The World in Mind: Women Writers, Improvement and Environmental Thought, 1770-1830

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Abstract

The object-oriented ontology that has dominated recent Romantic ecocriticism has largely focused on male writers such as William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley, noting that these writers' treatment of the perception of natural objects leads to emotional relations with nature. The main aim of this thesis is to explore the ways in which women writers applied science of mind to nature and in doing so responded ecologically to industrialisation and the ideology of improvement. I suggest, through my exploration of Anna Letitia Barbauld, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Hamilton, Maria Edgeworth, and Mary Shelley, that it is possible to understand the shift from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, from early resistance to industrialisation on ecological grounds and the questioning of perfect knowledge, to support for schemes of industrial improvement, as connected to different uses of science of mind, fading rational dissenting culture, and increasing commercial interests. This thesis covers ideas including landscape aesthetics, wastelands, deforestation, bogs, biodiversity, natural diet, and animal welfare, both abroad and in the homelands of the English, Scottish, and Irish writers concerned. Narratively, I suggest that ideas regarding habitual devotion and the "web" of relations between human and non-human nature were conceptualised by Barbauld in the late eighteenth century, continued by Wollstonecraft in the 1790s, and Shelley and Edgeworth into the 1830s. Overall, this thesis suggests that these writers offer important contributions to current ecocritical discourse, particularly regarding conceptions of human and non-human relations, benevolence, and species preservation.

Contents

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Material from chapters 3 and 4 have been or are due to be published. A version of chapter 3 is due to be published under the working title of "Maria Edgeworth's Environmental Education: Utility, Improvement, and the Industrial Sublime" in *European Romantic Review* in October 2020. Parts of chapter 4 appear in Harrie Neal, "'The Wind Seems at Once to Excite and Depress the Human Mind': Mary Shelley and Domestic Education in 'The Heir of Mondolfo'", *The Keats-Shelley Review* 33, 1 (Spring, 2019): 39-54.

This element of violation and violence is present in all fabrication, and *homo faber,* the creator of the human artifice, has always been a destroyer of nature … The *animal laborans,* which with its body and the help of tame animals nourishes life, may be the lord and master of all living creatures, but he still remains the servant of nature and the earth; only *homo faber* conducts himself as lord and master of the whole earth. Since his productivity was seen in the image of a Creator-God, so that where God creates *ex nihilo,* man creates out of given substance, human productivity was by definition bound to result in a Promethean revolt because it could erect a man-made world only after destroying part of God-created nature.

—Arendt, *The Human Condition*

Introduction

> My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion will be of the same nature as my self and will be content with the same fare. We will make our bed out of dried leaves, and the sun will shine on us as on man, and we shall ripen our food.[1]

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and more recently *The Last Man* (1826) have been key literary texts within the field of ecocriticism for their discussions of, amongst other things, vegetarianism, animal cruelty, the ethics of scientific progress, and the instability of Enlightenment ideals in the living world.[2] In spite of the fervent ecocritical attention Shelley's work continues to receive, scholars have been somewhat reluctant to consider the ecological contributions of the women writers who came before her but remained her contemporaries and literary influences. This thesis seeks to redress this scholarly gap by exploring the environmental thought of Anna Letitia Barbauld, Elizabeth Hamilton, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Maria Edgeworth, repositioning Shelley within this intellectual tradition of women writers, and reconsidering her work in these contexts.

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[1] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. D. L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2012), 120.

[2] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 1990), 90-106; Stephanie Rowe, "'Listen to Me': *Frankenstein* as an Appeal to Mercy and Justice, on Behalf of Persecuted Animals", in *Humans and Other Animals in Eighteenth-Century British Culture: Representation, Hybridity, Ethics*, ed. Frank Paleri (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006): 137-52; Sarah Canfield Fuller, "Reading the Cyborg in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*", *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 14, 2 (2003): 217-27; Stuart Peterfreund, "Composing What May not Be 'Sad Trash': A Reconsideration of Mary Shelley's Use of Paracelsus in *Frankenstein*", *Studies in Romanticism* 43, 1 (2004): 78-98; Timothy Morton, "Joseph Ritson, Percy Shelley and the Making of Romantic Vegetarianism", *Romanticism* 12, 1 (2006): 52-61; Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47-52; Morton, "Shelley's Green Desert", *Studies in Romanticism* 35, 3 (1996): 409-30; Sharon Ruston, "Vegetarianism and Vitality in the Work of Thomas Forster, William Lawrence and P. B. Shelley", *Keats-Shelley Journal* 54 (2005): 113-32; Richard C. Sha, "Volta's Battery, Animal Electricity, and *Frankenstein*", *European Romantic Review* 23, 1 (2012): 21-41; Michael Owen Jones, "In Pursuit of Percy Shelley, 'The First Celebrity Vegan': An Essay on Meat, Sex, and Broccoli", *Journal of Folklore Research* 53, 2 (2016): 1-30; Hilary Strang, "Common Life, Animal Life, Equality: 'The Last Man'", *ELH* 78, 2 (2011): 409-31; James Rourke, "'Nothing More Unnatural': Mary Shelley's Revision of Rousseau", *ELH* 56, 3 (1989): 543-69; Lauren Cameron, "Mary Shelley's Malthusian Objections in *The Last Man*", *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 67, 2 (2012): 177-203; Cameron, "Questioning Agency: Dehumanizing Sustainability in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*" and Avishek Parui, "Masculinity, Monstrosity, and Sustainability in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*", in *Romantic Sustainability: Endurance and the Natural World, 1780-1830*, ed. Ben P. Robertson (London: Lexington Books, 2016), 261-74; 187-98.

The aim of this thesis is to uncover the ways women writers applied science of mind to nature, and in doing so produced kinds of environmental thought. Women's writing has long been recognised by feminist historians as using Lockean associationism in their educational writing, although it has largely been seen as relegated to domestic spaces, even as it enabled opportunities for political and scientific discussions, hence associationism's alternative name, environmental philosophy.[3] However, I suggest that this concern with the environment and its natural objects, were foundational to women's science of mind, and provided a framework for discussing, amongst other things, human relationships with nature, the effects of industrialisation and scientific improvement, natural rights, and animal cruelty. I argue that the associationism developed by Barbauld, which built on the work of David Hartley and Joseph Priestley, provided an imaginative space for questioning the morality of perfect knowledge as the effects of industrialisation on nature became physically apparent.[4] I trace the ways in which this philosophy was used and adapted from the 1770s to the 1830s as industrialisation intensified, and arguments for improvement diversified. In many ways this thesis participates in the feminist tradition expounded by Harriet Guest and Jane Rendall by unpacking the 'small change' philosophy posited by a group of late eighteenth century women writers and its foundational concern with the living world.

This thesis primarily addresses the gap in scholarship regarding women's contributions to early ecological thought, which has largely focused on the later male Romantic poets, particularly William Wordsworth.[5] Women's writing certainly merits its own sustained analysis, and ecofeminist scholars since the 1990s have addressed the way women in the late eighteenth century saw parallels between their own social confinement and the caging, and cruel treatment towards animals.[6] Women's particular

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[3] The best overview of the associationist tradition in eighteenth and nineteenth-century education and female domesticity remains Mary Hilton's *Women and the Shaping of the Nation's Young: Education and Public Doctrine in Britain 1750-1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

[4] For a recent discussion of Barbauld, Hartley, Priestley, and associationism see Joanna Wharton, *Material Enlightenment: Women Writers and the Science of Mind, 1770-1830* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018), 31-72.

[5] Attention to Wordsworth has been vibrant. Some of the best studies include Jonathan Bate's *The Song of the Earth*, (London; Basingstoke; Oxford: Picador, 2000) and *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013); Lisa Ottum and Seth T. Reno (eds.) *Wordsworth and the Green Romantics: Affect and Ecology in the Nineteenth Century*, (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2016);Thomas H. Ford, *Wordsworth and the Poetics of Air* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[6] Some of the earliest and most significant studies on this include Josephine Donovan, "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory", *Journal for Women in Culture and Society* 15, 2 (1990): 350-375; Londa Schiebinger, "Why Mammals Are Called Mammals: Gender Politics in Eighteenth-Century Natural

relationship with nature as codified by gendered perceptions of nature as female, and knowledge as male, has been widely acknowledged as shaping their writing from the Enlightenment onward.[7] These arguments offer important critical context to the writers I discuss, however, this thesis also suggests that women's contributions to ecological thought need not always be viewed through a singularly gendered lens. Rather, the literature in this thesis offers ways of deepening our understanding of the philosophical frameworks and their contexts that were used to critically discuss nature in this period, and which may be useful to ecocritical studies of many writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Associationism is, after all, fundamentally about the relationship between the mind and the world. In this period, when scientific research and industrialisation were starting to challenge previously held notions about the immutability of the earth, the age of the earth, it's fragility, and its value as a resource, associationism offered an idiom for contemplating the semantic and philosophical instability of the term nature.

Science of mind as a model for studying nature in the aid of social progress was a common intersection of scientific writers on natural history in this period.[8] The idea promoted by Priestley that observing and reflecting on nature was coterminous with religious devotion and notions of providence, was also widely practiced within Unitarian circles, especially at the literary-scientific Warrington Academy.[9] I argue that the associationism as developed by Barbauld engages with both the idea of nature as real and vital force relating to contemporary moral debates about materiality and

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History", *American Historical Review* 98, 2 (1993): 382-411; Laura Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes: Humans and Other Animals in the Modern Literary Imagination* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2010), 65-91; Tess Cosslett, *Talking Animals in British Children's Fiction, 1786-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 23-45; Theresa Braunschneider, "The Lady and the Lapdog: Mixed Ethnicity in Constantinople, Fashionable Pets in Britain", in *Humans and Other Animals in Eighteenth-Century British Culture: Representation, Hybridity, Ethics*, ed. Frank Palermi (Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 31-48; Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain, 1750-1850* (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 65-100; Margaret Anne Doody, "Sensuousness in the Poetry of the Eighteenth Century", in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730-1820*, ed. Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 3-32.

[7] The most influential in this field is Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (London: Harper Collins, 1990).

[8] Barbara Larson, "Darwin, Burke, and the biological sublime", in *Darwin and Theories of Aesthetics and Cultural History*, ed. Barbara Larson and Sabine Flach (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 17-36; Catherine Packham, *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism: Bodies, Culture, Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 147-174; Ann Thomson, *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 175-216.

[9] Alan Marshall, *Unity of Nature: Wholeness and Disintegration in Ecology and Science* (London: Imperial College Press, 2002), 226; Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians, 1760-1860* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 33-43.

immateriality, the known and unknowability of nature, its mutability and immutability.[10] In many ways the texts discussed in this thesis also reveal ideas that may be useful to current ecocritical debates, particularly relating to object-oriented ontology, deep ecology, "the web of life", and capitalism's role in climate breakdown. The writers discussed in the latter chapters of this thesis, although they all engaged with Barbauld's work and other shared influential texts, demonstrate how associationism increasingly came to be used in the argument for industrialisation. This thesis does not aim to offer an origin story of ecological thought, or provide a textual web between these writers specifically, but seeks to show how some women writers in this period used science of mind to respond to environmental change with ethical thought, and how over a few decades these ideas were used to argue for environmentally damaging improvement schemes. In many ways this thesis is part of a growing trend in looking at early resistance to industrialisation on environmental grounds. However, my focus here is in contributing to a wider understanding of how those ideas shifted from resistance to promotion.

Ecofeminism to Animal Studies

In seeking to understand the philosophical ideas, literary uses, and contexts of women's writing about nature, this thesis directly contributes to the field of ecofeminism. In the 1990s the animal rights activist Carol J. Adams was the first to acknowledge the creature in *Frankenstein* as embodying a vegetarian ethic, and the harm done to nature by male scientific ego.[11] Adams' wider work, including the ground-breaking *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990), and *The Pornography of Meat* (2004) has consistently sought to recognise the affinities between women and the treatment of animals, revealing the way women are frequently animalised, and animal bodies often sexualised within a patriarchal and capitalist paradigm. Notable examples Adams provides range from the playboy bunny, to commonplace descriptions of a plucked, decapitated, and gutted chicken carcass in a supermarket as "fresh, whole…and sumptuous".[12] These modern examples however, are a continuation of the old cultural polarity which associates

[10] Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, i-vi.
[11] Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, 153.
[12] Adams, *The Pornography of Meat* (New York; London: Continuum, 2004), 31.

women with animals and men with reason, knowledge, and power. Adams, and others have since explored the history of these gendered and animalised dynamics in various religious, spiritual, class, race, and gender-oriented ways in the eighteenth century.[13] Scholars have often used these theoretical approaches in recognising the use of animals in women's nature poetry and writing for children to illustrate moral lessons and the spread of benevolence functioning, according to Hilda Kean, as the start of what was to become the animal welfare movement in the nineteenth century.[14]

Most of the critical attention to women's animal stories in this period has focused on conservative writers like Sarah Trimmer and Dorothy Kilner, although Barbauld and Wollstonecraft have often been positioned amongst this group as well.[15] As Andrew O'Malley notes, "irrational children" were frequently associated with "the lower orders of creation". Under the influence of John Locke, one of the primary purposes of education was to socialize children: to elevate them above the "brute creation" and to ensure they acquire the status of rational, adult human beings.[16] As a consequence, the presence of animals in children's stories enabled authors to teach children their "place in the social hierarchy, where beings of all kinds […] are ranged according to the will of God".[17] Even within this hierarchical framework, literature written for children repeatedly advocates the humane treatment of animals, while seeking to impart an appreciation for non-human life by drawing upon the discourse of natural history. As several commentators have noted, this compassionate strain can be traced to John Locke's educational writing.[18] In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*

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[13] Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, 150-178; Donovan, "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory"; Ariana Margaret Hendrix, *Women, Nature, and Knowledge: Ecofeminist Thought in Eighteenth-Century British Women's Writing* (San Francisco: San Francisco State University, 2014); Pamela Odih, *Watersheds in Marxist Ecofeminism* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), lii-lviii; Mary Mellor, *Feminism and Ecology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); Greta Gaard, *Critical Ecofeminism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017), 69-91; Sylvia Brockbank, *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies of Early Modern England* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Anne Milne, *Lactilla Tends her Fav'rite Cow: Ecocritical Readings of Animals and Women in Eighteenth-Century British Labouring-Class Poetry* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008).

[14] Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998), 13-38.

[15] Ann Wierda Rowland provides an overview of the trajectory of women's animal writing in "Learned Pigs and Literate Children: Becoming Human in Eighteenth-Century Literary Cultures", in *Literary Cultures and Eighteenth-Century Childhoods*, ed. Andrew O'Malley (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 99-116;

[16] Andrew O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child: Children's Literature and Childhood in the Late Eighteenth Century* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 141-42, n. 46.

[17] Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-Period Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 57.

[18] The most comprehensive of these are Cosslett, *Talking Animals*, 1-4; O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child*, 141.

(1693), he observes that children "often *torment*" the "poor Animals, which fall into their Hands".[19] Should such behaviour be observed, parents should ensure that children are "taught the contrary Usage".[20] In recent years, the treatment of animals within Barbauld and John Aikin's *Evenings at Home or, The Juvenile Budget Opened* (1792-96) has received increased critical attention.[21] More notably, Barbauld's depiction of animal life – exhibited in poems such as "The Caterpillar" and "The Mouse's Petition", which I will later discuss – has been considered in relation to her political and her scientific interests.[22] Edgeworth's stories however, have received significantly little ecocritical attention in spite of Mitzi Myers considerable early interventions in the field.[23]

By contrast, attention to Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788), have often presented her as "reaffirming hierarchical divisions between human and non-human life", as Adela Ramos has recently argued, even as she makes the case for their welfare.[24] More widely, ecocritical discussions of Wollstonecraft's work have been divided over her ecological position. For instance, Adams describes Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) as evidence of "an intellectual chasm between the aims of women's rights and the recognition of animal

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[19] John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), ed. John W. and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 180.
[20] Ibid., 180. For a recent account of the relationship between children's literature and natural history, see See Jane Spencer, "Natural History and Narrative Sympathy: The Children's Animal Stories of Edward Augustus Kendall (1775/6?-1842)", *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 25, 4 (2013): 751-774 (761).
[21] *Evenings at Home* is discussed in animal-focused monographs such as Christine Kenyon-Jones's *Kindred Brutes*, Cosslett's *Talking Animals in British Children's Fiction, 1786-1914,* and David Perkins' *Romanticism and Animal Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Perhaps the most thorough account of its treatment of animals is offered by Darren Howard in "Talking Animals and Reading Children: Teaching Passive (dis)Obedience in John Aikin and Anna Barbauld's *Evenings at Home*", *Studies in Romanticism* 48 (2009): 641-66.
[22] See, for instance, Kathryn J. Ready, "'What then, poor Beastie!': Gender, Politics, and Animal Experimentation in Anna Barbauld's 'The Mouse's Petition'", *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 28:1 (2004): 92-114; and Julia Saunders, '"The Mouse's Petition": Anna Laetitia Barbauld and the Scientific Revolution', *Review of English Studies* 53 (2002): 500-16.
[23] Mitzi Myers, "Reading Rosamond Reading: Maria Edgeworth's 'Wee-Wee Stories' Interrogate the Canon", in *Infant Tongues: The Voice of the Child in Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Goodenough et al (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994): 57-79; "Portrait of the Female Artist as a Young Robin: Maria Edgeworth's Telltale Tailpiece", *The Lion and the Unicorn* 20, 2 (December, 1996): 230-263; "Of Mice and Mothers: Mrs Barbauld's 'New Walk' and Gendered Codes in Children's Literature", in *Feminine Principles and Women's Experience in American Composition and Rhetoric*, ed. Louise Weatherbee Phelps and Janet Emig (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995), 255-88.
[24] Adela Ramos, "Species Thinking: Animals, Women and Literary Form in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*", *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 37, 1 (2018), 41-66; Sharon Ruston, "Natural Rights and Natural History in Anna Barbauld and Mary Wollstonecraft", in *Literature and Science*, ed. Sharon Ruston (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 53-71.

rights."[25] Although she later includes Wollstonecraft in her list of historical women who have advocated for animal welfare in *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animals Ethics: A Reader* (2007), she and Josephine Donovan argue that Wollstonecraft's concern with advancing women's rights necessitated severing women's ties with their animality.[26] Until recently, critics have largely viewed Wollstonecraft's work as conforming to speciesism — the belief in human superiority over non-human life. For instance, Mary Mellor states that "in common with Enlightenment thinking of the time,…[she] framed her claim for a common humanity in terms of the distinctiveness of human beings from 'brute nature.'"[27] Even those who recognise her "insistence on the kindness of animals", as Rod Preece does, agree that in general when it comes to animals, Wollstonecraft's attitude is akin to "political conservatives", while "the gulf she describes between humans and animals is far greater than any we find expressed by the Romantic poets."[28] Meanwhile, Christine Kenyon-Jones asserts that "human beings' [superior] place in the chain of being…is stressed time and time again."[29] Barbara Seeber remains one of the few to challenge Wollstonecraft's reputation for speciesism: she argues that by looking beyond the two *Vindications* and re-evaluating Wollstonecraft's lesser-studied work such as, *On the Education of Daughters* (1787), *Original Stories*, and *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796), it becomes clear that sympathy for animal suffering and its connection to "domestic tyranny" is a recurrent theme.[30] Indeed, thinking about the different political conditions under which Wollstonecraft wrote each of her works, not to mention the different genres she traversed and the formal conventions she subverted, is crucial for understanding the modifying rhetorical innovations Wollstonecraft makes to intervene in philosophical debates about non-human nature.

Within the field of animal studies, and ecocriticism more broadly, Shelley still dominates as one of the few women writers to be studied for her ecological

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[25] Adams, *Sexual Politics*, 147.
[26] Carol Adams, Josephine Donovan (eds.), *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics: A Reader* (New York; Chichester: Colombia University Press, 2007), 65.
[27] Mary Mellor, *Feminism and Ecology* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 72.
[28] Rod Preece, *Awe for the Tiger, Love for the Lamb: A Chronicle of Sensibility to Animals* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 203.
[29] Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-Period Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 63-64.
[30] Barbara Seeber, "'I Sympathize in Their Pains and Pleasures'", in *Animal Subjects: An Ethical Reader in a Posthuman World*, ed. Jodey Castricano (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2008), 223-40.

contributions outside of their relation to gender politics. This is largely because of the contributions made by ecofeminist scholars in the 1980s and 1990s, that paved the way for a field dominated by both male scholars and male authors. Recent critiques of the way animal studies has consumed the early contributions to ecofeminism, include Laura Wright's recent book *The Vegan Studies Project: Food, Animals, and Gender in the Age of Terror*.[31] Another reason for Shelley's popularity in this field, is partly because of her connection to Percy Shelley, and the attention his radical vegetarian essays have received. Timothy Morton's work, although it briefly gestures to the collaboration of the two writers, nevertheless positions Shelley on the side lines of political writing on animal ethics.[32] Indeed, still ecocritical attention is largely focused on texts written when Percy was alive, or that draws on his political ethos, as is the case in both *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*. There remains a resistance, perhaps an unconscious one, to looks beyond these texts, as I have argued in a recent special issue of *The Keats-Shelley Review*, and in chapter 4 of this thesis.[33] As Anna Mercer has discussed, and which I think applies more broadly to ecocritical and animal studies approaches to women writers, we need to look intertextually at all writers to appreciate their literary influences.[34]

Recent work on women writers and animals in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has illustrated imaginative ways of reading and seeing women's ecological thought. Namely, Seeber, whose book *Austen and Animals* both recognises the presence of animals in Jane Austen's novels, and connects them to her intellectual engagement and conversations with her contemporaries about human relations with non-human nature.[35] Jaqueline Labbe's work on Charlotte Smith remains a key text in its thoughtful intertextual analysis of Smith's personal and political responses to nature as deviating from masculine Romantic poetics.[36] Likewise, Anne Milne's discussion of

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[31] Wright argues that the field of animal studies has been dominated by big names, like Jacques Derrida, who have used earlier ecofeminist scholarship, often unacknowledged. See Laura Wright, *The Vegan Studies Project: Food, Animals, and Gender in the Age of Terror* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 18.
[32] Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste*, ii.
[33] Harrie Neal, "'The Wind Seems at once to Excite and Depress the Human Mind': Mary Shelley and Domestic Education in 'The Heir of Mondolfo'", *The Keats-Shelley Review* 33, 1 (2019), 39-54.
[34] Anna Mercer, "Beyond *Frankenstein*: The collaborative Literary Relationship of Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley", *The Keats-Shelley Review* 33, 1 (2019): 80-85.
[35] Barbara Seeber, *Austen and Animals* (London: Routledge, 2016).
[36] Jacqueline Labbe, *Charlotte Smith: Romanticism, Poetry and the Culture of Gender* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); *Romantic Visualities: Landscape, Gender, and Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

the working-class poets, Mary Collier, Mary Leapor, Elizabeth Hands, and Ann Yearsley, demonstrates how they communicated ideas about the ethics of agricultural improvement practices with personal experiences as milkmaids and land labourers.[37] These texts and others have all contributed to an understanding of eighteenth-century nature discourse as having an important gender and class component. One of the key issues raised in these works is the idea that women inherited a trope of animality which is often dismissed as sentimentalism, but which in fact reveals a great deal about their political lives. It has been almost forty years since Raymond Williams declared that "The idea of nature contains, although often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount about human history".[38] The idea of nature in women's writing still requires our attention.

"The Web of Life" or "the web of society"

In spite of this project's indebtedness to ecofeminist scholarship, one of its main theoretical questions is how to write a history of environmental thought that doesn't fall into the trap of identity politics. For the writers I look at, and for the field of ecocriticism in which this project participates, identities of gender and more specifically of ideas of the self, are binaries of concern, but which are difficult to cross and prevent from distracting us from paying attention to what else is going on. After thirty years of ecocritical history, where the lens of identity has been the established lens through which histories of national, imperial, gender, and environment have often been seen (with notable exceptions), how do we bridge the gap between identity and Marxism, whilst still recognising the important contributions that have been made? Much of this has to do with the 'literary turn', and the way studies about nature since then have often constrained useful ways of acting on the climate crisis, by viewing nature entirely as a construction, with meaning derived from various identity positions. At the same time, acknowledging the anthropocentrism in the idea of nature is crucial to understanding the ways in which the climate crisis has been shaped by human actors. These are the

[37] Milne, *Lactilla*, 2008.
[38] Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Ideas of Nature* (London; New York: Verso, 1997), 67.

questions ecocritical theorists such as Andreas Malm, Timothy Morton, and Jason Moore have been grappling with in recent years.[39]

Malm's ground-breaking book *Fossil Capital* reimagines the rise of the Industrial Revolution as driven not by technological innovation or cheaper fuel resources, but by the logic of capital to harness greater power over subordinate labour.[40] Malm addresses the recent use of the geological epoch, the Anthropocene, within the humanities and social sciences for flooding ecocritical debates with ideas from the natural sciences, in a way that elides the structural inequalities that exist between human and non-human nature, and "is inimical to action".[41] Instead, Malm requests that Anthropocene studies must refocus its critique on power relations, while at the same time dismantling species categories that have given rise to the exploitation of natural resources. What Malm and Moore call the "capitalocene", in many ways considers James Watt's invention of the steam engine as a major turning point in our climate epoch, but notes that the structures of capitalism go back to the sixteenth century, which the boundaries of the Anthropocene do not allow.[42] I see this thesis as contributing to Malm's argument. The writers I look at view the problems with technological innovation and exploitation of nature as problems because they can be so easily exploited by commercial desire for luxury and profit, but are not, or at least are not always, problems in themselves. These writers acknowledge the issues of political economy's consumption of nature in the years leading up and including the invention of the steam engine, with some of them, particularly Edgeworth, a part of Watt's wider circle.

The Anthropocene as a framework of enquiry is, in spite of its many criticisms, still a useful model for studying environmental change in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Even as it conflates geographical difference with social relations of capitalism and power, and might be seen as positioning human agents as part of a geological force which diffuses potential for political action, the Anthropocene as a

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[39]Andreas Malm and Alf Hornborg, "The geology of mankind? A critique of the Anthropocene narrative" *The Anthropocene Review* 1, 1 (2014): 62; Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Jason Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (London: Verso, 2015).

[40] Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (London: Verso, 2016).

[42] Moore writes that it was in a conversation with Malm when he was a PhD student that Malm first suggested the phrase 'capitalocene'. See Moore's introduction to *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. Jason W. Moore (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016), 1.

geological epoch remains useful for understanding geological timescales, as Jeremy Davies has recently argued.[43] In the late eighteenth century, notions of geological time had a significant impact on the way people were starting to think differently, even ecologically, about the world. James Hutton's theory that the world was millions of years old, and building on the work of Comte de Buffon, and other European geologists, that the earth worked on a system of flux and reflux, shifted the way the writers in this thesis thought about and experienced environmental change.[44] As one example, in Barbauld's 1815 poem, "The First Fire", she discusses the lifecycle of coal:

> —Companion of the solitary man,
> From gayer scenes withheld! With thee he sits,
> Converses, moralizes; musing asks
> How many eras of uncounted time
> Have rolled away since thy black unctuous food
> Was green with vegetable life, and what
> This planet then: or marks, in sprightlier mood,
> Thy flickering smiles play around the' illumined room,
> And fancies gay discourse, life, motion, mirth,
> And half forgets he is a lonely creature.[45]

Here, the burning coal in the fire gives way to a moral discussion about the age and materiality of the coal. Perhaps drawing on her nephew Arthur Aikin's *Manual of Mineralogy* (1814), as McCarthy and Kraft suggest, Barbauld's "solitary man" wonders "how many eras of uncounted time" the coal has existed since it was "green with vegetable life".[46] The contrast between the black, dead coal, and the verdant liveliness of its previous form affords a level of vital agency to the coal as it now burns with new life in the hearth. The knowledge that so much time has passed since the coal was a living object, indicates a new perspective on deep ecological time. This appreciation for the ecological timescale of the coal leads the narrator to imagine what the rest of the

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[43] Jeremy Davies, *The Birth of the Anthropocene* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016), 12-14.
[44] Ibid., 23-24; Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1987), 61-95; Joe D. Burchfield, "The age of the Earth and the invention of geological time", *Geological Society, London, Special Publications* 143, (1998): 137-43; Noah Heringman, "Deep Time at the Dawn of the Anthropocene", *Representations* 129, 1 (2015): 56-85; Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Anthropocene Time", *History and Theory* 57, 1 (2018): 5-32; Hanna Roman, "Naming as Natural Process and Historical Narrative in Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*, 1749-55", *Romance Studies* 31, 3-3 (2013): 238-50.
[45] Barbauld, "The First Fire", in *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed., William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Ontario; New York; Essex: Broadview Press, 2002), 178.
[46] Ibid., n1, 178.

planet was like back then, although the poem stops short of elaborating further, suggesting perhaps that such an endeavour is beyond the capability of the imagination at this time. The fire nevertheless brings comfort and conviviality to the solitary narrator, allowing him to "half forget[] he is a lonely creature", which indicates the improvements to knowledge and sociability that burning the earth's natural resources can bring. This idea that advances in scientific knowledge and their uses in industry and for social improvement, require moral contemplation, is central to the writers I discuss in this thesis.

The writers in this thesis identify in various ways, political economy as causing the problems they see in the world and recognise that nature, or the exploitation of nature, is its first cause. Their environmental philosophies hope to offer, if not answers, then contemplation of partial answers, to those problems. In her preface to Samuel Johnson in *The British Novelists* (1810), Barbauld chastises Johnson's "philosophic view" of using reason as primary tool for moral decision-making.[47] Here, she writes that reason alone only works for "insulated beings, detached from all connexions and duties", but reminds her reader that "no man is so insulated: we are woven into the web of society". For Barbauld, this idea of the "web of society" is connected to her associationism: through "ties of companionship", experience, and duties, we are a patchwork of our influences. However, we also have practical freedom in the pursuit of the "abstract good" with regards to our duty to God, notions of which Barbauld argues are "generally obvious" to everyone. As Wharton has discussed, Barbauld's educational practice was "woven into everyday experiences", and as such provides a model of "sensory fellowship" with the world.[48] Barbauld's "Thoughts on the Inequality of Conditions" (c.1800) draws on this idea of a web of connection, but recognises the extent to which human and non-human relations are organised by political economy, when she discusses the ways in which sugar plantations and smugglers who loot their produce from sunken trade ships are connected by structural inequality.[49] This idea of "the web of society" is not dissimilar from Moore's ecocritical work on "the web of life", which draws on world-systems theory in its conception of a "world-ecology".[50]

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[47] *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 428.
[48] Wharton, "Inscribing on the Mind: Anna Letitia Barbauld's 'Sensible Objects'", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, 4 (2012): 531.
[49] Barbauld, "Thoughts on the Inequality of Conditions", *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 345-55.
[50] Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, ii.

Moore, like Malm, posits that the global climate crisis is a product of capitalism's ability to create "cheap nature", of labour, resources, and nature, and that through thinking of capitalism as a force of organizing the world, instead of separate from the environment, is key to understanding out current predicament.[51] As Claire Westall has discussed, this model of the "web" is a useful development of Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, in that it is organic, it flows like a network, it expands, and I would add that crucially, it is fragile.[52] In some ways, this thesis tests the fragility of 'the web of life' as the writers in this thesis try to record, if not try to change the trajectory of capitalism and its impact on the living world.

Associationism

The history and concept of associationism is widely understood, yet still requires some measure of explanation in this thesis. The influence of Lockean associationism has been long recognised for its influence on educational writers in the eighteenth century, and Wharton's recent monograph on the influence of Hartley's interpretation of Locke on women writers in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century offers a good explanation of its use as an early model of psychology for educational and domestic purposes, to which this thesis is indebted.[53] In essence, associationism as imagined by Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), marked a major shift in the understanding of the mind by challenging the dualist conceptions of mind-body distinction which had previously held sway in medical, religious, and environmental understanding.[54] Locke has come to be associated with the term *tabula rasa*, because of

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[51] Ibid., 193-219.
[52] Claire Westall, "World-literary resources and energetic materialism", *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 53, 3 (2017): 265-76.
[53] Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 7-14. Also see Hilton, *Women and the Shaping of the Nation's Young*, 23-34; William Uzgalis, "The Influence of John Locke", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Spring, 2014); Patrizia Nerozzi Bellman, "On the Sciences of Man in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Art: Anatomizing the Self", in *Bioethics and Biolaw through Literature*, ed. Daniela Carpi (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 162-77; Mark Blackwell, "The People Things Make: Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding and the Properties of the Self", *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 35 (2006): 77-94; William Walker, *Locke, Literary Criticism, and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[54] Locke, *Human Understanding*, 80-1. See also, Matthew Stuart, *Locke's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Michael Ayers, *Locke* (London: Routledge, 1991); John W. Yolton, *The Two Intellectual Worlds of John Locke: Man, Person, and Spirits in the "Essay"* (Ithaca; New York: Cornell University Press, 2004).

his argument against the concept that humans are born with innate knowledge.[55] Instead, Locke argued that "*all ideas come from sensation or reflection*", whereby ideas are formed in the mind firstly through sensory experience, which imprints "pictures" on the mind, and through reflecting on those images, they are connected with ideas.[56] It is through an engagement with external objects that those initial sensory experiences are triggered, and through which ideas about the world and man himself, are derived. This notion of an active, thinking mind marked a shift from ideas about the essentialism of the soul, although Locke himself did not challenge the soul's immateriality, and later paved the way for more materialist and atheistic philosophies, such as Voltaire's *Lettres Philosophiques* (1734), and David Hume's scepticism in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), whose work was fervently opposed in the 1790s, but remained a subversive influence on the women writers I discuss here.[57]

Locke's environmental ideas about the mind had a transformative effect on early feminist writing and arguments for women's education throughout the eighteenth century, by offering the notion that women were not, as had often been thought, essentially incapable of rational understanding.[58] Some writers such as Margaret Cavendish and Mary Astell held a Cartesian view on the grounds that recognising the exclusivity of the soul retained women's claims to salvation.[59] However, by the late eighteenth century Lockean associationism was woven into the fabric of religion and education. Another major influence on the understanding of science of mind for the writers in this thesis was the physician and theologian David Hartley's *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749), which gave a physiological account of the theory that sensory impressions are transmitted in a pattern of sequences

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[55] Locke, *Human Understanding*, 81.
[56] Ibid., 104.
[57] John W. Yolton, *Locke and French Materialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); George S. Rousseau, "Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres: Towards Defining the Origins of Sensibility", in *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 162; G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 3-4.
[58] Brandy Lain Schillace, "'Reproducing' Custom: Mechanical Habits and Female Machines in Augustan Women's Education", *Feminist Formations* 25, 1 (2013): 111-37; Kathryn J. Ready, "Damaris Cudworth Masham, Catherine Trotter Cockburn, and the Feminist Legacy of Locke's Theory of Personal Identity", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, 4 (2002): 563-76; Nancy J. Hirshmann and Kirsty Morna McClure (eds.), *Feminist Interpretations of John Locke*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).
[59] Joan K. Kinnaird, "Mary Astell and the Conservative Contribution to English Feminism", *The Journal of British Studies* 19, 1 (1979): 53-75; Eileen O'Neill, "Women Cartesians, 'Feminine Philosophy', and Historical Exclusion", in *Feminist Interpretations of René Descartes*, (ed.) Susan Bordo (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 231-57.

to the brain through vibrations.[60] For Hartley, this mechanistic account of the mind provided an explanation for the formations of associations over time, and critically, how to avoid the formation of false associations, which became important to arguments regarding education.[61] Hartley's associationism, although it functioned mechanically, did not lead him to materialism, but rather to an appreciation that we are a product of "the Grace and Goodness of God".[62] This pious aspect of his theory is related to his idea of "theopathy", in which he describes sensory experience as a development of emotions that leads to a greater love of God, and the "Humility and Self-annihilation".[63] When Priestley revised Hartley's theory in *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* (1775), he endorsed this notion of self-annihilation in the face of God, but also developed his theory of emotions to challenge the idea that an essential "spirit" resides in man.[64] Although Priestley radicalised associationism, he also popularised it, and the theory of "habitual associations" became well-understood within educational writing and rational dissenting and scientific circles.[65]

Anna Letitia Barbauld and Habitual Devotion

This section introduces Barbauld's environmental philosophy, which I argue was fundamental to the ideas developed by the other writers in this thesis. However, I have not devoted an entire chapter to Barbauld for several reasons. Firstly, Barbauld's use of associationism and its connection to ideas about nature, as well as her discussions of animal cruelty, have already been explored.[66] Secondly, I see Barbauld's science of

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[60] David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, His Expectations* (London: S. Richardson, 1749), 1:354.
[61] Ibid., 1: 65, 77.
[62] Ibid., 1: 511-12.
[63] Ibid., 1: 510.
[64] Joseph Priestley, *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* (London: J. Johnson, 1795), xx.
[65] See Robert E. Schofield, *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley: A Study of His Life and Work from 1773 to 1804* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2004), 72.
[66] Kathryn Ready, "'What then, poor Beastie!'"; Mary Ellen Bellanca, "Science, Animal Sympathy, and Anna Barbauld's 'The Mouse's Petition'", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, 1 (Fall, 2003): 47-67; Sharon Ruston, "Natural Rights and Natural History in Anna Barbauld and Mary Wollstonecraft"; Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain, 1750-1850* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2007); David Perkins, "Human Mouseness: Burns and Compassion for Animals", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 42, 1 (Spring, 2000): 1-15; Darren Howard, "Talking Animals and Reading Children: Teaching (dis) Obedience in John Aikin and Anna Barbauld's 'Evening's At Home', *Studies in Romanticism* 48, 4 (Winter, 2009): 641-66; Cosslett, *Talking Animals in British Children's Fiction, 1786-1914*, 28-34; Julia

mind as the rough starting point, if one exists, in the philosophical tradition I trace in this thesis. I offer instead, an overview of Barbauld's environmental philosophy, with a discussion of the scholarship already undertaken and analysis of some of her most significant early works. Like the other writers whose ideas I explore in this thesis, Barbauld's work spans multiple genres, including political essays, hymns and stories for children, epic, epistolary, and riddle poetry, and educational writing. Feminist literary historians, including Angela Keane, have long argued for the need to understand women's writing as using genres available to them, such as educational writing, sentimental poetry, and the domestic novel, as subversive sites for philosophical and political discourse.[67] I suggest that the range of genres discussed in this thesis all share associationism as a basic framework for expressing their ideas about nature and improvement. However, they are all nevertheless shaped by the literary forms in which they are communicated. Barbauld's widely read poems and children's literature remains a useful point of connection for the writers I discuss, as well as other late Romantics whose work she influenced, and in the case of Coleridge, she mentored.[68]

Recent scholarly interest in Barbauld has been primarily concerned with her devotional poetics, and development of a Unitarian culture of free-inquiry.[69] Isobel

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Saunders, "'The Mouse's Petition': Anna Laetitia Barbauld and the Scientific Revolution", *The Review of English Studies* 53, 212 (November, 2002): 500-16; Jane Spencer, "Creating Animal Experience in Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, 4 (November, 2010): 469-86; Carolyn Sigler, "Wonderland to Wasteland: Toward Historizing Environmental Activism in Children's Literature", *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 19, 4 (Winter, 1994): 148-53; Inhye Ha, "The 'Fellowship of Sense': Anna Letitia Barbauld and Interspecies Community", *Studies in Romanticism* 57, 3 (Fall, 2018): 453-78; Richard De Ritter, "Rational Souls and Animal Bodies: Race, Religion, and Cross-Species Sympathy in John Aikin and Anna Letitia Barbauld's *Evenings at Home* (1792-96)", *The Lion and the Unicorn* 42, 1 (January, 2018): 37-56.

[67] Angela Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s: Romantic Belongings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1-2. For a wider discussion of women's literary traditions and their politics in this period, see Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Elizabeth Eger, "Fashioning a Female Canon: Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and the Politics of Anthology", in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon*, ed. Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999): 201-15; Eleanor Ty, *Unsex'd Revolutionaries: Five Women Novelists of the 1790s* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Cheryl Turner, *Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992); Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Writing, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[68] William McCarthy, *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Voice of the Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 400. McCarthy notes that Coleridge and Barbauld first met in 1797 at the Barbauld's residence in Bristol where they discussed metaphysics as well as literature. McCarthy also notes Coleridge's early style as emulating Barbauld, 399-402.

[69] The literature on Barbauld's dissenting poetics is huge, but a useful overview would include Ready, "Dissenting Heads and Hearts: Joseph Priestley, Anna Barbauld, and Conflicting Attitudes towards Devotion within Rational Dissent", *Journal of Religious Studies* 34, 2 (June, 2010): 174-190; Daniel E. White, "The 'Joinerina': Anna Barbauld, the Aikin Family Circle, and Dissenting Public Sphere", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, 4 (Summer, 1999): 511-33; White, "'With Mrs Barbauld it is different':

Armstrong, Daniel P. Watkins, Sonia Hofkosh, Jon Mee, Emma Major, and Joanna Wharton have all discussed various aspects of Barbauld's contemplative, imaginative, devotional taste.[70] Such studies have tried to understand and get beyond dichotomies of reason and feeling in Barbauld's work, and suggest that she records a process of experience and reflection of the world, rather than an internalised subjectivity of private feeling or abstracted metaphysics. Hofkosh's discussion of Barbauld's "Washing Day" as an example of the way everyday experiences of attention to "material objects", "as mundane as putting out the washing", can lead to devotion through reflecting on the feelings that empirical observation produces in the mind, has been important to understanding Barbauld's idea of a habitual devotion.[71] Likewise, Wharton and Armstrong's discussion of Barbauld's use of associationism in illustrating how an everyday sensory engagement with objects, can inscribe on the mind images connected with the feelings they stimulate, which when reflected on lead to new ideas and a deeper appreciation of God.[72] However, Major's focus on Barbauld's use of natural imagery to convey the divine, and its connection to the rational dissenting scientific culture at Warrington, is perhaps the most significant to this thesis.[73]

The suggestion that Barbauld expresses both a vital and materialist view of nature as it relates to associationism, is worth unpacking. Barbauld shared neither the

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Dissenting Heritage and the Devotional Taste", in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. S. Knott and B. Taylor (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 474-92; Emma Major, "Nature, Nation, and Denomination: Barbauld's Taste for the Public", *ELH* 74, 4 (Winter, 2007): 909-30; William Keach, "Barbauld, Romanticism and the Survival of Dissent", *Essays and Studies* 51 (1998): 44-61; Maggie Favretti, "The Politics of Vision, Anna Barbauld's 'Eighteen Hundred and Eleven'", in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment*, 19-101; Isobel Armstrong, "Anna Letitia Barbauld: A Unitarian Poetics?" and Isobel Grundy, "'Slip-shod Measure' and 'Language of Gods': Barbauld's Stylistic Range", in *Anna Letitia Barbauld: New Perspectives*, ed. William McCarthy and Olivia Murphy (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2014), 59-82, 29-58; Daniel P. Watkins, *Anna Letitia Barbauld and Eighteenth-Century Visionary Poetics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

[70] Armstrong, "Anna Letitia Barbauld: A Unitarian Poetics?", 59-82. Watkins has discussed much of Barbauld's oeuvre through the lens of imagination, however chapters 2 and 3 on pastoral and anti-pastoral imagination is probably the most useful to this thesis: see *Anna Letitia Barbauld and Eighteenth-Century Visionary Poetics*. Sonia Hofkosh and Joanna Wharton have discussed themes of materiality in Barbauld's poetry and children's writing: see Hofkosh, "Materiality, Affect, Event: Barbauld's Poetics of the Everyday"; Wharton, "'The Things Themselves': Sensory Images in *Lessons for Children* and *Hymns in Prose*", in *Anna Letitia Barbauld: New Perspectives*, 83-106, 107-26. Major discusses Barbauld's taste for nature in "Nature, Nation, and Denomination: Barbauld's Taste for the Public", 909-30. Mee discusses the function of enthusiasm in Barbauld's devotional poetics in *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 173-213.

[71] Hofkosh, "Materiality, Affect, Event", 84-6.

[72] Wharton, "'The Things Themselves'", 107-26; Armstrong, "Anna Letitia Barbauld: A Unitarian Poetics?", 59-82

[73] Major, "Nature, Nation, and Denomination", 909-30.

philosophical nor the theological convictions of her friend Priestley.[74] As Mee and McCarthy have discussed, there were significant differences too in their views on how devotion ought to be expressed, with Priestley preferring "candour", and accusing Barbauld of placing too much weight on "feeling".[75] However, they did both believe that materialism and Christianity could coexist and inform one another, while Barbauld's equivocality on the nature of the soul indicates an openness to Priestley's materialism, even if she was not a materialist herself.[76] Rather, Barbauld's well-discussed associationism, her faith in Providence, and her devotional taste carry potential for an ecocritical approach. Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* has suggested a philosophy of "vital materiality" which recognises the "vibrancy of things" and how material objects effect and affect human lives and histories, at the same time as questioning the uniqueness of human subjectivity.[77] Bennett's work, alongside others discussed in this Introduction, forms the contextual backdrop of my approach to Barbauld, and the other writers in this thesis. In *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777), Joseph Priestley makes a radical claim against Christian and Cartesian orthodoxies. He asserts that matter is "not that inert substance that it has been supposed to be", rather, it is "a substance possessed of the property of extension, and of powers of attraction or repulsion".[78] Matter, in other words, is active. As a dissenting theologian and experimental scientist, Priestley held a position that might best be defined as theistic materialism.[79] In some ways, this is comparable with Bennett's vital materialism: a belief in the agency of matter. But whereas for Bennett, "vitality" is the "capacity of things… to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own", for the theistic materialist everything depends on God as the omnipotent first cause.[80]

Priestley's sermon "On Habitual Devotion" was delivered in Wakefield in 1767. In his preface to the published version of 1782 he proudly informs readers that the sermon had inspired Barbauld's poem "An Address to the Deity". In "On Habitual Devotion", Priestley states that:

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[74] McCarthy, *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Voice of the Enlightenment*, 234.
[75] Ibid., 154; Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation*, 176.
[76] Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 45.
[77] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, vi.
[78] Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* vol.1 (London; Birmingham: J. Johnson, 1777), 2.
[79] See Robert E. Schofield, *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley: A Study of His Life and Work from 1773 to 1804* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2004), 72.
[80] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, vii.

> The most abandoned and profligate of mankind are those who live without God in the world, entirely thoughtless of his Being, perfections, and providence; having their hearts wholly engrossed with this world and the things of it… These persons may be called practical atheists; and the temper of mind they have acquired, often leads them to deny both natural and revealed religion.[81]

Priestley's description of devotion as a "temper of the mind" suggests a need to control the mind with religious practice which he imagines as a recognition of "natural and revealed religion". Without such control the mind is prone to be engrossed with material "things". The sermon goes on to explain how such a materialistic interest in objects can lead to greed, which occludes the idea of God. For Priestley, the perfected human state means seeing "God in every thing" and "every thing in God". In this sense, Priestley might be interpreted as implying that material desires can be overcome when all objects can be a path to the divine. There are evident risks involved in this idea if objects of material desire that cause harm, entrench structural inequality, and involve the accumulation of wealth, can be justified by ideas of devotional practice, which I explore in this thesis. For Priestley, habitual devotional practice becomes a way of connecting and reforming the material world with the eternal. Hartleyan associationism works here as a means of connecting the mind to the idea of God through repeated practice. Barbauld's "Address to the Deity" (1773) makes similar claims to connecting the mind to God through repeatedly associating material objects with the divine:

> GOD of my life! and author of my days!
> Permit my feeble voice to lisp thy praise;
> And trembling, take upon a mortal tongue
> That hallow'd name to harps of Seraphs sung.
> Yet here the brightest Seraphs could no more
> Than hide their faces, tremble, and adore.
> Worms, angels, men, in every different sphere
> Are equal all, for all are nothing here.
> All nature faints beneath the mighty name,
> Which nature's works, thro' all their parts proclaim.
> I feel that name my inmost thoughts controul,
> And breathe an awful stillness thro' my soul;
> As by a charm, the waves of grief subside;
> Impetuous passion stops her headlong tide;
> At thy felt presence all emotions cease,
> And my hush'd spirit finds a sudden peace,

[81] Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, *Sermons* (London: 1791), 3.

Till every worldly thought within me dies,
And earth's gay pageants vanish from my eyes;
Till all my sense is lost in infinite,
And one vast object fills my aching sight.[82]

In these lines 'all' both unifies and disunifies: "Worms, angels, men, in every different sphere/ are equal all", yet their plurality makes them all "nothing". Next, "All nature" collapses beneath the weight of divine power, but at the same time the word of God is known through "all [the] parts" of nature. This idea of nature speaking the word of God, makes nature a point of connection between the mind and the divine. In this sense, Barbauld adopts a more pantheist view of God by attributing a measure of agency and vitality to nature. Looking at the final two lines: "all my sense is lost in infinite/And one vast object fills my aching sight", the poem suggests that through studying nature the mind is lost to its vastness, and her perception shifts from the close and detailed towards ideas about the whole universe. The idea that fixing the mind on nature can lead to knowledge and appreciation for the "infinite" seems to take an almost Spinozist or monist perspective, until "GOD is seen in all, and all in GOD":[83]

If the "Address" experiments with such unorthodox concepts, it insistently reaffirms Barbauld's personal faith in the Bible. Barbauld's vacillations seem to accommodate different philosophical positions, but all of these ultimately lead towards God:

I read his awful name, emblazon'd high
With golden letters on th' illumin'd sky;
Nor less the mystic characters I see
Wrought in each flower, inscrib'd on every tree[84]

Devotion becomes a habit of mind, or "habitual devotion", which leads the individual to God through the observation of natural objects. Here, Barbauld's empirical attention to the details of the flowers and trees becomes an exercise in seeing God on earth. "Read[ing]" God in the sky becomes a natural progression from micro to macro observation, but the act of observing nature close by is not a "less[er]" act than looking to heaven. In this sense, perceiving nature empirically is a sensory experience as much as it is a rational one. The shift from a large scale visual blaze in the sky to small scale

[82] Ibid., 41-2.
[83] Barbauld, "An Address to the Deity", in *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. McCarthy and Kraft, 43.
[84] Ibid., 43.

details of the colours of the petals, texture of the bark, and perhaps the smell of the pollen and sap, emphasise the differences in sensory experience of God to be had in seeing God up close on earth and far away in the sky. Moreover, the reference to the act of reading suggests a similarly rational and emotional practice.[85] In this sense, Barbauld's sensual experience of nature leads her to a greater appreciation for God's infinite knowledge, which in turn leads her to lose herself in nature, and into knowledge of God.[86]

The idea that studying nature leads to practical knowledge through devotion is central to the dissenters' ideas about the continuity between social improvement and Providence. In her discussion of Barbauld's 1773 poem "The Invitation", Major has argued that in many ways Barbauld promotes the scientific practices undertaken at Warrington, taking the view that as rational dissenters they understand nature better than anyone.[87] The idea that the rational dissenters "appropriated nature" for both scientific and religious purposes is central to Major's argument that natural imagery was essential to their claims "to purer faith and patriotism".[88] The poem, which is ostensibly topographical, acts as an advertisement for the Warrington Academy, celebrating, according to McCarthy and Kraft, "the achievements of liberal progress in the form of futuristic technology".[89] The poem is also epistolary, and addresses Barbauld's friend Elizabeth Belsham, a frequent visitor to Warrington, and invites her to share in the pleasures of female friendship, and by extension, participate in and spread through sociable action, the improving inventions in which the academy was engaged.[90] The first half of "The Invitation" describes the beauty of the landscape at Warrington, and the pleasures to be had from observing, tasting, hearing, and smelling nature's offerings. Belsham is invited "To taste the grateful shade of spreading trees/And drink the spirit of

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[85] As Major has discussed, Barbauld's "metaphors of books and nature become interchangeable" through her use of Lockean associationism, developing in her child readers "a taste for the countryside" in *Madam Britannia: Women, Church, and Nature 1712-1812* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2012), 223.
[86] For a fuller discussion of Barbauld's habitual devotion and educationalism in this passage, see Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 37-8; Mary Hilton, "'Child of Reason': Anna Barbauld and the Origins of Progressive Pedagogy", in *Practical Visionaries: Women, Education and Social Progress, 1790-1930*, ed. Pam Hirsch and Mary Hilton (Oxford, New York: Routledge, 2000), 21-38.
[87] Major, "Nature, Nation, and Denomination", 911.
[88] Ibid..
[89] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 49.
[90] Anne Janowitz has discussed the familial, social, and intellectual bonds at Warrington and suggests that 'The Invitation' reflects the disagreements and ruptures in the academy, particularly those between those and Priestley, see *Women Romantic Poets: Anna Barbauld and Mary Robinson* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2004), 42-8.

the mountain breeze", after filling her "fancy" "From glittering scenes which strike the dazzled sight/With mimic grandeur and illusive light" of the city where "hollow friendships", noise, pollution, and crowds abound.[91] At Warrington, by contrast there are only "brighter climes and more indulgent skies", and sounds of "the wild warblings of the woodland quire".[92] The comforting picture of the landscape at Warrington where Belsham might be "wrapt in careless ease" by the "bosom of the grassy vale", is a product of those earlier sensory experiences.[93] After perceiving nature and admiring its qualities, Belsham can then sink into it as Barbauld described in "Address to the Deity". This sinking into nature then leads to a more detailed, empirical knowledge: "As FLORA'S breath, by some transforming power/Had chang'd an icicle into a flower:/Its name, and hue, the scentless plant retains/And winter lingers in its icy veins".[94] This change in perception, from viewing the vastness of the landscape, to a closer detailed observation of the snowdrop in winter, becomes a botanical study of the flower's lifecycle — just one of the scientific practices offered at Warrington.[95]

The poem then moves onto describing the practical implementation of the academy's education, as the students watch a canal being built:

> The sons of toil with many a weary stroke
> Scoop the hard bosom of the solid rock;
> Resistless thro' the stiff opposing clay
> With steady patience work their gradual way;
> Compel the genius of th' unwilling flood
> Thro' the brown horrors of the aged wood;
> 'Cross the lone waste the silver urn they pour,
> And chear the barren heath or sullen moor:
> The traveller with pleasing wonder sees
> The white sail gleaming thro' the dusky trees;
> And views the alter'd landscape with surprise,
> And doubts the magic scenes which around him rise.[96]

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[91] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 50. In her discussion of the cultural landscape at Warrington, Janowitz explains how the poem "distils the benevolence of the Warrington ethos" in "Amiable and radical sociability. Janowitz, "Anna Barbauld's 'free familiar conversation'", in *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770-1840*, ed. Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 68.
[92] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 50.
[93] Ibid., 50.
[94] Ibid., 51.
[95] Felicity James, "Religious Dissent and the Aikin-Barbauld Circle, 1740-1860: an introduction", in *Religious Dissent and the Aikin-Barbauld Circle, 1740-1860*, ed. Felicity James and Ian Inkster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 13.
[96] Barbauld, "The Invitation", in *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 51

This passage communicates the wonder and violence involved in industrial improvement schemes.[97] Here, unlike earlier in the poem, nature's "bosom" is less verdant and welcoming, but "hard" to the workers' "weary" attempts to cut through it. In spite of the workers' "Resistless" toil, the clay is still "opposing", and although the water system is "genius" it is "unwilling" to pass through "brown horrors" of the "aged wood", to meet the "barren heath" and "sullen moor". This anthropomorphisation of the canal and the landscape presents nature as reluctant, even harmed by the change forced upon it, where their resistance is matched in labour only by the workers who meet them in the struggle. In one sense, this picture of improvement is one of labour exploitation where, as Malm and Moore have argued, industrialisation requires the extraction of natural and human labour at ground level.[98] On the other hand, the canal work is viewed by the traveller as a wondrous experience with a positive result. The canal system hopes to "cheer" the heath and moor and clear the "lone waste" of the uncultivated landscape. The view of "aged" land as lying dormant, and unchanged, suddenly transforming by human action, is so astonishing that the traveller doubts what he sees as "magic". Ultimately, in spite of the toil involved, the canal is a shining example of scientific progress. Barbauld describes the Mersey canal as a product of geological research into mines, which is possibly a reference to Alexander von Humboldt's work, which she read, and how by "the guiding hand" of man, nature could be manipulated into improvement.[99] Moreover, Barbauld insists that such canal enterprises are sociable endeavours; a product of "social circles round the land".[100] This shift between the hopes of improvement dissenting science could bring to human societies, and the recognition that nature is harmed in the process, suggests a moral uneasiness with the idea that we can fully know nature. Although we might see light through "gleaming" inventions, there is also an unknowability in nature that lurks in the "dusky trees", which we should not ignore.[101]

The moral and material consequences of attempting to discover all nature's secrets, are expressed later in the poem. On the one hand, Barbauld presents Warrington

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[97] Jane Stabler has emphasised the wonder and magic in the canal building scene in "'Know me what I paint': Women Poets and the Aesthetics of the Sketch, 1770-1830", in *Romantic Women Poets: Genre and Gender*, ed. Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Cecilia Pietropoli (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007), 25.
[98] See Malm, *Fossil Capital*, i; Moore, *Capitalism and the Web of Life*, 1-2.
[99] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 52; McCarthy, *Voice of the Enlightenment*, 662 n38
[100] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 52.
[101] Ibid., 52.

as a place where scientific progress can flourish without censure: "Here nature opens all her secret springs,/ And heav'n-born science plumes her eagle wings:/ Too long had bigot rage, with malice swell'd,/ Crush'd her strong pinions, and her flight withheld".[102] Here, Warrington represents scientific and religious freedom, since the two English universities, Oxford and Cambridge, both required students to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, which effectively excluded dissenters from attending. Still, it is the dissenters' devotional practice which informs their scientific use of nature that makes their knowledge a contribution to social progress: "Knowledge to you unlocks the classic page;/ And virtue blossoms for a better age". Here, knowledge gained from "secret" but "divine" nature, aids understanding from reading books, and in its "virtue" it brings about improvement to society. Scientific practice at Warrington is itself a practice in associationism: through "[p]erception quick" and "fond enthusiastic thought" students gain "quick affections" which produces virtue and "friendship ardent". Because this scientific practice is virtuous, it scorns at "vernal vice", and "interest's sordid bribe". However, the quest for knowledge and improvement may lead others to pursue imperial and commercial enterprises:

> While those, impell'd by some resistless force,
> O'er seas and rocks shall urge their vent'rous course;
> Rich fruits matur'd by glowing suns behold,
> And China's groves of vegetable gold;
> From every land the various harvest spoil,
> And bear the tribute to their native soil:
> But tell each land (while every toil they share,
> Firm to sustain, and resolute to dare,)
> MAN is the nobler growth our realms supply,
> And SOULS are ripen'd in our northern sky.[103]

Here the "resistless" force that earlier drove the canal workers' tools into the clay, impels merchants to seek "[r]ich fruits" from foreign lands like China, although in the end "every land" will be sought. The double meaning of the word "spoil" suggests both natural produce, as well as the harm done to the land by taking them. Barbauld invokes ideas about imperial botany and commerce, which in the late eighteenth century were central to the botanical collections within intellectual circles like Leiden and Kew, and

[102] Ibid., 53.
[103] Ibid., 54.

were becoming a major aspect of East India Company policy.[104] Barbauld's final point, that it is the "nobler growth" of "MAN", capitalised perhaps to indicate the upright men of Britain, which is required to forge more moral paths around the globe. The reminder, that "SOULS are ripen'd in our northern sky" might further intimate that virtuous science does not require pillaging eastern nations, but occurs there in Warrington. My second chapter on Hamilton's environmental philosophy discusses imperial science in more depth.

Barbauld's warning that the "force" of scientific pursuit carries the risk of imperialism, is followed by a more immediate fear that empirical observation itself might be an intrusion on nature:

> Some pensive creep along the shelly shore;
> Unfold the silky texture of a flower;
> With sharpen'd eyes inspect an hornet's sting,
> And all the wonders of an insect's wing.
> Some trace with curious search the hidden cause
> Of nature's changes, and her various laws;
> Untwist her beauteous web, disrobe her charms,
> And hunt her to her elemental forms.[105]

In these lines, Barbauld presents the "pensive" and "creep[ing]" interrogation of the shell-collector as careful, calculated attention, both physical and psychological; an action that if not explicitly sinister, conveys a clear predator-prey dynamic. Here, nature is gendered female, with the delicate "silky texture" of the flower unfolded, the "beauteous web" untwisted and disrobed, and its "elemental forms" hunted by the male scientist, suggesting a measure of masculine force. The scientist's "sharpen'd eyes" are met in this battle the by "hornet's sting", implying that nature has its own defences to protect "her various laws" from violation. In this sense, Barbauld's gendering of nature in this passage is not entirely generic. Nature here is not passive, it asserts its autonomy, and overcomes its position as the subject of the scientist's gaze. Here, nature has a vibrant materiality, with "silky textures" and twisted webs, but also has its own subjectivity in its hidden causes, laws, and charms. This passage of vital materialism quickly melts into a defence of the scientist's pursuit of nature: what about the "cordial

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[104] For a discussion of literary responses to imperial botany, including Barbauld, see Alan Bewell, *Nature's in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 2, 16.
[105] *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 54.

drops" and "herbs" that might be found to ease "burning wound[s]" and "fainting head[s]" the poem seems to ask. This shift tone, from wonder at nature's form to hopes for its use in improving human lives pits nature's interests in self-preservation against the interests of improving medical knowledge. Here, human lives come at the cost of non-human lives. By presenting both arguments, Barbauld leaves it for the reader to contemplate the moral dilemma for themselves.

The final verses of "The Invitation" describe the final, providential hopes of the Warrington project:

> While others, consecrate to higher aims,
> Whose hallow'd bosoms glow with purer flames,
> Love in their heart, persuasion in their tongue,
> With words of peace shall charm the list'ning throng,
> Draw the dread veil that wraps th' eternal throne,
> And launch our souls into the bright unknown.[106]

The associationist approach to nature cultivated at the Warrington Academy here becomes an act of "purer" devotion and benevolence, where their scientific knowledge is spread with "love" and "peace" to a receptive congregation.[107] The image of the rational dissenters throwing their souls into "the bright unknown" suggests a kind of blind hopefulness that their approach will lead to providential fulfilment, but also an acknowledgement that such decisions mean embracing uncertainty when drawing "the dread veil that wraps th' eternal throne". For Barbauld, fear is but a thin sheath obscuring her view of God, yet the sense of uneasiness held in the word "dread" recognises the leap of faith she asks her readers to make and leaves open the possibility that she too may be wrong. The penultimate choice Barbauld gives her readers is reflective of the dualisms of light and dark, improvement and harm, micro and macro, and reason and feeling, that mark the rest of the poem. However, in the close of the poem Barbauld softens the harsh binary choices she has just described by offering a gentle suggestion that the form of dissenting science she has just promoted may be wrong. In a sudden shift from the preceding line of infinite "unknown" scope, Barbauld admits that the themes her poem has discussed may be too "arduous" a task for her Muse to undertake. In what may seem like a critique of her friend, Barbauld's Muse is

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[106] Ibid., 55.
[107] See Major, "Nature, Nation, and Denomination", 911-3.

"[u]nequal", her colours "too weak" and her lines "too faint" to produce concrete philosophical answers, and so her subject "folds up her fluttering wing/And hides her head in the green lap of spring." In this sense, Barbauld's lines suggest a retreat from the philosophical discourse of the poem, although they do not suggest a total retreat from her philosophical ideas. By softly sinking into nature's lap, Barbauld's Muse gives herself over to nature, accepting either divine connection through habitual devotion, or a "dread veil". The tender tone of her lines does not force her ideas on her readers, but rather they invite, as the poem's title suggests, moral contemplation of the verdant philosophy she has described.[108]

Wharton and Hilton have discussed the way Barbauld then illustrates habitual devotion to children in *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781), teaching them associationist techniques when in nature, in order to hear and see God in "in every sound we hear" and "all that our eyes behold".[109] In her preface to *Hymns in Prose*, Barbauld conveys the Lockean foundations of her work:

> The peculiar design of this publication is, to impress devotional feeling as early as possible on the infant mind; fully convinced as the author is, that they cannot be impressed too soon, and that a child, to feel the full force of the idea of God, ought never to remember the time when he had no such idea — to impress them by connecting religion with a variety of sensible objects; with all that he sees, all he hears, all that affects his young mind with wonder or delight; and thus by deep, strong, and permanent associations, to lay the best foundation for practical devotion in future life.[110]

Wharton describes this passage as establishing a "language of associationism", in which Barbauld conveys the idea of seeking to effect "an immersion in pleasurable sensory impressions" by forging concrete habits of attention to ideas with which a child might be familiar.[111] Objects that Barbauld introduces in *Hymns in Prose* are simple: birds "warble in the shade", "young lambs can bleat…and skip about", brooks have a "pleasant murmur".[112] To her child reader, these everyday objects become "sensible

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[108] Watkins has discussed these lines as a response to her earlier poem, 'Corsica', in which she sought poetic liberty in the price of "blood", but here finds free inquiry in the pastoral landscape. See *Visionary Poetics*, 55.
[109] Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 47-54; Hilton, "'Child of Reason': Anna Barbauld and the Origins of Progressive Pedagogy", 27-35.
[110] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 238.
[111] Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 47.
[112] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 243-44.

objects", teaching the child to pay attention to the verdant vitality of natural experience.[113] On one level, these accounts of nature are lessons in natural lifecycles, where children learn about chicks hatching from their eggs, and lambs falling on "soft grass", each one a lesson in God's ecological design. For instance, the lambs can fall on the "carpet" of grass without being hurt because "it is spread on purpose to receive you."[114] Here, lambs fall onto the grass to be received by God, much like Barbauld herself did at the close of "The Invitation". Nature here too is given a vitality: lambs also "may thank him in their hearts".[115] Barbauld makes clear that nature itself does not experience habitual devotion in the way of humans, and emphasises the importance of praising God "with our tongues" because "we are better than they, and can praise him better."[116] Here, material components that aid the senses, like tongues, are used to teach abstract ideas about God and hierarchical distinctions between species. Nevertheless, the passage may be confusing to a child reader, who would surely recognise that lambs too have tongues and are capable of verbal communication, even if it is unintelligible to all but other sheep and an omnipotent God. In this sense, Barbauld's providential faith in the superiority of humans over the rest of nature is illustrated with a vital materiality that in some ways undermines her speciesist prejudice.

Returning to Bennett, who argues for an understanding of the world and of ourselves as vitally material, to "theorize a vitality intrinsic to materiality as such, and to detach materiality from the figures of passive, mechanistic, or divinely infused substance."[117] She continues: "This vibrant matter is not the raw material for the creative activity of humans or God".[118] Clearly, there is a gulf between religious and non-religious perspectives on causation. As Wharton has discussed, there are also "interesting parallels between Bennett's post-environmental thinking and Barbauld's writings on nature: for one thing, both material turns challenge a conceptual distancing from the particular; for another, they both use a sensuous language to promote certain affective states".[119] Bennett's deliberate anthropomorphisation of nonhuman life is also

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[113] Barbauld uses this phrase to describe the process of sensory experience through observation of objects in 'Thoughts On the Devotional Taste, On Sects and On the Establishment' in *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 222.
[114] Ibid., 240.
[115] Ibid., 240.
[116] Ibid., 240.
[117] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, xiii.
[118] Ibid., xiii.
[119] Joanna Wharton, "'Living Waters': Christianity and Materialism in Priestley and Barbauld". Paper presented at the British Association for Romantic Studies conference, University of York, 28 July 2017.

notable: there might be parallels with Barbauld's "Mouse's Petition" and "An Inventory of the Furniture in Dr Priestley's Study", both of which have been much discussed within the field of animal studies.[120] Her writings demonstrate an alertness to what Bennett calls "thing-power". Barbauld also explores climatic forces – the "glad impulse" of "Dissolving snows" in "On the Backwardness of the Spring" (1771), the "new mould a climate and create the soul" in "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven", and the personification of Winter in "Inscription for an Ice House", which Lisa Vargo has recently discussed in terms of natural rights and the rights of Nature.[121]

Reading Barbauld's writing gives a sense of nature as vital matter – as one great "all" arrived at through attentiveness to particulars.[122] It also raises ethical questions about particularity, and the way treating nature as a scientific subject changes human-nonhuman relationships. Take, for example, the almost living detail of "The Caterpillar" (c. 1816), a poem that circumscribes the practical ethics of attentiveness, and builds on the contemplative wariness she expressed about scientific intrusion in "The Invitation":

> No, helpless thing, I cannot harm thee now;
> Depart in peace, thy little life is safe,
> For I have scanned thy form with curious eye,
> Noted the silver line that streaks thy back,
> The azure and the orange that divide
> Thy velvet sides; thee, houseless wanderer,
> My garment has enfolded, and my arm
> Felt the light pressure of thy hairy feet;
> Thou hast curled round my finger; from its tip,
> Precipitous descent! with stretched out neck,
> Bending thy head in airy vacancy,
> This way and that, inquiring, thou hast seemed
> To ask protection; now, I cannot kill thee.[123]

Here, Barbauld is confronted with a caterpillar, who in the past she has viewed obliquely as a pest, but now, when she observes one close up, and notices its material variety, with its silver streaks, azure and orange stripes, velvety texture, and hairy feet, she experiences the caterpillar as a living, sensory being, with a will to live. Through

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[120] Heather Keenleyside offers a refreshing take on these poems as well as 'The Caterpillar' in *Animals and Other People: Literary Forms and Living Beings in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 204-10.
[121] Lisa Vargo, "Anna Barbauld and Natural Rights: The Case of 'Inscription for an Ice-House'", *European Romantic Review* 27, 3 (2016): 331-39.
[122] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 41.
[123] Ibid., 179-80.

viewing and feeling the caterpillar's material components, the caterpillar's subjectivity becomes known, and forms an affective fellowship of vitalism that changes the narrator's subject position, and in doing so, her decision to kill the caterpillar. The poem then turns to the irrationality of affective mercy: she has "crushed whole families beneath [her] foot", "poured on their devoted heads/ The vials of destruction" without "pity".[124] But this particular caterpillar has made her feel for "Thine individual existence, life/And fellowship of sense with all that breathes".[125] Attentiveness to the particular often leads towards the universal in Barbauld's writing, even if only to make us acknowledge the inevitability that a system of ethics based on sympathy is limited by positionality, as Alice Den Otter argues in her article on pests and parasites in "The Caterpillar" and "Thoughts on the Inequality of Conditions" (1807).[126] Den Otter argues that the narrator's recognition of the caterpillar's subjectivity, is comparable with Barbauld's description of pillagers of trade ships in "Thoughts", where what is at first seen as a "parasite" is recognised as playing an important part in redistributing wealth, or cabbages in the case of "The Caterpillar".[127] Here, Barbauld's attention to the particular leads her to an affective and moral position, suggesting also, that her affective associationism does indeed lead to moral improvement, however limited in scope and effect.

What Bennett calls for is a "greater attentiveness to the active power of things", but this is by her own admission insufficient in the face of ecological disaster.[128] In other words, individual action is necessary but not sufficient to political change on the macro level. Similarly, in defence of her "micropolitics" of "the bodily disciplines through which ethical sensibilities and social relations are formed and reformed", Bennett argues that "There will be no greening of the economy, no redistribution of wealth, no enforcement or extension of rights without human dispositions, moods, and cultural ensembles hospitable to these effects".[129] To put it bluntly, however, there is always the risk that such sensibilities terminate in mere mindfulness, a politically inert,

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[124] Ibid., 180.
[125] Ibid., 180.
[126] Alice Den Otter, "Pests, Parasites, and Positionality: Anna Letitia Barbauld and 'The Caterpillar'", *Studies in Romanticism* 42, 2 (Summer, 2004): 209-30.
[127] Ibid., 220-24.
[128] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, v.
[129] Ibid., xii.

commodified, potentially narcissistic form of human self-improvement. These are the moral questions the writers in this thesis explore.

Structure of the thesis

The first chapter in this thesis looks at Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796), and her affective epistemology, which I argue tries to overcome the individualism and narcissism of sympathetic responses to nature, as she encounters various industrial and pre-industrial landscapes. My second chapter looks at Hamilton's environmental philosophy through her engagement with ideas about waste and agricultural improvement in colonial India, England, and her homeland of Scotland in *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), and *Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808). My third chapter explores Edgeworth's children's stories from 1796 to 1825, looking at her associationist lessons in natural history over the period that sees a shift from pre-industrial subsistence to the birth of the steam engine, and how Edgeworth's science of mind is used to negotiate the moral effects of improvement throughout this period. My final chapter repositions Shelley amongst this group of writers and considers her engagement with the associationist tradition in her rarely discussed short stories for *The Keepsake*. In particular, I suggest that these stories reflect on the loss of ecological ideas like Barbauld's and Wollstonecraft's by the 1830s, when she wrote most of her gift book tales. Each of these chapters focus on science of mind as a framework for these writers' environmental thought, and show, through their discussion of human and nonhuman nature relations, attention to processes of industrial change, and affective and rational responses, ways of understanding the environmental problems we live with today.

1. Natural philosophy and the limits of improvement in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Short Residence*

> It is indeed to be lamented, that lately we have only had the descriptions of good-humoured travellers; and, when novelty and civility gave a dazzling charm to each scene, we must of course expect to hear frivolous superficial remarks. Those who can readily gather flowers, will not laboriously turn up the earth for the most valuable minerals; and, they who are very scrupulous will not say anything that the world at large will not approve of, seldom think for themselves, or attain simple dignity of diction.[1]

In her "Advertisement" to *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796), Mary Wollstonecraft describes her approach to writing the travelogue as an experiment in affective epistemology, a project of "relating the effect different objects had produced on [her] mind and feelings whilst the impression was still fresh."[2] In the text itself, Wollstonecraft often insists, as she did in her withering review of Hester Lynch Piozzi's travel writing in 1789, on the importance of revealing the pleasures of "sportive" nature to be found in observing and experiencing natural objects, as well as relating what John Whale has called, "the dark entropic underside of Wollstonecraft's perfectibilist optimism."[3] I argue in this chapter, that Wollstonecraft develops a natural philosophy in *Letters* that, although often generic, also seems to draw on a Barbauldian idea of habitual devotion, in which nature becomes a route to divine connection, new knowledge of God's creation, and ultimately the improvement of society. Wollstonecraft's emphasis on the affective states brought about by perceiving and studying nature reveals positive relationships with nature that result in habitual devotion, as well as the harmful effects that attempts to improve society cause to the planet and human mind. This chapter shows how Wollstonecraft's *Letters* uses an affective epistemology to reveal the connections between beneficent nature, the individual, and sensibility's action in society; an experiment that entails questioning providential beliefs in a benevolent relationship between humans and nature, and shows

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[1] Mary Wollstonecraft, review of *Observations and Reflections, made in the course of a Journey through France, Italy and Germany*, by Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Analytical Review* 4 (June 1789), in *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft* 7, ed. Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1989), 110.
[2] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, ed. Ingrid Horrocks (Ontario: Broadview Editions, 2013) 75.
[3] Ibid., 72; John Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure 1789-1832: Aesthetics, Politics, and Utility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 94.

how a faith in social improvement, so essential to her own philosophy, is a cause of environmental destruction.[4] In the second section of this chapter I explore how Wollstonecraft applies empiricism to her feelings inspired by nature to reveal the affiliations between women and cows within a system of labour that exploits the bodies of both. I then show how Wollstonecraft figures the exploitation of nature as a barrier to connecting with God, and how a sense of divine duty to both humanity and the planet could be reimagined without its improving impulse.

Wollstonecraft, like the other writers discussed in this thesis, saw science of mind and natural philosophy as intimately connected, and in an age of industrialisation she took the consequences of toiling "the earth for valuable minerals" as a serious philosophical concern.[5] Wollstonecraft states that her intention in *Letters* is to "form a just idea of the nature of man" by comparing different societies across Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, and discriminating the "natural from the acquired difference."[6] The ensuing attempt to explain the entanglement of social, natural, and moral forces that can "harmonise to tranquillity" or simply "harm" is what drives the "usefulness" of the text.[7] Binary distinctions between human and non-human nature, society and the divine

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[4] For discussion of Wollstonecraft's religious beliefs, particularly her dissenting faith and later turn towards natural religion, see: Barbara Taylor, "For the Love of God: Religion and the Erotic Imagination in Wollstonecraft's Feminism", in *Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Jane Moore (London: Routledge, 2017) 520-25; Melissa A. Butler, "Wollstonecraft versus Rousseau: Natural Religion and the Sex of Virtue and Reason", in *Man, God, and Nature in the Enlightenment*, ed. Donald C. Jr Mell, E.D. Braun, and Lucia M. Palmer (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1988) 65-73. Deborah Weiss has argued that the Wollstonecraftian figure of the female philosopher provided other women writers, including Wollstonecraft herself, with the formal tools for discussing moral philosophy, religion, education, and ideas of social and individual progress in literary form: *The Female Philosopher and her Afterlives: Mary Wollstonecraft, the British Novel, and the Transformations of Feminism, 1796-1811* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) 1-49.

[5] *Works*, 110. Scholarship on eighteenth-century middle and upper-class women's scientific education in the late eighteenth century includes: Ann B. Shteir, "Botanical Dialogues: Maria Jacson and Women's Popular Science Writing in England", *Eighteenth Century Studies* 23, 3 (Spring, 1990) 301-17; Shteir, "Linnaeus's Daughters: Women and British Botany", in *Women and the Structure of Society*, ed. Barbara J. Harris and JoAnn K. McNamara (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1984) 67-73. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have discussed women's involvement in scientific discourse as part of a gendered and class analysis of women's education and exclusion from most formal scientific institutions in *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987). Elizabeth Eger positions the scientific community of the later Bluestockings within the Lockean paradigm of improving the female mind in *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 30-1. While the recent scholarly turn towards what has been called early environmental thought is vast, those that focus on contemporary women's discourse on the connections between industrialisation, agricultural improvement and environmental damage include: Anne Milne, *"Lactilla Tends Her Fav'rite Cow": Ecocritical Readings of Women and Animals in Eighteenth-Century British Labouring-Class Women's Poetry* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 2008); Sharon Setzer, "'Pond'rous Engines' in 'Outraged Groves': The Environmental Argument of Anna Seward's 'Colebrook Dale', *European Romantic Review* 18, 1 (2007): 69-82.

[6] *Letters*, 80.

[7] Ibid., 97, 51.

that have attracted so much critical attention to Wollstonecraft's oeuvre become blurred in *Letters* as the philosophical focus rests less on the categorical than on the relational.[8] Paradoxically, the practice of revealing bonds of benevolence that flow through nature, the individual and into society forces Wollstonecraft's narrator-self to confront material relations with nature in which she does not find benevolence. The more places Wollstonecraft studies, the more she finds natural devotion fails in environments that have received some form of scientific or industrial improvement. The text oscillates between this dark materialism, ruminating on the future consequences for nature and humankind if society pursues industrial improvement, and a dissenting providentialism in which civilisation gradually perfects.[9] The experiment, which tries to align a faith in knowledge and improvement with a destructive material reality leads to a re-evaluation of the status of humans and nature in the eyes of God; a re-evaluation that challenges notions of human superiority, but also tries to sustain an obligation of duty to God and to non-human nature. I argue that Wollstonecraft's political and philosophical interest in labour and landscape contains a fundamentally ecological reality: thinking about labour in nature also means thinking about the labour of nature, as well as the material consequences of working the land.[10]

Critics of Wollstonecraft's approach to nature have nevertheless largely viewed her as a rigid thinker when it comes to categorising nature against mankind. Indeed, critics in the field of animal studies tend to insist that Wollstonecraft's work conforms to speciesism by reiterating a hierarchical divide between women and animals. For instance, Mary Mellor states that "in common with Enlightenment thinking of the

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[8] Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) has particularly attracted critical attention for its use of exaggerated language in the political framing of elite sensibility and reason, see: Cora Kaplan, "WILD NIGHTS: Pleasure/Sexuality/Feminism", in *Sea Changes: Essays on Culture and Feminism*, (London: Verso, 1986), 31-41; Gary Kelly, *Revolutionary Feminism: The Mind and Career of Mary Wollstonecraft*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 1992), 107-140; Virginia Sapiro, "A Woman's Struggle for a Language of Enlightenment and Virtue: Mary Wollstonecraft and Enlightenment Feminism", in *Perspectives on Feminist Political Thought in European History: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Tjitske Akkerman and Siep Stuurman (London: Routledge, 1999) 156; Harriet Guest, *Small Change*, 275.

[9] John Whale has discussed Wollstonecraft's philosophical and theological ruminations in *Letters*. See *Imagination Under Pressure*, 86-97, and "Preparations for Happiness: Mary Wollstonecraft and Imagination", in *Reviewing Romanticism*, ed. P.W. Martin and R. Jarvis (London: Palgrave Macmillan 1992), 170-89.

[10] For a recent discussion of the eco-politics of labour and landscape in eighteenth-century studies, see Anahid Nersessian, 'Romantic Ecocriticism Lately', *Literature Compass*, 15, 1 (2017): 45-76; Jeremy Davies, 'Romantic ecocriticism: History and prospects', *Literature Compass*, 15, 9 (2018): 1-15; Ron Broglio, *Beasts of Burden: Biopolitics, Labor, and Animal Life in British Romanticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017); Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital*.

time,…[she] framed her claim for a common humanity in terms of the distinctiveness of human beings from 'brute nature.'"[11] Even those who recognise her "insistence on the kindness of animals", as Rod Preece does, agree that in general when it comes to animals, Wollstonecraft's attitude is akin to "political conservatives", while "the gulf she describes between humans and animals is far greater than any we find expressed by the Romantic poets."[12] Meanwhile, Christine Kenyon-Jones asserts that "human beings' [superior] place in the chain of being…is stressed time and time again."[13] However, Barbara Seeber has responded to the critical positioning of Wollstonecraft as an "anthropocentric thinker", and made a convincing case for situating Wollstonecraft at the table of ecofeminism.[14] In her essay on Wollstonecraft's animal advocacy and vegetarianism, Seeber argues that for Wollstonecraft, "the treatment of animals is a morally significant and political issue in its own right" and that animal suffering "intersects with other forms of oppression" in her texts.[15] In a similar vein, Sylvia Bowerbank and Hust have both made the case for viewing *Letters* as an ecofeminist text that reconsiders women's relationships with the land in the revolutionary period, emphasising instances of human-animal reciprocity that reimagine an egalitarian status between women and animals in particular.[16] In this chapter, I build on this body of work by unpacking Wollstonecraft's ambivalence towards species binaries in *Letters*, situating it centrally within her metaphysical religiosity.

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[11] Mary Mellor, *Feminism and Ecology*, 72.
[12] Rod Preece, *Awe for the Tiger, Love for the Lamb*, 203.
[13] Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes*, 63-4.
[14] Barbara Seeber, "'I sympathize in their pains and pleasures'", 225. Josephine Donavon has also placed Wollstonecraft in her long line of feminists advocating for animals; see her "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 15, 2 (1990): 359. Conversely, David Perkins argues that while Wollstonecraft is "strongly in favour of kindness to animals", she is ultimately a traditional thinker: *Romanticism and Animal Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 26.
[15] Seeber, *Animal Subjects*, 224.
[16] For further discussions of Wollstonecraft's ecofeminist approach in *Letters*, which touch on animal reciprocity, see: Sylvia Bowerbank, *Speaking for Nature: Women and Ecologies of Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 152; Bowerbank, "The Bastille of Nature: Mary Wollstonecraft and Ecological Feminism", in *Mary Wollstonecraft's Journey to Scandinavia: Essays*, ed. Anka Ryall and Catherine Sandbach-Dahlstrom (Stockholm: Almquiest and Wiksell International, 2003): 165-84; Lila Marz Harper, *Solitary Travellers: Nineteenth Century Women Travel Narratives and the Scientific Vocation* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2001); Karen Hust, "In Suspect Terrain: Mary Wollstonecraft Confronts Mother Nature in *Letters from Norway*", *Women's Studies* 25, 5 (1996), 498; Beth Dolan Kautz, "Mary Wollstonecraft's Salutary Picturesque: Curing Melancholia in the Landscape", *European Romantic Review* 13, 1 (2002), 42.

This chapter also builds on the work of Isabelle Bour, and Whale.[17] Bour's influential article on associationism in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* has repositioned critical perspectives of Wollstonecraft by placing her in the tradition of using science of mind to salvage a "genuine sensibility" for the improvement of society. Prior to Bour's article, Wollstonecraft had predominately been seen as adhering to oppositional categories of reason and sensibility, and society and nature in her work.[18] Whale's considerable scholarship on Wollstonecraft, and *Letters* in particular, was the first to suggest that Wollstonecraft challenges her own philosophy of improvement and "the calculated pursuit of happiness" in the text.[19] This chapter places Bour and Whale's arguments in relation to each other: I suggest that Wollstonecraft's application of associationism to nature in *Letters* partly informs her more broadly affective epistemology, which leads her to question the belief in providential improvement, knowledge over ignorance, and happiness over contentment. Moreover, I argue that it is through associationism that Wollstonecraft recognises the harm that schemes of improvement have inflicted on the earth, which leads her to re-think what improvement really means, and the ways humans relate to the rest of the living and non-living world.

Habitual devotion, sympathy, and instinct

The idea that observing nature would lead to new knowledge that could be applied to society in aid of its improvement was a generic Enlightenment belief in the eighteenth-century. However, the ways in which Wollstonecraft employs science of mind relates to a wider discourse, especially prevalent within radical dissenting circles, about the purpose of literature in encouraging "habitual devotion" through observation of nature.[20] As discussed in the Introductory Chapter to this thesis, Anna Letitia Barbauld's poetry was fully engaged in the work of encouraging philosophical contemplation of God using associationist principles of observation and experience of

[17] Isabelle Bour, "Epistemological Ambiguities: Reason, Sensibility and Association of Ideas in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*", *XVII-XVIII. Bulletin de la société d'études anglo-américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, 49 (1999): 299-310; Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure*.
[18] Bour, "Epistemological Ambiguities", 301.
[19] Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure*, 90.
[20] Major, "Nature, Nation, and Denomination"; Wharton, "Inscribing on the Mind".

nature.[21] In 1796, Barbauld wrote an Introduction to Mark Akenside's *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, to which she contributed a critical essay on the purpose and form of nature poetry and its effect on the mind. In this, Barbauld argues against didactic poetry, which simply "imitates" accomplished works of poetry instead of relating the "beauties of nature" and encouraging "contemplation of the Divine Being."[22] Barbauld argues that poetry should have something of "novelty" that sparks "delight", and although she concedes that poetry is inevitably a kind of "imitative art", it should focus its attention on natural objects to communicate the feelings, thoughts, and divine understanding that being in nature provides.[23] Although, by the mid-1790s, Wollstonecraft did not attend Unitarian chapel as regularly as she once had, she was part of an intellectual circle of radical dissenters and others working in fields of literature and science that included Joseph Johnson, Thomas Christie, Mary Hays, Priestley, John Aikin, and Barbauld.[24] The idea of using associationist principles as part of a devotional and scientific practice, was not, therefore unfamiliar.[25] Nor was the related idea that studying nature to improve mankind was benevolent practice.[26]

The notion of bridging the gap between benevolent nature and corrupt society through natural poetry was the subject of Wollstonecraft's final, though rarely discussed, publication, "On Poetry, and Our Relish for the Beauties of Nature" (1797), which appears to develop some of Barbauld's ideas from her Akenside essay.[27] Like Barbauld, Wollstonecraft agrees that natural poetry is often a "mere shadow" of nature, as it tends to imitate other works of poetry rather than relate "present feelings" which are vital to the development of taste, despite their transience and susceptibility to erasure through the process of reflection.[28] Wollstonecraft argues that natural poetry has

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[21] See also: Emma Major,: Barbauld's Taste for the Public", *ELH* 73, 4 (2007): 909-30; Joanna Wharton, "Inscribing on the Mind: Anna Letitia Barbauld's 'Sensible Objects'", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, 4 (2012) 535-50.
[22] Ibid., 13.
[23] Ibid., 18.
[24] Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, 103, 108, 110.
[25] Bour, "Epistemological Ambiguities", 301.
[26] Daniel E. White*, Early Romanticism and Religious Dissent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 116.
[27] Mary Wollstonecraft, "On Poetry, and Our Relish for the Beauties of Nature", in *Works* 7, 7-11. The version reproduced *in Works* is from Godwin's *Posthumous Works of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, vol.4 (1798). However, it originally appeared in *The Monthly Magazine* (April, 1797): 279-82. Virginia Sapiro briefly discusses the essay's political discussion of poetry in *A Vindication of Political Virtue: The Political Theory of Mary Wollstonecraft* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 215, 225.
[28] *Works*, 7, 8.

the capacity to counter the "voluptuary" and "moderate the pursuer of artificial pleasures" so often found in a civilisation driven by "luxury", but only when it does not limit "the lively imagination" by directing the "camera" of the poet to a "narrow" and "insubstantial, picturesque form".[29] For poetry to succeed in developing a taste for nature, it must get as close as possible to relating a "first impression" which the reader can contemplate "from the operations of his own mind."[30] Too often, Wollstonecraft despairs, a smaller, narrower, and more "emulated" image of nature is presented in poetry, which is consumed and discussed more heartily in society than nature itself. It is this distorted image of nature that Wollstonecraft rejects as "commercial" and "sentimental".[31] In an attempt to find the best form poetry can take to counter the consuming, sentimental tendencies of society, Wollstonecraft aims to rescue that "same sensibility" because the stimulation of the senses upon observing nature was crucial to forming associations in the mind. More importantly, sensibility was vital to obtaining a new understanding of God's divine creation which would lead to moral improvement.[32] In this sense, Wollstonecraft saw the project of nature-writing as part of what she called her "favourite subject, the future improvement of society". In many ways, the process of conveying first-hand immediate experiences of nature was a means by which she could encourage contemplation of God.[33] I suggest that this literary-metaphysical experiment, was Wollstonecraft's undertaking in *Letters*.

Letters places great emphasis on the experience of being in nature: perceiving it, feeling sensations of first impressions, storing images in the mind for future recollection, and applying instruments of reason to reflect on those experiences. As such, it partially resembles Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life* (1789), where Mrs Mason assiduously gives her young charges object lessons. Indeed, a hallmark of *Letters* is how it moves from a close study of natural objects, to an intimate description of personal feeling, and a moral analysis of the social and political contexts of a particular place.[34] In many ways *Letters* is in keeping with the epistolary form of

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[29] Ibid., 10, 11.
[30] Ibid., 10.
[31] Ibid., 7.
[32] Ibid., 11.
[33] *Letters*, 168.
[34] Gregory Dart places Wollstonecraft's comparative approach in *Letters* within other British and French radical discourses in the 1790s which urgently sought different ways of exploring human progress and perfectibility: *Rousseau, Robespierre and English Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 130. Nigel Leask discusses the shift in travel writing in this period, accounting for debates

travel writing from this period, much of which Wollstonecraft herself reviewed for the *Analytical*.[35] In her review of Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye* (1782), Wollstonecraft acknowledges that epistolary travel writing lends itself to revealing "a variety of desultory matter and detached observations", yet she insists that authors must, as demonstrated by Gilpin, retain a "grand object of pursuit to concentr[ate] their thoughts, and connect their reflections."[36] The aim of the travel writer, Wollstonecraft suggests in *Letters*, "would be to promote inquiry and discussion, instead of making those dogmatical assertions which only appear calculated to gird the human mind around with imaginary circles, like the paper globe which represents the one he inhabits."[37] Here, Wollstonecraft seems to be critiquing man's "quantifying spirit" and the flimsiness of scientific models that nevertheless claim to be grounded in a robust rationality. In writing *Letters*, Wollstonecraft showed how observations of different environments need not be categorised into rigid assertions.

Wollstonecraft's views on nature as well as her approach to expressing those views draws on an extensive body of eighteenth-century discourse. However, perhaps the main influence on *Letters* was Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (1755), which similarly features a solitary rambler contemplating the future of society.[38] Unlike Rousseau, Wollstonecraft veers between condemning solitary exclusion in nature - comparing it to the Bastille and, famously, a "golden age of stupidity" - and seeming more amenable to the possibility of a true "golden age" when nature and the treatment of nature by social and political practices are "harmonized".[39] Wollstonecraft states that her intention in setting her travelogue in Scandinavia is to avoid scenes of ruined empires found in more common travel writing about Italy and Greece, which so often inspires nostalgia for a lost age.[40] In Scandinavia, a place still in its "infancy", a more

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over politics, science and authorial ego: *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: From an Antique Land* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5-11, 41-43.

[35] For a discussion of Wollstonecraft's manipulation of the epistolary form, see Mary Favret, *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics, and the Fiction of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 111-13.

[36] *Works,* 161.

[37] Ibid., 81.

[38] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, trans. Peter France (London: Penguin Books, 1979). Nancy Yousef has discussed Wollstonecraft's shift towards "Romantic language" in *Letters* as influenced by *Reveries*: "Wollstonecraft, Rousseau and the Revision of Romantic Subjectivity", *Studies in Romanticism*, 38 (1999): 537-57. Amy Culley has also explored the influence of Rousseau's *Reveries* on *Letters*, emphasising the shared use of life-writing to perpetuate radical values: *British Women's Life Writing, 1760-1840* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 173-188.

[39] *Letters*, 97, 116.

[40] Ibid., 68-69.

just and practical "view of the progress of man" can be found.[41] For Wollstonecraft, who believed, like so many Enlightenment thinkers, in the indefinite progress of human civilisation, the problems of commerce, property ownership, and ranks of wealth and monarchy that proliferated in western European societies, were the product of sensibility corrupted by inegalitarian politics.[42] As she argued in the second *Vindication*, a view of stadial theory that imagines a golden age of nature, before the corrupting stage of commerce, pays little regard to the wellbeing of women, since prior to the age of commerce the rights and statuses of men and women rested on physical over mental strength.[43] A society based on strength of mind is more of a level playing field, and women's potential for a boundless imagination becomes limited only by education. Much of Wollstonecraft's ire in *Vindication* was directed at Rousseau's response to commercial society, which limited women's rational education in order to preserve their "delicate sensibility" from corruption, instead of offering concrete solutions to a historically constructed culture.[44] In *Letters*, Wollstonecraft sets out to find such solutions in nations less corrupted by the commerce found in places at a more advanced stage of civilisation.[45] She hopes to prove that the manners, customs, and character of a people, are not the product of a fixed nature, as she accuses other travel writers of claiming, but of the social conditions of society and the natural climate, scenery, and landscape.[46]

Writing a study so focused on nature as *Letters* forced Wollstonecraft to consider the meaning and limits of what she understood as "natural". As she quickly finds when observing the people of Norway, separating "the natural from the acquired difference" was not easy.[47] Wollstonecraft initially adheres to a theory of nature as divinely-created

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[41] Ibid., 81.
[42] For a thorough discussion of the wider politics and culture of radical Dissenters and their circle, see Felicity James and Ian Inkster (eds.), *Religious Dissent and the Aiken-Barbauld Circle, 1740-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); White, *Early Romanticism and Religious Dissent*.
[43] Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 102.
[44] For arguments on the different ways Wollstonecraft's engagement with Rousseau affects her educational program in *Vindication*, see: Kelly, *Revolutionary Feminism*, 19-20; Regina Janes, "On the Reception of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*", *Journal for the History of Ideas* 39, 2 (1978): 294; Rebecca Davies, *Written Maternal Authority and Eighteenth-Century Education in Britain: Educating by the Book* (London: Routledge, 2014), 65-67.
[45] Jon Mee argues that Wollstonecraft's analysis of the commerce she finds in cities like Hamburg, shows a decoupling of commerce from refinement in *Letters*, which defined much of *Vindication*. See his *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 162.
[46] *Letters*, 80-1.
[47] *Letters*, 80.

and existing as it is perceived by the mind and senses: "The natural" comes "merely" to consist of "the degree of vivacity or thoughtfulness, pleasure or pain, inspired by the climate".[48] As discussed in the Introductory Chapter of this thesis, both Price and Priestley's sermons promoted a love of mankind through sensory and devotional contemplation of divine nature. In "On Poetry", which was written just a few months after *Letters*, Wollstonecraft notes that 'natural', is a "very indefinite word", and explains her conception of "natural objects", to be whatever "stimulates the senses", and triggers the "animal spirits" to "touch the soul" with feeling, which the understanding contemplates.[49] Louise Hickman argues that Wollstonecraft's emphasis on individual experience signals her deviation from traditional providential thought, and is what informs her perfectibilist ethic, the idea being that experiencing God through nature leads to imitation of God's goodness, as Price argued, leading to the gradual improvement of mankind in God's image.[50] This idea of nature as essential to the process of sensibility, of both thought and feeling, is the basis of the affective epistemology that Wollstonecraft demonstrates in *Letters*.[51]

Wollstonecraft's conception of nature countered alternative models of sympathetic, or instinctive, connection that writers such as Edmund Burke and William Smellie promoted.[52] In Wollstonecraft's review of Smellie's *The Philosophy of Natural History* (1790) in the October 1790 edition of the *Analytical*, she wrote a sceptical and lengthy response to his suggestion that reason was a "quantity of instinct", rather than a separate faculty belonging to the human mind and soul.[53] Smellie argued that what separated humans from the animals was not their unique possession of rationality, but a quantitative difference in the instincts that made up rationality. In response, Wollstonecraft states that the science of instinct remains "a cloud that obscures our sight", but nevertheless painstakingly illustrates the way that Smellie's theory collapses

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[48] Ibid., 80; Major, "Nature, Nation, and Denomination", 212.
[49] *Works*, 7.
[50] Louise Hickman, *Eighteenth-Century Dissent and Cambridge Platonism: Reconceiving the Philosophy of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2017), 171.
[51] Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 8-20.
[52] For arguments pertaining to Wollstonecraft's opposition to Burke's idea of sympathy and debates over instinct, see: Mary Fairclough, *The Romantic Crowd: Sympathy, Controversy and Print Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 85-95; Julie Kipp, *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17; Daniel I. O'Neill, *The Burke-Wollstonecraft Debate: Savagery, Civilization, and Democracy* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 164.
[53] Mary Wollstonecraft, Review of *The Philosophy of Natural History* by William Smellie, *The Analytical Review*, (October 1790), in *Works*, 294.

under analytical scrutiny.[54] She principally critiques Smellie's categorisation of species — an anti-Linnaean hierarchy that, regardless of the absence of a distinctively human faculty of reason, still placed "man above brute".[55] According to Wollstonecraft, the "elephant is undoubtedly the most sagacious of animals, consequently, is the next link to man in this fanciful chain; but Mr S. forgetting what he has recounted of his abilities, makes it give place to the orang-outang, only because the outward form of the latter has a nearer resemblance to the human body."[56] By addressing the values Smellie places on the anatomical appearance of animals, Wollstonecraft accuses Smellie of using a ranking system that could be used to oppress bodies that do not conform to his idea of human. Through allusions to slavery, the oppression of women, as well as animal cruelty, Wollstonecraft asserts that Smellie's valorisation of "docility" as a favourable characteristic in his system is "of the most ignoble kind", and in fact the "*wonderful* instances which are celebrated here were produced by fear."[57] She argues that docility is really a way of describing compliance to performing "pretty tricks", but when animals are "well fed, and are not reminded by signs or voice, of the cruel treatment they endured when they were learning them", they forget.[58] In this way, Wollstonecraft reveals just how easily a system that rejects the exclusivity of reason can be manipulated to inflict cruelty.[59]

Crucially, Smellie's attempt at uniting the human, animal, and vegetable kingdoms is not a moral problem for Wollstonecraft, indeed, she agrees that it is "a beautiful analogy".[60] Rather, her ambivalence towards instinct rests on its use to deny moral duty to God and to nature, "which only reason points out."[61] It is this absence of duty that Wollstonecraft connects to the "false benevolence" she sees as flourishing in

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[54] Ibid., 296.
[55] Ibid., 295.
[56] Ibid., 296. Descriptions of elephants in natural histories of the period varied, however most were anthropocentric in their opposition to elephant matriarchies. The Quaker children's writer Priscilla Wakefield's assessment of the coquetry of female elephants is perhaps the most critical I have found. She describes them as "sly" deceivers who perform "with the address, dexterity, and allurements of Dalilah [sic]" in *Instinct Displayed, in a Collection of Well-Authenticated Facts, Exemplifying the Extraordinary Sagacity of Various Species of the Animal Creation* (London: Darton, Harvey and Darton, 1811), 254.
[57] Ibid., 299.
[58] Ibid., 299.
[59] For alternative readings of Wollstonecraft's review of Smellie in relation to animal ethics and speciesism, see Adela Ramos, "Species Thinking: Animals, Women and Literary Form in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*"; Sharon Ruston, "Natural Rights and Natural History in Anna Barbauld and Mary Wollstonecraft".
[60] *Works*, 298.
[61] Ibid., 298.

the commercial and sentimental elite classes.[62] For instance, in *Letters*, she describes how the fashion for displaying sympathy for animals was often a disguise for cruelty rather than genuine benevolence: "Ladies of the most exquisite sensibility, who were continually exclaiming against the cruelty of the vulgar to the brute creation, have in my presence forgot that their attendants had human feelings as well as forms."[63] In this way, Wollstonecraft questioned the instinctive model of sympathy, popularized by Burke, whereby the perception of suffering triggered sympathy through the mechanics of the animals spirits. As Mary Fairclough has discussed, Wollstonecraft's objection to Burke's notion of sympathy as "a kind of mysterious instinct" was that, in the revolutionary context, bypassing reason upon seeing sights of distress could lead to unthinking, and therefore unstable, political sentiments.[64] However, in *Letters*, Wollstonecraft is more considerate of Burke's sympathetic model of nature. As Wollstonecraft explores the countryside of Tonsberg in Norway, she declares:

> Nature is the nurse of sentiment,— the true source of taste;— yet what misery, as well as rapture, is produced by a quick perception of the beautiful and the sublime, when it is exercised in observing animated nature, when every beauteous feeling and emotion excites responsive sympathy, and the harmonized soul sinks into melancholy, or rises to ecstasy, just as the chords are touched, like the aeolian harp agitated by the changing wind. But how dangerous is it to foster these sentiments in such an imperfect state of existence; and how difficult to eradicate them when an affection for mankind, a passion for an individual, is but the unfolding of that love which embraces all that is great and beautiful.[65]

Here Wollstonecraft does remain sceptical of "imperfect" society in which sympathy is fostered, as well as the intense passions a sympathetic model of nature could produce, and how without reason to modify them, they could lead to women's undoing. In both *Mary, A Fiction* (1789), and her two *Vindication*s Wollstonecraft had warned of how failing to educate women in reason could cause them emotional suffering.[66] The

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[62] *Letters*, 172.
[63] Ibid., 65.
[64] Fairclough, *Romantic Crowd*, 85. Fairclough argues here that Wollstonecraft's ambivalence over instinctive connection as a science in her review of Smellie, fails the practical test in *A Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* (1794), because instinctive sympathy is much harder to control as a collective than it is in an individual, when collective action is a means of effecting revolutionary change.
[65] *Letters*, 86-87.
[66] See Saba Bahar, *Mary Wollstonecraft's Social and Aesthetic Philosophy: An Eve to Please Me* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 79, 112, 118; Christine Chaney, "The Rhetorical Strategies of

vindicating aspect of connecting to nature emotionally is its affiliation with a "love of mankind", which leads to the love of "all that embraces".[67] Consequently, in *Letters* Wollstonecraft implies that she cannot abandon the sympathetic model entirely, since it is crucial to benevolent action, which is partly informed by connecting with God.

By contrast, in a review for the *Analytical* of Price's *Discourse on the Love of Our Country* (1789), Wollstonecraft praises his claim that reason, not instinct, is the director of love for God: "Dr P gives us a forcible definition of that love which we ought to cherish for our country; love, the result of reason, not the undirected impulse of nature, ever tending to selfish extremes".[68] Here, Wollstonecraft finds on the same critique of instinct that she does in her Smellie review: instinct is prone to the cruelty of selfishness. Wollstonecraft's shift in *Letters* towards an appreciation of the devotional role of "natural" feeling is therefore significant to her understanding of duty and benevolence, which a love of God requires. Here, the involvement of feelings inspired by nature in a love of mankind, and of God, are nevertheless still directed by, even though Wollstonecraft emphasises the emotional effects of nature more insistently. Indeed, reason and feeling work together in Wollstonecraft's affective epistemology when observing nature, emphasising how the rational faculties in the mind interact with, and make sense of, the feelings produced by the instinctive process. In this way, Wollstonecraft hoped reason would "direct the understanding", and apply some degree of control over unstable feelings.[69]

Starfish/Jellyfish and Cows

Initially, Wollstonecraft is optimistic about the kinds of affective relationships it is possible to have with nature. Whilst rambling along the coast of Tonsberg, Wollstonecraft describes the process of observing the landscape as a reciprocal experience, noting how the natural objects affect her state of mind, and likewise how her feelings affect her perception of nature:

'Tumultuous Emotions': Wollstonecraft's Letters Written in Sweden", *Journal of Narrative Theory* 34, 3 (2004): 277-303.

[67] *Vindication*, 88.

[68] Wollstonecraft, Review of *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, *Analytical Review* (December 1789), in *Works*, 185.

[69] *Letters*, 81.

> Balmy were the slumbers, and soft the gales, that refreshed me, when I awoke to follow, with an eye vaguely curious, the white sails, as they turned the cliffs, or seemed to take shelter under the pines which covered the little islands that so gracefully rose to render the terrific ocean beautiful. The fishermen were calmly casting their nets; whilst the sea-gulls hovered over the unruffled deep. Everything seemed to harmonize to tranquillity — even the mournful call of the bittern was in cadence with the tinkling bells on the necks of the cows, that, pacing slowly one after the other, along an inviting path in the vale below, were repairing to the cottages to be milked.[70]

Here, Wollstonecraft applies her perceptive eye and ear to the landscape in front of her, describing in detail the appearance of each object and the way they move and sound. Wollstonecraft zooms in on objects like the "white sails", noting how they move into the cliffs and seem to disappear under trees from her point of vision. In this way, the objects Wollstonecraft observes appear to flow into each other, connecting to one another through her perception. The "harmonized" balance of the scene derives from her empirical observation of the objects in front of her. Everything about this scene projects Wollstonecraft's emotional state: her slumbers are balmy, the gales are soft, the islands are graceful, the fishermen are calm, the bittern and cow bells are in cadence, and the cows move slowly, all to make the scene a tranquil one. It is the experience of being in this harmonized environment that "refreshed" her mind and leads Wollstonecraft to perceive this scene as connected through a shared emotional experience. In this way, Wollstonecraft shows that nature does not have to produce the tumultuous emotions of melancholy or ecstasy that Wollstonecraft fears will lead to her destruction, for her to connect to God. Indeed, Wollstonecraft continues to observe the environment, gazing, and gazing "again", until her "very soul diffused itself in the scene", her sight piercing "the fleecy clouds" as it rests "before the awful throne of [her] Creator".[71] In this way, Wollstonecraft shows how the empirical tools of observation can modulate sublime passions, but still allow the soul to rise into divine nature.

The depiction of a more broadly affective epistemology applied to nature over the purely instinctive model of the sublime, provides Wollstonecraft with the figurative language of natural history which she uses to explore the connections between a divine

[70] Ibid., 97.
[71] Ibid., 97.

nature and the improvement of self and society. When exploring the countryside in Norway, Wollstonecraft turns her attention to the practice of natural history:

> I was amused by disturbing the innumerable young star fish which floated just below the surface: I had never observed them before; for they have not a hard shell, like those which I have seen on the sea-shore. They look like thickened water, with a white edge; and four purple circles, of different forms, were in the middle, over an incredible number of fibres, or white lines. Touching them, the cloudy substance would turn or close, first on one side, then on the other, very gracefully; but when I took one of them up in the ladle with which I had heaved the water out of the boat, it appeared only a colourless jelly.[72]

Here, the narrator applies her perception of the "star fish" or what is evidently a jellyfish, almost like a microscope, zooming in to view the details of the creature's appearance and behaviour. Wollstonecraft's description of it counters her own expectations of what she anticipated, as well as descriptions found in popular natural history texts, such as those of the Comte de Buffon, which Wollstonecraft reviewed and generally applauded in the *Analytical*.[73] The "colourless jelly" Wollstonecraft describes, instead of a hard shell, however, does less to reveal Wollstonecraft's ignorance, given how little was known about sea creatures in this period, but rather communicates the wonder and knowledge to be found in observing nature.[74] Lila M. Harper has discussed this passage in relation to Londa Schiebinger's work on eighteenth-century sexual categories, which associated maleness with hardness, and femaleness with softness.[75] In this context, Harper argues that Wollstonecraft complicates understandings of sexual categories by viewing the jellyfish as part of a "fluidity of life" that counters sexual dualisms.[76] Wollstonecraft had previously favoured sexual categories of nature in her Smellie review, though I suggest this was largely because it offered a more equal valuation of female nature by comparison to Smellie's instinctive model.[77] However,

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[72] Ibid., 99.
[73] See two reviews of Buffon, including an eight volume natural history in *Works*, 173, 289.
[74] Mary P.Winsor, *Starfish, Jellyfish and the Order of Life: Issues in Nineteenth-Century Science* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976): 73-98.
[75] Lila M. Harper, "The Starfish that Burns: Gendering the Jellyfish", in *Forces of Nature: Natural(-izing) Gender and Gender(-ing) Nature in the Discourses of Western Culture*, ed. Bernadette H. Hyner and Precious McKenzie Stearns (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 26; Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex?: Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 233-37.
[76] Harper, "The Starfish that Burns", 27.
[77] *Works*, 296.

the fluid, slippery, unfixed form of the jellyfish Wollstonecraft describes resists easy categorisation — it remains an 'it', without an attached sex or even a convincing species label. The kind of natural philosophy work Wollstonecraft is doing in this passage uses tools of observation without adhering to known theories about nature. Rather, by describing her emotional state as "a restless spirit, equally alive to joy and sorrow", Wollstonecraft demonstrates how feeling and reason together can lead to curiosity and new knowledge.[78]

The immediacy of Wollstonecraft's affective response, though mediated by reason, tries to present her study of nature as authentic and as unmediated by the performative process of writing as possible. The ease through which Wollstonecraft's eye moves over the coastal scene and the jellyfish's form, evokes a sense of the naturalness of her epistemological approach. Moreover, as she discussed in "On Poetry", embracing the immediacy of emotional responses to nature is important to her notion of developing benevolent connections with nature that project outwards into society. Wollstonecraft emphasises that it is the benevolent connections that the process of observing nature involves, which is most important, when, after describing the jellyfish, she says, "Enough you will say, of inanimate objects, and of brutes, to use the lordly phrase of man, let me hear something of the inhabitants."[79] Here, Wollstonecraft excuses her diversions into natural history by segueing into a discussion of Norwegian people, but maintains the connection between them when she states that the term "brutes" is a "lordly phrase", one that reveals and dismantles the species hierarchies between human and non-human. Just as she blurred the species category of the star fish, Wollstonecraft emphasises that the connections that exist between species are more fluid and varied than is often supposed. Indeed, the limitations Wollstonecraft places on the practice of natural history, as I will show, shifts the focus of the text between one of distanced observation and one of experience, between thinking and feeling nature.

Leask and Bohls have both commented that purely scientific travel writing did not exist before 1820, and before then there was a "fruitful struggle to integrate subjective experience with objective or scientific observation."[80] Though neither discuss Wollstonecraft's practice in *Letters* as science of mind applied to nature, the text

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[78] *Letters*, 99.
[79] *Letters*, 99.
[80] Leask, *Travel Writing*, 6, 8, 12; Elizabeth A. Bohls, *Romantic Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 20.

nevertheless engages in such a "fruitful struggle" towards those ends. The empirical description of "star fish" is embedded in a scene which emphasises the emotional affiliations between the physical and social conditions of cows and those of Wollstonecraft and other women around her. When seeking physical and mental recovery from a lung-infection contracted whilst weaning her daughter, Wollstonecraft finds solace in a "fine rivulet filtered through the rocks, and confined in a bason [*sic*] for the cattle."[81] Drinking the water shared by the dairy cows around her, Wollstonecraft is invigorated, and instead of letting her pregnant companion row them across the nearby water, she takes on the oars herself.[82] In this way, breathing the same air as the cattle, walking over the same ground, and drinking the same water, Wollstonecraft depicts the Tonsberg landscape as a gynocentric environment, with the cattle's fountain imagined as a place for mothers seeking restoration. Seeber has commented briefly on the reciprocity between species evidenced in this scene, calling the landscape a "shared ecological space".[83] The final clause of the passage is particularly illustrative of the affinity Wollstonecraft evokes between herself and her companion, and the animals before her: the "tenants of the shade" refer to the cattle, her companion and herself as one united group.[84] The word "tenant" also evokes the agricultural work undertaken by those like the pregnant woman accompanying Wollstonecraft on her journey, as well as the dairy cows. This image of Wollstonecraft intervening in a classic Georgic scene of pastoral labour, by partaking in the experience of both the cows and the domestic worker, draws attention to the work and perspective of those who often feature only as aesthetic observations and sights of nostalgic sentiment.[85] Wollstonecraft avoids such sentimentality by figuratively uniting herself with her companion, and the cows, in the image of reproduction, invoking an experiential alignment between the dairy cows who reproduce for the profit of human owners, the pregnant worker, and her own experience as a breastfeeding mother.

To emphasise the connection between the labour of the landscape and reproductive work, Wollstonecraft soon moves onto condemning the eighteenth-century

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[81] Ibid., 98.
[82] Ibid., 98-9.
[83] Seeber, "Women and Animals", 232.
[84] *Letters*, 98.
[85] For further discussion of Wollstonecraft's intervention in pastoral landscapes and nostalgia see: Bohls, *Travel Writing*, 156; Favret, *Romantic Correspondence*, 65-8; and Ingrid Horrocks, *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility, 1784-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 153.

trend for wet nursing. With "a heart writhing in anguish", Wollstonecraft notes that the wet nurse she meets at an inn "receives only twelve dollars a year, and pays ten for the nursing of her own child", which led to the father of her child abandoning her to escape the expense.[86] In the 1790s, mothers breastfeeding their own children was associated with revolutionary politics, with writers like Wollstonecraft advocating breastfeeding, as she did in *On the Education of Daughters* (1787).[87] The reference to the wet nurse's abandonment by her husband also rhetorically refers to Wollstonecraft's own abandonment by the father of her child, which she discusses vaguely as the cause of her distress in *Letters*.[88] Though she does not disclose the details of her involvement with Imlay in the text, we know from personal letters Wollstonecraft wrote to him during her travels, that her primary reason for going to Scandinavia was to try to recover a lost shipment of silver, which Imlay, and to some extent Wollstonecraft herself, were involved with exporting from France to the neutral ports in Sweden and Denmark.[89] With these biographical details, the connection between Wollstonecraft and the wet nurse appears even stronger. However, in the text itself, Wollstonecraft draws attention to the realities of reproductive work by aligning the exploitation of the reproductive bodies of women and cattle.

Cows feature so frequently in *Letters* that they supply an example of how repeated observations are stored in the mind for later reflection. Moreover, through observing the behaviour and conditions of cows in each place she visits, Wollstonecraft ensures they are more than mere dots on the pastoral landscape. The cows in *Letters* are recognised as part of a political and social system, a system which both affects the health and liberty afforded to the cows, and in which they themselves participate as

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[86] *Letters*, 103.
[87] Miriam Brody, *Mary Wollstonecraft: Mother of Women's Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 104. For a wider discussion of the politics of breastfeeding in the late eighteenth century, see: Kipp, *Romanticism, Maternity, and the Body Politic*, 82; Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 61-5; Susan C. Greenfield and Carol Barash, introduction to *Inventing Maternity: Politics, Science, and Literature, 1650-1865* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 2-12.
[88] *Letters*, 52.
[89] *Letters*, 20-3. The biographical work undertaken on Wollstonecraft and Imlay's commercial and personal relationship, includes: Per Nyström, *Mary Wollstonecraft's Scandinavian Journey*, trans. George R. Otter (Gothenberg: Kungl. Vetenskaps, 1980), 18-32; Richard Holmes, introduction to *Mary Wollstonecraft, A Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark; and William Godwin, Memoir of the Author of "Rights of Woman"* (London: Penguin, 1987), 21-26; Janet Todd (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1989), 303-50; Lyndall Gordan, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A New Genus* (London: Little Brown, 2005), 232-37.

economic, nutritional, and familial assets. For instance, in Sweden (a nation Wollstonecraft deems as debased by its recent empire and participation in the slave trade) the conditions of farmers, the land, and their cows is a miserable sight:[90]

> The women and children were cutting off branches from the beech, birch, oak &c, and leaving them to dry.—This way of helping out their fodder injures the trees. But the winters are so long, that the poor cannot afford to lay in a sufficient stock of hay. By such means they just keep life in the poor cows, for little milk can be expected, when they are so miserably fed.[91]

By contemplating her "miserable" feelings upon seeing the Swedish landscape, Wollstonecraft reveals the way that a nation's animals and land, as well as its people, are affiliated by their shared impoverishment.[92] Instead of blaming the rural poor for cruel agricultural practices, Wollstonecraft connects the suffering and injuries inflicted on the Swedish trees and cows to a cold climate to the political interests of the Swedish government. Indeed, Wollstonecraft notes the "politeness" of the address of the Swedish poor, in spite of their abject "poverty" and "broken spirit".[93] In contrast, she figures commercial enterprises, such as the building of a canal, which renders what should be a sublime cascade at Trollhätten "the insignificant sport of children", as well as the evasion of taxes by foreign merchants, as the cause of Swedish poverty.[94] Such "degrading" love of commerce also leads to inequalities throughout society, where women are "worn down by tyranny to servile submission", and men become "sot[s]".[95] If only the Swedes could sufficiently develop "cultivation of mind", Wollstonecraft maintains, then the selfish-interested tendency of "sympathy" wouldn't "justify deviations from duty", and such widespread cruelty would be reduced.[96] Wollstonecraft's description of the Swedish landscape illustrates how applying an empirical approach to contemplating her emotional response to nature is effective in revealing the connections between nature and society, where a sympathetic model merely resulted in "wretchedness".[97]

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[90] *Letters*, 54, 58.
[91] Ibid., 140.
[92] Ibid., 140.
[93] Ibid., 143..
[94] Ibid., 141, 143.
[95] Ibid., 143.
[96] Ibid., 143.
[97] Ibid., 143.

By contrast, in Norway Wollstonecraft remarks several times on the freedom and equality she observes there, and describes the legal system in place for farmers as producing in them "an independent spirit", since they do not "fear being turned out of their farms should they displease a man in power", nor are they "obliged to submit to any debasing tenure".[98] This freedom extends to the lives of the cows, who are allowed to graze "indiscriminately" on the commons.[99] This system of common land for all also gives a safety net for the poor, who by this means "can support themselves".[100] Wollstonecraft's comments here indirectly address the British enclosure policies implemented throughout the late eighteenth century, which enclosed common lands across the nation for agricultural improvement, and led to increased vagrancy amongst those who had relied on commons for subsistence.[101] Wollstonecraft's observations of the "liberty" of Norway prompts comparison with Britain.[102] Moreover, the figure of the cow was a particularly important symbol of agricultural improvement in Britain. George Stubbs' paintings of monumental cows, enlarged by genetic specialisation, became synonymous with British scientific knowledge as well as industrial might.[103] During the French Revolution, cows also became mascots of British military superiority, with patriotic ditties like "Merry Roast Beef of Old England", appearing in Hannah More's propagandistic tracts, and the familiar image of John Bull implying that a diet rich in beef made the nation stronger, both physically and mentally, than the starved, vegetable-eating French.[104] By praising the freedom of Norwegian cows, and directly

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[98] Ibid., 89.
[99] Ibid., 89.
[100] Ibid., 89.
[101] For wider discussion on eighteenth-century literary responses to the enclosure acts, see: Milne, "*Lactilla"*, 39-43, 78-92; Bridget Hill, "The Links Between Mary Wollstonecraft and Catharine Macaulay: New Evidence", *Women's History Review* 4, 2 (1995), 177-92; Peter Garside, Stephen Copley (eds.), *The Politics of the Landscape: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetic Since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Gary Lee Harrison, *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty, and Power* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 27, 70, 94; John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 190-5, 215, 221.
[102] *Letters*, 88.
[103] Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain*, 74. For a wider discussion of British animal art and patriotism in the late eighteenth century, see: Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights*, 45-53; Ron Broglio, *Technologies of the Picturesque: British Art, Poetry, and Instruments, 1750-1830* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008); Donna Landry, *Noble Brutes: How Eastern Horses Transformed English Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 57; Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside: Hunting, Walking and Ecology in English Literature, 1671-1831* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 129, 169.
[104] Hannah More, "The Way to Plenty; or The Second Part of Tom White", *The Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Tracts* (London: J. Marshall, 1796), 321; Ben Rogers, *Beef and Liberty*, (London:

affiliating herself and other women with them as she did in Tonsberg, Wollstonecraft subverts masculine British bovine imagery, rhetorically aligning Britain with patriarchal oppression of the landscape and the people who live there, and Norway with the kind of liberty that holds the potential to free its female inhabitants.

Industry, Mushrooms, and Overpopulation

Although Wollstonecraft was greatly impressed by the degree of freedom the Norwegian people enjoyed, particularly in terms of the freedom of the press, political speech, religious toleration, and their progression towards acceptance of "free-thinking", she was less impressed by their standards of education.[105] Though she concedes that the Norwegians are "a sensible, shrewd people", they have "little scientific knowledge, and still less taste for literature."[106] Children learn only "reading, writing and the rudiments of arithmetic", while the catechism is "carefully taught" to "prove [children] are not neglected", there are no universities and a serious lack of anything "that deserves the name of science". According to Wollstonecraft, the scientific pursuits of individuals do not "excite" within Norwegian society a "degree of curiosity which is the forerunner of improvement", since "knowledge was not absolutely necessary to enable a considerable portion of the community to live", and she fears that knowledge will never become "general" until it is needed for survival.[107] Wollstonecraft also conjectures that the "want of mechanical and chemical knowledge renders the silver mines unproductive; for the quantity of silver obtained every year is not sufficient to defray the expenses."[108] She argues that government-owned industries, like the mines and salt-works, could make far more profit if they reduced their work force, and released the "dead weight" of hands that "would naturally find employment elsewhere", relieving financial pressure from the communities that support them.[109] Here, Wollstonecraft seems to suggest that since the natural tendency of mankind was to survive, and survival will bring about instincts to improve, forced survival will bring

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Vintage, 2004), 150-167; Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (London: Routledge, 2003), 104.
[105] *Letters*, 93-4.
[106] Ibid., 90.
[107] Ibid., 93.
[108] Ibid., 93.
[109] Ibid., 93.

about new knowledge and general improvement[110] Indeed, she later clarifies that the "increasing population of the earth must necessarily tend to its improvement, as the means of existence are multiplied by invention."[111] In this sense, Wollstonecraft aligns a growing population – and a growing knowledge economy – with a perfectibilist belief in the improvement of mankind.

This notion of populous industrial improvement is nevertheless challenged when Wollstonecraft is faced with the realities of industrialisation. While visiting an iron-manufacturer at Laurvig, Wollstonecraft notes how easily commercial interests co-opt the idea of social improvement to disguise their own pursuit of profit.[112] Wollstonecraft gives an account of an iron-merchant whose private fortune was essential to establishing iron-manufacturing in Laurvig, but was not quite large enough to support the enterprise without the financial support of the town.[113] However, the owner of the iron-work, a count, had a large enough stake in the industry to produce a monopoly which the other inhabitants considered "an evil" since it obstructed their own rights to commerce.[114] The count, "wishing to increase the value" of his business, forced local farmers to use "different channels" than they had used previously to export their wood, which took that business to a different town, and earnings out of the community of Laurvig.[115] Here Wollstonecraft observes, the "improvement of manners" by the ingenuity of industrial improvement lies at odds with the reality that the extraction of natural "valuable resources" relies on merchants who are "ruinous to the inhabitants in every respect".[116] This criticism highlights the way improvement can bypass morality when it is tied to the interests of commerce alone. Moreover, by showing how the count's greed was enabled by the town's need for industrial improvement, Wollstonecraft shows how her own improving philosophy is complicit in the accumulation of wealth by private business, and the concurrent lack of moral reform that occurs as a result. As such, the image of local labourers oppressed by the pursuit of industrial wealth, reveals the way industrial improvement schemes could inflict cruelty rather than benevolence.

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[110] Ibid., 93.
[111] Ibid., 108.
[112] Ibid., 110.
[113] Ibid., 110.
[114] Ibid., 110.
[115] Ibid., 110.
[116] Ibid., 111.

The image of nature and society in ruins, caused by industrial attempts to improve it, appear more frequently as the narrative progresses. While visiting an alum-works in Christiania, Wollstonecraft uses natural language to subvert the idea of the picturesque, and draw attention to the ways in which human intervention harms the earth.[117] Wollstonecraft remarks on the "spoilt" view, which the process of using rocks to make alum had inflicted on the earth: "I do not know the process", Wollstonecraft admits, "I only know that the rocks looked red after they had been burnt; and regretted that the operation should leave such a quantity of rubbish, to introduce an image of human industry in the shape of destruction."[118] This image of industry bringing about earthly destruction challenges the idea that useful knowledge gained from studying nature would bring about social improvement. In disturbing Wollstonecraft's perception of the landscape, the burning of the earth in the name of improvement forces Wollstonecraft to question the idealism of her perfectibilist faith in improvement. Unlike her earlier experience with cattle and the tranquil coastal scene, the rocky view does not produce pleasant feelings or a feeling of affective or divine connection with the landscape. Rather, Wollstonecraft's impression of the scene is in the shape of human-caused destruction. There is no onward progress towards God, or sense of human-nature relations in balance, only "rubbish". Here, Wollstonecraft's description of red rocks burning the landscape recalls biblical imagery from the Book of Revelation, where human actions lead to apocalypse, and the eternal punishment of mankind.[119] In this way, Wollstonecraft directly inverts her own providential image of improvement, questioning its integrity and benevolence, and the notion of man's onward progress towards perfection and heavenly reward.

As Karen Hust has pointed out, Wollstonecraft embarked on writing *Letters* partly out of a financial need to make money after the father of her young daughter Fanny, Gilbert Imlay, abandoned them shortly before her travels to Scandinavia.[120] Wollstonecraft found herself travelling largely unaccompanied, small child in tow, as

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[117] Ibid., 126.
[118] Ibid., 126. Angela D. Jones has also read this passage as critical of the commercial effects of tinting the landscape on nature: "'When a woman So Far Outsteps Her Proper Sphere': Counter-Romantic Tourism", in *Women's Life-writing: Finding Voice/building Community*, ed. Linda S. Coleman (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997), 223.
[119] Wollstonecraft's description of the alum-works bears some resemblance to the Book of Revelations 8:8: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood".
[120] Hust, "In Suspect Terrain", 498.

part of Imlay's commercial enterprise to import goods into revolutionary France, and export money back out through the neutral ports in Scandinavia.[121] As letters and other biographical documents belonging to Wollstonecraft and Imlay have shown, Wollstonecraft became Imlay's agent in Scandinavia, and her task was to discover what had happened to their ship, which had been damaged on the journey to Copenhagen, missing a cargo of silver.[122] *Letters* does not contain any of this entrepreneurial detail, though it does present Wollstonecraft as a sorrowful victim of desertion. Wollstonecraft's confrontation with the ecological realities of applying scientific knowledge of nature to society cause her to consider the consequences of her own involvement with commercial industrialisation, and her philosophical understanding of "improvement". While meditating on a boat, she contemplates the future consequences for the world if improvement schemes continue, and imagines an alternative future to the prospect of earthly perfection:

> I anticipated the future improvement of the world, and observed how much man still had to do, to obtain of the earth all it could yield. I even carried my speculations as far as to advance a million or two of years to the moment when the earth would perhaps be so perfectly cultivated, and so completely peopled, as to render it necessary to inhabit every spot; yes, these bleak shores. Imagination went still farther, and pictured the state of man when the earth could no longer support him. Where was he to fly from universal famine? Do not smile: I really became depressed for these fellow creatures, yet unborn. The images fastened on me, and the world appeared a vast prison.[123]

This nightmarish image of ongoing improvement to the point where mankind turns the earth into a prison challenges the idea of benevolent knowledge, figuring nature as obliterated under the weight of the human population as it seeks onward improvement. The idea that humans could harm the rest of the living world to the extent that it can no longer support life transforms divinely resilient nature into an abject victim of human ideas. In this scene, Wollstonecraft recalls her earlier fears of material annihilation after death, when she entered a tomb in Norway and saw the bodies embalmed there as a "futile" attempt at "preservation". [124] In that tomb, Wollstonecraft had shrunk bank in

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[121] *Letters*, 23.
[122] *Letters*, 20-3.
[123] *Letters*, 115.
[124] Ibid., 95, 97.

"horror and disgust" at "something worse than natural decay", describing in detail the appearance of the embalmed bodies trapped in an "enchantment of animation".[125] Wollstonecraft's fear of "annihilation", in which the human soul is trapped in "dust" by a vain attempt to preserve life, leads her to decry the egos of men who "struggle to become a monument of human greatness", and offers the preferable "scythe of equality to mow them down with the common mass".[126] In the passage above, Wollstonecraft imagines how human arrogance could lead to a similar kind of fate, where the improvement of mankind makes it starved though unable to die, and traps their souls in material bodies. In this version improvement leads to the annihilation of the planet, and humans are its prisoners. In this way, Wollstonecraft's imagining of overpopulation and famine envisions how a providential faith in improvement could, ironically, lead to material annihilation of the planet.

Wollstonecraft's apocalyptic vision of the consequences of human progress nevertheless takes place two million years into the future. Unlike later 'last man' narratives, including Shelley's own production, which were set a century or three ahead of the present, Wollstonecraft's picture of human destruction is not easily imaginable.[127] That Wollstonecraft imagines another two million years of human progress suggests an unwillingness to fully challenge perfectibilism, or to accept her own realisation that improvement may not be eternally sustainable. To some extent, Wollstonecraft's distant timescale of destruction de-politicises her critical analysis by making it less of a contemporary threat to religious and capitalist doctrines of improvement. It also demonstrates a kind of ecological engagement with time in a way that is analogous with theories of 'deep time', developed by the Scottish Enlightenment geologist James Hutton, Buffon, and the Danish geologist Nicholas Sterno.[128] Hutton, in particular argued for "a system of habitable earth", a deistic concept where the earth was millions of years old, and constantly in a state of flux, eroding, and increasing its surface layers, heated by a central core.[129] Theories of deep time have gone on to have an ecological

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[125] Ibid., 95.
[126] Ibid., 96. For further discussion of this scene as an example of the failures of sensibility resulting in bodily decay, see: Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure*, 96.
[127] For a discussion of Mary Shelley and geological timescales, see Melissa Bailes, "The Psychologization of Geological Catastrophe in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*", *ELH* 82, 2 (Summer, 2015): 671-699.
[128] Tom Furniss, "A Romantic Geology: James Hutton's 1788 'Theory of the Earth'", *Romanticism* 1, 3 (November, 2010): 305-21.
[129] James Hutton, *Theory of the Earth: with Proofs and Illustrations* vol.1 (Bath: The Geological Society, 1997), 199.

after life, influencing the field of deep ecology, which recognises that there is an inherent moral responsibility to preserve life, regardless of its utility to human society.[130] Through applying associationism to the concept of geological time scales, Wollstonecraft produces a similarly affective epistemological response, imagining a world deep into the future where humanity's desire to improve has changed the earth's ancient natural systems, and used up all its resources. This position also signifies a shift from thinking about subsistence and improvement in terms of political economy and stadial theory, as she did in *An Historical View of the French Revolution*. Wollstonecraft's affective epistemology in *Letters* in contrast expresses a kind of grief about the future loss of the earth, which may be connected to her reflections on her experiences in France, and the shift in the approach in her thinking we see thereafter.[131]

Wollstonecraft reaches her affective vision of dark materiality through challenging her own image of fertile improvement. Alluding to the above passage later in the text, Wollstonecraft's imagined apocalyptic overpopulation occurs when humanity reproduces to the point of "pestilence". She also performs maternal concern for "these poor creatures, yet unborn", intimating an affective duty to future populations, to protect them from such a catastrophic fate. In this way, Wollstonecraft upends her previous image of maternal duty leading to moral improvement by making fertility a grotesque cause of environmental destruction. Through this image of destructive fertility, Wollstonecraft self-deprecatingly identifies her own providential philosophy as a colluder in the destruction of the planet. Pre-figuring Thomas Malthus' *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) by two years, Wollstonecraft's vision similarly imagines a perfectibilist dystopia where reproduction has gone unchecked. As Gail Bederman has meticulously discussed, Malthus wrote his first Essay as a response to William Godwin's perfectibilist argument in *The Enquirer* (1797), and his notorious sexual radicalism, which he unfolded in his *Memoirs of the Author of the Rights of*

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[130] The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess was the first to develop the theory of deep ecology in 1972, for an updated translation, see *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, (ed. trans.) David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For an overview of the field see Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1987); Andrew McLaughlin, *Regarding Nature: Industrialisation and Deep Ecology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993); (eds.) Alan Drengson and Yuichi Inoue, *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1995).

[131] Catherine Packenham, "'The common grievance of the revolution': Bread, the Grain Trade, and Political Economy in Wollstonecraft's View of the French Revolution", *European Romantic Review* 25, 6 (2014): 705-22.

Woman (1797). Bederman argues that Malthus was inspired to write his essay on population largely because of the sexual profligacy he found in Wollstonecraft's work, and read about in Godwin's memoir of her life, of which Bederman gives textual examples, including the marginalia Malthus left in his copies of *Memoirs* and the *Vindications*. Bederman argues that Malthus developed his population principle to oppose female sexuality and chastise unwed mothers in particular, and that Malthus was more inspired by the notoriety surrounding Wollstonecraft's illegitimate pregnancies, than in the work itself. I have been unable to find evidence that Malthus read *Letters*, but if he had – as seems likely given Bederman's description of his obsessive interest in her writing – he would have found all he needed to turn Wollstonecraft's own fears of overpopulation into a sober economic argument for reducing the population.

Unlike Malthus, Wollstonecraft largely directed her fears of overpopulation at men and at commerce. In Hamburg, a free port, where she had a number of business dealings with traders, she critiques the commercial enterprises taking place, and the "mushroom fortunes" made by "gamblers" of different nations, which like "a species of fungus" spreads "insolent vulgarity" on "common minds".[132] In this instance, Wollstonecraft makes figurative the degenerative effect commerce has on the mind and on society through mycological imagery. Free ports were known for the sexual exploits or "vulgarity" that took place there, something that as a woman travelling mostly alone, Wollstonecraft would have encountered with apprehension. As Millie Schurch has shown, the growth and anatomy of fungi, so different from that of plants and animals, led to their association with sexual deviance.[133] Through this allusion to a grotesque sexuality, Wollstonecraft figuratively aligns the degenerative effects of commerce with her own fears of overpopulation. Fears, which are grounded in the same destructive faith in improvement, recalled here as a sexual and commercial desire. Given what we know from Wollstonecraft's business in Scandinavia, it is also possible to interpret her criticism of the traders as a self-critical reflection on her own stake in "mushroom fortunes". As with her comments that "commerce embrutes", Wollstonecraft blurs species categorisations to reveal the delusion of those who consider themselves "demi-gods", above reason and above duty. As such, she discloses the anthropocentrism within her own perfectibilist philosophy, as well as that of commerce. Wollstonecraft

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[132] *Letters*, 190.
[133] Millie Schurch, "All the productions of *that nature*": Ephemera, Mycology and Sexual Classification at the Bulstrode Estate, *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 42, 4 (2019): 519-39.

asserts that it is this superior conception of their own subject position that allows the commercial classes to exploit others they consider hierarchically beneath them, with their "false benevolence" in shows of "charity" and claims to social improvement. In this way, Wollstonecraft reveals the cruel effects of human exceptionalism at the heart of her own conception of benevolence in improvement.

Forests, Famine, Fire, and Dust

Wollstonecraft's insistence throughout *Letters* on disrupting species hierarchies makes the notion of human superiority over nature a central concern. Wollstonecraft's feminine affiliation with cows earlier in the text showed how egalitarian relations with non-human nature could operate, whilst maintaining a sense of duty to benevolence. However, her later contemplation of her underlying belief in the human improvement that arises through connecting with nature makes her doubt the egalitarian motives behind her sense of duty. Implicit within Wollstonecraft's critique of improvement is the need for a model of connecting with nature that does not cause harm. The question for Wollstonecraft now becomes how to ensure connecting with nature truly is benevolent, and not a trick of "desire" for power or wealth. To begin answering this question, Wollstonecraft considers what an existence without social improvement might look like. After the disappointment of the Trollhätten cascade, when Wollstonecraft visited the famous waterfall and anticipated a sublime connection with God, but found the building of a canal disrupted the experience, Wollstonecraft visits a sparsely-populated village built on rocks.[134] As Whale has discussed, the feelings of dislocation she experiences while viewing what should have been the epitome of sublime nature, are not a failure of nature in bringing about sublimity, but an acknowledgement of the commodifying effects of human attempts at "social improvement."[135] It is this commodification of nature through industrialisation, that Wollstonecraft primarily sees as the cause of destruction. To consider a society without improvement, Wollstonecraft seeks connection with nature in a wasteland – somewhere so uninhabitable that it resists commodification.

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[134] Ibid., 141.
[135] Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure*, 92.

Wandering alone along the coast, Wollstonecraft finds the divine through an affective, associational connection to the barren land:

> The ocean, these tremendous bulwarks, enclosed me on every side. I felt the confinement, and wished for wings to reach still loftier cliffs, whose slippery sides no foot was too hardy as to tread; yet what was it to see?—only a boundless waste of water—not a glimpse of smiling nature—not a patch of lively green to relieve the aching sight, or vary the objects of meditation.[136]

Despite the disappointing lack of a kind of Barbauldian verdant delight, or Burkean sublime, Wollstonecraft nevertheless finds divine connection in the "desirable" solitude: "my mind was stored with ideas, which this new scene associated with astonishing rapidity."[137] However, she struggles with the concept of remaining in such a state of "ignorance", when the sociability offered by society stimulates new knowledge for the mind, even as it corrupts.[138] Wollstonecraft suggests the ideal solution to the problems of a life lived exclusively in either town or country, would be overcome if time could be easily divided between "a lone house…where [her] mind could gain strength by solitary musing", and "a metropolis to rub off the rust of thought, and polish the taste which the contemplation of nature had rendered just."[139] Wollstonecraft argues that such a balance between city and country living would make us less likely to pursue our "desire for knowledge", and instead those desires would be gratified through "chance".[140] In this sense, harmful improvement schemes could be prevented if greed fostered in cities is tempered by moral contemplation of nature in the countryside. Moreover, positioning "chance" as a moral solution to the cruelty of extracting knowledge from nature, also suggests that the pursuit of knowledge is driven more by instinctive desire than by reason. Consequently, applying reason to those instinctive impulses means limiting one's exposure to opportunities for pursuing knowledge, relying instead on chance to meet those basic instinctive needs without causing excessive harm.

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[136] *Letters*, 116.
[137] Ibid., 116.
[138] Ibid., 117.
[139] Ibid., 117.
[140] Ibid., 117.

Such an embracing of "chance" is also reflected in Wollstonecraft's changing approach to the chaos of nature. Early on in *Letters*, Wollstonecraft had written of the improving effects of organising Norwegian forests through deforestation:

> As the farmers cut away the wood, they clear the ground. Every year, therefore, the country is becoming fitter to support the inhabitants. Half a century ago the Dutch, I am told, only paid for the cutting down of the wood, and the farmers were glad to get rid of it without giving themselves any trouble. At present they form a just estimate of its value; nay, I was surprised to find even fire wood so dear when, it appears to be in such plenty. The destruction, or gradual reduction, of their forests, will probably meliorate the climate; and their manners will naturally improve in the same ratio as industry requires ingenuity.[141]

In this passage, Wollstonecraft refers to the popular agricultural theory, largely built on the botanical research undertaken at Edinburgh University, that trees bring rainfall, and deforestation brings drought.[142] This theory was a major informant of the agricultural practices of the East India Company, particularly in their response to widespread drought and consequent famine in India, which I discuss in my next chapter. Wollstonecraft's suggestion that the climate will "meliorate" with the cutting down of trees in Norway, is linked to the notion that the ideal conditions for national improvement are found in countries like Britain, where the weather is neither too cold nor hot, neither too wet nor dry.[143] Wollstonecraft, like many others at the time, understood that humans could bring about changes in climate to improve the agricultural and industrial development of a nation.[144] Warming the climate in Norway would therefore improve the industrial spirit of the country.

Critical reflection on the benevolence of improvement is crucial to Wollstonecraft's open consideration of alternative ideas of connecting with nature that

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[141] Ibid., 107.
[142] Wollstonecraft refers to this theory again when she states "nothing proves to me so clearly that it is the air which principally nourishes trees and plants, as the flourishing appearance of these pines". See *Letters*, 125. For wider discussion of botanical science in this period and the involvement of Priestley's theory of transpiration, see Robert E. Schofield, *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley: A Study of His Life and Work from 1773 to 1804* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2004); Ronnie Young et al (eds.), *The Scottish Enlightenment and Literary Culture* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2016); Sam George, *Botany, Sexuality & Women's Writing, 1760-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1-22.
[143] See Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (London; Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2000), 51, 120.
[144] Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 508.

neither harm, nor lose divine purpose. Wollstonecraft's experience of the effects of a different fire in the forests of Norway leads her to a new metaphysical understanding of chaotic nature. On her approach to yet another cascade, the "harmony" of which is once again "destroyed" by the presence of saw-mills and "many agricultural experiments", Wollstonecraft finds the surrounding forests still struggling to recover from the devastating effects of a wild fire "some years" past.[145] The landscape is described as "desolation…beyond measure gloomy, inspiring emotions that sterility had never produced."[146] Wollstonecraft's emotional response to this melancholy scene leads her to contemplate its causes. She observes that the "soil as well as the trees" were swept away by a "torrent" of wild fire, and realises that such fires occur when "farmers are burning roots of trees, stalks of beans &c." for manure, and a wind picks up and causes the fire to spread beyond control.[147] However, unlike elsewhere in the text, when Wollstonecraft is confronted with environmental devastation caused by the effects of human knowledge, she does not let a fear of annihilation overwhelm the scene, nor does she allow belief in divine providence to conflict with an egalitarian connection with nature.

Wollstonecraft finds comfort in the sublime, managing in spite of her inability to adequately convey "the beauty and elegance" of the forest to reconcile the struggle for existence in sights of death and decay.[148]

> Vast masses of stone are thus encircled; and roots torn up by the storms, become a shelter for a young generation. The pine and fir woods, left entirely to nature, display an endless variety; and the paths in the wood are not entangled with fallen leaves, which are only interesting whilst they are fluttering between life and death. The grey cobweb-like appearance of the aged pines is a much finer image of decay; the fibres whitening as they lose their moisture, imprisoned life seems to be stealing away. I cannot tell why—but death, under every form, appears to me like something getting free—to expand in I know not what element; nay I feel that this conscious must be as unfettered, have the wings of thought, before it can be happy.[149]

This scene of Wollstonecraft embracing freedom in death has been interpreted by Weiss, Whale and others in terms of Wollstonecraft's mental state, in light of her

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[145] Ibid., 133-5.
[146] Ibid., 134.
[147] Ibid., 134.
[148] Ibid., 134.
[149] Ibid., 134.

suicide attempt a few weeks prior to her journey to Scandinavia.[150] However, I argue that the scene also has something to say about ecology. Here, Wollstonecraft finds happiness in the idea of death through an idea of a shared life force with the trees, in which she sees her own possibilities for an "unfettered" consciousness. Her desire for her own consciousness to be freed from the fetters of embodiment allows her to see death in nature as a similar process of "getting free", but she uses the word "life" rather than 'reason' in reference to what is "stealing away", from the trees. This absence of reason in favour of an ambivalent life process of "I know not what element", still retains a notion of human reason in Wollstonecraft's own "conscious" but emphasises a greater vitalist connection between herself and the trees. In this way, Wollstonecraft imagines a human-nature connection that keeps in place the distinction between sentient and non-sentient modes of being, and yet makes them different expressions of the same mysterious life force. As such, Wollstonecraft retains a concept of providence secured by reason, as well as a more egalitarian notion of shared natural existence. This process stays true to Wollstonecraft's criticism of Smellie's instinctive model, where she says that since the science of the connection between human and non-human nature remains cloudy, it is best to "admit ignorance" than accuse God of allowing cruelty to his creation; cruelty which follows from a lack of rational duty to benevolence.[151] Through securing a sense of reason within her vision of vitalised affiliation with the trees, Wollstonecraft also retains a sense of affective duty to others.

Wollstonecraft's observation of the "cobweb-like" pine trees providing shelter for young saplings, makes figurative the connection between life and death; the "white fibres" of the cobwebs providing instinctive, natural protection to the next generation.[152] This image of the preservation of new life operates as a kind of dispassionate realisation that through the horror and inevitability of death, the very act of living and surviving depends on the devastation of life. The image of the dying trees protecting the young, recalls once again the idea of fertility, but here the protection offered by the decaying trees is not an affective duty, as Wollstonecraft saw in her own relationship to her daughter and to nature, but an instinct of preserving the species. This concept of

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[150] Deborah Weiss, "Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization: Pain and Politics in Mary Wollstonecraft's 'Short Residence'", *Studies in Romanticism* 45, 2 (2006), 215; Whale, *Romanticism Under Pressure*, 90; Jacques Khalip, "A Disappearance in the World: Wollstonecraft and Melancholy Scepticism", *Criticism* 47, 1 (2005): 98.
[151] *Works*, 296.
[152] Ibid., 134.

preserving the species is picked up again later in the text when Wollstonecraft tries to make sense of the chaotic nature of death.[153] Whilst observing soldiers training in Sleswick, then part of the Germanic kingdoms, Wollstonecraft reflects on human death as a natural though horrific process, comparing the soldiers to animals "sold to slaughter, or be slaughtered".[154] From this allusion to another form of human-caused killing, Wollstonecraft removes the concept of the individualised self from ideas about death, conjecturing that "it is the preservation of the species, not of individuals, which appears to be the design of the Deity throughout the whole of nature."[155] In this sense, Wollstonecraft moves away from the language of value attached to anthropocentric ideas about the superiority of the human soul, which contained within it the idea of human improvement, emphasising instead a shared purpose of life for all of nature.

Wollstonecraft's argument for the preservation of species over the valorisation of the individual continues to blur species boundaries as it draws on ideas of benevolence, which contains nature within its universal scope:

> Blossoms come forth only to be blighted; fish lay their spawn where it will be devoured: and what a large portion of the human race are born only to be swept prematurely away. Does not this waste of budding life emphatically assert, that it is not men, but man, whose preservation is so necessary to the completion of the grand plan of the universe? Children peep into existence, suffer, and die; men play like moths about a candle, and sink into the flame: war, and the "thousand ills which flesh is heir to," mow them down in shoals, whilst the more cruel prejudices of society palsies existence, introducing not less sure, though slower decay.[156]

This passage, which compares the bloodshed of war to fishing "shoals" of fish, contains both the ardent criticism of animal cruelty and its connection to male violence which she expressed in *Vindication*, within a notion of universal benevolence, applied here to include non-human life.[157] In his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), Godwin argued for a concept of universal benevolence as emanating from the mind directly to the suffering of nations and peoples, rejecting the idea that local attachments to people

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[153] Ibid., 168.
[154] Ibid., 166.
[155] Ibid., 166.
[156] Ibid., 166.
[157] Evan Radcliffe, "Revolutionary Writing, Moral Philosophy, and Universal Benevolence in the Eighteenth Century", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54, 2 (1993), 226.

lead to benevolence elsewhere.[158] As Evan Radcliffe has discussed, Wollstonecraft's earlier work in her *Vindication*s argued for the importance of local attachments in developing a more universal "love of mankind".[159] In *Letters*, however, Wollstonecraft retains the idea of duty within local attachments, as in her duty to Fanny, but rejects the notion of human exceptionalism within ideas of individualised "men", as opposed to the more general species description of "man". Reading this unsentimental, material perspective on death evokes the message that duty to mankind means recognising their shared natural instincts to preserve the species, and dispensing with an individualised notion of human superiority, since that superiority will inevitably lead to environmental breakdown and the suffering of all human and non-human life. By imagining the preservation of the species as a benevolent duty to acknowledge mankind's natural instincts, it becomes "the design of Deity".[160] Moreover, since the preservation of human life depends on the survival of the rest of nature, preserving the human species requires a duty of care to the natural world. Such an egalitarian view of God's divine will to benevolence turns benevolence from a top-down act of charity, into a call for the preservation of all species, or what we might call biodiversity.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the different ways in which Wollstonecraft cultivated an affective epistemology in *Letters* to contemplate the effects of improvement as a theological and metaphysical belief, on nature, By addressing the gulf she saw between moral notions of benevolence and duty, and notions of improvement, Wollstonecraft questioned her own perfectibilist beliefs and imagined the lasting ramifications of industrial improvement schemes on the earth. At its heart, Wollstonecraft found human and non-human relations, or in other words speciesism, as the cause of much of the violence she witnessed to non-human nature, and through applying an affective epistemology based on associationist principles she found a space for affective and rational reflection. By doing away with the category of the human as her primary

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[158] For discussion of Godwin's perceived "disinterested benevolence", see: Jon Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation: Poetics and Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 112.
[159] Radcliffe, "Revolutionary Writing", 215.
[160] *Letters*, 168.

category of analysis, and focusing on non-human nature, she found a kind of egalitarian utilitarianism in recognising the agency of non-human nature.

Wollstonecraft ends her *Letters* as she returns to England, with the "echo of trade" bringing recollection of the obstacles society faces.[161] In Copenhagen, Wollstonecraft mourns the overcrowding and overdevelopment of the city, noting the only sign of nature to be found was the "single tree" outside the church.[162] With this frail image of hope, Wollstonecraft indicates that countering the improving mechanics of society is still possible with the help of God. In her 'Appendix' to the text, Wollstonecraft discusses "grand causes" rather than particularities, here defining improvement as that which "diminish[es] the sum of human misery", something that, prior to her journey, she "had not previously considered".[163] To explain these "grand causes", Wollstonecraft uses natural language to emphasise the need to relinquish forced improvement as part of an "ardent love of the human race".[164] Laws and governments, Wollstonecraft asserts, must not be altered too enthusiastically, rather, "To render them useful and permanent, they must be the growth of each particular soil, and the gradual fruit of the ripening understanding of the nation, matured by time, not forced by an unnatural fermentation."[165] By employing that familiar Lockean conflation of nature and the mind, Wollstonecraft emphasises the importance of slow, calm feelings in nature, over passionate ones, since they allow for a clearer, less harmful, and less tumultuous understanding of nature and society. The discouragement of "unnatural fermentation" alludes to the cruelty and artificiality of attempts to improve nature and society with blind enthusiasm for rapid change. Evidently, these comments reflect the wider context of the French Revolution and her changing revolutionary politics, yet her choice of natural language here nevertheless carries a particular environmental weight in light of the nature discourse that abounds in the main text. By paying attention to "each particular soil" to bring about maturity, Wollstonecraft intimates how an affective epistemology applied to nature might foster a sense of duty towards the preservation of life in each species, including mankind; a benevolent connection with nature that she hoped her text would encourage.[166]

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[161] Ibid., 175.
[162] Ibid., 175.
[163] Ibid., 178.
[164] Ibid., 178.
[165] Ibid., 178.
[166] Ibid., 178.

2. Wastelands, Empire, and Scottish Improvement: Elizabeth Hamilton's Environmental Philosophy

Whereas Mary Wollstonecraft's affective epistemology leads her to critique the relationship between philosophical and industrial improvement, Elizabeth Hamilton's science of mind does not. Rather, Hamilton's application of associationism to non-human nature in her "everyday philosophy" of "observation and experience" redirects "taste for nature" to domestic and industrial landscapes improved by British hands, and away from "romantick" discourses on sublime solitude and individual feeling.[1] Although Hamilton, like all the writers discussed in this thesis, aimed to moderate the luxury of elite society with science of mind, she finds her solution in the industrious piety of agricultural labourers, whose work on improving (and enclosing) English and Scottish land, leads to benevolence, "pure patriotism", and the improvement of society as a whole.[2] In this chapter I look at Hamilton's application of her science of mind to landscapes in India, England, and Scotland. The first she knew only through reading and from her brother, who was a lieutenant in the East India Company, the second was where she lived intermittently throughout her life, and the third where she was raised in a rural community near Stirling.[3] Hamilton's philosophy of knowing the details of a place through attention and experience plays an important role in the way she represents her topographies. I argue that her specific location as a Scottish writer, whose personal experience of Scottish rural life combined with the influence of Scottish Enlightenment philosophers such as Lord Kames, Thomas Reid, and Dugald Stewart, as well as her friendships with other "common sense" philosophers, botanists, clerics, and novelists connected to Scotland, produce an environmental thought which complicates traditional paradigms of Scottish ecocriticism.

Louisa Gairn has identified some of the dualities in Scottish ecocriticism from the eighteenth century onward as urban versus rural, Highlands versus Lowlands, and

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[1] Elizabeth Hamilton, *Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education* (London: G. and J. Robinson, 1801), 1: xi; *A Series of Popular Essays, Illustrative of Principles Especially Connected with the Improvement of the Understanding, the Imagination, and the Heart* (Edinburgh: Manners and Miller, 1813) 2: 140.
[2] Ibid., 2: 113.
[3] See, *Memoirs of the Late Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton*, (ed.) Elizabeth Benger (London: Longman, 1819).

Anglo-Scottish versus native or clan literature.[4] Binaries which Gairn argues, are oversimplified and require complication.[5] Hamilton's writing does precisely that. For Hamilton is neither a strictly rural nor a cosmopolitan writer, and her commitment to the improvement of Scotland through education and agriculture is balanced by a wariness of applying English methods to Scottish land, warning what might be lost, whether it be language, ways of life, or diverse forests. In her Scottish writing, Hamilton uses science of mind to show both how Scotland can adopt industrious improvement methods through education in observation and experience, as well as questioning the commercial motives underpinning the replacement of Scottish forests with plantations of invasive species. Hamilton's topographical writing on India and England, showcased primarily in her first novel, *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), also advocates an "everyday philosophy" for rural workers which will lead to the improvement of the land and its community.[6] Jane Rendall and Claire Grogan have both discussed the way in which Hamilton's focus on rural reform effectively conforms to the interests of the status quo, while subversively encouraging an educational reform programme that will nevertheless lead to the reform of a commercially-minded elite class.[7] By emphasising a Common Sense philosophy found in rural heartlands, Hamilton contributes to what John Barrell identifies as a late eighteenth century tradition of using the landscape as a political common ground, in which opposing politics might be united, or at least appear to be united, in the patriotic hearts and minds of pastoral labourers.[8] Rendall's work on the uses of common sense philosophy by women writers of this period, including Maria

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[4] Louisa Gairn, *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 3. Further discussions of Scottish ecocriticism so far includes T. C. Smout, "The Highlands and the Roots of Green Consciousness, 1750-1990", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 76 (1991), 237-63; Smout, *Nature Contested: Environmental History in Scotland and Northern England since 1600* (Edinburgh: Scottish Cultural Press, 1998); Christopher MacLachlan, "Nature in Scottish Literature", in *Literature of Nature: An International Sourcebook*, ed. Patrick D. Murphy (Chicago; London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 184-90; Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000), 23; Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-7; Robert A. Lambert, *Species History in Scotland: Introductions and Extinctions Since the Ice Age* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

[5] Gairn, *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature*, 4.

[6] For a discussion of Hamilton's domestic philosophy see Jane Rendall, "'Elementary Principles of Education': Elizabeth Hamilton, Maria Edgeworth and the Uses if Common Sense Philosophy", *History of European Ideas* 39, 5 (2013): 613-30; Rendall, "Adaptations: History, Gender, and Political Economy in the Work of Dugald Stewart", *History of European Ideas* 38, 1 (2012): 143-61; Joanna Wharton, *Material Enlightenment: Women Writers and the Science of Mind*, 1770-1830 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018), 161-95.

[7] Rendall, "Elementary Principles of Education", 613-21; Claire Grogan, *Politics and Genre in the Works of Elizabeth Hamilton, 1756-1816* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 146.

[8] John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 87.

Edgeworth, Anna Letitia Barbauld, and Hamilton, has revealed how Stewart's work in particular, itself built on Lockean and Hartleyan science of mind, argued for the availability of philosophical principles like attention and experience to all people of all classes, and offered women a framework for participating in philosophical discourse.[9] This idea of commonality, and the notion of uniting the nation with an apolitical common sense view, has complex ecological consequences when it is applied to the landscape in the late eighteenth century, especially when engaging as Hamilton does with the politics of common land, Highland Clearances, Asiatic agriculture, and improvement.

As Rendall and Joanna Wharton have argued, Hamilton's science of mind is influenced by a wide range of philosophies, including the associationism of David Hartley and John Locke, common sense philosophy, and non-sectarian Christian teaching based on Scripture.[10] Hamilton is interestingly placed amongst the writers in this thesis for the way in which she built her science of mind into her metaphysical religiosity. Hamilton is unlike Edgeworth, in whose work religion is almost entirely absent in spite of her regular attendance at a local Church of Ireland parish. However, Hamilton is also distinct from the rational dissenters in her position as a Scottish Presbyterian, and though she shared an interest in science of mind and nature, and admired Barbauld and Wollstonecraft's work, she sought to distinguish her associationism from theirs on the basis of her religious faith.[11] In her philosophical text *A Series of Popular Essays* (1813), Hamilton argues that following God's teaching through biblical revelation is an important part of her metaphysical religiosity because it assists in directing the "exercise of benevolent affections" away from prejudice.[12] For

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[9] Rendall, "Elementary Principles of Education", 613-21; Rendall, "Adaptations: History, Gender, and Political Economy in the Work of Dugald Stewart", 143-61.
[10] Rendall, "Elementary Principles of Education", 626; Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 180.
[11] For a discussion of Hamilton's religious educationalism see Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 162-70; Joyce Goodman, "Undermining or building up the nation? Elizabeth Hamilton (1758-1816), national identities and an authoritative role for women educationists", *Journal of the History of Education Society* 28, 3 (1999): 279-96; Anne K. Mellor, "Romantic Orientalism Begins at Home: Elizabeth Hamilton's 'Tranlations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah'", *Studies in Romanticism* 44, 2 (2005): 151-64; Grogan, "Identifying Foreign Bodies: New Philosophers and Hottentots in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*", *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 18, 3 (2006): 305-27; Grogan, *Politics and Genre*, 1-26; Sarah Hutton, "The *Persona* of the Woman Philosopher in Eighteenth-Century England: Catharine Macaulay, Mary Hays, and Elizabeth Hamilton", *Intellectual History Review* 18, 3 (2008): 403-12; Fiona Price, "Elizabeth Hamilton's *Letters on Education*: Common Sense Alternatives to Skepticism and Their Consequences", in *Romantic Empiricism: Poetics and the Philosophy of Common Sense, 1780-1830*, ed. Gavin Budge (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 88-112.
[12] Hamilton, *A Series of Popular Essays*, 1: 373.

rational dissenters, like Barbauld and Wollstonecraft, revelation was rejected as a religious principle, especially amongst the Unitarians.[13] According to Hamilton's friend and biographer, Elizabeth Benger, the mixed-sect community of her Scottish upbringing, with her Presbyterian aunt, and Episcopalian uncle, and the religious discord between those churches at the time, gave Hamilton a lifelong "aversion to the bigotry and rancour of sect", which drove the consistent emphasis she places on religious toleration, dispelling prejudice, and a faith based on biblical reading alone.[14] I suggest that this insistence on religious toleration in combination with her common sense philosophy, produces a particular reverence for moderation in Hamilton's work, the direction of which we can see shift clearly in her discussion of the landscape.[15]

Rendall in particular has noted that in spite of the philosophical similarities between Hamilton and some of the other writers discussed in this thesis, especially Edgeworth, Hamilton received the most criticism for her science of mind, largely because of her religiosity.[16] It is perhaps for this reason that Hamilton, like the dissenters, wrote her philosophy into so many different genres, from novels, to educational, religious, and philosophical texts, and in doing so tried to evade overt criticism by subversively engaging in scholastic, philosophical and scientific discussions. Moreover, the experimental nature of her writing lends itself to writing on wider subjects like agricultural science and natural philosophy, which Susan Egenolf has discussed in the context of Hamilton's use of self-deprecating "glosses" which disguise her engagement with Asiatic miscellanies in *Hindoo Rajah*.[17] Like all the writers discussed in this thesis, Hamilton's literary and philosophical experiments require looking across the different genres she works in to build a picture of her environmental philosophy. In this chapter I look at two of her novels, the satire *Hindoo Rajah*, the domestic novel *Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808), and her educational and

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[13] Hickman, *Eighteenth-Century Dissent and Cambridge Platonism*, 4; Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England, 1760-1860* (London: Longman, 1998), ix.
[14] Elizabeth Benger (ed.), *Memoirs of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton*, 1: 3.
[15] Other common-sense philosophers like Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart were connected to radical politics in the 1790s, to which Hamilton was not connected, but may have had some private sympathy for, see Nigel Leask, "Robert Burns and Scottish Common Sense Philosophy", in *Romantic Empiricism*, ed. Gavin Budge, 64-87.
[16] Rendall, "Elementary Principles of Education", 614.
[17] Susan B. Egenolf has also suggested that Hamilton uses the literary technique of "glosses" in her novels, such as satire and self-deprecation, to "gloss" her engagement in masculine subjects such as Asiatic miscellanies in *Hindoo Rajah* in *The Art of Political Fiction in Hamilton, Edgeworth, and Owenson* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 17-38.

philosophical texts, *Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education* (1801), and *A Series of Popular Essays* (1813-15).

Environmental Philosophy

The term 'environmental philosophy' has particular ecological connotations when discussing Hamilton. Throughout her work, nature is a consistent focus point of her science of mind, and the foundation from which "benevolence", exercised through religious devotion, springs to improve society. Yet the domestic connotations of environmental philosophy remain. For Hamilton, nature that leads to benevolence and improvement is never represented as wild or desolate, but as in the process of improvement, whereby it is brought into human environments of domestic and industrial land. Such a representation of nature resists models of individualised Romantic subjectivity based on feeling, and the scientific empiricism that Gairn argues weigh heavy in an Anglo-centric canon of nature writing in this period.[18] Hamilton differs too from her fellow Scottish writers whose work has recently attracted ecocritical attention. Hamilton resists her friend Walter Scott's reverie and wonder at the "wild, precipitous… healthy and savage" Highlands landscape, but at the same time pre-dates his criticism of importing plantations of foreign trees to Scotland for the use of the "English" navy, which Susan Oliver has recently discussed.[19] And although it's very unlikely Hamilton inspired the founding of National Parks, as Robert Burns did for John Muir, Hamilton's similar emphasis on Scottish rural culture communicates her wider commitment to principles of attention and experience of nature, which phenomenological philosophers have argued is a crucial part of ecocritical work, through bringing the body and mind closer to nature through lived experience.[20]

Hamilton's attachment to notions of experiencing nature is noted by Benger, when she claims that Hamilton's experience of growing up in rural Scotland is where she

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[18] Gairn, *Ecology and Modern Scottish Literature*, 4.
[19] Susan Oliver, "Planting the Nation's 'Waste Lands': Walter Scott, Forestry and the Cultivation of Scotlands Wilderness", *Literature Compass* 6, 3 (2009): 585-98.
[20] John Muir, "A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf", in *The Eight Wilderness Discovery Books*, ed. Terry Gifford (London: Diadem Books, 1992), 124; "Thoughts on the Birthday of Robert Burns", in *The Wilderness Journeys* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), xviii. For a recent overview of phenomenological philosophy and its eighteenth-century contexts see John Wylie, "Landscape and Phenomenology", in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. Peter Howard et al (London: Routledge, 2018), 110-22.

learned to "play and explore" within a natural environment, and first made the connection between "nature in the material world" and "devotional" and "moral feeling."[21] Rather than deferring to writers like Barbauld or others who wrote on this subject, Benger emphasises that Hamilton's environmental philosophy was a natural consequence of her lived experience. This idea that cultivating science of mind through attention to nature was both natural and accessible to anyone, was a cornerstone of Hamilton's educationalism, which she directed principally to mothers, to whom the responsibility for educating of young children fell.[22] In *Elementary Principles*, Hamilton asserts that while those who live in the countryside have an advantage in "cultivating the perceptive and conceptive faculties", everyone can seek out natural objects: "If the vegetable world is shut to their person, the book of animated nature is open before them."[23] Hamilton argues that whether natural objects are local, or far away in the form of the "sun, moon, and stars", the "same principles of science are involved."[24] The important "mechanism" in this process, Hamilton asserts, is perception, which requires "judgement and reflection to comprehend." Hamilton criticises the practice of making children "learn to prate by rote", which she deems "words without ideas".[25] While such practice may produce the kind of accumulation of knowledge that is admired and respected, they are "a species of forced plant", which have "neither strength nor flavour", though they appear on the outside "fair and flourishing."[26] In this sense, like many associationists, including Barbauld and Joseph Priestley, Hamilton uses figurative objects to render principles like 'perception' material and comprehensible. In doing so, Hamilton brings nature inside the domestic spaces of women and children as an educational tool, with hopes that its cultivation will lead to "industry" and "happiness".[27]

Themes of waste, clearing away what is not useful, and cultivating what is useful to improvement, are common features of Hamilton's science of mind. At the end of the first letter of *Elementary Principles*, Hamilton writes: "greatly do I wish to see this

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[21] Benger, *Memoirs*, 1: 6.
[22] For further discussion of Hamilton and domestic education see Fiona Price, "Elizabeth Hamilton's *Letters on Education*"; Mellor, "Romantic Orientalism Begins at Home"; Goodman, "Undermining or building up the nation?".
[23] Hamilton, *Elementary Principles*, 1: 206.
[24] Ibid., 1: 206.
[25] Ibid., 2: 33
[26] Ibid., 2: 34.
[27] Ibid., 2: 282.

subject [science of mind] divested of all extraneous matter, cleared from the rubbish of systems and hypothesis, and rendered so plain to every capacity as to become part of common education."[28] Hamilton's desire to initiate a science of mind made accessible to everyone, through pruning philosophy back to natural principles, means removing the technical language which, she claims, are barriers to understanding and practising what is intrinsically "self-evident".[29] Wharton has discussed how Hamilton's notion of philosophical "rubbish" plays a part in how she self-fashions as a female philosopher, by clearing philosophy of the male discourse which she claimed was inaccessible to women.[30] However, this chapter is primarily concerned with the ways in which Hamilton applies this notion of "clearing the rubbish" to nature in her representation of Warren Hastings' agricultural improvement schemes in India, English enclosure and elite excesses, and Scottish improvement politics, as well as the kind of science that replaces it. I build on scholarship which has revealed Hamilton's complex metaphysical religiosity, domestic politics, and orientalism to show both the centrality of agriculture and natural philosophy to Hamilton's work, and how it illustrates how science of mind was used to simultaneously critique and promote the extraction of natural resources by agricultural improvement.[31]

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[28] *Elementary Principles*, 1: 20-1. In *Elements*, Stewart refers to contemporary metaphysicians as producing 'rubbish'. See Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1792), 1: 15, 1: 46. See also Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 177-210 for her argument on Hamilton's interpretation of philosophical "rubbish" as a way of cultivating her philosophy and her philosophical persona.

[29] *Elementary Principles*, 1: xii.

[30] Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 178-80. Wharton casts doubt on the sincerity of Hamilton's claim that philosophy was inaccessible to women, particularly given Hamilton's own extensive reading as well as her prolific use of technical philosophical language in texts that emphasise the importance of plain language.

[31] Discussions of Hamilton's orientalism, domesticity, and literary techniques, particularly relating to *Hindoo Rajah*, is where Hamilton scholarship has clustered. For an overview of the field see: Janice Farrar Thaddeus, "Elizabeth Hamilton's Domestic Politics", *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 23 (1994): 265-84; Sonja Lawrenson, "Revolution, Rebellion and a Rajah from Rohilkhand: Recontextualizing Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*", *Studies in Romanticism* 51, 2 (2012): 125-47; Pam Perkins, "Enlightening the Female Mind: Education, Sociability, and the Literary Woman in the Work of Elizabeth Hamilton", *Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature* 15 (2010): 55-134; Grogan, "Crossing Genre, Gender and Race in Elizabeth Hamilton's 'Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah'", *Studies in the Novel* 34, 1 (2002): 21-42; Mona Narain, "Colonial Desires: The Fantasy of Empire and Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*", *Studies in Romanticism* 45, 4 (2006): 585-98; Julie Straight, "Promoting Liberty through Universal Benevolence in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*", *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 25, 3 (2013): 589-614; Tara Ghoshal Wallace, "Reading the Metropole: Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*", in *Enlightening Romanticism, Romancing the Enlightenment: British Novels from 1750-1832*, ed. Miriam L. Wallace (London: Routledge, 2009): 126-37; Jeanne M. Brittin, "Fictional Footnotes, Romantic Orientalism and the Remediated Novel: Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*", *European Romantic Review* 26, 6 (2015): 773-87; John C. Leffel, "Empire, Race, and the Debate over the Indian

Clearing India

The idea of 'clearing the rubbish' to make way for a reforming science, was a cornerstone of the East India Company's improving imperial policy in the late eighteenth century. Hamilton's brother, Charles, who had been a Lieutenant under Hastings until his death in 1792, was one of the employees given leave to conduct research on India's history, culture, environment and other sources of 'knowledge'.[32] Charles firstly wrote a history of the Rohilla wars in defence of Hastings' imperial policy against the Rohilla Afghans from 1773-4, allegations regarding which were included in Hastings' trial from 1788-95.[33] His final project, however, was *The Hedaya* (1791), a translation of the Muslim book of law, the opening to which features an explanation of what the East India Company hoped to gain from learning and translating works from Indian soil:

> The diffusion of useful knowledge, and the eradication of prejudice, though not among the most brilliant consequences of extended empire and commerce, are certainly not the least important. — To open and to clear the road for science; to provide for its reception in whatever form it may appear, in whatever language it may be conveyed:— these are advantages which in part atone for the guilt of conquest, and in many cases compensate for the evils which the acquisition of dominion too often inflicts.[34]

Edward Said conceptualised in the 1970s how the orientalist idea of a shared culture of "knowledge exchange" between the metropole and its colonies became the prevailing

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Marriage Market in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800), *Eighteenth-Century Life* 26, 3 (2014): 427-54; Fiona Price, "Democratizing Taste: Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and Elizabeth Hamilton", *Romanticism* 8, 2 (2008): 179-196; Susan B. Taylor, "Feminism and Orientalism in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah"*, *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 29, 5 (2000): 555-81; Siraj Ahmed, "'The Pure Soil of Universal Benevolence': The Rule of Property and the Rise of Imperial Ideology in the 1790s", *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 15 (2000): 139-57; Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 100-1; Gary Kelly, *Women Writing, and Revolution, 1790-1827* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 129-269.

[32] Lawrenson, "Revolution, Rebellion and a Rajah from Rohilkhand", 126-8; Egenolf, *The Art of Political Fiction*, 17-25.

[33] Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell, introduction to *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* by Elizabeth Hamilton, ed. Pam Perkins and Shannon Russell, (Peterborough: Broadview, 2004), 28.

[34] Burhan Al-Din Al-Marghinani, *The Hedaya, Or Guide: A Commentary on the Mussulman Laws*, trans. Charles Hamilton (London: T. Bensley, 1791), iii.

fantasy of Empire during the eighteenth century.[35] Charles Hamilton indicates, however, that the process of obtaining that knowledge for "diffusion" back home, required literally "clearing the road for science".[36] The purpose of translating *The Hedaya* and the earlier *A Code of the Gentoo Laws* into English, was so that the East India Company could select ancient Hindu and Muslim laws that suited their own purposes, which they then used to govern the colonies, in the hope of avoiding violent uprisings from the installation of English laws in India.[37] As Ranajit Guha's work reveals, this form of colonial negotiation led to the East India Company gradually obtaining land through taxation.[38] By using zamindars as tax collectors and land managers on behalf of the British, and with the establishment of the Permanent Settlement Act in 1793, Guha argues that ideals of progressive capitalism, in contrast with earlier mercantile policies of commercial trade, were expressed through "agrarian improvement".[39] David Arnold has shown that ideas originating in the tilling "fields of Jethro Tull and 'Turnip' Townsend" were exported to India as "scientific improvement".[40] Richard Grove and Richard Drayton have both argued that this "ideology of development" owes much to the involvement of botanists, like Joseph Banks, who was instrumental in setting up the botanical garden of Kolkata, making it a showcase of global botanical collection, like

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[35] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 16-17.
[36] Hamilton (trans.), *The Hedaya*, iii.
[37] The first and what remains the most comprehensive study on the rule of property in colonial India is Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Durham; London: Duke University Press [1963] 1996). For a wider discussion of the act's political, social, economic, and literary significance see also, Ahmed, "'The Pure Soil of Universal Benevolence': The Rule of Property and the Rise of Imperial Ideology in the 1790s", 139-42; Vinay Krishnin Gidwani, "'Waste and the Permanent Settlement in Bengal", *Economic and Political Weekly* 27, 4 (1992): 39-46; Emily Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company, 1600-1757* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 77-125; H. V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 109; Michael Mann, "A Permanent Settlement for the Ceded and Conquered Provinces: Revenue Administration in North India, 1801-1833", *The Indian and Social History Review* 32, 2 (1995): 245-69; Nitin Sinha, *Communication and Colonialism in Eastern India: Bihar, 1760s-1880s* (London; New York; Delhi: Anthem Press, 2012), 27; John R. McLane, "Bengali Bandits, Police, and Landlords After the Permanant Settlement", in *Crime and Criminality in British India*, ed. Anand Yang (Arizona: Arizona University Press, 1987), 20-38; Priyamvada Gopal, *The Indian English Novel: Nation, History, and Narration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 17-27.
[38] Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal*, 105.
[39] Ibid., 105-55. For further research on pre-colonial environmentalism in India and the impact of colonial agricultural improvement, see Subir Sinha, Shubhra Gururani and Brian Greenberg, "The 'New Traditionalist' discourse of India environmentalism", *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 24, 3 (1997): 65-99; Bina Agarwal, "Environmental management, equity and ecofeminism: Debating India's experience", *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 25, 4 (1998): 55-95.
[40] David Arnold, "Agriculture and 'Improvement' in Early Colonial India: A Pre-History of Development", *Journal of Agrarian Change* 5, 4 (October 2005), 507. See also C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

those found in Leiden and Kew.[41] In *Hindoo* Rajah, Hamilton not only promotes but participates in these imperialist agricultural practices through applying her environmental philosophy to the Indian landscape she describes.

Hamilton praises the progress made through studying India's natural resources throughout her 'Preliminary Dissertation' to *Hindoo Rajah*, especially the work done by William Jones, and other members of the Asiatic Society who want to preserve the "fertile soil" and "permanency of knowledge" found in India.[42] However she argues that now the focus of research must be not on nature itself, and the "barriers" to knowledge "formed by nature", but on those "internal causes arising from the *nature of their Government, their Laws, Religion, and Prejudices*, and established manners."[43] Here, Hamilton suggests that through "attention" to and experience of Indian culture, greater improvement can be made to Indian soil.[44] Hamilton's assertion that nature is not the barrier to improvement, recalls what she writes elsewhere in the novel, that attention and observation of "pure soil", combined with "benevolent affections of the heart" lead to "universal benevolence".[45] In this way, we might understand Hamilton's attention to the legal and cultural barriers to knowledge which her brother referred to in *The Hedaya*, as continuous with her environmental philosophy, in which anyone can connect with nature for the improvement of society once the rubbish has been cleared. Moreover, clearing legal barriers to natural resources was a key part of the East India Company's programme of securing "permanent" acquisition of Indian resources through its zamindari system.[46] By putting zamindars in charge of land management, the East India Company had hoped to train them in British agricultural practices and profit from the spoils.[47] This plan was eventually deemed unsuccessful, with issues of absentee landlordism flooding the process.[48] Siraj Ahmed has argued that *Hindoo Rajah*, with its open dedication to Hastings after his acquittal of war crimes, contributes to a wider rehabilitation of Hastings' orientalist project, through its promotion of British acquisition of Indian soil.[49] Indeed, The Permanent Settlement Act (1793) had been

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[41] Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 311, 330, 340-2; Drayton, *Nature's Government*, 170-346.
[42] *Hindoo Rajah*, 55.
[43] Ibid., 57.
[44] Ibid., 57.
[45] Ibid., 83.
[46] Guha, *The Rule of Property*, 43.
[47] Ibid., 43-50; Arnold, "Agriculture and 'Improvement' in Early Colonial India", 507-11; Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, 171-212.
[48] Ibid., 506-7.
[49] Ahmed, "'The Pure Soil of Universal Benevolence'", 139.

secured in law by the time Hamilton claimed in 1796 that "Agriculture has been encouraged by the most certain of all methods — the security of property."[50]

In the 1770s and 1780s, the East India Company invested heavily in environmental and botanical science in India.[51] One such scientific endeavour was the establishment of the Asiatic Society, which focused on publishing research on botany, alongside other works of Indology.[52] Kolkata's botanical garden, established by Robert Kyd opposite Fort William, claimed to specialise in researching high-yield "conservationist" plants.[53] The claim, according to Kyd, the garden's director, was to use European scientific models for the purpose of "humanity", by growing food and medical plants to ease starvation and disease in India.[54] In the 1770s, parts of India had been thrown into famine as a consequence of an East India Company instigated war against the Rohillas and Marathas, combined with an extended El Niño effect.[55] Instead of blaming the famine on exploitative imperial policy, the East India Company justified continued expansion by claiming to solve the problem through analysing nature. The botanical garden, however was not quite the humanitarian experiment its directors claimed, and operated, according to Grove, Drayton and others, largely as a showcase for British imperial botanical collections, which required clearing an entire village in Calcutta for its construction, decades before a hospital was established in the 1820s.[56] Meanwhile, high-yield plantations, in areas most affected by famine in Rohilkhand and Awadh in Uttar Pradesh, merely entrenched existing trade routes with increased exports to Punjab,

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[50] Hamilton, *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, ed. Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), 70.
[51] Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 300.
[52] For Hamilton's discussion of William Jones' Asiatic Society, whom she praises as "the steady friend, the liberal patron, and zealous promoter of useful knowledge", see her 'Preliminary Dissertation" in Hamilton, *Hindoo Rajah*, 66, and Egenolf's discussion of her "Asiatic miscellanies" in *The Art of Political Fiction*, 17-30.
[53] Drayton, *Nature's Government*, 290.
[54] In a letter to the Board of Revenue in Calcutta, dated April 15th, 1786, Kyd wrote to persuade the EIC to support his proposal for storing food plants in the botanical garden. He wrote of the "accumulated riches which have accrued Great Britain, consequent to the acquisition of our Territorial possession in India" and the horrors of "physical causes incident to the Climate of Hindostan", which he feared might lead Indians "entailing on us the imputation of inhumanity…while every provisional plan…remains unattempted on the part of our Administration." Robert Kyd, *Letter to the Board of Directors*, Fort William, 15 April 1786, reprinted in Kalipada Biswas (ed), *The Original Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks Relating to the Foundation of the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta and the Summary of the 150th Anniversary Volume of the Royal Botanic Garden* (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1950), 3.
[55] Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 531.
[56] Ibid., 530-5; Drayton, *Nature's Government*, 280-99; Zaheer Baber, *The Science of Empire: Scientific Knowledge, Civilisation, and Colonial Rule in India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 165.

and then onto international markets via Afghanistan.[57] According to an extensive study by Simon Commander, this agricultural economy led to such high tax rates for peasant workers that "producers were divested of any access to the market."[58] Many of the forests conserved under the popular belief that trees purify the air and prevent drought, were in fact reforested to provide a sustainable source of timber for the navy.[59]

The science behind tree preservation can be traced to John Hope's Edinburgh school of medicine and botany, where many East India Company botanists were educated, and where Hamilton had friends with whom she remained in close correspondence.[60] Much of the science behind these projects was discussed by Edinburgh alumni and East India Company employees including Kyd, and his successor William Roxburgh in the Asiatic Society reports, to which Charles Hamilton contributed as a colleague and listed member.[61] Through correspondence with Charles, in which she writes of her interest in the activities of the Asiatic Society and East India Company endeavours, and even considered visiting India in the hopes of finding a husband, Hamilton had access to these reports, particularly after Charles' death when she spent four months in his residence in Belfast while writing *Hindoo Rajah*.[62]

Hamilton's novel, a work of fictional translations, set in the aftermath of the Rohilla War, borrows heavily from her brother's research in the promotion of the orientalist project, infusing the novel with the language and ideas of scientific improvement. Hamilton opens her "Preliminary Dissertation" by outlining the imperial appeal of the country whose "sources of knowledge" might be turned into valuable "treasures" by the enlightened "labours of men" in the metropole:[63]

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[57] Simon Commander, "Colonial Rule and Economic Subordination: The North Indian Economy in the Nineteenth Century", *Études Rurales* 89/91 (Jan-Sept 1983), 179. For the wider social context of Indian colonial agricultural trade see Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, 31-38, 90-95; Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Cambridge; New York; New Rochelle; Melbourne; Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 153-4, 331-3; Neil Charlesworth, *British Rule and the Indian Economy 1800-1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1982), 20-26; B. B. Chauduri, *Peasant History of Late Pre-Colonial and Colonial India* (New Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2008), 232-3, 514-23.
[58] Ibid., 180.
[59] Arnold, "Agriculture and 'Improvement' in Early Colonial India", 507-11. Grove has connected the plantation policies enacted by Roxburgh and later by Hooker to Edinburgh University, but suggests Priestley's theories of phlogiston might also have been considered in "The Culture of Islands and the History of Environmental Concern", in *Climate Change and the Humanities*, eds. A. Elliott, J. Cullis, V. Damodaran (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 69-91.
[60] Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 400.
[61] Richard Axelby, "Calcutta Botanic Garden and the colonial re-ordering of the Indian environments", *Archives of Natural History* 35, 1 (September 2011): 150-63.
[62] Narain, "Colonial Desires", 590; Hamilton, "Letter to Charles", 1783, in *Hindoo Rajah*, 336.
[63] Ibid., 56.

> The thirst of conquest and the desire of gain, which first drew the attention of the most powerful, and enlightened nations of Europe toward the fruitful regions of Hindoostan, have been the means of opening sources of knowledge and information to the learned, and the curious, and have added to the stock of the literary world, treasures, which if not so substantial, are of a nature more permanent than those which have enriched the commercial.[64]

For Hamilton, expanding the colonies in India is not simply about commercial gain, but the usefulness derived from the "permanent" truth of the knowledge gained from those "fruitful regions". Hindoostan is famous, writes Hamilton, "for the salubrity of their climate, the richness of their productions, and the fertility of their soil."[65] However, she continues, "Brahmins", the "guardians of law and religion", are also "barriers to knowledge."[66] As Grove has discussed, this image of India as "fertile", "wild" and "exotic" ground for the extraction of natural resources, held back by native incompetence, had been widely popular amongst travel writers since the early modern period and intimated a general responsibility of the more scientifically sophisticated British to study and learn about India's natural environment for the advancement of knowledge.[67]

The idea that the British are in possession of a special kind of knowledge and have an enlightened relationship with nature, is what drives Hamilton's portrayals of Indian and British agriculture. In the opening scenes of *Hindoo Rajah* we meet Zaarmilla, the eponymous rajah in the immediate aftermath of the Rohilla war, which saw 50,000 Rohilla Afghans killed by the neighbouring Nawab of Awadh and his British allies.[68] Hamilton explains that Zaarmilla, like many Hindus in the region had instructed his *sooder* servants to cut down the trees around his house, because surviving Rohilla Aghans who were fleeing from brutal annexation, had taken to burning the nation's forests as a means of vengeance.[69] Hamilton describes how this act of "cruelty" on behalf of the Rohillas, led to the death of Captain Charles Percy, a recent friend of Zaarmilla, and a likely alias for Charles Hamilton.[70] Running for safety with the "poor

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[64] Ibid., 55.
[65] Ibid., 57.
[66] Ibid., 59-60.
[67] Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 39.
[68] Lawrenson, "Revolution, Rebellion and a Rajah from Rohilkhand", 127.
[69] *Hindoo Rajah*, 79.
[70] Ibid., 81. Taylor, "Feminism and Orientalism", 556; Grogan "Crossing Genre, Gender and Race", 26.

fugitives" and looking for "the protection of a Hindoo", Captain Percy climbs one of the trees "almost cut" by Zaarmilla's servants after hearing "the yells of a tiger".[71] Because the servants had "neglected" to pull down the tree completely, it "gave way to the pressure, and occasioned a fatal accident".[72] The role both Muslims and Hindus play in the death of Captain Percy mark out both as dangerously incompetent managers of the land.

Hamilton's portrayal of Indians as incompetent land managers is consistent with the effects of the zamindari system. By presenting zamindars, whose job it was to manage colonised land, as incompetent, the East India Company could more readily position themselves as direct authorities on agricultural management.[73] This notion of the British clearing away wasteful agricultural practices to make way for their own improvement programme, appears again later in the novel when Zaarmilla visits Calcutta. Here, Hamilton uses Zaarmilla as a naïve voice of authenticity, albeit a satirical one, to compare the plantations controlled by Muslims and the British. The former, Zaarmilla declares is "desolate" and exploits its workers, while the land brought under control by the East India Company pays the fairest wages, is the most productive and has a "happy" workforce.[74]

Zaarmilla slips into a more sentimental style of describing the landscape surrounding "richly cultivated" Calcutta, the Mango groves of which "frequently intruded upon the verdant slope, to kiss the tresses of the Ganga."[75] This sentimental language of nature works here as a defence against Edmund Burke's famous accusation against Hastings in his trial, that the East India Company had destroyed the landscape of Rohilkhand, which is referred to in a footnote.[76] The footnote describes an encounter with a writer who parodies Burke's speech against Hastings, who portrays the "happy" and "peaceful" times of the Mogul Government before British interference, when Bengal was "charming and picturesque", and "*was filled with a variety of birds of beautiful colours; among others, peacocks in abundance*, sitting on the vast horizontal branches, displayed their dazzling plumes to the sun."[77] The reference to peacocks is

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[71] *Hindoo Rajah*, 81.
[72] Ibid., 81.
[73] Bayly, 151, 204.
[74] *Hindoo Rajah*, 78, 81.
[75] Ibid., 159.
[76] Ibid., 159.
[77] Ibid., 159.

made two more times, firstly in the main text, where Zaarmilla describes the "innumerable number" of peacocks "waving their resplendent plumage in the sun", and again in the footnote where the fictional editor of the letters clarifies that "the race of peacocks has not been exterminated" in an oblique reference to Burke's accusation that Hastings ordered the Rohillas to be "exterminated."[78] Hamilton's use of peacocks as an analogy for the Rohillas has several connotations that require unpacking. Firstly, the Burkean character's description of the peacocks sitting on branches recalls Charles Percy's earlier demise, where he dies falling from a branch that had been made unsafe partly as a consequence of a mismanaged Mogul empire, and through this image the reader is drawn into questioning the character's account of a flourishing landscape under Mogul rule. Secondly, by alluding to the "extermination" of the Rohillas as birds, Hamilton turns the notion that the East India Company was responsible for their deaths into a dark joke, directed at satirising Burke's accusation as an overreaction, and vindicating Hastings as a liberator of the Rohillas who can now live "abundantly" under British rule, as Zaarmilla attested in his description of peacocks.[79]

The duality of extermination and abundance darkly plays with the idea of clearing the excesses of sentimentalism from society. Using the motif of bird imagery also recalls Thomas Paine's attack on Burke's defence of Marie Antoinette and the French monarchy during the French Revolution, where he argued Burke "pit[ies] the plumage, but forget[s] the dying bird."[80] Hamilton's use of Paine's bird trope would have been familiar to British readers at this time, and in using Burke's sentimental language against him to insinuate an excess of misdirected sympathy, Hamilton slyly implies that just as Burke showed his lack of sympathy for the dying masses in France, his sympathy for the Rohillas is insincere. Although Hamilton has often been described as an "anti-Jacobin", more recent scholarship has revealed her political complexities as a writer who sympathised with Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and whose educational writing recognised the need for societal reform even as it urged for the avoidance of violent revolution.[81] This parody of Burke's sentimental style of

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[78] Ibid., 159. Additional explanation of Burke's speech is provided in a note by Perkins and Russell.
[79] For a discussion of Burke's speech within the context of his liberalism and universalism see Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 24-100.
[80] Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr Burke's Attack on the French Revolution* (London: J.S. Jordan, 1791), 26.
[81] Early studies on Hamilton that position her in the "Anti-Jacobin" tradition include M.O. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

describing nature nevertheless focuses on Burke's misuse of science of mind more than it does his political sentiments. In the footnote, the Burkean character is shown to have failed in his "attempts to expose the secret workings of the human mind" and should instead have "restrained" himself to the task of representing real "external objects".[82] As such, Burke's accusation against Hastings becomes a product of fanciful imagination rather than experience. By the 1790s, as I discussed in my last chapter, sentimental writing was seen by writers like Wollstonecraft as insincere and a symptom of the commodifying effects of luxury. Although Zaarmilla also frequently adopts a sentimental style, his naivety and lack of familiarity with the nuances of European culture reveal his sentiments, which after all are based on genuine experience of India, as sincere by comparison.

It is this impression of sincerity that allows Hamilton to present her vision of nature as authentic. Through the eyes of her naïve traveller, Hamilton describes the "awe" and "admiration" to be found in such a cultivated city as Calcutta.[83] Zaarmilla describes the improvements made by the East India Company to the "magnificent palaces" which are now "adorned" by new architecture, and the "grandeur" of the fortress which not only expresses "strength" but "beauty".[84] The scene gradually zooms in towards the natural environment that is the focus point of the city: the "silvery" river Ganges, and the gardens "rich in vegetable beauty."[85] At the beginning of the letter Zaarmilla declares that he intends to communicate to the reader of his travels "the first impression made upon my mind, by every new object presented to it".[86] This adoption of sensible European travel writing about the landscape on the one hand makes obvious the imitative voice Zaarmilla uses in his descriptions of the landscape, but also makes the slippage between Zaarmilla and Hamilton's voice that much harder to pick apart. Zaarmilla's praise for the improved Calcutta scenery as a form of beauty, redirects the eye of taste away from the wild Mango and Banyan groves where tigers lurk, to scenes of human invention and tamed nature. Moreover, the cultivated scene extends towards

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Press, 2001), 184-5; Grogan, *Politics and Genre*, 12-17. Kelly positions Hamilton more as an anti-revolutionary educationalist in *Women, Writing, and Revolution*, 126. Others who have read her feminist revolutionary sympathies, even if she does not advocate them explicitly, include Andrew McInnes, *Mary Wollstonecraft's Ghost: The Fate of the Female Philosopher in the Romantic Period* (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), 61.

[82] *Hindoo Rajah*, 160.

[83] Ibid., 167.

[84] Ibid., 167.

[85] Ibid., 167.

[86] Ibid., 162.

its people, who Zaarmilla describes as a "concourse" of "variety", with people of every "dress, complexion, religion, and manners", who nevertheless tolerate one another as they interact in the bustling city.[87] Toleration for Hamilton is one of the consequences of a civilized society, and something she hoped her science of mind would encourage through cultivating principles of attention and a shared experience of nature for the diffusion of benevolence.[88] Hamilton's main interest in toleration however, has little to do with Muslims and Hindus, and as she discusses elsewhere in her writing, in *Hindoo Rajah*, the Christian sects disturb the scene. Zaarmilla ends by commenting on the "stately Armenian" and "money-loving Englishman" whose interest in business makes them deaf to "any voice save that which calls them to the temple of Lacshmi." In this way, Hamilton points to the commercial interest of British investors in India as "barriers" to improvement which must be cleared away.[89]

English Luxury and Agriculture

This section focuses on Hamilton's discussion of English land improvement, and the metaphysical and moral mistakes that are made by the English elites. When Zaarmilla travels to England he expects the people he meets to live up to their reputation for pious benevolence, in spite of his friend Mandaara's warnings that the English are "cruel" and bloodthirsty.[90] It is through Zaarmilla's encounters with a range of elite, rural, academic, and domestic characters that Hamilton reveals the places where English cruelty resides, and how it is an impediment to the improvement of nature and society. Luxury, fashion, sentimentalism, and philosophical excess detached from the natural world, are enactors of cruelty towards nature in *Hindoo Rajah*, and this cruelty indicates a failure to "exercise the benevolent affections of the heart", which combined with "attention to natural objects" leads to improvement.[91] Hamilton's criticism of British cruelty, even as she ultimately defends the socio-political structures that hold the Empire and British class system in place, broadly conforms to the genre of eighteenth-century fictional travel writing, which Matthew Grenby has discussed. Through the eyes

[87] Ibid., 167.
[88] Rendall, "Elementary Principles of Education", 620.
[89] *Hindoo Rajah*, 167.
[90] Ibid., 266.
[91] *Popular Essays*, 1: 173.

of her Hindu narrator, Hamilton uses the form of orientalist satire, established by Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721) and Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* (1760-61), to contrast British and Indian customs, revealing the cruelties and follies of the former.[92] Andrew Rudd has argued that Hamilton's criticism of both cultures "creates a complex sympathetic dynamic, whereby the readers are more attracted to the Brahmin and the raja's point of view and simultaneously obliged to question their geographically inflected ideas about sensibility."[93] It is primarily through the English character's approach to the natural environment that these questions about sensibility are tested.

When Zaarmilla first arrives in England and secures access to Ardent Manor through connections to the East India Company, he is particularly struck by the transient commercial interests of Sir Caprice Ardent. Initially believing the agricultural and imperial endeavours of an English gentleman to be superior in benevolence and strategy as he has come to believe is the case from his experiences with Captain Percy and the East India Company, through his depiction of Sir Caprice, it becomes clear to the reader that this character falls foul of all manner of fashionable follies and elite excesses. Sir Caprice is described as an "*improver*", the italics indicating both Zaarmilla's unfamiliarity with the word, but perhaps also that Sir Caprice is in fact an improver of the worst kind.[94] Not only does he tear down the "fine grove of oaks and chestnuts" on his estate and replace them with "gnarled saplings and ill-formed clumps of shrubbery", but the sight of a piece of silver by a local workman gives him the idea to begin a mining business in Peru.[95] Unlike in India, where Hamilton championed the East India Company's orientalist plantation projects, even as she actively presented the land those plantations replaced as desolate wastelands, in England Hamilton is far more critical of tearing down ancient trees for agricultural use. Egenolf argues that the differences between Hamilton's treatment of English and Indian land reveals a general ambivalence towards the actions of the British empire, when the target of her improving educationalism is British society.[96] However, Mona Narain suggests that Hamilton

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[92] For further discussion of orientalist fiction and its politics, see Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[93] Andrew Rudd, *Sympathy and India in British Literature, 1770-1830* (London; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 109.
[94] *Hindoo Rajah*, 218.
[95] Ibid., 218.
[96] Egenolf, *The Art of Political Fiction*, 15.

deflects her criticism of the East India Company onto the English elites from which the company was largely drawn.[97] Both of these insights suggest that the excesses of English commercial values are in need of reform through Hamilton's environmental philosophy. In Caprice Ardent, Hamilton shows that while he prunes the landscape under the auspices of improvement, he is unable to tell the difference between rubbish, and nature that is useful, and in doing so he leaves a big mess in his wake.

Sir Caprice Ardent's lack of attention to nature is presented as the cause of his cruelty towards both human and non-human nature. After his failed attempt at profiting from Peruvian mines, he quickly moves onto agricultural improvement, never stopping to listen to common sense in spite of his substantial means and education. Zaarmilla describes how Sir Caprice strolled around his fields "with a silver spoon in his hands" ready to taste the soil for acidity and alkalinity, in a mocking portrayal of elite "taste" for nature.[98] Indeed, even though he "laid out his fields in the best method, that the best theoretical writers had pointed out", Sir Caprice's fields are "the worst crops that were known in the country", illustrating the fallacy of refined taste leading to industry.[99] The failure of his crops leads the "avarice-having" Sir Caprice to evict his longest-living tenants from his estate in a fit of blame.[100] Sir Caprice's entrepreneurial failures and cruelties are portrayed in the novel as symptoms of the trends of people of fashion, rather than the durable principles that attention, experience, and pious benevolence teach. Zaarmilla notes that if the Caprice had the benevolent attention to truly improve his estate he would have "a garden of delights" instead of "a stream of blood." [101] In this visceral image that aligns Sir Caprice's hunting practices with the 50,000 deaths of the Rohillas, Hamilton makes the consequences of failed environmental philosophy an ominous prospect that begins with failing nature.

In *Hindoo Rajah* the ideal improving landlord is Mr Darnley. The "Noble, generous Darnley" seeks to improve his mind and heart by "The study of Mineralogy and Botany, and exquisite relish for the beauties of nature, refined by an acquaintance with the sister arts of Poetry and Painting, [which] gave sufficient interest to the rural scenery, without any aid from the misery of inoffensive animals."[102] Darnley is thought

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[97] Narain, "Colonial Desires", 593.
[98] *Hindoo Rajah*, 219.
[99] Ibid., 219.
[100] Ibid., 218.
[101] Ibid., 266-7.
[102] Ibid., 291, 293.

to be "very strange" by other neighbouring squires for the "pleasure" he takes in walking without "being the butcher of either hare or partridge", and the "delight" he takes in rambling beside the river without "beholding the dying struggles of a poor trout, or exult[ing] in its writhing agony while tearing the barbed dart from its lacerated entrails."[103] In Darnley, Hamilton draws on the characterisation of other literary landlords, such the "benevolent" Sir George Ellison from Sarah Scott's *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), a sequel to *A Description of Millennium Hall and the Country Adjacent* (1762), in which the character becomes inspired by the charitable deeds of the utopian commune of Millennium Hall and begins a reform programme to relieve the conditions of the poor in his estate as well as on his slave plantations in Jamaica.[104] In this way, Hamilton connects herself and her first novel to the rich literary history of domestic improvement novels cultivated by the Bluestocking group.[105] In Darnley, Hamilton presents a character whose relationship with nature leads him to extend his benevolence to his tenants. In one episode, a grateful tenant tells of the "gallant funeral" Darnley organised with his own money, when the deceased had refused to leave any money to his starving family.[106] Acting as executor of the will, Darnley, though he himself is legally entitled to the assets of the "poor creature", divides it up amongst the relatives, explaining "God forbid! That I should take a farthing, that my conscience told me, was the property of another!"[107] The character of Darnley acts as a shining example of an improving landlord whose associations with nature and exercise of benevolent affections improve the happiness of those around him, both in contrast with Indian zamindars, and other landlords in Britain.

When Zaarmilla meets Darnley, he resides at the home of Mr Denbeigh and is first struck by the attempts to enforce enclosure. In those areas that have been enclosed, Zaarmilla remarks on "the cheerful aspect of the peasants", gathering grain "in a scene of plenty", and the "riches" to be sought in organising the land so productively.[108] In

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[103] Ibid., 293.
[104] Sarah Scott, *The History of Sir George Ellison*, ed. Betty Rizzo (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 72, 174.
[105] For discussions of the Bluestockings' literary fiction, charitable enterprises, industrial management schemes, and social and economic contexts see *Reconsidering the Bluestockings*, ed. Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg (Pasadena: Huntington Library, 2003); Elizabeth Eger, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism*; Eger (ed.), *Bluestockings Displayed: Portraiture, Performance and Patronage, 1730-1830*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Alessa Johns, *Women's Utopias of the Eighteenth Century* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003).
[106] *Hindoo Rajah*, 291.
[107] Ibid., 292.
[108] Ibid., 263-4.

comparison with "the solemn groves" and "gloomy jungles" of India, though they don't compare in either "grandeur or beauty" to the mango and banyan trees, these fields "breathe the air of hilarity" and "the intoxication of delight."[109] However, the areas that have not been enclosed, Zaarmilla describes as all "waste and barren", where "no yellow harvest waved its head — where no tall trees afforded shelter to the traveller".[110] This description of what Zaarmilla comes to learn is called "*a Common*", is defined by what is absent in the scene, and aesthetically evaluated in the picturesque language of an eighteenth-century traveller.[111] Unlike Hamilton, other writers who opposed the Enclosure Acts that were rolled out in this period, such as Wollstonecraft, and William Wordsworth, whose poem "The Female Vagrant" (1798) drew attention to how common land functioned as a safety net for the poor to squat and graze their cattle in times of poverty, emphasised that enclosure of common land removed the natural rights of the poor and radically reduced social conditions. However, through her naïve traveller, who sees the landscape in terms of its aesthetic appearance and as a landowner himself, the social effects of common land go un-noticed, and Hamilton does not explain them. Rather, Denbeigh and Zaarmilla agree that the slow implementation of legislation for "reasons of state" that Zaarmilla endeavours to discover, are a "restraint on cultivation."[112] By placing enclosure legislation, which was not consolidated into a nationwide act until 1801, as a barrier to cultivation, Hamilton recalls her words from her 'Preliminary Dissertation', that it is not nature itself that is a barrier to knowledge, but legislation. This notion of clearing the wastelands in England through clearing the path for legislation operates under her same theory that "permanent knowledge" is secured by the privatisation of land through agriculture.[113] By merging approaches to Indian and English land improvement, Hamilton makes both enclosure policies a subject of her environmental philosophy.

Hamilton's notion that the failure of government to allow for the privatisation of land is a "restraint on cultivation", engages with the wasteland politics that emerged in the eighteenth century. For Hamilton, like most who represented wastelands before the Industrial Revolution, a wasteland is an uncultivated piece of land, although her

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[109] Ibid., 264.
[110] Ibid., 264.
[111] Ibid., 264.
[112] Ibid., 264.
[113] Ibid., 70.

representation of a lack of cultivation differs from notions of wilderness or land completely untouched by human hands. For Hamilton, a wasteland is common land in England, or the desolate landscapes of war-torn, Indian-held lands. The wastelands she describes have experienced human habitation, but they are not used usefully, according to her understanding of utility. However, nor are Hamilton's wastelands the industrial landscapes of Wollstonecraft's *Short Residence*, where saw-mills, canals, and alum-works destroyed the nature through the pillaging of its natural resources. Vittoria Di Palma has discussed the way these two concepts of 'wasteland' were developed in the eighteenth century as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution and the development of overseas colonies, and argues that the "contested history of wasteland has shaped attitudes towards land" so that it is often defined "by its use or usefulness".[114] For Hamilton, utility is a key part of benevolence within her environmental philosophy. In *Popular Essays*, Hamilton explains that when attention and experience of nature, combined with the exercise of benevolence spreads benevolence into society, "pure patriotism" is reached, which she explains is the combination of "happiness" and "industry".[115] Benevolence's "general utility" to the improvement of society through industry and happiness thus situates industrial spaces as sites of utility because they cultivate "pure patriotism". [116] Consequently, Hamilton's description of enclosed land focuses on the "cheerful" appearance of the agricultural workers to indicate that productive rural landscapes cultivate moral improvement which can spread outwards into the nation.[117]

Attention to and experience of the land are enacted by many of the residents on Darnley's improved estate. When travelling with Denbeigh, Zaarmilla notes how "Every object that we passed, caused his heart to heave with tender emotion. In every shrub he recognised an old acquaintance, and in every tree he seemed to discover a long lost friend."[118] Although Zaarmilla explains these scenes in a sentimental style, it is clear that Denbeigh's attention and experience of nature produces a genuine emotional response. In contrast with the insincere sentimentalism of Lady Ardent, Charlotte Percy, Captain Percy's sister and Hamilton's alter ego, has formed such strong associations

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[114] Vittoria Di Palma, *Wasteland: A History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2014), 4-5.
[115] *Popular Essays*, 113.
[116] Hamilton, *Elementary Principles*, 1: 67.
[117] Ibid., 264.
[118] Ibid., 285.

with the land of her youth, that simply looking at a patch of potatoes which new tenants have grown in place of a much-beloved spot for viewing nature, is enough to bring her to tears.[119] This show of highly attuned sensibility is read as morally sincere because of both characters' humble, rural surroundings, and compassionate relationship with working land and animals. However, the emotional excess of these two characters' responses to the landscape is nevertheless a barrier to utility. Denbeigh, though described as a "kind" man, goes against his instinct to educate his daughter, Emma "the lovely moralist", until she is twenty, allowing her to marry Darnley aged sixteen. Even though Denbeigh fears that such nuptials might "injure her future happiness", so easily captivated is he by "the charm of a man who has seen something of the world", that he risks his daughter's wellbeing.[120] Indeed, it is Darnley's insistence on possessing Emma as his young wife so that he can delight in "improving her", that suggests Darnley's top-down version of benevolence is not quite so benevolent after all.[121] While Charlotte Percy's grief over the deaths of her uncle Morley and brother Charles, consumes her to the point where she cannot recognise the industriousness of the new tenants' improvements to their garden.

The benevolent heart of the estate is instead found in the rural labourers who work the land every day. In particular, Hamilton's environmental philosophy is found in the character of Morley, whose death leads the others to reflect on his character and the impact the absence of his industrious labours has on the land of the estate. For instance, Emma mourns how vigilantly Mr Morley would "delight in taking care" of the cattle and shrubs, and how in his absence "all the favourite objects of his attention are likely to perish!"[122] She goes on to note how Morley's benevolent attention to the natural world in turn spreads benevolence: "the trees he has planted may be cut down by sordid avarice; and the hand of brutish stupidity may root out the flowers of his garden; but his deeds of benevolence and charity shall be held in everlasting remembrance."[123] Since his death, much of the estate has fallen into disrepair: the fences he took care to maintain have fallen down and the cattle have escaped, destroying nearby trees which have now become dangerous blights to the landscape and for the people who work

[119] Ibid., 298.
[120] Ibid., 294.
[121] Ibid., 294.
[122] Ibid., 299-300.
[123] Ibid., 299-300.

there. Consequently, for Hamilton, although the improvement of the whole village system requires the progressive management of landlords, it is rural characters like Morley whose industrious labours and environmental philosophy cultivate the real work of improvement.

Animal Cruelty and Philosophical Excess

This section explores the idea of failed Christianity and associationist principles in England which Hamilton illustrates as resulting in animal cruelty. In one notable episode, we see the contrast between Hindu vegetarianism, and the grossness of British appetites, the latter of which Zaarmilla deplores in his letter to his friend, Maandaara:

> I nevertheless cannot be easily reconciled to that custom of devouring the flesh of so many innocent, and unoffending animals, whose lives are daily sacrificed in order to procure a short-lived, and inelegant enjoyment, to the vitiated plates of the voluptuaries. The injustice done to these animals, is however, amply revenged by the quantities of liquors, which it is the custom to swallow at the conclusion of their cruel feasts; and which, when taken in great quantities, seldom fails to pervert the senses, and reduce the reason to a temporary level with the victims of their gluttony.[124]

Here Hamilton assaults British tastes and faux sensibility and reveals them to be violent and unethical, through the eyes of a character whose nation the British were claiming to civilise. While the cultural and philosophical backdrop to Zaarmilla's outrage is Hindu teaching, as the last line of this passage shows, the argument for animal ethics rests on the European Enlightenment subject of reason. Once again, reason is held as the defining character of the dominant; in this case they are both British and human. But, as Hamilton deftly points out, those finely attuned senses and capacity to reason which were supposed to set these people apart, have been blighted by cruel unethical practices, like gluttony, a Christian sin. Later on, Zaarmilla keeps his promise of refusing to partake in carnist feasts, and looks on from a sofa as "the mangled remains of the bipeds and quadrupeds, the fishes of the sea, the vegetables of the earth, and the golden fruits of the garden, were carried off by the domestics".[125] This subtle allusion to species categorisation, albeit laid out on a plate for the consumption of humans, recalls

[124] Ibid., 170.
[125] Ibid., 232.

eighteenth-century natural history writing, which as Erica Fudge has observed, often reinforced notions of human superiority within hierarchical distinctions between animals, where what is really at stake is "the status of the human itself."[126] This rings true for Hamilton, whose attention to Zaarmilla's vegetarianism functions primarily as a means to expose the excessive tastes of a ruling class in the pursuit of social improvement.

Much has been written about the ways in which British writers increasingly presented themselves as militarily strong because of their beef-eating diets whenever they were faced with opposition. As Ben Rogers has pointed out, there was an increase in British patriotic propaganda using beef-imagery during the French Revolution and Revolutionary wars, and this was also the case when the East India Company colonised India in the second half of the eighteenth century.[127] Marguerite Regan has pointed to the intensified interest in vegetable diets on the part of natural historians and historians of India such as Alexander Dow. Dow's *Dissertation Concerning the Origin and Nature of Despotism in Hindostan* (1773) attributed the Hindus "mild and humane" temperament to their "low diet" of vegetables, and claimed that this was the reason India was "the most easily conquered and governed nation on earth."[128] By 1781, British travel writer, William Falconer sought to justify British ethnic superiority over India by associating meat-based diets with virility, and vegetable diets with feminine qualities.[129] Consequently, with Indians associated with weakness, the argument could then be made that they were a nation prone to tyranny, and it was the moral

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[126] Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*, (Basingstoke; London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 31.
[127] Ben Rogers, *Beef and Liberty* (London: Vintage, 2004), 88. For further discussion of different aspects of beef, cows, and John Bull in the eighteenth century see James Gregory, "Vegetable Fictions in the Kingdom of Roast Beef: Representing the Vegetarian in Victorian Literature" and Ron Broglio, "'The Best Machine for Converting Herbage into Money'": Romantic Cattle Culture", in *Consuming Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century: Narratives of Consumption, 1700-1900*, ed. Tamara S. Wagner and Narin Hassin (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 17-34; 35-48; Robert Trow-Smith, *A History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006); Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 15-23; Jeremy Rifkin, *Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of Cattle Culture* (Northwestern: Thorsons, 1993), 60; Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside*, 9; Major, *Madam Britannia*, 35-65, 256.
[128] Marguerite Regan, "Feminism, Vegetarianism, and Colonial Resistance in Eighteenth-Century British Novels", *Studies in the Novel* 46, 3 (Fall 2014), 280; Alexander Dow, *Dissertation Concerning the Origin and Nature of Despotism in Hindostan* (Delhi, 1773), 123.
[129] William Falconer, *Remarks on the Influence of Climate, Situation, Nature of Country, Population, Nature of Food and Way of Life on the Disposition and Temper, Manners and Behaviour, Intellects, Laws and Customs, Form of Government, and Religion, of Mankind* (London: C. Dilly, 1781), 241.

responsibility of the British, superior intellectually, physically, militarily, and sexually, to retain (and expand) governance.[130]

In her "Preliminary Dissertation" to the novel, Hamilton draws on similar national stereotypes when she foregrounds the issue of diet in accounting for the "constitutional apathy" of the "mild and gentle race" of Indians.[131] For Hamilton, vegetarianism is not a Christian principle, but it functions as a means of critiquing luxury and gluttony which deform the national character of the British. Though vegetarianism was becoming more widely visible in Britain during the 1790s, it was associated with radicals like Joseph Ritson, John Oswald, and later Percy Shelley.[132] In *Hindoo Rajah*, the New Philosophers boldly assert that as humans move increasingly into a state of perfection, they will be able to "exist on air alone"; a suggestion which Hamilton repeats again in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, and which is perhaps a pointed remark on the natural diet associated with Godwin's circle.[133] In *Popular Essays*, Hamilton denounces vegetarianism as leading to the extinction of all human life, and argues that through God's "care and attention" to human needs, he provided plants and animals for us to eat.[134] Indeed, for Hamilton, it is this failure to pay proper attention to nature and what is revealed by God, that means Hindus cannot form benevolent associations with nature. Since Hindus celebrate false gods, their "sympathy is derived from attention to external objects", and consequently it is a product of "monstrous imagination", which remains "idle" and "cannot flourish".[135] Accordingly, vegetarianism becomes another appropriation of the kinds of knowledge found in India which Hamilton puts to the use of advocating the moral improvement of the British, whilst simultaneously using it to justify the relegation of native people to colonial rule.

Hamilton also invokes Hindu animal relations to satirise the cruelties of material philosophers, whose animal experiments in the name of science lead to deaths of 300 birds. The metaphysical experiment in question involves catching a large number of baby sparrows and putting them in a beehive, built to accommodate their size, then

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[130] Regan, "Feminism, Vegetarianism, and Colonial Resistance", 291. For a comprehensive discussion of stadial models see David Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1990).
[131] *Hindoo Rajah*, 59.
[132] Tim Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 26.
[133] *Hindoo Rajah*, 261; *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, 155.
[134] *Popular Essays*, 1: 341.
[135] Ibid., 161.

feeding them honey, and waiting to see if, by virtue of the principles of habit, the sparrows turn into bees. Initially, Zaarmilla believes the philosophers must be testing out the theory of "transmigration", or reincarnation of the soul which, Ros Ballaster has argued, readers in the late eighteenth century would have recognised from oriental tales told in childhood.[136] Readers may also have been familiar with the term from John Aikin's tale "The Transmigration of Indur" in *Evenings at Home* (1793), and Barbauld's experimental poem "The Mouse's Petition" amongst others.[137] Transmigration could even be given a feminist inflection. In Mary Hays' *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain of Behalf of Women* (1798), she considers it a "Christian principle" which liberates women from the stain of "Eve's fall": if souls move from body to body after death, then women exclusively cannot be blamed for one woman's sins.[138] However, Hamilton does not entertain any of the philosophical potential transmigration held for her contemporaries.

Miss Ardent explains to Zaarmilla that the point of the experiment is to investigate "The reasoning faculties, of which we poor two-legged animals are so proud – and the various instincts, which mark each tribe of the brute creation, all equally originate in a combination of *external circumstances*."[139] This skewering of the group of radical, sceptical, and materialist philosophers satirizes philosophical ideas relating to human and non-human reasoning faculties suggested by, amongst others, David Hume, Erasmus Darwin, and Joseph Priestley.[140] The New Philosophers of the novel extrapolate the still controversial idea that "existing circumstances", such as the environment we inhabit, and food we consume, have the capacity to shape our minds and behaviours.[141] In the satire of the novel, this idea also has the capacity to determine what species we become. Subsequently, the difference between a philosopher "and a Bamboo, or Bramble-bush" is simply "a point of organisation".[142] The philosophers spend a great deal of time listening out for buzzing sounds coming from the hive, and when the chicks try to escape, they speculate that they must have "swarmed".[143] The

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[136] Ballaster, *Fabulous Orients*, 25-7.
[137] For further discussion of this tale, see Richard De Ritter, "Rational Souls and Animal Bodies".
[138] Mary Hays, *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain on Behalf of Women* (London: J. Johnson, 1798), 10.
[139] Hamilton, *Hindoo Rajah*, 266-7.
[140] Catherine Packham, *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism: Bodies, Culture, Politics* (London; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 147-75.
[141] Ibid., 41.
[142] Ibid., 258.
[143] Ibid., 268.

experiment inevitably fails when the 300 fledglings held "prisoner" in the hive are found rancid and lifeless in a "promiscuous heap", and everybody leaves in a hurry, "impelled by the *necessity of existing circumstances!*"[144] The putrid pile of dead birds here represents less a critique of vivisection practices, or a concern for the welfare of the creatures, and more a cruel joke that leaves a big mess and a bad smell.

Zaarmilla is the only character who laments the loss of the sparrows' lives when he declares, "The groves resounded with the plaints of woe!"[145] Here, Zaarmilla's sentimental language works similarly to the way it did in the peacock episode: as an expression of sorrow which in its naivety of the context of sentimentalism in 1790s England, reads as both comically excessive, and innocently authentic. Zaarmilla's bird laments particularly recall Lawrence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1765), when Yorick pities his pet starling trapped in his cage and when he lets him out, he escapes, and Yorick mourns his loss by rendering his image into a crest. However, in contrast with Lady Ardent, whose show of sentimental affection for her lapdog is decreed insincere by her choice of "cruel feathered" headwear, Zaarmilla is presented as having the more benevolent affection for animals than most of the house's occupants.[146] Indeed, Lady Ardent is described as a typical lady of fashion, who surrounds herself with a menagerie of animals, including parrots, lapdogs, and Persian cats.[147] Just as Wollstonecraft did in her second *Vindication*, Hamilton depicts her lady of fashion as having such exclusive sympathy for her pets, that her sympathy never leads to benevolence; to everyone else she directs only "languid disdain."[148] In *Popular Essays*, Hamilton argues that while "attention to the site of suffering" is vital to the development of sympathy, too much sympathy can result in sentimental cruelty, such as putting the lives of animals before those of humans.[149] Hamilton gives the examples of a woman who has too much affection for her cats and as a result she fails to direct

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[144] Ibid., 269.
[145] Ibid., 269.
[146] Ibid., 187.
[147] For discussions of pets and fashionability see Ingrid Tague, *Animal Companions: Pets and Social Change in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 43-72; Christopher Plumb, *The Georgian Menagerie: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century London* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris & Co, 2015); Theresa Braunschneider, "The Lady and the Lapdog"; Louise E. Robbins, *Elephant Slaves & Pampered Parrots: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 37-68, 122-155; Laura Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes*.
[148] *Hindoo Rajah*, 185.
[149] *Popular Essays*, 2: 275.

sympathy towards starving children. In this way, Hamilton presents sentimentalism towards animals as the product of fashionable excess, which must be cleared away.

The consequences of the bird experiment reveal the wastefulness and uselessness of the New Philosophers' metaphysics. Because the philosophers were unable to direct their attention to nature with benevolence, their experiment was fanciful and its results cruel. Hamilton depicts the New Philosophers as not only materialists, but atheists, who reject Christian teaching and all religion in favour of the teachings of nature gleaned from scientific practice. Because their vision of nature is not derived from "divine Wisdom", Hamilton emphasises how their scientific knowledge rests solely on the strengths, or rather the weaknesses of the human mind.[150] The philosophers' preoccupation with the working of the human mind highlights their solipsism, and their application of their theory of "external circumstances" to nature is presented as a self-indulgent projection of human fallacy. In *Popular Essays* Hamilton refers to the way "followers of natural religion", who she presents as similarly lacking in Christian piety, in their pursuit of knowledge, not from God's "Infinite Wisdom", but their own minds, end up "enlarging the idea of the self".[151] This she argues leads to prejudice and forestalls improvement. Hamilton calls this process "the selfish principle", in which the failure to exercise the benevolent affections of the heart through attention to God's teaching, leads to self-aggrandisement instead of the "annihilation of the idea of the self" into devotion.[152] In this way, we might see the New Philosophers of *Hindoo Rajah* as also failing to exercise benevolence and enacting the selfish principle, the consequences of which leads them to play at being God in their attempt to create bees from birds.

Scottish Clearances and Taste for Nature

This section explores Hamilton's shifting perception of agricultural improvement in her discussions of Scotland. Hamilton's novel on Scottish mores and manners, *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808), perhaps made the strongest case for the connection between attention to and affection for the rural and domestic environment, and

[150] Ibid., 253.
[151] Ibid., 2: 219.
[152] Ibid., 220.

improvements to benevolence and industry. In the figure of Englishwoman, Mrs Mason, Hamilton draws a character who, through industrious efforts and good habits, climbed the social ladder from an impoverished servant to a governess in an aristocratic family. Mrs Mason is forced to reside with her relatives in a rural Scottish village, and hopes to make her "training of youth" useful to "constant employment" and "virtue".[153] Mrs Mason's efforts at reforming the McClartys are focused on getting them to pay attention to the domestic tasks at hand, and range from persuading them to weed the garden so that more vegetables can be grown for food "all year round", to lighting a fire correctly so as to generate ventilation and freshen a stuffy room, and drying chicken feathers properly before stuffing in the best white pillowcases.[154] Mrs Mason's zealous attempts to reform the McClartys ultimately fall flat, however, in the process of drawing her family's attention to the importance of women's domestic work to industry, Hamilton draws the attention of readers to women's productive role in Scottish improvement.[155] Indeed, the McClartys' stubborn fondness for bedbugs, dirt, and bad smells, though satirical, show, as in *Hindoo Rajah*, that it is one thing to own property, but quite another to run one.

In her Preface to the novel, Hamilton notes the Scottish attachment to their land, culture, and history, but also their animosity towards "whoever dares to suppose that our country has not in every instance reached perfection."[156] The satire of *Glenburnie* consequently gives way to a critique, outlined in the Preface, of politicians who fail to appreciate Scotland and its people, and exploit their labour in industry as well as in the colonies. According to Rendall, the novel is "directed by a politics of improvement which while not disturbing social order, looked to the universal achievement of rational and moral understanding."[157] In the character of domestic reformer Mrs Mason, Hamilton showed that while attempts to change the habits of grown individuals through interpersonal admonishment may fail, through collaborating with others, community reform may be possible. Mrs Mason joins the minister of Glenburnie, Mr Gourlay, in denouncing the current educational system of the village's parochial school and sets on

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[153] Elizabeth Hamilton, *The Cottagers of Glenburnie and Other Educational Writing*, ed. Pam Perkins (Glasgow: ASLS, 2010), 92.
[154] Ibid., 155, 160, 162.
[155] See, Pam Perkins, *Women Writers and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Amsterdam: Brill, 2010), ch.1; Grogan, *Politics and Genre*; Egenolf, *The Art of Political Fiction*, 125-53.
[156] Hamilton, *Cottagers*, viii.
[157] Rendall, "Elizabeth Hamilton and the legacy of the 'war of ideas' in Scotland, 1804-16", Marilyn Butler Lecture at Chawton House, 2012.

reforming it. The schoolmaster, an itinerant preacher, is denounced for encouraging a system of prejudice and "evangelical righteousness" by which, "sects are particularly liable to be infected by party spirit, in so far are they injurious to the Christian cause."[158] At the same time, Mr Gourlay, and likely Hamilton as well, criticises conservative Moderate defenders of the Church of Scotland for following the same "narrow path" of intolerance.[159] This non-partisanship portrayed in the novel follows Hamilton's aim of cultivating an educational system which follows the principle that, "the pleasures of the heart, and of the understanding, as well as those of the senses, were intended by Providence to be in some degree enjoyed by all; and therefore, . . . in the pleasures of the heart and the understanding, all are entitled to participate."[160] The tolerant approach to education soon turns the school, and eventually the whole village, into a model of industry, subduing the anarchic tendencies of the Cottagers, until at the end of the novel we are told that "to have attended Glenburnie was considered as an ample recommendation to a servant", with the rural Scottish backwaters left behind for a new patriotic, and industrious Scotland.[161]

The reforms Mrs Mason and Mr Gourlay bring to the school, follow the Irish educationalist David Manson's monitorial programme, though Hamilton also refers to the more up to date ideas of Joseph Lancaster in a footnote, resulting in reforms that teach both domestic skills and "awaken the attention to the mind" of its students.[162] The pupils build a garden. They sow "grass-seeds, and round it made a border to be filled with flowers and shrubs…Planting, watering and rearing shrubs and flowers, which ornamented the borders of the grass-plot, became the favourite amusement of the elder school-boys; and being the reward of good behaviour, was considered as a mark of favour which all were ambitious to obtain".[163] Alongside the monitorial system, which encouraged a dynamic of authority based on punishment and reward in the classroom, it is the practical lessons with natural objects that encourage care and attention, and eventually a benevolence that spreads throughout the whole of Glenburnie.[164]

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[158] *Cottagers*, 197-8.
[159] Ibid., 198..
[160] Ibid., 47-50.
[161] Ibid., 342.
[162] Ibid., 373.
[163] Ibid., 382.
[164] Mary Hilton, *Women and the Shaping of the Nation's Young: Education: Education and Public Doctrine in Britain 1750-1850*, (Aldershot: Ashgate 2007), ch 1. Hamilton's final publication, *Hints Addressed to the Patrons and Directors of Schools* (1816), adopted the Pestalozzi system of education

Eventually, Mrs Mason is rewarded for her efforts, when the new heir to the formerly corrupt Longlands estate, reveals himself to be a former pupil of the school and vows to become an improving landlord, financially compensating her for all her work. Through building associationism into the monitorial system, Hamilton shows in *Glenburnie*, what she argued for in *Popular Essays*: that principles of attention to nature and revelation lead to "pure patriotism" in the form of happiness and industry.

Hamilton's ideas about improvement come as much from Scotland as from orientalist literature and English agriculture. As Rendall has established, Scottish Enlightenment philosophers in the mid to late eighteenth century, were heavily involved in promoting the cultural as well as the economic improvement of Scotland, and used the English model as a framework.[165] Lord Kames in particular was involved publicly and privately in the promotion of agricultural reform, from his introduction of crop rotation on his estates in Berwickshire and Perthshire, to his books, *The Gentleman Farmer, Being an attempt to improve Agriculture, by subjecting it to the Test of Rational Principles* (1776), and *The Progress of Flax-Husbandry in Scotland* (1766), which urged the importance of "experience" in agricultural improvement.[166] Kames was also a leading member on the Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvement in Scotland, which was particularly concerned with the improvement of the Highlands, and encouraged "training up their youth and early knowledge and practice of several branches of husbandry, manufactures and other necessary arts" as a means of "civilising" the region.[167] Like Hamilton, and most Scottish Enlightenment theorists, Kames was from the Lowlands, an area with more connections to England through the landed aristocracy, and more wealth with which to secure property rights through agricultural reform of the Highlands.[168]

In *Elementary Principles*, Hamilton signals her broad agreement with Kames' agricultural project when she states early in her introduction:

> The agricultural improver, who, on the northern side of the Grampian Hills, should implicitly adopt the plan of husbandry laid down by the Devonshire farmer, would have but sorry crops. In vain would he boast, that his ploughs

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which rejected ideas about punishment and reward in favour of a more practical and ecological understanding of human relationships to natural objects through attention and experience.

[165] Jane Rendall, *Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment, 1707-76* (Basingstoke; London: Macmillan, 1978), 10-11.

[166] Ibid., 10.

[167] Ian Ross, *Lord Kames and the Scotland of his Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 317.

[168] Rendall, *Origins*, 12.

> were of the same construction, that his furrows were of equal depth, and that he had, in spite of frosts and snow, of storm and tempest, committed the seed to the reluctant bosom of the earth on the appointed day: of his labour and his toil, the sole reward would be mortification and disappointment![169]

Here, Hamilton encourages the improvement of the Highlands, but is wary of the impact the direct application of improving principles developed in England, like establishing plantations of certain plants, could have on northern Scotland with its very different climate. Hamilton goes onto urge the study of soil and temperature by "observation and experience" in the hope that the studious farmer will "reap in joy, bringing his sheaves with him" as a result. Hamilton builds on Kames' insistence that a "man who has bestowed labour in preparing the field for a plough, and who has improved that field by artful culture, forms in his mind an intimate connection with it."[170] However, for Kames this sort of basic land tenure is associated with backwardness and a poorly developed mode of subsistence. Hamilton's particular advocacy of attention to Scottish land within her text on moral improvement derives in part from her response to the Highland Clearances that took place over the course of the eighteenth century. Following the advice of economic improvers, vast swathes of the Highlands were enclosed, plantations of crops like linen and tobacco replaced forests, and industrial methods of farming were implemented.[171] The disaster of the Clearances led to famine, crop failures, displacement, and poverty across the Highlands, the socio-economic impact of which has lasted centuries.[172] For Hamilton, writing after the first stage of Clearances, enclosure was still a viable model of reform, but her insistence that improvers pay more attention to the particulars of Highlands society, subtly critiques the broad strokes approach to agricultural improvement in the Highlands as failing in the principles of moral philosophy.

In a general sense, Hamilton agrees with the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers' base concept of stadial theory. As Kate McCarthy has argued, the stadial theory of human development, in which society became increasingly more civilised over four stages (hunting, pasturage, agriculture, and commerce), was a driving

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[169] Hamilton, *Elementary Principles*, 1: 13.
[170] Ibid., 14.
[171] Eric Richards, *Debating the Highland Clearances* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 90, 111.
[172] Ibid., 15.

argument for Kames, Robertson, and Adam Ferguson, amongst others.[173] Within economic arguments, stadial theory was used to argue that civilisation was intrinsically connected to commerce and the security of private property. Kames referred to the stadial theory of development when he noted that, "[a]griculture, which makes the third stage of the social life, produced in the relation of land-property."[174] Agriculture by this definition requires expenditure, the permanency of property, and a level of improvement. Kames argued that hunters and shepherds were therefore "[s]trangers to agriculture" for they "wandered about in hords [*sic*], to find pasture for their cattle".[175] Having an attachment to the land, which Kames describes as an "intimate connection" built in the mind from "a singular affection for a spot…[and] the workmanship of his own hands" is viewed as a moral cornerstone of property ownership, without which, "this vagrant life, men had scarce any connection with the land more than with air or water."[176] For Ferguson, property is "a principle of care and desire." Though this agricultural argument, typical of stadial theory, echoes Locke's labour theory of property, according to McCarthy, Kames' underlying notion of property as a gradually evolving individual moral sense, as well as material fact, avoids the question of consent for the division of property.[177] Consequently, it became possible to avoid issues of indigenous property rights, and this argument became a popular legal device in the British colonies, which the Scottish and English managers of the East India Company adopted.[178]

Hamilton's conception of associationism combined with benevolent attachments as a moral and practical argument for British rights to colonial land, might thus be seen as a development of Kamesian agricultural theory. Like Kames, John Millar, and Smith, Hamilton avoids state of nature arguments, embracing a notion of societal development in which Christian philosophy provides the civilising path towards moral improvement. When outlining the important role associations play in educating the young, Hamilton

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[173] Kate McCarthy, "Agrarian discourse in imperial context: landed property, Scottish stadial theory and indigenes in colonial Australia", *Australia & New Zealand Law & History E-journal*, (2005), 62. For a discussion of progress, race, and gender in the philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers see Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Commercial Society in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
[174] Home, Lord Kames, *Historical Law Tracts* 4 ed. (1792), 104.
[175] Ibid., supra note 7, 88-9.
[176] Ibid., 104.
[177] McCarthy, "Agrarian discourse in imperial context", 64.
[178] Ibid., 64.

aligns “Hindoos” and “American savages” as forming painful associations through an adherence to the strict rules of their religions, associations formed through habit rather general principles.[179] These associations fail in benevolence because they incur harsh punishments which inform their cultural practice and national character, but Hamilton suggests that if principles are instead “carefully expressed by words”, the associations formed might do more “good”.[180] For Hamilton, Hindus are not determined racially inferior by biology, they have the capacity to “overcome nature”, but lack the “useful” philosophy, which “the Hindoo and savage leave to the practice of the enlightened Christian of Europe!”[181] In this sense, associations, when guided by the educational philosophy of British Christian women, secure for those women a measure of ‘property’ in the form of educational authority.

The connection between associationism and the security of private property also has significance for the educational arguments of British women. Understandings of stadial theory were predicated on the sequential improvement of practices largely undertaken by men.[182] In his *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, Smith argued that native north American women “plant a few stalks of Indian corn at the back of their huts. But this can hardly be called agriculture.”[183] To be considered improvement in the scale of civilisation, land would have to be enclosed, regulated, and appropriated, by men. While Ferguson contends that even male-dominated hunting, the second stage in stadial theory, involves “subjects of property” in the form of “the arms, the utensils, and the fur, which the individual carries.”[184] The consequences of attaching moral improvement to dominion gained through physical superiority, are destructive for women’s claims to rational and moral authority. Hamilton gives the example of a lion who “brings not his weaker mate into a state of slavish subjection, but, inspired by instinct, lays at her feet the spoils his strength and courage have procured”.[185] Hamilton’s (false) example from natural history follows in Ferguson’s tradition of discussing human development in relation to the animal kingdom.[186] Here, Hamilton insinuates that lions, because they

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[179] *Elementary Principles*, 2: 23.
[180] Ibid., 2: 25.
[181] Ibid., 2: 25.
[182] For a discussion of Rousseau amongst others see Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress*, 22-4.
[183] Adam Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, ed. R. L. Meek, D. D. Raphael and P. G. Stein (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 29.
[184] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Edinburgh and London: 1767), 81.
[185] *Elementary Principles*, 1: 143.
[186] Rendall, “Adaptations”, 151.

lack reasoning faculties, are the product of instincts provided by God, and therefore it is both natural and divinely-instructed that all creatures work to the benefit of each gender. By contrast, Hamilton notes, the savage treats the "miserable partner of his hut with contumelious disdain and rigorous oppression", the result of which teaches daughters "to submit with cheerfulness the doom of slavery" and inspires sons "with savage notions of their own comparative importance."[187] If humans are to improve as they progress through the stages of civilisation, then everyone needs to be educated in the virtues that women bring to society, and as "the mental powers begin to rise into importance", the equal strengths of men and women must be recognised.[188]

Hamilton demonstrates her authority on the subject of natural history and agriculture in *Popular Essays*, a text that foregrounds her environmental philosophy as an "everyday philosophy" for everyone, in which she illustrates her own philosophical prowess. Following in the tradition of Stewart's conjectural history, in which examples from non-human nature and human relationships to it were used to explain human histories, Hamilton explains principles like taste and association using trees.[189] When Hamilton quotes her friend and Scottish agricultural writer Reverend Alison to whom she dedicated *Popular Essays*, she draws on his theory about the "character" of trees, and the importance of paying attention to the different, but no less important, qualities oaks, yews, spruce, ash, and willow, have in relation to each other.[190] Hamilton explains that appreciating the diversity of tree species is important in forming "a taste for the beauties of nature in the material world."[191] For instance, Hamilton argues that if attention is directed only towards an oak tree, and associations are formed regarding its "durability" and "strength", and these ideas are then anticipated in viewing a willow, then the viewer of nature will be disappointed by the willow's "melancholy" character, instead of approaching all trees with renewed attention to their respective emotional "characters".[192] For Hamilton, as for Alison, nature "excites emotions" in the hearts of those who pay attention to nature, and this discussion about trees' "characters" refers to

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[187] Hamilton, *Elementary Principles*, 1: 145.
[188] Ibid., 1: 145.
[189] Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, (Edinburgh, 1792).
[190] *Popular Essays*, 1: 217. See, Archibald Alison, "Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste", *Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics*, ed. Dabney Townsend (Amityville: Baywood Press, 1999).
[191] Ibid., 1: 218.
[192] Ibid., 1: 219.

the emotions stimulated through sensibility which inform associations in the mind, and form taste.

Hamilton's comment about appreciating the diversity of species of trees in Scottish forests has several effects. Firstly, Hamilton critiques models of associationism that are informed by fashion. For instance, in a footnote Hamilton notes visiting a forest with a "female attendant" who instead of admiring the vast and ancient beauty of an oak tree, claimed that she preferred the tall ones that looked "just as if they had been shaped with a pair of scissors".[193] Hamilton quips, "Need we ask by what associations her notions of beauty were influenced?" in a clear reference to fashion.[194] Moreover, her companion's dismissal of the "common" oaks, directly connects the idea of the oak trees' durability and slow growth with her own common sense principles, which require slow and careful attention and experience in order to become strong and durable.[195] This notion of commonality also operates as a means of resolving disputes. In an example of two gentlemen who fight over their different ideas of taste, both having formed their ideas on singular impressions of different trees, Hamilton argues that if they had both paid attention to many trees, they would share the same expanded taste for nature. In this way, Hamilton posits that her environmental philosophy has the capacity to moderate and unite perhaps even harmonizing conflicting political opinions.

Hamilton had previously critiqued the invasion of "Lombardy poplars" in Scottish oak forests, which, she says, replace the "durable" with the "weak", noting that such quick-growing trees will in turn produce "weak timber" grown in a "hot-house" for the navy.[196] In this way, Hamilton objects to the deforestation of ancient and diverse trees, and replacement with fast-growing species like the Lombardy poplar, which originated in Italy but was gradually planted across Europe in the eighteenth century, especially in England, for military uses.[197] Hamilton's criticism of this industrial practice emphasises the point she made in *Hindoo Rajah* regarding Sir Caprice's agricultural failures, that agricultural improvement must be applied to wastelands, not cultivated land. Indeed, Hamilton remarks that the preference for Lombardy poplars would only occur if ideas

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[193] Ibid., 1: 219.
[194] Ibid., 1: 219
[195] Ibid., 1: 219.
[196] *Elementary Principles*, 2: 179.
[197] Christina D. Wook, "'A Most Dangerous Tree': The Lombardy poplar in Landscape Gardening", *Arnoldia* 54, 1 (1994): 24-5.

about "utility" as well and "strength" and "durability" were abandoned.[198] In other words poplars are weak, fast-growing plants grown for purely commercial purposes. However, the difference between her treatment of Scottish and English trees and the Indian Mango and Banyan groves, which she presented as wild, dangerous, and "solemn" in comparison with the enclosures of England, demonstrates a level of ambivalence towards imperial agricultural improvement schemes, of which she is far more critical when applied in Britain. Moreover, Hamilton's assessment of Lombardy poplars as an invasive species that erodes the Scottish landscape echoes arguments that insisted upon the preservation of Scottish rural culture. For instance, the Scottish poet Reverend Alexander Geddes, whom Hamilton was likely referencing, defended the rural Highland dialect by comparing it to trees:

> Our numerous monosyllables, rough, rigid and inflexible as our oaks, are capable of supporting any burthen; whilst the polysyllables of our southern neighbours, tall, smooth, and slender, like the Lombardy poplar, bend under the smallest weight.[199]

Geddes, like Hamilton, here connects the deforestation of the Highlands during the Clearances through English agricultural techniques, with the cultural erasure of dialect in the image of the invading Lombardy poplar. This analogy is deployed to criticise the English and Anglo-Scottish approaches to the improvement of Scotland, presenting them as motivated by commercial and military gain. By describing the weakness of the Lombardy poplar, in comparison with the old, sturdy oak, Geddes and Hamilton assert that the Scots, and Scottish culture is durable enough to withstand these attempts at colonisation.

Hamilton's overt criticism of Anglo-Scottish agricultural improvement discreetly subverts the educational tract in which it was published. Nevertheless, in her explicitly philosophical *Popular Essays*, Hamilton's treatment of Scottish forests reproaches ideas about science and literature as well as commerce and fashion. In making her argument for redirecting taste towards a common sense approach to perceiving and experiencing

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[198] *Elementary Principles*, 2: 179.

[199] Alexander Geddes, "Three Scottish poems, with a Previous Dissertation of the Scotto-Saxon Dialect", in *Transactions of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland* (Edinburgh: William and Alexander Smellie, 1792), 92. Charles Jones, "Alexander Geddes: An Eighteenth Century Scottish Orthoepist and Dialectologist", *Folia Linguistica Historica* 17, 2 (2009): 71-103. It is also worth noting that Geddes was close to the Johnson circle and contributor to the *Analytic Review* at the same time as Wollstonecraft, working on Bible reviews.

nature, Hamilton argues that certain "men of science" and "romantick" poets whose representations of nature have often defined taste, are prejudiced.[200] Hamilton claims that some scientists, though she emphasises that few fall into this category, are so focused on the specific natural object of their experiments, that their attention becomes too focused, and "many of the beauties of nature are missed."[201] For instance, a botanist might be so focused on perceiving vegetations, that he is unable to appreciate rocks unless to view the lichen on which they grow, or a lake if not to identify the genus of plants that flourish on its beds. Those "men of science" who cannot see the wood for the trees, would benefit from turning their attention to nature's varieties so that knowledge gained about nature will continue to expand, without which knowledge is likely to become "partial".[202] Specifically, Hamilton refers to the "invaluable information" gained from "countries [men of science] have visited".[203] Consequently, it is the "power of observation" within the context of imperial science that becomes of importance "greater than we can possibly conceive" in the service, primarily of being "useful to others".[204] In this way, Hamilton directs her environmental philosophy towards imperial scientists, as a form of moderating the partiality of the British empire, which by 1815 had become a far more aggressive force around the world than perhaps it appeared to Hamilton in 1796.

Hamilton saves her primary criticism for certain writers and readers of literature who have based their ideas on a singular, and much imitated notion of "the sublime and the beautiful."[205] In a clear reference to Burke, and others such as Rousseau, Hamilton suggests that those who have formed their ideas about sublime nature from beholding "barren rocks and precipices" will find delight only in natural objects from which the same sensory experience can be abstracted. She maintains that the same viewer of nature "doubtless piques himself much on his superior taste" and will "sneer" at the "inhabitant of the cultivated vale" who "contemplate[s] flat fields waving with corn, and well fed herds ruminating beneath the shade of lofty oaks or spreading beeches".[206] By accusing such viewers of nature of a snobbish "want of perception", Hamilton redirects

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[200] *Popular Essays*, 2: 238.
[201] Ibid., 2: 72.
[202] Ibid., 2: 225.
[203] Ibid., 2: 240.
[204] Ibid., 1: 158.
[205] Ibid., 1: 159.
[206] Ibid., 1: 227.

the eye of taste towards scenes "of peace and plenty, and rural industry, and rural happiness" of which the rural man has associated in his mind. In this accusation of philosophical condescension towards "certain classes".[207] Hamilton argues that those who cultivate their taste upon perceiving "fertile" scenes instead of "images of solitude, sterility, and desolation" not only have the most "superior taste", but also the most "universal".[208] This idea of the common sense philosophy of the common man is explained by her insistence that nature which is made "useful", cultivates industry and happiness through benevolence, which has the capacity to spread throughout the nation, into "pure patriotism".[209] In this way, Hamilton subverts the classed subjectivity of the male poet to promote the autonomy and empowerment of rural workers, whose labour ultimately serves to reinforce classed divisions of nature. While her presentation of superior nature as that which is made useful to agricultural improvement, however moderated by benevolent notions of utility, is presented as a means of "universal influence" on both moral improvement, but also, inevitably, the exploitation of natural resources.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to illustrate through the environmental philosophy of Elizabeth Hamilton, how it became possible to incorporate ideas about agricultural improvement within science of mind. Like the other writers discussed in this thesis, Hamilton's application of associationism to nature did lead her to make some ecocritical assessments of the ways in which agricultural improvement schemes damaged the natural environment, such as the deforestation of ancient and diverse forests, and the invasion of foreign species for commercial gain. However, Hamilton's common sense approach to environmental philosophy, while claiming to encourage a moderate perspective which empowers women and the rural classes, speaks for that group of people in order to redirect taste for nature towards agricultural practices which reinforce the exploitation of their labour and the labour of natural resources, around the globe. In a lengthy obituary to Hamilton, Edgeworth wrote with admiration of how her friend had

[207] Ibid., 1: 227.
[208] Ibid., 1: 232.
[209] Ibid., 2: 79.

"thrown open to all classes of readers those metaphysical discoveries or observations which had been confined chiefly to the learned", while at the same time making advances for women writers:[210]

> The dark, intricate and dangerous labyrinth she has converted into a clear, straight, practicable road — a road not only practicable but pleasant, but what is of more consequence to women, safe.[211]

As Edgeworth recognised, Hamilton's innovative combination of associationism and Christian education, adopted the framework of national and agricultural improvement to 'clear the road' for female science and industry. In this way, Edgeworth intimates how the common-sense philosophy, which they both shared, offers a "safe" route for women to publish and express philosophical authority in their work, because it does not challenge directly the hierarchical class and gender structures which underpin society.

Through publishing her environmental philosophy across different literary genres which were primarily directed towards women and fellow educationalists, Hamilton not only advocated but helped to educate the next generation of British workers and governors to view nature as a resource for moral and industrial improvement. In this sense, the concept advanced by Mary Louise Pratt, of "the seeing-man […] whose imperial eyes look passively out and possess" takes on associationist connotations.[212] Although Hamilton would surely contend that associationism is a passive and possessing process only in the absence of benevolent affections, the use of environmental philosophy in an agricultural imperial context would have a lasting impact. Indeed, Hamilton's sense of both human and national exceptionalism within her environmental philosophy illustrates how it became possible to render associationist ideas about nature useful to the extraction and exploitation of nature as a British and Christian resource.

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[210] Maria Edgeworth, 'Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton', *The Times*, 5 October 1816.
[211] Ibid., 623-43.
[212] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4, 6.

3. Utility, Animals, and Secularisation: Maria Edgeworth's Natural History Lessons

Maria Edgeworth is both reflective of and a participant in the shift towards a utilitarian approach to viewing and relating to nature. Like others in this thesis, the concept of improvement as it relates to industrialisation and morality is of interest to Edgeworth, but as we see in her writing for children, she places a much greater emphasis on industriousness as an important moral quality. Edgeworth's children's stories unpack the moral and practical meanings of utility and encourage her child readers to consider the ethical consequences of scientific and industrial improvement, even as she instils in them a spirit of invention. Like Elizabeth Hamilton, Edgeworth built into her science of mind common-sense principles of attention and experience to teach her readers philosophical principles that would be morally and occupationally useful to all children, regardless of class or gender.[1] However, unlike Hamilton and her wider coterie of female literary educationalists, which also included Anna Letitia Barbauld and Joanna Baillie, Edgeworth's science of mind is largely secular, with little indication that her associationism is part of a religious or even devotional paradigm. I suggest this secularisation of science of mind has important consequences for the ways in which Edgeworth's industrious tales could be read as shifting the locus of morality from a divine to a material centre. However, Edgeworth's tales do not fully promote the empirical school of Lunar Enlightenment, as has often been argued.[2] I suggest that Edgeworth simultaneously redirects her readers' attentive eyes towards sights of industrial devastation, revealing them as entertaining and progressive, as well as harmful to nature. Edgeworth's science of mind introduces affective learning through

[1] Jane Rendall, "'Elementary Principles of Education'.

[2] Richard Lovell Edgeworth was a member of the Lunar Society in Birmingham in the late 1760s and 1770s, which promoted empirical science, invention, and free enquiry, and also included members such as Josiah Wedgewood, James Watt, Erasmus Darwin, Matthew Boulton, Thomas Beddoes, and James Keir. See, Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends who made the Future, 1730-1810* (London: Faber & Faber, 2002) for an account of the society's influence. For a discussion of Edgeworth and Lunar Enlightenment, see James Chandler, "Edgeworth and the Lunar Enlightenment", *Eighteenth Century Studies* 45, 1 (Fall, 2011): 87-104; Yoon Sun Lee, "Bad Plots and Objectivity in Maria Edgeworth", *Representations* 139, 1 (Summer, 2017): 34-59; Kathryn Scantlebury and Collette Murphy, "Maria Edgeworth: nineteenth century Irish female engineer of science education", *Irish Educational Studies* 28, 1 (2009): 103-113.

her lessons about natural history and invention, encouraging moral reflection on the consequences of industrialisation for non-human nature, even as she promotes it.[3]

This chapter surveys Edgeworth's children's literature from her first collection, *The Parent's Assistant* (1796) to her final instalment of tales, *Harry and Lucy Concluded; Being the Last Part of Early Lessons* (1825). It considers Edgeworth's educational approach to agricultural improvement during this period of intense industrialisation, which Edgeworth herself participated in personally as, effectively, the land manager of the Edgeworthstown estate after her father's death in 1817.[4] As is well-established in scholarship, Edgeworth's literary career spanned genres and disciplines, from educational instruction, novels, children's writing, letter writing, and involvement in politics and science, some of which she collaborated on with Richard Lovell Edgeworth and her siblings.[5] Edgeworth's use of associationism in education, which is explained in *Practical Education* (1798), and practiced in her writing for children, has been discussed by Jane Rendall and Joanna Wharton as informed by both Lockean and Common Sense philosophy, as well as by her large intellectual circle of writers, scientists, industrialists, land improvers, and politicians.[6] Like other writers in this thesis, Edgeworth's use of science of mind in her stories for children similarly explores principles of benevolence and improvement through teaching observation and feeling for natural objects. However, Edgeworth's environmental thought is suggestive, rather

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[3]Mitzi Myers's considerable work on Edgeworth's children's literature was the first to make the argument for Edgeworth's affective learning techniques: Myers, "War Correspondence: Maria Edgeworth and the En-Gendering of Revolution, Rebellion, and Union", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 22, 3 (November, 1998): 74-91; "'Anecdotes from the Nursery' in Maria Edgeworth's *Practical Education* (1798): Learning from Children 'Abroad and At Home'", *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 60, 2 (Winter, 1999): 220-250; "Reading Rosamond Reading: Maria Edgeworth's 'Wee-Wee Stories' Interrogate the Canon"; "Canonical 'Orphans' and Critical *Ennui*: Rereading Edgeworth's Cross-Writing", *Children's Literature* 25 (1997): 116-136; "Quixotes, Orphans, and Subjectivity: Maria Edgeworth's Georgian Heroinism and the (En)Gendering of Young Adult fiction", *The Lion and the Unicorn* 13, 1 (June, 1989): 21-40.

[4] There has been little in the way of critical evaluation of Edgeworth's land management, beyond Marilyn Butler's brief discussion within the context of Edgeworth's letters: Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 401-32. Catherine Gallagher, however, offers a useful discussion of Edgeworth's application of political economy to both her literary production and family finances, in *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

[5] For an overview of Edgeworth's multi-disciplinarity and political context of her work, see: Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography*, 177-235; Clíona Ó Gallchoir, *Maria Edgeworth: Women, Enlightenment and Nation* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2005); Claire Connolly, *A Cultural History of the Irish Novel, 1790-1829*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 206-16; Susan B. Egenolf, *The Art of Political Fiction*, 43-104; Susan Manly, *A Political Biography of Maria Edgeworth* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007; London: Routledge, 2017). Citations refer to the Routledge edition.

[6] Rendall, "Elementary Principles of Education", 613-21; Rendall, "Adaptations: History, Gender, and Political Economy in the Work of Dugald Stewart"; Joanna Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 197-230.

than explicit, and in this respect diverges from Wollstonecraft's explorative subjectivity, Hamilton's systematic theology, and Barbauld's experimental habitual devotion.[7] In her suggestive approach, Edgeworth also differs from other educational thinkers and writers for children who featured stories about animals and nature more broadly in this period, including Sarah Trimmer, Dorothy Kilner, Barbauld, John Aikin, Wollstonecraft, William Wordsworth, and Jean Jacques Rousseau.[8] Unlike Rousseau and Wordsworth, Edgeworth's literary children are not children of nature with moral superiority over corrupt adult society.[9] Nor do her stories directly explore child responses to injured animals, talking animals, or harness the common trope of women and girls' affiliation with trapped and caged domesticated animals, as Trimmer, Kilner, and Wollstonecraft did, and which has remained the primary way scholars have engaged with women's writing about animals.[10]

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[7] In a discussion of Edgeworth's novel, *Ennui* (1809), Andrew J. Smyth addresses the role animals play in the plot as a critique of courtly life which question ideas about human and animal identities and species hierarchies, such crossing of species boundaries does not appear in her writing for children. See, "Impersonating Authority: Animals and the Anglo-Irish Social Order in Maria Edgeworth's *Ennui* and Edmund Spenser's *Mother Hubberds Tale*", in *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture*, ed. K. Kirkpatrick and B. Faragó (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 135-48.

[8] Scholarly interest in the function of animals and nature in children's stories is fervent. The most exploratory and most recent of which include: Tess Cosslett, *Talking Animals in British Children's Fiction, 1786-1914* (Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 9-36; Ann Wierda Rowland, "Learned Pigs and Literate Children: Becoming Human in Eighteenth-Century Literary Cultures", and Richard De Ritter, "From Wild Fictions to Accurate Observation: Domesticating Wonder in Children's Literature of the Late Eighteenth Century", in *Literary Cultures and Eighteenth-Century Childhoods*, ed. Andrew O'Malley (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 99-116, 189-210; Heather Keenleyside, *Animals and Other People*, 163-200; Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 6; Markman Ellis, "Suffering Things: Lapdogs, Slaves, and Counter-Sensibility", in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, 2007), 92-115; Richard De Ritter, "Rational Souls and Animal Bodies".

[9] For a discussion of Rousseau, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, notions of the "Romantic child", and its ecological thought and influence on eighteenth-century educational practices, see: W. J. T. Mitchell, "Influence, Autobiography, and Literary History: Rousseau's Confessions and Wordsworth's the Prelude", *ELH* 57, 3 (Autumn, 1990): 643-64; Linda M. Austin, "Children of Childhood: Nostalgia and the Romantic Legacy", *Studies of Romanticism* 42, 1 (Spring, 2003): 75-98; Richard Gavril, "'Some Other Being': Wordsworth in *The Prelude*", *The Yearbook of English Studies* 19 (1989): 127-43; Christian Becker et al, "Malthus vs. Wordsworth: Perspectives on humankind, nature and economy. A contribution to the history and foundations of ecological economics", *Ecological Economics* 53, 3 (May, 2005): 299-310.

[10] Ecofeminist approaches to the animal-centred children's writing of the late eighteenth century, which have explored women's affiliation with trapped animals and benevolent treatment of animals as an educational lesson, includes: Mitzi Myers, "Portrait of the Female Artist as a Young Robin: Maria Edgeworth's Telltale Tailpiece"; Myers, "Of Mice and Mothers: Mrs Barbauld's 'New Walk' and Gendered Codes in Children's Literature"; Ingrid Tague, "Companions, Servants, or Slaves? Considering Animals in Eighteenth-Century Britain", *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 39, (2010): 111-130; Darren Howard, "Talking Animals and Reading Children"; Harriet Ritvo, "Learning from animals: Natural history for children in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries", *Children's Literature* 13, (1985), 72-93; Heather Klemann, "How to Think with Animals in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories* and

Edgeworth's tales resist overt didacticism. Instead of guiding her readers to defined conclusions, she uses natural history and animal lessons to teach principles of attention and practical experience, which the literary child and child reader must then use to explore the moral consequences of what they have learned on their own terms. The trend for teaching children about animal cruelty and benevolence using animal tales, or "tailpieces" as Suzanna Rahn has called them, has roots in Lockean educationalism.[11] Tess Cosslett argues that Locke's ideas about inscribing on the mind images that form associations led him to make suggestions for educating children using moral stories about animals.[12] In his *Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), Locke makes the case for the importance of animals, animal literature in child development when he suggests the only tales he knew of worth giving to children were *Aesop's Fables*.[13] The fables, Locke argues, both "entertain" and encourage "reflection", while the inclusion of pictures has the added benefit of encouraging children to read, entertaining them further, and "carries the increase of Knowledge with it."[14] Mitzi Myers and others have explored the way Edgeworth uses play as part of her "juvenile subjectivity", which combines reason and affect to encourage moral learning, disturbing the authoritarian rote learning of facts and moral lessons, which Edgeworth believed restricted contemplation and therefore did not lead to understanding.[15] Building on the work of Myers, Wharton, Rendall, and others, I argue here that Edgeworth uses a range of techniques to encourage moral contemplation of natural objects, including play, conversational debate, scientific experiments, and storytelling, often in subtle, surreptitious ways, which all focus on teaching perseverance and attention to nature.[16]

The Wrongs of Woman; or, Maria", *Lion and the Unicorn* 39, 1 (January 2015): 1-22; Zoe Jaques, "*Talking Animals in British Children's Fiction, 1786-1914*, and: *Victorian Fiction and the Cult of the Horse* (review)", *Journal of Victorian Culture* 12, 2, (Autumn, 2007): 354-60; Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams (ed.), introduction to *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics: A Reader*, 1-20.

[11] Suzanne Rahn, "Tailpiece: *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*", in *Children's Literature*, ed. Francelia Butler and Compton Rees (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 12: 78-91.

[12] Cosslett, *Talking Animals*, 9-10.

[13] John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 212.

[14] Ibid., 212.

[15] Mitzi Myers, "Portrait of the Female Artist", 232. Building on Myers' work, Wharton connects Edgeworth's "companionate voice" to the associationist educationalism of Barbauld. See *Material Enlightenment*, 200-5.

[16] Ibid., 200-10; Myers, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 230-40; Myers, "Socializing Rosamond: educational Ideology and Fictional Form", *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 14, 2 (Summer, 1989): 52-8; Rendall, *History of European Ideas*, 613-21; Catherine Toal, "Control Experiment: Edgeworth's Critique of Rousseau's Educational Theory", in *An Uncomfortable Authority: Maria Edgeworth and Her Contexts*, ed. Heidi Kaufman and Chris Fauske (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 212-225; Carol Strauss Sotiropoulos, "Where Words Fail: Rational Education Unravels in Maria Edgeworth's The

In Edgeworth's writing for children, the idea that rational principles applied to nature leads to moral understanding is apparent, but moral conclusions are rarely provided. Rather, Edgeworth's readers and characters must grapple with the meaning of terms like cruelty, utility, and benevolence for themselves, instilling in them an understanding that those meanings are far more complex and unfixed in an increasingly industrialised world than can be simply answered by religious teaching.

Although Edgeworth agreed with Locke's idea of using animals in education by capturing children's curiosity with affective learning, she disagreed with his use of image storage as the way to go about it. In her 1814 tale "The Bee and the Cow", Edgeworth gently mocks the mistakes children can make with picture books when a young girl confuses the letter 'B' with a cow because her picture book had accompanied the letter with a picture of a bull.[17] Moreover, earlier in *Practical Education* (1798), the experimental educational text she wrote with her father, Edgeworth explained that children are easily confused by allusion and pictures and require instead careful description of "real objects" to clearly inscribe on their minds accurate impressions of nature.[18] Edgeworth draws on Barbauld's nature poetry as an example of the limitations of poetic language in instructing children in benevolence towards animals. Although Edgeworth sees the benefits of "[t]he descriptions of the White Swan with her long arched neck, 'winning her easy way through the waters'" and "the nightingale singing upon her lone bush in the moonlight", as "well-suited to children", she argues that her other uses of "allegoric poetry" can be easily mistaken for reality leading to "false and confused ideas."[19] As a consequence, Edgeworth claims that "[w]ith regret children close Mrs Barbauld's little books" and find nothing "sensible" with which to replace them.[20] This praise and critique of one of the most popular children's writers of the late eighteenth century demonstrates firstly the entrepreneurial fashion with which Edgeworth and her father used *Practical Education* as a way of both attaching some of Barbauld's cachet to their own educational doctrine, and promoting Edgeworth's

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Good French Governess", *Children's Literature in Education* 32, 4 (December, 2001): 305-321; Davies, *Written Maternal Authority,* 86-108.

[17] Maria Edgeworth, *Continuation of Early Lessons*, (London: J. Johnson, 1814), 1: 235.

[18] Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, (London: J. Johnson, 1798), 1: 321. Manly discusses Edgeworth's political, associationist, and anti-sectarian approach to nature in "Maria Edgeworth and the 'Light of Nature': Artifice, Autonomy, and Anti-Sectarianism in Practical Education", in *Repossessing the Romantic Past*, ed. Paul Hamilton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 125.

[19] *Practical Education*, 321. This comment was likely RLE's.

[20] Ibid.

children's stories as the solution to a supposed gap in the market. The recommendation that children's stories involving animals ought to avoid allegory because it might lead to confusion suggests that stories about animals are far more complex, and require more careful execution than is often considered.

Drawing on the common belief that animal cruelty in childhood leads to violence in adulthood, Edgeworth argues in *Practical Education* that "tragical sanguinary spectacles" of animal suffering must be avoided as they lead to confused emotions and prejudice in "uncultivated" minds.[21] Edgeworth suggests that natural feelings of intense affection for animals mean that children are prone to inflict cruelty out of "caprice", and enact "revenge from being exposed to their insults and depredations".[22] At the same time, minds not yet educated in empirical observation are less likely to recognise cruelty inflicted on "irrational" animals who cannot communicate their suffering in words.[23] To counter these consequences, Edgeworth suggests an education based on "fixed habits of benevolence, and a taste for occupation."[24] This idea of combining feeling with industry is of particular interest to Edgeworth. By setting her tales in industrial and agricultural settings, she explores the murky relationship between feeling and industrialisation, by turns directing the observational eye to the wonders and pleasures of mechanical improvements, and finding the sublime in sights of industrial devastation. The process of educating her readers in attention has the effect of cultivating a taste for industrialisation, perhaps even replacing the idea of natural devotion with reverence for industry.[25] As we shall see, Edgeworth's literary animals are part of a scientific and industrialised topos, where animal labour is depended upon, and their bodies essential to the scientific inventions and industrial processes her young protagonists encounter.[26] Writing at a time of intense

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[21] Ibid., 282. Here, Edgeworth may be building on the arguments made by Catharine Macaulay, who similarly recommended children not be exposed to animal cruelty, even those "necessary" forms of cruelty, such as butchers: Macaulay, *Letters on Education with Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 197.
[22] Ibid., 285.
[23] Ibid., 282.
[24] Ibid., 282.
[25] Gary Kelly briefly discusses Edgeworth's taste for the industrial sublime in *Women, Writing, and Revolution*, 71.
[26] Most discussions of Edgeworth's topographical descriptions have focused on her Irish novels. Butler discusses Edgeworth's topography of the Irish landscape as embedded in the history, literature, and locality. See Butler, "Edgeworth's Ireland: History, popular culture, and secret codes", *Novel* 34, 2 (Spring, 2001): 267-92. Egenolf has also noted Edgeworth's topographical descriptions of Irish flora and fauna in *Belinda* as a narrative tool to indicate characters who exist in harmony with nature, and dramatic disruptions to traditional ways of life: "Edgeworth's Belinda: An Artful Composition", *Women's Studies*

industrialisation, when inventions like the steam engine were transforming the landscape of animal labour, revealing future possibilities for its replacement with mechanisation, as well as the effects of those inventions on animals and their habitats, Edgeworth's stories invite children to consider, if not find solutions to, the animal ethics of industrial improvement.[27]

Lazy Lawrence, Industrious Lessons, and Kindness to Animals

In "Lazy Lawrence", the opening story of her first collection of tales, *The Parent's Assistant* (1796), Edgeworth uses natural history to teach principles of attention, perseverance, and industriousness which lead to kindness to animals. The tale is ostensibly about an industrious child, Jem, who in an effort to save his horse from being sold (possibly to slaughter) because his sick mother is unable to pay their rent, goes out into the community to earn enough money to prevent that from happening.[28] In doing so, Jem's industriousness, which is not for his own profit, but for the love of his horse, shows how the pursuit of financial gain, when pursued with the wellbeing of others in mind, can effect moral reform in the political economy and produce benevolent communities. Jem's industrious spirit, shaped by habits of attention towards and experience of natural objects taught to him by his mother and affluent female employer, produces such kindness and understanding that he is even able to reform his idle friend, Lazy Lawrence, whose lack of industrious education leads him to engage in cock-fighting and steal from Jem's earnings. Deborah Weiss has argued that "Lazy Lawrence", and the collection of tales as a whole, makes crucial revisions to capitalism in the sense that it encourages commerce as a means of benefitting others within a

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31, 3 (2002): 323-348. Others including Malcolm Kelsall and Martha Adams Bohrer have noted Edgeworth's debt to the agriculturalist and cartographer, Arthur Young in *Castle Rackrent* and *Tour in Connemara*: Kelsall, "Civilization, Savagery and Ireland: Maria Edgeworth's Tour in Connemara", *European Journal of English Studies* 6, 2 (2002): 173-87; Brohor, "Tales of Locale: *The Natural History of Selborne* and *Castle Rackrent*", *Modern Philology* 100, 3 (February, 2003): 393-400.

[27] For broader discussions of industrialisation, relating to Marxist questions of power dynamics, and organisation of nature in political economy, which forms the context of this chapter's theoretical approach, see Malm, "The Origins of fossil Capital", 15-68; E. A. Wrigley, *Energy and the English Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 30-38; Jason Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*.

[28] 'Lazy Lawrence' appears in the first edition of the collection, and remained there when others were moved and added to in the second edition in 1800. Edgeworth, *The Parent's Assistant* (London: J. Johnson, 1796). For a discussion of the context of the tale as a whole, see Susan Manly, 'Introduction', *Selected Tales for Children and Young People* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), vii-xli.

community, discouraging the pursuit of private wealth and individual success.[29] It is this concern with the moral implications of an increasingly industrialised and consumer-driven society that, I suggest, leads Edgeworth to consider the role nature plays in economy and, in particular, how attention to natural objects can moderate self-interest.

Critical attention to Edgeworth's tales, particularly *The Parent's Assistant*, have produced diverse and seemingly competing views of Edgeworth's educational approach to political economy. Marilyn Butler has discussed Edgeworth's Smithian worldview and notes the financial precision of her writing for children: "it is possible to know at any one time the amount of money in the pocket of any of Edgeworth's twelve year-olds."[30] James Chandler and others have argued that Edgeworth's stories foster "Enlightenment individualism" in the way that they encourage entrepreneurial pursuits and the "spirit of invention".[31] This combination of economic knowledge, industrious spirit, and moral reform has led Kathryn Sutherland to assert that Edgeworth's stories aimed to raise "sociable little capitalists".[32] While such a claim may appear one-dimensional or – within a Marxist analysis – as oxymoronic, Sutherland's argument highlights Edgeworth's position as both a literary reformer and member of the 'improving' class of landowners. Like Hamilton, Hannah More, and other female writers arguing for educational and social reform in this period, Edgeworth participated in a domestic reform movement which sought to moderate social behaviour within an existing economic and class structure by encouraging characteristics like industriousness, and social benevolence.[33] Edgeworth's participation in this reform

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[29] Deborah Weiss, "Maria Edgeworth's Infant Economics: Capitalist Culture, Good-Will Networks and 'Lazy Lawrence'" *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, 3 (September 2014): 398.
[30] Butler, *Literary Biography*, 133. Building on Butler, and Katie Trumpener's work on political economy and imperial policy in the Celtic fringes, Fraser Easton has discussed Adam Smith's influence on Maria Edgeworth's writing as part of her improving economic outlook: Easton, "Cosmopolitical Economy: Exchangeable Value and National Development in Adam Smith and Maria Edgeworth", *Studies in Romanticism* 42, 1 (Spring, 2003): 99-125; Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). As readers will remember, Mandeville's subtitle is 'private vices, publick benefits', and he argues in the Fable that wealthy individuals generate economic growth by creating jobs through their greed. Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (1732), ed. F. B. Kaye (1924) (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1988), 8. For further discussion, see M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 125-6.9; Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* [1776], ed. R. H. Campbell and Andrew Skinner (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1979), 26-7.
[31] Chandler, "Edgeworth and the Lunar Enlightenment", 93.
[32] Kathryn Sutherland, "Conversable Fictions", in *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture,* ed. Paula R. Backsheider and Catherine Ingrassia (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 401.
[33] Interpretations of Edgeworth's position within the educational reform movement differ. Ellen Jordan sees Edgeworth as deviating from the domestic ideology of More in "'Making Good Wives and

movement has led Andrew O'Malley, in a discussion on "Lazy Lawrence" in particular, to point out that her middle-class values "promulgate views about [the] contentment of the lower classes". According to such a value system, progressive management—rather than a redistribution of wealth through charity, for instance—would improve the conditions of the poor without threatening the status quo.[34] I suggest that it is possible for these interpretations as well as Weiss's to co-exist, when we consider Susan Manly's extensive work on Edgeworth, which argues that her educationalism has a "resolute emphasis on free-thinking and free inquiry".[35] It is a reluctance to provide clear moral conclusions, and instead make space for moral contemplation within her educationalism, that makes Edgeworth's discussion of complex moral problems so ambiguous, and, as I will discuss in relation to her later tales of the 1820s, illustrates how difficult it becomes to rely on associationist educationalism in an age of industrialisation.

The preface to *The Parent's Assistant* supplied by Richard Lovell Edgeworth suggests the difficulty of taking a free-thinking approach to teaching benevolence alongside industriousness:

> It is not easy to give *rewards* to children, which shall not indirectly do them harm, by fostering some hurtful taste or passion; In the story of Lazy Lawrence, where the object was to excite a spirit of industry, care has been taken to proportion the reward to exertion, and to point out, that people feel cheerful and happy when they are employed. The reward of our industrious boy, though it be money, is only considered as the means of gratifying a benevolent wish. In a commercial nation, it is especially necessary to separate, as much as possible, the spirit of industry and avarice; and to beware lest we introduce Vice under the form of Virtue.[36]

Mothers'? The Transformation of Middle-Class Girls' Education in Nineteenth-Century Britain", *History of Education Quarterly* 31, 4 (Winter, 1991): 439-62. However, Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace positions Edgeworth as much more conservative in encouraging ideals of "domestic fulfilment" in her novels, see *Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 6. See also Isaac Kramnick, "Children's Literature and Bourgeois Ideology: Observations on Culture and Industrial Capitalism in the Later Eighteenth Century", in *Culture and Politics from Puritanism to the Enlightenment*, ed. Perez Zagorin (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

[34] Andrew O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child*, 48. Sharon Murphy, offers a similar argument in her discussion of Edgeworth's children's stories, which she sees as offering a palliative to political economy, by which largely encourages complacency, in "'The Fate of Empires Depends on the Education of Youth': Maria Edgeworth's Writing for Children", in *Young Irelands: Studies in Children's Literature*, ed. Mary Shine Thompson (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 23.

[35] Manly, "Maria Edgeworth and the 'Light of Nature'", 125.

[36] Edgeworth, *The Parent's Assistant*, (London: J. Johnson, 1800), 4. Further references are to the 1796 edition.

Speaking directly to the parents of child readers, the primary concern here is that readers might misunderstand the moral of the story: that the principal motivation for industry should not to be monetary reward in itself, but that work makes people happy because it assists them to do good deeds. Jem's reward, as the preface notes, is not the money he earns, but the saving of his horse, which his hard-earned money enables. Richard Lovell Edgeworth emphasises that in a "commercial nation" such mistakes are common, since avarice so often accompanies industry, and stresses the importance of separating the two. By showing that monetary reward is not a private vice when the aim of employment is to spread good-will and happiness, Edgeworth's story counters Bernard Mandeville's warning in the *Fable of the Bees* (1714) that private virtues are incompatible with public benefit. Nevertheless, as the preface shows an awareness that lessons in "benevolence and occupation" risked being misunderstood as celebrating material reward for hard labour.

In the tale itself, Edgeworth creates opportunities to clarify that Jem's pursuit of "a penny a day" is to save his horse, Lightfoot, but also that the ways in which he earns money are "honest" and rational enterprises.[37] The jobs Jem undertakes are all tasks relating to natural history and the study of natural objects. Moreover, the general principles Jem applies to his endeavours develop common-sense skills in attention and experience, as well as perseverance, which ultimately spreads benevolence through socio-economic good-will networks. For instance, when Jem first heads out to find employment, he finds a woman at the market selling sparkly rocks and asks her where she finds them. Although she rebuffs him, he perseveres, finds a man searching the coast for a lost crystal, and with observation and perseverance finds it. In return for Jem's kindness, the man offers to share the profits of his fossil-finding business with him. In this exchange, Jem profits because he is both attentive and kind-hearted, the message being that the two must go hand-in-hand. Likewise, when Jem goes to a lady's house to sell the fossils in the hope that she will buy them for the shell grotto she is building, it is Jem's politeness and consideration for others that persuade her to buy his fossils, not desire for the fossils alone. As the lady examines the fossils, Jem notices that she has just knocked over a pile of organised feathers, and, remembering how they were previously arranged, picks them up and re-orders them while she is not looking. Jem's application of attention and memory-retention in the service of another leads the lady to

[37] *The Parent's Assistant*, 14.

remark on his industriousness, and she offers him further employment as a gardener. What is notable about Edgeworth's treatment of natural objects is not the properties of the objects themselves, or (unlike Barbauld) the connection they offer to the divine, but the moral characteristics they encourage when put to useful purposes.

The kinds of natural objects Jem works with and tasks he carries out with them take part in an economy of female scientific and artistic enterprise. Jem's employer, who collects fossils, makes shell grottoes, maintains a highly-cultivated garden, and sells feathers amongst her similarly scientifically- and artistically-minded female friends, runs this domestic enterprise in the manner of the well-known Bluestocking, the Duchess of Portland.[38] Jem's horse, even shares a name with Portland's head botanist, John Lightfoot.[39] These references to a well-known circle of female Enlightenment thinkers, though likely missed by child-readers, shows how Edgeworth consciously connected her work to other women writers, artists, and scientists, and in doing so positioned herself in line with the broader aims of female scientific productivity. For instance, the lady in "Lazy Lawrence" proves to be a judicious educator of Jem, emboldening him to be "industrious" when she tells him she may not buy anymore fossils from him as it will encourage idleness, but offers him a more difficult job gardening.[40] When Jem proves himself to be more than up to the task, efficiently weeding more ground than a boy much older than him, the lady tells him she will pay him not for the hours he puts in, but for the work reasonably expected for a child his age to undertake. In this way, Edgeworth shows how upper-class women can make effective teachers of working-class children by encouraging skills like attention and perseverance, which were themselves central to women's scientific work and craft traditions.[41] By revealing the divisions of labour and employment practices involved in the lady's domestic enterprise, Edgeworth shows that women's scientific productivity

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[38] For a discussion of the scientific-craft pursuits of the Bulstrode circle, see Charlotte Gere, "Out of her shell: the 2nd Duchess of Portland's vast shell collection reveals much about the culture of Enlightenment natural history", *Apollo,* 180, 622 (July, 2014); Alison E. Martin, "Society, Creativity, and Science: Mrs Delany and the Art of Botany", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 35, 2 (Spring, 2011): 102-7; Madeleine Pelling, "Collecting the World: Female Friendship and Domestic Craft at Bulstrode Park", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41, 1 (March, 2018): 101-120; Millie Schurch, "'All the productions of *that nature*'".

[39] David, J. Galloway, "John Lightfoot (1735-1788) and the lichens of *flora scotica* (1777)", *The Lichenologist* 46, 3 (May, 2014): 247-60.

[40] *The Parent's Assistant*, 22.

[41] Hannah More, another Bluestocking, also applied principles of science of mind to the education of the poor in an effort to improve their conditions, their piety, and industriousness. See, Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 113-60.

both contributes to industry, and fosters the rational and benevolent qualities that lead to progressive management. In this sense, Edgeworth illustrates how using natural objects in industry is beneficial not just to advancing knowledge amongst elite circles, but to the education of the poor, to moral reform, and to the economy.

The natural history lessons Jem learns also lead to his own creative enterprise, showing how the working classes can benefit from using natural resources to earn a living and cultivate craftsmanship. When Jem notices the lady is in need of a doormat, he picks straw from the common and spends all night working out how to plait it all into a mat. His employer is so pleased with his efforts that she offers to sell them on for him out of good-will. Unlike other agricultural workers who till the land, weave, and spin in deteriorating cottage systems or factories, working for the profits of an employer, Jem keeps all the money his labour earns. In this way, Edgeworth shows how an education in attention to and observation of natural objects can lead to the kind of industriousness that will mobilise the working classes to entrepreneurship. At the same time, however, as Weiss points out, the fact that Jem's impetus to earn a living stems from love for his horse, not the pursuit of material wealth, means that his ability to earn so much that he challenges class boundaries is limited.[42] Likewise, because Jem is paid fairly, not simply for the work he does but because of his good nature to others, means that the exchange involved in Jem's enterprise form a good-will network, which operates to place checks on the "avarice" Edgeworth is so concerned about.[43] In this sense, Jem's industrious use of natural resources, which are only available to him because of his access to common land, is positioned against mechanised agricultural improvement: Jem productively and sustainably uses common land to create a small business for a single benevolent purpose. Unlike her friend Hamilton, Edgeworth presents common land as a space of rural, working-class productivity, which can support families who fall on hard times and offer the materials for improvement, thereby portraying it as an important resource in rural economies.[44] Since, the commons in "Lazy Lawrence"

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[42] Weiss, "Maria Edgeworth's Infant Economics", 401.
[43] Edgeworth, *The Parent's Assistant* (1800), 6.
[44] See chapter 2. Manly has recognised a similar argument towards the value of common land in another tale from *The Parent's Assistant*, 'Simple Susan', see Manly, "'Take a '*poon*, pig': Property, Class, and Common Culture in Maria Edgeworth's 'Simple Susan', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 37, 3 (Fall, 2012): 306-322. Other women writers of this period not discussed in this thesis also opposed the enclosure acts on political grounds, including Jane Austen, who Butler has shown was a great admirer of Edgeworth. See, Celia Easton, "Jane Austen and the Enclosure Movement: the Sense and Sensibility of Land Reform", *Persuasions* 24 (January, 2002): 71-89.

participate in Edgeworth's good-will economy of exchange, they might perhaps become associated in the minds of her child readers with morality and industry, and enclosure with greed; lessons which they may carry with them into later life.

By contrast, Jem's friend Lazy Lawrence, who has not received the same industrious education as Jem, persuades his violent alcoholic father to give him money to buy gingerbread, fruit, and nuts, instead of working. Out of greed, which the reader is assured is a result of "bad habits" and "bad company" rather than proof he is "bad", Lazy Lawrence is drawn into cock-fighting, and later stealing from Jem's wages.[45] The positioning of animal cruelty as a product of laziness, in contrast with Jem's industrious benevolence for Lightfoot, plays out Edgeworth's claim that "benevolent habits" and "occupation" dissuade children from cruelty to animals.[46] Although Lazy Lawrence is punished for stealing (indeed, he is sent to Bridewell prison), it is made clear that he is not irretrievably "wicked", and on his return he is "welcomed back into his community by Jem", who takes great pains to reform Lazy Lawrence into an "industrious boy".[47] It is not, then, an innate benevolence that leads Jem to industriousness, or Lazy Lawrence's lack of such that leads him to cock-fighting, but rather a difference in education which informs each child's behaviour.[48] As such, the tale demonstrates how an education of attention and experience of natural objects, like Jem's fossils, rocks, gardens, and wheat, can avert animal cruelty through the reforming powers of industriousness and benevolence.

Much of the focus on animal cruelty in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century revolved around working-class sports such as cock-fighting and bull-baiting.[49] Many writers and artists throughout the eighteenth century associated animal cruelty with vulgarity, gambling, drinking, and crime.[50] Christine Kenyon-Jones has argued that

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[45] *The Parent's Assistant*, 56, 59.
[46] *Practical Education*, 282.
[47] *The Parent's Assistant*, 55, 57.
[48] For a discussion of the economic context of Edgeworth's educationalism in 'Lazy Lawrence', see Weiss, "Maria Edgeworth's Infant Economics", 410; O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child*, 48-50.
[49] Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights*, 22-36.
[50] Donna Landry has perhaps contributed the most to research on the subject of rural sports, and discusses their representation by writers from Milton, to William Somerville, and William Wordsworth, in *The Invention of the Countryside*. Diana Donald has discussed the political and class contexts of animal sports and their representations by writers like William Cowper, and artists and animal cruelty campaigners like William Henry Scott and Lewis Gompertz, in *Picturing Animals in Britain*, 224-83. David Perkins has usefully discussed topic of bull-baiting in Lunar-man, and friend of the Edgeworth's, Thomas Day's children's book *History of Sandford and Merton*, which explicitly describes a bull-baiting scene; just one of Day and Edgeworth's many differences. See, Perkins, *Romanticism and Animals Rights*, 89.

while many popular writers including Rousseau and Wordsworth argued against upper-class sports like hunting, they encountered significant opposition from landowning elites intent on protecting hunting rights, who condemned writers against cruelty to animals as Jacobins and Methodists.[51] Kenyon-Jones argues that this landowning opposition meant that the first attempts to pass animal protection bills through the Commons and the Lords centred on sports that only the working-classes participated in.[52] It is worth noting however, that Edgeworth's other children's books, such as *Rosamond: A Sequel to Early Lessons* (1821), and *Frank: A Sequel* (1822), address the class dynamics and moral consequences of hunting and game laws as part of her broader educational arguments for a universal education based on common-sense principles.[53] A key concept within the idea of universal education, when principles like attention and perseverance spread through the benevolent and industrious efforts of characters such as the working-class Jem as well as the gentry, like his employer, is a faith in the moral improvement of all.

As Butler has pointed out, Edgeworth's books for children were marketed and priced by her London publisher, Joseph Johnson, more for an affluent readership than for the poor themselves.[54] Consequently, we might see "Lazy Lawrence", as more of a guide for middle- and upper-class parents, as the title of *The Parent's Assistant* suggests, in how to encourage industrious behaviour and moral reform in their work force. By making work the moral responsibility of individuals, though aided by progressive employment practices, Edgeworth makes improvement of the conditions of the poor their own responsibility rather than a condition of structural inequality. Edgeworth assures her readers in the preface to *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, as well as elsewhere, that employers, have a responsibility to do "justice", for example by providing fair wages, and such decisions rely on a rational and moral education.[55] The role of animals in this process is a rational as well as a moral issue for Edgeworth: if

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[51] Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes*, ch.3.
[52] Ibid..
[53] In 'Frank', the seven year-old protagonist decides against hunting with the vulgar Squire Rogers, recognising that although he is a gentleman he is poorly educated and that this is associated with his love of hunting, see Edgeworth, *Frank: A Sequel to Frank in Early Lessons* (London: R. Hunter, 1822). In *Rosamond*, teenage Godfrey enters into a debate about Game Laws, which restricted hunting to landowners, and the politics of class inequality and humane treatment of animals. *Rosamond: A Sequel to Early Lessons* (London: R. Hunter, 1821).
[54] Butler, *A Literary Biography*, 102.
[55] Edgeworth, *Harry and Lucy, Concluded; Being the Last Part of Early Lessons* (London: R. Hunter, 1825), 1: xi.

labour is a moral choice for the poor, and a route to improvement, what about irrational animals who are essential to rural labour but do not have a choice?

In "Lazy Lawrence", Edgeworth addresses the moral issue of animal labour by positioning Lightfoot as both the moral centre of Jem's industriousness, and as a useful part of rural life. Given Edgeworth's arguments in *Practical Education* that children should not domesticate or be near animals, it is significant that Lightfoot is not simply a beloved pet, but useful to Jem and his mother.[56] Although he is old, Lightfoot is still essential to the family business, in taking flowers they grow in their garden to market, and the strawberries they sell to Clifton. When, at the end of the story, the theft is resolved and Lightfoot is saved, the lady gives Jem a gift of a new saddle and harness, which within the gift economy, signifies an exchange that is both economically useful to Jem, and sociable in that it promotes good will and affection.[57] In this case, Edgeworth implies the use of animal labour enables industrious enterprise, but also, crucially, has care for animals at its heart. In direct opposition to this, Lazy Lawrence's involvement with placing bets on cock-fighting depends on animal cruelty for the single purpose of material reward. Here, Edgeworth suggests that although rural economies rely on animal labour, the implications of that work with animals must be considered, and care for animal wellbeing prioritised over financial profit.

Rabbits, Vegetarian Discourse, and Extra-Textual Contemplation

I will now look at Edgeworth's 1814 collection of tales, *Rosamond; A Continuation of Early Lessons*, and its story "The Rabbit", which builds on the themes of animal cruelty and involvement of animals in industry raised in "Lazy Lawrence", but addresses them more directly in the form of proto-utilitarian debate. In *Rosamond*, Edgeworth's middle-class children behave like child philosophers, observing objects and subjects of curiosity and discussing their thoughts and feelings, even if they don't always come to a moral conclusion. In the story, Edgeworth introduces a practical lesson for her child characters through an encounter with a rabbit, which breaks into Rosamond's garden

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[56] *Practical Education*, 282.

[57] Linda Zionkowski has argued that by the late eighteenth-century gift giving largely ceased to have an economic function, but it retained symbolic and moral importance in the "preservation of human connection", and became a critical concern of women's writing, see *Women and Gift Exchange in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Richardson, Burney, Austen* (London: Routledge, 2016), 14.

and eats her beloved laburnums. The garden, which Rosamond has cultivated over time, applying observation and perseverance, taking advice from others, and learning for herself through experience, functions as a space to explore the morality of agricultural management on a microcosmic level. When the rabbit comes and destroys her garden, the rabbit becomes an interloper, and a pest that presents an ethical problem for the child philosophers, who must, like landowners, consider the effects their industry has on animals. Although Edgeworth warned against exposing children to sights of animal abuse in *Practical Education*, she nevertheless praised Barbauld's tale "The Hare", which describes a hare being hunted from the animal's point of view, since she thought it would "leave an impression upon the young and humane heart, which may perhaps save a life of many a hare."[58] In "The Rabbit", Edgeworth's industrious child characters rationalize the ramifications of animal cruelty without ever encountering it directly. The philosophical dialogue that unfolds between Rosamond and her brothers unpacks the different ethical positions surrounding pests on agricultural land, generalising their philosophy further into a discussion of animal cruelty and vegetarianism.

At first, Rosamond screams out "Kill him", revealing her irrational, and instinctive self-interest, in defence of her garden.[59] However, Rosamond's natural affection for the animal quickly kicks in, and she recoils at the thought of killing the rabbit. She soon begins to rationalise what to do, asking her brothers for help, and taking such a sensible approach to the situation that her older brother, Orlando, expresses his surprise and admiration for Rosamond's treatment of "her enemy the rabbit."[60] Here, Edgeworth recalls her words in *Practical Education*, where she provides an anecdote of the Comte de Buffon, who in spite of his "benevolent philosophy, can scarcely speak with patience of his enemies the field mice; who when he was trying experiments upon the culture of forest trees, tormented him perpetually by their insatiable love of acorns", which led him to obsess over trapping them with snares.[61] Edgeworth insinuates that even though Buffon proffered benevolence alongside his empirical work, these two habits alone are not enough to restrain the passions of "revenge" that a mind uncultivated in industriousness is want to inflict.[62]

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[58] *Practical Education*, 321.
[59] Edgeworth, *Rosamond, A Continuation of Early Lessons* (London: J. Johnson, 1814), 53.
[60] Ibid., 53.
[61] *Practical Education*, 224.
[62] Ibid., 221.

Edgeworth's children however, are well educated in attention, experience, and perseverance, and direct themselves to industry to find a solution to the rabbit problem, which they do, in the form of a "humane trap".[63] Edgeworth even gives instructions for making the trap in a footnote, to encourage her young readers, who may themselves encounter a pest problem, to trap the creatures "*unhurt*".[64] In this way, Edgeworth introduces the idea that the "spirit of invention" may provide practical solutions to animal cruelty.

The trap, however, is only a temporary solution to an initial problem, and the children must consider what to do with the rabbit now it has been caught. The issues of pest control, animal rights, and the consequences of human industry for animals, cannot be solved with practical invention alone, but must be reflected upon philosophically. After examining the rabbit's appearance and behaviour inside the trap, Rosamond develops a great affection for it and wants to keep it as a pet, which leads to a discussion about liberty and the wrongs of trapping wild animals. Edgeworth here raises the issue of legal rights for animals, when Orlando says, "it is against the laws of England to do anybody good against their will", in response to Rosamond's plea that she would make the rabbit very happy if allowed to keep it.[65] Godfrey's reply that the rabbit is "not anybody, so it is not against the law", highlights the point that laws that protect human rights to liberty do not apply to animals.[66] This episode could well be read as an allegory for human issues relating to natural rights and liberty, such as slavery, and Catholic emancipation in Ireland, which Edgeworth addresses in her novels.[67] Indeed, Godfrey adds, although keeping an animal and treating it well is not against the law, "it is cruel".[68] This idea that pet-keeping is cruel from a position of natural rights, not because owners might treat them badly, but as a philosophical issue of liberty, is the same position Edgeworth takes in *Practical Education*, where she argues that children could not be trusted with restricting the "liberty" of animals, regardless of their "good intentions".[69] Edgeworth's philosophical point is born straight out of abolitionist

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[63] *Rosamond, A Continuation*, 54.
[64] Ibid., 54.
[65] Ibid., 55.
[66] Ibid., 56.
[67] Ó'Gallchoir has discussed Edgeworth's support for Irish Emancipation and the family's experience of the Irish Rebellion (1798), during which they attempted to stay neutral, in *Maria Edgeworth: Women, Enlightenment, and Nation*, 158.
[68] *Rosamond*, *A Continuation*, 57.
[69] *Practical Education*, 224.

arguments: those who are not defined by law as free citizens are "not anybody", and so the law does not apply to them.[70] The use of animals as allegories for slavery was a common literary trope in the eighteenth century, which Edgeworth draws on here to help her readers understand the moral and legal position of abolition.[71]

The tale of "The Rabbit" cannot entirely be seen as an allegory for slavery, however thinly veiled her message is. At the time Edgeworth was writing, in 1813, no laws pertaining to animal cruelty had passed into English law, although several attempts had been made since 1800 to pass various laws relating to animal cruelty, including those against bull-baiting and cock-fighting, and against cruelty to livestock.[72] It wasn't until 1822 that the first bill, The Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act, passed through parliament, spearheaded by the Irish MP Richard Martin, a friend of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, who Edgeworth herself met several times.[73] The act soon became known as "Martin's Act", with Martin famously dubbed "Humanity Dick" by King George IV, and commonly thought to be the primary organiser of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which was established in 1824.[74] Edgeworth was perhaps closer to the MP and fellow SPCA member, James Mackintosh, with whom she shared a friend in Dugald Stewart.[75] Writers like the radical dissenter and publisher Richard Phillips, who approached Edgeworth about publishing her debut *Letters to Literary Ladies* (1795), were also involved in the early days of lobbying Parliament against cruelty to animals, with Phillips penning Lord Erskine's powerful anti-cruelty speech to Parliament in 1809.[76] The speech itself draws on the utilitarian arguments made by Jeremy Bentham in 1789:

> The question is not, can they reason? nor, can they talk? But, can they suffer? Why should the law refuse its protection to any sensitive being? The time will come when humanity will extend its mantle over everything which breathes. We have begun by attending to the condition of slaves, we shall finish by softening that of all the animals which assist our labours or supply our wants.[77]

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[70] See, Manly, "Intertextuality, Slavery, and Abolition in Maria Edgeworth's 'The Good Aunt' and 'The Grateful Negro'", *Essays in Romanticism* 20, 1 (2013): 102-145.
[71] See, Tague, "Companions, Servants, or Slaves?", 111-30.
[72] Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes*, ch.3.
[73] Butler, *Literary Biography*, 345.
[74] Donald, *Picturing Animals*, 129, 224, 354.
[75] Butler, *Literary Biography*, 228, 415, 470.
[76] Ibid., 402; Connolly, *A Cultural History*, 7; Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes*, ch.3.
[77] Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (London: T. Payne and Son, 1789), 310-11.

Here, Bentham suggests that the underlying principles of natural rights, which is a matter not of rational faculties but of sentience, must eventually be extended not only to slaves, but to animals too.[78] Moreover, Bentham addresses the use of animals in industry and service to human beings as particularly relevant to the issue of natural rights; the aspect of animal cruelty Edgeworth also addresses. Manly's discussion of Edgeworth's utilitarian interests in relation to questions of government and slavery in her children's tales places Edgeworth within Bentham's wider circle, as a friend of the philosopher and Bentham's French translator, Etienne Dumont.[79] However, I suggest that for Edgeworth the question of utility also meant addressing the practical reality of applying the principles of natural rights to animals — problems that she puts to her child readers.

In "The Rabbit", the children soon open up the discussion to the wider subject of animal cruelty, with each child taking a different position but remaining open to changing their mind with each additional comment. The eldest child, Orlando, begins by admitting the difficulty of finding moral solutions to the subject: "I never clearly understood what was right to be done about animals; what is cruelty to animals".[80] At first, all the children agree that if animals "hurt us or our property…we must defend them, and we must defend ourselves."[81] This idea of defending their property comes up quickly as a reason to harm animals, yet as with Rosamond's initial response to the rabbit, when faced with the prospect of killing an animal like the one they observe in front of them, they admit they could not kill an animal. In this way, the object lesson the rabbit teaches the children, when they apply principles of observation and experience to it, is that a distanced, rational philosophy is at odds with the reality of killing animals. The subject soon turns to eating animals, since if they feel it is wrong to kill animals, surely eating them is just as bad. Indeed, they all manage to generalise the point that if they feel compassion for one rabbit, eating rabbits for dinner does not make rational

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[78] This passage has been widely discussed by environmental historians and animals studies scholars for its significant contribution to a utilitarian understanding of animal ethics, for instance: Roderick Frazier Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 49; Klaus Petrus, Markus Wild (eds.), *Animal Minds & Animal Ethics: Connecting Two Separate Fields* (Bielefeld: CPI — Clausen & Bosse, Leck, 2013), 14; Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes*, 89.
[79] Susan Manly, "Maria Edgeworth as political thinker: government, rebellion and punishment" *Lectures in Intellectual History* podcast series on PodBean.com, 25-04-2017.
[80] *Rosamond*, 55.
[81] Ibid., 55.

sense. In this way, Edgeworth demonstrates how sympathy for one animal could lead to a more universal benevolence towards all animals. This is a lesson which, as with her point about natural rights, encourages children to apply this principle of universal benevolence to other aspects of life, but still focuses the point on the complex issue of animal ethics.[82]

The question of eating animals becomes yet more complicated when Malthusian politics is introduced to the discussion. Orlando suggests that if we don't eat animals, then they might accelerate in number, which leads the children to consider the prospect of an overpopulation of animals that might, because of either food scarcity or because they are emboldened by lack of a human threat, eat people. Although their father intervenes at this point to explain that cattle do not eat people, he does agree with the principle that if unchecked through human intervention, animals would effectively "kill men" through outcompeting them for food.[83] Thomas Malthus' theory of overpopulation did not discuss the idea of animal overpopulation. However, the fear Malthus raised that the poor might overpopulate the earth was a contemporary concept of the period, which Edgeworth alludes to here.[84] Malthus became an acquaintance of Edgeworth's in the 1810s and 1820s, but in "The Rabbit" his loosely-alluded to theory is not wholly endorsed.[85] Indeed, the final points the children make on the subject of eating animals remain open-ended. Rosamond concludes by taking the position Edgeworth takes in *Practical Education*, saying that she will continue to eat meat, but that she "should hate to be a butcher".[86] In *Practical Education*, Edgeworth says that some "bloody form[s] of cruelty" are "necessary", including the occupation of butchers, who she suggests ought to be hidden from public view.[87] This position was widely held in the eighteenth century, with butchers frequently forbidden from being jurors under the commonly-held belief that they could not be morally trusted.[88] However, Orlando and Godfrey ignore their father's words, with Orlando stating that the issue requires

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[82] Perkins has discussed the way in which earlier writers, like Sarah Trimmer used animals in her stories to teach principles of universal benevolence, in *Romanticism and Animal Rights*, 33.
[83] *Rosamond*, 56.
[84] Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. Alison Bashford and Joyce E. Chaplin have viewed Malthus' theory in relation to the 'new world' and changing ideas about space, emigration, and the cultivation of land, as well as shifting economic dependence on labour: *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus: Rereading the 'Principle of Population'* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).
[85] Patricia James, *Population Malthus: His Life and Times* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 187-225-6, 358-67.
[86] *Rosamond*, 56.
[87] *Practical Education*, 221.
[88] Nick Fiddes, *Meat: A Natural Symbol* (London: Routledge, 1991).

further contemplation, and Godfrey committing to "write an essay on cruelty to animals", as had radical vegetarian essayists like Joseph Ritson and John Oswald.[89] The ambiguous conclusion to this philosophical discussion—"I'll think more of it", Godfrey avows—leaves open the opportunity for the characters, and by extension child readers, to form their own conclusions. Moreover, by voicing a position so closely aligned with her own in Rosamond, but allowing the brothers to question her, Edgeworth leaves space for self-deprecation and the possibility that she herself could be wrong, perhaps demonstrating a shift in her position on animal cruelty since 1798. Ultimately, the guidance Edgeworth offers through rational conversation and object lessons teaches the principles of ethical thought, and provides textual cues for children to continue their contemplation of animal cruelty beyond the page.

Useful Toys and Playing with Animal Bodies

Edgeworth's later writing for children, particularly *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, relies heavily on the faith that the educational principles of her tales will lead to extra-textual moral contemplation in her child readers. Whereas in earlier tales like "Lazy Lawrence" and "The Rabbit" Edgeworth makes the different arguments relating to animal cruelty and improvement quite clear, in *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, Edgeworth's ethical interventions are more subtle. The collection addresses the use of animals in industrial and scientific improvement much more directly than any of her other tales. As with Edgeworth's other stories from *Early Lessons*, siblings Harry and Lucy have grown older in the intervening years since they made their debut in Honora and Richard Lovell Edgeworth's *Practical Education; or, the History of Harry and Lucy* (1780). The children may not have aged as much as their real-life readers by 1825, but the world around them has. Now Harry is captivated by steam-engines, and Lucy, who in 1801 was told she should no longer be educated in science with her brother, begins her lessons again, this time with the added advantages of her education in literature and

[89] *Rosamond*, 57. For a detailed discussion of the animal rights essayists, their politics, religion, and influence on the discourse of vegetarianism, animal ethics, welfare, and environmentalism, see Tim Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 13-56.

arithmetic.[90] *Harry and Lucy, Concluded* is itself a challenge in attention and perseverance, containing within its volumes over 100 pages of mechanical descriptions, which the industrious reader might endeavour to use themselves if ever they were so interested as to build three different kinds of bridge, turn a camera obscura into a shell box, or measure the uptake of water using a piece of straw. However, in between the insistently instructive tales about material invention are breaks, usually made by Lucy, when the reader's attention is turned towards what else is going on in those industrial scenes. I argue that in these spaces, where the eye is drawn to non-human life, Edgeworth requires her child readers to look at the effects industrialisation has on the natural world, and in doing so asks them to contemplate the morality and utility of improvement.

One of the ways Edgeworth confronts the effects of industrialisation on animals, is through the use of mechanical toy animals. Wharton has argued that toys often function in Edgeworth's tales for children as an educational tool, and gives the example of "Chinese toys" in *Rosamond*, where the curious protagonist uses reason and observation to comprehend how the toy functions, and how it is made, developing habits of perception as well as dispelling prejudices.[91] In the case of the Chinese toys, the children's inability to work out how the toy is made, makes them admire Chinese engineering in a way that de-centres ideas about the technological superiority of Enlightenment Europe.[92] In *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, the siblings encounter some Chinese serpents and fortune-telling fish when visiting the home of the scientist and industrialist, Sir Rupert. At first the children, especially Lucy, are so swept away by the magic of the toys that they are unable to distinguish the mechanism of the toys from "nonsense".[93] The serpents and fish function autonomously, and even though Lucy assures Sir Rupert that she knows the toys are not real animals, she still wails "poor fish" when Harry insists on taking them out of water to see how they're constructed.[94] Lucy's expression of sympathy for the fish, though perhaps in jest, illustrates the differences in each child's approach to these toy animals. For Lucy, the toy creatures must be treated with care and respect, while Harry is solely interested in discovering

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[90] Edgeworth, *Harry and Lucy Concluded: Being the Last Part of Early Lessons* vol. 1-2 (London: R. Hunter, Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1825), 1-4.
[91] Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*, 221-225.
[92] Ibid., 224.
[93] *Harry and Lucy Concluded*, 263.
[94] Ibid., 262.

how they work. Here, as Myers has discussed, Harry represents an empirical approach to science, while Lucy brings an additional affective response to learning, both of which are important to observing and understanding the full picture of the problem in front of them.[95]

Eventually, the children both realise that the serpents are made of ivory, and the fish whalebone, by drawing on their earlier lessons about hygrometers and kinds of porous materials. While the children both agree that the toys are very clever, and admire the engineering of the toys as Rosamond did with the Chinese toys, Harry becomes more interested in the their utility as scientific instruments, while Lucy declares them a "nonsense".[96] The children's different reactions to the toys are based on their judgement of utility: Harry sees only the possibilities the materials provide to science, particularly how ivory hygrometers are used by East India Company scientists, while Lucy loses interest upon discovering that the toys are made of the bodily remains of other animals, and immediately turns her attention to a nearby canary, whose foot is chained to its water bucket. Lucy begins to consider whether the contraption hurts the canary, which she is told is a kind of entertaining experiment, where everyone gathers round to watch the bird yank the chain from inside its cage whenever it needs to drink water. In this way, Lucy draws the reader's attention away from discussions of the scientific uses of animal bodies, to questions of animal cruelty. Furthermore, only a few pages back, Sir Rupert comments on the ingenuity and "sagacity" of elephants, who he witnessed in India judging better than imperial scientists how much weight certain engineering materials could withstand.[97] When Lucy then turned her attention to the harm that might be inflicted on the canary, she may well have associated the ivory serpent with which she was so taken with the sagacious creature whose body it came from. Moreover, by introducing the abused canary immediately after the animal toys, Edgeworth provides textual cues to her readers to make the same association with animal cruelty that Lucy made, without addressing the matter of animal cruelty involved in the pursuit of scientific knowledge directly. At the same time, Edgeworth relies on the very principles of observation and reflection that the object lesson teaches, to make the association with animal cruelty in the first place. Thus, the toy has also been of moral use to Edgeworth,

[95] Myers, Mitzi Myers, "Portrait of the Female Artist", 232.
[96] *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, 263.
[97] Ibid., 127.

illustrating both its use to scientific progress, and surreptitiously questioning the ethics of its scientific practice.

The inclusion of the trapped canary in the tale marks a shift in Edgeworth's approach to addressing animal cruelty and the operations of sympathy more broadly. As with Rosamond's rabbit, the caged canary exposes questions of liberty, but the addition of the chained water bucket causes Lucy to wonder whether the action causes it pain. When Lady Digby tells Lucy that although she does not believe the canary is in pain, she cannot be sure, and suggests that the unwillingness of the bird to undergo the ordeal might be due to his "recollecting the pain which he had undergone in learning this feat".[98] When the bird eventually performs the trick to an audience and sings aloud, Lucy suggests that the canary must have been taught "gentle methods" of learning.[99] The episode with the canary therefore reveals two lessons to the child reader. Firstly, the spectacle of the scene, and Lucy and Lady Digby's uncertainty about the cruelty of the experiment, uncovers the process of sympathy with animal suffering as one that hinges on perception and judgement. The scene also reflects other kinds of experiments on birds in the eighteenth-century, such as "An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump" (1768) depicted by Joseph Wright of Derby, a satellite on the Lunar Society, which shows a crowd of witnesses watching with varying expressions of awe, indifference, and horror, an air pump experiment on a struggling, suffocating bird. Hilda Kean has described the painting as portraying the significance of sight in the "choice of whether to acknowledge cruelty or turn away".[100] Similarly, Diana Donald has argued that Wright's painting illustrates the "dichotomous possibilities" observation of cruelty involves, which she connects to David Hume's argument in *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739), where he says that sympathy for animals depends on perception and is therefore derived from imagination.[101] For Hume, and I would argue for Edgeworth also, moral instincts are not produced entirely from reason, nor from the immaterial qualities of the soul, but from perception, and reflection on the feelings, habits, and memories formed by viewing sights of suffering. Consequently, by depicting Harry and Lucy's two different reactions to the toy animals, Edgeworth illustrates the different habits, feelings, and memories Lucy has, which lead her to turn her perception towards

[98] Ibid., 270.
[99] Ibid., 304.
[100] Kean, *Animal Rights*, 17.
[101] Donald, *Picturing Animals*, 10.

animal cruelty. When Harry shows comparatively little interest in the suffering of the canary, it is not because Lucy is, as a girl, simply and naturally sentimental, but because she has been educated to form different associations to her brother.

The canary experiment is, much like Hamilton's sparrow experiment in *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, an experiment in Enlightenment education based on Lockean ideas about the malleability of the mind, which was often applied to animals in popular eighteenth-century culture. The idea of educating animals in "accomplishments" as Edgeworth describes the canary's bucket trick, mimics the literature and visual culture surrounding the "Learned Pig" phenomenon.[102] Writers, including Hamilton, Wollstonecraft, William Blake, and artists such as Thomas Rowlandson, commented on the sensational pig, who boasted such achievements as spelling and calculating mathematical equations. For writers on education, the pig encapsulated the powers of associationism, and challenged the idea that reason was a product of the immaterial soul, and proof of human exceptionalism over the rest of the animal kingdom. Earlier in the eighteenth century, Hume challenged the idea of human exceptionalism when he argued that the capacities for forming associations are also present in animals since, "beasts are endow'd with thought and reason as well as men" and "whatever we discover be true of the one species, may be concluded without hesitation to be certain of the other."[103] Unlike Wollstonecraft, Edgeworth is not perturbed by the idea that animals might be capable of rational improvement for reasons of duty to God. However, she is concerned with the same ethical problems relating to human responsibilities for animal welfare. For Edgeworth, the idea that animals might be capable of improvement raises issues to do with the ethics of improvement, to which she does not provide a clear answer.

Although the canary's improvement is rationalised as a "gentle" form of education, of the kind Edgeworth encourages parents to apply to their children, improving animals requires restricting their liberty and does not serve the interests of the animals themselves. Just before the canary episode, Lucy visits a deer enclosure on the Digby's estate, where an experiment in "kind" land management takes place in the form of a series of fences with feathers attached.[104] Lucy is told that the movement of

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[102] See Ann Wierda Rowland, "Learned Pigs and Literary Children".
[103] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), 1: 118.
[104] *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, 3: 232.

the feathers deters the deer from crossing the fence into the estate itself, where they would presumably cause damage to the property. However, she is also told that the deer are "tame" and "docile", unlike wild deer who are "timid". They are so tame in fact that one even allows "a boy to ride upon him" and "soldiers to amuse themselves by sticking their knapsacks across his antlers".[105] The ethical ramifications of taming the wild deer are left for the reader to contemplate, with the scene concluding simply with the open declaration that the effectiveness of the humane fence "may be true or may be false", and that the "experiment must determine" the outcome.[106] In this way, as with the humane trap in "The Rabbit", Edgeworth advocates humane alternatives to protect cultivated land from wild animals, but indicates that even attempts to "educate" animals to serve the interests of improvement change their natural behaviour. This message about the effects of civilising animals alludes to Rousseau's educational treatise, which argued that to function in society children, who are born free from the trappings of civilisation, must be educated to retain their virtue.[107] Rousseau's stipulation that boys receive rational education, and girls be shackled to their fathers and husbands, is challenged as an infringement on the liberty and the rational capacities of reasoning creatures, when Sir Rupert's educational experiment produces docility in the deer.[108] As O'Malley has argued, children were often compared to animals in eighteenth-century children's literature because of the idea that they shared a similar lack of developed reasoning skills.[109] That it is Lucy who witnesses the educational experiment that tames deer so as not to cross beyond permitted boundaries might be read as a warning to girls and their parents of the value of a rational education.

The function of animal toys in Edgeworth's tales often requires readers as well characters to assess issues surrounding the utility, materiality, and potential replacement of sentient animals with mechanical doubles. Although the toy serpents and fish do not fully convince the children of their animality, they nevertheless suggest the possibility that human invention can mimic animals, and as such might provide solutions to animal

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[105] Ibid., 3: 231.
[106] Ibid., 3: 232.
[107] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, trans. Barbara Foxley (London: J.M. Dent; Rutland, Vt.: C.E. Tuttle, 1993), 336-347. Rousseau was also a major proponent of teaching against cruelty to animals and against eating meat, which he deemed "unnatural", 59.
[108] Ibid., 337. Rousseau argued that women "must be subject all their lives, to the most constant and severe restraint, which is that of decorum; it is therefore, necessary to accustom them early to such confinements that it may not afterwards cost them too dear."
[109] O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child*, 56.

cruelty. This idea is suggested more clearly in another of Edgeworth's tales from the 1820s, *Rosamond, A Sequel to Early Lessons* (1821). At one point in the collection, Rosamond encounters a series of mechanised animals, including a caterpillar and a mouse that Rosamond judges would convince even a cat of its animality. Both caterpillars and mice feature in Barbauld's poetry as pests to human cultivation and property, to which various methods of animal extermination are applied. As I explained in my introduction, Barbauld's poetry recognises the animal perspective and right to existence by familiarising readers with creatures they might otherwise dismiss as pests. In *Rosamond, A Sequel*, Edgeworth introduces Rosamond and her readers to these pests in the form of toys. Intrigued by the mechanisation of the little creatures, Rosamond admires the details of their convincing behaviour and appearance, such as the soft fur of the mouse, and movement of the caterpillar, which leads her to fall in love with them, and dismiss any initial prejudice against their appearance. When her father offers her money to spend however she chooses, Rosamond realises that the mechanised toys are not adequately "useful" in comparison to a real pony, which she ultimately chooses to buy.[110] Unlike the curiosities on offer, the pony will not break, it will be useful in teaching her to ride, and will give her more "pleasure".[111] Therefore, the mechanised animals prove not to be as useful to Rosamond as the real animals, since they do not offer the same practical and affective qualities that constitute Rosamond's understanding of utility. Ultimately, Rosamond chooses to spend her money on an operation to restore a poor blind woman's sight, assuring readers that personal pleasure must always be checked by benevolence to others.

Harry, Lucy, and the Effects of Industry

Edgeworth builds on the idea that utilitarian decision-making ought to combine pleasure with use and benevolence in *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, although here she encourages its application to industry. In the longest tale of the collection, Edgeworth illustrates the difficulty and labour involved in constructing a bridge, providing detailed instructions for her readers on different kinds of engineering and the practical processes of Harry's

[110] Edgeworth, *Rosamond, A Sequel to Early Lessons* (London: R. Hunter, Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1821), 2: 163.
[111] Ibid., 2: 164.

attempts at bridge-building. However, I argue that Edgeworth surreptitiously disturbs the empirical epistemology and enlightened individualism represented by Harry in this tale, by illustrating the moral errors he makes along the way, and in doing so makes the case for an affective epistemology based on attention to nature and animal welfare.

At first, Harry is inspired to build a bridge across a small stream when he notices his mother having to extend her walk by quarter of a mile in order to appreciate the view on the other side. The reason for this endeavour, Harry notes, is for human "pleasure".[112] However, he justifies his pursuit as a "useful" one when he conjectures that working asses could also use the bridge and save themselves the added labour of walking around the stream. Still, the bridge proves extremely difficult, labour-intensive, and increasingly expensive to build by himself, and Harry's bridge fails several times in spite of his industrious spirit and perseverance. In the end, Harry discovers that the mathematical knowledge he possesses will only allow him to make a bridge for people, not for heavy, load-carrying asses. Harry's father urges him to build the bridge alone and states that asking Harry to learn the extra maths required to make a bridge for asses would be cruel, clarifying the meaning of cruelty as, "causing *unnecessary* pain".[113] Here, Harry's father's concern for the welfare of his son exemplifies his benevolent concerns in the bridge-building endeavour, where the usefulness of the bridge to the asses who might benefit from it is judged against the harm it may cause his son. That the father judges the cruelty of his son learning some maths as greater than the pain inflicted on working asses, who are depicted in the tale as carrying heavy loads across long distances, indicates his fairness as a father. However, in failing to offer to help his son in the name of industrious individualism, the father also fails consider the asses' welfare against his own interests in improving Harry's spirit of invention. Because of Harry and his father's desire for him to succeed on his own, and thereby uphold the ideals of masculinity, individualism, and genius of the 'man of science', the bridge ends up failing to be useful or benevolent in terms of the asses' welfare, and only serves human "pleasure".[114] As such, Harry's bridge fails to be particularly useful to anyone but his mother, while improvements to his own knowledge are limited by his failure to involve others with the mathematical skills required to fulfil his original, more useful

[112] *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, 3: 80.
[113] Ibid., 3: 197.
[114] Ibid., 3: 164.

and benevolent aims. In this process, Edgeworth shows how industrial claims to utility fail to truly bring about improvement, when they only serve to promote human interests.

The bridge episode also indicates what is missed when female skills and capabilities are ignored. Lucy's maths skills, which are superior to Harry's, are pointed out throughout the saga, and would have provided the solution to the bridge problem. However, she is side-lined partly out of Harry and their father's insistence that Harry complete the bridge project with little additional help, and partly because she lacks the strength to carry out the physical labour involved in the bridge's construction. Nevertheless, Lucy is present throughout Harry's endeavours and her actions are as important as Harry's attempts at civil engineering. Between the many pages of empirical mechanical description of bridge construction, Lucy sits and watches the effects Harry's improving efforts have on the natural environment he carves into. For instance, after trying and failing to axe through some wood, Lucy turns her attention to "a community of ants, whose dwelling had been disturbed by the new works."[115] Edgeworth describes Lucy as minutely studying one ant's trek towards "new habitations", across "springy green rush", moss, stones, "rocks of a perilous height", a "treacherous pebble", and "sparkling mica, whose projecting points proved fatal."[116] Only when the ant seemed "helpless", and its "labour" up a hill looked to be "in vain" does Lucy hold out a finger to help it along its way.[117] This passage stands out amongst Edgeworth's usual practical descriptions for its affective and imaginative rendering of animal subjectivity, even though it applies the same principles of attention to the ant's journey as to Harry's bridge-building. Indeed, the passage contains a reference to Barbauld's nature lessons: Edgeworth notes that Lucy's love of ants comes from reading "The Travelled Ant", a tale from *Evenings at Home* (1796). We might then view Edgeworth's homage to Barbauld as making the case for her affective and empirical associationist education when undertaking industrial improvement, and the way it encouraged a love and contemplation of nature.

As with Barbauld's "The Invitation", Lucy's attention to nature and how it is affected by industry leads her to want to help the ant. However, as she holds out her finger, she wonders whether she is really helping it, since in the past ants that did not seem to want her aid had turned away, leading her to believe that "they would rather be

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[115] Ibid., 3: 113.
[116] Ibid., 3: 114.
[117] Ibid., 3: 115.

without her assistance."[118] Lucy's quiet, affective contemplation of the effects of her mistaken efforts at animal kindness mark a welcome break in the tempo of the text, from steamrolling physical mechanics to slow and careful ethical thought. This shift in speed and scale as well as subject matter forces the reader to slow down, like Lucy, and consider whether human attempts to help animals are always benevolent in their impact, and perhaps more specifically, whether the benevolent intentions behind the bridge match up with the physical consequences of its construction. Lucy's Barbauldian perception of ants in her previous experiences led her to believe that wild animals are happiest left alone, yet the intervention the bridge makes to the ant's wellbeing makes her question the responsibility she has to the ant when her brother, and by extension she, is the cause of its homelessness. Edgeworth's portrayal of hesitance over the benevolent effects of studying nature ends with the ant "happily" making it to its new home, and Lucy recognising that this time the ant had truly needed her help.[119] In this way, Edgeworth makes clear that by disturbing the habitats of animals, industrial improvements make wild animals dependent on human aid. By drawing attention to the consequences of industrialisation on nature, Edgeworth forces the reader to consider its ethical ramifications, and decide, as Lucy did, whether to ignore the harm done, or try to help. Moreover, by presenting the need to apply principles of attention and experience to nature within an industrial setting, Edgeworth's middle-class readers might consider the effects of improvement on nature in their own later careers.

Secularisation and the Industrial Sublime

The main difference between Barbauld's educationalism and Edgeworth's is that attention and reflection on nature for Edgeworth does not lead to moral contemplation via contemplation of the divine. This section explores Edgeworth's secular ideas about science of mind, and how forming attentive and affective habits can lead to moral contemplation of industrial devastation, while at the same time presenting her readers with images of the industrial sublime. In a further episode from *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, Edgeworth seems to engage with Barbauld's ideas about habitual devotion,

[118] Ibid., 3: 115.
[119] Ibid., 3: 115.

its role in moral education, and whether connecting to God through nature can lead to benevolent actions to the natural world in an age of intensified industrialisation.

While on holiday at the seaside, Harry is captivated upon seeing the sea for the first time and undergoes a sublime and devotional experience. Both Harry and Lucy are immediately struck by the sensory experience of the effect of the setting sun on "the green and white waves, curling over each other".[120] Nevertheless, it is Harry's experience of the sunset that Edgeworth focuses on:

> Her mother came, and they found Harry still on the same spot, fixed in admiration. His mother seemed to know what he felt and thought, and to sympathise with him just as he wished. At first in silence, then expressing for him in words, that for which he could not find utterance. The ideas of boundless extent, duration, power; the feelings of admiration, astonishment, and awe, which create the sense of the sublime. While his soul was under this strong impression, his mother seized the proper moment to raise his thoughts still higher, from the ideas of immeasurable extent, duration, and power, to that Power by which the ocean, the sun, the earth, and we ourselves created, and are preserved.[121]

In this passage, Edgeworth presents Harry as stimulated by his sensory experience of the sea in a way that produces feelings of the sublime, and guided by his mother to connect these feelings to God. The idea of a higher "Power" in this sense indicates that the "strong impression" made on Harry's soul is the understanding of God as the creator of all things. We learn that their mother's concern over Harry's "imagination for the beauties of nature", comes from her fear that his obsession with mechanics had led him to trace "everything good and great" to man-made machinery.[122] In this sense, Harry's sublime experience is one approaching Hartleyan "self-annihilation", whereby looking with awe at nature reminds him that a greater power than man exists. For parents like Harry and Lucy's mother, this scene could be interpreted as reassurance that an empirical education in science will not mean they cannot also appreciate the affective and devotional aspects of experiencing nature. Indeed, Harry's father explains that it is because of Harry's enthusiasm for mechanics, and the training in attention and perseverance that his education provides, that he is able to apply those principles to

[120] Ibid., 3: 5.
[121] Ibid., 3: 6.
[122] Ibid., 3: 7.

anything to which he turns his attention. We might then read Harry's habitual devotion as a product of his empiricist education.

Harry's mother's belief in appreciating nature's beauty and his father's belief in industrious empiricism are both tested on moral grounds in this tale. As I discussed in my Introduction, for Barbauld habitual devotion was not a guarantee that pursuing knowledge through the study of nature would lead to benevolence towards the natural world. Edgeworth explores the ambiguity that we see in Barbauld's poems, such as 'An Invitation', by describing the different ways in which Harry and Lucy each respond to their experiences of the sea. Initially, Harry's obsession with looking at the sea each day leads him to study the timing of the tides, while Lucy collects shells and looks at sea urchins, learning through affective observation that the creatures are far more "ingenious" and wonderful than she had been led to believe by her book on the subject.[123] Both children's observations of nature are followed by kind acts to one another, with Lucy tidying away Harry's belongings, and Harry building Lucy a shell box out of his own broken camera obscura. However, from this act of benevolent invention, Harry is then impelled to build his fateful bridge. For Harry, the process of building the bridge leads him away from benevolence, towards industrious individualism, illustrating that whatever initial impression of divine power he felt when viewing the sea, did not have a lasting effect in reducing human self-interest, which Barbauld hoped habitual devotion would produce. By contrast, Lucy continues to apply habits of affective attention and experience of the natural objects she encounters, such as the ants, which leads her to contemplate the effects of her brother's destruction of their habitat and question her responsibility for them. In this way, the two children's responses to the same sublime experience presents religious devotion as inconsequential to their moral understanding and actions towards nature.

For Edgeworth, Barbauld's associationist lessons in habitual affective attention to nature have a far more benevolent effect than the religion in which they are contained. In a later scene from *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, Edgeworth explicitly presents a secular view of education through the character of Mrs Digby. When showing the children her hot-house, where she grows an assortment of exotic plants she has received from a friend in America (perhaps a reference to Edgeworth's own botanical exchanges with the American educationalist Rachel Mordecai Lazarus), Mrs

[123] Ibid., 3: 35.

Digby shows them a book on botany, which she describes as providing the "best and happiest" results because "it is free from the ostentation of religion".[124] The use of the word "ostentation" here suggests that religion might be so overwhelming as to distract and confuse the pupil from understanding complex botanical laws, for instance through the example of the air plant, which unlike most plants needs very little water to thrive. If the pupil does not pay proper attention to such laws of nature, then plants will die, and the pupil will not advance their knowledge. Mrs Digby lauds the book on botany on account of its utility, where what is "best" and produces the "happiest" results is what is most easily understood by the pupil. Nature here is material; there is no benefit to the human soul or gain in divine understanding that comes with contemplating nature. Rather, responsibility to the natural world stems from a kind of secular humanist morality founded on principles of attention, perception, and reflection.

In spite of the cues she provides for moral contemplation, the overwhelming impression Edgeworth conveys in *Harry and Lucy, Concluded* is one of unstoppable industrialisation, with or without religious devotion. Although the attentive reader might respond to her subtle moments of affective attention to nature and careful deliberation of industrialisation's environmental impact, the overall focus of the text is on the mass of empirical descriptions of mechanical inventions. As such, we might well see Edgeworth as turning her readers' attentive eyes towards industrialisation, and in doing so, cultivating their taste for material improvement. Indeed, Harry's experience of the natural sublime of the ocean follows an earlier, darker, reverence for the landscape of the foundry. Edgeworth first describes the industrial scenery as one of destruction, where the moorland is "fiery" with "heaps of dross, coal and cinders", and clouds of "white, yellow, and black" from the forges darken the air.[125] The natural landscape has "blackened" not just the people, but the trees, hedges, and even the sheep, so that "not a lamb even with a lock of white wool, or a clean face" can escape the soot.[126] Edgeworth's vivid description of the dark materiality of the foundry scene provides a stark visual image of the destruction inflicted on nature, where the once verdant and

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[124] Ibid., 3: 301. See also Christina Colvin and Charles Nelson, "'Building Castles of Flowers': Maria Edgeworth as Gardener", *Garden History* 16, 1 (1988): 58-70; Eve Tavor Bannet, "Maria and Rachel: Transatlantic Identities and the Epistolary Assimilation of Difference", in *New Essays on Maria Edgeworth*, ed. Julie Nash (Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 31-56; Catherine Craft-Fairchild, "The 'Jewish Question' on Both Sides of the Atlantic: *Harrington* and the Correspondence between Maria Edgeworth and Rachel Mordecai Lazarus", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 38, 3 (2014): 30-63.
[125] *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, 1: 164.
[126] Ibid., 1: 164-5.

pure living world has faded away into the vast blackness of industrial by-product. Unlike Blake's "dark Satanic Mills", there is no religious presence in Edgeworth's destruction of the Georgic picturesque.[127] The erasure of the moorland, and all its living inhabitants, including those who labour in its demise, are crushed until "dead flat" by mechanical, material power.[128] However, Edgeworth offers little moral critique of this scene beyond her initial description, let alone the idea that industrialisation in some way deviates from human progress, providential or material.

Edgeworth then turns to Harry's response to the landscape, which provides an alternative perspective on the scene. Where Lucy, looking to the lives being destroyed, thinks the place is "the most frightful country she had ever beheld", Harry focuses on the liveliness of the machinery, and deems it "wonderful" and "*a sort of sublime*."[129] When viewing this episode in light of his later devotional experience of the sea, Harry's response to the foundry is admittedly not quite so reverential. However, by suggesting that the scene of natural devastation, replaced with mechanical life could be seen as sublime, Edgeworth introduces the idea of a new, powerful mechanical world, and in doing so shifts the reader's perspective of the scene towards a vision of man-made sublimity. For Harry, the foundry offers much the same interest as the sea, as he looks to understand how it is all created:

> He could not help feeling a great respect for the place, where steam engines seemed to abound, and in truth, to have the place almost to themselves. These laboured continually, in vast and various works, blowing the huge bellows of the furnaces of smelting houses, forges, and foundries, raising tuns of water each minute, to drain the depths of the coal mines. The strokes of the beams of the steam engines were heard at regular intervals, and the sound of the blast of the furnaces at a distance. As the approached the foundries the noises grew louder and louder, till, as they entered the buildings, the roaring of the draft was tremendous.[130]

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[127] William Blake, "Jerusalem", in *Selected Poems* (New York: Bloomsbury, 1994), 114. The ecological, industrial, and social aspects of this poem have been widely discussed. For a brief overview of recent ecocritical discussions, see Mark S. Lussier, "Blake's Deep Ecology", *Studies in Romanticism* 35, 3 (1996): 393-408; Devin Zuber, "Satanic Mills and Jerusalem Redeemed: William Blake's Urban Poetics", *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* 10, 1 (2009): 39-49; Andrew Hageman, "'Wheels within Wheels,' Ecology, and the Horrors of Mechanophobia", *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 21, 3 (2014): 575-87; James C. McKusick, "The End of Nature: Environmental Apocalypse in William Blake and Mary Shelley", *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 95-111; Kevin D. Hutchings, "William Blake and 'The Nature of Infinity': *Milton*'s Environmental Poetics", *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 25, 1 (2003): 55-77.
[128] *Harry and Lucy, Concluded*, 1: 164.
[129] Ibid., 1: 165.
[130] Ibid., 1: 166.

In contrast to the lifelessness of the earlier description of the foundry, in Harry's eyes the foundry is full of the life of the steam engines, to the extent that their human labourers are "almost" absent entirely. The machines offer all the sensory qualities of the natural sublime as they roar into life, operating seemingly autonomously with one another. Indeed, their vastness, like the natural sublime, threatens to overpower "human creatures" who struggle to be heard amongst the cacophony of the machinery.[131] In this way Edgeworth builds a picture of industrial improvement where in the ashes of the living world a new world of mechanical productivity is born.

Since the traditional meaning of the natural sublime is commonly understood as a sense of awe and terror reaching an affirmative end, by shifting the meaning of sublime from the natural to the mechanical, Edgeworth might be interpreted as contesting the criticism that industrialisation destroys nature. At the same time, this sublime image of man-made creation challenges the idea of divine power and suggests reverence for the capabilities and future possibilities for progress offered by human invention. As such, we might view the later seaside sublime as a deferential gesture to reassure readers of Edgeworth's and her characters' piety. By presenting two contrasting perceptions of industrialisation, Edgeworth's tale remains ambiguous, leaving it to the reader whether to see mechanisation as death or improvement, or like the tale, remain ambivalent. Regardless, whether religious or not, critical of industrialisation or not, Edgeworth's final collection of children's stories ends with the overwhelming impression of unstoppable industrialisation. What is offered in the way of resistance are lessons in affective contemplation and moral reasoning, which though uncertain of their effectiveness, suggest ways in which the harmful impact on the natural world might be moderated.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored Edgeworth's sustained interest in the effect of improvement on nature in her writing for children. From her early faith in countering desire for profit with benevolence to animals, to her efforts to encourage progressive management, and

[131] Ibid., 1: 166.

mitigate against the harm caused by industrial improvement, Edgeworth's tales teach her readers general principles of affective attention, experience, and perseverance, in the hope that they will lead to moral reflection. By offering a secular view of nature and education, Edgeworth also challenges the idea that knowledge of the divine provides moral solutions to man-made problems in such a way that it could hold back the tide of industrialisation. However, her adherence to notions of industriousness, scientific knowledge, and class structures, entices her readers to look with awe at the changing world, and decide for themselves how to understand it. In this sense, Edgeworth's common-sense approach to education seeks to unite opposing perspectives of improvement by providing a common philosophical framework for contemplation and analysis.

4. Natural Diet, Vital Materialism, and Barbauldian Educationalism in Mary Shelley's Short Stories

> She collected pine nuts, she contrived to make a fire, and ate them with appetite; and then, seeking a covert, she lay down and slept, her boy in her arms, thanking Heaven and the Virgin for her escape.[1]

Since the emergence of ecocritical interest in Romantic literature in the late 1980s, scholars have been swift to identify Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and latterly *The Last Man* (1826), as making radical innovations in the handling of themes like vegetarianism, animal cruelty, benevolence to the living world, the pillaging of natural resources, ecological disaster, and humanimal relations more broadly.[2] Surprisingly, little critical attention has been paid to Shelley's later writing, particularly her short stories written for literary magazines and annuals, in spite of the fact that many of the themes which attracted ecocritics to *Frankenstein* can also be found in her tales. In one of the most quoted extracts of *Frankenstein* the creature dreams of escaping to a South American utopia with his bride and living off nuts and berries alone. It has been read by Carol Adams and Timothy Morton as evidence of the creature's initial instincts to do no harm to living others; instincts which are then corrupted by neglect and mistreatment.[3] The epigraph above is from Shelley's short story "The Heir of Mondolfo", likely written in the early 1820s, though not published until 1877, after a manuscript copy was found unreturned amongst Leigh Hunt's belongings.[4] Like *Frankenstein*, the tale

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[1] Mary Shelley, 'The Heir of Mondolfo' (c.1825), *Collected Tales and Short Stories with Original Engravings*, ed. Charles E. Robinson, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 326.
[2] A full list of discussions on Shelley's ecocriticism is too extensive and, if the numerous papers given at NASSR 2018 on the subject of the Anthropocene were anything to go by, too rapidly evolving to do just service. However, for the most thorough discussions of Shelley's ecocriticism as of January 2019, which discuss sustainability, posthumanism, and animal ethics, respectively, see: Avishek Parui, "Masculinity, Monstrosity, and Sustainability in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*", in *Romantic Sustainability: Endurance and the Natural World, 1780-1830*, ed. Ben P. Robertson, (London: Lexington Books, 2016), 187-198; Paul Outka, "Posthuman/Postnatural: Ecocriticism and the Sublime in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*", in *Environmental Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Stephanie LeMenager, Teresa Shewry, Ken Hiltner, (London: Routledge, 2011), 29-46; Christine Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-Period Writing*, 150-170; Carol Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1990), 70-75. For recent overviews of the field of Romantic ecocriticism, including work on Shelley see, Jeremy Davies, "Romantic Ecocriticism: History and Prospects"; Kate Rigby, "Romanticism and Ecocriticism", *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*, ed. Greg Garrard, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 60-79.
[3] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 74; Timothy Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste*, 47.
[4] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 397.

centres on themes of tyranny, natural education, and corruption, and as the epigraph shows, when the protagonist seeks escape, she chooses to forage for nuts over hunting animals. However, while *Frankenstein* shows how a lack of domestic affection leads to bloodshed, "The Heir of Mondolfo" demonstrates how tragedy can be avoided through domestic education and universal benevolence. Viola's attention to and love for nature teaches the unloved and uneducated Ludovico to care for all living things, and this love spreads outwards to reform the tyrants of society. Many of Shelley's other short stories deal with the same themes as her early work but respond to those ideas differently, with these changes becoming more noticeable in the stories written later into the 1830s. This chapter aims to address the gap in ecocritical Shelley scholarship by drawing attention to three of her tales, "The Heir of Mondolfo", "The Mortal Immortal", and "The Parvenue". It argues that these tales respond to shifting discourse regarding animal and environmental ethics by engaging with the environmental philosophies of earlier writers discussed in this thesis, namely Barbauld and Wollstonecraft, and thereby seeks to reposition Shelley within this philosophical tradition.

Recent studies on animal ethics in *Frankenstein*, such as that of Stephanie Rowe, have focused on positioning the novel as a philosophical work by exploring how the creature, a product of both "the slaughterhouse and charnel house", offers insights into the cruel treatment of animals, and arguing that the novel follows key tenets of animal ethics discourse.[5] Rod Preece has addressed the novel within a broader movement of writers and legislators in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, who called for greater concern for animals in education, notions of moral virtue, domestic practices, sport, and industry.[6] Hilda Kean has discussed how nineteenth-century social reform movements show a stark difference between the ethical discourse surrounding the "rights" of animals and the "nature of historical practice of people campaigning for the protection of animals", "often for the most contradictory and inconsistent of motives."[7] These reform movements, including that which culminated in the passing of the first animal protection law in Britain, The Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act (1822), and the formation of several animal welfare groups, including, perhaps most famously, the

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[5] Stephanie Rowe, "'Listen to Me': *Frankenstein* as an Appeal to Mercy and Justice, on Behalf of the Persecuted Animals", in *Humans and Other Animals in Eighteenth-Century British Culture: Representation, Hybridity, Ethics*, ed. Frank Palermi, (Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 137-8; Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 33.
[6] Preece, *Awe for the Tiger, Love for the Lamb*, 89.
[7] Kean, *Animal Rights*, 11.

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1824), later the RSPCA, are not explicitly referred to in any of Shelley's work. However, I suggest here that looking at one of the most prominent literary writers on the theme of animal ethics, as the discourse, legislation, and campaign movements concerning animals in Britain shifted in the mid-nineteenth century, can provide a deeper understanding of Shelley's literary response to animal ethics, and indicate how central and disparate animals ethics debates were in British society in the mid-nineteenth century.

One of the reasons for the lack of ecocritical research on Shelley's later work is the nature and timing of the early criticism *Frankenstein* received in the late 1980s and early 1990s. First to recognise Shelley's role in the history of animal ethics was Adams, in her ground-breaking ecofeminist polemic, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1989), in which she argued that Shelley was the first woman writer consciously to align the suffering of animals and the plight of women under the same patriarchal system of power.[8] Adams was also the first to draw attention to vegetarian themes in *Frankenstein*, highlighting the shared symbolism of animals and women, as beings reduced to bodies which are consumed. Adams positions Shelley's work within the intellectual climate of P.B. Shelley, whose vegetarian tracts were more widely recognised for their ethical contributions largely because of his literary distinction, especially at this time when studies on Shelley and *Frankenstein* were only starting to become mainstream. According to Adams, "Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* recalls the language of Percy Shelley's *Alastor*; Mary can be said to be bearing Percy's words in her novel."[9] In this sense, Shelley is recognised for her ideological work only through her proximity to Percy. Although much ecocritical research, including this thesis, owes a great intellectual debt to Adams, the urge to attach Shelley to Percy's political interests, while understandable and even necessary in relation to *Frankenstein*, has perhaps contributed to the neglect of her writing after the mid-1820s.

Morton, publishing just a few years after Adams, accounts for the relative absence of Mary Shelley in his substantial exploration of vegetarianism in the Shelley circle, by pointing to the "lack of textual evidence" in her writing.[10] By

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[8] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 74.
[9] Ibid, 74.
[10] Morton, *Revolution in Taste*, 10.

contrast, Percy Shelley provides much more obvious material relating to his ethical beliefs, including his four texts, *A Vindication of Natural Diet* (1813), "On the Vegetable System of Diet" (probably written in 1813 though not published until 1829), plus an extended note to *Queen Mab*, and a section from "A Refutation of Deism" (1814), not to mention letters discussing his meals, and diary entries of his food in weight. Publications of their friends and wider associates also included essays such as Joseph Ritson's *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty* (1802), a copy of which Percy Shelley is rumoured to have kept under his pillow, and John Oswald's *The Cry of Nature; or an appeal to mercy and justice on behalf of persecuted animals* (1792). Mary Shelley's work, however, is largely comprised of fiction, and therefore requires a different kind of critical attention to unpack its political and ideological content. Morton emphasises that the Shelleys' ideology was a product of the couple's collaboration, both in terms of editing each other's work, and in "creating the intellectual climate" in which they lived and wrote. As Morton argues, this suggests that Mary Shelley was a much more philosophically active contributor to the partnership.[11] Indeed, recognising the textual and extra-textual collaboration between these two writers is important for understanding both their works and legacies, but it is especially important in establishing Shelley as a robust thinker, whose political and literary interests developed with Percy, but continued throughout her life beyond his death. As Anna Mercer has recently shown, new studies of Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley consider the couple as part of a reciprocal collaborative relationship, and "the important exchange that shaped both Shelleys' works is now more properly appreciated".[12]

At the same time, understanding the intertextual relationship between Shelley and other women writers of this period and slightly earlier (not just Wollstonecraft), is equally important for understanding the discourse to which Shelley contributed. Recent ecocritical scholarship on Barbauld in particular, has focused on the way her poetry and writing for children communicated an animal ethic of dissenting reform, in which humans attain closeness to God through a

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[11] Ibid, 10.
[12] Anna Mercer, "Beyond *Frankenstein*: The collaborative Literary Relationship of Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley", *The Keats-Shelley Review* 33, 1 (2019): 80-85.

benevolent relationship with a divinely created nature.[13] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in *The Watchman* (1796), remarked (somewhat snippily) on the impact of Barbauld's 1773 poem "The Mouse's Petition" within literary culture in following decades: "Thanks to Mrs Barbauld…it has become universally *fashionable* to teach lessons of compassion towards animals."[14] As has now been well established, Barbauld's influence on the work and ideas of her contemporaries and later Romantics, was formidable.[15] Indeed, Shelley's father William Godwin, like most of his circle, was likely raised on Barbauld's immensely popular "little books", which he himself recommended for the education of children in a letter to William Cole in 1802, when Shelley was four-years old. This chapter looks at the associationist ideas and environmental themes discussed by other writers in this thesis, notably Barbauld's habitual devotion, and how Shelley reflects on the loss of those ideas in the 1820s and 1830s.

The Gift Book

Charles E. Robinson, the main collector of Shelley's short stories, has done the most to ensure Shelley's work beyond *Frankenstein* is not only studied and appreciated, but accessible in an affordable volume, *Collected Tales and Short Stories with Original Engravings* (1976), which I refer to throughout this chapter. In the introduction to the collection, Robinson also attributes the lack of scholarly

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[13] See, for example: Mary Ellen Bellanca, "Science, Animal Sympathy, and Anna Letitia Barbauld's 'The Mouse's Petition'", 62-4; Mitzi Myers, *Animal Advocacy and the Englishwoman, 1780-1900: Patriots, Nation, and Empire*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1998), 1; Myers, "Of Mice and Mothers: Mrs Barbauld's 'New Walk' and Gendered Codes in Children's Literature", 274-7; Amy Weldon, "The Common Gifts of Heaven: Animal Rights and Moral Education in Anna Laetitia Barbauld's 'The Mouse's Petition' and 'The Caterpillar'", *Reading the Romantic Text* 8 (June 2002): n.p.

[14] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Watchman*, ed. Lewis Patton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 313. It is notable that at this point in his career, when both he and Barbauld were held in high public esteem, Coleridge took to criticising Barbauld's work through failing to fully recognise the intellectual underpinnings of her writing on animals, particularly given the way he continued to use her as a literary model, which as David Perkins has observed, included such politically-driven and animal-minded poems as "To a Young Ass" (1794). See: Ready, *Eighteenth Century Life*, 113, n.43; David Perkins, "Compassion for Animals and Radical Politics: Coleridge's 'To a Young Ass'", *English Literary History* 65, 4 (1998): 930.

[15] See, for example: William McCarthy, "Mother of All Discourses: Anna Barbauld's Lessons for Children", *Culturing the Child, 1690-1914: Essays in Memory of Mitzi Myers*, ed. Donelle Ruwe (Maryland; Oxford; Toronto: The Children's Literature Association and The Scarecrow Press, inc., 2005), 85-112. For discussion on how Barbauld popularised a dissenting view of nature, see: Emma Major, "Nature, Nation, and Denomination".

interest in Shelley's tales to her proximity to Percy and the cult surrounding *Frankenstein*.[16] However, Robinson also claims that Shelley's short stories, most of which were published in the gift book annual, *The Keepsake*, between 1828 and 1857, or the literary magazines, *London Magazine*, *New Monthly Magazine*, and *Appleton's Journal*, suffered from the wholesale dismissal of the gift book by those within literary circles, who considered them to be "second-rate and sentimental".[17] Robert Southey once witheringly remarked that "The Annuals are now the only presents bought for young ladies, in which way poems formerly had their chief vent."[18] Southey's comment alludes to the fact that the gift book was extremely popular amongst women, the most popular being *The Keepsake*, which could sell 15,000 within a few months.[19] Contributors included Elizabeth Barratt-Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Wordsworth, who could both reach a much larger audience than with their individual books, at the same time as commissioning a much higher fee.[20]

Southey's snappy aside reveals an antagonism about the kind of work, and perhaps more specifically, the kind of forces influencing the reading practices of women. In spite of Southey's implication that gift books were outmoding poetry as the popular reading choice of women, many poets were published in gift books; the 1829 edition of *The Keepsake* included poetry by Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Felicia Hemens.[21] Southey's contention therefore appears to be more directed at the genre of poetry and tales produced by gift books, much of which shows, as Paula R. Feldman notes, "the increasing economic importance of female readers and the influence they came to exert on the matter and style of literature."[22] The short prose fiction pieces published in the gift book were not yet the short stories of modern fiction, but had strong antecedents in female writing traditions such as the commonplace book, and pocket-book; the latter Jennie Batchelor has established was "designed to cultivate

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[16] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, xii.
[17] Ibid., xiii; see also Barbara Onslow, "Gendered Production: Annuals and Gift Books", *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Joanne Shattock, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 79 on cultural responses to the gift book and discussion of its "ambiguous genre".
[18] Robert Southey, letter of February 24, 1828 to Caroline Bowles, *New Letters of Robert Southey*, 2:324.
[19] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, xv.
[20] Paula R. Feldman introduction to Mary Shelley, *The Keepsake for 1829*, ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds, (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2006), 8.
[21] Ibid., 9.
[22] Ibid. 13.

socially and economically desirable wives and daughters", whilst also containing within its form a dedication to moral virtue and fashionability.[23] Like pocket-books, which also contained a mixture of poetry, short stories, and illustrations, gift books were highly decorative, and marketed for a specifically female readership. Some versions were so decorative that they became highly desirable commodities, sometimes beautifully crafted in silk, which was somewhat cheaper at this time due to Britain's flailing silk industry, bound in leather, and finished with gold leaf.[24] Rival gift books to *The Keepsake* often had opulent-sounding names, like *The Amulet*, *The Forget-Me-Not*, and *The Ruby*. In Britain, *The Keepsake* sold for between eight shillings and four pounds, and was published in November, for marketing as Christmas gifts, or it was bought for special celebrations, like an anniversary, or wedding gift.[25]

The Keepsake, perhaps more so than other gift books, may have been valued more as a visual object than a literary text because of the unusual way the editors commissioned the illustrations for each edition prior to the stories.[26] Contributing authors such as Shelley, would receive an engraved plate, often taken from illustrations by famous artists such as William Turner, Joshua Reynolds, or Thomas Gainsborough, and either had to construct a story based around the illustration, or somehow build a reference into a pre-written tale.[27] For Shelley, this sometimes meant simply changing the names of the characters in her tales, as in "The Brother and Sister", in which a character originally called "Angeline", had to be changed to "Flora" to match the titled engraving.[28] At other times, however, it meant rewriting whole scenes or inserting a forced description, before returning to the narrative, as Robinson notes is the case in both "The False Rhyme", and "The Sisters of Albano".[29] While *The Keepsake*'s unusual

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[23] Jennie Batchelor, "Fashion and Frugality: Eighteenth Century Pocket Books for Women", *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 32, (2003): 1-3; Katherine D. Harris, "Borrowing, Altering and Perfecting the Literary Annual Form – or What It Is Not: Emblems, Almanacs, Pocket-books, Albums, Scrapbooks and Gift Books", *Poetess Archive Journal* 1, 1 (April 2007): 2-4.
[24] Feldman, *The Keepsake for 1829*, 8.
[25] Paula R. Feldman, "The Poet and the Profits: Felicia Hemans and the Literary Marketplace", *Keats-Shelley Journal* 46, 12 (1997): 156; both Linda Peterson and Kathryn Ledbetter have encouraged literary readings of the poetry in in the gift book: Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths, Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), ch. 1; K. Ledbetter, *British Victorian Women's Periodicals: Beauty, Civilization, and Poetry*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), ch.4.
[26] In Feldman, introduction to *The Keepsake for 1829*, 15, Feldman notes that the engravings were often the most expensive part of the gift book.
[27] Ibid., 5.
[28] *Collected Tales*, 386.
[29] Ibid., xiii.

commissioning process may have negatively impacted its literary content, the overall effect meant that while the gift book could be expensive, middle-class consumers could for the first time afford access to art work by famous artists.[30] The literary work in *The Keepsake* can thus be seen as accompanying the art work, rather than the other way around; in contemporary eyes, the images overshadowed the tales in artistic value. At the same time, *The Keepsake*'s literary appeal is one that rests on its collusion with a commodified feminine fashionability.

For many Shelley scholars, who may look to her lineage of radical politics, especially her mother's famous criticism of the "pomp" of "women of fashion", and its caging effects on the female mind, Shelley's short stories represent a rejection of progressive political thought.[31] Indeed, why would ecological or vegetarian ideas be found in a book bound in the dead bodies of cows and silk worms? Such observations may be best explained by David Denisoff's suggestion that short stories in the early Victorian period were particularly heavily influenced by The Great Reform Act of 1832.[32] "The various works of short prose fiction that were finding an audience in this period," argues Denisoff, "reflect not only differences between writers and readers, but also a range of political and cultural influences."[33] The voting rights gained as a result of The Great Reform Act, largely by middle class men of industrial professions, expanded the electorate in Britain at this time, extending the cultural power of the very group who purchased gift books the most.[34] In this sense, the cultural interests of a newly politically enfranchised middle class might be worth considering for their political content. Although Shelley's tales certainly include a great many stories broadly classed within the popular categories of romance and sentimental literature, they also continue to explore themes of enlightened domesticity, exploitation, class inequality, education, and human relationships with the living world.

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[30] Eleanore Jamieson, *English Embossed Bindings 1825-1850*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 5.
[31] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, (London: Joseph Johnson, 1792), 400.
[32] Dennis Denisoff (ed.), *A Broadview Anthology of Victorian Short Stories* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), 14.
[33] Ibid., 14.
[34] Nancy D. Lopatin, *Political Unions, Popular Politics and the Great Reform Act of 1832* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 5; see also James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, c. 1815-67* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 333 for discussion on the cultural ramifications of The Great Reform Act on middle-class reformism.

Natural Diet, Barbauldian Education, and "The Heir of Mondolfo"

"The Heir of Mondolfo" is one of Shelley's earliest short stories, the fair copy of which Robinson dates to "not after the mid-1820s", though it remained unpublished until 1877, after Shelley sent the manuscript to Leigh Hunt to comment on, and it would appear that he never returned it.[35] Given the length of the 97-page document, Shelley, and/or Hunt, may have deemed it too long to consider publishing in a gift book or literary magazine, but it is a good example of Shelley's ambitious ideas and shows the difficulty she had with concision. In a letter to Maria Gisborne, Shelley wrote of her exasperation at conditioning her writing to the confines of the gift book: "When I write for them, I am worried to death to make my things shorter and shorter — till I fancy people think ideas can be conveyed by intuition — and that it is a superstition to consider words necessary for their expression."[36] In some of Shelley's shorter tales, concision sometimes leads to her apologising via an ignorant narrator for the "slight sketch", or "slender narrative" of the text's "development of situation and feeling", as in 1833's "The Invisible Girl", or blaming the narrator's failed imagination to even "invent the commonest incident" for the "stripped" prose of "The Swiss Peasant" (1830).[37] The effect of trying to make her stories more succinct, even in a longer tale like "The Heir of Mondolfo", often means that descriptions, especially those of natural objects and living nature, take on a more important symbolic function.

"The Heir of Mondolfo" could well be considered a domestic romance considering its medieval Italian setting, emphasis on an enduring love between two people of different classes, and the obstacle they face by a tyrant king. For Shelley, the love story between Viola and Ludovico is central to her radical pedagogy. When we first meet Ludovico, he is abused by his father, the King, and his only defender, his mother, dies in his youth, leaving him emotionally neglected: "He was loved by none, and loving none his good qualities expired, or slept as if they would never more awaken."[38] Here, Shelley uses a Lockean "tabula rasa" to explain how environment shapes moral virtue in early

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[35] Robinson, *Collected Tales*, 395.
[36] Letter to Maria Gisborne, c. 27 August 1822, *The Letters of Mary Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 189.
[37] Robinson, *Collected Tales*, 190, 136-7.
[38] Ibid., 309.

development.[39] Locke's educational theories were well-known throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and Shelley herself notes in her diary that she spent much of December 1816 and two days of January 1817 reading Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.[40] Both Barbauld and Wollstonecraft emphasised the connection between parental affection and the development of morals in their work.[41] In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft argued that in order for people to care about others, they need to learn "domestic taste", "which would lead them to love with reasonable subordination their whole family, from their husband to their house-dog".[42] As Evan Radcliffe has shown, debates in the 1790s about universal benevolence centred around the idea of domestic attachments and whether, as Wollstonecraft argued, benevolence grows outwards, in connection with domestic "love", or as Godwin claimed, benevolence could form "from no particular motives" for close attachments.[43] Most writers on the subject of benevolence, however, were in agreement that without appropriate education, moral qualities would not be nurtured, and violence and crime would appear instead. As I showed in chapter one, Wollstonecraft went on to assert the need for "Humanity to animals" to be "part of a national education, for it is not at present one of our national virtues."[44] Wollstonecraft's formalisation of what was then benevolent teaching, taught by parents and children's books, including her own, into a national curriculum was based on the observation that cruelty begins with brutality to animals in youth, and "as they grow up, from barbarity to brutes to domestic tyranny over wives, children, and servants, is very easy."[45]

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[39] For more on Shelley's engagement with Locke's theories of child development and psychology in *Frankenstein*, see Eileen Hunt Botting, *Mary Shelley and the Rights of the Child: Political Philosophy in "Frankenstein"* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 36-40; William Dean Brewer, *The Mental Anatomies of William Godwin and Mary Shelley* (Madison: Teaneck, 2001), 130-4.
[40] Mary Shelley, *The Journals of Mary Shelley 1814-44*, ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 1, entry December 1816.
[41] For more on the role of domestic affection in eighteenth-century pedagogies and its connection to early psychological ideas about morality, sensibility, and associationism see Hilton, "'Child of Reason'", 21-38; Wharton, *Material Enlightenment*; and in the case of Mary Shelley's writing specifically, Angela Wright, *Mary Shelley* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018).
[42]Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 228.
[43] Evan Radcliffe, "Revolutionary Writing, Moral Philosophy, and Universal Benevolence in the Eighteenth Century", 224; William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* (London: G. G. J. and J Robinson, 1793), 1: 83.
[44] Wollstonecraft, *Rights of Woman*, 397.
[45] Ibid., 398.

In “The Heir of Mondolfo”, Shelley builds on the same connection between moral instruction and brutality by demonstrating how Ludovico’s violent behaviour is the consequence of both a lack of domestic affection, and a lack of education.

> He had few accomplishments, for his father had been at no pains for his education; feats of horsemanship and arms made up the whole catalogue. He hated books, as being a part of a priest's insignia; he was averse to all occupation that brought bodily repose with it. His complexion was dark--hardship had even rendered it sallow; his eyes, once soft, now glared with fierceness; his lips, formed to express tenderness, were now habitually curled in contempt; his dark hair, clustering in thick curls round his throat, completed the wild but grand and interesting appearance of his person.[46]

Ludovico, whose name manuscript copies show included earlier incarnations of the names Lionel, Lucian, and Julian, crossed out, bears a close resemblance to *The Last Man*’s Lionel Verney, which Shelley wrote at a similar time.[47] The appearance and countenance of both characters give the impression of people who are not entirely human, or rather, that their lack of moral development through poor education and parental attention, brings out in them a brute nature that is apparent in their physiognomy.[48] For instance, Verney, like Ludovico, is often described as “wild” like a savage, and similarly, both Ludovico and the Creature share a sallow complexion, and dark, curling lips.[49] The phrase, “he was averse to all occupation that brought bodily repose with it”, suggests an irritable character who, unable to engage in a practice solely of the mind, seeks freedom in practices more of the body.[50] This Cartesian framing of the practice of reading in opposition to the physical act of violence, indicates a character who is out of sync with natural mind-body processes, and therefore lacks some of those qualities which are part of those natural processes. Reading, and other

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[46] Mary Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 310-311.
[47] Robinson also notes the reference the name “Julian” makes to Percy Shelley’s poetry. “Julian and Maddalo: A Conversation” is a poem in which the character Julian embodies a progressive, hopeful world view of the future of humankind, in contrast with the more cynical Maddalo. Mary Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 395 n.XXII. Original MS copy, see: Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, “The Heir of Mondolfo”, (MS copy, Keats House, London, c.1820s), 1-97.
[48] Robinson and Betty T. Bennett note that a common theme throughout Shelley’s work is the idea of “the redemptive value of a broad and humanitarian education”, which has been undervalued by scholars due to the myopic focus on *Frankenstein* alone. See: *The Mary Shelley Reader*, ed. Charles E. Robinson and Betty T. Bennett, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 8. Angela Wright has also discussed at length the centrality of educational neglect and mis-education in failing to prepare Shelley’s characters for emotional and physical upheavals, which inform her Gothic style, in *Mary Shelley*, 4.
[49] Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, ed. Anne McWhir (Ontario; New York; Essex: Broadview Press, 1996), 9; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 85.
[50] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 311.

formal kinds of education, as Angela Wright has explored in her discussion of *Frankenstein*, thus becomes a means of connecting the mind to the body.[51] Without this exercise of mental faculties, Ludovico cannot develop the benevolence required to refrain from violence. In this sense, Shelley shares her mother's conviction that the development of domestic taste is a rational process that teaches "reasonable subordination".[52]

Ludovico soon turns to hunting animals as a favourite past time:

> It was winter, and the pleasures of the chase began. Every morning the huntsmen assembled to attack the wild-boars or stags which the dogs might arouse in the fastnesses of the Apennines […] This was the only pleasure that Ludovico ever enjoyed. During these pursuits he felt himself free. Mounted on a noble horse, which he urged to its full speed, his blood danced in his veins, and his eyes shone with rapture as he cast his eagle glance to Heaven; with a smile of ineffable disdain, he passed his false friends or open tormentors, and gained a solitary precedence in the pursuit […] The plain at the foot of Vesuvius and its neighboring hills was stripped bare by winter; the full stream rushed impetuously from the hills; and there was mingled with it the baying of the dogs and the cries of the hunters; the sea, dark under a lowering sky, made a melancholy dirge as its waves broke on the shore; Vesuvius groaned heavily, and the birds answered it by wailing shrieks; a heavy sirocco hung upon the atmosphere, rendering it damp and cold. This wind seems at once to excite and depress the human mind: it excites it to thought, but colors those thoughts, as it does the sky, with black. Ludovico felt this; but he tried to surmount the natural feelings with which the ungenial air filled him.[53]

Here, we might first look to how Ludovico delights in the pleasure of killing wild boars and stags. His blood dances in his veins as he seeks the blood of the animals before him. He smiles with "rapture" as though he is on the other side of the Heaven he glances up towards. In this respect, the chase positions Ludovico against both the fellow hunters, "his tormentors", as well the animals whose blood they seek to "spill"; the familiar double-chase scene, which Shelley also deploys in *Frankenstein*. The "baying of the dogs" and the "cries of the hunters" are linguistically aligned as one. The earth and animals are afforded vital agency: the sea is melancholy, his horse is noble, Vesuvius

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[51] Wright, *Mary Shelley*, 37. Wright argues that while reading on the one hand requires mental and bodily absorption, when the Creature listens to Felix and Safie's reading in *Frankenstein* it leads to troubling "emotional extremes" and the practice of reading itself is "read indiscriminately in terms of his emotions."
[52] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 400.
[53] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 311.

groans, the birds wail, the wind has the capacity to excite and depress the human mind. The failure of domestic love and education to teach benevolence towards nature has resulted in Ludovico attacking the living world. In its description of education gone wrong, this passage intimates a failure of Hartleyan or Barbauldian associationism. Indeed, the vitality of the natural objects described here, where the landscape seems to come alive in battle against Ludovico and the hunters, suggests a kind of material agency which produces sensory impressions on Ludovico's mind. In his glance of "disdain" towards Heaven, Ludovico's engagement with the natural world does not lead to divine connection through habitual devotion. In fact, Ludovico actively suppresses the "natural feelings" stimulated in him by the air, forcing "black" thoughts, instead of the verdant light we see so frequently in Barbauld's poetry and children's writing.

Readers of Barbauld's *Lessons for Children* (1778-9), whether they remembered from youth or continued to read to their own children, might have been reminded of her story "The Hare", in which Barbauld described the life, habits, and sensibility of a hare from its point of view, to teach abstract concepts like kindness to animals, sensory feeling, and domestic affection. The story of the hare, who we later see gruesomely hunted by huntsmen like Ludovico, paints a vivid picture in sensory detail:

> Ha! What is there amongst the furze? I can see only its eyes. It has very large full eyes. It is a Hare, It is in its form, squatting down amongst the bushes to hide itself, for it is very fearful. The Hare is very innocent and gentle. Its colour is brown; but in countries which are very cold it is white as snow. It has a short bushy tail, its lip is parted, and very hairy; it always moves its lips. Its hind legs are very long that it may run the better. The Hare feeds upon herbs and roots, and the bark of young trees, and green corn, and sometimes it will creep through the hedge, and steal into the gardens, to eat the pinks and a little parsley; and it loves to play and skip about in the moon-light, and to bite the tender blades of grass when the dew is upon them; but in the daytime it sleeps in its form. It sleeps with its eyes open because it is very fearful and timid; and when it hears the least noise it starts and pricks up its ears.

Here Barbauld builds up an abundance of small details about the hare, providing the child reader with sensory images about sounds, smells, tastes, and appearances which might provide both an affective response and an overall practical knowledge. When the hunters arrive we find the hare "terrified", "pursued" until Barbauld literally puts the consequences of hunting a hare into the mouths of her child readers as it is suggested

that the hare's "torn and bloody", "soft furry skin" be "ROASTED".[54] Without the prior build-up of details about the hare, the reader may not feel so strongly about its eventual death, and the moral lesson would be lost. The moral and practical lessons provided in "The Hare", and others in Barbauld's stories, are perhaps the one's Shelley implies are missing from Ludovico's education.

Critiques of hunting for sport were particularly common in the 1790s and 1810s, within both radical and moderate criticisms of luxury and the elite.[55] Aside from Barbauld's story, Mary Hays connected cruelty towards animals to violence in wider society, especially towards women, when she asked that women leave "such barbarous amusements, as that of hunting poor innocent creatures to death!" to men, "whose misfortune perhaps it is, in the present state of society, to be obliged to assist in the destruction of their own species. And who perhaps find it necessary to harden themselves against that, — at which the human heart naturally recoils with horror, — the sight of blood, — and the extinction of life."[56] These writers, along with prominent voices on the subject of Jacobin politics, also pointed to hunting as evidence of the connection between upper class cruelty to the poor, and cruelty towards animals.[57] For instance, Joseph Ritson, in 1802, identified the main obstacle to establishing a moral duty to animals when he labelled hunting "*a remain of Gothick barbarity*," which has largely escaped criticism because it has "such authority and custom to support it".[58] However, in 1809, hunting was raised in Parliament as part of a bill preventing "Malicious and Wanton Cruelty to Animals" by Lord Thomas Erskine, which though passing in the House of Lords, failed to pass in the House of Commons.[59] The first animal protection bill to make it through parliament, and gather the necessary Tory support, was The Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act in 1822, which makes no mention of

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[54] Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Lessons for Children from Three to Four Years Old* (London: J. Johnson, 1788), 80-4.
[55] Barbara K. Seeber, "The Hunting Ideal, Animal Rights, and Feminism in *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility*", *Lumen* 23 (2004): 295-308.
[56] Mary Hays, *An Appeal to the Men of Great Britain on Behalf of Women* (London: J. Johnson and J. Bell, 1798), 181.
[57] For wider discussion on political literary responses to hunting, see: Perkins, *Romanticism and Animals Rights*, 64-78; Matthew Cole and Kate Stewart, *Our Children and Other Animals: The Cultural Construction of Human-Animal Relations in Childhood* (London: Routledge, 2014), 37, 85.
[58] Joseph Ritson, *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty* (London: Richard Phillips, 1802), 84.
[59] Ian A. Robertson, *Animal Welfare and the Law: Fundamental Principles for Critical Assessment* (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), e-book.

hunting, and focuses instead on the treatment of working animals.[60] Later animal protection bills of the 1820s, helped by the newly formed Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, also resisted criticism of hunting, choosing to target working class sports like bull-baiting and cock-fighting, as discussed in chapter three.[61]

Responses to animal welfare in the nineteenth century reflected the institutional class schisms of this period, which saw the work of animal protection become embedded in middle class reformism. Soon after the formation of the SPCA, which included a mixture of men of different political backgrounds, such as Richard Martin, William Wilberforce, Thomas Foxwell Buxton, Rev. Arthur Broome, and Lewis Gompertz, the society was keen to emphasize that it "rejected all visionary and overstrained views".[62] These views included opposition to hunting as well as condemnation of carnism. Gompertz, a promoter of natural diet and a critic of hunting, as well as the only Jewish member of the society, was consequently thrown out as conservative forces closed rank and the SPCA declared themselves a Christian-only institution.[63] Gompertz later went on to form the Animal Friend's Society, which was much more vocal in campaigning against animal cruelty within all classes, though as Kean notes, a lot of the egalitarian campaigning was undertaken by women of the Ladies Association.[64] At the same time more groups formed, such as the Quaker organisation, the Rational Humanity Group, and pamphlets and journals were produced, such as *The Animal's Friend* and *The Voice of Humanity*.[65] The main aim of these groups was less about legislative change, and more about educating the public through proliferating information concerning animal cruelty.

While it would be wrong to undermine the significant work of women, and those who critiqued class structures within the broader animal welfare movement, it is worth noting Allyson N. May's observation , that the representation of hunting, which grew over the nineteenth century, was "Largely written by men", and most recognised the

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[60] Lord Thomas Erskine, *An Act to Prevent the Cruel Treatment of Cattle 1822*, http://statutes.org.uk/site/the-statutes/nineteenth-century/1822-3-george-4-c-71-cruel-treatment-of-cattle-act/ [accessed 10 January 2019].
[61] Kean, *Animal Rights*, 37.
[62] Arthur Broome, "Prospectus of the SPCA", *RSPCA Records* 2 (1823-6): 198-9.
[63] Kean, *Animal Rights*, 37; For a more thorough discussion of Gompertz, see: Preece, *Sins of the Flesh*, 264-311.
[64] Kean, *Animal Rights*, 37.
[65] Ibid., 38.

sport as a benign "feature of English life."[66] Literary responses, like Shelley's, which targeted a middle-class female readership, illustrate a deliberate intervention in what May describes as a "whole genre" of hunting literature, where instead of normalising cruelty to animals, hunting is framed as a cog in a gendered and classed system of tyranny.[67] Moreover, by presenting Ludovico as a victim of poor education and parental neglect, middle-class readers may have had their self-image as reformers reinforced. In this sense, Shelley's message that education has the capacity to change behaviour, takes on a subversive quality, where a critique of class cruelty is directed at those well-positioned to act upon it.

Ludovico is not reformed by a middle-class educator, but by the love and moral conviction of a poor, rural young woman, whom he meets while hunting a stag in the snow. Almost two pages are given to the description of Ludovico's hunt, which include a long and complicated ascension through hills, building expectation of the "despairing animal" giving over to his spear, followed by a sudden escape, Ludovico's "fatigue" and "anger", and another pursuit which "became a passion in the heart of Ludovico".[68] The scene then changes to a pastoral one, and through the "black and shining leaves of the ilex and those of the laurel and myrtle underwood", we are met, not with his prey, though the narrative cues are not lost in this story, but a young woman who could be mistaken for "an angel".[69] As their love blossoms, Shelley's use of reverent language of the pastoral tradition continues, marking the shift in Ludovico's domestic affections and relationship with nature.

> Every part was consecrated by the memory of their first meeting and their loves--the walks in snow and violets; the forest of ilex with its underwood of myrtle and its population of fire-flies; the birds; the wild and shy animals that sometimes came in sight, and, seen, retreated; the changes of the seasons, of the hues of nature influenced by them; the alterations of the sky; the walk of the moon; and the moving of the stars--all were dear, known, and commented on by this pair, who saw the love their own hearts felt reflected in the whole scene around, and in their child, their noisy but speechless companion, whose smiles won hopes, and whose bright form seemed as if sent from Heaven to reward their constant affection.[70]

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[66] Allyson N. May, *The Fox-Hunting Controversy, 1781-2004: Class and Cruelty* (London: Routledge, 2004), ch. 4, n.p..
[67] Ibid.
[68] Shelley, *Collected Stories*, 312.
[69] Ibid., 317.
[70] Ibid., 317.

As soon as Ludovico meets Viola, his behaviour and attitude towards the living world changes through her influence. Instead of hunting animals, Ludovico now observes them, and the pair discuss out loud, almost like a hymn, the changes in nature, projecting their "constant affection" outwards so that it is "reflected" back in an act of benevolence that is rewarded in the "bright form" of a child.[71] This scene of domestic bliss is an almost perfect rendering of Barbauld's *Hymns* and *Lessons*, both of which teach love for others, and love for God, through a love for nature. *Hymns* especially is meant to be read aloud, teaching children through repetition to pay attention to the changes of the seasons, from, "Flocks that whiten all the plain,/ Yellow sheaves of ripen'd grain;/ Clouds that drop their fattening dews,/ Suns that temperate warmth diffuse", to recognising that all of nature is really God: "Yet to thee my soul should raise/ Grateful vows and solemn praise;/ And when every blessing's flown,/ Love thee — for thyself alone".[72] Though not insistently devout, Viola is presented as having a natural connection to the divine, which is reinforced by her resourceful and compassionate relationship with nature. Indeed, Viola does not only take on the form of an angel, but when she sees the fireflies that surround her impoverished cottage, surrounded by clumps of dark myrtle and ilex, they seem "as if the brightest star in the heavens had wondered from its course, and, trembling at its temerity, sat trembling on its earthly perch." In this sense, just as Barbauld advocated, Viola is able to see the divine in nature, in a way that produces "mazed ecstasy of thought". This, she shares with Ludovico until he too feels "rapture and wonder on all that had taken place". The idea intimated here that love of the divine can spread through love of man, reflects the affective epistemology described by Wollstonecraft in *Letters Written on a Short Residence*, where she described the difficulty of combining a love of God through nature with the risks of female passion, when "a passion for an individual, is but the unfolding of that love which embraces all that is great and beautiful."[73] Here, Shelley illustrates how habitual devotion might be a shared romantic experience.

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[71] Ibid., 321.
[72] Anna Letitia Barbauld, "Hymn II", *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 81.
[73] *Letters*, 86-87.

Shelley spends the first half of the tale developing this Barbauldian vision of human progress through a divinely vitalised nature.[74] In the second half, she tests this teaching against the trials of persecution, and isolation from not only civilisation, but ideas about anthropocentric species categorisation. When Viola and Ludovico's peaceful life of domestic devotion comes to an end, and the tyrannical King Fernando kidnaps Viola and her son, she becomes a political prisoner like so many of Shelley's heroines.[75] Beatrice, Clorinda, Justine, Despina, Emilie, Proserpine, and Euthanasia are all incarcerated, not for committing any crime of their own, but for resisting the will of men.[76] These women are subordinated and restrained by those with power, and Shelley's continued advocacy for her heroines addresses the problem of the social and domestic constraints placed on women. That she regularly aligns abuses of power directed at women with abuses towards animals and the poor, is worth probing further. After deceiving her guards and fashioning a harness from a shawl, Viola escapes with some bread, and foraged pine nuts.

> She collected pine nuts, she contrived to make a fire, and ate them with appetite; and then, seeking a covert, she lay down and slept, her boy in her arms, thanking Heaven and the Virgin for her escape. When she awoke, the triumph of her heart somewhat died away. She felt the solitude, she felt her helplessness, she feared pursuers, yet she dashed away the tears, and then reflecting that she was too near Salerno--the sun being now at the sea's verge--she arose and pursued her way through the intricacies of the wood. She got to the edge of it so far as to be able to direct her steps by the neighboring sea. Torrents intercepted her path, and one rapid river threatened to impede it altogether; but, going somewhat lower down, she found a bridge; and then, approaching still nearer to the sea, she passed through a wide and desolate kind of pasture-country, which seemed to afford neither shelter nor sustenance to any human being.[77]

Shelley's return to pastoral and divine language is now interrupted by the practical demands of survival. Viola must find shelter and food in "a desolate kind of pasture-country", in contrast with her earlier domestic life amongst a verdant nature which has

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[74] William Godwin, "Letter to William Cole", March 2 1802, in Charles Kegan Paul, *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries* 2, (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1876), 118.
[75] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 324.
[76] For more discussion of Viola as a feminine archetype of Shelley's heroines, see: Syndy McMillen Conger, "Mary Shelley's Women in Prison", in *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley After Frankenstein*, ed. Syndy M. Conger, Frederick S. Frank, Gregory O'Dea, (Madison; Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 88.
[77] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 326.

disappeared with the actions of men who violate women and children. This further shift in the narrative is similar to the change Lauren Cameron observes in *The Last Man*, where the assured life of Lionel Verney, living secluded in the forests of Windsor, is disrupted in a way that reveals the artificiality of that earlier pastoral scene which "assumes the primacy of human intellect".[78] Where formerly, Viola and Ludovico observed nature, and in doing so reinforced a dualism that simulates human separation, and superiority over nature, Viola must now, just as Verney did, find a way to live with nature.

As Shelley's writing shows, Viola's gender adds layers of difficulty to her pursuit. Constantly afraid of being caught, Shelley writes, "Where no men were, there was no danger for her."[79] Instead of hunting animals to eat, as Ludovico may have done, Viola remains vegan and finds company with a shepherdess who also rejects the consumption of animal products. In spite of the shepherdess' easy access to milk, or even meat, she shares her meal of roasted pine nuts, broiled chestnuts, and coarse bread, in an act of female companionship that highlights how gender is encoded in the savagery of killing and consuming animals.[80] The characterisation of the shepherdess as "pretty", and "poor even to nakedness", leads to a description that fetishizes her poverty and youthful femininity, allegorically placing her on the meat market:

> In inclement weather they wrap rudely-formed clothes of undressed sheepskin around them--during the heats of summer they do little more than throw aside these useless garments. The shepherd-girl was probably about fifteen years of age; a large black straw hat shaded her head from the intense rays of the sun; her feet and legs were bare; and her petticoat, tucked up, Diana-like, above one knee, gave a picturesque appearance to her rags, which, bound at her waist by a girdle, bore some resemblance to the costume of a Greek maiden. Rags have a costume of their own, as fine in their way, in their contrast of rich colours and the uncouth boldness of their drapery, as kingly robes.[81]

I suggest that this extensive description of the shepherdess' physical appearance is a conscious choice. The sudden shift in the tone of the text, from one of female

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[78] Lauren Cameron, "Mary Shelley's Malthusian Objections in *The Last Man*", *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 67, 2 (September 2012): 185.
[79] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 327.
[80] Ibid., 328.
[81] Ibid., 328.

companionship and safety from "pursuers", to an objective, "male gaze" that appreciatively comments on the near-nudity of a young, and very poor girl, reinforces the point that these women are vulnerable, in spite of their comradery. Secondly, there is Shelley's ironic reference to the goddess Diana, known as the huntress, despite the implication that the shepherdess does not eat animals, as well as the heavy symbolic associations of shepherds as protectors of the flock, in the biblical sense. At the end of the day, Viola leaves the shepherdess a few silver coins in payment for her food and companionship.[82] This acknowledgement of female emotional labour marks out how women are not just value added to the marketplace of commodified femininity, but they have real knowledge and should be valued.

The story ends with the reformation of the family, through an egalitarian benevolence for nature. Viola, through resourcefulness, the help of another woman, and refusing to harm animals, survives well in the living world; her main fear is being hunted. That Ludovico finds her by using his hunting instincts, means the tale ends with the gendered roles of hunter and victim unchanged.

> The pool reflected the scene with greater distinctness and beauty than its real existence. The trees stood distinct, the ambient air between, all grouped and pictured by the hand of a divine artist. Ludovico drank from the fount, and then approached the pool. He looked with half wonder on the scene depicted there. A bird now flitted across in the air, and its form, feathers, and motion, were shown in the waters. An ass emerged from among the trees, where in vain it sought herb-age, and came to grass near these waters; Ludovico saw it depicted therein, and then looked on the living animal, almost appearing less real, less living, than its semblance in the stream.[83]

Here, Ludovico now recognises the divine in nature, even in the "ambient" which he had earlier in the tale suppressed from his mind. He also appears to recognise the details of the "form, feathers, and motion" of the birds reflected in the pool, and the "living animal" in the ass, suggesting that he has been reformed by the principles of Barbauldian associationism. When he sees them in real life, not reflected as pictures in the water, Ludovico's perception of them loses vitality; they seem "less real, less living". Seeing nature without it being mediated by reflection, through the pool here or through Viola's eyes, Ludovico is unable to

[82] Ibid., 329.
[83] Ibid., 331.

perceive nature as inhabiting its own agency or life force, and inevitably pursues the ass like the hunter he is, and is led once again to Viola. In this notion that images of nature might fail to fully impress on the mind ideas about real, living nature, Shelley seems to question the whole associationist project. On the one hand, Ludovico's hunting instincts are part of what makes him animal, and a part of the living world. And, if we are to have faith in the reforming capacity of domestic love and education, then there is nothing to fear from Ludovico replacing his prey with Viola. In fact, it might be this recognition of his own animality that saves them. However, the uncertain ending, where a figure sleeps on the ground, and Ludovico "roused" by "madness, yet deemed to gratify", leaves a dubious mark over the reforming capacities of associationism.[84]

Vital Materialism, Annihilation, and "The Mortal Immortal"

Ambiguous endings involving water are a recurrent theme in Shelley's short stories as well as her early novels. Just as the creature floats off on an ice raft vowing to kill himself, and Verney sails the ocean as the last man alive, water holds a vital, sublime power in Shelley's oeuvre. Siobhan Carroll has recognised water as a politicised theme in poetry of this period, noting its symbolic function for the unknown, dangerous, and solitary, as well as a space where empires were fought over, nations and peoples connected, and trade routes formed.[85] In this sense water could contain ideas about the deepest, divine secrets of nature, and the furthest lengths humankind is willing to go to exploit, and conquer it. If the pool in "The Heir of Mondolfo" reflected an image of hopeful vital nature, it also issued a siren's call to Ludovico, shattering that previous image, and igniting his hunting instincts in his pursuit of Viola. In her "Address to the Deity", Barbauld drew on similar ideas about the pleasures and powers of water in her description of habitual devotion:

> If the soft hand of winning pleasure leads

[84] Ibid., 331.
[85] Siobhan Carroll, *An Empire of Air and Water: Uncolonizable Space in the British Imagination, 1750-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 9-10.

By living waters, and thro' flow'ry meads
When all is smiling, tranquil, and serene,
And vernal beauty paints the flattering scene,
Oh! teach me to elude each latent snare,
And whisper to my sliding heart–Beware:
With caution let me hear the Syren's voice,
And doubtful, with a trembling heart, rejoice.[86]

"Living waters" appears numerous times in the King James Bible. Barbauld might have been thinking of Song of Solomon, which refers to "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters" (4:15), or Jeremiah: "they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters" (17:13). Barbauld uses the phrase to point to the Bible and to practical religion as embodiment: "living waters" calls to mind traditions of ablution in Abrahamic religions, perhaps aligning daily habits with patterns of religious thought. Here, the speaker seeks religious answers from visiting such "living waters", yet as pleasurable and tempting as the waters seem, we must not be lured by "latent snares" or let our hearts slide into doubting God's presence. Viewing "The Heir of Mondolfo" in light of this passage, we might see Ludovico's failure to see vitalised nature after looking into the pool as a similar ensnaring, where he was unable to see God in nature.

The phrase "living waters" appears in another Shelley short story, "The Mortal Immortal". By far the most anthologised tale of the collection, perhaps for its supernatural and Gothic themes, or reworking of Godwin's *St Leon*, the tale which first appeared in the 1833 edition of *The Keepsake*, continues to explore ideas relating to the consequences of the idea of progress, human separation from society, nature and God, and the annihilation of the self in nature.[87] The story uses what has been called a "Godwinian confessional narrator" in the character of Winzy, an assistant to the alchemist Cornelius Agrippa, who unlike St Leon takes an elixir of life unwittingly,

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[86] Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, 43.
[87] For other discussions of 'The Mortal Immortal' see Diane Hoeveler, "Mary Shelley and Gothic Feminism: The Case of 'The Mortal Immortal'", *e-Publications@Marquette* 1, 1 (1997); Marie Roberts, "Mary Shelley: Immortality, Gender and Rosy Cross", in *Reviewing Romanticism*, ed. P.W. Martin and R. Jarvis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992); 60-68; Jonas S. Cope, "THE MORTAL IMMORTAL: Mary Shelley's 'Overreachers' Reconsidered", *The Explicator* 72, 2 (2014): 122-26; A. A. Markley, "'Laughing That I May Not Weep': Mary Shelley's Short Fiction and Her Novels", *Keats-Shelley Journal* 46 (1997): 97-124; Marjean D. Purinton, "Mary Shelley's Science Fiction Short Stories and the Legacy of Wollstonecraft's Feminism", *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Story* 30, 2 (2001): 147-74; Elisabetta Marino, "The Themes of Reanimation and Immortality in Mary Shelley's Short Stories", *B.A.S. British and American Studies* 21 (2015): 25-30.

believing it to be a cure for love. The subject of his affections is Bertha, who cannot marry him because of his lowly status and lack of wealth. Still, his love is deepened when he sees her "by a gently bubbling spring of pure living waters".[88] Here, as in "The Heir of Mondolfo", romantic love is stimulated by a sensory engagement with nature, where the spring is afforded a kind of vital immediacy in its soft movement, gently encouraging his feelings to bubble up. Soon the two begin to meet at the fountain every day, their love blossoming through habitual experience of the "living waters". However, as in Barbauld and "The Heir of Mondolfo", the "living waters" carry a warning. Instead of finding God in nature, Winzy is lured into an impossible romantic love, which offers him little hope of future happiness. At first, Cornelius Agrippa offers Winzy a purse of gold in exchange for living with him, from which Winzy runs away and into the "living waters", feeling "as if Satan himself had tempted me".[89] Instead, Winzy sets his gaze on the fickle and ill-tempered Bertha, whose refusal to see past his social status leads him to take Agrippa's potion, which he is told is a cure for love.

Although Winzy's immortality is brought about unwittingly, his willingness to answer the siren's call and drink from the forbidden vial illustrates the dangers of exchanging one desire (for wealth), for another. In this sense, the potion carries the promise of the "living waters", as warned in John: "But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (4:14). This notion of earthly life and heavenly eternity is made real to Winzy after he takes the potion. Not only is he physically renewed, but his soul "is bathed in paradise" and "[e]arth appeared heaven".[90] By making his body eternal with science, the idea of human perfectibilism is brought together with providential fulfilment, and in his perfected human form, Winzy might begin to reform society. Indeed, his first act is to free Bertha from her "cage", where she is kept by her severe patron.[91] Bertha immediately falls in love with the new Winzy and they embark on a new radical life away from "detested luxuries, and wretchedness of this noble dwelling" and from "a gilt cage to nature and liberty".[92] We might here recall Wollstonecraft's words in these lines, in the ideas of freeing women

[88] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 220.
[89] Ibid., 220.
[90] Ibid., 223.
[91] Ibid., 223.
[92] Ibid., 224.

from the "gilt cage" of domesticity, luxury, and fashionability, and into nature and liberty.[93] In this way, the potion acts as a foil for Wollstonecraft's revolutionary perfectibilist ideals, where romantic love, social equality, liberty, and nature might operate cohesively for the improvement of society.

Wollstonecraft's fears surrounding improvement, which I discussed in chapter one, also play out in this tale. Soon Winzy becomes a social pariah as his body refuses to age past twenty years, and everything and everyone ages around him. Bertha grows to resent Winzy, and makes a poor attempt at disguising her own aged appearance with wigs and make-up. However, for the most it is Winzy who is regarded with "horror and devastation" and when charged with superstitious notions of occult interference, he remembers that it is "human science" that has brought about his fate and human science could never "conquer nature's laws so far as to imprison the soul for ever within its carnal habitation".[94] Here, immortality is framed as a trap of human scientific self-interest, which though Winzy doubts is capable of bringing about such an eternal horror, has nevertheless secured his imprisonment from heaven. His earlier impression of his immortality as bringing paradise to earth, is shattered now the reality of his material state has set in. We might again recall Wollstonecraft's fear of earth crumbling under the weight of human improvement in *Letters*, where she imagined the world in two million years' time so "perfectly cultivated" that its human population became trapped in "a vast prison".[95]

Winzy narrates his story as a 323 year-old, long after the death of his love, and without friends or family to surround him. There are references throughout the tale to Cain and the Wandering Jew, though Winzy insists he is not like them. Indeed, this is not a fable of religious history, but one Shelley connects to contemporary ideals. Winzy's age at the end of the tale would set the story just twenty years ahead of its publication date. This fantasy is not like Wollstonecraft's vision set deep into the future, but imagines the consequences of abusing nature's laws in the pursuit of improvement, in more or less real time. Towards the end Winzy soliloquies on the human desire to violate nature: "Such an enigma is man—born to perish—when he wars, as I do, against

[93] Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 13.
[94] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 226.
[95] Wollstonecraft, *Letters*, 124.

the established laws of his nature".[96] We might once again be reminded here of Wollstonecraft's lament in *Letters*, where she recognised death as inevitable and turned this realisation into a call for the preservation of species. Similarly, Winzy fears death the more he lives, but nevertheless tries to keep himself separate from others so as not to invite "ambition or avarice" to enter his mind.[97] Much like the creature, Winzy recognises his body's deviation from "all that really bound me to humanity", and that he is a product of human desire.[98] The only benevolent act left to him is to keep himself apart from mankind and seek an end to the state that was thrust upon him, through nature.

Those once "living waters" Winzy hopes will become "strangling waters" as he gazes into "placid lakes" and "mighty rivers" in case "portals to another world could be opened".[99] As Winzy pens his final pages he suggests that there is an element of "vanity" that has this far prevented him from seeking death:[100]

> Three centuries have passed since I quaffed that fatal beverage: another year shall not elapse before, encountering gigantic dangers—warring with the powers of frost in their home—beset by famine, toil, and tempest—I yield this body, too tenacious a cage for a soul which thirsts for freedom to the destructive elements of air and water—or, if I survive, my name will be recorded as one of the most famous among the sons of men; and, my task achieved, I shall adopt more wholesome resolute means, and, by scattering and annihilating the atoms that compose my frame, set at liberty the life imprisoned within, and so cruelly prevented from soaring from this dim earth to a sphere more congenial to its immortal essence.[101]

In a similar rendition of the *Frankenstein* ending, Winzy records his life for posterity, though not as a warning to mankind, but to leave his "name behind".[102] The act of writing in "The Mortal Immortal" thus becomes an act of self-interest instead of a public benefit, in contrast with *The Last Man* where the purpose of Verney's writing was left ambiguous. Winzy's suggestion, or perhaps fantasy, that if he fails to die he will become "one of the most famous among the sons of men", implies a similar strain

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[96] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 229.
[97] Ibid., 230.
[98] Ibid., 230.
[99] Ibid., 230.
[100] Ibid., 230.
[101] Ibid., 230.
[102] Ibid., 230.

of ego lingering in him.[103] Perhaps this desire for fame is the barrier to heaven he so desires. That he hopes to be known as a son of man suggests an embodiment of human improvement where his existence is afforded by the powers of man, not God, to conquer divine laws of nature. Winzy's intention to free his soul through annihilation by natural forces, also alludes to a Hartleyan or Barbauldian habitual devotion; one that might require him to relinquish that desire for self-aggrandisement to achieve.

Natural Religion, Political Economy, and "The Parvenue"

The prospect of finding solace in water also appears in Shelley's 1836 tale for *The Keepsake*, "The Parvenue". The tale about a woman who marries from rural poverty into aristocratic wealth, and the derangement money brings to those around her, drives the unnamed parvenue to contemplate suicide in the sea at Margate. Robinson notes that Shelley received the plate that accompanies the tale after writing it and made changes to accommodate the engraving of boats at sea off the Margate coast.[104] Although these changes might be viewed as forced, they add an important national context to the tale. For instance, when looking out to sea, the parvenue describes the scene in front of her exclusively in the colours of the union jack: the waves have "white crests", the blue sky is "bared clear by the wind", and the sun sets in a "fiery red".[105] The "troubled waters", into which she longs to be "borne away", are not a reflection of her state of mind, so much as her problems are the those of the nation.[106] The "troubled" sea painted in the colours of the British flag, gestures towards the trade ships pictured in the accompanying plate, and in the context of the tale's discussion of wealth, greed, and loss of ideals relating to natural rights and rights of nature, the scene reflects the wider political economy as the driver of these changes.

At the beginning of the tale we are told that the parvenue grew up in a small rural community, and though impoverished, they were happy. Her sick mother taught her "not in accomplishments, but in all real knowledge":[107]

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[103] Ibid., 230.
[104] Ibid., 392.
[105] Ibid., 271.
[106] Ibid., 271.
[107] Ibid., 267.

> She unfolded to me the wonders of the visible creation, and to each tale of bird and beast, of fiery mountain or vast river, was appended some moral, derived from her warm heart and ardent imagination. Above all, she impressed upon me the precepts of the gospel, charity to every fellow-creature, the brotherhood of mankind, the rights that every sentient creature possesses to our services.[108]

In these educational tenets we might see shadows of Barbauld and Wollstonecraft's children's stories of nature, moral instruction, and non-sectarian, universal values. What is interesting here, is the specific interpretation of natural education as embodying rights to "every sentient creature". This notion of sentience, as discussed in chapter three, was widely understood by this period to include animals, and the idea of rights extending to all those who labour in service to mankind, suggests an extension of natural rights both to slaves and animals. That these values are told to the parvenue by her otherwise uneducated mother, suggests a self-evidence of these values, and the benefits of an education based on experience of non-human nature. The use of words such as "unfolded" suggests a connection to stories like Wollstonecraft and Barbauld's which sought to 'unfold the mind' through connecting sensory experiences of natural objects with rational understanding and moral contemplation.

After a fire that leaves everyone but the parvenue physically harmed, the family is unable to work and maintain their home. By the time of the tale's publication, the Poor Law Reform Act (1834) had been rolled out across the south of England, which removed access to outdoor relief that had previously functioned as welfare support for the poor.[109] There were nevertheless provisions made for those unable to work for health reasons, yet workhouses were increasingly relied upon as the main form of welfare support for the poor. The parvenue chooses to marry Lord Reginald who saves her from the fire and falls in love with her, largely to aid her sickly mother. Although the text does not address the Poor Laws explicitly, implicitly readers may have read the parvenue's marriage as an attempt to save her family from the workhouse. Once

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[108] Ibid., 267.

[109] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), 241-68.
For recent discussions of the Poor Law Act and its social consequences see David Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Nineteenth-Century Britain, 1834-1914: From Chadwick to Booth* (London: Routledge, 2013); Samantha Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-Cycle Under the English Poor Law, 1760-1834* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011); Lorie Charlesworth, *Welfare's Forgotten Past: A Socio-Legal History of the Poor Law* (Oxford; New York: Routledge, 2010).

introduced to the circles of the rich, the parvenue is "pained" by the culture of money she encounters.[110] Not only does she find the notion of spending large amounts of money on oneself "while any one of their fellow-creature were in destitution" jarring, but "patrician charity", such as "thin soups and course flannel petticoats" she finds insubstantial to meet the needs of the poor.[111] Because of her mother's "enlightened piety", she describes her "instinct or sentiment of justice" as a concept of redistribution of wealth, or "debt" to mankind.[112] The parvenue forgoes "a thousand luxuries", "dresses dowdily", and feeds the hungry instead.[113] This "dislike for the apparatus of wealth" is perceived by her husband as failing her "first duty" to him, which he interprets as an "honour to his rank".[114] This clash between her inherited values of "enlightened piety", and the wishes of her husband become a discourse on female duty: duty to God and duty to a husband. Wollstonecraft argued that a woman's first duty was to God, and that enacting that duty involved maternal and spousal duties, as well as social ones. In this sense, Wollstonecraft's notion of duty comes to be tested against the values of mid-nineteenth century society.

The parvenue's family soon comes to rely on her for financial assistance which she believes it is her duty to fulfil. Being unable to work, her disabled father turns to "speculation" to earn money for his sick wife and gets into a lot of debt.[115] Other relatives soon ask for money, knowing of the parvenue's wealth and becoming "insane" at the idea of being related to a Lord.[116] At one point the parvenue's father becomes so seriously indebted that he turns violent on his dying wife, and her sister is forced to move to America to remove her own husband from the temptations of luxury. The trappings of wealth are here presented as a kind of disease, but one brought on by society. The parvenue gives all she can to her family, even though it destroys her marriage when Lord Reginald refuses to share his wealth with those other than himself. The parvenue ultimately chooses duty to her mother, and all the enlightened values she embodies, over duty to her husband, but as an individual, even one with some access to money and the ability to spend it how she chooses, her charity cannot change the causes

[110] Shelley, *Collected Tales*, 269.
[111] Ibid., 269.
[112] Ibid., 270.
[113] Ibid., 268.
[114] Ibid., 269.
[115] Ibid., 270.
[116] Ibid., 271.

of social inequality. In many ways this tale might be seen as a response to nineteenth-century middle-class reformism, and its failure to respond to an increasingly unequal and capitalist society. Charity, though in many ways necessary in the tale, does not stop the wealthy from accumulating wealth and the poor from needing money to survive. As the parvenue's parents eventually die, and her sister moves away, she is left surrounded by a society which doesn't share her values. As she looks out to the trade ships and the British seascape, the values of political economy seem to swarm around her as she contemplates sinking into the ocean's depths, and her own values, those of Wollstonecraft and Barbauld become lost to this new world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this essay has tried to convey just some of the rich and deeply political ideas to be found in Shelley's short stories. "The Heir of Mondolfo", one of the earliest stories within a large collection, raises the issue of women's roles within debates about animal ethics and protections more directly than her earlier and more famous novels. The tale addresses the particular issues of female education and domestic love, commonly discussed in the early nineteenth century, and which became an important influence on the reform movement. Viola's natural affinity with nature and seamless transition to become part of it, rather than an observer, not only comes to stand for the position of all women, but questions the anthropocentrism and notions of human exceptionalism within ideas about reform. While human devastation on the level of *The Last Man* is averted in this tale, questions remain over the fundamental power inequalities between men and women, and whether educational reform has the power to shift them. I have also suggested that Shelley subverts the genre of short stories connected to the gift book and journals, but also that those themes of romance, domesticity, and environmental philosophy, for which her later work is often overlooked, are central to her pedagogy. In a discussion of two of Shelley's 1830s tales, I have shown how Shelley continues to engage with earlier educational ideas about nature and society, and tests them in a later nineteenth-century context, after the 1832 Reform Act, and the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, which fundamentally altered the social circumstances of people in Britain, and those who fostered working-class moral sentiments towards the living world increasingly saw their rural lives disappear with the

removal of outdoor relief and the proliferation of workhouses. The context of "The Parvenue" in particular suggests a profound loss of Barbauldian and Wollstonecraftian philosophy in the face of the culture of luxury that their philosophies warned against, and in many ways brings those older ideas back to a new audience.

Conclusion

Shelley's spectral images of contemporary society enveloped by greed and luxury can be seen as embodying a science of mind model, where the mind has succumbed to materialistic desires through failing to control what Priestley called the "tempers of the mind". The earlier forms of "enlightened piety" Shelley presents as offering, however partial, forms of resistance to materialistic contagion, are lost ideals of a past age. In the 1840s Shelley wrote a three-volume travel book, *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843* (1844), in which she described the political and social changes she observed in Italy as a shift away from nature and public interest to personal improvement; a regime change Shelley portrays as inflicted by the Italian government. Shelley describes government censorship as suppressing "the improvement of his countrymen" at the same time as suspecting those who "limit endeavours to self-improvement", and enjoy "the beauties of nature, the elegance of art, the delights of climate, and the pleasures of society".[1] This rule of government, Shelley insists somewhat pointedly, must be of interest to the English since they "used" to uphold "free institutions" as an issue of national pride.[2] In this sense Shelley draws a line between the environmental philosophies of those who fought against self-interest with "attention to the beauties of nature", and the suppression of those very ideals by corrupt governments in the nineteenth century.

Beyond notions of incremental change and domestic education discussed in this thesis, associationism in a broader sense continued to influence agricultural and imperial policies well into the nineteenth century. In a letter to Hooker, Charles Darwin discussed associationist principles as part of their scientific practice. Darwin asked his friend whether the landscape in Brazil was "as beautiful or nearly as beautiful" as the Himalayas. Hooker replied that while Sikkim was "uncommonly fine" it did not match the beauty of Brazil, or several other places he had visited.[3] He notes that his experiences as a traveller, and botanist in the East India Company made him more aware that "our impressions are more the effects of associations than ever".[4] Hooker

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[1] Shelley, *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843* (London: Edward Moxom, 1844), xvi.
[2] Ibid., xi.
[3] David Arnold, *The Tropics and the Travelling Gaze*, 98.
[4] Ibid., 98.

adds that although associations can be misleading if not trained correctly, the perceptive observer might be stimulated through detailed observation to render the local and immediate accessible to a universal understanding of the world. To a nineteenth-century reader of Edgeworth's children's tales, John Ruskin, her influence on his taste for the industrial sublime, economic ideas about the use of labour, and associationism have been well-established, and there is little mention that her subtle, affective epistemology made much of a lasting impression.[5]

In many ways the associationist model advocated by Priestley, and built on by writers like those discussed in this thesis, was always prone to entrenching a taste for material objects, whether through Hamilton's devotional approach to "clearing the rubbish" of uncultivated land, or Edgeworth's secular taste for the industrial sublime. The very idea of attaching devotional significance, or justifying emotional attachment to material objects, natural or otherwise, carries with it the risk of fetishization. I have argued that religion played an important role in cultivating ideas about improvement and the exploitation of nature in which it results, and shown how the notion of turning attention to nature into a devotional practice could be interpreted as justifying imperial expansion, and industrial improvement practices that consume cheap labour and cheap nature. At the same time, Edgeworth's utilitarian argument for industrialisation, demonstrated how science of mind could be applied to nature without the religious connection, and still contain the same affective epistemology which encourages moral contemplation, that more religious writers like Barbauld and Wollstonecraft adopted. These writers ultimately occupy a liminal space in thinking about nature, improvement, and industrialisation. Their thought is open, discursive, contemplative, and does not come to any firm solutions or moral convictions. Their early warnings about the physical consequences of improving nature and the moral duties this requires of mankind, are tempered by the benefits improvement brings to society. This ambiguity, as Barbauld showed in "The Invitation", carries a risk —will attempts to balance moral improvement with social improvement launch them into "the bright unknown", or will a

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[5] Willie Henderson, *John Ruskin's Political Economy* (London; New York: Routledge: 2000), 12, 25, 107-10; Eglantina Remport, *Lady Gregory and Irish National Theatre: Art, Drama, Politics* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 6-8; Julie Nash, *Servants and Paternalism in the Works of Maria Edgeworth and Elizabeth Gaskell* (Aldershot; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 56-58; Myers, "Canonical 'Orphans' and Critical Ennui: Rereading Edgeworth's Cross-Writing", 126; David C. Hanson, "The Psychology of Fragmentation: A Bibliographic and Psychoanalytic Reconsideration of the Ruskin Juvenilia", *Indiana University Press* 10 (1997): 237-58.

"dread veil" fall down and cast a shadow of dark materiality across the earth? For Edgeworth and Wollstonecraft that idea of dark materiality may not be such a bad thing: to the former the near extinction of mankind might lead to a different, more efficient world; to the latter the prospect of species devastation offers a platform from which to argue for the preservation of all species, and change the anthropocentric dynamics that still direct our world view.

The re-emergence of similar arguments in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as Moore's "web of life", and the "capitalocene", Malm's "fossil capital", Bennett's "vital materialism", and object-oriented ontology, suggests an ongoing need to return to such inclusive, affective, and deliberative ideas. However, as this thesis has shown, there are risks involved in valuing the existence of objects: focusing too much on objects and we risk fetishizing them, turning them into objects of desire and consuming them as part of a cultural and political economy of things all over again, which Barbauld and Wollstonecraft saw happening with nature poetry in their time. In doing so we may descend into nihilism, and forget the human values and duties we have to others, as Wollstonecraft tried to balance with an egalitarian view of nature. For Wollstonecraft, the solution, if she had one, lay in arguments we may recognise as arguments for biodiversity, or deep ecology. Recognising the ecological system as a whole and the large scale effects of human devastation to the planet, must accompany attention to the small and individual object. One might say that it is very much easier to have a global or even universal perspective today than in 1795, or the 1770s when Barbauld explored the idea. For Wollstonecraft, shifting the category of analysis from the human to non-human objects is part of the act of taking humans out of their individualised world view and seeing themselves as part of a bigger system, which we rely on to survive. The duty we owe to non-humans becomes a duty to maintaining an ecological balance. That Wollstonecraft's ideas about duty stem from a religious ideology, suggests an important religious dimension to ideas about object relations that object-oriented ontologists would be remiss to neglect.

In "On Poetry", Wollstonecraft wrote of the desire for happiness as a flawed and harmful pursuit, which allows greed and luxury to take hold of humanity. Instead she argued that moderate, calm emotions allow reason and feeling to prosper harmoniously and produce the ultimate state of contentment. Yet happiness became a central doctrine in the philosophies of Edgeworth and Hamilton. The idea of industriousness as producing happiness is especially prominent, and it is this notion of pleasure

accompanying scenes of improvement to nature that I suggest requires further research. To 'improve' this thesis for adaptation to a monograph, I would look more closely at Edgeworth's philosophical practice as a land manager and her connection to other literary land improvers. As a writer, Edgeworth participated in the shift towards a utilitarian approach to viewing nature and industrialisation, but also advocated an affective approach to reading and learning. In 1813, Edgeworth and her father visited William Roscoe's estate to see the 4,000 acres of bogland he had improved, and Edgeworth notes in a letter to her Aunt Ruxton their shared opinion of Erasmus Darwin's botanical poetry: they agree that Darwin relies too much on "picture", and does not allow space for feeling.[6] Roscoe's own poetry, particularly his children's poem "The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast" (1802) is similar to Edgeworth's tales in combining entertaining stories about nature with a practical knowledge of the lifecycle of woodland creatures.

At the time, Richard Lovell Edgeworth was involved in the Bog Commission survey of Irish bogs for the British government, for which he wrote an influential report on bog improvement. Although the project was abandoned after 1814, probably for reasons of expense, Richard Lovell's recommendations relating to the treatment of peat, plant species, and organisation of reclaimed bog land pre-date the bog drainage schemes that took place across Ireland in the nineteenth century, and remain hugely environmentally significant today. For instance, Richard Lovell advocated keeping as much naturally-growing species as possible, to maintain the nutrients of the soil and avoid exhausting the land with imported commercial plants. That Edgeworth herself took over the estate management of Edgeworthstown after 1817, including its land improvement, points to literary and agricultural avenues of contemporary and ecological interest. Moreover, in her *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth* (1821), Edgeworth provides an extract of Richard Lovell's bog report and adds an addendum, where she adds that the drainage and cultivation of bogland allows more readily-available fuel, by providing access to peat in the middle of bogs that were previously inaccessible. In the later nineteenth century, such ideas were central to the depletion and release of carbon-emitting peat, that remains Ireland's main environmental concern.

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[6] Maria Edgeworth to Mrs Ruxton, 1813, in *Maria Edgeworth: Letters from England 1813-1844*, ed. Christina Colvin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 13.

Visiting what were once Roscoe's bogs many years later in 1830, this time by train, Edgeworth remarks that the new brickfield site that lies in its place is "far uglier" than Ireland's bogs.[7] This tussle between utility and beauty or pleasure appears frequently in Edgeworth's writing, some of which I discussed in chapter three. In her literary letter to her brother Packenham regarding her visit to Connemara, her approach to enlightened improvement is tested against the seemingly unimproveable wilds of the west. Bogs appear frequently in the letter as elusive places where death and danger lurk, recalling Byron's *Don Juan*, when soldiers must find their way through "bog and brake"; a poem which also mentions "Miss Edgeworth" and her novels.[8] In their mystery, the bogs take on a life of their own and challenge Edgeworth's conceptions of knowing and taming nature. In Connemara, the paradigm of civilisation and wilderness conflates. The Martins of Ballynahinch with whom she resides are educated, Enlightenment thinkers but also embody the otherness of the place they inhabit: their accent is unintelligible, the house is crumbling apart from the wind, the library which should be the enlightened heart of the home and connection to the rest of the world is a "dark closet".[9] Here, the power of nature refuses to be tamed, overwhelming its human inhabitants.

Elsewhere in her letters, Edgeworth explores a utilitarian approach to nature, where the sublime must accompany industry. When travelling to Mont Blanc alongside Etienne Dumont, whom she notes "loves Mont Blanc next to Bentham of all created things", she applies this combination to her description of the mountain scene:[10]

> My first impression of the country was that it was like Wales; but snow-capped Mont Blanc, visible everywhere from different points of view, distinguished the landscape from all I had ever seen before. Then the sides of the mountains, quite different from Wales indeed—cultivated with garden care, green vineyards, patches of blé de Turquie, hemp, and potatoes, all without enclosure of any kind, mixed with trees and shrubs: then the garden-cultivation abruptly ceasing—bare white rocks and fir above, fir measuring straight to the eye the prodigious border height. Between the foot of the mountain and the road spread a border-plain of verdure, about the breadth of the lawn at Black Castle between the trellis and Suzy Clarke's,

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[7] Ibid., 420.
[8] George Gordon Byron, *Don Juan* (London: J. Hunt, 1819-1824), 16, 255.
[9] Edgeworth, *A Tour in Connemara*, ed. Harold Edgeworth Butler (London: Constable, 1950), 59.
[10] Maria Edgeworth to Mrs Edgeworth, 10th August 1820, in *Maria Edgeworth in France and Switzerland: Selections from the Edgeworth Family Letters*, ed. Christina Colvin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 210.

> rich with chestnut and walnut trees, and scarlet barberries enlivening the green.[11]

Writing to her Aunt Ruxton who resides in Wales, Edgeworth paints a comparative picture for her reader to more accurately imagine the scene at Mont Blanc. In making the comparison to Wales she points out the Mont Blanc's advantages, not in terms of its beauty or sublimity, though she acknowledges earlier in the letter that the Mont Blanc sublime is beyond description, but in terms of its agricultural development. Unlike Wales, Mont Blanc is cultivated with enlightened domesticity in its "garden care" and mixed shrubbery, containing in a seamless stretch of landscape, plants like hemp for military and commercial use, a trellis of domestic plants, and ancient firs, rocks, and mountains. The scene is notable for its amalgamation of the natural and the cultivated, the useful and the sublime, without enclosure removing the variety of natural delights that bring colour, and pleasure, to the scene. That Edgeworth makes her letter about one of the most famously sublime scenes in the early nineteenth century into a point about agricultural reform is perhaps unsurprising for Edgeworth, but as part of a wider study of her agricultural ideals, it is worth considering.

Another possible avenue of research that this thesis has opened up would be to consider other women writers' use of science of mind in their discussions of nature. This thesis has not looked at writers of natural history, although a study of the Quaker Priscilla Wakefield whose botanical texts include *Mental Improvement: Or, the Beauties of Nature and Art* (1794) and the botanical books, *An Introduction to Botany, in a Series of Familiar Letters* (1796), and *An Introduction to the Natural History and Classification of Insects, in a Series of Letters* (1816), would make welcome additions. Indeed, as an educationalist and member of the Joseph Johnson circle, Wakefield has not received the same attention to her scientific, educational, and philosophical contributions as many others with whom she associated. Other writers might include Anna Seward, whose poems "Colebrooke Dale" (1784) and "To Colebrookdale" (1785) have received some ecocritical attention for their discussions of the coal industry. However, there has yet to be a wider study of Seward's environmental thought, although she often claimed to have contributed to Erasmus Darwin and Francis Mundy's poetry at Lichfield.

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[11] *The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth*, ed. Augustus C. Hare (London: Library of Alexandria, 1894), 1: 197.

Helen Maria Williams' *Tour of Switzerland* (1798) is influenced in many ways by Wollstonecraft's *Letters* and requires further exploration as a text within the tradition of environmental philosophy. I was unable to address Williams' work because of the limited scope of this project. However, her *Letters Written in France* (1790) and *Letters Containing a Sketch of the Politics of France* (1795) offer fascinating insights into the roles animals played in French Revolution, and which play on and challenge sentimental views of animals. In one episode, Williams writes of a family who was guillotined because their parrot escaped to the home of a government official and squawked "Vive le roi".[12] Only the daughter was spared death, but because animals were allowed in prisons, she kept the parrot and never spoke again, supposedly only letting the parrot speak for her. This tale opens up questions about animal instinct, human-nonhuman communication, and the political influence of animals. Another story recalls how a pet dog became an intermediary between a woman and her imprisoned husband, firstly as an affective and sensory vessel, where each one would stroke the dog, and then carrying small written messages between the two. Williams' poems "Peru" (1784) and later "Peruvian Tales" (1823), which she adapted to make more acceptable and saleable in the 1820s after losing money trying to translate Humboldt's *Personal Narrative* (1814-29) into English, also contain discussions of mining that require attention in connection to her work with Humboldt. Nigel Leask's now almost twenty year-old article on Humboldt and Williams opened up the discussion about Williams' influence on Humboldt and the sociable sensibility with which she inflected her translation for an English female audience.[13] However, Leask argued that a more substantial study of her translation needed to be done.

Women's environmental thought in this period produced – for better or worse – a discourse of uncertainty about the world they lived in and the role of human beings within it. As these networks of different eighteenth and nineteenth-century texts have shown, science of mind provided a framework for discursive philosophical thought on the moral and real consequences of the improvements to nature they witnessed in scientific, agricultural, imperial, and industrialised landscapes. Whether or not these texts were read as such in the later nineteenth or even twentieth centuries, their ideas

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[12] Helen Maria Williams, *Letters Containing a Sketch of the Politics of France* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1795), 3: 124.
[13] Nigel Leask, "Salons, Alps and Cordilleras: Helen Maria Williams, Alex von Humboldt and the Discourse of Romantic Travel", in *Women, Writing, and the Public Sphere: 1700-1830*, 217-36.

and similar continued and continue to offer useful and affective ways of thinking about the climate crisis we must deal with today.

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