

British and Other Nonhumans of the Long Nineteenth Century:
Abject Forms in Literature, Law, and Meat

By

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BA (University of Oregon) 2002
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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Comparative Literature

in the

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Acknowledgments

This project, researched over the last five years and, really, all the years before it, written in spells and chunks, streams and kernels, monumental weeks and dawdling months, would not and could not exist without the support and encouragement of many, many individuals and groups. There are more to mention than I possibly can. This besides the unbreakable debts I owe to my parents, Karl and Kathy Geier, and to four siblings of four beautiful, brilliant sorts: Elisabeth, Michael, Ben, and Jacob Geier. My grandmother, Carolyn van Praag, has been a constant source of love. Family, as a fact of coexistence I was lucky enough to broker, persists in my life and in my work through new and old connections with Geiers in the North- and the Midwest (Most often my Oregon relatives Max and Gilda, Joel and Becky, and their amazing kids) van Praags and Zelharts across California and other parts (John van Praag is a godfather of heart and commitment), and now Taylors and Johnsons thanks to a woman who saved my life forever in 2004 and agreed to be with me for its duration, Dr. Rachel Taylor Geier (more on her to come).

Certainly there have been animals who mattered, and my old dog Spencer has been a party to a lot of what I've done. I miss him often, but feeling somehow about animals also means this project has something to it. Our cat, Madeline, is quite something, and I hope we return the favor by being something for her. Kitty! At the heart of my work—and there's a heart—is shared existence over the time one can measure and recall and in other durations and persistences. That coexistence and its unpredictable forms lead me to the work, and I found in thinking through all the stages in my development to the thing that wrote this thing that the work has a long history. From my first shifts, now decades ago, as an animal docent at the Alexander Lindsay Wildlife Museum, and from the first books I read cover-to-cover like a blissed-out junkie (*1984* and Stephen King—my first 1,000-pager, the immortal *IT*), I have been preparing to produce a piece of work on animals, humans, literature, and whatever else is herein contained.

I tried several times to mention everyone who ever helped me to think, meant something to me, inspired me, challenged me, loved me, I loved, made me feel love, pissed me off, made me a better person, bought me a drink, took one out of my hands, existed, etc., etc., etc. It's simply not possible to give a proper accounting, and yet the sense of this thing is that it is right to do so. Friends from the way back like Charles Pastor, Chris Rubin, and Jim Bruce are in here, as are so many others. I'll focus these acknowledgments on those who got me to Davis or who nurtured my time and spurred the completion of this project. For all, I arrived at this fairly simple belief after trying to do justice to the life they've shared with me: Doing anything requires much, and doing something you care about requires even more; one can't do much alone, and one can hardly care without more than oneself to care for. Thanks be to all who have been with me.

That I made it to Davis is thanks to several important influences and mentors at San Francisco State University, including Saul Steier, Wai-Leung Kwok, Volken Langbehn, Mary Scott, Mike Lunine, Irene Strandenos, Sandra Luft, and my friend Dr. Robert C. Thomas, who set me on this path. Rob, I could barely be human without the time that I've known you and your sweetness.

Since I arrived at UC Davis, I have had every opportunity to explore diverse fields of inquiry and teaching, and this culminating dissertation has required every part of my Davis experience to express its fullest findings. Seminars with the excellent, world-class UC Davis faculty have

trained me as a scholar in comparative literary, cultural, and theoretical fields. The open design of the Comparative Literature degree track as it existed when I began here (“grandfathered in,” as they say) was crucial for my development across fields, periods, and genres. In particular, I must thank the Graduate Advisor during my time preparing for exams and advancing to candidacy, Sheldon Lu, who also served as my examinations chair. Sheldon also hired me to TA for him in several film classes and led a seminar on World Cinema that remains one of the most generative I’ve ever participated in. I return to its content often still, and Sheldon’s support of my interest in film studies was an important motivation of my own developing work in the field. Thanks as well to the excellent Mandy Bachman and her legendary precursor Kay Green, Graduate Program Coordinators for Comparative Literature during my time here. Mandy, as any Sproul graduate student will attest, is a constant presence in our lives and, for me personally, has been a crucial, tireless resource for everything I’ve ever needed. Falicia Savala has lent countless helping hands and was one of my favorite people to stop in for a chat with on 2 in Sproul Hall.

Thanks also to department peers and friends D Dayton, Monica Powers Keane, Josh Waggoner, Nick Sanchez, Giovanna Montenegro, Kristen Bergman Waha, Anna Einarsdottir and Magnus Snaebjoernsson, Christina Schiesari, Chris Tong and Natalie Strobach, and Elisabeth Lore, and to my other graduate cohort across the entire campus, including Gareth Love, Katja Jylkka, Elizabeth Crachiolo, Karinna Hurley, Mike Martel, Cameron Mortimer, Megan McMullan, Juan Camilo Cajigas, and Geoffrey Wildanger.

My teaching and playing in the UC Davis Extension International English Programs sustains me at all times, and I thank my hundreds of irresistibly positive and enchanted international students and softball/bowling pupils over the years, as well as the group of extraordinary teachers, administrators, and human beings I’ve been honored to work with there for the past four years.

I’m not sure I could have made out any better than to have arrived at Davis when I did, as I had the pleasure of seminar training and general elbow-rubbing with folks like David Simpson, Neil Larsen, Gerhard Richter, Jerrold Tannenbaum, Blake Stimson, Stefano Varese, David Lloyd, Nathan Brown, JoAnn Cannon, and *almost* Gail Finney (who I must thank simply for being Gail Finney and for being catalyst to the finest (now sadly defunct) Pub Quiz Team in Davis, Bill & Ted’s Excellent Adventure. Robert Kaufman welcomed me into a Berkeley seminar on Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory* that will remain. All are due great thanks, whether they remember me or not. I certainly remember them. Neil, especially, for not only the Marx but also for his sober, human approach to the academic life in these times, in these structures. David Simpson has been an especially influential and supportive presence, and I would be much less without the intellectual substance he brought to my time at Davis through his own work and teaching, as well as in hosting and enriching scintillating events with, foremost, David L. Clark and James Raven.

I pass daily through halls populated by the likes of Scott McLean, Kari Lokke and, of late, Stefan Uhlig, and I tend to bend their ear at liberty whenever I see them. I hope they haven’t minded too much, as I have gained so much from their wisdom and experience. Stefan has been especially kind in all things, and most recently in guiding me through the changes in scholarship and the resulting debates on literacy and print histories in England from the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century. Tobias Menely, another recent arrival, made the mistake of, first, having coffee with me when I rang him up and, second, sending me the proofs for his important book on the period of British animal writing and law immediately preceding the bulk of the studies

herein. Mistake, I say, in that knowing him and his work has only complicated my own by spurring it to be much better than it was. I hope. Marisol de la Cadena refuses to stop organizing spellbinding events with the best thinkers in the world, and we are all better for that. Once you're in a room with Marisol when there's thinking to be done, you'll think better from then on. Parama Roy and Roberta Millstein: Without these two excellent people, there would be no UC Davis Animal Studies Group. They always believed and supported. Thank you so much.

A number of groups and individuals helped ensure that Parama and Roberta's belief and support would be rewarded with exciting work and events in the field, including Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Ralph Hexter, Dean of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies Susan Kaiser, Adrienne Martin, The Departments of Religious Studies, Philosophy, English, and French & Italian, and the School of Veterinary Medicine. I must thank—to no end—Lynette Hart and Marty Bryant for their ongoing support of my endeavors and for making our conference in 2014, “All Things Great and Small,” a reality. Thanks also to Geoffrey Wandesforde-Smith for giving me a start (as an editor) after playfully giving Frans de Waal one (surprise!) at the conference. That conference was a culmination of the service and community foci of my professional training here at Davis, and the hundreds of attending speakers and participants from the field marked both the development and the future of the very same work inflecting this dissertation's nonhuman concern. For her support of such events and for making Sproul Hall a better place to be at all times, I thank the inimitable Naomi Janowitz, champion of the good.

I owe deep gratitude to the “Environments & Societies: History, Literature, and Justice” Mellon Research Initiative. My peers in the UC Davis graduate community arrive at Davis with a special secret awaiting them: they will get to study with *everyone* in the field thanks to the tireless work of Director Louis Warren and the Advisory Board to bring top scholars to Davis to share works in progress in our weekly seminars. In particular, I must thank my teachers Julie Sze and Mike Ziser, Co-Directors of the Initiative in a crucial year whose seminars, respectively, on Landscape & Power and Ecocriticism were foundational experiences for me. Julie and Mike have continued to support me throughout my time at Davis amidst their myriad other commitments to the campus community. This includes the research funding the Initiative granted in support of my 2013 London excursion, contributing especially to Chapters Two and Three in this work. To the Initiative, I owe my developing place in the field and my familiarity with more of its range than one could gain at just about any other institution. To Mike and Julie, I extend a very special note of thanks and appreciation. I continue to be edified by your excellent scholarship and expertise.

I was fortunate to develop portions of this work at several conferences in recent years, and I owe thanks to the UC Davis Office of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Students Association for generous travel awards beyond my department's unfailing support for my research activity while at Davis. I am grateful to the organizers of these conferences and to the incredible host of key scholars and attendees participating and offering their feedback in those settings. In particular: Miranda Burgess, David L. Clark, and Jacques Khalip for the MLA Romantic Period Division Session on “Nature” in 2014—I was criminally negligent in missing other portions of the event, but then had no choice; Kari Weil, Antoine Traisnel, and the excellent “Traffic in Animals (19th c.)” ACLA 2014 seminar group; Lynn Voskuil, David Thomas, and Chris van den Bossche, and Joe McLaughlin for excellent feedback and suggestions after my Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Conference talk in 2014; Robert McKay and Jon Miller for the exceptional

“Reading Animals” Conference at Sheffield in 2014, which drew together just about everyone in the field of Animal Studies. I am especially grateful to have connected with Stephen Eisenman and Brett Mizelle there and elsewhere, as well as with Laura Brown and many more; and the gang at SLSA 2012. And finally, I must extend a very special thanks to Harlan Weaver for the 2013 “Funny Kinds of Love” conference at UC Berkeley and for ongoing friendship, and for the chance to connect further around my work and theirs with Colin Dayan, Carla Freccero, Donna Haraway, Robert C. Jones, and a multitude of the best critters.

We’re nearing the present object now, and there is a group of good friends I’ve met in Davis without whom I never would have made it: Daphne Potts, Mike Gallegos & their dog/my niece Shay (we miss you), Brian Lockhart, Brian Young & Michele Laurenson, Brandon Winter, Andy Jones, Dianna Huculak, Jason Gilder, Colin Harris, Elena Mauli Shapiro & Harris Shapiro, Brian Davisson and Karina Zelaya, Al Klinger and Hendel Alméus, and my City of Davis Men’s D-3 League Softball Team (Wednesday nights), the Immoral Minority. WHAM!

I would have had no chance without five people at Davis. I don’t know what to say to you to thank you for your support over these years, and I couldn’t say it well enough to carry the feelings, anyhow. But at least this:

Allison Coudert grabbed me as a TA for her Ethical Eating course and hasn’t let me fall since. Allison’s incredible energy and enthusiasm for her own work and for a graduate student’s kept me talking and ensured everything I have been able to accomplish coordinating animal studies work at Davis, and all of that has gone into all of this. Thank you, Allison.

Jaimey Fisher has gifted me with opportunities to learn to teach, seminar training, and intellectual support since the beginning. He permitted me to explore to my heart’s content and provided sterling professional advice time and again. He rewarded my work with invitations to research groups and other gestures that deputize one’s intellectual substance and give a graduate student the confidence required to step forward into professional life. Thank you, Jaimey.

Jeff Fort cares about each word and its necessity for thinking in ways I hope to always be inspired by, and I hope more than a little of him has rubbed off on me, here and everywhere (my moles on 2 in Sproul tell me you’re their favorite, Jeff). Jeff has been a close advisor on the subject that has the longest “tenure” among my academic interests, critical theory, and his generosity as a teacher, translator, and reviewer affirms the heart of the critical endeavor and gives a graduate student a lucky, impossible place beside one of his idols. Thank you, Jeff.

To Juliana Schiesari and Tim Morton, co-chairs of my entire existence at Davis and now of this culminating event, I cannot say enough, and so I’ll simply say thank you, for now.

To Rachel,
You are all and we are one.

I love you.

Abstract

Theodore Edward Geier
June 2015
Comparative Literature

British and Other Nonhumans of the Long Nineteenth Century: Abject Forms in Literature, Law, and Meat

This project investigates literary expression, legal reforms and narratives, and meat production in the London city space in a comparative articulation of long nineteenth century forms of life and abjection. This begins on the subject of animals in Romantic poetry, and animals remain in focus throughout this dissertation, but the larger scope of the project examines articulations of nonhuman experience including the ways in which humans are rendered as something less human, inhuman, nonhuman, or otherwise. The “nonhuman” at the heart of this study, then, is also a consideration of the animal that once was. What results from changes in London life and prior shifts such as enclosure in England, and what is then reflected in the various literary, economic, civic, and legal revisions of the period, is a mutual destruction of animal life and human existence only defined after the fact, for example in twentieth century critical theory and modernist texts such as those by Kafka examined here. Through close analysis of the poetic and narrative forms in Romantic poetry, popular serial fiction, the works of Dickens, and Kafka’s modernism, this project shows the abiding concern with nonhuman form in daily life and in expressive modes. The literary forms attending, responding to, and then following specific London legal-historical circumstances such as the dense interspecies coexistence and mutual suffering at Smithfield Market, a central topic of study in parts of this project, produce a sustained and undeniable claim: We are, all of us, meat.

Introduction

“A condition more abject...”¹ Meat City and Nonhuman Objects

Alas! Why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings.²

This is an inquiry into the status of humans and nonhumans, including the instability of the former category, as expressed in the literary genres and constructed in the sociohistorical contexts of the long nineteenth century in England and in selected works by Franz Kafka. The “abject forms” of the title are poetic, literary, economic, legal, and then must also be social, and the primary locale of this study is the London of the nineteenth century. This begins, however, a bit afield in the performances of interspecies and aspirational “human” and humane life in Robert Burns’s enclosed Scottish pastures or in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, from which these opening passages above are taken. In the passage just before the provocative “condition more abject” in this Introduction’s title, the creature explicates in the famous response to humanity in Volume II of *Frankenstein*, to be base and vicious *appears* to be worse—more abject—than “to be a great and virtuous man.” This anthropocentric chauvinism of propriety—of civilization—grounds much English legislature on the animal in the nineteenth century and the improvement tropes of English society in the same period. The laws against animal abuse, which were the first in modern legal history, generally proceeded as arguments for the improvement of human behavior

¹ “To be a great and virtuous man appeared the highest honour that can befall a sensitive being; to be base and vicious, as many on record have been, appeared the lowest degradation, a condition more abject than that of the blind mole or the harmless worm.” Spoken by the creature. Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus*. 1818 text, ed. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf. Toronto: Broadview, 2012, p. 135.

² Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p. 116.

including the tempering of alcohol consumption and the Sunday cockfights, with the gambling and cursing that went along with them, keeping men and youths from proper church attendance. Mary Shelley's creature, however, is not referring to law or to London society, but to the status of existence it has been subjected to. The abjected experience outside human society is compared to the "blind mole" and the "harmless worm," but the final analysis of the human condition in the work is that these were misconceptions. Humanity, in practice, is a decidedly negative status, capable of every extreme atrocity and not reliably "humane," and certainly not civilized at all. Saving humanity from itself would seem a reasonable aim, as a result.

While Shelley's speculative, would-be-social nonhuman in *Frankenstein* invites thinking on the anxieties of sociation as well as on genetics and biopolitical structures of life and society, it is also part of a dense Romantic interrogation and address of nonhumans of diverse sorts. The all-too-human yet tragically nonhuman creature learns of humanity through a fortunate accident: A satchel with three books in it provides an education while it learns to speak and yearn for community by watching the DeLacey family through the window of a cottage in the woods. Thus, as the comparison to mole and worm confirms, Frankenstein's "framed," constructed monstrosity is capable of analogizing his predicament outside human society with the nonhuman status of, well, nonhumans. This is because his aesthetic distance—outside the domestic space he romanticizes, where things *seem* to be—is also his ontological distance. The demands of performing and verbalizing community participation he can meet; the task of appearing to be human, he cannot. *Frankenstein* is particularly generative for a consideration of the inhuman and the nonhumanness of the human that dominates later work, including the works of Franz Kafka about one hundred years later, and that lineage will be important at various points of the present study. Other Romantics, as I'll discuss in Chapter One, found all manner of nonhuman address

besides these deeply human existential concerns.³ The comparative logic—animals to humans, humans to animals—grounds the “apparent” and deeply ironic definition and evaluation of humanity in the passages from *Frankenstein*. And as this project will investigate throughout, the insufficiency of that comparison and the ways in which “brute” analogies impede empathy and sincerity, which is the further topic of *Frankenstein* and for a multitude of Romantic works, are part of broader London conditions at the Smithfield Market and elsewhere. The nonhuman coexistence of humans and animals, diseases and filth, water and corpses in London’s long nineteenth century is a primary concern of the project’s findings, though as civic reform advances on the heels of animal concern and Smithfield Market criticisms, the “meat factory” status of urban life and legal subjection is addressed in later fiction by Dickens that relates as well to the “post-Smithfield” articulations of nonhuman conditions in modernist works by Kafka as well as in the attending serial fiction of the London mass audience from the Penny presses. This dissertation considers these various yet integral literary forms of the nonhuman while also accounting for the cultural history of meat production and animal status in London.

There is strong tradition in Romantic literature that does not simply interrogate the nonhumanness of humanity in a reflexive project of the improved subject. That other tradition is often discussed as a sympathetic animal concern, and I will be particularly interested in the general mode of apostrophe—addressing the nonhuman—and its prospects for interspecies community in Romantic works. But I’d like to be clear up front about the project’s divergence

³ Two recent edited volumes provide the contemporary reader with formal aesthetic addresses of the question of animal life and of life, more generally, as they turn up in Romantic period works. See: Heymans, Peter. *Animality in British Romanticism: The Aesthetics of Species*. London: Routledge, 2012 and Wilson, Ross, ed. *The Concept of “Life” in Romantic Poetry and Poetics*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

from a serious, committed “animal rights” study, as there will be lots of dead meat and fun and games throughout, befitting the period’s incredibly popular cultural modes and amusements like the public hanging and the Penny Dreadful or other boys’ adventures. The sincere animal concern of many Romantic works, as well as the animal law reform of the nineteenth century, will certainly be addressed, and their great success acknowledged alongside an important critique of how the specific animal concern activism addressing slaughter and meat production led, in fact, to the expanded and streamlined mass killing of meat animals at Smithfield and after its removal from the city center. That form of “life” is the crucial node between Romantic nonhumans and modern urban nonhumans articulated in the works of Dickens and Kafka. But unlike a number of studies on Romantic animal literatures and Dickens’s social novels, my focus will not be a remarking on and beseeching for moral compartments as a result of these expressions of interspecies suffering. Nor will I devote extensive time to the longer, wider traditions of animal concern and nonhuman thought outside the Angolophone contexts at the heart of this study. Those are tasks for another time and another project. Instead, I will focus specifically on the literary forms and the legal structuration of subjectivity, such that they meditate on, articulate, and experiment with the fact and expression of abjection throughout the long nineteenth century. This means, then, that popular sensations like public hangings and serial, “non literary” fiction hold equal footing with canonical animal rights law like Martin’s Act 1822 and with canonical literature like Romantic literature, Charles Dickens, and Franz Kafka.⁴ Ultimately, the point of comparative constellation in the project is the lucid persistence of nonhumans as legal, economic, and literary subjects—targets, perhaps, would be a better way to frame these objects of address and consideration—administered in the forms of legal process,

⁴ The Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act of 1822, commonly known as Martin’s Act, is widely acknowledged as the first major, modern law on animal welfare.

production and consumption, and then in the poetics and narrative forms of the works attending the historical circumstances of the long nineteenth century, particularly for the British and other nonhumans trafficked to, through, and in London.

As an entry point to such a “democratic” consideration of nonhumans and nonhuman concerns in the period, consider Robert Burns’s “To a Haggis.” The haggis becomes a heroic actor, addressed in a spirited ritual ode now recited on Burns Night (January 25, the date of Burns’s birth) but fit for any meal of a haggis. The speaker says “O” twice, in both instances addressing the speaker’s own aesthetic experience: “O what a glorious sight” and “O how unfit!”⁵ The haggis is, however, directly addressed and interpellated as a “royal” coexistent actor via direct address as animals and other nonhumans often are in Romantic works: “Great Chieftain o’ the Puddin-race!”⁶ The meat object, actually an assemblage of oats, sheep’s organs, onions, and spices encased in a sheep’s stomach in the tradition Burns would have addressed, is the occasion for the ode on national identity. The closing asserts the rich, savory haggis’s role in national pride:

Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu’ pray’r,
Gie her a *Haggis*!⁷

Here “skinking ware that jaups in luggies” refers to vibrant, sugary foodstuffs (skinking ware) rolling or sloshing around (jauping) in formal vessels (luggies—handled bowls one can “lug” food about in), bereft of filling proteins and the hearty, savory, irony, salted tastes of the haggis mix. “Auld Scotland,” Burns’s frequent subject as the acknowledged Bard of Scotland, prefers

⁵ Burns, “To A Haggis,” ll. 17 & 36, *Selected Poems and Songs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 134-135. The Oxford edition notes deem the poem “mock-heroic” at points, but the heroic ode form, irony or not, is clearly employed in the task. See: Burns, p. 335.

⁶ Burns, p. 134, l. 2.

⁷ Burns, p. 135, ll. 45-48.

something of more character, and if you want “her” to respond to your address, best gie her a haggis. One would likely hear no response but “haggis,” incidentally, in an informal poll of American notions of Scottish cuisine.

Burns’s 1787 poem suggests the weighty role of meat and meat consumption under consideration in this project while also opening onto a key formal concern in Chapter One, the apostrophe, yet at least partially resisting the anthropomorphic turn. The haggis is not animated as a character that “responds” to the speaker, but Scotland could be. Lewis Carroll’s 1865 and 1871 works on Alice, on the other hand, are excellent examples of the animation of nonhumans in British literature through the century. Consider, especially, the riotous final banquet scene when Alice I queen, just before waking, and the Red Queen’s sulking adherence to etiquette and formality as Alice meets the meal:

“You look a little shy: let me introduce you to that leg of mutton,” said the Red Queen. “Alice—Mutton: Mutton—Alice.” The leg of mutton got up in the dish and made a little bow to Alice: and Alice returned the bow, not knowing whether to be frightened or amused.⁸

Next, the Red Queen refuses Alice’s offer to cut her a slice, saying “very decidedly: ‘it isn’t etiquette to cut any one you’ve been introduced to.’”⁹ And later, after Alice tries her hand at sovereignty and recalls a pudding dismissed by the Red Queen after another “Alice—[object]: [Object]—Alice” introduction, she cuts a slice, less shy now about her address of foodstuffs. The pudding is, naturally, not amused:

“What impertinence!” said the pudding. “I wonder how you’d like it, if I were to cut a slice out of *you*, you creature!”

It spoke in a thick, suety sort of voice, and Alice hadn’t a word to say in reply: she could only sit and look at it and gasp.

⁸ Carroll, Lewis. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. New York: Penguin, 1998, p. 229.

⁹ Carroll, pp. 229-230.

“Make a remark,” said the Red Queen: “it’s ridiculous to leave all the conversation to the pudding!”¹⁰

Mute wonder or bewilderment are common tropes of Romantic works, among which *Alice* would not likely be classed. The raucous “nonsense” of Carroll’s children’s literature, whatever “children’s” literature is to suggest in the case of such a dexterous, rich experiment in literary imagination, formal, and linguistic play, lacks the seriousness of the canonical Romantic works. Then again, Burns, never left out of the Romantic circle, is every bit as playful and ridiculous in his patriotic lauding of the haggis. And in fact, the address of meat in both works bookend the other forms of address—of meat and meat animals—that will take up much of this study. What Burns and Carroll assert for the project, and what I include at the outset as a sort of friendly gesture before what is, frankly, a gruesome tale, is the spirited heart about which so many of the works and concerns examined revolve and upon which they all depend. But measuring “heart” or moral intent in a formal literary historical study is quite the wrong approach, one is told, and so perhaps it will suffice as a gesture to further work yet to come.



Tenniel’s image of the mutton bowing to Alice.¹¹

¹⁰ Carroll, p. 230.

¹¹ Carroll, p. 230. Image source:

<http://www.grandmasgraphics.com/graphics/tenniel/ttlg/ttlg284.jpg>

This study will at times address institutionalized legal addresses of nonhumans, moving ultimately to a markedly different context by implicating the legal fiction of Dickens and Kafka in the tasks of interrogating and salvaging nonhuman forms of life from the ravages of the human forms and structures by which the abjected remainders show up—appear—as lesser life forms fit to be tied, beaten, enslaved, slaughtered, eaten, and worse. It will also examine the ways in which the live animal is summarily erased from London city space in the nineteenth century, and the meat animal—whatever that is to mean—is erased twice over in being produced and processed in the shimmering efficiencies of the massive public slaughterhouses that develop by the latter half of the century. No one encounters the animal that gave the food in the city as the city itself copes with its new intensities of population, technology, and as I'll also suggest in the course of this study, literacy.

At the center of these inquiries, again, is the question of form: literary, legal, object, and others. The meat of London, like the pulp of its most popular cultural forms in the nineteenth century, is one such form of life, as well, and one that complicates the notion of life and not-life in the husbandry and labor division rhetorics underpinning meat industry developments leading to a major civic reform, the Smithfield Removal Act of 1852. There is a strong, direct lineage from apostrophe and the broad social concern of the period that also produced England's well known early animal rights. This, in turn, inflected Smithfield removal debates with an apparent logic of sympathy and animal rights even as the operative causes were vastly more complex and economically motivated. The Smithfield meat form, already established as a manufactured meat article or object form long before in English animal husbandry and distribution systems in London, paralleled London civic experience reflected in the gruesome, dangerous, bloody tales driving much literary production in cheap serials and the more conventionally "literary" forms of

expensive works by Dickens, as well. Animal rights, which contributed to human slaughter reforms, led only to the easier, more efficient systematization of meat animal production and disassembly. Animal rights contributed to mass, technological animal slaughter. One curious industrial parallel of nineteenth century London, or perhaps not so surprising at all, is that of the mass production, distribution, and consumption of “cheap” literature and meat alike. The legal forms that bred the erasure of life in the evolved slaughter practice had their counterpart in an equally butchered Penny Blood and Dreadful literary form defined by mass, anonymous production, fungible characters and storylines, sensationalism, and general butchery and criminal types in the dark, dirty London city center. Authors such as Dickens and Kafka both interrogated city space and bureaucratic institutions as parallel structures producing the abject, alienated subjects at the heart of the chapter studies herein.

Romantic authors expressed clear concern for animals, which contributed to the period’s historic animal rights activism. These authors were preoccupied with the failures and challenges of human expression, interspecies communication, and collective suffering under political and economic forces, as shown in poetic works with animal actors like Burns’s “To A Mouse” and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “To A Young Ass,” as well as in the expanded community of nonhuman actors in Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and William Blake’s *Book of Thel*. The fractured yet hopeful expressions of shared, nonhuman abjection and unspeakable suffering, which are explicated in Chapter One at the level of poetic form, also target the inhumanity of metropolitan life in the period, as Edgar Allen Poe’s “Man of the Crowd” perhaps best typifies, and it is especially pronounced at the Smithfield Market. Smithfield and its butchers were targets of civic reform and sympathy movements responding to the social and animal concern in Romanticism and the Victorian period, but that “efficient” slaughter and animal management

practices produce an even more horrible erasure of animal life through meat production and, in conjunction with other urban concerns, contributed to the visceral yet anonymous experiences that dominate the most popular and economically accessible works of the mid- to late-nineteenth century available to the British reading public, the Penny Dreadfuls and Bloods. This includes *Sweeney Todd*, a story that was part of the penny serial *The String of Pearls* and that comments on the mistrust of meat and the City Centre near Smithfield. Dickens also documented this urban malaise as it relates to animals and other nonhumans, including a Smithfield scene in *Oliver Twist* I examine in relation to the meat market in Chapter Two and at other points in relation to Dickens's broad critique of London life and city space in Chapters Three and Four. This final chapter of this study examines the deep bureaucratic abjection in Dickens's novel on the Chancery Court, *Bleak House*, and the legal and bureaucratic horrors Franz Kafka rearticulates in modernist forms in *The Trial* and other works. This comparison shows precisely how futile those practical reform efforts and bureaucratic reorganizations of civic life were and how decisively aesthetic expression from Romanticism through modernism returns as a necessary, if troubled, address of deep social concerns. The project thus tracks the nineteenth-century revision of human chauvinisms at the level of literary form through gruesome themes and material forms in a multi-genre literary history.

The study of Romanticism in this project considers the problems of human, animal, and collective nonhuman suffering at the levels of both form and content to suggest a specific corpus of nonhuman aesthetics in Romantic literature that then must be read as an historical precursor to a still-progressing cultural project. This is directly related to the early animal rights movement in England, which was among a number of other social reform movements including public

education and literacy reforms that led to the massive new reading public the pennies fed.¹² In the Smithfield Market reform and removal process, the best intentions of the reformers succeeded in taking animal suffering on a grand, public scale out of the City Centre. The resulting meat production and distribution process was certainly quieter and less directly experienced by Londoners, but this only deferred the full negotiation of the encroaching horrors of administered life in the city. Londoners—human, animal, and otherwise—had all become nonhuman objects rendered not simply permeable by newly discovered organisms and diseases, but also ecologically interconnected in ways that undo concepts of individuality altogether and produce the unspeakable, nameless horrors dominating not only Romantic literatures of the nonhuman but also the most widely-consumed literary forms of the day, including journalism and especially the Penny Dreadful serial press.

The animals now erased from Londoners' daily lives suffer the clearest version of this nonhuman administration: meat animals in London in the nineteenth century become manufactured articles transported efficiently and constantly to processing plants—slaughterhouses that become public abattoirs post-Smithfield in London—and stripped of any animal status. Animals become manufactured meat objects in this period, in no uncertain terms. This study establishes the clear and damning complicity of animal rights and civic reform, including public education, with that status. It also demonstrates the literary engagements with shared suffering and nonhuman status, as well as the dilution of life's value the most widely read

¹² There is a robust literature on literacy rates and reading publics leading up to and through the nineteenth century, including John Klammer's *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* portions of J. Paul Hunter's *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth Century English Fiction* and Richard D. Altick's *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*. There is some debate on the methods used to ascertain literacy rates (Louis James, author of several essential works on penny fiction referenced in this project, refers to the use of marriage certificate signatures since reconsidered as conclusive bases) but general agreement on the rapid and major increase.

and widely accessible (cheapest) literatures of the period, the pennies, promoted at times. Pennies like *Sweeney Todd*, however, can also show that these literatures were not wholly complicit in these shifts, and were in fact on equal ground with Romantics and with Dickens and Kafka in expressing the deep, alien horrors of the new urban life and the *trouble* with meat. The literatures examined in this project comment on challenges like the Smithfield problem through committed, but troubled, attempts to recuperate nonhuman objects from the status modern life enforced upon them. One important link between this nonhuman concern and broader “animal studies” approaches to nonhuman concern is this abjection and suffering shared across species and reflected in Romantic literature before the dense social novels of Dickens and the alienating strangeness of Kafka’s modernism.

It is worth considering how such concern inflects practical action and cultural expression, perhaps then reconfiguring this supposed division in important ways. In contemporary animal studies, the stakes of historical study and critical inquiry invariably cross over into ethical territories. The field, as a general rule, is answering some version of the question “What is to be done?” This question is posed to the problem of animal use and abuse in human society, and while animal studies might certainly expand beyond this current form, it generally has not. Theoretical manifestations of the approach might explore the biology and rhetoric of animality and the lack of difference between species (such that it might preclude unequal treatment across species lines). Such approaches, however, share some common critical perspective on human behavior—the behavior may indeed be differentiation or judgment—that needs remedying.¹³ As

¹³ The hallmark texts of animal studies as an ethical project include, certainly, Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation* and ought to also include Rachel Caron’s *Silent Spring* given her focus on animal suffering wrought by human activity, though this latter is typically considered more to be an early environmentalist text. Some readers will not intuit a significant difference on this point, and the division of environmental and animal studies is a topic for a separate project. Regardless,

a result, a literary study of animals and nonhuman thought risks a similarly strict course both in execution and in reception.

This study generally resists such a narrow definition of “animal” studies, and thus may not properly fit the category. The project’s positive program is to start with the nonhuman thought in British Romantic literature to establish a coherent lineage of aesthetic expressions of the animal and of other nonhumans, and in this regard it has a place within the field of animal studies, to be sure. But the term “nonhuman thought” implies something else. While it shares the task of thinking about and critically addressing the nature and fate of animals, nonhuman thought also considers humans made somehow now—or less—human by increased velocities and impacted urban existences. It also considers a vast complex of other nonhumans such as the polluted Thames River and the City Centre of London, which both interact with humans and other animals in the period to articulate the conditions of life informing the aesthetic expression examined in this study. Such a study must also negotiate the myriad troubles with a concept like the human in the first place, a problem that dominates canonical Romantic works such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and is taken up again by Kafka after Dickens and committed realist authors attempting to recuperate humans from their own social, urban undoing in London. In this regard, it certainly owes a debt to concepts of the posthuman even as it proceeds, as a rule, through different methodologies than identifying and testing theories against the object of study at the heart of the project.¹⁴

the incredible recent interest in “animal studies” and the nonhuman turns throughout cultural history (beyond the well-established Anglophone contexts and theoretical precursors) continue to reiterate the need to work against anthropocentrism in some form.

¹⁴ On posthumanism, see especially Cary Wolfe’s *What is Posthumanism?* and also the lengthier consideration of human and animal status across his work and the works of Donna Haraway. As a theoretical address of chauvinistic frames that support institutional, even ontological, preconceptions about the use and treatment of other lives, these works fit neatly in the twentieth

Nonhuman thought thus shares important aspects with approaches such as posthumanism and biopolitics. Cary Wolfe, in articulating both the priority and posterity of posthumanism—before AND after humanism—presents posthumanism as a confluence of 1. the fact of technicized life (where technology can even be the thinking apparatus, a mode he borrows from Heidegger and others); 2. The revision of humanism’s hard binaries of Nature/Culture, Human/Animal, Reason/Feeling, etc.; and 3. A critical subjectivity oriented toward its futurity yet committed to demolishing concepts of perfectibility, authenticity, or essence that actually deny the continuance or further thriving of the very critical tools that invented such a concept in the first place.¹⁵ What this model adds to the current project is at least one rendition of key concerns in the cultural history of meat and London and the literary expression of those conditions. What it does not do is gather those historical conditions together in direct readings of the expressive modes of the period to present a thick study of the conditions from which terms such as “biopolitics” and “posthumanism” resulted as reflective terminologies in the first place, and so as a general rule, this study will not be concerned with adopting critical terms—excellent and useful, as Wolfe’s certainly are, or otherwise—to retitle or reframe the materials of the inquiry.

There will be several points, however, at which such a theoretical inquiry leads to necessary comparative frames for these conditions, and especially in the case of Chapter Four and the discussion of Frankfurt School critical theory as an articulation of the forms of

century cultural theoretical modes addressing other forms of inequality and mass suffering. In general, this project addresses specific nineteenth century London manifestations of any such cultural projects, but the dense entanglement of cultural history and the history of political, social, economic, and existential consciousness founded in the Theory developing through and in the wake of the world wars is always in mind.

¹⁵ See, in particular, Wolfe’s Introduction to *What is Posthumanism?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

administered life Kafka and Dickens negotiate in their now canonical legal novels. The exploration of the material London histories attending literary history during and after Romanticism, through popular penny fiction and Dickens's London novels, and culminating in Kafka's post-realist form of nonhuman thought, relates in important ways to a theoretical undertaking of animality, humanity, and nonhumans. The resulting picture of nonhuman expression through key, massive moments in animal history, the consumption patterns in a specific historical context that also frames the literary modes examined, and interspecies coexistence, suggests, as it turns out, not-so-new but no less vital approaches to thinking nonhumans well.

This casting of nonhumans, if it is intent upon a successful or coherent expression, then might also be said to express how very *unwell* humans had become, were still becoming, and perhaps were always going to be. This implies a concern for the subjects of literary expression, in the case of the animals and nonhumans in Romantic literature. Certainly, the social novels of Dickens reflect intense practical concern with the London he confronted. They are called "social" novels because of their social critique, after all.¹⁶ In the historical frame, animals in the Romantic and Victorian London receive their own critical attention in the form of a burgeoning animal rights movement and parliamentary protections. Even in a gruesome popular story like *Sweeney Todd*, the actions of the demon barber are presented as scintillating criminal mysteries to be solved, stopped, and punished. Their initial use as a lurid entertainment was no longer up for moralizing debate, and so the worst anyone could do was name them what they are still named today: "dreadful" and "blood(y)." The resolution of the story, however, does not condone

¹⁶ Much Dickens scholarship seems to take this aspect of his writing as a generic marker. One comprehensive study of the social novel and Dickens's development of the genre is Louis Cazamian's *The Social Novel in England: 1830-1850*. London: Routledge, 1973.

murder or cannibalism, though both are crucial, so to speak, to the story's vibrancy. While the Penny Dreadfuls and Bloods deal in horror and savage butchery, they do so generally in a build up to horrible climax, discovery, and resolution of the dangerous criminal element. And so all of the literatures attending Smithfield Market's economic and legal motions through the mid-nineteenth century can be said to share a social ethics and a lineage of animal concern back to Romantic literature.¹⁷

Romantic nonhuman thought presciently attempts to negotiate the rigors of nonhuman conditions in reflexive formal modes such as apostrophe. After Romanticism, Victorian period literatures such as the realist social novel and the penny serials employ techniques such as the objective documentary form of print journalism and the prose of Dickens. The pennies, like Dickens, were published in serial form but were much cheaper than the works of Dickens and printed on cheaper paper, besides. This penny serial form was thus an inherently disposable form, and the works themselves were often shared by multiple readers in local reading communities.¹⁸ Penny press serials also traded in equally "cheap," disposable literary techniques and devices, and even outright plagiarism of Dickens and others. These Victorian forms in turn amplify the objective and clinical yet grotesque, nonhuman conditions of city life and meat production. Meat production, which would otherwise be called animal management and use, was reformed in the middle of the nineteenth century in response to hygiene and civic traffic issues,

¹⁷ The intersection of animal rights and Romantic literature is addressed in Chapter One, including the separate studies by Christine Kenyon-Jones and David Perkins on the period.

¹⁸ Scholarship on the pennies is a developing field, and the excellent new digital project and collaborative work group *Price One Penny*, of which I am a member, has gathered several extant overviews of this and other aspects of period audience practices. For further information, see especially Louis James's *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850* and *Penny dreadfuls and boys' adventures: the Barry Ono Collection of Victorian popular literature in the British Library* by Elizabeth James and Helen R. Smith.

among other concerns, but only replaced an existing urban human-nonhuman coexistence with a renewed, mutually vacant ecology of demolished, anonymous fungibility in the disposable forms of literature and life in the city that meat animals, erased from their live market existence in London before 1852, were relegated to. These London conditions inform both the Victorian literary forms examined while also ushering in the mass, sublime dominations and administrations of life that Kafka's proto-modernism responds to by formally undoing narrative authority and subjective consistency while thematically exploring the nonhuman condition. In comparing legal fictions by Dickens and Kafka and re-examining the legal history of animals and the Smithfield Market, while also considering market and slaughter reform economic and political histories of butchers and other tradesmen, it becomes clear that the bureaucratic and objective solutions to nonhuman conditions, which may in other cases be called "inhuman," fail practically as well as formally, in literature, by producing a sterile, invisible, meaty object where something that could be called "animal" once existed. The literary and economic forms of this long nineteenth century nexus produce the abjected other precisely at the points that most aggressively employ the philosophical and legal rhetorics meant to preserve individual lives against such exclusionary, horrifying logics.

Romantic literature is often considered an early environmental form, and animals such as Coleridge's ass in "To A Young Ass," Burns's mouse in "To A Mouse," or Clare's birds in multiple works on birds and nests, have been written on at length as part of a broad appreciation for the period's prescient thinking on human-nonhuman coexistence.¹⁹ Rather than

¹⁹ Canonical "ecocritical" approaches to Romantic literature include Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology*, and the period's development of natural history as well as population and agrarian studies theories, including the controversial work of Malthus and the more progressive work of Godwin, portray a broadly "environmental" concern as a period marker of sorts. See as well

revisit Romanticism as an environmental literature, it seems time to work through the specific modes of thinking nonhumans in select works including those three, Mary Shelley, Robert Blake, Edgar Allen Poe, and others in order to articulate a fuller sense of the period's attempts to negotiate troubling suspicions about the categories of human/nonhuman and the deep horror of coexistence. Poe's "The Man of the Crowd," for example, makes clear the urban malaise in modern population density and work life while also commenting on the sustained indeterminacy of that life. In this story, the indeterminacy is primarily on the level of time—the new gas lamps and ceaseless activity through the night in the city breeds new humans with neurotic, obsessive habits of asocial proximity with one another. A number of Romantic authors explored similar concepts of terrible intimacy and inconsistent subjectivities under new labor and political systems that kept humans preoccupied with individuality yet frustrated in efforts to articulate their identities or communicate with others. Such is the case of Victor and the creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and the creeping horror of proximity, terrifying contact, and supernatural strangeness in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* or William Blake's haunting *Book of Thel* also reflect this concern in Romantic literature.

Romantic nonhumans and the gathering uncertainty about human life leads to attempts to grapple with the stakes for nonhumans once humans have been, for lack of a better term, dethroned on the great chain of being. In this regard, little seems to have changed from the anthropocentric "improvement" paradigms of even much intensely committed nonhuman advocacy.²⁰ One of the great ironies of the animal rights movement in early and mid-nineteenth

Kevin Hutchings's "Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies," in *Literature Compass* Vol. 4, No. 1 (2007), pp. 172-202.

²⁰ Although this project will consider select eighteenth century contexts in some depth as they relate to the Smithfield environment and its role in London civic order, it will not deal at length with the eighteenth century origins of the various British sympathy movements. It is worth

century London is that Richard Martin, besides being the author of the single most recognized animal rights act in parliamentary history, was also a diligent pamphlet activist at Smithfield Market alongside the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The irony lies in the outcome of the successful efforts by Smith, the RSPCA, and by a host of other civic actors with their own interests besides animal welfare at the teeming live animal market in London's heart. The market was indeed removed from its prominent location just outside St. Bartholomew's Church and just outside the City Centre walls, but what then followed was the complete erasure of the live animal body from the meat production and trafficking process and the clinical manufacture of food object and meat parts still in place today. One of the greatest achievements of the greatest heroes of animal rights in the modern world was, in fact, a hallmark in the evolution of an even more emotionless, anonymous, and anthropocentric use of animals. In effect, the most forcefully argued legal accomplishments in animal rights, which were clearly addressed to human interlocutors as calls for the reformed treatment of animals and the improvement of human behavior, appear in retrospect to have been an anthropocentric moralist discourse detached entirely from the real material outcomes of the activism and sincere animal concern. This legal and civic history at Smithfield, in particular, shows a clear success for the animal rights activists but an atrocious failure for the broader project of improving animals' chances at life—the reform of meat production and slaughter practices constitute the welfarist

noting that several publications arose in the early formation of what would become the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and these periodicals, *The Animal's Friend* and *The Voice of Humanity* carried on the logic of sympathy movements while arguing, as Richard Martin and Lord Erskine would on the floor of Parliament, that animal concern was effectively a practical marker of general civility and propriety. The history of animal rights debates in the period and the proposed and ratified acts themselves are critical of drinking, gambling, and other “low,” “mean,” and “brute” habits of the lower and criminal classes abusing animals throughout the London streets. Hilda Kean's *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain Since 1800* reviews these publications, and the previously mentioned work of Perkins and Kenyon-Jones also review Martin and the RSPCA.

approach to animals that maintains the anthropocentric entitlement to using and killing animals while attempting also to assert a claim on humane treatment of those objects of use. The fact of the animal's death, in this form, is thus ruled out a priori as a relevant consideration. It is assured. The death of the animal is the guarantee that renders its life irrelevant yet, in the case of the welfarist position, the focus of treatment before the unceremonious and perfunctory death that enables meat to become meat.²¹

While the legal history of animal rights at Smithfield and in other contexts is fraught with repeated failures and impediments, there is rarely such a thing as a “negative history” of animal rights like the preceding synopsis of the Smithfield case suggests. Martin's Act remains a pivotal moment in a long march to animal rights not only in British contexts but also in the United States, and, as historian Hilda Kean notes, Richard Martin's work to clear the city center of the public spectacle of animal cruelty was seen as part of “a modern, city-based society disengaging itself from a former barbarity.”²² That work was successful, and the removal of the sites of cruelty at Smithfield and elsewhere around the city were part of a broader civic reorganization. Market reforms including the transition from open air street markets to controlled, enclosed spaces across the city were part of stronger regulation of public space and, as Robyn Metcalfe has documented in her history of Smithfield, “of a growing acknowledgment of the government's duty to protect public interests such as free trade, public safety, access to food and public health.”²³ As Metcalfe also notes, however, the city's residents were already reacting to a constant sense of upheaval amidst rampant civic construction and restructuring projects, and the

²¹ Taking here the generally agreed-upon sense of animal welfarism as the industrial husbandry and food animal practice of protecting animals from “unnecessary” suffering but still affirming the human use of animals for food and other purposes. A welfare unto death, in other words.

²² Kean, p. 61.

²³ Metcalfe, Robyn. *Meat, Commerce, and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012, p. 84.

activity in the first half of the nineteenth century “eroded any sense of permanence in the neighborhood and portended a questionable future that prevented new businesses and tenants from putting down roots in Smithfield.”²⁴ The increased density of urban population and the impacted spaces of city life had already begun to negatively affected people’s sense of their own existence and future status. The City’s administrative tendencies now also threatened the sense of life in the City.

Thus it is that the fate of animal lives protected by some parts of early animal law was that they were never saved from their fate as meat for human consumption—quite the contrary, in fact. Smithfield reform debates and the eventual removal of the market were precisely directed toward improving meat production efficiency for an increased demand for meat from an exponentially increasing urban population.²⁵ At the time of the Smithfield debates, widespread criticism of the cruelty of cattle drovers, butchers, and other agents at the market fueled public sentiment and parliamentary action to reform Smithfield. Martin and the RSPCA, in the pages of the periodical *The Animal’s Friend* as well as in pamphlets distributed in London, ultimately abetted civic interests the butchers opposed, leading to the smooth-running, centralized, and institutionalized administration of the meat industry. Martin and other animal cruelty activists, in presenting individual agents such as cabbies and butchers as the villains in the plight of animals at Smithfield, succeeded in taking the public spectacles of cruelty out of the public domain and hiding them away in the gleaming new Metropolitan slaughter works at Islington.

²⁴ Metcalfe, p. 83.

²⁵ Metcalfe’s book makes this point several times, often invoking the singular work of Richard Perren in tracking meat animal transport and meat consumption numbers in the period. See, in particular: Metcalfe, pp. 33-47. See also: Perren, Richard. *The Meat Trade in Britain, 1840-1914*. London: Routledge, 1978; and Rixson, Derrick. *The History of Meat Trading*. Nottingham: Nottingham University Press, 2000, pp. 279-84.

This gruesome irony of the Smithfield debate animal rights activism was prefigured in the Romantic fixation on frustrated yet intricate addresses of animals. Romantic concern for animals was sincere, yet the lingering sense of life's precarious status in the face of new arrangements such as enclosure inflects Romantic literature on human and animal suffering with the same frustrating uncertainty the civic reforms in London would later inflict upon residents near Smithfield and elsewhere. Romantic authors, however, were more skeptical about the effectiveness of rational administrative authority than London civic planners and parliament would be later in the nineteenth century. They incorporated their critiques of the instability of human representations and addresses of animal suffering in their work. Burns's poetics in particular, as the chapter on Romantic literature shows, show how attempts to address, represent, or advocate for animals risk regular failure and that the form of address itself, as a human construction, may well be the primary cause of such failure. Nevertheless, Burns's speaker attempts to protect the mother mouse turned up by his plow in the poem from the cruelty of human society: "Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me / The present only touches thee: / But och! I backward cast my e'e. / On prospects drear!" My evaluation of this poem in its entirety in Chapter One will articulate Burns's articulation of the human-nonhuman relation and his sense of the governing difference between species here.

This difference, and any adherence to its ontological primacy in considerations of the animal, may not measure up to contemporary animal studies frameworks and certainly reminds of Martin Heidegger's "poor in world"—*weltarm*—animals from *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*.²⁶ In "To A Mouse," Burns expresses the shared

²⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, p. 177.

economic subjection of a human and a mouse. The agrarian plowman speaker has lost the British commons to enclosure and expanded private property concepts in the early Romantic period. In *The Making of the English Working Class*, E.P. Thompson discusses the period of 1790-1830 as the period in which field workers were the largest single working class in England. The period of 1780-1840 is the slightly longer period in which most, and eventually all, public land rights are lost to private land title and fenced off agricultural land, resulting in massive waves of migration from country to city centers.²⁷ In Scotland, Burns's country, Highland Clearance enclosure was especially brutal. Removing tenants from land that had been consolidated under the title of wealthy landowners was often violent and came on little—if any—notice. This is reflected directly in “To A Mouse,” and resonates deeply with the later urban afflictions that dominate Victorian era literature also commenting on new, alienating forms of life. Hard divisions of town and country, organic and technological, do not capture the status of life in question, as such, despite being essential poles in the historical circumstances behind enclosure and population shifts from rural to urban areas. Burns seems quite aware of the insufficiency of human/animal or town/country divisions in the poem, as reflected in the poem's meditation on the circumstances that have found him in his country home but that show precisely how entangled all nodes of the British economic and legal communities were.

The speaker of the poem addresses a mother mouse whose nest is turned up by the speaker's plow. The poem's stunted apostrophe—the speaker cannot converse with the mouse,

²⁷ See in particular “The Field Labourers,” in Thompson, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Vintage, 1963, pp. 213-33. See as well John Barrell's study of Clare's poetry, which includes essential discussions of enclosure: *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972. Thanks to David Simpson for a nod toward this text (and much more!) in his comments on one of my first papers on Romantic literature and meat production/consumption, years ago.

only catalogue her behavioral signs while reflecting on his own condition at first—suggests that grand individual failures like the reverent addresses to the natural world in much Romantic poetry are still emphatic and substantive subjective expressions. Such addresses are examined in further detail in Chapter One, which also delineates the differences between such addresses. The speaker’s address to the cliffs and islands of Winander in Wordsworth’s “There Was a Boy,” for example, eulogizes a deceased boy and shares the lamentation in a community with the mute features of the nonhuman world. The boy, whose life the speaker narrates, used to try to communicate with the owls by mimicking their sounds, and they would respond to him, according to the speaker.

In comparison with Burns’s “To A Mouse,” Wordsworth’s poem lacks direct political engagement. The poem discloses the boy’s death and constructs a final stanza of mourning. The mute fact of his death and the strong effect that death had on the speaker is punctuated by the speaker’s final disclosure that, in the churchyard where the grave is, “A long half-hour together I have stood / Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!”²⁸ Wordsworth thus constructs a personal, individuated suffering in reflective remembrance Burns’s poem has a precise political aspect. The speaker and the mouse in the poem are separated, like the speaker from his object of address, the natural world in “There Was a Boy.” The deep sadness of Burns’s speaker recognizing the inevitable fate mice and men share is similar to the harrowing conclusion of the Wordsworth poem. And yet Burns’s poem goes much further than Wordsworth’s and expresses an excruciating condition of subjected, and in fact abjected, coexistence in mutual suffering—the mouse due to human agrarian use of land and the plowman under enclosure. Wordsworth’s poem

²⁸ Wordsworth, William. “There Was a Boy,” in Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1800*, ed. Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter. Toronto: Broadview, 2008. 1800 edition, Vol. II, ll. 33-34, p. 299.

is not concerned with the material forces afflicting humans and animals with precise forms of economic subjection. And Wordsworth's speaker performs a sort of self-abjection, stopping the poem in its closing stanza with an aggressive volta to the post mortem "muteness" that the words themselves belie entirely: the poet was not stopped for good. Burns's speaker attempts a related recuperation of circumstances, telling the mouse that she is lucky to not have history and memory. This anthropocentric chauvinism will be examined in greater detail in Chapter One. The important differences between Burns's and Wordsworth's forms of apostrophe and senses of interspecies community and communication are also explicated in more detail.

This study then proceeds through the material history of popular literary production and consumption as well as meat production and meat market intensification and removal debates in nineteenth century London. Following the investigation of Romanticism, the account here of London's Smithfield Market explicates the shared focus on cruelty in broad animal rights debate and specifically at Smithfield to then show the crucial way in which the results of Smithfield animal concern completely undermine animal welfare. This complicates any sense that animal rights and legal protection in nineteenth-century England were foundational nodes in successfully, as Peter Singer might say, "expanding the circle" of ethical consideration and legal status for animals. This is not to say, however, that nineteenth-century animal concern was anything less than the single most important, foundational period in animal rights discourse and effective legislature in modern history. It was. Nevertheless, the history of Smithfield Market, including the active role Martin and the RSPCA took in arguing for its censure and removal on animal cruelty grounds, shows definitively that those welfare debates led directly to the complete erasure of the animal from the public's conception of meat production. The animals "protected" from the drover's whip and the butcher's depravity around Smithfield were moved to a

technologically vast killing operation outside the main city center, where they would die by even greater numbers, at even greater speed, for even more consumption by the likewise-exponentially-increased London populous.

What my chapter on Smithfield considers, against the usual grain, is the shared abjection of the butchers during this period. The butchers were the villains in much anti-Smithfield narrative, but they were also a well-organized and longstanding trade guild in London that had its own complaints to enter in the debate. The discourse against cruelty employed in a variety of new animal laws and reiterated as part of Smithfield Market removal advocacy focused primarily on the depraved cruelty and the low society that congregated around Smithfield and its laboring ranks. Besides meat production, this discourse perhaps most famously singled out the cab drivers around London and other animal use trends in London such as cart horse “overdriving.” At times, the rhetoric of morality and decency in those Parliamentary debates on the side of anti-cruelty legislature suggest a civic program that merely reiterates a brand of *human* concern focused on treating animals a certain way insofar as that treatment breeds a more ideal human comportment and welfare. All of these claims to human decency make the butchers and drivers less than human, in no uncertain terms. That discourse on improvement is clear in the thriving vegetarianism of the period, which more closely resembles religious temperance than it does any contemporary form of animal liberation ideology it might otherwise be listed as a precursor to.²⁹ Market reform and anti-butcher sentiment, however, did little to salvage animal life despite extensive negotiations and real improvements of the inhumane approaches to livestock management and slaughter.

²⁹ See, in particular, Christine Kenyon-Jones on “Animals as Food: Shelley, Byron and the Ideology of Eating,” in *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic Period Writing*, pp. 109-134.

Smithfield as an historical negotiation for nineteenth century London mobilizes all of the period's rampant fears of disease, of gruesome and murderous depravity in dark, uncontrolled, labyrinth urban spaces, and of the shock of urban anonymity in massive and deterministic economic systems. While this last condition has clearly mapped literary consequences in naturalism and social realism, and this same milieu has no small role in the Marxian analysis that breeds later cultural theory that is closely related to some of the usual approaches to this "posthuman" condition, in fact it is Romanticism and the less-frequently considered popular penny presses that best articulate the formal consequences of such conditions. In the case of Romanticism, and particularly in the case of apparent failures to address nonhumans well, the nonhuman condition is explored as it emerges. By the time the popular presses are feeding a massive, newly literate working class English audience, the rampant interest in their bloody details and themes of adventure, danger, murder, mystery, and liminal transgressions reflect the day's cultural condition. Londoners, as it turns out, had a well-developed taste for blood, cheaply produced. The "case cracking" resolutions in the pennies, as in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* or Poe's earlier tales, neatly capped the bloody, depraved, sensational escapades of the pennies, but this reliably perfunctory narrative form, much like reliable meat, demanded no critical or moral consideration of consequence. Romanticism formally surmised that successful address and resolution of political or economic concerns might be unlikely; the mass popular fiction never even considered it. In fact, a popular story might go on indefinitely according to demand, and popular characters killed in one volume might turn up later in another with no discussion at all.³⁰ Stoker himself was a voracious consumer of the Penny Dreadful, and even plagiarized scenes of Lucy in the coffin from Rymer's *Varney the Vampyre*. The pennies, before Stoker, had

³⁰ See here again James, *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850*.

plagiarized the more expensive Dickens novels, and so the genre presents not only a crucial material consumption study that directly parallels the forms of meat production and consumption efficiency in the same period, but also a vital and “contaminated” intersectional genre between canonical nineteenth century literatures, reflecting as well the general anxieties about physical contamination and permeation in the London city space.

The anxieties about Smithfield and other London spaces are clearly addressed as a nonhuman condition from Romanticism through modernism. At Smithfield, this proceeds as a negotiation of the economic forces and civic concerns, including a tenuous market economy of butchers, drovers, and middlemen battling each other for profit shares and larger business interests for the future control of a meat traffic that engaged animal welfare insofar as it related to meat quality and to promoting public consumption. This civic reform did not resist the end result of market reform that succeeded so well precisely because of its use of established animal cruelty protections and rhetoric in Parliament, but there were certainly intersections, often in pamphlet form, between calls not to use animals in this way and broader promotions of anti-Smithfield sentiment that civic leaders capitalized on.

Smithfield’s removal is a key example of a turn to the total erasure of the living animal body and the site of slaughter from the public consciousness. The gleaming new meat processing systems born of nineteenth century slaughter and market reform in fact inaugurate the horror of anonymous, vacant, and fungible “life” for industrial application in consumption networks, and as the study goes on to demonstrate, this condition is far more than an animal condition. It is the nonhuman condition shared across all species lines and lived as a disorienting, mutual permeation of bodies and fluids, uses and replacability. Romantic literature, certainly in the case of Burns, fought against those conditions and Dickens’s novels attempted to document this

reality. Kafka's modernism then expresses this inhuman horror to a more gruesome conclusion. Resolutions like Wordsworth's mourning of the boy at Winander adhere too naïvely—perhaps because they precede the primary period of urban intensification in England—to a status of life and death long since undermined by nineteenth century social, commercial, and technological forms. *Sweeney Todd*, on the other hand, explores unknown, ambiguous others and “mystery meats” with the popular (human) meat pies Todd's murderous practice produces.

Londoners' anxieties about food, disease, and especially the strange, murky divisions between bodies for food and bodies that are not for food—like human bodies that might need some clean food from trustworthy sources—dominate literary expression and production in the period, but are also vibrant participants in daily life in other strange ways. One of the remarkable products of the Victorian period, for example, was “Bovril” concentrated meat extract, the precursor to today's much saltier Oxo beef and chicken bullion. This paste was predominantly meat and only a small percentage salt at first, contrary to its current formula for broths and other cooking applications. Oxo has its own intriguing architectural role on the London Thames waterfront, still present as a very well known tower on the south bank not far from the new Globe theater, but also a lasting indication of the age of immanent market logics—the famous Oxo windows got around strict laws against advertising on the Thames, the major commercial route through the city, by the lucky fact that the company's name was short enough and geometrical enough to convincingly be incorporated as a masonry feature in plain, glorious view from all directions. The Oxo story is a complicated one that involves Justus von Liebig, the scientist who invented modern industrial agriculture, in no small sense, by developing an artificial nitrogen-fixing process and also devised a way to concentrate 30 kg of beef into 1 kg of extract, then expected to be consumed by those too poor to afford “the real thing” in nineteenth

century London. From this starting point, the Bovril/Oxo extract production is exported to southern Uruguay (specifically, to the town of Fray Bentos, which would also be its international trade name outside of England and which Jorge Luis Borges uses as a setting in his 1942 short story, "Funes the Memorious."). There, meat production runs one third the cost it does in England at the time because the company was able to exploit an animal use economy focused on hide processing and not on meat production. Hence, the cattle could be purchased at much cheaper rates, rather than bred directly. But once this mystery meat form, from mysterious foreign origins, was inserted back into the London consumer economy, it was yet another strange, disorienting evolution of food that fed an increasingly vivid urban imagination of insidious foreign agents in water, air, and everything else. While Bovril and the Oxo brand has been wildly popular, with very little surrounding intrigue due to health problems or the meat quality issues of British and other European production in the period and multiple times since, it was also indicative of the sinewy intersections of nonhuman conditions in the London cityspace and the material adaptations of consumption and animal use: The beef had been distilled to its pure, portable "beefiness," and this commodity extraction was part of the total annihilation of the animal in the period that Smithfield removal and slaughter revision achieved through erasure of the animal bodies from the spaces of prior human-nonhuman interactions in the meat production process.

The condensed "meatiness" of a spreadable, portable paste form ironizes material consumption in precisely the same way popular, mass-produced, composite penny literatures in the period does. Penny Dreadfuls, thus, might more properly be called "extractive" literature. The pennies stand between and against the political commitments of Romantics like Burns and later realists like Dickens. Romantic presentations of the forms of subjection and abjection begin

in the robust expressions of animal suffering, inhuman conditions, and measured cross-species empathy in works such as Burns's poetry and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The anxieties about anonymity in such works manifest in the interchangeable and hardly nourishing portable narratives of the pennies.

The pennies were produced at new speeds, using new technologies, and the reading public that consumed them was, likewise, new and massive. The pennies have a complex relationship to canonical works. They plagiarized Dickens to make those popular works even more accessible to the new lower class reading public. They were liberally borrowed from, having already been deeply adored and religiously read, as stated, by later nineteenth-century writers like Stoker. The material conditions of penny literary production and consumption in London parallels the Smithfield Market conditions. The narrative content, such as the case of the mystery meats and bloody technologies in proximity to the meat market in *Sweeney Todd*, are precisely the conditions documented by the comprehensive social presentations in Dickens. Engaging these literary modes in a cross-study of the Smithfield case and examples such as the Bovril/Oxo company, as well as their respective roles in reinforcing the subjection and abjection of nonhumans for meat, builds a literary heritage of nonhuman thought and amplifies these authors' conviction that human society had already made literature into non-literature (and back again), humans into nonhumans, and nonhumans into far worse than simply not-humans or even not-animals.

In some cases, the disparate cultural forms in such a comparison resist clear relation. One key work on animal rights and Romantic literature, for example, succeeds in making the case that Romantic authors express intense concern for animals in their works, and that this tradition

precedes the period as well. The author, Christine Kenyon Jones, also succeeds in tracking animal rights and law in the nineteenth century in England while presenting important, careful readings of, for example, Byron's critique of Spanish bull fights in *Childe Harold*.³¹ But then Kenyon Jones must also bridge her parallel studies of the cultural history of animal rights and her literary excavation through an unsatisfying synthesis: *Lord Byron* was likely in the room for a number of Parliamentary debates on animal cruelty, including bull-baiting in England. But he is not on the record in such debates as are John Martin, author of the 1822 Martin's Act, or Lord Erskine, another frequent early defender of animal rights in Parliament. In another essential work, David Perkins's *Romanticism and Animal Rights*, the author assesses the animal poetry of John Clare and makes a similar connecting point—one that, to be sure, resonates deeply and in harmony with Clare's clear animal concern: Clare's poem "Badger" is first published just as Parliament passes significant legislature banning badger baiting. This coincidence is even less coherently causal or material than Kenyon Jones's illumination of Byron's biographical investments in the animal concern his literary production suggests.

This is not to denigrate either work—far from it—but only to note that a standard refrain when working on Romantic literature in comparison to law and to animal studies has been to focus on the animal concern in the works and then compare this expression to the other forms of animal concern in the period. This has included children's literature and known public movements (usually among the upper classes) to develop children's behavior by teaching them compassion for animals, as Kenyon Jones documents. What is clear in the texts and in the history, as both of these authors deftly establish, is that, surely, a history of attitudes toward

³¹ Kenyon Jones, Christine. *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-period writing*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001.

animals in nineteenth century England produces a coherent turn to animal concern that is reflected in literature, in law, and in art. But the apparent gap at times between practical animal concern and cultural production expressing similar concerns may in fact be precisely the trouble with presenting nineteenth century England as the birthplace of animal rights and animal law, as it has often been described by theorists and historians including Cary Wolfe and others. And what has seemed less clear than the modes of animal concern among, especially, the upper class, and what this project explores, is how some crucial threads in the history of animal concern and law in fact underpin horrific *intensifications* of cruelty and cross-species suffering not simply at sites like Smithfield, which can be and were reformed and removed, but across a host of nonhuman conditions in London and elsewhere. Furthermore, what has certainly not been considered in conjunction with this condition is the rise in public literacy and the market response to new demands for literary production that seem to match the efficiency and volume of the burgeoning technological meat industry as well as the “bloodiness” of its stock and trade.

As stated previously, serial fictions feeding a rampant reading population were mass-produced, and not always with clear publication origins, and relied heavily upon outright plagiarism of the more expensive, but also more “literary” works by Dickens and others. They also relied heavily upon reliable narrative formulas that focused on sensational suspense, horror, or “adventure” with predictable payoffs and descriptive, gory language. This was the origin of prolific popular culture, and select streams in the serial fiction output were also extremely preoccupied with the terrifying, gruesome dangers of, early on, the outskirts of the city and the highwaymen and murdering marauders one might encounter in those liminal social spaces, but in the full heyday of the Penny genres, with the dark and horrible spaces of the urban center that so fascinates Dickens. But where Dickens’s descriptions of the urban mazes in an increasingly

crowded London space still manage to make a coherent, controlled point about those spaces, the Penny Dreadfuls were much more focused on heightening—perhaps even “hyping”—the threat and the mystery of the dark corners of both town and country.³² The overriding aesthetic investment in such works is in, first, the “unspeakable” and the ghastly, and second, the denouement of the criminals and the resolution—typically after their death or, as in one vital and wildly popular work, *Sweeney Todd*, their arrest—of the culture of fear their crimes had produced. Immediately, such concerns suggest the works of Edgar Allen Poe, and to be sure, Poe’s expressions of a similar urban horror and the captivating, relentless pursuit of discovery must be compared to the Penny Dreadful genre. What I show in Chapter Three, however, is that there is also a vast body of bloody crime consumption back to Defoe and in the incredibly well-attended public hangings of criminals like Jack Sheppard. Sheppard is caught and hung in the early eighteenth century, but he then becomes one of the most famous characters in the Penny Dreadfuls of the mid-nineteenth century. Dickens also wrote on the ongoing public executions in his London. The criminal heritage in the pennies and in Dickens thus reflects the public taste for gruesome spectacle, be it individual civic experiences in the dark spaces that remind of basement abattoirs and dark butchers’ alleys or the mass event of the execution. Kafka’s works, likewise, concern themselves time and again with the public scene of suffering and of excruciating performance. Dickens’s rebuke of the public hanging in periodicals of the day, which I discuss in Chapter Three, demonstrates however the tension of committed social concern and the ubiquity and popularity of horrible forms of entertainment in London

³² In his essay on *Bleak House*, J. Hillis Miller made an important point about Dickens’s specific brand of symbolic realism: “[S]cenes in Dickens which are initially merely narrative realism are transformed into symbolic expressions of the entire destiny of a character.” In Korg, Jacob. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Bleak House*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1968, p. 84. Chapter Four briefly considers the importance of genre categories in Dickens.

In the case of the Smithfield Market removal debates through this same period, proposals to reform Smithfield and do away with seemingly unnecessary animal suffering suggested that those public scenes of suffering were not as entertaining. The primary arguments for removal, like the animal welfare legislature they were related to and drew upon after 1822, matched the social concern and improvement rhetoric of Dickens on the public hanging, for example. Despite this sincere aim, they were actually promoting heightened meat production and slaughter efficiency to feed a larger population more economically-viable meat: market noise and impaction were damaging consumer attitudes *and* the quality of the meat, and the problem had thus become an economic one, not a moral one. The hygiene issues were real, but then those too could be effectively mobilized to systematize London meat production and commercial networks, in the process threatening the “small business” sorts running the market and the nearby butchers’ abattoirs and cut meat shops. Any arguments to keep not only the mass live animal market in place, but also these established private abattoirs and commercial networks, met with a strong opposition in the form of a “sympathetic” cultural climate focused intently on the tropes of improvement and civic reform. That some of the strongest and most organized voices for market “status quo” were also the most readily demonized animal abusers, like the Worshipful Company of Butchers, only ensured their failure. Market removal was a paramount achievement of what today proceeds as within industrial agriculture, albeit with some exceptions and with significant accomplishments in real animal welfare even in agricultural applications that still end in meat consumption: the animals are articles and objects, and their silent, efficient, mass killing was not only authorized by the tropes of animal welfare canonized in nineteenth century England, but in fact desired by the anthropocentric tones of “civilizing” social reform in the

period that wanted, more than anything else, to quell the neurosis of known horrors underpinning the social architecture of London.

This, to be sure, departs in important ways from another version of British cultural moods in the period that has been widely discussed. The incredible rise in vegetarianism in the period also has literary roots and prominent exponents such as Percy Shelley, but then the work of influential contemporaries like Joseph Ritson on the natural diet and on the barbarous consequences of meat eating still have a strong sense of human improvement and not of animal welfare. Shelley and Ritson probably more closely resemble religious temperance advocates than they do contemporary ethical vegetarianism focused on animal liberation. And in fact, the Vegetarian Society in England was founded, precisely, by the temperance advocate Reverend William Cowherd. Byron, as well, turned to vegetarianism for its health effects and in close contact with the Shelleys' dietary austerities. While all of these examples certainly suggest hope for the poor creatures humans might otherwise eat, they belie any coherent mode of animal concern at the same time. In fact, the individuated austerity of dietary regimes seem much more reminiscent of precisely the anthropocentric conceit of self-control and singularity a poet like Walt Whitman both espouses and explodes in his unruly—but thus unfettered and manly—verse style across the Atlantic later in the nineteenth century. That comportment works as well for a vegetarian vigilance as it does for a meat-eating vigilance in self-cultivation.

Animals and other nonhumans course through literature long before the British Romantic and Victorian periods of British literature, but literary works through the long nineteenth century take as their frequent task an articulation of nonhuman forms marking increasingly abjected modes of modern life and negotiating the attending anxieties through the ambiguities of Romanticism. This includes experimentation with narrative authority, irony, and fragmented

forms that veer often into apparent poetic failure—certainly their themes dwell on human failures, at least—in a broad project on the human being as a concept. This turn to literary form and to philosophical rumination on the status and prospects of the human responds directly to the historical conditions of industrial modernity, but then it also attempts to resist such decisive triangulations of a condition; history, science, and narrative each imply some frame of coherence that Romantic authors are highly suspicious of. Any “broken” narrative voice would thus be capable of performing an ethical or political abjection such as Burns’s speaker and the mouse upturned in “To A Mouse,” but then only as an indicator of the historical situations in question. In the case of Burns’s poem, this includes, at the least: English-Scottish colonial politics, Enclosure of the commons, animal welfare discourse, and abolition.

Romantics were associated with radical traditions resisting infringements on the rights of marginalized classes, which also must have some relation to a sense of individual freedom such as the Romantic poet’s creative spontaneity.³³ Coleridge’s political projects with Robert Southey and he and William Wordsworth’s early alliances in *Lyrical Ballads* on the heels of the new Poor Laws show a coherent and principled political commitment during a period that has often been studied for its incarnations of radicalism, populism, and general political activism. This suggests that the literary works, which frequently engage political issues directly alongside recurring themes of human fragility and inconsistency, attempt a precise form of address that does not submit to the very nonhuman conditions that seem to motivate them. The works in the period seem intent upon mitigating those conditions even where they suggest an incommensurable divide between history and subjects, science and life, society and individuals. The form by which

³³ The list of academic works on Romantic political engagements might run longer than this entire project’s length, and on the matter of spontaneous poetic response, one need look no further than Wordsworth’s Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: “Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.”

they attempt to do so, however, is generally an individuated voice or agent failing, in various ways, to resolve the conflict or circumstance a poem or novel constructs. As naturalism and realism react against this individual mode and become dominant genres later in the nineteenth century, the task of literature has already succumbed entirely to the *facts* of society, science, economy, history, humanity, and finally, animality.³⁴ Dickens's long novels—published in serial forms very similar to the pennies, though on better paper—describe and present the immense decay, but also the profound joys, of London society. In Dickens, there is still a society to be rescued from its increasing velocity and mechanization, if only those who don't know “how the other half lives” would realize the full scope of modern life. Then again, as Chapter Four shows, Dickens's novels often suggested that middle class social concern, which includes animal concern although Dickens does not explicitly engage in that discourse, could itself be a ridiculous performance with no relevant purpose. The satirical bent in Dickens thus leads directly into the Kafka's modernist mediation of modern experience. His lasting expression of the horror of such encasings only reiterated, yet again, the basic despair of a saturating, total nonhuman form. Kafka, although outside the morphological case histories of Smithfield and in London popular press

Nineteenth-century London urban history has multiple, complex vectors, but its total revolution in meat, the very idea, has proven to be both materially disastrous for animal life and historically decisive in the context of general shifts in animal use and consumption. The British meat economy evolves rapidly through advances in animal husbandry producing “manufactured articles,” as reports of the day described them. Revised market slaughter management in

³⁴ This project eschews overdetermined differentiations between realism and modernism, and will work more from an assumption of shared thematic and ontological engagements across the canonical and popular genres investigated while specifying the aesthetic forms of each.

response to increased production and consumption culminated in the 1852 Smithfield Removal Act. But the Act also came on the heels of intense complaints and formal parliamentary petitions by butchers about unfair market price fixing. Market removal was also motivated by an increasingly annoyed public crammed into tighter urban spaces with loud, smelly, and suffering animal bodies. This combination of factors produced both an animal and a human that accomplished a total, technical administration of life but then demolished all sense of individual, meaningful, valuable life in the end. The debates between the butchers and other civic entities, in particular, shed new light on the matter.

To focus only on the moralist arguments for removal or on the Smithfield case's important role in the foundations of animal rights is to avoid the broader civic management issues and to risk yet another erasure of the resulting nonhuman condition. Robyn Metcalfe's important history of the market offers the most comprehensive account to date of the primary motivations for and debates surrounding Smithfield removal and civic space use, and instead of presenting the Smithfield case as an animal rights issue, as one might, she proceeds in a more complex archival mode through the interconnected economic and political history of the 1800-1855 removal conceptualization, planning, and execution. Reminiscent of the thick historical assessments of British animal use by Harriet Ritvo, Metcalfe's study draws together the civic negotiations *and* select examples from cultural production of the day (Dickens, for instance) to argue that the Smithfield case was a matter of community space and sanitation.³⁵ Metcalfe's issue is not, then, the concept of nonhumans. But she does consider the role of the Worshipful Company of Butchers and other groups in the removal debate, and thus presents clearly the

³⁵ Ritvo, Harriet. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

general absence of animal concern besides economic investment in a “quality” meat object threatened by untenable traffic and storage options in an ever-more-crowded London city space.

London reacts to this horror in law and in intense civic planning to remove animals from the site (and the sight) of human industry in the city center. The killing, no longer done at Smithfield, moves to the shiny new Metropolitan Cattle Market a bit further north of City Centre in Islington, and achieves a more hygienic and orderly meat production process. This plan, which responded to rampant public health concerns among the exploding London population as much as to any concern about the killing (or suffering) of animals, drew inspiration from the incredible success of similar moves to “public abattoirs” in France just a short time ahead of the Smithfield revisions. Nevertheless, critics including Dickens, who used Smithfield more than once in his novels as a site of depravity and filth in juxtaposition to the goodness of characters like Oliver, defended the Market and its denizens against the more unsavory sorts in Parliament and in British business interests. Dickens eschewed, for example, the French system some Londoners were infatuated with in their arguments for market removal, on the grounds that Paris could hardly fathom the greatness of a place like Smithfield. He was not alone. Defoe, about a hundred years earlier, had also remarked on the wonders of Smithfield. Its massiveness, in the heart of the most massive city the world had ever known by 1850, certainly left an impression. But ultimately, the public resentment of the Market’s health and moral implications, resentment Dickens helped along in literature even where his journalism argued for its maintenance (he was also a major proponent of the butcher classes that had become regular targets of market debate), won out and the Market was removed. What remains at the old site is still an impressive and very large working meat market in a Grade II protected Victorian building, but there is no live animal traffic along major arteries any more and the place is often quite empty relative to the current

sites of commerce nearby. One can wake up very early some days of the week to observe the functioning market at peak hours, and it is well worth it, but the place is cavernous and vacant, even dead silent, throughout much of the day.

Smithfield removal, despite its gruesome outcomes, still realized the intent of modern animal concern reflected also in later public commemorations of animal suffering from the brown dog statue at Battersea Park to the present Smithfield Market site.³⁶ Today, the commemorative bench in the Smithfield Market park in downtown London incorporates quotes from the animal welfare debates in parliament, noted literary passages on Smithfield Market din and atrocities, and even a nod to the site's long history as a religious and political execution site known as Smoothe-Field back to medieval times. The water fountain in the park, one of many spots in present-day London one can see a particular aspect of interspecies utilities history "in the flesh," was placed there by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. That organization, founded in 1859 and changed to include cattle in 1867, exists today as merely the Drinking Fountain Association. There are of course no more cattle troughs in London, though perhaps there are dog-watering sites. Smithfield thus remains a dense comparative node in London's nineteenth century civic development and cultural history, including the first major animal rights laws, waste and water oversight, livestock and animal labor management, and broad literary histories. And the primary advocates for Smithfield

³⁶ The Battersea monument commemorates mid-century animal rights activism in relation to early medical experimentation on a specific test subject, a little brown dog the gallery claimed was twitching and moving violently during a demonstration, not at all "out" from anesthetic. The monument itself was immediately vandalized by pro-medical center individuals angered by the public censure of the developing medical profession. The current statue is a replacement after the original was destroyed, and it was placed in what was originally an out of the way corner of Battersea Park, just southwest of City Center across the Thames. The site's general vicinity is perhaps most famous now for the Battersea Power Station, whose smoke stacks will be immediately recognizable to any Pink Floyd Fan who has seen the cover of their album, *Animals*.

removal had to admit that animal welfare in the British meat trade had, at least for a time, or at least cosmetically, been dramatically improved as a result of the evolution of meat animal traffic and meat object processing efficiencies. But of course, this all amounts merely to a traffic re-routing and not to, if one extends the metaphor, an eradication of the offending modes of transportation altogether. The meat still courses through the city, moving in fact only more easily, at greater speeds, and in greater quantities. Incidentally, animals suffering in and around Smithfield, as well as the larger metropolis, were also the city's primary transportation energy source before the full arrival of railways, which also have a precise connection to Smithfield. Smithfield was among the very first central railway points in London's nineteenth century design. The trains were directed through Smithfield specifically to facilitate meat trade and simultaneously ushering in the age of meat refrigeration.

This nonhuman, but all-too-human condition is not at all lost on Londoners or historians of the city and its animal history. The commemorative bench at Smithfield is a decidedly modern affair—it was a winning design by students at the University of Edinburgh and installed in 2006. That the most recent addition to the West Smithfield Garden Rotunda, as the commemorative square is called, is on the subject of animal suffering and market removal is both fitting and also surprising confirmation of the place of animal concern in contemporary thought. Smoothie-Field has a long and gruesome past as a major site for political and religious executions dating well back to medieval times, and its connection to St. Bartholomew's Hospital is, likewise, longstanding.³⁷ Those histories are also documented in various forms at the present site and amply in literature on the history of Smithfield. But the present iteration of Smithfield is, without

³⁷ I will also discuss Bartholomew's Fair, an age-old festival of spectacles and freak shows held adjacent to Smithfield and commented on by Wordsworth and others. St. Bartholomew, not incidentally, is the patron saint of butchers.

question, in the context of animal history and, as a result, animal concern, cruelty, rights, and further ramifications of thinking nonhumans after these initial, well-worn considerations. The next step, as the Postmodern commemorative bench at Smithfield suggests, is to address the fuller lineage of nonhuman thought and the critique of institutional forms the literary examples in this study, like the bench in the West Smithfield Garden Rotunda, wage well after revisiting the basic, though important, tenets of conventional animal concern and rights discourse.

British interspecies cultural history, marked at all points in both canonical and other literary forms, presents the clear origin of contemporary animal concern and ecological consumerism while also suggesting modes of thought that deserve to be reiterated as possible solutions to the problems caused by pre-packaged, artificial concentrations of that thinking. The period, from Romantic through Victorian, wages clear thinking and negotiations of coexistent horror. The sense of human life Smithfield communicates, and that is represented both on the floor of Parliament and in key cultural products of the day like the works of Dickens, thus forced immediate action both on practical terms and in terms of philosophical premises about evolved human society. Anecdotes on the suffering of animals and the depravity of their marketplace tormenters—a habitually drunk class, to read many accounts in Parliament and in the bustling periodicals devoted to animal status produced in the period—matched the sensational accounts of the atrocities committed in bear- and bull-baiting, cockfighting (on a Sunday, no less!) that had produced the first animal rights legislation early in the nineteenth century. These tropes of human decency and right sentiments, both having strong origins in the popular literatures of the preceding century, were routinely mobilized also in the Smithfield debates. This, again, shows the intense collaborative history of animal rights discourse and London civic planning as pertains to animal slaughter and market traffic. Smithfield was a morphologically profound problem for

the members of decent human society of London confronted with their own increasing anonymity outside replicable, fungible roles in a social totality. The mass spectacle at the site of undeniably technological reproduction of animal bodies, such that the question of “life” was rendered irrelevant altogether outside the requisite meat animal gestation and extraction timelines, was a sublime threat to humans’ self-image in an age of increasingly scientific, taxonomic logics of species and evolutionary theories that animal husbandry and genetic understandings only reinforced. Humans were not so special, on the one hand, and yet were genetic terrorists on the other: life was far too easy to manage, it seemed.

The market din features prominently in literature from the period, such as Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist*. Dickens uses the market site precisely as the metaphorical “passage” of Oliver, dragged along in the “Expedition” chapter by the Mr. Sikes, through London’s dirty underbelly, highlighted by the frequently excerpted passage on the squalid, disorienting chaos of Smithfield, and on the proverbial garden path to a life of crime. One urban geographic irony among many, perhaps a genre unto itself among Dickens, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf only a bit after, is that Oliver and the company travel from a more traditionally hard scrabble, working class part of London to a tonier area well south of City Centre. Of course, the market and attendant cattle removal (and Thomas Hardy is yet another author to chronicle the market in negative tones) goes the other way, potentially inflicting the atrocities of market space so effectively lamented in Parliament on the poor working class citizens most aligned with the nonhuman condition at the market.³⁸ But in fact, removing the market to such locations alongside revising slaughter and management forms to the new systems of efficient invisibility meant that

³⁸ Rod Preece has written in several works on Hardy’s reaction to witnessing the Smithfield cruelty, and Hardy’s works include frequent remarks on animal suffering and market spaces. See, for example: Preece, Rod. *Animal Sensibility and Inclusive Justice in the Age of George Bernard Shaw*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011, p. 123.

civic reform ensured the classes most likely to have an aesthetic moral response to the fact of animal killing for meat would be far less likely to ever remember that the meat came from somewhere in the first place. And rather than align some anonymous, suffering poor class with some anonymous, suffering animal class, Smithfield removal only further ensures that the upper classes shielding themselves from London's horrors, even if in dietary abstention from meat products, attempt to mitigate the encroaching horror of interminable nonhuman community with organisms, objects, and masses through escapist denial that merely promotes the evolution and entrenchment of the original horror. A logic of automatic consumption reproduces itself at and after Smithfield.

Smithfield stands now as a lasting monument to the anthropocentric trends Romantic and Victorian literature responded to by suggesting animal suffering and interspecies community, as in Burns's "To A Mouse," which laments enclosure and urban concentration as shared multispecies violence. Charles Dickens wrote on Smithfield in several of his mid-century novels and in his journalism, not only in *Oliver Twist*, and these various addresses will be considered in subsequent chapters. Thomas Hardy was still invoking the by-then-removed live animal market in his work on the teeming metropolis at the turn of the twentieth century, and the animal meat market has lasting literary traditions in other contexts as well, perhaps most famously in the case of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and associated U.S. legislative work.

Smithfield's interspecies history of total annihilations of life to bare forms shows that removal did not ease but merely erased mass animal suffering, quelling middle class animal concern but further mechanizing mass slaughter and disassembly. Removing live animals and private abattoirs—pervasive sites of slaughter that continued to feed a vivid urban imaginary of murder and unknown terrors in the pennies through the middle and latter parts of the nineteenth

century—from impacted city centers shattered a prior intimacy with meat animals, producing a far worse horror. Modern London sold itself a capital lie: meat became a clean, portable, alien object fueling the human world but without any trace of animal history.

This removal came on the heels of intensive animal rights debate in parliament that tended toward classist “improvement” arguments in which the villains were working class men, often also labeled as drunks in the arguments around animal-baiting for entertainment. Some labor groups were more reviled than others, such as cabbies and other jobs with horses for goods and people transport. Individual retail butchers, who did not always kill the animals they sold as meat at Smithfield and other locations, were an especially frequent target of animal rights activists, but the market in general became a major cause for the animal concern movement in the earliest years of the nineteenth century. That activism would not stop until formal market removal, but the removal of acres of live animals from the middle of London, again, was not entirely concerned with animal welfare, and Charles Dickens and the butchers themselves made strong cases for their expertise and quite sober, calculative eye when it came to meat procurement and dispensation. It bears repeating that the primary causes for market reform, which was not always presented as removal, were explicated by market actors themselves as issues of market efficiency and, increasingly, of meat quality.

Long transport of live animals damaged meat animals through a variety of problems such as weight loss, bruising, and illness. The earliest signs of resistance from the butchers is, at least, in the early seventeenth century when the butchers draft a petition against new grazing laws restricting a practice the butchers depended upon to get the best prices for their meat. Animals driven from the country to Smithfield Market would lose considerable amounts of weight, they argued, and limiting re-fattening to thirty days once butchers purchased live animals at

Smithfield would further reduce their profit while all other market agents saw the same rate of profit as always. The history of butchers and animals at Smithfield crosses a number of such entangled concerns. The intense urban population explosion and cultural interactions between species and new organisms, as well as the growth of medical understanding and mechanization of commerce and transport, not to mention objects as seemingly wondrous and harmless as gas lighting, were converging in all aspects of cultural life and literary production as an ongoing interrogation of the strange, alien nature of mutually vacant yet inescapably coexistent lives in nineteenth century London. But the London butchers and meat tradesmen were in the crosshairs of relatively unfettered, direct practical conditions that, in a spectacular fit of irony, made butchers the bad guys because they did the killing that the rest of the meat system simply wanted more, and more reliable, capitalized control over.

The butchers still remain as the Worshipful Company of Butchers, with offices at present-day Smithfield and with their famed old hall still nearby. But one aspect of the Smithfield case that fits well with the experiments in paradoxical, petrifying horror in the literatures here examined is the fate of butchers as both culturally “slaughtered” objects of public aggression, as in Penny Dreadfuls like *Sweeney Todd* and a variety of other forms examined, and as economically reduced, rendered agents in the expansion—and thus, concentration and minimization—of capitalist networks in the London meat market system. The butchers, for lack of a better term, get butchered. In multiple arenas. The spectacle of this butcher execution satisfies several publics.

A word here about the public fears about meat products, specifically, as the butchers were frequent targets of public suspicions about “growlers” with cat or dog meat in them or about foreign meats from unknown origins. There are unknown meat pies in at least one work by

Dickens (*Martin Chuzzlewit*) and also in *Sweeney Todd*. In both cases, these objects condense the various horrors of the Dreadfuls and the broader horror tradition including *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* to investigate, or simply capitalize upon, a deep and constant urban anxiety at anonymous and total coexistence with things that no longer support frames of the human, to be sure, but also a frenzied uncertainty about all consumption exchanges in an increasingly unsanitary, dangerous city space. This coexistence is not simply being in the same places as or suffering the same fates as each other. It is a complete intermingling of all that must be separated first in order to determine identity. Epizootic viruses and bacteria transgress any hard boundaries between species, but epizootic outbreaks are only one variation of total coexistence. The even more disorienting and destabilizing issues of the period were the increasingly pervasive permutations of layers of coexistence such as animal use, collective waste, water sources, and the diseases then plugged back into consumption channels like the cholera outbreaks and more.³⁹

These very real yet very strange threats articulated the brands of liminal and urban horror period literatures including the early Romantics explored. The nonhuman forms of life and literature were not so different from each other. Stoker attempted to import some of the dense horrors preceding him, and also the Penny Dreadfuls he himself consumed, but he also attempted some of the authoritative, realist management of those horrors in a documentary fictional mode. This also realizes the cultural forms of the day in an objective, articulate administration of factual presentation and nonhuman (and thus, in the case of the phonograph and typewriter technologies fetishized in the novel, more accurate and reliable as observers of the story's manifold violations of some physical, biological reality) reproductions of reality. The Penny Dreadfuls rarely engaged in such intertextual explorations, but their production in fact relied precisely on the

³⁹ Metcalfe's Smithfield history is essential on these issues.

technological machinery of mass extraction and (re)production, and their primary audience was the massive, newly literate London working class population. This voracious urban working class readership ensured that the community continued to consume its own abjection as a form of mass entertainment. The stories of urban murder and unwitting cannibalism, highwaymen marauders and “butchers” in terrible bands of robbers, and other popular horrors, made use of the day’s lived dangers and fears but “solved” many of these stories or featured prototypes of the twentieth century superhero who fought off all manner of threat to decent society and community safety. Chapter Three examines the complicated relationship between reader and spectator demand and both literary and civic supply of such narratives and themes in the pennies and in the public spectacle of executions. Chapter Two, by showing the Smithfield Market system’s role in producing de-animalized meat parts, permits a clear view of the important similarities between the new, invisible meat production logics post-Smithfield and the penny press assembly lines. In both cases, there is a manufactured object that troubles prior concepts of that object—literature and meat—but also at least partially erases that prior status in the process of production. Literature becomes serial parts of varying quality and unknown origin. Or, in some cases, the origins may sometimes be known plagiarisms of other pennies. At the risk of a trite, tired metaphor, these cobbled-together scraps are a sort of “Franken-text,” and there is a decided literary “cannibalism” circulating through the penny press period. Meat, and the animals manufactured to produce it, is likewise a streamlined but ambiguous affair. Meat City, the vast meat machinery in London and elsewhere, was not only about animals. Or rather, animals did not stop at the “livestock” sold explicitly at physical meat markets.

This is perhaps the most lasting legacy of the Smithfield Market removal of 1852. The morphological specificity of meat production and distribution processes in the seething urban

center leads directly to today's contemporary CAFO-market efficiency model. Post-Smithfield animal management erases the known horror of animal use and slaughter and inaugurates the invisible, alien meat form. Authors like Poe, Stoker, and Dickens explore the horror such organizing principles and administrative consequences bestow. Poe in the anonymous cacophony of urban work classes, Stoker in the insidious permeation of boundaries and blood, and Dickens in elaborate presentations of the dingy squalor of London. Dickens even addresses London's incredible problem with dead bodies in the period in *Our Mutual Friend*, which responds in turn to the incredible cholera outbreaks and Thames River water pollution issues of the day.⁴⁰ Many of the weird, uncanny new boundary seepage, health risks, and contaminations influence reform of, but also arise *from* the dominant biotechnological modes of meat-animal production, construction, and distribution. The result is an intensification of bureaucratic and administrative forms instead of a mitigation of the nonhuman forms of modern urban life that already existed.

This is not to imply that such a mitigation either ought to be desired or could be accomplished. What is clearly at stake in the Smithfield case—and this is also the reason that it so directly informs and refracts the literary modes of the nineteenth century—is the same impulse to conceal the workings of social organization in order to maintain precisely the social hubris of perfectible subjects (reform); correctable crimes (justice); and reliable identities (species). What the Smithfield case materially exposed in its public health, morality, and commercial intersections is the same nonhuman condition the literatures of the day expressed

⁴⁰ The popular tourist attraction, Highgate Cemetery, home to the grave of Karl Marx (among others) and near the very same Hampstead Heath Lucy/The White Woman traverses at night, stealing babies in *Dracula*, is the direct result of hygiene programs to manage the increasingly stinking, massive piles of corpses underneath City Centre church floors and in the River Thames. Highgate is one of the “Magnificent Seven” cemeteries opened between 1832-1841.

across species and trades, and thus the apparent solution to the Smithfield question was in fact only a deeper ossification of its origins.

While Chapter One deals with a text like *Frankenstein* directly on the division of technicity and biology underlying the creature's "birth" in Victor's laboratory, Chapter Four examines later literary engagements of accelerated technological and bureaucratic infringements on biological life and also retains the critique of biological essentialism *Frankenstein* helps to begin. In Kafka, life is inseparable from the offices of life, and much as in Dickens's *Bleak House*, legal process and subjection in particular inflict a program of propriety while simultaneously, in both Kafka's *The Trial* and in *Bleak House*, erasing the subject that is to be disciplined by that program. *Frankenstein* in fact also features a critique of legal process in the case of Justin's trial, albeit a critique that uses ironic dramatic irony (the reader "knows" Justine is innocent, provided the multiple framing narrators can be trusted) rather than Kafka's inscrutable ambiguity or Dickens's tireless satire.

In the case of meat production, the issue of "manufactured articles" like livestock now built only to be killed, dissected, and distributed as purposeful parcels realizes the darkest fears about assemblage in *Frankenstein* while also echoing the deepest concerns in Romantic literature about animal and human suffering. The pennies mobilize these horrors about life, its possible value, and its potential evacuation in an exhilarating, sensational genre that resolves the fear of invasion, liminal threats, bodily violation, and whatever worse fare the imagination can concoct. Dickens, on the other hand, much like Marx, set about documenting the incarnations of social conditions leading to abjection while Kafka formalized that abjection in narrative modes like *erlebte Rede* (or free indirect discourse). This shows Kafka's recurring attention to the aesthetics of "estrangement," as Stanley Corngold has described Kafka's thematic investment in dis- or un-

placement and extractive filth in, for example, *The Metamorphosis*.⁴¹ The focus in this study is on Kafka's inquiry into subjection, including estrangement, in several key works, and the study draws parallels to earlier expressions of such experience in Romantics such as Coleridge, Blake, and Poe in order to map the heritage of "abjection lit" from Romanticism, through Dickens, and into modernism.

Kafka's *The Trial* articulates a pervasive, total captivation of the character K. to anonymous, yet specific forces like *the* law and *the* court system. Despite a clear target for K.'s investigations into the charges brought against him and the encroaching punishment he must face for whatever he has done, this law, and the physical court chambers themselves, combine in an impossible network of bureaucratic—bureaus—authority and protocols that K. spends copious amounts of time simply trying to identify and confirm the status of. This works to both reiterate the physical structuration of authority in a community while simultaneously dissociating legal force and its resulting subjection of citizens like K. or the man from the country in the oft-excerpted parable, "Before the Law," from specific locations or associations. This is the case even when crucial moments in that subjection occur in proximity to the bureaus and structures of law, as is the case when the man from the country has the door to the law shut before him—only for him—by the door's guard. The text provides roles and titles for characters, and the events in the stories occur in rooms and buildings, perhaps in dwelling such as the titular burrow in *Der Bau* (the jumble fan might piece together "bureau" here if not looking closely enough) but then focuses intently upon the experience of enclosed spaces, bare life, and inarticulate social regiments and protocol. Chapter Four supposes a general sociological and philosophical interest in both realism and modernism, and while it does employ a basic genre division at times

⁴¹ See in particular Corngold's Introduction to *The Metamorphosis*. New York: Bantam, 1986.

alongside period divisions, the prevailing interest of the entire study, again, is in the persistence of these themes of bureaucratic, civic, and other forms of entrapment and abjection across a divergent, fertile literary history.

Dickens's *Bleak House* and Kafka's *The Trial* approach law and social subjection in very different ways, but the comparison in this chapter ultimately reveals that the target of their respective critiques is virtually the same. This "virtually" might seem to elide the significant contextual variations between Dickens and Kafka. Dickens's constant and prolific literary output, his nineteenth century London/British domain, and his relative economic comfort for at least part of his life have been well-documented in other work. Kafka's brief life in Prague, his cultural identity, and the question of his linguistic heritage as it relates to his literary expression have, likewise, driven much Kafka scholarship. Chapter Four engages the authors' biographical details at times but focuses on the works' aesthetic techniques for presenting, respectively, London social conditions and an overwhelming expression of the experience of subjection and abjection in ambiguous settings. Anecdotal information like the fact that Kafka's early schooling took place in a meat market (better yet, *Fleischmarkt*) certainly intensifies the chapter's development of the concept of nonhuman objects both authors explore in their legal novels, but the chapter draws upon the nonhuman thought in their literary works and not in their biographies.

Chapter one assesses animality and the interrogation of mutually "nonhuman" abjections in Romantic literature on the coexistence of humans and other animals. Parts of this analysis are in relation to the sincere animal concern and rights activism of some authors, but the balance of the chapter articulates the "Romantic interspeciesism" of Romantic form and content as they attempt to negotiate the potential and the insufficiency of subjective experience, particularly

through the figure of apostrophe. As works on the nonhuman by Mary Shelley, Blake, and Coleridge demonstrate, the animal in Romanticism does not necessarily suffice as a clear lens through which to consider the technical, ethical, or other efficacy of Romantic nonhuman thought. In fact, all such frames, from the animal to the ethical, can miss the far deeper inquiry into nonhuman conditions in Romantic literature that authors engage at the level of literary form.

Chapter two continues to track the nonhuman status of Romantic period subjects as they intersect, through both animal rights discourse and cultural forms in the London city center, with the meat animal being constructed as a pre-determined meat object—neither life nor animal at all. This includes an original evaluation of the Smithfield Market and attending removal debates in the first half of the nineteenth century, paying special attention to a routinely erased human actor in the history of animal concern, the butcher, despite some of the strongest arguments on either side of the market removal debate coming from a very well-organized and longstanding association of those tradesmen. This particular study reveals the economic arguments fueling slaughter and market reform not only in England but also in other nineteenth century contexts, and it disrupts easy descriptions of the nineteenth century British context as a birthplace for animal concern and rights even though, to be sure, it is the moment and the site of the first codified legal defenses of animals in modern legal history. This, in conjunction with the social critiques and aesthetic expressions of suffering in literature, shows the much more horrifying and problematic erasure of animals from daily human life market reform inaugurates. For it is at this precise moment, and in this precise location, that the anxieties about human status in exponentially more crowded urban centers, in ever more condensed interspecies coexistences, evolve to reiterate the fundamental eradication of “life” from the question of the animal. The meat animal, removed from tactile, aural, haptic proximity in London at Smithfield, first was

moved to a space outside the main city center, and ultimately out of consumer consciousness thanks to the dazzling technological efficiency and invisibility of modern slaughter operations born in nineteenth century cases like Smithfield. The gruesomely inanimate meat objects and substances produced in this moment, paralleling the multitude of other industrial applications—the widespread “rendering” of animal bodies supported human society’s most advanced technological attributes, in many cases—is “addressed” in the advertising poetics of the day as the animals of Romantic literature had been addressed, although now for entirely different ends.

Chapter three builds on the Smithfield condition articulated in Chapter Two and the literary addresses of Smithfield by Defoe, Dickens, and others, to consider the dark, criminal London of the basement abattoir and of a new urban danger made wildly popular across multiple centuries of real crime sensationalism and serial fiction production. Eighteenth century criminals like Jack Sheppard—and their crimes—found a literary heritage from Defoe to Dickens via wildly popular Penny Dreadfuls and Bloods, and the popular culture of London in the period amplified these bloody tastes with the public executions of those criminals as well as the “freakshow” attractions at St. Bartholomew’s Fair adjacent to Smithfield. Alongside these sensational elaborations of the horrors of London, Poe’s London, and even Melville’s New York in *Bartleby the Scrivener*, express the new urban work experience as a hopeless abjection even in the case of total and mundane sociation. The chapter’s review of nineteenth century publishing culture also considers the rise in public literacy among working classes in order to document the pervasive cultural force of their narrative form and content in the society of the day, not only the Society articulated in these various literary modes. The “cheap,” mass-produced penny objects and the hodge-podge, sensationalistic, plagiaristic renditions of more expensive editions by Dickens and others comprised the standard form of the consumed literary object in the new mass

reading public. The penny's material form, a clear product of the economic setting in which it is produced, distributed, and consumed that parallels the meat production systems at and after Smithfield, reiterates themes of horrifying, erasive murder and demolitions of the human the penny narratives consistently work through. *Sweeney Todd*, the canonical Penny Dreadful, gathers the historical and thematic topics of this project together in a condensation of meat and butchery, urban development and depravity, and literary expression.

Chapter four moves from the pennies' form of urban and social abjection to suggest that Dickens's legal fiction and Kafka's modernist poetics of bureaucratic *subjection* respond to the "improving" society's technical and administrative violence against the individual. In comparing the forms of legal abjection in, especially, Dickens's *Bleak House* and Kafka's *The Trial* by tracking the specific aesthetic strategies in each work and considering, in particular, Kafka's nonhuman form across his works. In each work, the force of law is total yet absurd, pervasive yet ambiguous, and this builds upon the other articulations thereof by Poe and Melville, to be sure. The immense legal apparatus Dickens and Kafka build probes how such a thing as "ambiguous totality" even be the case while formally negotiating the effects of such abjective structures through narrative voice, ambiguity, and other devices examined in the chapter. The result of this study is a clear literary heritage that is critical of the role legal and bureaucratic apparatuses play in administering modern life in the city, but certainly also, in the case of other works from both authors' oeuvres, well outside the city walls or formally constructed social situations. These works construct, in their very different ways, a deep suspicion of the human apparatuses that grant subjectivity only to produce abjection, and this then compromises animal law and the civic compartmentalizations both pre- and post-Smithfield. This analysis proceeds as both a close reading of Dickens and Kafka but also as a theoretical interpretation engaging Frankfurt School

critical theorists like Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin and their work on the inhuman conditions of twentieth century technology, urban experience, and war. In many ways, the cultural expressions of nineteenth century modernity and its immediate aftermath drive later critical theories such as posthumanism and Frankfurt School social theory, which is clear enough by the chosen objects of study in the latter and equally clear any time posthuman, cyborg, or related theoretical approaches pick up *Frankenstein* or factory organization after Marx.

Ultimately, this project presents an archeology of thinking nonhumans through a dense, foundational history and a recognition of collective suffering, animal concern, and meat production/consumption that somehow fails to mitigate any of the most aggressively documented horrors. The literary arc of this archeology includes canonical evolutions from Romanticism to modernism, as well as the intersectional genre of the Penny Dreadful. This shows how literary form engages with the cultural history at Smithfield and the excruciating irony of an animal rights movement that produces even more unspeakable, more insufferable, less articulable nonhuman conditions. Against the cultural history of Smithfield, oscillation between literary strategies appears to be perhaps the only available technique of resistance. Meat City thus has, really, nothing at all to do with nineteenth century London, or with animals, or with popular, mass-produced serial fiction, or with literary history. These individual archives, however, unearth an abiding conceptualization of nonhuman conditions to express the horror and, perhaps, the inexpressibility of vacant coexistence. Meat City, with its nonhuman objects, is the excruciating totality and the inarticulate nothing of modern life.

Chapter 1

The Trouble With Coexistence: On Being and Becoming Romantic Nonhumans

All out-o'th'-way, far-fetched, perverted things,
All freaks of Nature, all Promethean thoughts
Of man; his dullness, madness, and their feats,
All jumbled up together, to compose
A Parliament of Monsters. Tents and Booths,
Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast mill,
Are vomiting, receiving, on all sides,
Men, Women, three-years' Children, Babes in arms.
Oh blank confusion! True epitome
Of what the mighty City is herself
To thousands upon thousands of her Sons,
Living amid the same perpetual whirl
Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
To one identity, by differences
That have no law, no meaning, and no end;
Oppression under which even the highest minds
Must labour, whence the strongest are not free!⁴²

An excruciating, vacant ecology and a frustrated human experience dominate works like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Blake's *Book of Thel*. Anxieties about the trouble with human/nonhuman intercourse also show up in less unnatural figures of animals, inhuman conditions, and mass vacancy in works such as Robert Burns's "To A Mouse." And we might say that Coleridge's "Rime" and "To A Young Ass" join two poles of nonhuman thought in the period within one oeuvre. Animals and the nonhuman return again and again as targets of thought in British Romantic literature. This incorporation of animals includes domestic and agricultural modes, wilderness motifs, hunting, and meditations on less defined nonhuman modes include the quasi-scientific assemblage of dead body parts in Mary Shelley's

⁴² Wordsworth, William. *The Fourteen Book Prelude*, ed. W.J.B. Owen. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, Book VII: 714-730, pp. 156-157.

Frankenstein, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's weird, possibly supernatural mariner, and the inescapable dark spirits of Robert Burns' "Tam o' Shanter."

Wordsworth and Coleridge craft Lyrical Ballads in 1797 as part of a broad, public social critique of the Poor Laws, but their poems also include multiple engagements of animals and other nonhumans. Coleridge's separate poem, "To a Young Ass," is about an abused, laboring animal, and Wordsworth's animals include owls, harts, heifers, and many more. Burns and Clare spend the majority of their poetic lives lamenting enclosure, cultural disruption, and the suffering of birds, badgers, and others, and they narrate sentimental and non-sentimental losses of places that seem to ruin things for all critters equally. As David Perkins has noted, Clare writes "The Badger" as bans on badger bating pass thru British Parliament.⁴³ Writers throughout the Romantic period, regardless of direct political interests such as Wordsworth and Coleridge's or circumstantial overlap such as "The Badger" and parliamentary developments in bull baiting that Lord Byron may have been present for, articulate interspecies community at the formal level.⁴⁴ This only scratches the surface of the deep nonhuman engagements in the literature. Some of the more precisely animal works include Burns' "To A Mouse" and John Clare's "Badger," the latter of which is believed to have been written in the very same year the British Parliament made badgerbaiting, bullbaiting, and cockfighting misdemeanors (1835).⁴⁵ Burns and Clare were also

⁴³ Perkins, David. *Romanticism and Animal Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

⁴⁴ Christine Kenyon-Jones brings up the association of Byron to bull-baiting legislature in Parliament, noting that when Lord Erskine brought the 1809 bill to the floor, "among those who were privileged to hear it 'live', as it was first delivered, was the twenty-one-year-old Lord Byron." Kenyon-Jones, Christine. *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-period writing*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2001, p. 80.

⁴⁵ Perkins, p. 99. Complicating a precise interpretation of Clare's exact intent in the poem, it was not published until after his death. Perkins notes that a modern editor of Clare's works claims Clare identified with the afflicted badger (and, presumably, the other nonhumans in the poem)

combatting the onset of and the ongoing enclosure, respectively, of British agrarian land. Both often seem to fit an ideal “peasant poet” role that could materially inhabit the marginalized agrarian subject position to articulate a consubstantiality of human and nonhuman experience. Burns, for one, seems anything but idealistic as his plow digs up a mouse and her nest, and although the general themes of uprooting and disappointment (for mice and men alike) dominate the piece, the narrator’s “union” with an affectionately hailed “mousie” opens up a space for shared suffering and mediation of collective disenfranchisement. This interspecies mode also inflects texts on other nonhumans such as spirits and angels, creatures like Frankenstein’s monster, plants, worms, insects, the celestial orbs of works reflecting on the universe, and more.

And so it is that, throughout British Romantic literature, nonhumans, humans, and the nonhuman humans at the heart of Romantic critiques of subject position and anthropocentric hubris are all negotiated as intermingling and potentially at risk. In many cases, the notion of risk or of cross-species threat is then negotiated as a further conceit of the human subject. This can be true especially in the most directly “sympathetic” works like “To A Mouse.” A certain Romantic “interspeciesism” takes multiple forms as failed encounter, failed critique, sincere sympathy, sadistic pity, empathic consideration, and more. This interspecies impulse effects nonhuman forms in poetics and narrative technique, as this chapter’s findings will demonstrate. British Romantic literature is also often read as a proto-environmentalist movement that looks beyond negotiations of the individual or the human to address the natural world, thus espousing a form of social concern similar to the operative improvement and civility tones behind animal rights debates. This presents Romantic literature as part of or as a precursor to the Victorian “self-improvement” project that attempts to build a more perfect human subject. Jonathan Bate’s study

and, per Perkins’ own analysis of the poem itself, ridiculed several human actors in the poem’s narrative.

of the period, *Romantic Ecology*, and later works such as James McCusick's *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*, claim an inherent environmentalism in Romantic literature by tracking connections between Romantic Literature and the North American conservationist rhetoric of John Muir and others.⁴⁶

Nature, in such readings, is a sublime refuge from an urbanizing modernity. The untouched nonhuman world, marked by words like virgin and pristine, becomes by the nineteenth century a green container for escapist human experience and meditations on life, death, and love. The works of the era are literally littered with such scenes, and, as such, it would be easy to accept a face value assessment of the period as one of rampant nature writing and overlook deeper political concerns such as those operative when Samuel Coleridge and William Wordsworth, in 1798, the first publication date of *Lyrical Ballads*, launch a poetic assault on the Removal Act of 1795 and the archaic poor laws of the day.⁴⁷ The Romantic literary engagement of and influence on social and political events, as I will discuss next, is practically a period indicator. The proto-environmentalist interpretation of Romantic literature does not always perform a rigorous social critique of Romantic literature—including animal concern—focusing as it does on a sort of transcendental misanthropy that is surely performed in a great many Romantic works but that ends up isolating the human subject as the only consequential subject of analysis. Nevertheless, this oft-documented aspect of Romantic literature's social consciousness carries through to the broader cultural programs of Victorian England, including the slaughter reform and market removal documented in Chapter Two.

⁴⁶ See: Bate, Jonathan. *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. London: Routledge, 1991, and McCusick, James. *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*. New York: Palgrave, 2000.

⁴⁷ See Harrison, Gary Lee. *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty, Power*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994.

In considering Romantic literature's social awareness, so to speak, in unison with the formal experimentation and hallmarks of specific authors, one must also consider the Romantic address of audience. This can be interior to the poem in clear ways, as in the case of the device at the heart of this study, Romantic apostrophe. However, the Romantic period also opens a decisive consideration of the public as an entity to be addressed and, more importantly, to be persuaded on social reform and political issues.⁴⁸ This means that Romantic authors are not simply writing works about animals, with animals, or even *for* animals (and other nonhumans) in an expressive vacuum. When Romantic authors address clouds, clods of dirt, animals, ghosts, and others, the work expressing such apparently vacuous apostrophic endeavors highlights the comportment of the speaker while also presuming (or perhaps designing) a reading audience capable of reflecting upon that reflexivity. Poems and novels striving to express and negotiate interspecies and nonhuman communities through formal experimentation, thematic details, or with the outright demonstration of animal concern in the animal rights era "Badger" poem by Clare thus work on the speaker, the reading public, and then on nothing at all.

This "nothing at all" is a persistent potentiality of the Romantic work, one that Marjorie Levinson's poetic theory of the fragment may be best suited to.⁴⁹ Levinson's intensive study of Romantic poems that were incomplete or fragmentary by apparent design, including the "deliberate fragment," Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." The idea that the works might either frame a sense of incompleteness in their completion or, on the other hand, fail to address their audience, which is also a frequent narrative aspect of works like *Frankenstein* or Wordsworth's "There Was a Boy," ultimately reframes the stakes of the work of art altogether. I will examine

⁴⁸ For more on this, see Franta, Andrew. *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁴⁹ Levinson, Marjorie. *The Romantic Fragment Poem: A Critique of a Form*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Frankenstein later in this chapter to consider both the play on apostrophe and the more common concerns about techno-biological effects upon life, human or otherwise. These interventions in audience-less response and audience conditioning, as in the case of the *Lyrical Ballads* Advertisement, which I will discuss shortly, are perhaps more convincing as “art for art’s sake” than any depoliticized mode despite the recurrent political commitments of Romantic works, and this version of pure expression, “perhaps” expression that has no audience, ironically dominates literary production in the early era of its mass publicity.⁵⁰

One of the hallmark poems from the Romantic period on this issue is in fact one that features a relatively *successful* work weathered by time and then removed from its disintegrated context in a violent assertion of finitude. The poem is of course Percy Shelley’s “Ozymandias.”

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”⁵¹

Shelley writes “Ozymandias” on the occasion of a large statue of Ramses II (Ozymandias) arriving in London from Egypt. Plundered artifacts were arriving for display at the British Museum from other locations including Greece and Iraq throughout the first half of the century. Aside from the Elgin Marbles and the Rosetta Stone, the Royal Library of Ashurbanipul was

⁵⁰ See again Franta.

⁵¹ source

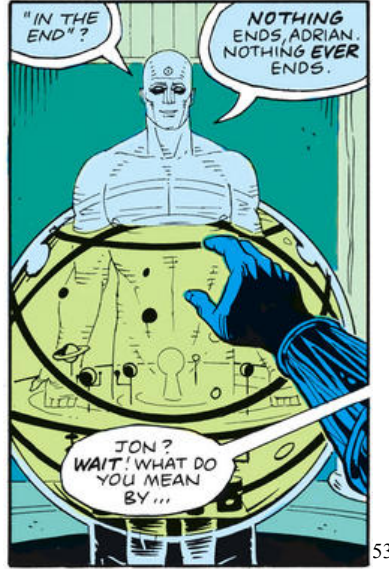
discovered in 1849 at Nineveh in northern Iraq, and within were tablets containing The Epic of Gilgamesh, in part radically revising conceptions of biblical narratives such as the great flood because the tablets and narratives they contained predated the Genesis compilation of several of the same stories.⁵² The aperture of the poem is a first person address that immediately unravels the artifice of report or documentation, for within the reported report are myriad questions about authorship and record. The “hand that mocked them” and “the heart that fed” could be the same artist or scribe, carver or sculptor. Or perhaps not. The Italian favorite, *Chissà*, seems apropos—who can say? I wonder? I am curious. Maybe. The poem’s volta unmistakably contrasts human monument and accomplishment with nonhuman time scale and coexistent indifference, but then it is also a melancholy, even melodramatic anthropocentric lament. The poem’s speaker has only quoted this response to all that is contained within. No critical marks dictate a perspective outside the strong socio-global (cosmopolitan?) remark that “I met a traveller,” besides the fascinating ellipses inserted early, *as if* to remind of the material quotation in hand. This “as if” returns frequently in Romantic irony and simulacrous expression. Ultimately, the constructed object accomplishes all and more that any “authentic” nonhuman object could for aesthetic experience and deep thinking, as perhaps demonstrated again in the reflexive genre modes in the Ozymandias sonnet.

Shelley’s revision of the sonnet form here relies entirely upon the stability of the sonnet form—and, presumably, an audience’s recognition of that form—to achieve its experimental ends. Instead of the rote three-quatrain, one couplet pattern in ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG scheme, “Ozymandias” follows an ABAB ACDC EDEF EF pattern. One of the obvious

⁵² David Damrosch’s excellent account of the text’s discovery, translation, and reception chronicles the origins of the discovery in 1840 and the final recognition of what had been discovered in 1872, in the back rooms of the British Museum. See: Damrosch, David. *The Buried Book: The Loss and Rediscovery of The Great Epic of Gilgamesh*. New York: Holt, 2007.

consequences of this innovation is that the words “things” and “kings” are paired in, arguably, the most glaring instance of formal anomaly. On the other hand, “read” and “fed” are another pairing and the triplet rhymes produced by the other variations, “land sand command” and “appear despair bare” could all rightly lead to intriguing interpretations in a poem playing on the notion of mockery and mimesis, fallen tyrants and the dust of empires, and forgotten artists lingering in the artifacts of conquest. Further, the rhyme pairs themselves are just a shade off in most spots besides the king-things and the evacuated property triplet of land-sand-command. The enjambment here amplifies the sense of “lifeless things” given the critique of lineation while also unsettling the sense of rote rhyme resolutions.

I focus on the line endings because the poem is so very concerned with the play on endings and non-endings itself, and perhaps no clue better assures of this interpretation than the “sole” open phonemics in the poem, “decay” and “away.” The punctuation throughout, and the frequent stoppages with hard, terminal closure on consonants disrupted, funnily enough, only by the slippery, would-be inanimacy of “stone,” play on endings. When the “actual” end itself is reached, however, Shelley’s speaker(s) save the worst for last: decay and away, the clever open vowel enjambment that settles the mouth on no certain task until the next line is taken up, paired in the only timeless certainty of the poem and its subjects. With good reason, Alan Moore fixed on this sense of ending and persistence with his character, Adrian Veidt/Ozymandias, whose question “I did the right thing, didn’t I? It all worked out in the end,” is answered by science, in the form of the nuclear superman, Dr. Manhattan, in two separate speech bubbles, one with repeated speech ironized in quotation marks, as though the question were human, all too human:



The hand that mocked, and the heart that fed. Jon (Dr. Manhattan) disappears immediately after this, leaving Adrian/Ozymandias to stew alone after his own ellipses.

The Turn to Audience

What then must we make of the trouble with audience and expectation in Romantic literature on the failed human or the “posthuman,” as in “Ozymandias,” and on animals in other poems, given the simultaneous humanism at stake in presuming authorship and readership talented enough to reflexively critique all of these parameters and relationships? For starters, there is the very direct manner in which Romantic literature in England “ushers itself in” as a direct address of public audience, and of an audience with a prior sense of poetry that may condition them to resist these new strains of common speech and “radical” writing. The Advertisement to the 1798 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* includes the admonition—what else can we call it?—that

Readers accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps frequently have to

⁵³ Moore, Alan and Dave Gibbons, illustrator. *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics, 2005, XII: 27.

struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title.⁵⁴

It is crucial to consider literary reception and the link of social and political change to the crafting of *Lyrical Ballads*, but then it is also crucial to consider the ways in which poetry might suffice where politics had failed. Even this “non-literary” Advertisement performs the role, through sarcasm and mockery, of social catalyst; it interpellates a readership that will mark the text’s failure, and so the text prefigures not the accuracy of judgment on that count but the affective “strangeness”—the alienation and resistance—produced in the interaction of text and audience. The poetry—any text whatever—is insufficient before it has even been read. As an act of aperture, the Advertisement ensures a didactic experience and simultaneously brings into question the presumptions of the educators. This then, in conjunction with the known social concern and political engagement of the text, suggests another way to consider Wordsworth and Coleridge’s *Lyrical Ballads*: as marking the insufficiency of law and social concern to address their purported objects, in this case on the issue of the new Poor Laws and in the wake of several modes of the Corn Laws, and all of this after the primary documents of Enclosure.⁵⁵

David Simpson has perhaps remarked most conclusively on this strange tension between authorship, audience, “concern,” and effect:

In using the word *concern* in my subtitle, I intend to capture the unresolved nature of the questions Wordsworth raises about suffering and sympathy. To be concerned usually

⁵⁴ Coleridge, Samuel Taylor and William Wordsworth. *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1800*, eds. Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2008, p. 47.

⁵⁵ Scott Boehnen is especially good on the issue of poetry and politics in *Lyrical Ballads*, cross-referencing the new sociological “taxonomy” of poor classes in Jeremy Bentham’s 1797 *Annals of Agriculture and Other Useful Arts* (noting as well that Wordsworth read the text in question and suggesting that Wordsworth in fact responds directly to it, perhaps by 1798 and certainly by 1835). See: Boehnen, Scott. “The Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: Poetics, Poor Laws, and the Bold Experiments of 1797-1802,” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 20:3 (1997), pp. 287-311.

means not having finished with an issue, being in a state of suspended attention that may produce a resolution but has not done so yet. The word also usefully signals the reflexive component of Wordsworth's poetry, which is so often about itself and its own making.⁵⁶

As this chapter will often consider apostrophe as such a "suspended" or incomplete address, and then also as a determinate failure exhibiting the mutual abjection of human and nonhuman, Simpson's figure here is instructive but for its sense that the suspension is of a "resolution" to come. In other Romantic authors, this will not remain an open question in quite the way implied by Simpson of Wordsworth. Simpson goes on, in a later passage, to discuss the "spectral figure" of the soldier encountered in the summer vacation episode of Book IV of the *Prelude*. Simpson uses instead a 1798 fragment from an edition of *Lyrical Ballads* that, indeed, suggests an even more extraordinary "deformity" Simpson, rightly I think, associates with the figure of the *Muselmann* and thereby with the walking dead and the debris of modern industrial administration.⁵⁷ This bridges the atrocities of the world wars already inflicted in the eighteenth century, long before their more recent philosophical articulation in twentieth and twenty-first century works by Giorgio Agamben, Theodor Adorno, and others, with the World Wars and technological shifts operative in those latter expressions.

The version of the lines in *The Prelude* emphasize the word "common," and Simpson does not concern himself with the figure's solitude expressed as "[c]ompanionless, no dog attending, and by no staff sustained he stood."⁵⁸ Simpson does, however, note the narrator's

⁵⁶ Simpson, David. *Wordsworth, Commodification and Social Concern*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Simpson, pp. 92-93.

⁵⁸ Wordsworth, *The Fourteen Book Prelude*, ed. W.J.B. Owen. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, Book IV: 415-16, p. 90

“animal delight,” which is “countered by this vision of animal insensibility, as his self-possessed silence is displaced by the soldier’s ‘murmuring sounds’.”⁵⁹

[He was in stature tall,
A foot above man’s common measure tall,
And lank, and upright. There was in his form
A meager stiffness. You might almost think
That his bones wounded him. His legs were long,
So long and shapeless that I looked at them
Forgetful of the body they sustained.
His arms were long and lean; his hands were bare;
[His visage, wasted though it seem’d, was large
In feature, his cheeks sunken, and his mouth]
Shewed ghastly in the moonlight ...⁶⁰

The “visage” cannot fail to remind of the half sunk, shattered visage of a former greatness, or terribleness, in Shelley’s “Ozymandias.” Wordsworth, in *The Prelude*, goes on to write that “yet still his form kept the same awful steadiness,” and this steady form, along with the soldier’s “stately air of mild indifference,” both monumentalize and demolish the human in nonhuman form, which Simpson’s version denotes as the soldier being “scarcely ‘akin to man’.”

Simpson also discusses Wordsworth’s poetry on poverty—and certainly also on impoverished experience, a notion I will explore in greater detail later in this chapter. These sections consider the difficulty of political address under the sign of poetic expression becomes clear. First, what Simpson has to say about another famous passage from Wordsworth’s *Prelude*:

Making decisions between these options is made all the harder because it is not absolutely clear that Wordsworth approves of himself here: he could be retrospectively casting himself as a rather pompous young man endorsing the views of a figure whom he admires while adding in his own limiting conditions drawn from the British poor law debates of the time ... What does it mean to be “lowly”? Does this simply mean near the bottom of the socioeconomic order, or does one have to demonstrate abjection as well?⁶¹

⁵⁹ Simpson, p. 92.

⁶⁰ “*Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797-1802*,” eds. James Butler and Karen Green. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992, pp. 277-82. Quoted in Simpson, p. 92.

⁶¹ Simpson, p. 18.

Simpson's mention of abjection" on the subject of poverty is, moreover, a further reference to the imbrication of social abjection and war, and the passage in question is in this case is not entirely on the subject of economics. Simpson's target is another oft-excerpted passage from Wordsworth's *Prelude*, and one that, indeed, must be considered in the context of Poor Laws and social concern but also, on a grander scale, the fact of social administration in general. The "legalized exclusion" of human objects already rendered nonhuman—foreclosing the assertion of humanity altogether in the "steady form" of abject individuals—takes shape not merely in value and commodity forms, the subject of Simpson's book; not merely in the killable animal body at times protected by the new laws of the Romantic period and at times rendered even more monumentally disposable; not merely in the atrocity of war and exhausted, spectral soldiers defined by "ghastly mildness" as in *The Prelude*:

... Yet not the less
Hatred of absolute rule, where will of One
Is law for all, and of that barren pride
In them who, by immunities unjust,
Between the Sovereign and the People stand,
His helper and not theirs, laid stronger hold
Daily upon me, mixed with pity too
And love; for where hope is, there love will be
For the abject multitude. And when we chanced
One day to meet a hunger-bitten Girl
Who crept along fitting her languid gait
Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
Its sustenance, while the Girl with pallid hands
Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
Of solitude, and at the sight my Friend
In agitation said, "'Tis against *that*,
That we are fighting," I with him believed
That a benignant Spirit was abroad
Which might not be withstood, that poverty,
Abject as this, would in a little time
Be found no more, that we should see the earth
Unthwarted in her wish to recompence
The meek, the lowly, patient Child of Toil,

All institutes forever blotted out
That legalized exclusion, empty pomp
Abolished, sensual State and cruel Power,
Whether by edict of the One or few;
And finally, as sum and crown of all,
Should see the People having a strong hand
In framing their own Laws, whence better days
To all mankind.⁶²

The Girl at the heart of a meditation on poverty and on poverty laws in the period is indelibly paired, like kings and lifeless things, to the heifer. The proper noun capitalization suggests a categorical hierarchy between human and animal at first glance, and Wordsworth does not openly consider the matter here. On the other hand, the trouble with capitalized, singular subjects and diminished, modular objects under the sign of species is of vital “concern,” to borrow the turn, to many Romantic works. Further, “heifer” is marking specificities besides a merely killable “chattle” object: this is, at least, an identifiably female cow. These are note the firmest indicators of the poem’s potential for an interspecies reading, however. The

Girl
Who crept along fitting her languid gait
Unto a heifer’s motion, by a cord
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
Its sustenance, while the Girl with pallid hands
Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
Of solitude

is not alone. The “heartless mood” is perhaps due to her lot amongst the bovine, but the unity of these “lifeless objects,” as I’ll address in Chapter Four on the unity formed by executioners and condemned man at the end of Kafka’s *The Trial*, seems total here. Her “languid gait” need not dictate the mood of the scene, though the clear contrast of a “hunger-bitten” girl tied indelibly to a cow mundanely feeding itself with no apparent trouble surely indicates the speaker’s

⁶² Wordsworth, *The Fourteen Book Prelude*, ed. W.J.B. Owen. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, Book IX: 501-532, p. 193. Simpson quotes in this case from *The Thirteen Book Prelude*, ed. Mark L. Reed, 2 vols. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991, IX: 519-26.

perspective on the human-induced poverty of humans. The cows, after all, appear to have it better. As such, reading the poem against the grain a bit to suggest a lock step coexistence of girl cow and girl human, of human and nonhuman, risks much. At the same time, it risks precisely Wordsworth's object here: the girl *is* rendered inhuman; the figure engages both the animal fate and the precariousness of humanity in the historical context. What Wordsworth does not so precisely acknowledge, of course, is the proximity of inhuman to nonhuman, of the evacuation of the concept founding his critique of war, its ghastly atrocities, and the post-war ghastliness one can measure in one substantial post-man, as Simpson nicely documents in his study of the earlier fragment. As such, the unified form here is nonhuman-nonhuman and not Girl-heifer, if we are to take Wordsworth at his word and reflect successfully on the suffering and the abjection inflicted by modern society.

Wordsworth is writing on a late eighteenth-century event, carrying it fully into the nineteenth as he revises and reissues the lines in *The Prelude*. Zachary Leader, in his comprehensive study of Romantic authorship and the phenomenon of revision in the period, remarks on Wordsworth's editorial longevity thusly: "Where Wordsworth differs from many other poets is in his refusal, with rare exceptions, to recognize earlier work as the work of an earlier self, insisting instead on 'affinities preserved | Between all stages of the life of man', and constantly returning to the past to test and confirm personal identity."⁶³ Wordsworth bridges the Romantic period via his own persistence, and his editorial energies had well-known influence on the works defining the period. Besides his direct role in the publication of other Romantics, especially the tense history with Coleridge, he was also among the early fans and supporters of

⁶³ Leader, Zachary. *Revision and Romantic Authorship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 38 and quoting from *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 5 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941-9, ii. 481.

Charlotte Smith and her blank verse innovations in works such as “Beachy Head.” Wordsworth famously remarked, long after her death, that Smith was “a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered.”⁶⁴

I mention Wordsworth’s biography in relation to literary influence and cultural history in this case only to contextualize the concern with audience and reception and also any would-be “theoretical” interest in figures such as “posthuman” or in the thicker historical concern with abjected bodies damaged by war and riven with disease and hunger. Connecting this broader cultural historical aspect to his particular practices of revision and his related, authoritative role in literary development through the turn from the long eighteenth to long nineteenth century is another way of addressing the very same human status Shelley questions in “Ozymandias.” Charlotte Smith, for her part, was no less concerned with the violence of category, the equivalence of war, and the differentiation of species that motivate so much of the other Romantics’ works, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Felicity Nussbaum has addressed the “limits of the human” in long eighteenth-century literature, as well, discussing precursors to Romantic authors and the vital matter of “life” that Romantic authors take up again and again in blank verse, epistolary, and other forms with the attendant, reflexive markers of literary form was not remotely specific to the period or to the “age of Darwin” and industrial technology and secular “modernity” in the long nineteenth century. In her study, which considers tropes of deformity and defectiveness in literatures that

⁶⁴ The quote is well known and ubiquitous to nearly all Charlotte Smith websites and a good number of editions and commentaries on her work. What is perhaps less well-known is the Wordsworth family’s direct connection to Charlotte Smith’s financial and legal troubles, which are also among the first topics covered in discussions of her work and life. For an especially careful job on those biographical connections between Wordsworth and Smith, see: Hunt, Bishop C., Jr. “Wordsworth and Smith: 1970,” in *The Wordsworth Circle*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Spring, 2004), pp. 80-91.

“link” race and gender in mutually bolstered, abject status, Nussbaum discusses a 1774 account of a shipwrecked girl:

[S]he allegedly inspired those who first saw her to shout, “*Voilà le Diable!*” The savage white child, feeding on roots and raw game, lives as a weasel-like amphibious creature until she is captured and integrated into gentility in a nunnery. Her life, lived at the limits of the human, extends beyond Eve’s defective duplicity or Desdemona’s fanciful romance to suggest an alternative narrative that would enable incorporating the untamable feminized primitive into civility through education and religious instruction.⁶⁵

Nussbaum can be forgiven the inattention to animal detail here, as her task is not to examine the categorical violence of abjecting animals from social experience and the status of autonomous life. She is focused on the “classes” of human species that are abjected from the full human community, just as Wordsworth seems at first to be before his own text subverts that chauvinism. Nussbaum is also not affirming the “civilizing” technique she describes in the close of this passage. Quite the contrary—Nussbaum is especially good on the atrocious “limits” of the civilizing imagination, one could say.⁶⁶ She also draws on the works and life of Samuel Johnson, the great inventory-master of British poetry prior to the Romantic era and subject of a complex relationship of literary influence with the Romantics.

One of the most riveting moments in Nussbaum’s study, which is quite useful in establishing the discourses on nonhuman abjection and on the London socius before and immediately into the nineteenth century, concerns the social interactions of Johnson and Elizabeth Montagu on the issues of national literary and linguistic heritage, class, and civilization. Montagu ridiculed Johnson’s “deformity,” his effeminacy, and his general

⁶⁵ Nussbaum, Felicity A. *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 256.

⁶⁶ See especially the discussion of “civilization” in Chapter 1, “Fictions of defect,” pp. 42-44, and Chapter 2, “Effeminacy and femininity,” pp. 58-59, and throughout.

behavior.⁶⁷ Nussbaum contends that Montagu's aggressive assessments of good taste in fashion, writing, and more, produced her violent rebukes of Johnson and more than just his verbose written style. Perhaps the most curious example of Montagu's anti-Johnson streak is the analogy she draws from Johnson's style to the savages who throng at oddity markets like Bartholomew and Haymarket or the "barbarous and uncultivated" coal miners she oversees upon the death of her husband, the owner of coal mines. And within those vibrant accounts, Nussbaum unearths a telling, if conventional, link between ornament, classification, and nonhuman objects subjected to the cultural politics of all of this. Nussbaum writes,

She characterizes overwrought ornamentation as an exotic strangeness that is attractive to a mob mentality and uses as an example a Haymarket mob's admiring the sea monsters that adorned the King's coach: 'False thoughts & grotesque ornaments may please & surprise but it is only the just, the natural, & the proper, that can engage. The mob indeed are attracted by the exhibition of monsters [...]' In this passage Montagu reveals her belief that a class association exists between the unruly and the unlettered, and that the grotesque, the monstrous, the rare, and the foreign especially allure the mob and inspire lawlessness ... Savages are especially vulnerable to this kind of show since they 'still decorate their persons with shells, feathers, skins of beasts, & c.'"⁶⁸

Here Nussbaum has located an incriminating bit of classist, colonial chauvinism. The unity of lifeless things that so severely pique Montagu's contempt is yet another conjoining of abjected human-nonhuman lowness, as in the Wordsworth passages. Wordsworth was also interested in the marketpace, as Paul Youngquist documents at length in his study of Romantic literature and

⁶⁷ Johnson is believed to have suffered Tourette Syndrome based on posthumous studies of character descriptions by his biographer Boswell and other contemporaries, and he was widely considered to exhibit odd, abrupt mannerisms. When Arthur Shapiro published the first definitive study on the subject, he presented Johnson as the most famous example of Tourette's, and subsequent scholarship in neurobiology and other fields continues to affirm that view. See: Shapiro, Arthur K., Elaine Shapiro, Gerald Young, et al. *Gilles De La Tourette Syndrome*. New York: Raven Press, 1978.

⁶⁸ Nussbaum, p. 77 and quoting letters from Elizabeth Montagu to various others, found in Eger, Elizabeth. *Bluestocking feminism: writings of the Bluestocking circle, 1738-1790*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999, pp. 159-177

its fascinations with bodies, which also includes lengthy historical review of the anomalies audience at Bartholomew Fair at West Smithfield.

I also briefly discussed Bartholomew Fair in relation to the Smithfield Market in Chapter Two, but here it is important to include Youngquist's notion of Wordsworth as "the poet laureate of the proper body."⁶⁹ Body fascinations indeed dominate many of the preoccupations of the authors in this study, all the way to Kafka's vegetarianism, fletcherizing, and various other body complexes.⁷⁰ Wordsworth writes of Bartholomew Fair in *The Prelude*, and his withdrawal from the horrors of the site and the City in general fuel Youngquist's critique of the "normalizing force of his poetry": "Wordsworth confronts flesh and blood en masse and retreats in mild disgust to the cleaner consolations of the proper body."⁷¹ As I will also discuss in greater detail in Chapter Two, Smithfield Market was also the site of Bartholomew Fair. This location inspired a dazzling assortment of such anxieties in the nineteenth century leading eventually to the market's removal and relocation yet not quelling the popular cultural and literary fascination with the depraved, bloody atrocities of dark Smithfield alleys and urban butchery in the new, criminal district not so far from the Fleet Street barber shop where Sweeney Todd's meat pies will be made under the sign of suspicious meat products of unknown origins at the heart of the City. In later chapters, I will discuss how *Sweeney Todd* and works by Dickens featuring the Smithfield scene, the intensity of the animal masses and comingling of all sorts, breeds, humans and otherwise in this space, dictate a particular aspect of the urban literature in the period that is not defined by the typical urban, technological, business motifs but by meat, animals, and then

⁶⁹ Youngquist, Paul. *Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 28.

⁷⁰ I am thankful to Jeff Fort's suggestion to consider Kafka's body and food practices, and for the information on his vegetarianism and his chewing habits, and thereby for the insight that they meld so neatly with the nineteenth-century cultural practices under investigation presently.

⁷¹ Youngquist, p. 36.

also by the common concern with hygiene and contamination in a changing London ecology. Here Wordsworth responds directly to this concoction of urban coexistence with many of the same “civilizing” tones of the Montagu class, foreshadowing the utter incapacity of the structuring, authoritative rationality in legal and civic administration of social and animal ills to resolve these perceived privations:

All out-o’th’-way, far-fetched, perverted things,
All freaks of Nature, all Promethean thoughts
Of man; his dullness, madness, and their feats,
All jumbled up together, to compose
A Parliament of Monsters. Tents and Booths,
Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast mill,
Are vomiting, receiving, on all sides,
Men, Women, three-years’ Children, Babes in arms.
Oh blank confusion! True epitome
Of what the mighty City is herself
To thousands upon thousands of her Sons,
Living amid the same perpetual whirl
Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
To one identity, by differences
That have no law, no meaning, and no end;
Oppression under which even the highest minds
Must labour, whence the strongest are not free!⁷²

As Nussbaum writes to close her study of the eighteenth century:

In fact, of course, the multiple ways of being human undermine any single subject of modernity. White women’s sexuality becomes the carefully guarded line between the infected and uninfected spaces of racial and cultural contagion as an intact normative femininity and a bolstered masculinity free of defect serve as signs of successfully fending off contaminated forms. The black shadow harbored now *within* the country, the potential pollution that blackness brings to that femininity, comes to signify the menace of impurity and degeneration looming over and within an increasingly imperial England in the long eighteenth century.⁷³

Wordsworth’s anxiety at muddled masses in an unruly City space is echoed in the sweeping fear of invasion and contamination from the inside-out in the England Nussbaum articulates.

⁷² Wordsworth, *The Fourteen Book Prelude*, VII: 713-730, pp. 156-157.

⁷³ Nussbaum, p. 256.

Wordsworth's reaction, whether coherently identified as such or not, must also be considered a racist, classist abhorrence of the full scope of Bartholomew Fair.⁷⁴

What I am of course not examining in all of this, and what has been the basis of a number of addresses of crowds, especially "mobs" in England and other metropolises in the wake of the French and American Revolutions, is that crowds and assemblage were legislated against as a means of political control that, frankly, only reiterated the chauvinistic classifications in question here already.⁷⁵ I'd like to suggest that "trivial objects, melted and reduced to one identity, by differences that have no law, no meaning, and no end" is about half right. Certainly, the interminable sense of London's crowded coexistence called for laws, and laws and other municipal measures were soon passed to manage a number of emergent civic management problems including traffic, health and hygiene, and of course broader social ills such as slavery. Recalling here the way in which Wordsworth's ghastly soldier helps to undo the hard divisions between human-nonhuman, however, the "trivial objects, melted and reduced," besides its invocation of rendering down bodies, must be read as a proposition immediately rejected by "differences that have no law, no meaning, and no end." Further, "end" can be purpose, and thus Wordsworth undoes himself if his object is to lament the coexistence at Smithfield on the grounds of inauthentic, oppressed, and decaying experience. As will be clear in Chapter Four, in the case of the London Charles Dickens writes about (which must be the very same Wordsworth here writes about, much as the 1792 Wordsworth, by his own measure, is still attendant in 1735), the massive unity of the place still does not overrule the concern for individuation. At the same time, the texts are quite mindful of the "trouble" with coexistence, with individuation and with

⁷⁴ See here also Youngquist, pp. 28-56.

⁷⁵ David Collings' excellent *Monstrous Society* has much to say on this connection. See: Collings, David. *Monstrous Society: Reciprocity, Discipline, and the Political Uncanny, c. 1780-1848*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009.

consubstantiality, and they negotiate in an increasingly open, inquisitive way in the wake of Wordsworth's categorical aggressions.

This will reinvigorate object-status anew, opening onto the examination of mutual abjection and object-experience, as in Burns's "To A Mouse," as I will discuss. Furthermore, the turn to address and the limits of coexistence—what can humans even say to nonhumans, once humans are under interrogation?—manifests in a series of experiments with apostrophe, linking formal study to nonhuman thought. Another consequence of the redress of address in Romantic works in the afterlife of the animal rights that begin in the Romantic period, right in the heart of London on the Parliament floor, is that apostrophe and Romantic expression, in general, negotiate a failed *legal* encounter of nonhumans and an insufficient legal and social redress of human ills. This will be clear as an extension of the recurring failure of human address of nonhumans in Romantic literature, a considerate failure based on the mutual demolition of subject and object, human and animal, in the sometimes hopeful, sometimes disaffected "Parliament of Monsters" in the works here examined.

Addressing Apostrophe

Michael Macovski, author of a devoted study of apostrophe in Romantic literature, writes in his introduction on the discursive reach of literature

as a composite of voices—interactive personae that not only are contained within the literary text but extend beyond it, to other works, authors, and interpretations. Within this schema, literary characters interact not only with individual voices but also with other discourses themselves—political, religious, and historical.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Macovski, Michael. *Dialogue and Literature: Apostrophe, Auditors, and the Collapse of the Romantic Discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 3.

This approach to literature seems open-ended, but then it also draws heavily on the suggestion of Wordsworth in the Advertisement and, further, the figures of bare life, animal suffering, and racial abuse documented in the literature “before, during, and after” Romanticism. He writes of apostrophe:

The recurrence of the apostrophized listener in these poems thus begins to suggest a rhetoric of Romanticism. It is this rhetoric that first led M.H. Abrams to define the Romantic lyric as a “sustained colloquy, sometimes with himself or with the outer scene, but more frequently with a silent human auditor, present or absent” (“Lyric” 527). For Abrams, such an apostrophe “captures remarkably the qualities of the intimate speaking voice” within the “dramatic mode of address to an unanswering listener” (531, 533; cf. 533-56). Yet this “silent human authority” suggests not only a rhetoric of “address” but a poetics of dialogue—a poetics in which a speaker’s words are actually constructed in relation to proleptic repose. As Paul Magnuson has noted, such a poetics emerges from the “vital and dynamic relationship between speaker and auditor”—the sense that there “cannot be segregated and isolated utterances.” Generally speaking, the rhetorical inclusion of even a mute listener implies the form of a dialogue, with its attendant notions of reception, affect, and potential for response. Indeed, the incorporation of the Romantic addressee as a metonymic listener within the text sets up the formal configuration of a “co-respondence”—the structure, at least, of a communication. Romantic apostrophe accordingly becomes a rhetorical synecdoche or figure for dialogue—even if this form remains vestigial or unspoken.⁷⁷

Against this sense of Romantic poetry, I’d like to pose Poe’s often-invoked notion of a poem being for itself in *The Poetic Principle* is in fact quite the opposite of “art for art’s sake.” Poe writes in 1850 that “under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified — more supremely noble than this very poem — this poem *per se* — this poem which

⁷⁷ Macovski, p. 11, quoting an influential article on the “species” of Romantic verse, Abrams, M.H. “Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric,” in *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle*, eds. Fredrick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. Macovski here also brackets his claim of a vibrant, open interpretive sense of literary form and interplay with a passage from Paul Magnuson’s recently re-issued important work on *Lyrical Ballads* and the role the relationship of its two authors played in the unique, discursive genre that interplay produces: *Coleridge and Wordsworth: A Lyrical Dialogue*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988/2014.

is a poem and nothing more, this poem written solely for the poem's sake."⁷⁸ Poe produces here a nonhuman poetics by attending to the poem's singularity outside human aesthetic economies. He next exults "Truth," labeling it a "she" and making the famous claim that "the demands of Truth are severe." But then Poe engages Aristotelian aesthetic categories before asserting the three categories of mind he adheres to for his evaluation of poetry: Pure Intellect, Taste, and Moral Sense. Next, Poe writes

I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement, *of the soul*, which we recognise as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the heart. I make Beauty, therefore — using the word as inclusive of the sublime — I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes: — no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve, incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work: — but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem.⁷⁹

Kevin Gilmartin has written of the period that "early nineteenth century radicals were prepared to theorize the terms of the public debate, and to deploy those theories (including the idea of a single public) as political weapons."⁸⁰ Andrew Franta has recently written on what Jeremy

⁷⁸ Poe, Edgar Allen. "The Poetic Principle," <http://www.eapoe.org/works/essays/poetprnd.htm>, p. 5.

⁷⁹ Poe, "The Poetic Principle," p. 8.

⁸⁰ Gilmartin, Kevin. *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 8.

Bentham called the “regime of publicity,” suggesting that the term publicity “transforms ‘public’ into a set of practices or mode of action” that British Romantics were constantly negotiating in their poetry.⁸¹ This, Franta argues, was a continuance of the period’s political endeavors, which also developed as part of a burgeoning mass periodical system. The gathering sense of Romantic address, audience, and effect here, taking Poe as a supervenient voice on the matter, maintains the reflexive concern for discursive coexistence and the complex, thick entanglements of form and social context. This seems to be Marcovski’s object, as well, and while I will focus most intently on the effects of apostrophe in Romantic works on, with, to, from—however and whatever—animals, this larger interaction of literature and culture must be kept in mind as it sets up the intensification of the interactions between public literacy, mass production (of literature and of animals), and social concern through the long nineteenth century.

In particular, I will question the engagement with animal welfare and the relation to developments in animal law, at times, in what follows. In a later chapter, the roles of mass public literacy and revolutions in publication technologies will be considered in the case of the most popular, most widely read literatures of the period, the penny fictions that produced serial works like *Sweeney Todd* and other horrific narratives. In the case of Romantic literature, however, the intersection of this new concept of publicity with social and political expectations for published literature precedes the bare fact of a mass public. It may prove to be the case that the massive public literature of the penny fictions follows after the great political period of British literature, or that, at best, the mass fungibility of the literary form circulated in penny editions reveals something intractably determinate about the social conditions and political prospects of the period. That is to say, cheap, replaceable works match the modes of life in their period of great

⁸¹ Franta, Andrew. *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 4.

industrial productivity. If without political projects, the works might at least express social conditions.

Romantic literature may be taken to express social forms in more overtly *effective* ways. The literary form, at the level for example of sentence construction or a device like apostrophe, addresses these matters directly, whereas a text like *Sweeney Todd* might employ irony, sarcasm, wit, and the classic narrative arc along with character development, etc., yet its object is certainly not vocation, expression, and address—the successes and the limitations of each, as well—in remotely the same sense. Likewise, the “politics” of *Todd* and the pennies do not suggest the commitments of the Romantics, even where they inflect political discourse and cultural theory with themes and problems. And so I take up a relatively standard stance on Romantic literature as more or less an activist literature concerned with a variety of social projects of the day, and yet I examine apostrophe and the animal concern in these works not so much as a book end to the animal law also being waged in the period but as instead an attempt to properly consider and include nonhumans that are improperly separated from the human community via the hubris of human exceptionalism.⁸² As the authors discussed to this point have surely shown, being suspicious of this foundational division of human and animal is the starting point to articulating the lingering senses of community, coexistence, and even difference—which will still matter, at the end of the day—precluded by prior structures of the human-nonhuman divide.

Apostrophe is surely a speaking to oneself, and potentially an egotistical bout of staged melancholy. But the impulse itself is not necessarily always reflexive and ironic. Levinson’s discussion of Romantic Literature as an emphatically fragmentary genre is again useful here.

⁸² On the issue of political commitment in Romantic literature, one can hardly do better than Marilyn Butler’s seminal *Romantics, rebels, and reactionaries: English literature and its background, 1760-1830*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Even when the poems themselves are not aggressively performing framed, epistolary, or multiple forms that resist total articulation, failed expression becomes the theme of much Romantic literature, but then also a remarkable success. This theme can stand out as it does, for example, in the ruined monuments in Shelley's "Ozymandias," that yet communicate and interpellate. And in the course of this, Shelley also manages to critique the imperial removal of objects from colonized lands for leisurely consumption at the British Museum. This is a strong version of the multiple discursive zones, I think, Marcovski is after and that I will also be sketching through readings of several canonical poems on animals—*real* animals, so to speak, for the most part—and then a few creatures for good measure.

John Clare's Animals

John Clare's works are routinely held up as the ideal realization of the "peasant poet" motif other Romantics portray. Elizabeth Helsinger, among others, has pinpointed the class distinction between a Wordsworth and Clare, noting the "middle class fantasy" of landscape Wordsworth enacts in his peasant aspirations. But "Clare—like Burns or Bloomfield before him—was identified with the social as well as the geographical place that was his subject."⁸³ Clare's own biography is perhaps most responsible for this important tension between the *real* peasant poet and the staged peasant ideal of other Romantics. Born to a farmer in rural England, Clare did not go to college like other Romantic poets and he did not have literary or politically connected parentage like a Mary Shelley or a Lord Byron. Clare was of the British country and remained a laboring class poet. He had a brief military career before beginning his major poetic activity and, later in life, would be committed to an asylum, where he lived from 1841 until his

⁸³ Helsinger, Elizabeth. "Clare and the Place of the Peasant Poet," in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Spring, 1987), p. 509.

death. His poems themselves track the displacement and alienation of English agriculturalists as enclosure of the countryside commons dramatically revised the economic relations of laboring humans to the new notion of real property and to the agricultural land they worked for others under that property system. This alienation was not just of humans from the land. Clare's poems also tracked the human alienation from self in the modern industrial age, but without any significant attention to the city or to technology.

Clare wrote extensively on what Perkins calls "endangered nests."⁸⁴ Clare's poems often address birds and homes threatened by enclosure and general agrarian production that dramatically alter the British countryside, and Clare writes of the remaining havens, such as flooded marshes, in which "security pervades" and animals can hide from destructive humans.⁸⁵ But humans also hide from other humans in the country, and then again, humans and animals also convene in old age and death:

And this is nought but common life, what everybody finds
As well as I, or more's the luck of those that better speed
I'll mete my lot to bear with the lot of kindred minds
And grudge not those who say they for sorrow have no need
Why should I, when I know that it will not aid a nay?
For Summer is the season; even then the little fly
Finds friends enow, indeed, both for leisure and for play;
But on the winter window it must crawl alone to die:
Such is life, and such am I--a wounded, stricken flie⁸⁶

Clare, in this poem, goes a rung lower than Burns's mouse to open his sympathetic community to the fly where Burns, perhaps because the plow directed it so, unearthed "only" a mouse. If Wordsworth vs. Clare comes out on Clare's side for peasantry, then Burns vs. Clare is another win for Clare as the lowlier than thou expresser of supreme interspecies empathy. This empathic

⁸⁴ Perkins, p. 132.

⁸⁵ John Clare, "To the Snipe," quoted in Perkins, p. 132.

⁸⁶ Clare, "The Old Man's Song," *Selected Poems*. New York: Penguin, 2004.

mode, as Christine Kenyon-Jones and Perkins have both acknowledged, was not only a hallmark Romantic style but also an influence on social concern and, ultimately, parliamentary debate and legislation.⁸⁷ Clare's poem to the badger on the eve of parliamentary bans on badger baiting reminds, happily, of Kenneth Grahame's anti-social, anthropomorphized Badger in *The Wind in the Willows* while skipping over anthropomorphism quite a bit more convincingly; the poem breeds empathy via competitive opposition of human society, with domesticated dogs as foe to an inscrutable badger.⁸⁸

Clare's investigations of alienation and displacement could be considered, for lack of a better word, organic in their themes. Animals and humans on the land were not subjected to the directly technological compression of urban life and of the mechanized slaughter awaiting meat animals. The humans in Clare's works were not confronted with their horrible, creaturely selves like Victor Frankenstein was, and the London scene Wordsworth pitted against his rural ideal did not inflect Clare's poetry with any such memorable strokes. Clare, when he wrote of cattle or sheep, could certainly have been thinking of their lot and their future destination in London, however, and Chapter Two will discuss some of that animal traffic in further detail. Life in the country, however, was disrupted in different ways than this, and Clare's poetry explored the same themes of displacement and anonymity in those seemingly "organic" spaces that the authors of urban spaces and technological horrors considered. Nevertheless, Clare's works articulated the disarming sadness of nonhuman life as influenced by seasons and other natural forces. Clare's works struggled, to the end, to negotiate the valueless existence they inaugurate in all sorts of things.

⁸⁷ See: Kenyon-Jones, Christine. *Kindred Brutes: Animals In Romantic-Period Writing*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2001.

⁸⁸ Grahame, Kenneth. *The Annotated Wind in the Willows*, ed. Annie Gauger. New York: Norton, 2009.

The animals that shared in this alienation in Clare's poems were no better off by virtue of not being stuck in the human social and economic world. Clare's figure of alienation is instead an ontological displacement, at times brought by winter and solitude, at other times by the violence of humans abusing animals as in the later "Badger." "Badger" is written not only on the eve of animal rights laws banning badger-baiting, but also in the year before Clare is finally committed to the asylum to live out his days. Regarding an "organic" alienation in Clare's poetry, his poem "The Nightingale's Nest" probes the general irrelevance of life while cradling life as the dearest thing at the same time. This proceeds as a fascination with delicate nonhuman minutiae that then refract the human subject position and narrative role:

Up this green woodland-ride let's softly rove,
And list the nightingale - she dwells just here.
Hush ! let the wood-gate softly clap, for fear
The noise might drive her from her home of love⁸⁹

The opening establishes a surreptitious management of the nonhuman that is, nevertheless, a careful, sincere appreciation of its proximity. The "wood-gate" implies the bird has made a nest in a human structure. The poem's aperture, as a whole, thus amplifies the sense of quiet entry into a world constructed by humans—as a poem or as any space called "nature" yet bounded by human industry, including naming and cataloguing. But then Clare's entry point also opens the narrator's company to the nightingale's space and to nonhuman space in general. Even if humans built the gate, "Hush!" and the imploration against driving the bird away usher in care and concern. The poem's narrative opening into a bounded space of observation is matched by the entry into a gated space in the poem's narrative world. All of this reiterates the aesthetic experience Clare's narrator is after, as the next lines show:

⁸⁹ Clare, John. "The Nightingale's Nest," in *The Rural Muse, poems (1835)*. London: Whitaker & co., 1835, ll. 1-4, p. 30.

For here I've heard her many a merry year -
At morn, at eve, nay, all the live-long day,
As though she lived on song. This very spot,
Just where that old-man's-beard all wildly trails
Rude arbours o'er the road, and stops the way -
And where that child its blue-bell flowers hath got,
Laughing and creeping through the mossy rails -
There have I hunted like a very boy,
Creeping on hands and knees through matted thorn
To find her nest, and see her feed her young.
And vainly did I many hours employ :
All seemed as hidden as a thought unborn.⁹⁰

The sense of surreptitious, ineffective snooping—vainly, all seemed hidden—and the willingness to acknowledge failure in sincerity and toil preserve the nightingale's autonomy despite its status as object of study. This is a technique common to the nature writers of the North American tradition, as well, and one is reminded of Henry David Thoreau, Farley Mowat, and a host of other male wilderness rompers with the keen documentarian's nose for, as Mowat likes to call them, "the Others." Clare, however, is a good deal more misanthropic than those fierce individualists and tricksters like Mowat.

Clare's poem on the badger is sometimes called "The Badger," sometimes simply "Badger." Sometimes it is published starting at "When midnight comes a host of dogs and men/Go out and track the badger to his den." Other editions begin at "The badger grunting on its woodland track." The poem would not be published in Clare's lifetime, first appearing in 1920.⁹¹ In the edition edited by Merryn and Raymond Williams, it is "The Badger" and it begins with "The badger grunting..."⁹² In this volume, the poem is followed by "The Hedgehog." The

⁹⁰ Clare, "The Nightingale's Nest," ll. 5-16, p. 31.

⁹¹ The first publication was in *John Clare: Poems Chiefly from Manuscript*, eds. Edmund Blunden and Alan Porter. London: R.Cobden-Sanderson, 1920, pp. 186-187. This version is titled "Badger," begins with "When midnight," and is followed by the poem "The Fox."

⁹² Clare, "The Badger," in *John Clare: Selected poetry and prose*, eds. Merryn Williams and Raymond Williams. London: Routledge, 1987, pp. 161-162.

hedgehog poem includes particularly gruesome commentaries on the state of human affairs as they encroach ever more on the nonhuman world. It is clear, upon reading both poems, why the Merryn and Raymond Williams placed them adjacent to one another:

The hedgehog hides beneath the rotten hedge
And makes a great round nest of grass and sedge
Or in a bush or in a hollow tree
And many often stops and say they see
Him roll and fill his prickles full of crabs
And creep away and where the magpie dabs
His wing at muddy dyke in aged root
He makes a nest and fills it full of fruit
On the hedge bottom hunts for crabs and sloes
And whistles like a cricket as he goes
It rolls up like a ball or shapeless hog
When gipseys hunt it with their noisey dogs
I've seen it in their camps they call it sweet
Though black and bitter and unsavoury meat

But they who hunt the field for rotten meat
And wash in muddy dyke and call it sweet
And eat what dogs refuse where'er they dwell
Care little either for the taste or smell
They say they milk the cows and when they lye
Nibble their fleshy teats and make them dry
But they who've seen the small head like a hog
Rolled up to meet the savage of a dog
With mouth scarce big enough to hold a straw
Will ne'er believe what no one ever saw
But still they hunt the hedges all about
And shepherd dogs are trained to hunt them out
They hurl with savage force the stick and stone
And no one cares and still the strife goes on⁹³

The badger poem details the hunting expedition in more detail but lacks some of the nose for the inscrutability of the nonhuman world at the same time it offers that more intricate detail of the human-nonhuman relation. After various tortures and assaults, celebrations and “hollos” by boys, men, and bulldogs, “He falls as dead ...and kicked by boys and men,/Then starts and grins and

⁹³ Clare (1987), “The Hedgehog,” p. 163.

drives the crowd again;/Till kicked and torn and beaten out he lies/And leaves his hold and crackles, groans, and dies.”⁹⁴ The badger was taken from his home and forced to perform as Badger—the constructed terrible beast but also, in Clare’s words, vital and noble and clever and in charge of the action in important ways, latent and manifest. The full poem starts like this:

The badger grunting on his woodland track
With shaggy hide and sharp nose scrowed with black
Roots in the bushes and the woods and makes
A great high burrow in the ferns and brakes
With nose on ground he runs a awkward pace
And anything will beat him in the race
The shepherds dog will run him to his den
Followed and hooted by the dogs and men
The woodman when the hunting comes about
Go round at night to stop the foxes out
And hurrying through the bushes ferns and brakes
Nor sees the many holes the badger makes
And often through the bushes to the chin
Breaks the old holes and tumbles headlong in⁹⁵

Next, the poem introduces the covert midnight operation and a brief bestiary of fox, goose, poacher, hare flees the scene as the posse captures the baiting badger. The poem ends with something more unsettling than the death of the single badger:

Some keep a baited badger tame as hog
And tame him till he follows like the dog
They urge him on like dogs and show fair play
He beats and scarcely wounded goes away
Lapt up as if asleep he scorns to fly
And seizes any dog that ventures nigh
Clapt like a dog he never bites the men
But worrys dogs and hurrys to his den
They let him out and turn a harrow down
And there he fights the host of all the town
He licks the patting hand and trys to play
And never trys to bite or run away

⁹⁴ Clare (1987), “The Badger,” ll. 51-54, p. 162.

⁹⁵ Clare (1987), “The Badger,” ll. 1-14, p. 161.

And runs away from noise in hollow trees
Burnt by the boys to get a swarm of bees⁹⁶

Clare's poem presents the domesticated "wild" badger for sport. This is the precarious status of the badger when the badger-baiting laws passed in England: a sort of manufactured article for entertainment not at the level of test tubes and hybridities, but age-old husbandry techniques that would become highly developed in England for horses, dogs, and meat livestock in the century before and during Clare's poem. I will discuss aspects of husbandry and "manufactured articles" (otherwise known as animals) in Chapter Two, but for now this sense of the performing, captive animal that is also expected to represent a wild foe for pursuit, capture, and abuse (the dogs are also in a precarious position in the "game") is presented as a discursive theme of animality in Romantic works *without* the formal play of apostrophe interior to the poem. Clare's works stand as relatively sincere complaints on human behavior relative to, certainly, a privileged animal. And yet, this is not to say that Clare's animals are decidedly de-animalized. He attempts to retain animal identities with verbs like "roots," and this contrasts the anthropomorphism of the tame badger when "he trys to fight." Clare is onto something here. Clare's poetry is not dominated by the trope of apostrophe in the way several other poets' works are, and I will now turn to some of those works in order to develop the modes of address in Romantic poetry on nonhumans and the suffering of animals.

Robert Burns: "To a Mouse..."

Burns's narrator in "To A Mouse" struggles to equate the mother mouse's behavior with his own language of suffering even as the poem suggests both have suffered from the break down of "Nature's social union" that separates them and then further oppresses them

⁹⁶ Clare (1987), "The Badger," ll. 55-68, p. 162.

individually. The plowman narrator is now cast off the commons and laboring under private property systems that developed in the decades immediately preceding the 1785 poem and the mouse's nest was destroyed by his plow. Burns seemingly assigns human behavior to the mother mouse, saying "panic's in they breastie" instead of "you are trembling," for example: the narration classifies the emotion as "panic" even while foregrounding bodily reactions to the shock of a demolished home space. The truer form of pathetic fallacy, in fact, is in "Nature's social union," which is indeed capitalized in the middle of the line and, thus, anthropomorphized by the violence of the same proper noun system William Blake ironizes in *The Book of Thel*, which I will discuss in the subsequent section. But in both cases, Burns's attempt to express interspecies conviviality—and its rupture when Nature's social union is broken—retains a de-anthropocentric impulse.

This impulse does not successfully drive the narrator's later pontification on the mouse's superior, less-encumbered relation to being and time:

Still, thou art blest, compared wi' me!
 The present only touches thee:
 But och! I backward cast cast my e'e,
 On prospects drear!
 An' forward tho I canna see,
 I guess an' fear!⁹⁷

There is no "I" there, nor an "eye," and the object "me" galvanizes the failed rhyme of "I" and "eye" both in formal rhyme prospects and the narrative content of the mutually abjected human and mouse. The aesthetic subject position in Romanticism is thus annihilated yet mandatory in formal redresses of literary modes like the pastoral and consistent in portable categories of human/nonhuman. Burns here "pre-iterates" the differentiating animality (poorness in world)

⁹⁷ Burns, Robert. "To a Mouse, on turning her up in her Nest, with the Plough, November, 1785," in *Robert Burns: Selected Poems and Songs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, ll. 43-48, p. 73.

that Martin Heidegger would later impose in his twentieth-century philosophical work on finitude and human exceptionalism.⁹⁸ The mouse is without memory and history but also incapable of prospect view and, thus, any aesthetics of experience: the mouse is not the same subject, and hence not the same sufferer, as the plowman who knows of the past and can then be depressed about the future. For Burns's narrator, this is the preferred situation to be in.

There is a curious connection between this salvational world-poverty and Heidegger's later claims on the lack of world in a stone. Heidegger's pathetic fallacy/anthropocentric anthropomorphism runs rampant where art can open a world of agrarian labor and humble suffering in an inanimate object (a painting of *peasant's shoes*), and he also invokes von Uexküll's concept of Umwelt to discuss immanent experience and responsiveness to environment.⁹⁹ For Heidegger, Umwelt and the evidence from animal science on bees and others von Uexküll draws together presents a crucial sense of life. Nonhumans with a Lebenswelt or "life-world" that makes sense or operates according to the modes these other species exist in the world (i.e., without the aggressive cognitive positioning humans employ) ought, then, to not suffer a renewed categorical violence like the one Heidegger inflicts with his "poor in world" dictum. The difference for Burns is that his narrator is not outside the scene of suffering as Heidegger's philosophical voice is. Burns well might be, but then the phatic attention to the Scots language disrupts any quick assessment of authorial intention and objectivity by reminding his reader of the governing cultural forms.

⁹⁸ See: Heidegger, Martin. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

⁹⁹ On the peasant shoes as arbiter of a agrarian pastoral, see: Heidegger, Martin. "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper, 1971, pp. 15-89. On Umwelt, etc., see:

The reference to Heidegger here is cursory, and included only to draw attention to the central place Burns's question of animal experience and human articulation thereof retains in theoretical addresses into and through the twentieth century. The imperative to address abjection and to voice concern—effective or not—dominates philosophical inquiry into the hallmark atrocities of the twentieth century World War period, for example, as reflected in the emergence of a critical theory interrogating human suffering under the anti-semitic strains of organized, teleological industrial violence.

The anachronous association here posits Enclosure, for Burns, as a parallel motivating atrocity. In his late lectures, Theodor Adorno would note the unsettling blankness of death in contradistinction to Heidegger's philosophy, and the nothingness Burns's plowman shares with a mouse he cannot properly address suggests that he is in fact abjected in ways the mouse is not:

The so-called epic death, which is presented in Heidegger's doctrine of death as a necessary moment of the 'wholeness of existence', and which is really at the root of all these death metaphysics, is no longer possible, because such a wholeness of life no longer exists. [...]

If mortally weary people take an affirmative view of death, it is most likely the case that death relieves them of a burden. The reason for the allegedly positive relationship to death taught by these metaphysics is none other than [...]: that the life in question amounted to so little that there was little resistance to its ending.¹⁰⁰

The pastoral motif makes its mark in "To A Mouse" by impeding direct comprehension and communication, but not quiet and rich coexistence as interaction and recognition. This absence of an unsettling gesture may be even worse than the horrors of the more grotesque examples. As Adorno writes, "because the individual actually no longer exists, death has become something wholly incommensurable, the annihilation of a nothing."¹⁰¹ Adorno's context is after World War

¹⁰⁰ Adorno, Theodor. *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 133-134.

¹⁰¹ Adorno, *Metaphysics*, p. 136.

II and the extermination camps. It must be allowed—indeed, it was never to be allowed or disallowed at all—that that context has no “parallel,” and further that to loosely suggest extending the camp logic to the abuse and displacement of animals or even humans under a separate historical administration of life under Enclosure commits an unconscionable offense. But it also must be the case that the question of whether or not one can write poetry or live “after Auschwitz,” which Adorno returns to in these late lectures as he strives also to articulate a philosophy after Auschwitz and, indeed, an aesthetic theory in the wake of the “end” of experience and of expression, is precisely the limit concept of an age that has occluded the limit concept altogether, if Adorno and Heidegger are both to be believed. Heidegger, in this case, in “The Question Concerning Technology” and Adorno in his late works while he lives on and must answer the question again and again about how this can be so.¹⁰² The world and all of its objects have come under the sign of human domination and annihilation, such that suffering can be excluded from the calculus of extermination on the basis that the deaths are not deaths, the objects erased not lives. This is the same concern Burns shares with the mouse that, truly, cannot comprehend that diminution of its life even as it suffers under the fact. This is parallel atrocity.

“To a Mouse...” marks the rapid enclosure of the British commons and the increasing violence to the ways of life of both the tilling peasant and the burrowing mouse. The narrator discovers the mother mouse trembling and frightened when his till unearths her nest. The poem’s famous “best laid plans of mice and men” realizes a deep coexistent suffering, sharing life and its disruption across species lines. Both the individual laboring on the land and the individual making any other form of home of that land—animal or otherwise—are losing the space of those existences in an uninterrupted coexistence now defined precisely by disruptive displacement and

¹⁰² See: Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper, 1977.

potential evacuation of their life forms. The poem critically addresses these pre-existent articulations of individual laboring life or discrete animal family (mother mouse and baby mice, for example), and also applies its critique to the Scottish national identity fractured by British sovereignty. Instead of a terminal lament on a lost reality or authenticity, the poem's overbearing existential mode rules out all reifications of status or existence. As seasonal variance threatens even well-sown plants, radical coexistence eradicates categorical precision and dominion: the narrator can notice and describe the trembling and apparent emotions of the mother mouse, but cannot articulate its experience or define his own in the traumatic setting of the poem. But despite clear markers of enclosure and incidental yet total interspecies violence, the narrator gathers coexistent suffering under a measured form in the poem's pastoral mode. Burns has found a way to articulate suffering yet resist prescriptive ontological claims for justice, equality, or revolution. This effects an elegiac mode, but the narrator's reflective authority, even where synthesis of the presented scenarios is ruled out, resists submission to catastrophic, anonymous coexistence in bare life at the same time. Mourning cannot be inaugurated even as the speaker stops work to mark the violence of coexistent displacement. Nevertheless, the poem's political content works in the absence of a call to arms. Conversely, in Coleridge, according to Perkins and Kenyon-Jones, the political project of interspecies community results in insecure "burlesque" or self-satire. Burns does not seem burdened by such commitments here, yet is deeply committed, for example, in the case of the sovereign parallel lingualism of Tam o'Shanter.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Despite the specter of Enclosure haunting this analysis of "To a Mouse," I have not dealt at length with Burns's political activity, which included his commitment to preserving Scottish linguistic and cultural heritage. He published Scottish songs and poems in Scots dialect, and "Tam o'Shanter" was published in both English and Scots.

“To a Mouse...” is narrated “chiefly in the Scottish dialect” that is both estranged from an English milieu while also in agreement with other English narrations: the narrator cannot quite appropriate and articulate the clear behavior of suffering on the part of a mother mouse turned up in a field the tiller/narrator is working, but stops everything in the place of agrarian dailiness to mark it, to address it, to mourn it and attend to the trouble with agriculture and landed economies none in the poem can ameliorate or negotiate beyond attention and testimonial. The apology: “I’m truly sorry man’s dominion/had broken Nature’s social union.” That the narrator cannot narrate the mouse’s suffering or explain that failure is a gripping human suffering in the poem as well. The mouse is a narrated object in total terror, but the narrator marks the impeded sharing and cannot imagine “what it’s like to be a mouse” before simply “plowing ahead” and gathering mice and men in shared suffering. Burns’s diminutive phrases in the poem are worth evaluating, but the primary impulse and general theme of frustrated human endeavor, in conjunction with Burns’ lifelong resistance to English linguistic and cultural hegemony, strike a measured blow against a too-quickly flattened space of inclusion that elides or erases (productive consumption, in the case of tillage) Scottish and animal places alike. In another version of this impulse, Charlotte Smith critiques the prospect view and scientific catalogues of natural history in “Beachy Head,” and all those human efforts to “lay hands on” nature and critters wash away with the tide or are forgotten in an unapproachable (though narrated) place: a watery cave at the foot of the Beachy Head cliff. Smith’s poem includes reflexive address of aesthetic experience and expression, and a more direct lament on the shortcomings of the poet than Burns’s speaker allows in “To a Mouse...”

Ah! hills so early loved! In fancy still
I breathe your keen air; and still behold
Those widely spreading views, mocking alike
The Poet and the Painter’s utmost art.

And still, observing objects more minute,
Wondering remark the strange and foreign forms
Of sea-shells; with the pale calcareous soil
Mingled, and seeming of resembling substance.¹⁰⁴

Burns's mode of frustrated yet somehow "full" interspecies thought shows the Romantic impulse for interspecies community, often expressed as the shared suffering he interrogates. He sets up a mode of interspecies thought that is also dominant in the works of other period authors like Clare. The impulse for interspecies community, often expressed as the shared suffering Burns interrogates, returns again and again. Despite repeated "failures" or fragmentary encounters, authors attempt again and again to resist categorical inventories of objects and species, and try everywhere to address nonhumans while evaluating the violence of address in many cases as well. At the formal level, authors on either end of the Victorian period explore radical unreliability in literary frame structures like those of *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*. But theme and mood, such as the misanthropic epic wanderer of a Byron pilgrimage or a Wordsworth excursion, also ensure that the human is always somehow in question. These authors were generally concerned with practical social change and experimented in their literature with formal modes of critique that both supported calls for social concern and complicated defenses of humans altogether.

William Blake's Weird Nonhuman Concern: *The Book of Thel*

Apostrophe tends to be closed with exclamation marks. In Blake's *Book of Thel*, a young girl addresses cloud, worm, and finally Clod of Dirt, and these address her, as well, with the characteristic "O" aperture—Blake gathers humanoids and nonhumanoids together in their

¹⁰⁴ Smith, Charlotte. "Beachy Head," in *Beachy Head: With other poems*. London: J. Johnson, 1807, ll. 367-374, pp. 25-26.

clunky, mannered addresses to things that are not there. Thel is seeking answers to her questions about finitude and life's meaning in this address. This one fails, too. Thel is a virginal angeloid, but at least humanoid against nonhumanoid before a weird leveling in the poem's final stanza when Thel is in her grave in the ground. The human form she represents is humiliated and runs home to her mother and social life she is accustomed to, away from terrible places she is not at home in. What Thel refuses here is the more properly interspecies coexistence Blake wages, an uncanny, weird and unsettling mingling that produces abject horror at the bare, indeterminate state of life. Thel succumbs to this evacuated ontology, which must be what the monster imposes upon the complacent, horrified Doctor Frankenstein.

Blake, in *The Book of Thel*, thinks the strange coexistence of humans and nonhumans as a flattened ontology that yet nods heavily to the figure of worms Milton, Shakespeare, and myriad others employ to de-center the human form. This produces a de-individuated process or no-thingness of existence that then redresses particular human activities and historicizes ambition, domination, and suffering as a body of references that yet go on despite the impossible problem of meaningless coexistence. Thel gets to approach and encounter the nonhuman and the anonymous "somewhere" on the precipice of her own grave, but she has first encountered a worm beloved as a thing, simply, by some God, and only thought to ask (or only asked to think) if this was in fact a worm at all. As a sourceless voice emanating from Thel's could-be grave asks, why an ear? Why any fleshiness at all covering up any impulse or any contemplative comportment? Each sense is registered but none is valorized besides the sublime fear that enables Thel to escape back to the social realm of un-strange substance. Blake's version of the supernatural—and the intensity of human-nonhuman contact in Thel drains the titular (supernatural) character of her capacity to even entertain supernatural interactions—is not the

same as Mary Shelley's technical supernatural, in which the same anxiety of contact infests every enframed encounter perhaps especially when the creature closes impossible distance in a literary zoom atop the mountains and annihilates Victor's authority in that particularly meaty encounter. Burns's poem, in contrast, seems at first to be simpler, more "organic."

This claim mounts a deep irony considering the source of the creature and the location of Thel's fit at the end of the poem. She stands by her own grave as she apostrophizes the worm. Few objects would seem more organic than the loamy burial site and the lowly worm. When Thel addresses the cloud in equally reverent, humbly beseeching tones a bit earlier, "O Cloud," her tone makes sense. But when her address turns to the clod of dirt and the worm, Blake seems to have primarily accomplished a humiliation of the human. This is a customary use of nonhumans in Romantic literatures or, more precisely, a customary mode of literature that considers the status of nonhumans at all. It is also a major aspect of the use of animals in Romantic period animal rights activism and legislature. Arguments linking cruelty to animals and human depravity were the most successful of all arguments.¹⁰⁵ Blake's literary use of the clod of clay, the worm, and the cloud appear to also employ nonhumans in direct distinction to a human, reiterating a species difference in the process. But, of course, Thel is not entirely human.

What Blake achieves is a diminishment of all subject positions. The cloud, clod of clay, and worm function as a satire of formal apostrophe (and so Blake gets the poets, too). So, too, does Thel herself, for these objects, and the Lily of the Valley, all address her in various ways including "Queen of the vales" and "virgin." But Thel first "charges" the Cloud to tell her something, and Thel doubts the Worm's authority ("Image of weakness, art thou but a Worm?"). The satire begins with the Lily of the Valley, then proceeds to the Cloud and next to the Worm

¹⁰⁵ I will examine some of the specific instances of animal legislature in Chapter Two.

and then the Worm's mother, the Clod of Clay. Blake traces all life back to an original organic "mother" material, and the Clod of Clay invites Thel into her world thusly: "Wilt thou, O Queen, enter my house?" This show of hospitality is the Clod's response to overhearing Thel's interrogation of the "helpless worm." Blake capitalizes the objects when they are speaking subjects, but in the narrator's description of the worm in this case, he does not. When any of the poem's speaking subjects address one another, or merely pontificate (and there is a good deal of pontification from Thel at that), the others are capitalized. But in the narrator's description, it is a "helpless worm," not capitalized: this worm is an anonymous object. And so in this case, Blake's emphasis on the capitalization draws attention to the irony of proper names, and the resulting satire of both subjective propriety and of formal apostrophe matches the poem's thematic and narrative content as Thel "descends" through two examples apiece of the parallel categories of life and non-life that yet have various poetic and taxonomic roles (clouds and flowers at the top, worms and dirt at the bottom). What ends up only ironically or performatively "at the bottom" is Thel in her own future-imaginary grave, posing as a version of the tree of knowledge in an unnatural yet organic Eden. She escapes, albeit horrified, "with a shriek," and racing away from the Clod of Clay, the helpless worm. Where she approached the Lily and the Cloud in extravagant apostrophic humility, she doubted the Worm and both reader and Clod of Clay recognized her conceit. Blake has Thel reveal her conceit and the limitations subject position imposes on thought. Thel is captivated, captured, subjected by the Clod of Clay and goes exactly where she is told. The Worm, as it turns out, could *not* speak, but only weep. Only its suffering marked its identity, and this was what the Clod responded to out of pity. The earth punishes Thel, in this revenge fantasy, for all of Thel's abuses of the helpless, including when she continues to apostrophize the Worm only to ask if it is a Worm at all and to wonder aloud, in patronizing

tones, at its lameness. Blake's *Clod of Clay* attempts to rescue the abjected and speechless from the iterative subject position altogether, and does so in the narrative through an eradicating horror. Thel is overcome by the horror of this moment and flees to her semi-human counterparts, away from the decidedly nonhumans she had been communing with, after coming "face to face" with her own grave and the reality of her finitude. For an angel like Thel, this is also an empty encounter, and so Thel leaves fanciful discursive play in the "unknown lands" of death only to return to untroubled Elysian lightness and play. The didactic lesson of the earth is an abject failure. Thel cannot be contained despite the record of her exchanges suggesting clearly that her choice, in and of itself, to stay with these nonhuman objects or return to the vales of Har reiterates the inequality of what appears to be an anthropocentric anthropomorphism.

Thel's anthropocentric anthropomorphism meant that she assigned human characteristics to nonhumans she had already relegated to subhuman status. Thel, in other words, *has* a centrism. A device closely related to anthropomorphism, perhaps even identical, is John Ruskin's "pathetic fallacy" ("affective" fallacy in recent literary theory).¹⁰⁶ Both terms denote that a work of art bestows human characteristics upon nonhumans. But Romantics, writing before Ruskin coins the term "pathetic fallacy," were already suspicious of anthropomorphism, as Blake's Thel and other examples show clearly.

Poe, Coleridge, M. Shelley: Urban Nonhumans and *Really* Weird Nonhuman Concern

The titular character of Poe's "Man of the Crowd" fervently seeks out contact and constant urban experience so his feelingness is never shut off or isolated, in case solitude and

¹⁰⁶ Ruskin, John. *Modern Painters*. London: Spottiswoode & co., 1856. On "affective fallacy," see: Morton, Timothy. "The Dark Ecology of Elegy," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, ed. Karen Weisman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 251-271.

quiet might demolish him in a hail of self-contemplation instead of sensation and coexistence.¹⁰⁷ Poe's narrator, the observing agent in a story begun with a German quote that roughly means "it refuses to allow itself to be read," is completely stymied in his obsessive, analytic pursuit of this man's class and mode. Whereas every other urban denizen proved legible and reducible to group or species, class or category, this singularly illegible specimen refuses analysis and will not be erased. The frustrated narrator thus becomes the object of analysis and the bounded but unmarked space of the narrative becomes a sheer environmentality that would as easily function away from the city as it would within it. The man of the crowd is sheer sociality. Like the sea-space of Coleridge's narrated narration in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, nature in such an urban coexistence precludes Nature if "Hey! I'm having an Experience!" is the only demarcation of environmentality required. This is how Baudelaire can lampoon Landscape, the eclogue, and calm repose in nature in "Paysage," and can in turn mark the pastoral as an artificial mode while also lambasting the use of imagination.¹⁰⁸ This revises one Romantic mode to reveal that those contemplative, imaginary modes that articulate a specific shape of Nature as the container of their activity are in fact the phenomenal grounds of an environmentality that precedes thinking environment or environmentality at all. The logic of environment pastoral presumes would seem to build the environmental degradation and domination demanding recovery and escape for the poet's subjects into its structure before the process of repose and recovery is ever begun. Recovery, as such, can never take place at all. The performance will always be a failure of contemplative objectification unless it embraces the deeper strangeness of constant contact and

¹⁰⁷ Poe, Edgar Allen. "The Man of the Crowd," in *Complete Stories and Poems of Edgar Allen Poe*. New York: Doubleday, 1984, pp. 215-226.

¹⁰⁸ Baudelaire, Charles. "Paysage/Landscape," in *Selected Poems from Les Fleurs du Mal*, trans. Norman R. Shapiro, engravings by David Schorr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 156-157.

uncanny coexistence that dominates the forms of environmentality in *Frankenstein* and other texts.

The Romantic mode of community or consubstantiality is not a consistent object, and many Romantic texts seem at times, even when their authors are among the era's fiercest political critics, to forego such an endgame practical abbreviation in order to probe even more deeply into human experience to explore contact and intimacy, horror and strangeness, and the generally elided critical distances between objects and subjects in a dysfunctional aesthetic-experiential economy that proposes the subject always-already as an object of thinking within an unproblematic thinking. This latter problematic has been worked on by Paul Hamilton and others, and one schematic version of the periods' characters might present the Romantic anti-subject as a bit of stylish, erudite misanthropy wandering the truer wilds and communing directly with the remnants of reality outside the commercial centers of human (and object) dissolution while constantly dealing in an "as if" irony of such performances.¹⁰⁹ The period, in effect, launches a much broader ongoing analysis of life/nonlife (and the likely failure of such division). Two works at the heart of this investigation are Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.¹¹⁰

Coleridge in particular works through some of the "aesthetic" hang-ups in any consubstantiality project by negotiating the weird, "dark" coexistence and interpenetration of objects that horrify and terrify human subjects unawares. The famous "all creatures great and small" at the end of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is preceded only a bit by a cacophony of

¹⁰⁹ See: Hamilton, Paul. *Metaromanticism: Aesthetics, Literature, Theory*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003.

¹¹⁰ Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus*, the original 1818 text, ed. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2012. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in *Lyrical Ballads*.

owls and wolves. What has been taken often as an earnest, sober community of coexistents is also terrifying and humiliating. The terrible encounters with ghastly objects like Wordsworth's soldier and Coleridge's characters rupture and captivate because of the essential mundaneness and constancy of uncanny contact and not, echoing again Adorno's critique of Heidegger, a more epic (and thus articulable) singularity.

Mary Shelley, in *Frankenstein*, is especially attuned to this uncanny coexistence, for example when the creature bounds impossibly across a full mountainscape, impeding Victor Frankenstein's recuperative contemplation and escapism. Shelley's text is, throughout, pontificating on the business of being human and repeats figures of observing life through window frames and, of course, through the "frame" of the constructed life form itself. One of its central revelations is that bringing unlife to life is not more horrible than bringing life to unlife. Both seem a form of murder, if murder is the sovereign negation of the life status of another object. Further, the horror rehearsed again and again, and that the monster's consciousness ultimately imposes on the doctor once it realizes the stakes and the potential of the game, is that humans can and do (or do not) wield sovereign power over any other being at all. The text constructs a thinking, feeling nonhuman human with interiority and rampant rational power. But this enframing cannot push the monster through the frame (window, narrative, other). Despite a horrible intimacy in many scenes with Victor, it does not enjoy intimacy with them and is never acknowledged as a coexistent. The play on apostrophe here is not subtle: the "nonliving" assemblage of dead meat addresses, is addressed, and craves a partner creature to address authentically and intimately. By the time the monster is aboard the ship in the novel's close, wishing intimacy with the dead body and also, perhaps, with the bride one dead body had refused to animate when still able to, the sheer excess, the overload of humanity the monster embodies is

too much for the ship's crew. The monster occupies the ship's cabin holding the dead body as an inaccessible unapproachable horror of intimate desire. As in the cabin in the woods, first communing with the blind musician but subsequently eradicating human intimacy and community when the terrified family flees the area, the monster now wages the full human anxiety of impossible intimacy and contact and stands in for the full flattening of "life" to a mechanical but valueless assemblage of nonspecific "atoms." The human is meaningless in *Frankenstein's* final calculus.

What both Coleridge and Shelley uncover is that, impossibly, coexistence itself is the alienating experience. One always-already coexists with the objects of one's thought, and objects are inaccessible in fundamental ways that not even the most contrived naïve realism can bracket out of the recognition of total coexistence and interpenetration between things. The framed being of *Frankenstein*, like the wedding guest of *Rime*, horrified at its own position and at the encroaching old mariner's verses, is no-thing but is yet *with* everything. Sense is impossible yet total all at once, crucial yet wholly without force. But the culminating artifact of this radical strangeness of sensation is not merely a blank nihilism. This, returned to the "feedback loop" of human comportment, shows that all of the un-suspended human endeavors that coexist with such reflective or frustrated-reflective thinking can carry on regardless of such discoveries. Fittingly, this sublime renovation of human as in-"human" means nothing and has no bearing except for the potential to reinscribe enframed existence with such attitude and comportment as results from this terrible, horrible, dark mode of thinking. Thinking is not for humans and is not about humans and nonhumans. As such, thinking must have alternative ends, if it has any ends at all.

Frankenstein revises apostrophe almost constantly, waging a prolonged meditation on the radical strangeness of the iterative "I" in discourse. The book frustrates the interpersonal,

interspecies, and the interobjective as creatures interpellate a speechless horror reduced time and again to baseless, empty frames like “devil” and “evil,” vile beast, “infernal,” but never accomplishing the intimacy all forms seem intensely to desire and seek out throughout the written work, and thereby also exposing the vacancy of the terminological frameworks these characters attempt to assert upon worlds they struggle to attend to. The impossible apostrophe might be the full aspect of a “Romantic interspeciesism” that cannot be, but must be done. The expression of shared suffering, which is a failure the moment it supposes total articulation and “presentation” of its concept, is really in the ellipses in “Ozymandias.” Such a Romantic interspeciesism is not failed address but constant addresses to the *fact* that address can never thoroughly appropriate or access. The sense of reflexive materiality in this mode seems of particular interest to the modernist or postmodernist, if not also being the dominant impetus for a realist or a naturalist’s exhaustive efforts to catalogue and report on suffering or on determinate impossibility in the hopes that the message will “get across” somehow.¹¹¹

Closing Up Shop: Coleridge’s Ass and other nonhumans

Romantic authors have other strategies that resist categorical inventories of objects and species—think of the violence of taxonomy Charlotte Smith negotiates from prospect position to sea cave grave at the base of Beachy Head. Through multiple instances of apostrophic, “direct” address of nonhumans in Romantic works, as well, authors try everywhere to adequately address nonhumans while simultaneously evaluating the violence, or merely the irony, of address. At the formal level, authors on either end of the Victorian period explore radical unreliability in literary

¹¹¹ Nonhuman form in Dickens and Kafka will be discussed in Chapter Four.

frame structures like those of *Frankenstein* or *Dracula* and unsettle human authority at the very heart of literary production.¹¹² But theme and mood, such as the misanthropic epic wanderer of a Byron pilgrimage or a self-absorbed Wordsworth excursion, also ensure that the human is always, at least, somehow in question.

Coleridge's 1794 poem, "To a Young Ass," clarifies the animal concern of the nineteenth century while also explicating the trouble with apostrophe.¹¹³ This is a poem often discussed in relation to Coleridge and Southey's political ideals for an egalitarian commune in North America. Coleridge's recognition of animal suffering here denotes his broad sympathy within an interspecies community, as in the closing of the Rime. The ass's chief pains are domination by human masters and hunger, combining the concerns of Wordsworth's "hunger-bitten Girl," and the narrator also wonders at the suffering of the ass's mother tethered nearby:

Or is thy sad heart thrill'd with filial pain
To see thy wretched mother's shorten'd chain?
And truly, very piteous is her lot--
Chain'd to a log within a narrow spot,
Where the close-eaten grass is scarcely seen,
While sweet around her waves the tempting green!

These family ties are echoed in the politically charged "Brother" of another passage in the poem, and Coleridge thus invites the nonhuman directly into political affiliation on the basis of recognized and, ostensibly, *shared* suffering under the whip of economic subjection.

The ass was laughed out of court, so to speak, when Parliament considered extending horse protection measures to donkeys during the 1821 cruelty act debates. Surely, *it* could not function as a target of compassion. Kenyon-Jones and Perkins consider Coleridge's revisions and

¹¹² Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*, eds. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal. New York: Norton, 1997. *Dracula* will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three.

¹¹³ Coleridge, "To a Young Ass, Its Mother Being Tethered Near It" in *The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. eds. Derwent and Sara Coleridge. New York: D. Appleton & co., 1857, pp. 26-27.

hedging an authorial gap that threatens a true compassion. Perkins seems to make the alluring claim that Coleridge experienced the full crisis of his utopian ideals while attempting to get this brief poem “just right.”¹¹⁴ The ass, both honorable and ridiculous, fails to measure up, risking the entire objective of flourishing interspecies community if that is the point.

If there is something like a Romantic “Posthumanism,” it would have to include these ironic failure of humans on the precipice of nonhuman thought. Such thinking on nonhumans, a figure including anything (including humans) hits its mark by exploding revision and social reform, in a mouse’s shudder or an ass’s dull, lifeless persistence tethered to an empty, grassless circle of grass. This expression is quite confident of the inescapable reality of mute, anonymous coexistence that escapes articulation or, quite worse, as in the case of administered, nonhuman meat, organizes life best when authorizing its evacuation. There is surely a marked frustration in attempts as interspecies communication and redresses of authority, as Burns perhaps shows best despite stunted, anthropocentric surrender. In many ways, this finely wrought program of thought goes hand in hand with the vibrant escapism of penny fiction, which will be examined in Chapter Three, but it would not be quite fair to say that the Romantic “interspecies” impulse always ends in total frustration, even as the crafty forms of apostrophic de-anthropocentrism the period spawns build an impressive case against general human hubris. There is also the fact of communities of non-suffering. The owls in Wordsworth’s canonical “There Was a Boy” don’t need to be responding directly in the dead boy’s narrated past to be being themselves and also to

¹¹⁴ See: Perkins, David. “Compassion for Animals and Radical Politics: Coleridge’s ‘To a Young Ass,’” in *ELH* 65.4 (1998), pp. 929-944 and *Romanticism and Animal Rights*, pp. 108-115. See also: Kenyon-Jones, *Kindred Brutes*, pp. 68-70, 71, 73.

be being past, possibly dead. The failed “mimic hootings” are in fact the *ironic* valence of interspecies, nonhuman consubstantiality in that particular poem.¹¹⁵

There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander! many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And through that churchyard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!

The narrator begins with formal apostrophe: “There was a boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs and islands of Winander!” Already, in a personifying trope of address to a so-called “inanimate”

¹¹⁵ Wordsworth, William. “There Was a Boy,” in *Lyrical Ballads*.

object, humans are considering their “place” in an act of mourning, at a funereal. The poem closes with the narrator standing next to the grave of the boy after narrating his life and interspecies, interobjective “naturey” romps and efforts at interspecies communication. Wordsworth narrates a non-thing or non-place in regimented blank verse. The ghostly “long halloos” of the owls/boy are the imaginative non-thing. The onomatopoeia in a recollection/speculative narration of the boy’s interspecies intercourse with the watery, rocky place was a seductive excursion into what interspecies intercourse would be “as if” it were possible. What is really dominant in the work “after the fact” of reading outside the space of the poem is the fruitless, hollow apostrophe of the (presumably older, wizened) narrator in address to the remaining cliffs and islands.

We Have Never Been Posthuman, or, Will Never Have Been

Ascribing a contemporary critical concept like “posthumanism” to this eighteenth-to-nineteenth century British human-animal context performs an anachronous sleight of hand: The intersections of technological change and anthropocentrism in the Romantic and Victorian periods are not the same as those motivating Cary Wolfe or other recent theorists’ evaluation of a posthuman condition. Wolfe, in articulating both the priority and posterity of posthumanism—before AND after humanism—presents posthumanism as a confluence of 1. the fact of technicized life (where technology can even be the thinking apparatus, a mode he borrows from Heidegger and others); 2. The revision of humanism’s hard binaries of Nature/Culture, Human/Animal, Reason/Feeling, etc.; and 3. A critical subjectivity oriented toward its futurity yet committed to demolishing concepts of perfectibility, authenticity, essence—what have you—that actually deny the continuance or further thriving of the very critical tools that invented such

a concept in the first place.¹¹⁶ This is the atrophy of experience Benjamin writes of, and all of these “conditions” inflect Adorno’s sense of an administered life that subjects life (and non-life) forms, as concrete economic objects (and “objects of reason” merely avoids that more fundamental reification) to static categories or use values.¹¹⁷

I will move in the next chapter onto an assessment of the Smithfield condition (and it was called the Smithfield System in its heyday) in conjunction with the aesthetic expression of its central objects—nonhumans, all of us—with the hope that it might build a stronger critical history and usefulness of the figure, “posthuman” but, frankly, with little concern for the theory besides its alluringly clear expression of the concept and problems of nineteenth-century London’s nonhuman coexistence. The Smithfield live animal market made human-animal coexistence a fundamental aspect of London civic development. Authors who published well-known reactions to the writhing, stinking, horrible, anonymous mingling of animals and humans included Swift, Defoe, Dickens, and Hardy. Smithfield’s removal was a long, arduous process culminating in an even worse outcome: the magnificent, efficient, sparkingly clean, and brutally mechanized new Metropolitan Meat Market at Islington. It would carry into the full sense of modernity invoked in twentieth century social theory on inhuman, bare life and the anonymous devaluation of individual lives wrought by meticulous, clinical administration. The period’s

¹¹⁶ See: Wolfe, Cary. *What is Posthumanism?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

¹¹⁷ See: Benjamin, Walter. “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” in *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press: 2003, pp. 313-355. See also the edited volume compiling some of Adorno’s critiques of philosophy’s failure to prevent—and potential inability to go on after—Auschwitz, taken as the metonymous substitute for “The Holocaust,” “Shoah,” “World War II,” “Hiroshima,” or another constellatory figure of the twentieth century atrocities motivating much of his work. Adorno, Theodor. *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, and in particular Part III: “Administered World, Reified Thought,” pp. 93-204. I am thinking here also of Adorno’s *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, excerpted portions of which also appear in *Can One Live After Auschwitz?*

slaughter reform produced a concept of meat with all notion of the animal itself—the stinking, noisy, suffering, proximate animal body—erased. Far worse than the preceding cruelty, market removal and slaughter reform/revision quelled middle class animal concern but inflicted the deepest horror of all. Animals were emptied of content by modes of production including the successful practical management of a massive, seething population in a space that already struggled to maintain a hint of human splendor against the backdrop of widespread poverty and disease. Wordsworth’s “Parliament of Monsters” foreshadowed nothing less.

The middle class moralizing about the cacophony at Smithfield included claims that labor forms such as butchery and driving bred morally-bankrupt humans while broader social concern produced an animal welfare movement, institutions like the RSPCA, and a series of parliamentary acts banning cruelty. Responses of the day called these objects, this meat that was the product of world-renowned animal husbandry—*technology*—manufactured articles. The animals were perfectible machines and now the meat that left no trace of the blood, guts, and other offal not for eating (maybe for lighting or for washing) was the heart of a humming, thriving, and newly self-aware commodity production and distribution system wondered at as any new railway or gas lighting would have been. Not even “just” a cut, not merely, but *totally* the thing—some thing—that was not a live animal.

The uncanny recognitions of dehumanized humans in industrial, urban London, and the increasing technicity of biotic and other material administration and ecological risks such as cholera, water supplies, and more, led to organized repositionings of the idealized, perfectible human subject. The nineteenth century in Britain is rightly described as one of deep social awareness and activism, but also one of pervasive moral discipline: animal rights debates in Parliament would rail against lower class iniquity to accomplish their ends while, as Dickens

lampoons in *Bleak House*, social consciousness, even global awareness, could be properly, hollowly performed by middle and higher class sophisticates while London yet wallowed in squalor. What such contradictions highlight is an overwhelming sense of performative consumption and of precisely the strange new social life forms challenging constitutive notions of identity and cultural or human substance (to say nothing of conceits of superiority). The humanist subject was a routinely satirized object while paper got cheaper, journalism and popular literatures exploded, and literacy among the working class exponentially rose with the population.

The intense social and animal concern of this period seems, by definition, critical of a coexistence comprised of indistinguishable, unidentifiable nonhumans that could be manipulated, categorized, and assembled into uncanny, alien forms. As Dickens and Hardy documented, and as contemporary historians such as Hilda Keane and Robyn Metcalfe confirm, the seething, meaty masses of London urban market space mobilized biological anxieties against an interspecies, material consubstantiality of filth and noise that evacuated humanist concepts of life and value because the consequences for humans near animals at Smithfield were the same as they were for animals near animals through the streets of London and to market: daily shocks, unsettling din, and bruising that damaged the quality of any individual animal as violently as they disrupted any remaining hope that urban life retained a properly “humane” quality.¹¹⁸

These animals were required to feed a massive population. This economic reality had direct effects on the humans and the animals in just the way Burns saw enclosure to assault humans and animals alike. The reduction of life to such modes leads to Adorno’s proto-

¹¹⁸ See: Kean, Hilda. *Animal Rights: Political and social change in Britain since 1800*. London: Reaktion, 1998. See also: Metcalfe, Robyn. *Meat, Commerce, and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012. Both works will be further considered in Chapter Two.

posthumanist assessment of economic forms producing an inhuman subject deprived of prior concepts of individual autonomy yet wholly demolished under the same concept of consequential individual life. Smithfield animals and other technicized, productive animals and humans could no longer differentiate between themselves yet could be managed as labor and forced into mechanized, calculated deaths that matter so much exactly because of the horror of this total vacancy. This mattered enough to reform slaughter techniques in the cruelest irony of welfarist animal protection.¹¹⁹ And it mattered of course to anti-slavery reforms that have been widely discussed in correlation to animal rights rhetoric and literature, including by Christine Kenyon-Jones and David Perkins. But the sincerity of commitment, the practical reality, could always be freshly negated, and literature especially was preoccupied with the tenuous success of any animal concern or nonhuman thought. Something about the task itself was a destined failure that matched the ironic negations of Romantic literature.

A number of other examples from Romantic literature suggest a deep and abiding animal concern that also articulates the “posthuman condition” by, quite fittingly, de-centering the human in an interspecies community of suffering that, time and again, eludes effective communication. Although tracing direct links between Romantic authors and animal rights legislative efforts is a spotty job, one performed brilliantly by Kenyon-Jones and Perkins despite the requisite qualifiers, the animal concern in the period is not in question. Romantic authors did not interrogate the efficacy of human address of animals not in communication (Wordsworth’s “mimic hootings” dispel the myth of some telepathic or Dr. Doolittle interspecies commerce). What was under review was coexistence and the limits of concern, in all its forms. The deep suspicion of the literature of nonhumans in the period becomes the dominant reality of human

¹¹⁹ See: Lee, Paula Young, ed. *Meat, Modernity, and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse*. Lebanon: University of New Hampshire Press, 2008.

and nonhuman experience in the London of the Smithfield era, and this motivates further efforts to “address” “real” suffering in civic reorganization and legal reform, both of which are taken up in the next chapter. What has happened, already when the Romantics address themselves as nonhumans and then struggle to address anything else, is this: the abject form of coexistent nothingness does not reduce experience or undo the critical vantage at all. “It” was already thus, and thus cannot be addressed at all, merely expressed.

Chapter 2

Meat Without Animals: Outcast Objects and the Improvement of London

‘Finally, he was quartered,’ recounts the *Gazette d’Amsterdam* of 1 April 1757. ‘This last operation was very long, because the horses used were not accustomed to drawing; consequently, instead of four, six were needed; and when that did not suffice, they were forced, in order to cut off the wretch’s thighs, to sever the sinews and hack at the joints...’¹²⁰

The age-old meat market on the north-western fringes of the City is a site of butchery in more ways than one. Revolting peasant Wat Tyler was famously put to the sword by the Lord Mayor hereabouts, although that was more of a politically motivated murder than a planned execution. The area came to be known as something of a health hazard for anyone who disagreed with the monarch. William Wallace met his end here in 1305, via the now-familiar hanged-drawn-quartered technique. A memorial to the shouty Scot is still visited by flower-laying patriots to this day. A couple of centuries later, Smithfield was also the scene of religious executions, when Bloody Mary I condemned at least 50 Protestants to death by burning (also commemorated with a plaque). Swindlers and confidence tricksters were occasionally boiled to death in oil. Nice place, Smithfield.¹²¹

Studying animals in nineteenth-century England leads one invariably to Harriet Ritvo’s pioneering work in the field, and especially to the seminal *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*.¹²² The book ranges far and wide, including zoos and eating, natural history, horse breeding, and attitudes towards animals as exhibited not in literature and philosophy but in archival research. Byron, for example, the frequent subject of other authors’ work on animals in nineteenth-century England, is mentioned only once as a stray

¹²⁰ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1995, p. 3.

¹²¹ Contemporary tourism synopsis, “In Search of London’s Execution Sites,” *Londonist*, 11 January 2012.

¹²² Ritvo, Harriet. *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

reference to attitudes toward dogs, and his view is found not in his poetry but on his famous monument to his Newfoundland Boatswain: “all the Virtues of Man without his vices.”¹²³

The larger scope of this project, in all its chapters, owes much to the thinking Ritvo summarizes as a “schema in which people occupied no especially prominent position.” There are myriad “humiliations” of the human one could consider in relation to this de-centering and flattening of living communities. I will here forego some of the recent theoretical inquiries into the concept of “life” or the insufficiency of terms like community and relations to express the various modes of coexistence fully inflecting the objects called “alive” and “dead,” or even “objects.”¹²⁴ But it will be worth considering what, exactly, we mean when we say “animal” and what, then, we could possibly mean by “meat animal.” This is addressed in the period, as animals become manufactured articles for consumption, abetted by new technologies of husbandry, management, slaughter, and distribution including forms that are not even *meat*, but things like extracts and powders.

The contemporary animal flavors—chick’n crackers this, bacon chocolate that, *ad infinitum*—derive from the nineteenth century advancements just as the veterinary sciences and the dairy industry do. Agricultural giants like Justus von Liebig, inventor of the nitrogen-fixing techniques that enabled the “other revolution,” contemporary industrial agricultural, was also the inventor of the Liebig-OXO meat extract. Weird new foodstuffs, part and parcel of a widespread trend in food fads and body regimens, were the precursors of mass-produced meat animals in derivative “post-animal” products. This is not at all surprising—as I discuss in Chapter Three, animals were rendered for a variety of applications, including soap, candles, and various other

¹²³ Ritvo, p. 86.

¹²⁴ See: Morton, Timothy. “The Mesh,” in *Environmental Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Stephanie LeMenager, Teresa Shewry, and Ken Hiltner. New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 19-30, and in particular pp. 20-21.

products in which no trace of the animal was left after processing. The animal was already a dis-integrated object for human consumption besides meat and dairy eating or drinking. There could be no film industry, for example, and no film at all, without the animal gelatin used in “real” film. Some contemporary vegans suggest that, in fact, it is virtually impossible to be a “real” vegan—one who consumes no animal byproducts whatsoever, from shampoo to medicine, biodiesel to charcoal, anything with animal parts of any sort in it at any point in production or consumption.¹²⁵ Much as contemporary ecological thought considers the industrial revolution’s status as the onset of the Anthropocene, the long nineteenth-century period of animal use and abuse will likely have to be considered the onset of whatever we’re to call the erasure of the *animal* from the products and objects exploiting the former animal life in human consumption. These articulations of meat without animals rest squarely on all aspects of the technological, economic, and theoretical foundations of the civilized society under examination in this project, and especially in the morphological specificity of London, Smithfield Market, and the discourse on animals marking the long nineteenth century.

Ritvo is a historian, and in tracking the history of ideas in relation to animals, presents a thick history of animals and society in the period as well as the requisite acknowledgment of how the work of Darwin influenced perspectives on human-animal community after the 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species*:

Certainly, for those who were persuaded by it, Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection eliminated the deity who had created the world for human convenience; it also eliminated the unbridgeable gulf that divided reasoning human being from irrational brute. *On the Origin of Species* itself dethroned both God and humankind almost

¹²⁵ Web sites tracking the animal-in-your-everything are by now ubiquitous and helpful for those hoping to curb some of their animal consumption. One of the stronger recent studies of this ubiquitous disassembly and “biotic” reassignment structure is Nicole Shukin’s *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

implicitly. Rather than focusing directly on humanity, Darwin outlined an elaborate schema in which people occupied no especially prominent position.¹²⁶

Darwin is as handy a barometer as any for the sense of categorical life and ambiguous species boundaries, and also in relation to the new modes of animal breeding in the period. In the wake of the enclosure of the British countryside under “Farmer George,” King of England, Ireland, and then the United Kingdom after merger, agriculture and animal husbandry were “improved” to respond to food shortages.¹²⁷ English authors on the subjects of population and resources established essential threads of political economic study, which did not go unnoticed by Marx and Engels, and included William Cobbett, Thomas Malthus, and Mary Shelley’s father, Mary Wollstonecraft’s husband, William Godwin.¹²⁸ Malthus is the outlier of the bunch, being the conservative proponent of “positive checks” on population, otherwise deemed catastrophes, such as war, disease, and famine. In conjunction with the Poor and Grain laws in the period, theories and methods of food production and distribution also developed to address the increasing crises confronting English society. The object of this chapter is not to consider agricultural economics, however, but the specific case of animals and meat production as relating to Smithfield Market,

¹²⁶ Ritvo, p. 39.

¹²⁷ See: Chambers, J.D. and G.E. Mingay. *The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880*. New York: Schocken, 1966; Neeson, J.M. *Commoners: common right, enclosure and social change in England, 1700-1820*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993; and Overton, Mark. *The transformation of the agrarian economy 1500-1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

¹²⁸ Works include: Cobbett, William. *Cottage Economy: Containing Information relative to the brewing of BEER, making of BREAD, keeping of COWS, PIGS, BEES, EWES, GOATS, PULTRY and RABBITS, and relative to other matters deemed useful in the conducting of the Affairs of a Labourer’s Family*. London: C. Clement, 1822; Godwin, William. *Of Population. An Enquiry concerning the Power of Increase in the Numbers of Mankind, being an Answer to Mr. Malthus’s Essay on that Subject*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Ornie & Brown, 1820; and Malthus, Thomas. *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it Effects the Future Improvement of Society*. London: J. Johnson, 1798. Marx responded to and referred to each variously in his works, Malthus being the conservative, “positive checks” catastrophe-mongering of population control.

animal rights discourse, the vilification and debasement of the butcher class, and the general shape of London public space these aspects produce.

Animal breeding is, for all intents and purposes, invented as a modern practice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the areas of horse, dog, and meat animal breeding.¹²⁹

Among the revolutions in agricultural production in the period,

new methods of agriculture were introduced, notably the growing of root crops such as the turnip which enabled many more livestock to be fed through the winter. The most famous early improvers were “Turnip Townsend” (1674-1738), who popularized crop rotations, and Jethro Tull (1674-1741), pioneer of farm mechanization.¹³⁰

One “improver” in particular is credited as the father of British animal husbandry, as well as an important influence on Charles Darwin via the generations of breeders he inspired. Robert Bakewell, as of around 1760, was making discoveries in selective breeding of meat animals that produced more meat and better animals. From that early work, other breeders “were increasingly able to apply their practical knowledge to the moulding of farm animals for greater efficiency and production.”¹³¹ This notion of constructing animals for human consumption was not the true target of much animal concern and activism in the period, however. What was more commonly addressed in early animal rights debate and in the first laws protecting animals in British law, such as Martin’s Act in 1822, was cruelty towards animals.

Smithfield’s history as London’s main meat center spans over 1,000 years, but it undergoes a radical expansion in the late eighteenth century, becoming a massive livestock center within London before public outcry over noise, smell, public health, and most especially, animal welfare, force Parliamentary debate and 1852 statutory removal of Smithfield’s livestock

¹²⁹ See Ritvo.

¹³⁰ Hall, Stephen J.G. and Juliet Clutton-Brock. *Two hundred years of British farm livestock*. London: British Museum (Natural History), 1989, p. 12.

¹³¹ Hall & Clutton-Brock, pp. 12-13.

grazing and keeping to outside London that ultimately occurs in 1855. Some of the earliest, clearest laws regarding the treatment of animals are written precisely to address the various atrocities at or on the way to Smithfield. In particular, laws regulating the “overdriving” of animals stem directly from Smithfield Market heyday of the first half of the nineteenth century.¹³²

Rob Boddice has written a broad review of public relationships to animals in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain that surveys the primary Parliamentary debates and poses cruelty and pain as central critical targets, presents a compelling review of philosophical antecedents to animal concern and welfare positions in the period, and works them all through in a critique contemporary anthropocentrism.¹³³ Boddice makes no mention of Smithfield but does evaluate other sources of the earliest animal rights laws in Britain. In particular, he credits John Lawrence’s *A Philosophical Treatise on Horses and on the Moral Duties of Man towards the Brute Creation* with influencing the 1822 Martin’s Act, the first anti-cruelty act of Parliament and generally regarded as the first such legal statute in modern legal history.¹³⁴ This is certainly because, besides penning a book the PM Richard Martin read, John Lawrence actually collaborated with Martin in drafting the Bill.¹³⁵ Boddice evaluates the history of statutes

¹³² Hilda Kean’s chapter, “Sight, Spectacle, and Education,” from *Animal Rights*, includes a historical account of Smithfield’s development and the public interaction with sites (sights) of cruelty against livestock including whipping, slaughter, overdriving and overworking, and the ways in which Smithfield animal owners adapted to public concern for animal welfare by working at night and adopting other evasive means before legal reform formally censured their practices. See Kean, Hilda. *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain Since 1800*. London: Reaktion, 1998, pp. 39-69.

¹³³ Boddice, Rob. *A History of Attitudes and Behaviours toward Animals in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century Britain: Anthropocentrism and the Emergence of Animals*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 2009.

¹³⁴ Boddice, pp. 169-170.

¹³⁵ Boddice, p. 169, and citing Shevawn Lynam’s biography of Martin, *Humanity Dick Martin: ‘King of Connemara’ 1754-1834*. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1997, pp. 194-6.

pertaining to domestic livestock and cruelty, and provides intensive study of a number of sources for the arguments and attitudes behind Animal Law in the Romantic period, but it seems that what remains to be articulated is the strong connection between meat market and general animal labor issues at the time and the public concern that then leads to the formal legal defense of animals.

The suffering of individual animals and classes of laboring animals—cart horses, taxi horses, cattle and sheep driven loudly and abusively through the crowded streets of London or stored tightly and noisily at Smithfield, beaten dogs, roosters used for fighting, bait-bulls and badgers and bears—all of these maligned creatures became the cause célèbre of the “humanitarian” animal advocates and Parliament members like Lord Erskine and Richard Martin (“Humanity Dick” and an Irishman, let it be known). Martin’s Act, also known as the Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act 1822, read as follows:

Whereas it is expedient to prevent the cruel and improper Treatment of Horses, Mares, Geldings, Mules, Asses, Cows, Heifers, Steers, Oxen, Sheep, and other Cattle : May it therefore please Your Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That if any person or persons shall wantonly and cruelly beat, abuse, or ill-treat any Horse, Mare, Gelding, Mule, Ass, Ox, Cow, Heifer, Steer, Sheep, or other Cattle, and Complaint on Oath thereof be made to any Justice of the Peace or other Magistrate within whose Jurisdiction such Offence shall be committed, it shall be lawful for such Justice of the Peace or other Magistrate to issue his Summons or Warrant, at his Discretion, to bring the party or parties so complained of before him...¹³⁶

New periodicals like *The Animals’ Friend* and *The Voice of Humanity* diligently tracked the offenses Martin, and his Act, responded to.

British law articulates animal subjects in completely new ways near the beginning of the nineteenth century. What had before only been property, even when property that could be

¹³⁶ http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Martin's_Act_1822. Animal law has been well documented in online resources to date.

cruelly mistreated, became a protected body. Animals remained—and remain—property in specific legal scenarios such as liability, but a gradual shift to considering treatment of animals as a target of criminal charges began with these first laws. Animals that could be indirectly protected by laws curtailing human social depravity became valuable in their own rite. This legal history shows how little regard had been shown toward nonhumans prior to these changes and also maintains divisive hierarchies among humans themselves through each stage of social normativity in the laws controlling human behavior *involving* animals. Animals used in entertainments such as baiting or gambling games accompanied by drinking, greedy overkilling of game, and abusive animal driving to market through overcrowded city streets inflicted a human social suffering, if the language in parliamentary acts is taken as a guide. But gradually, animal advocates argued for laws that protected animals from abuse for the animals' own good. Nevertheless, the language of human social improvement often accompanied even the best, most animal-focused laws in the nineteenth century. The rhetoric of animal protection rarely succeeded in presenting a “stand alone” animal subject not somehow subjected anew as the equipment of human iniquity.

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, British common law establishes animal rights in a form that continues to the contemporary moment. This is not at all to suggest that animal law itself, and not even animal concern and legal reform, begin here. Property law had long covered cattle/chattle, and animals are fundamentally regarded as property by the law today in the U.S. and England. But property law does not cover all of the relations humans and animals engage in, and in England in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, laws against animal baiting and excessive gaming, as well as a variety of laws regulating Sunday observance, had already been passed. Many of these had more to do with the wellbeing of humans, not animals: the laws aimed

to curb unsavory human practices such as gambling and the drinking often associated with various animal entertainments. The gaming laws by and large censured greed through economic penalty while also incorporating language about the depravity of those taking more than their fill of the King's animals. Laws against animal abuses near churches, in public parts of London, or during specific holiday seasons such as Easter that aimed at human welfare in this manner had a long history in English Law dating back well earlier than 1600. The sorts of legal arguments against social depravity—"great multitudes of the worst sorts of people resorted" to such pastimes according to a 1585 act—would stick with animal law into the modern era. But several legislative measures, generally regarding livestock management, also concerned animals' direct welfare.

In 1635, Irish Parliament made it a crime to work horses "by the taile" when plowing and pulling, and the same act also outlawed pulling "wooll" off live sheep. The language, including "cruelty" toward the animals and the "barbarity of custom" and "prejudice to" animals such cruelties inflicted, codifies animal concern precisely as the contemporary animal rights advocate might. These animals were still property, to be sure, but now the law subjected property owners to standards of comportment concerning the wellbeing of that property, and without reiterating the fact of property at all. Violators could be fined and imprisoned. The formal rationale for controlling this cruelty was that "the breed of horses was much impaired in this kingdome." Perhaps this implies a national possession, and thus reinvigorates the sense of animals as property—certainly as capital—but here the animals' health and suffering were, nevertheless, codified.

On the eve of the nineteenth century in England, the law begins to address specifically urban human-animal interactions at Smithfield Market, London. The language of laws regarding

cattle driving and Smithfield land use prior to this time had already accounted for the damage to property/capital poor management and insufficient grazing could inflict. In 1774, the law seems to meld human and animal welfare indelibly even when animals are merely the vehicles of “mischief” for humans near the market. But the telling language—“improper,” “cruel”—ushers in the intense welfare consciousness that would later influence specific laws against animal cruelty:

**Driving of Cattle, Metropolis Act 1774
Great Britain Parliament**

[14 George III. c. 87] An Act to Prevent the Mischiefs that Arise from Driving Cattle Within the Cities of London and Westminster, and Liberties Thereof, and the Bills of Mortality

Whereas the improper and cruel manner in which cattle are driven from Smithfield market, within the city of London...has occasioned great mischief, and endangered the lives of many of his Majesty's liege subject inhabiting therein; ...if any person or persons, who shall be hired or employed to drive any cattle within the said cities...shall, by negligence, or ill usage, in the driving such cattle, be the means that any mischief shall be done by such cattle...[shall] be kept to hard labour for any time not exceeding one month, or shall be publickly whipped.

There is no conflation of humans and animals in the “liege subjects’ here, though many accounts of Smithfield Market at this time suggested exactly such interspecies subjection. Besides indicating how problematic the exponential increases in both animal production and human population had become for an ever-more-crowded London city center, this law both confirms the daily proximity of animals to human life while codifying the cruelty of human animal use. This law does not specifically detail the nature of the cruelty, nor does it penalize the cruelty—the punishment was for, basically, disturbing the peace with the whips and attending animal noise and scenes of cruelty. But built into this proto-cruelty legislation is the massive store of sympathy for animal suffering writers such as Defoe, on Smithfield, and Barbauld, on mice used in scientific experiment, had already expressed. More importantly, public sentiment and increasing journalistic coverage of London life had clearly established that the sights,

sounds, and smells of animal abuse and urban overcrowding were taking too great a toll to go unnoticed by the law. Today, one will pay a congestion charge to drive a car into the heart of London, past several congestion zones. In 1774, one would pay dearly for congesting London with excessive, disruptive cattle driving.

As discussed in the previous chapter, literary historians have recently focused on the connection of Romantic literature to the nascent animal rights movement in England that grows and strengthens until just before World War I.¹³⁷ Kenyon-Jones and Perkins suggest that the legislative debates of the period inflect Romantic Literature with an even stronger association with the nonhuman. They often focus on Romantic literature that is not at all intent on improving human comportment toward an endangered environment but is, instead, focused entirely on animal suffering. Romantic literature articulates an inaccessible but inescapable nonhuman. Kenyon-Jones reads Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in relation to the series of anti-cruelty measures brought before the House of Commons between 1800 and 1822, reading Byron's portrayal of a Spanish bull fight against the arguments for banning bull-baiting in England.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, Perkins now and then lapses into a familiar Eco-escapist model of animal concern in his book, noting a Romantic rejection of mankind when he writes that "the cause of animals appealed to the pathologically shy, to the alienated, to the misanthropic, to those who, for whatever reason, had trouble identifying with other human beings."¹³⁹ This fits too simply into a version of Romantic environmentalism that refuses a deeper, perhaps darker,

¹³⁷ I note this periodization not due to causal connection, though it suggests rich possibilities given the diminution of life in the World Wars, and only as a general frame to the "long" nineteenth century under review. Another period marker to be considered is the English Protection of Animals Act of 1911, delineating and banning specific acts of cruelty and still in force today.

¹³⁸ Kenyon-Jones, p. 80.

¹³⁹ Perkins, p. 4.

thought that embraces these anxieties and alienations (and affectless coexistences) without the overbearing sense of crisis and loss so commonly assigned by such readings. At the same time, it proves to be appropriate to the Smithfield debates and the rhetorics of depravity and improvement I will discuss in other parts of this chapter.

Perkins ultimately reads the Romantic period, especially in representative works like Burns' "To a Mouse," as one defined by its focus on empathy, compassion, and the improvement of humanity through a comprehensive expansion of the circle of consideration in daily life. And while the sunny outlook of such a positive, practical alteration of behavior (think of vegetarianism or the anti-sugar and spice practices in Great Britain during the abolitionist movement) seems to fit an escapist consumerist aesthetic attitude Timothy Morton, borrowing from Hegel, has called "beautiful soul syndrome," many of the Parliament floor arguments themselves were far worse.¹⁴⁰ Proponents of ending animal baiting and fighting would often openly decry the moral turpitude—the drinking, the fights amongst bettors, the betting—such entertainment engendered in the working class. The legislators argued as though they were wholly convinced that the evil reality of animal cruelty could be corrected, the evil barred for good, and they routinely based their arguments on the moral health of human subjects. The literature produced in the period thus parallels, augments, and responds to the animal rights discourse raging through parliament and the broader humane movement (including the formation of the Animal Friends' Society and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)

¹⁴⁰ See, for example: Morton, Timothy. "Nature and culture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shelley*, ed. Morton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 203-204 on vegetarianism as escapist consumer practice in particular. See also: Morton, Timothy. *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

that contemporary theorists like Cary Wolfe identify as the acknowledged onset of modern animal rights discourse.¹⁴¹

During the years 1800-1835, laws were presented and eventually passed to ban uses of animals for entertainment in staged fights between dogs and bears, bulls, and badgers, and some of the proposed and ratified laws included prohibitions against cockfighting. The 1835 Animal Cruelty Act, in particular, codified an intense social concern relating to domestic cattle, sheep, and other species in meat production and general labor conditions. The ban on the “overdriving” of animals, which survives today in the language of the strongest and most often cited animal protection laws in contemporary U.S. Animal Law, was specifically directed at the ways in which massive herds of meat animals were brought to Smithfield Market in London in the early 1800’s. The parliamentary arguments appear to follow two primary tracks: focus on the effect of human activity with animals on humans and focus on the effect on animals themselves. For example, a number of arguments brought before parliament claim that bear- and bull-baiting threaten the morality of the poor.

With regard to animal sport and livestock driving, the arguments often focused on the moral depravity such practices instilled in humans while also considering the suffering inflicted on animals. Kenyon-Jones notes that the debates on animal cruelty in the House of Lords were “widely reported in the press and subsequently published as a pamphlet,” and goes on to examine the bull fight episode in a major work by a then-21-year old member of the House of Lords who would have heard the debates “live” in the same year he wrote *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*.¹⁴² Jones notes the humanitarian appeal of anti-cruelty measures, and she refers to Sir William

¹⁴¹ Wolfe, Carey. Video interview on Post-Humanism and Animal Studies at the University of Waterloo, May 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NN427KBZII>

¹⁴² Kenyon-Jones, p. 80

Pulteney's 1800 bill introduction, highlighting passages that inveighed against the deleterious effects bull-baiting, in particular. The strongest (and most successful) opponent of the animal cruelty cause in parliament was William Windham, who, as Perkins notes, found several ingenious examples by which to argue that animal cruelty and suffering was not a fit subject of legislation and that reform "must be left to morality and social opprobrium."¹⁴³

Hilda Kean has linked the animal concern of the period to the new sense Londoners had of the City and its ideal civility, drawing out especially juicy passages on the hectic scene around Smithfield: "Screams of terrified women and children present scenes of disorder which one could hardly expect to find even in the worst regulated towns in Europe, but which are highly disgraceful to one of the largest, most populous and richest capitals in the world."¹⁴⁴ The tumult at Smithfield was among the most frequently mentioned reasons to remove the market altogether.¹⁴⁵

Smithfield Market was the great live animal market in the heart of London that would be remarked on by authors on either side of its heyday and removal, from Defoe to Hardy. Defoe had seen just about all there was to see in his day, and yet even he could not quite believe the wonder of Smithfield. As one of his biographers presents Defoe's reaction, "Defoe is awed by this sheer quantity: '*Smithfield* Market for living Cattle, which is, without Question, the greatest in the World; no Description can be given of it.'¹⁴⁶ As Dickens would write in *Oliver Twist*, this overwhelming, indescribable space overcame those near it by sheer din and danger.

¹⁴³ Cited in Perkins, p. 19.

¹⁴⁴ Kean, p. 61 and quoting *The Voice of Humanity*, Vol. II, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ See: Kean and Metcalfe, Robyn. *Meat, Commerce and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012.

¹⁴⁶ Richetti, John. *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005, p. 333 and quoting Defoe, Daniel. *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain*, Vol. II, p. 91.

Dickens's description is among the most often-cited sources of Smithfield critique, included in most histories of the site and excerpted as well on the incredible commemorative bench in the current-day Smithfield Square near the old Market location in London:

It was market-morning. The ground was covered, nearly ankle-deep, with filth and mire; a thick steam, perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle, and mingling with the fog, which seemed to rest upon the chimney-tops, hung heavily above. All the pens in the centre of the large area, and as many temporary pens as could be crowded into the vacant space, were filled with sheep; tied up to posts by the gutter side were long lines of beasts and oxen, three or four deep. Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a mass; the whistling of drovers, the barking of dogs, the bellowing and plunging of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs, the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and roar of voices, that issued from every public-house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping, and yelling; the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the market; and the unwashed, unshaved, squalid, and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng; rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses.¹⁴⁷

What recurs in descriptions of the Smithfield scene, stink, and sound is the failure of rationality to account for the affective experience with all of the life in the City. The “meatspace” of humans and animals disrupts and charges the senses, as is often said of nineteenth-century urban industrial experience.¹⁴⁸

The noise is a well-known aspect of the complaints against the Market in the decades leading up to its removal. Kean's study of the activist literature in the period includes haunting passages and images from the early stages of the fight, led in part by Martin himself and the first generation of the RSPCA and mobilized in publications like *The Voice of Humanity*: “At night the local residents could hear the animals' cries of distress as they were rounded into the pens and then they were prevented from sleeping ‘as the dreadful blows inflicted on the cattle are

¹⁴⁷ Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004, pp. 188-189.

¹⁴⁸ See, for example, the work of Georg Simmel or of Walter Benjamin.

distinctly hear din their bedrooms’.”¹⁴⁹ The activist press of the period certainly had an interest in presenting the worst view of the Smithfield atrocities they could as part of the political campaign for animal rights, but the death and gore of the site seemed to speak for itself, as well. One particularly provocative note on the killing at Smithfield Kean uncovers is also from *The Voice of Humanity*. Kean writes,

much killing of the animals took place underground in cellars into which the animals were precipitated to a depth of several feet and ‘often [had] their jaws and legs broken by the fall’. Such practices were unseen but conjured up in the evocative illustrations of the journal *The Animals’ Friend*. While campaigners did not necessarily become vegetarians they were horrified about the effect meat butchered in such circumstances would have on human health.¹⁵⁰

The image she includes alongside the passage is, apparently, from some ten years later, but it is certainly provocative, with ghoulish, bare-skulled Smithfield workers clubbing swarms of sheep and cattle under a fog-shrouded crescent moon and the great dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral. The dome is still plainly visible from the Smithfield site in London. The image, along with other aspects of the activist literature, suggests that all of the debauched murder and mayhem at Smithfield was happening under the watchful eyes of higher authorities who, surely, were not pleased by the lowness of it all.

Kean here highlights the invisibility but ubiquitous sense of animal death at Smithfield preceding the much larger erasure of Market Removal. The startling noises and smells of the poorly ventilated basement abattoir, which would also have had little to no access to running water, heightened the fear of the butcher class and added to their “urban legend” status. The precipitous fall of a meat animal victim, described here in an 1827 account, is also the direct precursor to the *modus operandi* of Sweeney Todd with his meat human victims, dropped

¹⁴⁹ Kean, p. 62, and quoting *The Voice of Humanity*, 1827, p. 27.

¹⁵⁰ Kean, p. 62, and quoting *The Voice of Humanity*, p. 6.

through the floor to their deaths in the basement for quartering and processing in mysterious meat pies, hungrily consumed by unsuspecting Londoners against the backdrop of ongoing concerns about meat sources and safety.

Smithfield would disappear as a center of human-animal coexistence, only to shuttle the animals to a bigger, more inscrutable processing facility at Islington, The Metropolitan Cattle Market, as slaughter practices were being “improved” to manage the exponential increase of meat animal production arriving in the city after the husbandry advances took hold. In his study of the refinements to slaughter technique, focused primarily on the period after Smithfield’s removal but still relevant to the longer process of those shifting practices, Ian MacLachlan notes that the gruesome tales of animals skinned alive or bludgeoned by “revengeful” savages were unlikely. As butchers and meat tradesman themselves were proclaiming in their trade journals, “Humanity and profit go hand in hand.”¹⁵¹ This is in direct contrast to the stories in the animal rights journals, and MacLachlan, along with just about anyone writing on the state of slaughter and meat production in the nineteenth century, notes the general knowledge of terrible conditions and abuses surrounding Smithfield and the London abattoirs. MacLachlan then details the “humane” innovations in slaughter technology, including slaughter masks and the captive-bolt mechanism contemporary audiences not working directly in the meat industry will recognize as the killing device used by the villain Anton Chigurh in *No Country for Old Men*. Nevertheless, the butcher’s poleaxe, likely the technology causing the terrible sounds Kean mentions, still rated as an efficient method, and rumors of drunken butchers missing their mark and causing the

¹⁵¹ MacLachlan, Ian. “Humanitarian Reform, Slaughter Technology, and Butcher Resistance in Nineteenth-Century Britain, in Young Lee, pp. 111-112 and quoting Verschoyle, John. *Slaughter-House Reform*. London: Humanitarian League, 1903, p. 7 as well as “Mr. E.W. Darby on Humane Slaughtering,” in *Meat Trades’ Journal*, No. 351 (April 16, 1896), p. 1008.

“undue suffering” Martin’s Act specifically warned against seem to have been further hyperbole from the effective animal rights activists.¹⁵²

As quickly becomes clear, the shifting legal and civic administration of meat animals in the London City Centre around the Smithfield Market in the nineteenth century includes disparate city actors like the butchers’ guild and the burgeoning animal rights movement, and it incorporates the various advances in animal husbandry and slaughter in the period as well as the city’s growing traffic—powered by animals still. What becomes apparent through considering this dense network, as well as the extensive shifts in public awareness of and responses to disease and ecological degradation in the city, is that the primary application of animal rights law at Smithfield was not in protecting animals’ lives but in managing their efficient deaths so their meat would be best cultivated and produced. Slaughter improvement produces something like categorically “good” deaths as meat animals, amplifying their status as somewhere in between the dead meat they were becoming and the animals they will have been after slaughter. Animals, hand-in-hand with animal rights and with civic “improvement” rhetorics, are instrumentalized and administrated through legal process and civic management. These are the material “facts of life” (and death) at Smithfield.

Upon its removal, and in the discourse leading up to the improvement and reform of the violent Smithfield scene, the Smithfield “system” of animal slaughter and meat distribution became instead an erasure of the animal body form the city scene and, in the process, from the conception of “meat” in the consuming public. In contemporary life, one need only consider the difficulty of acquiring photographic or other evidence of the atrocities in the CAFO slaughterhouse to understand the anxiety within the industry itself about the effect of witnessing

¹⁵² See MacLachlan, pp. 117-126.

meat animal death. In London at Smithfield, as I have said previously and as commentaries reveal time and again, there was a problem of *affect* in the “meatspace” Londoners met when they arrived at the site. Dickens, Defoe, Hardy, anyone writing on the scene, noted that it challenged the senses and exceeded coherent understanding. It stank, it was noisy, and the mass of bodies—humans and animals intertwined and inseparable, really and truly—overwhelmed onlookers. Compounding matters, the health risks of a dirty, unmanageable meat industry while consumption of the now readily-available meat animals was at an all time high included rotten meat and unknown meat pie contents, all of which elicit stomach-turning responses to the Smithfield problem. This haptic proximity only turned Londoners more against the butchers who were their final, direct link to the meat animal, especially as the issue of meat prices and quality became worse and worse:

Since there was not a generous profit margin for dead meat, butchers concentrated on ways to mitigate the inevitable spoilage. The City inspectors fined butchers who sold ‘unwholesome’ meat and confiscated the offending product, some more ambitious butchers concocted ways to portray meat as fresh. [...] Butchers found that the exposure of these boxes (of meat) along with the agitation of the uneven pavement during transport degraded the meat and invited even lower profits.¹⁵³

Butchers were left “holding the bag,” so to speak, on both meat quality and meat price issues, and when the Market removal debates went into full gear, they resisted because of the obvious threat to their personal business practices and livelihood. On the other hand, they were suffering from a systemic weakness at the Smithfield site that could not handle the increasing numbers of humans *and* animals, as shown in the conditions described in the previous passage. If anyone would have liked to see significant London “improvements” to roads, Smithfield traffic flows, and later innovations like refrigeration, it was the butchers. As proverbial middlemen, however,

¹⁵³ Metcalfe, p. 38.

this was not to be, and perhaps no trade was to suffer more than the butchers' upon Smithfield reform and removal.

While today the well-meaning animal activist can point to an accepted Big Other in the form of a capitalist meat industry, such targets in the nineteenth century era of slaughter reform at the crest of a long evolution of meat system labor division had not yet been totally formulated. An individualist, moralist discourse still carried much more weight, as it did in calls to vegetarianism that utilized the model of temperance from religious sources. And this led directly to the demonization of butchers and other labor groups in the Smithfield system, as it was called. What made the butchers unique in this discourse was both their obvious hand in the bloody, noisy deaths of the animals and, in a complicated turn, their dispersal throughout a teeming, intensely compact city space. On top of the animal erasure at Smithfield, the broader history of animal "manufacture" for various human uses reminds of the city's subjection of humans to new modes of life, as well, many of which will be examined in the office and legal literature considered in Chapters Three and Four.

Smithfield removal, as well as the simultaneous shut-down of the annual Bartholomew Fair located on the site, is part of the city's discipline of animals *and* humans, linking the animal rights and civic reform discourses with a categorical, marginalizing address of animals and working class London residents. Smithfield thus stands as a crucial emblem of the biopolitical administration of bodies and lives under the signs of civil society and public education:

The campaign to close down Smithfield was essentially conducted on two separate but linked themes: the adverse effect on animals and the adverse effect on people, both those who carried out cruelty and those who lived or worked in the vicinity and who were obliged to see it. The anonymous pamphleteer who wrote against the 'fiend-like depravity' exhibited at Smithfield market suggested that humans were distinguished from animals by reason while the latter were creatures of instinct. But, he went on, since humans were abusing this free agency, how were humans superior except in depravity? The 'higher ranks' in society oppressed and persecuted the poor through

vagrancy and game laws which led, in turn, he argued, to me in the lowest stations of life becoming the persecutors and tormentors of animals as their own inferiors. Christian philanthropists then had a duty to take a stand against the practices in Smithfield as examples of ‘malignant moral distemper’.¹⁵⁴

The butchers were routinely included as the abusers and depraved classes under fire in the animal rights legislature, too, and when their business practices were examined closely, it revealed other atrocities of business:

A still more deceptive practice was that of meat polishing; the butcher would layer fat around an offending piece of meat and then rub the fat and meat with hot cloths, thus producing an even, smooth appearance. Despite the vigilance of City inspectors, techniques such as polishing allowed butchers to sell diseased or damaged meat to unsuspecting customers.¹⁵⁵

Smithfield Market closed as a live cattle site on June 11, 1855. The Smithfield Market Removal Act passed in 1851 had direct Parliamentary roots in the nineteenth century, but the debate about the City’s meat industry sites—and their removal—had roots dating well back into the early modern period, including a longstanding battle between the Worshipful Company of Butchers and other City actors. The market is thus a crucial node in the animal history of London, and a key fulcrum across which to consider the horrors of the nonhuman form at the heart of this entire project. This is in no small part due to the butchers’ complicated place at the heart of centuries of civic dispute, playing such an impossible role as independent agents of civic management, terrible slaughterers of the suffering animals at the heart of both nineteenth century animal concern and, as vivid antagonists in cultural production, of humans, and finally—maybe always—as abjected nonhumans themselves in a civic system that recognized their power and role only in order to discipline it. This produced a butcher that was really and truly horrible, stinking, bloody, and crude, but also talented, skillful, intelligent, committed, organized, and

¹⁵⁴ Kean, p. 59.

¹⁵⁵ Metcalfe, p. 39.

honest where non-craft “middlemen” who flocked to the Market’s new economic modes like parasites were anything but. The butchers were relentlessly abused by City forces, despised and feared by the consuming public at various turns in the City’s market histories, and continue on as one of the oldest and most esteemed guild groups to this day. It is impossible to vilify the butchers, yet they were publicly assaulted through each and every Smithfield or other market space debate. Sweeney Todd, the demon barber of Fleet Street, was a cold, bloody butcher of humans who sold his infamous meat pies in the time of dog meat “growlers” and mystery meat pie fears. The murderers of Defoe’s early stories, like the late nineteenth and early twentieth century murderers that made London true crime tales so famous around the world, were all known by but one name: butchers.¹⁵⁶

Perhaps the foremost group opposed of Smithfield’s removal from London was the Worshipful Company of Butchers. The guild has ancient roots in the City. Philip E. Jones, in his singular history of the Company, suggests that the butchers were one of the six, perhaps seven, oldest independent craft guilds recognized by the City and its Exchequer authorities. The others were the weavers, bakers, goldsmiths, pepperers, clothworkers, and the saddlers. Jones writes that this last was at least on the Pipe Roll of 1179-80 with the butchers.¹⁵⁷ Jones goes on to say that this recognition was legal and economic, perhaps more importantly the latter as the history of London at this time includes the first Mayor of the city and an increasing reliance upon district management via wards and precincts. The butchers, then, were already crucial economic and civic forces besides being respected craftsmen. This last distinction was surely forgotten by the

¹⁵⁶ I will examine these literary butchers in further detail in Chapter Three.

¹⁵⁷ Jones, Phillip E. *The Butchers of London: A History of the Worshipful Company of the Butchers of the City of London*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1976, pp. 1-2.

time of Smithfield removal debate and the rampant violence associated with “butchery” from the eighteenth century until present times.

The butchers also have a long history of activism and resistance to civic rule over their trade, and that history reveals a parallel long history of City efforts to move and remove meat industry sites in response to shifting civic organization needs. The butchers became notorious not only because of their trade, but also for this intensive involvement in City politics and civic design. Their centuries-long refusals to obey various reform measures related to the Smithfield Market space and other aspects of their trade made them ready targets of the City’s various officials. Their defense of specific trade sites like Eastcheap, St. Nicholas Shambles, and Smithfield—all located within one mile of each other in the old City Centre—coalesce finally in the seeming defeat of the 1852 Smithfield removal, but, as Jones writes,

The utter refusal of the butchers to abide by restrictions imposed on the trade by Act of Parliament resulted in the punishment of the whole Company. The sustained opposition of the butchers persuaded Parliament year after year to delay the operation of a statute, an achievement which even the modern trade unions may envy.¹⁵⁸

Perhaps the primary reason the butchers became so reviled in the city had little, if anything at all, to do with their horrible trade. The butchers were the most organized and effective labor unions in the City from earliest times, and their ability to resist what they considered unfair civic restrictions on their trade made them one of the City’s strongest adversaries any time a new civic regulation came around. For example, in 1321, the Royal Justices of London ordered all the butchers’ stalls in the well-established Eastcheap district butchers’ rows be taken down. Eastcheap is only a ten-minute walk, less than a half mile, from the Smithfield site, right in the heart of the old City Centre, and Eastcheap’s supplies came exclusively from the Smithfield live animal market like meat throughout the City did.

¹⁵⁸ Jones, p. ix.

The Eastcheap removal claims stated that “the stalls were mobile and that the sale of meat within the houses might lead to fraud and deception.”¹⁵⁹ The butchers resisted the entire effort, deeming it an effort by the Sheriffs to continue extorting unfair dues from them. The stalls in question had been numbered in 1244 for oversight and so the King could collect the owed revenue from the City’s businessmen, including butchers. And so there was precedent for the practice. All of this was but one such conflict between the City and the butchers on the issue of market space and boundaries, then compounded by revenue and taxation.

The dominant trouble with the butchers, whether they were in the right or not in their various run-ins with civic management, was always pollution. Stinking Lane ran into Butcher’s Alley, all right in the neighborhood of the St. Nicholas Shambles part of London south of Smithfield that was also involved in the 1321 Eastcheap dispute. Stinking Lane was so-named, precisely, as a result of its association with the smells of butchery. This is very close to the River Thames, and there were efforts to regulate the butchers’ disposal even in the medieval period. This area is, incidentally, directly adjacent to Paternoster Row, which was home to the early publishing industry in the City.¹⁶⁰ The St. Nicholas Shambles area, along Butcher Lane and adjacent to Newgate Market (site as well of the notorious Newgate Prison and inspiration for the Newgate novels discussed in Chapter Three), is just south of Smithfield.

Butchers had private shops (abattoirs) not only around Smithfield, but also in many other parts of the city. Keeping animals in back yards or in smaller spaces than the massive live animal market was common practice in London even after Smithfield removal. The drivers and salesmen, who were other major targets in the Smithfield removal debates, were concentrated

¹⁵⁹ Jones, p. 75.

¹⁶⁰ See: Raven, James. *Bookscape: Geographies of Printing and Publishing in London Before 1800*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

along traffic arteries and at the Smithfield Market site, respectively. But butchers, with their dark, dank, disgusting basement abattoirs, were in numerous city pockets. Any neighborhood could host the mysterious, dangerous, insidious crimes of the basement killer, a trope that was exploited to great effect, commercially and narratively, in the Penny Dreadfuls just as it was in novel length crime tales and horror stories across the century. So it was the case that Smithfield was by no means the only animal site in this period. It was central and singular, and had been a major topic for writers and civic actors across multiple centuries, but there is an entire city of animals, and of meat, to consider. Shepherd's Bush, a borough far west of City Centre, was known as a major pig keeping area, for example.¹⁶¹ One of the major issues in the market removal debate was actually an entirely separate historical process.

This history of Smithfield Market, the butchers, and the cursory assumptions about animal concern and rights discourse in the period combine to reveal a complex political negotiation between economic actors such as butchers and civic agents including Parliament and other planning bodies. Much of the debate between the different economic interests at Smithfield and the civic agents pushing for changes and improvement had to do with the use of public city space, which was an evolving concept through the market's height and removal periods between 1700 and 1850.¹⁶² As Robyn Metcalfe has shown in the only extensive history of the market,

¹⁶¹ Velten, Hannah. *Beastly London: A History of Animals in the City*. London: Reaktion, 2013, p. 28.

¹⁶² London after the Great Fire has no shortage of famous city planners, including Peel and Wren. Few histories of the city omit some mention of these and others, and there are a number of very readable books on the subject such as the urban historian, Leo Hollis' *London Rising: The Men Who Made Modern London*. New York: Walker/Macmillan, 2008. Metcalf and others consider the sense of London and its space, and there are numerous studies of the changing conception of the city in the period. One excellent, relatively recent comprehensive study of nineteenth-century London city space planning that would come into conflict with mid-century population and traffic increases: Arnold, Dana. *Rural Urbanism: London landscapes in the early nineteenth century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005. David Harvey's study of

Meat, Commerce, and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855, the public space concern melded with increasing understanding of hygiene and disease in the period.¹⁶³ London suffered an incredible string of public health crises such as the cholera outbreaks between 1832 and the notorious 1854 Broad Street outbreak. These were all the result of intense urban crowding and ineffective waste management practices that dumped the city's growing filth directly into its primary water supply, the Thames River. Smithfield was drawn into this issue, naturally, as the incredible rivers of waste from the live animals there, likewise, ran through city streets and into the same river. And one of the most gruesome aspects of this river of filth was the market effluvia from the animal slaughter practices at Smithfield and the numerous private abattoirs around the city. Smithfield thus became an emblematic object in the city's self-image and efforts to "clean up its act."

Besides the waste was the incessant noise, which would go deep into the night. I have already discussed the noise Hilda Kean notes in *Animal Rights* and the narrative of animal rights activists such as Richard Martin and *The Animals' Friend*, the major periodical of the Animals' Friend Society, which was at the forefront of the very successful animal rights campaign early in the nineteenth century. The Society thus imbricates animal rights and Smithfield through such sensationalist tones—the intense animal suffering and lawless, all-hours savagery needed to be communicated to the powerful classes that didn't have to actually live near Smithfield—that serve not only to drive public sentiment against the Market's location, but also against its laborers. The animal rights debate, as it plays in the Smithfield case, contributes directly to the further demolition of the animal when the animal becomes a sterile object of mechanized

Hauptmann's revision of Paris and the consequences for experience and thinking in the period is also instructive. See: *Paris: Capital of Modernity*. London: Routledge, 2005.

¹⁶³ See in particular Metcalfe's chapter on public health and Smithfield in *Meat, Commerce and the City*, pp. 99-112.

manufacture (not even slaughter, really, as technological efficiency streamlines death in the public slaughterhouse). Just as troubling, the animal rights debate relies yet again upon a classist discourse that requires a “bogey man” human target in its rhetorical form. The primary bogey man in efforts to have the market removed, again, would prove to be the butcher and his associates even when they turned out to be correct about issues such as animal slaughter techniques and other practical considerations.

Slaughter reform, not only in England but also in the U.S., France, Germany, and elsewhere, introduced extensive new killing technologies and animal population management techniques throughout the nineteenth century. Today’s antibiotics and CAFO architecture are clear results of this massive, ongoing aspect of human-animal cultural history. The nineteenth century reforms took animal slaughter and processing out of the individual, private abattoirs and put them into the gleaming, towering new monuments to mechanized civic management and animal slaughter like the Metropolitan Cattle Market (now the Caledonian Market) at Islington. This figure of mechanized civic slaughter is the hallmark of modernity, as the new meat factories were some of the period’s most anticipated and publicized civic achievements in Napoleon’s Paris and in post-Smithfield London.

Paula Young Lee, in her introduction to the edited volume *Meat, Modernity, and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse*, acknowledges the significant role Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* played in public discourse around meat production, animal suffering, and slaughterhouse practices. The suffering of animals was not as central in the outcry around Chicago’s meat works as were the new horror of finding human parts in the consumers’ meat products. Reminiscent of episodes in Frank Norris’ monumental American Naturalist novel, *The Octopus: A Story of California*, in which the massive grain processor eats a character, Sinclair’s novel features workers dying in the

slaughterhouse and, likewise, being processed as meat that then goes out to customers. The novel of course also raised awareness of issues such as workers' rights and safety. She also acknowledges literature's role, in this case, in sparking political and legal change in the form of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act Theodore Roosevelt argued for.¹⁶⁴ Laws regulating slaughterhouse safety and general hygiene followed. Nevertheless, as Young Lee is quick to point out, "(n)either the misery of the workers nor the appalling conditions in which the animals were killed were meaningful factors in the political equation."¹⁶⁵ The slaughterhouse machine was little changed, as far as workers' and animals' welfare was concerned. The only real impetus in any slaughter reform that did come to pass was the economic loss caused by already waning meat sales. The public had begun to consume less meat in the U.S. because of its generally poor, bruised, or even decomposed condition and negative health impacts.¹⁶⁶

This American meat machine legacy is vast. New York slaughter oversight and urban organization led to the 1866 creation of the Metropolitan Board of Health and major slaughterhouse reforms in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Slaughter and butchery regulation had actually begun as early as 1676, and in 1806, New York City appointed a butchers' committee that would inspect the city's slaughterhouses.¹⁶⁷ Known problems with slaughterhouses, tanners, and rendering plants, increasingly located in ever-denser urban settings through the exponential urban growth of the nineteenth century, led to widespread oversight and regulatory bodies but not to widespread enforcement. In fact, Day claims that the anti-regulatory mood of the early nineteenth century in New York led to independent businessmen like butchers

¹⁶⁴ Young Lee, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ Young Lee, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶ Young Lee, p. 3, and throughout subsequent chapters by other contributors.

¹⁶⁷ On New York City's reforms, see: Day, Jered. "Butchers, Tanners, and Tallow Chandlers: The Geography of Slaughtering in Early Nineteenth-Century New York City," in Young Lee, pp. 178-197.

and tanners heavily influencing a broad economics of meat and animal processing in the city that also dictated specific geographic management. This history has strong similarities to aspects of the London situation, but does not entirely match all aspects at the same time. Some moments in slaughter reform predate London, as do reforms in Paris and other locations, but then some of the regulatory changes come later. The London Smithfield case is clearly part of a broad international meat history, and one that both American literary audiences and contemporary consumer-activists will recognize immediately from these preliminary American contexts such as Sinclair's novel and current CAFO debates. Butchers in the New York context also have their place—perhaps Martin Scorsese's "Bill the Butcher" nativist from *Gangs of New York* ought to be reconsidered in this frame, for example. The British context, with its strong heritage of antecedent and resulting animal law and literatures on the nonhuman object, presents a singular study within the history of meat and civic erasure of its ideological and biological sources.

The direct relationship between literature and social organization in the case of *The Jungle* has crucial precursors in the London case, and authors like Dickens wrote defenses of the butchers in periodicals even while lamenting the squalor and chaos of Smithfield and its denizens.¹⁶⁸ British literature has fewer direct interventions in the meat industry than it does in the broader animal rights movement, despite extensive writings on the butchers, Smithfield, and slaughter in general through the booming periodicals trade. Butchery in the Penny Dreadfuls, on the other hand, is a dominant trope. Butchers and butchery—meat trade labor and gruesome, heinous murder in equal parts—were major shapers of both the practical civic changes in London

¹⁶⁸ Metcalfe and others cite the Dickens description, "The Butcher", from *All the Year Round*, pp. 54-55. I am especially grateful to Professor Joe McLaughlin of Ohio University for directing me to a separate article by Dickens on Smithfield in *Household Words*, in which Dickens exhibits full familiarity as well with the humanitarian streak in cattle slaughter, whereby animals should be "killed 'comfortably'." *Household Words*, No. 6 (May 4, 1850), p. 121.

around Smithfield and the meat industry, as well as of the public imaginary fueled by the widely consumed periodicals and serial fictions. The identification of one violent, bloody class of laborer as a pervasive social actor reminds here of Poe's *Man of the Crowd* catalogue of types, and this was also the way in which cabbies and vivisectioning doctors were vilified at various points in animal rights actions in London throughout the nineteenth century. The butchers at Smithfield bear an inordinate industry burden in reform debate. A clearer sense of the role butchers played in London civic management and the public debates about inhuman urban conditions around Smithfield explicates the source of this negative trope beyond a simple notion of animal killing during a time that motivated extensive social change through the discourse of sympathy.

Butchers are one of the longest-standing organized labor groups in London, but their place in a slaughter system that was the target of major reform in the nineteenth century left them cast out of decent society, as so many diatribes against other forms of animal abuse colored their targets. Their difficulties in London had deep roots. In 1624, Parliament introduced an Act to restrain butchers from grazing purchased animals in London for more than thirty days after purchase at the live animal markets, including of course the largest and most central, Smithfield.¹⁶⁹ The Free Butchers of London, a trade organization, issued its Reasons against the bill.¹⁷⁰ The preamble begins precisely where the economic histories of American slaughter do. The butchers claim that, due to their mandatory seven years of apprenticeship learning the trade and specifically the proper pricing and selling points, they have a stronger claim to regulatory authority on aspects of meat production in the city such as city land use for animal fattening. The primary claims against the 30-day limit are that transport over great distances (Wales and

¹⁶⁹ *Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1872, p. 31.

¹⁷⁰ See *ibid.* and also: Lemon, Robert. *Catalogue of a collection of printed broadsides*. The Society of Antiquaries of London, 1866, p. 62.

Scotland, for example) can cause the animals to lose significant amounts of weight or, in other cases, to overwork the muscle tissue that would become meat. Another concern, albeit one that could help arguments for Smithfield removal, was that it could take longer than thirty days to properly rest and re-fatten the animals since there would be competition for grazing space in the area given the heavy traffic.

This traffic in animals at Smithfield has been a known London feature dating at least into the twelfth century, when William Fitzstephen wrote of the “smooth field” (Smithfield was originally Smoothe-Field). Fitzstephen’s account is clear: the market was already a large, bustling, varied affair with the biggest and best animals available for purchase.¹⁷¹ By the early eighteenth century, when Daniel Defoe wrote of Smithfield, it was “the greatest in the world.” But as the Parliamentary and pamphlet histories show, Smithfield was beset by this contrast between its greatness and its unmanageable size and industry. Several different butcher groups wrote petitions to legislative changes to the Smithfield space, but there were a number of other market labor classes involved including graziers, salesmen, and drivers. The graziers would have been hired middlemen who tended animals brought to the market, and as the market evolved, the butchers who would have done this part of the meat production process at the time of the 1624 pamphlet had already been split into these more specialized cogs in an expanded meat machine. The salesmen would work at Smithfield selling not to the public but to the various butchers. The drivers would have brought the cattle to market from out of town.

These different meat market classes were in direct competition with one another but also shared a Smithfield history that pitted them against other civic forces. Drovers, or drivers, were

¹⁷¹ Fitzstephen, William. *A description of London*, ca. 1174/1183.

<http://users.trytel.com/~tristan/towns/florilegium/introduction/intro01.html>

Reference here is from: *Fitz-Stephen’s Description of the City of London, Newly Translated from the Latin*. London: B. White, 1772, p. 36.

the middlemen who brought the animals into London, often from other nodes near, but still outside the main city, and were in fact one of the primary targets of the earliest animal rights laws in England banning the “overdriving” of any livestock or transport animals. While the most sensational target of the overdriving charge would have been the horse cabbies flogging animals in the emerging marketplace streets, the early law on animal overdriving, which remains the verbatim form of the law even as it stands in the strongest current U.S. animal rights laws, is clear that it applies to all livestock and transport animals. Horse floggings were a favorite anecdote of the animal rights arguments brought by upper class activists, precisely the classes that would bear witness to the most horse floggings: cab rides were expensive. But the traffic congestion motivating some of the Smithfield debate—the clogged arteries of London— was due in equal part to meat market animal herding. The early form of traffic congestion wrought by horse-drawn carriages and cabs before the motorized automobile was, to be sure, a factor in the animal rights law on overdriving, and the savage nature of the drivers of Smithfield meat animals was legend.¹⁷² Cabbies, drovers, butchers—the collective animal use and abuse spectacle at Smithfield turned them all into the public’s whipping boys. The innards of the city works were to be kicked out, as far as public opinion was concerned. The Smithfield problem turned the Butcher into an outright civic menace and, ultimately, a literary villain, as will be discussed in Chapter Three.

What turned the public so adamantly against the butchers, then, was not animal abuse at all but rather the increasing price of meat in a time that also saw increasing meat quality and safety concerns. Regardless of which kind of butcher one was, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the butchers were at the heart of public anger over the price of meat and blamed for all

¹⁷² See: Bosner, Kenneth. *The Drovers: who they were and how they went, an epic of the English countryside*. London: MacMillan, 1970.

manner of commercial deceit. The jokes of the day about “growlers” and “meowers”—both suggesting stray pets had ended up on the butcher’s block for public consumption—were based in some truth.¹⁷³ Such jokes, like stories like *Sweeney Todd* with its far more sinister meat, were actually marking the incredible public mistrust of butchers in London in the nineteenth century. The most lurid tales—and *Sweeney Todd* is certainly that—suggested an even more grisly mystery meat. Human meat, consumed unbeknownst by a ravenous public who could not get enough of the taste of delectable meat pies, was a figure that integrated the economic fears of a consuming public wary of price-fixing with the justified fears of potentially harmful, diseased meat from parts—and bodies—unknown. All such fears coalesced in the figure of the butcher, who was both an economic agent and the one who slaughtered the animal in the disgusting basement abattoirs sully local boroughs and littering the back alleys near Smithfield. That there were divisions of labor within the butchers’ ranks was immaterial, and that was despite vocal opposition to Smithfield removal action brought by some butcher groups against others.

The cutting butcher dealt directly to the consuming individual. The carcase, or retail, butcher dealt to cutting butchers and perhaps to public houses. The killing butcher dispatched the animal. All of these roles would be consolidated and streamlined in the public slaughterhouse, which was the city’s response to an exploding population with an exploding meat consumption habit. Meat consumption in Great Britain begins to exponentially increase by 1830.¹⁷⁴ By 1840,

¹⁷³ This is a food anxiety that has not remotely abated in England and other locations, and although a much longer discussion of differing cultural perspectives on meat sources is appropriate to the issue, the lineage of cat and dog meat fears to the present day in the context under examination is clear in articles such as a March, 2013 piece in the *Mirror*, “Dog or cat in our curry: Fears over 'mystery meat' in takeaway which has baffled experts.” It is important to note that this refers to “take away” food, precisely what Mrs. Lovett’s meat pies were. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/dog-cat-curry-fears-over-1789118>

¹⁷⁴ See: Perren, Richard. *The Meat Trade in Britain 1840-1914*. London: Routledge, 1978. See also: Perren, *Taste, Trade and Technology*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006.

according to Richard Perren's calculations, Britain's per annum meat consumption crossed 1,000,000 tons for the first time. Perren notes that official records for Britain do not technically exist prior to 1867, but Perren also acknowledges that, when meat import first begins there in 1842, precise records *were* kept. Import in this case would be certainly from Ireland and from France and Germany, but then also in forms Perren does not track from later years of animal food imports such as Liebig Meat Extract, produced in Uruguay for British consumption after 1862. Perren also suggests that mere numbers of live animals or processed animal bodies would likely not suffice to account for gross production and its impact on consumption because "imported animals did not necessarily weight the same as home-produced ones."¹⁷⁵ This last point indicates that British husbandry and meat animal design had significant variations from practices and results elsewhere in Europe or in the U.S., or at least that precise numbers on production via gross weight/meat output in the period 1831-1914, his focus, are hard to establish. Still, through all such qualifications of the data, Perren constructs an educated guess, in chart form, about meat consumption between 1831 and 1914. The per annum increase upon the 980,000 tons in 1831 (with no meat importation) hits 2,575,400 tons total by 1914, the close of his study of British agricultural and economic records, nearing a 300% increase in British meat consumption, supplemented by a near even split of imported and domestic meat by 1914. Perren employs his findings in a more general statement about Britain's prosperity, claiming that the incredible increase of a number of "the more expensive protein foods, like meat, butter, cheese and eggs" show clear improvement in overall living standards. His "overall living standards" here of course do not include the animals' lives, but he cites the major importance of meat production to the overall British agricultural economy. Although Perren's focus is of course the

¹⁷⁵ Perren, *The Meat Trade*, p. 2.

human progress meat production and consumption indicate, the case for meat's essential role in Britain's total economic standing and social identity made by him and by others, such as Ben Rogers, firmly establish that this incredible period of economic development and social improvement rides, quite literally, on the backs of animals built in and brought into the country.¹⁷⁶

The changes in animal husbandry and meat production leading up to the Smithfield heyday in London both inaugurate and then respond to increasing demand for meat among the general populous. The butchers pre-exist the major advances in husbandry of the eighteenth century. The butchers also enjoy the height of British livestock production just as that peak turns into a crisis of overpopulation at Smithfield and in London as a whole. After the major population explosion heading into the nineteenth century, the butchers had a "captive audience" in the lower classes clamouring to partake in the good life, and British meat eating was an age-old tradition. Smithfield contributes to the city's hygiene and traffic issues in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. None of this, according to Perren, seems to curb meat consumption, and even the concerns about disease do not calm demand. Smithfield reform was a corrective measure ensuring the meat trade could continue and expand.

And Say the Butcher Responded?

The butchers, as the public's primary contact with the entirety of the meat trade, end up front and center as major targets for Smithfield opponents capitalizing on the public's dearest complaint. Whether they lived near the nightly Smithfield din the animal rights activists harped or not, and whether they were in the same neighborhood as the dark butchers' abattoirs of the

¹⁷⁶ See Rogers' excellent *Beef and Liberty: Roast Beef, John Bull and the English Patriots*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2003.

darkest horror stories, Londoners saw the butchers as adversaries. The primary issue upon which the butchers were demonized was price. The public blamed the butchers for the high prices, and beginning before the nineteenth century, there is a clear history of butchers themselves bringing the issue to Parliament and to the public in pamphlet form. The butchers' complaints were most often against one another—specializations within the general butchery trade produced groups like the cutting butchers, the carcasse or retail butchers, and others. In 1796, a committee in the House of Commons issued its report in response to a Retail Butchers' petition. The Cutting Butchers, in 1795, had submitted a petition complaining of monopolies above their station in the meat production and distribution chain.¹⁷⁷ The appeal frames the complaint as a service to the poor of London, and the opening also complains of unregulated price fixing these cutting butchers—the butchers who sold meat directly to the consumers after it passed through several previous agents as live animals and then as carcasses in this case—had to contend with at the market. Their argument was that they then were forced to pass on costs to the consumers. Butchers, like bakers in London at this time, were frequent targets of complaints about the high price of food in a vast, growing metropolis.¹⁷⁸ The Philanthropic Butcher, articulating a monopolistic but evasive supply machine of foodstuff he is subject to as much as the baker to the corn (grain) markets, cannily aligns the two supply trades within the early passages of the petition:

¹⁷⁷ *Monopoly. Price Sixpence. The Cutting Butchers Appeal to the legislature, upon the high price of meat: In which many of the base practices of Smithfield are exposed, and a remedy pointed out for the poor*, by A Philanthropic Bucher. London: H.D. Symonds, T. Bellamy, and all the booksellers, 1795.

¹⁷⁸ For more on this parallel economic crisis in London, see: Barnes, Donald Grove. *A History of English Corn Laws From 1660-1846*. London: Routledge, 1930, 2010. See also: Boyer, George. *An Economic History of the English Poor Law, 1750-1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Both books include discussion of the 1795 Bread Riots in London. See as well: Davis, Michael. "Bread riots, Britain, 1795," in *The International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest*, ed. Immanuel Nest. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

The difficulty of ascertaining truth, is more conducive to the interests of the fraudulent than to the just, and operates, but too frequently, to make the innocent suffer the guilty; hence arise those ill-directed murmurings from a suffering, but indiscriminating multitude, towards the butcher and baker, which should be leveled at higher agents; it is with Smithfield Market, as with the Corn Market, where the price is not regulated by quantity of meal, but the artifices of seller.¹⁷⁹

What is immediately apparent, not unimportantly for contemporary readers, is that the “base practices” of Smithfield in this petition will not relate at all to animal concern. The terrible state of affairs at Smithfield concerning the cutting butchers, who would be unlikely animal rights activists at best, was in fact the complex retail games played by graziers, carcasse butchers, and salesmen against the direct meat outlet cutting butchers.

The petition makes a case for prohibiting any animal slaughter within 10 miles of the City; but the case has nothing at all to do with the cases that would be made in the 1852 Smithfield Removal Act that formally removed live animals and slaughter from the location. The 1795 petition wanted the slaughtering trade removed from Smithfield because the location had become home to a re-sale practice wherein agents would purchase live animals on one side of the market and then sell them at a price increase on the other side of the market. The market’s size was about 5 acres, but the din and confusion of such a site with thousands of cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry at any given time, made it seem wholly impenetrable. The Philanthropic Butcher describes the collusion of Carcasse Butchers and Graziers in dark terms: “The Smithfield Wickedness,” “evil agent(s)” working for the “destruction” of Cutting Butchers and the public. Smithfield salesmen take advantage of outsiders and newcomers who are not “one of the gang,” according to the petition. The Philanthropic Butcher’s populist appeal highlights themes of exclusivity and maliciousness in his criticism of the animal handlers and sellers at Smithfield: “The dark cunning with which the villainy of Smithfield is pursued, renders it almost inscrutable,

¹⁷⁹ *Monopoly*, p. 4.

yet it all tends to the disadvantage of the Cutting Butcher, in the first instance, and the Public eventually.”¹⁸⁰

The petition thus attempts to align the most frequent target of public complaint about high meat prices—the direct vendor, the Cutting Butcher—with the suffering public by blaming a sinister, inaccessible monopoly. This body afflicts London with impoverished strife while “Society” refuses to critically examine the massive economic infrastructure of both the Corn and Meat markets the city’s complaints are levied against. The Philanthropic Butcher synthesizes his case, ultimately, in a clear complaint against enclosure: “The great primary cause of this temporary misery is the consolidation of little farms into great farms, yet the calamity, as it is, might be thus reduced if not presented.”¹⁸¹ The butcher’s solution was surely an ill-fated suggestion: “No person should be permitted to export corn or cattle.”¹⁸² The Philanthropic Butcher also complains that those cattle that do make their way to Smithfield are not the best cattle, yet the Cutting/Retail Butcher must still pay top price for these animals. This recalls the complaint of the butchers in 1624, in the petition against the bill to prohibit excessive grazing of animals owned by butchers, in which the leanness of cattle that travelled long distances from outside the city had to be mitigated by an appropriate re-fattening. Lending at least some circumstantial credence to the 1795 Cutting/Retail Butchers’ complaint of an unwieldy food production and distribution machine, 1625 language does not distinguish here between the Grazier, Carcasse Butcher, and Cutting/Retail Butcher now pitted against each other and the consuming public. The consuming public increased roughly threefold between 1625 and 1795, and so perhaps it is only fitting that meat management staffing underwent similar multiplication.

¹⁸⁰ *Monopoly*, p. 8.

¹⁸¹ *Monopoly*, p. 10.

¹⁸² *Monopoly*, p. 10.

The conclusions of the Philanthropic Butcher include a complaint about horses, which require corn (grain) that might otherwise go toward the feeding of other animals. But the complaint about horses, which would in 1795 still have been vital to general transport and farm labor, among other uses, seems particularly chosen for its relation to a broader critique of “fashion” and unnecessary habits of consumption. The horse, according to the Philanthropic Butcher, is an emblem of the general wastefulness of an “Epicurean” class. The Carcasse Butchers are unconcerned with price inflations they either can weather or do not incur themselves, and are, according to the Philanthropic Butcher, “men of large property” many retired already, in an “overgrown” class none challenges because of their entrenched and controlling position.¹⁸³ None of these parties—the salesmen, Graziers, Carcasse Butchers, and higher classes feeding their useless horses—are concerned with food supply or affordable food for the public. The Philanthropic Butcher’s diatribe on horses and grain in a subsection, “The State and Management of Grain,” pits food against taste:

As the cultivation of every species of grain, is materially connected with the progress and advancement of animal food, respecting both its *existence* and its *price*, I implore the Legislature to pay some attention to the following declaration—*viz. that one third of the produce of this land, is devoured by Horses*, who consume on an average half a bushel of corn daily, and if the establishment of Horses were diminished, we should have more cows, more sheep, more veal, more bread, butter, cheese, bacon, beer, ale, soap, candles, leather, wool, &c. &c. and shall such a host of blessings be blindly sacrificed upon the polluted altars of FASHION. Good God! Is there more solicitude to keep the equipage sumptuous, then the People comfortable?—may that Epicurean perish who upholds the chilling thought.¹⁸⁴

The Philanthropic Butcher then calls for a remedy to the problem of food supply in London, arguing against excesses that serve only to “pamper, not satiate, the appetites of one or two idle, worthless sprigs of Distinction; while the virtuous and meritorious labourer is fainting at his

¹⁸³ *Monopoly*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁸⁴ *Monopoly*, p. 12.

loom for want of nourishment.”¹⁸⁵ The Philanthropic Butcher lists the four primary points from his “authentic representations” of the Smithfield Market near the end of the petition:

1st. The Carcasse Butcher, causes an advance of price in the markets of the metropolis, generally speaking, of one penny, or three half-pence per pound, independent of natural necessity.

2dly. The Carcasse Butcher, by this artificial management of the markets, gives birth to all that opprobrium and rage administered by the public towards the Cutting Butcher, who is innocent of the evil altogether.

3dly. The Carcasse Butchers, have increased the number of beasts they kill, and raised their demands for all, at this precise point of time, although the idea is circulated, that cattle were never so scarce in this century!

4thly. The Carcasse Butchers, attend all the chartered markets within fifty miles of London; although those markets were established and intended for the accommodation of the Country Butchers, and not for the Carcasse Butchers of Smithfield; and it is from this measure of monopoly, more than any other, that we are to ascribe every misfortune, that has, or may arise, from the dearness of provisions.—This is an alarming and increasing evil, and must be completely done away by the government, for the preservation of common happiness and social order.¹⁸⁶

The Philanthropic butcher must be at least generally correct on the question of supply, as Perren’s numbers verify. His appeal to social order matches all of the most sensible, “civilized” calls of the animal rights activists or any other moralizing community in the new City Beautiful Syndrome—clearly, these are not the savage brutes of widespread repute. Or, perhaps more appropriately, that charge itself seeks out a vilifying animal claim where it purports animal concern and “humane” inclusiveness.

The pamphlets attending the Smithfield Removal Act include *Cursory remarks on the evil tendency of unrestrained cruelty : particularly on that practised in Smithfield Market*, by Elizabeth Coltman (1823), *The question of Smithfield Market fully considered*, author Clericus

¹⁸⁵ *Monopoly*, p. 14.

¹⁸⁶ *Monopoly*, p. 14.

(1837), and *An appeal to the British public, or, The abuses of Smithfield Market and the advantages of a new central cattle market : fairly considered*, published in 1850. The 1823 text covers standard animal concern ground and reiterates ideas about the low lifeforms at Smithfield. This includes the dirty business dealings, the crude men laboring there, the issues with alcohol, and the unsafe conditions of a writhing, stinking animal space. The 1850 text moves from these appeals to decency and public outrage to then make a clear, measured argument for what turns out to be the chosen alternative, a new “central” cattle market. In fact, the market that replaces Smithfield is further from the City Centre, not nearer, but in the context of slaughter reform, this centralization should be read as the mitigation of sprawling, unregulated sites of slaughter and distribution in the private abattoirs around the city.

The city’s argument to itself in Smithfield reform debates becomes, effectively, that a homogenized, regulated meat industry will solve the public health and quality concerns, silence the very vocal anti-cruelty groups by establishing animal “welfare” in the mechanized meat production industry, and soothe urban traffic congestion and population impaction issues around Smithfield. The butchers became a crucial, much-maligned stand-in for all of these aspects. The unregulated abattoirs were filthy and had no running water. Their dark basement locations, wretched air, and the terrible noises emanating from them fed an active urban imaginary and, thanks to the gruesome visible effluvia and withal from butchers’ abattoirs, did little to quell those concerns. The butchers, lumped in with drivers and others at Smithfield and in the vicinity, were the final abusers of the animals and, on top of it all, were often perceived as drunken killers with horrible tools and skills that eventually fed an active literary imagination. Butchers were terrifying, expert disassemblers of flesh with the equipment to do the best (worst) possible job of a killing. Again, their dark alley locations, and then their dark basement work spaces besides

that, did little to ease fears about insrutable, hard butchers. And finally, the butchers' numbers, and the growing difficulty for community members at Smithfield and in butchers' shops to get a firm sense of market supply and fair rates, went hand in hand with the general increase in commercial traffic through London. Similar to the mass produced confusion of the Penny Dreadful business discussed in parts of Chapter Three, meat itself had become a nonhuman object without animals and the butchers, with the rest of the Smithfield system, comprised a convoluted, anonymous, but decidedly untrustworthy group.

Another treatise title shows that the major concern regarding Smithfield begins at the end of the eighteenth century with animal concern as a mere backdrop. Retail, or Cutting Butchers, were already bearing the brunt of public displeasure with high meat prices and market complaints, and so they organized a repsonse in the form of parliamentary petitions that took on the whole practical economic structure of the market in an effort to shift blame to a broader target besides just themselves and, ostensibly, truly correct market woes that had made some aspects of the business less profitable and free than others: *An effectual cure for the high prices of butchers' meat : Smithfield Market, an essay: including a plan for the better regulation of drovers, the sale of live stock in the London Market, and for abolishing the trade of a wholesale butcher. With a reply to the report of the committee of wholesale butchers by Henry King and J. Edmunds. Mark now, how plain a tale shall put them down,* Sold by W. Bingley, Red Lion Passage, Fleet Street, 1796.

As discussed, meat prices were rising at rates similar to the bread prices that had led to widespread anger and resentment in the late eighteenth century. One curious aspect of Martin's arguments is that he represents the business interests of *other* businesses at Smithfield as a means of convincing his audience of his case. As mentioned, Kean discusses the general public disgust

at the market's live animal masses, including the resulting waste, noise, and slaughter residue, and notes that, in 1828, and Richard Martin circulates a petition to "establish an inquiry into the manner in which cattle were driven and the conditions in which they were kept at the market."¹⁸⁷

The petitioners also demanded investigation into the fact that local businessmen *not* in the meat trade were disturbed by the meat market's daily affairs, especially the noise. And local residents, particularly at night when the visible scene was diminished, "were prevented from sleeping 'as the dreadful blows inflicted on the cattle are distinctly heard in their bedrooms'."¹⁸⁸

In 1852 the Act formally removing the Smithfield Market from the heart of London, just outside the old London Wall border of City of London, proper, passed through Parliament and ushered in a decisive sea change in the human-animal community in London fueling much of the anti-cruelty sentiment. Kean surveys some periodicals of the day, but writers like Dickens and Thomas Hardy, as well as others, documented in their fiction that the city had become a dense association of animal noises, smells, and bodies in the same thoroughfares humans were crammed into.¹⁸⁹ The sounds of animals being driven to market or of horses being flogged in the street by cartmen and cabbies, all hallmark inclusions of the Parliamentary Acts against cruelty brought by Lord Erskine and others, completely overwhelmed Londoners while the problem of animal waste and offal in the slaughter and butchering process had become an entirely separate civic concern as more knowledge of hygiene and disease dictated the healthiest organization of

¹⁸⁷ Kean, p. 62.

¹⁸⁸ Kean, p. 62, and citing Mary Dawtrey's "Women as Food Reformers" from *Food Reform Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 3, January 1889, p. 134.

¹⁸⁹ See: Preece, Rod. *Animal Sensibility and Inclusive Justice in the Age of Bernard Shaw*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011, p. 123. Hardy also devised a biting representation of a deplorable "wifeselling" practice at Smithfield in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. See also Norman Page's Appendix on the matter, and his discussion of Hardy's Smithfield reactions, in Hardy, Thomas. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ed. Norman Page. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997, pp. 378-382.

city space and waste management. Epizootic research begins in fact in close relation to animal slaughter in Scotland, imported then to England.¹⁹⁰ There was also an intensive cemetery movement, discussed in Chapter Three, which led to the Magnificent Seven cemeteries being founded around the main London city expanse to deal with the problem of dead human body storage that came with the world's first urban industrial metropolis. The stories of dead bodies floating in the Thames and of new private funeral houses in London surely added to the city's growing identification with the horror of intersecting communities of living, dead, human, animal, and more.

ButchersAnimals: Improvable Subjects

In her history of Smithfield during the removal period, Metcalfe suggests that the debates and removal efforts followed a general "Victorian" trend toward a "religion of humanity," which she borrows from Gertrude Himmelfarb's 1968 *Victorian Minds*. The arguments coming before parliament against various forms of animal cruelty, including those practiced at Smithfield and forms of entertainment such as baiting, seem to support this view. The activism against high meat prices and monopoly were more instrumental in market removal than arguments about public health and common decency, but the "improvable subject" tones applied in the rhetoric of anti-cruelty measures, including those related to Smithfield Market, also inform claims cutting butchers made against other market agents who damaged the meat somehow. These butchers, as the petitions show, did not trust other parts of the Smithfield labor chain such as drovers and graziers, to properly manage the livestock en route. Butchers in the 1624 petition were also the

¹⁹⁰ Perren's works are superlative on many of these issues, and Derrick Rixson's *History of Meat Trading* is especially comprehensive, covering a vast history but also offering significant detail and a full section devoted to Smithfield, as well.

graziers. That petition sought to convince London not to impose grazing limits of thirty days upon the meat trade. The butchers were at least unified, at that time, in their opposition to regulation of their business, and their primary argument against the grazing limits was that the animals would lose weight due to the duration and the stresses of their travel. The petition also had language suggesting that the drovers might not have been as attentive to the livestock's food needs as they might have been.

By the 1795 petition, the butchers were further down the chain of purchase and exchange from the original rural animal sources. Drovers, graziers, and several different classes of butcher all dealt with the live animals and their eventual slaughter and sale. The arguments about Smithfield in the nineteenth century, including the butchers' petitions, had also begun to blame the ubiquitous middlemen of the trade. These were men who would purchase animals on one side of Smithfield and then re-sell them on the other side.¹⁹¹ Such agents, who had no skill besides price-driving, were part of the general trouble with price-fixing at Smithfield. The other serious charge levied by the butchers was about the seeming monopoly there, as previously discussed. Economic concerns led the charge in some significant portion of these foundational anti-cruelty laws. The decisive erasure of the basis of meat production—the living animal—from Smithfield Market, which remains to this day a *cut* meat market and which has seen technical advances including underground rail transport and refrigeration in the ensuing 160 years, ushers in the contemporary meat-consumer mode in no uncertain terms.

¹⁹¹ See: Metcalfe, "The Smithfield System in the Nineteenth Century: A Grand Complexus," in *Meat, Commerce and the City*, pp. 33-48.

Entrails: Meat Without Animals

The welfarist position on “humane” driving and slaughter technologies and the cellophane package of red that stands in for dead animal parts to the modern consumer carry on this erasive legacy, in which the disassembly of the animal into parts or even into new weird substances and entirely manufactured food consumption overtake prior modes of interspecies community. One such “weird” substance, previously mentioned, was the Liebig meat extract manufactured in Uruguay starting in the 1860’s. Justus von Liebig (1803-1873) was a German chemist known chiefly as the “father of fertilizer” for his work on Nitrogen-fixing in agriculture. But Liebig also devised a meat “extract” process whereby 30-35 lbs. of beef could be turned into roughly one pound of “essence,” as Richard Perren terms the product.¹⁹² One German history of the Liebig *Fleischextrakt* describes a *Brühe*, or broth, Liebig and his students made during the extraction experiments.¹⁹³ This was a soupy mixture that, after soaking meat in heated water, could be reduced to a sort of paste that was primarily meatstuff for those who could not afford actual meat. The problem was that producing the meat to reduce into meat “essence” was far too expensive in Europe to lead to a suitable product and cost for wide consumption—and von Liebig was indeed thinking in utilitarian terms. And so, production was exported to Uruguay. The product he invented, and his company, changed hands and names a few times, but one can still purchase Bovril Brand meat extract, perhaps most akin to what the U.S. consumer would know as beef bullion. The formula, however, is now a yeast extract instead of beef as of 2004. This raises all sorts of questions about the idea of meat the modern consumer is left with in the wake of the animal erasures in simply the “real” meat production. Liebig has another company

¹⁹² Perren, *Taste, Trade and Technology*, p. 46.

¹⁹³ Judel, Günther Klaus. *Die Geschichte von Liebigs Fleischextrakt: Zur populärsten Erfindung des berühmten Chemikers*. http://geb.uni-giessen.de/geb/volltexte/2004/1381/pdf/SdF-2003-1_2b.pdf, p. 7.

heritage as the OXO Company that, ingeniously, established its brand along the Thames via masonry when there were strict laws against riverside billboard and other advertising. That's the building on the right, in recent times, across from 30 St. Mary Axe ("The Gherkin"):

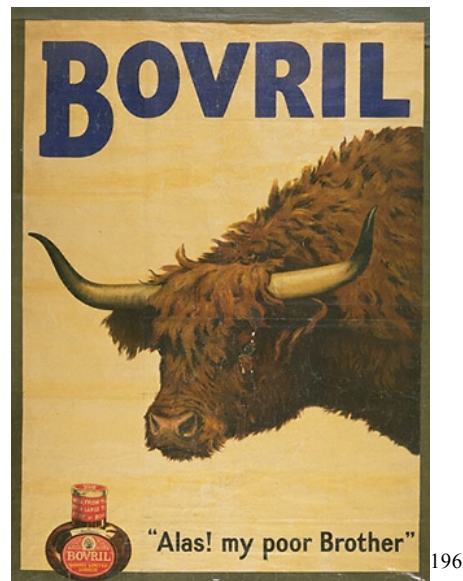


The distinctive container for Bovril has always had a rather bulbous profile, and Bovril advertisements from the late nineteenth century provide endless entertainment around the thinking they inspire on the question of dis-integrating the animal body to then incorporate it into the human body:

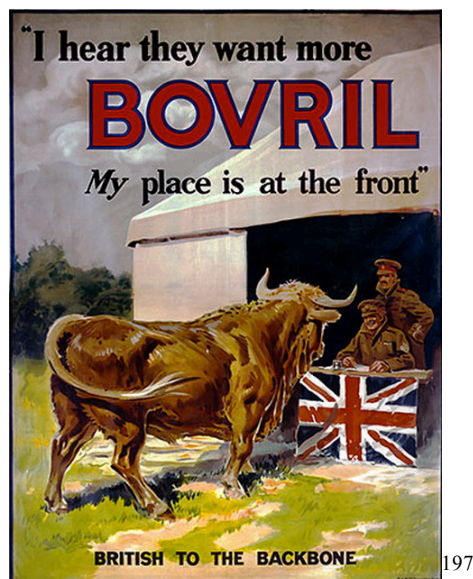


¹⁹⁴ Image source: <http://www.walklondon.com/london-walks/walk-london-images/the-queens-walk/oxo-tower-att1.jpg>

Other images from the Bovril heyday are more curiously ambiguous on all of the intersecting animal concerns, technological reductions and disintegrations, and themes of vitality and beastliness. The original advertising image invokes the “brother” of Coleridge’s “To a Young Ass” in a curious form of apostrophe:



Other examples make the ties between national pride, duty, and meat consumption quite clear:



¹⁹⁵ Image source: <http://www.retroandcollectables.co.uk/retro-steel-bovril-sign>

¹⁹⁶ In the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Image source: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/users/node/7181>

Whatever the animal concern was to accomplish in the period, its ultimate, most ubiquitous “product” has been the welfarist-industrial subjection of animal lives to a walking death. This erasure of life from the business of food production, or this invention of meat without animals, has a parallel history in the abjection of laboring classes from the “civilized” society Londoners—some Londoners, at least—saw themselves as. There is, in other words, a shared abjection yet again in England’s long nineteenth century (growing ever longer). This time, it is not a peasant poet and a trembling mouse unified in mutual suffering, but the killer and the killed themselves united in a classist, categorical urban ideal in response to the inability to “process” the Smithfield scene and on the wings of the sweeping economic-industrial interests of London’s upper classes.

The commemorative markers at Smithfield today include a replica of the things like the Worshipful Company of Poulters’ Arms:



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¹⁹⁷ Image source: <http://digitalpostercollection.com/propaganda/1914-1918-world-war-i/united-kingdom/i-hear-they-want-more-bovril-my-place-is-at-the-front/>

¹⁹⁸ Image source: photo by Ted Geier, October 7, 2013.

The commemorative bench on the Square off to the SE corner of the current cut meat market site, which has a large Victorian-era building dating to just after removal of the animal yards, is a writhing, postmodern reminder of the City's dense historical entanglements:



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On the bench are recognizable quotes from *Oliver Twist*, Fitz-Stephen, and the animal concern movement in London through the years, also staged to intersect in the barest suggestion of line and structure yet also juxtaposed along rhizomatic planes and vectors. Yet one is always sitting on the inscribed animal history of the place, as the quotes are not on the vertical axes:



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¹⁹⁹ Image source: photo by Ted Geier, October 7, 2013.



For the majority of consumers post-Smithfield, there is no animal in meat. In fact, this erasure began in London even earlier than the Smithfield removal. While, certainly, the majority of butchers' rows and the meat market itself were all within the relatively small but heavily trafficked City Centre, meat purchase did not itself have to take place in proximity to the massive Smithfield site. As Dickens's Expedition chapter in *Oliver Twist* neatly shows, Smithfield impresses itself upon all the senses but is but one moment of a traipse across nineteenth century London. And, as Dickens and Hardy, later also make clear, Smithfield is not really *Smithfield* unless it is market day. The spectacle of high animal traffic for market day is then not the routine animal encounter of the London denizen even in the Smithfield heyday. Instead, Smithfield was

²⁰⁰ Image source: photo by Ted Geier, October 7, 2013.

²⁰¹ Image source: photo by Ted Geier, October 7, 2013.

already a highly specialized spectacle. Nevertheless, a customer would still have gone to market to purchase some animal body part, as one still may. In the nineteenth century, however, meat canning or tinning became a standard method of preserving—not always successfully—meat for transport on, for example, British Navy expeditions.²⁰² Then there is the Liebig/Bovril Meat Extract “spread” of concentrated flesh on a piece of toast:



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The most gruesome aspect of London’s meat production was to have been the private basement abattoir, though at Smithfield commenters on the comparatively open-air killing stalls were no less disturbing. Here, butchers would kill the animals they had purchased live at Smithfield, for example. As Kean and others describe, the killings took place in darkness, with no running water or regular removal of prior offal in between. The animals, terrified and dying, would make horrible noises (these would be the primary noises of nighttime near Smithfield, for example) as they awaited and underwent their slaughter. The stench, particularly in summer, was total, permeating the abattoir and street spaces nearby. This “bad air” in butchers’ quarters

²⁰² This will also be briefly discussed in the context of meat fears and *Sweeney Todd* in Chapter Three.

²⁰³ Image source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bigshock/2952239782/>. Delicious.

immediately calls to mind the oppressive fog of Dickens' impoverished London and, worse yet, the crushing intensity of Kafka's bureaucratic miasma. The arguments for Smithfield's removal paralleled arguments for a new, more hygienic (not necessarily more humane) way to kill animals. However, the new Metropolitan Market at Islington that would replace the mass live animal market at Smithfield employed bureaucratic precision to new heights, in the process completely removing not only live animals and numerous hidden sites of slaughter from an impacted city center, but the very knowledge of and intimacy with the animals that became meat in the new London meat architecture. In effect, the successful movement to silence animal suffering in the city center and "clean up" slaughter's act produced a far worse horror: meat was a clean, portable, alien object all its own with no history as an animal and no prior object status in the human community. The animal had been completely abjected from the production of meat for mass consumption quite precisely because of how horrible the entire affair had become. It was perhaps the grandest lie the contemporary urban world ever managed to sell itself.

The particularly dreadful, horrifying nature of untrustworthy and possibly sinister food supplies—specific to meat products—went hand in hand with the intensive renovation of city center meat market and slaughter practices codified in the 1852 Smithfield Market Removal Act and the decline in private basement abattoirs as primary butchery sites after market sale of live animals and carcasses. And as the history of livestock management, meat production, and slaughter in London show, the butchers operating in those private spaces were vilified and attacked for problems such as high meat prices and strains on city land through the fattening of their animals (which arrived from outside the city). As independent, identifiable vendors the consuming public had its only contact with when acquiring meat stuffs, the butchers operating out of dark, secret basement spaces with untold contraptions and cutting implements made for a

particularly dense figure of public safety, health, and economic strife in the period. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the “Cutting Butchers,” also known as Retail Butchers, would petition parliament for a remedy to price-fixing at Smithfield because, in large part, they had been receiving such a landslide of public displeasure and aggression due to the very real high price of meat. Further, independent tradesmen associated with animal work, such as cabbies and butchers, would invariably be lumped together with drunk bear- and badger-baiting parties as the “lower” class of men responsible for the animal suffering Victorian era animal concern movements and Parliamentary debate highlighted in early animal rights laws. The butcher was an especially “lowly” professional who also was perceived to be depraved and potentially malignant. The sounds, smells, and unreliable meat quality the consuming public associated with its direct suppliers, the individual butchers, contributed to a picture of the basement killer and meat food producer dominated by the insidious horror of blank, inscrutable meat products like Sweeney Todd’s meat pies.

Smithfield Market in London was the site of spectacles like well-attended public executions and the Bartholomew Fair. Anxieties about untraceable meat sources and contamination at Smithfield inflected popular literature such as *Sweeny Todd*. On the eve of modern animal rights law, Smithfield Market removal from the City Centre of London and “advancements” in slaughter technique coalesced as a target of animal rights activism, producing increased, “efficient” livestock production, management, slaughter, and distribution. This gruesome irony was all part of shifts in the geographic and spatial conception of city space as the world’s first mass metropolis articulated itself. Victorian authors including Dickens were fascinated by the Smithfield “scene” (deemed the “system” among those in the meat trade) and by the broader biopolitical crisis of new urban experience Smithfield’s human-animal-waste-

consumption imbrications exemplified. By 1855, the Fair was ended and the live animals at Smithfield—along with their suffering—were erased from the City Centre and moved to an inscrutable, out of the way, “public” abattoir. Animal traffic was re-routed. Meat became a hygienic, “humanely” sourced object with no trace of the live animal on it. More animals could be killed, faster, more quietly, and thus modern meat was born hand-in-hand with modern urban space.

Chapter 3

Impossible London, Criminal Subjects, and the Horrors of Mass Production

There can be no doubt but that the love of money was the pre-dominant feeling in Sweeney Todd's intellectual organization and that, by the amount it would bring him, or the amount it would deprive him of, he measured everything.

With such a man, then, no question of morality or ordinary feeling could arise, and there can be no doubt but that he would quite willingly have sacrificed the whole human race, if, by doing so, he could have achieved any of the objects of his ambition.

And so on his road homeward, he probably made up his mind to plunge still deeper into criminality; and perchance to indulge in acts that a man not already so deeply versed in iniquity would have shrunk from with the most positive terror.

And by a strange style of reasoning, such men as Sweeney Todd reconcile themselves to the most heinous crimes upon the ground of what they call policy.²⁰⁴

London, with its ghastly horrors, is the main character across a sweeping literary arc from British Romantics and Poe's *Man of the Crowd*, through Dickens's works and the popular penny fictions produced in London's presses, as well as in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and later works. This lineage shows a recurring fascination with the mysterious, dark depths of the city's condensed streets and routines. These stories were also fed by a rich history of crime fiction—urban and rural—and owed a considerable debt to eighteenth-century nonfiction accounts of famous criminals executed in London like Jack Sheppard. This implicates one of the best-known figures to document Sheppard's feats and death, Daniel Defoe, in the tradition. Defoe also wrote on French murderers, culminating in one of the bloodiest tales available to the late nineteenth-century reader upon its re-issue. The foremost collector of Penny Bloods and Dreadfuls, Barry Ono, had a significant store of Defoe's bloody tales in his collection, now at the British Museum. Furthermore, the immediate precursor to the pennies, the Newgate novels published serially

²⁰⁴ Mack, Robert L., ed. *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 141.

alongside Dickens, had a similar fascination with figures, now becoming characters, like Sheppard.

This chapter will consider many of these bloody entrails, as well as at times the vital role of plagiarism and recycled material in the pennies, and also some of the specific shifts in literary entertainment production after the advent of steam press technology and an important reduction in paper prices near the beginning of the nineteenth century. All of this must furthermore be considered against rising literacy rates among the working class and the price-point that defines the genre of the Penny Blood or Dreadful in the first place: “price one penny.” The technical “reduction” of material, production, and distribution uncannily matches the meat industry while the low moral value of the pennies—their precursor, the Newgate novels, had been censored in fact—reminds of the prior legislative efforts to curb animal entertainments among the working classes. In all, the pennies reflect an abiding public interest in the gore of urban and foreign crime while amplifying the rampant, real fears coursing through the City’s veins and orifices at Smithfield and other sullied sites. The mass-produced object of public entertainment arrived full force in London at the time of the pennies, leading to important changes in the sense of a reading public and, furthermore, of its political agency in relation to mass literacy and a print culture responding to and motivating major legislative reform. While I will not deal at length with the full breadth of penny production, I will discuss the most famous example, the Sweeney Todd story, which imbricates all of the chapter’s concerns and the “meaty” contents of Chapter Two in an essential expression of my full project’s inquiry into nonhuman form and the London publics affected by, and affecting, that form.

In general, the question of literary value will be left aside as a concerted inquiry in this chapter. It is important to note, however, that the pennies, as shown in the quote from *Sweeney*

Todd that opens the chapter, worked on many of the same themes and moods as the “literary” works of the period. In fact, one line in the quoted passage above employs free indirect discourse with the “probably” speculation, and this mode will be the focus of much of my investigation of the works of Franz Kafka in Chapter Four. Kafka’s relationship to London would be difficult to establish, however, and so this chapter focuses on the intersections of London serial press production, London life and bloody murder, and the complicated relationship of literature that expressed an impossible, damning city experience to the unshakable need to document and interrogate that city. To begin, I will consider an American work that takes up the City of London as its charge.

The narrative mode of insecurity and speculation mentioned in *Sweeney Todd* melds seamlessly with the foregrounded problem in Edgar Allen Poe’s “Man of the Crowd,” in which Poe’s narrator watches a parade of new professional classes and then succumbs to the haunting distortions of the new gaslights in the city, following the city’s incessant activity through the visage of the inscrutable title character, who ultimately refuses to be followed in any manner that might produce understanding. “Man of the Crowd” presents the city as an inscrutable, constant assemblage of activity and objects akin to the depravity Wordsworth presented at Bartholomew Fair. The story opens with a quote from La Bruyère’s *The Characters of Man*, “Ce grand malheur, de ne pouvoir être seul.” The quote frames the eponymous main character of the story as an afflicted soul that cannot endure solitude amidst the thronging “sea” of “bobbing heads” in the city. La Bruyère’s great “Characters,” first published in France in 1688, was both beloved and widely criticized for its cynical outlook on human behaviors and social types that well known figures of the day thought to be based on themselves. The work fits neatly with the type

cataloguing and misanthropic philosophical commentary on the appearance and characteristics of people the narrator in “Man of the Crowd” observes.

The man of the crowd himself never stops moving and attaching himself to various groups in the story, and his great malady is his insatiable, *unsocial* sociability. He never talks to anyone, and no one but the narrator seems to notice him, yet he is constantly amidst others and only shows affectation when he risks being alone at one point in the story. He quickly finds another group to join, and the narrator notes that the man is relieved. The narrator’s description of the man is not relegated to behavior and the final word on his identity—“the type and genius of deep crime.”²⁰⁵ But the narrator also marks that the man cannot be read, and that it will be fruitless to follow him further about the city. Nevertheless, the narrator gives clear information on the man of the crowd at one point before concluding the inscrutability of his object:

I had now a good opportunity of examining his person. He was short in stature, very thin, and apparently very feeble. His clothes, generally, were filthy and ragged; but as he came, now and then, within the strong glare of a lamp, I perceived that his linen, although dirty, was of beautiful texture; and my vision deceived me, or, through a rent in a closely buttoned and evidently second-handed roquelaire which enveloped him, I caught a glimpse both of a diamond and of a dagger. These observations heightened my curiosity, and I resolved to follow the stranger whithersoever he should go.²⁰⁶

The clothing marks the man as either wealthy himself at some point or, as the dagger may suggest, a criminal who acquired high-end goods in a prior offense. The “second-handed” item complicates matters further, perhaps even suggesting charity house donations or, worse yet, grave-robbing. Poe here, with the roquelaire and high quality fabric, includes the harbinger of fashion, one of the hallmarks of London fiction through the middle and later part of the nineteenth century. At the very least, Poe invokes goods consumption as a marker of status,

²⁰⁵ Poe, Edgar Allen. “The Man of the Crowd,” in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allen Poe*. New York: The Modern Library, 1938, p. 481.

²⁰⁶ Poe, “Man of the Crowd,” p. 479.

occupation, and “character” in line with the lists of people and their appearance that populate the earlier part of the story. But the general state of disrepair the man has fallen into, even with luxury markers of possible status that so intrigue the narrator, builds a more convoluted, layered story of the man’s identity and standing. He may be a criminal; perhaps he is a senile royal. He has no clear occupation to attend to, and he apparently does not need to—or at any rate, he does not—worry about the state of his attire despite its fine traces. He is weak and small, and yet he has some cunning and swiftness given his undetected, asocial, yet constant association with others. The man himself, in the narrator’s ultimate surrender to illegibility, is given up as a calculable and categorized object. And this most unknowable, inscrutable, contradictory and confounding object is relegated to the grossest, deepest criminal ranks in the narrator’s final, authoritative word on the matter.

The inscrutability of the man denotes an aesthetic failure of the observer-narrator on one level, albeit not a failure of experience or reception. The failure is more an acknowledged reflective impossibility despite the narrator’s “verdict” on the man of the crowd. The narrator perceives the man’s behavior and, in response to the uncertainty and trepidation the man’s behavior seems to produce in the narrator, he assigns the man the category: criminal. The story thus plays on the limited comprehension and address at the heart of Romantic concern in the works examined in Chapter One and produces an unreliable, or perhaps outright untrustworthy, arbiter of the social scene. The London space presented is a work-a-day drudgery of repetitious office forms, conformist and claustrophobic street traffic (pedestrian human traffic alone), and finally a weird, unsettling night-space of gin-soaked depravity and “organized,” categorical city crime.

In the story, gas lighting opens the man of the crowd up briefly to the narrator's impulse to inventory. This, with the other observed behaviors of the man, is the basis for the narrator's speculation on his identity. And by the story's end, the man's resistance as a calculable object/character seems to found the narrator's assertion that the man of the crowd is a gross, deep horror of the city space. This is not the only time gas lighting figures in the story's interplay of observation, speculation, and horror:

[T]he rays of the gas-lamps, feeble at first in their struggle with the dying day, had now at length gained ascendancy, and threw over every thing a fitful and garish lustre. All was dark yet splendid-as that ebony to which has been likened the style of Tertullian.

The wild effects of the light enchained me to an examination of individual faces; and although the rapidity with which the world of light flitted before the window prevented me from casting more than a glance upon each visage, still it seemed that, in my then peculiar mental state, I could frequently read, even in that brief interval of a glance, the history of long years.²⁰⁷

The city is not a space filled with people and things, partially illuminated here and there so the basically reliable status of everyone and everything can be confirmed now and then. Instead, the city is precisely these affectations and the blank, illegible nonpresence that barely grazes the observations and speculations of its neurotic abjects. Bringing things into the weird, toxic light of the city only makes matters worse:

It was the most noisome quarter of London, where every thing wore the worst impress of the most deplorable poverty, and of the most desperate crime. By the dim light of an accidental lamp, tall, antique, worm-eaten, wooden tenements were seen tottering to their fall, in directions so many and capricious, that scarce the semblance of a passage was discernible between them. The paving-stones lay at random, displaced from their beds by the rankly-growing grass. Horrible filth festered in the dammed-up gutters. The whole atmosphere teemed with desolation. Yet, as we proceeded, the sounds of human life revived by sure degrees, and at length large bands of the most abandoned of a London populace were seen reeling to and fro. The spirits of the old man again flickered up, as a lamp which is near its death-hour. Once more he strode onward with elastic tread. Suddenly a corner was turned, a blaze of light burst upon our sight, and we stood before

²⁰⁷ Poe, "The Man of the Crowd," p. 478.

one of the huge suburban temples of Intemperance- one of the palaces of the fiend, Gin.²⁰⁸

The gas lighting indicates the city's development. The nocturnal activity in the story is both enabled and distorted by the play of the gas lighting and the dark spaces it does not penetrate. London has become a sleepless center of activity personified by the man of the crowd, who cannot stop moving and must always be with (though not in communication with) others. And yet, like the city partially and inconclusively illuminated by gas lighting, the man cannot be identified as readily by the narrator as the various working groups listed in the first part of the story. Not a lawyer, military man or dandy, or other category, the man of the crowd resists attempts to read him (er last sich nicht lessen, in the German Poe opens the story with).²⁰⁹

Gas lighting was developed and implemented in Britain in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The Westminster Bridge had lights installed in 1813, and gas lighting was used widely throughout London within ten years. By 1840, the publication year of "The Man of The Crowd," gas lighting would have been more or less pervasive in New York, where Poe had lived, Baltimore, where he lived in 1840, and London, the story's setting.²¹⁰ And in 1815, when the young Poe moved to London for what would be five years with his foster parents, the lighting would have been a sensational attraction, having been introduced in 1807.²¹¹ Although Poe did not move to Baltimore until 1835, the town had been an early site of gas lighting installations in

²⁰⁸ Poe, "The Man of the Crowd," p. 481.

²⁰⁹ Poe, "The Man of the Crowd," p. 475.

²¹⁰ Night shopping and, reminiscent of the "browsing" from inside one space to the outside, window shopping were new, popular pastimes in the early reign of Victoria as gas lighting made the London city space at night accessible in new ways. See: Nead, Lynda. *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. See in particular Part II, "Gas and Light," pp. 83-148.

²¹¹ See: Tomory, Leslie. *Progressive Enlightenment: The Origins of the Gaslight Industry, 1780-1820*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2012.

the U.S. in 1816.²¹² Adding further intrigue, some hypotheses on Poe's death blame carbon monoxide and prolonged heavy metal exposure from gas lighting for health maladies Poe and his wife Virginia suffered. Some have interpreted his descriptions of those maladies in his letters, as well as his peculiar facial features in photographs from his later life, as signs that Poe was suffering from the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning due to gas lighting.²¹³

Despite its toxicity, gas might have been a sort of salvation for land animals were there not evermore demand for meat, leather, and other animal-based goods in the city. The tallow that used to be crucial for candle production was gradually phased out even before gas lighting arrived. The city of London used to have mandatory lighting of city streets in some areas, and candles were used before gas lighting and, now, electric lighting. Candle manufacture relied increasingly on paraffin by the seventeenth century. The other source that overtook tallow for candle making was of course whale spermaceti, also used in pharmaceutical and other applications. Cows and sheep were spared the candle-makers rendering, replaced by the whale. Truthfully, whale-hunting took a much larger toll on whale populations in the twentieth century, but the daily reliance on whale spermaceti in the nineteenth century was so ingrained in the public consciousness that burgeoning petroleum use (another post-animal application) led to

²¹² Beadenkopf, George. "The Centenary of the Introduction of Gas in Baltimore," in *The Baltimore Gas and Electric News*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (June, 1916), p. 243.

²¹³ Mackowiak, Philip A., MD. *Postmortem: Solving Histories Great Medical Mysteries*. Philadelphia: American College of Physicians, 2007, p. 251.

responses like this 1861 cartoon in *Vanity Fair*:



And even though tallow use in candle production abated in the nineteenth century moment Poe and British authors were writing on the horrors of urban space, another product required the animal fat in mass quantities: soap.²¹⁵

Poe's narrator catalogues all of the passers-by from a coffee house perch. He looks through a "smoky" windowpane and assigns everyone their occupation while describing their foibles and gaits. The descriptions of behavior and apparent mood or preoccupation serve as the bases for the occupation and character assessments. Yet the narrator notes the intense pace of his own reading practice, as "the rapidity with which the world of light flitted by" precludes sustained observation. The narrator's reading is like the brief, sensational news lines he is

²¹⁴ *Vanity Fair*, April 1861. See also: Dolin, Eric Jay. *Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America*. New York: Norton, 2008, pp. 335-341. And: Black, Brian. *Petrolia: The Landscape of America's First Oil Boom*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000, pp. 17-18.

²¹⁵ In a typically scandalous irony attending the Smithfield reforms, the nineteenth-century soap boiler's works comprised a particularly noxious site of stink, effluvia, and public health threats. See: Metcalfe, *Meat, Commerce, and the City*, pp. 99-103.

reading on the paper mentioned early in the story. Periodicals, like window-shopping (in the reverse in this case), capitalize on rapid intensity and flashy plays upon rapt consuming agents, but they cannot be expected to withstand longer consideration if the impulse to buy is not immediately satiated. The narrator (who is a reader) has a sales job in the story. The narrator must make convincing, pithy, but snap judgments on passers-by. The brief categorization that follows must be decisive, final, and total; base types of the city are the story's product. And yet this is of course its own affliction, and the lamp light is perhaps the best clue to the city's general subjection of people and lives to types and surface characteristics.

Poe's narrator even invokes the physiognomy of Retzch, casting the man of the crowd as the superlative epitome of the fiend and saying that Retzch would have preferred this face to his own depictions.²¹⁶ The man of the crowd is an excessively representative case of the urban horror, the arch and inscrutable criminal named all the same as, precisely, the abject limit to both civil conduct and civil calculation. It does not permit itself to be read except as that unreadability, and unreadability is the grossest horror and the deepest criminality. Poe's narrator is disgusted with all sorts, even the "decent" day laborers observed in the story, and this anonymous facelessness fits as well the de-individuated business classes as the hyper-individuated but indistinguishable man of the crowd. The city is legible by the lighting and organized passage ways the narrator catalogues, and its denizens are classifiable objects, as well, but the constant contact and imperative to observe and recognize becomes the city itself for the narrator. The identification game played with the others in the story does not satisfy the narrator, and seems in fact only to irritate the existing condition of needing to classify and judge everyone.

²¹⁶ See: Retzsch, Morris. *Retzch's Series of Twenty-Six Outlines, Illustrative of Goethe's Tragedy of Faust*. London: Boosey and Sons, 1820. Referenced in Poe, "The Man of the Crowd," p. 478. Poe apparently misspells Retzsch's name, but then so did editions of Retzsch's work printed during his lifetime.

People deemed “decent” are merely “deskish,” and here Poe’s narrator suggests that the bursting business class in the nineteenth century, facilitated by the lights and comprising the writhing, teeming mass of human traffic the city has become, is an unsettlingly simple-to-define monstrosity.²¹⁷

The sheer mundaneness of London’s incessant existence is its darkest horror. This mundane, deskish horror immediately recalls another American example, Herman Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener.” Bartleby famously declares “I would prefer not to” whenever prompted to perform a basic task in what seems a standard office setting. The story escalates, the narrator growing more and more furious at Bartleby’s immovability. The story also highlights the frustrated effort to install order and industry in the daily activity of laborers in a city space wholly devoted to business—Manhattan instead of the London thoroughfares around the business district, in this case. Giorgio Agamben, following after Gilles Deleuze in taking up the story as a philosophical byway, writes that, as

a scribe who has stopped writing, Bartleby is the extreme figure of the Nothing from which all creation derives; and at the same time, he constitutes the most implacable vindication of this Nothing as pure, absolute potentiality. The scrivener has become the writing tablet; he is now nothing other than his white sheet. It is not surprising, therefore, that he dwells so obstinately in the abyss of potentiality and does not seem to have the slightest inclination of leaving it.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Besides the nineteenth-century renditions, London as monstrosity dominates accounts of the city in the eighteenth century, too. Daniel Defoe stands in as the voice of London here once again, calling it “this great and monstrous thing.” See further: White, Jerry. *A Great and Monstrous Thing: London in the Eighteenth Century*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2013.

²¹⁸ Agamben, Giorgio. “Bartleby, or On Contingency,” in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. & trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 253. See also: Deleuze, Gilles. “Bartleby; Or, The Formula,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 68-90.

Melville's tale is worth considering in relation to the London works, and perhaps especially in relation to the Fleet Street environs of *Sweeney Todd* yet parrying off of Dickens's chosen settings away from the high society and financial developments in London.

The full title of the Bartleby story is "Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street." Like the man of the crowd, Bartleby is impossible to "read," and the narrator presents him in far less developed form than he does his other two scriveners, Nippers and Turkey. Of the latter and his coat, the narrator says:

One winter day I presented Turkey with a highly-respectable looking coat of my own, a padded gray coat, of a most comfortable warmth, and which buttoned straight up from the knee to the neck. I thought Turkey would appreciate the favor, and abate his rashness and obstreperousness of afternoons. But no. I verily believe that buttoning himself up in so downy and blanket-like a coat had a pernicious effect upon him; upon the same principle that too much oats are bad for horses. In fact, precisely as a rash, restive horse is said to feel his oats, so Turkey felt his coat. It made him insolent. He was a man whom prosperity harmed.²¹⁹

Of Nippers:

In short, the truth of the matter was, Nippers knew not what he wanted. Or, if he wanted any thing, it was to be rid of a scrivener's table altogether. Among the manifestations of his diseased ambition was a fondness he had for receiving visits from certain ambiguous-looking fellows in seedy coats, whom he called his clients. Indeed I was aware that not only was he, at times, considerable of a ward-politician, but he occasionally did a little business at the Justices' courts, and was not unknown on the steps of the Tombs.²²⁰

On the other hand, the character ("figure") Bartleby arrives already foreshadowing, in his stasis and his "forlorn" comportment, some of the later narrative events he will motivate:

Now my original business—that of a conveyancer and title hunter, and drawer-up of recondite documents of all sorts—was considerably increased by receiving the master's office. There was now great work for scriveners. Not only must I push the clerks already with me, but I must have additional help. In answer to my advertisement, a motionless young man one morning, stood upon my office threshold, the door being open, for it was

²¹⁹ Melville, Herman. "Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street," <http://www.bartleby.com/129/>, par. 11.

²²⁰ Melville, par. 11.

summer. I can see that figure now—pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn! It was Bartleby.²²¹

This is a retrospective account by the narrator, and yet the firmest speculation on Bartleby's attitude is merely the "forlorn" countenance. The narrator is immediately pleased to have found an employee "of so singularly sedate and aspect."²²² This comportment is, however, merely a professional attribute:

It is, of course, an indispensable part of a scrivener's business to verify the accuracy of his copy, word by word. Where there are two or more scribes in an office, they assist each other in this examination, one reading from the copy, the other holding the original. It is a very dull, wearisome, and lethargic affair. I can readily imagine that to some sanguine temperaments it would be altogether intolerable. For example, I cannot credit that the mettlesome poet Byron would have contentedly sat down with Bartleby to examine a law document of, say five hundred pages, closely written in a crimped hand.²²³

After an early period of incredible productivity, Bartleby begins to resist assignments with the infamous "I would prefer not to." When the narrator asks "Why do you refuse?" the answer is the same as to any request of service: "I would prefer not to."²²⁴ Throughout, the familiarity and perfunctory *function* of the social structure of the office—Turkey and Nippers, and the third employee who preceded Bartleby's arrival, the lad Ginger Nut, all fitting in, in proper form—sustains against Bartleby's inscrutable exception to the social rule:

"Turkey," said I, "what do you think of this? Am I not right?"

"With submission, sir," said Turkey, with his blandest tone, "I think that you are."

"Nippers," said I, "what do *you* think of it?"

"I think I should kick him out of the office."

(The reader of nice perceptions will here perceive that, it being morning, Turkey's answer is couched in polite and tranquil terms, but Nippers replies in ill-tempered ones. Or, to repeat a previous sentence, Nippers's ugly mood was on duty, and Turkey's off.)

"Ginger Nut," said I, willing to enlist the smallest suffrage in my behalf, "what do *you* think of it?"

"I think, sir, he's a little *lunny*," replied Ginger Nut, with a grin.

²²¹ Melville, par. 15.

²²² Melville, par. 16.

²²³ Melville, par. 19.

²²⁴ Melville, pars. 33-34.

“You hear what they say,” said I, turning towards the screen, “come forth and do your duty.”

But he vouchsafed no reply.²²⁵

Bartleby’s passiveness, his “mulishness,” irritates and vexes the narrator, whose official industry is as passive and as rote but for the one fact of Bartleby’s agency he *cannot* match: Bartleby’s refusal, and his very refusal to actively refuse, violate the ethic of the office place and his docile resistance contaminates the office space.

The narrator makes numerous attempts to order and coerce Bartleby into action, all to no avail and producing occasional philosophizing on the reasonable behavior of human “creatures.”²²⁶ Curiously, despite the seeming inaction of Bartleby and the narrator’s expectation of a controlled, disciplined (if routinely automatic) office space, the narrator loses track of the keys to the offices of law:

Here it must be said, that according to the custom of most legal gentlemen occupying chambers in densely-populated law buildings, there were several keys to my door. One was kept by a woman residing in the attic, which person weekly scrubbed and daily swept and dusted my apartments. Another was kept by Turkey for convenience sake. The third I sometimes carried in my own pocket. The fourth I knew not who had.²²⁷

Bartleby of course has the key and is living in the office, which the narrator soon discovers. There are several more rounds of the infuriating business of asking Bartleby questions and receiving only the “I would prefer not to” answers. Bartleby wiles away days in “dead wall reveries” while the community of active staff members grow increasingly agitated and derisive toward Bartleby in their private office small talk.²²⁸ In the final irony of power in the story, Bartleby refuses to quit or be moved, and the narrator moves the entire office except for the passive scrivener:

²²⁵ Melville, pars. 41-49.

²²⁶ Melville, par. 84.

²²⁷ Melville, par. 85.

²²⁸ Melville, par. 166.

Then something severe, something unusual must be done. What! surely you will not have him collared by a constable, and commit his innocent pallor to the common jail? And upon what ground could you procure such a thing to be done?—a vagrant, is he? What! he a vagrant, a wanderer, who refuses to budge? It is because he will *not* be a vagrant, then, that you seek to count him *as* a vagrant. That is too absurd. No visible means of support: there I have him. Wrong again: for indubitably he *does* support himself, and that is the only unanswerable proof that any man can show of his possessing the means so to do. No more then. Since he will not quit me, I must quit him. I will change my offices; I will move elsewhere; and give him fair notice, that if I find him on my new premises I will then proceed against him as a common trespasser.

Acting accordingly, next day I thus addressed him: “I find these chambers too far from the City Hall; the air is unwholesome. In a word, I propose to remove my offices next week, and shall no longer require your services. I tell you this now, in order that you may seek another place.”

He made no reply, and nothing more was said.²²⁹

There is first the business of calling the authorities to arrest Bartleby for vagrancy. In the British context, this parallels the issue of public assembly and, more in line with Bartleby’s “symptoms,” with malingering, for example, by “motiveless” late-century asylum patients lacking in any useful occupation.²³⁰ The asylum at the heart of much of the action in Stoker’s *Dracula* should also come to mind here, and while “Bartleby” is written a bit before the true boom in psychoanalysis and sanatoria, already the troublesome signs of modern office and urban affect are on display here in Melville’s text. The crisis of occupation the narrator exhibits is parallel, in turn, to the efforts to “improve” the masses in England in the same period.²³¹ Next, the narrator expresses, really, two problems as one: 1. The location is too far from the seat of

²²⁹ Melville, pars. 172-174.

²³⁰ See, for example: Chaney, Sarah. “Useful members of society or motiveless malingerers? Occupation and self-injury in late nineteenth-century British asylum psychiatry,” paper presented at *Therapy and Empowerment – Coercion and Punishment: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Labour and Occupational Therapy*, 26–27 June 2013, St. Anne’s College, Oxford.

²³¹ Not to be confused with social concern and resistance to the “improving” classes attempting to discipline the unruly, threatening working masses. See: Engels, Friedrich. *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, ed. David McLellan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

industry at City Hall, and 2. The air is “unwholesome.” As I will discuss in Chapter Four, the issue of “bad air” seeps into two representative legal fictions of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Dickens’s *Bleak House* and Kafka’s *The Trial*. “Bad air” and bad water had become real ecological concerns in London and numerous other industrial cities using massive amounts of coal and other fuels.²³² Here, however, the conflation of *unwholesome* air and city location reflect the city space as a disciplinary regime, wherein the expectations of central industry work automatically and Bartleby, who refuses all manner of alternative occupation offered by the narrator before this counter-eviction, is the abjected docile body. “Either you must do something,” the narrator says, “or something must be done to you.”²³³

It is at this moment that Bartleby voices a different response, no longer a refusal or a vital character’s passivity but an empty figure’s homogenous alienation: “I am not particular.”²³⁴ Bartleby from there is imprisoned, does not eat, and wastes away—Melville writes “I saw the wasted Bartleby.”²³⁵ And finally: “‘Lives without dining,’ said I, and closed the eyes.”²³⁶ The story closes with a “report” the narrator cannot verify—a rumor, nothing more—of Bartleby’s prior occupation:

The report was this: that Bartleby had been a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington, from which he had been suddenly removed by a change in the

²³² There is no shortage of discussion on the Romantics’ sense of ecological damage, for example. Among the representative commentaries on specific literary works responding to coal pollution, deforestation, and other concerns, see: Bate, Jonathan. *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. London: Routledge, 1991; Hutchings, Kevin. “Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies,” in *Literature Compass* Vol. 4, No. 1 (2007), pp. 172-202; McKusick, James C. *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000; McKusick, James C. “Ecology,” in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Nicholas Roe. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 199-218; and Morton, Timothy. “Environmentalism,” in Roe, *Romanticism*, pp. 696-707.

²³³ Melville, par. 197.

²³⁴ Melville, par. 200, and repeated thereafter.

²³⁵ Melville, par. 245.

²³⁶ Melville, par. 247.

administration. When I think over this rumor, I cannot adequately express the emotions which seize me. Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men? Conceive a man by nature and misfortune prone to a pallid hopelessness, can any business seem more fitted to heighten it than that of continually handling these dead letters and assorting them for the flames? For by the cart-load they are annually burned. Sometimes from out the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring—the finger it was meant for, perhaps, moulders in the grave; a bank-note sent in swiftest charity:—he whom it would relieve, nor eats nor hungers any more; pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities. On errands of life, these letters speed to death.

Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!²³⁷

The notion of dead letters being dead men is of course the story's final verdict on "official business," and the narrator's continued life is rendered something less than the concept ought to imply. This is Agamben's critique of the story, in part, albeit his interest in the philosophical shape of "potentiality" and of dormancy is stronger than my own in this case; Bartleby and the narrator, as well as the three co-workers, share in the "administrative" potential implied through Bartleby's relocation. That this relocation was among his last is incidental, and furthermore, there is no clear sense that the narrator hadn't also relocated more than once. The narrator's subservience to the bureaucratic life is so total that Bartleby's resistance to the mode is alien to him and earns his office's reproach. None of them are particular, or particular people—particular is both adjective to the would-be subjects and preference, grammatically still the adjective. Were there an indefinite article, "a particular" could be an individuation. This, again, is likely part of Agamben's fascination with the story, but beyond the grammatical particulars, the narrators apostrophic throwing-up-of-hands to close can only be an insincere "accounting" of the burnt humans at stake in the office space. Manhattan, like London, is the centripetal interpellator. Move to the center, impelled by business, and survive or don't. Those are the only rules of the game suggested by Bartleby, a further extrapolation of the Poe tale with one key shift: the

²³⁷ Melville, par. 250-251.

exceptional—those abjected from the norm even in radical sociality like the Man of the Crowd—are deemed criminals in Poe.

Before turning back to the criminality in the pennies and the Defoe and Newgate Calendar accounts that preceded them, I would like to address the classic London novelist of social concern and urban transformation, Charles Dickens. Dickens's *Oliver Twist* is concerned directly with the criminal element around Smithfield and throughout London, and the book suggests makes direct mention of Smithfield in the "Expedition" chapter preceding the burglary. But in between these glaring examples of London Smithfield crime connections are multiple instances of Oliver and others associating with animals—or having their behavior and appearance associated with animals and other nonhumans. Dickens thus builds a similar sense of the interspecies, mutual abjection the Romantic poets discussed in Chapter One did. And in a preview of Chapter Four's discussion of the confusing, foggy London in *Bleak House*, Oliver is born in Mudfog, a fictional town that is perhaps prophetic for the Dickens London-scape: fog and mire constantly attend the confusion and ambiguity of *Bleak House*, as well.

When the unscrupulous Fagin takes Oliver in, he relates to him a story of a previous ward in Oliver's condition who had ratted Fagin out to the police but, in some turn of events, ended up the one hung after a trial at Old Bailey's.²³⁸ Fagin describes the hanging in gruesome detail to make an impression on Oliver. This will prove to be prophetic of Fagin's own hanging, which I will discuss in relation to Dickens's views on public hangings in the period. Oliver, stuck in his room awaiting his captors' return, becomes part of a tremulous band of creatures in the dirty, squalid quarters:

Spiders had built their webs in the angles of the walls and ceiling; and sometimes, when Oliver walked softly into a room, the mice would scamper across the

²³⁸ Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004, p. 162.

floor, and run back terrified to their holes. With these exceptions, there was neither sight nor sound of any living thing; and often, when it grew dark, and he was tired of wandering from room to room, he would crouch in the corner of the passage by the street-door, to be as near living people as he could; and would remain there, listening and counting the hours, until the Jew or the boys returned.²³⁹

Oliver is beholden to the gang throughout the story, but he is not purely naïve, as evidenced when the Dodger asks Oliver what a prig is, assuming he won't know. Oliver catches himself after starting off "It's a th--; you're one, are you not?" As part of the Dodger's response, an unfortunate dog is employed in the standard anthropomorphic commentary on human behaviors, thereby normalizing the criminality in question (a prig is a thief) while establishing the multispecies openness of the criminal ranks:

"I am," repeated the dodger. "So's Charley. So's Fagin. So's Sikes. So's Nancy. So's Bet. So we all are, down to the dog. And he's the downiest of the lot!"

"And the least given to preaching," added Charley Bates.

"He wouldn't so much as bark in a witness-box, for fear of committing himself; no, not if you tied him up in one, and left him there without wittles for a fortnight, said the Dodger."

"Not a bit of it," observed Charley.

"He's a rum dog. Don't he look fierce at any strange cove that laughs or sings when he's in company!" pursued the Dodger. "Won't he growl at all, when he hears a fiddle playing! And don't he hate other dogs as ain't of his breed! Oh no!"

"He's an out-and-out Christian," said Charley.

This was merely intended as a tribute to the animal's abilities, but it was an appropriate remark in another sense, if Master Bates had only known it; for there are a good many ladies and gentlemen, claiming to be out-and-out Christians, between whom, and Mr. Sikes's dog, there exist strong and singular points of resemblance.²⁴⁰

The animal similarities here are intended not as a positive consubstantiality, however, but as a diminution of the humans in question. Dickens's inventory of depravity, inhuman poverty, and an intractable, impossible London city space is thickly staged in the novel:

Beguiling the time with these pleasant reflections, Mr. Fagin wended his way, through mud and mire, to his gloomy abode: where the Dodger was sitting up, impatiently awaiting his return.

²³⁹ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 164.

²⁴⁰ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 166.

“Is Oliver a-bed? I want to speak with him,” was his first remark as they descended the stairs.

“Hours ago,” replied the Dodger, throwing open the door. “Here he is!”

The boy was lying, fast asleep, on a rude bed upon the floor; so pale with anxiety, and sadness, and the closeness of his prison, that he looked death; not death as it shows in shroud and coffin, but in the guise it wears when life has just departed; when a young and gentle spirit has, but an instant, fled to Heaven, and the gross air of the world has not had time to breathe upon the changing dust it hallowed.

“Not now,” said the Jew, turning softly away. “T-morrow. To-morrow.”²⁴¹

This sense of deferral persists throughout the novel, until Oliver is eventually freed by external forces. Until the resolution of his imprisonment with the gang—a mobile imprisonment of labor and abetting—Oliver is equipment to the gang, employed in various menial support roles.

In a transformative passage, Oliver recognizes his own subjection while reading, of all things, a gory, bloody account of famous criminals as would have been popular, whatever point in the nineteenth century Dickens set the story and wrote it in:

Oliver leaned his head upon his hand when the old man disappeared, and pondered, with a trembling heart, on the words he had just heard. The more he thought of the Jew’s admonition, the more he was at a loss to divine its real purpose and meaning. He could think of no bad object to be attained by sending him to Sikes, which would not be equally well answered by his remaining with Fagin; and after meditating for a long time, concluded that he had been selected to perform some ordinary menial offices for the house-breaker, until another boy, better suited for his purpose, could be engaged. He was too well accustomed to suffering, and had suffered too much where he was, to bewail the prospect of change very seriously. He remained lost in thought for some minutes; and then, with a heavy sigh, snuffed the candle, and, taking up the book which the Jew had left with him, began to read.

He turned over the leaves. Carelessly at first; but, lighting on a passage which attracted his attention, he soon became intent upon the volume. It was a history of the lives and trials of great criminals; and the pages were soiled and thumbed with use. Here, he read of dreadful crimes that made the blood run cold; of secret murders that had been committed by the lonely wayside; of bodies hidden from the eye of man in deep pits and wells; which would not keep them down, deep as they were, but had yielded them up at last, after many years, and so maddened the murderers with the sight, that in their horror they had confessed their guilt, and yelled for the gibbet to end their agony. Here, too, he read of men who, lying in their beds at dead of night, had been tempted (so they said) and led on, by their own bad thoughts, to such dreadful bloodshed as it made the flesh creep, and the limbs quail, to think of. The terrible descriptions were so real and vivid, that the

²⁴¹ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 179.

sallow pages seemed to turn red with gore; and the words upon them, to be sounded in his ears, as if they were whispered, in hollow murmurs, by the spirits of the dead.

In a paroxysm of fear, the boy closed the book, and thrust it from him. Then, falling to his knees, he prayed Heaven to spare him from such deeds; and rather to will that he should die at once, than be reserved for crimes, so fearful and appalling. By degrees, he grew more calm, and besought, in a low and broken voice, that he might be rescued from his present dangers; and that if any aid were to be raised up for a poor outcast boy who had never known the love of friends or kindred, it might come to him now, when, desolate and deserted, he stood alone in the midst of wickedness and guilt.²⁴²

The trouble for Oliver, as for multiple London characters in the works being considered in this chapter, is seeing his way “clear” of the precarious criminal existence he is subjected while his character or soul is preserved in its good will. On the night of the burglary, when Oliver’s fate as innocent or criminal is potentially in the balance, Dickens makes London the dangerous, criminal antagonist via obfuscation and confusion:

It was now intensely dark. The fog was much heavier than it had been in the early part of the night; and the atmosphere was so damp, that, although no rain fell, Oliver’s hair and eyebrows, within a few minutes after leaving the house, had become stiff with the half-frozen moisture that was floating about. They crossed the bridge and kept on towards the lights which they had seen before.²⁴³

The noun choice for Oliver’s status in the crime achieves its object while the ironic “dark lantern” with which to accomplish the deed violently illuminates matters:

“Now listen, you young limb,” whispered Sikes, drawing a dark lantern from his pocket, and throwing the full glare on Oliver’s face; “I’m a going to put you through there. Take this light: go softly up the steps straight afore you, and along the little hall, to the street door; unfasten it, and let us in.”²⁴⁴

Object is not bad enough, however, and Oliver’s suspended vitality punctuates the sudden visibility and legibility of the scene; Sikes has Oliver at gunpoint:

“Take this lantern,” said Sikes, looking into the room. “You see the stairs afore you?”

²⁴² Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, pp. 181-182.

²⁴³ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 196.

²⁴⁴ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 198.

Oliver, more dead than alive, gasped out “Yes.” Sikes, pointing to the street-door with the pistol barrel, briefly advised him to take notice that he was within shot all the way; and that if he faltered, he would fall dead that instant.²⁴⁵

Oliver is shot, not by Sikes but by the residents of the house, who then turn out to be his safe harbor when he returns to the front door of the house, in his worsened state, later that night. He had intended to dart up the stairs to warn them but dropped the horrible light and alerted them to the burglary. The Dodger and Toby “ditch” Oliver in a gutter. This entire turn of events is precisely the volta toward Oliver’s redemption and salvation—Oliver’s progress turned on the lowest abjection, left for dead when already more dead than alive, and returned to those he would have saved in the first place.

When he recounts events in the safety of the boarding house later, it is amidst tones of magnanimous society and mutual “humanity” uttered by characters like Mr. Giles. Giles worries he’d injured a “fellow-creature” and the discussion of criminals undertakes not dramatic rebuke of criminality but reverent appreciation for the law, reasonable explanation, and the spirit of charity. Only the poor family dog is left out in the cold, as it were, from the warm sentiment of Society on display:

With the next morning, there came a rumour, that two men and a boy were in the cage at Kingston, who had been apprehended over night under suspicious circumstances; and to Kingston Messrs. Blathers and Duff journeyed accordingly. The suspicious circumstances, however, resolving themselves, on investigation, into the one fact, that they had been discovered sleeping under a haystack; which, although a great crime, is only punishable by imprisonment, and is, in the merciful eye of the English law, and its comprehensive love of all the king’s subjects, held to be no satisfactory proof, in the absence of all other evidence, that the sleeper, or sleepers, have committed burglary accompanied with violence, and have therefore rendered themselves liable to the punishment of death; Messrs. Blathers and Duff came back again, as wise as they went.

In short, after some more examination, and a great deal more conversation, a neighbouring magistrate was readily induced to take the joint bail of Mrs. Maylie and Mr. Losberne for Oliver’s appearance if he should ever be called upon; and Blathers and Duff, being rewarded with a couple guineas, returned to town with divided opinions on the

²⁴⁵ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 200.

subject of their expedition: the latter gentleman on a mature consideration of all the circumstances, inclining to the belief that the burglarious attempt had originated with the Family Pet; and the former being equally disposed to concede the full merit of it to the great Mr. Conkey Chickweed.²⁴⁶

The tone hardly lets up from there, as Oliver's salvation from the dark, evil depths of London criminality progresses:

Oliver told them all his simple history, and was often compelled to stop, by pain and want of strength. It was a solemn thing, to hear, in the darkened room, the feeble voice of the sick child recounting a weary catalogue of evils and calamities which hard men had brought upon him. Oh! If when we oppress and grind our fellow-creatures, we bestowed but one thought on the dark evidences of human error, which, like dense and heavy clouds, are rising, slowly it is true, but not less surely, to Heaven, to pour their after-vengeance on our heads; if we heard but one instant, in imagination, the deep testimony of dead men's voices, which no power can stifle, and no pride shut out; where would be the injury and injustice, the suffering, misery, cruelty, and wrong, that each day's life brings with it!

Oliver's pillow was smoothed by gentle hands that night; and loveliness and virtue watched him as he slept. He felt calm and happy, and could have died without a murmur.²⁴⁷

Oliver is a tragic animal figure, and also one subjected to English law. He is made pathetic: "the feeble voice of the sick child recounting a weary catalogue of evils and calamities which hard men had brought upon him." Oliver and the suffering child class he stands in for invokes deep social concern—the extrapolation of the sympathy movement that incorporates social reform logics into the designed emotional content. This is a rational calculation of care, and Oliver can hardly even narrate the circumstances himself; that there can be an implored audience to the narration of social abjection and calculable recuperation marks both Oliver's social abjection and his narrative impotence.

Oliver is a diminished subject, an inoperable object. At the same time, he is possessed of a good will, giving second chances and half his inheritance away to those who do not deserve his kindness. He is saved by a beneficent other, much as Dickens's Esther is in *Bleak House*, which

²⁴⁶ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 271.

²⁴⁷ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 257-258.

will take up a significant portion of my analysis in Chapter Four. The resolution of the story is complete on another important count, as Fagin is to be hanged after a time in the famous Newgate prison. True to London form, a large crowd gathers for the public hanging, to which Fagin goes ignominiously and without any of the stoic courage of the criminal Jack Sheppard in the other crime novel published in *Bentley's* at the same time *Oliver Twist* is. Dickens's setting matches this action—public executions remained extremely well attended events into the middle of the century. Execution history is a particularly well-catalogued archive, and several excellent scholarly works on the subject will be referenced later in this chapter. However, this is a subject that also translates very well to the famous London walking tours, several of which may include execution sites or grisly murder tales and additional drippings from the execution spectacle to add a little juice to the exercise. The Museum of London also has an impressive store of scandal and intrigue such as the 1824 execution of a prominent banker who had defrauded the Bank of England. 100,000 thousand people showed up to watch the “gentleman” hang:



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²⁴⁸ Jackson, E. Execution broadside printed with an account of Henry Fauntleroy's crimes, 1824.

Ten years after the publication of *Oliver Twist*, Dickens would attend a public hanging and write a letter of complaint to *The Times*. In *Oliver Twist*, Fagin's fate is to be revealed in, though he is made pathetic. Of the 1849 execution he witnessed, however, Dickens would write the following:

I believe that a sight so inconceivably awful as the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd collected at that execution could be imagined by no man, and could be presented in no heathen land under the sun. The horrors of the gibbet and of the crime which brought the wretched murderers to it, faded in my mind before the atrocious bearing, looks and language, of the assembled spectators. When I came upon the scene at midnight, the *shrillness* of the cries and howls that were raised from time to time, denoting that they came from a concourse of boys and girls already assembled in the best places, made my blood run cold. As the night went on, screeching and laughing, and yelling in strong chorus of parodies on negro melodies, with substitutions of 'Mrs. Manning' for 'Susannah,' and the like, were added to these. When the day dawned, thieves, low prostitutes, ruffians and vagabonds of every kind, flocked on to the ground, with every variety of offensive and foul behaviour. Fightings, faintings, whistlings, imitations of Punch, brutal jokes, tumultuous demonstrations of indecent delight when swooning women were dragged out of the crowd by the police with their dresses disordered, gave a new zest to the general entertainment.²⁴⁹

The reaction is identical to the arguments against animal abuse in the Parliamentary debates, as discussed in Chapter Two, and Dickens's Smithfield criticisms echo loudly here as well. Dickens, canny as his works are on the issue of ambiguous characters and shifting narrative perspectives in a work like *Bleak House*, was ever the moralist in this case.²⁵⁰ Dickens would go on to base the character of Mademoiselle Hortense in *Bleak House* on one of the hanged

Museum of London. <http://www.museumoflondonprints.com/image/1094361/e-jackson-execution-broadside-printed-with-an-account-of-henry-fauntleroy-crimes-1824>

²⁴⁹ Dickens, Charles. Letter to *The Times*, 13 November 1849. British Library: "Learning Dickens in Context."

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/dickens/campaigning/letter/dickensletter.html>

²⁵⁰ Several works address Dickens's moralizing tendencies, including: Gold, Joseph. *Charles Dickens: Radical Moralizer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972 and Hardy, Barbara. *The Moral Art of Dickens*, 2nd Ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2002. J. Hillis Miller was famously dismissive of Dickens's "fear of a moral life of breadth, imagination, or novelty. Dickens sometimes seems to believe that only with this narrowness is the moral life likely to be successful." Hillis Miller, J. *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970, p. 221.

individuals, Marie Manning. The hanging took place at the Horsemonger Lane Gaol that, despite the name, is not near Smithfield but in Southwark, across the Thames from the City Centre. The resulting picture of things from Dickens's study in crime: A complicated nexus of Sikes using public hanging's sensational effects as a disciplinary measure against Oliver, only to be punished horribly himself in a fitting administration poetic justice, and concluding in Dickens's admonishing city officials and the media for continuing the practice a mere ten years later

The Popular Horrors

Sweeney Todd, one of the most well-known penny fictions, capitalizes on public fears about mystery meat products in the slaughter reform era while also engaging in an urban erasure of solitary travelers—the demon barber's victims were business travelers in the new business center of the world. Once Stoker read another penny fiction, Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampyre*, he had the ideal supernatural specter through which to express a gathering fear of disease and biological permeations of the body, and he also capitalized on concerns about foreign blood arriving to contaminate London. His fusing of scientific rhetoric and rational analysis, often in the form of journalistic *verité*, also reflected the period boom in daily journalism covering all issues of the city's business. This association of Stoker's novel to journalistic impulses is not quite as neat as it could be, for the more ubiquitous documentary techniques in the novel are phonograph recording and journals. The trouble with any notion of documentary reliability, as the novel plays on for some of its most gripping tensions, is that all of the materials recording the purported events have been catalogued and indexed by one of the characters who is afflicted during the story. Furthermore, the perspective of the characters is routinely unclear or unreliable.

The trouble with narration in *Dracula* has even become a defense of the vampire himself. Nina Auerbach, perhaps the most important *Dracula* scholar to date, discusses this in her book, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, in which she turns to another key *Dracula* scholar, Carol Senf, to get at the matter:

Senf claims that *Dracula* is dominated by a series unreliable, even criminal narrators who suppress their vampire, victim: “Dracula is *never* seen objectively and never permitted to speak for himself while his actions are recorded by people who have determined to destroy him and who, moreover, repeatedly question the sanity of their quest.”²⁵¹

In this case, Stoker’s book may shed more light on the trouble with Poe’s man of the crowd and its narrator than it does on *Sweeney Todd*. In attempting to establish an authoritative order on the city’s perceived threats—and these stories all play on the growing understanding of and fear of hygienic lapses and contaminated food and waterways—each of these narratives fit into a London genre that may even require the abjection of narrators in order to sustain a reliable, ordered sense of urban reality that does not overwhelm and “confuse the senses” as Smithfield does Oliver in Charles Dickens’s novel. Dickens himself was a prolific journalist, besides his clear role in the lineage of London urban literatures negotiating increasing population impaction, social divisions, and the burgeoning critique of technologically abetted modern labor and living conditions in the megalithic cityspace.

A word here about the broader nonhuman form articulated in the London literatures. None of these urban preoccupations, nor the decisive shift in the material form and price, if not value, of literary output after the reduction in paper costs and the 1810 innovation of the steam press in London, should distract from the intense preponderance of nonhuman thought in British

²⁵¹ Senf, Carol A. “*Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror*,” in *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 9 (1979), pp. 160-170 and reprinted in Carter, Margaret, ed. *The Vampire and the Critics*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988, p. 95. Quoted in Auerbach, Nina. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 204, n. 32.

cultural production that links Romanticism, realism, and modernism with parallel period popular print forms. In fact, the apparent gap between popular pulp forms—like the pennies and the new journalistic output—and the canonical works of Romanticism or Dickens’s novels (published in serial form themselves) is as misleading as the apparent animal concern of the period is on the issue of the amplified erasure of the animal that this concern enables by promoting the Smithfield removal agenda. What arises in the new mass media, abetted by rapid technological advances as well as successful education reform—the city and its citizens *were*, certainly, improved per the agenda of the day—is a blurred and impossibly vast cultural reservoir of *print* that both documents and articulates a vast audience.

Media, in general, has been discussed as well in relation to the articulation of life in the period. For example, Margaret Linley’s essay on *Frankenstein* and technology, including print technology, interrogates recent biopolitical theory on exclusion and bare life, drawing primarily on Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and on Judith Butler’s critique of media and politics. Linley writes that, “[a]ccording to Butler, the very conception of the human is elaborated among inequalities illegible from within the framework established by the human, for the human is born on the basis of a ‘norm of exclusion’ which helps ensure that the violent conditions of its emergence remain unintelligible.”²⁵² Linley’s claim is that “media creates a predicament for any assertion of life, since exceptional or bare life forms must have a means through which to be recognized.”²⁵³ Linley goes on to discuss the cholera outbreak panic attending the First Reform Act of 1832, during which “[m]edia intensified the scale of dread which would underwrite the

²⁵² Butler, Judith. “Afterword. The Humanities in Human Rights: Critique, Language, Politics,” in *PMLA* 121.5 (October 2006), pp. 1658-1661. Referenced and quoted in Linley, Margaret. “*Frankenstein* Revisited: Life and Afterlife Around 1831,” in Colligan, Colette and Margaret Linley, eds. *Media, Technology, and Literature in the Nineteenth Century*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2011, p. 264.

²⁵³ Linley, p. 264.

infectious disease as both a population concern and an object of political discipline.”²⁵⁴ The Act in fact marked the third attempt to pass the Bill in Parliament, and so the build up presented ample opportunities for the press, including the penny presses, to argue for passage via cartoons and other means. As Louis James notes, the press saw its printing capacity triple between 1801 and 1831 in London even *with* the old, heavy taxation system in place.²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, media and print succeeded in meeting a huge new “public” described at the time as “for the first time becoming a *reading* population, actuated by tastes and habits unknown to preceding generations, and particularly susceptible to such an influence as that of the press.”²⁵⁶

On the one hand, “print” here implies “The Press,” which congratulated itself on the victory of the 1832 Reform Act Linley discusses. From an August 1832 celebration of the June passage of the Act, at Derby:

Intellect and Justice have triumphed over Ignorance, Corruption, and misused Power. The Reform Bills have passed. The Land rejoices. In that joy the printers of Derby—the men who exercise the glorious art of the PRESS—the art by which man communicates with man, and by which political truths, the strength and wealth of the public mind, the force of public opinion, are at once diffused and concentrated—unite with unreserved transport. [...]

THE GREAT ORGAN OF MENTAL STRENGTH IS

The Press²⁵⁷

There has been some attention paid to the role of the new, cheaper press and increased literacy rates in political activity, such as the Chartist movement, and on general reading habits in relation to the sense of an administrative “public,” as also discussed in relation to Andrew

²⁵⁴ Linley, p. 275.

²⁵⁵ James, Louis. *Print and the People 1819-1851*. London: Penguin, 1976, p. 17.

²⁵⁶ *Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge Minutes*, 21 May 1832, pp. 284-285, quoted in James, *Print and the People*, p. 18.

²⁵⁷ Reprinted in James, *Print and the People 1819-1851*, p. 16.

Franta's work in Chapter One.²⁵⁸ As the backlash against Newgate novels featuring sympathetic criminal characters showed, the public's exponential increase and, in turn, its exponentially increased access to literatures such as the emergent "popular" press works, was a problem to the civilized society types Dickens can rightly be grouped among given his moralizing tendencies. At the same time, Dickens's own social aims—his politics and economic critique—group him squarely with the radicals on other counts.

The development of the pennies, on the other hand, includes the issue of taste: "dreadfuls" and "bloods" were terrible works full of nothing but gore, and certainly with no redeeming attributes. On the issue of public affect and conditioning via the readership of new popular literature, which eclipsed even the numbers attending executions, Louis James summarizes his discussion of *Sweeney Todd* thusly:

Apart from its horrific theme, the story sustains the reader's interest, and is occasionally relieved with gentler passages of description... The story is bound up in itself, and does not impinge on the reader's sense of reality. A reader can enjoy the monstrosity of Sweeney Todd's adventures and, unless he has some mental distortion that makes it real to him, be none the worse...

While I doubt whether the most unsophisticated reader would be tempted by *The String of Pearls* into a taste for cannibalism, the author added to the fun by setting the story firmly in London: Londoners were invited to think, as they passed St. Dunstan's Church, of the congregation convulsed with the rising stench from Todd's abattoir.²⁵⁹

This concern with literature's—whatever its perceived quality—redeeming aspects and social effect dominated public discourse around the popular fiction of the day while, simultaneously, the pennies were built on plagiarism and mass production. Their basement prices and the ready

²⁵⁸ See: Gilmartin, Kevin. *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. See also: St. Clair, William. *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. On the political press, see especially: Haywood, Ian. *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics, and the People 1790-1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

²⁵⁹ James, Louis. *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 164.

consumer in the newly literate working man required rapid and voluminous production to turn a profit.

Before turning to my full discussion of the “Penny Dreadful” and popular literature’s London production and audience, which will connect as well with other London industries of mass production like the traffic in animals and their multiple uses, I would like to focus on a precursory literary work by Daniel Defoe. This work is crucial as a marker of the literary taste for blood that dominates the nineteenth century readership, a taste whose effects and significance for London’s social health scholars have taken various approaches to, as I will discuss. While its publication in 1723-1724, on the one hand, rules out any overblown claims that nineteenth-century London is an exceptional host to the bloodthirsty reading public, Defoe’s journalistic interest in brutal murders of English business travellers in France—the same Defoe who would write on the terrible immensity of Smithfield, as discussed in Chapter Two—and his rendering of the tale for the British audience reveal a critical historical context for the development of popular fiction in London as it melds with the mass productive modes under investigation here. And in fact, the edition of this Defoe work contained in the greatest Penny Bloods and Dreadfuls collection in the world is an 1869 edited volume—the reception of Defoe’s crime journalism and narratives enjoyed a revived London heyday under the sign of the post-Smithfield urban malaise. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Defoe had a well-known take on Smithfield. Defoe had also written a story about a Colonel Jack that was recycled, as penny material typically was, in a nineteenth-century penny edition. In Colonel Jack one will find, incidentally, another reference

to Smithfield Market and to Bartholomew Fair—they pick pockets and rob gentlemen, as one naturally does at Bartholomew and at Smithfield.²⁶⁰

This concern for the Defoe story is not incidental or fanciful. The Barry Ono collection includes Defoe stories alongside the highwayman adventures and bloody dreadfuls such as *The String of Pearls*, which was the serial that Sweeney Todd’s human meat pie horrors appeared in. Barry Ono was the most famous and important archivist of penny fiction. His collection is the British Library’s collection, and thus perhaps is the Ono Collection is something like the “official” representation of the genre. The Ono collection has recently been part of a massive task of digitizing and cataloguing an impossibly, vast, unruly, and incomplete body of works from the nineteenth century. We do not know even what we might be missing in cases where the catalogue is blank and the materials lost. His collection is a signal of the pennies’ audience in general, which has also been discussed by James and others. The pennies fed a ravenous London audience, lovers of savage cruelty and bloodshed, marauding adventurers, and imperiled women and murdered children. The Defoe story is a particularly gruesome assemblage of “true crime” passed along to the reading audience.

The primary difference between Defoe’s early eighteenth-century tale and the pennies’ cultural significance to nineteenth-century London has much to do with price and accessibility. The cost of paper shifts dramatically near the time the steam press revolutionizes the mass production and distribution of reading material in London, and this boom in journalistic output and the much more affordable (than even the widely available Dickens) penny fiction is hand-in-

²⁶⁰ Defoe, Daniel. “Colonel Jack,” in *The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel De foe, With Preface and Notes, Including those Attributed to Sir Walter Scott*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1904, pp. 310-311.

hand with a major spike in public literacy rates I will also discuss in further detail. As such, the “taste” for bloody murder is of course a much older proclivity than the appetites of the unwitting cannibals in *Sweeney Todd*.²⁶¹ What is especially provocative about Defoe’s story as a critique of audience tastes and experience, however, is its basis in the events of the day. Furthermore, a closely related account of the life and execution of the most famous London criminal of the early eighteenth century, Jack Sheppard, was part of an even larger public audience phenomenon. Sheppard’s execution was one of those many public executions at Smithfield and at Tyburn Tree, the gallows on Hyde Park right along Holborn/Oxford Street—the busiest central vein of the city dating centuries back. If anything, making too much of *literary* tastes for blood and offal in the nineteenth century would only further repress the lingering effects of the quite real, visceral blood entertainments the city’s populous had long supported.²⁶²

Defoe’s accounts of Sheppard and of Cartouche, a French criminal of even bloodier exploits, foreshadow the London crime fascinations and terrors, as in the case of Jack the Ripper for example. Reminding the contemporary reader perhaps of Truman Capote and *In Cold Blood*, which Capote wrote based on prison interviews of the two killers in a sensational crime that

²⁶¹ On the matter of Victorian cultural blood thirst, Rosalind Crone’s work is definitive. Crone tracks developments from public executions to popular stage works and, ultimately, to the pennies and *Sweeney Todd*. See: Crone, Rosalind. *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012.

²⁶² There is no shortage of historical accounts of London’s history of executions, and much has been written on the eighteenth-century trouble with mobs and public disciplinary displays. Regulations on public assembly attempted to mitigate the former, and ironically put Speaker’s Corner, for a time the only location public audience assembly for political and other debate was allowed, right where Tyburn Tree gallows had been on Hyde Park, all in the shadow of the Marble Arch. See: Shoemaker, Robert. *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England*. London: Continuum, 2004. See also: White, Jerry. *A Great and Monstrous Thing: London in the eighteenth century*. New York: Random House, 2012, and in particular pp. 456-466, “‘Low-Lived, Blackguard Merry-Making’: Public Punishments.” See also: Linebaugh, Peter. *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Verso, 2003, and in particular chapters on Jack Sheppard (pp. 7-41) and Tyburn (pp. 74-118).

gripped national attention due to the violation of presumptions of a quiet, good, Midwestern simplicity, Defoe's journalistic enthusiasm (he went immediately to Newgate prison to inspect after one of Sheppard's escapes in 1724) drew the admiration of Sheppard, who knew Defoe in fact as "Mr. Applebee," editor of *Applebee's Original Weekly Journals*.²⁶³ What is more important to my study here, however, is the office of Cartouch's victims. The Cartoucheans, as Cartouch's gang was called, had taken to killing businessmen and lawyers on the roads outside urban centers. Not only did this cause commercial losses, but it also pitted organized crime of unknown, powerful numbers against a still-organizing European law enforcement body. In London, in fact, police forces, like most of civic management, would undergo significant reform and revision during the nineteenth century. The Metropolitan Police Force ("Scotland Yard") was founded in 1829 by Robert Peel, and the separate City of London force would be established ten years later. It would truly arrive as a City Centre institution in response mostly to new traffic needs during and after the Smithfield removal period, incidentally, and would become notorious, by ineffectual association, thanks to the Jack the Ripper case in 1888.²⁶⁴

Defoe, and the public, seemed to have been especially drawn to the Cartouche execution and its aftermath. Cartouche confessed hundreds of his associates, leading to law enforcement's

²⁶³ Lee, William, ed. *Daniel Defoe: His Life, and recently discovered writings, 1716-1729*. London: John Camden Hotten, 1869, pp. 384-385. On the contemporary "nonfiction novel" and the true crime genre, see: Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood*. New York: Vintage, 1994. Capote established a strong bond with Perry Smith, one of the killers, that has been the subject of much speculation and conjecture since; Sheppard wrote to Defoe, "This with my kind love to you ... your humble servant" at one point nearing his final days (Lee, p. 385).

²⁶⁴ For more on the history of London police forces, see: Taylor, David. *The new police in nineteenth-century England: Crime, conflict and control*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. See also: Emsley, Clive. *The English Police: A Political and Social History*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2014. For the hundred year period between the public executions such as Sheppard in 1724 and the Victorian period, see especially: Reynolds, Elaine A. *Before the Bobbies: The Night Watch and Police Reform in Metropolitan London, 1720-1830*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

grand victory over the mysterious, bloody marauders terrorizing international business classes. This abuse of the business classes would be precisely the stuff of *Sweeney Todd*, where the Fleet Street barber “polished off” lone travellers in London for financial and, more than likely, a good deal of animal trafficking to Smithfield and the butchers’ shops just off the famous Fleet Street address for Todd’s shop. As public literacy rose in the nineteenth century, so too did ideals of escaping the abject poverty Dickens documented alongside the harrowing tales of Sheppard’s crimes and escapes in *Bentley’s*. The mass public identified more with the poverty-stricken young Sheppard, feared the authorities, and sure enough, when Defoe was tracking Sheppard relentlessly, the public was *really* inspired by his resourceful shirking of the authorities they considered to be more their own oppressor than their ally against Sheppard’s crimes.²⁶⁵

The scandal of Englishmen being murdered while abroad in France was, of course, always the scandal of an English *gentleman* being murdered, as no others would be able to travel or murdered under such circumstances as Defoe’s accounts details: Middle class and above would have been the only sort with the money or possessions worth robbing.²⁶⁶ As Lee writes in his 1869 volume of Defoe’s works, this aspect was sensationalized to sell copies. Defoe’s second pamphlet on the Cartoucheans was entitled “A Narrative on the Proceedings in France for Discovering and Detecting the Murderers of the English Gentlemen.” Lee also notes the popular

²⁶⁵ By the nineteenth century, stories about Sheppard would be censored and banned because of “copy cat” crimes, but the notion that Sheppard, Cartouche, and even Todd represent threats to private business interests and not public safety has been discussed elsewhere. On the former view, see: Brantlinger, Patrick. *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literary in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998, pp. 71-72. Brantlinger also discusses the intersecting roles of Dickens (*Oliver Twist*) and Ainsworth (*Jack Sheppard*) in the debate on romanticized crime Thackeray instigated. On the latter, see, for example: Seymour, Benedict. “Notes on the Last Days of Jack Sheppard: Capital Crimes and Paper Claims,” in *Mute*, Vol. 2, No. 13 (August, 2009).

²⁶⁶ Contrast this with the intense public pleasure taken in the hanging of the gentleman banker, discussed earlier in the chapter.

appeal of Sheppard and even suggests that he ought not to be associated with the inhuman depravity of Cartouche at all. Lee is at pains to communicate the evil savagery of the French criminal before his largely apologetic account of Sheppard. One wonders about the fact that Defoe took his account of the Cartoucheans from an English victim of the crimes who recovered (a servant to one of the murdered gentlemen, not incidentally), whereas he was apparently friendly with the Englishman Sheppard. From Lee's account of Defoe's Cartouche reports:

Before his death, this great robber had confessed the names of a large number of his followers, and the crimes they had committed. The horror produced by these revelations gave such an impulse to the course of justice, that several hundreds of these villains were shortly afterward executed. The confederacy being thus broken up, some of the members became leaders of smaller parties, marauding separately, but sometimes together. On the 21st of September 1723, John Lock, Esq., and English Gentleman, returning from Paris, was robbed and murdered within a few miles of Calais by one of these gangs, and a few minutes afterward three other Englishmen, Edward Seabright, Esq.; Henry Mompesson, Esq., John Davies, Esq., and their servants, being on their way to Paris, came to the spot, and were also robbed and murdered by the same miscreants [...]

Although Cartouche occupies a high place in the annals of crime in France, a name so stained with the blood of his fellow-creatures can scarcely be mentioned without execration. Nothing of this kind attaches to the name of John Sheppard, whose brief but wonderful career of infamy produced at the time a degree of public excitement, that might be fitly termed a popular mania; whose sad fate never ceased to be pitied, even by the virtuous, —and whose acts of ingenuity and daring courage, have invested his character with as much of admiration, as could be bestowed on so great a criminal.²⁶⁷

The connection of Defoe to the pennies is of course much stronger than the contingent inclusion of a bloody document of French murders among the papers of a pennies collector. Defoe's account of the notorious English criminal Jack Sheppard was one of the most popular pieces to the eighteenth century reading public captivated by Sheppard's deeds, and the penny genre made great use of those "literary accounts." Defoe's account was featured in a relatively popular periodical, *Applebee's Original Weekly Journals*, published in 1724 as *The History of*

²⁶⁷ Lee, p. 383.

the Remarkable Life of John Sheppard, Containing A Particular Account of his many Robberies and Escapes. Sheppard famously approved of Defoe's accounts at his execution. He was hung, but of course, on Tyburn Tree in Hyde Park. As the story goes, what remained of his body, having been assaulted by thronging masses, was buried after at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. According to reports, as much as 200,000 of London's roughly 600,000-person population attended the spectacle.²⁶⁸

Sheppard was the subject of a very popular "Newgate novel" in 1839-40 by William Henry Ainsworth, when it ran alongside Dickens's serial, *Oliver Twist* in *Bentley's Miscellany*. The Newgate, or "Old Bailey," novel was, for all intents and purposes, the predecessor of the Penny Blood. Ainsworth wrote several of these, including works that included another major Penny character, Dick Turpin. The novels hold an especially vexed place in literary-cultural studies because, perceived as they were at the time to glorify, or at least revel in the acts of, their criminal protagonists, they were the target of legal censure and general ridicule in various literary magazines and even an occasional direct satire by William Makepeace Thackeray. Although not as roundly rejected on literary grounds as the pennies would be, the Newgate novels were deemed low brow, more or less. At least one of the Newgate authors, Thomas Peckett Prest, would however become directly involved in the Penny business: He was the co-author, with James Malcolm Rymer, of the Sweeney Todd story. So it is that Defoe, via his work on the real Jack Sheppard that would inspire such a robust "afterlife" in popular cultural expression including plays, songs, and other works, is linked indelibly to the business of the pennies and, as such, is a perfectly logical author for Barry Ono to catalogue alongside his more

²⁶⁸ For one particularly entertaining account of Sheppard's life and execution, see: Moore, Lucy. *The Thieves' Opera: The Riveting True Story of 18th-Century London's Most Notorious and Active Criminals*. New York: Harcourt, 2000.

pedestrian texts. Defoe published in *Applebee's*, and Applebee had also been the primary publisher of crime literature as well as the overseer of the precursor Newgate press preceding the *Newgate Calendar* of criminal trial and execution accounts that Sheppard and others populated.

The account of the Cartoucheans is noteworthy for its presentation of criminal terror on business travel routes, and it is also important for its horrible, brutal details of the crimes. The resulting picture of these liminal criminals—and Dickens's London crime saga, *Oliver Twist*, also traded in the abject criminal environs—is gruesomely didactic, in theory. The mass readership of crime accounts, like the attendees of sensational executions, however, suggests that nothing terribly edifying was afoot. Kafka's "In the Penal Colony" suggests a similar disconnect between the scene of punishment and disciplinary affect.²⁶⁹ The account begins with an inadvertent connection between horror and entertainment:

As the robbery and murder committed in September last, on the persons of four English gentlemen and their servants, near Calais, justly filled the world with a kind of uncommon surprise, so France seemed more than ordinarily touched with it. The whole nation entertained the relation of it with horror, as if, however innocent, it had reflected upon the very name of the French, and that it had been a fact so cruel, and so outrageously vile, that nothing like it had ever been committed but in France...

But such a piece of savage cruelty as this was, in murdering the gentlemen without mercy, after they had peaceably delivered their money into their hands, filled everybody with an inexpressible horror and amazement.²⁷⁰

The criminals under investigation remind immediately of the small time initiatory circles from

Oliver Twist and of the classes of criminal in Poe:

He says that this Joseph Bizeau acknowledged he had used the trade long before Cartouch was heard of; that the said Cartouch was at first but an underling, a poor low-priced street-runner, a kind of shop-lifter, or pick-pocket, and knew nothing of the matter, being only a disbanded foot-soldier, naked, and almost starved, when, merely for his

²⁶⁹ This is discussed in further detail in Chapter Four.

²⁷⁰ Defoe, Daniel. *An Account of the Cartoucheans in France*. London: J. Roberts, 1724, p. 1. Included within *Popular Literature in 18th and 19th Century Britain, Parts Three-Ten: The Barry Ono Collection of Bloods and Penny Dreadfuls*, British Library. Accessed via Nineteenth Century Collections Online, Gale Group. Hereafter: *Cartoucheans*.

bold, audacious spirit, he was taken in, upon his humble petition, into the great society of gentlemen, as he called them, meaning the gang of highway robbers, who acted in a higher sphere of thievery, and had, for some years, plied the forest or Orleans, the great road to Italy, and the woods about Fountainbleau, where they robbed with security, as well as success, and were seldom attacked, and never overcome.²⁷¹

These transcendent criminals—their inscrutable, supernatural criminality is established from square one—are called throughout the narrative a “bloody gang.” Their work is “horrid murders,” and they “mangle and cut in pieces the bodies of those they kill, so that they may not be known,” throwing body parts in the Seine in the aftermath. The city “was a constant scene of blood and rapine” and the acts’ cover of night meant that “no man was safe in going abroad after candlelight.”²⁷² The objects stole were almost always stock receipts—papers that were the only evidence that money had been spent on stock shares. The narrative notes that these were not “ear-marked,” and so they could be transferred without procedural intervention, via gift or, in this case, theft. Possession was all that was required to claim the monetary share, and so the paper was as good as gold:

The sum of the matter is this, that, in a word, this circumstance of the papers was the encouragement of the robbers, and the raising the fame of Cartouch and his company, for now, to get the paper of a stock, was to get the stock, let it amount to what sum soever; to pick a pocket, and draw out a pocket-book, was to get an estate, and it was a frequent thing to have some gentlemen in the crowd whose very pocket-books were worth many millions.²⁷³

The Cartoucheans then sold the papers quickly for ready money and, rather than committing one great final “score,” established a thriving business model of their own to rival the staid office productivity in “Bartleby.” While they could have left realm of justice with the money, never to be traced or apprehended, they did not. The criminal that takes shape in this narrative is the total

²⁷¹ *Cartoucheans*, p. 5.

²⁷² *Cartoucheans*, pp. 5-7. The mention of “after candlelight” also periodizes the piece nicely against the gaslit London of Poe’s story.

²⁷³ *Cartoucheans*, p. 7.

outlaw who also populates the business and financial world as an unpunishable, and untrackable, rich thief. Defoe writes that these criminals had “setters” and “winkers” who watched the market and knew who bought or sold stock, and then the gang’s leader could set the gunmen to rob them on the road. The business afoot was a bloody paper traffic:

In most, or all these cases, they seldom executed their designs without blood; for the booty they had in pursuit was generally so great, and the method of coming at it was naturally so violent, that there was no remedy but to murder the persons they attacked, and they were, indeed, almost obliged to this butchery by necessity; for that there was too much difficulty in coming at the prize, if the person had life left to struggle for it, or a voice to cry out, which, in a city so populous as that of Paris is, would not fail to bring help instantly about them; they were therefore obliged either immediately to cut the person’s throat or to throw a handkerchief about his neck, or, at one blow, to knock him down, and then dispatch him, or they would be surrounded with people; and the soldiers, who were appointed, on that extraordinary occasion, to be always patrolling in the streets, would be upon them.

These things made Paris, indeed, be a dismal place to live in; nothing but known poverty was a protection, nothing but broad daylight and the open street a security, so that, after some time, those who were charged with great sums transacted nothing but in private, made no bargains in the Quincampoix but by whisper, and, as it were, in secret, or by appointed retirement to proper places; in a word, a general wariness possessed mankind, and they seemed to be afraid of everyone they met; they seemed to take everybody that did but look at them to be a thief, and to clap their hands immediately to the pocket where the letter-case lay, if any man that they did not know came but near them.²⁷⁴

These tropes of blood and of butchery mount in the narrative, and also make up the visceral, gruesome stuff of the later pennies.²⁷⁵ Other crimes against humanity committed by the gangs include the robbery of a “whorehouse,” replete with “lewd acts,” some of them unspeakable for the benefit of the readers’ imaginations, as in the case of prostitutes “tied naked to fiddlers in position not fit to be named” and more:

The story is embellished by our author with some lewd pranks they played also with the gentleman’s mistress, who they had caused to lie stark naked before them all the while they were plundering him and the matron of their money; but those things,

²⁷⁴ *Cartoucheans*, p. 8.

²⁷⁵ Crone tracks the development of this taste for blood and the spectacles of suffering in her chapter, “From scaffold culture to the cult of the murderer” in *Violent Victorians*, pp. 75-123.

as too gross for our relation, we purposely omit, our business being of a more serious nature.²⁷⁶

And then, the narrative begins to introduce the moral account of these acts, employing its apparent limit concept rhetoric of criminality. It matches the still-to-come nineteenth-century animal rights, Smithfield removal, and anti-butcher rhetoric discussed in Chapter Two:

[T]his is certain, that they carried on their trade of robbery, both before and after, more like savages and butchers than men born among Christians, and, as our author relates things, nothing has ever been acted with so much barbarity and unnatural cruelty in our age.²⁷⁷

Defoe's account notes that they deserved their punishment, much as Fagin surely deserves his hanging in *Oliver Twist*, suggests also that they are perhaps even more to be feared and punished by virtue of their professional office, their practiced craft:

Of this horrid race of men, and thus introduces, these two, whose execution has been so justly severe, and who we are now speaking of, are produced; and if the author, from whom these facts are thus published, had made a true collection, they have had a great length of time to practice their villainies...²⁷⁸

The report of the murders, transcribed supposedly from a survivor of the gang, is dominated by words relating to butchery: "Who was butchered next I cannot tell," "Mr. Mompesson took notice in the night, that he thought the rogues were but indifferently paid for the drudgery of butchering so many," "This inhuman butchery soon spread its fame over the whole country; and as it filled the ears of all that heard it with horror," "the butchery rogues," "bloody disposition," etc.²⁷⁹ The other terms—barbarity, inhuman murder, massacre—all echo the complaints from Smithfield and the demonization of butchers that come in the century after these accounts. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Butchers' Guild in London had a long and troubled civic history

²⁷⁶ *Cartoucheans*, p. 11.

²⁷⁷ *Cartoucheans*, p. 11.

²⁷⁸ *Cartoucheans*, p. 19.

²⁷⁹ *Cartoucheans*, pp. 14-15; 20-21.

and Defoe was among the public authors who noted the atrocity of the Smithfield space. Likewise, the techniques he employs to communicate the Cartoucheans' atrocities—their “barbarous massacre”—play on the question of civilized society: the “coup de grace” is so “horrible” it “cannot be heard by Christian ears.” It was “inhuman murder” all around.²⁸⁰

Curiously, however, Defoe also includes the social determinant of the atrocities. The gang is comprised of sutlers. Sutlers, technically, were salesmen and merchants who provided various wares or soldiers via moving stores on the warfront. Defoe's account includes further information: This “barbarous race of people,” including boys and women, was a species of body strippers who followed the camp with no employ, taking things off of dead bodies and finishing off not-yet dead bodies on the battle field:

Of this wretched gang what could be expected but a crew of ruffian, who, being early—from their very childhood—drenched in blood, and hardened against the cries and entreaties of the miserable—deaf to all the most moving expostulations, and strangers to pity and compassion, were ripened up for all manner of cruelty, and the more bloody any undertaking was likely to be, the more suitable to their nature and inclination.²⁸¹

The conditions of war meant people tolerated these nonhumans, with their inhuman acts, depravity, and bloody wretches. And yet when they were left without a job to do, post-war (or at least in between wars), they turned their comportment and their skill in liminal “priggery” to the business classes travelling in increasingly cosmopolitan and financialized Europe that could not comprehend (or “hear”) their acts, let alone mitigate them:

But this gang, who sheltered on the frontiers, being, as is observed, the refuse and outcast of the army, the brood of sutlers and blackguard boys, their usage was so bloody that nothing seemed to be attempted by them without it; and, as our author writes, murder was their element, and they delighted in it; nay, even they killed people when no danger of discovery, no difficulty of escape, or any other necessity, pressed them to it.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ *Cartoucheans*, p. 24.

²⁸¹ *Cartoucheans*, p. 12.

²⁸² *Cartoucheans*, p. 14.

This is the sort of criminal that Barry Ono and the nineteenth century penny fiction aficionado would fall madly in love with. This was the “type and genius of deep crime” that was not merely clever, deceptive, and evasive. The criminal element being proffered in popular narrative—the public hanging, the journalistic press, the midrange Dickens serial, or the dreadful cheap mass market presses—had to be wholly expunged from the human ranks in order to galvanize the desire for civil society in a time of sweeping abjection in the London streets, in particular, and at a time of intense participation of the working classes in social organization in mid-century London.

Polishing Things Off: *Sweeney Todd* and the Objects of Consumption

London’s population increases to 1,000,000 around 1810, making it the first true metropolis of the modern world. Also in the nineteenth century, literacy rates among the working class skyrocket throughout Britain. David Mitch and others have examined the causes for this increase, and Mitch considers both the national elementary education system and an increase in popular demands for education in his work, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy*. Mitch tracks the literacy rates via several statistical studies including the increasing instances of marriages confirmed by actual signatures instead of simple marks such as “X” by the marrying parties. Mitch and others note at least a doubling in literacy rates between 1840 and 1900.²⁸³ Another evaluation of literacy in the period by Martyn Lyons considers the rise in literacy not just among working class populations but also among all children and all women. Lyons claims that 70% of the male population of England was literate by 1850, which seems at first a potential contradiction to the numbers of Mitch and

²⁸³ Mitch, David F. *The Rise of Popular Literacy: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.

others, if they are to double by 1900, but Lyons also notes that rates varied dramatically between town and country.²⁸⁴ Literacy within massive London was, before 1850 even, high and rising.

To answer the insatiable demands of this massive reading public, popular presses began to produce in earnest. The stamp tax reforms had put cheap paper in the hands of both radical and improvement publishers, and a boom in periodicals put reading into the daily lives of Londoners.²⁸⁵ Into the second half of the nineteenth century, in response to growing popular demand for this newly accessible mode of entertainment, not merely information and education, other publishers began to produce short, cheap, lurid tales of adventure, murder, and supernatural mystery. These works would cost a penny, sometimes even a mere halfpenny, and enterprising readers would often trade and circulate one copy among multiple readers. The Penny Dreadfuls, or Penny Bloods, were thus read by more individual readers than the works of even the very popular Charles Dickens or other canonical nineteenth century British authors.²⁸⁶ This comparison has become the “gold standard” by which to show the popularity of penny literature. Dickens, easily the most popular novelist of mid-nineteenth century England (published in serial form at the time), was still overpriced for much of Britain. Louis James, in *Fiction for the*

²⁸⁴ Lyons, Martyn. “New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers,” in *A History of Reading in the West*, eds. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999, p. 313. Another longer history of public literacy suggests that 46% of country residents who married could sign their own names by the mid eighteenth century. See: Laqueur, Thomas. “The Cultural Origins of Popular Literacy in England 1500-1850,” in *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1976), pp. 255-275. Laqueur, setting up the popular contemporary imagination of nineteenth century English culture early in the article, presents bear-baiting and St. Monday drunks as cultural markers that might belie an extensive public literacy. Both issues in fact played large roles in public discourse and parliamentary debate on social improvement and animal rights during the first half of the nineteenth century.

²⁸⁵ On the early political impetus for popular literature, including surveys of pamphlets by Paine, Chartist, liberal, and other didactic literatures, see Haywood, *The Revolution in Popular Literature*.

²⁸⁶ Haining, Peter, ed. *The Penny Dreadful*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1976, pp. 14-16. Haining’s example is *Jane Eyre* instead of Dickens.

Working Man 1830-1850, makes such claims and also tracks popular fiction by yearly consumption.²⁸⁷ The penny periodicals that arrive shortly after 1820 and the invention of the steam printing press begin a continuous growth in popular literary production and consumption to match the rising literacy rates. And most importantly, as one reviewer of James's book, Patrician Thomson, notes, the widespread consumption of such works presents an essential view on British society in the period that the social novels by Dickens and others in fact may distort. Thomson summarizes: "The social novels of the 1840's convey an aura of working-class plain living and high thinking which does not stand investigation."²⁸⁸

The Pennies included well-known titles such as *Varney the Vampyre*, which Bram Stoker would read with great interest before penning *Dracula*, and the serial *String of Pearls*, which included one very well known installment, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. There was also an American tradition of Penny literature, published independently of the British series by American publishing houses and dominated by boys' tales of adventure and heroism that fit well with the frontier wilderness of the young United States terrain. The British Pennies could, as in *Sweeney Todd*, be an urban affair, defined by the intense proximity of unknown others, the strange, inescapable dangers punctuating even the most familiar city spaces with dark alleys and hidden basement abattoirs, and the growing sense of health and social risks that invaded homes and bodies without the victim ever being aware of contamination. This bred a permanent condition of fear, bringing the bad sorts and depraved criminals who terrorized the liminal open road between familiar cities in highwaymen pennies right into the city space. Something—one never knew what, but *something* was surely amiss—lurked around every

²⁸⁷ James, *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850*.

²⁸⁸ Thomson, Patricia. Review of *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850* (Louis James) in *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 61 (Feb., 1965), pp. 92-94.

corner, in every dark alley, or perhaps even in one's own home. But a vast number of these works also took place outside city spaces on the high seas or in remote caves and woods. Many were set in prior centuries, before widespread mechanization of life and transportation. There seem to be more horses in Penny Dreadfuls than in Dickens, for example, and rarely is the horse riding a casual entertainment or unremarkable travel at a country estate as it might be in Austen. The stories investigated escape—from the city, from the present—and facilitated the fantasy of conquest that urban work life could hardly produce.

Londoners, alienated and displaced by the massive industrial city, could not stop consuming the abjection that was the Penny's stock and trade. This was also the strongest and most consistent mood of now-canonized literary authors such as Poe and Baudelaire, but the sheer form and circulation of these comparably mass-produced works hits right at the core of the urban critique these authors expressed. The Pennies' excepted, horrible villains exploited perfectly the blank inhumanity of the human and animal condition in London, while their "low" status was so certain that it is now difficult to even find a number of the works given the physical insignificance of the very materials they were produced from and the total disregard nearly everyone paid them as objects. They were circulated among multiple readers as anything but precious singular possessions and they were discarded unceremoniously in droves even in a time of widespread collection and catalogue among upper classes. The pennies, however, became the original collector's item literature in time, opening the door to the comic trading and other practices.

The name "Penny Dreadful," once again, itself indicates both the material fungibility of the works and their perceived literary value. They would be bought and "recycled," shared amongst a readership group within a neighborhood or work community, so that they could be

consumed—quite literally “used” up”—via excessive handling within one serial edition run. The pennies could disintegrate before their serial lifespan had even passed, given enough hands processed them. The most famous and important collection, Barry Ono’s, is missing an undetermined number of its original items due to a basement flood and casual regard for the materials after his death. The works hardly seemed important and, now, this crucial reflection and propellant of the pervasive moods of urban abjection in nineteenth century London, as vulnerable and fungible as the cheapest physical materials and the most replaceable, easily consumed, prurient narrative material, shares the material insignificance it exploited so effectively for the popular literacy that, ironically, was produced to consume and be consumed in urban industrial London. The stories themselves were often sensational, condensed narratives. The earliest ones favored highwaymen and tales of frightening travel outside city walls. The open road and open country inaugurated dissolved social regulations, and the most popular stories often featured outlaws—bandits, primarily—acting not as virtuous Robin Hoods but as outright mercenaries of self-interest, as in the Defoe account that helped to spark the popular consumption of crime narratives. All of these aspects reflect the disintegrating forms of life and daily occupation in the new cityspace.

The Sweeney Todd episodes from a Penny Dreadful series called *String of Pearls: A Romance*, is especially pertinent to the gruesome state of London meat products and general anxieties about human food contamination and consumption. Published serially from 1846-1847, the series features the eponymous Sweeney Todd, the “demon barber of fleet street,” whose *modus operandi* is to collect his victims from his own barber chair. In the stories, Todd would pull a lever in his shop and the customer/victim would plunge into the dark basement below. The victims are often killed by the fall when they fracture their neck or crack their head open. If the

fall does not kill them, Todd finishes the job with his straight razor, slitting their throats. All of this would be a simple enough story about a serial killer but for the horrible aftermath. Todd's victims end up in meat pies sold to unsuspecting customers. This is not the first version of such a food horror.

Charles Dickens had earlier portrayed a meat pie salesman who put cats into his meat pies in *Pickwick Papers*. This information is part of a general advisory to urban dwellers that they educate themselves on the source of their foods, and relates more broadly to urban legends about alien meat pies and other products made outside London but consumed by Londoners. Perhaps reflecting some of the same anxieties that produced earlier highwaymen penny dreadfuls, this urban mistrust of dark, unknown, disordered rural foodways in fact recurs in Dickens' later novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, when the narrator remarks on "the dens of any of those preparers of cannibalistic pastry, who are represented in many country legends as doing a lively retail business in the metropolis."²⁸⁹ The city was during this time host to myriad programs to clean up streets and rectify social ills, many of which led to intensive architectural and street renovations coinciding as well with expansive rail development, some of which were discussed in Chapter Two.

"Penny Dreadful" refers to both the price and the quality of serialized stories published in London during the nineteenth century. The period in print publication history after 1810 includes an incredible increase in production for a combination of reasons. In 1810, in London, Friedrich Koenig first employs automatic printing techniques to mass-produce texts. Before his steam press innovation, all presses had to be turned by hand. This severely limited the quantity of production. Once Koenig's steam-driven press was implemented in other London publishing

²⁸⁹ Dickens, Charles. *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 495.

houses, the sheer volume of print material positively dwarfed the prior output. This would be the beginnings of the mass production, distribution, and circulation of literatures of any sort—literary, popular, journalistic, any type at all. *The Times* of London would be the first to purchase the new technology in 1814.²⁹⁰

This does not happen precisely in 1810. Rather, the true explosion in print production would come about ten years later once paper production for this purpose catches up to the technology and can consistently produce paper of uniform, larger sizes. The shift to machine paper manufacture instead of hand pressed pulp techniques is developed during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, mostly in England and in France, and is quickly taken up in the U.S. and elsewhere after 1820.²⁹¹ Paper in the first two decades of the century had become exorbitantly expensive, contributing directly to a severely diminished publishing industry and high book prices. Paper making technology had been developed already, but only around 1820 was machine paper manufacture finally employed across the industry. Once this was the case, paper prices dropped steeply. What follows from this combination of technological advances and adaptations is a bustling popular press industry.

Pinpointing the origins of the demand for the new mass production is trickier business, but that demand among a new public is a crucial dynamic. Discussing claims by Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt around this time about printing's remarkable new power in public discourse, Andrew Franta, in *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public*, writes that

neither printing nor its widespread dissemination were new in the nineteenth century... Hunt's and Hazlitt's claims have less to do with technological innovation than

²⁹⁰ Lee, Alfred McClung. *The Daily Newspaper in America, Volume 1*. London: Routledge, 2001, p. 114-115.

²⁹¹ See Munsell, John. *Chronology of the Origin and Progress of Paper and Paper Making*. Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1876, pp. 55-72. For further discussion on the London machine patent and technical evolution, see James, *Fiction for the Working Man*, pp. 10-11.

the effects of the emergence of the mass reading public. Their point, in other words, is that while print technology was by no means new, it took the appearance of new classes of readers to realize print's full potential.²⁹²

However, there is significant reason to believe that, in fact, no such "mass" public pre-existed the new print mechanisms and their advancement. Historians of the literary consumption in the period often note that the prior century had seen expansive public education programs and, on top of this, enclosure and other forces had driven a new mass public to cities like London in the proverbial droves. As discussed previously in this chapter, this explosion of "the public" was unprecedented, and with a higher rate of literacy among all classes in the metropolis, there is at least some explanation of a reading public fit to consume the sheer volume of literary output from the new mass presses. The development of mass print culture was, thus, as rapid as London's population increases in the period were. Beginning slowly in 1810 and exploding by around 1820, the amount of literature available skyrocketed alongside an incredible increase in literacy for London's massive, growing population.

As previously mentioned, London was the world's first million-person city as the nineteenth century began. The 1801 census recorded 1,096,784 people living in London. By 1815, the number was 1.4 million. By 1860, there were 3.2 million inhabitants.²⁹³ This meant London had the largest reading public in one concentrated metropolitan area *ever*. The print industry quickly learned to keep up with the demands of this massive public. This mirrors the Smithfield scenario and its meat supply role for the same consuming public. Furthermore, as James Raven notes in his geographical study of London publishing histories (albeit the period immediately preceding 1810), the publishing industry itself is housed in much the same area of

²⁹² Franta, *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public*, p. 137.

²⁹³ London makes its historical census information available to the public via governmental website: <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/historic-census-population>

London as Smithfield.²⁹⁴ But on the issue of nineteenth century print culture alone, there is a clear and massive increase due to a specific historical technological circumstance borne of the gathering demand for this increase. The people were hungry. There were a lot of people.

Once the texts were more ubiquitous, their individual prices came down in some cases. This was true, generally, across the spectrum of publication, but there was still a firm sense of literary status, or at least, of the value of fame, and some paper cost more than other paper; prolific London authors like Dickens saw the prices for their novels, even in serial form, stay much higher than prices for the exploding cheap paper serial trade. Another key development in the nineteenth century print trade was the lowering of taxes on paper and, in 1861, the outright abolition of the paper tax. The newspaper trade grew even more after 1861, as did the print industry in general.²⁹⁵ The increasing demand led to tensions between the publishers and the government, and in line with the 1810 steam press innovation came a previously unheard-of access to cheap paper for mass literary production. And so the first part of the “Penny Dreadful” moniker has to do with price. A Penny Dreadful cost one penny. Contrast this with the *production* cost of “penny-a-liners” like Dickens, paid as the expression suggests.²⁹⁶

Even a penny could be too rich for some workers in London, and so they would often share one copy amongst several readers in a neighborhood area. This is one issue that makes determining the precise readership of any Penny Dreadful extremely complicated. But circulation numbers suggest that these were, by far, the most commonly read literature of the nineteenth century. Besides this, there is a significant archive problem in tracking Penny Dreadful history:

²⁹⁴ Raven, James. *Bookscape: Geographies of Printing and Publishing in London Before 1800*. London: British Library Panizzi Lectures, 2014.

²⁹⁵ See: Barker, Hannah. *Newspapers and English Society: 1655-1855*. New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 37-39. See also: Gray, Drew D. *London's Shadows: The Dark Side of the Victorian City*. London: Continuum, 2010, p. 97.

²⁹⁶ James, *Fiction for the Working Man*, p. 154.

it's often impossible to know who the actual authors were.²⁹⁷ On top of this, it can be difficult, sometimes impossible, to determine even which printer ran a particular Penny Dreadful. Other times, publishers might have existed only to publish one series. Other times, the same story may have several publishers associated with it. And further still, even those publishers that are reasonably well known and clearly associated with particular serials may have kept terrible records during existence that have become no better through the passage of time since.²⁹⁸ This all amounts to a jumbled, bloody mess. The material history of these texts resists cataloguing in ways the era's fascination with Natural History and taxonomy would seem to have surely ruled out. Nevertheless, tracking these texts and their multiple versions and editions, and getting clear information on "actual" authors while wading through myriad pen names and constant plagiarism stands as a monumental task with no guarantee of successful completion. The trouble with the history of Penny Dreadful, really, could not match the city's general problems with cacophonous, untraceable overcrowding and intersecting influences at Smithfield any better.

Besides the confusion caused by such archival challenges, the serials themselves troubled notions of precise literary value thanks to rampant plagiarism, and the incredible reduction in price literature undergoes in the nineteenth century amplifies the question of literary value in yet another sense. Charles Dickens, wildly popular despite still being inaccessible to large sections

²⁹⁷ Marie Léger-St-Jean, Cambridge University, has established the definitive online resource on the pennies, an endeavor I have been invited to take part in by Rebecca Nesvet, another contributor. One of the most useful aspects of the site is its consolidation of the few known narrative histories of penny production and statistics, including references to all known bibliographies or notes to future inclusions not yet incorporated. See: <http://www.priceonepenny.info/index.php>

²⁹⁸ The bibliography at *P.O.P.* is again definitive here, for the most part, and in particular the work of Louis James referenced already in this project and in that bibliography is a crucial source of these details, as is the excellent narrative introduction to the Ono Collection by Elizabeth James and Helen R. Smith in *Penny dreadfuls and boys' adventures: the Barry Ono Collection of Victorian popular literature in the British Library*. London: British Library, 1998.

of the population due to the cost of his works, was also a wildly popular victim of Penny press plagiarism. The Penny fiction “reign of terror” as London’s most accessible and popular literary form begins essentially with Thomas Pickett Prest’s plagiarism of Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers* as *Penny Pickwick*. The penny press thus made literature available to the newly massive reading public in a form of “discount” recirculation. There were original stories and series, to be sure, but the pennies also made the works of famous authors available to a ravenous reading public. Dickens, for example, was typically available in monthly installments at one shilling per issue. One shilling was twelve pence. Thus, one weekly series in a penny edition was one third as expensive as Dickens, and there would be, by the close of the nineteenth century, a number of *half* penny editions on the market. The “bang for the buck” is clear, and the general accessibility a penny promised is matched in the price of a shave in the most notorious penny serial of all. Sweeney Todd’s barbershop, with its white and red pole, boasts the window advertisement: “Easy shaving for a penny, As good as you will find any.”²⁹⁹ The alternative to the shilling monthly serial, for those who wanted to read Dickens, was a library subscription. Those typically cost forty-two shillings, or more than five hundred pence; a reader could get ten different penny serials per week at such rates. Publishers that made Dickens and other works available to the working classes at the penny rates thus not only met an existing demand, they fomented that demand by leveling the cost of literature. Readers found other ways to stretch their money, often sharing penny editions amongst neighborhood communities of readers who then split the cost even further.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Rymer, James Malcolm. *The string of pearls: or, The Barber of Fleet Street: a domestic romance*. London: E. Loyd, 1850, p. 2. Included within *Popular Literature in 18th and 19th Century Britain, Parts Three-Ten: The Barry Ono Collection of Bloods and Penny Dreadfuls*, British Library. Accessed via Nineteenth Century Collections Online, Gale Group.

³⁰⁰ Léger-St-Jean, <http://www.priceonepenny.info/notes.php>

There are other aspects of nineteenth serial publication that highlight the unruliness attending early mass production of popular culture. One is the case of boys' magazines, a primary mode of serial fictions that included highwayman suspense stories and tales of adventure, the former being a more direct precursor to the Penny Dreadful and urban murder tale. There were massive numbers of different publications with titles including the word "boys" in some form. The narrative and material quality of these publications was apparently not important. The same storylines could show up in multiple different series, characters killed in prior editions could be suddenly alive and well in later issues with no explanation at all, and general typographical errors were all common. Nevertheless, these boys' tales and the broader serial fiction of the day enjoyed a voracious readership. The publishers had no trouble satisfying that demand, as they could borrow liberally from prior publications and from more established literature including the works of Dickens and other canonical writers of the period. Dickens was wildly popular, but his works and other literary works remained out of the price range of the new, massive reading public in London. But copyright law was still developing, and so individual publishers could plagiarize to their heart's content with little consequence.³⁰¹

Dickens himself was serialized, and his notoriously prolific output (similar to Sir Walter Scott) included pervasive media activity. During his lifetime, Dickens was a well known author of city journalism, a serial fiction writer, and a legal reporter, etc. But even though his output was ubiquitous and he was serialized per the period's trends, Dickens was still Dickens. He was famous in the manner the personalities of Romanticism were. The authors of Penny Dreadfuls were often unknown. There are clear exceptions, such as Thomas Pickett Prest and James

³⁰¹ For a general sense of copyright and related issues in England during the nineteenth century, see: Alexander, Isabella. *Copyright Law and the Public Interest in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Hart, 2010.

Malcolm Rymer, the latter the author of *Varney the Vampyre* and the former often listed as the author of *Sweeney Todd*, though Rymer is generally considered the primary author of *Todd*. But in general, the pennies were mechanized, anonymous, and even surreptitiously written works. Some writers had multiple aliases to protect their identities as aspiring “serious” authors. They would ghost write these lurid, cheap stories and often recycle narratives from prior works or authors like Dickens. The Penny Dreadful was the processed meat of literary production, the amalgamated sausage of narrative. The inscrutable provenance of these mostly unremarkable narratives and the cheapness of their material composition seem almost too harmonious with one of the most popular examples of the genre.

Sweeney Todd, known to the nineteenth century audience as part of the 1847 *String of Pearls* series published by the most prolific penny publisher of the era, Edward Lloyd, is a textbook example of the Penny Dreadful’s “recycled” processed meat mode—there are multiple versions of the story. Although there were earlier stage versions and multiple printed versions— or perhaps, as a result of all of this overlap—the story became very popular, very fast.³⁰² *Sweeney Todd* proceeds as a series of murders, basement butchery and pie manufacture, and then sale at the market. Todd’s barber chair is a technologically intricate revolving “double chair,” with two barber’s chairs that can be flipped by the press of a button so a body is turned upside down and deposited into the basement while, up in the barber shop, a clean, empty chair betrays no crime. The fall itself often killed the victims, but if they should survive, Todd would head downstairs with his gleaming straight razor to “polish them off” with a clean slit of the throat.

³⁰² There is to date no better history of the narrative and its myriad contexts than Robert L. Mack’s *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd: The Life and Times of an Urban Legend*. New York: Continuum, 2007. See also the critical introduction and other prefatory materials in the Mack-edited edition of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. vii-xxxviii.

From there, the corpse would be processed into unidentifiable meat, which then, through another ingenious mechanism, would pass through cabinet shelves in the wall into an adjoining basement where a young man was being held prisoner. His charge was to then make meat pies for Mrs. Lovett to sell at the market. The pies were eagerly anticipated by a voracious consuming audience much as the *String of Pearls* stories themselves were by the reading public of London.

As Mack has discussed in his work on *Sweeney Todd*, the victims of Todd's violence are solitary, anonymous travellers "lost" into belly of London. Mack does not draw the connection to the Sutlers of Defoe's tale, but he notes that "[t]he clothes, possessions and unusable body parts of Todd's former customers are hidden both within the barber's house and within the increasingly noisome and overcrowded vaults of the neighbouring church of St. Dunstan's in the west, also on Fleet Street."³⁰³ As London became a buzzing business center, it also drew travellers from all corners of the world, and those travellers were often males traveling alone in pursuit of their fortune. Fleet Street would also have been the metonym for the newspaper industry and the press.³⁰⁴

What is most alluring in the *Todd* story is its associations with the meat industry—and the host of London anxieties therein reflected—discussed in Chapter Two. In T.P. Prest's version of the story, for example, a magistrate attempting to crack the case poses as farmer who had brought beasts from out of town to market. This seemingly incidental note in fact implicates Smithfield Market directly in the narrative as the most likely destination for any "live" meat animals brought to London from outside the city. Mack's introduction includes a dazzling overview of other attending meat topics, such as the fact that, by the beginning of the nineteenth

³⁰³ Mack, p. xvii.

³⁰⁴ White, Jerry. *London in the Nineteenth Century: 'A Human Awful Wonder of God'*. New York: Vintage, 2007, Section VIII, "Fleet Street: City of Words."

century, the Worshipful Company of Butchers was letting just about any kind of meat be sold in the city as a result of suburban competition: “every kind of shoddy or mouldy flesh could be purchased,” Ackroyd observes of the period, so that the ‘unchecked reign of commerce’ involved with the sale of meat became itself a kind of ‘symbol of city life’.”³⁰⁵ There were even “penny pies” to be had, as a result, aligning indeed the penny press with the meat trade in London. Mack’s review of London malignancies and the gathering anxiety about “perfect” murders committed by invisible criminals like those already discussed in this chapter, includes authors from DeQuincey to Orwell.³⁰⁶ He also considers other atrocities such as rumored cannibalism at sea (a fear Stoker may have also had in mind for the ship travel in *Dracula*) and the tinning of meat as a means to mitigate humans falling from their humanity under duress.³⁰⁷

Mack compiles all of the juicy bits of the London meatspace with all of the gruesome urban fears and historical developments in place: “Burkers” tracking vagrants and killing them for dissection experiments by the “sawbones” doctors exploring anatomy in the early London medical schools. The poet John Clare hearing from an acquaintance of the hysteria surrounding travel in London as “unwary walkers in the great metropolis routinely disappeared into trapdoors connected to a subterranean network of tunnels” robbed, murdered, thrown into boiling cauldrons, bones sold to doctors.³⁰⁸ There are then the grave robbers in Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* (Mack references *A Tale of Two Cities* instead). As Mack writes,

Such macabre tales of flesh, bones, and body parts were naturally of a piece with the gossip related to similar stories of unspeakable desecrations in the heart of an increasingly mythologized London after dark—a London of gad-lit, yellow streets, and

³⁰⁵ Mack, p. 12, and quoting Ackroyd, Peter. *London: The Biography*. New York: Verso, 2000, p. 316.

³⁰⁶ Mack, p. 23.

³⁰⁷ Mack, p. 38.

³⁰⁸ Mack, p. 41.

deep, impenetrable fog. The so-called ‘gas-light ghouls’ of the Victorian era, at least, appear to have been all the more ghoulish when they confessed to feeling a bit peckish.³⁰⁹

It is the London of Poe, of Dickens, and even of Defoe’s French butchers! Mack’s work bridging the meat-eating culture of nineteenth-century London with the *Sweeney Todd* concludes with an accounting of some of the “All Time Great” terrible, huge, alien meat pies of English culinary history. To a one, they stink and offend.

In the story itself, which has offensive crimes and a drawn-out narrative arc befitting the pennies’ disposable status and the crime tale’s sensational figures, take place in the environs immediately off of butchers’ stalls and known icons of the Smithfield-era meat industry even when off the Smithfield track a bit. The magistrate posing as drover tells Todd he is staying at Bull’s Head Inn, which was at the important meatspace of Clare Market, right off of Fleet Street. Clare Market had tons of butcher’s shops and was known, definitively, as a meat market specializing in cut meat and not the Smithfield live animal store. However, it was also an active slaughter site in the private butchers’ abattoirs, which were discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two. Among other incidental Bull’s Head details: Hogarth and his artists’ group used to meet at the Bull’s head, and it is now roughly on the spot of the London School of Economics.

A visit to modern-day London will confirm the anxieties the story and the others reviewed in this chapter present: Narrow winding alleyways. Heavy traffic. Proximity but anonymity, even for regular travelers. There would have been an itinerant market class besides butchers and grocers themselves, involving all of the barren occupations and fixations of the middle classes and the sordid abjections thereby inflicted, bettering any Dickens could have imagined for the poor if not for the bare fact that, still, they had money. On this note, the Bull’s Head block would have been run-down and poor, but the “victim” has money on him all the

³⁰⁹ Mack, p. 44.

same. Todd buys it all in the story's resolution, though the story seems implausible at best and suggests Todd is "slipping." Readers sense the game is up as well, as the meat delivery mechanism has by this point been revealed. The only remaining event is for the law to witness the killing apparatus, the two-sided chair performing automated slaughter and erasure under the cover of the doubled "assigned seat" of the customer-victim. Clare Market was renovated at end of century, erased in a similar flick of the civic administrative straight razor as discussed in Chapter Two. The final staged "victim" is the empowered agent of the law and the wizened city denizen. His story is that he consorted with drovers and butchers, meat industry figures who were as disposable for the City as were the animals it ate. Their fate was as peripheral and unimportant as any of Todd's travelling piefolk. lowest life forms in city, yet also at heart of profiteering complaints and suspicions of corruption and secret wealth. Near enough, the Chancery Lane with the court in *Bleak House* that I will discuss in Chapter Four. A bit further north, Smithfield Market, the great heart of the meat industry refracted by the mystery meat pies Todd and Lovitt sell to the city—the import and the foreign unwittingly consumed even amidst the rampant anxieties about both risks built steam in the new mass public. The stinking church's, which really and truly had a problem with its dead "returning" form under the floor boards—the City's new massive population still had to die, really, and there was yet another unscrupulous yet enterprising business to be had: horrid stacks of the dead interrupted church services regularly in the City Centre and elsewhere until the 1852 civic act on burial, right as the Smithfield Removal Act was in process. This is the source of a popular tourist attraction: the seven great Victorian cemeteries, including Highgate at Hampstead, site of Lucy's white lady on the Heath, eating children (no matter what a current-day tour guide says to the contrary). The city beautiful improvements weren't simply the organic result of a civilized society. Parishioners went to

church breathing in the bad air of decaying corpses. Life with death, throughout the city and threatening its denizens at every corner. What a mess.

An urban legend such as the one Dickens employs to reiterate an urban/rural animosity only furthers the general sense of urban anxiety and reactive complaint about uncontrollable but intimately felt economic and health woes smuggled into every crevice and pore of the human in London. This subjection was total and oppressive in the form of fogs, smells, and foods. *Sweeney Todd*, as a popular serial on the eve of the major London slaughter and general civic reform, inculcates the economic and media identifier of London—Fleet Street—and the burgeoning service consumption industry—barbers for hire—with the abjection of urban anonymity and the administered atrocities and forms of “life” discussed earlier in this chapter. Humans purchased all goods and were subject to the quality and price set by uncontrolled, potentially malicious, and unknown forces. Humans themselves end up becoming the “meat” the city consumes as fodder for its mechanized workings. The Penny Dreadfuls of the mid- and late-nineteenth century form a coherent expression of this London malaise, which is articulated in the other literatures here under review as bureaucratic routines juxtaposed with unspeakable, undefined horrors of bloody murder, impossible city experience, and the exclusionary, abjective logics of the improving society.

Chapter 4

Kafka, Dickens, and the Fiction of Legal Subjects

“But if K. behaves ‘like a dog’ it is because he has been treated like a dog by the Court, because he has entered their ‘traffic’ and unwittingly begun to imitate them.”³¹⁰

This chapter is not precisely concerned with “animal figures” in Kafka or Dickens, though it will certainly mention several. It is, rather, focused on the nonhuman forms in their stories. I mean by nonhuman form the narrative and linguistic techniques by which characters are rendered as inanimate objects or, in other cases, disciplined and “unfree” subjects of law and of other social forms. This occurs in the clear subject matter of Kafka’s *The Trial* and Dickens’s *Bleak House*. Both texts are “about” the law (as I will discuss later in the chapter, prepositional precision is itself under review in the title of Kafka’s work on the law, as in “Before the Law”). Both texts, as well as many others by both authors, are also “about” the subjectivity of individuals deprived of their rights and freedoms by massive, inscrutable social structured besides simply “the law.” In the case of Kafka, as I will demonstrate, specific texts like “The Burrow” in fact distill the anxiety of sociation itself as just such a structural impediment and interlocutor. Then, through narrative techniques like *erlebte Rede*, Kafka’s characters can carry on speculative conversations with their own expression, in a way, as narrators and characters wonder out loud about the significance of events and their own position within them without precise, objective articulation of the facts. This is Kafka’s nonhuman form, often acknowledged as his unique convention, and it is nonhuman by virtue of demolishing the human actors at the

³¹⁰ Anderson, Mark. “The Physiognomy of Guilt: *The Trial*,” in *Kafka’s Clothes: Ornament and Aestheticism in the Habsburg Fin de Siècle*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 162.

site of their articulations. Dickens also employs narrative technique and formal play to effect his critique of the violent effect the law and London both have on the subject, as I will demonstrate. Thus, the form and the content—narrative authority and legal subjection—of *The Trial* and *Bleak House* turn out to coincide in far more ways than a standard realism/modernism divide would allow, in part because, like Kafka, Dickens’s auteur innovations often kick him out of precise generic modes. As a result, these two works operate on at least three critical registers: practical/legal; formal/narrative; and philosophical/theoretical. Together, these critiques implicate literary form and social structure in an interrogation of administered life and the potential “nonlife”—the nonhuman forms of life—that results from the machinery of modern (and decidedly urban, in Dickens’s case) society.

Before developing that analysis, I would like to briefly address, as I did at the outset of Chapter One for British Romanticism, another approach Kafka studies might take in a more “practical” animal studies analysis, and I will also note that, at times in this chapter, I will recall the legal history of animals and Smithfield from Chapter Two in order to integrate the formal literary studies herein with the broader legal studies of other parts of this project. There has been some attention paid to animal characters and figures of animality in Kafka’s work, and it is worth noting that the firmest address of nonhumans in Kafka—and then of some of the nonhuman forms of Kafka’s literary techniques—defines itself as having thematic interests I also explore in this chapter. In 2010, an edited volume on Kafka’s nonhumans brought together a number of Kafka and animal studies scholars to

help make sense of the literary and philosophical significance of his preoccupation with animals, and make clear that careful investigation of those creatures illuminates his core concerns: the nature of power; the inescapability of history and guilt; the dangers, promise, and strangeness of the alienation endemic to modern life; the human propensity for cruelty and oppression; the limits and conditions of humanity and the risks of

dehumanization; the nature of authenticity; family life; Jewishness; and the nature of language and art.³¹¹

Such studies draw on contemporary animal studies approaches, which are increasingly interested as well in biopolitical critique and are highlighted by the critique of anthropocentrism as it relates to the oppression and exploitation of animals for labor, food, and even companionship—the household pet has been described as a slave and there are strong trends in “critical” animal studies seeking to liberate animals through the abolition of pet keeping.³¹² The critical gesture that these liberationist animal studies perform, the “de-centering” of the human subject of history and of social structures, has its best-known antecedent in Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals*, a text published in cooperation with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals in 1975. In that text, Singer claims that the human use of animals for research, food, and anything else that causes suffering for the animal, cannot be ethically defended. The term he employs for human chauvinisms toward animals that ground such cruelty is “speciesism,” and the text is also well known for Singer’s discussions of the ethical equivalence of performing certain experiments on humans of diminished intellectual capacity instead of great apes with (proven) higher mental capacities. The text and the branches of animal studies most closely associated with its claims thus constitute an ethical discourse on species difference that articulates the porosity of species groups at the level of intellectual capacity and other distinguishing characteristics that are not confined to humans or other animals. This “undoes” strong claims of species exceptionalism that tend still to be the fundamental bases of arguments against Singer’s arguments.

³¹¹ Lucht, Marc and Donna Yari, eds. *Kafka’s Creatures: Animals, Hybrids, and Other Fantastic Beings*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010, p. 3.

³¹² *Nonhuman Animal Liberation: The Abolition of “Pet” Slavery*, <http://veganwarfare.com/pets/>

Kafka is equally concerned with the presumptions of human social forms and individual consistency, exploring the horrific absurdity of bureaucratic structures as well as the unexceptional simplicity of those who function without incident in the world in works such as *The Trial*. There are some, such as Josef K.'s co-workers, who wear the office life without incident and appear to be, for lack of a better word, normal. The anxieties of Kafka's protagonist in *A Hunger Artist* have much to do with his struggle to perform a beautiful act that has no audience but culminate in a mundane, unsatisfying excuse of sorts for all of his transcendent commitment to a sublime ideal. Kafka unmoors the human subject, reflecting not the "broken" authentic human in the age of its technological administration but the simultaneous recognition that the human was never an authenticity to begin with. It may have all simply been a case of bad timing. As I will show in further detail later in this chapter, Kafka repeatedly relies on the play of narrative voice—the *erlebte Rede*—to negotiate a recognition of narrative event that simply arrives upon the characters' and narrators' experience yet must be synthesized with an authoritative position, typically in unconvincing fashion but for the way that they might convince us of the demolition of narrative authority.

What "speciesism" has to do with Dickens is simpler still: Singer's analogy of speciesism to racism or classism—and the argument that it thus cannot rightly found discriminatory treatment—is the direct heritage of liberal social critiques such as those found in Dickens's London novels and the broader English reform movement era of the long nineteenth century, some of which I have already discussed in the case of animal rights and public literacy improvements and education reform. This parallel of animal concern to, in this case, the realist's social consciousness, also attends the Romantic era social activism while a similar sense of the London "scene" took hold in new shopping habits and the constant interest in spectatorship and

aesthetic comportment as shown in Chapter One. Dickens, however, also has a massive journalistic output in which he defends the butchers at Smithfield as abjected London actors, as discussed in Chapter Two, and his expression of the Smithfield scene in *Oliver Twist*, as discussed in the prior chapter and here, shows his broader concern for suffering, in itself.

Oliver is the precarious life in the Expedition chapter, and in *Great Expectations*, Pip arrives first to the Smithfield scene in the customary “Arrival” scene in Dickens’s London social novels. The passage in *Oliver Twist* shows the distortion of human and animal figures alike in the market commerce context:

Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a mass; the whistling of drovers, the barking dogs, the bellowing and plunging of the oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs, the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and roar of voices, that issued from every public-house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping and yelling; the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the market; and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid, and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng; rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses.³¹³

In *Oliver Twist*, as discussed in the previous chapter, Smithfield is a recurring point of progress for young Oliver that amplifies his uncertainty and unhappiness:

It was Smithfield that they were crossing, although it might have been Grosvenor Square, for anything Oliver knew to the contrary. The night was dark and foggy. The lights in the shops could scarcely struggle through the heavy mist, which thickened every moment and shrouded the streets and houses in gloom; rendering the strange place still stranger in Oliver’s eyes; and making his uncertainty the more dismal and depressing.³¹⁴

Dickens and the popular penny fiction of nineteenth-century London, particularly in the case of *Sweeney Todd* and the horrors of new urban market zones replete with mystery meat and bloodthirsty psychopaths privy to all manner of technological methods of atrocity, paint a gruesome and dirty picture of London and the modern consumer society. As the long section on

³¹³ Dickens, *The adventures of Oliver Twist*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1870, p. 76.

³¹⁴ Dickens, *The adventures of Oliver Twist*, p. 55.

the Market highlights, and as the earlier and subsequent literary comments on the space also confirm, the mass of live animals at the heart of the city was an immediately recognizable aspect of London that motivated public debate about the fate of this historic site of revelry and spectacle. Population growth and shifting notions of social experience in the nineteenth century city space rendered the Smithfield scene insufficient and inhumane by the changed civic standards. The issues with meat sources, general hygiene, and crime had already influenced changes at the site before market removal. Smithfield was horrible yet not anomalous despite its close “proximity” to the low forms of life that British reform movements would target throughout the century—the depravity of Smithfield was an everyday commonplace.

This imbrication of quotidian intimacies and mundane contact with unspeakable atrocities and dangerous contact with disease and unsavory characters, including the spectacle of oddities at Bartholomew Fair, were aggressively legislated alongside the animal welfare activism centered on Smithfield and other animal rights law as discussed earlier. Legal action was meant to right the social wrongs, and faith in the law to do so was largely sincere. Still today, animal law studies begin with English Common Law and the development of chattle (cattle) property law while marking Martin’s Act of 1822 as a foundational moment. The law’s failure to save animals from slaughter, and animal rights law’s outright complicity in the evolution of mass slaughter and meat consumption, is one of a number of such failures. Besides the insufficiency of animal protections and the grim irony of “humane slaughter” regulations in the meat industry, the meat product industry also exported its work to less-regulated spaces such as the Liebig Meat Extract Company/OXO’s South American meat processing plants. Concentrating “meat” into a spreadable paste, filled not only with animal bodies but now also producing early versions of the corporate transnational outsourcing mode in the new global industry more familiarly linked, for

example, to the British East India Company, makes the regulated and legislated meat object of the nineteenth century into a commodity separated entirely from the animal body and prior geospatial restrictions on its care and transport. Smithfield removal was one stage in this evolution, and the popular London literatures expose the cultural consumption tastes attending that progression. In all, the animal question in nineteenth-century London and the Smithfield scene informing gruesome narratives and public fears coalesce in the legal addresses, failures, and subjections that Dickens would directly address as his Romantic precursors had in literary forms like apostrophe and the other modes explicated in Chapter One. That sense of abjection and administered experience in urban modernity recurs across Kafka's works including, as I'll interrogate in comparison to the Dickens study in this chapter, in his legal novel, *The Trial*.

The two great legal novels in the wake of the important animal law period in this study suggest quite a different view on the law than the reasoned sincerity of animal rights activists (on their best days), perhaps drawing attention more to the classist social engineering and middle class sense of propriety underlying much animal rights law in nineteenth century England. The Smithfield scene inscribed on daily London life a unique brand of the gathering knowledge that the Market space, like London at large, asserted a consubstantial intermingling of human and nonhuman in a time that Dickens and others also considered one of deep social hypocrisy as millions languished in abject poverty in the world's great metropolis and world power. Smithfield produced the vibrant, paradoxical crises of sociation and Society Dickens documented, at times in modernist tones, and that Kafka expressed in meditations on family, work, and, of primary concern in this chapter, on law. The law had not corrected the conditions Smithfield, as emblematic of London's gathering modernity, inflicted. It had merely served to erase them in facilitating a welfarist censure and removal of the market from City Centre space.

Once removed to less-frequented thoroughfares, the invisible business of slaughter proceeded at an increased rate. Dickens had chronicled the butchers' union fight against the Smithfield reformers in his journalism, addressing the butchers and other meat tradesmen also in less glowing tones through the Market removal period in later installments of *Household Words*. His targets were often the unnamed civic managers motivating London's reforms, including Parliament, and so the turn to the gears of the Chancery Court in *Bleak House* satirizes the formal administration of rules and law in the (as always) foggy, dingy, noisy city that as easily hosts the meat market as the "high" courts. The law, like the teeming meat market, is ridiculous and uncertain. In Kafka's *The Trial*, the ridiculous is far more gruesome. These two works taken together, however, articulate the trouble with the law that had seemed a legitimate remedy to the suffering of animals, humans, and anything else in the long nineteenth-century metropolitan meat grinder. There are several key overlapping tropes in the two works, such as the dense, "bad" air that hangs as a fog over London's Chancery Court in Dickens and that permeates the halls of the court in *The Trial*. My comparison, besides such shared figures, will focus primarily on the two works' interrogation of narrative technique as an expression of thematic, historical, and ontological forms of life under the sign of law.

First, I will discuss the surprisingly few comparative approaches to the two works. Those that exist display curious gaps especially at the level of literary form, which then permeates the thematic and any sense of historical analysis therein. Mark Spilka's 1963 *Dickens and Kafka: a mutual interpretation* starts out with an anecdotal proof of the comparison's rarity and strangeness: "After long experience with friends and colleagues, I have learned to expect raised

eyebrows, foolish grins, even a mild state of shock, on mentioning the subject of this book.”³¹⁵ Spilka goes on to dispel the casual synopses of Dickens and Kafka as, respectively, “open, cheerful, effusive, preoccupied with social causes” and “cryptic, morbid, astringent, obsessed with religious *angst*.”³¹⁶ He considers a more nuanced comparative treatment of the two, one that addresses the “persistent vein of innocence” in Kafka and the “gloom and guilt” in Dickens (especially later Dickens, Spilka will argue throughout the work), to be especially important on the issue of “home-society conflict.”³¹⁷ Spilka’s comparison of *Bleak House* and *The Trial* is, surprisingly, one of very few. Spilka focuses intently on the religious aspects of the two texts, calling the offices and chambers in both stories—the bureaus of the law—“oddly religious Courts.”³¹⁸ And yet one of the initial pieces of evidence for Spilka’s claim is simply that, in *Bleak House*, the protagonist (one of the narrators, as well) Esther arrives in London, is immediately bewildered by the fog and the noise and the “distracting state of confusion” before arriving at the law offices that will oversee much of Esther’s progress for the remainder of the novel, which is apparently located on an old church grounds.³¹⁹ “The converted church (for what else can we call it?) is Kenge and Carboy’s law office,” Spilka writes.³²⁰ The case Esther is in London for is Jarndyce and Jarndyce, the interminable estate case that might ultimately deem Esther and her fellow orphaned siblings the rightful heirs to a fortune, were the fortune not

³¹⁵ Spilka, Mark. *Dickens and Kafka: a mutual interpretation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963, p. 13.

³¹⁶ Spilka, p. 13.

³¹⁷ Spilka, p. 13.

³¹⁸ Spilka, p. 199.

³¹⁹ Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 84. Quoted in Spilka as on page 3. The original serial edition matches conventional contemporary print organizations. See for example: Dickens, Charles, *Bleak House*. London: Bradbury and Evans, 1852-1853.

³²⁰ Spilka, p. 203.

wholly expended on the case itself through the course of the novel's proceedings.³²¹ Spilka, on the issue of the mess of a case Esther and her siblings are party to, draws connections to Kafka's "In the Penal Colony" and other "Kafkan metaphors" including the unfinished wall in "The Great Wall of China."³²² What is most striking about Spilka's version of the story in this case, however, is when he writes that, "the three orphans and their guardian are involved in a legal muddle which suggests Original Sin."³²³

Some of the problems with Spilka's approach, which don't overrule the value of other parts of his study, do lead to important misunderstandings of the literary form in Dickens, especially. This begins with his choice of theme and its historical motivations. Spilka's leap to a religious significance skips over any consideration of legal structures and rituals as not reinvigorations of religious practice but as revised social forms marking a broader shift to secular, legal administration of life. His study is also not concerned with London's general civic recombination in the period, as discussed in the section on Smithfield. Buildings continue to be repurposed, if not demolished outright, in London. What Dickens's chosen architectural and social symbols here denote is the general shift in London civic space in the period, down to the most hallowed halls. Spilka avoids the more troubling conclusion for his own findings, as well: the law is the full target of Dickens's satire in *Bleak House*. The institutional critique Dickens wages against legal structures is more accurately a rebuke of religious structures, as well, and not an extension of religious experience and anxiety. There is an ample literature on both Kafka and Dickens with regard to the religious aspects of their work and their personal lives, including Max Brod's account of Kafka, but those approaches are both problematic in their own rite and, as in

³²¹ Thanks to Jeff Fort for an intriguing observation on the matter that seems ripe for further exploration in future work: why does *Kafka* so rarely discuss money?

³²² Spilka, p. 204.

³²³ Spilka, p. 205.

the case of Spilka's avoidance of key aspects of Dickens's satire, besides the point altogether. The structural and narrative concerns Spilka does *not* address are incredibly revealing, even down to the seemingly minor level of citations. Spilka's text can be confusing on citations at times, for example quoting a long passage in which Esther's godmother insults her and her mother's "disgrace" and then later the passage containing Esther's arrival at the law offices in London. The confusion is that both quotes, and others, are listed as on the same page of the Dickens original. This is unlikely, as the quotes are about ten pages apart in most standard editions and comprise vastly different scenes. This is not the only long quote listed as all on the same page (3) of *Bleak House* in his chapter on *Bleak House* and *The Trial*. The reason this matters is that these passages are not even in the same narrative voice or chapter section of Dickens's work, and yet Spilka layers them all in one massive meta-aperture to the book to begin his study on "Religious Folly." One consequence of the resulting textual ambiguity, as simple as it seems at first, is that Spilka's efforts to conflate civic disruption with religious confusion elides the thrust of Dickens's expression of London's material immensity and the fate of the individual against that development. The individual in *need* of the religious sincerity and success Spilka seems aimed at no longer exists as a whole, consistent subject, and is a status Dickens interrogates alongside his interrogations of the reconfigured London.

At the opening of the book, the city is shrouded in fog and, in this and other Dickens works, overwhelms the uninitiated outsider and, as Spilka correctly asserts, the child. Through Esther's peripheral vision (as it were—her narration is as an outsider arriving at the day's center of the universe, London), Dickens reiterates the coeval disorientation of the law and the city that opened the novel before Esther's first episode of narration. Spilka stacks up Dickens's meticulous preface in an unidentified narrator's voice with Esther's opening first person

responses to the “same” London that narrator had just expressed. Spilka has a potentially excellent read on an ideal affected subject, or subjects that

lack a comprehensive grasp of complicated systems; they convert their complexities into immediate effects of absurdity and confusion; they respond, as it were, from below, with emotional immediacy and concreteness, but without those speculative and synthetic powers which make for clarity, scope and fullness of perception: and Kafka, for all his intellectual sophistication, for all his legalistic and Talmudic sense of contradictions and alternatives, was as confined as Dickens by the child’s emotional outlook.³²⁴

The “childlike” outlook, for example, can resist some of the ossified tropes of adult behavior like the bureaucratic procedures of court and business alike. In focusing on such a “potential,” Spilka may inadvertently skip that Jarndyce and Jarndyce, as a symbol of London in general, confounds all of the adults in the novel as well. Esther is twenty when the novel begins. She is soon to become a potential wife-object to Dr. Allan Woodcourt and is, throughout, a focal point of the story and a frequent narrative voice. Spilka next lumps Dickens and Kafka in a group of childlike actors in his claim on reality and its negotiation. It is a confusing claim in some ways. Dickens and Kafka constructed the complex figures grounding Spilka’s analysis, and yet they are berated for their naïveté and their expression of the form of “absurdity and confusion.” At the same time, the “potential” of the innocent perspective Spilka notes links quite well to a critique of the administered, automatic forms of life the adults around them lead. This may simply illustrate the trouble with biographical claims on literary form, in general, as they can so quickly distract from effect and expression in their compulsion to ascertain motivation and intent. In Spilka’s study, however, this is a creative and generative, yet perhaps ultimately an editorial claim on the literary technique of Dickens and Kafka.

Grouping the two together in this expressive immaturity is vital to Spilka’s claim that *Bleak House*’s influenced the *The Trial*, “or at the least, prefigured its appearance; in either case,

³²⁴ Spilka, p. 200.

the important fact is continuity of vision.”³²⁵ Later, Spilka claims that “Dickens is able to present the bewildering hopeless quality of life among the ignorant poor” (210) and “so the universe which Kafka builds is not of every time and place, but the product of historical and social forces” (233) without sacrificing his opening and thoroughgoing marriage of author biography, authorial intention, and his critical diminution of authorial authority. Spilka has done the reading, so to speak—he takes out the portions of Kafka’s journals in which he notes a debt to Dickens.³²⁶ When the selections from Kafka he chooses match well with the classist condescension Spilka expresses, the goal seems unclear while the way is made even harder:

General impression given one by peasants: noblemen who have escaped into agriculture, where they have arranged their work so wisely and humbly that it fits perfectly into everything and they are protected against all insecurity and worry until their blissful death. True dwellers on this earth.³²⁷

Spilka draws a line between the expression of a social reality—and he imposes biography and documentary archives on his critique of literary form besides—and the developing modernist trends in both Dickens and Kafka that work against the conditions they articulate by effacing narrative perspective and effectiveness at times, yet then still holding out the potential to catch that effacement and consider it as a further effect, indeed, of the “reality” that influences composition and content.

³²⁵ Spilka, p. 200.

³²⁶ Kafka wrote variously on Dickens, and these writings have been variously addressed in literary criticism as in the case of E.W. Tedlock’s “Kafka’s Imitation of *David Copperfield*,” on the subject of Kafka’s claim that *Amerika* was based on the Dickens story. *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter, 1995), pp. 52-62. The excellent Kafka Encyclopedia by Gray et al asserts that Kafka read *Bleak House*, albeit in hedged terms such as “it seems safe to assume,” and that “the legal motif of *The Trial* reminds some readers of *Bleak House*’s impenetrable, foggy Chancery that defeats by exhaustion all human efforts to lead a natural life.” Gray, Richar T., Ruth V. Gross, Rolf J. Goebel, and Clayton Koelb. *A Franz Kafka Encyclopedia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005, p. 70.

³²⁷ Kafka, Franz. *Diaries, 1914-1923*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Martin Greenburg and Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken, 1953, p. 188 and cited in Spilka, p. 233.

First, the scene that opens the novel: Before Esther ever arrives to mark a crisis of faith or a religious lapse, Dickens begins subsequent paragraphs of the opening “establishing shot” of London and The Law thusly:

“Jarndyce and Jarndyce drones on.”

“Jarndyce and Jarndyce has passed into a joke.”

“How many people out of the suit, Jarndyce and Jarndyce has stretched forth its unwholesome hand to spoil and corrupt, would be a very wide question.”³²⁸

The punctuation of this third sentence is itself disruptive and resistant on a “procedural” level the narrative will foreground. The novel thus begins with a premise about the ubiquitous presence of the case and about the law in general and with Jarndyce and Jarndyce also the stand-in for London and the way it incessantly churns around anyone and anything, ubiquitous in its inane yet dreadful effects. A reflective appreciation of the law’s substance (or lack thereof, in this case) is marked by the second passage, and then overruled by the curious, staggering sentence about quantities “touched” by an anthropomorphized, corrupting law. “The law” is already an elaborate metonymy, for it is its own proper name at the same time as it stands in for the dense nexus of actors and brokered systems that cannot possibly be summarized in only three letters—this will of course prove to be an unshakable interrogation for Kafka, as I will discuss in later portions of this chapter. The “unwholesomeness” of that broken hand, then, is of course the corrupting, spoiling influence of an inhumane administrative structure, but it is also the insufficiency of representation, which will again be an elaborate joke given both Dickens’s own ineffective legal representation and the stooges in *Bleak House*—once again, a precise corollary to *The Trial*. “Jarndyce and Jarndyce has stretched forth its unwholesome hand to spoil and corrupt”

³²⁸ Dickens, *Bleak House*, pp. 64-65.

punctuates the more unsettling, alienating figure it inhabits: “How many people out of the suit / would be a very wide question.” Dickens reiterates the performativity of sociation and legal process, the demolition of individual identity through occupation, and the nonhuman condition under the law that Kafka will also present. What follows these three simple “topic sentences” is the clue to the social distortions Dickens phatically demarcates with the strange punctuation stations of the third.

The various office clerks, and folks like “Mr. Chizzle, Mizzle, or otherwise” are interpellated through the case and, if fortunate, “may shuffle into themselves out of Jarndyce and Jarndyce.”³²⁹ Dickens repeats the words mud and fog relentlessly in these same opening salvos, culminating in a selfsame London mire as earlier described in the Smithfield passages from *Oliver Twist* and elsewhere, until, in this precise reiteration in the paragraph-sentence introducing the head of the courts in the thick of London:

Thus, in the midst of the mud and at the heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.³³⁰

From there, the mired Chancellor is addressed several times over in the colloquial voice of Mr. Tangle, who knows more than anyone else about the case and has the appropriately symbolic name to prove it, thanks to Dickens’s deft hand, as “Mlud...” Naturally, more than once, the Chancellor responds to Tangle with the fully articulated “My lord!” as Tangle dazzles and confounds him with the earliest parcels of the ridiculous case and its entanglements.³³¹

The mutual attention paid to legal alienation is one routine connection made between the two legal novels in question. The damaging but also ridiculous influence of London civic space and social structures in *Bleak House*, as in other Dickens novels, matches Kafka’s persistent

³²⁹ Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 65.

³³⁰ Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 65.

³³¹ Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 66.

themes even though Kafka's civic space is abstract and, perhaps, "ambiguously" disorienting in ways Dickens's specific London and laboriously intricate depictions of legal disorientation are not. Both works highlight the strangeness of legal procedure and its liminal social forms, but Dickens's intent focus on London as a parallel source of confusion to the individual is singular. What is less common in Kafka-Dickens commentaries is the role of narrative style in their interplay; Kafka the modernist, pitted against Dickens the realist, or something to that effect, would do for a basic start. The shifting narrative perspectives in Dickens, however, and the ongoing project of expressing the dearth of personal and narrative authority in Kafka, suggest a shared literary-ontological concern not easily summarized in literature surveys of the period. Still, scholars have sought out more direct chains of influence and significance between the two authors even when they do work on form. Graham Storey, in his study of *Bleak House*, in a passage on European literary contexts, criticizes Spilka's focus on religious aspects, as well, then spends the majority of his discussion of Kafka contrasting the two works before returning to his ranging analysis of the Dickens novel.³³² Richard Posner's *Law and Literature* features only brief summaries of law in literary works, though the entry on Kafka immediately precedes that on Dickens and Posner then collects what few examples of direct comparison exist in notes to the Dickens entry.³³³ Posner also notes the brief mention Deborah Heller Roazen made in 1978 that Kafka may have read Dickens.³³⁴

³³² See: Storey, Graham. *Dickens: Bleak House*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. In particular, he draws distinctions between the two authors' interest in individual character consciousness, pp. 106-107, and his critique of Spilka leads into his broader contrast summary, pp. 103-104.

³³³ Posner is a legal scholar and, incidentally, one of the best-known opponents of animal rights in public discourse, having participated in a publicized email debate with Peter Singer on the matter. See: Peter Singer and Richard Posner. "Animal Rights," *Slate*. June 2001. Posner begins his part in the exchange by agreeing with Singer that humans are animals and are not "infinitely" superior to other animals, before aligning human preference for other humans over other animals

The alluring proximity of their works and their experiences with legal and other official training and work, despite the often inconclusive and indirect links between the two authors, generate at least one relevant biographical consideration of their work. Tracing literary influence between the two has been addressed to some extent through the study of Kafka's letters and journals, in which he mentions Dickens (approvingly and otherwise) on more than one occasion.³³⁵ But the other requisite biographical comparison is that both men worked in the legal trade. Kafka was trained as an attorney and spent a year working as an unpaid law clerk in the courts before working in insurance offices thereafter.³³⁶ Dickens was a court reporter for a time. That both would go on to write canonical satires of courts and legal systems might be most easily summarized as personally cathartic or liberating, and Dickens had a further bone to pick with the law in the case of his own Chancery, well, case: His *A Christmas Carol* was famously plagiarized and redistributed upon its incredible popularity after the original 1843 printing. He had five separate bills against individual publishing houses all at once at the Old Bailey, the London court. He had already lambasted American presses for distributing his works in the U.S. but not paying him even one pence—or perhaps a dime is the better idiom in this case. *A*

with Americans' preference for other Americans over non-Americans. Things deteriorate rapidly from there. Posner, a bit like Spilka on the matter of "Original Sin" in *Bleak House* in fact, arrives at grand frames like "love" with no sense of how he arrives at such terms. Throughout—and Singer has his own hobbyhorses, to be sure—Posner defends a common sense anthropocentrism through frequently shifting rhetorical targets. Singer lets Posner have the last word but opens his final missive with "this 'Dialogue' has been both a pleasure and an enlightening experience," neither of which can possibly be true based on the disaster the email chain comprises.

³³⁴ Heller Roazen, Deborah. "A Peculiar Attraction: *Bleak House*, *Der Prozess*, and the Law," *Essays in Literature*, Vol. 5, 1978. Referenced in Posner, p. 187.

³³⁵ Gray et al, p. 70.

³³⁶ Kafka's work life has been the subject of some discussion. Stanley Corngold edited, with Benno Wagner and Jack Greenberg, *Frankz Kafka: The Office Writings*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, to be released in paperback July 2015 and perhaps the sign of even more to come on Kafka's office life and something like the "onto-bureaucracy" in his works.

Christmas Carol had been reprinted and sold for a penny in England in the time leading up to his January 8, 1844 suit against the publishing houses. He won his suit, technically, but then the primary target of his charges declared bankruptcy and Dickens was left to pay his own court and attorney's fees while receiving in settlement far less than those costs amounted to. Not only had his works been successfully reduced to popular penny press status once again, he then was subsidizing that reduction out of his own pocket despite the principle of his complaint having been fully upheld—the presses stopped.

The Dickens copyright case and its possible relationship the *Bleak House* versions of procedural idiocy and the economic ironies of legal proceedings on financial matters is well-documented. Perhaps the most illuminating and thorough account is E.T. Jacques' *Charles Dickens in Chancery, being an account of his proceedings in respect of the "Christmas Carol" with some gossip in relation to the old law courts at Westminster*.³³⁷ Jacques, a Supreme Court Solicitor, reminds his reader of Sir Walter Scott's similar troubles with profit on his work and late-in-life destitution, which Dickens pointed to as a cause for his own complaint. Jacques even dabbles in literary criticism and his own bout with ironic Education Law approval before properly returning to his legal review: "For present purposes I am not concerned with Dickens's merits; and as regards his influence, I think it will be admitted on all hands that no one, literate or illiterate, can read him without being the better for it."³³⁸ His mention of Education Acts does not specify which; as discussed in the chapter on penny serials, public literacy rates had exponentially improved starting one hundred years before Jacques wrote. There were a series of

³³⁷ Another nod to Jeff Fort here, as he notes that this particular title reminds of the roles gossip and hearsay play in *The Trial*.

³³⁸ Jacques, E.T. *Charles Dickens in Chancery, being an account of his proceedings in respect of the "Christmas Carol" with some gossip in relation to the old law courts at Westminster*. London: Longmans, Green, 1914, p. 7.

new laws relating to education passed throughout the nineteenth century in England and schools for children, slight in existence before the nineteenth century, were being built at incredible rates as well. An 1833 Act provided fee remission for poor parents. It is possible he speaks here specifically of the 1870 Forster Elementary Education Act making school attendance compulsory and establishing government support for school construction where means were lacking. His sense of “improvement” in the passage would at least suggest an affinity for reform movements. No shortage of Dickens characters, incidentally, to inspire such social concern.

Dickens’s ridiculous, interminable Jarndyce and Jarndyce case in *Bleak House*, while modeled on, if anything, a different brand of legalities than the copyright case he suffered at Chancery, thus has at least some biographical impetus. The punch line, as even contemporary members of the legal trade writing on Dickens are quick to note, is that court cases seemed then and seem still “to have no purpose but to line the pockets of lawyers.”³³⁹ Writing more broadly on the issue of bureaucratic process in *The Castle* and then as it plays in *The Trial*, Stanley Corngold and Benno Wagner note, drawing on the work of Hartmut Binder as well, that “Kafka’s fiction turns bureaucracy into a political grotesque—a grotesquerie that is ‘abysmally’ comic.”³⁴⁰ This is an essential lynchpin in the comparison of Kafka’s and Dickens’s legal fictions, which are in turn always [a broader assessment of the structures of sociation and the prospects of the self down to the very material of selfhood, the individuating narrative voice and identity.

The violently inscrutable structure that kills off its subjects in *The Trial* has employees rendered anonymous and immovable yet also strangely powerful and uncomplicated—their

³³⁹ Krotz, Daniel. “Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce,” *The Huffington Post*, May 17, 2010.

³⁴⁰ Corngold, Stanley and Benno Wagner. *Franz Kafka: The Ghosts in the Machine*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011, p. 117

experience is not threatened in the events of the story, whereas the man “on trial,” K, is demolished. Likewise, in *Bleak House*, which features a significant clarity in comparison with *The Trial* in that, at least, the case is defined and described in great detail. This laborious performance of the immensity of the legal structure in *Bleak House* does not salvage its victims, however, and the estate inheritance at the heart of the whole ordeal is consumed by the entangled legal meanderings that take up the pages. The money is “burnt up” like poor old Krook, and the facts of the money’s consumption in legal process is no less ridiculous, in retrospect, than Krook’s spontaneous combustion.³⁴¹ If Kafka and Dickens intended to dismantle the legal system and, simultaneously, exorcise their own work anxieties, they did not do so through the secondary characters stuck in the offices of the law. Of course, their biographies diverge on this count, as Dickens would not always work in law offices or any other bureaucratic day-to-day as Kafka did. At any rate, a thoroughgoing biographical study that considers all character profiles and developments as part of such a claim about the authors’ perspectives on the law avoids the important point Spilka makes about the conflict in domestic and social spaces. Spilka and others have remarked on the way the structure of law and society beyond (or alongside) legal buildings and processes subjects humans to an objecthood.

While the law is an obvious interpellator in *Bleak House*, *The Trial*, and “In the Penal Colony” that can extend general critique of other bureaucratic structures and systems in both authors’ works, Kafka’s “The Burrow” is among those stories that start a bit before, or perhaps

³⁴¹ Dickens really believed in the phenomenon, apparently, despite round rebuke from George Henry Lewes and others of his contemporaries. More interesting on the matter of Krook is that he drank bad gin constantly, reminding directly of the greasy gin of Orwell’s *1984*. Krook is a poorly organized sort and a compulsive hoarder of, what else, documents. After his death, it turns out he had the signed legal will that “solves” the doomed Jarndyce case, stressing Dickens’s high opinion on the arbitrary reach of not legal authority, as in Kafka, but the raw materials of the law, the papers and objects that must be assembled to establish the law at all, let alone enforce or confirm it.

after—perhaps both and neither—firmly articulated modes of such structuration. Here Kafka’s story suggests that social life subjects individuals to domestic structuring—activities of building and burying oneself in habitats that satisfy both an obsessive need to produce and a need to be enclosed and braced against the outside world. This negative sociation and domesticity effect an ecological form in Kafka that may relate to theories of animality and the inhuman conditions of industrial urban modernity but that, as a literary form, also resist such thematic frames at precisely the point at which an animal subjection or inhuman condition is most forcefully pronounced. For example, the tricky identification of just what, precisely, the genderless “vermin” Gregor Samsa “has become,” or when he had become it before awakening one morning—a trope of indeterminate narrative progress also dominant in the buried protagonists in *The Castle* and *The Trial*—disrupts the otherwise perfectly functional horror of having become, suddenly one real morning at home, a gigantic cockroach that can’t speak.

The elementary yet deadly effects of the literal/figurative play of the vermin metaphor remains one of the best known studies of Kafka to date, by Stanley Corngold. “In the end,” according to Corngold, [Gregor] is sheerly not-this, not-that—a paradox, a creature not even of dust.”³⁴² When Clayton Koelb reviewed Corngold’s seminal *Frank Kafka: The Necessity of Form* in 1990, he began immediately, in the first analytic paragraph after his personal opening to the review for *Modern Philology*, with the persistent resistance of this “literalized metaphor” in *The Metamorphosis*.³⁴³ The ambiguity makes the condition somehow even worse than that imaginable fate.

³⁴² Corngold, Stanley. “Introduction,” *The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka*. New York: Bantam, 1972, p. xix.

³⁴³ Koelb, Clayton. Review of *Franz Kafka: The Necessity of Form*, in *Modern Philology*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (Aug., 1990), pp. 105-107.

“The Burrow” makes it clear that the individual abjection within the imagination of industrious society breeds an inarticulate paranoia about others and a bolstered domestic space (the “Castle Keep”). Not incidentally, Kieran Dolin, in a chapter on “Reformist critique in the mid-Victorian ‘legal novel’” that discusses *Bleak House* at length, notes the symmetry of fractured families and permeable domestic spaces—“precarious dwellings”—and the insecurity of lower economic classes, children, and women. Dickens’s “decaying houses,” Dolin writes, are the same as “the rotting structure of chancery.” Dolin, perhaps with no thinking on Kafka at all, begins this consideration with a savvy read on the stakes of legal procedure and domestic estate, which matches the burrowing protagonist in Kafka and its obsession with structuring procedures, excavation and buttressing, and all under the sign of a calculative but indirect narrative voice.

From the Dolin:

If, according to the mythology of English law, an Englishman’s home is his castle, then the novel’s imagery of homes vulnerable to invasion and of “decaying houses” in Chancery forces a reconsideration of the security afforded by the law. In consequence, the decrepit slum of Tom-All-Along’s comes to stand not only for the deranged obsession of Tom Jarndyce, but for the rotting structure of Chancery.³⁴⁴

In “The Burrow,” the play on anti- civic space, domestic labor and security, and the tensions of these and other associations dominate the narration. The story plays on terms like Burgplatz and even bergfried. Burg- is a prefix in derogatory bourgeois insults. Fried denotes peace, similar to the “stillness” the narrator had just noted as the favorite aspect of the burrow before mentioning the Castle Keep. This stillness will never hold sway in the story, however. Burgplatz is a town “square,” such as the Smithfield Market square. Platz is space, room, and place, and further can be one’s civic appointment or work role. Bauplatz would be a building site. And of course, Burg is not the term for castle Kafka would use in *Das Schloss*, written just before he would write *Der*

³⁴⁴ Dolin, Kieran. *Fiction and the Law: Legal Discourse in Victorian and Modernist Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 83-84.

Bau. Neither were completed at the time of his death, and both were published posthumously against his wishes. An old German pairing, “Schloss und Burgen,” means castles and stately homes. The two are differentiated, and Burg invokes humble, here “underground” senses of the animal as well as the conflicting, “vertical,” as Corngold and Wagner write, castle square space Burgplatz conventionally delimits.³⁴⁵ Corngold and Wagner are especially convinced that the space of the underground burrow and the chosen term, instead of the fuller Aufbau—structure, also the term Kafka uses for the machine in “In the Penal Colony”—is due to the narrating subject, which is made even more badger-like given the “animal” domestic space. The biber Burg is a beaver’s lodge— a good hint at the critter doing all the work in the story. Of further note, J.M. Coetzee was preoccupied with issues of translation, time, and tense (but not the Castle Keep) in one of his existent scholarly works, “Time, Tense, and Aspect in Kafka’s “The Burrow.”³⁴⁶

The narrator first describes an ideal companion—the object of social desire—before being completely overwhelmed by the approaching other. Its apparent proximity intensifies in scrapings and sensations the narrator describes, with no recourse to objective narrative authority, overwhelming the narrator’s interior perspective and seemingly every aspect of the telling of the story. The ambiguous frenzy of the story’s later stages could as easily have been present beneath the measured, rational veneer of the opening narrative structure’s success: the shifting voice in the narrative development in fact achieves no narrative progress at all. The burrowing that takes up the majority of the story is precisely the narrator’s subjective obsession with rational account, and thus its “successful” digging is simultaneously the catastrophic abjection of the social

³⁴⁵ Corngold, Stanley & Benno Wagner. *Franz Kafka: The Ghosts in the Machine*. Northwestern University Press, 2011, p. xi.

³⁴⁶ *MLN*, Vol. 96, No. 3, German Issue (Apr., 1981), pp. 556-579.

subject striving to construct individuation *against* sociation. Across Kafka's oeuvre, he returns to the project of expressing this intimate, irresistible abjection in a consistently "nonhuman" literary form. The domestic frame telescopes broader structural frames like the civic and, perhaps most prominently of all in Kafka, the legal.

The Coetzee connection, while peripheral in this treatment, is not accidental, and nor are the tropes of animality in this story and others by Kafka. What is especially fascinating is the connection of the forms of captivity, domestic security, and social anxiety in Kafka to the larger concern, as at Smithfield, with a leveled anthrozootic community at the very heart of the city or, in Kafka's sense, at the very heart of humanity and its post-calculus. Kafka's characters are undergoing that leveling and, time and again, attempt to narrate their way out of things, so to speak. Josef K. in *The Trial* always seeks proper audience while reminding himself and the reader alike, through the narrator's *erlebte Rede*, of the social, would-be legal formalities precluded at each point of his quest. The irony of Smithfield's legal *success* in addressing captive suffering, and human-nonhuman coexistence in one fell swoop is the intensification (as silence and invisibility) of animal slaughter wrought by that procedural success. In Kafka, the human meat of *Sweeney Todd*, as discussed in Chapter Three, is now simply the frustrated, at best, form of human life possible in the bureaucratic society.

Several recent works of literature and of philosophy have compared meat production and CAFOs to concentration camp genocide during World War II. The most oft-invoked instance of this is J.M. Coetzee's 2003 novel *Elizabeth Costello*, in which the titular character is a famous writer working through her long life and giving lectures on topics that frequently include the lives of animals. This, in fact, was the title of Coetzee's earlier publication of part of the novel,

and in *The Lives of Animals* (1999), Elizabeth Costello gives a lecture on animal rights instead of on literature, as she was invited to do. Coetzee delivered the work as a Tanner Lecture at Princeton in 1997, and the edited edition of the story includes responses by Peter Singer, Marjorie Garber, and others.³⁴⁷ *Elizabeth Costello* is not merely about the issue of animal rights, despite taking a long segment of the history of philosophy to task for its rampant anthropocentrism. Besides his criticisms of Marx, Arendt, and others who choose singular capacities like labor and political articulation as exceptional human attributes that validate human/animal difference, Coetzee uses a significant portion of the novel to work on Kafka's *The Trial*, and especially the excerpted passage, "Before the Law," in a chapter called "At the Gate." Elizabeth Costello negotiates species difference directly in terms of concentration camp atrocities that empty humans of all content in order to dispose of them. Coetzee thus takes up Adorno's strong claims about the necessity of philosophizing from history, including the inhuman atrocities of twentieth century warfare and, invoking Benjamin's work on modernity, of technological subjection.³⁴⁸ This establishes a dense but precise path through twentieth century critical theory that valorizes, specifically, the nonhuman condition Kafka articulates as a key philosophical interlocutor. Coetzee, writing at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, then caps the long literary tradition of nonhuman thought—and nonhuman form—on the same terms of abjection and anonymous killing that drove the Smithfield unrest and London's general anxieties during the nineteenth century. Such social conditions—

³⁴⁷ The character Elizabeth Costello is introduced in Coetzee, J.M. *The Lives of Animals*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. See also: Coetzee, J.M. *Elizabeth Costello*. New York: Penguin, 2004.

³⁴⁸ See, for example: Adorno, Theodor. *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002 and, in particular, Benjamin, Walter. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, eds. Howard Eiland & Michael W. Jennings. Harvard: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.

anthrozootic social conditions—contribute directly to the sense of nonhuman object status that had been highlighted in the Romantic frustrated apostrophic forms and the horror stories of the mass-produced, fungible Penny Dreadfuls.

These conditions were also articulated in the critical theoretical texts of the period itself. One need look no further than Marx's works to find the history of social relations leading up to Victorian England. Incidentally, Marx's thirty-year residency in the British Library's Round Reading Room, where he wrote *Das Kapital*, was about one mostly-straight mile down High Holborn from Smithfield Market. Published finally in 1867 (Volume I was the only part published in Marx's lifetime), researching the work would have kept Marx in the library for the entire height of Smithfield reform debates and completion. This also means that Marx himself had to contend with the urban density and homogenizing production modes of nineteenth century London. Marx's primary historical examples were often drawn from English history, and Marx himself works at length on the same issues of enclosure and agrarian changes the butchers had complained about in their 1795 petition pamphlet.³⁴⁹ In the twentieth century, Frankfurt School theorists negotiated the outcome those modes of production and their attendant social relations in the context of world war era atrocities including the concentration camps.

Adorno and Max Horkheimer suggested that the Nazi concentration camps revealed the wholesale failure of Western reason represented as a detached, calculative-instrumental mode. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer suggest that the conditions of modernity, including technology and economic forms, produce an inhuman subject deprived of prior concepts of individual autonomy yet wholly demolished under the same concept of consequential

³⁴⁹ Marx, Karl. "Chapter 27: Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land," *Capital, Volume I*, trans. Ben Fowkes. New York: Penguin Classics, 1992.

individual life.³⁵⁰ As such, death, as a projected terminus that might be integrated in an individual's self-consciousness, no longer functions in this "epic" mode and is, instead, a foregone and irrelevant termination of a meaningless, dominated life. This life is, thus, not really life in the sense implied by any struggle against death or assertion of self. They claim in the chapter on anti-Semitism that the liberal thesis of the unity of humanity *requires* the disfiguring of human beings. This is both a metaphysical critique and, as Adorno might later call it, a concrete critique. Horkheimer and Adorno suggest that Hegel presupposed the end game of negation—the absolute, totality—and abandoned his own determinate negation in positing that new transcendental concept. Adorno and Horkheimer contend that enlightenment, as a program of calculative thought that presumes to have escaped from myth and enchantment, develops mathematics into such an authoritative frame that thought itself becomes a thing and a tool within an assumed, total, yet controllable system (nature, in this case). Thought, then, is posed as a reified "autonomy" within this structure, but Adorno and Horkheimer write that this is in fact a hypostasis of the concept of autonomous thought that, instead, cancels out determinate negation or critique. In a programmed system of things, such as this, subjects and objects are all null. The intense dilemma of modernity, then, is that humans continue on under the transcendental figure of individual autonomy and human dignity, including the problem of death and its relation to meaningful, complete, authentic life, when life itself is already surrendered to homogenizing forms of liquidity and disposability. Nowhere is this mistaken calculus more proven, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, than in the Nazi death camps and the excluded lives in the totalitarian *socius*. The critical address of such conditions, however, which will ground philosophical inquiry "after Auschwitz" in the later Adorno, is impeded by those conditions.

³⁵⁰ See: Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

This problem in modernity is provocatively expressed in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, but in ways similar to the way that Kracauer's film theory searches for a rational explanation for Hitler's rise through a highly selective and intensely affected—but startlingly convincing and brilliant—argument riddled with critical gaps such as his choice of disparate “high art” films over popular cinema and questionable psychoanalytic interrogations of complicated socioeconomic issues.³⁵¹ This, however, fits quite well with Adorno's later commentaries on his own work and on the work of Walter Benjamin. Adorno will later argue that the only way to overturn the philosophical deficiencies outlined in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and reconcile the atrocities embedded in modern culture—including in thinking and in all cultural forms dominated by technical demolitions of the individual life and the concrete fact of genocide—is to philosophize from these concrete experiences instead of posing old models of humanity that uphold the worn out transcendental figures of the Enlightenment. The way in which modern society seems best equipped to accomplish this is through radical immersion in the same shock experiences that have hardened the senses and led to the withering of experience Benjamin assesses in some of his work and that Horkheimer and Adorno engage at length in the chapter “Elements of Anti-Semitism: Limits of Enlightenment.” Adorno later incorporates these experiences into his critique of prior philosophy and continues to analyze social structuration through this dialectic of material reality. But Adorno's aesthetic theory is also crucial to his political project, and this is also something he and Horkheimer establish in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

The culture industry, in lockstep with the mass technical productive modes in contemporary culture, liquidates aesthetic objects to reified, hardened, portable concepts that can

³⁵¹ Kracauer, Sigmund. *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

be easily distributed and consumed uncritically by a dominated public. But, as Horkheimer and Adorno argue, the products of this industry are really all the same. And they claim that the culture industry extends the homogenization of “unified culture” to leisure time, keeping the clock always running and the factory always open as the systems of capitalist production dominate life totally, in all reaches of experience. Adorno and Horkheimer suggest that the culture industry fulfills dreams of a unified culture, but only by rendering the individual a homogenous manifestation of advertisement copy: “personality means hardly more than dazzling white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions.”³⁵² of white teeth, no body odor, and emotional freedom. Adorno, in his other works, attempts to articulate the ways in which certain works of art resist this commodity form stagnation and dormancy. He is particularly interested in Kafka, whose works perform, both in form and content, the predicament of culture and the radical inhumanity unto death. Kafka may not provide any hopeful recovery from these conditions, but Adorno attempts to endorse Kafka’s works as a potentially recuperative body within a critical theoretical negation of the modes of domination Kafka crystallizes in works such as *The Trial*.³⁵³

In *The Trial*, K. is submitted to a machine of justice that never iterates his crime or explains the process he has been (and will be) subject to. To the very end, K. speculates on his position and potential alteration thereof, and he wonders if he will be able to argue his innocence. Or, at least, he would like to have his day before the law—whoever or whatever may represent it individually, such that he may present himself to it explicitly—in order to argue the reasons the law has proceeded inappropriately and, thus, cannot expect him to accept this fate. Throughout

³⁵² Horkheimer and Adorno, p. 136.

³⁵³ Adorno wrote extensively on Kafka. Essays and short form meditations on Kafka can be found in a number of translated and edited volumes, as well as in sections of *Minima Moralia* and throughout Adorno’s unfinished final work, *Aesthetic Theory*.

the book, K.'s dilemma is his incessant reasoning on his individual entitlement, frustrated constantly by an impenetrable, spatially disorienting, and even atmospherically oppressive (there is "bad air" in the halls of justice) legal structure. K. visits "The Offices" of the law, which was in itself an overstepping of his station—people are meant to accept the law's charges without response in the society of *The Trial*. But this injustice itself motivates K.'s resistance and inquisitive journeys in the book. This spirit of individual value and resistance is in fact his primary undoing, and upon his first visit to the offices, the signs of this error are clear:

K. looked at the usher. The man had said that nobody would pay any attention to him, and now two people were already after him, demanding an explanation of his presence. The only comprehensible and acceptable one was that he was an accused man and wished to know the date of his next interrogation, but that explanation he did not wish to give, especially as it was not even in accordance with the truth, for he had come only out of curiosity or, what was still more impossible as an explanation of his presence, out of a desire to assure himself that the inside of this legal system was just as loathsome as its external aspect.³⁵⁴

In this passage, K.'s interior motivations and rationalizations are presented through a narrator's free indirect discourse (*erlebte Rede*). This formal technique distorts the reader's access to K.'s true interiority, on the one hand, but then calls attention to and frustrates that expectation as well. One consequence of the technique, in the case of *The Trial*, is that K. becomes "its" own object of narration. Like the book's opening, in which Josef K. is arrested having done nothing, this passage captures K. in singular ("the only") realities despite the formal uncertainty of the expression in this case. He had come only out of curiosity, but then the narrative speculation immediately undoes that agency with the impossibility of his presence being explicable. That this "presence," an inconclusive narrative object, would expect to measure appearance ("external aspect") with analysis ("inside") is all the more impossible. K. is the accused.

³⁵⁴ Kafka, Franz. *The Trial*, trans. Willa & Edwin Muir. New York: Random House, 1956, pp. 82-83.

Following from this, the narrative form ensures that K. remains an administered object—a character confused and suspended in limited narration—at both the formal and the narrative levels. Limited, or restricted narration, a formal term often used in film studies to denote the access to a narrative arc shared by both characters and audience, here describes how K. remains in all segments of *The Trial* but has no clue as to the direction his story is headed. Likewise, the reader does not have access to information outside of the information presented to K.'s consciousness in chronological sequence, even when that presentation is severely in question due to the ambiguous identity of third person and first person perspective in free indirect discourse. However, the expectation of narrative authority—and as ambiguous, hyper-deterministic, and administratively pedantic narration in *The Trial*—still dictates, precisely, a procedural norm. Traipsing through the rooms, circumstances, and seemingly inevitable turns in K.'s story becomes a routine *process*, and *The Trial* is the alluringly, if imprecisely, cognate *der Prozess* in German.

If the reader attempts to determine potentially important narrative aspects such as, “does the narrator at times lapse into the disciplinary talking points of the social structure K. is in, even when K. seems to be narrating his own thought process?” then the reader risks succumbing directly to the same forces K. has. The novel proceeds in a conventional point A to point B chronological line, but both the narrative techniques and the plot experiences of the character amplify ambiguity, uncertainty, and suspension until K.'s death. As a result, it is often, perhaps always, possible that K. is deluding himself in all of his calculative pursuits for the truth about his circumstances. Due to the narrative form, then, the reader is also interpellated by a procedural circumstance. One option would be to put the book down, and thus Kafka's modernism expresses, both in form and in content, the resistant impulse of subjection. But K. can never

reject his procedural object status, and his resistant form in fact drives further subjection because of the gap in narrative disclosure the reader is also subjected to: K. does not actually know anything about the forces he articulates and attempts to resist, and this bare interpellation of K.'s place then overrides any aesthetic of resistance altogether. The law called K. successfully, decisively, and finally: the termination of the story is the animal termination of K.'s life, "like a dog." The turns from new, troubling revelations to some rationalization of how K. was correct in his suspicions only further amplifies his incessant condition:

And it seemed, indeed, that he had been right in that assumption, he did not want to make any further investigation, he was dejected enough by what he had already seen, he was not at that moment in a fit state to confront any higher official such as might appear from behind one of these doors, he wanted to quit the place with the usher, or, if need be, alone.³⁵⁵

As in other Kafka novels, especially *The Castle*, character "extras" within a disorienting social and physical space frequently warn the protagonist-victim of the inaccessibility of the authorities. Whether a single governor or the looming, ambiguous body of the law or ideal of justice, as in *The Trial* and "In The Penal Colony," respectively, the power driving the protagonist's circumstances and, crucially, that could give the protagonist the audience he seeks, remains invisible and impenetrable. The other characters are will-less objects but also curiously defiant interlocutors for K. because of their subjection to the disciplinary ecology in the novel. K. can order them around to a point, but they frequently resist his behavior when it stands outside of the social norm.

Frustrating K. even further in *The Trial*, the characters around him fade in and out of his progress, and most seem to be quietly—or not so quietly—mocking him at every turn. This infuriates K., and he puffs himself up with rhetorical buttressing of his position and intelligence

³⁵⁵ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 83. Yet another opportunity to consider connections with Orwell's *1984*.

that are meant to subdue outside critique but, in the end, are merely K.'s spiraling performance of an intelligible, rational iteration of self and situation that can never acknowledge the terminal condition the disciplinary process imposes from the very beginning. Waiting for the law and before the law is an interminable, permanent process of impediment and subjection that ends in a meaningless, humiliating death.

The old man from the country in the brief parable excerpted from *The Trial* as "Before The Law" finally dies, the gates to the law shut violently to keep him out, but the gate had always kept him out even when ostensibly open. The paternal, impassable guard never allowed him entry but the old man stayed by the door, death overtaking him as he sits suspended before the law. The gate was only for him, shouts the guard, and now the guard will close it. In *The Trial*, K. also interacts only with gatekeepers of the law, though unlike the man in the parable, K. often interacts with other vague associates of the process of law such as the advocate and the painter, Titorelli. Like the gatekeeper in the parable, Titorelli is not entirely helpful despite having quite a lot of procedural information to offer K. Titorelli, as nothing more than an official portrait painter for the court (who lives, when K. sets out, on the other side of town from the court), should really have no significant insight into the process and yet holds K.'s rapt attention as he advises on strategy. K. is "captured" by those with advice to offer like the man stuck outside the gate in the parable. Titorelli lays out the potential routes K. can take in his case and, as a separate but representative associate of the court, can communicate the legal strategies and forms of defense K. may pursue despite Titorelli's claim that no one in K.'s position has ever been acquitted.³⁵⁶ These forms are not documents, but modes of defense and official statuses of innocence, none of which promise significant relief from the condition of being in the legal

³⁵⁶ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 192.

process. In Titorelli's chambers, K. wants only to "breathe fog" through an open window, the bad air of the chambers so oppresses him during the circuitous discussion of definite acquittal, ostensible acquittal, and postponement. This reminds directly of the London fog and the fog of Smithfield Market in *Oliver Twist* and the legal fog of *Bleak House*. The interminable capture in such atmospheres, literal or figural, is repeated in the bureaucratic procedures Titorelli presents. Entering documents for any of the three endgames would only reiterate that "the accused is never free."³⁵⁷ The procedures for postponement are a "matter of form" (Anordnungen)—"a certain activity must be shown from time to time, various measures have to be taken, the accused is questioned, evidence is collected, and so on."³⁵⁸ K. cannot decide, and Titorelli's "last words" on the matter are that "all that it amounts to is a formal recognition of your status as an accused man."³⁵⁹ K. had been teased and mocked sexually by the girls outside Titorelli's chamber before he entered, and so he accepts Titorelli's offer of another exit route than the door now blocked by the girls, and finds that, somehow, Titorelli's chambers open right back into court offices. He cannot escape. This, ultimately, is the final verdict on humans in legal society. But the endgame of this subjection, K.'s death in a liminal space outside his quotidian circlings but still within the civic realm, spatially and legally, reiterates one of the deepest humiliations in the entire story and, arguably, in all of Kafka's work.

K. meets the client Block at one point, and Block has become a destitute, broken man before the law. Block has been in process for years and is wholly dependent upon the advocate's instruction. The lawyer brutally assails Block's manhood and accuses him of doglike subservience. Block, though not dead, has become the abjected, subhuman human in the process

³⁵⁷ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 201.

³⁵⁸ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 201.

³⁵⁹ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 201.

of bureaucratic, legal captivation. K.'s fate does not proceed this far down the path to dormant humanity. He refuses his own speculated responsibility to kill himself with the butcher's knife his two attendants pass back and forth at the end, prolonging and condensing the scene of dismembering justice while K.s head is, literally, on the block, and when he fails to finally incriminate himself, he is stabbed in the heart and dies, "like a dog." He had never lived as anything else. I will return to this closing scene later in the chapter to consider the formal effects of the scene as written and to, perhaps, salvage all actors in the scene on equal ground. But first, I will discuss the fuller consequences of Kafka's "posthumanist" articulations, taking here Cary Wolfe's scheme for the term as a confluence of 1. the fact of technicized life (where technology can even be the thinking apparatus, a mode he borrows from Heidegger and others); 2. The revision of humanism's hard binaries of Nature/Culture, Human/Animal, Reason/Feeling, etc.; and 3. A critical subjectivity oriented toward its futurity yet committed to demolishing concepts of perfectibility, authenticity, essence—what have you—that actually deny the continuance or further thriving of the very critical tools that invented such a concept in the first place.³⁶⁰

Kafka's story is a study in abjection and captivity, two modes of modern life that critical theorists in the 20th century would focus intently on in evaluating the stakes of technological and economic administration of life. Kafka's works often map out the inhuman in humanity. In other stories, the inhuman is some form of the imposed process-conditions in *The Trial*, but the effacing internal exclusion becomes the primary drama in cases like *The Metamorphosis* and the scene of justice may be even more pronounced and radically excluded to a marginalized socius, as in the case of "In the Penal Colony." These conditions of exception and discipline dominate Kafka's works. In the critical theory of the 20th century, the violence against humans is an

³⁶⁰ See: Wolfe, Cary. *What is Posthumanism?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

instantiated dormancy akin to Kafka's man before the law, and the equipment of captivity is modern technology, increasingly electronic mass media, and cultural forms based on fungible commodity forms that also dominate people.

"Before the Law" was also the focus of Derrida's well-known essay of the same name. On one hand, the text ridicules the subject of the law—the individual subject to law, or subjected by law. "The law" is a massive agent in this regard, and yet the short passage works to construct an ambiguous, or perhaps vacant, entity in any place one would look for The Law. There is a guard, and the guard speaks—these are customary indications of a customary social order, and articulating structure in human form, in human language, suggests an immanent propriety. Or, in less optimistic fashion, this reflexive self-discipline is Foucault's disciplinary society, discussed in terms of the "efficient" panopticon prison model Jeremy Bentham articulated, which succeeds in internalizing restrictive, oppressive social orders as part of its subjects perceived identity. Humans police themselves as a matter of daily life, without question.³⁶¹ The Law in Kafka's short passage, which then reflects upon the entire longer narrative of *The Trial*, refuses admittance and resists inquiry or individual aspiration to know the law at all. K can never ascertain even what he has been charged with in the incessant trial that subdues him and ultimately subjects him to his "canine" death. On the other hand, the short passage acknowledges the stark categorical impotence of those who impose, represent, defend, or otherwise attend the law. The metaphors of a gate and a building, which perhaps are not figurative, not metaphorical, as in Corngold's commentary on *The Metamorphosis*, erect a space of law—a site of address—yet reinscribe the sense of a structuring that can only be interminable and superficial. As in *The*

³⁶¹ See: Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1995. See also: Bentham, Jeremy. *The Panopticon Writings*. Ed. Miran Božovič. New York: Verso, 1995.

Burrow or “In the Penal Colony, the great structures of incessant regulation and disciplined procedures are sociation, not Society. The trick Kafka’s wandering characters so routinely fail to play is to forget about this tension and associate without question.

The Trial, as a whole, is deeply concerned with the inhuman conditions of bureaucratic life. The law is the dominant bureaucratic apparatus in the story, but Kafka works constantly on the various offices that subject humans and animals alike to empty performances where meaningful identities would otherwise stand. For example, the Whipper in displays an administrative obstinance that amplifies the inevitability of all the official procedures and policies in the story: “I am here to whip people, and whip them I shall.”³⁶² The Whipper has been summoned (by the Court, that inscrutable metonym) to punish the warders Franz and Willem for K.’s inquiries. As they tell him: “We’re to be flogged because you complained about us to the Examining Magistrate!”³⁶³ K.’s attempts to determine the charges against him, which become the complete narrative scenario of the novel, thus extend his own paranoid shame to the punishment of those he contacts. His coexistence itself, under the sign of calculative investigations of his own life status, thus inflicts the reach of the Court upon innocent bystanders. Their whipping is a disciplinary spectacle for K., a motif repeated by Kafka in “In the Penal Colony.”

In both texts, the captivation of subjects within or before the punishing apparatus is unbroken and dissociated from reflective acknowledgment of any rational content beyond the aesthetic register. In *The Trial*, the punishment inflicted renders the human inhuman, or rather, produces the ideal nonhuman object. And at the moment of Franz’s whipping, this is recognized in vocation: “Then the shriek rose from Franz’s throat, single and irrevocable, it did not seem to come from a human being but from some martyred instrument, the whole corridor rang with it,

³⁶² Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 106.

³⁶³ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 104.

the whole building must hear it.”³⁶⁴ The two guards had been important guides for K., showing him the functional obedience the legal system expects from its lower-tier employees and inspiring his quest to access the top representatives. K. attempted to intervene in the whipping with more reasoned arguments, this time for why he did not intend them to be punished. He physically intervenes by knocking Franz to the floor, and Franz makes a loud noise. K. wants what he has subjected the two men to covered over. He leaves the room and hurries to assure two clerks who have not seen, only heard, this sign of Franz’s inhuman suffering that all is well: “Has anything happened?” “No, no,” replied K. “It was only a dog howling in the courtyard.”³⁶⁵ Throughout the chapter, K. also attempts at various times to slam doors to hide events from others, and Kafka reiterates the inadequacy of this tactic: “At all events, he could have done nothing but slam the door, though even that action had not shut out all danger.”³⁶⁶ K. slammed the door right after Franz wailed, then had his erasive exchange with the clerks in which he made Franz’s suffering into “only a dog.” Later, K. has the room where the beatings took place cleared out, hopefully clearing his own conscience in the process. All of this leads directly to the guard’s violent response to the man from the country in “Before the Law,” when the guard says he will shut the door that had only been for the man. The man from the country, like Franz, indicated his position and his suffering, and in Kafka’s economy of subjection, this amounts to self-flagellation: “If Franz had not shrieked—it must have been very painful, certainly, but in a crisis one must control oneself—if he had not shrieked, then K., in all probability at least, would have found some other means of persuading the Whipper.”³⁶⁷ But of course, he would not have.

³⁶⁴ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 108.

³⁶⁵ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 108.

³⁶⁶ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 110.

³⁶⁷ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 109.

This process of rationalization is a primary character in *The Trial* that constantly reasserts the power of rational thought and verbal articulation while failing time and again to effect a change in status. K. also directs his critical perspective toward the unfettered actors, all of which are framed as bureaucratic automatons—nonhumans—while only they act in unchallenged volition relative to those suffering under their watch. And so even the truest articulation of the nonhuman conditions *The Trial* enforces falls short of its targets because the rational, articulate expression itself has already embraced the order of things in administered society: “If the whole lower grade of this organization were scoundrels, why should the Whipper, who had the most inhuman office of all, turn out to be an exception? Besides, K. had clearly seen his eyes glittering at the sight of a banknote, obviously he had set about his job in earnest simply to raise his price a little higher.”³⁶⁸

Kafka’s fascination with animality in his stories, which was acknowledged at the outset of this chapter, is then a fascination with humanity as it crosses over into animality or, in some cases, forgets its unbreakable bond to animality, is also his fascination with the force of law. *Vor dem Gesetz* is “before the law,” but this, as Derrida begins to suggest at the opening of his essay, is to miss something else in the title. It is “in front of” the law, and crucially, *outside* the law. It is *of* the law. It is *in* law, as well. Colloquially, it is “in the eyes of the law.” The title is a neuter dative phrase. *Something* is in relation to the law. In the story, it may be the old man who eventually dies. Certainly, the guard’s violent proclamations that the door was only for the man, and now he (the guard) will shut it suggest the man was involved in the grammatical structure of the title somehow.

³⁶⁸ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 109.

Generic Form(ulae): Not so different after all

Realism and modernism are separate genres by virtue of modernism's self-conscious rejection of realism. Modernism, that is, is a period of artistic expression that directly resisted concepts such as objective fidelity and truthful depiction. But realism could as easily be accused of modernist tendencies beyond the lengthy presentations of actually existing social conditions in the industrializing world of, for example, London. In the case of Charles Dickens, there are certainly supernatural elements in *A Christmas Carol*, a work eerily reminiscent of Blake's *Book of Thel* or even Goethe's *Faust* thanks to protagonists' intercourse with spiritual worlds on the way to truth, salvation, or worse. This work's exploration of human intimacy and the loss of humanity—inflicted by greed, if not overt capitalism—matches it precisely with the bureaucratic horrors in Kafka and the nonhuman abjections of Romantic literature. Dickens also wields the formal frame techniques Stoker after him or Mary Shelley before him did, inserting texts-within-texts, constant concern for handwriting and material documents, and shifting narrative positions throughout his work on the Chancery Court, *Bleak House*.³⁶⁹ Dickens's texts do not, however, indulge in introspective, hyper-individuated excursions on subjectivity. In this regard, he matches the realist concept of social reality. Nevertheless, law as an abominable nonhuman actor in *Bleak House*, and further, the bureaucratic expectations of society his narrator succumbs to in the end as she erases herself while lauding her husband, belie any supposed anti-formal realism. Dickens is far more complex than simple generic distinctions can accommodate on this count.

³⁶⁹ Dickens deserves ample credit as a bit of “postmodernist,” as well, employing as he does not merely the epistolary in some parts of *Bleak House* but also the metafictional technique of inserting would-be handwritten letters as objects against the typeface narrative, opening onto the persistent concern with writing and interpretation in the book. See, for example, p. 82, when Esther receives the letter from the law firm “removing” her from the Greenleaf boarding house and into London to commence the book's, and the case's, full proceedings.

The law fails to protect or even affirm the existence human characters in Dickens' *Bleak House* and Kafka's *The Trial*. Both works seek "good" air outside the stifling chambers and corridors of Kafka's *Trial* and anywhere but London in *Bleak House*. The bad air permeates the spaces of law, seeping through K. and contaminating his already troubled rational procession through the chambers with even denser layers of paranoia, uncertainty, and blank, bare subjection to an entirely anonymous and unknown legal structure. This trouble is, however, also an active response by K. to the law. K. cannot breathe "in" the law, cannot even bear it, and so that he is constantly rejected by the law—forever "before" it—is likewise his own physically inscribed failure to properly address and access the law. He is in a double bind. Dickens's narrator in *Bleak House*, on the other hand, is quite confident in its satirical lampooning of the ridiculous Chancery Hall. The churning busywork of the court, the typical buffoonery of authorities and participants in legal proceedings, and the confusion surrounding the Jarndyce will hangs over the bulk of the story as oppressively as the uncertain fate of K in Kafka's *The Trial* looms over that narrative. But the result is generally sustained ridicule and humor, arguably distracting from the stark disappointment and potential ruin the Chancery Hall could inflict upon even the winning party. Dickens's dissatisfactory "victorious" Chancery Court battle over his rights to *A Christmas Carol* could have provided ample force to the legal satire of *Bleak House*. Dickens levies his sense of humor against ridiculous disappointment and total abjection from the grounding circumstance of the court's purpose, fairness and justice in matters between equal citizens before the law. The law, and Society with a capital S are of no use to Dickens' narrator in *Bleak House* just as they send Kenneth Grahame's Badger into the woods in a dissociative huff in *The Wind in the Willows*, as discussed briefly in Chapter One.

Kafka's law, on the other hand, is ambiguous and oppressive all at the same time. K can never find out what his crime has been, and his ultimate fate is to die, "like a dog," on the knife of an unidentified party after all of K's attempts to gain an audience with any single authority figure fail. He cannot get straight answers on his case from individuals in the labyrinth halls of the law, nor from the priest in the final scene in the cathedral, and is left only to talk to himself about the merits of his case (sans details of any sort). K's formal position, ultimately, is only that he ought to have a forum on the matter and that surely he will be victorious because the procedural shape of his case is so distorted and improper. Kafka's law, condensed in the brief "Before the Law," is a personal and singular aperture but a multiple and unknown density. It is not one thing, not even a structure, so much as a distracting depth of associations and performances.

The various sedimentations of penal process and inscription in "In the Penal Colony" visits just this theme of anonymous mass systems that can always be distilled to single actors, but then no level of interaction with, or even punishment of those actors, satisfies the lingering sense of injustice and abjection from some larger, anonymous power. The law may kill itself in a gruesome, horrifying scene of justice turning the criminal inside out, but the grand denouement of one *Aufbau*, or "great structure" fits precisely the prior modes of spectacle and moral inscription the Officer's obsession represents. The machine kills the obsessed executioner-operator in the story in the final act of justice the obscure writing on his papers commands. That the death fails to teach him of his crime (the witnessing Explorer notes that he saw no sign of enlightenment on the face with the spike of justice now protruding through its forehead) and accompanies the self-destruction of the machine of justice he had long overseen only reinforces a fuller sense of administration and abjection.

Such displays draw quite a lot of attention to the fact of power. Mass displays have become awkward, old-fashioned fixations stalling an even smoother machine of power that might evolve to function more seamlessly, more *invisibly*, if it were to erase the blood and guts, the gore and penetration, the execution and disassembly of flesh like the skin-etching and later immolation produced by the great machine. This directs once again to the Smithfield condition in nineteenth century London as the meat production industry undergoes incredible change. Animals had been run through city streets for centuries already by the time, in the early nineteenth century, public outcry about sites like Smithfield Market began to become part and parcel of Parliamentary action. The earliest animal rights laws would begin in Parliament as Acts regulating the driving of animals to slaughter and the unlawful slaughter of horses, suggesting from the earliest point that animal rights would have to contend with its welfarist stream to the last. This version of animal rights that permits animal use for human consumption—food, entertainment and display, candles and parchment, clothing, pets—attempts to draw the line of ethical treatment of the animals destined for that life or lack thereof within human culture. But the Acts would not be passed on their first tries, generally, though the earliest, the 1786 Knackers Act against unlicensed (and thus, generally cruel and gruesome) horse slaughter did. Subsequent Acts aspiring to go further and ban various forms of cruelty to animals associated with entertainments such as bear-, badger-, and bull-baiting would see several defeats before finally passing nearer the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the social concern backing such action was undeniable in England, and bodies like the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals founded in 1824 are clear markers of the broad concern for animal welfare and rights launched in the century. That legal protections contributed to the

further erasure of the animal by mediating the public atrocity of the system, “sterilizing it,” in effect, only reinvigorates the “closed door” neuroses of Kafka’s punishing bodies.

Aside from the legal structure in Dickens’s *Bleak House*, London is also an organizing mass object through which the characters and transactions of the story communicate (in the sense Dickens would use himself in identifying the connection of and passage through rooms in a house). London also seethes as an inescapable assortment of objects, objects that Dickens, in chapter after chapter, lists in dazzling series including candlesticks household objects, to be sure. He will also include from time to time the “tools of the trade” for a particular character’s workspace [references]. But Dickens amplifies the overbearing sense of lists and accumulations—piles, really, matching London’s rampant development and impaction in Dickens’ historical context—by listing much more. For example, in a satirical passage invoking King George IV’s dandyism in order to criticize characters’ vacuous, artificial aristocratic airs at *Bleak House*, Dickens list the virtues his characters lack:

The brilliant and distinguished circle comprehends within it, no contracted amount of education, sense, courage, honor, beauty, and virtue. Yet there is something a little wrong about it, in despite of its immense advantages. What can it be?

Dandyism? There is no King George the Fourth now (more’s the pity!) to set the dandy fashion; there are no clear-starched jack-towel neckcloths, no short-waisted coats, no false calves, no stays. There are no caricatures, now, of effeminate Exquisites so arrayed, swooning in opera houses with excess of delight, and being revived by other dainty creatures, poking long-necked scent- bottles at their noses. There is no beau whom it takes four men at once to shake into his buckskins, or who goes to see all the Executions, or who is troubled with the self-reproach of having once consumed a pea.³⁷⁰

The party in question is at least one level of substance removed from the real thing, posturing and pretending but missing even the most easily-lambasted signals and objects of the original aristocratic performance of excess. Yet Dickens lists virtues beside accessories, feigning real critique only to break the model of performance as well. The virtues themselves can be

³⁷⁰ Dickens, *Bleak House*. Ontario: Broadview, 2011. Ed. Patricia Ingham, p. 190.

performed, put on as clothing it would seem, and the lack of these is no more or less conclusive than the missing fashionable object. Anything in such lists, though broken by paragraph gap as if to suggest a difference, is emptied of content as a mere mode of consumption. This works in conjunction with the narrative's primary formal organization.

The entire story moves along with the lawsuit of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, which is an interminable inheritance dispute involving seemingly all characters in the novel including the narrator, Esther Summerson. The lawsuit ends without completion when the inheritance in dispute runs out. All of the money the parties await division of is consumed by the legal costs of determining the inheritances. Dickens may have based the case on a real case that had begun in 1798 and would not actually end until 1915. *Jenners vs. Jenners* did end because the estate ran out of funds through legal costs. Jacqueline Labbe, in her introduction to Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manour House*, has also suggested that Dickens based the case on her father-in-law's Chancery case of more than thirty years.³⁷¹ In either event, Dickens' at least partial commitment to social realism drives the lengthy narrative around which he constructed the satire. There are other period inclusions that build this historicist accuracy while also enabling Dickens' creative play and broader sensibilities.

For example, amidst the above lists of objects, Dickens includes an anecdote about Beau Brummel (1778-1840), a real fashion maven who also had the famous one-liner when asked whether he ate vegetables, "I once ate a pea." Here the fashion of meat consumption is aligned with consumption of virtuous performance and clothing. Dickens doubles up on animal consumption in the passage, at the least: Beau wears buckskins and boasts at an exclusively

³⁷¹ See: Labbe, Jacqueline, ed. *The Old Manor House* by Charlotte Smith. Ontario: Broadview, 2002, p. 7. Dickens's own preface to *Bleak House* notes contemporary suits in Chancery. See: Dickens, *Bleak House*, "Preface."

carnivorous existence. He may have tripled up, in fact. Beau also consumes death spectacles, which would have likely been hangings but also immediately recalls the old Smithfield role, parallel to its time as the “Smoothe-field” animal market site, as public execution site for religious heretics and enemies of state such as William Wallace. Beau not only attends them, he attends *all* of them to keep up his proper consuming display. Two chapters later, Dickens uses London’s animal marketways, including Mile End, Spitalfields, and without question the seething, teeming animal currents to and from the Smithfield Market he writes on in *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* to punctuate the wayward son Peepy’s itinerant, filthy personage:

As I had not seen Peepy on the occasion of our last call, I now enquired for him again (when he was not to be found with the dustman’s cart), I now enquired for him again ... the cook supposed that he had “gone after the sheep.” When we repeated, with some surprise, “The sheep?” she said, O yes, on market days he sometimes followed them quite out of town, and came back in such a state as never was!³⁷²

When he finally arrives, he is a dirty mess, and Dickens uses the same listing technique here as what seems to be simple descriptive exposition. He collects all the clothing articles and their condition, including his “deficient buttons” now replaced by some from Mr. Jellyby’s coat to paint the proper picture of a degenerate Mrs. Jellyby, off to mile end and “some Borrioboolan business, arising out of a Society called the East London Branch Aid Ramification” (backward r.a.b.l.e.s., with perhaps the extra b stressed in the made up Borrioboolan before) is improving the little man for public consumption and yet not terribly concerned with her own as she works on African relief efforts and, generally, performs as a false aristocrat of character and substance. Dickens’ target is clear, if perhaps hemmed closely to the homeland despite satirical barbs against colonization’s forgotten double-sided consequence: exported improvement as domestic consumption mode. Consciousness is here, in the political sense, a conspicuous consumption

³⁷² Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 210.

fashion statement. Peepy is more or less neglected by much of the family, though here the narrative certainly notices his animality as he “flows” with and floats on the river of sheep through the London streets. The animal traffic through London was noticed by human denizens, such that it would be removed by Parliamentary Act shortly after the publication of *Bleak House*, and here Dickens includes one of the markets’ strongest urban characteristics as a traffic flow linking city nodes in coherent channels.

Dickens’ dense historical references and “name drops” lead naturally to historicist evaluations of his practical social critique. One quickly deems Dickens’ literature didactic or even practical as a result. Dickens’ cataloguing impulses can also be clearly related to his near-constant journalistic activity. Much like Sir Walter Scott, Dickens was writing all days and seemingly at all hours. His vast journalistic output exceeds an already massive novelistic production, and few if any writers of the day chronicled Victorian material life in London more exhaustively. Certainly none retain the influence Dickens still wields, at least in the case of London market (including butchery and meat markets) and daily life. George Eliot’s realist works, like Dickens’s many novels, maintain important claim to the documentary of the day, but Dickens’s catalogue of London was massive and sheds bright light on the collector’s impulse behind his list motifs and mass reportage tones within the novels. This reportage mode communicates the intensity and monstrous size of, for example, an onerous legal structure in *Bleak House*, but it still retains a critical distance. Satire, in this case, seems capable of collecting the facts of oppression and bureaucratic alienation. But Dickens, like Kafka later, rarely seems convinced that the product of the legal society is so manageable. There is a real sadness and abjection to the characters, and the biting rebukes of fashionable material consumption seem more like desperate self-defense than self-possessed critical rejection.

The damaging weight of dispassionate yet obsessive reportage bears down upon the self-reflexive hollowness of Esther's closing entries to the novel. Here the coordinating conjunctions and formal rhythm both drive the magnanimous stoicism Esther idealizes and also smuggles in the spirit of protest without literally claiming discontent. The oppositional coordinating conjunction "but" recurs while the pleasing parallel constructions transport the stylishness of her husband's good works and her own performance of proper feminine absence—her authority is based on the hearsay of his works and this is allowed because she is the "good woman" of society by her very absence from the outward exercises of moral authority she reports and promotes:

We are not rich in the bank, but we have always prospered, and we have quite enough. I never walk out with my husband, but I hear the people bless him. I never go into a house of any degree, but I hear his praises, or see them in grateful eyes. I never lie down at night, but I know that in the course of that day he has alleviated pain, and soothed some fellow-creature in the time of need. I know that from the beds of those who were past recovery, thanks have often, often gone up, in the last hour, for his patient ministrations. Is this not to be rich?

The people even praise Me as the doctor's wife...³⁷³

The paragraph break seems to kick Esther out of her report on Allan's excellence, and the deep affectation of the good woman follows immediately after: "The people even like Me as I go about, and make so much of me that I am quite abashed. I owe it all to him, my love, my pride! They like me for his sake, as I do everything in life for his sake." Allan then arrives and asks "My precious little woman, what are you doing here?" (she is on the porch). He asks what Esther is thinking about and she replies that she has been thinking about her "old looks." Allan calls her his "busy bee." The reporter is marginalized in this closing, despite Allan's surely magnanimous and soothingly positive "(a)nd don't you know that you are prettier than you ever were?" Esther,

³⁷³ Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 752.

of course, is immediately erased—effaced—by the courtesy of expectation, both hers and Allan’s preceding formality, and the novel ends with a rushing list and formally open closure:

I did not know that; I am not certain that I know it now. But I know that my dearest little pets are very pretty, and that my darling is very beautiful, and that my husband is very handsome, and that my guardian has the brightest and most benevolent face that ever was seen; and that they can very well do without much beauty in me—even supposing—.

THE END.³⁷⁴

The closing editorial remark on the beauty Esther is not allowed to claim and yet cannot forsake revises the dire subservience—the domestic suspension, abjected in the very home she founds—of her performances and narrations. Dickens supposedly held little patience for would-be feminist resistance to domestic modes expecting women to support the wellbeing of home totally and before any other ventures. The ridiculous tone of the colonizing socialites’ busy work “saving” Africans, for example, suggests both a national-level domestic violation and a much simpler, more fundamental dereliction of domestic duties the conspicuous consumer commits in Dickens’ eyes. And yet Esther the cataloguer, Esther the journalist, Esther the narrator, and Esther the wife and mother, is broken by the expectations and roles of Society, the capital-S machine of custom and propriety that yet neglects its London citizens throughout both Dickens’ historical milieu and his social novels.

Of course Dickens’ target here might still be middle class social climbers and fashionable consumption. Esther could simply be a didactic character sacrifice. But the formal result is an unreliable yet reliable narrator of precisely the damaged life London consumerism and class aspirations—more consumerist logic—inflicts upon everyone. If Esther is not qualified to self-critique, then Esther is not qualified to evaluate the situations she reveals in her narrative. If Dickens’ satires of the legal structure and Society succeed due to the formal immensity of their

³⁷⁴ Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 753.

idiocy in narrative length and form in the epic *Bleak House*, then the simultaneous wasting of their reporter is at least a parallel “success” in this sense. Esther’s emptiness is an atrocity of the system as much because of the rambling politeness of her entries as the final mark of vanity when she/the narrator stops the last indelible listing with the long dash stops and the aperture to indeterminate “supposing.”

The struggle to narrate the “end” in *Bleak House* is perhaps an even larger problem for Kafka’s K. in *The Trial*. The ending episodes, also highlighted by Anderson, also suggest a stunted sociality (not quite the domesticity of Esther):

But just outside the street door they [clung onto him] (*hängten sie sich in ihn*³⁷⁵) him in a fashion he had never before experienced. They kept their shoulders close behind his and instead of crooking their elbows, wound their arms round his at full length, holding his hands in a methodical, practiced, irresistible grip. K. walked rigidly between them, the three of them were interlocked in a unity which would have brought all three down together had one of them been knocked over. It was a unity such as could hardly be formed except by lifeless matter (*wie sie fast nur Lebloses bilden kann*).³⁷⁶

This unity of lifeless matter reiterates K.’s object-status within the legal and social structure while also maintaining Kafka’s overall critique of sociation as such. The two executioners, attendants, men in suits, *suits*, period... they are as impotent as K. in the scene. And yet the “lifeless matter” *can* do something: it can build a unity. It is not really a singularity, at that, as the “Lebloses” *are* inanimate objects. The entire trio is an assemblage of perfunctory association. They will next keep the killing object in parallel ambiguity, refusing it in turn and thereby refusing its arrival as the killing object until a minor surprise. K. begins to believe again in salvation and redemption from the crime he still has not been accused of or charged with

³⁷⁵ Thanks to Jeff Fort for clarity on a translation choice here, “clung onto him” against the Muirs’s choice of “fastened,” as it illuminates even better the sense of mutual dependence and enforced sociation in a scene remarkable for its stark *detachment* as the two anonymous, intractable attendants coldly dispatch K. at the novel’s close.

³⁷⁶ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 281 and *Der Prozess*, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1962, p. 162.

(perhaps Spilka's insistence on Original Sin and the nameless guilt of existence comes from this absence). Just at that moment, one attendant grabs him by the throat, the other "thrust the knife deep into his heart and turned it there twice."³⁷⁷

K. considers that he is meant to take the knife and polish himself off, to borrow Sweeney Todd's expression. That he does not do so before the two attendants off him does not preclude the automatic discipline he had already considered. The incessant ambiguity of his situation, punctuated and elaborated by his equally incessant procedural aggression and rational strategizing, heighten the "mere" possibility that K. could be guilty. He may be. He could certainly also be considered unlikable, but this would be to be guilty of being human in much of Kafka's work. K. exhibits none of the "humanized" virtues of the antihero, but is certainly villainous: his misdeed is never disclosed, perhaps it never was, but the guilt that would attend it still becomes the driving influence of the entire saga. This ambiguity, and the possibility that it is all a mistake or a grand conspiracy, drives the story. K., as the narrator begins on the first page and as commentators routinely note, has done nothing *evil* (*ohne daß er etwas Böses getan hätte*).³⁷⁸ Nevertheless, he is arrested (*verhaftet*). *Verhaftet* is also the source of the adjective *verhaftet*, "to be closely attached to," and a standard German phrase, "*einem Irrtum verhaftet sein*" means to be under a *misapprehension*. *Irrtum* is the standard noun for mistake or error, and the prefix *irr-* denotes a dense complex of words and expressions for wandering, insanity, ranting, tortuous journeys, and even stray objects—bullets as easily as letters. What is so striking in *The Trial* is the absence of error yet this reiteration of "errant" missteps (wandering astray). As the short parable "Before the Law" amplifies, the law is as it must be and it is directly adapted to its subjects yet inscrutable and ineffable to that same subject; the legal subject is

³⁷⁷ Kafka, *The Trial*, p. 286.

³⁷⁸ Kafka, *Der Prozess*, p. 7.

abjected, stuck outside the gate, and yet in attendance before the law constantly. In a telling, brief passage, the guard tells the old man of the country that he will accept all of his payments and gifts, all of the formalities the old man engages in, “*damit du nicht glaubst, etwas versäumt zu haben.*”³⁷⁹ *Versäumen* means to fail to do something, to miss or neglect—not to err or make a mistake at all but to not even act. When K.’s landlady’s cook “failed to appear on this occasion,” as the Muirs translate the second sentence of *The Trial*, in fact it is something quite a bit more definite and precise than the absence of action a “failure to appear” would entail: she “*kam diesmal nicht.*” She didn’t come this time. The further proof of the finality and precision of the scenario is the manner in which K. is wrongly arrested, or “closely attached” to the legal process that follows. He is slandered (*verleumdet*) instead of correctly or accurately accused and charged. The final problem with such a reading, however, is the cagey *mußte* verb and the inarticulate “someone” (*jemand*) that must have done K. wrong. This is modal verb past projection of probability. *Erlebte Rede* dictates the opening in this way, shadowing the “facts” with an imprecise, biased narrative voice that echoes K.’s rationalizations of the process and expressions of his innocence while also marking the unreliability of narrative authority. The speculation, the conjecture of the entire affair is snuck into the first two words—an unclear actor and an undocumented action, but certainly not a failure to act or a no-one. A dog, but still a something.

The *sollte* of the novel’s close reiterates this gesture of ambiguous attachments and actions, which is even more aggressively conditioned by the simple *als* where Kafka’s narrator closes K.’s death scene with *als sollte die Scham ihn überleben.*³⁸⁰ The “as if” performs one of the Romantics’ favorite plays on aesthetic expression, the simulacrous object positioning that denotes the brokenness of representation underlying the failed “likeness” in the first place.

³⁷⁹ Kafka, *Sämtliche Erzählungen*, p. 149

³⁸⁰ Kafka, *Der Prozess*, p. 165.

Rather than hewing to a lost authenticity or “real” primary object, the move here in Kafka destroys the notion of primordial or enduring “shame”—human subjection to social forms, regardless of moral content or impropriety. In Romantic literature, such as *Frankenstein*, the simulacrum of “as if” critiques the industrial or social contexts in play, and this is the same aspect of the *als* at the close of *The Trial*, as well as the dimunition of the social “ought” implied by a noncommittal narrative voice, “wondering” at the significance of K.’s vocation of the prior speculative verdict (*Wie ein Hund!*—like a dog!). *Wie*, the “how?” question word, is also a further version of the “as if,” the performance of similarity or after a form. The simulacrum is thus of a human as a dog, under the sign of the law, and already administered as a speculative non-entity from the opening narrative voice. Commenting on the creature in *Frankenstein*, Jerrold Hogle writes that it is “constructed as a prototype (or mold), the basis of a counterfeit becoming an industrial simulacrum.”³⁸¹ Hogle’s critique is of the ideological and “industrial” conditions under which modern individuals construct themselves and articulate reality as pre-ordained “counterfeits.” Writing in his seminal text on narration in Kafka’s works on the contentious aftermath of the parable “Before the Law” in *The Trial*, in which Joseph K. and the chaplain argue, neither satisfied in the end, Roy Pascal claims that “the reader may well go further than Josef K. and the chaplain in their argument and find the cause of the failure of meaning to lie not in the servant or the petitioner but in the power they serve and worship.”³⁸²

No transcendent essence shines through the grimly plain and base Josef K. He is human, all too human, and a colloquially unredeemable louse of a man. Nevertheless, the absurdly

³⁸¹ Hogle, Jerrold. “From the ghost of the counterfeit,” in *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre: Re-forming Literature 1789-1837*. Ed. Rajan, Tilottama & Julia M. Wright. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 193.

³⁸² Pascal, Roy. *Kafka’s Narrators: A Study of His Stories and Sketches*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 1982, p. 153.

surreal proceduralism of the process ensures that Josef K.'s guilt is, as is commonly said of the book, irrelevant to the experience of, in, before the law Josef K. is subject to. The procedural commitment that begins out of nowhere as the performance of being subjected to and by law, of being accused out of nowhere as Josef K. is in the opening of the novel and "proceeds" as an unexamined addiction to the rules of the game and an investigation of those rules. Josef K.'s various visits to attorneys, clerks, and Titorelli to learn about proper document preparation and case management, which is of course impossible, reflect the crushing hugeness of seemingly countless legal hearings, documents, twists, and turns in Dickens's *Bleak House*. What Kafka foregoes, but what comprises the formal space of Dickens's novel, is the sheer volume of the legal process. Instead, the strangeness and impotence without—not a facile as some "beyond" – description in *The Trial* performs the vast uncertainty and pointlessness of *Bleak House*. The obvious difference is the closing. Esther apparently has a shot at happiness, and certainly has been properly domesticated into a desirable home with no need for the inheritance she would otherwise have received in a cheerful closure to the grand affair. This of course forgets the self-effacement, the narrative erasure of Esther as she continues to hold first person perspective yet narrates the greatness of the husband she is so, so lucky to have landed—captured, by another turn of phrase. Esther is the captive in this case, though, and she resembles a bit too much the captive meat animal spared jostling, striking, and other blows from the traffickers that might diminish her quality and her value to the end consumer. Josef K.'s "like a dog" is an "as if" staged death; Esther's good and lucky wife is the truth. Which is worse?

Ultimately, the nonhuman figures in Kafka can be found in other forms in Dickens despite the copiously developed and satirized human figures that comprise *Bleak House* or others of his London social novels. The formal variations between the two denote a commonplace in the

study of long nineteenth-century literature, as dissatisfaction with realism, which had previously reacted to Romanticism's artifice, fed attempts to express experience besides the documentation of social realities or, in the case of naturalism, social determinants. In Kafka, the suspicion of categories such as human and nonhuman are foregrounded in the formal ambiguity of reliable narration, and further, since Dickens also features questionable narrative perspectives, in the unsatisfied questioning as to status and social obligation in texts like *The Trial*, "The Burrow," and "In the Penal Colony." Dickens's London novels, focusing as they do on the same "fog" of encroaching social space in the city as Kafka thematizes in *The Trial*, thus enact a parallel experiment in articulating experience through literary form. In this case, the immensity of social documentation, though in Dickens's unmistakable authorial tones, to be sure, and the frivolity of legal process and documentation coalesce in an insurmountable, idiotic cacophony that the conventional interpretation would suggest is abated by the closure of the case with a found will and the exhausted resources. Dickens exceeds that interpretation, however, in Esther's self-erasure as a lucky, redeemed woman now "happily" drafting new documents on the social structure she inhabits. She writes herself out of a subjectivity as a result, so to speak.

What is a horrible sociation in *The Burrow*, whatever the narrator suggests at the story's outset about awaiting companionship, is a decisive yet wholly inarticulate power imbalance between the Office and the Explorer, such that the latter seemingly sentences the former without a word—like the creature digging in *The Burrow*, the Officer assigns himself to the machine and its atrocities. The final result, however, is not an enlightenment as to his crimes and to the achievement of justice:

It was as it had been in life; no sign was visible of the promised redemption; what the others had found in the machine the officer had not found; the lips were firmly pressed

together, the eyes were open, with the same expression as in life, the look was calm and convinced, through the forehead went the point of a great iron spike.³⁸³

Likewise, the burrowing, structuring, obsessive figure in *The Burrow* concludes its narration in abject failure. Furthermore, the closing lines highlight the same “müssen” speculation as the *erlebte Rede* of *Der Prozess*:

[W]enn es mich aber gehört hätte, hätte doch auch ich etwas davon bemerken müssen, es hätte doch wenigstens in der Arbeit öfters innehalten müssen und horchen. – Aber alles blieb unverändert. – –³⁸⁴

[B]ut if it had heard me I must have noticed some sign of it, the beast must at least have stopped its work every now and then to listen. But all remained unchanged.³⁸⁵

The near-passive voice in “all remained unchanged,” not other than it was, belies the mannered punctuation of the em dashes left out of the English translation in this case. Adorno’s well-known essay on punctuation marks instructs readers to take them quite seriously, if poetic study or good clean common sense had not already done so:

The less punctuation marks, taken in isolation, convey meaning or expression and the more they constitute the opposite pole in language to names, the more each of them acquires a definitive physiognomic status of its own, an expression of its own, which cannot be separated from its syntactic function but is by no means exhausted by it.³⁸⁶

And so not only is the variability of the *erlebte Rede* informing the action, but “the beast” in the passage (*das Tier*—a neutral animal being despite the simultaneously proper and improper translation of its menacing significance into the beastly) is as easily the supposed protagonist-narrator as it is the suspected Other beast underground with the denizen of the Burgplatz in the story. It is impossible to know “which” is experiencing the speculative mood about the “other” in

³⁸³ Kafka, Franz. “In the Penal Colony,” in *The Complete Stories*. Ed. Nahum Glatzer, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir. New York: Schocken, 1995, p. 166.

³⁸⁴ Kafka, “Der Bau,” in *Sämtliche Erzählungen*, p. 444.

³⁸⁵ Kafka, “The Burrow,” in *The Complete Stories*, p. 359.

³⁸⁶ Adorno, “punctuation marks,” trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, *The Antioch Review* Vol. 48, No. 3, Poetry Today (Summer, 1990), p. 300.

this structure at the end.³⁸⁷ The consistent agent in the narrative is the obsession with construction and not the would-be subject of a secure domestic space. In *Bleak House*, Esther, the would-be protagonist-narrator and also the hero whose “progress” could successfully achieve catharsis, is likewise limited in the end and is a sort of transient first person narrator to begin with given the chapter shifts between her perspective and another narrator’s. Furthermore, both works end in the punctuation marks that denote not closure or termination but aperture or, even more disconcerting, suspension.

It is hardly necessary to invoke here the incomplete ending of Kafka’s *The Castle*—

She spoke with difficulty, it was hard to understand her, but what she said
—but it seems all too fitting as an inflection of the two works here under comparison, which remind as well again of the unity formed by the two attendants who escort K. to his “lifeless” and dog-like death: *Es war eine Einheit, wie sie fast nur Lebloses bilden kann.*

³⁸⁷ One is reminded, perhaps, of the rapid shifts in perspective in the closing scenes of Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*, in which Dave, the astronaut who has terminated the HAL 9000 emblem of evil human technology and now arrived at the far reaches of the universe, only to suspect his own multi-dimensional presence and, perhaps, enter into a time loop to re-populate an earth as a primordial fetus after death.

Conclusion

Together At Last, or, After All

As this project has shown, the literary heritage of nonhuman form from Romanticism to Kafka's modernism passes through the proverbial "meat grinder" of nineteenth century urban life. The legal conundrums produced through British laws of enclosure, grain regulations, and governing the poor in the new civic spaces spiraled into the sincere, but also sincerely flawed animal rights movement in nineteenth-century England. What Romantics express about nonhuman life—whether an animal or a human that experiences it—is that nothing can salvage anything from the violent abjection of categorical divisions like the labor class mutations the butchers undergo through the history of Smithfield or the refinements in manufactured articles meat animals suffer during the same period. At times, the Romantics directly engage livestock and laboring animals such as the young ass of Coleridge's poem of the same name, or even Clare's badger. But Mary Shelley approaches the same trouble with flesh and "corpsing," to borrow a modern apocalyptic figure from Beckett's *Endgame*, by articulating a nonhuman deprived of, yet defined entirely through, the human. The creature lives, yet cannot live, and Victor dies, yet cannot properly die because the performed sublime of his life sublimates his aesthetic recognition of experience. The creature explodes Victor's world yet Victor cannot access this expression of suffering. Victor is inhuman and the nonhuman cannot instruct him in human ways despite apparent expertise. These narrative and philosophical circumstances are expressed in the framing structures of the novel and repeated play upon iterative subject positions such as "I" and "the creature." This is the same formal play Robert Burns wages in his redress of human narrative authority in "To A Mouse" and the same narrative-philosophical

horror in Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Other works, such as Blake's *Book of Thel*, convincingly establish the Romantic nonhuman form through the satire of apostrophe and the revision of subject position in the poem.

The Romantic nonhuman form gives way, by the 1821 implementation of the steam printing press and the progress of animal rights in relation to the trope of sympathy and the upper class narrative of improvement, to the real demolition of individuality. If Romantic literature is often held up as a defense of individual expression against the encroaching homogeneity of urban anonymity and mass population, it then falls mightily to the burgeoning popular pulp literary culture. That popular literary culture, which rides the wings of a massive increase in public literacy that ironically leads to the mass consumption of "cheap" literatures with uncomplicated narrative structures and poor production value, ultimately inculcates a nonhuman form both in mass, untraceable, and fungible anonymity at the level of authorship and at the level of material production. On top of this, the shallow narrative forms, although gripping and sensational as suspense narratives with conventional denouements, are saturated with gore and the horrors of bloody marauders, dark urban murderers, supernatural nonhumans, and the infamous supplier of cannibalistic fare, Sweeny Todd.

At the same time, the tradition of spectacle in London, including the immensely popular public hangings of the very same criminals who would be immortalized in the penny fiction, suggests that these gruesome tales were as entertaining as they were terrifying. Whatever real anxieties they expressed, about meat insecurity or about new urban dangers to the rural traveler or anyone else, the public had a very strong stomach for it all as evidenced by the sheer volume of consumption. The demon barber of Fleet Street, harvesting the meat of replaceable, travelling, business class visitors in London's increasingly labyrinth urban center, realizes the darkest

horrors of the uncontrollable city, but it then also deputizes the evolution of dulled urban sensibilities.

Dickens's immense, singular London realism, with its myriad flourishes belying a strict realist tenor and coupled with his journalistic output, ultimately fails to "present" London as it is, but does manage to express the gaping sink hole of London, for Oliver, or of London's developing bureaucratic channels, as in the case of the law in *Bleak House*. When Krook is finally consumed in a spontaneous combustion like so much candle tallow, it is the consummation of the absurd, abject urban space and the trappings of administered modern life as well as the legal consumption of both common experience and the individual. Just as London eats itself in *Sweeney Todd*, so does it finally burn itself up in *Bleak House*. Esther's narrative position matches the Romantic ambiguity of narrative authority perfectly. Esther does not burn up in a sensational self-consuming spectacle. Esther *writes* herself into abjection as an appendage of her magnificent husband by the novel's end. Likewise, the narrative arc that consumes the object and purpose of the legal case at the heart of the novel achieves Dickens's critique of the mass society in London.

Bleak House does not deal in squalor and atrocity in the way *Oliver Twist*, with its disgusting, overwhelming passage on Smithfield, must. Instead, Dickens shifts his attentions to the far more destructive administrative forms of middle class, aspirational class, and upper class consumption habits. The broad "consumer class" born in nineteenth century London culture and buttressed by its raging legal structures—the same structures that would defend the suffering animal objects at the heart of fashionable consumer class animal rights activism—eats everything, from everywhere, and perfects the systems of domination and extraction that produce the essential extract of meat, like Bovril, and perfectly mechanize animal slaughter for the

perfectly rendered, anonymous, invisible meat objects the consumer class, necessarily, had to erase all animal traces from with Smithfield removal. Meat *had* to be cleaner, *had* to be quieter, *had* to be “more humane.” This was what the market demanded. These myths were precisely the grounds upon which Kafka would express this total domination and irrevocable abjection, and the parallel totality and futility of social structures his works articulate realized the deepest consequences of nonhuman form as it treks from Romantic expression, through material intersections such as the meat and popular literary modes of nineteenth century London, and into the twentieth century atrocities motivating Kafka and those that followed in his wake. Throughout, however, Dickens and Kafka both maintain a sense of humor or, certainly in Kafka’s works, sweetly mundane “curiosity.” Can the way from Burns’s haggis roast and Carroll’s inane curiosities be so far?

Harriet Ritvo, in a dazzling material gesture, named her seminal text *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in Victorian England*. The “animal estate,” or the nonhuman behemoth of Jarndyce and Jarndyce—London and social structuration—is a similarly interminable affect for its subjects but a definitively terminal condition, in fact. The animals produced *as* produce, like the heirs trafficked to an alienating London to be shuffled about in productions of domesticity like Esther with her wonderful husband, and like the famous creature of Mary Shelley’s text, all languish in their efforts to articulate themselves and address interlocutors. More properly for the animals in the metropolitan meat works, the legal protection of animal bodies—for the sake of profit and regulation, to be sure—both inscribes the animal as an individual object and a substantive subject of law *and* erases the animal from the livelihood informing that legal articulation in the material conditions of Smithfield Market removal and meat production efficiencies. The human meat commodities Sweeney Todd manufactures,

complete with intricate, professionally innovative technological devices like the double barber's chair that swings clients in and out at "breakneck" rates, realize the full potential of the urban meat production system at the level of metaphor.

The larger critique Dickens, Melville, Poe, and Kafka mount in literary form and that theorists like Georg Simmel and the Frankfurt School articulate in philosophical and sociological forms, shows the real administration of human lives and animal lives alike. All classes succumb to nonhuman forms of administered life in the meat industry, the pulp serial press, the urban-business quotidian, and the legal structure of society refining itself in intense, exponential strides throughout the nineteenth century. London has not stopped its development of city life, and today's Smithfield Market, once the site of vibrant animal rights activism as well as riveting social critique, is a quiet space a bit off the main drags of London traffic. The commemorative square is a soothingly circular, silent, shady enclave with a precious view of St. Paul's dome housing a writhing postmodernist bench installation. It also has a key post-Smithfield, post-cholera outbreak clean water source, a remnant of the sedimented London livestock history: an old Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association outlet that, as it includes cattle in the name, must be after 1867, well after Smithfield removal and specifically commemorating the site's animal welfare importance.³⁸⁸ And so it is that nonhuman forms, if they aspire to shake free of human forms, never quite do, but then the other side of the coin is as gravely imprinted. That is the claim of much recent work on the animal and on posthuman, post-biopolitical inquiry. Neither post, human or nonhuman, sufficiently grounds committed compartments toward an alternative coexistence. All suffer and flourish in unison.

³⁸⁸ Dickens, naturally, had an entry on the city's new drinking fountains in his *Dictionary of London*. See also: Kean, *Animal Rights*, and Kean's chapter, "Animals and War Memorials: Different Approaches to Commemorating the Human-Animal Relationship," in *Animals and War: Studies of Europe and North America*, ed. Ryan Hediger. Leiden: Brill, 2013, pp. 237-262.

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Animal Law Bibliography

Selected English Parliamentary Acts & Proposed Acts

[1785-1837]

Act: 1786 Knackers

Bill: 1800 Bull-Baiting

Bill: 1802 Bull-Baiting

Bill: 1809 Cruelty to Animals

Bill: 1810 Cruelty to Animals

Act: 1822 Metropolitan Police

[3 George IV. c. 71.] Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act, 1822
Bill: 1823 Bull-Baiting, Dog-Fights
Act: 1825 Impounding Distresses
Bill: 1825 Bull-Baiting Bill
Bill: 1825 Cruelty to Cattle
Bill: 1826 Cruelty to Cattle
Bill: 1826 Bear-Baiting Dog-Fights
Bill: 1826 Cruelty to Dogs
Act: 1827 Larceny
Act: 1827 Malicious Injury
Act: 1827 Metropolitan Police
Act: 1835 [5 & 6 William IV. c. 59.] Cruelty to Animals Act, 1835

[1837-1901]

Act: **1837** [1 Victoria c. 66.] Cruelty to Animals (Ireland)
Act: 1837: Eastmeon Inclosures
Act: 1839 Metropolitan Police
Act: 1839 London Police
Act: 1844 Eastmeon Inclosure
Act: 1847 Markets and Fairs
Act: 1847 Towns Improvement
Act: **1849** [12 & 13 Victoria c. 92.] Cruelty to Animals Act, 1849
Act: 1850 Police Improvement
Act: **1850** [13 & 14 Victoria c. 59.] Cruelty to Animals Act, 1850
Act: 1851 Metropolitan Market
Act: **1854** [17 & 18 Victoria c. 60.] Cruelty to Animals Act, 1854
Act: 1862 General Police
Act: 1875 Public Health Act
Act: **1876** [39 & 40 Vict. c. 77.] Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876
Anti-Vivisection Act, 1876
Bill: **1879** Cruelty to Animals 1879
Act: 1892 Burgh Police (Scotland)
Act: **1900** [63 & 64 Victoria c. 33.] Wild Animals in Captivity Protection Act, 1900

Smithfield Removal Act, 1852