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Harvesting The Seeds Of Early American Human And Nonhuman Animal Relationships In William Bartram's Travels, The Travel Diary Of Elizabeth House Trist, And Sarah Trimmer's Fabulous Histories

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HARVESTING THE SEEDS OF EARLY AMERICAN
HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS IN
SARAH TRIMMER'S *FABULOUS HISTORIES*,
WILLIAM BARTRAM'S *TRAVELS*,
AND *THE TRAVEL DIARY OF ELIZABETH HOUSE TRIST*

by

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B.A. Jacksonville University, 2006

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of English
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses ecofeminist and human-animal studies lenses to explore human animal and nonhuman animal relations in early America. Most ecocritical studies of American literature begin with nineteenth-century writers. This project, however, suggests that drawing on ecofeminist theories with a human-animal studies approach sheds light on eighteenth-century texts as well. Early American naturalist travel writing offers a site replete with human and nonhuman encounters. Specifically, naturalist William Bartram's travel journal features interactions with animals in the southern colonial American frontier. Amateur naturalist Elizabeth House Trist's travel diary includes interactions with frontier and domestic animals. Sarah Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories*, a conduct manual that taught children acceptable behavior towards animals, provides insight about the social regulation of human and nonhuman relationships during the late eighteenth century, when Bartram and Trist wrote their texts.

This thesis identifies and analyzes textual sites that blur the human subject/and animal object distinction and raise questions about the representation of animals as objects. This project focuses on the subtle discursive subversions of early Euroamerican naturalist science present in Bartram's *Travels* (1791) and the blurring of human/animal boundaries in Trist's *Travel Diary* (1783-84); Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories* (1794) further complicates the Euroamerican discourse of animals as curiosities. These texts form part of a larger but overlooked discourse in early British America that anticipated more well-known and nonhuman-centric texts in the burgeoning early nineteenth-century American animal rights movement.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Spectrum of Human and Nonhuman Relations.....	70
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	v
CHAPTER ONE: WHEN ECOFEMINIST THEORY AND HUMAN-ANIMAL STUDIES MEET EARLY AMERICA	
Statement of Purpose	1
A Productive Merger: Ecofeminism, Human-Animal Studies, and Early American Texts ...	2
CHAPTER TWO: TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT “PROPER” RELATIONSHIPS WITH NONHUMANS.....	
British Colonial and Early American Conduct Instruction with Nonhumans	10
American Parents Buy Colonial Ideology	12
Defining Curiosity	13
Damaging Anthropocentric Metaphors	14
Children, Respect the Animals	19
CHAPTER THREE: LISTENING TO THE NONHUMAN OTHER	
An Ecocritical/Human-Animal Studies Reexamination of William Bartram’s <i>Travels</i>	27
(Re)conceptualizing Speaking Subjects to Recover Voices	32
“Accessory to what now appeared to be a cruel murder”	33
The Child-like Cub Cries Out.....	36
Seeing the Nonhuman in the Meal.....	39
When (An)other Gazes Back with Eight Eyes.....	43
Accepting the Responsibility of Killing	46

In Praise of Rattlesnake Restraint	47
The Alligator’s Choice.....	49
CHAPTER FOUR: BEYOND THE OBJECTIFIED SPECTACLE IN <i>THE TRAVEL DIARY OF ELIZABETH HOUSE TRIST</i>	
54	54
Contextualizing Trist’s Diary	54
Discourses of Euroamerican Curiosity	55
Finding Similar Threads of Animal Subjectivity in <i>Travels</i> and <i>The Travel Diary</i>	57
Understanding Her Traveling Companion.....	59
Moving Towards Recognition of Intertwinement, Response, and Respect.....	62
Comparing Companion Intimacy: the Horse, Fawnis, and Polly	66
CHAPTER FIVE: WHEN THE PAST INFLUENCES THE FUTURE: A BRIEF MEDITATION	
70	70
A Spectrum of Human and Nonhuman Relations	70
The Nineteenth Century Brings More Vocal Animal Advocacy.....	72
Connecting with Nonhuman Subjects in Contemporary America.....	74
REFERENCES	76

CHAPTER ONE: WHEN ECOFEMINIST THEORY AND HUMAN-ANIMAL STUDIES MEET EARLY AMERICA

Statement of Purpose

This thesis uses ecofeminist and human-animal studies lenses to explore human animal and nonhuman animal relations in early Euroamerican travel writing and a British children's conduct manual published in early America.¹ Most ecocritical studies of American literature begin with nineteenth-century writers. However, this study of naturalist William Bartram's travel journal, amateur naturalist Elizabeth House Trist's travel diary, and Sarah Trimmer's conduct manual suggests that ecofeminist and human-animal studies lenses illuminate eighteenth-century texts as well.²

Focusing on Trist's and Bartram's narration of human and nonhuman relationships, I demonstrate that ecofeminist theories in conjunction with a human-animal studies approach enable a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of early American human and nonhuman interactions. I use these lenses to better understand the subtle subversion of the discourses of curiosity in Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories* (1794), and the blurring of the human/animal binary in Bartram's *Travels* (1791) and Trist's *Travel Diary* (1783-84).

¹ Although for the sake of space and ease of reading I use the words "human," and "animal," I do not endorse the idea that humans are separate from or superior to animals; I do acknowledge the importance of recognizing and respecting human and animal difference. I invoke the condition of humanimality (acknowledging that humans are animals and are kin to nonhuman animals) by using the terms "human animal" and "nonhuman animal." Carrie Packwood Freeman stresses the importance of these terms because they acknowledge human and animal kinship and imply that humans are not superior to animals (11-15).

² Scholars have used the term "animal studies" in the past to mean scholarship descendent from cultural studies that considers "the question of the animal," or investigates the manner in which human and animal difference (or similarity) is constructed by culture (Wolfe 564-67). Carol Freeman and Elizabeth Leane, however, offer a more recent and encompassing definition of this field that implies the interdisciplinary nature of the field and scrutiny of human and nonhuman bonding, communication, and interaction (2-3). I use Freeman's and Leane's term "human-animal studies" because it more accurately describes the approach of this project.

A Productive Merger: Ecofeminism, Human-Animal Studies, and Early American Texts

Scholars neglect to examine the human/animal binary in eighteenth-century Euroamerican texts.³ I scrutinize the human/animal binary in these texts as a way to unpack the ecofeminist concerns and animal advocacy occurring in the narration. Seeing subjects in nonhuman nature leads to greater respect and understanding of those nonhumans; however, early American texts often portrayed animals as curious objects for amusement, objects for scientific study, or as natural resources. By looking at nonhuman subjectivity with an ecofeminist and human-animal studies lens we can see that Trimmer's text advocates against seeing animals as objects of amusement, while Bartram's text presents frontier animals as unique individuals with agency, and Trist's text illustrates movement towards companion species bonding with an animal trained for labor. These examples show that early Euroamerican texts did counter dominant cultural discourses about animals even more so than the degree that the majority of American ecocritical studies might suggest. In fact, these examples from eighteenth-century American texts present nonhumans as subjects, a representation that blurs the human/animal binary, and can lead to animal advocacy. Although the first American branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was not founded until 1866, animal advocacy was present to some degree in early America, as this reading of Bartram, Trist, and Trimmer will reveal (SPCA International). Reflecting on moments where animals are viewed as subjects, we might ask why these

³ The human/animal boundary is based on the concept that humans are not animals and may be used to justify a range of human practices with animals, including eating or abusing them (Carrie Packwood Freeman 11). The term human/animal binary refers to the same concept as human/animal boundary but also stresses the fact that the "animal" is reduced by this relationship and invokes Donna J. Haraway's discussion of binaries that should be blurred or "confused" in order to end the reduction of the lesser part of the binary (*Symians*). I also use "human-animal" to indicate an equal and interdependent relationship between humans and animals that the term "human/animal" excludes.

alternative discourses from the past are still minority voices today. By noticing these moments we encounter a new paradigm from which to approach animals in early American nature writing, which scholars may use to identify early Euroamerican animal advocacy and use as a beginning from which to reimagine more sustainable and respectful models for interacting with animals in contemporary America.

Finding ways to see nonhumans as fellow subjects and understanding how our nation succeeded or failed in this endeavor is integral to discovering ways to live sustainably today with nonhumans. Because nature is still viewed as an economic resource even in contemporary America, animals are likewise viewed with the colonial mindset that, according to Timothy Sweet, plagues how contemporary Americans relate to nature. Sweet and Daniel Philippon recently argued that ecocritical examinations of early American texts can be rich and productive. Sweet's discussion of the American eco-economy locates in modern American life the persistence of our colonial mindset and its unsustainability (424-25). In response to Sweet, Philippon explains that the humanities—including studies of early American literature—are equally important to the ecocritical cause as the sciences. Philippon reasons that because human behaviors and beliefs are the root of damage to the environment, exposing and altering these damaging behaviors will improve the global environment (430-33). I agree that this theoretical angle can identify unsustainable early American attitudes and practices. Moreover, I extend Sweet's and Philippon's arguments to include ecofeminist theory and human-animal studies tenets. Studying the manner in which these early Euroamerican texts countered the colonial Enlightenment mentality, which endorses and promulgates anthropocentric thought, provides a template from which to understand and counter the lingering effects of these paradigms.

Discourses of curiosity, colonialism, and early Euroamerican natural science inform the representation of animals as objects in eighteenth-century Euroamerica. A “curious” person investigated, catalogued, and kept specimens of interesting plants and animals (or “curiosities”) for study in the pursuit of knowledge; this definition also implied that a British man was most adept to observe and collect this knowledge (Parrish 63-67). Early American naturalist gathering and cataloguing methods were based on British botanical models, which looked toward Enlightenment theory for the conception that animals are lesser beings (Lewis 68). Naturalist methods of observation encouraged the objectification of nonhumans by simplifying categories, descriptions, and behaviors of animals. Western thought has relied on hierarchical categories to understand human and animal relations, which precludes acknowledging kinship among species (Bell 164). For example, the Chain of Being theory called for ranking all beings in a hierarchy with no possibility of blurring distinctions between species or the order of the hierarchy. The Linnaean classification system and Linnaean drawing method also placed nonhumans in definitive categories and left little room for descriptions of behavior, habitat, or interaction with other species (Magee 151-52). While early American naturalist methods promoted the objectification of animals because of the link with Enlightenment thought, objectification also occurred because naturalist agendas were often directed by British and later American colonial imperatives, which included appropriating nonhuman nature for national economic or philosophical benefit. Early American naturalists who gathered specimens also participated in nation-building practices and used cataloging to appropriate the natural resources of the new nation as wealth (Lewis 69-75).

One key ingredient in my approach to how early Euroamerican texts promote nonhumans as subjects instead of objects is the ecofeminist assumption that all living beings exist interdependently, thereby making each being equally important to the survival of all beings. The common mission of ecofeminists is to end the reduction of women and nature while learning to view all beings in nature as equally valuable (Gates 21). One set of shared beliefs underpins ecofeminist texts:

[T]he necessity for social transformation by moving beyond power politics and an equivalent necessity for less ‘management’ of the land. . . . They also include an appreciation for the intrinsic value of everything in nature—a biocentric rather than an anthropocentric viewpoint; an end to dualisms like male/female, thought/action, and spiritual/natural; and a trust in process, not just product.

(Gates 21)

This project acknowledges that these dichotomies and hierarchies are deeply rooted in American culture, partially because of the influence of these colonial and Enlightenment discourses, and require a multi-disciplinary dismantling to dispel them. This project also unpacks the “naturalness” of what counts as “natural” in human and animal relations. That is, naturalist science entailed more than simply recording and classifying because to record and classify entails a system; I examine the system itself by looking at how animals are made visible as individual beings (or not) in the eyes of the observer. Trimmer’s conduct manual provides a basis for identifying diversions from assumed “natural” eighteenth-century human and animal interactions.

That which we otherwise take for granted or as “natural” can also be analyzed productively through a human-animal studies lens. Human-animal studies discourses intervene in dominant cultural representations of animals, which draw on Enlightenment and Judeo-Christian thought. With the help of this framework I can “re-see” the relationships depicted in early British American texts that draw on naturalist and travel discourses. The Enlightenment period, (featuring philosophers such as Descartes and Kant) although brief, stands as “the formative one for our prevailing intellectual, political, and juridical institutions” (Wolfe 564). While post-humanist thinkers acknowledge that the human/animal binary harms all beings by reducing animals and creating a false separation of humans and animals, the Enlightenment belief in this false divide remains pervasive in current ideology. In general, human-animal studies scholars argue against viewing animals as diminished, lesser, or incomplete humans; they also recognize animals as agents of their own free will who speak, communicate, and gain wisdom through bodily experiences (Freeman 24-29). A recurring objective throughout human-animal studies scholarship is to ponder “the question of the animal” in society and culture. More recently, the mission of this interdisciplinary field includes investigating human and animal relations, bonds, and interspecies communication (Freeman and Leane 2-3). In short, “a human-animal studies scholar *reflects on*, as well as describes, the ‘limitations and complexities’ of these relationships” (Ken Shapiro qtd. in Freeman and Leane 3). The territory of human-animal studies remains difficult to define because it reaches to any text that includes animals (Wolfe 565). Although eighteenth-century American human and animal relations, communication, and bonds exist within the broad purview of human-animal studies, these texts remain mostly unexplored. I therefore focus on when these texts blur the human/animal boundary, study if and how humans

and nonhumans communicate, and identify when interspecies bonding occurs. All of these actions can signal a movement away from seeing nonhumans as objects and towards viewing them as subjects with agency.

In the selected texts in this thesis, I examine passages that narrate human recognition of animal suffering and death, a turn that anticipates sympathy and understanding of these animals as fellow subjects. In early Euroamerican colonial and naturalist texts, animals were usually presented as objects. According to twenty-first-century human-animal studies thinkers, objectifying nonhumans precludes sympathy and leads to harmful, unsustainable behavior towards all beings.⁴ Human lack of sympathy for animals relates to an inability to acknowledge their suffering and death for the benefit of humans. Some scholars believe the solution is for humans to exhibit a feminist ethics of care and re-learn sympathy for animals in order to recognize and stop horrific abuse of nonhumans (Donovan 294). Human-animal thinkers explain the distinct category of “human” as a harmful cultural fabrication because it opens the way for abuse; that is, the term “animal” itself may contradict the “humane” (*The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 168-71). In essence, ecofeminist and human-animal thinkers argue that the category of “animal” also implies objectification by humans. For Carol J. Adams, Josephine Donovan, and Victoria Johnson, this viewpoint damages humans and nonhumans by creating a relationship of power that also invites abuse.

⁴ Twenty-first-century sympathy should not be confused with Adam Smith’s eighteenth-century notion of sympathy, which operates more like contemporary empathy; it entails a spectator imagining themselves in the position of another and determining if s/he would react to the situation with the same emotions. If the observer determines that s/he would share the emotions of the other person given their situation, then the observer sympathizes with the other person. Smith claims that, for humans, sharing mutual emotions (positive or negative) brings pleasure, intensifies happiness, or eases sadness (Smith).

Human-animal studies ultimately offers a lens to accomplish the main objective of this thesis: a framework through which to track the textual resistance to, complication of, and even dismantling of Euroamerican subjectivity defined by anthropocentrism and human and nonhuman interactions. Rather than adopt a humanist definition of subjectivity, I use Patrick D. Murphy's anti-anthropocentric definition of subjectivity.⁵ Murphy defines subjectivity as the ability to respond to another being with any type of semiotic exchange, even if this exchange consists of "non-volitional utterances" or nonverbal engagement ("Subjects" 123-24). This definition is essential to this project because it allows viewing nonhuman communication, knowledge, and knowledge production as "speech," which stands at the core of asserting agency, and therefore, signaling subjectivity. Also wary of a humanist practice of human-animal studies, I call upon Donna J. Haraway's concept of companion species in order to interrogate hierarchical notions of human and animal relationships. A "companion species" relationship, as Haraway defines it, goes beyond a pet/owner or human/animal dichotomy because it features recognition of all the ways that human and nonhuman bodies and minds intertwine to make us human animals. This recognition then allows humans to see past the culturally constructed human/animal binary, which leads to viewing animals as kin, thereby increasing human respect for nonhumans and reducing abuse towards them (*When Species Meet* 16-19). This concept is vital to this project because it provides an example of an alternative to the human/animal hierarchy and aids in identifying moments in the selected texts that deviate from this eighteenth-century cultural norm.

⁵ As Cary Wolfe explains, the attempt to simply grant nonhumans human subjectivity comes from a humanist paradigm that still denies animals their inherent agency (572).

This project extends the work of ecocritical and ecofeminist scholars to track how animals emerge as non-anthropocentric speaking subjects in Trist's and Bartram's travel journals. These texts reveal a language of empathy and advocacy for nonhuman kin.⁶ Trimmer's children's conduct manual serves as a backdrop, advancing a dichotomous relationship that may best represent the views of general audiences. Adults of Bartram's and Trist's generation could likely have read or presented Trimmer's *Fabulous Histories* to their children. Trimmer's conduct manual inculcated lessons about a human/animal hierarchy even as it discouraged treating animals as curious objects.

By viewing these three texts in conversation and through an ecofeminist/animal-centric paradigm modern readers can identify disruptions in dominant cultural narratives about humans and animals. If we attend to these moments of human and nonhuman connection and understanding, we observe that human/animal hierarchies are no more "natural" to the eighteenth century than they are today. Perhaps these moments from long ago can offer contemporary scholars a starting point for theorizing early British American naturalist texts as ecocritical and for developing more sustainable relationships with animals today. When readers and writers recognize animals as subjects, they begin moving away from colonial interactions with animals and toward acknowledgement of nonhuman animals as speaking subjects with their own diverse and unique identities.

⁶ While eighteenth-century sympathy, to an extent, enables the animal advocacy in these texts, I plan to pursue this connection in a later project because it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT “PROPER” RELATIONSHIPS WITH NONHUMANS

British Colonial and Early American Conduct Instruction with Nonhumans

Sarah Trimmer’s children’s conduct manual, *Fabulous Histories* works within colonial, Enlightenment, and scientific curiosity discourses while also subverting them. Generally, Trimmer’s text endorses the Enlightenment human/animal hierarchy through anthropocentric storytelling and the Christian belief in animal inferiority. *Fabulous Histories*, however, argues against the practices of treating animals as curious objects for amusement and capturing animals as scientific curiosities. The text, at times, counters the anthropocentric narration by recognizing animals as subjects with their own desires, needs, and agency. This resonates with moments within *Travels* and *The Travel Diary of Elizabeth House Trist* that reject an objective, colonial naturalist view of animals. This children’s conduct manual also offers an interesting point of comparison because adults from Trimmer’s and Bartram’s generation could have had access to it. Essentially, examining *Fabulous Histories* alongside *Travels* and *The Travel Diary* offers insight into what this generation of Euroamericans might have taught their children about how to view animals. With the moments of animal advocacy weakened by Trimmer’s constant reminders of animal inferiority, *Fabulous Histories* provides a solid contrast to *Travels* and *The Travel Diary*, which contain animal advocacy or blur the human/animal binary without the caveat of human superiority.

First published in London in 1786, the *Fabulous Histories* garnered a prolific transatlantic audience and was read in Philadelphia (1794, 1795, 1869) and Boston (1822, 1827,

1901) (*WorldCat Database*). In a biography of Trimmer's life, published in 1817 in the New York-based periodical *Christian Register Moral and Theological Review*, the biographer makes it clear that *Fabulous Histories* was widely read by American children:

The intention of this little work [*Fabulous Histories*] was to give children proper ideas of the treatment of animals; and, under the fictitious name of a Nest of Robins, to inculcate lessons of domestic virtue. This book being in the hands of most young people, it is unnecessary to say much respecting it; the reader will doubtless allow it the merit of being ingenious and interesting, and of conveying much useful instruction under a pleasing form. ("Biography" 10)

Americans could have bought or read *Fabulous Histories* to their children during the same timeframe as when they read Bartram's *Travels*—around 1794. Likewise, Trist's diary was written only ten years prior to *Travels*. It is clear from early American periodicals, where Trimmer's text was frequently listed for sale, that it found an American readership well into the eighteenth century.⁷

In purchasing or sharing *Fabulous Histories*, early American parents endorsed the content, which included recognizing animals as more than objects. By uncovering the many degrees of animal subjectivity presented in early American texts (by this I mean texts written or read in early America), we garner a more complete picture of early American views of nonhumans. This examination of *Fabulous Histories* next to Bartram's and Trist's texts

⁷ In 1807, the Boston-based newspaper the *Christian Observer* lists the text for sale as two volumes bound featuring "plates," or illustrations ("List of New Publications" 193). The Philadelphia periodical the *American Publishers' Circular and Literary Gazette*, lists *Fabulous Histories* for sale in 1856 as a book bound in paper-covered "boards," and measuring "18mo," or eighteenmo, which would have been about 4 by 6.5 inches ("List of New Works" 42).

demonstrates that some early American discourses entertained animal subjectivity in contrast to the discourse of curiosity.

American Parents Buy Colonial Ideology

Trimmer, “the most saleable children’s author of her day,” is remembered in part for developing the theory that children must read literature because it was “not only the key to personal development, and by extension, to society’s future, but also, potentially . . . the safeguard of the nation in a time of crisis” (Grenby 137, 156). Her children’s books were intended to shape good British citizens, which also entailed thinking like good colonizers. This colonizing world view in *Fabulous Histories*, which presents humans as the naturalized managers of nature, makes her depiction of some animals as subjects even more subversive. Trimmer’s books also promoted eighteenth-century Natural Theory, which posits that scientific study reveals how God shaped nature as a part of divine design (Cosslett 17). Trimmer believed that by examining animals and plants children would observe God’s will and design (17). Also, through scientific observation children would better understand animals and be less likely to harm them (19). Tess Cosslett explains how Trimmer often asked children “to think themselves into the subjectivity of animals” in order to convince them to treat animals with kindness (18). *Fabulous Histories* often uses this device to encourage children to be kind to animals. *Fabulous Histories* came into print during a transitional period in children’s literature, “a development from the rather static fable, in which each animal represents one emblematic quality, for the purposes of social satire and moral advice, to stories that also give natural historical information, plead for kindness to animals, and attempt to create animals as subjects as well as objects of study and use to man” (30). Understanding why *Fabulous Histories* contains these sometimes

conflicting messages fails to weaken what the text ultimately conveys to readers—an alternate paradigm through which to view animals as more than objects and deserving of respect.

Although Trimmer sought to reinforce human/animal hierarchical structures throughout *Fabulous Histories*, the message of animal advocacy exudes a significant presence in the text. I argue that the subversive view of animals in this text resonates strongly with Bartram's and Trist's writings from a similar period in early America. Taken collectively, these texts could indicate a trend in opposition to objectifying animals in the eighteenth-century transatlantic culture of curiosity.

Why did American parents purchase a book that taught children to treat animals as less-than-human but also to reject the idea that they were curious objects for amusement? American naturalists appropriated British botanical methods, which resulted in a discourse that sought to control and colonize a distinctly "American" nature (Lewis). This colonial paradigm, therefore, may have resonated with Americans and made a suitable conduct manual for American children because it reflected the paradoxes of early American naturalist discourse—which involved viewing animals simultaneously as objects and subjects.

Defining Curiosity

Since the sixteenth century, British citizens viewed America as a site of knowledge production and the source of undiscovered "curious" specimens of plants, minerals, and animals (Parrish 8). The definition of curiosity in the seventeenth century was "associated with the negative, credulous aspects of wonder" and used to define "an anomalous wonder" or childlike "proclivity for questioning" (62-63). In the eighteenth century, however, curiosity shifted to

signify “a new addition to an increasingly comprehensive and faithful catalogue of nature;” or “a reliable, detailed, and exhaustive” observer of the natural world (63). The boxing and shipping of these specimens and equating nonhuman nature with catalogued items linked “curiosity” to objectification. A human hierarchy was also inherent in discourses of eighteenth-century transatlantic curiosity. Curiosity was embodied by the affluent “English gentleman” examining natural objects to produce knowledge (75). Essentially women, colonial men, slaves, and other non-English were viewed as less than capable curious observers; however, colonial men and women still used various rhetorical strategies to assure English audiences of their reliable natural observations (75-76). *Fabulous Histories*, however, warns against both the seventeenth-century concept of viewing nonhuman nature as full of curious objects of wonder and amusement, and the eighteenth-century idea of capturing and cataloguing curious objects for knowledge production. Instead, the narrator encourages observation of nonhumans in their natural environments to avoid disturbing or harming them.

Damaging Anthropocentric Metaphors

By establishing how anthropocentric metaphors saturate Trimmer’s conduct manual and generate unproductive confusions of the human/animal binary, I consider how Trimmer’s contrasting passages function subversively. Anthropomorphism, more often than not, functions to remove real animal needs and concerns and replace them with human ones; this naturalizes the human/animal binary by forming a hierarchy of needs and privileges. As I explain in my introduction, contemporary scholars argue that dominant ideologies still proclaim the “natural” nature of the separation between human and animal and the human/animal hierarchy, which have

roots in Enlightenment thought (Bell, Donovan, Freeman, Haraway, Sanbonmatsu). Many scholars feel that the originators of the seventeenth-century European view of nature as a mechanical object either created or confirmed “man” as the dominator of nature: they “turned nature into the servant of men, into the distanced object that ensured his status as master” (Parrish 43). Anthropomorphic animal figures that speak human morals only further this human domination over animals. As Frank Palmeri notes, “animal fables are not about animals, but rather transpose human social relations onto the animal world in order to narrate and comment on human behavior” (83). *Fabulous Histories* follows this formula with an anthropomorphic family of robins. Anthropocentric metaphors, such as those employed in *Fabulous Histories*, deny the entangled relationship between humans and nonhumans and privilege human over nonhuman needs. Animals studies scholar Karen Raber explains that “the problems of anthropomorphism, anthropocentrism, and speciesism, [are] the triumvirate of bad words for what people do to animals when they talk about them” (99). She argues that anthropomorphizing animals leads to anthropocentric thinking, which prioritizes humans over animals. Similarly, Murphy points out that anthropocentrism keeps humans from this interspecies interdependence; when humans force animals to wear our faces and mannerisms, nonhuman animals are obscured by human desires and needs (*Literature, Nature, and Other* 52). Later, I explain the moments where *Fabulous Histories* departs from this traditional anthropocentric fable formula and uses animals to instead address issues of the human treatment of animals.

The story features a male and female robin who nest and hatch four eggs in the safe space of a human family’s garden. Trimmer presents the robins as a human, heteronormative family named the Redbreasts. The robins experience human problems, such as disobedient children. The

parents teach their children that adults, especially the father, should be obeyed, thereby establishing a patriarchal structure within the family. Essentially, the robins speak and act out human concerns as a way to instruct young readers about human moral behavior and their place in the metaphorical nest. The Redbreast family serves as an example of damaging anthropocentrism which threatens to erase the nonhuman animal completely in favor of naturalizing the myth of the separate and superior “human” life form. The robins are more than an “animal” foil for “humanity,” however; they also function as tools to instruct children in the workings of “human” patriarchal social structures and to teach them that animals rank below them in this hierarchy. Essentially, the robins operate as devices for humans to understand their own ideology.

Human gender and family roles are clearly defined to align with dominant culture. The mother generally stays in the nest to care for the four children while the father leaves to search for food and provide for his family. The father robin also “chose to leave the female part of his family to the particular management of their mother” (92). This separates the roles of the mother and father; the mother is responsible for the domestic private space, while the father searches for food in the public space outside of the nest. The mother robin even yields to the father robin’s authority, sometimes acting only after “having obtained her mate’s consent” (15).

As the robins speak with human voices and exhibit human social concerns, their actual needs and the way *real* robins see the world is overshadowed by the human masks they wear as the Redbreast family. The human voices that the robins use to teach human ideology to their offspring eclipse the manner in which *actual* robins communicate. One main example of this anthropocentric use of the robins to explain human ideology is when the parent robins teach their

disobedient son (named Robin) that his parents have authority over him. Robin “failed to humble himself to his father” by not accepting his father’s flying advice, which results in his fall to the ground (92). After Robin is hurt, he realizes that he should have listened to his father’s advice and delivers a monologue about obedience:

Oh! Cried he, that I had but followed the advice and example of my tender parents, then had I been safe in the nest, blessed with their kind caresses, and enjoying the company of my dear brother and sisters! But now I am of all birds, the most wretched! . . . What kind beak will supply me with food to assuage the pangs of hunger which I shall soon feel? . . . Who will protect me from the various tribes of barbarous animals which I have been told make prey of birds?
(93)

In this excerpt, the home is portrayed as a “safe” place with “tender” parents that “protect” and caress children (93). In contrast, existence away from home comes across as “wretched,” full of “pangs of hunger,” and “barbarous animals” (93). This language equates obedience in the home with protection, while portraying the natural world as a hazardous place without food or shelter from ravenous animals. With this reasoning, nature comes across as the enemy of the domestic family. This passage is one small piece of the larger text that follows the anthropomorphic Redbreast family as they deal with human social structures, therefore, displacing the representation of how actual robins live, think, speak or interact in nature. Anthropomorphic metaphors and anthropocentric views of the world such as those in *Fabulous Histories* contribute to the belief that humans are separate from and superior to animals. This line of thought only leads humans to forget that nonhumans are also capable of thought, emotion, speech, and social

interaction. Anthropocentric thinking also reinforces belief in the artificial human/animal hierarchy by naturalizing it.

Through the human characters' interactions, *Fabulous Histories* also directly endorses the human/animal and domestic/wild binaries. The six-year-old boy named Frederick proposes to take responsibility for the robin family in living in his garden by using his allowance to buy bird feed: "O, said Frederick, I will give all the money I have in the world to buy victuals for my dear, dear birds" (15). His expression of compassion towards the birds is countered by his mother. She responds to this by quickly correcting him that he is "human" and should therefore help his own kind before "inferior" animals:

[T]hough I commend your humanity, I must remind you again, that there are poor people as well as poor birds. . . . I am delighted, my dear children, with your humane behaviour towards the animal creation, and wish by all means to encourage it. But though a most commendable propensity, it requires regulation; let me therefore recommend to you, not to suffer it, to gain upon you to such a degree, as to make you unhappy or forgetful of those, who have a superior claim to your attention: I mean poor people; always keep in mind the distresses which they endure, and on no account waste any kind of food, nor give to inferior animals what is designed for mankind. (15-16)

Here, the animal presence of the robins acts as a foil to construct the humanity of young Frederick. The authority figure of the mother reaffirms that humans are "superior" to the birds and deserve to be cared for before "inferior animals" (15). Frederick's mother instructs him to "regulate" his "humanity" and not "waste" food "designed for mankind" (16). What is missing in

this line of reasoning is that birds do not need human care or food to survive in nature. The mother speaks in this passage as if sustenance only exists in the human-made home and never acknowledges that birds survive in the wild without human help. This reinforces the Enlightenment belief in a human-dominated hierarchy over animals. It even naturalizes the idea of a safer human domestic space over “animalized” nature.

Children, Respect the Animals

In contrast with the anthropomorphic presentation of the robins, the text speaks against treating animals as curiosities for amusement and objectifying animals to justify violence against nonhumans. The text also encourages observing animals in their natural environment instead of as captured objects. Immediately after the anthropomorphic robin passage, Frederick’s mother demands he respect a butterfly trapped in his home and release it into its natural environment. Despite being juxtaposed with the anthropomorphic portrayal of the robins, this butterfly encounter argues for adults to teach children to respect insects as subjects with agency. The butterfly passage differs from the robin passage because Frederick’s mother instructs him to leave the butterfly alone. The mother makes it clear that treating the butterfly as a play-thing will lead to harming it: “This [butterfly] Frederick was very desirous of catching, but his mamma would not permit him to attempt it; because (she told him) he could not well lay hold of its wings without doing it an injury, and it would be much happier at liberty” (16). The butterfly’s well-being is more important than Frederick’s desire to catch the butterfly for his amusement. This contrasts with the anthropomorphic presentation of the robins that conflates actual bird needs with human needs. Frederick’s mother recognizes and explains the butterfly’s needs to Frederick.

She also encourages him to imagine himself in the insect's place: "Should you like, Frederick, said she, when you are going out to play, to have any body lay hold on you violently, scratch you all over, then offer you something to eat which is very disagreeable, and perhaps poisonous, and then shut you up in a little dark room?" (16-17). The text leads young readers to place themselves in the captured butterfly's position. This passage demonstrates how to respect the butterfly by putting the insect's needs before the child's desire to be entertained. It also sends the message that capturing any insects as curious objects harms them. After Frederick imagines himself in the position of the butterfly, he asks his mother to let it outside and she instructs her children to open a window to release it.

The narrator describes the butterfly's reaction to the open window in a manner that shows recognition of its individual subjectivity: "the happy insect seized the opportunity of escaping, and Frederick had soon the pleasure of seeing it on a rose-tree" (17). The butterfly reacts to the open window by flying outside, thereby demonstrating his individual agency. Frederick continues to observe the butterfly in the garden and his spirits are lifted in reaction to the butterfly's behavior: "Frederick, during his walk, amused himself with watching the Butterfly, as it flew from flower to flower which gave more pleasure than he could possibly have received from catching and confining the little tender creature" (17). Frederick's happiness with watching the liberated butterfly exercise its agency in a natural environment shows readers how mutual respect benefits all beings involved and promotes observing nonhumans in their natural environments instead of as caged or captured curious objects. This entire butterfly vignette conveys the message that humans should resist any desire to capture, or confine nonhumans as objects for human study or amusement—a theme that continues throughout the text. While

young readers can empathize with Frederick, mothers reading this to their children may also gain strategies for preventing their children from capturing and harming insects. This passage acts as one of the strongest examples of the presence of this counter-discourse because most of the examples feature a reminder that God made humans superior to animals.

Trimmer clarifies this viewpoint in the advertisement in the front matter of the book; while “Christian Benevolence” entails being compassionate to animals, “immoderate tenderness . . . towards those, over whom the SUPREME GOVERNOR hath given them dominion” is incorrect (vi). Although these instances of animal advocacy are qualified by the Christian belief that God made humans naturally superior guardians of nonhumans, something other than mere objectification or anthropocentric thinking occurs. Trimmer links “immoderate tenderness” towards animals to animal-hoarding behavior, which ultimately leads to the neglect of humans and nonhumans alike. Again, seeing animals as objects for amusement is presented as the gateway to harming humans and nonhumans.

Mrs. Addis, a family friend, keeps a strange menagerie of animals in her drawing room, including “a parrot, a paroquet, and a macaw, all in most elegant cages . . . a squirrel and a monkey, which had each a little house neatly ornamented . . . a lapdog lying on a splendid cushion; and in a beautiful little cradle . . . a cat with a litter of kittens” (97-98). This excerpt shows how Mrs. Addis displays and keeps these animals as curious objects for human amusement. She keeps the exotic animals chained and caged in her house and fails to respect their individual needs. Mrs. Addis’s children are also neglected in this arrangement; she keeps her boy in boarding school only to keep him away from her animals. She also spends her time and money on her animals instead of dressing her daughter or socializing her: “Mrs. Benson was

quite shocked to see how sickly, dirty, and ragged this child was, and what a very vulgar figure she made, for want of instruction” (100). This definition of “immoderate tenderness” suggests that keeping animals as ornamental objects in such a manner interferes with human ability to operate productively in human society. It also portrays the harm done to animals when their distinct needs are ignored in favor of human desires. Despite warning about being too fond of animals and reinforcing the belief in human superiority, the text still advocates for the rights of nonhumans in specific passages that function to model a relationship of mutual respect, which counters the discourse of animals as curious objects.

When Frederick expresses his desire to cage the robins in the garden that he feeds, his mother explains that caging birds for human pleasure only harms birds. The same tactic that was used with the butterfly is employed here. Frederick’s mother asks him to imagine himself in the position of the birds to determine if keeping birds in captivity would be wrong: “And would you really confine these sweet creatures in a cage, Frederick, merely to have the pleasure of looking at them? Should you like to be always shut up in a little room?” (35). The mother explains that birds experience similar emotions to those of humans, which is a powerful statement, even though she qualifies it by saying they are lesser beings: “Though these little animals are inferior to you, there is no doubt but they are capable of enjoyments similar to these [human pleasures]; and it must be a dreadful life for a poor bird to be shut up in a cage, where he cannot so much as make use of his wings—where he is excluded from his natural companions” (36). The statement that birds remain inferior, along with acknowledgement of a hierarchy where the birds play with “natural companions,” authorizes the call for compassion towards animals, recognition of their needs, and acceptance of animal emotions.

As with the butterfly and the robins, Frederick's mother explains that keeping song birds in cages for human amusement is wrong because it hurts them. She describes her rescue of a pet canary that was released into the wild because the owner did not like the way it sang. She finds the canary unused to English weather and abused by native birds: "I could not help fancying the little creature to be like a foreigner just landed from some distant country, followed by a rude rabble of boys" (37). Where her neighbor disposed of the canary simply because its song failed to please, Frederick's mother demonstrates a keen awareness of the bird's needs by comparing it to a human stranger who needs her help. Much like the crying, child-like bear in Bartram's *Travels* (examined in chapter three of this thesis), Trimmer's anthropomorphic description of the bird acts as a device to elevate its status from that of a broken object of amusement to a fellow subject in need. She provides the bird with a large cage in her warm home, procures a mate for company, and eventually bestows the canaries and their offspring on a friend with an aviary. Frederick's mother further explains that she keeps larks to save them from being eaten: "Quantities of them are killed and sold for the spit . . . I frequently buy them, as you know, Harriet, but as soon as the fine weather returns, I constantly set them at liberty" (38). Like the narrator in *Travels*, examined later in chapter three, these characters model for readers how keeping nonhumans, such as birds and insects, as objects of amusement only harms nonhumans.

The text also describes how keeping animals as public curiosities hurts them. The mother's explanation of the Learned Pig in London, who spells words by choosing letters on cards, argues against using animals as public scientific curiosities: "I would advise you, Harriet, never to give countenance to those people who shew what they call *learned* animals; as you may assure yourself they exercise great barbarities upon them, of which starving them almost to death

is most likely among the number” (72). The mother tells her daughter never to view animals performing for public amusement because they only perform after suffering “great barbarities” at human hands.

Frederick and his sister Harriet’s discussion with their playmate Edward Jenkins illustrates how young readers might put the animal advocacy that Trimmer describes into action. Edward suggests that “it would have been a nice diversion to you to toss the young birds [the robins that live in Frederick’s garden] about” (58). He boasts to Frederick and Harriet that he collected at least a hundred bird’s eggs from nests: “I blow out the inside, and then run a thread through them, and give them to Lucy [his sister] to hang up amongst her curiosities, and very pretty they look, I assure you” (58). Harriet’s response to Edward echoes the teachings of her mother by asking if he would: “rather see a parcel of empty egg-shells, than hear a sweet concert of birds singing in the trees?” (58). Harriett’s words devalue the eggs as objects in favor of hearing wild birds’ sing. This response calls for valuing birds in their natural environment instead of draining the eggs to decorating human homes.

Fabulous Histories advocates for the subjectivity of domestic as well as “wild” animals by arguing that seeing animals as objects leads to violence against them. The neighbor Edward embodies this idea. Edward tries to tie Harriet’s dog and cat together to watch them fight. While Frederick and Harriet convince Edward to leave the pets alone, he explains that he enjoys throwing cats off of roofs for fun: “[W]e tied bladders to each side of their necks, and then flung them from the top of the house. There was an end of their purring and mewing for some time, I assure you, for they lay a long while struggling and gasping for breath . . . but at last up they jumped, and away ran scampering” (62-63). Edward describes violence to several animals. He

convinces strangers to beat and shoot to death a neighbor's dog whom he characterizes as a mad dog, drowns puppies in front of their mother, makes cocks fight each other until they are cut and blinded, and plucks a live chicken. Edward demonstrates how naturalizing animal inferiority and denying nonhuman feeling and emotions is a slippery slope toward rationalizing violence against nonhumans. Edward explains to Harriet that he has a right to use animals as he pleases for his amusement because they cannot feel: "why have we not a *right* to do as we please to dogs and cats, or do you think they *feel* as we do? [emphasis original]" (63).

Although the call to respect nonhumans remains qualified by the Christian belief that humans are superior to animals and is folded into the anthropocentric morality tale of the Redbreast robin family, *Fabulous Histories* also moves toward a more mutually respectful relationship between humans and nonhumans that counters the discourse of animals as curiosities. The text presents Edward, Mrs. Addis, and the trainers of the Learned Pig as examples of how seeing wild and domestic animals as objects for amusement may easily lead to violence against them. Even though the butterfly's response to the open window stands as one of the few examples of an animal expressing his/her agency through a responsive movement in *Fabulous Histories*, Trimmer's text proclaims animals as beings with needs and desires independent of humanity in the interactions between Mrs. Benson, her children, and her animals. The examples from Bartram's and Trist's texts, which omit outright statements of "human superiority," appear as even stronger arguments for animals as subjects against the backdrop of the anthropocentric and Trimmer's text.

Aaron Bell argues that as long as compassion and respect for nonhumans is couched in anthropocentric thinking, such as that espoused by Enlightenment theories and religions that

naturalize human superiority, humans will continue to rationalize violence against beings considered less-than-human:

If we are finally to abandon the self-aggrandizing narrative of anthropocentrism constructed in the West, we will have to begin by reconceptualizing the difference between humans and animals in a way that does not operate under a destructive exclusionary logic. Both for human beings and for animals, any cession of violence under the current logic is only a momentary deferment . . . Even moments of apparent tenderness and compassion become grotesque symptoms of a corrupted order so long as this way of life is permitted to stand. (174)

In the context of this argument, the moments of compassion in Trimmer's manual are corrupted by the discussion of animal inferiority. *Travels* and *The Travel Diary*, however, lack this blatant exclusionary logic and instead model steps to move toward reconceptualizing human and nonhuman relationships—making these and similarly subversive early American texts vital for fertilizing the discussion of how to move forward as a nation and plant the seeds to reimagine a healthier relationship with nonhumans.

CHAPTER THREE: LISTENING TO THE NONHUMAN OTHER

An Ecocritical/Human-Animal Studies Reexamination of William Bartram's *Travels*

The evening was temperately cool and calm. The crocodiles began to roar and appear in uncommon numbers along the shores and in the river. I fixed my camp in an open plain . . . I had free prospect of the river, which was a matter of no trivial consideration to me having good reason to dread the subtle attacks of the alleigators, who were crowding about my harbour . . .

William Bartram (*Travels* 75).

In the above passage from his eighteenth-century travel journal Quaker naturalist William Bartram describes the bank of the St. John's River in Florida where he encountered and fought with roaring and bellowing alligators. This ordeal culminates in an intense interspecies faceoff as a twelve-foot long alligator confronts Bartram and climbs ashore to stare the traveler down. In this moment, alligator and human-animal acknowledge and challenge each other for a catch of fish in the narrator's canoe. Seeing that the alligator is not afraid of him, Bartram kills the hungry reptile by "lodging the contents of [his] gun in his head" (75-77). At first glance this frequently anthologized passage, like the other descriptions of animal deaths in *Travels*, might seem to portray Bartram the literary character as an adventure-seeking hunter.⁸ While Bartram records the same actions as hunters during his travels, he captures something more than hunting—moments in the lives of early American frontier animals and the narrator's reactions to encountering these animals and often witnessing their deaths.

This project focuses on these moments of human and animal interaction, where the blurring of the human/animal boundary occurs, because, while other scholars have touched upon this

⁸ Some scholars interpret Bartram's narration as "catalog[ing] the pleasures of the gentleman hunter" (Imbarrato 84).

issue, none have explored it deeply from an ecofeminist/ human-animal studies paradigm. M. Allewaert, for example, considers human subjectivity but not animal subjectivity. Allewaert argues that the narrator's experiences in the swamp shatter the Anglo-European fantasy of Edmund Burke's sublime because the narrator experiences immediate danger—Burke's sublime spectator stays safe and separate from the dangerous spectacle being observed (344-45).⁹ Bartram's inability to maintain a safe, sublime order in his narration leaves his own human subjectivity undefined against the threatening backdrop of the swamp while also resisting the subject-object separation of colonial discourse that the sublime enables (345). In another example, Matthew Wynn Sivils approaches *Travels* from an ecocritical perspective but uses a different focus than that of human-animal studies theory. Sivils argues that *Travels* features a mixture of "pastoral imagery and biological description" to vividly convey interdependent ecological communities of the early American frontier (58). In one example, Sivils identifies the comparison of humans to a community of mayflies as a literary device to teach humans "about the human condition within the natural world" (60-62). This thesis chapter, however, argues that the human and animal encounters in the text teach readers about something more than the "human" condition—these moments show the narrator recognizing animal subjectivity and advocating for animals.

To recover the nonhuman semiotic exchanges, I examine the narrator's acknowledgement of and responses to the communication of a bear cub, a spider, sandhill cranes, rattlesnakes, and an alligator; and argue that the narrator presents these overlooked nonhuman animals as "speaking" subjects with agency. In each account, the narrative moves from an objective to a

⁹ Kiene Brillenburg Wurth characterizes Bartram's viewing of a "monstrous" battle, before the large alligator attacks him, as a "tentative evocation of the sublime" (27).

subjective view. The narrator seems to be moving nonhuman marginalized animals into focus because dominant cultural constructions present animals as objects. To signal this change in vision, Bartram acknowledges a connection with nonhumans and seeks to respect their individual agency.

Published in 1791, *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida* represents Bartram's edited account of his earlier four year trek across the southern colonial American frontier to catalogue plants and animals for his British employer, Dr. John Fothergill, a Fellow of the Royal Society of London. Bartram appealed to Fothergill to sponsor his seed-and specimen-gathering trip after his failed careers as a trader and Florida planter, mounting debts, and increased pressure to live up to his father's reputation as the King's Botanist (Magee 46-47, 71-73, 85-89). This journey brought the nature-loving Bartram face-to-face with a plethora of real American animals such as a bear cub, a silky haired spider, a sandhill crane, a rattlesnake, and the "old daring" alligator (Bartram lvii, lxi, 139-40, 170, 77). Scholars generally agree that *Travels* stands as a forerunner to American nature writing such as *Walden* (1854), Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1974), and many other American nature texts (Charles H. Adams 66; Hallock 150). Philip G. Terrie even marks *Travels* as the beginning of the American nature writing tradition, noting his influence on Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Emerson (17-18).

While scholars often remark upon many subtly subversive qualities of *Travels*, none explore the moments where the narrator presents animals as subjects with agency.¹⁰ Thomas Hallock acknowledges that while *Travels* includes visions of a frontier developed for human use,

¹⁰ See Eve Kornfeld for a discussion of the "subtle subversions" of dominant early American colonial discourses in *Travels*, which she explains are the result of a "prolonged and transformative encounter with the Other" (314).

the narrator also appreciates nature in its undeveloped state (169-72). Charles H. Adams identifies Bartram's playful, diverse writing style as ecological rhetoric, which he sees as Bartram's attempt to go beyond scientific classification and fully depict the complexity of nonhuman frontier life. Adams explains that the ecological rhetoric in *Travels* consciously resists attributes of dominant writing styles to mirror the diversity of nature and illustrate the interdependence of all living beings (72-73). Adams explains that *Travels* succeeds in this effort by creating "an effect analogous to Bakhtinian polyphony, a rhetorical pluralism in which no single discourse can represent the full range of nature's meaning" (72). Allewaert also reads *Travels* as resistant to the colonial nationalism of the early republic that insisted on appropriating land and resources for the new nation. According to Allewaert, humans gain agency by working with nonhuman nature to resist the economics and politics of the plantation zone. Bartram complicates the objectifying Linnaean naming system by explaining how plants and humans are interdependent in the plantation zone for survival (340-43).

By most accounts, the naturalist occupation precluded viewing animals and humans as equals. Early Euroamerican botanists appropriated British colonial naturalist cataloging methods for use in the new republic. The Enlightenment belief in a solid human/animal boundary carried over to these British naturalist methods (Lewis 68). According to the Great Chain of Being theory, all living beings fit into a linear, hierarchal chain ranging from least to most advanced, with humans as the most superior beings; naturalists' use of Linnaean taxonomy supported this theory (Magee 148-51). Belief in a "natural" hierarchy of beings and that nonhuman nature operated mechanically contributed to the perception that nonhuman nature was Other, less-than-

human (Bell 165-166). Essentially, the idea that humans could control and manipulate nature stood central to Enlightenment and, later, naturalist thought (Magee 132).¹¹

Ecofeminist theory assumes that all beings are harmed when humans categorize in ways that create binaries (man/nature, human/animal, etc.) and that mark as “less than” one side of the binary (Gates 21). Such binaries enable and rationalize systems of domination and oppression. American botanists who appropriated European naturalist research methods were therefore more likely to see nonhuman animals and nature as Other. Evidence suggests that they in fact viewed nature as an object and attempted to colonize nature by defining and claiming a distinctly “American” wilderness (Lewis 65-69). Timothy Sweet proposes that nature emerged as an object upon which early Euroamericans built the foundation of the fledgling nation’s economy—an unsustainable eco-economic base that he says Americans still continue to rely upon (Sweet 422). These Enlightenment beliefs and naturalist practices emerge in early Euroamerican travel writing as calls to “civilize,” and “improve” the American frontier through settlement, deforestation and farming (Imbarrato 70).

With my ecocritical/human-animal studies lens I find more than another subversion of Enlightenment colonial discourse; I recover the voices of nonhuman Others in the text, the emotional responses that they elicit from the narrator, and the narrator’s appeals to respect nonhuman animals. This chapter opens a new way to understand the narrator’s relationship with animals in *Travels*—as a form of early American nonhuman advocacy. Is Bartram’s text also a

¹¹ Scholars remain divided as to what discourses influenced Bartram’s different view of nature, which departs from a purely objective, colonial paradigm. Larry R. Clarke and Burt Kornegay both explore the possible influence of the Quaker faith on Bartram’s perception of nature. Bruce Silver, however, argues that no distinct Quaker beliefs appear in Bartram’s observations of nature in the text; instead, he cites other possible philosophical influences. Nancy E. Hoffmann argues that the draft manuscripts for *Travels* feature a pilgrim narrator waiting for a Quaker-like “inpouring of spirit” from the natural world; she speculates that Bartram edited the pilgrim narrator out of the published version because of the diverse religious backgrounds of his readers (285).

precursor to American animal rights writings? The nonhuman emotions, connections, and interspecies communication that the narrator in *Travels* describes continue to be perceived as extraordinary instead of the norm. Examining this early Euroamerican text is useful for beginning to explain why Americans relate to animals the way we do today and broaching the discussion about more respectful and sustainable ways to relate to animals.

(Re)conceptualizing Speaking Subjects to Recover Voices

In order to uncover the animal voices in *Travels* I use a non-anthropocentric definition of subjectivity, which accepts nonhuman knowledge, communication, and ways of knowing. The narrator in *Travels* acknowledging nonhuman semiotic exchanges as communication ultimately allows him to view them as subjects, respect them, and advocate on their behalf. Defining subjectivity as any being capable of responding, even non-volitionally, allows for a definition that includes more than humans. According to Patrick D. Murphy, when fiction models an expanded type of subjectivity, it creates a space where humans can see and acknowledge a greater connection with the nonhuman world, which leads to greater respect for it (“Subjects”). The narrator in *Travels* acknowledges and is moved by various animals’ semiotic exchanges so much that his language changes to acknowledge their subjectivity after he perceives them as communicating with him. Murphy argues that a more accurate portrayal of human connectedness with the natural world in fiction reduces the harmful behavior that results from perceiving one’s identity as detached from the world:

These fictions distinguish rather than conflate the subject of their plots and the identities of their characters. Furthermore, they distinguish between heroes’

bodies, the selves identified with those bodies and the subject positions and identities that develop for those embodied selves. As a result, this latter group of literary texts offers more complex and thereby more realistic representations of human entanglement and engagement in the rest of the material world. It is my contention that such complex representations can play an important part in developing a potentially less destructive form of human self-perception than the one dominant in the cultures in which these works are written. (“Subjects” 122)

Murphy defines subjectivity not in terms of the capacity for human language or human knowledge but instead as the ability to respond to another being with “any form of semiotic exchange,” which includes “non-volitional utterances” (123-24).

“Accessory to what now appeared to be a cruel murder”

Travels begins as Bartram reviews the most significant discoveries about plants and animals from his journey through the early American frontier. Among his discoveries he recounts witnessing hunters murder a bear for “the sake of the skin and oil” and then killing the bear’s cub as he was crying for his mother (lvii). The tone of narration before the murder of the mother bear describes her and her cub as objects. This tone shifts to acknowledge the bears’ subjectivity as a result of the cub’s cries and gestures:

[In] the evening my hunter, who was an excellent marksman, said that he would shoot one of [the bears], for the sake of the skin and oil, for we had plenty and variety of provisions in our bark. We accordingly, on sight of two of them, planned our approaches, as artfully as possible, by crossing over to the opposite

shore, in order to get under cover of a small island, this we cautiously coasted round, to a point . . . we gained gradually on our prey by this artifice, without their noticing us, finding ourselves near enough, the hunter fired, and laid the largest dead on the spot, where she stood, when presently the [cub], not seeming the least moved, at the report of our piece, approached the dead body. (lvii)

This passage is narrated with a procedural and methodical tone. The narrator explains that the hunter plans to kill a bear, describes how they approach unseen for a good shot, and that the hunter killed the bear in a single shot. The detached narration lacks any emotion and simply states the strategy of the hunters. Essentially, the objectification of the bears enables the murder; the responsibility for destroying an object is much less than that for killing a subject. The narrator never names the hunters but instead only calls them “hunters,” defining them in relation to their ability to kill animals. He praises his hired hunter as “an excellent marksman” (lvii).

As the narrator describes his part in the pursuit of the mother bear, he simply calls her “our prey” and “the largest” (lvii). Categorizing the bear as “prey” and “the largest” denies the bear’s subjectivity and, therefore, individuality and ability for semiotic exchange. This language separates “bearness” from “humanness.” Calling the bear large prey disguises the killing of a subject who is capable of response. The term “prey” invokes the construct of the hunter, which works to naturalize the actions of the men. As “prey,” the bear is seen as an object of the hunt, destined to be shot and used by humans. Also, by describing the mother bear as simply “the largest,” she is itemized as the object with the most capital value, the most fur and oil. This language functions to distance “humans” from the bears by denying the bears’ individual worth. These connotations reinforce what Donna J. Haraway calls the illusory human/animal binary.

Haraway explains that the belief that humans are separate and superior to animals exists as a myth designed to define “human” against the “animal” (*When Species Meet* 77-78). This belief creates false boundaries between human animals and nonhuman animals, which leads to the reduction of those categorized as nonhuman objects. Haraway calls for a confusion of these sorts of boundaries to escape false generalizations and dichotomies (*Symians* 163-64).

From an ecocritical perspective Bartram’s hunting party pursues the bears not for sustenance but only for their fur and oil, wasting their meat. The hunters with Bartram lack respect for the individual animals by failing to acknowledge the significance of killing them. Hunting practices which align closer to an ecocritical paradigm than the actions of Bartram’s hunting party existed in early America. Early American Powhatan hunters, for example, believed a successful hunt occurred because of the hunter’s skill, the will of the spirits, and the animal offering itself to humans because of a relationship of mutual respect: “Hunting was not only a display of human prowess but also an opportunity to acknowledge the reciprocal relations linking men and animals. Guided by spiritual protectors, animals offered themselves as gifts to humans in return for evidence of gratitude and respect” (DeJohn Anderson 28-29). Although skilled marksmen, the hunters with Bartram fail to see their connection with the nonhumans, respect their prey as subjects with agency, and only see the successful hunt as a result of their individual skills. This anthropocentric view of the hunt prevents them from engaging in a respectful relationship and heeding Bartram’s pleas to leave the cub alive after killing the mother bear.

The Child-like Cub Cries Out

Immediately after the mother bear is shot “dead on the spot,” Bartram refers to her as “she” for the first time (lvii). This indicates that by watching her die he became aware of the loss of her individual life. In this passage the narrator also notices the cub speak as a subject, an individual telling his story and expressing his agency through his gestures and cries:

[The cub] approached the dead body, smelled, and pawed it, and appearing in agony, fell to weeping and looking upwards, then towards us, and cried out like a child. Whilst our boat approached very near, the hunter was loading his rifle in order to shoot the survivor, which was a young cub, and the slain supposed to be the dam. (lvii)

In this passage, the cub breaks through the narration to express his emotions. Viewing these cries and gestures with Murphy’s definition of subjectivity, they express the bear’s individual subjectivity. The cub witnesses his mother fall after being shot; approaches, and “smelled, and pawed” her body (lvii). With these gestures the cub tries to communicate with his mother; he urges her to respond. The lack of a response leads him to react “in agony, [and] fall to weeping” (lvii). The cub’s expressions of suffering confirm that he is a subject expressing his loss and not a mere prey object, or object of scientific study.

Although the narrator describes the cub’s emotions anthropomorphically, this anthropomorphism aids the narrator in conveying the cub’s subjectivity. By depicting him as an “afflicted child, bereft of its parent,” the powerful image of a crying human child encourages humans to extend the same sympathies for the cub as an orphaned human child (lvii). According to enlightenment science, animal behaviors or noises were thought of as “mere mechanical

impulses,” or “instinct” (Bartram lvi). The child-like cub connotes feelings, emotions, and the pain of a mother’s death, thereby disrupting the image of animals as pure instinctual beings. Some Ecofeminist and human-animal studies scholars explain that in most instances anthropomorphizing animals leads to anthropocentric thinking, which prioritizes humans over nonhumans (*Symians*, Haraway; *Literature, Nature, and Other*, Murphy 106-16; Raber 99). Karla Armbruster argues, however, that anthropomorphic animal figures can be used to explore messy, intertwined human and nonhuman relationships by complicating the boundary between human and animal instead of collapsing it and erasing the animal (106-16). Likewise, in the narrator’s encounter with the cub, human traits are ascribed to the cub illustrating similarities between human and bear emotions instead of erasing the cub’s emotions. The cub’s cries are described as child-like, which makes the suffering in the cub’s voice relatable enough for humans to recognize his suffering. Therefore, while associating the bear cub with a human child risks missing the cub’s suffering entirely, viewing the anthropomorphic aspects of the bear cub shows human and bear similarities.

In the following passage, the narrator describes his own reciprocal emotional response triggered by watching and listening to the cub:

[T]he continual cries of this afflicted child, bereft of its parent, affected me very sensibly, I was moved with compassion, and charging myself as if necessary to what now appeared to be a cruel murder, and endeavoured to prevail on the hunter to save its life, but to no effect! (lvii)

The narrator remarks that the cub’s vocalized anguish “affected [him] very sensibly” and “moved [him] with compassion” (lvii). He also calls the mother bear’s death a “murder.” The

realization that the animal experiences feeling direct his use of the word murder. The word “murder” connotes an acknowledgement of the bear’s subjectivity. Essentially, when the narrator chooses the word “murder” to describe the death of the mother bear at the hunter’s hands, his word choice shows that that she is a subject that can be murdered. Haraway explains that saying only “humans” can be “murdered” is a semantic tactic, which comes from our denial that nonhuman animals are capable of response; this denial maintains the false label of “human” in contrast to the instinctual “animal” (*When Species Meet* 77-79).

In addition to the narrator’s emotional reaction to the mother bear’s death and the cub’s cries, he advocates for the cub, demanding that the hunter let him live: the narrator “endeavoured to prevail on the hunter to save its life, but to no effect!” (lvii). The narrator explains that that hunter fails to perceive the bears as beings worthy of compassion. The hunter is blind to the human and nonhuman kinship that the narrator sees through the cub’s expressions of suffering. Therefore, the hunter is unable to see shooting the cub as killing a fellow subject: “for by habit he had become insensible to compassion towards the brute creation, being now within a few yards of the harmless devoted victim, he fired, and laid it dead upon the body of the dam” (lvii). Even though the narrator fails to advocate for the cub to the hunter, he still comes to see the bears as speaking subjects with emotions and agency that deserve to live.

From Other to (An)other

In the same passage, the narrator exhibits another vital component to acknowledging nonhuman subjectivity and the human connection to the nonhuman world: recognizing that the cub returns his gaze. While in the beginning of this passage the narrator describes the bear hunt

from his procedural, objectifying gaze, after the mother bear's death and the cub's cries, he recognizes that the cub gazes back at him. Murphy explains "anotherness" as understanding that "one's self is always someone else's other, and both are another to each other" (*Literature, Nature, and Other* 137). Respect for species diversity and interdependence accompany this recognition of (an)other being's gaze. The narrator acknowledges the cub as (an)other when he explains to readers how the cub looks back at the hunting party: "[the cub was] looking upwards, then towards us, and cried out like a child" (lvii). By recognizing the cub's ability to look back at the hunters and himself, the narrator then functions as (an)other being to the cub. The narrator's recognition of the cub gazing back acts in conjunction with the anthropomorphic depiction of his cries to depict the cub as an agent expressing himself. Through the image of a child-like cub—"this afflicted child, bereft of its parent"—looking at the killers of his mother while crying, the cub is empowered with a knowing, intelligent gaze that demonstrates that nonhuman nature looks back at us (lvii) The narrator, therefore, recognizes that the cub exists as (an)other being, instead of something Other. The narrator also repeats this realization when he sees a spider as (an)other.

Seeing the Nonhuman in the Meal

Later in *Travels*, the narrator presents a similar scene of recognition, but this time he expresses a greater degree of interconnectedness and advocacy for nonhumans. The narrator's objectifying scientist's gaze transforms to advocacy for the hunted animal when the hunting party brings him a dead Florida sandhill crane. Bartram first sees the crane after the hunters

shoot the bird and bring his body to camp for dinner. The narrator records all of the details of the crane with scientific objectivity:

This stately bird is above six feet in length from toes to the extremity of the beak when extended, and the wings expand eight or nine feet; they are above five feet high when standing erect; the tail is remarkably short, but the flag or pendant feathers which fall down off the rump on each side, are very long and sharp pointed, of a delicate texture, and silky softness . . . the crown of the head bare of feathers, of a reddish rose colour, thinly barbed with short, stiff black hair. (139)

After thoroughly measuring each part of the crane, recording the various shapes and colors of his feathers, and describing how his wings fit to the body and operate for flight, the narrator's tone becomes regretful. As with the bear vignette, after the narrator's initial observations, he transitions to explaining how the crane is a speaking subject capable of expressing "passions and affections" through bird language (140). While Bartram depicts the bears as displaying family ties and rational and emotional behavior after he witnesses the mother bear's murder, the moment of transition in the crane passage occurs when he eats the crane in soup.

The narrator immediately visualizes the crane when he looks at the soup, unlike the unacknowledged animals that he considered "provisions" at the beginning of the bear passage.¹² He knows he consumes another living being that was "shot in the adjoining meadows" (139). When the crane soup is served, Bartram's descriptions shift from objective to portraying the bird as an otherworldly being. He imagines the crane flying, instead of floating in his soup:

¹² See Kathryn E. Holland Braund for an examination of Bartram's meals during his journey, including the sandhill crane soup. Braund finds that Bartram's meals reveal much about Native American and early southern American diets.

We had this fowl dressed for supper and it made excellent soup; nevertheless as long as I can get any other necessary food I shall prefer his seraphic music in the etherial skies, and my eyes and understanding gratified in observing their economy and social communities, in the expansive green savannas of Florida.
(140)

Although the narrator admits that the “fowl” makes “excellent soup,” he vows never to eat crane again because he would rather hear “seraphic music in the etherial skies” (140). The choice of the words “seraphic” and “etherial” connote an angelic and heavenly being—clearly an idealized image of cranes. These words also imply that cranes exist as superhuman creatures, making the human killing and consumption of him seem more unfortunate.

The narrator’s idealization of the dead crane makes sense in light of his depiction of birds in the introduction, in which the narrator describes how he admires birds because they communicate, possess emotions, and live interdependently. The narrator explains that he sees birds as particularly intelligent beings with the capacity to communicate with each other via language; he clarifies that this language birds use is unique to birds: “language in birds, is the common notes or speech, that they use when employed in feeding themselves and their young, calling on one another, as well as their menaces against their enemy” (lix-lx). Here he also explains that some birds even work interdependently to care for orphaned young from other species (lx). This information clarifies what the narrator means by envisioning the cranes interacting in “social communities” (140). In light of this information from the introduction, the narrator must know that the dead crane was intelligent and capable of semiotic exchange with

other beings, meaning he viewed him as a subject before he examined and ate him, which explains the regret.

As he reflects upon the significance of the crane's death, the narrator expresses regret by vowing never to eat another crane "as [he] can get any other necessary food" (140). This signals that the narrator accepts responsibility for the crane's death—that the crane died to feed humans. In this way, Bartram models Haraway's concept of living responsibly within the need to kill. Haraway offers that humans should recognize the significance of each animal killing and "learn to live responsibly within the multiplicitous necessity and labor of killing," instead of using semantics to naturalize animal killing for the benefit of "humans;" in short, humans need to recognize "that earthly heterogeneous beings are in this web together for all time, and no one gets to be Man" (*When Species Meet* 80, 82).

Bartram also explains how his livelihood as a naturalist depends on the presence of nonhuman animals like the crane. The narrator says that he learns about the cranes from cranes, demonstrating his recognition of his dependence on the birds for knowledge. Also, beyond knowledge, the aurally and visually pleasing cranes provide him with a source of enjoyment: "my eyes and understanding gratified in observing their economy and social communities, in the expansive green savannas of Florida" (140). Murphy argues that recognition of interanimation (the ways that species learn and grow through interaction with each other) leads to interspecies growth and survival (*Literature, Nature, and Other* 23). As Bartram regretfully digests one of these birds that assisted in his growth as a naturalist, the narrator advocates for all cranes to be left in the skies instead of hunted. This acts as a powerful visualization of interspecies

entanglement: Bartram needed to eat the crane for food but regrets his death because cranes bring him enjoyment and knowledge.

Because neither Bartram nor the reader sees the crane alive, the crane is unable to communicate for himself in the text. Unlike Bartram's treatment of the bear cub, in which anthropomorphic metaphors risk describing an animal with human qualities to portray him as a speaking subject, the narrator avoids these metaphors. Although he does attempt to idealize the crane as an otherworldly, angelic being, when contextualized with the information in the introduction, it is clear the narrator sees the cranes as subjects. Like the bear vignette, this passage demonstrates a shift from objectifying a nonhuman with scientific observations to lauding the crane's subjectivity. In this example, however, the shift was based on previous observations of crane semiotic capability. This encounter still contained a form of avocation for all cranes: a reflection on why cranes should be left in the sky instead of eaten as a meal.

When (An)other Gazes Back with Eight Eyes

During Bartram's description of his encounter with a "buff colour" spider "the size of a pigeons egg" readers see the spider speaking through gestures (lix). Like the bear cub, Bartram sees the spider as (an)other, who instead of being a mere object of his gaze possesses the power to look back at him and even defend himself if needed:

As I was gathering specimens of flowers from the shrubs, I was greatly surprised at the sudden appearance of a remarkable large spider on a leaf, of the genus *Araneus saliens*, at the sight of me he boldly faced about, and raised himself up as if ready to spring upon me." (lviii-lix)

Bartram respectfully acknowledges that the spider challenges him because he inadvertently invaded the spider's space while collecting plant specimens; therefore, the narrator respects the spider and withdraws from close proximity. By turning around and facing Bartram, and by attempting to seem larger, the spider communicates his unease with the human animal who interrupted his hunt. In response the narrator attempts to put the spider at ease before further observation: "after I had recovered from the surprise, and observing the wary hunter had retired under cover, I drew near again, and presently discovered that I had surprised him on predatory attempts against the insect tribes" (lix). The visual image of Bartram and the spider mutually surprising and acknowledging one (an)other is a powerful testament to the effect that nonhuman animals can have on human animals and vice versa. After the spider's successful communication, the narrator recounts the spider hunting a bumble bee:

[T]his cunning intrepid hunter (conducted his subtil approaches, with the circumspection and perseverance of a Siminole, when hunting a deer) advancing with slow steps obliquely, or under the coverage of dense foliage, and behind the limbs, and when the bee was engaged in probing a flower he would leap nearer, and then instantly retire out of sight, under a leaf or behind a branch, at the same time keeping a sharp eye upon me. (lix)

Acknowledging that the spider has the power to "keep an eye on him," again demonstrates Bartram's perception of himself as (an)other to the spider (lix). The spider asserts his agency, reacting to Bartram and demonstrating his semiotic communication with a knowing gaze. In moving away from the spider to respect his space, the narrator illustrates that the spider communicating to the narrator serves to transform his perspective of the spider. Initially the

spider is only defined by his Linnaean name, “*Arsneus saliens*” (lviii). This name marks the spider as an object, a resource catalogued for later use by the new republic. After the spider gestures to signal displeasure, however, Bartram sees him as a speaking subject that he respects.

The narrator imagines the spider as Native American instead of Euroamerican; Bartram himself admired and respected Native Americans and rejected the idea that “they were deserving of the severe censure, which prevailed against them among the white people” (lx). He proposed that the United States should only judge Native Americans on their civility in friendly cultural situations; liaisons should learn their language, customs, history, judicial system, religion, and traditions (lxi). The anthropomorphic Seminole-spider, who skillfully hunts his food using his natural surroundings, “under the cover of dense foliage and behind the limbs,” makes the hunters who “murder” the bear and her child-like cub with guns for skin and oil seem unskillful, disrespectful, and unnatural (lix). In this context, the narrator’s association of spider and Seminole emphasizes the narrator’s admiration for this nonhuman animal. Therefore, Bartram’s anthropomorphic description simultaneously elevates the spider and Native Americans, who would both be considered “uncivilized” according to dominant colonial ideology.

Throughout this passage, the narrator explains interdependency in the vicinity of the spider. He describes how the flower feeds the bee, which feeds the spider, which he imagines “perhaps before night became himself, the delicious evening repast of a bird or lizard” (lix). For the narrator, all beings, from plant life to larger predators, depend upon one another for sustenance. The spider-Seminole-deer-hunter is a powerfully resonant image of the human and nonhuman connection. Instead of placing the human at the top of this food chain, he imagines a human in the middle. Therefore, by linking the skillful, hunting spider to a human (the Native

American), he places humans amidst this interdependent web of life, bringing them into a heterarchical, interspecies relationship where all are knotted together in reliance upon one another. The account of stumbling into a bush and pausing to meditate on the human animal connection to a random spider shows that even “humans” depend upon, and are connected to flowers, spiders, birds and lizards.

Accepting the Responsibility of Killing

When faced with a nonhuman animal with the power to kill him, the narrator acutely perceives that human animals cannot control nonhuman animals because they are subjects in their own right with their own agency to make choices. The narrator tells of Seminoles who evacuated their camp because of the presence of a large rattlesnake. They refused to kill the snake because of their “extraordinary veneration or dread of the rattle snake,” which led them to implore the narrator to kill the snake (164). Bartram kills the snake only after he “at length consented” for the sake of the “greatly disturbed” Native Americans (164-65). Before killing the snake, he carefully describes his peaceful behavior: “the dreaded and revered serpent leisurely traversed their camp, visiting the fire places from one to another, picking up fragments of their provisions and licking their platters” (165). The narrator makes it explicitly clear that he already respects the rattlesnake before he begins to hunt it. He made sure to kill the snake instantaneously with a blow to the head: he “luckily . . . dispatched him instantly,” showed his head “as a trophy of victory” to the Seminoles, and then stored his fangs with his specimens (165). Because Bartram says he kills the snake only to help the Seminoles, Bartram’s “victory” can be read as a celebration that no one was bitten and that the snake died a quick death because

of Bartram's skill. The narrator models for the reader that killing a snake is not a light decision. The subtext of the narrator's actions says that one should spare nonhumans from suffering if killing is necessary, and accept responsibility for the killing—which Haraway claims in a necessary step to move towards a full recognition of our intertwinement with nonhumans and finding healthier ways to treat and relate to nonhumans (*When Species Meet* 88-90).

In Praise of Rattlesnake Restraint

Unlike the previous examples, this snake's death in the Seminole camp fails to transform the narrator's view of nonhuman animals. Instead, it acts as a prelude to a series of stories from the narrator's past that taught him that rattlesnakes are subjects. He uses these stories to explain why he serves as "an advocate or vindicator of the benevolent and peaceable disposition of animal creation," which includes rattlesnakes (168). He explains that the rattlesnake is "a wonderful creature, when we consider his form, nature and disposition" because "he is never known to strike until he is first assaulted or fears himself in danger, and even then always gives the earliest warning by the rattles at the extremity of his tail" (167). The narrator's account of the rattlesnake death in the Seminole village leads to an argument for the entire species; the narrator vows to prevent future rattlesnake deaths at the hands of humans.

He revisits a memory of how he and his friends walked by a rattlesnake several times in the woods at night. The animal had the power to kill the youths but instead chose not to bite them and merely observed them as they walked nearby. When young Bartram realized that the snake refrained from harming humans, his view of the rattlesnake shifted. He sees the rattlesnake's gaze on him as one of restraint: "he lay quiet whilst I surveyed him, appearing no way surprised

or disturbed, but kept his half-shut eyes fixed on me” (169). This transforms his view of the rattlesnake. Bartram credits God and “the dignified nature of the generous though terrible creature, who had suffered us all to pass many times by him during the night, without injuring us in the least, although we must have touched him” (169). Recalling this incident enables Bartram to narrate a discussion where the youths reach a rational decision to allow the snake to live because they acknowledge it as a reasonable subject. This story models the rhetorical design of the other animal vignettes so far discussed: describing a moment when a nonhuman animal communicates to the narrator, which leads him to recognize the nonhuman animal’s subjectivity. This rattlesnake passage contains an additional message however; the snake could easily choose to kill human animals as the humans could choose to kill the snake. This destabilizes the human/animal hierarchy characteristic of Enlightenment thinking.

Upon recalling a lesson from his father that snakes attack only if aggravated, and a third rattlesnake encounter from his youth, the narrator confessed that “fright” led him to kill the third snake that he encountered. He regretted this killing because the snake had the opportunity to bite him and chose not to: “I however, was sorry after killing the serpent when coolly recollecting every circumstance, he certainly had it in his power to kill me almost instantly, and I made no doubt that he was conscious of it” (170). In this instance Bartram failed to pause and assess the situation, which resulted in the snake’s death. He reacted on instinct, which Enlightenment science says separates “humans” from “animals.” After his fear subsided he recalls the event when the large rattlesnake is later served in several dishes for dinner. As with the crane example, the narrator is deeply aware that the “snake served up in several dishes” was a subject, which

most likely explains why Bartram “tasted of it but could not swallow it” (170). The distance from immediate danger also allows Bartram to regret and accept responsibility for snake’s death.

By viewing the snake as (an)other once the danger passes he is able to see the events from the snake’s perspective and realizes that the rattlesnake “was conscious of” his power to kill (170). Ironically, the supposedly “mechanical” creature acted rationally while Bartram reacted with instinct. After recalling these memories, the narrator vows to readers that he will “never again be accessory to the death of a rattle snake, which promise [he has] invariably kept to” (170). These demonstrations of agency, the voluntary choices of all of the rattlesnakes he encountered to not harm him, deeply affect Bartram. The narrator advocates for no further harm to rattlesnakes with these stories, which show they are subjects capable of independent thought and action.

The Alligator’s Choice

Reading the vignettes of the bears, crane, spider, and rattlesnakes together establishes another way to interpret the widely anthologized alligator passage. Garnering a more complete understanding than simply reading the alligator’s death as “his most celebrated victory” allows a broader understanding of Bartram’s view of animals (Braund 35). The narrator experiences moments of transformation when the animals speak to him; he then sees them as subjects worth respecting and not deserving of death. The various animals’ subjectivity and agency expressed through their semiotic exchanges with Bartram speak of their reaction to the human presence of Bartram’s traveling party. These vignettes also demonstrate the narrator’s recognition of his

connection to the nonhuman world. The narrator shows that his respect for nonhumans follows recognition of nonhuman subjectivity and species interdependence.

But what happens when, unlike the rattlesnake, the animal decides he wants to fight with the narrator? In the widely anthologized alligator encounter, the narrator witnesses two large alligators battling in the water. They are depicted as supernatural monsters battling like dragons:

Clouds of smoke issue from his dilated nostrils. The earth trembles with his thunder. When immediately from the opposite coast of the lagoon, emerges from the deep his rival champion. . . . Again they rise, their jaws clap together . . . when the contest ends . . . and the vanquished makes a hazardous escape . . . The shores and forests resound his dreadful roar, together with the triumphing shouts of the plaited tribes around, witnesses of the horrid combat. (75-76)

In this vignette the narrator portrays the alligators in a mythic, dragon-like way, bypassing the usual objective observations. The tone of the passage reflects the narrator's fear and admiration for the fighting amphibians. The alligators' "clouds of smoke," "dilated nostrils" and trembling earth seem reminiscent of the supernatural power of dragons battling. Alligators aurally disturb the forest with "thunder," "dreadful roar[s]," and "triumphing shouts," another otherworldly characterization. These descriptions indicate fear, awe, and respect for the power of the battling alligators.

After witnessing this alligator battle, Bartram decides to fish before there are too many alligators present—a decision that results in a faceoff with a large alligator. He paddles his canoe from the shore of his camp towards a lagoon to catch trout and is "attacked on all sides, [by] several [alligators] endeavoring to upset the canoe . . . rushing up with their heads and part of

their bodies above the water, roaring terribly and belching floods of water” (76). After clubbing the many alligators to fend them off of his canoe, the narrator succeeds in catching trout for his dinner. He is followed “particularly by an old daring one, about twelve feet in length, who kept close after [him], and when [he] stepped on shore and turned about, in order to draw up [his] canoe, he rushed up near [Bartram’s] feet and lay there for some time, looking [him] in the face, his head and shoulders out of water” (77). The narrator views the alligator’s nonverbal possession of the canoe as a territorial threat. In this moment, Bartram knows the alligator looks at him with intelligent eyes “looking at [him], and seeming neither fearful nor any way disturbed” as they acknowledge each other (77). As with the cub, spider, and rattlesnakes, the narrator knows that the alligator is a fellow subject with his own agency.

In contrast to the rattlesnakes that let Bartram pass, the alligators attack Bartram, and the “old daring” twelve-foot long alligator pursues him onto land and challenges him for his fish. Here is where the nature-loving naturalist, who already had “good reason to dread the subtle attacks of the alligators” becomes “resolved [the alligator] should pay for his temerity” (75,77). He retrieves his gun from his camp, and returns to his canoe to find the alligator “with his foot on the gunwale of the boat, in search of fish” (77). Bartram’s other appeals for humans to leave bears, cranes, spiders, and rattlesnakes unmolested are absent when he kills the alligator by “lodging the contents of [his] gun in his head” (77). The alligator threatens the narrator’s life, and Bartram, realizing that the alligator has the power to kill him, must resort to using his gun. Similar to Bartram’s recognition of the cub’s, spider’s, and rattlesnakes’ ability to look at him with semiotic glances, Bartram sees that the alligator looks at him with the knowing eyes of a fellow subject. Unfortunately, this exchange ends in the alligator’s death because the alligator

does not offer Bartram the restraint that the rattlesnake demonstrated. The alligator passage conveys perhaps the most important message of all of these vignettes: humans cannot control nonhuman subjects.

The narrator's strange and fantastic alligator encounter comes into focus as a reminder that nonhuman animals are subjects with their own agency. They may choose to control or kill human animals just as humans try to control and kill them. The killing of the alligator was not for sport, pleasure, or to win a victory over a powerful dragon-like warrior. Instead, recognizing that the alligator is a fellow rational creature, Bartram shoots him because the alligator chooses to threaten him.

Perhaps this analysis sheds light on why the real-life Bartram was reluctant to discuss the alligator encounter after *Travels* was published. English Quaker Henry Wansey wrote in his diary that "when one of his companions made joking reference to the encounters with alligators described in the *Travels*, Bartram 'became so reserved, that we could get but little conversation with him'" (qtd. in Slaughter 603). Perhaps, where the narrator fails to mourn the death of the alligator because he was afraid of the amphibian killing him, the real-life Bartram, upon reflection, sees the alligator's death as a loss—a death that he accepts responsibility for and acknowledges the full weight of killing a fellow subject.

In the vignettes explored in this thesis chapter, each nonhuman asserts its agency through various sounds, gestures, and actions that result in the narrator responding to them as fellow subjects. Their gestures, responses, and utterances are their expressions of agency that allow the narrator to view them as more than objects for scientific observation: the bear cub cries and gestures, the spider reacts with movements to express himself, the various rattlesnakes refrain

from attacking humans, and the alligators perform territorial displays. Even the dead crane that the narrator encounters sparks memories of cranes communicating and living in complex, interdependent communities, which elicits the narrator's regret and avocation for all cranes.

The narrator states in the introduction that the philosophers of his time are incorrect to believe that animals act on mechanical impulses and are inferior to humans. He argues that animal potential for relationships and emotions equals that of humans: "The parental, and filial affections seem to be as ardent, their sensibility and attachment, as active and faithful, as those observed to be in human nature" (lvi-lvii). The excerpts examined in this thesis chapter, however, make an even larger case: that nonhumans act as subjects that communicate, express agency, and live interdependently with humans, and they deserve respect as fellow subjects because humans only imagine that they can control animals. Because the complex and multifaceted nature of nonhuman subjectivity continues to surprise Americans, the narrator's encounters with animals remain relevant to us today; therefore, *Travels*, and other early American texts that engage with nonhuman subjectivity, should be examined further.

CHAPTER FOUR: BEYOND THE OBJECTIFIED SPECTACLE IN *THE TRAVEL DIARY OF ELIZABETH HOUSE TRIST*

Contextualizing Trist's Diary

The roads were so slippery that it made it very dangerous rideing. We concluded to go about two Mile out of the way to get over. Horses frosted, the cold so intense that I was allmost dead. We found it impossible to get to the next stage which is 20 miles. Therefore, hired a guide to conduct us to a good farm house, which was but 10 mile, where we were inform'd we cou'd be provided with beds . . .

Elizabeth House Trist (209)

In the above excerpt dated January 7, 1784, Elizabeth House Trist records the dangerous conditions she faced while traveling through Hannas Town on horseback in what was then the colonial Western Frontier of Pennsylvania (209; Westmoreland County Historical Society). Trist and her horse overcame snow, ice, and mountainous terrain; shortly after writing this entry she rested in Pittsburgh, awaiting spring when she could resume her journey to Natchez via flatboat down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. The hope of joining her husband, who had moved to Natchez to manage land investments in British West Florida, motivated Trist during her rough journey (Kolodny, "Introduction" 184-90). Upon reaching her destination, Trist unfortunately discovered that her husband had died. Despite this tragic end to her journey, Trist kept the record of her travels, which was later preserved in archives at the University of Virginia library (194-98). First published in 1990, scholars now know this text as *The Travel Diary of Elizabeth House Trist: Philadelphia to Natchez, 1783-84*. *The Travel Diary* is an eighteenth-century American secular journal, a semi-public document written in the style of an extended letter (Culley 16). Trist's primary intended reader was her close friend Thomas Jefferson, whom she left behind in

Philadelphia (Kolodny, "Introduction" 186-87). In this thesis chapter, I focus on the overland entries in the diary and argue that, after one significant and prolonged journey, the narrator's interactions with her horse promote an awareness of human animal and nonhuman animal kinship and a companion species relationship.

Although animals were not the main focus of early American travel literature, Trist's text includes many observations about them. Scholars speculate that Trist focused on nature because her primary audience, Jefferson, was interested in the landscape and resources of the early American frontier (Kolodny, "Introduction" 185-89). It is also likely, however, that Trist recorded her observations because she was genuinely interested in natural science. In a letter before her journey to Natchez, she expressed her wishes to accompany Jefferson on a naturalist frontier expedition (187). As a secular diarist, Trist acted as a community historian, capturing snapshots of Euroamerican frontier life and interactions with nonhuman animals (Culley 16).

Discourses of Euroamerican Curiosity

Despite the harsh weather and physical conditions of eighteenth-century travel, Trist used her journey to contribute to the colonial-American practice of observing and documenting natural "curiosities." Susan Scott Parrish explains that while naturalist discourse of this era characterized nature as an asset, colonial Euroamericans also wrote about curious natural objects as a strategy for claiming a metropolitan identity: "Colonial men and women used novel or beautiful specimens of American nature to prove to themselves and to their metropolitan correspondents that they were *not* in an uncouth periphery and were *not* any less astute or curious than their friends in London" (17). In the late eighteenth century, both male and female colonial

naturalists were viewed as less legitimate than British naturalists until American men gained greater acceptance into this community (16-17). Contradictory beliefs that naturalist activities could be both “fatal” and “improving” to female naturalist practitioners failed to discourage them from adding their letters, reports, and drawings of American specimens to this transatlantic conversation (17). As the perceived credibility of American male naturalists increased with the formation of American philosophical associations and institutions, Parrish argues, participating in the discourse of “curiosity became more fraught for women” (17). Trist’s diary, written after this decline in female participation in the naturalist conversation, now stands as an invaluable artifact of an early British American woman’s relationship with the nonhuman world.

Literary scholars such as Annette Kolodny and Susan Imbarrato note that Trist’s objectification of nature and the frontier entail describing the landscape and its inhabitants as captivating spectacles, assets for American development, and curious scientific objects. Kolodny explains that Trist looked forward to the development of the “wild” frontier into garden cities, and argues that, like other early American women, Trist saw beauty in raw nature only if it resembled a domestic garden (*The Land Before Her* 39-47). Imbarrato further explains that Trist’s first-person observations provide opportunities to see the early American landscape through a female settler’s eyes. For Imbarrato, Trist imagines herself as a landlady anticipating human improvement of the raw “wilderness” (69-76). Imbarrato elaborates on Kolodny’s theory that men’s attempts to master the frontier further separated them from the environment (Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land* 28). Imbarrato extends this idea to Trist’s observations of nature, which show that she and other settlers viewed the environment in relation to its ability to support the developing nation. Imbarrato adds that these attitudes were “an unfortunate premonition of

greater environmental neglect to come” (74). Imbarrato focuses on Trist’s narration of men in a flatboat killing a pelican to inspect it as a curious object for scientific study (73-74). Imbarrato’s reading of Trist’s reaction as “curious excitement” mixed with “admiration” for the murdered pelican illustrates one aspect of early Americans’ relationship with animals; however, neither she nor Kolodny analyzes Trist’s descriptions of domestic frontier animals in the context of these encounters (Imbarrato 73). Imbarrato argues that Trist’s desire to catalogue the pelican as a curious object creates an ideological distance which results in her objectification of the bird (73-74). Conversely, her physical closeness with her horse enables connection.

Finding Similar Threads of Animal Subjectivity in *Travels* and *The Travel Diary*

Before and during the American Revolution, William Bartram trekked through the southeastern British-American frontier and gathered the information he would later use to reconstruct his journey in his post-revolutionary published text *Travels* (Magee 123-24). Trist, however, penned her account during her arduous journey from Philadelphia to Natchez, shortly after the revolution (Kolodny, “Introduction” 184). While their journeys occurred at different times, both texts were written for post-revolutionary readers and, therefore, capture a similar moment in early Americans’ relationships with nonhuman animals in the frontier. At this time, early American naturalists viewed nonhuman nature as valuable resources that, when catalogued, could support the new American economy (Lewis 69). This view of nature relates to and succeeds what Parrish describes as British colonial discourse of nature as a collection of assets (17). Kathryn Napier Gray further explains that early American written accounts of the frontier as a living landscape presented nature “as a captivating spectacle, which in turn fed

contemporaneous political and ideological ambitions of colonial expansion and American independence” (530). Gray says descriptions of nature as a spectacle were an influential factor in shaping American political ideology that literally moved Euroamericans to dominate the natural frontier. Although Trist fails to discuss “wild” nonhumans as subjects, the text complicates written depictions of the natural world because the narration recognizes her horse as a subject.

While Trist’s text reads as a less-conscious effort to explore acknowledgement of animal subjectivity than *Travels* does, animal subjectivity still appears in Trist’s diary. While sustained contact with nonhuman frontier inhabitants changes the narrator’s relationship with them in Bartram’s *Travels*, the cold weather and fast pace of Trist’s journey prevented her from making extended observations of “wild” animals. The harsh weather instead created a situation for Trist to experience prolonged contact and develop a close bond with her horse. A comparison of scenes involving unusual birds in Bartram’s and Trist’s texts illustrates my point that close and prolonged contact between humans and nonhumans is vital before the naturalist observer may move from objectifying discourse and begin to view animals as subjects. In the case of the pelican that Imbarrato says Trist objectifies, Trist only briefly observes live pelicans. The first pelican she comes close to is killed by a man on the flatboat: “There are many Pelican about here, the first we have seen. They are a fine Majestick looking bird and at a distance resemble the swan. One of our people kill’d one and brought it on board the boat” (229). As Trist recounts the close observations of the dead pelican, she makes objective scientific notes but she also tries to understand how the pelican used its pouch. By contrast, Bartram studied cranes before confronting a dead one; his previous knowledge allows him to recall how cranes live in interdependent colonies. Bartram also reflects on his connection with cranes, recalling how

observing them brings him joy and gives him knowledge to work as a naturalist. Because Trist has no experience observing live pelicans closely, she can only speculate about how dead pelicans behave and sees no connection with the bird, which she describes in the language of curiosity:

They are all white, except the wings which are tinged with black. It measured ten feet from the tip end of one wing to the other. The Bill is about an inch wide and a foot in length. . . . I can not comprehend what use they make of this amazing pouch, unless to scoop up the little fish. They are very harmless and so tame that they swim allmost in reach of our oars. The most curious bird I ever saw. (229)

Even though she makes scientific observations about the dead pelican, her curiosity comes from her desire to better comprehend them as living beings. Unlike the narrator in *Travels* who sees even a dead sandhill crane as a subject, Trist had never encountered pelicans before this moment. To her the pelican was sexless, an “it;” whereas Bartram saw the crane he encountered as “he.” Trist’s physical distance from live pelicans prevents her from bridging the ideological gap; therefore, Trist is unable to understand pelicans as subjects and can only speak of them with the language of curiosity. Trist’s depictions of her brief contact with frontier animals portray them as distant curious objects; however, after prolonged contact with her horse her language about him gradually recognizes the horse’s subjectivity.

Understanding Her Traveling Companion

In 1704, as Sarah Kemble Knight departed from Boston along rural roads to New Haven, she observed the silhouette of her guide and his horse: “His shade on his Hors resembled a Globe

on a Gate post” (Knight 87). Although this image presents a comical view of a larger man on a horse most likely meant to entertain Knight’s audience, it also shows a human and horse merged into one entity working together, the post supporting the globe. Here the man is intimately connected to and dependent upon his horse.¹³ Similarly, written nearly eighty years later, Trist uses written expression to acknowledge a similar physical and mental connection with her horse.

Trist’s entries about her horse gradually shift from objectifying descriptions to those that enable the horse’s agency to emerge. This depiction of the horse as an agent correlates with discursive traits described by Donna J. Haraway as a companion species relationship. Haraway explains that companion species bonds can occur wherever nonhuman animal and human animal lives and bodies intersect, influence, and create each other (*When Species Meet* 16-17). A “companion” relationship, as Haraway defines it, goes beyond pet/owner and recognizes all of the ways that human and nonhuman bodies and minds intertwine to make us human animals. For example, Haraway argues that this relationship is reciprocal because humans also shape and influence nonhumans. A companion species relationship entails recognition of other species as kin; this recognition must be present before interspecies respect is possible:

Looking back in this way takes us to seeing again, to *respecere*, to the act of respect. To hold in regard, to respond, to look back reciprocally, to notice, to pay attention, to have courteous regard for, to esteem: all of that is tied to polite greeting, to constituting the polis, where and when species meet. (19)

Haraway stresses that acknowledging this intermeshed relationship and participating in interspecies response fosters respect. The respect that evolves out of this expanded view of

¹³ I thank Lisa Logan for bringing this example to my attention.

human and nonhuman relationships brings the threads of interconnection into focus: “To knot companion and species together in encounter, in regard and respect, is to enter the world of becoming with, where *who and what are* is precisely what is at stake” (19). That is, a companion species relationship involves “becoming with” nonhumans—defining *who* you are and *what* you are in a manner that acknowledges and accepts all of the ways nonhumans influence us, make us possible, and exist as kin. Haraway writes that human and nonhuman relationships constantly evolve; during the months that Trist was with her horse, their relationship certainly deepened. Trist’s diary narrates an early instance of the movement towards a contemporary companion species relationship.

This theoretical angle brings to light where Trist’s narration departs from the dominant colonial view of domestic animals and verges on escaping dominant ideology by recognizing how her identity is intermeshed with her horse. When viewing Trist’s narration of her relationship with her horse through Haraway’s definition of companion species, we see a silhouette of a city woman on her horse, an image of interdependence as physical and mental connection, a state of “becoming with.” Haraway elaborates that: “Species interdependence is the name of the wording game on earth, and that game must be one of response and respect. That is the play of companion species learning to pay attention. . . . I am who I become with companion species, who and which make a mess out of categories in the making of kin and kind” (19). As Trist’s journey progresses, she pays more attention to her horse in diary entries and demonstrates an increased awareness of this interspecies connection.

As Virginia DeJohn Anderson points out, early Euroamerican farmers were more likely to view livestock as more than tools, which often led to affection for these nonhumans.

According to DeJohn Anderson, historical records such as sermons show that seventeenth century Euroamericans viewed domestic livestock as living possessions that they were responsible for controlling:

By emphasizing that livestock were living creatures, not just tools to be used and discarded, this way of thinking also left room for farmers to develop affection toward the animals entrusted to their care. But by assigning livestock a status approaching that of servants or even children, as beings to be ruled with a kind but steady hand, the concept of stewardship muddled the theoretically distinct categories of human and animal. (93)

In the context of DeJohn Anderson's theory—that the dominant ideological boundaries that proclaimed humans and animals as separate beings were less defined between humans and laboring domestic animals in the seventeenth century—it makes sense, then, that Trist more readily bonds with her horse than with the “wild” animals she encounters.

Moving Towards Recognition of Intertwinement, Response, and Respect

In the second preserved entry of *The Travel Diary*, written December 24, 1783, Trist mentions her traveling party's horses in a procedural manner that portrays horses as primarily a means of transportation: “Arose very early with an intention to set off before Breakfast, but it set in snow very fast which detained us till 10 O' clock; we rode some distance before we baited [fed] our Horses, the roads beyond description bad: we cou'd get no further that day than Elizabeth Town” (201). In this entry, Trist links the group's ability to travel with their horses' needs and abilities. Stopping to feed their horses is a normal activity, much like fueling a vehicle

on a road trip. At this point Trist's expresses recognition of her horse's agency, and her ability to respond to those expressions of agency is limited. Trist's tone and detail merely acknowledge that humans are linked to their horses in order to maintain their identities as travelers, a rather shallow connection when compared to a companion species relationship, which involves acknowledging the many complex ways that humans and nonhumans are connected, respond to each other, and enable each other's identities. Haraway contends that this failure to recognize interspecies intertwinement makes it difficult for humans to respond to, respect, and acknowledge nonhumans as kin (*When Species Meet* 19). Because of the manner in which the diary begins, Trist's eventual recognition of the deeper ways that her horse enables her identity marks a significant move towards a companion species relationship.

Trist's movement towards recognition of interdependence first occurs five days into her journey in the December 30, 1783 entry. Despite her desire to continue and find nicer lodgings, she acknowledges that her traveling schedule depends on her horse's physical wellness. Even though her party disapproves of the accommodations available, they are forced to stop to feed and rest the horses: "we were obliged to push on for want of a place to stop that was fit for a christian. At one House we stayed to feed our horses, the family was large—a good farm and a Mill, the buildings good; but every thing was so dirty that I would rather have slept out of doors" (204). Although Trist disapproves of the lodging, she sees that her horse is hungry and tired. While her record of feeding the horse implies that she sees him as a vehicle for travel, she also sees that at least in one respect they depend upon each other. The conditions undesirable to humans enable Trist to see that in this case his needs supersede hers.

The presentation of horses and humans as interdependent species is not limited to Trist and her horse. During a stop in one recently settled frontier location Trist's elderly hostess, who was "upwards of eighty," brags that "she coul'd ride a 100 miles in one day without being fatigued if she cou'd get a horse that wou'd carry so far" (204). The woman's ability to skillfully connect with her horse is narrated as a mark of pride on a frontier where riding long distances was necessary. This woman describes her horsemanship, in effect constructing her identity in relation to a horse. Trist finds this woman's ability to travel great distances on a horse significant enough to record in her diary. Perhaps this anecdote was included because Trist related to the woman's experience with her horse; she too imagined constructing her identity as a companion to a horse.

As the freezing conditions on the trail worsen, Trist evinces an even greater connection to her traveling companion. She knows that he enables her survival in these harsh conditions and records how he carried her through waist-high snow that nearly blocked the only path up a mountain: "the Snow up to the Horses bellies. . . . Had I dismounted, I believe I must have Perished for I cou'd not have mounted again" (204-05). Here, Trist's identity as a human traveler relies upon her horse. She explains how the horse enabled her survival: "I am certain I cou'd not have walk'd 2 or 3 miles through the snow" (205). During the trek up the snow-covered mountain she also remarks that she has to hold onto the horse's mane so that she does not fall out of her saddle during a steep incline: the terrain is "almost perpendicular, and our saddles slip'd so that we cou'd scarcely keep our selves on by holding the main" (205). Close contact with her horse is essential to her survival. The image of Trist, fingers entwined in the horse's mane and holding on for her life, illustrates the human-horse bond generated by eighteenth-century frontier

travel. Instead of a human rider perched atop a horse, this passage features a different silhouette—one with the rider’s body pressed close to the horse—both species working together for survival. Trist’s decision to describe her horse’s presence as life-saving marks a shift from understanding the horse as a means of transportation to recognizing her dependence upon him for survival. The rough traveling conditions deepen Trist’s relationship with her horse and her account of him as a respected companion.

Trist gradually sees the horse as part of her own physical ability and identity. After weeks of traveling with him, she mentions that she senses his emotions. Her sensitivity signals the presence of another key aspect of a companion species relationship—listening to and responding to other species with respect. An excerpt from January 8, 1784 stands out for Trist’s increased sensitivity and response to her horse’s needs and nonverbal communication. On January 6, 1784, Trist attributes her composed demeanor during the difficult travel conditions to her riding skills: “The small runs as well as creeks were all most impassible. The Horses were frequently near swimming. Notwithstanding, I did not feel much intimidated but plunged through with no other mishap than getting wet; the roads very bad. . . . Mr. Fowler gave me credit for my good Horsemanship” (208). Two days later, however, Trist senses her horse’s fear and responds empathetically with concern for both horse and rider:

I cou’d not get my Horse out of a walk, and every step his feet allmost slipping from under him, at last down we came; but lucky enough to receive no damage. Only it made his cowardice increase and added nothing to my courage. Poor beast, he trembled every step he took after that. Night came on and, for the first time since I left home, my Spirits forsook me. (210)

The difference between the two situations is that in the January 8 excerpt Trist senses that her horse is scared. While in the first entry Trist's confidence is bolstered by her increased skill, her sensitivity to her horse in the second entry illustrates her evolving connection with him during the hazardous journey. Trist and her horse are so intimately connected that she loses courage only when her horse becomes fearful: "his cowardice increase[d] and added nothing to my courage" (210). Trist reads her horse's nonverbal communication, his shaking, as fear. After her horse falls, she senses his trembling and feels sorry for him, lamenting that he is a "Poor beast" (210). Calling her horse a "Poor beast" may initially seem an uncompassionate expression to a modern reader. In the context of Trist's greater connection with her horse and ability to sense his emotions, however, this phrase indicates an empathetic response. This comparison of these two passages, therefore, shows another advance in Trist's evolving relationship with her horse—movement towards a companion species bond with her horse.

Comparing Companion Intimacy: the Horse, Fawnis, and Polly

The significance of Trist's frequent diary entries about her horse and their increasing bond comes into full view when compared to how she describes her female traveling companion Polly and her small dog Fawnis. While Trist never names her steed outright, she still comes to write about him as a companion to whom her identity and emotions are linked. She writes about her dependence upon him; she understands his nonverbal utterances enough to read his emotions. Because of these connections, a relationship with compassion and respect becomes possible by the end of the journey. At a first reading, Trist's horse might appear as an absent figure, hidden behind his labor as a source of transportation; however, a closer look through the contemporary

lens of a companion species relationship makes Trist's greater bond with him visible. This bond also results in an increase in the horse's ability to express himself and break through Trist's narration. Specifically, the moment of connection that allows readers to hear the horse as a character is the aforementioned passage when Trist describes her horse's fall and resulting fear on the frozen trail: "Only it made his cowardice increase and added nothing to my courage. Poor beast, he trembled every step he took after that" (210). In addition to Trist's expression of connection, in this moment Trist also narrates the horse's feelings and experiences during this leg of the journey, bringing him into focus as more than an element of scenery. The horse's fear makes visible his own needs and emotions.

The emotional needs and state of Fawnis and Polly, however, cannot be deciphered from Trist's encounters with them. Trist mentions Fawnis only to mark his mysterious disappearance during a stop to rest from traveling on a flatboat down the Yasow river: "We stopped at an Island for the night, and I lost my poor little Dog, Fawnis. Tis supposed the Allegator got him as one was seen swimming about the boat in the evening—poor little fellow" (230). Kolodny speculates in a footnote that Trist most likely acquired her dog during a stop as a gift (230). While Trist does express sadness for the loss of her "poor little fellow," she never describes him as part of her identity, never records sensing his emotions, nor writes about him in any other surviving entry. As animal companions go, Trist's descriptions of her horse indicate a growing relationship, while this lone excerpt about her dog merely records his disappearance and Trist's sadness at his fate.

Trist similarly neglects to mention her human companion—a young girl named Polly, who accompanies Trist as a companion from Philadelphia for the entire journey—in any

expressly emotional capacity in her diary. Scholars have yet to decode Polly's relationship to Trist; was she a servant, a neighbor, a distant relative? Kolodny describes her as "a female companion known only as Polly" ("Introduction" 188). Trist mentions Polly mostly as a woman to share a bed with on their journey; in this capacity Polly helps Trist to maintain a public display of virtue. Without Polly, this journey would have been a compromising situation for a lone woman traveling the eighteenth-century British-American frontier. On January 1, 1784, Trist describes the lodging conditions when they stop for the night in Juniata, Pennsylvania: "The one [bed] occupied by Polly and my self was up in a dark corner surrounded by pickling tubs which did not yield the most agreeable smell in the world; the other by Mr. Fowler and a Lawyer Hamilton" (205). In this entry, Trist makes it clear that she and Polly slept together while the men they were traveling with slept in another bed, their privacy secured by pickling tubs. Six days later, Trist mentions Polly again when they stop at a farm for the night. Again, Polly's presence establishes Trist's propriety—they sleep in one room with "Six or 7 men" (209). The entry records Polly's spot beside Trist and their joint efforts to change clothes behind a curtain: "Old Mr. Waltowers and Mr. Irwin had one of the beds, Polly and myself the other—but we found no difficulty in being private, having good worsted curtains round the bed. We allways made it practise to dress and undress behind the curtain" (209). Polly receives no further mention until May 27, 1784, when they share an "old log hut" and "spread [their] beds at night and, in the Morning by rolling them up, they serve as seats" (218). Trist makes it clear that she and Polly sleep away from male travelers and even relates how they domesticate the hut by using beds as seats and a barrel as a table.

When the traveling party encounters rough conditions the next day, Trist mentions Polly only to note Polly's horse's emotional state: "Polly's Horse being in better Spirits than mine, she push'd on" (210). Interestingly, Trist records the horse's good emotional state but fails to explain if Polly was bothered by the icy weather, although she does note when Polly comes down with a fever. Each of these examples show that Polly helps Trist to maintain propriety along the "uncivilized" frontier and that Polly garners less mention in the diary than Trist's horse. Trist's relationships with Polly and Fawnis fail to evolve in the journal as her relationship with her horse does, suggesting that she considers the growing companion bond with her horse remarkable and worth sharing with fellow naturalist Jefferson. This ecofeminist/human-animal studies approach, therefore, allows *The Travel Diary* to be read, in part, as Trist's account of her growing companion species bond with her horse.

CHAPTER FIVE: WHEN THE PAST INFLUENCES THE FUTURE: A BRIEF MEDITATION

A Spectrum of Human and Nonhuman Relations

This project reveals that *Fabulous Histories*, *Travels*, and *The Travel Diary* present narratives that resist objectifying animals. None of these texts wholly endorse the human/animal hierarchy, nor do they completely break from it. The best way to visualize this relationship is by arranging the texts along a spectrum as in Figure 1:

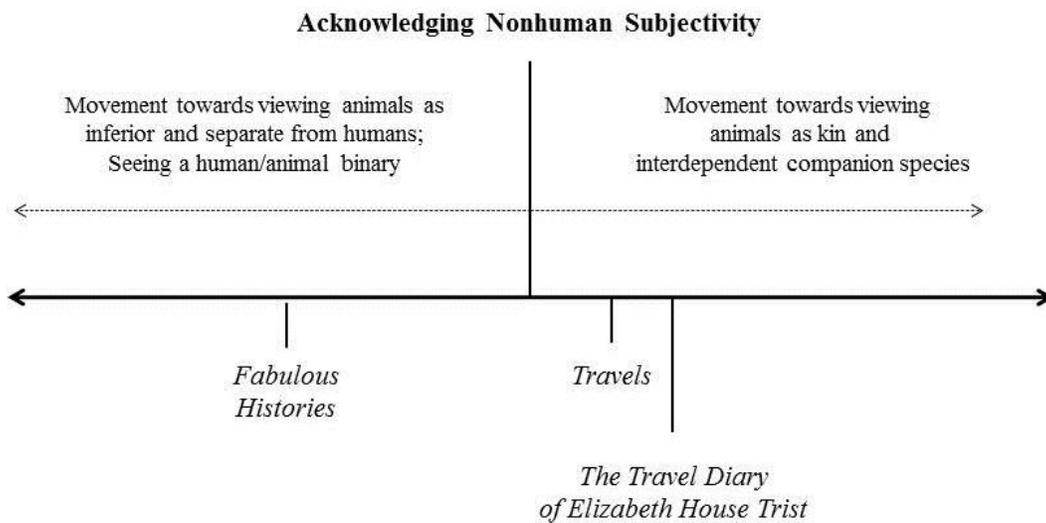


Figure 1: Spectrum of Human and Nonhuman Relations

Texts at the left extreme of this spectrum, without exception, endorse the human/animal binary and hierarchical relationships, such as those promoted by hierarchies in Enlightenment thought. Texts at the extreme right of the spectrum feature heterarchical relationships (such as Haraway's companion species bond), in which the interdependence and diversity of species is recognized as

necessary for survival, and nonhumans are treated with respect. Any movement to the right along this spectrum is also movement toward more sustainable human and nonhuman relationships.

In the context of the spectrum in Figure 1, *Fabulous Histories* advocates for compassion towards animals and speaks against keeping nonhumans in cages for amusement or as preserved curiosities. These qualities keep *Fabulous Histories* from the extreme left end of the spectrum, despite its constant statements that animals are inferior beings. *Travels* is placed further to the right because the narrator repeatedly moves from a scientific, objectifying tone towards “wild” nonhumans to seeing them as communicative beings who express agency. *The Travel Diary* features Trist’s gradual movement toward a companion species bond with her horse. This text is to the right of *Travels* because Trist acknowledges a bodily and emotional connection with her horse that allows her to read his emotions—she sees how their interdependence shapes and enables progress and survival during their arduous journey. That being said, Bartram, does reflect on how cranes bring him joy and partly enable his work as a naturalist. Trist’s bond with her horse, however, is one of two creatures working together for survival. While Trist does sense her horse’s emotions at the end of her diary, Bartram sees various frontier animals as speaking subjects. An argument could therefore be made to switch the placement of Trist’s and Bartram’s texts along the spectrum for different reasons. Both texts, however, still make more progress towards sustainable relationships with nonhumans than *Fabulous Histories*.

My thesis opens the door to further examine the connections among human relationships with animals in early America and the discourses of sympathy, understanding, science, nature, and respect. Advocacy and compassion for animals may only advance a relationship to a certain point; without recognition of nonhuman subjectivity, humans may continue to overlook the ways

species exist interdependently and justify overlooking the abuse of nonhumans by claiming they are less-than-human. Acknowledging nonhuman subjectivity, therefore, acts as a threshold that must be crossed to advance beyond a relationship in which nonhumans are inferior beings that should be cared for because humans, as a superior species, are responsible for them. In early America, as in contemporary America, examples of nonhuman communication, emotions, interspecies dependence, and agency continue to shock humans. Similar explorations of early American texts would therefore prove productive because they reveal something about the origins of our contemporary denial of nonhuman subjectivity.

The Nineteenth Century Brings More Vocal Animal Advocacy

Sentimentality, kindness and avocation for the welfare of animals persisted as minority discourses in the United States. In 1866, for example, people questioned the establishment of The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. In various magazine articles writers accused the organization and its president of unnecessary sentimentality towards animals. New York enacted several state laws that outlined rules for transporting livestock by railroad, outlawed fighting animals with each other or humans, and made it a misdemeanor to harm or neglect any animal belonging to a human (“Cruelty to Animals”). While these laws set protections in place for animals, including “any horse, mule, ox, cattle, sheep, or other animal, belonging to [a human],” they failed to protect nondomestic animals (“Cruelty to Animals”). Also, the SPCA faced challenges from the media and individual Americans. In a letter to the editor of *The Galaxy*, on June, 15 1866, the president of the SPCA, Henry Bergh, addressed the editor’s accusations that the creation of an animal welfare society was unnecessary:

[Y]ou are pleased to say, that this Society is the least needed of all reforms. You will pardon me for saying that I think the article alluded to was written without due reflection. Is no reform needed in the carrying of cattle by railroads thousands of miles, without allowing them rest, or food, or water for *four and five* days at a time? (“Article 3” 365)

The Galaxy editor replies that he approves of the reforms but disapproves of the creation of a society to oversee them. The editor points out Bergh’s sympathy for animals and says that *The Galaxy* employees privately empathize: “As to the cattle, the beeves and calves, sheep and lambs, and the unnecessary and injurious suffering that they undergo at the hands of butchers and drovers, Mr. Bergh’s sensibilities, official though they are, cannot be more tender, more easily wounded than those of our humble and private self” (365). The editor’s tone seems sarcastic even as he says he possesses tender sensibilities.

Whether this editor’s response was a direct attack on Bergh because he sympathizes with animals or not, an article from November 3, 1866, titled “Another Anti-cruelty Society Needed” directly attacks the society’s sympathy for animals: “the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty is appealing to public sympathy in behalf of the animals. In fact, there is every certainty that no effort will be made to imbue them with a proper sense of gratitude” (220). This satire of the SPCA continues with descriptions of mewling cats disrupting human sleep, ants and roaches ruining pastries, and moths destroying clothes; it concludes by calling for a society where animals advocate for other animals to be kind to humans, “a zoologico-benevolent society, which should educate and send forth missionary bugs and beasts of every species for the conversion of their unenlightened brethren . . . to be known as the Cosmopolitan Society for the Prevention

among *Animals of Cruelty to Men*” (220). Clearly animal welfare existed as a contested subject in the nineteenth century; at least the presence of the SPCA indicates a more direct and vocal avocation than in Trimmer’s, Bartram’s and Trist’s eighteenth-century texts. While post-bellum, nineteenth-century antisentimental thought partly influenced the negative reception of the SPCA, the eighteenth-century discourse of sympathy played a role in how humans related to and advocated for nonhumans. As sympathy was significant during and immediately after the American Revolution, examining its impact on human and nonhuman relations adds another significant dimension to the reading of these texts. One direction for future research is to layer the discourse of sympathy onto a human-animal/ecofeminist framework to decode human and nonhuman interactions in Trist’s, Bartram’s, Trimmer’s, and other early American texts.

Connecting with Nonhuman Subjects in Contemporary America

Scholars across many fields have begun to unravel the myth of human superiority and separation from animals, including Carol J. Adams, Jacques Derrida, Donna Haraway, and Cary Wolfe). As Murphy explains, all living beings are interdependent and interanimated—growing together and learning from each other (*Literature, Nature, and Other* 21-23). Therefore, even the smallest waves of influence can impact all other beings because we exist in these interdependent relationships. Too often, contemporary American relationships with nonhumans exist to the left of the “acknowledging subjectivity” threshold (see Figure 1). Reimagining ways for humans to acknowledge humanimality is a challenging project with infinite possibilities that I hope many scholars will take up. Once fully realized, this project will fundamentally change our thinking for

the better. For now, this small disturbance is a ripple in what I hope will be a wave of rethinking early American texts with ecocritical and human-animal studies lenses.

Where can we look for vital moments of connection such as those Trist and Bartram recount? We spend our lives connected via multimedia devices and disconnected from nonhuman nature. Immersed in a digital world of noise, images, and human-centric ideas, these simulacra separate us from the physical world where we encounter and bond with animals. The further we remove ourselves physically and mentally from our nonhuman kin, the easier it becomes to forget that we share this connection and that human decisions based on “the good of humanity” can harm all beings.

For Bartram and Trist, animal bonding happened “out” in nature; Trimmer discussed the pleasures of observing animals in nature as opposed to collecting and caging them. But what if nature is not “out there” but everywhere? Each daily encounter is a moment to rekindle our connection to nonhuman kin. Perhaps it is as simple as observing a spider spin her web in the morning light of your kitchen windowsill and imagining how she sees the world. The spider does not see herself as an invader, as less-than-human, or as a pest. She moves about the world with her own thoughts, emotions, and purpose—all of which are always already intimately connected to our own movement through the world. The sooner all human animals envision their connection to nonhumans the sooner the quality of all life will improve. These connections cannot be made, however, unless human animals take the effort to encounter, listen to, respect and try to understand our nonhuman kin.

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