Rhyme and Reason

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved April 2013 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2013

ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers the literary and cultural response of the labor-class poets to the emerging forces of Foucauldian biopolitics in early modern Britain to shed new light on the cultural impacts of biopower upon the rural community in early modern Britain. The analysis demonstrates how the labor class literary response is characterized by an exterior experience with the nonhuman in an alternative mode to the Wordsworthian experience of the interior. I then use labor-class poets to counter Wordsworthian notions of the immaterial State population through a critical expose of state-Subject, subject-object, and human nonhuman exterior relations as they are depicted in the labor-class poetry of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain. Employing an object-ontological reading of community, I explore how the effects of biopower were inscribed in the literary artifacts of the labor-class. The research takes a focused historical view, surveying a range of literary, political, and historical texts between 1760-1840 to offer new readings of Robert Bloomfield, Robert Burns, John Clare, William Cobbett, Ebenezer Elliott, Oliver Goldsmith, James Hogg, and William Wordsworth.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

By 500 BC, technological improvements in overland transportation, farming, and a nautically driven inter- and intra-community commerce system had led to relatively sophisticated notions of citizenry and community participation in ancient Athens (Garnsey 21). Through philosophical inquiry, lived experience (praxis), and the technological realities of overseas trade, inclusive and exclusive terms of community came to bear upon whatever religious and spatial discrepancies the ancient forbears of the Western tradition had in the name of political, social, and economic improvement. Nowhere is this find more evident than in the uniquely participative social phenomena of the Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece. Government sanctioned and partaken by all class of citizen subjects, the Mysteries are an important instance of material agency and community relations in the Western world. The early notion of a κοινή, or "common," bond of community was culturally manifest as members from all strata of society gathered at Eleusis for initiation and participation in the ceremony. Men, women, foreigners, peasants, patricians, and Emperors alike were all initiated though an unveiling of a basket of corn (Garland 85).

In the scene of the Mysteries, the nonhuman object, Bruno Latour's material actant, constructs one of the most important social phenomena in the Western world (Latour 54). The Mysteries were annual celebrations held between the fourteenth and twenty-second day in September, in honor of Demeter's descent into the Underworld in search of her daughter Persephone (Melas 76). When fertility had disappeared from the

fields, Zeus allowed Persephone to return to the upper world once again in order to please Demeter (Morris and Powell 141). Classical scholarship notes that the Mysteries were grounded in two essential struggles of the physical world: isolation and hunger. Demeter gave new fertility to the land and taught the people of Eleusis the material bonds of community and how to worship her deity properly through shared participation in the rites of agriculture (Melas 80). For over 1,000 years, violation of the ritual was punishable by death (Garland 84). The Mysteries were, unlike other cult religions, grounded in the physical, tangible experience of bodily participation with the material world. Fasting took place for two days prior in order to induce the state of "heightened awareness" that occurred in the absence of community and harvest. After an elaborate procession, initiates partook in a ceremony that culminated with the unveiling of a sacred basket of objects. The actual ritual remains one of the closest guarded secrets in religious history. The contents of the basket were rumored to have been something along the lines of sesame cakes, vegetables, or, most likely, an ear of corn (Garland 86). The material object represented the bonds of life and community that Persephone provided (Kerenyi 28). The material object gains agency as it binds socially and culturally the human community and nonhuman (Latour 54). Indeed the Mysteries' greater symbolism of corn, pomegranates, and poppies "referred to the unseen forces which affect mankind via [agriculture]" (Godwin 33).

Humanist terms of community are at stake, then, as material objects gain agency in the construction of community and social phenomena. In her recent work, *The Discourses of Food in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*, Annette Cozzi identifies a

similar relationship between the terms of community and the material object, and notes the relationship between the Latin word for bread, *panis*, and the Latin word for community, *companis* (Cozzi 7). The issues of nonhuman agency and community intersect with the wider Western tradition then. But I only offer the preliminary instances of nonhuman actant relations to demonstrate the cultural and temporal berth for a potential discourse of ontological community. As Jonathan Bate showed with *The Song of the Earth*, **c**onnecting ecocritical questions in Romanticism to the larger Western tradition helps situate issues of community and Romanticism within an ongoing site of critical inquiry. Questions such as: What is community? What is population? What drives community? and, as I articulate in the Methodology, the role of space, place, and the nonhuman in affecting community relations become key points of intrigue in the Romantic labor-class literature. To draw such parallels is of course not without obvious flaw. To apply so haphazardly such distant literatures is to disjoint and discount sincere critical questions concerning identity, institutionalism, temporality, and spatiality in the humanities. Instead, I open with these cultural parallels only to suggest that the roots of any post Enlightenment humanist queries into subject-State relations and *communitas* draw must first deal with conflicting issues over what precisely constitutes a community, and what drives the community.

Commoners

Κοινή (koine) was to the attic Greeks a cultural and linguistic equivalent to "common", or that shared among many. As was the case for centuries afterward, the "many" were often poor laborers who shared cultural and linguistic coordinates through

their usage of the κοινή language, or vulgar Greek. Of course, koine was the very dialect of Greek in which the New Testament was written. To bind the population through shared participation in a common linguistic and cultural community is at the roots of our Western tradition. Yet, the idea of nativity and an immaterial citizenry did not exclude conceptual considerations of "others," then, but rather "foreigners." Indeed "alien," however it may be applied today, was from the attic □λλος, transliterated "allos," to mean "other." These Others were not excluded from the citizenry. Rather, the βάρβαρος (barbaros), "foreigners," were. Millennia of cultural negotiation would argue for a similar sense of bordered community and shared nativity in the political and poetic works of Edmund Burke and William Wordsworth. As I will outline in the Methodology, material relations to the nonhuman is a focal point in the present Romantic literary study of nativity, community participation, and subject-State discourse. I posit that the biological and political ecological function of the nonhuman within a human driven conception of community to be a worthy point of contention among the terms of subject-State community, or what Foucault critically labels as the modern nation-State. Temporally, then, these questions of community in the subject-State program are located firmly within the temporal realm of Romantic Period studies.

In accordance with these historical coordinates, I submit examinations of labor-class literature from c. 1750 onward with a focus on the literary Romantic Period, c. 1770-1843. In Chapter 7, I argue that dimensions of a query rooted in the socio-economic terms of Romanticism to be incomplete without a gesture towards 1846. While normalized modes of criticism may discount such mid-nineteenth century literature as

non- “Romantic” on cultural-literary grounds, I show that the particular political, economic, and social circumstances surrounding the literary texts under review warrant an alternative consideration labor-class Romanticism in temporal terms. I make the specific political, economic, and social arguments in Chapter 7 and 8.

On an introductory note of textual placement, topically much of high culture Romanticism was without of reach for the illiterate laborer. Even if literate, the laborers read little other than locally circulated newspapers. As Cobbett also wondered, “From such vehicles what are they to learn?” (Cobbett 54). The lack of engagement with the predominant philosophical, political, economic, literary and historical contentions of the time is largely absent in the praxis of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British laborer. Again, this important point only bolsters an argument for the problematic concerning where and how to position the labor-class authors within British Romanticism. For on the one hand, direct references to Robert Bloomfield, Burns, and others are found in the letters of Southey and Wordsworth. On the other, we know that the labor-class authors, or “peasant poets,” as they were then known, had limited contact with the cultural concerns that preoccupied the writings of William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley, John Keats, Lord Byron, and William Blake. To date, the forces of canonicity and post-Marxist inquiry have offered one possible solution. I offer another solution in chapter 5.

This study formally considers instances of material agency, community, population, and nonhuman actant relations in Romantic Period labor-class literature in its response to the terms of community disruption and population management that

biopower bore upon the labor-class communities of early modern Britain. Through biopower, the terms of community were physically and culturally altered. Methodologically, considerations of the institutional enterprise that is biopower in Romanticism will help position the subject body community as a horizontal network of human and nonhuman entities. By demonstrating the affected laboring communities as such, an interrogation of labor-class literature in the Romantic Period will reveal ways in which the human writers spoke on this set of human-nonhuman relations as they reacted to two vestiges of biopower in Romanticism: enclosure and imparkment.

I consider the existing criticism and review pertinent developments in relative scholarship in the Literature Review and Methodology sections. I articulate a method for reading the agency of the nonhuman in scenes of community, and posit Romantic era literature within the forces of Foucauldian biopower. In Chapter 4, I consider issues of Foucauldian biopower in British Romanticism by attending to the historical and theoretical concerns surrounding the Foucauldian project. I then review the historiography of English rural community studies to ascertain the shifts made to the professional terms of community through the twentieth century.

Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 will demonstrate the labor-class literature as a response to biopower. In Chapter 5, 1 will first investigate the ways in which the labor class poets position the exterior in nature as an alternative to traditional Wordsworthian notions of Romantic subject experience. Specifically, the chapter demonstrates that labor-class poets evidence a sense of relations to the nonhuman material State that traditional Wordsworthian notions of the immaterial dismiss. Using an exterior driven ontological

model outlined in the methodology, Chapter 5 considers the labor-class reactions of John Clare and Oliver Goldsmith to two vestiges of Romantic Period biopower: enclosure and imparkment. Chapter 6 introduces the labor class poets outside of the anti-pastoral mode. By placing their work outside the confines of the either/or conditions that presuppose the anti-pastoral, the analysis may re-position the labor-class literary response as biopolitical. I make this case by offering object oriented readings of the labor-class community to demonstrate the ways in which the cultural disruption of biopower extend beyond the singular actant experience to the entire nonhuman ontographical community.

I argue so through using the aforementioned ontological lens to identify relations and references to the nonhuman in the literature of the labor-class authors of Romantic Britain. Finally, the object-oriented method uncovers a labor-class cultural counter to biopower's insistence on a manageable community in the writings of Hogg and Cobbett. I then briefly turn to the Laxton case to evidence a lasting instance of ontological community resistance to Romantic Period biopower. Material and immaterial remnants of resistance remain in what is the last open-field rural community left in England today. In chapter 3, a network of objects and relations construct the rural world of the village laborers in William Cobbett's *Rural Rides*. While working in the political context of British protectionist policies and the Corn Laws, I appropriately open Chapter 7 with a tangential consideration of the events leading up to Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and the decisive shift to Victorian capitalism. It was such circumstances that prompted Cobbett to study the laboring villages. Cobbett has remained a focal point for British social historians and larger humanities concerns rooted in the early nineteenth

century Britain, and yet Cobbett mentions very few actual human bodies. I consider ontologically how Cobbett depicts the rural community and culture he investigated during changing social, political, and economic circumstances of Romantic era England. I then consider to the protest poetry of Ebenezer Elliott in Chapter 8 to posit his writing among the most biopolitically responsive poetry of Romantic era Britain. Here, I return to Collings' notion of counter power and the plebian food riots to position Ebenezer Elliot's writing as a form of inscriptive counter power.

Following the exploration of the Romantic period literature in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8, the examination turns attention toward more recent critical responses to postcolonial in Chapter 9. To realize contemporary literary-cultural engagements with biopower, I consider the illustration of juridical nonparticipation in J.M. Coetzee's 2007 *Disgrace*. More specifically, the postcolonial work is analyzed to bridge the ongoing effects of European biopower across space and time. This, in turn, will demonstrate the ongoing impact of biopower within the contemporary sphere of subject-State experience. I will specifically consider the body-subject move to tacit juridical noncompliance in the demonstration of a biopolitical reaction in postcolonial literature. I outline a set of postcolonial relations to help export Foucault across the continent via British Colonialist operations/institutions/cultural tendencies. If Foucauldian driven questions of population management and community become inculcated in the Romantic Period on the grounds of those elegant patterns of arrangement and paradigm shifts articulated in the greater Foucauldian project, then contemporary issues of biopower and biopolitical participation in literary-cultural responses are likewise insinuated. Transporting temporally and

spatially biopower on the grounds of related Foucauldian authorized European institutions and related modes of productivity will uncover a postcolonial response to issues of biopower and population management. In the Afterword, I point to current issues of population management, food supply, and community participation to demonstrate the ongoing relevance of critical engagement with issues of biopower and the related cultural responses to them.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a wide and varied body of literature treating the new mode of thought that triggered the changes in social, economic, and political policy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For the laboring class, such changes were handed down in the form of measures, policy, and legislative procedures that constitute the biopolitical end of biopower. That is, a politics of governing the subject-body life. Feeding a developing urban population, an expanding global colonial enterprise, and capitalizing, quite literally, on new methods of obtaining profit from the native resources made their way into the State agenda of the day. Diverse studies in the humanities ranging from eighteenth century economics, physics, medicine, philosophy and the arts are among the present corpus of cultural criticism devoted to locating these moments of cultural shift.

The critical reception of the new population and species discourse of the Romantic period is key in informing the labor-class literary and cultural reaction to the biopolitics. Recently, Paul Youngquist laid strong groundwork for such projects with his 2003 *Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism.* Earlier pieces of this project appeared as early as 1999 in *European Romantic Review*. The 2003 publication set the stage for future interactions with the cultural notion of "a proper body" that Youngquist traced to British Romanticism. Younguist's project aligned this cultural consolidation with the liberal political impetus that sought to normalize "the individual for the unit of civil society and the marketplace for its epitome" inside eighteenth century European culture (Youngquist xv). From Youngquist, the cultural history that coincides with the

period of British Romanticism saw the rise of socio-cultural institutions that regulate the body-subject and service the state. For insights regarding the management and serviceability of the subject-body population, *Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism* articulates the effect of biopower on managing the body-subject population:

> If one of the cultural projects of liberal society, with its individualist and capitalist commitments, is to build a proper body that circulates a norm for human health and wholeness, monstrosities prove a challenge, a carnal turn toward some unutterable otherness. (Youngquist 7)

In the management of such Otherness, Youngquist continues that deviations and the management of the monstrous bodies are made possible after ascertaining a value of normative relations between the bodies and the State:

> They materialize a prior uniformity, an assumption that becomes clearer…monstrosity occurs materially as a deviation from a functional norm; and second, that this deviation becomes intelligible as a monstrous instance of he very norm it violates. (Youngquist 12)

From David Collings, this intelligible value derives from the relationship within the functional norms of moral economy (Youngquist 12). Accepting the monstrosity of the body-politic, or the plebian masses, within the terms of moral economy, then, offers a way of tempering the population within a degree cultural normativity. The sum of any economic structure can only equal the singular totality of its available resources be it a shared morality or material resources. When the multitude presses against the State measures of body management, the moral economy allows a way to incorporate these

frictions into the normative, measured project of body-subject management.

Youngquist took a step towards examining these relations in his own acute assessment of the Bartholomew Fair as "a space of deviance, a collective social practice that for a few days each year challenged the normative force of the proper body" (Youngquist 45). This Bakhtinian mention of "other spaces" and the carnivalesque creates enough room for Collings' to leverage these instances of collective social practice as acts of crowd-elite reciprocity in his later 2009 analysis. In a2002 survey of vernacular English poetry, Rachel Crawford agrees that these mechanisms "fed into a national spirit in which science was prized both as a realm of knowledge and as an empirical practice, and systemization was perceived as key to its practice" (Crawford 49). But Crawford's analysis ultimately rests on the contention that "the sense of cultural consequence attending parliamentary enclosure probably has less to do with actual material effects than the fact that these enclosures codified an agricultural practice at a particular moment in history when many other unsettling transformations were taking place." Biopower, however, ties Crawford's "unsettling transformations" to the material effects she dismisses in the cultural conditions she surveys (Crawford 51). The material imprint of biopower is uncovered through ontological engagement with the labor class literature. The interdisciplinary potential of Foucauldian biopower allows the fields of economics, politics, and cultural studies to interact harmoniously if tended Methodologically. Political scientist Thomas Lemke examines the eighteenth century literature along similar lines. Indeed Lemke, along with New York University's "Biopolitics" book series, encourages interdisciplinary projects in the field.

The shift in critical perspective that drives such projects coincides with the shift from the mercantilist economic model of previous two centuries toward the capitalist economies that spread across turn of the nineteenth century Europe. For coinciding insights with biopower, Lemke writes,

> the new art of government, which became apparent in the middle of the 18th century, no longer seeks to maximize the powers of the state. Instead, it operates through an 'economic government' that analyzes governmental action to find out whether it is necessary and useful or superfluous or even harmful. (Lemke 45)

What Lemke offers here is a way to align the treatment of subjects and their communities with this new treatment of government. As human reason had taken place, the State needed make a place for a crowd that fits within a model that places the elite-State institution in the center (subject). If the place of the mass were not to be with the experiencing human (subject), the elites, then the mass can only be accounted for as a nonhuman object in the model. This claim correlates with the frequent depictions of the crowd as animals, a multitude, swine – all nonhuman. This approach to population-State community relations shares ground with Youngquist and Collings' presentation of the monstrous masses, or that tendency "to reduce human beings to animals or worse" (Collings 196).

Through a sharp recognition of the biopolitical issues at stake in eighteenth century Britain, Collings explored relevant Romantic literary examinations of and responses to the gradual abrogation of common right that occurred during the late

eighteenth century. His discussion of reciprocity and monstrous communities in eighteenth century English plebeian society demonstrated a wider application of his approach to examining biopower and literary representations of the attendant themes. Still, Collings offers a limited analysis of Romantic community, and instead turns to Mary Shelley, Matthew Lewis, and political writers Edmund Burke, Jeremy Bentham, and others. In his discussion on mastering the human object, Collings assesses Victor's creation of the monster as a failed attempt at creating a distinct human being. "He will inhabit a mass," writes Collings, "that is not a body but an assembly of parts." But in that case, Victor will not have succeeded in creating a human being, for the creature, while remaining distinctive, will also bear a relation to his body that no human being ever endured." (Collings 199). The scene presents individual "distinctiveness" as the defining characteristic of the human subject. But the monster is not a distinct human, but rather "an artificially constructed biological mass that nevertheless demands to be heard" (Collings 197). Collings does a service in revealing the monster as the mass. In setting the social body as an "unconquerable monstrosity" against the tide of a principled social order, Collings demonstrates *Frankenstein* as a literary response to the political economy of the day.

In this regard, Collings' text offers much for examining the cultural status of eighteenth century Britain, and is thereby highly influential for larger research focused on biopolitical readings of the labor class writers. His biopolitical reinterpretation of reciprocity will still help to shed light on similar issues of eighteenth century cultural abrogation, namely enclosurement and the Corn Laws. Collings' attempted to historicize

his own approach properly and, what is more, bridge the gap between eighteenth century England and the contemporary State. Relevant for reading Ebenezer Elliott's writing as counter power in Chapter 4, Collings argued that the symbolic interplay he sets forth in *Monstrous Society* is but a vehicle for examining social and literary history. The study likewise recognizes that for both periods there remains "a kind of agency that exceeds social discipline. Such agency is not therefore independent of its historical moment…and must assert themselves within the conventions of symbolic interplay they inherit" (Collings 21). This agency, it will be shown, is furthered by Jane Bennett's own approach to licensing the agency of human-nonhuman community actants. Addressing the nonhuman as a viable community actant means moving beyond the human driven mode of experience.

As a step towards exteriority, Ron Broglio offered a critical engagement with the issue of interiority in the Romantic subject experience. Broglio's 2008 essay on the Deleuzian interior of Wordsworth offers a challenge to exposing the Romantic body-subject experience on flatter terms. (Broglio, *Wandering in the Landscape with Wordsworth and Deleuze*).

> Considering pure exteriority entails misplacing these proper relations between inside the metaphor and outside, as well as confusing what is proper within the social system and what belongs outside it. (Broglio)

The notion of proper becomes exposed once working within the moral economy of subject-State relations. Collings assigns the moral economy of early modern England as a useful theatre for interpreting the literary responses to accepted subject-State relations.

As Foucault outlined these relations in his project, so Collings offers a means of working within these relations to negotiate the terms of Broglio's proper social system. In contemporary critical currents, the ongoing gesturing that Post humanism makes towards an unraveling of the interior invites rather than dismays further conversation by way of casting light on the issue's insistence. Broglio revealed the ways in which the period's calibrated technologies and precision instrumentation allowed for a more logical ordinance of self in relation to the exterior world in *Technologies of the Picturesque*. The claim to a precision sense of self does not exacerbate the problem of interiority with its analysis but instead calls further attention to the problem. I intercept his argument on the interior to illustrate the means needed to achieve his call to a flattened subject experience. I outline an object ontological framework to do so in the Methodology, and draw upon the notions of life and agency in Giorgio Agamben, Alphonso Lingis, and Jane Bennett. The move towards flatter relations, then, has implications for the discourse of the human-nonhuman community relations.

The Literature of Low Cultural Community

The predominant treatment given to community in Romantic high cultural critique coincides with the immaterial image of community. The decision to omit canonical depictions of rural life and high cultural reactions to biopower comes at the behest to focus exclusively on the labor-class literature of the period. Strong work on community, environment, and the high cultural texts is to be found throughout the corpus of ecocritical studies. To make a stronger case for the labor-class depiction of rural life, then, I instead turn to the works of English and Scottish laboring poets, or "peasant

poets," as they were then known. As Crawford explores, for instance, enclosure and self -perception in Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, I target my analysis instead on the laboring poets representation of enclosure and community through the works of John Clare and Robert Burns. Raymond Williams' now classic critical account of English literature, *The Country an The City*, serves as a key moment in British labor-class literary scholarship. Similar post-Marxist contentions drive editorial model of John Barrell and John Bull's *English Pastoral Verse* that has helped shaped the receipt of the labor-class poets as "anti-pastoral." More recently, Jonathan Bate's extraordinary 2000 work, *The Song of the Earth*, helped establish John Clare, Oliver Goldsmith, William Cobbett, Stephen Duck and others within a long tradition of English poetry and ecocriticism. The concern seems fundamental to understanding the labor-class writers' engagement with the exterior: How do the labor class poets position themselves within ideas of rural community? How do the labor class poets position their community within the relations of subject-State biopower? Neither, so far, has been answered.

The long tradition of scholarship on Wordsworth and nativity has often read his Romantic engagement with nature through tones of immaterial identity and nationalism. Michael Garner and Dahlia Porter note, however, that Wordsworth's addition of the five pastorals to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* were likely due to his happiness in returning to his native English borders after the 1798 trip to Germany. From Wordsworth's own encounter with material borders, explorations of boundary and material encounter in the labor-class poets will help situate the labor-class depiction of community as a deeply exterior experience, marked through material relations and

nonhuman ontological markers of experience. A dialogue with the works of Marlon B. Ross and Lucy Newlyn will help situate the labor-class community experience as a decidedly material set of relations that problematizes Wordsworth's notion of an immaterial English population.

Primary scholarship on the labor-class poets has treated them as "minor" poets indeed. With the notable exception of Robert Burns, poet laureate of Scotland and premier Scots "peasant poet," the authors examined herein are largely considered minor figures in the wider considerations of Romantic Period literature. With the emergence of ecological reading, there has been an appreciable resurgence of the "minor figures." Robert Bloomfield and John Clare have received an enduring place in Romanticism through recent eco critical treatments and those important cultural signifiers that "minor" brings to bear upon natural community. As Jonathan Bate has shown, Clare's deeply sensitive environmental response has been firmly absorbed into the ongoing eco critical concern. The 1800 publication of *The Farmer's Boy* brought Robert Bloomfield a degree of fame, fortune, and even contact with the literary giants of his day. His work received praise from both Clare and Wordsworth, but fell out of critical circles for over a century (Bloomfield 3). The founding of The Robert Bloomfield Society in 2001 has helped reengage interest in the last decade. Bucknell University Press published new scholarship in 2006, and Tim Fulford and Lynda Pratt edited a collection of Bloomfield's letters and criticism for *Romantic Circles*.

James Hogg and William Cobbett have also both remained within the greater Romantic catalogue to varying degrees. Cobbett has and will likely remain a well-

studied commentator on the social, economic, and politics circumstances of the early nineteenth century. Recent historical and political studies have employed the best of contemporary data techniques to shine new light on the conditions Cobbett explored so fervently in his career, as Ian Dyck and Charles have done. Hogg remains as the premier Scottish essayist, and yet *The Shepherd's Calendar*, perhaps his purest labor-class exercise, is largely ignored. Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson's formidable 2009 essay collection, *James Hogg and the Literary Marketplace*, all but omits entirely any mentioning of *The Shepherd's Calendar* as Scottish Romantic literature.

Perhaps no other Romantic era labor-class writer was as reactionary as Ebenezer Elliott. Like Clare, Goldsmith, Burns, and Cobbett, Elliott's corpus offers a series of dialogues on the great labor-class issues of the day such as enclosure, imparkment, wage earning, and the Corn Laws. Elliott eventually sketched out the circumstances of labor-class life in turn of the century England as an effort to offer a community-wide response to the recent biopolitical impositions of the Parliamentary instilled "bread-tax." I consider his attempt to do so as a form of literary counter power in Chapter 8. His works exist today as extant reproductions, and there has been virtually no treatment of his place in Romantic era literature. Surveying the field of greater British Studies yields a similar result. Yet, Elliott offers some of the most intriguing insight into the economic and socio-cultural conditions of his day. His writings concern the particular labor-class experiences, measures, and modes of political mobilization that imbue Foucauldian biopolitics with a decidedly "modern" slant. Such claims certainly warrant Elliott a closer unveiling.

To date, Elliott has been ignored as an attentive labor class poet and political critic. Serious critical attention of Elliott all but vanished after the 1850s. No public registry of Elliott's birth exists, but he tells in his posthumous autobiography that he was born at the New Foundry, Masbrough, Rotherham, on March 17, 1781. His grandfather, Robert Elliott, was a whitesmith from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, "a man in good circumstances," who sent Ebenezer's father to "a first class commercial education" as an apprentice to Landell and Chambers, ironmongers. Ebenezer's father then moved to Masbrough to become a clerk, and married a Scotswoman. He sent Elliott to "a dame's school, kept by Nanny Sykes, the beautiful and brave wife of a drunken husband, where I learned my A B C" (Watkins 5). Elliott then attended Joseph Romabotham's Hollis School. He worked in the iron business at 16, and was thus self-taught. He began writing poetry at 17, and received a bit of acclaim in the *Monthly Review* before marrying in 1806 (Watkins 55). He started an iron business that failed in 1816, and his son-in-law asserted in 1850 that the realities of bankruptcy and his father's penury deathbed spurred a lifetime interest in ending poverty. More specifically, "Elliott attributed his disasters to the Corn-laws" (Watkins 80). So, Elliott turned his poetic attention towards the labor-class experience of Romantic era Britain, and published a string of well-received popular protest poems that began in 1830 with *The Ranter* and culminated with the three-volume publication of *The Splendid Village; Corn-Law Rhymes and Other Poems* in 1833. Elliott found success when he reentered the iron business in 1829, and then that too foundered in 1837.

Elliott's son-in-law, John Watkins, wrote his biography in 1850, one year after he died, and this London publication remains the best source of information on the poet's life and circumstance.

Victorian journalist January Searle (George S. Phillips) published a memoir on Elliott in 1852, and little has been mentioned of him since. Watkins maintained, astutely, that Elliott's poetry would fade with the dissolution of the Corn Laws (Watkins 93). This fact only further imbues Elliott's poetry with a utilitarian quality, and highlights the cultural specificity of his writing as a reaction to the circumstances of his time. As a published labor-class writer, it was difficult for Elliott to ignore the cultural and community anxieties instilled by the Corn Laws of the early nineteenth century. As so, for any critics of early modern English culture, it becomes difficult to ignore Elliott. The intention is not to place Elliott within a historical tradition of Marxist reactionary writing, as Barrell and Bull have done with Elliott, but rather to establish a cultural and political landscape against which his writing as a Romantic poet and a political commentator may be brought into sharper relief. Chapter 8 evaluates Ebenezer Elliott's work within the developed themes of biopower, attending especially to the historical, political, and cultural connections that he associated in his writing.

What the overall analysis consistently seeks with Elliott, then, as it navigates a variety of Romantic and eighteenth century cultural terrain, is to develop resources for production of further discourse and criticism on the labor-class writer. As a self-taught peasant poet, so to speak, Elliott came to learn and appreciate Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats (Searle 14). He garnered appreciation from Robert Southey, who

wrote a rejected and unpublished review of *Corn Law Rhymes* for Elliott. Elliott's correspondence with Southey and others is intact but again largely ignored. There is certainly more work to be done on Elliott's personal, political, and poetical agenda, then, through the surviving texts.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

An Interdisciplinary Literary Studies Project

Regarding methodology, the research adopts an openly interdisciplinary mode of interrogation. Several avenues of query arise. To appropriate the modes of investigation deployed, I offer an analysis of the interdisciplinary methodology adopted. In depth interpretations of executing interdisciplinary methodology in literary studies are found elsewhere, particularly in Allen F. Repko's *Interdisciplinary Research*. I provide instead a brief summary of the points of intersection that are most relevant in the approach to literary studies this particular research espouses.

The methodology attempts to track cultural patterns through ontographical literary representations of labor-class community relations in the Romantic Period. Temporally, the research works in the range of 1770-1840. 1840 marks Raymond Williams' endpoint for Romanticism proper, but I extend that date to encourage a treatment of Ebenezer Elliott's writing in Chapter 8. The labor-class poets offer a different reading of the human-nature relationship that drove Wordsworth's notions of an immaterial State population, and this relationship is best understood in the research as human-nonhuman relations. To read cultural reactions to biopower through ontological relations, then, is to read an imaginative relationship that has only recently been tackled by humanities scholars, social scientists, and critical theorists alike. For this particular body of work, several terms employed are borrowed appropriately from the aforementioned fields of relevant scholarship. The research wholeheartedly becomes an

interdisciplinary work of literary scholarship. Accordingly, the interdisciplinary nature of the project means that embedded terminology may incite a potential conflict of insights. A clarification of applied terms throughout should mitigate any potential conflicts of meaning. In addition, given the integrated natures of cultural and social history, efforts are made to create common ground for shared concepts

Regarding biopower, the theoretical outlay entertains a host of socio-political terms necessary to understand the historical, social, economic, and political conditions of late eighteenth and early century Britain. The term early modern nation State is inherently problematic. Historians are generally in consensus that the birth of the modern nation State coincides with the application of Enlightenment era thinking in politics, the adoption of capitalist modalities in economic production, and a European wide move toward democratic institutions and republicanism. The period that beings c. 1770, or the beginning of the French Revolution and the birth of William Wordsworth, to c. 1840, the development of European capitalism, is generally considered in humanities studies and adopted herein also as coinciding with early modern Britain. The pertinence of the agricultural revolution in labor-class criticism offers less stable temporal bounds, then, due to the complicating forces of technological and economic crossover within which the new capitalist agrarian practices operated. C.1750-1850 is the roughly one hundred year period attributed to the European agricultural revolution, and in this way situates the field of Romantic Studies within its bounds. Community history offers the opportunity to study the historical norms familiar to those labor class poets and their audience. This is not to imply that the authors had studied historical texts or that they incorporated explicit

references to them in their own discourse. Rather, the value of the historical texts lies in the light they shed on the writers' discursive practices. In Chapter 4, I trace the historiography of rural British community studies to highlight various changes and negotiations between terms of the community history and the critical shifts in the humanities.

Michel Foucault's terms for the subject-State relations of the modern nation State will be deployed clearly enough. In attendance to the theoretical and historical aspect of biopower, I trace biopower as it developed in the wider Foucauldian project in Chapter 4. As the methodological foundation for Foucault's lectures on biopolitics and society, the method of analysis developed in *Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* should in this fashion form the nucleus of any endeavor to elucidate Foucault's historico-philosophical approach. Through terms built in his earlier works, Foucault offered an analysis of power relations and the modern nation State that had emerged in early modern Europe.

The presently applied notion that the modern State deploys a series of mechanisms and techniques to control the subject at a biological level, both at the crowd and at the individual level, was thematically developed as "biopower" in the recently published lectures from the College de France. Alongside with *Society Must Be Defended*, *The Birth of Biopolitics* constructs a theoretical approach to reading the social phenomena that were acts of biopower of in eighteenth century labor class poetry. As Giorgio Agamben notes, "After 1977, the courses at the College de France start to focus on the passage from the "territorial Sate" to "State of population" (Agamben 3). This

focal shift toward State-crowd relations formulates the key theoretical lens for applications of community biopolitics and the ontological labor-class Romantic population.

To offer new readings of these relations, a fresh theoretical consideration of the labor class literature is needed to position the subject and objects on in a more horizontal relationship. Such a new consideration is made possibly by recent developments in the intersecting fields of Post humanism and object oriented ontology. The project demands a methodology that can bridge together the disciplines in order to facilitate a workable medium through which the analysis may address the nonhuman in the texts. Posthumanism's attention to the Other and nonhuman provides a succinct vocabulary to consider the forms of relations sought out by the labor class poets in their efforts to address the nonhuman cultural community that biopower destabilized. An ontological vocabulary's ability to present themes, tropes, and forms in the writing are essential to understanding the poetry and prose of the community response. For the object-ontological aspect of the readings, human and nonhuman are terms used to relate the human and any nonhuman, artifacts organic or not, under study. The object ontological relations explored within the study rest, then, on Gilles Deleuze's definition of affectivity in community,

> An exercise of power shows up as an affect, since force defines itself by its very power to affect other forces (to which it is related) and to be affected by other forces. To incite, provoke and produce (or any term drawn from analogous lists) constitute active affects, while to be incited or

> provoked, to be induced to produce, to have a 'useful' effect, constitute reactive affects…each force has the power to affect (others) and to be affected (by others again)… Spontaneity and receptivity now take on a new meaning: to affect or to be affected. (Deleuze 71)

Reading the Agency of the Nonhuman

Reading the material object as a literary symbol of the biopolitical discontent in labor class Romanticism brings with it a number of challenges to the earlier question of what constitutes an object within a community. To propose a methodology for reading the agency of the nonhuman, the larger analysis will attempt to theorize events as occurring between ontologically diverse agents, human and nonhuman included. Jane Bennett informs one such methodology for reading objects, both human and nonhuman, as affective agents within the biopolitical community. Revising Bennett's constitution of the nonhuman object allows for a stronger literary connection to the nonhuman object as an operative, functioning symbol, or actant, within the biopolitically determined labor-class communities of Romantic era Britain (*bios*). But, working inside a dynamic valence with Bennett's philosophy, an application extending Alphonso Lingis' thesis on post human interpretive representation onto Giorgio Agamben's notion of *zoe* will reveal the ways in which the nonhuman material object possesses not only a political currency in the early modern nation state, but also a biological one (*zoe*). At stake, then, is the very serviceability and reliability of a biopolitical model that depends on analytically controlled, passive material resources to regulate the human bodies of the modern nation State.

As Foucault's framework for biopower enables a consideration of political phenomena with respect to the biological governance of the community, Jane Bennett's framework offers a way of examining the role of objects within this same community. In a move to elucidate the cultural significance of Collings' eighteenth century counter power riots over food supply, Jane Bennett's work will help propose a way to view the nonhuman as a systematically vital object within the cultural landscape of the rural eighteenth century English community. To research material culture this way, Bennett's 2010 *Vibrant Matter* offers a relevant critical analysis. In order to consider the force of an object in a society, her examination first focuses on biopower, social constructions, and the power of the body since Foucault's 1984 death. Bennett's useful term, vital materiality, argues that objects have an ecological role in a life-based society. This system, or the political ecology of objects, should inform an understanding of the nonhuman objects and land under harsh scrutiny in the relevant labor-class literature. In both a Foucauldian and post structuralist tradition, Bennett traces a trail of human power to expose social hegemonies and incorporates a thing/matter and object/life binary to argue on the social vitality of material objects.

Bennett explores, among other things, a vital materialism that addresses the relationship among organic and nonorganic material objects alike. Indeed for Bennett these networked relationships create a "political ecology." Her model is instructive in demonstrating the function of the nonhuman object in a biological community seemingly driven by human action. For Bennett, the aim is to consider "a more horizontal representation of the relation between human and nonhuman actants," or agents, in order

to assess more appropriately the sociopolitical role of each object/body. Bennett suggests with this concept of agency that the efficacy becomes distributed across an "ontologically heterogeneous field," rather than in a localized human capacity or a collective produced by human efforts. Thus, from Bennett, such materialism emerges from a confederacy of macro- and micro actants. The confederacy analogy is useful in representing a layered organization that consolidates authority from other loosely affiliated autonomous or semi-autonomous actors. For Michele Foucault, this confederacy is known as "biopower." From here, the role of the material object within the community will become part of the larger confederacy that includes, but is not limited to, the plebeians, their foods, their fields, the lords, the Parliamentarians, and the greater nation state alike.

Bennett importantly references John Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems* to explore the ways through which political action occurs in such confederated communities. While Dewey and Bennett both consider the formation of the public body as a result of human action and reaction, it is Bennett who closes the gap between political participation and the role of the nonhuman object in this participation. Such a framework is needed to assess the micropolitical functioning of the nonhuman objects in the rural community. Dewey considers "where an organism ends and its environment begins…is a dynamic acknowledgment of this dependence of the self for wholeness upon its surroundings" (Dewey 102). He defines the scope of the nonhuman as the outside "environment" in which a human actant operates, and so creates a decidedly uneven theatre for the human and nonhuman objects to be actants. The problem such anthropocentrism creates for the analysis of a nonhuman political actor is multifaceted.

First, it enables a general assumption that even those events in which the human "acts in conjoint" with the nonhuman will too easily categorized as human endeavors. The politically influential power of the nonhuman object itself cannot be fully recognized. The argument affirms a "profound" dependence of human actions on the nonhuman objects rather than "a true reciprocity between participants of various material compositions" (Bennett 102). Thus, any possibility that a community's nonhuman element may inaugurate human culture is relinquished. Relevantly, Bennett's framework acknowledges this problem, and, borrowing from Bruno Latour, identifies that "nonhumanity infects culture, for the latter entails the blasphemous idea that nonhumans – trash…food…technologies, weather – are actants more than objects" (Bennett 115). Collings also notices this, but his framework is unable to grant agency to the "food" in his food riots. In this way, the privileging of human efforts muddles the active presence of other nonhuman actors for both Collings and Dewey. Moreover, failing to recognize this in the framework would also relegate the humans themselves as outside the "environment" of the political "organism" that is the empowered aristocracy. But as Collings does find, however, the resultant counter power of the plebian foot riots dismisses this. Dewey's approach, in this way, falls short in offering a workable consideration of the nonhuman material object as an actant within the biopolitics of the community.

Bennett's model, on the other hand, offers a more "horizontal" ecology in which the nonhuman object may operate. Bennett herself admits that although "Dewey comes close to saying that even human initiatives are not exclusively human," his proposition

merely “flirts with a post human conception of action” (Bennett 102). Bennett historicizes and identifies the causality of an object within a community through recognizing “heterogeneous series of actants with partial, overlapping, and conflicting degrees of power and effectivity ” (Bennett 33). Jane Bennett turns to Hannah Arendt’s differentiation between “cause” and “origin” in her discussion on the agency of assemblages. Following Arendt, Bennett adopts that “a cause is a singular, stable, and masterful initiator of effects, while an origin is a complex, mobile, and heteronymous enjoiner of forces” (Bennett 33). Bennett then readily concludes that “elements by themselves probably never cause anything,” and denotes a “melting of cause and effect” to express phenomena. But the self-interested tendency to negotiate political phenomena does not serve the current argument; the consumption of foodstuffs moves beyond the political ecology into an actual biological necessity. It is this very specific intersection between Bennett’s political theory and biological necessity that Foucault calls biopolitics. Thus, in order to apply Bennett’s spatio-temporal relationship of the nonhuman object within the parameters of Foucault’s own claims to biopower, the context of the examination must be recognized as decidedly fractal. While Bennett’s philosophy contests “assemblages are not governed by any central head: no one materiality…has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory” of a phenomena, here Foucault theorizes a deference to the biological base need of the foodstuff and the overarching biopolitical control of the early modern nation state. In this way, the very “common” object of the community’s nonhuman element becomes a powerful symbol of biopolitical culture. From here, it would seem that the cultural

tensions surrounding the very period that oversaw not only the rise of the modern nation state but also a newly fashioned system of nation-wide food production should occupy a unique place among the ongoing negotiations of socio-humanist concerns. But here the limits of modeling a material object in an early modern British ecological framework should be addressed and, if possible, furthered. The salient limitation facing Bennett's approach is the degree to which any nonhuman object may be considered "active" in the community. Here, Giorgio Agamben and Alphonso Lingis' critique of the Post human biological community creates a space to do just this.

In his 2002 examination, *The Open,* Agamben reflexively identifies the inherent indeterminancy facing any study "undertaking a genealogical study of the concept of 'life' in our culture...is that the concept never gets defined as such" (Agamben 13). Bennett's political ecology has already granted one mode of life for Agamben, the *bios*, or the form of living harmoniously with the body politic. That the other concept of biopolitical life, *zoe,* lacks a linguistic plural is an event that Agamben mentioned as "significant" in his introduction to *Homo Sacer* but failed to explore accordingly. This other mode of life, *zoe,* is a "living" moment common to all beings. Animals, humans, and non-existing Greek gods share this common life yet material objects are readily excluded. Food becomes a complex object of study here; it is at once alive as a plant, but then "dead" as bread. With Bennett's framework in place, Lingis' program of the imperative tangentially invites a retooling of the ways by which the Kantian mode of representation orders this very issue of presentational interpretation and, in doing so, presents an alternative positioning of what constitutes a biological, living community

constituent, or *zoe*.

Indeed, Kant's method of interpretive representation has long been used to dispute the ongoing problems in metaphysical discourse. Specifically, Kant uses his particular investigations into the nature of judgments about the arts and beauty in order to reveal underlying principles of judgment in general. In order to extend Bennett's model to give nonhuman objects a biological currency inside the biopolitical construct, or the *zoe*, revisiting Kant's ideas concerning the relationship between mental perception and pragmatic experience highlights a notable weakness in the philosopher's interpretive mode to which Lingis' thesis may then attend.

Kant's mode of interpretive representation, writes Lingis,

> …must not be regulated by the existing representations of nature in the science of our day, the representations of the uses of things in the technology of any existing economy, and the representation of the order of society in any present or past jurisprudence. We must form an ideal image of the forms of nature, or practicable reality, and the social field with which to project an image of the nature we will make of ourselves in nature, the end we will take ourselves to be in the instrumental layout of creation and the responsible citizens we will make of ourselves in human society. (Lingis 210)

Kant makes clear the relationship that exists between imagination and understanding in regard to one's power of judgment over relations. He refers to this as "the harmony between two presentational powers," and elaborates on how this harmony

works. He continues that it is a "schematizing" process, and later explains the relationship between imagination and understanding in that they "reciprocally quicken each other." He does not, unfortunately, devise a method for understanding the balance or degree of influence that either imagination or understanding have on one another; rather, he stops with what he calls the idea of "free play," and the argument that "only in the subsumption of the very imagination under the condition which must be met for the understanding to proceed in general from intuition to concepts…the imagination's freedom consists precisely in its schematizing without a concept."

Although he himself next recognizes that from this "a judgment of taste must rest upon a mere sensation," he again finds himself turning to the limited explanation of "free play," that "powers," i.e., the "power of intuitions, and the "power of concepts," and not a method for understanding the degrees of these powers. By arriving at his notion of intellectual "free play," Kant ultimately fails to interpret this relationship to any applicable degree. His continued negotiation of this idea would, most certainly, offer his audience a more workable means by which they may deduct judgments of perception, and not simply a framework, or, as Kant writes, a "guide" (Kant 19, 20). For Lingis, this model is "crude and misleading. And the Kantian concept of imagination is willful" (Lingis 210). Lingis extends from Kant's prosthesis that from "the fragmented, ever partial, format of the cognitive representation of nature" comes a need for the subject to make:

> his and her thought a field in which disconnected concepts from various scientific domains, from non-Western and ancient cultures, even from

> myths are taken seriously as ways to observe, in which diverse kinds of laws, paradigms, and schemata are used to related observations, in which different mathematics and different logics are used to formulate observations and laws, in which diverse models are used to construct theories; he and she must make his and her theories empirically productive; he and she must make his and her thought obey an imperative of productive observation rather than consolidation. (Lingis 215)

Lingis demands a theoretical faculty without Kant's "ideal simplicity and unity, without an internal pyramid" limited by a given moment's technological and societal constitutions. From Lingis' lens, then, at stake is a new theoretical construct based not solely on relationships for production and power, where Foucault's project concluded, but rather one with a consideration of nonhuman community actors "who are dying and who are dead…who share the space of our bodies and with whom we live in symbiosis – and with all the other animals and plants with which we form ecosystems" (Lingis 212).

To encourage such applications, Lingis points out that those perceived internal operations are merely a Kantian product of "the representations of the cultural production of identity, worth, and networks, of association with others out of mass-produced consumer commodities." For Lingis, viewing the material object only as such, as a mere nonparticipatory resource, stems from the early modern nation-state's project of an industrial and postindustrial civilization that "requires citizens as consumers." This "technological representation of the material environment as resources and

instrumentalities," which Foucault traces out in biopower, reinforces a Kantian image of the rational human actor who views the material object as such. Lingis agrees, contending also that regardless of "the diverse kinds of laws, paradigms and schemata used to relate observations…the models used to construct theories respond to the ways nature is ordered" (Lingis 215). Lingis' work highlights in this way an innately inescapable, "ordered" relation between humans and nonhuman objects that the Kantian frame precludes regardless of the "laws, paradigms and schemata used to relate" our limited interpretation of that relationship. Thus, there must exist for the nonhuman actor at least one ordinance, or distinct perceptual space, wherein the material object is not merely an analytically controlled human produced resource but rather a viable nonhuman actor vibrating relationally to the human actors in a political ecology of things. Granting this ordinance to objects opens a space to consider a fuller ecological relationship between humans and nonhuman community actors in early modern Britain.

Lingis' invitation to reconsider the interpretive relationship between the human and nonhuman through a reevaluated Kantian framework affords a unique valence among Foucault, Bennett, Agamben, and himself. Bennett's framework offers the material object a stake in the political ecology of the moment, or what Agamben calls *bios*. Lingis' framework, in tangent, may now offer the same object a stake in the biology of the moment, or what Agamben calls *zoe*. Indeed, the food must be grown, tended, harvested, stored, milled, processed into bread, and consumed within a finite period of biological availability to the human body before it loses all utility. The nonhuman object, in this way, has a biological life of its own replete with a birth, death, and transformative

experience from seed to stale bread across the political ecology of the human/nonhuman network. In this turn, Lingis' philosophy extends Agamben's own terms of *zoe* to include the material, and, in doing so, grants the material object a biological currency to complement Bennett's political one (*bios*). Now, the biopolitical project to manage *bios* through an analytical regulation of passive objects becomes disrupted when viewing the material object in terms of biological fluctuation. Suddenly, management of the non biological material object becomes the management of a different type of material, a material now vibrating, affective, able to be birthed and enable birth, and now no longer purely material in operation but instead, as Jane Bennett would say, living, "vibrating" in its operation. In these ways, the post human philosophical valence outlined here shifts the terms upon which an object gains life, or vibrancy, inside the biopolitical scheme in which Agamben's philosophy, an extension of Foucault's project, operates.

Identifying two ways of reading material objects in the culture of the modern nation state affords an informed theoretical frame through which the nonhuman may be read as a highly vibrant, instable component of Foucauldian biopolitics and early modern British culture. The first, as Jane Bennett has shown, takes place when viewing the material object as a living actant within a larger system of political control, and thus granting the material object an ecological role (*bios*). The second, as the argument has espoused from Alphonso Lingis' work, takes place when the nonhuman actants are considered with respect to a biological ordinance (*zoe*). After ascribing a theoretical leveling and applicable framework through which the nonhuman object may operate as a culturally symbolic and active material object within the biopolitical community, this

model valuably enables further research on the actual forces of disruption within the community of material objects specifically engaged: the biopolitical mechanisms of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain.

As Ian Bogost succinctly explains such approaches, "OOO puts things at the center of being. We humans are elements, but not the sole elements, of philosophical interest. OOO contends that nothing has special status, but that everything exists equally" (Bogost 6). Likewise deployed are several familiar terms from Posthumanism. Clearly, then, Graham Harmon's 2009 essay collection, *Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures*, and Bogost's *Alien Phenomenology*, have both influenced the way the project approaches object ontology. In Chapters 7 and 8, ontological process philosophy should help uncover some ways in which Cobbett ascribes participation and agency to the community objects that construct his literary depiction. A theoretical approach that assumes a participatory and collaborative method of cultural production between human and nonhuman (corporeal and material) is needed, and it is therefore inappropriate to consider the literary productions without accounting for the socio-cultural place of the human and nonhuman objects.

That the texts derive some amount of meaning from their social and historical situating is not ignored. I turn to several social historical works to contextualize the literature more appropriately. To this end, Ian Dyck, Charles Tilly, and E.P. Thompson inform the study accordingly. In addition, I borrow only those perspectives as far as data gathering and proper historical situating is needed. In the historiography of Chapter 4, for example, I make use of the historian's belief that "any historical period cannot be

adequately appreciated without understanding the trends and developments leading up to it" to appropriate the historically survey in marking the shifts as Classical, Medieval, and Capitalist employs what historians often refer to as the "shift" approach to history (Repko 61). From a literary perspective, considerations of community and biopower from the Introduction's nod to antiquity and Chapter 9's postcolonial contexts will approach what historians refer to as a micro narrative in the story of Western biopolitics.

Digressions from the direct discussion of labor class literature take place throughout the workto highlight disciplinary insights relevant to the conversation at hand. These discussions serve to critique the actual measures of biopower under scrutiny in the literature. In Chapter 8, for example, I extemporize on the procedures and pricing controls to which Elliott so critically rebukes. Thorough appreciation of the labor-class literary response to biopower is not possible without such referents. To appreciate more fully any concerns within British rural community history, I have traced out the historiography of rural Britain in Chapter.

In juxtaposing the Romantic interiority to the labor class exteriority in Chapter 5, I consider some of the more progressive treatments of the topic to identify points of intersect with ongoing critical concerns. Also, as biopower operates within the larger Foucauldian project, I have outlined the development of his work in alongside the rural historiography to identify how biopower connects to his wider historico-philosophical project. Again, a fuller understanding of both the terms of biopower and the shifting conceptions of British labor-class history seem salient to engaging with the rural community's cultural response.

There are epistemological limitations to any historical contextualization, however. That all works are socially and historically positioned, and how they are interpreted, is deeply shaped by this admission and must not go unaddressed. Indeed, as ever, proper historicizing of the texts will be employed. The approach recognizes the merits of Walter Benjamin's *On the Concept of History* to warn,

> Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal nexus of various moments of history. But no state of affairs is, as a cause, already a historical one. It becomes this, posthumously, through eventualities which may be separated from it by millennia…The historian who starts from this, ceases to permit the consequences of eventualities to run through the fingers like the beads of a rosary
>
> (Benjamin, *On the Concept of History* A).

To mitigate the tendency to historicize, or the attempt to depict an "eternal," universal picture of the past, a more appropriate method for reading material objects in labor class writing should accordingly follow Benjamin's interpretation of historical materialism. The notion that the economic production of objects creates a material base on which the social, political, and cultural institutions of a period may rest allows a way of understanding the nonhuman relations of biopolitics in a constantly changing society while simultaneously recognizing that human actors and prescriptive social relations too play an important role. As Benjamin explains, to approach a historical object,

> Solely and alone where he encounters it as a monad. In this structure he cognizes the sign of a messianic zero-hour [*Stillstellung*] of events, or put

> differently, a revolutionary chance in the struggle for the suppressed past. He perceives it, in order to explode a specific epoch out of the homogenous course of history; thus exploding a specific life out of the epoch, or a specific work out of the life-work. (Benjamin, *On the Concept of History* XVII)

Therefore, to situate labor class poets within their social and literary horizons, comprehensive considerations of the social, political, and economic circumstances unique to them must be undertaken. This will, in turn, minimize the threat of any one epistemological tendency to "be immaculately free of previous social and literary entanglements" (Eagleton 77). In this way, the cultural meanings that the texts produce and the exploration of the shifting relations to which this analysis speaks will attend arduously to a degree of interdisciplinary self-reflexivity.

These perspectives must work together to demonstrate a cultural narrative of the nonhuman as a participatory labor-class community actant, and to appreciate simultaneously ramifications of biopower on community within the historical coordinates of Romantic era Britain. Even so, this study maintains a literary lens as its focal point of a qualitative cultural analysis. This multi-stranded approach has the advantage of offering not only a method for considering the role of material objects in the literary artifact, but also a useful method for discussing the biopolitical place of the nonhuman in population discourse.

Textual Selection

In terms of textual selection, the absence in the study of any canonical

Romantic writing should be noted. The study focuses on the labor-class writers on the grounds that they offer an undervalued and unique take on the larger conversations of biopolitics and ecocriticsm currently taking place in Romanticist scholarship. While such a study could easily be applied to the major Romantics, I feel that such an undertaking is more appropriate for separate extended discussions of the work done herein. The insights that unfold and the study's central themes assuredly bear down on the works of the period's major figures. But the study wishes to illuminate aspects of cultural and literary response brought on by the forces of biopower at the rural community level. Accordingly, the texts that best formulate a response to biopower at the level of the rural community are the labor-class authors themselves. In addition, by narrowing the focus, the study is better suited to present a new understanding of the labor-class poets within the ongoing discussions of Romanticism.

The specific labor-class texts surveyed were chosen along two parameters. First, the labor-class texts chosen serve to represent the authors discussed in today's Romantic scholarship. Robert Bloomfield, Robert Burns, John Clare, William Cobbett, Oliver Goldsmith, and James Hogg have all been maintained in the scholarly tradition. Second, the labor-class texts chosen offer direct engagement with the issues at hand, namely enclosure, imparkment, the Corn Laws, and community disruption. In the case of Ebenezer Elliott, however, his texts are represented in the current scholarship but offer valuable insight to the conversation at hand. I place Ebenezer Elliott among the labor-class poets on the grounds that his works offers a literary response to a similar set of cultural forces as the aforementioned writers.

Taken together, the texts represent a rich sample of the labor-class writers from the Romantic Period who responded to State acts of biopower. This methodological decision will hopefully establish a stronger case for labor-class Romanticism (and its concerns) through a self-reflexive unification of the selected authors. To omit or negate the importance of other labor class writers in Romanticism is most assuredly not the goal of this work. Nor is it to dismiss the role of biopower in the canonical literature. But the chosen writers were selected to place the study in conversation with the larger critical body of labor-class Romantic scholarship and concurrent treatments of biopower. To this end, Bloomfield, Burns, Clare, Cobbett, Goldsmith, Hogg, and Elliott become the most appropriate choices. On the other hand, such a decision might also prompt further work on the wider labor-class corpus. In addition, it is my sincere hope that this work shines light on Ebenezer Elliott. His radical political poetry surely demonstrates a strong literary response to the emerging biopolitical relationships that so fascinate this study. His voice as a labor-class literary radical in a period of unique cultural turmoil is, however, even more fascinating. Certainly such a complex Romantic era poet is wanton of further study.

Visual cultural objects will also play a small but useful role in the study. With the methodological emphasis on accounting for the nonhuman, visual representations offer another window into the subject-object relationship depicted in Romantic era British culture. The application of visual media here follows Sarah Pink's claim that "uses of visual methods and visual media are always embedded in social relationships and cultural practices and meanings" (Pickering 130). In cultural studies, it

likewise produces a dynamic presentation of the issues at hand. Martin Lister and Liz Wells articulate, “it is seldom, if ever, possible to separate the cultures of everyday life from practices of representation, visual or otherwise” (Pickering 129). Relevant to the application of visual culture in this study is Pink’s insight that in fact visual cultures “grew up in the later twentieth century as part of the British cultural studies tradition, drawling largely from art history and media studies approaches” (Pickering 130).

On the on hand, literary text-based research techniques such as close readings and critical discourse analysis are deployed. On the other hand, the research relies heavily on social history to inform the structures and infrastructures of the economic, social, and political systems observed in the literature. The newer, cultural historical model of “micro history” allows a close, “micro” observation of the cultural agency of the nonhuman object within community systems across space and time. While examining the culture-based creation of the texts is indeed a phenomena well within the bounds of literary studies, the continuous referencing of people, events, and movements of human civilizations past and present is a mode of interrogation more illustrative of historical work. In this sense, the research adopts Sarah Pink’s view that “cultural studies itself is an academic field that is defined by its theoretical and substantive area of interest...rather than by its methodology” (Pickering 129). The driving assumption in the research nevertheless assumes the literary texts themselves as the lens for understanding the cultural experience under review here. The research thus remains an overwhelmingly literary treatment of its subject matter.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL CONCERNS: BIOPOWER AND COMMUNITY

Biopower and the Humanities

The contextualization of labor-class writing in a period of turbulent agricultural, social, political, and economic change brings with it a number of challenging theoretical and historical concerns. The period known today as the Romantic Period stretched from c. 1770-1840, and endured a series of dynamic social, political, and economic changes at the global, national, and local levels alike. National revolution, a newfound respect for and reliance upon measured statistics, forecasts, and mechanized observation in matters of governance combined with a philosophically driven set of industrial, technological, and agricultural advancements to underscore a rapidly growing European population and a shift away from the mercantilist economic model of the previous two centuries toward what is today considered early capitalist society. Such an explosion of mechanized techniques for political management now enabled the early modern State a mode of regulating the national population at the body subject level.

These mechanisms are easily identified but not readily observed in the humanist driven readings of labor-class community. From a social historical perspective, Charles Tilly traces several relevant markers of biopower in his extant research on British popular assembly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain*. Tilly's 1995 research identifies several Acts of Parliament that had a direct effect on the British State's power to manage the populations' right to life and collective action at the body-Subject's level. For the purposes herein, these new technique of body-subject management began roughly c. 1750

in the form of Parliament's newly expanded capital provisions for the Mutiny Act of 1715 that would enable the use of State military troops to control civilian populations. Further expansions were made in 1766, 1784, and 1797. In 1757, the Militia Act inaugurated widespread domestic military service for the purposes of national defense and crowd control with revisions made in 1758, 1761, 1802, and 1803. By 1774 the first codified police practice was established in Westminster with similar local watch experiments taking place elsewhere. Notably for Britain's Atlantic concerns, the 1776 Criminal Law Act authorized the punishment by hard labor of offenders who were liable to transportation to the colonies. Parliament relaxed the restrictions on military or police intervention in the case of mass riot, and created a Home Secretary charged with the responsibility of maintaining domestic order in 1780. In 1787, the Vagrants and Criminals Act allowed Justices to send vagrant bodies to jail as an alternative to houses of correction. It also allowed corporal punishment, expanded the legal definition of "idle and disorderly" to include male citizens who mismanaged their wages and subjected their families to poor rates. In 1793, Greville's Aliens Act strengthened Britain's political control of foreign bodies through a mandatory registration process. Rights of speech, press, and assembly were then severely restricted through the Treasonable Practices Act and Seditious Meetings Act of 1795. The 1798 Act for the Defence of the Realm notably authorized the prosecution of civilian posses against threats to public order. In 1803, in light of escalating international tensions with France, Parliament passed a stronger Act for the Defence of the Realm. By 1820, the Malicious Trespass Act authorized punishment of persons "willfully or maliciously damaging or trespassing public or

private property" (Tilly, 416). By 1823, the power to life was exercised by reversing several statues that had imposed a death sentence over property crimes. A similar manifestation of State power over life occurred through the 1825 repeal of the statute enforcing the death sentence for assaulting a revenue officer. When taken together, these measures represent the terms by which the British State employed new mechanisms of population control and management of the body-Subjects. The politicizing of the biological body, or biopolitics, had in this way taken hold during the late eighteenth century. The sum of these formations, collectively termed "biopower," marked the formation of the modern nation State's management over population and bare life as it exists today. Indeed the notion of the State-subject relationship was birthed here, and Michel Foucault shared such observations in his formulation of the socio-cultural power arrangements prominently explored in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Order of Things*. Reading the labor-class reaction to biopower in Chapters 2,3, 4, and 5 is in this way as deeply indebted to Foucault's larger historico-philosophical approach as it is reliant upon it. Understanding the implications of biopower as it sits within the larger Foucauldian project is salient to its application in the textual context Romantic era Britain. An assessment of Foucauldian thematic will help place biopower within the larger Foucauldian project.

Biopower in the Foucauldian Project

Foucauldian studies offer a rich tradition for historical, literary, and cultural analysis in labor class Romanticism. Foucault's recently published 1975-1976 lectures from the College de France offer additional insights into the biopolitical mechanics that

have enabled the cultural concerns of Romantic era humanities work. More precisely, these lectures and related themes are embedded within a larger historico-philosophical body of work that outlines a greater post structuralist mode of engagement, arrangement, and analysis. I would like to shine light on the larger Foucauldian canon in order to portray and assess accurately the myriad ways in which these theoretical works are connected. The tripartite review will first examine the canonical works of Foucault as they stand in relation to the historical philosopher's telos of arrangement, pattern, and overall historical philosophy. The literary analyses of Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 reference community terms of subject-State arrangement from Foucault's more recently published lectures on the biopolitical relationship between State and subject. Accordingly, I mount a bibliographical examination that will identify possible insights, gaps in scholarship, and possible lines of inquiry for humanities research in biopolitics and Foucault through a detailed consideration of pertinent primary and secondary developments in Foucauldian scholarship.

The texts that first develop the critical approaches and epistemes espoused in Michel Foucault's biopolitical research were originally published in the 1960s. Michel-Paul Foucault was born in October 1926 to an intellectual middle class family in Pointier, France. After his training in the Ecole Normale Superieure, Foucault taught psychology and language at a series of Swedish and German institutes until returning to France to complete his doctorate in 1960. In 1961, this doctoral thesis was published in French and as an abridged English text in 1961. As the English title, *Madness and Civilization*, suggests, Foucault's earliest work examined and commented on the cultural, social, legal,

and medical constructs of the notion of madness as it had existed and evolved from European medievalism to the eighteenth century. In locating the notion of madness as a cultural and linguistic construct, Foucault's first work built on structuralist tendencies in order to identify the notion of madness as a cultural and linguistic construct. More specifically, he posited that the societal idea of "madness" was a constructed object. For Foucault, then, specific institutional power structures were what ultimately shaped the notion of madness as it had changed over time. These key developments served as the theoretical foundation for his later analyses on the historical constructs of disciplinary discourse. As such, *Madness and Civilization* serves as a representation of Foucault's earliest formulations of the key biopolitical assumptions of power structures, State-subject relations, and discursive practice. Foucault's 1963 work acted as a continuation if not progression from the modes of analysis utilized in *Madness in Civilization*. This next text, *The Birth of the Clinic,* examined the creation of the medical clinic as a site of dehumanization. Foucault developed the key terms "medical gaze" here, which functioned as an understandably post structuralist notion that dehumanizing the patient as an object under study had a marked influence on the philosophy and practice of modern medicine. He noted this philosophical find through a claim that the epistemological views on what was considered to be science and medicine had shifted around the turn of the nineteenth century. For ground level applications, then, the find may be articulated as two people visually "seeing" the same thing, or object, and yet describing very different causes and processes that formed that object. In this sense, the notion that subjective views and terms of representation are shaped by various epistemes, power structures, and

modes of discourse was thoroughly extended in *Madness and Civilization*. In the larger critique of the Foucauldian canon, the 1963 text helped crystallize Foucault's major mode of thinking as an attempt to trace discursive and disciplinary shifts historically – hence, the self-titled historical philosopher.

Foucault's 1966 *Order of Things* was perhaps his most rigorous engagement with this mode of analysis. Arguably Foucault's most formidable work, *Order of Things* was a critical examination of the shifts in scientific and disciplinary discourse through the post Enlightenment era. Indeed, the original French title includes "The Archaeology of the Sciences." Foucault analyzed how ideas of sciences had changed over time due to the sudden shifts in institutional power structures, disciplinary epistemes, and underpinnings of what constituted notions of truth within individual historical periods. Clearly influenced by Nietzsche, then, *Order of Things* picked up on the continental tradition of philosophical inquiry to enable a decidedly French post structuralist method of discursive analysis. These themes, in tangent with *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, largely shaped his later biopolitical analysis of the modern European socio-institutional structures. In a wider sense, the *Order of Things* was highly influential in the critical approaches in history, philosophy, literature, art, science, and religion. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* worked as a clear post structuralist extension of *Order of Things* and served as the formative development in the Foucauldian approach to knowledge formations. Again, this method of analysis is salient to understanding Foucault's later biopolitical claims. Foucault utilized discourse analysis to help uncover the levels, dimensions, and, ultimately for biopolitics, relations of power in the modern nation State. At a more

particular level of analysis, he built on the post structuralist works and ideas of the episteme in order to examine knowledge, or the representation thereof, as a product of language and linguistic discourse. Relevant for a biopolitical undertaking, the limitation of analyzing discursive practice as linguistic practice is one theoretical weakness of his biopolitical theoretic that David Collings addresses in his 2009 reading of Foucault (Collings 25). Foucault also incorporated an analytical as opposed to strictly continental approach to philosophical analyses here. From the analytic tradition, then, Foucault built on ideas of the statement, rules of language, and hermeneutics so as to characterize a limiting set of rules on language and hence knowledge.

As the methodological foundation for Foucault's later lectures on biopolitics and society, the method of analysis developed in *Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* should in this fashion form the nucleus of any endeavor to elucidate Foucault's historico-philosophical approach. Still, Foucault's 1975 *Discipline and Punishment* examined and built upon the widely accepted societal concept of the prison in order to trace, for biopolitics and elsewhere, cultural shifts concerning the idea of the sovereign body. Temporally linked to Foucault's more recently released lectures from the period, *Discipline and Punishment* presented themes that were expanded accordingly in the lectures. 1984's *The History of Sexuality* represented a later gestation of these themes as a multi-volume work on the effects of institutional, religious, and scientific pressure on the human subject to repress natural biological and reproductive tendencies. Through terms built in his earlier works, Foucault offered an analysis of the State and power relations of the modern nation State that had emerged in the eighteenth century.

The applied notion that the modern State deploys a series of mechanisms and techniques to control the subject at a biological level, both at the crowd and individual levels, was thematically developed as "biopower" in the recently published lectures from the College de France.

From 1970 until his death in 1984, Foucault delivered a series of lectures per his post at the College de France, Paris. This position was, in many respects, the equivalent of an academician researching in a tenured university setting. Without a mandated requirement to teach or publish, however, Foucault's position coincided with a series of open lectures on his research developments of that year. These lectures were not transcribed but recorded; the first published accounts appeared in French during the 1990s, and were later translated into English. *Society Must Be Defended* did not appear in print until 2003, and currently comprises one of the eight lectures that have so far been made available to the Anglophone audience. As the lectures were delivered from 1970 onward, they deal largely with notions of institutional power in the modern nation State, issues of biopolitics and biopower as manifestations of these powers, and the pertinent relationships between the State and subject at both collective and independent levels. In particular, *Society Must Be Defended* deals with the historical knowledge of struggle and subjugation in the overarching attempt to examine power at the mass level. Richly informed, this text draws on connections from modern to contemporary formulations of nation and Statehood, and traces these connections back to Roman times. The latter portion concludes with approaches towards conceptions of the sovereign, applications of biopower, and appropriated approaches towards racism. When taken in conjunction with

The Birth of Biopolitics, *Society Must Be Defended* offers a rich theoretical framework for examining State and subject relations in eighteenth century writing.

The Birth of Biopolitics, Foucault's recently published lectures from 1978-1979, has been theoretically insightful for research into the formations of the modern nation State and the socio-political relationship between subject and State power. Foucault examines contemporary issues in detail ranging from American and German neo- to the analysis of micro powers in the modern State system. Relevant for humanities work on community, the text considers contemporary social phenomena to be a result of such biopolitical points of connection and thereby builds on Foucault's earlier post structuralist approaches articulated in *Order of Things* and *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Alongside *Society Must Be Defended*, *The Birth of Biopolitics* constructs a theoretical approach to reading the social phenomena that is Romantic era subject-State discourse and Collings' theatre of counter power in eighteenth century labor-class literature.

As Giorgio Agamben notes, "After 1977, the courses at the College de France start to focus on the passage from the "territorial State" to "State of population" (Agamben 3). This focal shift toward State-crowd relations formulates a theoretical lens for applications of biopolitics. With an established understanding of the larger bibliography by which the Foucauldian canon had theoretically informed the lectures, attention may now be turned toward the pertinent secondary works on biopolitics for the humanities. Agamben's own work, *Homo Sacer*, considers biopolitics in an assessment of bare life in the "hidden point of intersection between the juridico-institutional and the biopolitical models of power" (Agamben 6). For Agamben, Foucault's biopolitical thesis

drove a claim that bare life, "originally situated on the margins of political life," shifts gradually into the political realm from an object of culture and society to a subject of State power. In a Foucauldian sense, he traces this shift to the birth of modern democracy and notions of the citizen. Taking Foucault's biopolitical thesis back to the settings of Roman law and Greek philosophy, Agamben's analysis argues from Aristotle's theories, political treatises, and the fundamental political philosophies of Western thought. For ongoing applications, Agamben also demonstrates the inherent fragmentary nature of Foucault's own analysis of biopolitics. Katia Genel offers a similar connection for Foucault and Agamben in her 2006 essay, *The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben*. Genel examines the meaning and content of Foucault's biopower in Agamben's later work so as to assess biopower in terms of the sovereign State and subject. Set in conversation with Foucault, then, Agamben serves as another resource for tracing and elucidating sites of State, subject, and crowd discourse.

More specifically, Foucault's 1976 lecture, "Society Must Be Defended," posited a new type of sociopolitical relationship now known as biopower that forms the core theoretical concern of this project's understanding of biopower and community espoused in the upcoming chapters. The biopolitical relationship between Foucault's individual/State and the modern nation State plebeian/authority both stem from a nineteenth century phenomenon when "the biological came under State control," also phrased State control of the biological life (Foucault 240). Here, the State, or modern sovereign power, possesses and disperses the right of life and death. Foucault elaborates that "the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity, and so on – together with a whole series

of related economic and political problems" are what constitute the realm of the biopolitic. But for Foucault, the effects of these technological and political intersections are "aleatory and unpredictable when taken in themselves or individually," and so it is only at the mass or state level that sch phenomena are "easy, or at least possible, to establish" over time (Foucault 246). Foucault argues that it is "the collective phenomena which have their economic and political effects," and such macro phenomena that biopolitics should address (Foucault 243, 246). On the other hand, the local systematic shifts represented by the reciprocity of the plebian food riots in early modern Britain stand symbolically for the larger, internal antagonism "that operated throughout that emergence" of both Foucault's modern society and contemporary plural societies (Collings 18). The term reciprocity here encapsulates the mutual exchange of power wherein the commons consigned power to State elites in exchange for the protection of political and economic interests. Accordingly, there is no means for Foucault's recovery of "the uncodified premises" of elite-collective interplay, and there remains an inherent limit on the historical application of his approach (Collings 13).

Usefully, Foucault traces when biopolitics became "problematized in the field of political thought, of the analysis of political power" by means of "the mechanisms, techniques, and technologies of power" that appeared in the eighteenth century (Foucault 241). As Foucault's State was able to regulate biopolitically through the use of "forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measure," so early modern Britain was able "to regulate the shipping, milling, and baking of wheat flour and regulate the price of bread within their localities to prevent profiteering, unfair business practices, and

subsistence crises" (Foucault 243, Collings 27). The analogous reliance of these projects upon "the language of calculation, characteristic of utilitarian thought" crystallizes that late eighteenth and early nineteenth century notion of a measure driven State-subject relationship articulated through the authoritative mechanisms that Foucault inculcates as "biopower." As Maureen McLane suggests, it is against such "quantifying projects" that Romantic writings' qualitative projects must be examined (McLane 111). Foucauldian biopower is surely a powerful lens for this.

For Foucault, biopower includes an implicit use of elite political and economic measures first appearing in the early eighteenth century. For humanities work, utilizing the examination of subjective rights within the procedures of the authoritative State community serves as "a grid for understanding historical processes" (Foucault 239). But Foucault's approach ultimately falls short in its ability to test the strategem within "the history of embodied exchanges" and material relations. Kata Genel agrees, and notes the difficulty in Foucault's invocation of a "multidirectional and non unified history of political techniques" in the presentation of biopower (Genel 44). More specifically, the Foucauldian approach to examining State control fails to examine the practices of the modern State within the context of those communities that preceded them. David Collings finds it difficult, then, to assess "modern society itself from the perspective of its continuity" with a Foucauldian theoretic (Collings 17). As Foucault largely limits his symbolic analysis to "something new emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century," which includes such discursive instances as "the death of Franco," he is unable to test empirically the reversibility of technology and political power in the life of the

subject population– his very definition of biopower (Foucault 242-248).

Relevantly, Collings observed this flaw and also notes that Foucault will "seldom discuss social practices unless they were represented or preserved in writing" (Collings 31). In this way, Foucault's method of analysis marginalizes the role of material agents in social discourse, so limiting the attempt to examine the shifting cultural values placed upon objects and space in the biopolitical community. This, accordingly, must be remedied through an ontological discourse of community relations and population-State management. Whereas other discursive social theorists, including Slavoj Zizek, argue that the highly representative nature of society deems the very notion of a society with reversible power a "fundamental impossibility" (Zizek 124-128), Collings turns to the reciprocal nature of the plebian food riots of eighteenth century England for a counter argument (Zizek 124-128). Although both Foucault and Collings seem to agree on how the notion of biopolitical mechanisms operates through legitimized acts of State, it is Collings who mounts his critique of political and social control through a close examination of embodied social practices and what is more "those found in the transformations of economic relations" of mid-eighteenth through mid-nineteenth century society (Collings 20). Terry Eagleton captures the cultural irony of the biopolitical regulation of the Romantic period succinctly: "The dynamic, spontaneous energies of social progress were to be fostered, but curbed of their potentially anarchic force by a restraining social order" (Eagleton 19).. McLane hones in on the problem Romantics faced as a struggle "to make their vocation answerable to this [rapid] reconfiguration of knowledge and value…Poetry would not bind itself to scientific truths or arithmetic

calculations" (McLane 146). The modern State's biopolitical checks on progress and restraint in this way "fused together motion and stillness, turbulent content and organic form, mind and world" (Eagleton 19). It is these themes with which the humanities discourse on Romantic era issues of population and community must reckon. As a preliminary note to Chapter 5, then, I posit the labor-class literature as a reaction to the physical and cultural "reconfiguration" schemes of enclosure, imparkment, and the biopolitical Corn Laws. People and place, human and nonhuman were all physically and culturally affected through biopower, then. In sound juxtaposition, Wordsworthian instances of an interior driven experience of engagement with community will represent, as Eagleton states, the famous "ingrown self consciousness of a nineteenth-century literature ineluctably addressed to a bourgeoisie it despised" (Eagleton 73).

A History of Space and Place: Rural British Community

The treatment given to British community history has undergone a process of reappraisal akin to any other major sector of contemporary European historical research. The labor-class communities of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain are represented today through a century of professional historical scholarship. As Britain exited the nineteenth century, a cadre of newly disciplined historians sought to compile methodologically informed community histories of the rural locales so echoed in much of Britain's cultural consciousness. Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, historians began fashioning community histories of the laboring farm towns in response to waning nationalistic tendencies in the face of a then declining global empire. If considering the

role of the rural nonhuman actant, biopower, and the Romantic response to a shifting rural community, then a well understood historiographical consideration of the rural community histories should inform the analysis. The intense historiographical shift that took place during the twentieth century culminated in a reexamination of the rural experience that shaped the progress of twentieth century historiography for contemporary humanities work. The critical reception of the new population and socio-political discourse of the Romantic period, key in informing the labor class literary and cultural reaction to the new biopolitics that were affecting their cultural community and way of life. To theorize free from historical implications is to offer an incomplete framework. Historically, the approach toward rural English history has undergone several notable changes throughout the course of the twentieth century. Categorizing these approaches enables a fuller picture of what has and has not been emphasized and incorporated in the larger literary landscape. The discussion will help highlight a historical trope of participatory nonhuman material objects and seasonal yield to be, historically, a binding source of labor-class culture and consciousness. The sum historical literature treating rural English history is as diverse temporally as it is methodologically. Systematically assessing the historiography in terms of strengths, weaknesses, patterns, and gaps is thus problematic. Nonetheless, it is possible to categorize these approaches in order to evaluate, assess, and utilize the greater historiography for research purposes. The twentieth century scholarship has taken several notable approaches to the history of rural English towns during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

To categorize clearly, as agricultural history deals with the technological and

economic dimensions, so the rural history deals with the social and community dimensions (Burchardt 470). These histories place rural England in a period of rapid societal change during the agricultural revolution that is thought to have occurred between 1750 and 1850. Assessing the narrative of English rural community history requires a thorough understanding of the critical role that English agricultural history has played within the context of the English rural community. Bearing this, it becomes easier to identify particular phases in the historiography of rural England since the codification of rural history in the twentieth century. Relevantly, fundamental patterns of land use and community structure were irrevocably altered during this period. The large-scale enclosure of open fields and common land, the introduction of new forms of machinery and farming technology, improvements to livestock breeds and farming techniques, and the adoption of new crops were implemented on a national scale. These transformations enabled the rapidly developing English cities to be fed by means of producing increased yields on existing rural plots as well as the cultivation of newly expanded areas. Accordingly, historians must carefully mind the agricultural implications on the rural community history of England.

The historically intertwined agricultural and rural dimension of community is reflected in much of the literature concerning rural English communities. Considerable attention is devoted to agricultural practices, yield, labor practices, and land tenure practices in the labor-class literature. Divorcing one history from the other is, in many ways, to offer an incomplete historiography. As the historical and philosophical trends changed throughout the twentieth century, so the various focuses and approaches utilized

in English community studies changed. For the purposes here, these changes may be located along a three-part phase shift model that begins in the early twentieth century. The early twentieth century nationalist oriented community studies place the history of the rural English town within a greater nationally connected framework of progress. The first major shift occurred during the growing post World War II Marxist productions of the 1950s and 1960s, exemplified by Christopher Hill and E.P. Thompson. The second major shift focuses on the 1980s incorporation of increasingly sophisticated source materials and modes of quantitative social analysis. Much of the influential literature today is derived from this period. The third, and most contemporary, of these phase shifts had occurred within the last two decades as a result of increasing postmodern tendencies across and within the humanities and social sciences. These three phase shifts represent the major modes of professional community scholarship that have embraced English rural history. Considering a historiography along these lines will make clear the patterns and modes of arrangements used to represent the English rural community as a temporally stable yet discursively instable object of historical study. Such historiographical considerations will then make it possible to locate any patterns, inconsistencies, and relevant gaps in the literature as they pertain to continued research in the field.

Entering the twentieth century, there was a noted focus in local English community histories as they pertained to a larger framework of national production and progress. Indeed much of the literature on rural history written in this important early twentieth century period focuses on presenting elements of social and economic success

as worthy local components of a successful national system of rural production. Naomi Riches' 1937 study of Norfolk exemplifies this approach and analyzed Norfolk against the backdrop of the eighteenth century agricultural revolution. As a precursor to the class -conscious social histories that would follow, Riches' examination was grounded in an analysis of socioeconomic institutions including land tenure, parliamentary acts of enclosure, the leasing of farms, the circulation and regulation of agricultural commodities, labor quality, wages, and housing conditions. This mode of analysis drew heavily on period literature pertaining to husbandry, field production, and crop rotation as they operate within the success of the Norfolk community (Riches 81).

The economic and social analysis in her pre World War II examination focused, accordingly, on the noted increases in crop yield since the seventeenth century and the quality of the standard of labor and life in the town. Riches drew on the official demographic and agricultural statistics of 1934 to shape a community identity that was agriculturally and economically successful (Riches 124). To strengthen her findings here, Riches turned to the best-kept records of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, those of the largest estates. Working through the available estate records, Riches constructed the personal fortunes of the towns most prosperous landowners as evidence of Norfolk's economic success (Riches 128). For the laborer, Riches turned attention to the "quality" of Norfolk's laboring people as a source of production and community success. J.L. and Barbara Hammond's influential 1911 *The Village Labourer* identifies a similar nationalistic sentiment. From analyzing the quality of agrarian life in the eighteenth century before enclosure, the Hammonds note,

> The antiquity of that elaborate economy has been the subject of fierce contention, and the controversies rage round the nursery of the English recall the controversies that raged round the nursery of Homer. (J.L. and Barbara Hammond 1)

Introducing local British labor class rural culture one the same plane as the "nursery of Homer" speaks to this feeling of "common" connection in the noblest sense. The Hammonds explain that "from the old English" society until enclosurement, Riches' "quality" laboring people included 40,000 families of freeholders, 280,000 families of freeholders, and 150,000 farmers who were, to echo Adam Smith, "at once the strength and the distinction of English agriculture" (J.L. and Barbara Hammond 4).

For Riches, "distinctive" features of Norfolk included their noted increase in the size of their cattle since 1732, and their ability to simultaneously maintain successful as both a cattle and sheep rearing community (Riches 105). Her 1932 research drew on a 1791 characterization of the Norfolk labor class as "strongly marked by a liberality of thinking, and in consequence by an openness in their manner and conversation. This may be accounted for; many of them have been, and some of them still are, rich" (Riches 125). Her analysis of the local clergy is performed only after and in complement to the noted "liberality" of the Norfolk commoner. Demographic details focused on the family as a seasonal work home that was greatly influenced by the plough men's work, nap, and "summer and winter schedule" (Riches 130). The construct of the Norfolk family unit is further framed around the "four family cottage" and "two family cottage," and her work is replete with reprinted cottage illustrations from the late eighteenth century (Riches

141). The comfortable nature of the Norfolk family unit was highlighted by a discussion of a seemingly hardy daily menu. Although women were discussed as participants in seasonal harvest work as well as in their role as dairymaids, the demographic critique is, not surprisingly, focused on the varying roles of the workmen as family provider (Riches 133, 137). This was, ultimately, one noted shortcoming in the English rural histories of the early twentieth century. That there was but one page dedicated to the role of children as additional harvest hands speaks to this concern (Riches 146). The negation of the important roles that women and children had in rural society was thus a notable gap in the period's literature. It was in this sense that Riches' 1932 analysis served as a strong example of the pre World War modes of community critique. Still, such analyses laid the ground work for future rural histories decades later. Riches' history exemplified the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's interpretation of rural history as a production of stated socioeconomic forces. Indeed, noted contemporary historian Jeremy Burchardt stated that "the historiography of nineteenth- and twentieth-century rural England predominantly treats [economy] and the countryside as if they were one and the same thing" (Burchardt 465).

Riches, writing in 1937, drew on various governmental records, secondary sources, Estate records, and family archives. Subsequent histories built on this approach and added additional sources as well as new methods. As the twentieth century progressed, however, there was a gradual widening of sources incorporated into the English community histories. More progressive approaches than Riches', as Burchardt pointed out, began to imbibe a more integrated quantitative analysis in order to stake new

sociopolitical claims (Burchardt, 467). A good example of this shift is Joan Thirsk's work on the history of Lincolnshire in 1957. A look at Thirsk's approach serves to highlight the conscious attempt to elucidate a community's social history by means of quantitative analysis. The need to assess twentieth century historical concerns quantitatively was in large part due to the urban and industrial identities that had undeniably taken place by the mid twentieth century. Thirsk noted that it was "mainly due to the establishment of local archive offices and a more diligent search among the public records" that such histories were fashioned at this time (Thirsk 4). Building on the early twentieth century tradition of community history as a tradition of productive peasant farming, Thirsk incorporated more statistics, probate inventories, government surveys, acreage maps, topographical charts, and population movements into the study of rural history. Staking her interpretive claims in quantitative based sociopolitical analyses. Thirsk drew on nineteenth century governmental statistics when she cites "in the late nineteenth century…these same peasant communities were the object of public curiosity and government investigation, because they weathered the storm better than the large farmers" (Thirsk 2).

For such early twentieth century community studies, interrogations were shaped in terms of questioning how community functioned in relation to the large national socio-cultural values. Following World War II, professional social historians and anthropologists revisited histories of the industrially transformed rural towns. The shifts in historiographical tendencies that followed World War II thus constitute the next set of historiographical resources for research in English rural history. Indeed, entering the

second half of the twentieth century, community histories of rural England became firmly entrenched in historical materialism in order to demonstrate a vivid element of class-consciousness and class struggle. Shifting away from interpreting community history in terms of questions of good or bad, these newer historical approaches focused on the fundamentally dialectic nature of change and development. Incorporating economic interpretations of history, these studies sought to illuminate the social, political, and economic institutions as sites of historical socioeconomic struggles. These histories, broadly engendering what is called social history, contain within themselves multiple valences for interpreting rural history. From the viewpoint of rural society as a theatre for class struggle came Marxist concerns over history as conflict with a theoretically rooting in Hegelian dialectics. Martin Hegel's philosophy invited a view on community rooted in the notion that historical and social formations are shaped by the two social classes operating in the dialectical mode, the capitalist and the proletariat worker (Castle 109). This class struggle was viewed as the heart of historical outcomes. These new histories were predicated on the idea that history is a product of social forces and ideology. In this sense, historical outcomes and conditions are a production of ideology. As a form of this dialectical materialism, Marxist approaches held that social and historical realities are fundamental material in that they hold origin in the production and means of labor. The history of a community would be shaped by the dialectical relationship between labor and production. The Marxist approaches were in these ways, a form of historical determinism whereby historical analysis could proceed in a measured, scientific fashion. Community history became thusly shaped, or "determined,"

by these productive forces (Castle 312).

Christopher Hill was influential from the late 1950s and1980s, and E.P. Thompson also served a key role in redefining the Marxist approach to labor history. history. Their associated group, the Communist Party Historians Group, helped shed light on these new modes of examining labor history in England. Thompson's seminal contributions, *The Making of the English Working Class* and *Customs in Common*, sought to recover the working class histories of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century English commoner. This influential phase helped promote a notion of shared class-consciousness based on common experience and articulated identity. These concerns work in opposition, or dialectically, to those whose interests and concerns differed from their own. More specifically, these Marxist historians began contributing a critical social history that was narrower and more ideological in representation. Under their synthesis of Martin Hegel's theory of dialectics, a historical brand of Marxism featuring cultural materialist values emerged. Institutional relationships and interaction in the community were then considered along the lines as they operated to shape the social and political fabric of the community from points of ideological influence and consensus. Thompson's *The English Working Class* was particularly influential in setting a new agenda for labor historians and locating the importance of the study of labor and class values within general social history. Thompson himself wrote that "the culture of working people in the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth" was ignored due to historians failure to recognize the customary and class consciousness among the English labor class through his notion of a customary moral economy (Thompson 1). Thompson absorbed the

English labor class into the broader history of English plebian culture. His modified Marxist historiography was in that way discontinuous and in part anachronistic. In his attempt to recover the English working class culture at that moment, Thompson's own analysis was caught "between a narrative of historical development and a politics of transhistorical identification" (Collings 30). The larger project of saving the common class experience of the English worker superseded Marxist analytic methods. This weakness was articulated well in David Collings 2009 account of English plebian culture, *Monstrous Society*. Collings noted Thompson's "notorious resistance to theory, his rather naïve insistence on the authority of experience, and his tendency to identify with historical agents of earlier periods" (Collings 30). According to Collings, this resulted in a failure to produce a self-reflexive questioning of his need for such historical identification.

In the end, through a theoretical focus that reexamined nationalist and political/labor traditions, these approaches use English history to shed light on wider historical and political themes in society. The social historians sought to recover the details of the English working masses, local government, and enclosure. Most informative for studying the rural English community, these arguments construct a rural identity centered on the working class agrarian peasant and laborer. These labor histories flourished well into the 1980s until the historical focus shifted to matters of urban identity and its implications. More temporally relevant to contemporary research, then, the methodological implications of the third phase warrants thorough examination. By the last quarter of the twentieth century, shifts away from problems of class ideology and

societal production were taking place. The shift towards a post-Marxism critique was largely influenced by the work of Frederic Jameson. Although suited to an era of industry capitalism and class formation was changing, Marxist analysis did not thoroughly interrogate the ways through which ideology organized social relations. Post-Marxist critics sought a more structural means to interrogate the ways by which these ideologies organized social and community relations. Social, cultural, as well as economic and political institutions in the community were no longer assessed in terms of mechanical output and the relations formed from these outputs. By the 1980s, following the Marxist social histories, more temporary histories began embracing the values and practices prevalent in the social, psychological, political, and economic dimensions of community development. Technological supremacy is feature of this new historical conscious, and created community critiques that consider technological histories and urban developments as measurements for success (Ivory 172). Rural community histories now questioned the relationship through which technology played a role in their development or decline as a community. This is, then, a way by which late twentieth century technological concerns have affected the greater historiography in what questions they ask, what factors they assess, and by what measurements are community assessments ultimately made.

The methodological and material approaches taken by Edward Gillett and Kenneth A. MacMahon were a part of this phase shift. Their community history of Hull represented what Burchardt identified as the 1980s shift from examining English community history in terms of "cows and ploughs" to examining English community

history in terms of "economy, society, and culture" (Burchardt 467). As an attempt to define the changes in the English town as urban progress, the Hull study shied away from agricultural-based community analysis in favor of a new urban history. Their community history of Hull presented an account of the rural town as it gradually progressed into contemporary urban development. In doing so, the study traced the community history along a path of continuous urbanization that starts as early as the fourteenth century medieval town center. By arguing a history through the terms of urban formation and reformation, Gillett and MacMahon's study ultimately marginalized the rural history as an interim period that existed between the medieval town and the late nineteenth century industrial city. Such a shift in focus brought with it a shift in both quantitative and qualitative modes of assessment. Here, the community's role as a node of commerce was characterized not only by Marxist interpretations of regulatory sociopolitical legislation, but also by a historically urban spirit of shared trade and innovation. Aggressive attention was thus paid to reported statistics reaching back into the 1270s, and careful consideration of relative weights, prices, trade routes, capital flow and interurban commercial ventures painted a markedly different picture of the socioeconomic forces of community. On the qualitative side, there was a shift in focus from the earlier studies' focus on wretched housing, starvation wages, and oppressive land tenure policies to a material culture that was enriched through productive trade and commercialization. The market, town walls, village-square, home, hearth and water wells were examined as evidence of commercial success (Gillett and MacMahon 37). Hull was historicized as an honorable port town that "experienced both the hazards and the profits of the almost

continuous wars" (Gillett and MacMahon 61). Accordingly, considerable attention was paid to the nineteenth century's technological and urban progress over nineteenth century's attention to community history as a bi product of eighteenth century agricultural progress. This view favored an appraisal of ferries, steamships, the 1840s railway, and the overall "optimism of the Hull business men" (Gillett and MacMahon 295).

Representing the period between post WWII Marxist labor histories and Postmodern concerns over the nature of historiography, the phase importantly saw an influx of outside disciplinary sources as relevant research material. The Hull study, in this way, qualified Burchardt's assessment of the 1980s rural histories as part of a historiographical phase that embraced such diverse inputs as "photographic history to ethnography, and from hydrology to oral history" (Burchardt 469). Gillett and MacMahon's 1980 community study incorporated, for example, four separate maps to argue Hull's geographic and geopolitical roles as a rural waterside community to an important trade center with Scandinavia and Baltic powers (Gillett and MacMahon 429). This method of argument history thus began to locate the English rural community within an international context. The scholarship also incorporated photographic evidence to supplement a holistic community history that developed arguments on archaeological based medieval production claims, images of a pew-end from the Holy Trinity Church to highlight evidence of material culture prior to the seventeenth century, and recovered images of the Humber dock from 1834 (Gillett and MacMahon 84, 341). Of equal note are the efforts of these studies to include a holistic study of the community that were

inclusive of not only social, economic, political, and cultural concerns, but also religious, military, marital, educational, and pre and post War points of identification. Widening the scope also meant widening the range of primary and secondary sources. Accordingly, Gillett and MacMahon's treatment noted clerical records, private letters, archived town historical records, roles and records of military service, parish records, chapel histories, and religious festivities are noted in Gillett and MacMahon treatment. Perhaps more representative of these methods of analysis was Gwyneth Nair's 1988 study of Highley. Tracing the rural community to the seventeenth century, Nair considered both social and economic change through a reflexive post Marxist critique of the little known village of Highley.

Minding the traditional agricultural history of the village, the Highley text examined not only agricultural records, clerical transcripts, twentieth century census data, and but also geological and demographic data from the time frame. Nair ultimately sought to expand the picture of social life in rural England by structuring her analysis around two forms of change. Enclosure and industrialization were employed there to demonstrate that social and economic change was a dynamic, ongoing process. Her study importantly demonstrated an emerging reflexivity in that "it must not be taken to imply, however, that these periods were in themselves wholly homogeneous and static…there were trends in village society which were not caused by enclosure" (Nair 5). To remedy this, Nair examined the local economy as well the salient features of demographic and social reality in order to draw together the major threads of community change over a period of more than 300 years in Highley history. These threads noted commonalities in

local farming techniques, life and death demographic data, and reconstructed archaeological assumptions on housing structures. Her study also blended both political and social analysis in analyzing tenants, laborers, family life, and local oligarchical structures. Considerable attention was given to the role of women in Highly society, and analyzed alongside and independently of the family structure (Nair 104). The Highly work was also representative of an emerging brand of "microhistory," and traced the "geographical mobility" within and without a single parish of Highley by means of statistical analysis (Nair 208). The work then incorporated concerns over national and international immigration patterns as they affected Highley's population since 1780. Conversing with prior Marxist histories, the Highley study preferred "class" as a descriptive term to the various social groups in Highley history who shared similar lifestyles, income and life-chances (Nair 249).

On the other hand, to demonstrate clearly the post Marxist shift, the Highley study questioned the difficulty of determining class-consciousness and horizontal class ties. In a reflexive move, Nair recognized that such wide-ranging claims are outside the range of any individual study, and especially the "narrow parish limits" of a village like Highley. In this manner, Nair's work was instructive on the problematic notion of conscious class existence (Nair 249). Throughout the study, various socioeconomic categories were referenced "groups," rather than classes. Moreover, the Highley work acknowledged that experience between socioeconomic groups "needs to be tested in larger parishes where socially-specific samples of sufficient sizes can be generated" (Nair 254). In the larger considerations of twentieth century English historiography, then, these observations

demonstrate a notable break from the tendencies of previous rural scholarship to elucidate sociopolitical and socioeconomic concerns through an analysis only of labor production, legislation records, wage studies, and work cycles.

Now aware of the wider sweep of capitalist transformation that took place since the eighteenth century, the late twentieth and early twenty first century works offered conscious attention to the influential relations between community and the globalized marketplace. This recognition of external relationships invited attention to issues of poverty, national debt, inflation, recession, industrialization and deindustrialization, democratic traditions, and notions of technological supremacy as new means for considering community history. In his sense, the post-Marxist histories engaged with concerns of the community's urban development and historical patterns of commodity exchange (Castle 110). Accordingly, these subsequent histories engage with what are termed postmodern concerns of urban development, cities as centers of cultural exchange, and commodity exchanges as far back as medieval and prehistoric times. More specifically, Postmodernism resembled the early moves away from the Marxist histories in that it lacks a rigid, distinct profile for conducting history. At the theoretical level, the shifts from Marxist tendencies were in large part replaced with Neitzsche's critique of Christian morality and idealist metaphysics that had shaped Eurocentric, western concerns of what constitutes worthy lines of analysis. The Postmodern tendencies reject notions of authenticity and origin, or master narratives. This rejection of universals, absolute truths, and the notions of meta narrative become worthy foundations for interrogating community history. Considerations of community

assemblages, interconnections, and desires offered a new way to examine the forces acting within and without community development. Work by theorists like Bruno Latour contributed to these developments. The critical questioning of fundamental aspects of political and social life raised, in turn, new questions for consideration in historical evaluations. New questions of gender, the legal status of women, ethics of reproduction, class and racial identity reoriented the way to historicize according to fixed, immutable, and hierarchical relations. Recognizing that there can be no entirely stable foundation for truth, law, ethics, and even perception, such Postmodern approaches embrace instead the ever-changing reality of particulars and the unpredictability of change. In turn, sociocultural buffers that were once prevalent in the scholarship prior to the 1990s, including that of the 1980s, had on a lesser role in these overall assessments. Traditional evaluations of church, school, family, and community, have indeed suffered serious erosion.

Rural Community History and the Contemporary Humanities

In community studies, the last two decades have seen a Postmodern reexamination of the relationship between historians and historiography. That the notion of an objective, verifiable history has come into question creates a new set of historiographical and philosophical concerns for critically examining community history. The historical fact as name, place, or date was with little meaning unless assembled with other historical evidence. Here, Postmodern historiography took root though rejection of meta narratives, nationalistic based views on community historiography, consideration of colonial and postcolonial inquiries, a reflexive concern

or Eurocentric and Western based attitudes, and a more refined presentation of community history as an ongoing process or continuation rather than isolated sites of development. More broadly, these contemporary critiques relied on an interdisciplinary critique that speaks to many valences of community development. The access to a wide range of current and past sources, material and literary evidence, and even bioarchaeology offered the Postmodern analysis much in the way of breadth and depth query. Barrowing from archaeology, for example, early medieval planning had recently emerged as a major theme in the presentation of community history. The emergence of network theory and a Postmodern emphasis on theories of communication and transport had also shifted the emphasis of these studies away from purely internal methods of observing community change. Most importantly for community historians, Postmodernism invited something other than pure historical sequence into the analysis. In history, philosophy, and political science, Postmodernism equaled a new episteme in which texts and knowledge functioned in new and highly diversified ways. This critical shift altered the way historians portrayed history as way to know the world." Most directly, Postmodern approaches incorporated a general characteristic of relative skepticism about truth, language, causality, and history, most importantly subjectivity. From Francois Lyotard, then, Postmodernism and its affects is not an ossified philosophy for conducting history but rather a general condition. When considered this way, Postmodern histories shed light on not only contemporary considerations of community but reconsiderations of how to generate community histories.

Notably, contemporary community research has borrowed a variety of both

quantitative and qualitative approaches and assumptions in the wake of the interdisciplinary research model. To demonstrate comparatively, Tom Williams' 1993 treatment of Norfolk deployed a very different method of analysis than Riches' 1937 study of Norfolk does. Quantitatively rooted to changes in population density and distribution statistics, Williams approach incurred many debts from outside disciplinary research. As a reflection of the growing interdisciplinary trend of the 1990s, Williams' work devoted considerable attention to the geological and archaeological circumstances surrounding Norfolk's development as a site of community development. Drawing on recent finds from aerial photography, archaeology, and even plough soil microbiology, Williams was able to contextualize Norfolk in a topographical and environmental framework first and foremost (Williams 18, 119). The scholarship utilized these archaeological finds to argue a new claim that shifts in the topography were ultimately responsible for the configurations Norfolk's developing territories and urban structures. Nevertheless, one of the recurring limitations of this type of interdisciplinary study was the reliance on physical and material remains. The archaeological remains, soil samples, and physical evidence upon which much of the analysis was based suggested a greater understanding of the archaeological record than much of knowledge of the period admits. Still, such contributions to community scholarship exemplified the advances made in thinking about community history in the wake of Postmodern approaches to research.

Similarly representative of this sort of scholarship was Martin Dufferwiel's 1998 study of Durham. Dufferwiel sought to create a historical picture of Durham's people and culture from Anglo-Saxon North Umbria to the 1990s. To do so, he utilized a

comprehensive six part analysis that draws on an archaeologically evidenced examination of Durham's pagan past, the translated Anglo Saxon literary record of battle engagements and medieval township formation, a political history of the English Civil War and Catholic conversion, considerations of Lord Byron and Charles Dickens' European travels in Durham, the growth of coalfield mining and locomotive transport, an assessment of Durham's contribution to the English war effort in Nazi Germany, and the recent status of Durham's mining history. Through this approach, Dufferwiel constructed a one thousand year political history of Durham that incorporates findings from archaeological material culture, ancient literary inscriptions, to oral histories of local involvement with the British military service. The observation in an assessment of twentieth century historiography's treatment of English rural history was that there were now present elements of community identity that were omitted entirely from community histories compiled only decades prior. Dufferwiel's work exemplified an application of top down political history to examine Durham on a vast temporal scale, and demonstrates well the multifaceted concerns that had imbued Postmodern historical examination.

The historiography of rural English communities has clearly undergone several notable changes throughout the course of the twentieth century. Categorizing these approaches lends a fuller picture of what has and has not been emphasized and incorporated into the larger humanities discourse of community. The most evident tropes in the historiography are the influential role of the annual yield and the instability of terms by which historians negotiate who and what constitutes community.

The analysis has made clear that if anything does remain stable in the historiographical

consideration of rural British history, it is the general attempt to approach and understand precisely why and how communities develop and operate the way that they do.

CHAPTER 5

BEYOND WORDSWORTH: FROM THE IMMATERIAL TO THE MATERIAL

> What he did not appreciate, however, was what Wordsworth most valued in the judgment of his readers, namely, the spirituality with which he endeavoured to invest external nature, and the life of man. And this endeavour, which lies at the root of all Wordsworth's writings, Elliott had little or nor sympathy with. (Searle v)

Introduction

Chapter 5 demonstrates labor-class literature as a cultural response to biopower. The chapter first engages Wordsworthian notions of immateriality to consider more critically the difference between the Romantic subject's interior experience and the labor-class subjects ontologically exterior one. Specifically, I identify an immaterial Wordsworthian community demarcated by a shared nativity and "all Englishness" that echoes Burkean early modern State politics. I then deploy the outlined ontological model in order to problematize Wordsworth's notions of interiority and an immaterial State population through new readings of community in labor-class writing. This will position the labor-class representation of community as an alternative to the mode of subjective experience driven by the Romantic human's interiority. In light of this ontological driven model of experience, the chapter then reads the labor-class literature as a community response to two specific acts of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century biopower: enclosure and imparkment.

* * *

Beyond Wordsworth: From the Immaterial to the Material

From the historical and theoretical situating, reading the biopolitical in the literary canon of labor-class Romantic poetry is not without merit. The modern State's biopolitical checks on progress and restraint "fused together motion and stillness, turbulent content and organic form, mind and world" for the Romantic explorer (Eagleton 19). In sound juxtaposition to the ground level labor-class treatment, Wordsworth's work presents a privileged anthropocentric reading of the laboring community of Romantic Britain. In other words, his literary depictions represent well the traditional humanistic readings of rural cultural experience in which both elites and peasants can participate as part of a singular citizenry, or "all Englishness," through the shared immateriality of the Romantic subject's experience. In contrast, the labor-class poets offer an alternative reading of the human-nature relationship that so drives Wordsworth's notions of an immaterial nation. This alternative has been identified in the present study as human-nonhuman relations. In this vain, the analysis uses the labor-class poets to counter Wordsworthian notions of the immaterial through a critical expose of state-Subject, subject-object, and human nonhuman exterior relations as depicted in the labor-class response to biopower.

Useful for understanding Wordsworth's notion of a shared immaterial experience of the body-subjects and its limitations in accounting for the biopolitical experience is to consider his vision of an immaterial English body politic. Wordsworth's privileging of immateriality in the citizen-State relationship takes on a political register similar to the vision of State in Edmund Burke's *Revolutions on the Revolution in France*. Burke roots

his vision of England in a Romantic tradition of immateriality threatened by the French Revolution, Napoleonic expansion, and European political progress (Burke 38). Burke and Wordsworth both root their notions of the citizen body in the immaterial. For Burke, the material disruptions of the French Revolution threaten that sense of immaterial perpetuity. As Burke argues, "our liberties can be regularly perpetuated and preserved sacred as our "hereditary right" (Burke 25). For Wordsworth, the sense of immaterial connection to country creates a singular, unified citizen body physically bound by natural borders and whose shared experience within the natural physical borders of State create a constancy of human experience. This concept of nativity affords a unique bond to the exterior that Wordsworth strives to convey:

> Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
> The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
> Of bells; -those boys who in yon meadow-ground
> In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and the roar
> Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore;-
> All, all are English. ("Composed on the Valley near Dover" 1-6)

Wordsworth uses the sensory experience of hearing the sounding of bells and the breaking of waves against a shared English shore to unify the human subject to nature and the subject-body to the wider English citizenry. This concurs with Lucy Newlyn's work on community and Wordsworth in that "Wordsworth understood how it is through sights, sounds and sensations (not through abstract ideas0 that the deep patterning of consciousness is established" (Newlyn 64). Marlon B. Ross notes the all-inclusiveness of

experiencing nature develops a shared immateriality among human bodies within the State. This immaterial organicity that unifies land/nature to citizen body/humanity is salient to the Wordsworthian continuum of an "all Englishness." The Burkean citizenry, or, for Wordsworth, the shared English immateriality, is part of a larger continuum rooted in the shared organic relation to nature.

Wordsworth's insistence to connect past and present in his writing is a key argument on the organic continuity of the English nation-State. Newlyn notes that Wordsworth achieves a Bakhtinian dialogic that "creates discussion amongst voices past and present" (Newlyn 62). This univocal sharing attempts to create a continuity and nativity whose interiority lies outside the bounds of material change, be it socio-political, economic, or otherwise. In *Hart-Leap Well*, the medieval "knight" (1), an "artist" (61), a "grey-headed shepherd" (171), and the contemporary wandering subject "I" (101) are a part of the immaterial English experience across time. This continuity helps root immateriality through an investment in the natural world and the human being's shared sensory experience of that world. The immaterial bond of experience ties England to its people, to Wordsworth, to the lords, and to its laboring peasants. Wordsworth's singular sense of "Englishness" is cemented through the imaginative perception of the immaterial. The binding of the aristocrat, the wanderer, and the shepherd are essential Wordsworthian moves to bind the State through the natural bonds of the immaterial. The material decays, is brought into question, and altered by time. But the relation among the Englishmen is not so. The binding together of the high and low culture in *Hart-Leap Well* reflects the immaterial nation-State that Burke argued and Wordsworth harmonized.

The Burkean citizenry, or, for Wordsworth, the English immateriality, is part of a larger continuum rooted in the organic relation to nature.

The labor-class poets enact a very different vision of these subject-State, subject-object bonds and relations. Their vision is seen as a highly ontological and material one:

> The work is done, no more to man is given
> The grateful farmer trusts the rest to Heav'n
> Yet oft with anxious heart he looks around
> And marks the first green blade that pierce the ground
> In fancy sees his trembling Oats uprun
> His tufted Barly yellow with the Sun,
> Sees clouds propitious shed their timely store
> And all his Harvest gather's round his door
> But still unsafe the big swoln grain below
> A favorite morsel with the Rook and Crow
> From field to field the flock increasing goes
> To level crops most formidable foes. (Bloomfield 99-106)

In *The Farmer's Boy*, Robert Bloomfield acknowledges the laborer's minimized, flattened role in the greater ontological community of the rural field. He is but a single participant operating relationally to the field, the skies, the yield, and the animal foes. The laborer is limited in his participation by the very nature of his work. Bloomfield separates the laboring experience into narrative blocks, or sequences, to establish the

laborer's own limitations as a human actant within the relative seasons of toil. He plants furrows, but recognizes that he "trusts the rest to Heav'n" and the skies for favorable weather and profitable yield. The laborer is certainly not the privileged driver of the experience. The material crop is not positioned in order to justify the wondrous doings of the human laborer, but rather placed at the forefront of the scene through Bloomfield's capitalization of the crops. The "Oats," "Barly," and "Harvest" are all capitalized to denote the relative occupation and affect these objects have in the set of rural relations explored. The linguistic respect accorded to the material objects here help relate for the reader that the field does not tremble as observed objects in the wind, but trembles as human uncertainty as capitalized Oats. The capitalization serves to personify the grain object in order to establish the nonhuman on equal terms with the human. The Oats are as much a part of the community as Giles. Similarly, the capitalized" Sun" helps denote the immense respect the laborer felt for the weather as very active nonhuman participant in the community.

Equally important to the scene's depiction of rural community are "the Rook and Crow" as affective nonhuman participants. For the laborer, the Rook and Crow are not aesthetic objects in nature to be observed and represented, but "most formidable foes" in a web of shared human and nonhuman relations. The nonhuman animals are given language and experience otherwise reserved for human "foes" as they become dangerous enemies to the "warry plundrers" who labor the fields for survival. The nonhuman hungry flock poses a threat to the Oats and laborer in a community interdependent on its own material relations for survival. This labor-class perception of nature offers a very

different “imaginative perception” of the same human-nonhuman relations. From such positioning, the labor-class poets’ ordering of experience disrupts the Burkean-Wordsworthian register of an immaterial citizen community. The frictions offered disrupt the immaterial through an organization of experience that is highly dependent on manageable, malleable, and ultimately destabilized material objects in nature. The theoretical positioning adopted problematizes, then, the traditional Wordsworthian privileging of the interior experience. For Wordsworth, the human is rooted in nature and the poet laureate’s insistence on the immateriality of the body in nature reduces and minimizes, if not altogether removes, the possibility of the fricative relations between State and body-subject that biopower unravels.

Critical accounts of Wordsworth’s interiority have focused similarly on the terms by which the Romantic subject is constructed. Lucy Newlyn finds in Wordsworth an interior experience founded on “a value of work, conscience, and the connection of self with the community…” (Newlyn 67). Wordsworth’s community includes all classes of England to create a “bond” through a patterning of life and experience. But such a community favors a pattern of life only made possible through the actions of man. A reading of a selected passage from *The Prelude* highlights this privileging:

> Magnificent
>
> The morning was, a memorable pomp,
>
> More glorious than I ever had beheld.
>
> The sea was laughing at a distance; all
>
> The solid mountains were as bright as clouds,

Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn –
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth into the fields.
Ah, need I saw, dear Friend, that to the brim
My heart was full? I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me: bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be – else sinning greatly –
A dedicated spirit. On I walked
In blessedness, which even yet remains. (iv 330-345)

Newlyn traces the passage along "the hazy distant prospect to the clearer human figures" that appear after the distant material elements of the morning scene. She uses the passage to locate in Wordsworth a move "from the grandiloquent and the epic to the humdrum and the quotidian" that helps emphasize a privileged "blessedness," or grace, for the human actant revealed. But Newlyn's criticism omits the role that Wordsworth denies the laughing sea, the solid mountains, and the meadows in the supposed blessedness of the morning community. A participation of the nonhuman objects is soon forfeited in favor of a pattern of life rendered possible only by the English laborers' entering the field. For Wordsworth, the blessed pattern of life is driven by human effort. It is witnessing the "labourers going forth into the fields" during the scenes final unfolding that warrants the "full" heart and "bond unknown" for the human poet. The material

circumstances of the community experience are placed peripheral in the ongoing attempt towards the immaterial. The mountains, mist, and bird song are excluded from the blessedness and immaterial community that only human toiling can create. Wordsworth's descriptive patterning betrays his exclusive "bond." For in fact it is the material objects in the scene that create the morning "sweetness" through which Wordsworth crafts the blessed experience for his human subjects. The shared "common dawn" that arouses the bonding sensation is dependent upon the material "Dews, vapours, and melody of birds," the laughing sea, and the solid mountains. It is ultimately nonhuman relations and material circumstance on which Wordsworth stakes his exclusive immaterial community.

Recently, Ron Broglio moved towards a reconfiguring of the Wordsworthian interiority in his 2006 *Technologies of the Picturesque*. Borrowing Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of assemblage, Broglio attempts to map the interiority of the Romantic subject against elemental nature in a mode that is made possible only through the newly fashioned sense of place afforded through the technological and instrumental developme developments of the eighteenth century. For Broglio, technology coordinates the body to its surroundings (Broglio 28). In the spirit of instrumental enterprise, then, Broglio offers vector readings of Wordsworth to demonstrate the construction of relatedness and experience between the Romantic subject and its surroundings within a wider discussion of ontological maps and territories (Broglio 93):

> Following this interpretive gambit, by discounting the privileged interiority of the Romantic subject, it becomes possible to see how

> Wordsworth's sense of selfhood does not come from within the subject; rather, the subject is an inflection point that takes on meaning as it draws together elements from the surroundings. (Broglio 85)

There is, then, in Broglio's work a hint towards a flatter sense of human-object relations evident in the exploration of the Romantic subject. But to flatten these relations is to float a system of objects, human and nonhuman, that has at stake a collapse of the privileged space within which Wordsworth's Romantic subject operates. To read for such a flat ontology, however, would be to observe faithfully the affectual role of nonhuman objects in the literature.

Robert Burns' captures this idea of a participatory nonhuman in his poem on rural community, *To a Mouse.* Burns uses the mouse to demonstrate a social union of nature that man cannot undo, and a shared set of circumstances they must endure as a human-nonhuman labor-class community. As Burns writes,

> I'm truly Sorry man's dominion
> Has broken Nature's social union,
> An' justifies that ill opinion,
> Which makes thee startle,
> At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
> An' *fellow-mortal*! (7-12)

Burns apologies to the mouse for the action of the human in the shared ontological space of the laboring community. Indeed the full print title of the poem is *To a Mouse: On Turning Her up in Her Nest with the Plough, November 1785.* Burns calls this shared

ontological space "Nature's social union." Burns' use of Nature insists on the solidarity and sanctity of this relationship that he unwittingly violated. Further, Burns acknowledges the mouse's right to harbor an ill opinion of the human's action, and the human is responsively startled by this. For the laborer, "Her Nest" is as much a domicile as the ploughman's cottage: Thy wee-bit *housie*, too, in ruin! The displacement of the mouse from the home is afforded the same sensitivity as the laborer from his own. This recognition of the nonhuman follows what Jonathan Bate means when he writes, "Nature is made capable of feeling" (Bate 145). To confirm that the nonhuman mouse shares the experience of the laborer, the stanza concludes with a leveling of the mouse as "earth-born companion/An' *fellow-moral*!" The conscious use of authorial italics marks the point of fellowship and community that Burns wished to convey. As the poem concludes and the laborer reconciles with the mouse, the realities of rural life bear down on both participants. The mouse and laborer live in face the future's uncertain prospects together.

> But Mousie, thou art no thy-lane,
> In proving *foresight* may be vain:
> The best laid scheme o' *Mice* an' *Men*,
> Gang aft agley,
> An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
> For promis'd joy! (37-42)

The sensory position of the labor-class subject is not one centered and surrounded by its environs, as it is with Wordsworth, but rather one ontologically relational and

operationally relevant to the nonhuman mouse. In contrast, consider Wordsworth's lyrical use of animals to construct a sense of place for the human, "The little-hedgerow birds,/That peck along the toad, regard him not,/He travels on, and his face his step" (1-3). In *Old Man Travelling*, the nonhuman helps introduce the conscious positioning of the human within the natural community. Nature serves as but a point from which to construct his own subjective experience,

> He is by nature led
> To peace so perfect, that the young behold
> With envy what the old man hardly feels
> -I asked him whither he was bound, and what
> The object of his journey; he replied
> 'Sir! I am going many miles to take
> 'A last leave of my son, a mariner,
> 'Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth,
> 'And there is dying in an hospital.' (12-20)

Introducing the poem with references to the nonhuman, the tranquil "little hedge-row birds," helps privilege the human experience through ensuring it is the subject "he" who journeys through nature. On the surface, the poem tells of an old man travelling alone to take "a last leave" of his wounded. "His journey," as the narrator explains, exposes an intrinsic loneliness that the human subject is capable of feeling through his connection with nature. But as the second title of the poem suggests, "*on Animal tranquility and Decay*," the human is able to ponder his own finitude and decay only through noticing the

way nature does the same. The animals as single actants are neither named nor mentioned again after the opening. The introduction of the birds in the opening lines constructs an experience outside the reach of the nonhuman birds that "peck along the road, regard him not," and serve as a background from which the human's contemplation of the moment may be placed brought to the foreground. Wordsworth explains the anthropocentric driven moment,

> A man who does not move with pain, but moves
> With thought – He is insensibly subdued
> To settled quiet: he is one by whom
> All effort seems forgotten, one whom
> Long patience has such mild composure given. (6-10)

Here the human is driven from the interior, "with thought" and through his own construction of self may experience the feelings Wordsworth is conveying. While the nonhumans are placed at the outset of the poem, from this reading they are ultimately marginalized as they but help orientate the human around his own sense of self as "He is led by nature" to feelings of peace. More telling of this find is that Wordsworth dropped the first part of the title entirely in the 1800 printing of *Lyrical Ballads* and kept "On Animal Tranquility and Decay." In this sense, the state the narrator wishes to realize is not achieved *with* and *among* nature, as the labor-class poetry does horizontally, but rather *through* nature and the subject positioning it affords. These instances of "greenness" and humanity drive Broglio to turn to moments of encounter so as to locate an alternative and "reorganized" set of human nature relations that moments of encounter

in Wordsworth allow (Broglio 118).

For Burns, in contrast, the nonhuman mouse-object *becomes*-subject as it participates in the same sensory experience reserved for the privileged anthropocentric positioning in Wordsworth. The mouse-object runs, eats (32), "holds ill opinion" (9), and feels "December's winds ensuin'" (23). The mouse-object causes the farmer to experience remorse, apologize, reorganize his plough, and so the mouse-object becomes mouse-subject acting upon a human-object. There is no clear line between the mouse-*becoming*-human and the human-becoming-mouse in the community experience (*bios*). They are, in Burns' ontography, all State subjects operating in a rural community under the same sets of lived terms.

Still, to describe so is not to conclude the position of these objects, human and nonhuman, material and immaterial, corporeal and other, within a set of relations solely to each other for this exacerbates the very problem of subject interiority. Rather, it is to place instead the objects-as-ontological community in relation to the exterior conditionality of biopower that creates the system of relations in which the subject-as-objects attain their vulnerability. As Burns depicts, the community participants exude the biological functions of birth, play, consumption, death and even morality under the rules of biopower (*becoming*-subject) to interact and affect horizontally the corporeal experience of the human object as flatly as it does them. Under biopower, the entire community operates as one ontological community through displays of interdependence and a shared vulnerability. Indeed as Burns shows all community actants are vulnerable under biopower. The land, mice, and human bodies are managed as a population through

the State's biopolitical moves on land enclosurement, drainages, price controls that determine the number of animals. But calculated yield expectations can never be accurately predicted. The imprecision of precision reveals the community's resistance to management. This set of conditions, collectively termed biopower, offers a different kind of subject-object relations for the British Romantic experience.

As a counter point to this material ontography, consider again Wordsworth's *Hart-Leap Well*. Nature and her shifting environs are explicitly present in the poem, and teach the poetic traveller through revelation and concealment. Questions of Enlightenment morality, compassion for the nonhuman, and social critique of aristocratic hunting practices are all evident in one of Wordsworth's "most popular" treatments (Chandler 20). In this journey, an aristocratic medieval stag hunt is the scene for an exhausting encounter with nature. The journey takes the lives of all the hunters, dogs, and horses involved except for the surviving Sir Walter. After Sir Walter erects three stone pillars as a material tribute to the journey, a contemporary wanderer happens upon the material remains of the memorial. A nearby shepherd then recalls the tale and the significance of the objects. Hart-Leap Well is real physical place, a small spring of water near Richmond in Yorkshire. Much has been made of the cultural contexts, participants, and various social meanings of the poem. David Perkins considers the new sympathies associated with animals in Wordsworth's poetic reaction as the Romantic reflection that "Animals might be viewed as individuals, each with its own unique personality and life history" (Perkins 421). The post-Descartian view that nature too had inalienable rights is a focal point in Romantic eco critical studies. Perkins' deep critique of *Hart-Leap Well*

as a Romanic polemic against hunting is representative of this approach. Whether a polemic against hunting, a praise of courage and human virtue, or a memorial for natures effacement, as Perkins and others have suggested, *Hart-Leap Well* offers all the conventions of sincere Romantic critique on man's relationship to nature.

Yet, at best Wordsworth posits a Romantic figure that "communes with entities" (Broglio 107). The distance between human subject and nonhuman object is never quite remedied. On the one hand, Wordsworth grants sympathy to animals on their capacity to suffer, "Never to blend our pleasure or our pride/With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels." On the other, even in his extravagant Romantic reactions, Wordsworth cannot render the nonhuman "elm" and "beech" as anything more than "lifeless stumps" to the poem's wanderer (126). "Entities" and nonhuman objects are little more than diminutive material objects that warrant our sympathy. The uncertainty of the trees' position presents the poem's nonhuman actants as little more than distant "entities" to the privileged human community. In ontological inspection, the uncertainty and irreverence for the exterior with which Wordsworth's subject engages nature is evident through this encounter with the Shepherd. The trees are little more than pieces of wood for the wander who unwittingly hears "some say they are beeches-others elms-" (126). The Shepherd's reference to "some" deliberately excludes certain relations of the natural world for the peasant community. At the conclusion of the aristocratic chase, Sir Walter erects three commemorative stone pillars "pleasure-house" and "small arbour" (81-84). Years forward, as the passing narrator attempts to decode the meaning of the material remains, the Shepherd enters to reveal the material connection that Wordsworth'

immaterial wanderer cannot. The shepherd finally brings sense and meaning to the decayed materiality of the chase.

To the Romantic wanderer, the Shepherd is the one finally able to render a social context and meaning to the tale through his unique relation to the material. The relationship that enables the laborer to identify the nonhuman community actants with such ease is not an introspective turn of the Romantic sensitivity, but a set of relations expressed in the lived experience of the laborer. The equitability conferred upon the exterior is without reach of even the most ponderous of subjects. Wordsworth, in one way, realizes the fallibility of the high culture poet. Recall the odd praise of the laborer in *Concerning the Convention of Cintra*:

> In fact: the Peasant, and he who lives by the fair reward of his manual labour, has ordinarily a larger proportion of his gratifications dependent upon these thoughts – than, for the most part, men in other classes have. For he is in his person attached, by stronger tools, to the soil of which he is the growth: his intellectual notices are generally confined within narrower bounds: in him no partial or antipatriotic interests counteract the force of those nobler sympathies and antipathies which he has in right of his Country; and lastly the belt or girdle of his mind has never been stretched to utter relaxation by false philosophy. These sensations are a social inheritance to him. (230-237)

Perkins makes the point that "the pastoral care of the shepherds for their flock is about to be extended as a 'deep and reverential care' for all animals" (Perkins 438). The

shepherd, of course, is made to empathize more with the animal community more than the other human in the poem. The introduction of the shepherd in the second stanza may reflect, as Perkins has suggested, "the final calm" and "widened" perspective" that the laborer provides once the fanciful is exhausted. These critiques seem to give little notice of the shepherd's relation to the nonhuman as one possibly differential to the one Wordsworth gives to wandering narrators or cruel human figures. For all of the human emotion wrought from the hunter's perversion of the exterior, the shepherd is the figure who dispenses with a material history of the place and its object relations. The Shepherd opens the relations to the nonhuman as he explains "The arbour does its own condition tell" (139). The laborer pronounces life (*zoe*) and material participation (*bios*) to the nonhuman. The lived, material experience of the shepherd confers a different set of relations upon the exterior that is outside the sensibility of the Romantic subject's experience. Wordsworth's wonderer stands "in various thoughts and fancies lost" as the Shepherd enacts a ground level meaning to the nonhuman material actants (127). The shepherd explains the community's ontological interaction with nature as "she leaves these objects in slow decay" (183). The attempt to bring the fanciful down to the realm of the material is outside the bounds of even the most imaginative of literate poets.

Ross similarly concludes Wordsworth's immaterial exploration of the subject ill-equipped to account adequately for the cultural implications of material circumstance in the interior experience (Ross 58). Ross sums this problem of interiority in Wordsworth succinctly:

> Ironically, the growth of Britain into a modern nation state is based on the

> radical change in the function of and in that Wordsworth resists. Industrialists, utilitarians, scientist, economists, state functionaries, capitalists, the bourgeoisie all view land, not as a constant that is to be held onto, passed on through primogeniture, stabilizing the relations among the classes, seasonally producing the fertility of the whole, and determining the values of the whole in consonance with that stability, but rather as property to be exchanged, expanded, and improved for the sake of profit and national growth. (Ross 60)

Under the terms of biopower, the laboring poet experienced cultural and community tensions that are expressed through the meaningful relations between and to the human and nonhuman objects in their rural communities. To consider these literary depictions of the human in relation to the objects "around" them is to return to Broglio's issue of moving beyond the privileging of the human subject as the center of experience. While any ontological claims to assemblage complicate notions of community, the term is useful for placing a temporal and spatial bound on the labor-class experience. This bounding would seem to contest, once again, Wordsworthian notions of immaterial continuity, nation, nativity, and the bonded interior experience.

* * *

The consequences of biopower for interiority are, then, that bodies become material objects whose qualified *zoe* is at stake in the new biopolitical project of citizen-body management. Measurements and statistical measures decouple the interior experience from the early modern State in which quantifiable degrees of certainty help

ensure the bodies as manageable material objects whose power to life can be measured in degrees of certainty. The interior experience is no longer a unifying, organic course for the human subject, as Wordsworth would have us believe. The human experience takes place not within the immaterial bonds of the human subjects but within a national scheme of quantifiable mapped ordinances, managed city plans, measured consumption (a necessary component of life), population, stand overall subject-population measurement at the level of quantifiable objects. The humanistic cultural experience is now realized in terms of relations to these quantifiable, material objects and the social, political, and economic institutions that make them possible – the larger schemae of biopower.

The laboring community whose biological livelihood and shared cultural heritage were at stake readily felt such measures. For the laboring class, it was participation in the materiality of biopolitical State, and not the immateriality of the Wordsworthian one, that articulated the relationship to the biopolitical mechanisms that the privileged space of the Romantic subject's interiority failed to realize. From the biological consumption of their material crop-as-ale, to the tangible, material bounds of enclosed fields, to the seasonality of the agrarian experience and the negotiation of centuries old values with culturally corrosive Parliamentary legislation, the labor-class poetry depicts a system of human experience that cannot be understood without a reckoning of these human and nonhuman ontological relations.

*** * ***

Biopower and Labor-Class Response

John Clare and Oliver Goldsmith both wrote poetry in direct response to two

respective vestiges of biopower in Romanticism: enclosure and imparkment. Enclosure in Britain has its roots in the fifteenth century medieval farming practices, but by 1660 slightly more calculated attempts of enclosurement took root during what Foucault and the present study outlay as the birth of the modern nation State. Indeed prior to the eighteenth century, enclosure occurred on a smaller scale and at a slower rate. Centuries of self-preservation saw gradual and relatively sporadic enclosures that were undertaken on amicable terms to ensure sustenance and community survival. Although the seventeenth century saw a large swath of open country enclosed, these still traditional enclosures were on a smaller scale, and often done in unsystematic piecemeal through general agreement. It was not until the 1760s that the initial wave of Parliamentary enclosures was enacted.

As the mechanical improvements of the European agricultural revolution made increased yields more likely, the State sought to put more land under cultivation through nationally sponsored Acts of Parliament. Rachel Crawford unintentionally defines this mode of biopower,

> Pre-parliamentary enclosure [1760] were by comparison unsystematic. Parliamentary enclosure therefore fed into a national spirit in which science was prized both as a real of knowledge and as an empirical practice, and systemization was perceived as key to its practice. (Crawford 49)

With improved agricultural technology and new cultural desires generated by eighteenth century imperialistic and mercantilist tendencies, Parliament and the elite ruling class

worked together in a program of biopower designed to make available as much productive farm land as the topography would allow. For Great Britain proper, the agricultural revolution lasted c.1750-1850 with the most accelerated series of Inclosurement Acts passed accordingly between 1750-1830. In this way, the Romantic British State officiated methods of population management and production to ensure the feeding of its citizens and a proper managing of *bios* through Parliament sponsored enclosure and codified legislative acts. The new management of land and population was now a legally stipulated process bearing the weight of official State approbation (biopolitics).

The biopolitics here typically involved a group of commissioners elected by church, manor lord, and free holding land owners to oversee and determine the land allotments for each parish. By State requirement, all allocations had to be approved by those elites controlling two-thirds or more of parish property. Surveys were undertaken to determine the appropriate boundary markers such as tree lines, hedgerows, and riding paths were laid out in measure. Streams could be diverted and altered to create new boundaries and trees uprooted. Draining, fertilizing, cultivating, and maintaining these newly enclosed lands required enormous capital, and the largest landowners were easily able to buy out smaller ones. The displacement meant that once self-sustaining village laborers were now wage-earning laborers for the enormous enclosed lands on which they no longer held common right. Prior to enclosure, the laborer was not merely a wage earner but an active participant in the community's political ecology (*bios*). The laborer "had a cow or a pig wandering on the common pasture, perhaps raised a little crop on a

strip in the common fields" and so maintained himself as a producer (Hammond 55). Lands were surveyed and distorted, people and parish were counted, and new roads and riding paths were created. Irregular, small-scale plots were soon consolidated into organized, large scale farming installations. In her deep review of enclosure studies, Crawford agrees,

> By 1804 the process had become so thoroughly interconnected with the larger concerns of commerce, especially transportation of goods, that even the width of roads was stipulated (sixty feet including a verge on either side. (Crawford 49)

The result was a disrupted eighteenth century rural landscape that had shifted physically as well as culturally.

John Clare wrote two poems specifically on enclosure. *To a Fallen Elm* and *The Mores*, both from the Helpston Period, were probably written between 1812-1831 in his local Helpston dialect. The dating places Clare's poem within the period of accelerated field clearing, drainage, enclosure, and consolidation that had taken place between 1809-1820. Clare's distinctive choice to write in his local dialectal language at once binds the community as all objects retain an ontological place unique to the community. At second inspection, the use of the Helpston laboring dialect serves to separate the community as an ontological space distinct from the managed language of the State.

Clare himself was born next to a public house in the Northampshire village of Helpston where he experience enclosurement first hand in 1809 from an Act of

Parliament that removed the common grounds where the village laborers kept open fields, livestock, and timber. In actuality, the old common lands acquired here were considered ill suited to cultivation and alternatively called wastelands and served as a type of public grounds. Landholders acquired these waste tracts in a nationwide program to place more land under cultivation and manage a growing State population at home and abroad. Purchasing and enclosing lands had gone on for centuries prior to 1750, but the newly fashioned sense of population management and mercantilist State enterprise inspired Parliament to sponsor private bills of enclosure for the landholders. These wealthy elites were able to buy out many of the smaller landholders and smaller rural farms of roughly twenty acres were rapidly replaced with large-scale agricultural installations of three to five hundred acres. By 1750, roughly 74,000 acres of land were enclosed by an Act of Parliament. By the time of Clare's writing, in 1809, roughly 750,000 acres of land were enclosed.

According to Tom Paulin, Helpston's open fields once surrounded the village "like a wheel" (Clare xix) Biopower's1809 enclosurement had a devastating effect on the sense of space and place that Clare associated with the rural community:

> Far spread the moorey ground a level scene
> Bespread with rush and one eternal green
> That never felt the rage of blundering plough
> Though centurys wreathed springs blossoms on its brow
> Still meeting plains that stretched them far away
> In uncheckt shadows of green brown and grey

Unbounded freedom ruled the wandering scene. (1-7)

Clare connected the open, continuous spaces of the commons to the open, continuous lifestyle of the laborer with which he associated himself. From the opening "Far spread," a language of distance and space seems to permeate throughout the poems eighty lines. This space is connected in a denied perpetuity through Clare's observation of "centurys" of cultural heritage now displaced. The "unbounded" freedom of his community operated and "Spread its faint shadow of immensity/And lost itself which seemed to eke its bounds." The humans in the community loses their sense of pride and place as the lands associated with the community become bounded, streams diverted to become straightened boundary markers, and trees removed for farming. Fences and signposts were erected to manage the movement of the village laborers and restrict their community within Parliament set boundaries. The juxtaposing descriptions of the Helpston community prior and subsequent to enclosurement create and maintain a sharp contrast throughout the poem,

While the glad shepherd traced their tracks along
Free as the lark and happy as her song
But now alls fled and flats of many a dye
That seemed to lengthen with the following eye. (33-36)

Clare then reflects on the loss of freedom that was felt through the material loss of the opened lands, "Where swopt the plover in tis pleasure free/Are vanished now with commons wild and gay" (Clare 38-39). In lines 45-50, we see Clare turning to the immense loss of space and the effects felt in the community:

And sky bound mores in mangled arbs are left

Like mighty giants of their limbs bereft

Fence now meets fence in owners little bounds

Of field and meadow large as garden grounds

In little parcels little minds to please

With men and flocks imprisoned ill at ease. (45-50)

Once bounded by nothing but the sky, as Clare writes, through biopower the fields and meadows are now as small as "garden grounds." The laboring populations becomes "imprisoned ill" in the newly fashioned parcels from the tremendous reduction of open field space to their topography. Clare hints towards a severe psychological trauma felt when he alludes to feelings of imprisonment and torture. In a more radical reading, Jonathan Bate associated the loss of the commons to Clare's loss of identity and eventual descent into madness decades later (Bate 162).

So disturbed by the acts of biopower, Clare considered enclosure acts "enslaving tools" in his *To A Fallen Elm*.

It grows cant terms of enslaving tools

To wrong another by the name of right

It grows a license with oer bearing fools

To cheat plain honesty by force of might

Thus came enclosure – ruin was her guide.

(51-55)

Again, for the laboring poet, it is not only the human laborers feeling the effects of

biopower. For Clare, the rural landscape was densely peopled, but not just with "human" people. Birds, bees, trees, and children are sketched throughout Clare's poetry to reveal a rich community composed of the material and immaterial, human and nonhuman, man and animal. Nesting birds, seasonal nonhuman visitors, shepherds, rocks, bees, dogs, foxes, and children all interact in Clare's rural community. This singular, ontological space, Helpston, becomes disrupted and distorted for Clare as the biopolitical concerns physically impose upon the topographical space and to distort the cultural identity that Clare endears.

Clare continues on the ruin of the community's rabbit dens as an event as culturally significant as the loss of an actual human "comforts cottage."

> Tho comforts cottage soon was thrust aside
> And workhouse prisons raised upon the scite
> E'en natures dwelling far away form men
> The common heath became the spoilers prey
> The rabbit had not where to make his den
> And labours only cow was drove away. (57-62)

In a final move to bind the human and nonhuman actants to the land itself, Clare addresses his final stanza to the fallen elm tree:

> Such was thy ruin music making Elm
> The rights of freedom was to injure thine
> As thou wert served so would they overwhelm
> In freedoms name the little that is mine. (65-68)

For the laborer, the loss of the local elm tree (*zoe*) is seen as nothing short of the loss of a fellow community member, Elm (*bios*). Clare even extends "rights of freedom" to the Elm as he laments the loss. In interrogating Clare's role within the Romantic literary canon, Bate briefly notes,

> For Clare, the most authentically 'working-class' of all major English poets, social relations and environmental relations were not set in opposition to each other in this way. He viewed the "rights of man" and "rights of nature" as co-extensive and co-dependent. (Bate 164)

Again, the terms of biopower were felt in the rural community in such a way that ontographical vocabulary reveals less obvious relations among human and nonhuman actants inside the literary landscape of rural Romantic Britain.

* * *

Oliver Goldsmith reacted to biopower in the form of rural depopulation and imparkment in his 1770 *The Deserted Village*. Sitting within the historical bounds of a series of accelerated enclosures sponsored by an Act of Parliament, Goldsmith's poem has long been treated as a political essay in iambic pentameter on the diminution of the rural village at the hands of "the miser's wish." Goldsmith writes in acute awareness of the implication of biopower at home and abroad:

> Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
> The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay
> 'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
> Between a splendid and happy land.

Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,

And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;

Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,

And rich men flock from all the world around. (265-272)

"Surveys," "statesmen," "increase," and "loads of freighted ore" all call to attention the practices of measurement and management that defined biopower at home and abroad. For Goldsmith, the driving consumerist tides brought on through colonial production, cultural imperialism, and international trade meant a surveyed shift in resources for the rural populations of England. As a response, his work captures the culturally destabilizing effects of biopower on the laboring communities in several registers. Goldsmith captures in one stanza the realities of the burgeoning capitalistic society and sense of body-Subject imbued in the peasantry:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a pretty,

Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;

Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;

A breath can make them, as a breath has made;

But a bold peasantry, their country'spride,

When once destroy'd, can never be supplied. (51-56)

Goldsmith's heroic couplets reveal the sense of impending catastrophe and population "decay" of the peasantry that biopower induced. The quantitative inversion of accumulated wealth and decaying men that Goldsmith presents in line 52 clearly stakes the rural decline that coincided with mercantilist national growth. By 1770,

mercantilist appetites and the agricultural revolution were taking hold on the ancient interests of the rural laboring communities. In *The Deserted Village*, the reference to depopulation at the expense of shifting national attitudes for "increasing luxury," as he addressed Sir Joshua Reynolds, is here fulfilled through Goldsmith's attack on the predatory practice of imparkment that had begun to take hold at the time of Goldsmith's writing. Imparkment, or the enclosure of lands or villages for conversion to pleasure grounds, served Goldsmith as a critical expose of the culturally corrosive effects of the biopolitical measures imposed by Parliament. In this sense, Goldsmith's attack on imparkment offers a labor-class reaction to a different and important measure of biopower in late eighteenth century Britain.

Tom Williamson coherently argues that imparkment and depopulation were as responsible, if not more so, for the destruction of the English "peasantry" as Parliamentary enclosure was. According to Williamson and others, decades of historical research have show that enclosurement affected little more than a fifth of the total land area of England, and living conditions deteriorated with equal rapidity in both newer and older enclosed villages (Williamson 162, Crawford 43). Williamson is quick to remind, "complex patterns of social, economic, and agrarian change are most easily summarized in single events with clear physical traces" (Williamson 162). As a result, Parliamentary enclosure, with its visibly fixed boundaries, identifiable hedged rows, fences, and signposts, thus remained the key symbol of the peasantry's decline. From Williamson's historical work on enclsoure,

> The sudden and dramatic, as well as highly visual, character of enclosure

> experience made it a useful scapegoat for social and economic problems which, in reality, had more complex, longer-term and deeper-seated causes – rampant demographic expansion, rural de-industrialisation and the inexorable rise of agrarian capitalism. (Williamson 162)

To connect the literary front, Rachel Crawford similarly finds in her survey of eighteenth century vernacular poetry,

> It was common, in fact, to address the evils of parliamentary enclosure in terms of the motivations and concerns of this horticultural counterpart. Imparkment represented an extreme manifestation of the social endorsement of contained space after 1770. (Crawford 43)

In Goldsmith's case, the deserted village is widely believed to be Nuneham Courtenay, Oxfordshire. Simon Harcourt, 1st Earl Harcourt built Nuneham House and the surrounding park and gardens 80km from London after demolishing the Nuneham Courtenay in 1761 (Batey 57). Although not revealed by name, the village pseudonym, *Sweet Auburn*, is transformed through biopower from a productive landscape into a "lingering" ornamental garden with the community *bios* at stake:

> Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain,
> Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
> Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
> And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed. (1-4)

The population's "health" and "plenty" become managed and, ultimately, exchanged for the Lord's accumulated wealth in the greater State program. The Parliamentary bills

designed to impark and enclose lands were a biopolitical mechanism with direct effect on the body-Subject at the labor-class level. The removal of laboring settlements to make way for parks served as a physical manifestation of biopower upon the labor-class community and its habitants. Legislative changes in 1773 were designed to disrupt, divert, and maleate the existing villages and countryside pathways in favor of Subject community more conducive to boosting national productivity. The institution of the Road Closure Orders by Parliament made these changes cheaper and easier through subsidization. In this way biopower transformed the community at the physical level as the roads, footpaths, and highways that interconnected the population were cleared to make way for Elite owned parks and plantations (Williamson 167).

In opposition to the biopower program, Goldsmith sketches the blissful participation of a community driven by local cultural values rather than national economic ones. This is what Beningham calls the "home economics" of rural life in her discussion on Gainsborough's painted depictions of the shifting eighteenth century English landscape (Beningham 42). The cultural "Innocence and Health" that Goldsmith introduces in line 61 are the product of the laboring community's cultural valuation of monetary wealth.

> A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
> When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
> For him light Labour spread her wholesome store,
> Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
> His best companions, Innocence and Health;

And his best riches, ignorance of wealth. (57-62)

The cultural values, "his best riches," are under threat as the desire for increased wealth impinges upon the community's "ignorance of wealth" through State biopower. Goldsmith explains the loss of peaceful field sports (71), the sound of evening's close (113), and "nature's simplest charms" (96) to the biopower program that demolishes an ancient community for "barren splendor" and the State's mercantilist quest "for all the luxuries the world supplies" (lines 284-286). Goldsmith records the shifting behavioral patterns of the peasantry as "the rural mirth and manners are no more:"

Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in ach look, and brighten'd all the green-
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more. (70-74)

The laboring poet records the physical changes of the Subject bodies in addition to the physical changes of the landscape and animal life. The physical participation of the community bodies becomes altered after imparkment, and in this way biopower disrupts corporeally the cultural continuum that Wordsworth claims for an immaterial all English body. Cobbett similarly comments on the loss of field sports, "rural customs," and the diminished animal life at Burghclere: "the fact, that, forty years ago, there were five packs of foxhound's and ten packs of harriers kept within ten miles of Newbury; and that now, there is one of the former (kept too, by *subscription*)" (Cobbett 45).

Still, Goldsmith recognizes the superficiality and materiality of his own rural life if only to contest the materiality of the newly accumulated wealth that imparkment reflected. Language on the pleasurable superficiality of beautiful land and laughter is at once replaced with language of mercantilist labor practices. A breath can make them, as a breath has made/But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,/When once destroy'd, can never by supplied" (54-56). Here the language of supply and demand implant themselves on the experience of the laborer who can only make sense of the change through the contemporary economic vocabulary of supply and demand. Moreover, unlike Wordsworth, for whom life and death are a part of the immaterial continuum, Goldsmith sees life and death in material economic terms only recently deployed by the forces of biopower in the early modern nation State. Life and death, the *bios*, become the privilege of the State's rights to life through regulating the biology of life with mercantilist agricultural practices that service the project of biopower. Wealth a means, an accumulation, and not a natural value intrinsically connected to the interior experience and human sensibility. In Goldsmith's plain language, it is merely an accumulation of product at the cost of social decay in the rural community. The juxtaposition of accumulating wealth and decaying men does little to satisfy a notion of wealth as anything other than a material gain in the project of biopower. For Goldsmith, that accumulation is a materiality that costs men their lives and his community their pride. Goldsmith contests the cultural cost of employing such practices for material gain:

> Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
> That leaves our useful products still the same.

Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride

Takes up a space that many poor supplied. (273-276)

Again, the language of supply and demand produced "gains" (273) and "loss" (275). But Goldsmith recognizes the cultural futility of wealth accumulated at the expense of laborer's livelihoods. Indeed "wealth is but a name," writes Goldsmith, "that leaves our useful products still the same." By deploying the economic language, Goldsmith draws attention to the relative utility of the mercantilist program for the village laborer: "that leaves our useful products still the same." The ground level impact for the village laborer is a gain for the landholder and overseas trader and a loss at home. Unlike the gain, the loss incurred is more than a name as Goldsmith continues on the next line. The gain comes at the expense of a "space that many poor supplied." For Goldsmith, the loss of rural culture is far more impactful than material gain.

* * *

The labor-class *bios*

The loss of rural culture to Goldsmith is not solely the realm of the human laborer. As Goldsmith describes the political ecology of *The Deserted Village*,

The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,

The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,

The noisy geese that gobbled o'er the pool,

The playful children just let loose from school;

The watch dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,

And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;-

These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,

And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made. (117-124)

Crawford suggests a similar connection, "The babble of human tones mingles 'in sweet confusion' with those of cows, geese, and watchdog in a world where each living thing is a beneficiary of the common grace of rural virtue (113-124). This is what Beningham calls the "organicism" of rural life (Beningham 42). Goldsmith confirms this ontographical population in the stanza's couplets,

But now the sounds of population fail,

No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,

No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread

But all the bloomy flush of life is fled. (125-128)

The nonhuman actants are actually counted in the community "population" through the shared participation of the sensory experience that Wordsworth would privilege the human subject. "Population" for the laboring poet involves the "milk-maid," "herd," "geese," "children," "watch dog," "wind," and "nightingale" acting and reacting together in the community's dusk ritual. For Goldsmith, there is no exclusion of the nonhuman actants in the community as the all-inclusive line 128 explains, "But all the bloomy flush of life is fled." Indeed, "life" here obtains meaning by Goldsmith through a shared participation in the political ecology of things. This type of "life," or *bios*, is not rendered the sole realm of man's sensibilities for the laboring poet. Goldsmith recognizes that the community reacts and responds against biopower as an ontographical unit. As the second half of the stanza reflects the post-biopolitics phase of the village,

Goldsmith stresses the community's entire population, human and nonhuman, "fled together" during imparkment. Goldsmith's labor-class poetry demonstrates community to be a shared pattern of life set in place through ecological co-existence and, appropriately, thusly threatened as a singular ontographical entity under biopower. Whether accounting for the physical shift in topography or the cultural shift of the laborers "manner and mirth," as Goldsmith describes, the ontological reading incorporates the human and nonhuman in the changing eighteenth century political economy as a singular biopolitical population. The laboring poet' sensitivities to the nonhuman actants demonstrate the effects of biopower within the shared ontological space of rural community.

CHAPTER 6

OUTSIDE THE ANTI PASTORAL

Introduction

Chapter 3 begins by repositioning the labor-class poets outside the traditional confines of the "anti-pastoral" mode of literary response. To consider the labor-class Romantic literature outside the confines of a Marxist driven class-based relations analysis will place their work in conversation with more recent critical approaches to the socio-cultural power structures of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain. The chapter then considers an ontographical labor-class experience that remains resistant and counter to biopower's program of population management in the works of Scottish labor-class writers Robert Burns and James Hogg.

* * *

The ways in which the labor class poets experience the exterior in nature indeed differ from the traditional Wordsworthian experience of the Romantic interiority. This labor-class experience is often referenced as "anti-pastoral" in Romantic poetry in the works of Jonathan Allison, Barrell and Bull, and Williams. But this term is misleading and incomplete given the advancing twentieth-century theoretical discussion. John Barrell and John Bull set this tradition for British Studies as they editorialized the works of Stephen Duck, Oliver Goldsmith, Charles Churchill, George Crabbe, William Holloway, John Clare, and Ebenezer Elliott against the idyllic tropes of the pastoral. Barrel and Bull borrow the same class-based relations reading with which Raymond Williams so imbued the pastoral tradition in 1985. The term anti-pastoral works in

logical opposition to, or against, the cheerful image of nature in which Wordsworth and others work. The labeling flows from the view that the labor class poets were responding to class-based social conditions brought on by the materialist capitalist forces of production taking root in the late eighteenth century.

Raymond Williams helped purvey a notion of the anti-pastoral with his cultural analysis of agricultural capitalism in *The Country and the City*. In it, Williams recounts the harsh realities depicted in the labor poetry to argue a thoroughly class-based social history of the period's subject-rural encounters. John Barrell and John Bull, editing a hallmark collection of pastoral prose in 1974, chart the aforementioned labor class writers as "anti-pastoral" in accord. Drawing off of Williams' Marxist analysis of pastoral poetry, Barrell and Bull read the harshly depicted conditions of field labor as "entirely appropriate expressions of agricultural discontent" (Barrell and Bull 381). They invite but ultimately do not answer for themselves an earlier question of this research:

> It is true enough that the protests of these poets and others like them find expression in the conventional nostalgia of the pastoral tradition, and in complaints whose substance appears and reappears throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The important question, however, is why these complaints appear where they do and when they do. And the changes described…although sometimes expressed in a generalized and conventional pessimism, are, particular, local changes; considered in the lump they were certainly only pars of a long and painful agricultural revolution, with no beginning and no end, but they must have

been quite convulsive in the local communities in which they occurred. (Barrell and Bull 380)

One problem with the Marxist anti-pastoral sentiment is that it sets the depictions of rural community as either a continuation of the Augustan Age apolitical experience or that which is anti-, against, or in opposition to that experience. The appraoch is unable to question effectively the agricultural discontent outside of class-based terms. By maintaining the Marxist reading of decades prior, Barrell and Bull's anthology maintains a theoretically undialectical classification of the laboring poets that limits exposure to contemporary currents and further conversation outside of the class-based reading of the pastoral. Since the 1970s, and more recently due to translations of late, biopower has offered a means of considering the British rural experience outside the confines of material production and class-based cultural criticism.

By foregrounding the literature in a more recently developed socio-cultural outlay of biopower, and by maintaining an updated ontological oriented look at the subject response in these those texts, the labor class writers become uniquely responsive to biopolitical experience at the "ground level." This is to say, these writers were tired to the land and they reacted to the disruptions to the rural community brought on by the enclosurement acts, corn laws, and industrialized farming in close relation to the biopolitical objects themselves – the animal, the ager, the yield, and enclsoure. Hence the needed invocation of a theoretical outlay that grants meaning to the nonhuman object as something beyond a production based material commodity. As the previous chapter showed, the human and nonhuman material objects in the community are all actants

operating under the shared terms of biopower as a community whose relations are flattened under the nation-State. Accordingly, the labor-class poets are deemed labor-class as the nature of their bodily occupation within the community was in the fields. In a contrasting instance, Barrell and Bull place Robert Bloomfield among the high canonical pastoral works of Wordsworth and Shelley (Barrell and Bull 472).

The bodies' close relation to the land, its inhabitants, and its seasonal changes offers a vantage point from which to observe various elements of community as they vibrated under biopower. While the laborers possess a bodily occupation of corporeal life, the nonhuman too possessed a *zoe* for the labor-class poet. Robert Burns illustrates this biological life course of the object in *John Barleycorn*. Burns' scene explores the role of the material object in the laboring Scottish community as *zoe*, but more than just paint an ontological portrait of community, John Barleycorn is a case of *bios* afforded to the nonhuman.

> They took a plough and plough'd him down,
> Put clods upon his head,
> And they hae sworn a solemn oath
> John Barleycorn was dead. (5-8)

John Barleycorn is not only at once a living ineffaceable object of sustenance for the human bodies, *zoe*, but a proper participant in the community's cultural act of drinking ale, *bios*. Again, the labor-class poets name John Barleycorn minimize any cultural discrepancy that might exist between the human and nonhuman. Indeed John Barleycorn lives a *bios* of his own as an actant in the laboring community, and Burns' poem traces

the life of John Barleycorn as he is grown, processed, and ultimately consumed in a process beginning in life through cultivation and ending in death through harvest.

Culturally, the association among John Barleycorn, life, and the laboring community is centuries old. Burns references the process of reaping the barley, malting, and distilling the Scotch *uisge beatha*. The *uisge beatha* was a Scots Gaelic translation of the Latin *aquae vitae*, or literally "water of life." Irish monks translated the Roman name for distilled alcohol in medieval times, and the cultural associations of John Barleycorn and Scottish agricultural life were maintained etymological into Burns' time. Although Burns' *John Barleycorn* was published din 1792, John Barleycorn was in effect an English folksong that had appeared in countless variations since the reign of Elizabeth I. Indeed the "life" of John Barleycorn has been traced to Anglo-Saxon paganism. In medieval English folklore, *Beowa* was a figure associated with barley and agriculture. Folklorist Kathleen Turner, a student of J.R.R. Tolkein, argued in 1997 that the folksong's account of life, sufferance, death, and resurrection are parallel to the medieval Anglo-Saxon legend (Turner 16). The figure John Barleycorn was traced to Anglo-Saxon paganism from the Old Enlglish word for "barley," *beowa*.

For Burns too, John Barleycorn's *zoe* is part of the laboring community's seasonal cycle of cultivation, growth, yield, milling, fermenting, and consumption. Life begins each Spring as John Barleycorn returns in the fields.

> But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
>
> And sho'rs began to fall;
>
> John Barleycorn got up again,

And sore surpris'd them all. (9-12).

So Burns begins his treatment of the life of John Barleycorn. By the summer, Barleycorn …grew thick and strong/His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears." (14-15). As the autumn harvest approaches, John Barleycorn once again faces the prospect of death as the ploughman observes:

The sober autmn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail. (17-20)

Nothing can stop the inevitable in the life cycle of John Barleycorn. Birth has occurred in the Spring, growth and maturation in the summer months, and now certain death through harvest as the "wan and pale" Barleycorn is cut for cudgeling.

They've taen a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then ty'd him fast upon a cart
Like a rogue for forgerie. (25-28)

Barleycorn is ready for processing, and as his growth and death as a material object in the community reflect his participation as a community actant so too the the laborer must plant, grow, and "cut him by the knee" before the village miller processes John Barleycorn. Now, the village miller participates as "But a miller us'd him worst of all, / For he crush'd him btween two stones." (43-44).

John Barleycorn is finally ready for consumption as the community consumes

Barleycorn's "blood" in the customary toast to "old Scotland" in the final stanza. Old Scotland references the traditional laboring community and helps establish that it is the laboring community of which Barleycorn is an integral participant. In *Scotch Drink*, Burns revisits this ontological community of old Scotland to proclaim "But when thou pours they strong *heart's blood*, / There thou shines chief." The Barleycorn ale is the blood of Barleycorn and the "heart's blood" of the old Scotch labor-class (23-24). Carol McGuirk confirms Burns praise for the affective role of Barleycorn products in the laboring Scottish community, and notes "Burns praises whiskey as democratic, smoothing over difficulties for rich and poor alike" (Burns 232). John Barleycorn is personified as an important part of the Scottish working community, and one on whom the labor-class community depended for biological survival. For in fact, two components of the laboring Scots diet came from John Barleycorn, the barley scone and barley soup referenced in *Scotch Drink*:

> On these aft Scotland chows her cood,
> In souple scones, the wale o' food!
> Or tumbling in the boiling flood
> Wi' kail an' beef;
> But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
> There though shines chief. (19-24)

As a cultural association, the addition of John Barleycorn to the boiled beef was a proud reflection of the Scottish labor-class community (21). Together, these associations help set John Barleycorn within the ontology of the labor-class community and against

Parliament and biopower,

> Wae worth that Brandy, burnan trash!
> Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!
> Twins monie a poor, doylt, druken hash
> O' half his days;
> An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash. (85-90)

Carol McGuirk similarly finds such a response to biopower in Burns,

> The notion that Parliament, at any point in its history, had enacted legislation favourable to Scotland strikes the poet as richly humours; but an underlying anger at Parliament's indifference to Scottish welfare depends the significance of his comic hyperbole. (Burns 224)

In 1784, Parliament's Wash Act implemented a high excise tax on any liquor imported to England and nearly bankrupted the Scottish distilling industry (Butler 93). The "brandy" Burns references was most decidedly consumed by the wealthiest elites and foreign produced. The brandy consumers are catalogued alongside the Wash Act to represent the elite and State forces that operated in opposition to a Scottish labor-class whose culture derives much meaning through its relationship to John Barleycorn and all its forms. Removing the agency of Barleycorn through biopower is to disrupt Burns' labor-class culture.

Importantly, then, Barleycorn is signified culturally as having both *bios* and *zoe*. Even after death, Barleycorn is physically consumed, processed, and ultimately affective on the community's human bodies:

And they hae taen his very heart's blood,

And drank it round and roun;

And still the more and more they drank,

Their joy did more abound. (45-48)

Barleycorn participates in the evening's festivities as his *zoe* is incorporated affectively into the human subject's experience. In turn, the human *zoe* becomes integrated as the corporeal functions of consumption take place. Barleycorn's *bios* then continues still as an affective object in the scene,

'Twill make a man forget his woe;

'Twill heighten all his joy:

'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,

Tho' the tear were in her eye. (53-56)

Burns tells that John Barleycorn is able to make a man forget, heighten his joy, make the widow's heart sing, and bring tears to the human eye. For his important role in the human affair, Burns' firmly establishes his place in the community and elevates him to heroic status:

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,

Of noble enterprise,

For if you do but taste his blood

'Twil make your courage rise. (49-52)

The sensory position here of the labor class subject is not one centered and surrounded by its environs, but ontologically relevant to the nonhuman John Barleycorn in the

community. The nonhuman object becomes-Subject as Burns inscribes Barleycorn's experiences of birth, growth, death, humility, and labor class community participation. John Barleycorn horizontally interacts and affects the corporeal experience of the human object as the human actant. In the end, from a materials standpoint, the actual energy matter of John Barleycorn begins in the earth and merely becomes an organic part of the laborers bodies after consumption. Thus, from an object ontological standpoint, the community remains flat as the same matter simply shifts forms and occupies a different space within the community. Burns' ontography reveals that John Barleycorn as a nonhuman actant moves, flows, and operates in different spaces within the community to reveal the "vibrating," non static nature of the object as an important component of labor-class culture.

Perhaps a more accessible expose of this sort of community is seen in fellow Scotsmen James Hogg's parable:

> A single shepherd and his dog will accomplish more in gathering a stock of sheep from a Highland farm, than twenty shepherds could o without dogs. So that you see, and it is a fact, that, without this docile little animal, the pastoral life would be a mere blank. (Hogg 57)

The community and its productive accomplishments are as dependent upon the nonhuman community actant as they are upon the human ones. Hogg's insistence that "the pastoral life would be a mere blank" attests to the dependent ontological relations on which "the pastoral life" as *bios* depends. The humans cannot operate as actants, or gain affectivity as such, without the nonhuman dogs as operative space then "would be a mere

blank." Hogg's insights into the human-nonhuman relations of the laboring community in this way shed light on the ontography of the Scottish laboring community

The inclusion of Scottish literature through Robert Burns and James Hogg is not unwarranted. The intersecting of the Scottish Enlightenment and British Romanticism each had a place for the labor-class poet. Scottish folk literature had circulated throughout England (Rubenstein 61). It should be said that much of the British gesturing toward free trade practices in the nineteenth century was Scottish derived. Scotsmen Sir John Sinclair (1754-1835) was the first writer to use the term *statistics* in the English language in his 1791 *Statistical Account of Scotland*. Six of the seven founders of the Anti-Corn Law movement were Scots, and Adam Smith too was a Scot. Paul Pickering and Alex Tyrell identify the important intellectual contributions to the Anti-Corn Law League in the form of conferences, petitions, and delegations. Pickering and Tyrell likewise contend that Scotland was perhaps the earliest site of British free-trade proponents,

> The campaign against the Corn Laws was an indigenous product of Scotland with a history that long ante-dated the foundation of the Anti-Corn Law League. As far back as 1787 the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce had declared its support for a free trade in grain. (Pickering and Tyrell 48)

Reading labor-class responses to biopower in Scotland becomes a less obvious task. Enclosure in Scotland occurred at a relatively later date in British rural history. It was not until the 1840s that Scottish laborers experienced enclosure, or "crofting," as it

was called in Scotland. By 1840, as argued earlier, Britain was shifting toward a thoroughly capitalist based system of resource allocation and national development. Within the borders of England proper, the 1840s were already witnessing the concluding removal of the protectionist Corn Laws. Instead, Robert Burns' poems were mostly composed between 1774-1786 with several begun during his juvenilia as a Scottish laborer. James Hogg's 1820s essay collection recounts through storytelling the folk experiences in the sheep-farming district of his native Ettrick Forest.

The sensitive relationship to the land, the seasons, the village laborer lifestyle, and the nonhuman community actants are all clearly evoked in Burns. Fellow Scottish essayist Hogg similarly examined the relationship between human shepherd and nonhuman in his 1780 text, *The Shepard's Calendar*. Of course, the title alone first raises questions of biopolitics and ontography. The possessive seems to insist on a sense of dependency on the between the Shepard's traditionally, natural cause and the charted course of the year. For as biopower may try to forecast and manage the environs, the Shepard shows an awareness to the acute realities of interacting with nature through centuries of shared community experience. Man may impose a calendar upon the season, but the exterior environment imposes a will all its own. Cobbett noticed this ontographical relationship when he stated, "Ours is a Government that now seems to depend very much upon the Weather" (Cobbett, 235). A unique nexus between William Cobbett and Hogg's laboring experience is found in their shared understanding of the unmanageability of the weather. Like Hogg, Cobbett's observations demonstrate a keen sensitivity to the agency of weather within the labor-class ontography.

> The wind is now coming from the East. There is every appearance of the fine weather continuing. Before Christmas, we hall have the wheat down to what will be a *fair average price in future*. I always said that the late rise was a mere puff…The present crop will have to last only eleven months, or less. The crop of barley, last year, was so very bad; so very small; and the crop of the year before so very bad in quality, that wheat was malted, last year, in great quantities, instead of barley. This year, the crop of barley is prodigious. (Cobbett 335)

Cobbett shares Hogg's recognition of the weather as an unmanageable and very powerful nonhuman community actant. Indeed Cobbett's own italicization emphasizes the relationship between the weather actant and human pricing. This ground-level understanding of the imperfectability of pricing in biopower reflects a labor-class understanding of those wider Romantic reactions to the imperfectability of eighteenth century notions of reason, calculability, precise economic measurement, and what Paul Youngquist has identified as the management of the Romantic corporeality. From Cobbett and Hogg, the project of biopower to manage the Subject bodies at the biological level becomes no more manageable than the weather itself.

For Hogg, the weather is a perpetual community actant of material and immaterial means. Life, death, growth, subsistence, and resistance are all at stake in the laboring human's relationship to weather. In the colorful essay, "Rob Dodds," Hogg recounts a storm from February 1823 that sees the shepherd reflect on the temporality of managing his flock and the accepted uncertainty that is a part of the Ettrick shepherding tradition.

> …and over these the half-starving flocks were scattered, picking up a scanty sustenance, while all the hollow parts, and whole side of mountains that lay sheltered from the winds on the preceding week when the great drifts blew, were heaped and over-heaped with immense loads of snow, so that every hill appeared to the farmer to have changed its form. There was a thick white haze on the sky, corresponding exactly with the wan frigid colour of the high mountains…it was not apparent where the limits of the earth ended, and the heavens began. (Hogg 22)

The Scottish laborer mixes language of *bios* and *zoe*, certainty and uncertainty, and human and nonhuman to depict the shepherd's understanding of weather in his laboring occupation. The flock is capable of life and death proper, but also undergoes the hardships of weathering the storm with the shepherd. For the Romantic subject, "every hill" changes form from the "immense loads of snow." The shepherd may attempt to locate through the "thick white haze on the sky" where the distant mountains mark the end of the field, but he finally unable to position himself as the scene's privileged subject by forcible means of the weather's effect: "it was not apparent where the limits of the earth ended, and the heavens began." As a result of this forced de-centering, Hogg's laborer is forced to understand the temporal conditions not through calculable means, but through incalculable chance. Hogg's Romantic human actant makes sense of the unmanageability of population, "which he attributed as a reward for their acts of charity and benevolence" (Hogg 23). Hogg's enlightenment language of correspondence, half-starving flocks, immense loads, and material limits strives to make sense of the effects of

the storm and relations of the landscape. Unable to achieve this, Hogg's language succumbs to the laborers traditional means of understanding such circumstances: "Temporal benefits," records Hogg, "were sent to men as a reward for good works." Hogg returns to this idea of uncertainty later in the story, writing:

> Conjecture was no driven to great extremities in accounting for all these circumstances…There were a hundred different things suspectit; and mony o' them, I dare say, a hundred miles frae the truth. (Hogg 35)

Hogg's laborer rejects "truth" as a stable, universal notion. For the laboring community in ontological relations with the nonhuman, "a hundred different things suspectit" replace and resist the shift toward calculable outcomes. Even Cobbett is unwilling to reconcile this tendency when he too observes, "ours is a weather Government…[and] weather depends on the winds, in a great measure" (Cobbett 235). Cobbett's insistence politicking throughout *Rural Rides* means that even weather must become a variable of "measure" in early nineteenth century political argument. In this sense, the political and social agenda of Cobbett betray his ontology as the acknowledged incalculability of weather the laboring community must somehow become managed and measured in the literary discourse of 1830s Britain.

The claim that Hogg's presentation of traditional Scottish laboring community relations as resistant, and counter, to the Enlightenment program of a calculated manageability is not without support. Although raised in a remote and mountainous district of Scotland, Hogg is received today as a writer well versed in the intellectual and cultural trends of his time (Alker and Nelson 13.) Recent essays by Ian Duncan and

Gillian Hughes explore Hogg as a participant in the high literary culture of Romantic Scotland. On the other hand, to examine Hogg as labor-class poet is to follow Sharon Alker and Holly Faith Nelson's view that "Hogg downplayed his considerable knowledge of intellectual trends, philosophy, literary history, and related areas of knowledge." The resulting literature was as important cultural contribution to the maintenance and reimagining of Scottish folk traditions, specifically song and oral. Accordingly, placing Hogg's *The Shepherd Calendar* alongside the English labor-class literature is to consider what Mack calls "the working-class or subaltern Scottish voice." Hogg introduces the temporal scheme of pastoral life as ineluctably situated around "the bloody capitals" of Scotland's most perilous storms. Hogg as a shepherd-poet, in these ways, presents an ontological relationship with the environment that spans centuries of oral tradition. "Even the progress of improvement in Scots farming can be traced traditionally from these," writes Hogg (Hogg 3). Unlike England, whose aggressive grasp of the agricultural revolution made the island nation Europe's most productive grower, Scotland's Ettrick Forest had a laboring tradition that maintained itself through rural community relations.

* * *

Only in response to recent modes of thinking brought on by larger Postmodern and preceding poststructural developments can a reexamination of British labor-class writing look beyond the simple binary of either/or, pastoral or anti-pastoral. It is this camp within which the terms of biopower offer a repositioning of the "peasant-poet" as labor-class author. Rather than responding to class-based relations formed out of

agricultural capitalist production forces, the labor-class writers were responding in the aforementioned ways to the cultural constraints that the terms of biopower presented. Considering Foucault's biopower helped position the poets as subject' bodies responding to the nation-State's measures of management in contrast to the anti-pastoral Marxist contention that "when the ideological transition occurred …we read the abstract comparisons of rural virtue and urban greed" (Williams 48). Once we move beyond a Post-Marxist imagining of the laboring community as a product of eighteenth century class-based social conditions, it becomes clearer that the particular temporal forces of production actually sit within a wider arrangement of socio-cultural and economic institutions. This chapter demonstrated that the labor-class poets are responding within an ontologically flattened community that operates, or vibrates, in, within, and under these socio-political power arrangements that marked the early modern nation State.

* * *

Ineluctable Relations

To move beyond the privileged interiority of Wordsworth is in the end to decenter the human subject. To de/center is to decentralize. But decentralizing the subject in human experience is to remove the subject from the center of relations and to place it as a part or assemblage within a flatter network of participants and system of relations. Indeed this system of which the human is a part is not a static one, as the term stasis precludes operation. The system of relations must thus operate relative to, according to,

or within something else (*exterior*). For even the English copulative *to be*, the most neutral linguistic marker in the English language and the only inscriptive device that offers any potential to move beyond strict one-to-another relations (subject to object) must perform something-to-something (subject-to-subject/object-to-object). The human relation to Other is ineluctable, then. This point is made in deft irreverence to foreign linguistic concepts, and specifically the conceptual German *sein* as it is indeed English language literatures under study here. But that the most linguistically neutral marker in the English language, the copulative *to be*, only permits itself an actuality when operating in relation to something else demands attention. For literary studies, as the study of the inscribed human experience, must acknowledge the ineluctability of these relations.

As a worthy supplement, it should be noted that the tradition of nonstatic relations in the Western critical tradition is commonly traced back to Plato. The metaphysical and physical bound of existence is a theme central to the Platonic project. The richer meanings of Plato are generally outside the grasp of a non-specialist philological audience. Coercing translatable meaning from Plato is only apparent after a rigorous distillation of the grammatical complexities in Platonic Greek. For the sake of lucidity in English, I offer instead the oft-quoted opening line of Plato's *Phaedrus* to illustrate this metaphysical point more tenably: "Whence come you? And whither are you going?" Widely known, the deceptively simple opening interlocution of *Phaedrus* positions the subject of a seemingly static dialogue between two exterior points in space and time. The adverbs of place, whence and whither, convey that in even self-contained and otherwise static daily conversation, the subject positioning in relation from (*whence*) and to

(*whither*) something. The Platonic preference for a constant "moving" self is a pertinent aspect of the larger Western critical inquiry. The present self, from the Western tradition, has always been in relation to something and always in motion. For in fact the Greek sense of self was always engaging and being engaged even during a perceived stasis. "From" somewhere and "to" some place reflects the notion of perpetual life movement that characterized the Attic Greek sense of life and existence that much of early Platonic philosophy sought to explore. Worth considering still is that the early metaphysical Greek concept of "to be," *ε□ναι*, is quite different than modern Western interpretations would believe.[i] The verb *to be* is more strictly understood as *to be present*. The concept sought to denote an implied readiness and sense of active attention and participation to and from the exterior world. In this sense, early Platonism invites object ontology.

CHAPTER 7

FIGURING COBBETT: VILLAGE MATERIALITY AND COBBETT'S CHIASM

Introduction

Critiques of Cobbett's political and economic observations are not within the scope of the present study. Instead, Cobbett's writings are examined in terms of the literary depiction of community and experience in the early nineteenth century English village. I first address the pressing circumstances that led Cobbett to explore the social and cultural changes in the English rural village. In the present and proceeding chapters I outline the paradigm shifts and temporal circumstances to which William Cobbett and Ebenezer Elliott were responding. Continuing the methodology of Chapter 6, I examine instances of where Cobbett constructs the life of the laboring village through a series of object relations and participations of the nonhuman village actant. Cobbett's ontological relations and descriptions of village materiality place at stake an idea of Romantic rural community as a set of human driven interactions and relations. The rural rider's literary depiction of an ontological rural community to illustrate the important cultural associations the laborer made to the material. I follow this claim through considering the literary chiasm through which Cobbett analyzes village culture.

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Figuring Cobbett

William Cobbett's body of literature has held particular value to social and political historians alike. His unique insights into the social and political stakes of the laboring classes are sharply informed by his own experiences as a ploughman,

international journalist, Parliamentary correspondent, Radical political writer, and eventual member of Parliament during his years spent in England proper. His 1820s horseback excursions through the Southeast and Midland counties of England gave Cobbett a spatially rich survey of and uniquely close encounter with Romantic period rural English culture. His journey and recorded experiences took place between 1821 and 1832 and were serialized in the *Political Register* from 1822 to 1826. They were eventually published as two volumes in 1830, and updated thereafter.

Accordingly, the social and historical formations surrounding Cobbett's work are of critical import if assessing *Rural Rides* as a literary-cultural critique. On the historical front, as Cobbett first set out in the Fall of 1821, Parliament had passed its first Corn Law in a series of trade acts and legislative instruments designed to tax imported grain in order to protect the English landholding producers from foreign competition. As Cobbett saw it, for the village laborer, the English producers were the Lords and land holding elite under whom they toiled. The trade restriction on the cheaper foreign wheat imports ensured that the local elites reaped full profit for the year's crop at the expense of the plebeians' ability to purchase affordable bread. In this way, this enhanced profit came at the expense of the laborers biological welfare, as the local yield was simply not great enough to feed the Subject-body population.

Termed "corn" in English political usage, the wheat supply and its affordability was thus crucial to the sustainability of a rural population whose primary foodstuff was bread (Cozzi 21). The production, sale, and consumption of the yield were a centuries old practice. The import taxes and price controls, however, were relatively new. The

first of the Corn Laws were passed by Parliament as the Importation Act of 1815. The mercantilist economic modality of eighteenth century Europe helped elites conceive of a means of restricting foreign imports to protect and maximize domestic crop production. These Parliamentary instruments are seen as part of the larger, temporally situated biopolitical measures to manage the life of the Romantic body-Subject (biopower). The fixed price of wheat and elevated import taxes were instrumental in shaping the cultural response of the laboring community. This is the thesis of the project's analysis of Cobbett.

In terms of economic history, it becomes relevant but difficult to pinpoint the exact date in which Britain's economic system shifted to early capitalism. But, usefully, historians and political economists are in general agreement that functional markers of capitalist tendencies are those rates and degrees to which a government withdraws from the market place to allow free trade to ensue (*laissez-faire*). For historians of the British marketplace, this shift is largely recognized as the repeal of the protectionist Corn Laws in the 1840s. The final trade restriction on corn was repealed through the Importation Act of 1846 (Tilly 245). There is, then, a general consensus that 1846 marks the functional shift away from mercantilist economic practices towards an early capitalist model of economics (Lusztig 398). Indeed, Adam Smith's 1776 *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* was not yet fully part of the British economic consciousness at the turn of the nineteenth century. It was not until the realization of the Industrial Revolution that Britain aggressively sought to maximize on the availability labor, land, and capital through free trade practices, participation in the

international marketplace, and a laissez-faire economic model that the expanding colonial Empire could supplement. The Cobb-Douglas production function, $y = Ak^a l^{1-a}$, describes graphically how this concept works in neoclassical growth theory (fig. 1).

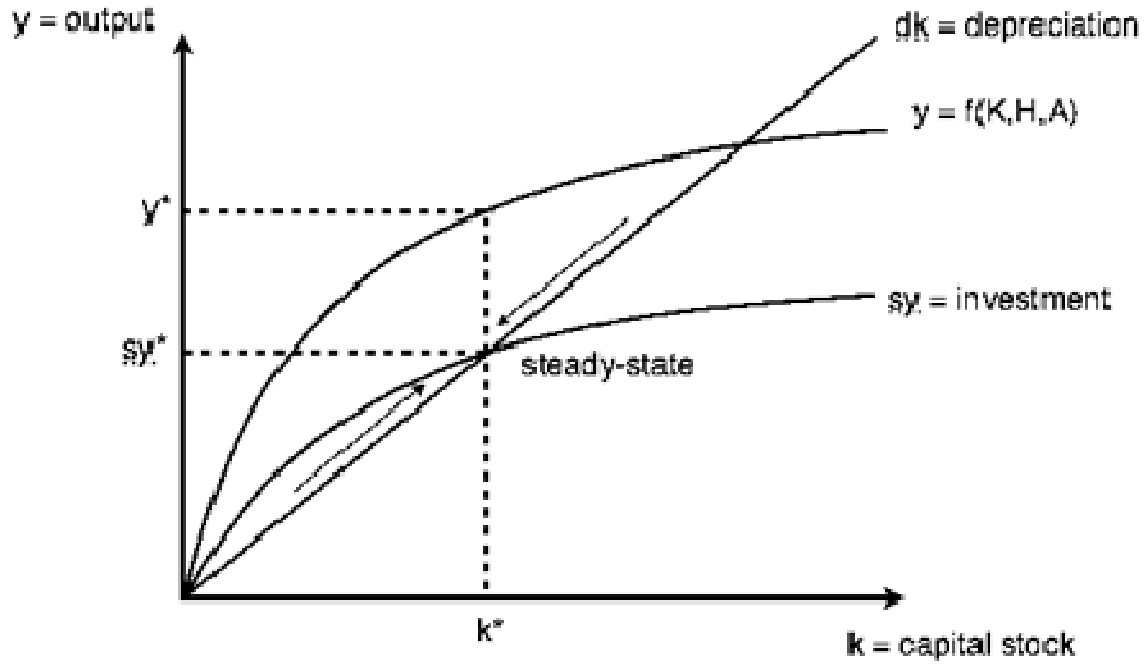

Fig 1. Source: Robert W. Bisnoff.

For any given increase in *k* (capital), the total output, or *y*, increases in diminishing increments. Increasing output through investment, *i*, or labor, *l*, similarly cannot increase the productivity of a given level of capital indefinitely. The smoothing of the curve illustrates this. Only though an increase made to the total productivity factor (TPF), or *A*, can a given increase in *k* yield indefinite increases to *y* at any given level. To be clear, the mathematical expression explains that increases made to investment and

labor for any given level of capital will only increase total output in the short run. Only through increases made to the TPF, *A*, that long run increases in output can be realized. The TPF is a variable that accounts for all output not caused by traditionally measured inputs such as labor and capital, or, understood alternatively, it is the measure of an economy's dynamism with regard to a given level of metrical resources (capital, labor, investment). For a historically situated socio-economic context, it is not the quantity of inputs (*mercantilism*) but the quality and efficiency of how those inputs are used (*capitalism*) that determines long-run economic growth.

In contrast, under the previous mercantilist model of the prior two and a half centuries, Britain and the European powers preferentially sought to discourage foreign imports, maximize domestic resources, export surplus materials, and sought positive growth through capital (*K*), investment (*I*), and labor (*L*) with the support of military and colonial expansion to ensure State security. It was this economic modality under which the labor-class writers experienced and responded to the terms of biopower. On the ground level, this socio-economic model meant limited wages and restrictions on imported foodstuffs in the case of famine. Throughout the Romantic period, the rural British laborer was at the mercy, then, of both seasonal crop yield and Parliamentary enacted trade law.

Not surprisingly, Cobbett's pictures of domestic and social life in rural England have informed humanities research since the 1850s. Yet, for all of the commentary that Cobbett has offered to the humanities, he mentions very little about the actual humans themselves. A formal count reveals Cobbett wrote of only fifteen human bodies in the

entire first journal through Berks, Hants, Wilts, Gloucester and Hereford, and Oxford. The appropriate question becomes: In what ways, then, does Cobbett construct his cultural commentary? Cobbett depicts scenes of rural life as a network of objects. Indeed *Rural Rides* constructs literary scenes of rural life and rural relations through attending to the material objects and participation of the community's *non*human element.

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Village Materiality

The chief aim of incorporating Cobbett into this study is not to analyze the writer on historical or political grounds, as cultural historians have generally done, but to consider his writing as a cultural-literary depiction of the Romantic labor-class experience. Relevant are Cobbett's many observations and interactions with and among the various laboring communities of rural England in his 1820s travelogue, *Rural Rides*:

> Every cottage has a pig or two. These graze in the forest, and, in the fall, eat acorns and beech-nuts and the seed of the ash; for, these last, as well as the other, are very full of oil and a pig that is put to his shifts will pic the seed very nicely out from the husks. Some of these foresters keep cows, and all of them have bits of ground, cribbed, of course, at different times, from the forest: and to what better use can the ground be put? (Cobbett 35)

Here, the network of objects and relations constitute the rural world of the village laborers. On the one hand, Cobbett depicts rural life from the vantage point of the English journalist and visiting middle-class subject. On the other, Cobbett himself

experienced rural life as the son of a small farmer, adopted their beliefs and values concerning moral prescriptions, viewpoints on the cottage economy, and cultural habits. Pitt Cobbett wrote of William Cobbett, "Our companion throughout the book is a man who thoroughly understands what he is describing, with all the experience of a farmer, and with all the keen observation of a naturalist" (Cobbett 6). As Ian Dyck records in his seminal study, *William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture*, Cobbett's memories of youth "were dominated by his setting off to the field in his blue smock-frock and woolen spatter-dashes, together with his bread, cheese and wooden bottle of small beer" (Dyck 14). Cobbett's recollection on his youth as a seasoned adult journalist is dominated by simple language, by local objects and foodstuff playing a particularly descriptive role, and by an overall sense of commonplace association. That Cobbett's description could have been for any ploughman, and are often intended as such, is a testament to his long lasting cultural associations that imbue his writing. His talents as a heralded transatlantic literary journalist and published English grammarian most certainly empowered him with the means to frame the labor class experience as he pleased. Yet Cobbett turns to a commonplace bond shared through the ontography of the material culture to portray the labor class experience:

> I could be very well content to live on nuts, milk, and home-baked bread.- From Cloucester to Chellenham the country is level, and the land rich and good. The fields here, are ploughed in ridges about 20 feet wide, and the angle of the species of roof is pretty nearly as sharp as that of some slated roofs of houses…The town is one street about a mile long. (Cobbett 40)

Such ontography is in fact Cobbett's greatest tool in positioning the labor class experience, which he records with a "passionate sympathy with all rural occupations" (preface). His notion of "all" separates and binds the laboring village as a distinct community in the nation State. This "passionate sympathy" for the rural experience has been marginalized in favor of William Cobbett the famed journalist and Radical political writer. If considering Cobbett's writing as literary culture, then, it is worth noting that within his own lifetime and the decades that followed Cobbett was largely examined as a political journalist. The majority of critical attention came accordingly from the directions of historical inquiry and political class-consciousness. Cobbett's contemporary literary luminaries were well aware too of his position as a political Radical and important one at that. Dyck points out that William Hazlitt's famous 1831 praise of Cobbett in the *Public Register* referenced him as the single most powerful and eloquent political writers of his day. For the most part, his contemporary critics had all but dismissed entirely the value of Cobbett's "association with the cultural and psychological world of the village laborer" (Dyck 15). For in fact, Hazlitt was not alone in ignoring Cobbett's contribution to the cultural legacy of the laborer. The eighteenth century popular cultural coinage of "exchanging the smock frock for the red coat" alluded to the many village laborers who would leave the plough for the urbanity, and such was the case for nearly four decades in Cobbett's life. For these reasons, Cobbett has appropriately remained a largely political writer in critical scholarship.

Examining scenes in Cobbett's *Rural Rides* as a cultural critique becomes more wanton. His psychological and literary associations between people and place, bodies

and objects, community and State, and the human and nonhuman are deployed throughout his writing. The ontographical representation of rural life helps convey the sense of community relations he sought to explore during his travels through England's early nineteenth century rural communities. For Cobbett, the very material objects of village life were central to his experience:

> Whitechurch is a small town, but famous for being the place where the paper has been made for the *Borough-Bank*! I passed by the *mill* on my way to get out upon the Downs to go to Alresford, where I intended to sleep. I hope the time will come, when a monument will be erected where that mill stands, and when on that monument will be inscribed the *curse of England.* (Cobbett 166)

Several registers of economic, political, and social criticism are present here. All registers, however, are revealed through Cobbett's emphasis on the material rather than the immaterial. The experience of sleep is positioned only in relation to or as an afterthought to arriving in the village of Alresford. The interior dimension of extreme fatigue and travel give way to the location-as-object. Alesford is where he intends to sleep; he does no intention of experiencing the locative through introspect and imagination. The place, for Cobbett, and not the interior apprehension of the exterior operates as the marker of experience. Cobbett attends to Whitechurch as a community associated with the Borough-Bank and its related interests. But the relationship is demarcated through the "paper" that the place produces. The village's important political relationship to the bank, on which editor James Paul Cobbett himself elaborates, is

represented here through the relationship to the "famous" material paper-object as a product of the community. The village's materiality marks the community.
That the very "paper," or material object involved, is used to associate the community with its relations is exhibitive of Cobbett's preference for the exterior experience. The emphasis on the paper-object draws attention not only to the political or economic register, but to the materiality of those relations. Cobbett's italics are, in fact, his own. Again, the *mill* is emphasized in literation as an important exterior marker of community association. As the rural English experience becomes inscribed, the memory of the mill becomes the "curse of England."

In observing his journey through Bollitree, we see a similar portrayal of community-as-objects. For to consider the labor class community as anything other than a set of interrelationships among human and nonhuman community participants is to portray less than faithfully the cultural experience of the laboring English village. Throughout Cobbett's articulations of the various dells, meadows, and unspoiled American lands, he attends to the actual manner in which the material objects are used by the owners and incorporated into the village experience (Cobbett 24). The cultural notes of the English laborer are defined through various relations to the material. Cobbett praises the superior beauty of the American countryside throughout *Rural Rides* only to reflect on the inferior material culture of the laborers. In one entry, the English laboring culture is distinguished from the American counterpart through the villagers' interactions with and relationship to the nonhuman village objects:

> No wonder this is a country of *cider* and *perry*; but, what a shame it is,

> that here, at any rate, the owners and cultivators of the soil, not content with these, should, for mere fashion's sake, waste their substance on *wine* and s*pirits*! They really deserve the contempt of mankind and the curses of their children – The woody hill mentioned before…(Cobbett 25)

In this passage, Cobbett charges the English labor experience as superior to the "American" one on the grounds of their respective relationship to the material community. Here, the gross misappropriation of the village materiality is a point of contestation and cultural incompletion. The failure to appreciate the "cider and perry" is a failure to engage properly with the laboring experience, as Cobbett understood it. The village materiality *becomes*-the village experience. On the one hand, the relative ontography of the American land creates a superior village for Cobbett. On the other, the American laborers decision to interact with the material objects, "wine and spirits," differently than the English laborers would is "contempt" worthy. These ontological associations are important tools for Cobbett's mode of description as he assigns qualitative value to the communities and articulates the village experience. In this passage, the material objects and incorporation of these objects into the human experience become important cultural markers for Cobbett.

In his entry on Bollitree, the arrangements of the trees and pastures bring Cobbett to associate Penyard Hlll with the unspoiled beauty of Americas. The no human ontography represents the community. As the nonhuman objects become associated with the land, Cobbett is reminded of his American observations:

> One of these dells…an orchard belonging to Mr. Palmer, and the trees, the

> ground, and every thing belonging to it, put me in the most beautitful of the spots…Sheltered by a lofty wood; the grass fine beneath the fruit trees; the soil dry under foot…no moss on the trees: the leaves of many of them yet green; every thing rough my mind to the beautiful orchards near [America]. (Cobbett 24)

Here, the objects become markers of national memory for Cobbett. The humans are placed peripheral to the material objects and the associations the humans have to these village objects. In these instances of cultural evaluation, the quality and manner of the human bodies are all but ignored in favor of a defining village materiality. The nonhuman objects give the laboring communities an identity and constitute a value system upon which Cobbett examines other villages. Cobbett notes, "I got to this beautiful place (Mr. William Palmer's) yesterday, from Gloucester…The goodness of the land is shown by the apple-trees, and by the sort of sheep and cattle fed here" (Cobbett 24). Little is made of the owners and farmers, for they are merely the laboring bodies on the land. The quality of the land, animals, and tree formations denote the quality of village life. The village materiality and the associations made through the objects give the laboring community relative meaning. The population of the village becomes a population of objects for Cobbett.

Cobbett uses the material culture to formulate a rhetoric of rural English consciousness. The superior agricultural features that he praises are not due to the Parliamentary program of enclosure or manorial clearings, but to one Mr. Budd's "miniature farming" and agricultural techniques. In the midst of an attack on "the paper-

system…generals, admirals, governors, commissaries, contractors…tax-collectors to government, and scourgers of the people," Cobbett immediately turns to the local transplanting technique as a sign of rural cultural resistance. His ready adjunction, "the tax-collectors to the government, and scourgers of the people. – I must not quit *Burghclere* without noticing's Mr. Budd's *radical* Swedes and other things," sets the subject-State relations into rural terms (Cobbett 46). The stark transition signals the logical opposition that Cobbett saw reflected in "government" and local villagers. The unity of the laboring community contains the humans, animals, and their soil, but their rural agricultural techniques offered a cultural challenge to the program of biopower that was sweeping England. As Cobbett saw it, "our nations of [turnips] and cabbages present a happy uniformity of enjoyments and of bulk, and not, as in the broad-cast system of corruption" (Cobbett 33). In this way, Cobbett's rural vignettes challenge the "Collective Wisdom" of the Sir Edward Knatchbull and the other ""tax-eating" elite through setting his own mode of collective rural wisdom (Cobett 55).

To jest towards Cobbett the bio/political writer, certain literary episodes also reveal Cobbett's ontographical understanding of subject-State relations. Cobbett had studied the long-term movements in the price of bread during his extended stay in Hampshire. After analyzing four decades of local price data, Cobbett concluded that the price of bread had nearly doubled in twenty years (Cobbett to Windham). Ian Wyck argues that Cobbett's data collection prompted the writer to explore the social and cultural implications that taxation and the system of cash subsidies had on the laboring English communities (Wyck 28). On more than several occasions does Cobbett react

directly to the Acts of Parliament and pricing measures. Cobbett crystallizes in several instances the unique interaction between the State and labor-class community. The biopolitical instrument of cash subsidizes, or here, Cobbett's "cash-measures," give the State a biopolitical stake in the realities of labor-class living.

> The crop of barley, last year, was so very bad; so very small; and the crop of the year before so very bad in quality, that wheat was malted, last year, in great quantities, instead of barley. This year, the crop of barley is prodigious…Yet the first never got to seventy, and the latter never go to forty! And yet there was a man who calls himself a statesman to say that that mere puff of a rise satisfied him, that the cash-measures had never had any effect! Ah! They are *afraid* to believe in the effect of those cash measures: they tremble like children at the sight of the rod, when you hold up before them the effect of those cash-measures. (Cobbett 237)

Cobbett calls attention to unmanageable fluctuating yields in as a decisive factor in the failure of cash subsidies. Throughout these declamations are references to material markers in order to afford a tangible value to the disruptive effects on rural culture that the biopolitical measures actually had. In the 1760s, in Cobbett's youth, a week's wages could purchase roughly "a bushel of flour, a pound of bacon, a pound of cheese and a bushel of malt; the prices of these articles in 1809 amounted to nineteen days' wages" (Dyck 136). In the 1740s, a German visitor recorded that laborers ate roast beef and plum pudding (Dyck 135). It was not the actual nominal shifts in pricing, but the real shifts in pricing relative to the dependency on wage working that impacted the quality of

labor class life. As William Marshall observed in 1800, "all ranks of people, FARM WORKERS ONLY EXCEPTED, have had an increase of income, with the increase of the prices of the necessaries of life" (Dyck 138). The declining material luxuries of the laborer crafted a different sense experience that contrasted the cultural tradition of "old England" in the seventeenth century.

Through literature, the intangibility of the labor class experience of biopolitical State instruments becomes charted through relations among material objects in the rural community. In Cobbett's portrayal of rural space, the construction of experience becomes accessible as and only as a set of material relations:

> The road through the wood is winding and brings you out at the corner of a field, lying sloping to the south, three sides of it bordered by wood and the field planted as an orchard. This is precisely what you see in so many thousands of places in America. I had passed through Hempstead a little while before, which certainly gave its name to the Township in which I lived in Long Island, and which, I used to write *Hampstead*, contrary to the orthography of the place, never having heard of such a place as *Hempstead* in England. Passing through Hempstead I gave my mind a toss back to Long Island, and this beautiful wood and orchard really made me almost conceit, that I was there, and gave rise to a thousand interesting and pleasant reflections. (Cobbett 110).

Cobbett's exposition of this moment is revealing of the exteriority that defines his understanding of rural place and community. First and foremost is the use of exterior

material coordinates as a definitional representation of an object oriented experience. It is "the road" around which the language, the human body, and the field are descriptively situated. The exterior roads that were designed to provide transportation and offer a material borders act upon act upon and form the laboring village. The external linguistic subject, "it," is the thing which acts upon "you," the material body-as–object. As Cobbett explains, "The road through the wood is winding and brings you out at the corner of a field." Here the material road through the wood acts upon the "you" to position the body in relation to the community of objects under exposure. The corporeal holds a value here when and only when placed in relation to the winding road and sloping field of Wycombe. Within the designated material borders, the corporeal becomes a community-object and a human element of the ontography. The nonhuman are the actants here, then, and Cobbett's demonstratively exterior experience of village object relations simultaneously produces a body-object vulnerability. For in fact a displacement of the field, a shifting of the slope, and a structural change to the road are all stabilizing/destabilizing factors in the ontological positioning of the human. The human experience as one vulnerable unto its own exteriority dismisses Wordsworth's call to the immateriality of the Romantic subject's experience.

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***Becoming*-Rural Objects**

Again, in understanding his experience of place, Cobbett is considerate not of his own interiority but of the locative "field, lying sloping to the south, three sides of it bordered wood and field planted as an orchard" as the exterior marker that enables him to

make sense of his shared transatlantic experience (Cobbett, 110). The "thousand interesting and pleasant reflections" as an experiential moment is drawn not from an interiorized sense of place and being, but from the exterior locative markers that actually materialize a shared cultural community. The second half of Cobbett' description of a journey through Hycombe reflects on how he concerns and aligns the material community to the biopolitical realities of land ownership under enclosurement:

> On quitting the wood I crossed the great raod from London to Wendoer, went across the park of Mr. Drake, and up a steep hill towards the great road leading to Wycombe. Mr. Drake's is a very beautiful place, and has a great deal of very fine timber upon it. I think I counted pretty nearly 200 oak trees, worth, on an average, five pounds a piece, growing within twenty yards of the road that I was going along. Mr. Drake has some thousands of these, I dare say, besides his beech; and, therefore, he will be able to stand a tuf with the fundholders for some time. When I got to High Wycombe… (Cobbett 110)

Like so many of Cobbett's moments, the description includes little mention of the human body-objects as anything more than that. Mr. Drake is not grafted qualitative value, and has no greater stake in the moment than the oak trees and hills. Mr. Drake is not beautiful himself, but "Mr. Drake's is a very beautiful place, and has a great deal of very fine timber." In other words, Mr. Drake exists only in relation to the beautiful place with very fine timber-object that just happens to be his own. His corporeal value is only realized through the nonhuman timber, and Mr. Drake *becomes*-timber.

The scene at Burgchlere similarly turns the laborer into another agricultural object. Productive techniques of furrowing and planting "rows of plants *two feet apart*" help produce "fine" laborers through their "fine" products. In Cobbett's plain language, the laborer's efforts are not praised for the result but instead the resulting objects are. After examining three months of toiling, Cobbett definitively concludes, "The butter is excellent" (Cobbett 47). Through participating in the labor-process of his material object, the laborer *becomes*-his butter. Pages of prose are dedicated to the rural laborers' unique transplanting technique. Yet, the vignette says nothing to comment on the laborer's final health and being after an exceptionally laborious three-month planting procedure (Cobbett 46, 47). Instead, the results of the toils and bodily health of the laborer are transferred to the objects that incurred his efforts, the four "fine" cows. The laborer is not the one deemed to be in "large, fine, and in fine condition" come May, but rather the "four milch cows" are (Cobbett 47). Through the occasion of experience, then, the farmer *becomes*-the cows. The ontology of Cobbett's rural relations depicts a community not through measures of human driven experience but through the rural objects that enable these occasions of experience.

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Cobbett's Chiasm

Following this line of flight, these exterior relations become more significant when considering Cobbett's depiction of enclosure in *Rural Rides*. As a keen cultural observer, Cobbett notes on several instances an inverted relationship between the quality of the land and quality of the population bodies. Within Cobbett's cultural observations, a

deliberate chiasmatic relationship between the quality of the land and the quality of the human population is deployed to reflect the shifting cultural experience in rural England. As the greater quality lands were parceled and enclosed among wealthy landowners through biopolitical Acts, the population bodies suffered in turn. Cobbett reflects the diminished quality of the land onto the bodies of the laborers:

> Invariably have I observed, that the richer the soil, and the more destitute of woods; that is to say, the more purely a corn country, the more miserable the labourers. The cause is this, the great, the big bull frog grasps all. In this beautiful island every inch of land is appropriated by the rich. No hedges, no ditches, no commons, no grassy lanes: a country divided into great farms; a few trees surround the great farm-house. (Cobbett 322)

In this way the laboring bodies *become*-the land. In Cobbett's journal entries through Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, observations of enclosed lands and the laboring bodies occupy much of his writing. As the journey through to Horsham relates:

> Over six of the worst miles in England…The first of these miserable miles go through the estate of Lord Erskine. It was a bare heath, with here and there, in the better parts of it, some scrubby birch. It has been, in part, planted with fir-trees, which are as ugly as the heath was; and, in short, it is a most villainous tract. (Cobbett 215)

In Cobbett's ontography here, Lord Erskine and the manorial estate are represented through the "ugly" plantings and the "villainous tract" objects. In the bio/politically

affected village of Horsham, language of disease and despair color descriptions of the enclosed lands. In journeying through the enclosed forest at Horsham, Cobbett finds:

> A most miserable one; and this is followed by a large common, now enclosed, cut up, disfigured, spoiled, and the labourers driven from its skirts. I have seldom travelled over eight miles so well calculated to fill the mind with painful reflections. (Cobbett 215)

The managed and "calculated" landscape is disruptive to the object oriented laboring experience and provides an "ugly" and "miserable" village aesthetic for Cobbett. In a chiasmatic turn, after journeying through the Surrey hills, Cobbett arrives at the Weald of Sussex that yields a landscape naturally unsuited to enclosure and a "very nice" village aesthetic. The Weald possessed clay beds that were less suitable for intensive enclosure and drainage. Cobbett notes that Weald meant "clay, or low, wet, stiff land" and produced a relatively "backward" production of barley, oats, and wheat. Such unfavorable conditions produce:

> A very nice, solid, country town. Very clean, as all the towns in Sussex are. The people very clean. The Sussex women are very nice in their dress and in their houses. The men and boys wear smock-frock, more than they do in some counties. When country people do not, they always look dirty and comfortless. (Cobbett 216)

A chiasmatic aesthetic happens here as the arable lands (A) of Horsham become enclosed to produce a landscape of ugliness and misery for Cobbett (B), and the "poor, miserable, clayey-looking sand" (B) of the Weald produce a landscape of beauty and health (A).

This inverted relationship between healthful land/ugly landscape and ugly land/healthful landscape presents a chiasmatic understanding of the relationship between State biopower and laboring community. The best lands, like Horsham and Margate, became enclosed in biopower to produce a wage stricken laborer upon a calculated and unattractive Landscape. The laboring bodies suffered from poorer wages and worsened living conditions. In contrast, the less productive clay beds of the Weald at Sussex were left unenclosed to create a "nice, solid…very clean" English village. The representative State elements, here the enclosed commons and manorial estate of Lord Erskine, are depicted as distorted and villainous under the terms of biopower. The unenclosed lands are less productive for the State interests, but better suited for the interests of the village population. In his ride from Dover to Wen, Cobbett recalls the condition of the laboring bodies at enclosed Margate in contrast to the bodies of Sussex:

> The labourers' houses all along through this island, beggarly in the extreme. The people dirty, poor-looking; ragged, but particularly dirty…what a difference between the wife of a laboring man here, and the wife of a laboring man in the forest and woodlands of Hampshire and Sussex! (Cobbett 321)

On the massive farming installation at Margate, the abundance of corn surrounds a ragged village population. The productive enclosed lands at Margate (A) produce a "dirty, poor looking" population (B) as the less productive and unenclosed lands of Hampshire and Sussex (B) produce a "very-clean" body (A). Through his use of chiasm and material ontography, Cobbett successfully depicts the shifted conditions of the land

onto the bodies to engage the corporeality of the labor class experience. As biopower altered the physical landscape through enclosure and drainage, the physically distorted State becomes the physically distorted bodies.

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Cobbett's cultural community is opened by ontographical considerations of the human and nonhuman actants. Cobbett constructs scenes of rural life and rural relations through attending to the material objects and to the participation of the community's *non*human element. The agency of the material actants are the only terms by which the thing-object and its relations are realized as community in Cobbett's work. The objects *become*-community in Cobbett's work. For the instructive place that Cobbett maintains in humanities research, the literary consideration of Cobbett helps unravel the ways in which he portrays labor-class community. In Cobbett's investigations of the ground-level realities of Romantic Period biopower, the State subjects as body-objects become relative to other community objects as the analysis of Cobbett illustrates. Biopower sets stable terms of biological management upon ontologically instable bodies. Cobbett's rural community formations exclude a stable interiority. This reflects a vulnerability back upon the State's arranged terms of biopower. The community objects vibrate and relate relationally to each other, and so the calculability and management of population and place become inherently instable.

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Laxton: Remnants of Resistance

The village of Laxton in Nottinghamshire survives today as the last remaining

open field system in England. Through a series of extraordinary circumstances spanning a millennium, Laxton managed to escape the sweeping socio-cultural reforms that would permanently alter Britain's cultural and physical landscapes. After a succession of sales following William the Conqueror's original manorial grant to Geoffrey Alselin in 1066, the manor of Laxton was purchased by Robert Pierrepont, 1st Earl of Kingston-Upon-Hull, in 1640. The manor estate would remain in the Pierrepont family well into the twentieth century. In the early part of the eighteenth century, the manor was consolidated through amicable land exchange with the freeholders. The trustees enclosed portions of Laxton through the early 1730s until four farms with distinct boundaries occupied the majority of Laxton's viable farmland.

Still, this was only partial enclosure with an open commons. The Manuscripts and Special Collections department at the University of Nottingham records, "One of the reasons why more extensive enclosure did not happen in Laxton was because the land was divided between a large number of freeholders." Publicly, the laboring population owned, in essence, enough of the land that the major landowning elite, then the 2nd Duke of Kingston, could not legally enforce enclosure by Act of Parliament. Privately, British economic woes were worsened following the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. Complete enclosure was expensive due to the drainage changes needed. In the end, "the expected increase in wheat yields after enclosure may not have been considered to be big enough to offset the expense."

On the one hand, this important point reflects the notion that the object ontological community remained outside the certitude based management moves of

biopower. There was no guaranteeing wheat yields. On the other hand, the point illustrates that the ineluctable dependency upon the assemblage of the nonhuman, the material actant, in the State project of population management offers the ontographical laboring population a mode of resistance to biopower. The immeasurability and incalculability of the *bios* and *zoe* of the nonhuman community actants, be it the weather, crop growth, or other affective ontological object, escape the terms of certitude and accurate forecasting necessary to biopower. The Laxton case represents, then, the only contemporary remnant of Romantic Period labor-class resistance to biopower.

By the 1840s, British industrial growth drove waves of village laborers to the new urban economic centers of industrial production. Poor Laws, welfare reform, urban housing, and unionization, among other urban realities, would offer an entirely new host of tools for State led population management (Victorian biopower). But during the Romantic Period, prior to capitalism and the industrial based formation of these urban communities, the State program of population management was in the aforementioned ways tied to and dependent upon the incalculable affectivity of the nonhuman labor-class community objects. Laxton's survival is perhaps the only socio-cultural evidence of the ways in which nonhuman labor-class community actants resisted biopower in Romantic Britain. By the twentieth century, as the University of Nottingham's archives website states, Gervas E. Pierrepont, 6th Earl Manvers, "was aware that death duties could force the sale and break-up of the manor." In 1952, he sold the remaining open field farms to a "sympathetic purchaser:" the Ministry of Agriculture. Today, Laxton operates as a heritage possession of the Crown Estate Commissioners and continues to be farmed by

tenants in an open field labor-class community.

CHAPTER 8

RHYME AND REASON: EBENEZER ELLIOTT AND LITERARY COUNTER POWER

Introduction

A lesser-known labor-class writer who deserves to be explored more prominently is Ebenezer Elliott. With a reputation that faded by the late nineteenth century, Elliott, or "The Corn Law Rhymer," as he was known, offers some of the most radical and least considered poetic discourse from the turn of the nineteenth century. Harshly critical of the Parliamentary forces of his day, Elliott sought to give voice to the highly marginalized laboring masses of the Romantic Britain:

> Read, then our poem; a poem not base, not servile, yet, strange to say, altogether British. -Only in a sinking land, a land of taxation without representation, of castes and cornbills, of degradation, cant, and misery; of wretched poor, and wretch-making rich; where destruction grows like a weed, and where capital and skill are alike profitless, could such a poem as, "The Splendid Village" have been written or conceived:-but if wars and taxation, Corn Laws, and restricted industry, the landlords and their victims, the degradation of our once noble peasantry, and the triumphant march of British capital, seeking profitable employment in foreign lands, -if these are now the Muses that inspire the poets of England, the fauls rests with – whom? Not with the poet of trade and the rabble. (Elliott 15)

Elliott offers labor-class insight into the ground level implications of the

biopolitical mechanisms under which the early nineteenth century laborer operated. For Elliot, enclosure, imparkment, and Parliamentary enforced price controls all placed severe cultural constraints on the labor-class community. At stake in Elliott's poems is a form of labor-class Romantic "Britishness," as it were, with careful attention paid to a nationalized sense of daily struggle, attacks against price controls and taxation, and the growing popular consciousness. The new cultural reaction to State practices reconfigured what British citizenship meant during this time. Elliott's poetry binds and separates the labor-class population through a language of shared experience, and in doing so redefines the terms of national British consciousness.

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Elliott's 1833 response to biopower, *The Splendid Village*, is situated within an intense period of increasing displays of collective contention and popular response. In a Foucauldian movie, Ian Dyck notes the rise of "a claim-making repertoire of meetings, marches, petition drives, electoral campaigns, social movements, associations, firm-by-firm strikes, and related forms of action" with the "spurting population, expanding economy, consolidating state" between 1828-1834 (Dyck 288). Evident of the period's increased public display of discontent were the resulting Seditious Libel Act of 1830, Coercion Act of 1832, the Local Disturbances Act of 1833, and the Peace Preservation Act of 1834. In 1830, the State extended the period available for review between a death sentence and its execution (Dyck 294). In this sense, Elliott's collective works operate as a form of noninscriptive discourse against the State biopower program.

In *The Splendid Village*, Elliott explores the effects of biopower though

recounting in two parts the tale of an unnamed "Wanderer" who has returned to the village of his youth only to encounter an unrecognizable village community. In the poem, lands are imparked and enclosed, a lord becomes a State profiteer, the laboring population is physically displaced, and the humans are turned into manageable "swine." Biopower in *The Splendid Village* places at stake, then, notions of "Englishness" and identity in Romanticism as Elliott turns to a language of population and subject-State relations to separate and exclude the laboring community from State interests. The first part of the journey, "The Wanderer Returned," narrates the Wanderer's experience upon first return to his once "sweet village" and recounts the various changes that he observed. Elliott thematically opens by contrasting the laborer's participation in the natural wonders of the village community with the forces of biopower that seek to use it for State ends,

> Too long I pac'd the ocean and the wild, -
> Clinging to Nature's breas, her petted child;
> But only plough'd the seas, to sow the wind,
> And chas'd the sun, to leave my soul behind. (15-18)

In his opening stanzas, Elliot recalls his time spend in the "sweet village" of his youth. Interactions with other villagers and the natural world defined "Freedom" for the laboring Elliott (5). The laborer enjoyed the seas not for profit but "only…to sow the wind" (17). As a laborer, the "journey's end" happens not upon death but upon the loss of the village, "For now no lilies bloom the door beside;" (ii.13). The physical loss of the "window'd gable's ivory-bower," "the pink, the violet…the polyanthus, and auricular" flowers reshaped the village landscape to which the adult wanderer returned (ii.15-19).

Elliott constructs a sense of space and community through the objects as he closes the stanza to explain “Not one square yard, - one foot of garden ground” remain. For the laborer the garden ground and village objects construct the spatial and temporal relations of the community he bemoans.

As Elliott’s unnamed wanderer continues, the opening of the third stanza witnesses a sudden bearing of arms, and the entrance of “constable, publican, and warrener” figures into the village life (iii.4). The increased presence of constables and State dispatched elites here is a likely reference to the biopolitical measures of the 1820s through 1830. Dyck reminds that through November 1830, Parliament enacted measures designed to ensure a proper citizenry and orderly collection systems. Troops were deployed and special constables were recruited to condemn “a wide range of actions taken by landless laborers,” and to assist in the collective collection of taxes and payments (Dyck 294). The community space is violated, as the State is physically present in the daily culture of village life. Elliott’s sharp transition in the third stanza from a scene of rural community to a scene of rural encounter with magistrate and laborer draws distance to the labor-class community of the first two stanzas. Elliott’s wanderer encounters the human product of the recently imposed State interests, “He met me, muttering “I should know this tramp;’ /He pass’d me, muttering ‘Vagabond,’ and / ‘Scamp;’” (iii.5-7). The unfamiliarity with which the wanderer meets a “menial” elicits surprise and confusion. The “sun-burnd’ menial” is a reference to the “slave-“ like status of the now over-worked, sunburned wage earners that the laborers had become. In this important stanza, Elliott distinguishes the past bonds of the “sweet village” he once knew

to the now State imposed “unfamiliar” community laborers he observes. Doing so both securely binds the familiar terms of the traditional labor-class community while separating the newer disturbances of the village scene under question. The villages decline has turned the laborers from humans into “stone” through their transformation into wage earners, “I sought society but stood alone, / I came to meet a man, and found a stone!” (Elliott 20). Upon the wanderer’s return, the forced experience of wage earning has transformed the laborers transformed from once lively human participants to “lifeless” matter. The laborers have *become*-stone.

The wanderer resumes his position as an objective observer and declares, “here I am, resolv’d to view the land, / Inquire, and ponder, -hear, and understand” (iv.1-2). The wanderer notes first the depletion of objects that marked the village community, “the cucking stool is gone, the stocks remain;” (v.1). He notices the dilapidated village school has been replaced with a boarding school near the manorial house where “the fool” has been replaced with an “ignoramus” (v.18). The butcher’s son has become a steward of the Lords interests during the inn’s feast. The son has traded the village butcher’s life “to ride and stare” with his sire. He has lost the “grace” with which he plied his trade to supplement the “the loud debate” of the manor’s functions. Elliott’s language “to ride and stare” removes the butcher’s son from the ontological community as he no longer participates as the village butcher, his father, once had.

The village relations of the wanderer’s youth have also been shifted, as the lord is no longer considered a labor-class community participant. The village to which Elliott’s wanderer “returned” helps depicts the other end of the cultural dialogue, the

"social and cultural interaction of the elite and non-elite" that Cobbett yearned in *Rural Rides* (Dyck 46). The once participative lord's of Cobbett's "old England " are depicted in the aftermath of Elliott's village, "He gives no alms" – not ev'n his putrid meat;/But keeps his cab, whips beggars from his door,/Votes for my Lord, and hates the thankless poor (vi.14-16). The lords have become separate entities from the village community in the quest for profitable enterprise and Parliamentary intercourse. The wanderer cements the relation of State interests among the lords and the "Clerk of Taxes, Magistrate and Squires," "the Vice-regal Constable and Bailiff "(vii. 24, xi 20):

> Sworn friends are they, Squire Woolpack, and
> Squire Brush;
> One is their creed-"Impoverish! Torture! Crush!"
> Behold two models, unexcell'd on earh,
> Of British wisdom loyalty, and worth! (vii.36-40)

The seventh stanza articulates the set of subject-State relations Elliott sees. The lords have become interested in maximizing their landed interests in collusion with the service of the State mechanisms that have allowed them to do so, for "One is their creed" (vii.38). The wanderer sarcastically notes the increasing self-interest of the lord, "He hath enough, thank God, to wear and eat" (vi.13). Stanza vii also condemns the State, this Parliament-elite enterprise, for mistreating the labor-class community under their jurisdiction:

> Unmatch'd in quibble, great in If and But,
> Sublime in cant, superlative in smut;

He jests, as none but British worthies can,
Laughs at despair, spurns, tramples fallen man
Condemns misfortune for its wrongs and woe,
And bids his victim thank him for the blow. (vii.30-35)

There is a fervent discourse of subject-State relations at play here. The wanderer is in awe at the recent state of affairs procured by the witted "British worthies." The British State, "unmatch'd in quibble," is able to enact an economic "model" that treats its subjects so poorly. In the cultural quest to be beholden to "British wisdom, loyalty, and worth," the educated lord has become subsumed into a program of profiteering and shifting village culture that the receipt of Parliamentary mechanisms has enabled him to do. The narrator calls such mechanisms "Ice-hearted Law's forc'd charity to man" (ix 10). Specifically, we learn in stanzas viii and iv reveal that imparkment and enclosure have transformed the village physically and culturally. Elliot first calls direct attention to this subject-State relationship in the following stanza, which identifies the local lord as "a man of state" (viii.11):

Now, where three cotters and their children dwelt,
The lawyer's pomp alone is seen and felt;
And the park-entrance of his acres three
Uncrops the ground which fed a family.
What then? All see he is a man of state,
With his three acres, and his park like gate! (viii.7-12)

In the effort for increased production, the subsuming of the open lands into the estate

alters the village population through biopower. As Foucault observed, by Napoleonic years, "the mass of the population administratively were compartmented…that were defined at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, in relation to the economic needs of the time and to the reciprocal position of the social classes" (Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* 163). To manage the burgeoning population, the Swing Riots finally prompted Parliament to authorize State control over the administration of rural districts in the Poor Law Amendment of 1834 (Tilly 297). The rate of population increases reached an all time high in the decade after 1816. The rates of increase grew from 1.35% in the years 1801-1806 to 1.50% in the years 1811-1816, 1.53% in the years 1816-1821, and finally 1.55% in the years 1821-1826 (Tilly 289).

As the wanderer narrates, he references the physical separation of the population that biopower had erected in the community. The "gates" of the eighth stanza mark the physical separation of the subject-State relationship (viii.12). The past tense of line 10 calls attention to the loss of population that occurred when the lord "uncrops the ground" for a park. In the ninth stanza, biopower alters the village landscape through erecting "walls" of enclosure:

> Lo! Where the water-caster once abode,
> The pinfold, erst his garden, skirts the road
> Him ample cot, erst while not ample call'd,
> Is now, with lath and lime partition, wall'd. (ix.1-4)

Elliott suggests that biopower has turned the laboring population into "swine" and the lord into a "leech." The material lands and villagers' bodies have been displaced to

expand the manorial estate. The narrator explains, "The humble dwelling of the leech divine / Makes six large styes for thirty human swine" (ix.5-6). As the language of population and management transform the village laborers into "thirty human swine," so the laborers have *become*-swine through the experience of displacement and partition.

In the poem's second half, "The Wanderer Departed," the labor is given time to reflect critically on all he has seen before he departs. After observing the village, the idea of prosperity through biopower is a value challenged under poetical reflection. The narrator reflects the labor-class value, "They say, that discontented with our lot, / We envy wealth, because we have it not" to question the notion of a singular English prosperity that the State declares (II.i. 4-5). Elliott charges that the State interests are indeed different from the labor-class' own, "When prosper'd England as she prospers now?/They err. We envy not the pomp we see, But hate the wealth which makes our poverty" (II.i. 9-11). The poet calls upon the objects of past, "restore to rustic toil his beef and ale," to signify the days of village laborer prosperity. (II.i.13).

The imagery of village objects also constructs a scene of change during the narrator's recollection of the "Feast of the Village." (II.iii) The omission of the village feast signals the observed disillusion of the laboring community into marked subject/State relations. In this Bakhtinian carnival, the material objects are markers by which Elliott's recalls the cultural intercourse of the elites and non elites has been altered. The "poor man's pudding! – rich with spicy crumbs,/ And tiers of currants, thick as both my thumbs,-" were participatory objects in the annual feast through which both laborers and lords were bound through shared relations (II.iii.9-10). The loss of "the

festal plenty which their fathers shared" removes the space for an ontological sharing of objects that bound the labor-class-elite community prior to the subject-State formations of the modern Nation State. The social construction of their bond was reliant upon the omitted material actants.

Elliott reflects that the mechanisms of the "unbounded wealth survey" have displaced and deformed the village population (II.viii.2). The population is altered as "One farmer prospers now, where prosper'd five!/Ah! Where are they? –wives, husbands, children,/where?" (II. vii 2-4). Elliott explains that the bodies resist proper management as the children have become convicts "beyond the main" (II.vii.8). Others have become "poor wanderers…and some are dead." (II.vii.10). Biopower alters the nonhuman population too as a "well-fed ham" of the commons is no more (II. vi. 3). Towards the end of the poems second half, Elliott finally turns to the institutions of arrangement that have altered the village so. The village laborer sees Foucault's powers of arrangement emulated from the State level as "God-like powers" (II.viii.8):

> Powers, that on rail-roads base no treasures waste,
> Nor build huge mills, that blush like brick at taste,
> Where labour fifteen hours for twice a groat,
> The half-angelic heirs of speech and thought;
> But pour profusion from a golden hand,
> To deck with Grecian forms a Gothic land.
> Hence, yeoman, hence!-thy grandsire's land
> Resign;

Yield, peasant, to my lord and power divine. (II.viii.10-18)

Elliott objects when the industrial driven State interests use biopower to manage the subject population for the ends of mercantilist economic growth, social control, and political legitimacy. For the laborer, Romantic Period nation-State interests impact the inland laboring population here as the biopolitical measures of production and population management facilitate the program of international growth, "To deck with Grecian forms a Gothic land" (II.viii.15). At the end of his journey, the wanderer finally concludes that the England of national interest is not the England of the laborer. The effects of biopower have altered the village community in such a way that the wanderer can no longer recognize his village as England. The wanderer exhorts, "England! Can this be England? – this my home?" (II.xiii.2). He separates the mercantilist interests of the nation, "To deck with Grecian forms a Gothic land," from the laboring community's "modest state" of England to realize separate national identities (II.v.21). The separation of the laborers England, the "modest state," from the England of the nation State challenges notions of an immaterial national identity. Elliott questions the immaterial nation State directly when the wanderer asks, "The body still is here, but where the soul?" (II.xiii.10).

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Labor-Class Consciousness and Poetical Counter Power

In the root of his poetical reactions to the impositions of the modern Nation State, Elliott was adamantly and harshly against the mercantile modalities of 1830s Britain. Elliott's first widely received poem, *The Ranter*, was influential in solidifying

his receipt with the audience for whom it was written (Searle 43). John Watkins wrote in 1852 that Elliott deeply felt,

> Trade was fettered by the operation of certain laws that had been enacted for the benefit of landowners, because their party was the most powerful in the State, and had rendered a factitious service to Government in its late wars. (Watkins 87)

As the laboring class was as whole relatively unlearned, Elliott skillfully turned to analogous scenes of nature and interchange to illustrate the benefits of free trade to the Sheffield laborers in 1830:

> Or nature is a dream unnatural.
> Look on the clouds, the streams, the earth, the sky,
> Lo! All is interchange and harmony!
> Where is the gorgeous pomp which, yester morn,
> Certain'd you orb, with amber fold on fold?
> Behold it in the blue of Rivelin, borne
> The feed the all-feeding seas! The molten gold
> Is flowing pale in Loxley's crystal cold.
> To kindle into beauty tree and flower,
> And wake to verdant life hill, dale and plan,
> Cloud trades with river,and exchange its power;
> But should the clouds, the trees, the winds disdain
> Harmonious intercourse, nor dew nor rain

Would forest-crown the mountains; airless day

Would blas on Kinderscout the heathy glow.

Nor purply green would meeken into grey

O'er Don at eve; no sound of river's flow

Disturb the sepulcher of all below. (iv.180-197)

Elliott's passage here is as elegant as it is politically astute. Having labored himself, Elliott understood that a polemical portrayal of Parliamentary figures and exchange mechanisms was not the only way to forge class unity. Elliott's poetry draws on the natural world and scenes familiar to the village laborer's associations of community to illustrate the "unnatural" operation of mercantilism. The scenes of natural imagery help narrate the political philosophy he seeks to explain. He calls upon the labor-class to understand free trade in terms of a river's free flow and the unrestricted "interchange" of nature's delights. Elliott recognized that the laborer understood community through such interactions with the natural world. For a laborer, "the streams, the earth, the sky (181)…the blue of the Rivelin (185)…tree and flower (188) are sensible images associated with the natural way. Elliott first opens with the prospect that the social community handed to them is perhaps a "dream unnatural" (180). Elliott illustrates free trade's natural flow of goods as the natural flow of the river into the seas (186). He then tasks the laborers to consider the flow of goods as the flow of the River Rivelin in nearby South Yorkshire. The free flow of the Rivelin allows it to feed in turn the faster-flowing River Loxley. Elliott appeals to the laborer-class understanding of "natural" community relations as he compares poetically the culturally disruptive

mercantilist protectionist policies with the open "flow" of the natural world.

From the widespread public attention that followed the appearance of *The Ranter*, Elliott called for repeal of the protectionist Corn Laws with the publication of *Corn Law Rhymes* in 1831 (Searle 43). Elliott situates the Corn Laws historically as a momentous injection of the State's program of biopower into the life of the laboring subject:

> If I am called to produce from history a record of similar catastrophes, I shall answer, that history can furnish no record of a similar state of things. The British government is the only one that ever legislated against the bread of its people, by impeding the exchange of manufactured goods for food, at the very moment when such exchange ought to have been facilitated by all possible or conceivable means. (Elliott 54)

In *Corn Law Rhymes*, State espoused promises of production and a society no longer bound to the imaginative woes of European dependence are countered through an alternate experience of labor-class famine, irreverence, and dismay. Elliott brings into question precisely who the beneficiaries are of such a system if not the population:

> If wars and taxation, Corn Laws, and restricted industry the landlord and their victims and degradation of our once noble peasantry, and the triumphant march of British capital, seeking profitable employment in foreign lands, - if these are now the Muses that inspire the poets of England, the fault rests with – whom? (Elliott 15)

Like William Cobbett, then, Elliott considers the impact of the legislative

measures on the laboring communities of early nineteenth century Britain. Within Elliott's work, a rhetorical assessment of the Corn Laws, the British labor-class experience, and the mechanisms of State interests show the diverse ways through which both Parliamentarians and plebian agrarians alike negotiated the cultural implications of nineteenth century biopolitics. Elliott positions the Parliamentary restrictions as the focal point of his literary assault. In doing so, he sets a discourse not between class based institutions but between the subject-body and State mechanisms. For Elliott, the particular mechanisms under attack are the 1820 Corn Laws:

> As we cannot escape from the consequences of the Corn Law, (except by causing it to be repealed, or by emigrating with our heart-broken wives and children,) we will, by all the legal means in our power, oppose the horrible anti-profit law, alias Corn Law, and never remit in our exertions, until the monopoly of the first necessary of life be utterly destroyed. (Elliott 56)

The first of the Corn Laws was introduced in Britain in 1804 to impose a protectionist duty on imported corn. In the midst of the agricultural revolution and the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, British wheat farming was expanded to feed a State population that could remain independent from imported corn. With the close of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, Britain was able to import foreign corn again and the combined abundant production lowered the price per quarter (8 bushels) from 126 shillings in 1812 to 65 shillings a quarter in 1815. The elite landowners responded in Parliament by enacting a law that would permit foreign importation when and only when the domestic price

reached 80 shillings per quarter. Tilly explains the labor class was heavily dependent on the current market prices for food. The historian records, "Low wage-workers therefore became even more vulnerable to swings in both prices and employment." Nominal wages decreased relatively little between 1827 and 1835, and so shifts to real income occurred from drops in food prices. Thus, Elliott's protest is grounded in firm economic causes that explain "in the short run, fluctuation in prices for everyday necessities strongly affected the well-being of poor families, even when their wage-earners had jobs) (Tilly 291). Tilly presents a composite cost-of-living index that demonstrates quantitatively that "wide swings from year to year and season to season" counteracted any drops in whole subsistence prices (Tilly 292). The graph shows that "neither levels of contention as a whole nor sustained collective complaints about prices and wages corresponded to fluctuations in the cost of living" (Tilly 292).

To the laboring masses who spent the majority of their wages on bread, however, this legislative move meant starvation at the hands of elite political, social, and economic State interest (Tilly 112).

> Hopeless trader, answer me!
> What hath bread-tax done for thee?
> Ask thy lost and owing debts;
> Ask our bankrupt-throng'd Gazettes? ("The Black Hole of Calcutta," 9-12)

Lacking legitimate means of political participation, the laboring masses responded through food riots (corporeal) and protest literature (inscriptive). With no

formal space of response in the State power structure, these forms of political (non) participation become, then, a "counter-" power. The threat of protest by the laboring bodies as discursive reactions in the protest literature represent what David Collings articulates as "counter power." Referencing E.P. Thompson's *Customs in Common*, Collings carefully argues that the food riots from early modern England produced a complex interplay of forces and political power shifts that reflected the highly reversible nature of biopower. To offer an instance of counter power, Collings noted that when the plebeians found the price and distribution of bread to be dissatisfactory, "plebeians would gather near a marketplace to demand that magistrates take action to lower the price of bread or distribute it more effectively" (Collings 26). Collings importantly cites that the local gentry often released a bit of grain "in a symbolic action meant to generate loyalty; the crowd made a show of disturbance in a similarly mimetic way in order to force the gentry to accept their obligation to lower prices." In these instances, the subjects actually created a new condition of biopolitics: "that the betters accepted and acted upon in their obligations" in fear of riot, thus reversing Foucault's authoritarian biopolitic to a theatre of mutual interplay (Collings 28). Foucault's central argument of the "state control of the biological" is easily reversed to a biological control of the state in instances of counter power. The performance of the plebian food riots articulates the very kind of nondiscursive societal interplay from which Foucault's analysis shies. The societal interplay of the food riots reveals the biological subject's ability to override, reverse, and counter the actual mechanisms of biopower designed to govern them. That the very presence of the assembled plebeians was often enough to enact concessions reflects this

bodily participation of discourse. (Thompson 241). Collings' interpretation states, "The massed force of the traditional crowd denoted the possibility that it could take action on its own accord, for example by seizing grain or setting prices…embodying the power to execute the law in the absence of official compliance" (Collings 230). So counter power becomes an infused aspect of the moral economy when price concessions were granted in actual anticipation of the protest. With no formal register of legislative response, the crowd relies on moral appeal to interrupt the market. Thompson makes the important point that regardless of any actual short-term shifts in the price of bread, "the expectation of riot upon the total market-situation" was the manifestation of counter power (Thompson 241). In one instance, Thompson locates in parish records that the very presence of the assembled plebeians was enough to enact concessions (Thompson 241). The masses participation in the political economy becomes legitimated through bodily "counter" participation in the political and economic prescriptions of State. Dyck reminds this was "the old English ideology of fair play" (Dyck 46). In terms of subject-State relations, this participation occurs in what Deleuze calls "the *complementary space* of non-discursive formations ('instructions, political events, economic practices and processes')" (Deleuze 9). Likewise for the corporeal, instances of property destruction and physical altercation did occur on occasion. In one such altercation, for instance, "one young man had his skull fractured, another his upper lip cut off" (Thompson 240). But the difference rests in the fact that the magistrates had the support of State military forces. Here, the frictions between State and Subject take on the corporeal.

If these acts of protest and riot act as a form of corporeal counter power, then

Elliott's poetry acted as a form of inscriptive counter power. His writing supplied an attitude and helped shape a collective consciousness that eventually led to the Corn Laws' repeal in 1840. January Searle confirmed in 1852 that Elliott deliberately sought to agitate Parliamentary reform through spirited poetry and song (Searle 52). In one of the *Corn Law Rhymes*, "Hymn Written for the Sheffield Political Union," Elliott turns to reason as the rallying point for the dispersed masses,

> Hands and hears, and minds are ours;
> Shall we bow to bestial powers?
> Tyrants, vaunt your swords and towers!
> Reason is our citadel. ("Hymn Written for the Sheffield Political Union" 1-4)

The song makes clear that the State possesses arms and militia, but the masses have reason as a "citadel" of their own. Elliott understood the subject-State relationship, and advocates the mode of "reason" as a labor-class counter. To summon the population around reason, the rhymes rally and pluralize the masses in a host of anti-corn law rhetoric and imagery. The rhyme "Lines: On the Eleven Poor Men of Hallamshire" explains the importance of strength in numbers and invites the laborers of Sheffield to "combine." The poem invites the laborers to band together, "Come, drink to the four and the seven" and "Combine, for the wicked conspire" ("Lines on the Eleven Poor Men of Hallamshire" 1, 5). The poem repeats the imperative "Combine!" three more times to convey the urgency and power of combining interests. Elliott mixes a language of relative pronouns and numerical references to unify the laborers and demonstrate that the

singular voice becomes pluralized through organization. The rhyme reassures the laborers that they are bonded through shared values, "All useful, all modest, all brave" (13). Elliott offers the group an identity and a shared British consciousness as, "All British through marrow and bone:/There is not among them a slave/Gold-Rusted, gold-rotten,-not one!" (14-16). In "The Four Dears," Elliott describes the personified interests of Sugar, Tea, Corn, and Representation acting in collusion with Parliament to oppress and "beggar the whole British nation." In doing so Elliott sets the values of the State project against the values of the laboring masses in verse,

> Dear Sugar, dear Tea, and dear Corn
> Conspired with dear Representation,
> To laugh worth and honour to scourn,
> And beggar the whole British nation. ("The Four Dears" 1-4)

Elliott admonished the laborers to take up "worth and honor" in the face of the State's disregard for the "British" values. Elliott binds the labor-class consciousness through a language of shared experience in "The Death Feast." The poem features a host of commonplace English names and experiences under the Corn Laws. The accessible stories of "John" and "Jane" depict the daily struggles of hard work, starvation, and death by consumption in 1830. Writing in 1852, Watkins considered the *Corn Law Rhymes*, "A poem not base, not servile, yet, strange to say, altogether British" (Watkins 15).

* * *

Aftermath: Inscriptive Counter Power?

In context, Elliot was responding directly to Sir Robert Peel's government and

their continued failure to repeal the Corn Laws. Chronologically, Sir Robert Peel was elected Prime Minister in 1841. Yet, his decision to repeal was gradually implemented, political orchestrated, and is still questioned today (Lusztig 2). Peel's decision to repeal the Corn Laws led to his political demise and the dissolution of his government five years later. On the one hand, Peel had reportedly studied the works on political economy from Thomas Malthus to Adam Smith and was an outright proponent of free trade along with laborer-turned-manufacturer Richard Cobden. On the other hand, repeal of the Corn Laws was not an imperative of Peel. The preservation of the hard earned and well respected British constitution rested upon aristocratic franchise, and Peel voted against repeal every year between 1837 and 1845. Elegant arguments have been made over the causes of Parliamentary repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. Recent work in comparative politics has argued for the role of counter power as the deciding factor Peel's 1846 decision. Two theories continue to hold water in the debating scholarship and for the present consideration of the *Corn Law Rhymes* as inscriptive counter power.

From the political economic argument, the nineteenth century balance of international power was largely dependent on open trade restrictions that would allow trading partners to take advantage of world markets in the wake of industrialization. Britain sought to maximize its global comparative advantage, and still the protectionist Corn Laws were not repealed until 1846. The rural labor-class and soon urban working-class hardships of the period were evident, and Britain's Poor Laws were among

measures designed to offer some relief against the exorbitant and fluctuating food prices. Yet, the elimination of agricultural protectionist policies was not underway. Lusztig maintains that prior to the 1832 Reform Act, "the overrepresentation of the landed classes in parliament prior to 1932 ensured the maintenance of the Corn Laws." (Lusztig395) The importing sector's landed elites favored protectionism, and the exporting sector's industrial class MPs were not yet able to shift voting power in Parliament. Known as a "specific factors" theory in political behavior, this theory suggests that the turnover in parliamentary MP composition between 1832 and 1846 was not quick enough to justify the shift in national trade policy. The second theory is linked to the failure of the Irish potato crop as an impetus for mobilizing Parliamentary support of free corn trade. In his 1995 essay, *Solving Peel's Puzzle*, Michael Lusztig debunks the popular contestation that Ireland's potato famine was a reason behind repeal. Lusztig argues instead for a third explanation: that a mounting fear over popular revolution culled Peel to orchestrate a Parliamentary coalition that would finally repeal the remaining Corn Laws in 1846.

The popular protest that Peel felt came in the form of political and cultural resistance. On the political end, the most noted pressure group was the Anti-Corn Law League of which Cobbett and Cobden were both members. The League was well organized, circulated newsletters, boasted MPs on its member roster, exerted continuous pressure on Parliament, and was the wealthiest political group in Britain thanks to handsome support from wealthy industrialists Peter Taylor and Samuel Courtauld. Although comprised of Liberals and Radicals across Scotland and England, the group

was ultimately ineffective at presenting any pertinent State change. But as Lusztig's research finds,

> there is little evidence that the League in and of itself generated sufficient popular enthusiasm for free trade to compel the government to repeal the Corn Laws. The record of League-sponsored candidates in Parliament by-elections was mediocre. Moreover, while industrial elites certainly represented the financial foundation of the League, "there is little to suggest overwhelming business support. (Lusztig 96)

On the cultural end of Peel's pressure, then, was the threat to democratic reforms "through popular agitation and possibly insurrection" (Lusztig 297). Elliott considered himself "a pioneer of the greatest the most beneficial, the only crimeless revolution, which man has yet seen" in the 1849 Preface to his first Volume of collected works 1849 (Elliott v). Lustzig cites that popular insurrection was a very real threat in Peel's eyes,

> Day, like our souls, is fiercely dark;
> What then? 'Tis day!
> We sleep no more; the cock crows – hark!
> To arms! Away! ("Battle Song" 1-4)

There are clear examples of revolutionary language in Elliott's poetry and prose that demanded changes to the biopower machine. The language depicts unity, commitment, and discipline to challenge the State by declaring the dissidents a force to be reckoned. Elliott's *Corn Law Rhymes* convey the threat of implicit retaliation against violators of the moral economy. As Elliott pluralizes the labor-class experience, he inscriptively

portrays a community of subjects on the brink of retaliation,

> Ye coop us up, and tax our bread
>
> ---
>
> Thus, twelve rats starve while three rats thrive,
>
> (Like you on mine and me,)
>
> When fifteen rats are caged alive,
>
> With food for nine and three. (“Caged Rats” 1, 5-8)

Elliott stakes his claim in the first line, and then demands that action be taken under the threat of revolt in the closing stanza. By turning the population into rats, Elliott illustrates the baseness and violent nature of which the multitude is capable. He uses a language of numbers to threaten the State through the “destruction” that the multitude can perform, “Haste! Havoc’c torch begins to glow,/The ending if begun;/Make haste; destruction thinks ye slow; Make haste to be undone!” (9-12). For Elliott, resisting biopower means disrupting the properness of the subject body, “Turn all the good that God hath made/To fear, and hate, and pain; Till beggars all, Assassins all,/All cannibals we be” (19-22). He encourages the masses to turn from the docile obedience of the subject-State relationship to a citizenry of “beggars,” “assassins,” and “cannibals” (21-22). The biopolitical model that Elliott is challenging rests on a tacit relationship whereby the populace as crowd accepts local power structures of economic and political governance “on the condition that the gentry protected the interests of their charges, safeguarded their traditional rights, and recognized them as fellow human beings in festivals and communal rituals” (Collings 11). Historically, this mutually affirmed

relationship by which the crowd surrenders power for safeguarding, referenced "reciprocity," manifested itself through forms of historical social contest. When dissatisfied with the local elite governance over society, the subjects could exercise their own form of power through collective participation in food riots and public protest. Collings addresses the disunity between labor-class politics in England and contemporary theories of modern democratic societies. To accept Elliot's Romantic era writings as a form of counter power, Collings' invites the acceptance of a perennial authority, or "legitimizing agency" in his own discussion on biopower. Once theorized, "reciprocity…insists that power is inherently divided from itself [the] legitimate authority must ever confront a tacit, legitimizing agency" (Collings 18). If Collings is expanding the theoretical gaze to any scenario involving a crowd authority relationship, then *Corn Law Rhymes* becomes a literary form of crowd response.

As literary counter power, then, Elliott's writings as fit squarely within the burgeoning social movements of early nineteenth century Britain. Tilly defines the elements of British social movement that included "the production of addresses, pamphlets, and other texts on behalf of the program; a search for publicity in newspaper and other periodical, including periodicals organized deliberately for the purpose by movement supporters" (Tilly 372). In these ways, Elliott's poetry acted as a form inscriptive counter power and pluralist response. On the other hand, where the qualitative intersects with the quantitative, there can be no certainty on the degree to which the *Corn Law Rhymes* actually impacted effectual action in Parliament. While it is outside the bounds of the study to attempt to quantify the affectivity of Elliott's literary

response, it is safe then to argue his protest literature as part of the greater British social movement. Watkins felt in 1850, "had Ebenezer Elliott not lived, it is quite possible that the Corn-laws would not have been repealed" (Watkins 127). The usage of biopower caused Elliott to react and respond through binding the laboring population in his poetry, and participating inscriptively in the reversing of the Corn Laws. That the masses' manifestation of pluralistic thought, through works such as Elliott's *Corn Law Rhymes*, could in any way eventually incite a Parliamentary act of repeal further justifies a reading of such a minor figure.

* * *

"Assemblages," as a plural term, linguistically denotes that the individual assemblages are all part of the one, ultimately singular, assemblage. From this, understanding body-other relations leaves little room for assessing the State as anything a single system community. The terms of biopower, however, place all non-State assemblages on an unequal footing with the power of the State institution. The assemblages do not operate as a singular, multi-parted ontological organism, but rather as one body politic under the top-down confines of State enforced and assemblage felt biopolitical measures. The separation of the body politic and State apparatus cannot be elided for one entity may terminate the other; the French Revolution demonstrated this all too well. More importantly, the body politic and the ontological community are in themselves constantly under threat, as Foucault shows, from the necessary institutional power that is the ability to take life. To threaten, or to act upon, is an act whose very operation rests within a subject-object construction. Whether the body politic is acting

upon the State or the State is acting upon the body politic, the nature of the action precludes the State a space within the ontological assemblage. In one positioning, the State may be the subject and the human/nonhuman body politic the object(s), or; 2 The body politic body-subject acting against State apparatuses. Whichever way the construction operates is entirely irrelevant. For what this insight shows is that Foucault's note on the power to take life as salient to the legitimacy of State power means that the body politic and State each necessarily act upon each another in the singular system of biopower. Examining the frictions of this body/State relation in corporeal and inscriptive forms of counter power is a chief derivation of this point.

CHAPTER 9

CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS: BIOPOLITICS AND THE POSTCOLONIAL MORAL ECONOMY

Introduction

This chapter will engage existing postcolonial notions of the instability of language, and reconsider the postcolonial subject's counter voice in J.M. Coetzee. I contend that in *Disgrace*, Coetzee deals with the biopolitical themes of institutional oppression and counter voice in South Africa. While Foucault's 1975 analysis of institutional oppression posits that subaltern nonparticipation in the modern European state structures creates a mode of discursive counter voice, Coetzee's work presents Lucy's noncompliance as a way through which contemporary postcolonial issues of counter voice and resistance may be read in his biopolitical thesis. Specifically, the chapter will engage Lucy's act of juridical noncompliance in *Disgrace* through Foucault's terms of biopolitics and moral economy. At steak for postcolonial concerns, then, biopolitics demonstrates that Lucy's decision to remain tacit shifts the meaning of discursive subaltern participation through her conscious nonparticipation in the formal institutional procedures of her society. In turn, a site of discourse for counter voice and resistance opens.

Yet, much of the existing treatment of postcolonial biopolitics is cursory. The existing body of scholarship offers sound methods of reading J.M. Coetzee within a biopolitical framework, but does little to engage with existing sites of inquiry or to offer new ones. Accordingly, the first aim is then to offer a coherent methodology for

approaching the biopolitical constructs of a subaltern moral economy, or accepted terms of subject oppression, in the postcolonial inheritance of the European socio-juridical institution. The instability of language for the subaltern to express trans historical oppression will present the postcolonial subject's tacit action as a discursive response to the forces of biopolitics. Engaging the instability of language will enable an additional move that places Lucy's actions in opposition to, or counter to, the social institutions as a representation of the widely observed counter voice. For the oppressed subaltern, postcolonial biopolitics is a means of subaltern counter voice through which conscious acceptance of a postcolonial moral economy enables body subject actions "to speak" discursively in and of themselves. As this analysis works primarily with an author whose postcolonial community relies upon the conceptual institutions of Foucauldian biopolitics, the issues of counter voice in *Disgrace* can in diptych fashion produce useful insights for disentangling State-subject concerns in future postcolonial studies. The larger crux of this essay will engage existing scholarship on the text as much as the text itself in order to extend a Foucauldian analysis of biopower that offers richer modes of engagement with existing sites of scholarly criticism on Coetzee.

Postcolonial Biopower?

Evaluations engaging with postcolonial biopolitics must identify an inherent mode of reflexivity that offers merit to considering the postcolonial literary world within Foucault's conceptual one. The South African post colonial environs of Coetzee and the modern European States of Foucault's analysis are separated by both time and space. In accordance, I heed Edward Said's warning, "the prospect of calculating and securing the

values of these artists involves more than an estimation of their historical circumstance (Said 144). Literary and cultural representations do respond to certain cultural and historical requirements of the time. To connect the two seemingly disparate bodies of social criticism, then, is to understand South Africa as an inheritor of the European cultural and social institutions Foucault analyzes. Indeed, unlike "black Africa," whose "cultural life remained largely unaffected by European ideas until the last years of the nineteenth century," as Anthony Kwame Appiah notes, South Africa's political, social, and economic institutions had long been a part of the larger European tradition that Foucault targets (Appiah 222). From Coetzee's own standpoint, too, South Africa had been in receipt of European cultural and social institutions since the seventeenth century (Pennett 48). Discrimination, partite politics, cultural notions of suffrage and racism, and inter and extra continental relations are all a part of this cultural inheritance. Attempting to trace out these lineages on an individual basis is both an exercise in futility and outside the range of the analysis herein. Nevertheless, those important connections appropriate Coetzee's literature as a viable site of analysis for Foucauldian biopolitics. Worth noting is that Coetzee considered himself as a South African to be a part of the same European tradition as Foucault. This is most evident in his 1993 critical essay "Emerging from Censorship." Bill McDonald notes, he "reflected his continuity within a tradition of increasingly 'settled and institutional' hostility between artists and 'government authority,' which he dates from the late eighteenth century" (McDonald 44). In this way, the biopolitical construct of an oppressed European subaltern subject is in fact not limited to the modern nation states of Europe. Aligning in this way the historic European

governmental and social institutions that constitute "government authority" in both Europe and South Africa makes for a unique look at biopolitical questions posed in any site of European post-Enlightenment institutional inheritance. Accordingly, any moments of analysis predicated on subject relationships engendered by biopolitics are admittedly in the vain attempt to understand the humanistic traps laid out by biopolitics. Nonetheless, aligning theoretically Foucault's analysis with Coetzee's literary world allows a critical examination of the juncture.

The Postcolonial Moral Economy and Juridical Noncompliance in *Disgrace*

The instability of language for discerning conditions of oppression upon which Coetzee's narratives rest may be remedied through a mode of subject body discourse not limited through a language that envelops the conceptual struggle of consciousness not at the mercy of the English language (Clarkson 16). "The impossibility of truth telling language is of course a dilemma with which Coetzee's fiction has long wrestled," writes one critic (Boehmer 139). The presentation of a trans historic community consciousness introduces this prominently in *Disgrace*. There is the temporal divide between David Lurie and Petrus' generation that cannot be bridged by language alone. "Petrus is a man of his generation," remarks Lurie. As he serves to reflect a different generational experience of the same community, Petrus "has been through a lot" and "has a story to tell. But preferably not reduced to English" (Coetzee 117). For Coetzee, to articulate the relationship between Petrus' generation and David's own creates too many uncertainties once "pressed into the mould of English," and becoming "arthritic, bygone."

This is Coetzee's postcolonial world "caught between a narrative of historical

development and a politics of trans historical identification" (Collings 30). "More and more [Petrus] is convinced that English is an unfit medium for truth of South Africa." Here, the story cannot be fully realized through a linguistic medium alone. The temporal division to which Coetzee alludes complicates the articulation of their postcolonial realities in this fashion. The conflict is clearly trans generational, and yet it is that very element of temporality that renders their language insufficient. In a similar moment later in the novel, David Lurie finds great difficulty in understanding any explanation of Lucy's decision to remain tacit following her violent rape. For Derek Attridge,

> Lurie is in many ways a typical white South African of the generation that grew up with apartheid (he would have been three years old when the Nationalist government won power), even though his relatively liberal views mark him as belonging to a particular sector of the white population… (Attridge 171).

Lucy notes this generational issue, too. "What happened to me is a purely private matter. In another time, in another place, it might be held to be a public matter. But in this place, at this time, it is not" (Coetzee 112). The sociopolitical dynamics at play in Coetzee's novel refuse a discourse through spoken language to invite instead a noninscriptive bodily one.

Ultimately, Coetzee turns to "the comforts of a theory" to offer a solution (Coetzee 98). Recognizing what he terms "the schematic aspect" of the trans historical predicament, Coetzee sets to account conceptually for what the instabilities of language fail to do discursively (Coetzee 98). Coetzee seeks to replace the failed metrical

"stretches of English code" with a conceptual framework of counter voice through which conscious acceptance of a postcolonial moral economy enables tacit, bodily subject responses to institutional oppression "to speak" instead (Coetzee 117). Lucy's conscious decision to remain silent under police investigation demonstrates this. First, the notion of moral economy requires elucidation. The notion of a moral economy, or accepted terms of oppressed existence, can be traced to Foucault's 1975 lectures at the College de France. Aptly titled "Society Must Be Defended," the 75'-76' lecture series evidences the socio-political history of biopolitical subject control since the inauguration of what he deems the modern European nation states in the seventeenth century. Foucault's argument relies on the omission of a juridical representation of power as traditionally conceived in terms of law, prohibition, and sovereignty. Clearing these perceptions enables Foucauldian moral economy,

> A more meticulous historical examination in order to show that in modern societies [such as South Africa] power has not in fact functioned in the form of law and sovereignty, a historical analysis that forces one to find another form of representation that does not depend on the juridical system. (Foucault xxi)

Foucault's terms of analysis follow instead a continental tradition and adopt the Neitzchean claim that "knowledge is always a certain strategic relation in which man finds himself placed" (Foucault xxiv). This paves way for not only his genealogies of power in the lecture series, but also the reading of a moral economy in the analysis herein. In Coetzee, the subaltern moral economy was formed through South Africa's

history of social, cultural and political struggle through which several patterns of cultural value emerge to constitute moral economy. South African community subjects have long understood socio-juridical oppression. There has been institutional linguistic oppression since the political policy of apartheid institution of two segregated language groups, Afrikaans and English. At the subject body level, the issue eventually ignited the tragic Soweto riots in 1976. In 1982, police left 172 teens dead after 15,000 bodies marched in the streets in Soweto against the oppression of Afrikaans cultural values. Indeed, the linguistic oppression has been an institutional problem since the British proclaimed English the official language of the educational, religious, and governmental institutions. Indeed the right of the majority blacks to be taught Afrikaans was politically suppressed until 1925. Recently, at the level of socio-political coercion, the South African government has forcibly relocated an estimated 2 to 3 million blacks in "tribal homelands," scattered within the national borders. Clarkson notes the extreme form of socio-juridical control that was shown in Sophiatown during the force removal of residents classified as non-white to make way for the forced Afrikaners in 1955 (Clarkson 208). The communities are, mostly, in barren areas defined by poverty, malnutrition, and mortality. With remote access to political and educational resources, these groups are constantly under threat from the South African government to absolve themselves from responsibilities for the communities. Yet, the South African government additionally draws on these communities to benefit from the resulting migratory black labor force. The socio-juridical history left in these ways an oppressed subject body of not only white but also recombinant "South Africa's black African, Asians, and Coloured

populations" (Huggan and Watson 92.) Following apartheid, the remnants of socio-juridical oppression blend with historical circumstance to govern a postcolonial community "in which police brutality and postmodernism cohabit" (Duggan and Watson 97).

That postcolonial bodies in South Africa function as subjects operating under juridical institutions of power is the ground level application for biopolitical engagement with *Disgrace*. The historically institutionalized regulation of life and liberty in South African are key assumptions here. Under this conceptual framework, the oppressed subject response of Lucy becomes integrated into the framework as a response to those institutional forces that control life and liberty. Accordingly, such a framework invites a sharper consideration of Lucy's "tacit" response as it articulates a new space from which the subaltern subject may "speak." More pertinently, understanding Lucy's move in the particular biopolitical terms outlined here will offer a possible answer to what Gregory Castle reminds is perhaps Spivak's most pressing concern, "the hard question whether the subaltern subject can as peak if she can find no space from which to articulate that is not determined in advance by a discourse designed to silence her" (Castle 53).

To do this inside of the existing literary-philosophical debates requires a new attentiveness to what the existing criticism has labeled "counter voice." Here, counter voice constitutes that authorial refraction to speak and act counter to dominating voice (Clarkson 80). Adopting the terms of counter voice will highlight two functions of Lucy's nondiscursive participation in biopolitics. The first is to enable a clearer orientation of subject response, or counter voice, as it exists in "counter" relation to the institutions of

postcolonial oppression. In this manner, the postcolonial subject voice is read as a subaltern group response to their oppressive institutions. The second function is that reading through counter voice demonstrates an important congruency that aligns postcolonial-subject counter voice and Foucauldian-subject counter power as both Foucault's theoretical subject bodies and the postcolonial counter voice operate inside of a discourse containing socio-juridical institutional controls.

To clarify counter voice as subaltern group, "in Coetzee's writing, the process of 'drawing together' often comes with negative connotations of exclusion, or of coercion, a loss of individual freedoms, the subjection of self to an unsavory institutional or national apparatus" (Clarkson 177). To offer a more refined application of this for the subaltern group, where Clarkson's own treatment of Coetzee's "we" falls short is, however, in her attempt to explain linguistically the "different possible equations" of "we." Relevant to justifying a more subtle albeit critical component of reading the counter voice "we" as a crowd, or "simple plurality," Clarkson fails to conclude in her analysis that "'I plus you,' or 'I plus them', or 'I plus you plus them' - or in more pointedly exclusive forms - 'I plus you minus them' and 'I plus them minus you," equals, in each case, the same ultimate construct of "we." While elegant, her linguistic analysis of the plural crowd issue is ultimately deficient. By simply extending out this deficit, then, the importance of considering Coetzee's "we" as a crowd under these terms becomes clearer. What is at stake for the postcolonial work is then not the threat of a mob riot, or, as eighteenth century treatments of the topic mention, a French revolution, but the development of a counter consciousness in the decolonized voice. While engaging the idea of counter

voice supports the particular mode of reading "we" as counter voice, it also sheds some light on the inherent omission of the Postmodern notion of multiplicity within Foucauldian biopolitics. Reading postcolonial applications of Foucauldian biopower is then highly instructive, as the postcolonial configuration of the "we" as a drawn together plurality presents a possible insight for which larger Foucauldian considerations of biopolitics may wish to account. Accordingly, this deficiency of voice in Foucault's considerations of the biopolitical subject is one that future investigations mounted under these terms should bear (Collings 31). In addition, Clarkson also locates the notion of an "invisible interlocutor" in the overt dialogic potential of postcolonial writing (Clarkson 178). This is key in claiming a relationship between notions of Foucauldian counter power and Coetzean counter voice. From Michel Bakhtin's work, the positioning of counter voice for Coetzee is one of many possibilities, as the author must "orientate" his voice around the others. Choosing an explicitly counter voice, then, becomes a conscious move to position the voice of the postcolonial oppressed in direct dialogical opposition to the oppressive (Bakhtin 201). Moreover, similar to Clarkson's location of an "invisible interlocutor" in counter voice, David Collings' elaborate 2009 treatment of biopolitical counter power identifies an "invisible relationship" between the subject and the oppressor in counter power. In building congruency for the postcolonial concerns here, Clarkson's terms help stabilize a relationship between power and counter voice on these grounds. This is the application of Foucault's biopolitical analysis at a finer level. To bridge postcolonial counter voice as Foucauldian postcolonial counter power, then, several theoretical concerns require explication.

Since working on the margins of postcolonial theory, postcolonialism as a theatre of biopower extends issues of “racial difference, legal inequality, and subalternity” as socio-juridical and cultural contradictions in decolonized regions. Indeed a complex interplay of forces effect subject engagement. Under the conceptual framework, to consider the means by which the subjects engage and are engaged by these biopolitical forces offers a richer understanding of the biopolitical metrics within Coetzee's literary representation of postcolonial subject response. Carrol Clarkson, Bill McDonald, and Coetzee himself, have noted that Coetzee often achieves this counter response through working within the constructs of a Bakhtinian dialogism (Clarkson 9, McDonald 48). This allows a specific type of engagement that positions, or "orientates," Coetzee's authorial consciousness freely. To utilize insights in a Foucauldian frame means shedding the element of emotionality to ground a postcolonial moral economic equation. If following a similar Bakhtinian tradition of reading Coetzee in the dialogic, then emotionality is neither required nor helpful in this instance. To reference Attridge’s idea of grace, emotionality becomes a hindrance to any dialogical assessment of Coetzee. “Rather than an increased sensitivity,” explains another, “sympathy and empathy were incompatible in a world rife with dialogism” (McDonald 57). More directly, the usurpation of another’s point of view disables “the unfinished dialogic world in favor of the closed finished interaction…and the possibility of two colliding viewpoints shattered” (McDonald 57). Like Boobar, Sam Durrant takes similar issue that “the sympathetic imagination encounters a certain verbal limit, an incapacity to describe the reality of other lives that is as much Coetzee’s as Mrs. Curren’s” (Poyner 124). Resigning the usual

method of imaginative sympathy then, this amendment to Clarkson's dialogism makes space for a view of power and counter voice in biopolitics that recognizes, as Coetzee does, that "the loss of one's place…cannot be understood as translation from someone else's language into one's own language" (Bakhtin xxxiii). In this way, the reading of the text as a dialogic work offers a space for competing voices and discourses to interact. This allows Coetzee in turn to offer competing ideologies. Although competing ideologies are the basis for Marxist class based analyses, the biopolitical lens considers Coetzee's counter voice in the above terms in order to read the counter voice as a postcolonial representation of Foucault's discursive theory of counter power in the moral economy.

To observe the moral economy in postcolonial terms, David recognizes that formal justice and reconciliation are not easily had in their community. An explicit portrayal of moral economy in qualified fashion occurs following the gang rape of Lucy. While he "wants those men to be caught and brought before the law and punished," he questions the sociopolitical ethics of [postcolonial] moral economy "Am I wrong? Am I wrong to want justice?" (Coetzee 98). Rhetorical question or not, the answer is that justice in the postcolonial community is not had through the formal policing procedures of what Foucault considers traditional institutions of power and coercion. Lurie seeks a response through formal legal proceedings as the subject's only perceived means of participation in institutional discourse,

> In South Africa, as in any society past or present founded on dominance and submission, the continuation of the system is dependent upon the

willingness of all the participants to play their roles consistently and to adhere strictly to the rules." (Penner 63)

Lucy's unwillingness to engage formally, however, with the institutional "system" of the law is what Collings calls counter power in Foucauldian analysis – a power to respond within the formal system through noncompliance with the formal system. From this Foucauldian standpoint, the girl's reaction not to inform authorities becomes "at once recognized power and an expressed form of counter power" (Collings 27). Lucy's refusal to press charges as a forewarning on the consequences of the usurpation of consciousness that takes place following a "death" of the imaginative empathy. Brittan considers this scene within the context of an "imaginative empathy" excluded from Coetzee's writing of character conscious (Brittan 478). From this consideration of consciousness and death in Coetzee, the scene reminds us that "Gayatari Chakravorty Spivak is not alone in arguing that in order to understand Disgrace's central mystery - Lucy's refusal to press charges or to leave her land- readers must 'counterfocalize' to escape the confines of David's consciousness'" (Brittan 487). Boehmer tries to unravel Lucy's refusal to speak of her experience of rape as questioning the efficacy of bearing witness to obvious institutional horrors of the postcolonial apartheid. Lucy is placed within a tradition of not spoken voices but "subjected bodies carrying…the effects or manifestations of wrong which others have inflicted: the diseased…the killed…the inflicted" (Poyner 12). By doing so, the positioning refracts Lucy as a postcolonial subject body "participation in the suffering" of others, and more importantly, by silently, bodily bearing witness to it." The critique of Lucy as a bodily

response to the violence makes a case for Lucy as a symbol of the institutional oppressed. Minding this, Lucy's decision to remain tacit about the rape becomes a bodily discursive response within the moral economy of the postcolonial setting. Hence, noncompliance with the notion of "the continuing ideological construction of the third world subject" (Spivak 180). The notion of moral economy offers a way to frame the moves of the subject body as a discursive instrument in the postcolonial setting through the reactive creation of their own "counter power".

Peng Cheah's recent analysis of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's critique of Foucault in *Can the Subaltern Speak*? contends:

> Because Foucault dismisses the concept of ideology, and because he believes that the oppressed can know and express the nature of their exploitation, Foucault is complicit with the continuing ideological construction of the third world subject and, therefore, can b said to repeat the imperialist project in its current forms. (Spivak 180)

To rebut, what Foucault's framework offers postcolonial subjects is not simply complicity with oppression as it enables them to know and express the nature of their exploitation through nontraditional participation in the dominant discourse. Rather, the use of counter power has shown that Foucauldian biopolitics does not, as Cheah argues, enable subject participation as a means to reinforce the postcolonial subject construction, but to demonstrate a type of participation by enabling the subject bodies' noncompliant acts to react, or "to speak", not through compliance with the rules of the dominant voice but through the subaltern's constructed counter voice, or counter power reaction. Lucy's

intentional noncompliance demonstrates this all too well. For a Foucauldian analysis, discourse is, with respect to a relation of forces, not merely a surface of inscription, but something that brings about effects. Lucy's move not to inform the juridical institutions in place is a non-inscriptive, yet discursive move inside of the juridical framework. Her tacit noncompliance places her oppressed body outside the existence of the traditional juridical social structures, yet inside of the same moral economy that allows for this action. Lucy takes a "different tactical position," to use Foucault's preferred terms, and is thus able to subvert the traditional juridical institutions through nonparticipation (Foucault 208). As a methodological precaution, adopting Foucault's method of analysis is not to assess legitimate forms of power, per se, nor their general mechanisms and effects. It entails instead the objective of understanding power as it transgresses, to quote Foucault, "the rules of right that organize and delineate it…oversteps those rules" (Foucault 28). To follow this line, the approach does likewise not entail an aim to trace specific centers of power in the postcolonial environment, or "who has the power?" Nor does it seek to assess who does not have the power as the oppressed other. The approach considers instead functions of power as they allow for real and effective practices of discursive operation outside of the traditional power structures. In this way, the notion of moral economy offers a way to frame subject body responses as counter discursive reactions to the postcolonial environment. If reading Lucy's initial refusal to respond inside juridical terms this way, then the decision not to pursue legal action represents a space where tacit moves of subversion dispel traditional notions of how juridical power operates. Collings adds "the fact that [Lucy's noncompliance] were enacted rather than

written means that they cannot occupy the same social space as the products of literate culture and thus for most practitioners do not share in the same kind of history" (Collings 31). This supports the Foucauldian stake here that subject bodies have a space to act outside of traditional socio-juridical norms. For Lucy in particular, such "near-identity of violence and deferral," writes Collings, "is the same principle which enables [the subject] to alienate itself in its institutions" (Collings 56). Through these expressed acts of alienation, the oppressed subject discursively operates both inextricably inside and expressively outside the institutions that control it.

Furthermore, David Lurie's ensuing reaction demonstrates the postcolonial moral economy in a different fashion. Lurie ultimately makes sense of these realities by assuring himself that Lucy's oppression is only part of his country's moral economic reality. "It happens every day, every hour, every minute, he tells himself, in every quarter of the country. Count yourself lucky to have escaped with your life" (Coetzee 98). He continues to find a slight comfort through accepting the terms of their moral economy. Ignoring juridical formal policing procedures and considering a return to "normal" life in the face of atrocity are not institutional or generational realities, but moral economic ones. For the postcolonial subject, says Lurie, "That is the theory; hold to the theory and to the comforts of theory. Not human evil, just a vast circulatory system, to whose workings pity and terror are irrelevant. This is how one must see life in this country: in its schematic aspect. Other wise one could go mad" (Coetzee 98). Lurie at last rejects the potential of traditional codified inscriptive practices to "try" to convey their world as he comes to terms with this notion. "War, atrocity:" he italicizes, "every

word with which one tries to wrap up this day, the day swallows down its black throat" (Coetzee 102). Coetzee has them expound on the rejection of a language-based attempt to represent their reality in favor of reconciliation through a pithy discussion of their moral economic reality:

> "'What are our plans for today?'
>
> 'Our plans? To go back the farm and clean up?
>
> 'And then?'
>
> 'Then to go on as before.'" (Coetzee 105)

Briefly questioning the "schematic aspect" of their world, Lurie protests, "Things have changed. We can't just pick up where we left of." Lucy responds only to confirm the existence of and refusal to depart from the understood terms of social existence. Lucy readily accepts that they must not only act within the terms of their moral economy, but also makes clear "It was never safe, and it's not an idea, good or bad. I'm not going back for the sake of an idea. I'm just going back" (Coetzee 105). For Lucy, then, to operate within the moral economy is "not an idea," but a functioning element of their biopolitical reality.

Robert J.C. Young has noted "an increasing tendency has been to produce new archival material rather than to develop further the theoretical parameters" (Castle 77). In response, this review of *Disgrace* has extended the Foucauldian biopolitical framework to reconsider counter voice as counter power, and in turn ultimately offer new hope for Lucy's decision to remain tacit. This was done only after first producing a coherent methodology that defined, aligned, and enabled a biopolitical engagement with the stakes

of postcolonialism. This allowed biopolitics to engage the postcolonial the notion of the instability of language as a telling dialogic space within the sphere of the institutionally oppressed. The second site of engagement with Coetzean criticism used a Foucauldian framework to reinterpret the widely examined aftermath of Lucy's rape as a site of juridical noncompliance, and brought with it new ways to consider resistance in the postcolonial subject. These insights offer a new space for examining notions of moral economy in the postcolonial literary environment while also demonstrating further applications of Foucauldian biopolitics in contemporary settings.

NOTE

[1]In contrast, note the different conceptual inflections from the contemporaneously lethargic sense of "being" as a passive state in several strains of Anglophone culture. For a further explication on the Greek *ε□ναι* , Charles H. Kuhn's classic 1966 essay, "The Greek Verb 'To Be' and the Concept of Being" offers a sufficient introduction and is recently republished by Oxford University Press in Kuhn's 2009 self-edited collection, *Essays on Being*. Originally printed by Springer. Kuhn, Charles H. "The Greek Verb 'To Be' and the Concept of Being." *Foundations of Language*. 2.3. (1966): 245-265.

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