

Animal Life and Rural Labor

Literary and Material Resistance in Biopolitical Britain

In George Morland's painting *Outside the Alehouse Door*, two men are talking outside a rustic thatch-roofed alehouse. One man sits at a simple outdoor table and holds a beer and a pipe. His companion has his hands on the table and leans toward the seated man as if engaged in earnest conversation. The man seated with his beer is slightly turned away from the viewer, and the brim of his hat covers part of his face. Light focuses the viewer's eyes on the men while a darker atmosphere surrounds them, including a darkened doorway, shadows cast by the roof and a tree, and a sky with mixed weather of dark and light clouds. We are left to wonder what these men could be discussing.

Known for his agricultural paintings of labor and leisure, Morland is one of the most prodigious painters of the Romantic period.¹ His work was well known throughout the nineteenth century, and John Barrell's *The Dark Side of the Landscape* brought Morland to contemporary notice. As Barrell notes, such wondering about the conversation between the men at the alehouse turned to anxiety for at least one of Moreland's Romantic-period biographers. William Collins, in his 1805 *Memoirs of a Painter*, describes the painting as "[a] group of English figures regaling themselves, which, like true sons of liberty, they seem determined on in spite of all opposition."² Collins's use of the term "true sons of liberty" carries with it the connotation of populism and radicalism, which coupled with "the word 'English' has a disturbing political implication. He [Collins] recognizes these labourers as 'free-born Englishmen,' men who are represented as actually resisting—they are 'determined'—the demand that they should accept the status of mild, temperate, industrious, submissive labourers"³ According to Collins's sensibility, rather

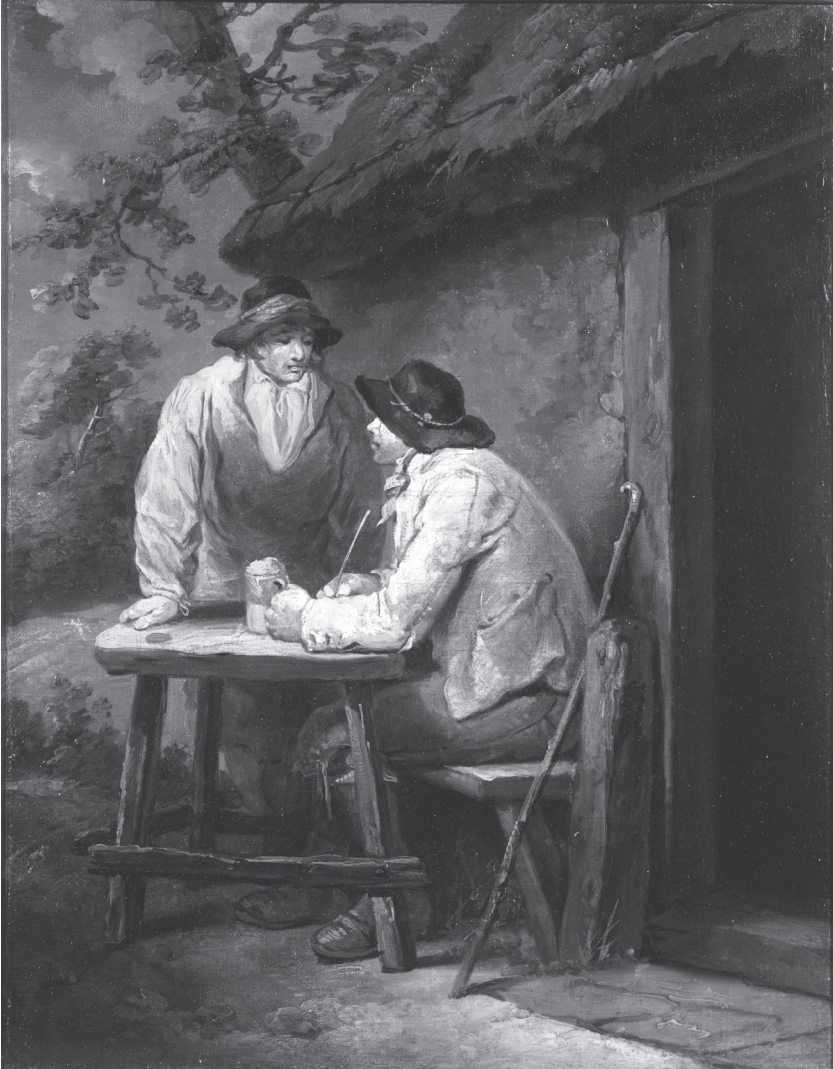


Figure 1.1. George Morland. *Outside the Ale House Door*. 1792. Tate Gallery.

than drinking beer, these men should be figures of industry, and like proper laborers in picturesque paintings, they should be working in the fields.

Barrell explains that with one beer between them and their serious demeanor, the men are not “regaling themselves.” Rather, discomfort over the ale comes from “this jug of ale [as] a symbol of their indiscipline and revolt—

[because] it is not diluted by any reassuring passivity of attitudes. . . . their little money would be better spent on the wants of their families than on their own coarse pleasures; and that pint becomes for Moreland's critics a signpost on the road that leads from idleness to insurrection."⁴ A turn to biopolitics—or biological life made political—extends Barrell's line of thinking and sees it as more than anxieties over the political capacities of the laboring class. The worker is drinking beer brewed from a grain in the fields in which he has toiled or from other fields nearby. It is a local product of his labors and those of his fellow field hands. On the eve of war with France and with perceived distance between landowners and field hands, the men in *Outside the Alehouse Door* must place the sweat of bodies in the field, their labor, and their liberty in relation to a larger political world of a growing nation.⁵ The beer is in contrast to French wines, which became the fashion of landowners and was derided as a political betrayal by William Cobbett and other class-conscious critics of rural life. As Robert Bloomfield laments, the landowners now "violate the feelings of the poor; / To leave them distanc'd in the mad'ning race, / Where'er Refinement shews its hated face."⁶ What these men at the alehouse door eat and drink, how the product of their labor is used and to whom it is distributed, where they are allowed to congregate, and how they are allowed to use their "free" time are all matters of biopolitics as the social body peers into the biological life of a people.

Pipe and beer as signs of Englishness appear some years later in Edwin Landseer's painting *Low Life*, where a stocky dog with wide chest and thick jaw sits at the worn wooden doorstep of his master's home, loyally awaiting his return. Beside him rests a mug of beer and a pipe. Through the cultural signification of objects, the animal is interpolated within the same social, economic, and labor world as his master.⁷ The political connection between beer, bully breed dog, and England is evident in James Gillray's cartoon *Politeness*.⁸ A stout Englishman sits with his pint of beer in his hand and his bulldog at his feet. Behind him hangs a large cut of red meat on a hook. He stares down at a Frenchman seated to his side. In contrast to the beefy Englishman, the thin Frenchman wears refined clothes and a wig. He holds a container of snuff rather than a British beer. At his feet is a mousy dog cowering from the growling British bulldog. Where the Englishman has large slabs of meat behind him, the Frenchman has two small frog legs.

Returning to Morland's painting, to further the contrast between these field hands and the landowners, where "Refinement shews its hated face," a walking stick rests next to the seated man. From its appearance, the stick is likely made from hawthorn or blackthorn—both of which were used as barbed hedgerows to reinforce land enclosure in a fence-like fashion. A

walking stick cut from the barriers to liberty of trespass reveals a defiance against laws that restrict the movement of people and forecloses the use of common pathways. A knotted, thorny shrub changes value. It transforms from plant to a fence that reinforces state and local laws.⁹ In the hands of a field worker, it becomes an object of defiance of such laws. The walking stick refashions the biopolitical tool from fence to instrument of motility.

One can read bodies, their vitality, and their capacities by creating new assemblages of material objects; dogs, beer, and earnest laborers set in a rural environment create a mosaic of a political life that affects the very biological being of the dog and workers, their food, and their rural ecology. Maurizio Lazzarato summarizes how forces become a power, in this case biopower, and how such power is used by the state as biopolitics. According to Lazzarato, “biopolitics is the strategic coordination of these power relations in order to extract a surplus of power from living beings. . . . Biopower coordinates and targets a power that does not properly belong to it, that comes from the ‘outside.’ *Biopower is always born of something other than itself.*”¹⁰ Moreland’s painting, along with Landseer’s and Gillray’s, show how the “surplus power from living beings” is called upon for political ends. Collins’s uneasiness about the leisure of laborers in *Outside the Alehouse Door* reveals how the life of the worker is circumscribed to toil in the fields. Any surplus time and energy carries with it the social demand that it be spent in moral and industrious pursuits of benefit to the family and society. Ale and beer serve as ambiguous signs: they can represent the well-being of a people who have the ability to expend time in drinking but also the possible careless or riotous mood drink can induce.

The dogs in *Low Life* and *Politeness* are tough-looking, muscular beasts. Their attributes of loyalty and ferocity move from dog to human owner. In this move, the canine is part of a fearsome animality within the Englishman. The politics of muscular bodies, what they eat to build themselves, and how these bodies can be used for ends of power and the state are part of what Lazzarato means when he says that “*biopower is always born of something other than itself.*” Biopower attempts to harness the forces within masses of living bodies toward civil and social ends.

As will be evident throughout this book, bodies insist, resist, and weigh.¹¹ Biopower causes something new to emerge: populations, labor expenditures, food intake, economic outputs, and so on. But the “something else” from which biopower extracts its ability does not have to abide passively. While biopower is a mode of production by assembly and assimilation of forces not properly its own, resistance to biopower creates yet other modes of production: “Foucault is interested in determining what there is in life

that resists, and that, in resisting this power, creates forms of subjectification and forms of life that escape its control.”¹² Friction to state machinery and biopolitical schemes creates other modes of living and dwelling. Such resistance is a line of flight from the formation of the modern state and its ability to “make live and let die.” Each chapter in this book provides a reading of not only apparatuses that create biopolitical subjects, but also alternative forms of life.

In his essay on public health in the eighteenth century, Foucault sketches a methodology for reading biopolitical apparatuses. He proposes to examine “the whole of a complex material field where not only are natural resources, the products of labor, their circulation and the scope of commerce engaged, but where the management of towns and routes, the conditions of life (habitat, diet, etc.), the number of inhabitants, their life span, their ability and fitness for work also come into play.”¹³ I apply a similar methodology of investigation where material fields meet representation and apparatus of production (biopolitical and otherwise). Some of the texts, such as Malthus’s and Adam Smith’s work, are symptomatic of the biopolitical apparatus, while other texts, such as the labor class poetry of Bloomfield and Robert Burns, bear witness the workings of biopolitics “in the field,” as it were. Still other texts provide alternative assemblages and ways of dwelling over and against interpolation by the state, as is evident in the James Hogg’s rural tales and select work of Edwin Landseer.

By way of illustration, consider another brief example of material life and politics from the Romantic period, this time taken from the twenty-fifth chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy: “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn” (Deuteronomy 25:4). During the Romantic period, this biblical phrase was used by advocates of gleaning to justify this common practice. For centuries, workers and their families have gathered for their own use the sparse remaining stalks of grain from harvested fields. Gleaning functions outside the wage-labor system but within the social economy by which families supplement their provisions and income. Taken literally, the biblical phrase invites working livestock to partake in the fruits of their labors, which otherwise become commodities for humans. The passage expands the community and economy by which humans and nonhumans dwell. By using the passage from Deuteronomy as a rhetorical tool for justifying gleaning, advocates of the practice collapse the human–animal distinction, bringing both together as beasts of burden. Although the physical labor of humans and animals was part of the economic system of agriculture, the beasts of burden are claiming that their physical labor should feed their biological need. The ox eats the corn to sustain further milling, and the farm hands and their

families glean grains to keep hunger from their doors. The biblical passage pits biological bodies and their capacities against economies that overlook the needs for sustaining life.

Those who opposed gleaning sought to bring the labor practice under a singular system of accounting. In it, not only the work of gathering grain but its food value, too, would be measured within the quantifiable sums of a monetary economy and capitalist market. Along with gleaning, food riots were a way of rebelling against the market-driven system. Agricultural laborers believed it their social right to be able to buy the bread made from the grains they grew and harvested. These concerns of life, agriculture, and capitalist economy are addressed in chapter 2, but here I would like to develop the utility of biopower as a concept by which to reevaluate less known literary and cultural texts of the Romantic period. *Beasts of Burden* explores how a number of interested parties and systems attempted to manage not only labor practices but more broadly the health and well-being of the humans and animals who worked the fields and how these beasts of burden resisted such systems. The book is a proof of concept for how the extension of social power into biological life has far-reaching implications for the Romantic period and for scholarship on aesthetic and cultural texts of the period.

Michel Foucault's early work on disciplinary societies accounts for the regulation of labor practices as a regulation of bodies. These are "techniques of power that were essentially centered on the body, on the individual body."¹⁴ For agricultural labor during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this means everything from pricing systems for labor to technologies such as new seed drills and plows; it includes soil regeneration by way of crop-rotation systems and the use of manure. Each of these mechanisms, large and small, changed how the laboring body functioned in the fields. However, the disciplinary society does not adequately describe the relationship among commodity markets, governmental practices, and the livelihood of laborers. Gleaning, for example, means not only labor practices but also a regulation of food, life, and livelihood both on and beyond the scale of the individual body.

In the mid-1970s, Foucault began describing a different modality of power that he saw as "the greatest transformation political right[s] underwent in the nineteenth century." According to Foucault, various technologies, apparatuses, and governmental structures cohere in a new power: "the power to make live and let die."¹⁵ Governments have long had the power to kill, including sentencing citizens to execution or sending them to fight in wars. This new power, what Foucault calls "biopower," is the regulation of life en masse. In his lectures published as *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault defines biopower as "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the

human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power.”¹⁶ Rather than control over the individual subject and individual bodies, biopower is concerned with populations and systems by which populations can be normalized and controlled. In Foucault’s words, this means a power “applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species”; it is a “taking control of life and the biological processes of man-as-species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined, but regularized.”¹⁷ Moving politics to the scale of the biological expands the arena of social control and what “counts” as a social text.

Foucault situates this new power historically at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century—during the Agricultural Revolution. The gains in agricultural production freed labor to leave the fields and fill the cities during the rise of the Industrial Revolution. Shifts in population, food and its distribution, and health became a concern of the nation. They were monitored by new apparatuses such as statistical models, exacting ordinance surveys, censuses, measurements of resources and their distributions, and forecasts.¹⁸ Significantly, Britain’s war with France (1793) and Malthus’s *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (first published in 1798) heightened the sense of urgency in managing the population and the material assets of the nation. While Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man* (1791) was interested in the individual as a citizen of the nation and how each citizen is counted, Malthus moves the counting from a political concern of representation to a matter of biopolitics.¹⁹ In other words, Paine’s citizen is not only a participant in a government; he is also according to Malthus a biological being whose life is enabled and managed by the state.

Foucault’s lectures on biopower and his subsequent *History of Sexuality* focuses on sex and population as the matters of biopolitical concern.²⁰ What he leaves out—but what I take up in this book—is how food and the labor of producing it are also implicated in biopower, and particularly so during the early formation of the biopolitical systems in Britain. Where Foucault marks race as the site of “fragmenting the field of the biological,”²¹ I am interested in class as a set of material labors, powers, and practices that leverage the capacities of bodies, both human and animal, within a larger social system. It is not that Foucault is unaware of the capacities of agriculture within his delineation of biopower; he outlines, for example, the role of agriculture in the formation of a nation and the role of the Third Estate in ensuring “the substantive and historical existence of the nation” in eighteenth-century France.²² However, such interventions by Foucault into food as biopolitical apparatus are rare.

It is only more recently with the work of Cary Wolfe in *Before the Law*, Nicole Shukin in *Animal Capital*, and Mick Smith in *Against Ecological*

Sovereignty that biopower has been explicitly linked to agricultural and animal concerns. Shukin's *Animal Capital* looks at how the title's two terms cyclically feed each other such that animal life and capital finance recursively sustain one another. As Shukin explains: "The tautological ring of this book's title seeks to make audible a related time of real subsumption effected by material and metaphorical technologies pursuing the ontological indifference of capital and animal life."²³ Much of Shukin's work outlines the "material and metaphorical" ways that capital and technology construct and limit animal life. It is in the final chapter and afterword that she begins to trace zoonotic diseases and possibilities of pandemic (from mad cow to H5N1) as a blow-back to such an animal-capital system. Shukin and Wolfe in particular provide the system analysis necessary to understand the apparatus as a precursor to thinking after biopolitics. *Before the Law* appears throughout several early chapters to help construct my argument.

Extending Shukin and Wolfe's work, my project considers how the life and liveness of the subject resists and exceeds the frameworks used to render subjects units of operation within the *dispositif* of capital and state. The goal is to find moments early in the formation of biopolitics where other modalities of living and dwelling were at odds with the biopolitical regime that continues to the present. Little work has been done on biopower and the Agricultural Revolution in Romantic-period Britain, and it is to this task that *Beasts of Burden* sets itself. Moreover, this book furthers my earlier work on agriculture, aesthetics, and nationhood in *Technologies of the Picturesque*.

Beasts of Burden explores how laboring classes represented rural life during the rise of biopolitical apparatuses. I have coupled this with representations of working animals such as the horse and sheep dog along with a few wild animals such as lions and polar bears that do social and political work through their wildness.²⁴ The result is a different Britain than the one depicted by well-known authors of the Romantic period.²⁵ I try to trace "the emergence of a multiple and heterogeneous power of resistance and creation that calls every organization that is transcendental, and every regulatory mechanism that is extraneous, to its constitution radically into question."²⁶ In other words, the constitutions of economic, political, and state machinery built on the biological forces are defamiliarized. Their reasons for existence and the realities they produce are denaturalized as other ways of dwelling emerge from the multiple and heterogeneous forces.

Several scholarly works have taken up the problem of population in relationship to Romantic-period literature and culture. Most notable among these are Maureen McLane's *Romanticism and the Human Sciences: Poetry, Population, and the Discourse of Species* and, published at almost the same time, Philip Connell's *Romanticism, Economics, and the Question of "Culture."*²⁷

Both highlight the well-known population debates characterized best by the work of William Godwin and Malthus as well as literary figures such as Hazlitt and Wordsworth, who opposed Malthus's treatment of the poor. Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetic masses of humanity and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* are representative second-generation Romantic texts for these authors. Connell addresses rural life in a brief section on Cobbett, but otherwise his view of population is through primarily well-known and well-read authors, few if any of whom had themselves farmed the land.²⁸ David Simpson's recent *Wordsworth, Commodification, and Social Concern* provides a similar lens for reading rural populations through well-known Romantic-period authors.²⁹ The framing of life and how life is used, in short a biopolitical framework, is absent in these historical readings of population and community; this is, at least in part, the contribution *Beasts of Burden* seeks to make.

What Simpson raises and what Katey Castellano brings forward in *The Ecology of British Romantic Conservatism, 1790–1837* is a conservatism within liberal thinking about rural economies and the environment. As Castellano explains, there is a desire to project into the future an idealized image of past relationships between laborers and landowners and between humans and natural resources:

Romantic conservative critiques of modernity—found in texts as diverse as poetry, novels, political philosophy, natural history, and agricultural periodicals—all manifest conservative-conservationist reactions against the progressive ideology of capitalist modernity. Like the *Reflections [on the Revolution in France]*, they locate communal futurity in the past by championing localized, customary communities and practices that have been, in Burke's words, "formed by habit."³⁰

A biopolitical frame brings to this conversation the shift in scale of British nation building. Forces applied globally to colonial subjects are at work within the boundary lines of the nation as well during the constitution of a modern state and its citizens. Moreover, these forces work at the level of life itself, not simply on bodies or citizen-subjects. Whether it is Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* projecting a plan for regional or national production and capital or the conservative view of Burke, the new apparatuses of survey, census, statistics, and record keeping create new ways of managing life, normativity, and productivity for masses of humans and animals.

It is difficult to discuss rural labor without also addressing the place of animals in British life. While the first appearances of animal studies in Romantic scholarship were around 2001, the field has grown considerably

since then. Christine Kenyon-Jones catalogues the appearance of animals in works by major Romantic authors in *Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic-Period Writing*.³¹ David Perkins outlines the beginning of the animal rights movement alongside Paine's *Rights of Man* and Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Women* in his *Romanticism and Animal Rights*. Since these works, there have been a number of collected essays in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholarship in animals and culture.³²

Beasts of Burden does not address animal rights for several reasons. Perkins's book serves as a good overview of this terrain, as does Harriet Ritvo's *Animal Estate*, where she describes the birth of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.³³ More importantly, biopower provides a different way of approaching animal life. As Cary Wolfe explains in *Before the Law*:

Foucault argues that this shift from sovereignty to biopower involves a new concept of the subject, one that is endowed with fundamental interests that cannot be limited to or contained by the simple *legal* category of the person. But a trade-off is involved here. If the subject addressed by biopolitics comprises a new political resource, it also requires a new sort of political technology if it is to be fully controlled and exploited. The biosubject, you might say, is far more multidimensional and robust than the "thin" subject of laws and rights; that is both its promise and its challenge as a new object of political power.³⁴

Rights discourse attempts to address the subject under "a transcendental ethics of communication," of which Jürgen Habermas is the most relevant current proponent.³⁵ However, as Wolfe notes, such a characterization of the human and animal subject is "thin" in that the more "multidimensional and robust" elements of life are either left out or forced within the frame of a transcendental ethics. Biopower gives us a more comprehensive view of how human and animal life are made political and put to use by the nation and by the demands of capital. The rise of a new sort of subject under biopolitics calls for a different language from the all-too-weak modalities of common sense and rational communication projected by rights discourse.

Tobias Menely's *The Animal Claim* bridges rights debates with a corporality that precedes any possible discussion of rights and social recognition. He is interested in how animals give voice, how their voices are heard culturally, and how they are taken up for advocates for animal rights within the cultural and political systems of eighteenth-century Britain. For Menely, sensibility and affect provide avenues by which animals give prelinguistic

signals of liveness, potency, and vulnerability. Tracing the animal question in philosophy and poetry of the period, *The Animal Claim* considers how “[s]ensibility . . . puts pressure on the symbolic order, and thus on a model of community as necessarily human . . . by relentlessly defining its operations with response to the impassioned voice, an unintegrated origin and never fully actualized surplus of meaning that precedes the signifier itself” (4–5). Something is going on in the animal, as evidenced by voice, and it is this something to which the poets bear witness. While Menely is primarily interested in how aesthetics can bear witness or help claim a space for animals, “voice, an unintegrated origin and never fully actualized surplus of meaning” also provide evidence of a friction between human community and an unintegrated (and perhaps unintegratable) animality. Such friction reveal what I believe is a resistance to biopolitical regimes as they develop in the Romantic period.

As Jacques Derrida explains in “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow),” the word *animal* is all too human and covers too many different creatures and ways of life to be particularly useful as a designation.³⁶ Instead, Derrida advocates that we examine the various fractured lines in specific human–animal relations. In *Beasts of Burden*, I am interested in how animal life is represented and used within culture and in ways that animals provide friction to the interlocking gears of our social systems. Where they do create friction, animals reveal the often overlooked machinery of subjectification and commodification. And, as is perhaps obvious, because animals live not only within our cultural worlds but also within worlds beyond our comprehension, they point to other ways of dwelling. In the final chapter and the afterword, I project out the implications of animal worlding at the limits of human culture. In doing so, I develop how biological life and animality can be used over and against political apparatuses and how the concept of biopower pushes cultural thought to the limits of what it is capable of understanding or even conceiving.

Before proceeding further, it is worth briefly noting why I am primarily using Foucault’s articulation of biopolitics rather than Agamben’s use of the term in relation to the state of exception and bare life. Agamben traces his terms back to the Greeks. The emphasis throughout his corpus is “on sovereignty and the abjection of the body [particularly the human body] as ‘animal,’ which in turn becomes a kind of abstract philosophical *topos*. What we’re talking about here instead is a kind of biopolitics that is very, very specifically articulated in relation to different, particular kinds of bodies.”³⁷ Foucault places biopower within very specific historical contexts and apparatuses, while Agamben’s matrix remains an abstract frame based on foundational workings

of culture dating from the distinction between *bios* or “the good life” and *zoe* or “animal life” (and for humans excluded from *bios*, there is a bare life). Certainly Agamben’s terms can be used in relation to the human and animal spheres I address in this book; however, much of the historical specificity would be lost. The result would be an analysis of human and animal life that could equally describe many other cultural and historical moments.³⁸

There is much that this book does not cover. Its scope is rather narrowly on farm life and the depiction of domesticated and wild animals. Notably absent is the role of slavery in the wealth of the nation. West Indian labor helped build the British Empire. Timothy Morton’s work on blood sugar in *The Poetics of Spice* is well known. Paul Youngquist and Grégory Pierrot’s ongoing work on Caribbean slavery takes up many biopolitical concerns, as does Paul Youngquist’s *Race, Romanticism, and the Atlantic*.³⁹ Also absent is the history of agricultural experimentation and the growth of Britain’s beef culture. I have addressed both of these topics in *Technologies of the Picturesque*. Finally, readers interested in labor-class poets of the Romantic period will notice that I have not included John Clare in my discussion. Ranging from John Barrell to Jonathan Bate to James McKusick, Tim Fulford, and Timothy Morton, much has been written on Clare’s poetry from a historical, Marxist, and ecocritical perspective.⁴⁰ While a biopolitical reading of Clare is certainly useful, I did not feel I could sustain an original discussion of his work in light of so much written about him. Moreover, the larger arc of this book would not have been advanced by including a discussion of his poetry.

It is worth noting that a recent work on Clare, Sara Guyer’s *Reading with John Clare: Biopoetics, Sovereignty, Romanticism*, examines how language (and rhetorical or figural language, as she invokes Barbara Johnson and Paul de Man) creates poetics with a power of life—a biopoetics—over and against biopolitics as governmental power to let die and make live. For Guyer, Clare makes life visible in ways different from the political apparatus of the nation, “politics—and biopolitics—can seem to ‘hinge’ on the structure of a poetic figure . . . to recognize this structure is to see poetry and politics as two forms engaged with questions of viability.”⁴¹ Guyer’s extensive close readings and invocations of a poetics as politics will be welcomed work within Clare studies and beyond. Her work and mine share a concern over what is made visible, by whom (or by what apparatus) and for whom. Where Guyer is concerned primarily with the Romantic-period formation of the lyrical subject and its power, my work is primarily focused on a more conventional Foucaultian constitution of subjectivity. While I do not address Clare, and Guyer’s study is primarily on Clare, we share an interest in how life appears

as a political sum and those ways in which life works over and against the biopolitical *dispositif*.

Beasts of Burden builds a narrative of biopolitical Britain by looking first at the constitution of a citizenry from the heterogeneous masses of people and regions. It then turns to labor-class poetry and prose from Bloomfield to Batchelor to Burns to Hogg. The book then looks at animal imagery ranging from domesticated animals to natural history accounts. Finally it moves from hunting scenes in Landseer to his inhuman landscapes and ends with a nonhuman world replete with animality but absent of human culture and its biopolitical scaffolding. By using a range of cultural texts including literature and art, I have attempted to provide a broad view of how thinking with biopower can change how we think about the problem of life in the Romantic period.

The second chapter uses Burke's comment about the "swinish multitude" of British citizens to explain how disparate groups of humans and human-animal assemblages worked against being counted and so interpolated within the nation-state. A number of institutions attempted to use population data to create policies to control and appease the crowd of distressed poor and working-class people, but those in distress resisted institutional apparatuses that they did not understand and that did not provide the immediate remedies they sought. The chapter uses James Gillray's illustrations, Spence's utopics, Sussex pigs, and Cobbett's *Rural Rides* to push against the narrow parameters by which population understands and represents life.

Chapter 3 folds the problem of life into counting death by way of how animal death is represented in picturesque art and literature, including an extended discussion of Robert Bloomfield's and Thomas Batchelor's poetry. Throughout the chapter, the machinery of biopolitics at work on the material, biological, and political body of laborers is revealed through the figure of animal death. Human bare life and animal life are interconnected. The chapter ends with Robert Burns's poem "To a Mouse," which allows us to think of human fragility alongside other species.

The fourth chapter ratchets up the modes of resistance to biopower as evident in the works of James Hogg. Too often his stories of witches and brownies are read as quaint gothic entertainment for the reading public. His shepherds' tales are considered nostalgia written for an urban public that likes to pine for an idealized bucolic past. The fairy and witch stories provide a particular way of seeing. In pairing these "superstitions" with the life of shepherds, this chapter links a variety of Hogg's rural tales as ways of dwelling counter to the "light" and "civilization" and English conquest of Scotland,

which brought the region into modernity, a new capitalist economy, and the purview of the rising nation-state.

Whereas the early chapters focus primarily, though not exclusively, on literary texts, the next two chapters look at artists well known for their representation of domestic and wild animals. Chapter 5 examines the role of natural history in the machinery of classification and biopolitical utility during the age of global exploration. Yet, as much as natural history serves utility and human understanding, it discounts much of animal life. The artistic works of Thomas Bewick and George Stubbs move between the scientific ends of natural history and an artistry that works not as a handmaid to science but rather as a way of creating wonder at nonhuman life. Chapter 6 conjectures a radical reevaluation of the Edwin Landseer's work as something other than sentimental animal portraiture and Victorian hunting scenes. Working backward from the later painting *Man Proposes, God Disposes* to his Romantic-period works of the 1820s and 1830s, I pursue the collapse of animal-human worlds and hierarchies precariously built within a number of his famous Highland and hunting paintings and portraits of loyal dogs. In the end, Landseer is haunted by an animality that disposes of culture.

The devastating vision of life without humans portrayed in some of Landseer's paintings provides a path for chapter 7 as a brief afterword in which I examine well-known Romantic literature that experiments with limits of human life and culture. These works point to extreme environments as a leveling force that disrupts and will eventually overcome human worlding. In such works, we meet not simply the limits of the biopolitical but the limits of human worlding altogether. These works, written during the rise of biopolitical apparatuses, use the limits of human life as a political weapon against culture.

By proclaiming that man is dead, Foucault famously extended Nietzsche's comment that God is dead and man killed him.⁴² The death of "man" exposes the fictional quality of the privileged interiority of the human subject so valued by Romanticism and its expressive theory of poetry.⁴³ Behind this privileged interiority lurks a biopolitical apparatus that structures the very discourse of citizen, subject, and the poets as "unacknowledged legislators." As will become evident throughout this work, man or the citizen-subject is a convenient mask that allows other apparatuses of power to work behind the scenes without notice. Across its chapters, *Beasts of Burden* calls into question basic concepts of Romantic scholarship from the individual and the citizen to the limits of history and historical scholarship and finally to the limits of reason. The chapters are meant as experiments in thinking Romanticism otherwise—deploying commonly used tools of criticism but then exceeding their limits to reveal other material worlds, other ways of thinking and dwelling, and other lives during the Romantic period.