary once Crusoe can lay claim to human subjects. Schonhorn argues, “For Crusoe, in the terminology that Defoe and his critics like to use, is a father and no father; that is, his patriarchal power, in a distinction that Defoe continued to make till the end of his life, derives from institution and education, not from biology” (160). Once Friday arrives, the animals become a means for the exercise of power and props for Friday’s education. As John Williams explains, the use of animals as a means of political display begins with the slaughter of the lion: “All of this is a game of ‘pleasure’ for Crusoe, apparently for the sole purpose of reinforcing his position as sovereign in his relationship with Xury” (340). A similar fate waits for the animals necessary to “educate” Friday, and thus strengthen Crusoe’s claim to sovereign power. First, Crusoe sets out to kill a goat “in order to bring *Friday* off from his horrid way of feeding, and from the Relish of a Cannibal’s Stomach” (164). While this act of slaughter has clearly been undertaken many times prior to this occasion, it now has the added purpose of weaning Friday off of human flesh. It is not merely survival, but also part of what allows Crusoe to claim authority over Friday. Flynn adds, “Crusoe destroys more than a goat for Friday’s sake. To convince Friday of his benevolence, Crusoe continues the carnage in killing a parrot. Shooting

the goat, no matter how flashy the display of powder and power, can be rationalized as a way to replace human with animal flesh. But killing the parrot is an act of luxury” (156). The parrot is simply the life that was sacrificed in order to explain to Friday the power of the gun, and to teach him that just its noise alone offered no risk. It is both a show of force and an element of increasing Friday’s knowledge. Flynn continues, “Defoe makes his readers know the creatures they consume: the idle kid sitting next to its mother in the shade, the sentient parrot picked out of the tree, beings sacrificed to make safer the idea of civilization” (157). The killing of the parrot replicates a similar status shift enacted on the kittens of Crusoe’s “family.” At one time, parrots can serve as companions to Crusoe, calling him by name. Then, in service of a lesson to Friday, they can become targets and examples of the power of a gun. These acts of violence do little to directly affect Crusoe’s survival and serve to strengthen his position with respect to Friday. In doing so, the lives taken are not direct contributors to the furthering of Crusoe’s life. As such, their death lowers the metaphorical status granted to the animals elsewhere in the narrative.

The final fall in the ontological status of animals in *Crusoe* occurs once Crusoe and Friday have left the island. Travelling overland back to England, the group encounters a bear along the road. Crusoe describes bears thusly, “If you meet him in the Woods, if you don’t meddle with him, he won’t meddle with you; but then you must take Care to be very Civil to him, and give him the Road; for he is a very nice Gentleman, he won’t go a Step out of his Way for a Prince” (227). In an attempt at diversion, Friday lures the bear up a tree and destabilizes it before eventually shooting it in the head. The scene is gruesome and violent, but takes place only because Friday hopes to amuse Crusoe and their fellow travelers. Crusoe remarks, “I was angry at him heartily, for bringing the Bear back upon us, when he was going about his own Business another Way” (229). Friday initiates an entirely unnecessary confrontation with the bear. Flynn

offers an explanation for his impulse: “That Friday, first civilized victim to Crusoe’s rage for order, who learned from his master how to shoot fluttering parrots out of the sky, expresses Crusoe’s desire for mastery and demonstrates just how well Crusoe has established his ‘natural’ physical economy” (159). However, removed from the island and the necessities of survival, this incident takes on an even more grotesque purpose. On the island, the variable and tenuous status of the different animals created a muddled hierarchy. Here, as Flynn also notes, the anthropomorphization of the bear throughout the narration complicates the intended purpose of the scene. The bear is baited and killed simply for amusement. Crusoe describes the scene as “the greatest Diversion imaginable” (227), as they “did laugh heartily” (229) and “had laughing enough indeed” (229). Ultimately, the group was “pleased,” and he describes the killing as “indeed a good diversion” (230). The humanizing characteristics of the bear make the ends of the “diversion” even more shocking. On the island, though an animal’s status was unstable, there was possibility for harmonious coexistence of human and non-human animals. Once Crusoe and Friday are removed from the island, the treatment of animals becomes one of domination and destruction simply for the sake of amusement. Gone are the feelings of sympathy and the aims of utility. As Crusoe resumes his place in the world, the animals become decidedly below and out of that world.

In Defoe and Pope, readers confront different considerations for the status of animals alongside their human counterparts. The root of these variances may be traced to the role of “aspiration” in the bodies of work. Defoe offers Crusoe, a man whose wandering impulse and desire to attain more in life lands him on an isolated island. Crusoe’s attitude and worldview are consistently shaped by his restlessness. No matter his insistence on the primacy of providence, Crusoe cannot curb his optimism. He has faith in human reason and understanding. With only a

Bible, both Crusoe and Friday can grow, change, and improve. The implication is that human earthly authority and mental ability offer potential advances unavailable to other creatures. Given this paradigm for the human condition, the ontological status of non-human animals remains characterized by bodily danger, frivolous use, and even wanton abuse. Their place in the world is unstable and subject to the whims, desires, and needs of humans. Pope, on the other hand, looks at human aspiration with disdain. Man's unique gift is reason, but that reason is meant to restrain his actions and desires. Pope's paradigm of being rests upon acceptance, submission, and restraint. While Crusoe pays lip service to the acceptance of the will of providence, he continuously hopes for providence's favor. He is active in his submission. Pope's submission is far more passive. Rather than providence, Pope urges humans to submit to the cosmic order created and perfected by God. Further, this submission requires man to see himself as one part of a perfect whole, no more or less important or valuable than any other link in the scale. This insistence on equitable value of all spheres of existence creates an improved and stable status for animals, a status seemingly unattainable in the practice of eighteenth-century life.

DRAMATIZING NATURAL PHILOSOPHY: ANIMALS ON STAGE AND THROUGHOUT *THE SEASONS*

Charles II's granting of a charter to the Royal Society in 1662 marked a significant legitimization of the burgeoning natural philosophy, or new science¹ as a powerful field of study. Inspired by the work of Francis Bacon and a new epistemological paradigm that privileged observation and sensory data, practitioners of the new science obsessively catalogued their copious observations and measurements of nature. In doing so, these natural philosophers constructed not only a new discourse for explaining the works of nature, but also a new paradigm for understanding man's relationship with the rest of the natural world. The Baconian project aimed to solidify the position of the human atop all the other animals of the world. Knowing the secrets of nature resulted in the ability to exercise power over nature, reinforcing man's dominion.

Given the context of the emerging scientific discourse, this chapter will explore the various ways in which literary representations of natural philosophy either reinforce or resist the absolute hierarchy of dominion proffered by the Baconian thrust of new science. After delineating the elements of scientific discourse, I will turn to literary representations that reveal the consequences of this discourse on human and animal interactions. The primary and most direct representation of natural philosophy exists through the character of the virtuoso, an

¹ Though the most common term for this movement is natural philosophy, I will use "new science" as a synonym throughout this chapter. Further, though referring to practitioners as "scientists" is a bit anachronistic and not wholly compatible with our modern understanding of the term, I will also use it as short hand for the practitioners of the emerging natural philosophy.

amateur practitioner popular in plays of the Restoration and early-eighteenth century. From Gimcrack in Thomas Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* to Valeria in Susanna Centlivre's *The Basset Table*, these comic characters act as locations of ridicule for the excesses of the practices of natural philosophy. However, the source of the comedy varies amongst these characters.

Drawing from the work of ecofeminist theory, I will explore these differences as they rely on the gendered foundations of scientific discourse and practice. The lampooning of male virtuosi stems from attempts at useless mastery of nature and animals. The joke is aimed at the broader practice of the new science and the experiments on which it so heavily relied. However, the female virtuoso creates a comedy reliant upon the masculine nature of natural philosophy and the mastery it attempted to attain. Though the dramatized virtuosi all remain comedic, their respective genders craft distinctions between the elements of the new science that are up for ridicule. However, in each case, the ontological hierarchy between human and non-human animals remains consistent. They replicate the Baconian search for understanding and control, gendered as masculine. Moving from the stage, I will offer James Thomson's *The Seasons* as a counterpoint to the masculine control that typifies the work of the virtuosi and the Royal Society. Though Thomson is heavily influenced by the knowledge gained by the explosion of scientific exploration, his poem crafts a different relationship between humans and the rest of nature. Again drawing from an ecofeminist paradigm, I will show that Thomson's representation of nature rejects the masculine control that is so prevalent in the majority of natural philosophers. As such, Thomson rejects the ontological hierarchies that occupy such a forceful position in the other representations of animals. Thomson employs scientific discourse differently, resulting in a more egalitarian relationship between human and non-human animals.

Though the emergence of the new science had begun decades prior, the founding of the Royal Society offers a definitive beginning to the legitimization and scope of this incredible change to the way in which knowledge was gathered. The shift away from Scholasticism now had a definitive line to identify the new era. Margery Purver notes the magnitude of the change because the “scientific revolution of the seventeenth century was conscious and deliberate, rather than a gradual shifting of attitude based on incremental discoveries” (3). The Royal Society acted as a state-sponsored institution to assist in completing the move toward this new epistemological paradigm with an invigorated focus. As Michael Hunter explains, “The Royal Society was founded in 1660 with the aim of reforming knowledge by experiment, and it is wrong to underestimate the single-minded devotion to this intellectual enterprise as the motive force behind the Society’s early activities” (*Establishing* 47). In championing these changes, the Royal Society maintains a continual search to justify and explain their methods and purpose in the quest for knowledge. Though his account is the subject of much debate,² Thomas Sprat’s *History of the Royal Society* attempts a comprehensive declaration of the Society’s aims and methods. In critiquing the scope of Sprat’s work, M. Hunter reinforces the importance of the *History* as a document that captures the spirit of natural philosophy, even as its specific connection to the Society is contested. M. Hunter explains that Sprat “conflated the Society’s work with all of recent progress in its chosen fields” (*Science* 32) and “relates the aspirations for the Royal Society, not necessarily the achievements” (*Science* 31). Though the *History* may be contested as

² The debate largely revolves around the extent to which Sprat’s account is guided by the Society. Purver argues that his work was closely supervised and approved by several members of the Society (1). However, M. Hunter claims that the *History* is best considered as Sprat’s personal interpretation of the Society’s work and mission. The other element of contention deals with the Society’s relationship to the broader interest in natural philosophy. Did the Society drive Restoration science or was it a reflection of it? M. Hunter advocates for the latter and critiques Purver’s claim to the former (M. Hunter *Science* 33).

a specific record of the Society's work, it is a valuable resource for understanding the epistemological foundations of the new science.

Sprat's *History* reveals the importance of Francis Bacon to the aims of natural philosophy. Within the *History*, Sprat proclaims, "I shall onely mention one great Man, who had the true Imagination of the whole extent of this Enterprize, as it is now set on foot; and that is, the *Lord Bacon*. In whose Books there are every where scattered the best arguments, that can be produc'd for the defence of Experimental Philosophy; and the best directions, that are needful to promote it" (35). The Society's debt to Bacon appears difficult to overstate. M. Hunter rightly points out that the structure and workings of the Society are based upon Bacon's "Solomon's House" in his *New Atlantis* (*Establishing* 6), while Purver notes the large debt the Society owes to Bacon (5-6). In their introduction to Sprat's *History*, Cope and Jones argue that the "Royal Society gave Bacon's new empiricism a symbol and a focus" (*Sprat* xii). The epistemological foundation of the Royal Society and other practitioners of the new science rests in the empiricism espoused and explained by Bacon.

Bacon's work provides the basis for the scientific practices of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century by powerfully articulating changing notions about the root of knowledge. M. Hunter describes Bacon's project as "set[ing] out to provide a full-scale and systematic methodology for the reform of knowledge. He hoped to replace the sterile sophistries of scholasticism by a new programme of careful induction, involving the investigation of natural things by observation and experiment" (*Science* 13). However, these ideas don't spring newly from Bacon. "At best, Bacon only gave a systematic statement of an approach that already existed" (M. Hunter *Science* 15). Brian Vickers summarizes the prevailing view of Bacon "as a propagandist for science who urged that 'natural philosophy' be given a new importance in

human affairs and be organized on a new plan” (1). Bacon succeeds in offering a clear delineation of the shift toward knowledge based on observation and experimentation. His work provides the extensive philosophical and intellectual justification for the work of the Royal Society and other practitioners of science after the Restoration.

Bacon also outlines a distinct purpose for the investigation of nature. In his own view, scientific exploration was a benevolent act, benefitting all of society. However, discussions of Bacon’s broader aims reveal an unquestioned anthropocentrism in his position. “The ultimate goal of Bacon’s scientific society was to discover the laws of the working of all physical phenomena, for the proper use and benefit of humanity,” or in Bacon’s words, to enlarge “the bounds of Human Empire” (Purver 61). B. Vickers casts Bacon’s purpose in an equally anthropocentric light: “Bacon’s whole system is directed toward producing inventions and processes which will be useful to man. ... In Bacon, ‘usefulness’ is equivocal to ‘philanthropy’” (2-3). However, the anthropocentrism of Bacon’s project results in a hierarchy that divides and separates humans from the natural world. This relationship between man and nature relies upon the power of knowledge. Carolyn Merchant identifies this power dynamic: Bacon “transformed tendencies already extant in his own society into a total program advocating the control of nature for human benefit” (164). It is the emphasis on control that shapes the evolving dynamic between scientist and nature. Charles Whitney captures the breadth of Bacon’s anthropocentric order as “freedom, reason, discovery, progress: Bacon focuses these in a search for knowledge as power over nature” (1). Bacon intends to unite the hallmarks of human aspiration into an understanding of nature that results in control and power over it. In doing so, Bacon reinforces and solidifies the idea of man atop the rest of the material world in the chain of being. Both books in Bacon’s *The New Organon* are titled “Aphorisms concerning the Interpretation of Nature and the Kingdom of

Man.” Perez Zagorin’s analysis of the phrase “Kingdom of Man” highlights this reification of man’s position in the chain: “These words seem to allude to the *entrance* to the kingdom of man and signify that his reconstruction of philosophy constitutes this entrance. What they point to is the prospect of using scientific knowledge for the vast amelioration of humanity’s condition to the extent of making the world the kingdom of man” (78). Of course, Bacon still very much operates within a Christian world view. Though he and society placed great faith in the kingdom of God, “Bacon was positioning alongside of it another kingdom, that of a life on this earth of which man would be the sovereign” (Zagorin 78). In focusing on the utility/philanthropy of the new science, Bacon firmly establishes human status over the rest of the material world.

Through the hierarchy created by Bacon, a clear ontological distinction exists between humans and nature. The experimentation and observation casts humans as possessors of intellect and reason distinctly apart from flora and fauna. Whitney casts Bacon’s method as a “preservation of the wondrous otherness of nature as God’s book ... This otherness insures the scientific objectivity or disinterest that is so basic to Bacon and to modern science” (40). However, the combination of disinterest and dominion forms through a gendered epistemology and replicates the masculine controls of patriarchy. Bordo establishes the gendered foundation of science:

The birth of modern science represents a decisive historical moment in this regard, a “masculine birth of time,” as Bacon himself called it, in which the more “feminine” – i.e., intuitive, empathic, associational – elements were rigorously exorcised from science and philosophy. The result was a “super-masculinized” model of knowledge in which detachment, clarity, and transcendence of the body are all key requirements. (8)

The privileging of masculine modes of thought is not unique to Bacon, as the methods of the new science also owe a great deal of debt to Descartes, particularly with respect to vivisection and dissection. Bordo argues that “the Cartesian ‘masculinization of thought’ ... is one intellectual ‘moment’ of an acute historical flight from the feminine, from the memory of union with the maternal world, and a rejection of all values associated with it” (9). In crafting an objective distance from nature, the Baconian scientist finds himself charged with probing the depths of the natural world through both experiment and observation. Bacon’s language relies on upon casting nature as coyly female, hiding the secrets of the world. Merchant observes that Bacon’s philosophy “treats nature as a female to be tortured through mechanical inventions” (168). “Nature must be ‘bound into service’ and made a ‘slave,’ put ‘in constraint’ and ‘molded’ by the mechanical arts. The ‘searchers and spies of nature’ are to discover her plots and secrets” (Merchant 169). The dominion of the scientist relies on the forceful subordination of nature to investigation and probing. Sandra Harding takes the critique of Bacon’s language even further. “One phenomenon feminist historians have focused on is the rape and torture metaphors in the writings of Sir Francis Bacon and others enthusiastic about the new scientific method” (Harding 113). However, more traditional histories discount these metaphors as being unimportant to the intentions of Bacon’s methods. Merchant cites several relevant passages from Bacon:

For you have but to follow and as it were hound nature in her wanderings, and you will be able when you like to lead and drive her afterward to the same place again ... Neither ought a man to make scruple of entering and penetrating into these holes and corners, when the inquisition of truth is his whole object. (168)

There is therefore much ground for hoping that there are still laid up in the womb of nature many secrets of excellent use having no affinity or parallelism with

anything that is now known ... only by the method which we are now treating can they be speedily and suddenly and simultaneously presented and anticipated.

(169)

As the substance of the passages appears to be inextricably tied to the metaphors, Harding argues their importance:

But if we are to believe that mechanistic metaphors were a fundamental component of the explanations the new science provided, why should we believe that the gender metaphors were not? A consistent analysis would lead to the conclusion that understanding nature as a woman indifferent to or even welcoming rape was equally fundamental to the interpretations of these new conceptions of nature and inquiry. (113)

Harding succinctly captures the damning implications of the masculinized paradigm of the new science: “Both nature and inquiry appear conceptualized in ways modeled on rape and torture³ – on men’s most violent and misogynous relationships to women – and this modeling is advanced as a reason to value science” (116). This philosophical foundations of Baconian science stem from a sharp divide between humans and the rest of nature, resulting in the anthropocentric othering of everything non-human. However, this anthropocentrism is decidedly patriarchal, as it becomes the masculine scientist who must probe and prod nature to release “her” secrets. Merchant argues that “the new image of nature as female to be controlled and dissected through experiment legitimated the exploitation of natural resources” (189). The ethos of natural philosophy rested in a decidedly masculine anthropocentrism.

³ Merchant argues that Bacon’s language is also influenced by the methods of the courtroom and the interrogation of suspected witches via torture (168).

The experimentation of the Royal Society and other practitioners represents the meeting point of masculine control and objectification of animals. This hierarchy and ontological division are reinforced and replicated through the explosive expansion of dissection and vivisection. M. Hunter identifies the philosophical thrust of experimentation: “Much of the intellectual effort of Restoration science was devoted to testing and refining Cartesian mechanical theories in new fields of research, from biology to chemistry” (*Science* 16). This testing and refining relied upon a range of experiments, but none more illustrative of the objectification of nature than vivisection. “The Cartesian version of the mechanical philosophy, with which these men were familiar, both provided a conceptual framework for their work and also seemed, at least from our perspective, to justify vivisectional practice” (Anita Guerrini 391). Members of the Royal Society frequently performed public experiments where animals were suffocated in a vacuum, vivisected in front of a crowd, or transfused with the blood of another animal. In a particularly gruesome procedure, a dog’s thorax was opened and it was then kept alive via bellows filling its lungs with air. “John Evelyn, one of the observers, who vividly described the experiment in his diary, found it to be ‘of more cruelty than pleased me’” (Guerrini 402). Dix Harwood recounts several of the most cruel experiments conducted for a public audience and the frequency with which they occurred. “These experiments were not performed just often enough to establish a fact. They were repeated again and again, as in the case of the man who wanted to transfuse the blood of half a dozen dogs at once” (Harwood 118). In a society that was beginning to recognize the needless cruelty in bear baiting and children abusing dogs, far less concern was shown for the animals that lay upon the vivisection table. Harwood spares little in his condemnation: “The desire to watch the functioning of the animal machine had become a disease. The speculation of Descartes and the studies in anatomy had set in motion a tremendous amount of intellectual

activity, but this same activity, as we have seen, had its degenerate as well as its useful side” (118). The experimental acts found their justification in casting nature as a feminine other, emphasizing man’s role in knowing and controlling the non-human world. Vindicated via rape metaphors, these experiments embodied the absolute excess of masculine dominance and the ontological distance between human and non-human animals.

Analysis of the relative distance between experimenter and specimen has not always maintained the strength of Bacon’s conviction regarding difference. The obvious point is that learning about animal anatomy offered useful corollaries to human anatomy. Cutting open animals to gain further knowledge about the human body highlights the shared physicality of different species. Upon being chartered in 1662, the Royal Society “was also given the right to dissect corpses, to disassemble individual bodies for the collective good” (Ereck Jarvis 60). However, corpses were of little use when experimenters hoped to see the circulation of blood through a body. Harwood recounts Edmund King’s attempt to find a suitable volunteer for a transfusion. After failing to obtain one of Bedlam’s inhabitants, King eventually persuades “a feeble-minded cleric” to agree to a transfusion of sheep’s blood for twenty shillings (Harwood 115). With human subjects not feasible, scientists turned to animals to satisfy the great desire for transfusion experiments. Harwood points out that this strategy helped to undermine the force of the Cartesian beast-machine hypothesis: “Through the errors of the Cartesians and the discoveries of the scientists, men saw at last how closely akin we are to the beasts” (120). While Harwood focuses on physical similarities, Fudge further problematizes the subject-experimenter relationship:

The reading of the animal in vivisection repeats the paradox of humanism’s reliance on the animal. The absolute animality of human body is revealed even as

humanness is expressed. As such the destruction of the boundary which exists between human and animal continues. Reformed ideas, humanism and the new science are all linked by their difficulties in sustaining an idea which separates the species. (92)

However, within the framework of the chain of being, the physical similarities between human and many non-human animals is never questioned. Man's privileged position stems from his occupation of the middle link between the physical and the spiritual world. The body serves as the physical, while the soul (or intellect, spirit, reason, etc) is the spiritual element that creates man's position atop the material world. It is the immateriality of humanness that causes the separation from the beasts. The ontological separation that was so important to the new science draws from Cartesian dualism, which offers both human exceptionalism and unthinking beast-machines. While the scenes present in the laboratory and public exhibitions may seem grotesque, virtually all contemporary practitioners saw their acts as the ultimate expression of human superiority.

The philosophy and actions of members of the Royal Society and other scientists rippled through society at large. Their effects were not confined to laboratories and secret spaces. The public nature of many experiments confirms the popularity of (or at least wide spread interest in) natural philosophy. Harwood describes the social nature of this investigation with a hint of sarcasm:

Anatomizing and experimenting became very much *à la mode*. The great and near-great entertained their friends with vivisection parties and a dish of tea, or trotted across town to see what the virtuosi of the Royal Society were about.

These latter meetings were the center around which the savants and philosophers

clustered; and the gatherings of that brilliant body were crowded with poets, statesmen, divines, physicians, and curious noble sprigs with a vacant hour or two. (110-11).

Harwood even notes that King Charles maintained a laboratory “where he played at being a virtuoso when the mood struck him” (111). Interest in natural philosophy reflects the marked shift in the way people went about understanding and knowing the world around them. Experiments, observations, and philosophizing about them excite serious practitioners as well as social hobbyists. As Harwood’s repeated use of the term suggests, the figure of the virtuoso embodies this growing interest. The virtuoso was any practitioner and was not limited to membership in the Royal Society. M. Hunter notes the importance of the character: “The virtuosi represent the true social extension of the science of the age” (*Science* 77). Contrary to Harwood’s characterization of Charles playing the virtuoso, the amateur practitioners were very much a part of propagating the work of natural philosophy. M. Hunter describes the breadth of this importance: “London, therefore, was the focal point of virtuoso culture, but virtuosi were also widely dispersed throughout the country and even beyond, into the colonies, where there was much curiosity about natural phenomena. These scattered figures, too, played an important part in the science of the day” (*Science* 78-79). The virtuosi put into common and widespread practice the Baconian project, as it was filtered through the more organized associations of the Royal Society.

It is the figure of the virtuoso that represents a significant presence of natural philosophy in literature of the Restoration and early-eighteenth century. Though a figure of ridicule and source of comedy on the stage, the virtuoso reflected the pervasive presence of scientific pursuits in the broader culture of the higher segments of society. Peter Anstey remarks, “Indeed so

intertwined were the issues of authority and achievement in natural philosophy and literature that poets, playwrights and essayists could hardly escape reflecting upon the value and importance of the new philosophy” (148). However, this reflection was quite often one of lampooning elements of virtuoso culture. Three particular characters provide comedy at the expense of new science: Nicholas Gimcrack in Shadwell’s *The Virtuoso*, Periwinkle in Susanna Centlivre’s *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, and Valeria in Centlivre’s *The Basset Table*. Each character relies on virtuoso culture and practice to bring an element of comedy to their respective plays.

Though all comedic characters, these virtuosi rely on different elements of scientific culture for their humor. The male characters, Gimcrack and Periwinkle, satirize the sillier elements of virtuoso practice, while Valeria behaves as an earnest and respected scientist, only to be cast as comic because of her gender. Though their particular sources of comedy differ, each portrayal keeps consistent the larger philosophical framework of the new science. In each case, the paradigm of masculine domination of nature and the clear ontological separation between human and non-human animals form the foundation for what makes the characters humorous. Even in satirizing elements of natural philosophy, these plays reveal the diminished status of animals as fodder for human growth, a project reliant on a gendered understanding of knowledge and control.

The comedy of the male virtuosi stems from lampooning the useless mastery of nature and animals.⁴ The comedy is of the excesses of new science practices. While Shadwell’s Gimcrack should not be taken as a direct representation of Robert Boyle, Anstey argues that

⁴ Anstey’s excellent chapter closely examines *The Virtuoso* as a reaction to Robert Boyle’s natural philosophy. He organizes attacks on Boyle into three areas: questions of demarcation, usefulness, and credulity (147). While I will refer to Anstey throughout the discussion, I do not rely on these specific categories, as I am hoping to shift the analysis to focus on the ways in which the dramatic virtuoso and its critiques replicate assumptions about the ontological status of animals within a masculine natural philosophy.

“there is little doubt that the Boylean traits of Gimcrack and his ‘philosophical’ interests would have resonated with audiences in Shadwell’s day. For Boyle was the paradigm virtuoso of the new philosophy in England, both in terms of experimental and literary output and theoretical articulation” (146). Gimcrack appears to be the eponymous protagonist of *The Virtuoso*, but the play’s central conflict revolves around a complicated dual love plot. Gimcrack’s antics simply serve as the background for the love plot until a mob forms outside of his residence, angry because they believe he has invented a mechanical loom that will make their jobs obsolete. However, it is quite clear that Shadwell’s play is as interested in satirizing elements of new science through Gimcrack as it is in developing the love plots. Gimcrack’s experiments and collections capture the absurd end of the scientific spectrum at the time and serve as the setting and backdrop for the rest of the play.

However, no matter the ridicule aimed at Gimcrack, he and the rest of the characters in the play still replicate the larger structural and hierarchical paradigm that supports his behavior, even if his particular experiments are silly. “A florid coxcomb,” Sir Formal Trifle, frequently acts as Gimcrack’s supporter and cheerleader. He applauds Gimcrack’s work and attempts to persuade other characters to do the same. Trifle gives expression to Cartesian dualism in most stark terms when expressing his happiness to serve Clarinda: “My soul, methinks, is fled from its corporeal clog, and I am all unbodied” (V.i.8-9). This duality of his being is standard for Trifle. He expounds on the dangers of passion by saying “it drowns your parts and obstructs the faculties of your mind while a serene soul like that which I wear about me operates clearly, notwithstanding the oppression of clay and the clog of my sordid, human body” (I.ii.226-30). Though Trifle’s rhetoric is often overblown and humorous, he replicates the privileging of the

human soul/intellect that shaped natural philosophy's desire to know the world. For Trifle, the distinction is stark, decrying the "sordid, human body" as a clog to the clarity of the human soul.

Given the subordination of material substances to the intellect, Gimcrack and Trifle also participate in the Baconian desire to control or improve upon nature through their knowledge of it. Gimcrack proudly exclaims, "A man by art may appropriate any element to himself" (II.ii.28-29). Trifle dutifully agrees with him: "Nor do I doubt but your genius will make art equal if not exceed nature" (II.ii.24-25). At the heart of Gimcrack's experiments and collections lies an attempt to dominate nature or capture its attributes for human exploitation. In this sense, Gimcrack exposes the absolute anthropocentrism of his project. Existing notions that God has created a perfect, full universe that man simply needs to know to understand are replaced by the egotism that man can improve upon what nature has wrought. Gimcrack highlights the way in which man has retreated from participation in nature to be the master that can improve upon it. Human art trumps nature. The comedy derives from the application of these precepts. Gimcrack's goals are simply misplaced and his conclusions too grand. The practice of blood transfusion was popular among the Royal Society and the virtuosi. In the year prior to the publication of Shadwell's play, "In the winter of 1667-1668, the question of blood transfusion was especially exciting to the Royal Society" (Harwood 114). The point of these experiments was often "to see if a transfusion of blood would make any difference in the disposition of the animals used; whether with new blood a dog would fawn on his master and whether a trained dog would forget his tricks" (Harwood 116). This, of course, was not the case. However, it did not stop the obsession with transfusion. Harwood describes the method:

Animals were fated to suffer for the delectation of the virtuosi. One of the beasts was always killed. The directions issued by the Royal Society were quite specific.

One writer in giving directions regretted that, owing to the scarcity of dogs, he had been able to bleed only one animal at a time; but he hoped to correct this matter soon and to bleed three or four dogs at once. One must be very careful in performing this experiment lest one kill both subjects, and thus disappoint the spectators. (116)

When supplies were low, experimenters just insured that they bled larger animals into smaller ones. But Gimcrack's experiments are farcical replications of those that Harwood describes. Gimcrack explains his process: "Why I made, sir, both the animals to be emittent and recipient at the same time ... and so caus'd them to change blood one with another" (II.ii.118-123). Gimcrack's audacity of method is exceeded only by his results. He claims that "the spaniel became a bulldog and the bulldog a spaniel" (II.ii.127-28). The absurdity only grows larger when Gimcrack reports on the results of transfusing sheep's blood into a madman: "The patient from being maniacal or raging mad became wholly ovine or sheepish: he bleated perpetually and chew'd the cud; he had wool growing on him in great quantities; and a Northamptonshire sheep's tail did soon emerge or arise from his anus or human fundament" (II.ii.190-94). The satire on Gimcrack arises from the results of his experiments, not necessarily the experiments themselves. He replicates the Baconian quest for knowledge, but his results make him humorous. Even through the comedy of these experiments, their foundation works upon the very real assumptions that were made by practitioners of the new science. Gimcrack's comedic sin is that his experiments reveal more than they should/could have.

The other characters in the play may laugh at Gimcrack and Trifle, but their expressions frequently reinforce the distinct species hierarchy that informs experimentation on animals (and madmen, seen as less than human). As is common with insults via simile, Clarinda and Snarl's

exchange relies on the ontological distinctions between species. Snarl decries Clarinda's optimism by claiming, "I thank Heav'n. I was never such an ass. I'd not be such a puppy for the world, in sadness." (I.ii.131-33). However, her retort is even sharper: "Pish. You are an old, insignificant fellow, nuncle, such as you should be destroyed like drones that have lost their stings and afford no honey" (I.ii.134-36). Clarinda's insult simultaneously plays on scientific knowledge of bees while using that knowledge to cast Snarl as useless and worthy of destruction. Even within the dominant love plot of the play, characters turn to metaphors that rely on human and non-human interactions. Longvil equates the selection of a partner to the method by which he would prefer to obtain meat for consumption. "I had rather kill my own game than send to the poulterer's. Besides, I never eat tame things when wild of the same kind are in season. I hate your coop'd, cramp'd lady; I love 'em as they go about, as I do your barndoor fowl" (III.i.10-14). Longvil stakes his pride on the difference between forcefully capturing and consuming wild nature as opposed to that which is domesticated. Interestingly, the object of his affection, Miranda, concurs, "'Tis more natural indeed" (III.i.15). This sort of conquest reinforces an assumed supremacy, with the consumption of the captured being the proof. Longvil's comment is clearly meant to be proof of his manhood and honor, but conjures its power through a paradigm of man's ability to defeat and subdue nature via his superior powers. Capturing wild game suggests a prowess not necessary for the procurement of tamed animals. Marriage metaphors later return to species hierarchy when Hazard and Lady Gimcrack discuss the demerits of a husband. In their exchange, a husband is "a clog, a dog in a manger" (IV.ii.43-44), "an insect, a drone, a dormouse" (IV.ii.48), and "a body without a soul" (IV.ii.52). These characters reinforce species hierarchies through their admonishment of one another. In this exchange, Gimcrack and Hazard bring to the forefront the Cartesian beast-machine. The useless

husband is both a clod, a body without a soul (replicating Trifle's pronouncement), and a dog, insect, drone, and dormouse. The material human body is equated with the animal body.

However, the metaphors emphasize the necessity of the soul in order to achieve humanness.

Gimcrack is ridiculed because his experiments' results transgress species separation. This world relies on distinct ontological difference between human and non-human. Overlap can only ever operate on the level of metaphor, and then, these metaphors work to insult other characters.

While characters critique one another based on species-dependent metaphors, Gimcrack literalizes this distinction through his chosen focus of study. His pursuits dramatize a popular critique of the virtuosi. They chose to be expert in matters almost wholly unimportant to progressing human good, the form of philanthropy advocated by Bacon. In *The Tatler* 216 Joseph Addison captures this juxtaposition in "a general rule, 'That whatever appears trivial or obscene in the common notions of the world, looks grave and philosophical in the eye of a *Virtuoso*'" (182). Gimcrack's interests push the limits of utility and create his satiric portrayal. Trifle announces Gimcrack's bonafides: "I do assure you, gentlemen, no man upon the face of the earth is so well seen in the nature of ants, flies, humble-bees, earwigs, millepedes, hog's lice, maggots, mites in a cheese, tadpoles, worms, newts, spiders, and all the noble products of the sun by equivocal generation" (III.ii.1-5). Gimcrack affirms his commitment to such exploration, as he responds, "Indeed, I ha' found more curious phenomena in these minute animals than in those of vaster magnitude" (III.ii.6-7). The operative phrase in Gimcrack's utterance is "curious phenomena." It is the interest in the minute and potentially unimportant that creates the object of critique against the virtuosi. Addison takes this position:

I would not have a scholar wholly unacquainted with these secrets and curiosities of NATURE; but certainly the mind of man, that is capable of so much higher

contemplations, should not be altogether fixed upon such mean and disproportioned objects. Observations of this kind are apt to alienate us too much from the knowledge of the world, and to make us *serious upon trifles*; by which means they expose Philosophy to the ridicule of the witty, and contempt of the ignorant. In short, studies of this nature should be the diversions, relaxations, and amusements; not the care, business, and concern of life” (181-82).

Gimcrack’s boast about his knowledge sprouts from an anthropocentric belief that he, the human, can know the nature of these creatures. Oddly, Addison’s rebuke of such focus also stems from an anthropocentric belief that man is capable of “so much higher contemplations.” Gimcrack’s anthropocentric pursuit is rendered comical because of the even greater anthropocentric belief that humans should be focused on matters more grand. This tension between Gimcrack’s behavior and Addison’s hopes creates a humorous juxtaposition. Anstey explains, “It therefore became increasingly difficult to demarcate between *mere* matters of fact and matters of fact which, as we would now put it, constituted observational evidence for a theory. It is this blurring of the line of demarcation between ‘mere matters of fact’ and ‘natural philosophical facts’ so to speak which could be exploited by the likes of Shadwell” (152). The tension stems from Gimcrack’s grandiose intentions in matters that are not so grandiose. His aspirations are not high enough. In mocking Gimcrack’s interests as minute and silly, Shadwell suggests that Gimcrack’s potential as a human and a scientist is being wasted. Gimcrack’s humanness makes him capable of more important matters, which emphasizes human potential and superiority to other creatures.

Similar to the poor focus of Gimcrack’s work, Periwinkle is the satiric representation of the virtuoso’s tendency to focus on collecting trivial rarities. Centlivre’s *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*

offers a singular, unique plot. A young woman, Lovely, is left with a fortune of £30,000, but only receives it if all four of her guardians agree to her marriage. Periwinkle, one of the guardians, is described as “a kind of silly virtuoso.” Another character notes that Periwinkle is “a kind of a *Virtuoso*, a silly, half-witted Fellow, but positive and surly; fond of nothing but what is Antique and Foreign, and wears his Cloaths of the Fashion of the last Century; doats upon Travellers, and believes Sir *John Mandiville* more than the Bible” (4).⁵ The play clearly establishes the comedic elements of Periwinkle from the beginning. He is only a “kind” of half-witted virtuoso. He embodies Addison’s charge that virtuosi attempt to make serious the contemplation of trifles. Upon meeting Lovely’s suitor, Fainwell (who has tailored his appearance to appease Periwinkle), Periwinkle remarks, “Sir, I honour a Traveller, and Men of your enquiring Disposition: The Oddness of your Habit pleases me extreamly; ‘tis very Antique, and for that I like it” (24). Devoid of any scientific or philosophical substance, Periwinkle is pleased simply because the clothes are odd and appear old. Periwinkle enjoys the eccentric for its own sake, not for an increase in applicable knowledge. There is little function to his interests.

Beyond his preference in clothes, Periwinkle’s scientific activities reach absurd heights. He spends his time amassing odd objects. As Addison complains, “Since the world abounds in the noblest fields of speculation, it is, methinks, the mark of a little genius, to be wholly conversant among insects, reptiles, animalcules, and those trifling rarities that furnish out the apartment of the virtuoso” (181). It is precisely these trifling rarities that preoccupy Periwinkle. He falls for Fainwell’s disguise and remarks that “a Person of your Curiosity must have collected many Rarities” (25). Fainwell is all too happy to indulge Periwinkle’s obsession with rare objects. He proceeds to list objects in his fictional collection: “a muff made of the Feathers of

⁵ References to *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* will be to page number, as line numbers are not provided.

those Geese that sav'd the *Roman Capitol*;" "an *Indian Leaf*, which open, will cover an Acre of Land, yet folds up into so little a Compass, you may put it into your Snuff-Box;" a vile of water that "was part of those Wave, which bore *Cleopatra's* Vessel when she fail'd to meet *Anthony*;" and a girdle that renders its wearer invisible (26-27). Periwinkle, of course, is mightily impressed and hopes to travel in order to acquire similar rarities. He lacks "higher contemplations" in his methods and practice, and is therefore easily deceived. He views his collection as a symbolic extension of himself. Musing about his usage of a potential inheritance of £21,000, Periwinkle considers that he "may very well reserve sixteen Hundred of it for a Collection of such Rarities, as will make [his] Name famous to Posterity" (47). He then closes the scene with the couplet, "With Nature's curious Works I'll raise my Fame, That Men, 'till Doom's Day, may repeat my Name" (47). Periwinkle's desire to collect objects gestures toward Bacon's concept of natural histories, which formed the foundation of his project. Anstey explains that "Natural Histories were vast collections of matters of fact about objects and the qualities of objects" (150). Anstey continues, "The histories were to be ordered and prerogative instances from the histories were to be taken and so on. The aim was to discover the true causes of natural phenomena" (151). Periwinkle's goals encompass collection and presumably amassing data about his objects, but the only end goal to his collection is to increase his fame. The humor stems from Periwinkle equating collecting rarities with knowledge. His virtuoso practice is only to accumulate. His misapplication of the term is made clear when he proclaims, "I say Knowledge makes the Man" (54). One of Periwinkle's fellow guardians responds, "Yea, but not thy kind of Knowledge – it is the Knowledge of Truth – Search thou for the light within, and not for Bawbles, Friend" (54). Lovely takes the critique even further: "Ah, study your Country's Good, Mr. *Periwinkle*, and not her Insects – Rid you of your homebred Monsters, before you fetch any from abroad – I dare

swear you have maggots enough in your own Brain to stock all the *Virtuoso's* in *Europe* with Butterflies" (54). Periwinkle participates in the widespread collection project, but lacks any utility. He collects for the sake of collection, in hopes that the collection alone will secure his name in posterity.

Gimcrack and Periwinkle share a comedic foundation: their work lacks utility. Their application of the methods of natural philosophy neglects the ultimately philanthropic ends of the project, as Bacon imagined it. This creates the alienation from the rest of society that Addison warned against. Longvil can easily claim of Gimcrack that "these fools are beyond all that art or nature e'er produc'd" (III.iii.80). These virtuosi proudly boast their self-indulgent aims. Gimcrack exclaims, "'Tis below a virtuoso to trouble himself with men and manners. I study insects" (III.iii.88-89), and "To study for use is base and mercenary" (II.ii.89). The focus on knowledge for knowledge's sake plays upon perceptions and critiques of new science in general. Anstey points to Gimcrack's attitude when claiming that "the perception was that the new philosophy was slow to produce tangible results of a practical nature," in spite of the attempts of Glanvill, Sprat, and Boyle to justify the utility of new science (154). Gimcrack's lack of utility reaches its comedic height with his work to replicate the swimming motion of a frog. Lady Gimcrack explains the process: "He has a frog in a bowl of water, tied with a packthread by the loins, which packthread Sir Nicholas [Gimcrack] holds in his teeth, lying upon his belly on a table; and as the frog strikes, he strikes; and his swimming master stands by to tell him when he does well or ill" (II.ii.295-99). While Trifle supportively boasts that Gimcrack will soon swim better than all frogs and people alike, the virtuoso has no plans to put his skill to use. Gimcrack explains, "I content myself with the speculative part of swimming; I care not for the practice. I seldom bring anything to use: 'tis not my way. Knowledge is my ultimate end" (II.ii.84-86). As

with Periwinkle, Gimcrack revels in the pursuit of knowledge, but never approaches the Baconian end of putting that knowledge to work. He aims to reveal nature's secrets without applying that knowledge to philanthropic ends. This motivation is further reinforced when Gimcrack admits to weighing air from different parts of England simply "to know what it weighs. O knowledge is a fine thing" (V.ii.20-21). The inability to improve human lives renders Gimcrack's experiments and collections humorous and trivial. The play satirizes the esotericism of natural knowledge for the sake of simply knowing.

While the satire of these male virtuosi revolves around the lack of usefulness of their explorations, the underlying anthropocentrism remains unchallenged. Even as the individual virtuoso is ridiculed, the broader scientific paradigm remains unquestioned, maintaining the distinct ontological superiority of humans over non-human animals. Both Gimcrack and Periwinkle focus on their own increase in knowledge, and not the advancement of the human race. This is what makes them absurd. The final plot element that directly involves Gimcrack reveals the importance of the underlying paradigm of natural philosophy, emphasizing the anthropocentric requirement of its ends. As ribbon weavers descend upon Gimcrack's residence, they demand satisfaction from him, believing Gimcrack to be the inventor of an engine loom that will put them out of work. Gimcrack's defense includes his pleas: "I protest and vow they wrong me. I never invented anything in my life" (V.ii.114-15). "Hear me, gentlemen, I never invented an engine in my life. As Gad shall sa' me, you do me wrong. I never invented so much as an engine to pare cream cheese with. We virtuosos never find out anything of use, 'tis not our way" (V.iii.76-79). His philanthropic and functional uselessness is his greatest defense. Having been deserted by his wife and his mistress, Gimcrack is reformed. However, his reformation is one of correcting the error of his scientific ways. Gimcrack laments, "That I should know men no

better! I would I had studied mankind instead of spiders and insects” (V.vi.122-23). He continues, “Well, now ‘tis time to study for use. I will presently find out the philosopher’s stone” (V.vi.130-31). The error lies in rejecting utility as the guiding principle behind experimentation and collection. Gimcrack’s reformation reinforces the anthropocentrism and ontological hierarchies that are so foundational to the actions of the Royal Society and other practitioners. In satirizing the figure of the male virtuoso, Shadwell and Centlivre exploit *pretending* to the advancement of mankind. These virtuosi partake in what Lady Gimcrack has labeled “fruitless speculation” (II.i.279). Critiques revolve around their behavior neglecting the “higher contemplations” befitting the possibilities of human intellect. Their application is satirized within plays that still sanction the epistemological grounds of natural philosophy, a paradigm that emphasizes ontological difference between human and non-human animals. For these two virtuosi, egocentrism trumps their anthropocentrism, and this makes them comical.

In Centlivre’s *The Basset Table*, Valeria provides a different version of the comedic virtuoso. Valeria is much more scientifically sound than the male virtuosi, Gimcrack and Periwinkle. Rather than focusing on a lack of utility, the humor of the female virtuoso revolves around her gender. Reactions to Valeria’s scientific pursuits rely upon the masculine nature of natural philosophy in order to cast her as an undecipherable outsider to the other characters in the play. However, Centlivre ultimately treats Valeria sympathetically, as she is not punished for her interests and still ends up married to the man of her choice, despite her father’s desires. The play not only supports Valeria, but it also reinforces the epistemological paradigm of the new science with respect to both gender and species distinctions. The comedic nature of Valeria relies upon the acceptance of a scientific paradigm that revolves around masculine control and the diminished ontological status of animals.

Valeria's gender provides the foundation for other characters to ridicule her as a female outsider and transgressor of social and scientific norms. Described as "a philosophical girl," Valeria maintains an almost singular obsession with natural philosophy. However, her interests make her an outsider to almost all of the other characters. They view her as an anomaly. Her father, Sir Richard, attempted to raise Valeria in a manner that minimized exposure to what he considers to be the dangers of London life. Sir Richard explains, "I bred her in the country, a stranger to the vices of this town, and am resolved to marry her to a man of honor" (239).⁶ The results of Sir Richard's plan proved problematic in a different way. In an aside and as a wink to the audience, Lady Reveller's woman remarks that "wanting these diversions, she has supplied the vacancy with greater follies" (253). Though Valeria has not fallen to the city life, Sir Richard laments her fascination with natural philosophy. "The devil! Had I lived near a college, the haunts of some pedant might have brought this curse upon me, but to have got to my estate in the City, and to have a daughter run mad after philosophy, I'll ne'er suffer it in the rage I am in. I'll throw all the books and mathematical instruments out of the window!" (254). Valeria's interest in science has helped her to avoid the standard vices of young women, "gaming, parks, or plays" (253), but instead cast her as an even more vexing rebel.

Unlike the traditional follies of city life, her philosophical pursuits have the potential of making her unfit for marriage. Valeria balks at the suggestion that natural philosophy is but a whimsy. She is told that it is "ridiculous learning," "ridiculous indeed, for women. Philosophy suits our sex as jack-boots would do" (251). The particularly masculine nature of the new science creates an unfeminine other out of Valeria. Gendered foundations of natural philosophy destabilize Valeria's place within the gendered binary of marriage. In focusing on the rationalism

⁶ This and further references to *The Basset Table* will be to page number.

of Descartes, Bordo notes the discrepancy between science's reliance on objectivity and notions of femininity:

The "great Cartesian anxiety," although manifestly expressed in epistemological terms, discloses itself as anxiety over *separation* from the organic female universe. Cartesian rationalism, correspondingly, is explored here as a defensive response to that separation anxiety, an aggressive intellectual "flight from the feminine" into the modern scientific universe of purity, clarity, and objectivity.

(5)

In her focus on learning and experimentation, Valeria embodies this masculine paradigm. As such, Valeria is a counterpoint for accepted femininity. In hopes of procuring a specimen to dissect (the typical, Baconian objective activity), Valeria offers Lady Reveller a jewel for her Italian greyhound, and Reveller replies, "What to cut to pieces? Oh, horrid! He had need be a soldier that ventures on you. For my part, I should dream of nothing but incision, dissection, and amputation" (252). Because Valeria rejects feminine norms of emotional attachment and nurturing care, Reveller highlights Valeria's limited marriage options. Her participation in scientific acts relies on embracing masculine traits. Captain Firebrand later asserts that "she's fitter for Moorfields than matrimony. Pray, madam, are you always infected, full of change, with this distemper?" (255). Each of these comments devalues Valeria specifically because her interest in science grates against acceptable female behavior. This exposes the gendered paradox that Valeria embodies. M. Hunter notes that the largest frustration of rural virtuosi "was the lack of scientific conversation" (*Science* 80). Valeria's isolation within the play isn't geographical, it is gendered. She is an incomprehensible other precisely because she betrays her femininity by

operating within a paradigm of masculine objectivity and domination. Thus, her gender is the source of her comedic alienation, rather than the absurdity of her practice.

Though Gimcrack and Periwinkle humor the audience by stretching the utility of natural philosophy, Valeria is an earnest representation of the more accepted exploits of the virtuosi. Showing that she has experience in dissection, Valeria comments on the *Lumbricus Laetus* she discovered “in opening a dog the other day” (260). She also invites Lovely to “come, come here, look through this glass, and see how the blood circulates in the tail of this fish” (260). Valeria plays off of the popularity of experiments that traced the circulation of blood. Valeria also has interest in smaller creatures: “Dear cousin, don’t stop me, I shall lose the finest insect for dissection, a huge flesh-fly, which Mr. Lovely sent me just now, and opening the box to try the experiment, away it flew” (251). Hayden states that “examples of outrageous folly ... are not part of Valeria’s study. Her investigation and dissection of worms, insects and flies resonates with contemporary ‘scientific’ research” (“Centlivre” 125). This is the clear distinction between Valeria and her male counterparts. While simply collecting worms and viewing blood circulation may not have direct utility, they still advance scientific understanding. Anstey comments on experiments that discovered correlation between respiration and circulation: “Like Harvey’s experiments on snakes, rabbits, and sheep, it is indicative of the central role of comparative anatomy in many of the significant anatomical and physiological advances of the early modern period” (157), even if directly practical applications were slow to follow. F.P. Lock captures this distinction between Valeria and the male virtuosi: “Gimcrack ... is clearly intended to expose to ridicule the ‘science’ that he professes. But Valeria’s empirical procedures and skeptical attitude are in the true spirit of the Royal Society” (53). Hayden argues that Periwinkle’s “interest in collecting is neither to further knowledge nor for continued study, but rather to gather such a

collection,” and that “collection is futile in that it brings him no knowledge” (“Centlivre” 127). The chief difference between Valeria and Periwinkle “is the requirement for the love of learning, which Periwinkle clearly lacks” (Hayden “Centlivre” 128). Valeria’s actions and intentions follow an earnest pursuit of knowledge of the natural world. She rejects the trivial concerns that preoccupy Gimcrack and Periwinkle.

What remains is a sympathetic portrayal of Valeria, even though she is humorous. Hayden also highlights the gendered paradox of Valeria’s interests: “Nevertheless, in spite of the gendered construction of the pursuit of the New Science (and the masculine and aggressive metaphors used to parlay this), Centlivre forays into the contest with high praise” (“Centlivre” 115). Ultimately, Valeria marries the man of her choice (Lovely) and requires no reformation in order to obtain marital and intellectual happiness. Lovely has indulged her interest in natural philosophy and makes no hint at changing her behavior. Her science isn’t the source of ridicule, but her very presence is humorous because it challenges and subverts the masculine assumptions about scientific practice. Lock argues that “it is clear from the sympathetic portrait of Valeria in *The Basset Table* that Centlivre saw nothing absurd in experimental science” (112). Hayden adds, “*The Basset Table* celebrates female learning and women’s engagement with the New Science” (“Centlivre” 125).

As Valeria’s portrayal is more sympathetic than that of Periwinkle and Gimcrack, so too is *The Basset Table*’s validation of the Baconian epistemological paradigm. The underlying support for Valeria’s scientific interest (even in the face of ridicule by some of the characters) further backs the anthropocentrism of her pursuits. Centlivre’s valorization of female learning suggests that Valeria’s positions hold merit, and in these positions we may see the codification of distinct species hierarchies that diminish the ontological status for animals, just as is required by

the Baconian project. Bacon insists upon visual empiricism. “The visual is at the heart of the new science: to see is to believe” (Fudge 91). Valeria arranges her view of the world through careful categorization and visual analysis of other beings. This sets Valeria apart from and above other characters. In a play filled with deceptions, Valeria relies on an objectivity in keeping with her scientific interests. When Lovely presents a trembling hand as proof of love, Valeria responds simply, “Why so it does. Have I not told you twenty time I love you, for I hate disguises?” (261). Her observations reveal an earnestness that is absent from virtually every other character in the play. But it also renders her unable to operate successfully within the unscientific community represented in the play, a society based upon deception. When Lovely is in her room, Valeria’s father is heard approaching. In a moment of panic, she hides Lovely in the only place possible: beneath a tub that was filled with fish (presumably for dissection). But the overturned vessel attracts the attention of her father, and when he refuses to believe that she is keeping a live bear cub (also for dissection), Lovely is revealed. Though much greater deceptions “succeed” in the play, Valeria is unable to simply hide a person in her room. This inability to partake in deception makes Valeria foreign to the other characters, but earnest in her scientific qualifications. She refuses knowledge that does not stem from empirical methods.

This empiricism translates directly into her dissections and animal experiments. Fudge explains the worth of the experimenter within scientific culture: “The vivisector, the Baconian scientist, is presented as the good reader, the true human. Cutting up animals becomes the thing which reveals both the animality of the human body, and the human-ness of the human (92). Valeria acts out this emphasis on the human and human knowledge. When a question about whether or not a being without gall exists, Valeria responds, “I have dissected my dove, and positively I think the vulgar notion true, for I could find none” (252). When Reveller expresses

shock at the “barbarous” action, Valeria adds, “Killed it! Why, what did you imagine I bred it up for? Can animals, insects, or reptiles, be put to a nobler use than to improve our knowledge?” (252). This response replicates the absolute anthropocentrism at the heart of the new science. The noblest existence of the animal is to improve the knowledge of the human. Here, the ontological difference between species comes to the forefront. Tague identifies one of the philosophical dilemmas of such stark differences in species value: “Humanity’s distinction from beasts implied domination, but with this authority came responsibility, without which humans risked slipping back into animality. Being human required both the rule over animals and the care of them” (“Companions” 111). Valeria’s actions highlight the masculine domination inherent in natural philosophy, which necessarily rejected the feminine attributes of nurturing and caring. For Valeria to care for the bird would be for her to embrace her femininity, rather than the masculine objectivity of experimentation. She also justifies the bird’s usage on the grounds of the utility of her experiment. The destruction of the bird resulted in an increase in knowledge, which Valeria proudly displays as she reminds the group that the bird was void of gall, answering the question regarding a “trifling subject” (252).

Valeria’s anthropocentrism results in determining a creature’s status solely upon their use-value. Her interest rests only in substances and beings that increase her knowledge of the world. In this way, she takes the chain of being and ascribes to it a hierarchy that revolves around the pursuit of knowledge. Her position is incredibly anthropocentric, scientific, and egoistic. Merchant identifies the centrality of the scientist in Bacon’s cultural paradigm: “Bacon’s utopian society ... displayed upward mobility in the case of the ‘scientist,’ who was placed in the highest stratum” (176). Valeria displays this stratification when she thinks she is being forced to marry someone other than Lovely: “Can I have joy in a species so very different from my own? Oh my

dear Lovely! We were only formed for one another, thy dear enquiring soul is more to me than all these useless lumps of animated clay” (274). What separates Lovely from the rest of the cast is his “enquiring soul.” Lovely’s pretense to sharing some of Valeria’s interest in natural philosophy makes him worthwhile, and the others useless. Valeria establishes her utility for men earlier in the play: “The converse I hold with your own sex is only to improve and cultivate the notions of my mind” (254). She laments time wasted, too: “How has my reason erred, to hold converse with an irrational being” (255). For Valeria, people pose little interest unless they can serve her quest for knowledge. In an interesting way, this reinforces distinct species hierarchies and the lowered ontological status of animals. Though she has no interest in “irrational” humans, or those that cannot add to her understanding of the world, she is willing to let them live freely. Animals, however, are all objects to be dissected and explored. She fundamentally sees non-human animals as fodder for her anthropocentric pursuits. When a servant announces a guest, Valeria asks, “A...What? Is it an accident, a substance, a material being, or a being of reason?” (252). When the servant responds that it is a man, she says, “Pshaw, a man, that’s nothing” (252). Her language replicates the chain of being, but the value assigned to each is not based upon the linear hierarchy, but one that is decidedly anthropocentric. This reworking of ontological status is confirmed when Lovely expresses concern that Valeria will be married to Captain Firebrand, a coarse speaking sailor. In allaying his fears, she remarks that “if he was a whale he might give you pain, for I should long to dissect him. But as he is a man, you have no reason to fear him” (261). Because the Captain is a boring man (previously labeled an “irrational being”), he shall live free of the scalpel. But if he were a whale, Valeria would feel free to claim his body for experimentation. The status of any non-human animal is that of object for exploration. There is no value in the life of the animal for the animal’s sake. The relentless

anthropocentrism of the Baconian project that Valeria follows renders animals as object devoid of inherent claims to life.

Valeria and the male virtuosi provide comic portrayals of the practitioners of natural philosophy. Though their foundations for humor highlight different aspects of new science, each portrayal leaves the underlying epistemology of Baconian science intact. In each case, the world is meant to serve the human quest for knowledge. The masculine domination inherent in the new science remains unquestioned, even when aspects of the practice are made humorous. Following these foundations, animals exist as objects for exploration, as anthropocentric vessels of knowledge. If the role of the scientist is objective observer and knower, non-human animals are the objectified observed. They do not exist for their own sake, but for the sake of increasing human knowledge and control.

James Thomson's *The Seasons* offers a competing representation of natural philosophy and the resultant relationship between man and nature, human and non-human animal. Thomson's representation of the interaction between humans and the rest of nature, while still informed and driven by science, presents a very different relationship and power dynamic. If the Baconian paradigm and approach of the Royal Society consist of masculine mastery and control, Thomson's is one of feminine nurturing and mutual interdependence. Both aims are scientific in that they attempt to know and describe the mysteries of nature. Strongly shaped by the chain of being, Thomson's paradigm more closely mirrors Pope's granting of value to each link for its own sake within the whole chain, rather than the Baconian view that nature exists for man's use. Thomson takes the knowledge gained from science and assigns to it a wondrous respect for God's creation, rather than a notch on man's intellectual belt. What results is a representation of the natural world where man is simply a part of the larger whole, dependent upon nature and

tasked with responsible care for the creatures below it on the chain. Where the Baconian project aims for dominion, Thomson envisions humans as stewards. In this paradigm, animals enjoy a heightened ontological status, as their existence is valued for its own sake, rather than just as an anthropocentric secret to be uncovered.

Thomson was greatly influenced by the shifting epistemological foundations of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. His project is ambitious and grand in its scope and aim as he attempts to capture the totality of nature. According to W.B. Hutchings, “Each season is a particular ordering of the variety of creation which manifests its ultimate unity” (58). In undertaking such a project, Thomson cannot help but reflect and react to a field of study and mode of viewing the world that reshapes the basis of human knowledge. Anstey explains the connection between the poet and the scientist: “Natural philosophy provided many of the basic categories by which the poet’s world was understood and described and as the natural philosophical categories began to change with the emergence of the new science, poets found themselves having to adjust” (147). The influences on Thomson are multiple. At the most basic level, Sambrook notes that Thomson’s diction draws from “the regular, exact vocabulary of early eighteenth-century scientific writing” (xiv).⁷ Further, the poem is quite remarkable for the number of editions and the substantive revisions Thomson made over the years. The publication of various sections and editions spans 20 years. A great deal of Thomson’s changes reflect the growing influence of scientific advancement and knowledge. Sambrook explains, “The growth of Thomson’s poem, first to the completed *Seasons* of 1730, then to the greatly expanded versions of 1744 and 1746, tended to bring in more natural philosophy (i.e. science) but the work remained essentially a nature-descriptive poem” (ix-x). For example, in a revised passage in

⁷ All references to Sambrook are from the introduction to Thomson’s *The Seasons and The Castle of Indolence*.

Autumn, Thomson describes the methods by which water circulates through the environment.

The passage reflects a growing scientific understanding of hydrology,⁸ employs specific scientific language, and works to advance Thomson's view of a unified natural world. The passage concludes:

United thus,
The exhaling sun, the vapour-burdened air,
The gelid mountains, that to rain condensed
These vapours in continual current draw,
And send them o'er the fair-divided earth
In bounteous rivers to the deep again,
A social commerce hold, and firm support
The full-adjusted harmony of things. (*Au* 828-35)

The scope of Thomson's work necessarily relied upon science for accuracy. He could not adequately capture the splendor of nature if his descriptions were factually incorrect. However, as will be oft repeated throughout the poem, scientific accuracy is not the sole end of the verse. Thomson describes the process of condensation and evaporation to show the "full-adjusted harmony of things." Thomson's goal is not to capture human knowledge resulting in control. His purpose is to express the harmony of God's whole creation. But in doing so, Thomson reveals his scientific understanding. Thomson relies upon scientific knowledge to faithfully execute his plan.

Thomson's relationship with natural philosophy goes deeper than just aiming for scientific accuracy. Sambrook argues that Thomson relies on some of the conventions of the

⁸ Sambrook explains the changes in the description, which initially contained a description of the eventually disproven percolation theory (230).

georgic because it was “the appropriate vehicle for any ambitious Augustan poet who was touched, as Thomson clearly was, by the spirit of scientific inquiry which spread into English culture from the activities of the Royal Society after the 1660s” (xi). More than simply touched by the emergence of natural philosophy, Thomson assigns Bacon the role of muse now that “the light of dawning Science spread / Her orient ray, and waked the Muses’ song” (*Su* 1533-34). The praise for Bacon continues:

The great deliverer he, who, from the gloom
Of cloistered monks and jargon-teaching schools,
Led forth the true Philosophy, there long
Held in the magic chain of words and forms
And definitions void: he led her forth,
Daughter of Heaven! that, slow-ascending still,
Investigating sure the chain of things,
With radiant finger points to Heaven again. (*Su* 1543-51)

Thomson praises the new science’s supplanting of Scholasticism and “jargon-teaching schools.” Still reliant on the underlying notion of the chain of being, Thomson celebrates the “true Philosophy” that finds the truth in “investigating sure the chain of things.” Thomson expands his usage for natural philosophy within the poem as he proclaims:

With thee, serene Philosophy, with thee,
And thy bright garland, let me crown my song!
Effusive source of evidence and truth!
A luster shedding o’er the ennobled mind,
Stronger than summer-noon, and pure as that

Whose mild vibrations soothe the parted soul. (*Su* 1730-35)

Thomson relies on the epistemological evidence of the objective observer because philosophy offers the “source of evidence and truth.” He relies on an objective mode of knowledge-making, requiring empirical connections to truth. In these passages Thomson reveals the extent to which his entire project is of a scientific nature. He will rely upon the epistemology of the new science in order to reveal nature’s splendor.

While Thomson acknowledges and makes use of the epistemological changes ushered in by natural philosophy, his methods and ends differ from the virtuoso and the Royal Society experimenter. Thomson’s lab is nature and his scalpel is nothing but his observation. In these key departures, Thomson aims for a different purpose than the vivisector, collector, and dissector. According to Sambrook, “Thomson’s subject is not merely the countryside but the secret workings of Nature as these are revealed to the enlightened eye of the philosopher and scientist” (xii). The key in Sambrook’s formulation is combined enlightenment of the scientist *and* philosopher. While Thomson’s use of the word “philosophy” carries a distinct inclusion of “natural philosophy,” Sambrook identifies an important complexity. Thomson is not after the knowledge and control of the scientist. As the comedic virtuosos show, the scientist’s pursuit was one that distanced man from nature and made the relationship one of domination. Their knowledge was meant to be put to use to shape nature for man’s needs. Thomson values the knowledge gained from natural philosophy (the eye of the scientist) in order to apply that knowledge to understanding the greater perfection of creation (the eye of the philosopher). He believes in the knowledge of natural philosophy, even as he presents a different paradigm through which that knowledge should be applied. Thomson aims for enlightened understanding instead of control. Thomson explains the gains humans have made as a result of their industry

and mechanical power, creating metals, cloth, and other necessities. However, these advances have greater ontological ramifications:

But, still advancing bolder, led him on
To pomp, to pleasure, elegance, and grace;
And, breathing high ambition through his soul,
Set science, wisdom, glory in his view,
And bade him be the lord of all below. (*Au* 91-95)

Thomson recognizes the hierarchy created by the “science, wisdom, and glory” to which humans lay claim. There is a distinct difference between human and non-human animals. However, Thomson’s hierarchy calls for humans to act as stewards, rather than controllers:

Hence every form of cultivated life
In order set, protected, and inspired
Into perfection wrought. Uniting all,
Society grew numerous, high, polite,
And happy. (*Au* 109-13)

Though cultivated life establishes a clear order, that order is meant to keep every form “protected.” Only in protection, order, and inspiration can perfection be seen. Man’s responsibility is to protect those forms of life that help create his full and flourishing life.

The importance of protecting cultivated life finds expression in descriptions of storms. Thomson describes a poignant scene in *Summer* as all manner of life seek shelter in the face of an impending storm. The people have found shelter, leaving the cattle behind:

In rueful gaze
The cattle stand, and on the scowling heavens

Cast a deploring eye – by man forsook,
Who to the crowded cottage hies him fast,
Or seeks the shelter of the downward cave. (*Su* 1123-27)

Safe from the “sonorous hail” and “prone-descending rain,” the humans neglected to protect the cattle they depend upon. After the storm, “A lifeless group the blasted cattle lie; / Here the soft flocks, with that same harmless look / They wore alive” (*Su* 1152-54). Thomson emphasizes the innocence of the dead animals, highlighting the “soft flock” and their “harmless” looks. The hierarchy of *The Seasons* places a responsibility, not just a privilege, on those at the top. It rejects an absolute anthropocentrism that sees human needs as special and uniquely important, which resists a complete agreement with the Baconian paradigm. Merchant notes that Bacon’s “Solomon’s House” “was a forerunner of the mechanistic mode of scientific investigation” (182) and “the antithesis of holistic thinking, mechanism neglects the environmental consequences of synthetic products and the human consequences of artificial environments” (186). In Merchant’s long view of human intervention in the environment, domestication changes non-human animal behavior into “artificial” norms. Thomson works to synthesize knowledge from new science with a holistic understanding of nature, inculcating stewardship into the human/nature interaction. The purpose and mode of domestication offers Thomson a useful site for this sort of break from the Baconian scientists of the Royal Society. He describes the shearing of an “indignant ram”:

Fear not, ye gentle tribes! ‘tis not the knife
Of horrid slaughter that is o’er you waved;
No, ‘tis the tender swain’s well-guided shears,
Who having now, to pay his annual care,
Borrowed your fleece, to you a cumbrous load,

Will send you bounding to your hills again. (*Su* 417-22)

This representation of domestication is one in which all parties are mutually benefitted. The ram avoids the “horrid slaughter” and is instead relieved of his “cumbrous load,” sent to bound in the hills again. Thomson’s lauded humans are not scientists who cut for knowledge, but tender swains who simply “borrow” cumbersome fleece. The well-being of all creatures creates a holistic view of the way in which people interact with the environment, and especially with the non-human animals they keep as livestock.⁹ Thomson’s view of the world is one in which the whole of creation works in unity, rather than one in which man gains knowledge at the expense of all other living beings.

In keeping with his holistic and unifying view of all of creation, Thomson organizes the material world through the chain of being, but it is a chain that is Popean in its valuation of each link for its own sake. That Pope is a strong influence on Thomson is hard to ignore. Thomson compliments Pope’s translation of Homer and his relatively quiet life at Twickenham:¹⁰

Or from the Muses’ hill will Pope descend,
To raise the sacred hour, to bid it smile,
And with the social spirit warm the heart;
For, though not sweeter his own Homer sings,
Yet his life the more endearing song. (*Wi* 550-54)

They initially meet in 1725, and Douglas Grant explains that “Pope and Thomson liked and admired each other from the first, but their real intimacy belongs to a later day” (67). Grant summarizes their relationship and notes a reunion in 1733: “Among the many friends who often

⁹ Thomson carries this belief to its logical conclusion, advocating vegetarianism (*Sp* 336-78).

¹⁰ Sambrook connects this compliment, added in 1730, to Pope’s “successful self-cultivation as the virtuous recluse” (237).

visited [Thomson] at his cottage perhaps the most interesting was Alexander Pope, who could easily make the short journey from Twickenham. The friendship between the two poets had been close ever since their first meeting ... Upon his return from abroad, Thomson was quickly intimate with Pope again” (161). Their friendship suggests a connection that can be seen in their analogous interpretation of the chain of being. Ralph Cohen expresses their shared vision: “Thomson related nature’s transformations to the familial, commercial, political and social world of man. The unity, thought, diction, grammar of the poem offered an interpretation of Augustan society, that, for all its similarity to the views of Pope, presented a novel poetic vision” (330). While Thomson’s artistic vision is undoubtedly unique, the philosophical foundations of *The Season* employ the perfection and unity of the chain of being that Pope so eloquently expresses in *Essay on Man*. As such, Pope’s delineation of the chain of being proves an important backdrop for Thomson’s usage within *The Seasons*.

Thomson frequently refers to and expounds upon the chain of being. Though he believes in the hierarchy of the chain, Thomson removes the anthropocentric values assigned to the relative links in the chain. Man is granted a special place atop the chain, but Thomson tempers this position with an emphasis on mutual interdependence and unity. For example, Thomson can cast man as a special creature who “superior walks / Amid the glad creation, musing praise / And looking lively gratitude” (*Sp* 170-72). However, “superior” man’s role in this passage is to walk “amid” the rest of creation and remain effusive. But man’s higher and more complex faculties rely upon interaction with nature. A passage that celebrates man’s capacity for deep love begins: “Sing the infusive force of Spring on man; / When heaven and earth, as if contending, vie / To raise his being and serene his soul” (*Sp* 868-70). The uniqueness of human love stems from the inspiration of spring, rather than originating from man’s superior nature. The relationship

between humans and nature is one of mutual benefit. Nature gives to man, and man is to protect nature.

By avoiding casting the chain of being as an anthropocentric lauding of humans, Thomson frequently turns his focus to the overall perfection of the total system. In doing so, like Pope, he praises each portion of life for its own sake. On the perfection of the whole chain, Thomson explains:

Nor to this evanescent speck of earth
Poorly confined; the radiant tracts on high
Are her exalted range; intent to gaze
Creation through; and, from that full complex
Of never-ending wonders, to conceive
Of the Sole Being right, who spoke the word,
And Nature moved complete. With inward view,
Thence on the ideal kingdom swift she turns
Her eye. (*Su* 1782-90)

In this passage the realm of spirits, not confined to the “speck of earth,” can view the entire perfection of nature. God creates an “ideal kingdom” to be praised and honored by all of its inhabitants for its completeness. Revelation of this perfection is Thomson’s aim in writing *The Seasons*. He outlines the path to understanding:

Hence larger prospects of the beauteous whole
Would gradual open on our opening minds;
And each diffusive harmony unite
In full perfection to the astonished eye. (*Wi* 579-82)

Again the emphasis is on comprehending the “beauteous whole,” which operates through “diffusive harmony.” For all of Thomson’s insistence on the perfection of creation, he does allow for movement up the chain. Thomson explains the process:

Then, even superior to ambition, we
Would learn the private virtues – how to glide
Through shades and plains along the smoothest stream
Of rural life; or, snatched away by hope
Through the dim spaces of futurity,
With earnest eye anticipate those scenes
Of happiness and wonder, where the mind,
In endless growth and infinite ascent,
Rises from state to state, and world to world. (*Wi* 600-08)

Thomson makes a key distinction in this passage. Human ambition is not the method that allows movement up the chain. Learning “private virtues – how to glide through shades and plains” allows one to hope for “infinite ascent” in the next life. Movement up the chain only happens by respecting one’s place in life, living harmoniously amongst the rest of nature.

As Thomson expresses admiration for the whole of creation, the human condition is always one of incomplete understanding. The plentitude of nature always leaves man in a state of unknowing. Thomson asks:

Has any seen
The mighty chain of beings, lessening down
From infinite perfection to the brink
Of dreary nothing, desolate abyss! (*Su* 333-36)

It is at this point that Thomson's faith in the knowledge of science meets a stopping point. The quest to know nature will remain incomplete. The bounty of nature outruns the human capacity to name because "then spring the living herbs, profusely wild, / O'er all the deep-green earth, beyond the power / Of botanist to number up their tribes" (*Sp* 222-24). Even profound technological advances cannot overcome man's limited view of creation. He proclaims:

Gradual from these what numerous kinds descend,
Evading even the microscopic eye!
Full Nature swarms with life; one wondrous mass
Of animals, or atoms organized. (*Su* 287-90)

In this perpetual state of ignorance, humans must not attempt to assign anthropocentric values to a system that they do not fully comprehend. Thomson again appears similar to Pope's insistence that man is in no position to judge that which God has seen fit to create. Robert Inglesfield cites a letter written by Thomson in which "he expresses an unqualified religious optimism, declaring that 'there is no real Evil in the whole general System of Things; it is only our Ignorance that makes it appear so, and Pain and Death but serve to unfold his gracious Purposes of Love'" (72). Thomson has no illusions about the human capacity to fully know nature or the complexities of natural interactions. Everything that exists is good in the sense that it contributes to the overall perfection of the system. Even in an attempt to know and see the world, man must accept his imperfections and inability to wipe away all remnants of ignorance.

The recognition of human failings further promotes Thomson's representation of the perfection of the totality of the chain. Rather than focusing on a particular individual or class of individuals, Thomson places the greatest value in the aggregate system. He again praises all of creation: "To thee I bend the knee; to thee my thoughts / Continual climb, who with a master-

hand / Hast the great whole into perfection touched” (*Sp* 558-60). This repeated emphasis works to level any privilege on a particular portion of the chain. The ontological value is spread across the chain, rather than concentrated on humans. “The basic unit of Thomson’s ontology is not the unique individual, and it is not necessarily human. Thomson depicts creatures that ‘retain to some extent their individuality’ not although but because they are ‘organised within a formal pattern’” (Heather Keenleyside 453). The focus on the whole provides non-human animals (and the rest of nature) with a heightened status over their role in a Baconian paradigm. Even in attempting to enlighten people to this view, Thomson aims for a less anthropocentric representation of the world. Man is not at the center nor master over nature, he is simply part of it. Grant describes this focus: “Thomson, however, described Nature for its own sake. He shifted the interest of poetry from mankind to it, and lightened his descriptions of any artificiality” (100-01). Nature, the flora and fauna that make it up, contains its own value. The importance of plants and non-human animals is not dependent upon their utility to mankind.

Thomson’s focus on capturing the perfection of nature emphasizes a system of mutual interactions between the different classes of organisms and employs personification as a means of distributing agency throughout all manner of creatures. In a description of ploughing a field, Thomson brings all of the actors together in harmonious concert:

Joyous the impatient husbandman perceives
Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers
Drives from their stalls to where the well-used plough
Lies in the furrow loosened from the frost.
There, unrefusing, to the harnessed yoke
They lend their shoulder, and begin their toil,

Cheered by the simple song and soaring lark. (*Sp* 34-40)

The husbandman and the steers participate in the process with a mutuality, one that leaves the beasts “cheered” in the process. The relationship is one of cooperation, rather than coercion. “He first shows the oxen, faintly humanized, sharing the ploughman’s joy in the soft breezes and bird-songs of spring and working in willing partnership with him, the earth too is ‘faithful’, and man, beast and soil exist in an ideal harmony” (Sambrook xi). The “faintly humanized” oxen exist along with the ploughman, reducing the ontological hierarchy that casts such animals as beasts of burden. Thomson’s use of personification creates a stylistic and poetic execution of his philosophical paradigm. Sandro Jung discusses the complex interdependence of Thomson’s nature: “Thomson aims to create organic representations of the inextricable interrelatedness of objects and persons, using personification as a central, mediating device negotiating the boundaries between the inanimate and the animate” (584). Looking at broader ramifications of personification in the eighteenth century, Keenleyside notes that the “predilection for personification reveals modernity to be marked less by the clear distinction between person and things than by the persistent instability of these terms” (448). Thomson frequently elides clear distinctions between traditional categories of life. In citing Thomson’s usage of “human blossoms” to describe children, Hutchings argues that “by speaking of human beings in botanical language, Thomson establishes a point of contact between different aspects of the natural world: humans’ growth is analogous to that of flowers because they are both facets of one single creation” (54). As Keenleyside succinctly explains, “In *The Seasons* everything ‘is doing’” (451). Though elements of nature remain different by classification, there is a leveling of value through their animation. However, Thomson does not resist all distinctions between types of living beings, rather he shifts the dividing line. Keenleyside explains that “Thomson would

appear to accord different faculties to different kinds of beings. Describing the motions and emotions of both humans and animals, moreover, he would appear to locate difference not between human and nonhuman but between animate and inanimate” (456). The unification of human and non-human through personification appears particularly powerful in a passage where the speaker has been overwhelmed by the presence of a flock of birds:

I feel
A sacred terror, a sever delight,
Creep through my mortal frame; and thus, methinks,
A voice, than human more, the abstracted ear
Of fancy strikes- ‘Be not of us afraid,
Poor kindred man! thy fellow-creatures, we
From the same Parent-Power our beings drew,
The same our Lord and laws and great pursuit.
Once some of us, like thee, through stormy life
Toiled tempest-beaten ere we could attain
This holy calm, this harmony of mind,
Where purity and peace immingle charms.
Then fear not us; but with responsive song,
Amid these dim recesses, undisturbed
By noisy folly and discordant vice,
Of Nature sing with us, and Nature’s god.’ (*Su* 540-55).

The personified birds look to assuage fear by pronouncing their kindred creation to be “fellow-creatures” from the same God. Not only does their creation unite them, but they share life

experience, as well. Similarly “tempest-beaten,” both creatures hope for “harmony of mind” and “holy calm.” The birds’ song powers the poet’s creation, asking him to “sing with us.” The generative power of birds and nature drive the poet. The passage unites animate beings within God’s creation, emphasizing their equivocal ontological status and nature.

The leveling of value across the chain of being results in a distinct call for humans to craft a harmonious relationship with nature, rather than one of domination and control. Thomson makes the distinction clear. Thomson describes a summer evening after a storm:

Broad below,
Covered with ripening fruits, and swelling fast
Into the perfect year, the pregnant earth
And all her tribes rejoice. Now the soft hour
Of walking comes for him who lonely loves
To see the distant hills, and there converse
With nature, there to harmonize his heart,
And in pathetic song to breathe around
The harmony to others. (*Su* 1376-84)

In nature is the place for man to find and create harmony. The earth is full of life as “all her tribes” rejoice. Maintaining accord with nature fosters a virtuous harmony for the human soul. Importantly, this harmony is one that spreads to others. Cohesion with nature has a multiplying effect. In contrast, Thomson warns against forgetting one’s place within the whole and ceasing to have reverence for God’s power and works. Immediately after a storm, the scene is serene:

‘Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Joined to the low of kine, and numerous bleat

Of flocks thick-nibbling through the clovered vale.
And shall the hymn be marred by thankless man,
Most-favoured, who with voice articulate
Should lead the chorus of this lower world?
Shall he, so soon forgetful of the hand
That hushed the thunder, and serenest the sky,
Extinguished feel that spark the tempest waked,
That sense of powers exceeding far his own,
Ere yet his feeble heart has lost its fears? (*Su* 1233-43)

The harmonious hymn risks being destroyed by “thankless man.” The danger stems from man losing “that sense of powers exceeding far his own.” The potential failing in this passage is one of forgetting the human role within God’s perfect whole and assuming a greater power than allotted. Violating the order of nature results in man marring the post-storm calm. Man must not forget that only God has the power to calm the rain and the thunder. Human gratitude shall mirror the “grateful song” of the rest of nature.

Thomson does not refrain from including scenes where man violates the harmony and interdependence of nature. Typically, we can see these violations as cases of humans not respecting the intrinsic value of another creature. Anthropocentric destruction disrupts the perfection of the chain of being. Thomson attacks and laments the caging of birds:

Be not the Muse ashamed here to bemoan
Her brothers of the grove by tyrant man
Inhuman caught, and in the narrow cage
From liberty confined, and boundless air.

Dull are the pretty slaves, their plumage dull,
Ragged, and all its brightening lustre lost;
Nor is that sprightly wildness in their notes,
Which, clear and vigorous, warbles from the beech. (*Sp* 702-09)

The capture not only robs the birds of their liberty, but it also destroys the attributes that make them pleasant contributors to the sensations of nature. They become dull and lose the beauty of their song. Thomson's relationship with birds counters the dissecting impulse of Valeria in *The Basset Table*. She cannot imagine a bird's existence that doesn't end in dissection. Thomson rejects even the cage. Thomson emphasizes the inhumanity of "tyrant man" when he exercises control over the birds. Transgressing against nature is to transgress against man's proper place. He pleads for humans to "spare the soft tribes, this barbarous art forbear" (*Sp* 711) and let "piety persuade" (*Sp* 713) against capture. Love of God and his creation should prevent the enslavement of that creation. Man should not reach for undue power. In a later passage, Thomson laments the survivor of a mated pair of birds: "The sad idea of his murdered mate, / Struck from his side by savage fowler's guile" (*Su* 618-19). Thomson highlights the savageness of the action by anthropomorphizing the surviving bird. The fowler violated the harmony of nature. Even when animals are able to escape the actions of humans, the result is a situation that valorizes the animal and castigates the human. Thomson takes a much broader historic view of the difficulties faced by elephants:

-wisest of brutes!

Oh, truly wise! with gentle might endowed,
Though powerful not destructive! Here he sees
Revolving ages sweep the changeful earth,

And empires rise and fall; regardless he
Of what the never-resting race of men
Project: thrice happy, could he 'scape their guile
Who mine, from cruel avarice, his steps,
Or with his towery grandeur swell their state,
The pride of kings! or else his strength pervert,
And bid him rage amid the mortal fray,
Astonished at the madness of mankind. (*Su* 721-32)

The tension in this passage sees the “truly wise” elephant escape the chains of man. The passage juxtaposes the elephant and the “cruel avarice” of humans that would attempt to “pervert” his power to augment their own position. The peaceful elephant does not have the natural capacity to “rage” against men, but could only be influenced by the “madness of mankind.” Though the elephant does not suffer at the hands of humans, Thomson again highlights the destructive attempts to harness and control nature for human aspiration. The “madness of mankind” reveals an interruption to the perfection of nature. These disruptions occur when humans either disrespect the inherent value of other creatures (as in the case of the birds) or attempt to seek power or glory outside of their sphere. By focusing the ill effects of disrupting the proper place of each living species, Thomson gives value to each animal for its own sake. Neither the bird nor the elephant derive their importance from their utility to humans. Their ontological status is not depressed because their individual role in the larger order is just as important as that of humans.

While the examples of human domination offer clear examples of violating nature’s harmony, Thomson also castigates an excess of violence where humans rely on the bounty of nature. In one practice of retrieving honey, the hive was essentially placed on top of a fire, killing

the bees and leaving the honey easy to harvest. Thomson recounts the practice by thoroughly renouncing the needless death of the bees, anthropomorphizing them to make the brutality seem all the more unnecessary:

As, see where, robbed and murdered, in that pit
Lies the still-heaving hive! at evening snatched,
Beneath the cloud of guilt-concealing night,
And fixed o'er Sulphur – while, not dreaming ill,
The happy people in their waxen cells
Sat tending public cares and planning schemes
Of temperance for Winter poor;
... the tender race
By thousands tumbles from their honeyed domes,
Convolved and agonizing in the dust.

.....

O man! tyrannic lord! how long, how long
Shall prostrate nature groan beneath your rage,
Awaiting renovation? When obliged,
Must you destroy? Of their ambrosial food
Can you not borrow, and in just return
Afford them shelter from the wintry winds? (*Au* 1172-94)

This agricultural interaction varies greatly from the idyllic enjoyment of the ploughman and the oxen mutually basking in the breeze, as they do in the section of *Spring* previously discussed. The death of the bees renders this exchange tyrannical and tragic. Anthropomorphized, the bees

are “robbed and murdered,” taken away from their pleasant slumber. The “tendered race” is eradicated when the “happy people” tumble from their cells. The questions that follow offer proclamations of what should have been. Nature shall not “groan beneath” man’s rage, nor must humans “destroy” what they can “borrow.” This passage concludes by going beyond passive avoidance of excessive violence, suggesting that man should “afford them shelter” during the harshness of winter. The ideal scenario is one of mutual benefit. Through the anthropomorphization of the bees, Thomson suggests that they should be allowed to live for the sake of their own peaceful lives. During this upheaval, Thomson goes so far as to grant the bees narrative power. He describes the hive as “a proud city, populous and rich” (*Au* 1201), that has been “seized / By some dread earthquake, and convulsive hurled” (*Au* 1204-05) “into a gulf of blue sulphureous flame” (*Au* 1207). As the human throwing the hive into the fire is the earthquake, Keenleyside rightly argues that “with these shifts in point of view, Thomson grants the eyes and ears of a bee or a hare the power to de-personify humans, making body parts not only the objects or the means but also the subjects of personification” (465). In his needless cruelty, man loses his humanity. The de-personification of the human into an earthquake also reinforces earlier warnings about man’s forgetting that God alone has the power of nature. In the context of the storm, man needed to remember that God stops the rain and thunder. The act of inhumanity against the bees sees man cast as the natural force of destruction, the earthquake. In venturing, even metaphorically, into the realm of God, man is tyrannical and murderous. The role of humans must not be as instruments of the destruction of non-human animals.

Critical of some agricultural practices, Thomson is even clearer in his condemnation of hunting. Though Thomson describes several hunting scenes, he remarks:

These are not subjects for the peaceful Muse,

Nor will she stain with such her spotless song-
Then most delighted when she social sees
The whole mixed animal creation round
Alive and happy. 'Tis not joy to her,
This falsely cheerful barbarous game of death. (*Au* 379-84)

Again Thomson relies on the notion that “the whole mixed animal creation” should remain “alive and happy.” Hunting upsets the harmony of the whole system. Thomson recognizes the need for beasts of prey to hunt for survival, but he draws a clear distinction between their actions and those of men. Animals hunt at night:

As if their conscious ravage shunned the light
Ashamed. Not so the steady tyrant, man,
Who, with the thoughtless insolence of power
Inflamed beyond the most infuriate wrath
Of the worst monster that e'er roamed the waste,
For sport alone pursues the cruel chase
Amid the beamings of the gentle days. (*Au* 389-95)

Lacking a contribution to survival, man's hunting transforms him into the “worst monster.” Thomson's outrage at hunting logically follows a philosophical position that deems all of nature important for its interdependence and mutual benefit for all creatures involved. Without shared benefit, the act violates the larger order. Though this passage focuses on the grotesqueness of the hunter, the underlying premise is that the pheasant, the hare, and the fox deserve to live free from the human predator. However, the effect on the hunter goes beyond being portrayed as a monster. As Cohen argues, “The hunter is comfortable in his future but, for his own pleasure,

ruthlessly wreaks destruction among the animals. Thomson's implication here is that in hunting man loses his charity and humanity and leaves himself open to meaner passions. In the post-hunting scenes man himself becomes hunted by his meaner passions, an object of ridicule and disgust" (191). As the object of ridicule, man falls from grace and his rightful position within the chain of being. He is ontologically diminished when he does not respect the ontological status granted to the animals he hunts. The symbolic and literal gore spreads outward to other creatures, especially the hunter's horse:

The big round tears run down his dappled face;
He groans in anguish; while the growling pack,
Blood-happy, hang at his fair jutting chest,
And mark his beauteous chequered sides with gore. (*Au* 454-57)

The hunter's brutality physically drains the horse while visually implicating him in the death of the hunted. The stakes for violation of harmony are not limited to the hunter. The brutal act resonates throughout nature's realm.

Thomson has an idealized view of nature, but he does recognize the brutality of some animals toward others. However, this is under the guise of survival, which contributes to the success of the whole system. He balks at man's destruction for destruction sake, or for a false sense of improving human importance within the larger whole. This is where his philosophy, and the resultant ontological status for animals, diverges from that of the Baconian scientist. For the scientist, animals and the rest of nature serve as secrets to be explored. Practitioners perform public vivisections repeatedly for the sake of improving knowledge. The ultimate aim is to grow man's understanding and ability to employ that understanding in ways that prove beneficial for mankind. The paradigm is one of absolute anthropocentrism. Even as Hooke expresses concern

over the destruction of vivisection, other Royal Society members “followed Bacon’s exhortations to force nature to yield her secrets” (Guerrini 401). But Hooke only took his protestations so far: “After unsuccessfully trying to foist the distasteful job of the open-thorax experiment onto someone else, who botched it, Hooke finally responded once more to the repeated pleas of the Royal Society” (Guerrini 401). Even in the face of moral doubt regarding the experiment, the weight of expectation of the Royal Society and other interested parties convinces Hooke to perform it nonetheless. The experimenter is nothing without the experiments. This sort of anthropocentrism forms the foundation of what makes the virtuosi humorous in *Shadwell* and *Centlivre*. The virtuosi diligently and obsessively play the part, collecting and experimenting. However, it is only method and gender that are ridiculed in the plays. They poke fun at elements of the practice, but still replicate the anthropocentric foundations of that practice.

Thomson presents an alternative application of scientific knowledge. Clearly influenced and inspired by the burgeoning understanding of the complexity of nature, he aims to capture the wonders of nature. Though he aims to express the magnificence of the whole, he revises passages to capture the minute and specific details now understood because of the developments of natural philosophy. What emerges is a competing ontological ordering of the world and a different mode of scientific discourse. Thomson takes the language and knowledge of natural philosophy and uses it to further illustrate man’s minute place within the whole of creation. The Royal Society and the Baconian scientist employ the language and knowledge of natural philosophy to exert dominion over the rest of creation. The difference in application exposes the range of ontological statuses for non-human animals. These literary representations, informed by scientific discourse, expose just how much is at stake for the lived experiences of animals.

CONCLUSION: GULLIVER AND THE IMBRICATION OF DISCOURSE

The previous chapters have explored the various ways in which the human and non-human animal are inextricably connected. To define one is to rely upon the other. The various discursive contexts for differentiating human and non-human animals shape the parameters of what it means to be human, and thus what it means to be non-human. The importance of this project has been to trace the ways in which anthropocentric discourses affect and define the relative ontological status of non-human animals. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* proves an apt coda to the complexity of status and tenuousness of being for non-human animals. As a vehicle for Swift's misanthropy and distrust of human nature, *Gulliver* spans multiple discourses and draws lines of intersection between them. Swift addresses the nature of human aspiration and advancement, the epistemological foundations of travel narratives and new science, and the application of new science principles. As Swift's general misanthropy runs through these topics, the work calls into question the specialness of the human animal and the basis for defining humans as particularly unique within the grand scheme of creation. *Gulliver* proves particularly instructive precisely because it places human and non-human animal status within a matrix of discourses, where the intersection of human ambition, epistemology, and science necessarily and overtly shape one another. As the existence of the human is critiqued and called into question, the ontological status of human and non-human animals draws closer together, diminishing justification for the control and mastery of animals. Within an overall pessimistic framework

regarding humans, *Gulliver* illustrates multiple anthropocentric concerns that define the range of ontological statuses for animals.

My analysis of *Gulliver* recognizes the work's negativity toward human pride. In this way, Swift's misanthropy shapes the representation and critique of humanity through multiple discourses. I will begin the chapter by analyzing the way that human aspiration shapes the narrative. Gulliver's wandering nature resembles Crusoe's, but Swift's distrust of aspiration results in a very different outcome for Gulliver. I will then explore the ways in which Swift employs the conventions of the travel narrative and its reliance on sensory perception for truth-making. Similar to Behn's narrative, Swift exposes the tenuous status of the animal in this epistemological paradigm. Furthermore, I will then argue that Swift subverts the very nature of human agency and human ontology when Gulliver attempts to maintain his narrative authority in Book II. Gulliver continually works to prove the existence of his humanness, saving both his life and his ability to reinforce the veracity of his narrative. He does this through a reliance on displays of reason and the recording of sensory details. Turning to Book III, I argue that Swift's representation of Laputa and Lagado satirizes the epistemological foundations of the new science. Finally, I analyze Gulliver's trip to Houyhnhnmland as the ultimate critique of assumed human superiority based on reason. Throughout each element of the work, Swift maintains a negative view toward humanity, continually questioning clear ontological separation between humans and animals.

The whole of Gulliver's narrative rests on a foundation of human aspiration. As the third of five sons, Gulliver strives to find his way up in the world through his series of voyages. Aided by his inclination toward "an active and restless Life," Gulliver continually leaves the comfort and stability of his family in England (366). However, Gulliver is not simply a travelling spirit.

His justifications for leaving home carry the hope for further enrichment, no matter the cost. The increase in status and wealth excites Gulliver. Before leaving on his third voyage, Gulliver describes the advantages of the offer. As surgeon of the ship, he would have “another surgeon under me, besides our two Mates; that my Sallary should be double to the usual Pay; and that having experienced my Knowledge in Sea-Affairs to be at least equal to his, he would enter into any Engagement to follow my Advice, as much as if I had Share in the Command” (409). Oddly, Gulliver’s knowledge stems from two instances of being marooned. However, Gulliver is drawn by the double salary to assume a post that gives him a key role in the command of the ship. The money and status prove irresistible.

This aspiration for more wealth and status not only draws him away from home, but it helps cause the failure of his intended mission. As the captain awaits delivery of goods, he devises a plan for Gulliver to load another ship with goods for trade. Gulliver explains, “He appointed me Master of the Sloop, and gave me Power to traffick” (409). The attempt to maximize the profits from the excursion creates the ship’s susceptibility to being captured. “We were chased by Pyrates, who soon overtook us; for my sloop was so deep loaden, that she sailed very slow” (409-10). The thirst for maximum profits renders Gulliver unable to outrun the pirates. In this case, aspiration for upward mobility directly contributes to Gulliver’s misfortunes.

As Gulliver’s hope for advancement helps create his misfortune, it also undercuts his ability to be happy or recognize happiness. After the first three voyages, Gulliver is able to fit back into his domestic arrangements with relative ease. He even continues to produce children at an incredibly efficient rate. However, his aspirations elide any notion of domestic felicity, and these elements are framed in direct contrast before Gulliver’s final voyage. He explains, “I continued at home with my Wife and Children about five Months in a very happy Condition, if I

could have learned the Lesson of knowing when I was well. I left my poor Wife big with Child, and accepted an advantageous Offer made me to be Captain of the *Adventure*” (453). Finally an official captain, Gulliver leaves behind a pregnant wife and stable home life. Gulliver’s ambition serves as the underlying force that drives the narrative. Without his restless spirit and search for further financial success, Gulliver’s story ends. After Gulliver leaves his pregnant wife at the beginning of Book IV, he does find happiness living with the Houyhnhnms. These situations provide the best examples of momentary happiness for Gulliver. As Erin Mackie notes their relation, “His movement between these is driven by a fantasy of upward mobility, first conceived in the familiar materialist terms of wealth and self-advancement and then displaced onto a moral ideal” (110). Adventure and material wealth drive Gulliver’s hope for improvement for most of the work. However, Gulliver’s contentment with the Houyhnhnms draws from a more abstract commitment to a pure, perfectly moral and rational existence. In this sense, Gulliver leaves behind the more base human desires for one that emphasizes his place at the top of the chain of being in the material world. The perfection of reason and intellect would see Gulliver become the most human of all humans. Though ostensibly more altruistic, Gulliver’s final aspirations aim for the height of human improvement. Of course, the height of human improvement is satirized because Gulliver’s quest for perfection comes from imitating horses.

Gulliver’s relentless pursuits lead to his ultimate downfall and alienation from human society. He sees a degree of accumulation of material wealth, but it proves little consolation. The narrative charts Gulliver’s mental and social destruction, which undoes his humanness.

According to David Mazella, “*Gulliver’s Travels* repeated treatment of failed improvement ... reflects Swift’s pessimistic view about the possibilities of rational, planned improvement, and a humbling of his age’s or his nation’s characteristic fantasies about the tractability of the human

race or its environment” (240). Gulliver’s failing is the failing of humanity. His faith in the ability to move upward cannot erase his failings and the broader shortcomings of human society. Rejecting one’s place in the social and cosmic order creates problems of faltering status. Gulliver describes the fatal flaw of a captain whose ship sinks. “He was an honest Man, and a good Sailor, but a little too positive in his own Opinions, which was the Cause of his Destruction, as it hath been of several others” (453). Gulliver directly links an overconfidence in ability and knowledge to the death of the captain. As with Gulliver’s desire for status and wealth, the captain’s overestimation of his capabilities resulted in ruin, rather than success. Both cases rely on an inflated confidence in human ability.

The ruin of Gulliver echoes Pope’s call to know and respect one’s proper place. *Gulliver* presents a narrative driven by human aspiration that ends differently from Defoe’s positive arc for Robinson Crusoe. Though he spends years alone on the island, Crusoe is rewarded for his aspirations by the close of the novel. Providence delivers him success. Gulliver ends in isolation and loneliness. Mackie explains:

While Defoe’s narrative subscribes to progressive ideology correctively enhancing its terms to encompass spiritual alongside material achievement, Swift’s resolutely refuses it through a kind of redoubled critique that negatively mirrors the structure of Defoe’s affirmation. Gulliver can neither achieve his Houyhnhnm good life nor recapture the happiness he never knew he had enjoyed at home. (111)

Gulliver is forced to confront the failings of mankind as he relates the social and political intrigues of European life. In trying to escape returning to what he sees as the deplorable condition of English life, Gulliver clings to the Houyhnhnm rationality, rendering him neither

semi-rational human nor fully-rational Houyhnhnm. McKeon describes this bind: “Gulliver ends radically at odds with himself, violently repudiating his own human nature yet spurned by that other nature with which he has learned to identify so closely” (“Parables” 200). Gulliver’s narrative ends in his destruction as a functioning, successful human, a being without a socially recognizable nature. The foundation of Swift’s work is that of the failings and pitfalls of human ambition. In relying on the fallibility of human aspiration, Swift ultimately undercuts the a priori understanding of humans as exceptional and ontologically superior to other creatures.

Gulliver’s Travels explores human aspiration through the increasingly popular form of the travel narrative. In doing so, Swift unites Gulliver’s ambition with an epistemology rooted in the privileging of individual sense experiences. The travel narrative aims to fill the author’s desire for knowledge, goods, and renown. Swift necessarily joins the excesses of the motivation behind the genre as well as the grounds on which its validity rests. As affirmed by McKeon, “*Gulliver’s Travels* is, of course, a satire of the travel narrative, and the naïve empiricism with which it is so closely associated” (“Parables” 210). Proof of Gulliver’s truth-telling requires the continual recording of minute and sometimes trivial details. “Entirely devoted to the evidence of the senses, Gulliver is one of those ‘plain, diligent, and laborious observers’ celebrated by Thomas Sprat, who bring their ‘eyes uncorrupted’ to their work, and he is quite preoccupied with an assortment of instruments ... with which he hopes artificially to improve upon ‘the Weakness of [his] Eyes’” (McKeon “Parables” 207). This reliance on sensory details places much of Gulliver’s narrative authority in descriptions that frequently work as asides within the story. After an extensive description of how the Lilliputians carry away his excrement, Gulliver explains, “I would not have dwelt so long upon a Circumstance, that perhaps at first Sight may appear not very momentous; if I had not thought it necessary to justify my Character in Point of

Cleanliness to the World; which I am told, some of my Maligners have been pleased, upon this and other Occasions, to call in Question” (331). In defending his cleanliness, Gulliver defends the veracity of the character he has presented in the narrative. Of course, so much focus on scatological concerns satirizes the obsession with minute observations so typical in the travel narrative. Swift compounds this obsession with recorded observations of the contents of Gulliver’s pockets. Rather than simply relating what is in his pockets, Gulliver translates and reads from the register that is created by the Lilliputians (334-35). The sensory details become compounded and thus, less empirical through translation. The objects are “observed” as a list that must be translated, even as those objects came from the narrator’s pockets. These observations function as Swift’s mode of ironic truth-making.

The distorted size and scale of Gulliver’s first two voyages provide the satiric lens of the narrative, so the relation of objects out of scale makes sense. But Gulliver’s empiricism is not limited to the inanimate. As with Aphra Behn’s truth-making strategy in *Oroonoko*, Gulliver often relies on animals as the objective trappings of his story. Treating animals as objects of observation and verification of truth creates ontological consequences for those animals. After leaving Lilliput, Gulliver obviously has difficulty convincing people that his experience was real. In order to prove that his story is not the product of a disturbed mind, Gulliver relies upon small cattle and sheep that he brought with him from Lilliput. He provides the animals as proof: “I took my black Cattle and Sheep out of my Pocket, which, after great Astonishment, clearly convinced him of my Veracity” (363-64). The cattle and sheep prove Gulliver’s story, but in this function they lose their ability to be animals. In a sense, they are converted from living beings to objects kept in a coat pocket. The status of the animals is only slightly restored when Gulliver transitions them from mere proofs of truth into profit makers. Gulliver explains, “In the short Time I

continued in *England*, I made a considerable Profit by Shewing my Cattle to many Persons of Quality, and others: And before I began my second Voyage, I sold them for six Hundred Pounds” (364). In both cases, the status of the animals is subjugated to Gulliver’s ambitions to prove his incredible adventure and to profit from it. The case of the small cattle combines the discourse of empirical truth and ambition. The exploitation of the small sheep and cattle for monetary gain exists merely as an aside at the end of Book I, and nothing is said of the logistics of their display. As might be expected, Gulliver has little concern or care for the lived experience of the animals, thus reinforcing their status as objects for human aspiration.

In Gulliver’s second voyage, not only his physical size advantage reversed, but also his subjectivity is undercut and his ability to define truth is diminished. Once Gulliver is the physically diminutive and endangered species/race,¹ previously assumed species/race boundaries become destabilized. Brobdingnag provides not only an inverse scale, but an inversion of the source of ambition. As McKeon notes, “In the insatiable avarice of the Brobdingnag farmer, we have already seen an ironic reflection of Gulliver’s own insatiable desire for profit and mobility after Lilliput” (“Parables” 205). The farmer’s thirst for profit undercuts Gulliver’s subjectivity, resulting in a diminished ontological status in Brobdingnag. Though he still controls the narrative, Gulliver metaphorically becomes the tiny sheep and cattle. The precariousness of Gulliver’s position is expressed through the relationship between human and non-human animals. When Gulliver first meets a Brobdingnagian in the field, the precariousness of an animal’s life drives Gulliver’s fear. Gulliver explains, “I apprehended every Moment that he would dash me against the Ground, as we usually do any little hateful Animal which we have a Mind to destroy” (369). In order to emphasize the danger of his situation, Gulliver must turn to

¹ The inhabitants of Lilliput and Brobdingnag are obviously humanoid. However, the language that defines them in relation to Gulliver is inconsistent.

more familiar interactions between human and non-human animals. These interactions function through a clear hierarchy where the “hateful animals” can be destroyed on a whim. The ontological superiority of humans is assumed to be inherent. Gulliver fears a negative reaction from the Brobdingnagian farmer’s son and is “afraid the Boy might owe [him] a Spight” (371). Anticipating Hogarth’s first stage of cruelty, Gulliver “well remember[s] how mischievous all Children among us *naturally* are to Sparrows, Rabbits, young Kittens, and Puppy-Dogs” (emphasis added 371). In order to fully convey the danger of his situation, Gulliver must turn to human-animal relations and status differential to adequately capture his diminished status and the dangers it poses.

As part of his survival, Gulliver must continually reassert his humanness because to remain a hateful animal in the eyes of the Brobdingnagians is to perish. In his assertions of humanness, Gulliver relies on Cartesian assumptions about the divide between human and animal. The relation of the King’s reaction to Gulliver is telling. “When he observed my Shape exactly, and saw me walk erect, before I began to speak, conceived I might be a piece of Clock-work ... contrived by some ingenious Artist. But, when he heard my Voice, and found what I delivered to be regular and rational, he could not conceal his Astonishment” (378). As a humanoid looking animal, Gulliver is taken for an ingenious machine, echoing the language for the Cartesian beast-machine. It rightly follows that Gulliver’s speech proves the element that elevates his status from clockwork/animal to creature of sense. Similar language is used when Gulliver retells the rumor that spread regarding his residence at the farmer’s house. The community remarks:

My Master had found a strange Animal in the Field, about the Bigness of a *Splacknuck*, but exactly shaped in every Part like a human Creature; which it

likewise imitated in all its Actions; seemed to speak in a little Language of its own, had already learned several Words of theirs, went erect upon two Legs, was tame and gentle, would come when it was called, do whatever was bid, had the finest Limbs in the World, and a Complexion fairer than a Nobleman's Daughter of three Years old. (374)

As with Gulliver's experience in the other voyages, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon his linguistic abilities. Language is also what Gulliver perceives to save him from the farmer's servant. "He appeared pleased with my Voice and Gestures, and began to look upon me as a Curiosity; much wondering to hear me pronounce articulate Words, although he could not understand them" (369). Gulliver's humanness both saves his life and provides him a status somewhere between animal and Brobdingnagian human.

For much of Book II, Gulliver struggles to distance himself from the non-human animals of Brobdingnag. Gulliver's privilege and suffering stem precisely from his novel imbrication of human and animal attributes. The King's scholars, at a loss, classify Gulliver as a "*Lusus Naturae*" (379). Always looking for a more secure (closer to Brobdingnagian human) status, Gulliver continually appeals to his language and reason. Talking with the King, he explains that "reason did not extend itself with the Bulk of the Body: On the contrary, we observed in our Country that the tallest persons were usually least provided with it. That among other Animals, Bees and Ants had the Reputation of more Industry, Art, and Sagacity than many of the larger Kinds" (393). Though Gulliver's point about reason not being proportional to size is sound, he collapses a clear distinction between human and animal by providing ants and bees as a parallel. This collapse is notable, as it finds reciprocity in the attitudes of the King and the Prince. Upon hearing Gulliver explain European politics, the Prince remarks "how contemptible a Thing was

human Grandeur, which could be mimicked by such diminutive Insects as I” (381). After Gulliver’s discourse on gunpowder, the King “was amazed how so impotent and groveling an Insect as I (these were his Expressions) could entertain such inhuman Ideas” (398). Gulliver becomes an insect precisely when his humanity is in question. The energy behind Swift’s satire of human nature is that it fails to provide the clear ontological separation from the animals it defines itself against.

Though classifications collapse when Gulliver and Brobdingnagians discuss abstract animals, material animals give Gulliver a chance to reassert his humanness and superior position within the ecological and social hierarchy of Brobdingnag. However, these don’t always succeed. Gulliver believes he has bested a linnet by hitting it with a cudgel. Gulliver exclaims, “I knocked him down, and seizing him by the Neck with both my Hands, ran with him in Triumph to my Nurse” (387). Gulliver’s victory is short lived. “However, the Bird who had only been stunned, recovering himself, gave me so many Boxes with his Wings on both Sides of my Head and Body” (387). However, the failure of his attempted exercise of power is mitigated when a servant kills the bird. Where Gulliver’s ecological status fails, his privilege succeeds, for he is served the linnet for dinner the following day. A similar confrontation happens with a monkey that terrorizes Gulliver. The conflict only stops when the monkey is ordered to be killed and all other monkeys are prohibited from entering the palace. In these cases, Gulliver is a man ill-suited for the natural elements of Brobdingnag. His humanness does not have the power to save him in these cases. He is at the mercy of his protectors. In this version of “nature,” Gulliver exists below both the Brobdingnagians and the animals that inhabit their world.

Gulliver is able to successfully defend himself on a several occasions, however. The most telling interaction comes between Gulliver and rats the size of mastiffs. One rat is effectively

dispatched with a sword and the other flees, receiving a stab to the back. Gulliver relates the conflict and then his mistress's reaction to the blood and dead rat. He then adds:

I hope, the gentle Reader will excuse me for dwelling on these and the like Particulars; which however insignificant they may appear to groveling vulgar Minds, yet will certainly help a Philosopher to enlarge his Thoughts and Imagination, and apply them to the Benefit of publick as well as private Life; which was my sole Design in presenting this and other Accounts of my Travels to the World; wherein I have been chiefly studious of Truth, without affecting any Ornaments of Learning, or of Style." (373)

The encounter obviously reinforces a physical superiority for Gulliver, but he also connects the incident to his narrative agency and veracity. Gulliver necessarily overlaps his need to assert his humanness (superiority to the animals of Brobdingnag) and his narrative authority. His rejection of stylistic ornamentation acts as a claim to truth. He replicates similar moves by travel writers and scientists, as well as Behn's narrator in *Oroonoko*. In this scene, descriptions of unpleasant details prove Gulliver's truth *and* status. When Gulliver struggles to overcome his diminished status as (non)human animal, he relies upon empirical evidence to reassert both his narrative agency and his human subjectivity.

Gulliver's assertion of narrative truth works on the same epistemological foundations that drive the quest for knowledge within Baconian science. Gulliver acts as both traveler and practitioner of new science in the narrative. He remarks, "I had my self been a Sort of Projector in my younger Days" (426). Gulliver plays the virtuoso several times in Brobdingnag. He weighs and measures hail stones (386) and saves wasp stingers that he eventually gives to Gresham (the Royal Society) upon his return (383). However, his interests go beyond collecting and

measuring. Upon seeing the large lice in Brobdingnag, he remarks, “They were the first I had ever beheld; and I should have been curious enough to dissect one of them, if I had proper Instruments (which I unluckily left behind me in the Ship)” (384). As a surgeon, Gulliver obviously has a solid foundation in anatomy, but his desire to dissect the lice ties his scientific interests to his attempts to reclaim human subjectivity. The new science’s impulse to control nature necessarily implies mastery over other animals. If Gulliver is a scientist attempting to know the animals of Brobdingnag, then he is necessarily not an animal, retaining his superior status as human. Gulliver can rely upon the inherent privileging of the human in the foundations of new science to inflate his own diminished status.

Swift directly attacks the principles and strategies of new science in Book III. While the exact target of the satire is often debated,² the theme of misplaced or unnatural human aspiration unites most analyses. Frank Boyle argues:

Swift set himself ... in opposition to the Royal Society’s impudent claims for universal knowledge. Impertinence is, in Swift’s handling, a word that expresses the components of modern hubris: prideful impudence built on transient matter. Impertinence also expresses the appropriate response to hubris: an impudence, derived from a traditional poetic respect for human limitations, toward grand claims for human accomplishments. (90)

Douglas Patey similarly claims that the foundations of empiricism, which drive both the new science and the travel narrative, motivate Swift’s attack on human exceptionalism. “Swift’s comments on science not only provide additional ordnance in his attack on human pride; they

² The foundation of connecting Book III to a critique of new science can be found in the oft-cited work by Marjorie Nicolson and Nora Mohler, “The Scientific Background of Swift’s Voyage to Laputa.” In “Swift’s Laputians as a Caricature of the Cartesians,” David Renaker argues that the Laputians are satirized Cartesians while the Academy of Lagado focuses specifically on the Royal Society.

outline a satiric alternative to the epistemological and moral commitments implied by the travel form itself” (Patey 220). In both cases, the misanthropic substance of the critique revolves around unchecked and unreasonable aspirations for human knowledge. Swift directly mimics Robert Boyle’s extensive observations in “A Meditation upon a Broom-Stick.” Maurice Johnson notes that “unlike Boyle, Swift does not simply draw a salutary moral lesson from his conceit. Rather, he elaborates from it a searing indictment of man” (137). Johnson argues that “Swift most condemns man ... not so much for the disorders themselves as for man’s brazen pride in the face of them” (139). Based on inevitable human failings, Swift’s critique questions the possibility for great human advancement, especially as human pride allows people to have an inflated adoration of those possibilities. The same elements of new science lampooned in the character of the virtuoso find a more damning critique in the way Swift equates these blunders to inherent failings of mankind. J.P. Hunter explains:

His attack on projectors in book III of *Gulliver’s Travels* is a logical extension of his attack on Boyle in *Meditation on a Broomstick*: not only did modern science have no clear program of usefulness and no plan for sorting between practical and impractical methods, but it offered no authoritative conclusions and depended simply on the subjective application of individual observation and experience.

(289)

Again, the critique rests in the distrust of broader conclusions based in individual sense experience. The crime is still one of hubris: believing that the individual human experience can be the reliable foundation for larger truths. Rather than focusing on particular faults in new science through hyperbole, as the virtuoso characters do on the stage, Swift skewers the very

epistemological foundations of new science. They rely too heavily on faith in human observation and intellect. The failings are in people, not just science.

The general undercurrent of misanthropy in Book III may help account for some of the discord around the specific object of Swift's satire. The disunity of the narrative and locations necessarily increases the types of human failings that can be explored. P. Rogers identifies yet a different target for Book III. "*Gulliver's Travels* was written at a time of exuberant commercial expansion and fertile practical invention. Its cultural matrix can be defined as the Age of Projectors – a bustling, uncerebral world of entrepreneurs and inventors. This stage in economic history was brought to a head in the Bubble, itself a symbol of this speculative mania" (Rogers "Gulliver" 261). Rather than a specific attack on the Royal Society, P. Rogers argues that economic speculation (and disaster) typified by the South Sea Bubble provides the context for Lagado. This is still human ambition run amok.

Whether it be speculative philosophy or financial speculation, the hubris and ambition of mankind result in useless application of knowledge and exposure of untrustworthy human motives. As the final voyage to a humanoid land, Book III amplifies the failings of humanness, which then culminates in the direct subversion of human superiority in Book IV. The instigators in the downfall of Lagado were citizens that returned from Laputa with only a small amount of knowledge. Their learning was incomplete, but it did not stop them from reaching for grand "improvements." In the quest for intellectual perfection, they fail to provide any utility to their community. Gulliver remarks, "Their Houses are very ill built, the Walls bevil, without one right Angle in any Apartment; and this Defect ariseth from the Contempt they bear for practical Geometry; which they despise as vulgar and mechanick" (415). And though the Academy has been in existence for 40 years, "none of these Projects are yet brought to Perfection; and in the

mean time, the whole Country lies miserably waste, the Houses in Ruins, and the People without Food or Cloaths” (425). The rejection of practicality and utility destroys the bases for society: shelter and sustenance. In reaching for greater intellectual heights, projectors of Lagado doom the citizens to destruction. Another projector attempts to codify into political practice the distrust of motives. The state of political corruption is so pervasive, that permanent hypocrisy becomes the solution. Gulliver summarizes, “He likewise directed, that every Senator in the great Council of a Nation, after he had delivered his Opinion, and argued in the defence of it should be obliged to give his Vote directly contrary; because if that were done, the Result would infallibly terminate in the Good of the Publick” (433). The unreliability of motives parallels the lack of utility of other projectors. The whole activity of the Academy has done nothing but lead to the ruin of society, just as the motives of Senators are codified as necessarily contrary to “the good of the public.” Those reaching for political power and those grasping for intellectual improvement betray the good of the public they attempt to serve. Aspiration results in devastation.

The projectors of the Academy go further than critiquing the motives of political speech; they subvert the importance of all language. The two most striking projects regarding language remove either the human presence or the complexity of human speech. The gigantic language machine aims to record all of history without the generative powers of a person. The second project “was a scheme for entirely abolishing all Words whatsoever ... since all Words are only Names for *Things*, it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them, such *Things* as were necessary to express the particular Business they are to discourse on” (429-431). Anne Patterson rightly argues that these projects subvert the very elements that define humans apart from nature in the Cartesian worldview. The mechanization of speech contradicts the distinctly

generative powers of humans to create speech, while the use of objects to replace words “would of course reduce language to symbols for ‘things’ on a one-to-one basis, leaving out all notions of relationship” (343-44, 346). This simplification reduces communication to dyadic signification. By eliminating the arbitrary signifier, the project removes the socially mediated component of the sign. Thus, in Patterson’s language, removal of the relationship omits proof that human communication is of a different kind than that of other species. The lack of complexity undercuts superiority of human speech. Not only are the linguistic projects preposterous, their very aim is to subvert the faith in human ambition that prompts their exploration in the first place. The projecting spirit collapses in on itself, causing the projectors to attempt to disavow the very linguistic attributes that make them rational beings. While Gulliver relied upon language to save his life in Brobdingnag, the projectors are secure enough in their heightened status that they can work to reject that which makes them human.

The Laputians embody an almost complete split between the mind and body of Cartesian dualism. Their lives operate under an absolute privileging of reason over the bodily senses. They retreat into a total focus on intellect, attempting to escape the vulgarities of sensory experience. Their bodies support this retreat, as “their Heads were all reclined either to the Right, or the Left; one of the Eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the Zenith” (412). Though their eyes are not suited to seeing, this physical limitation only follows from the singular focus of their existence. “The Minds of these People are so taken up with intense Speculations, that they neither can speak, or attend to the Discourses of others, without being roused by some external Taction upon the Organs of Speech and Hearing; for which Reason, those Persons who are able to afford it, always keep a *Flapper* ... in their family” (412). The blockade of the sense is so complete that they even require a flap to the eyes while they walk, lest they collide with any

object in their path (413). The absurdity of this existence lampoons an absolute privileging of reason over sense, as Descartes attempts to do. Reason cannot function without the senses. The absurd Laputians show the necessity of sense, as Locke does in his disagreement with Descartes. The Lockean position highlights the necessary cooperation required between sense and reason. Reason, the ability that links man to the spiritual realm of the chain of being and the attribute that distances human from non-human animals, necessarily relies upon the body, that which inextricably links humans with animals. As they aim to exist only via reason, the Laputians cease to be able to function in the world. If the Academy critiques the poor application of reason, Laputa exposes the foolishness of setting reason upon a pedestal, apart from bodily senses.

Book III satirizes the supposed special features of humans. The worship of intellect either rejects the practical application of that intelligence or it alienates the thinker from functioning in a material world. However, apart from Gulliver and his initial guide in Lagado, the inhabitants are blind to their failings. As such, animals in Lagado suffer the same fate of the animals used by the Royal Society. Projectors treat animals as objects for their experimentation. Such an exclusive emphasis on reason and intellect allows little recognition of shared materiality. In an almost direct replica of the respiration experiments of the Royal Society, a projector blows air into a dog via bellows. After he filled the dog with air, “the Animal was ready to burst, and made so violent a Discharge, as was very offensive to me and my Companions. The Dog died on the Spot, and we left the Doctor endeavouring to recover him by the same Operation” (428). Though a bit of an aside, the passage concludes with the projector continuing to blow air into the dead body of the dog, thinking it could revive him. The absurdity of inflating a dead carcass emphasizes the lack of utility of the projector’s project. Even though the experiment has failed,

and presumably not for the first time, the projector needlessly continues. At this point, the dog's abuse in experimentation continues after its death.

The first three books combine to reveal a steadily increasing disgust for mankind and its seemingly boundless aspiration for elevating the nature of its existence. Up to this point, Gulliver has participated in this aspiration. Kirsten Juhas and Hermann Real argue that Swift was frustrated by the “hubristic understanding of human nature, the loathed maxim in which the boastful belief in the essential rationality of Humankind most pithily articulated itself: *Homo est animal rationale*” (17). However, particularly in the trip to Brobdingnag, Gulliver's precarious subjectivity rests in the tenuousness of his ontology as a non-human animal. Gulliver is the pet/insect/freak in a land of giants. His appearance of rationality can save his life, but it does not guarantee him full human status. The uncertainty of Gulliver's status in Book II undercuts clear distinctions between the rational human animal and the instinctually driven non-human animal. Gulliver can appear to be both at the same time. However, the projectors replicate the assumed entitlement of humans to experiment wantonly on animals, even while Swift satirizes their obsession with reason and new science. They become ridiculous, poorly-functioning humans even as they boast of their humanness via reason and experimentation. Aspiration, reason, empirical epistemology, and science are all objects of Swift's derision. The first three books provide the foundation for the extreme misanthropy of the final book and the most direct subversion of human/animal binaries.

Gulliver's final voyage presents an obvious break from the previous books. The Lilliputians, Brobdingnagians, and various beings of the third book are all humanoid. With the trip to Houynhnmland, Swift introduces non-human actors in order to most directly question the hubris of humans. This shift also brings about a decentering of unquestioned anthropocentrism of

the first three books. While Gulliver is certainly an outsider throughout the earlier voyages, Allen Michie argues that Gulliver is not truly alienated until Book IV. In the first three books, Gulliver's perception is the baseline for comparison, but the foundation for comparison shifts to the perspective of the Houyhnhnms (76). The primacy of the Houyhnhnm worldview disrupts the assumed anthropocentric hierarchy that characterizes the earlier voyages. Bryan Alkemeyer notes that in his work on horses "[William] Cavendish³ defines the horse's signal nobility in terms of its approximation of human intelligence and places the horse just beneath the human in his version of the chain of being" (29). For Swift's most scathing attack on humanity, he inverts the traditional order of the chain of being. Gulliver's lowered status (as in Brobdingnag) is not a matter of misreading or scale, but is instead ontological. Humanity is not just criticized, it is demoted and devalued within the order of the material world.

The normative perspective of the Houyhnhnms still relies on the relative value placed on sense and reason, just as the anthropocentric hierarchy does. However, the Houyhnhnms represent a perfected right reason. In doing so, the aspiration and ambition that plagues humanity is absent in Houyhnhnmland. According to McKeon, "The appetite for upward mobility – through state service, intermarriage, or whatever means – never arises here, because the very conditions of status inconsistency by which it is generated, the very possibility of expectations that are 'relative' to anything but one's own race, are absent" ("Parables" 204). The absence of ambition creates a much more rigid, unchanging hierarchy. Without desires to move, the social order remains in place and unchallenged. This clearly contributes to the cooperative and fairly conflict free existence of the Houyhnhnms.

³ Cavendish's equestrian manual appears in *A General System of Horsemanship* (1743). Alkemeyer cites Cavendish in order to argue that Swift's Houyhnhnms are distinct from all other animals because horses are distinct from all other animals due to their inherent nobility. However, I cite Alkemeyer and Cavendish to simply reinforce the relative positions of humans and horses within the chain of being.

Gulliver presents a problem for the Houyhnhnm hierarchy because he occupies the middle link between the Houyhnhnm and the Yahoo, previously thought not to exist. Gulliver's descriptions of the Yahoo typically focus on their physicality. "My Horror and Astonishment are not to be described, when I observed, in this abominable Animal, a perfect human Figure" (458). He considers them to be the most detestable "sensitive Being" (459). The Yahoo act as the base drive and physicality of humans, while the Houyhnhnms are right reason embodied in horses. "As these noble *Houyhnhnms* are endowed by Nature with a general Disposition to all Virtues, and have no Conceptions or Ideas of what is evil in a rational Creature; so their grand Maxim is, to cultivate *Reason*, and to be wholly governed by it" (482-83). Gulliver's Master establishes Gulliver's position as equidistant between the Houyhnhnm and the Yahoo. Gulliver explains, "He observed in me all the Qualities of a *Yahoo*, only a little more civilized by some Tincture of Reason; which however was in a Degree as far inferior to the *Houyhnhnm* Race, as the *Yahoos* of their Country were to me" (486). The equivalent degree of separation between Gulliver and the other species constructs a much clearer and strict hierarchy than was present for man's place as the middle link between the spiritual world and the material world. Man's status in the chain of being cuts both ways, allowing some thinkers to emphasize human superiority, while others focus people as flawed material beings. The hyper-rational Master clearly and definitively situates Gulliver as a middle link, diminishing any chance of recasting that position in either direction. Gulliver is partially rational and partially animal. According to Michie, "The intersection of the animal and the human is the intersection of unstructured nature with classical reason: the morally neutral is made to confront the morally culpable. As such, Swift satirizes the potential and responsibility of human reason to 'conquer' nature" (68). Gulliver's status as middle link in Houyhnhnm-land is relatively lower than the traditional understanding of man as

the middle link in the chain of being. Normally, humans would be the highest position in the material world, providing the link to the spiritual realm. However, in Houyhnhnmland, Gulliver is a degree lower, with the Houyhnhnms occupying man's traditional spot. The inversion subverts Gulliver's status, supporting Michie's position that human reason can no longer claim power over nature. Gulliver has become part nature to be mastered by Houyhnhnms.

Due to his lower status, Gulliver has his reason questioned by his Master. The Master's doubt rests on a Cartesian understanding of the linguistic capabilities of the beast-machine. Gulliver notes, "My Master was eager to learn from whence I came; how I acquitted those Appearances of Reason, which I discovered in all my Actions" (461). He later remarks, "He found I had cured myself of some bad Habits and Dispositions, by endeavouring, as far as my inferior Nature was capable, to imitate the *Houyhnhnms*" (491). From early in the narrative to Gulliver's settled life with his Master, Gulliver's use of reason is considered to be an "appearance" of rational thought, which functions through imitation. The Master's language describes Gulliver's actions in much the same way the Cartesians considered the behavior of animals. This paradigm for understanding Gulliver explains why the Master is so focused on Gulliver's speech. "He desired I would go on with my utmost Diligence to learn their Language, because he was more astonished at my Capacity for Speech and Reason, than at the Figure of my Body, whether it were covered or no" (464). Gulliver's physical nature, which aligns him with the Yahoo, is not what makes him a unique hybrid creature. His speech is. The combination of inverting the horse/human placement within the chain of being and focusing Gulliver's status in Cartesian terms undercuts the Cartesian certainty in identifying human reason as distinct from the appearance of reason in other creatures. We are to understand that Gulliver maintains his human capacity to reason, but the ontologically superior creatures deny that Gulliver has a full

capacity to human reason. Though the Houyhnhnms have perfected “human reason,” Gulliver is of another species to them. The Houyhnhnms reject Gulliver’s full “human reason” in the same manner that Descartes disallows reason in animal signification. Doubting the abilities of other creatures helps maintain the ontological hierarchy. If Gulliver does have access to reason (not just the appearance or imitation of it), then the hierarchy collapses. The satire minimizes the anthropocentric foundation of human superiority because animal signification cannot be understood in its own terms, especially when Gulliver, a human, is the one fighting to prove his abilities to the Houyhnhnms. Their rejection of Gulliver’s reason replicates the human refusal to accept the limits of human knowledge to categorize animal signification in such a way that doesn’t degrade it through anthropocentric contextualization. As such, the hierarchy of species relies on an incomplete premise. The logical conclusion is that the hierarchy cannot stand and must be leveled.

Gulliver internalizes the Houyhnhnm version of the chain of being. He accepts their unique ability to reason rightly, diminishing the rationality of humans. In Gulliver’s internalization of his inferiority to horses, Swift begins to satirize Gulliver’s excessive misanthropy. Gulliver becomes a social outcast in society because he has aspired to a higher state of being and rejects out of hand any existence that he considers lesser. Of course, the irony is that Gulliver will remain human, embodying both the best and the worst of what that entails. In order to align himself with the Houyhnhnm version of “human” understanding, Gulliver separates the speech faculty from the existence of right reason, just as Descartes claims that a parrot’s speech indicates nothing more than imitation. Gulliver explains:

When I thought of my Family, my Friends, my Countrymen, or human Race in general, I considered them as they really were, *Yahoos* in Shape and Disposition,

perhaps a little more civilized, and qualified with the Gift of Speech; but making no other Use of Reason, than to improve and multiply those Vices, whereof their Brethren in this Country had only the Share that Nature allotted them. (490)

To Gulliver, humans use reason only to amplify their faults and vices, rather than to elevate themselves, like the Houyhnhnms. But Gulliver takes the condemnation of the human race even further, suggesting that the Yahoo do not suffer from this amplification of vice because they do not reason. In doing so, Gulliver presents the theriophilic paradox, suggesting that the Yahoo may, in fact, be more perfect than the other humans because they are only as degraded as they ought to be. Gill explains “that theriophilic forms of argument have been adapted in a most pervasive way to the narrative of the fourth voyage to secure a paradoxical conclusion, the aim of which is a recognition of the multiple incongruities of human thought and experience” (“Beast” 549). Gulliver struggles to square his own sense of self with what he now sees in the people with whom he once identified precisely because Swift subverts the stability of value assumed by the chain of being. The clear line between reasoning man and sensing animals has broken down because the category of “reasoning man” has been problematized and questioned.

This inverted framework of horse > Gulliver > human not only undermines the assumed superiority of human reason, but it also reveals tensions in human/animal relationships caused by that assumption. Swift turns to horses in order to hone in on human folly and ambition, but this necessarily includes discussion of the horse. According to Anne Kelly:

Because humans are so dependent on animals in the postlapsarian world, they consciously or subconsciously refuse to hear the ‘bullocks groan[ing] beneath the heavy yoke.’ For psychological insulation, humans choose to see animals as things, rather than sentient beings, but when humans make brutes speak in

imaginative texts, what often comes out is anger that humans think they have a moral right to exploit animals. Narratives with talking animals allow mankind's repressed anxieties to be articulated. ("Biting" 271)

Swift complicates the nature of the talking horses by giving more than just the power of speech: they also occupy a status above the humans in the story. The Master obviously balks at the notion of horses being beasts of burden in Gulliver's homeland, as they are the dominant species in Houyhnhnmland. He laments the ill-treatment of horses, but this is because he cannot fathom a world in which the Yahoo are in control. This mirrors Gulliver's "Strength of Reasoning" upon arriving in Houyhnhnmland. He explains, "The Behaviour of these Animals was so orderly and rational, so acute and judicious, that I at last concluded, they must needs be Magicians, who had thus metamorphosed themselves upon some Design" (456). Gulliver's reaction can be attributed to two independent, but overlapping causes. His reliance on magic suggests both his poor reasoning skills and the inconceivability of rational animals. Eventually Gulliver is disabused of his assumptions and he learns of his hybrid existence in Houyhnhnmland. The speaking animals are not horses, they are the perfectly rational Houyhnhnms. However, in revealing the faults in human behavior, the Houyhnhnm do in fact destroy the "moral right" of most human actions. These speaking horses cause Gulliver to see falsity in previously held assumptions about human superiority.

Swift, however, also presents a different sort of talking animal. In the fourth voyage, Gulliver is the communicative beast of burden. Upon his arrival in Houyhnhnmland, Gulliver becomes the expressive Yahoo that can speak back to the species that is in control. As previously discussed, Gulliver isn't simply a speaking Yahoo. His ability to speak marks him with a degree of reason, which gives him a special status apart from the rest of the Yahoo. He comes to

represent both the Yahoo of Houyhnhnmland and the humans of Europe. His Master grants him a special status, which disturbs the other Houyhnhnms because of the way it disrupts the established status hierarchy. Gulliver explains, “The Representatives had taken Offence at his keeping a *Yahoo* (meaning my self) in his Family more like a *Houyhnhnm* than a Brute Animal” (490). Gulliver makes the transition from wild beast or beast of burden to domesticated pet. The Master takes responsibility for Gulliver’s education and his care. He is given special treatment and special access to the house and company. According to Kelly:

The Master Horse’s rapport with Gulliver marks him as a creature of sensibility, one who is capable of empathy with lesser creatures of his own or other species. In eighteenth-century England, the ‘cult of sensibility’ not only promoted the anthropomorphism of pets, but also anti-vivisection campaigns, interest in vegetarianism, and the development of literature focalized on the consciousness of animals. (“Gulliver” 332)

This sensibility creates an improved status for Gulliver and other animals of Europe. While it may not grant them a right to live for their own sake, it does grant them a life that may not be destroyed for human’s sake. Gulliver is neither abused nor threatened (at least not by the Master), but he does live for the Master’s curiosity and pleasure. Gulliver’s lived experience is improved, even if his status still remains definitively below the Houyhnhnms.

The more interesting attitudes of Gulliver-the-pet revolve around his consideration of his status with respect to the other animals of Houyhnhnmland. As Gulliver is still human and as much as he enjoys his elevated status in the Master’s house, he cannot let go of the notion that he is decidedly superior to all other creatures, even if the Master doesn’t always think so. Gulliver complains, “I DURST make no Return to this malicious Insinuation, which debased human

Understanding below the Sagacity of a common *Hound*, who hath Judgment enough to distinguish and follow the Cry of the *ablest Dog in the Pack*, without being ever mistaken” (480). Gulliver refuses to consider his reason to be below (or even equal to) a dog. The comparison is telling, as Gulliver insists that even in pet-hood, he remains uniquely superior to other pets. Just as in Brobdingnag, Gulliver finds himself in a tenuous position, so he must continually reassert his claim to a superior ontological status over the other creatures around him.

Gulliver strives for more than just self-preservation, as he attempts to become as Houyhnhnm-like as physically possible. He maintains his distinctly human aspiration to move even further up the hierarchy of beings. In shedding as much Yahoo as possible and replacing it with Houyhnhnm behaviors, Gulliver hopes to unsettle his equidistant position between Yahoo and Houyhnhnm. Gulliver’s aspiration allows him to easily consider the Yahoo as less than human, as he continues not fully to accept that he is a Yahoo. He carries this to such an extent that he nonchalantly talks about catching, killing, skinning, and rendering Yahoo to fix his shoes and complete his boat. He describes the boat, “I finished a Sort of *Indian Canoo*, but much larger, covering it with the Skins of *Yahoos* well stitched together, with hempen Threads of my own making. My Sail was likewise composed of the Skins of the same Animal; but I made use of the youngest I could get, the older being too tough and thick” (492). Even after recognizing the connection between himself and the Yahoo, he has no qualms about making use of “the youngest” he could acquire. In Gulliver’s eyes, the Yahoo go from subhuman species to useful objects. But the status of the Yahoo are complicated when Gulliver describes them as “cunning, malicious, treacherous and revengeful” (482). Relying on anthropomorphic terms, Gulliver reinscribes some of their humanity, even if it is negative. Still the ambitious climber, Gulliver distances himself from the creatures below him in the Houyhnhnm chain of being. Further, he

never reverts back to the human-centric chain, maintaining the Houyhnhnm hierarchy. When the Portuguese sailors rescue him, Gulliver remarks, “When they began to talk, I thought I never heard or saw any thing so unnatural; for it appeared to me as monstrous as if a Dog or a Cow should speak in *England*, or a *Yahoo* in *Houyhnhnm-Land*” (495). In order to show his surprise, he connects his new understanding of the chain to the one understood by his readers. In both cases, Gulliver keeps a strict, value-laden separation between relative positions in the chain of being.

The whole of *Gulliver’s Travels* develops a growing misanthropy that unites discourses on aspiration, science, and empiricism. What emerges is the subversion of the specialness of humans that leads to clear ontological distinctions between human and non-human animals. Through the lowering of human status, the distance between human and animal shrinks, and is even reversed in the final voyage. By satirizing the substance of human superiority, Gulliver’s narrative reveals the gaps in the line between human and animal. The assumed binary of human/non-human can only operate as a thin veneer that requires consistent optimism and positive assumptions about the power of human reason, the reliability of the reason, and the base nature of human behavior.

The tendencies and trends that establish the ontology of animals and humans cast doubt on the confidence with which humans dominate, destroy, and use other creatures. While Crusoe and the virtuosi maintain their confidence in the superiority of humans, Thomson, Pope, and Swift undercut their confidence. We return to the way in which the chain of being can be interpreted in two directions. Writers and works that emphasize man’s fallen nature unsettle clear human/animal binaries, subverting confident claims to superior human ontology. When human

potential is celebrated, animals suffer through diminished ontology and precarious lived experience.

Though the concept of the chain of being loses its power later in the eighteenth century as a more organic view of the world supplants it, attitudes and behaviors based upon the optimistic understanding of man's place in the chain persist. Later animal protection movements grapple with the battle lines drawn during the Enlightenment.⁴ The tenets of empiricism, natural philosophy/science, and aspiration still largely shape modern human existence. It is in this context that uncovering the tenuousness of distinct human/animal ontology dramatically questions long-held assumptions about the way humans should interact with animals. Of course, our behaviors are not universal: the beloved family pet enjoys a much different existence from the cattle who spend their lives in a CAFO (concentrated agricultural feed operation). But the care for the pet largely exists as the exception, the unique willingness to ignore the clear ontological separations we create for interactions with other animals. While we continually discover more ways in which animals are like us (or even more advanced), society rarely adjusts large-scale behaviors toward animals. Ironically, it is now science that repeatedly reveals fissures in the clear line between species. However, we may still benefit from continued analysis of the cracks in the intellectual foundations that formed in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, bases that shaped and continue to shape the ill-treatment of non-human animals.

⁴ Katherine Shevelov tracks the events leading up to the founding of the RSPCA in her *For the Love of Animals: The rise of the Animal Protection Movement* and Rob Boddice sees animal protection discourse as having its roots in the eighteenth century in *A History of Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Animals in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain: Anthropocentrism and the Emergence of Animals*.

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