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Thomas Coryate, the Lousy Humanist

After completing a five-month journey across Europe in 1608, Thomas Coryate published *Coryat's Crudities* (1611), an eccentric travel narrative accompanied by mock-encomia in which his own fascination with objects, animals, and spaces on the continent is refracted into descriptions of him as virtually anything other than human. He is “Bologna sawcidge lovely fat,/Stuft with the flesh of a Westphalian sow,” (I:L5,r) Chanticleer, a chorographic map, an engine, a globe, an Irish harp, an otter, and a chess board pawn. Although this satire produces a public, human role for Coryate in the mock-heroic or mock-epic vein, it also opens our eyes to the nonhuman elements of his social network. Focusing on the concept of ornamentation, this essay uses “Thing Theory” and “Actor Network Theory” to examine the constitutive role of the nonhuman in shaping Coryate—in particular the heterogeneous network of animals, things, and routes in foreign places.

Anna Beskin
Fordham University

Pasture to Plate: Meat Matters in Early Modern Country House Poems

“[L]arge Ribbs of Beefe,” “Porke,” and “part of Kid” crowd the dinner table in Robert Herrick’s “A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton” (lines 9, 54 and 55), while the feast in Thomas Carew’s “To My Friend G.N. from Wrest” possesses so much “meates/ Of choicest relish” that the oak table “under the load of pil’d up dishes cracks” (44-46). Ben Jonson’s “To Peshurst” and Carew’s “To Saxham” present animals who are “willing to be kill’d” for the feast (30). Country house poem scholarship has traditionally examined these meat-filled feasts (festivals?) through a lens of hospitality—a perspective that generates many interesting insights *but* erases the animal from its central place in the narrative. My paper aims to reshift the focus by highlighting the matter of animals (as sentient beings and food) in the country house poem genre and interrogating the poem’s dialectic of excess. In other words, I am interested in how the animal gets from pasture to plate within this small but important early seventeenth century genre and suggest that such an exploration can not only reveal early modern values of meat production and consumption but also the contested concept of the golden mean. Although moderation was an early modern ideal, the notion was a highly controversial one as we see in country house poems that display lavish feasts as examples of the landlord’s generosity but with the backdrop of the poor who benefit only peripherally if at all. My paper interrogates this tension between excess and lack, gluttony and want, by looking at the way country house poems employ meat—at times rhetorically linked to the animal from which it came and sometimes purposefully divorced from the sentient creature—since no other food is embedded with so much cultural and social significance as meat.

Suggested Readings:

Appelbaum, Robert. *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food Among the Early Moderns*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2006. Print.

Boehrer, Bruce Thomas. “Renaissance Overeating: The Sad Case of Ben Jonson.” *PMLA*.105.5. Oct 1990. 1071-1082. Print.

Fudge, Erica. “A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals.” *Representing Animals*. Ed, Nigel Rothfels. Indiana: Indiana UP, 2002. 3-18. Print.

Keith M. Botelho
Kennesaw State University

Honey, Wax, Dead Bees

According to Charles Butler in *The Feminine Monarchie* (1609), honey and wax provided both “profit and pleasure” to English men and women, and these substances make regular appearances in recipes for food, drink, and curatives in the period. Honey and wax might be usefully viewed as “resilient totems” (to borrow Roland Barthes’ term), as the material traces of bees are intimately felt in numerous early modern environments (home, chandlery, church, apothecary, theater) and used for a diverse set of purposes. Robbing the hive of both its honey and wax for the benefit of man often meant destroying the entire skep (a hive made of straw), and in some parts of Europe during the Renaissance, that meant killing the bees as well. In this essay, I want to explore what occurs when the dead bee itself becomes a part of the recipe or cure and examine the question of human/animal agency in this process. Mead (or its spiced equivalent, metheglin), the most ancient of drinks, was originally made by boiling the entire hive, and this practice continued in some early modern recipes. What are we to make of imbibing the entire hive—propolis, bee pollen, royal jelly, and dead bees—and how does this act of apian consumption complicate man’s relationship with these industrious and revered insects? Finally, I examine a curious seventeenth-century recipe for “An Aproued medesen” to cure urinary blockages, which calls for drinking the strained juice of bees that have been pulverized with a mortar and pestle. The paper thus examines those bee things which Butler notes “these divine creatures abundantly yield” while also considering early modern man’s complicated reliance upon the fragile bodies of bees.

Suggested Readings

- Campana, Joseph. “The Bee and the Sovereign? Political Entomology and the Problem of Scale.” *Shakespeare Studies* 41 (2013): 94-113.
- Woolfson, Jonathan. “The Renaissance of Bees.” *Renaissance Studies* 24:2 (April 2010): 281-300.
- Yates, Julian. “What are ‘Things’ Saying in Renaissance Studies?” *Literature Compass* 3/5 (2006): 992-1010.

Dan Brayton
Middlebury College

Still Carping on Aquaculture

Near the end of *All’s Well That Ends Well* Lavatch describes Paroles to Lafeu by developing an aquatic metaphor that comically gestures towards the materiality of its own vehicle—a fishpond. In an exchange on Paroles’ having fallen into “Fortune’s displeasure,” Lavatch entreats Paroles, “Prithee allow the wind.” When the latter protests, “Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sire. I spake but by a metaphor,” Lavatch insists, “if your metaphor stink I will stop my nose” (5.2. 6-11). When Lafeu then enters Lavatch describes Paroles by playing on a constellation of conventions having to do with fishponds and their proverbially fecund association with mud and excrement.

Lavatch: Here is a purr of Fortune’s, sir, or of Fortune’s cat—but not a musk-cat—that has fallen into the unclean fish-pond her displeasure and, as he says, is muddied withal. Pray you, sir, use the carp as you may, for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my similes of comfort, and leave him to your lordship (5.2. 16-21).

Here Lavatch literally calls Paroles a piece of shit, for a “pur” or purr denoted a piece of cat’s dung. He also calls Monsieur Words a carp, and this is what interests me, for I am interested in the material and historical basis for the interlinked metaphors at play in this scene. Carp were prized food fish in medieval and early modern Europe, frequently raised in fishponds, early efforts at aquaculture used since Roman times and common in early modern England. In this paper I’d like to investigate what Shakespeare has to say about aquaculture; to that end, I will excavate a cultural history of carp, carping, and fishponds, as well as looking into other forms of aquaculture (e.g. oysters) practiced by Shakespeare’s contemporaries.

FURTHER READING

Berners, Juliana. *A Treatyse of fysshynge wyth an Angle*. 1496.

Fagan, Brian. *Fish on Friday: Feasting, Fasting, and the Discovery of the New World*. New York: Basic Books, 2007.

Falconer, A.F. *Shakespeare and the Sea*. London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1964.

Phipson, Emma. *The Animal Lore of Shakespeare’s Time Including Quadrupeds, Birds, Reptiles, Fish and Insects*. London: Keegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1883 (Dover reprint).

Perry Guevara
Emory University

“I have but killed a fly” (*Titus Andronicus* 3.2.59): Insecticide on the Early Modern Stage

From the Elizabethan stage to the stage of the microscope, insects occupied a distinctly theatrical space in early modern England. Even Thomas Moffet's encyclopedic *Theatrum insectorum* (or "insect theater") attests to their performativity. Insectile theatricality, I argue, is connected to the fragility—the brittleness and miniature size—of arthropodic bodies. This essay turns to Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* to think about the vulnerable materiality and subsequent killability of insects. The insect's relationship to the theater, Eric Brown notes in *Insect Poetics*, "is partly embedded in the etymology: the Greek 'en-toma,' whence 'insect,' was applied by Aristotle to capture the most important identifying characteristic of these creatures: segmentation," (29). Brown points out that "entoma," in classical literature, signified "the hewn fragments involved in ritual sacrifice. The transferal of this religious enterprise into a theatrical one can be read in the *sparagmos* of classical drama--or the sort of sacred cutting that the sons of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* make of the captive Alarbus when his 'limbs are lopped' (1.1.143)." If Alarbus is a figure of entomological life, as Brown suggests, then so too are the play's other characters who suffer dismemberment: Lavinia, who is bereft of her limbs and tongue at the hands of her rapists, and Titus too, who willingly amputates his own hand. Shakespeare's insected bodies dramatize human suffering, but it is his black fly that draws our attention to the possibility of animal suffering. Challenging critics who prescribe anthropomorphic and thereby anthropocentric readings of the black fly, I entertain possibilities of nonhuman emotion with reference to Eugene Louis Bouvier’s early twentieth-century foray into insect psychology as well as more recent neuroscientific studies on cognitive affect in invertebrates. I then look to an incipient early modern culture of animal dissection that began to view both the insides and outsides of insects under the microscope to demonstrate the ways in which the insect’s killable body came into focus during the period. The essay concludes with a brief discussion of somatic blackness as grounds for insecticide in Shakespeare’s earliest tragedy.

Suggested Reading:

Brown, Eric. "Reading the Insect." *Insect Poetics*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2006. ix-xxiii. Print.

--. "Performing Insects in Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*" in *Insect Poetics*

Haraway, Donna. "Shared Suffering." *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota

Press, 2008. Print.

Scott, Charlotte. "Still Life? Anthropocentrism and the Fly in *Titus Andronicus* and *Volpone*." *Shakespeare Survey: Shakespeare, Sound and Screen*. Vol. 61. Ed. Peter Holland. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. 256-268. Print.

Nicholas Helms
University of Alabama

Invisible Insects: Seeing Death on Shakespeare's Stage

This essay began its life as an open question about the materiality of corpses on the early modern stage: how might one represent a corpse in Shakespeare's theatre? And, more to the point, what might an early modern audience be invited to imagine when a corpse is brought (or made) onstage? The clearest sign of the corpse is the company it keeps: that "certain convocation of politic worms" that mark the deceased, who has gone "not where he eats but where 'a is eaten" (*Ham.* 4.3.19-20). So Cleopatra imagines her corpse as "blow[n] into abhorring" by "water-flies" (*Ant.* 5.2.58-9), and so Mercutio curses both Capulets and Montagues, saying, "They have made worms' meat of me" (*Rom.* 3.1.109). Death marks the moment when the eater becomes the eaten, when the human consumer becomes the consumed. In this essay I'll contrast these carrion worms—"worms that are thy chambermaids" (*Rom.* 5.3.109)—with another ever-present yet invisible insect on the early modern stage, the bee. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* stages the bee—or rather, products of the bee's domestication—in two ways: through the honeyed language of the young lovers (a sweetness Friar Lawrence urges them to temper with moderation (2.6.11)) and through cerecloth, the wax-coated shroud used to wrap the dead in order to ward off decay. In the final scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, Tybalt's corpse lies on stage wrapped in cerecloth. This stage prop relies on two absent insects: the domesticated bee (the wax in the cerecloth) and the parasitic fly (warded off by that wax). Early modern anxieties about "fester[ing] in [the] shroud" balance fears of being devoured by death's insect agents with confidence in humanity's ability to slow that decay by harnessing nature's powers (4.3.43).

Further Reading

Farrah Karim Cooper and Tiffany Stern, editors, *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance* (Arden, 2014).

Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, translated by Lawrence R. Schehr (University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

Evelyn Tribble, *Cognition in the Globe: Attention and Memory in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Susan Zimmerman, *The Early Modern Corpse and Shakespeare's Theatre* (Edinburgh UP, 2005).

Jim Kearney
University of California, Santa Barbara

Wooly Breeders: Animal Generation and the Limits of Economic Reason in *The Merchant of Venice*

In their first scene together in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock and Antonio exchange heated words that establish their antagonistic personal history and the position each character occupies both within the larger community of Venice and in relation to Judeo-Christian traditions. Mostly though, they talk about sheep. This paper looks at the exchange concerning Laban's sheep to ask what it means that so much weight is placed on the generative capacities and accomplishments of these "wooly breeders." Animal generation is a crucial area of concern for early modern economic thought, especially with regard to economic risk and the management of that risk. An important aspect of the early modern conception of

risk is that the contingent was considered the realm of the divine and thus beyond human knowledge and economic calculation. In late medieval and early modern controversies concerning usury specifically and economics generally, one of the key areas of dispute had to do with proper domains of influence and action: when and where must one acknowledge the limits of human knowledge and influence? This desire to establish the limits of human knowledge dovetails in striking ways with the ongoing contemporary critique of an anthropocentric modernity that colonizes the alterity of animal materialities through the instruments of scientific knowledge and economic calculation. In this paper I explore the conjunction of what I am calling the familiar alterity of animal materialities and the disavowal of economic reason in early modern thought and Shakespeare's play. Mostly though, sheep.

Key readings:

Germano Maifreda, *From Oikonomia to Political Economy*

Karen Raber, "Working Bodies: Laboring Moles and Cannibal Sheep" in *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture*

Marc Shell, "The Wether and the Ewe: Verbal Usury in *The Merchant of Venice*" in *Money, Language and Thought*

Ian MacInnes
Albion College

Cow-Cross Lane and Curriers Row: Animal Bodies in the Procedural Rhetoric of Early Modern London

Of the enormous number of animals that entered London in the latter half of the sixteenth century, few ever left the city alive. This process is a larger version of what Erica Fudge calls "animal-made-objects" and by its logic the city itself can be considered a vast tool for turning animals into objects. But Fudge also coined her term to conjure up its reversed meaning: not animals objectified but "objects constructed from animals" (42). If we extend both meanings of the term to the city, we might say that while early modern London made animals into objects, it was also a city made out of animals: it was itself an animal-made-object. In the past fifteen years, early modern animal studies has explored animal bodies largely through individual details. In this essay, I take a different approach to the issues. Rather than choosing a particular variety of animal or a particular animal-related event, as so many, including myself, have done before, I have elected to view the various animal-human networks in one place, but as from a great height. My goal in this essay is to analyze early modern London's "procedural rhetoric" (borrowing a term from Ian Bogost's game theory) with respect to the animal bodies that had come to shape the city both economically and materially. I take as a primary source the multiple layers of content created by Janelle Jenstad and others in the Map of Early Modern London project (MoEML), layers which can be combined (GIS-fashion) to demonstrate visually the interrelationship between different stages in animal-encounters, from generation through transportation, processing, and consumption. For example, domestic animals flowed into the city through established paths, with common destinations, and guided by traditional forms of labor (drover, etc.). All of these left their mark upon the urban landscape in street and place names that encode both location and direction. Animal processing is revealed in many of the city's great liveries: Skinners, Salters, etc. Those animals not usually consumed as food but still part of the network are marked through traditional places of entertainment and labor like the baiting arenas of Southwark or the stables of the Royal Mews. I draw also upon a variety of literary and extra literary sources from Shakespeare to Stow to authenticate in a more familiar textual sense the larger procedural rhetoric of the city. Ultimately, I argue that rather than demonstrate an instrumental or objectifying relationship with non-human animals, the procedural rhetoric of

early modern London constantly drew its human inhabitants into multiple and historically persistent forms of identification with animal material, shaping their behavior, their language, and their sense of communal identity.

Works Cited

I This claim is not as hyperbolic as it sounds. Thanks to the work of historians over the last thirty years, it is well understood not only that early modern Western Europeans were more dependent on domestic animals than other cultures of the time but that England, particularly in the late sixteenth century was even more animal-dependent than other European nations.

Bogost, Ian. *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2010.

Fudge, Erica. "Renaissance Animal Things." *Gorgeous Beasts: Animal Bodies in Historical Perspective*. Ed. Joan B. Landes, Paula Young Lee, and Paul Youngquist. University Park, Pa: Penn State UP, 2012. 41–56.

"MoEML: The Map of Early Modern London." N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Dec. 2014.

Suggested Readings:

Floyd-Wilson, Mary. "English Mettle." *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2004. 130–146.

Kerridge, Eric. *The Agricultural Revolution*. New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968.

Overton, Mark. *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500-1850*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996

Katie Will
University of Michigan

Illicit Beasts in Early Modern English Heraldry

I'm working on a project that explores heraldry as a form of early modern historiography, one produced in part by people on the margins of gentility. Because I am new to animal studies, I look forward to our seminar, which will help me think through the relationship between humans and beasts in heraldic contexts. Human and animal bodies in heraldry are often objectified (i.e., dismembered) and distinctly gendered. Along with fully realized lions and eagles, early modern heraldic devices frequently feature parts of animals and people, e.g., stag antlers, unicorn heads, and men's hands and legs. At the same time, printed heraldry manuals like John Guillim's *The Display of Heraldry*—along with dozens of handwritten catalogues of arms called ordinaries—contain images of boars with phalluses, bare-breasted harpies and mermaids, and descriptive text that emphasizes feminine inferiority across animal species. In this paper, I hope to place heraldry in relation to other practices that featured literal or figurative dismemberment and gendering, including criminal punishment and poetic blazon. In all three instances, distinctions between animal/human, subject/object, male/female, licit/illicit, and praise/condemnation are collapsed into seemingly conventional visual, verbal, and bodily signifiers. I would like to tease out some of these distinctions, and in doing so, to explore how heraldic beastliness shaped specific instances of punishment and praise. Potential texts for discussion include print and manuscript heraldry manuals; *Astrophil and Stella*; *Venus and Adonis*; and early modern verse and drama depicting mock coats of arms.

Suggested reading

Essays in Burns, E. Jane, and Peggy McCracken, eds. *From Beasts to Souls: Gender and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013.

Callaghan, Dymrna. "(Un)natural Loving: Swine, Pets, and Flowers in *Venus and Adonis*."

Early Modern Culture, 2003. <http://emc.eserver.org/1-3/callaghan.html>
Wolfe, Heather. "So much for goats, or, cute creatures in coats of arms." *The Collation: A Gathering of Scholarship from the Folger Shakespeare Library*. The Folger Shakespeare Library, 19 Nov. 2014.
<http://collation.folger.edu/2014/11/so-much-for-goats-or-cute-creatures-in-coats-of-arms>

Deborah Willis
University of California, Riverside

Animals and the Demonic in Early Modern Popular Culture

My plan is to take a closer look at the witch's animal familiar as part of a broader exploration of the relation between the animal and the demonic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In English trial documents, descriptions of familiars make them seem much like actual animals kept as pets; elsewhere they may be portrayed as (immaterial) spirits taking the shape of (illusory) animals, while the devil himself is commonly represented as a human-animal hybrid. Witches can also shape-shift into animal form (though rarely do so in English texts). Animals thought to be familiars may be wild and/or commonly considered disgusting (weasels, toads, insects) or domestic and pet-like in their behavior (cats, dogs). Animals or animal parts are also featured in magic spells. Do animals need to lose their association with the supernatural in order for Descartes and others to conceptualize them as machines? What is the place of the animal familiar in the history of the pet? Why does the cat become the animal most likely to retain associations with the uncanny well into the modern age? My questions have not yet cohered into a clear plan of action, but some of the texts I am likely to consider include *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, *The Witch of Edmonton*, Nashe's *Terrors of the Night*, Baldwin's *Beware the Cat*, various witchcraft pamphlets, and religious tracts.

Readings:

Ewan Fernie, *The Demonic: Literature and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2013).

James Serpell, "Guardian Spirits or Demonic Pets: The Concept of the Witch's Familiar in Early Modern England," in *The Animal/Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2002).

Laurie Shannon, *Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).