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LYRIC WITHOUT SUBJECTS AND LAW WITHOUT PERSONS: VAGRANCY, POLICE POWER, AND THE *LYRICAL TALES*

Sal Nicolazzo

In “Anthropomorphism in Lyric and Law,” Barbara Johnson famously writes that “lyric and law might be seen as two very different ways of instating what a ‘person’ is.”¹ Revisiting one of the central questions of her earlier essay “Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion”—how rhetorical figure simultaneously constructs and undoes legal persons—Johnson argues for the importance of lyric to the rhetorical operations of the law, as both law and lyric insist on the simultaneous urgency and undecidability of the same question: “What is a person?”² For Johnson, what lyric and law have in common is that they employ figures (such as anthropomorphism) that seem to rely on the presupposition of the existence of a human subject yet at the same time undo the coherence of this subject by revealing its reciprocal reliance on figure. At stake is the relationship between two kinds of subject: “the ‘first person’ (grammatical subject) and the ‘constitutional person’ (the subject of rights).”³

Of course, Johnson relies here on sustaining, or at least not disputing, an identification of lyric with expressive subjectivity sustained through figure. This presumption, however, is precisely what Virginia Jackson seeks to defamiliarize as a creation of twentieth-century critical practice. Through this practice of “lyricization,” she argues, lyric comes to stand in for poetry itself, and the critical practices that collapse poetry into lyric then transform their own protocols of reading into supposed attributes of lyric: expressive subjectivity, unmediated self-presence of the moment of reading, suspension from historical particularity.⁴ In a historical process that culminates in New Critical preoccupation with lyric more generally and Romantic lyric in particular, lyric acquires a privileged relation to subjectivity: “Only in lyric poetry is the subject . . . transformed into the sole carrier of meaning, the only true reality.”⁵ This happens, however, along precisely the “fault line” noted by Johnson: the surprisingly difficult distinction between material human bodies and subjects sustained through figure.⁶ In Jackson’s account, the New Critical identification of lyric with

subjectivity and self-presence ironically effaced historical persons and replaced them with figure, as it “created an abstract personification in place of the historical person, and consequently created an abstract genre accessible to all persons educated to read lyrically.”⁷

What is a person? In a sense, this is not actually the difficult legal question. A person—whether a natural person or a fictive juridical person such as a corporation—is a bearer of rights and duties.⁸ The difficult question is when legal personhood does and does not attach to human bodies.⁹ The central legal text in “Anthropomorphism in Lyric and Law” is a U.S. Supreme Court case that hinges on the relationship between juridical personhood and human embodiment. When an association of prisoners sought to sue the correctional officers of the prison, they attempted to bring the suit without paying fees, as an indigent person is legally entitled to do. However, courts disagreed as to whether a corporate person such as a prisoners’ association could truly prove indigence or if the state of indigence was limited to natural persons. In Johnson’s reading of Justice David Souter’s ruling that indigence is indeed limited to natural persons, she emphasizes his inability to distinguish natural from artificial personhood without recourse to the very language that sustains artificial personhood before the law: “Souter again turns to Webster’s dictionary to find that poverty is a human condition, to be ‘wanting in material riches or goods; lacking the comforts of life; needy.’ Souter also refers to a previous ruling, which holds that poverty involves being unable to provide for the ‘necessities of life.’ It is as though only natural persons can have ‘life,’ and that life is defined as the capacity to lack necessities and comforts. . . . The experience of lack differentiates natural persons from artificial persons.”¹⁰

Johnson’s legal case study hinges on the question of “indigence”: that is, whether the material deprivation and bodily need that characterizes poverty can ever attach to a legal person that is not also a human individual. Souter’s decision emphasizes the embodied and subjective experience of deprivation—in other words, having a body that can suffer and a mind that can register this suffering—as necessary conditions for the ability to bring a suit *in forma pauperis*. Clarence Thomas’s dissent, however, does not concur with a definition of “indigence” that requires a subject to experience it; he notes that nations can certainly be described as “poor,” thus arguing for a notion of legal personhood as capacious as the figurative use of the language that constructs it. As Johnson points out, if we admit corporate personhood, which relies on a figure of personification, then it is hardly an unimaginable leap to allow the anthropomorphism by which a nation or a prisoners’ association might be described as indigent.¹¹

That Johnson stages the question of lyric subjectivity over the matter of impoverishment and incarceration is, I contend, more significant than it may appear. This particular arena for articulating the boundaries of lyric and legal personhood evokes a long-standing poetic tradition, after all. In the 1790s, just as William Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, Robert Southey, and Mary Robinson overtly theorized their experiments with and hybridizations of lyric, they also staged encounters between law and lyric through the aestheticization of criminalized poverty. Scholars have long noted the astonishing ubiquity of vagrancy in early Romantic poetry, and have—particularly in the case of Wordsworth—understood vagrancy as a key site for the articulation of poetic form, labor, and consciousness. Some have argued for Wordsworth's construction of vagrants as lyric subjects themselves, thus mobilizing poetry as an ethical alternative to the legal gaze. Gary Harrison argues, for example, that "Wordsworth's poetry presents the reader with the possibility for an engagement with the laboring poor as subjects, rather than as objects," while Quentin Bailey claims that Wordsworth sought to "create[] a 'Romantic' sensibility that emphasized the valuable and almost unknowable individuality of every 'outcast of pity.'" ¹² Meanwhile, another important strain of criticism has emphasized how Wordsworth uses vagrancy to elaborate not only or necessarily lyric subjects but poetic labor and consciousness. ¹³ Finally, Celeste Langan sees in Wordsworth's vagrants poetic elaborations on the very *idea* of subjectivity, both poetic and political. As "the vagrant's mobility and expressivity are abstracted from their determining social conditions," poetry takes up "those aspects of vagrancy susceptible to analogy and subsequent idealization" so that "the poet and the vagrant together constitute a society based on the twin principles of freedom of speech and freedom of movement." ¹⁴ Literary-historical investigations of vagrancy and subjectivity, both legal and textual, are not confined to Romanticism; for instance, Patricia Fumerton's recent engagement with early modern vagrancy across legal and literary texts leads her to propose the emergence of a new form of "unsettled subjectivity" that "posits the possibility of a 'free' individual or detached self, even in the face of its actual or felt impossibility." ¹⁵

The *legal* category of vagrancy, however, is not one that presumes, deals with, or sustains subjects. As a catchall category allowing for the apprehension of a wide variety of petty offenders, vagrancy law granted local authorities discretionary power to punish or expel nearly anyone they perceived as a potential threat or economic burden. ¹⁶ Overseers of the Poor, for example, routinely used vagrancy law to expel people who threatened to cost the parish too much in poor relief, while magistrates and justices of the peace used it to summarily convict suspected or reputed

thieves, prostitutes, or unknown persons thought to pose future threat.¹⁷ Above all, vagrancy is a crime of status, which renders its targets' subjectivity, interiority, and power of autonomous action irrelevant: neither criminal intent nor the commission of a criminal act are essential to the legal definition of vagrancy.¹⁸ Indeed, as the allowance for summary conviction obviated the need for a trial, eighteenth-century vagrancy law concerned itself not with the adjudication of an individual's criminal responsibility but rather with the anticipatory management of populations and spaces associated with potential future threat. Vagrancy did not index a knowable identity marked by particular qualities but rather an unpredictable assemblage of anything that might arouse the suspicion of those who were keeping order. Bryan Wagner, in his reading of William Blackstone and his later interpreters, thus argues that "the vagrant can exhibit no properties that matter from the standpoint of the law."¹⁹

This places vagrancy squarely in the realm of police offenses. "Police," in the eighteenth century, referred not to a uniformed law-enforcement agency but to the general maintenance of the peace and protection of the community against threat.²⁰ Markus Dubber characterizes vagrancy as the eighteenth-century "police offense par excellence," and William Blackstone prominently features vagrancy in his discussion of "public police and oeconomy," which he defines as "the due regulation and domestic order of the kingdom: whereby the individuals of the state, like members of a well-governed family, are bound to conform their general behaviour to the rules of propriety, good neighbourhood, and good manners; and to be decent, industrious, and inoffensive in their respective stations."²¹ Dubber explains that from the perspective of police, the distinctions that are so vexed in Johnson's discussion of law and lyric—artificial versus natural persons; rights-bearing legal entities versus vulnerable human bodies or minds capable of intent—are utterly irrelevant: "It also makes no difference whether the offender is a natural person or a fictional one, an individual or a group, or simply a multitude. . . . There is nothing distinctive or qualitatively different about threats in the form of natural persons. The offender's dangerousness . . . is what matters, not her rights, or duties, or her capacity for autonomy. The corporation is not regarded as a 'right-and-duty bearing unit,' nor is the individual; personhood, corporate or individual, is simply beside the point."²² In the decades preceding the establishment of the modern metropolitan police force, "police" was a topic of increasing legal and political debate, and vagrancy law served as a crucial blueprint for the kind of discretionary power and anticipatory orientation toward threat that would later be institutionalized as the purview of *the* police.²³ For example, in the 1785 House of Commons debate on Pitt's London and Westminster Police Bill,

the Solicitor General attempted to parry accusations that the proposed system would constitute “an arbitrary system of police” that would violate personal liberty.²⁴ While a petition from the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London opposed the bill on the grounds that it would create “new officers, invested with extraordinary and dangerous powers,” the Solicitor General insisted that “he had no intention of introducing any new punishment, or constituting any new crime, except by extending and enforcing in some degree the vagrant laws.”²⁵ This bill, which would have centralized policing in London, ultimately failed due to justices’ opposition to regulations that they saw as encroaching on their discretion and authority, but the centrality of vagrancy law as the legal prototype for delineating police powers reappeared in later, successful attempts at centralization.²⁶ Vagrancy law (and the police powers it authorized) rendered its targets’ personhood—legal, natural, subjective—irrelevant. How might this change the way we read the proliferation of vagrant figures in Romantic poetry?

I propose that we turn away from lyric or legal subjectivity in order to see other crucial poetic valences of vagrancy in the late eighteenth century. In Mary Robinson’s final collection of poetry, the *Lyrical Tales* (1800), she performs astonishing experiments with lyric form in a book dominated by the dispossessed, impoverished, stateless, and fugitive. Robinson not only pushes us to reconsider a literary-historical narrative that has long been dominated by Wordsworth but also offers an engagement with vagrancy that theorizes law and lyric as intersecting precisely where legal persons and lyric subjects disappear.

All/Alone: The *Lyrical Tales* and the Vagrant Nonsubject

In both the title’s overt response to the *Lyrical Ballads* and in the collection’s overwhelming emphasis on marginality, poverty, and isolation, the *Lyrical Tales* marks Robinson’s unique contribution to an intertextual poetic conversation. Stuart Curran characterizes Robinson’s social vision as much harsher and more critical than those of her contemporaries: “If Wordsworth sees in marginality an arena forcing into play a range of mental reactions from fear to compassion, and Southey finds it an aberrancy prompting a dialectical counter-movement toward community, Robinson . . . views it as the normal condition of life.”²⁷ In the *Lyrical Tales*, Robinson pushes lyric to its limits; the title announces a hybridization of lyric more radical than that of the *Lyrical Ballads* (as the “tale” gestures not only beyond lyric but also beyond poetry itself), while Robinson’s metrically and formally experimental poems, as Daniel Robinson argues, “literally perform their artifice in the strangeness of their forms.”²⁸

The *Lyrical Tales* also begins with vagrancy. With no prefatory material such as the “Advertisement” that had graced Wordsworth and Coleridge’s 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, the *Lyrical Tales* opens with a homeless child in a churchyard, disturbing his poet-interlocutor with his insistence on remaining unincorporated into community or narrative—on remaining out of place. The apostrophic opening lines of the first poem, “All Alone,” attempt to hail its object into subjectivity that might speak: “Ah! Wherefore by the Church-yard side, / Poor little LORN ONE, dost thou stray?” (1–2).²⁹ The speaker’s long description of the boy’s material and affective deprivation—noting that his “eyes are dim, [his] looks forlorn” (21) and that his “naked feet are wounded sore / With naked thorns” (25–26)—then performs a rhetorical move akin to Justice Souter’s, elaborating his personhood through his bodily lack and conjuring this body through a catalogue of injuries to it. The speaker ends this initial invitation to rejoin the social by projecting apostrophe to the music “on yonder hill,” where “the merry reed, and brawling rill / call thee to rustic sports away” (43, 45–46).

The boy, however, refuses to assent to the speaker’s attempt to sketch him as a body capable of sensation and animated to movement. Instead, he begins his response by refusing everything but the stasis of the grave:

“I cannot the green hill ascend,
I cannot pace the upland mead;
I cannot in the vale attend,
To hear the merry-sounding reed:
For all is still, beneath yon stone,
Where my poor mother’s left alone! (49–54)

He does, with some prodding from the speaker, temporarily occupy precisely the subjectivity asked of him when he tells the story of how he ended up here, but all he can narrate is a catalogue of losses: his parents, their animals, their home. While the speaker claims that this storytelling will incite reparative intersubjectivity—“Thou art not left alone, poor boy, / The Trav’ller stops to hear thy tale” (7–8)—the boy’s narrative of his life to the speaker fails to incite any relationship that the boy will recognize, and he ends the poem declaring his only relation to be with the unspoken name of his dead mother:

No friend shall weep my destiny
For *friends* are scarce, and *tears* are few;
None do *I* see, save on this stone
Where I will stay, and weep alone! (141–44)

In claiming the identity of “Trav’ller” (8) and asking to hear the boy’s story, the poet-speaker invites precisely the kind of uneasy identification between vagrant and poet that scholars have long noted in Wordsworth. The poem, however, is dominated by the boy’s utter refusal of such an identification with expressive subjectivity.

The poem’s dialogue pointedly echoes Wordsworth’s “We Are Seven,” but while the girl in “We Are Seven” insists that her dead kin be counted as part of the community of the living, the boy in “All Alone” insists that he be regarded as belonging only to the dead:

My Father never will return,
He rests beneath the sea-green wave;
I have no kindred left to mourn
When I am hid in yonder grave! (145–48)

In his insistence on being understood as nothing more than a future corpse, the boy in “All Alone” is a striking figure of Malthusian redundancy. “We Are Seven,” with its impasse between irreconcilable modes of counting people, also invokes Malthusian logic and policy, but what it most insistently stages is the problem of enumeration: who counts, who does not count, and who decides.³⁰ “All Alone,” on the other hand, dwells in the category of the supernumerary. The “all” in the title can paradoxically index both the absoluteness of the boy’s solitude *and* the figuration of multitude that haunts the idea of poverty under the Malthusian concept of population.³¹ The poem enacts the steady accumulation of death that Malthus warns of as the inevitable result of life’s reproduction beyond its means.

Redundancy is also the poem’s most insistent *formal* concern, as the boy’s utter refusal of life takes the form of semantic and sonic repetition. His first words to the speaker are framed by the stubborn anaphora of “I cannot . . . I cannot . . . I cannot” (49–51), and the poem itself adopts his stony recalcitrance: every stanza ends with a couplet repeating the same rhyme, and nearly every one of these couplets contains “stone,” “alone,” or both.

As Catherine Gallagher has shown, some of the most canonical early Romantic poetry, traditionally read for its emphasis on the solitary lyric subject, is in fact also crucially concerned with the problem of population as it emerged as a touchstone for political economy at the end of the eighteenth century.³² Meanwhile, Malthus not only characterized the criminalized poor as “redundant” but also used vagrancy as a crucial metaphor for redundancy as a mass of life doomed only to death. In his

much-expanded 1803 edition of the *Essay on the Principle of Population*, Malthus elaborates a parable for the pressure of redundant population on the scarcity of resources:

A man . . . If the society do not want his labour, has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, has no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders, if he do not work upon the compassion of some of her guests. If these guests get up and make room for him, other intruders immediately appear demanding the same favour. . . . The order and harmony of the feast is disturbed, the plenty that before reigned is changed into scarcity; and the happiness of the guests is destroyed by the spectacle of misery and dependence in every part of the hall, and by the clamorous importunity of those, who are justly enraged at not finding the provision which they had been taught to expect.³³

As the multitudes who intrude on the feast and disrupt the guests' pleasure with their "spectacle of misery and dependence" are stand-ins for the "redundant" births that, Malthus argues, result from parish support for the poor, vagrancy here becomes a metaphor for existing-while-redundant. Being born is rendered equivalent to begging, and death is figured as nature's enforcement of vagrancy laws, as she turns away the imagined beggar who "has no business to be where he is."

Even in the boy's painful isolation, his redundancy—his existence beyond the resources available to sustain it—thus also marks him as a figure of anonymous multitude. Ironically, death would grant him a far more stable place in the social order than does his current life in the churchyard; after all, as Thomas Laqueur argues, the right to burial in one's parish church was a crucial legal and customary marker of communal belonging.³⁴ As an anonymous denizen of a churchyard, the boy resembles the village dead more than he does any living person yet occupies a liminal space between the two. Poetically, he is also positioned between living, speaking subject and featureless dead thing, as he is figured not only as the particular and injured body whose voice produces an address but also through the recalcitrance he shares with the constantly accruing "stone" that punctuates the poem, recurring equally in his speech and his interlocutor's, piling up with implacable regularity in the couplet ending nearly every stanza no matter what is said before it. It is in his stoniness that the boy exceeds boundaries

between subject and object, speaker and spoken of, person or multitude, living or dead. Across all these divides, he is simply redundant.

In criminalizing populations regarded as redundant, vagrancy law occupies such undecidability between individual and multitude, subject and thing. In legal and political writing of the eighteenth century, vagrants were repeatedly figured as vermin, waste, garbage, and debris.³⁵ The same authorities were tasked with the management of both animate and inanimate disorder. The bridewell, as an early modern carceral institution constructed specifically to combat vagrancy, pioneered the use of incarceration as punishment long before the birth of the penitentiary, marking populations deemed vagrant as the first targets of a prison regime that, as Caleb Smith argues, renders former legal subjects “animate corpse(s),” suspended between (legal) life and (civil) death.³⁶

If vagrancy, as a legal category, rests more on anticipated future threat than on criminal responsibility for acts already committed, it has little to do with subjectivity, interiority, or intent. As the boy refuses social belonging and poetic identification, insisting instead on identifying himself only as what he will one day be—a corpse—he enacts this logic at its starkest extremes. He refuses to exist outside the logic of anticipation, while his stasis in living death also echoes this logic’s carceral consequences.

Vagrant Worlds and the Policing of Empire

In 1799, the magistrate and prolific police reformer Patrick Colquhoun offered a concise summary of his theory of police as a fundamentally *spatial* enterprise:

Police as recently exemplified, may be said to be a new science, not yet perfectly understood. . . . Wherever a proper Police attaches, good order and security will prevail; where it does not, confusion, irregularity, outrages, and crimes must be expected; wherever great bodies of aquatic labourers are collected together, risque of danger from turbulent behaviour, will be greater in proportion to the number of depraved characters, who, from being collected in one spot, may hatch mischief, and carry it into effect much easier in Docks than on the River. A Police only can counteract this; and to the same preventive system will the commerce of the Port be indebted for securing both the Docks and the Pool against Conflagration.³⁷

Police here responds to a geographical contraction that London's global commerce has instigated: by concentrating so many valuable goods and so many sailors in one place, Colquhoun argues, London creates conditions for crime that are unprecedented in their scope and thus requiring an unprecedented response. Just as the causes of crime here are spatial, so is the mechanism of its prevention: the risk here comes from the density of specific populations (both "aquatic laborers" and "depraved characters") drawn into one spot. The river's "vast extent of Floating Property," Colquhoun argues, is what simultaneously elevates and endangers it; as the point of convergence for the empire's military and commercial power, the docks are where London meets the world—and is made vulnerable to it.³⁸ The docks—the transnational space where people, goods, and ships converge between journeys that shape the globe in the image of the British Empire—become a metonym for the reach of imperial power, even as (Colquhoun argues) this concentration of goods and people make it uniquely vulnerable to unrest and disorder.

Colquhoun was not alone: the idea of police was deeply concerned with the management of space across multiple scales, from local to global. Vagrancy had also long been a legal and imaginative rubric for managing populations and their movements along global flows of capital; in the late seventeenth century, sporadic transportation of vagrants to the Americas funneled the destitute of London into the rapidly expanding plantation economy, and throughout Britain's North American colonies, vagrancy law became a crucial tool in the apprehension of suspected runaway slaves and indentured servants.³⁹ Meanwhile, vagrancy law was also crucial to the development of modern nation-states' border controls; eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European states drew on the existing model of vagrancy as they legally consolidated a "monopoly of the legitimate means of movement."⁴⁰

In "The Lascar," Robinson engages with vagrancy in precisely these terms: as a hermeneutic that links space, population, and global commerce. Lascars—Asian sailors hired by the East India Company to work on ships returning to England—formed an increasingly visible indigent population in London at the end of the eighteenth century. Hired to replace English sailors lost to death, desertion, or impressment on the way to India, lascars often found themselves stranded in England, unable to secure work on outbound ships due to restrictions in the Navigation Acts limiting how many non-British sailors could work on British ships.⁴¹ For the East India Company, the visible destitution of lascars in London was an embarrassing political problem.⁴² By the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, both public opinion and legal practice were less sympathetic

toward lascars, and this population was increasingly treated as a threat to be contained or an unsightly spectacle to be concealed.⁴³

Robinson's poem begins by ventriloquizing enforced idleness not as threat or nuisance but as an excruciating subjective experience:

Another day, Ah! me, a day
Of dreary Sorrow is begun!
And still I loathe the temper'd ray,
And still I hate the sickly Sun! (1–4)

At first, the lascar offers precisely what the boy in "All Alone" refuses to give us: a lyric subject. Indeed, he echoes the stone/alone refrain of "All Alone," but unlike the boy, he does so as he narrates himself as a conscious being who animates his body to move through the world while also registering a subjective experience of bodily pain:

I have no home, no rich array,
No spicy feast, no downy bed!
I, with the dogs am doom'd to eat,
To perish in the peopled street,
To drink the tear of deep despair;
The scoff and scorn of fools to bear!
I sleep upon a bed of stone,
I pace the meadows, wild—alone! (27–34)

However, he ends the poem as a corpse, just as the boy in "All Alone" insists he will end up, and "The Lascar" narrates the steady erosion of its subject's subjectivity. His voice fails him, and his body, so vividly evoked by his litany of suffering and vulnerability, begins to fade from view—"HE was dark, and dark the scene" (223)—until this racialized invisibility proves fatal: he is killed by a fearful traveler who cannot see him in the stormy night.

After leaving London and wandering into the countryside, encountering repeated denials of charity, the starving lascar turns desperately to the traveler for help:

The LASCAR now with transport ran
"Stop! stop!" he cried—with accents bold;
The Trav'ler was a fearful man—
And next to life he priz'd his gold!—
He heard the wand'rer madly cry;

He heard his footsteps following nigh;
 He nothing saw, while onward prest,
 Black as the sky, the Indian's breast;
 Till his firm grasp he felt, while cold
 Down his pale cheek the big drop roll'd;
 Then, struggling to be free, he gave—
 A deep wound to the LASCAR Slave. (229–40)

Throughout the poem, the lascar attributes Britons' refusals of charity to his racialized invisibility, and here, that invisibility becomes tragically literal. To the traveler, he is utterly invisible and then, suddenly, terrifyingly present as the traveler hears the lascar's cries but cannot track them, seeing only "nothing" as the lascar, "black as the sky," cannot be distinguished from the landscape. Everywhere and nowhere at once, unknown and thus carrying potentially unknowable threat, the embodiment of every danger that might befall a propertied traveler on the road: the lascar here is perceived by the traveler as the quintessential vagrant from the vantage point of police. This happens specifically through the ability of a racial metaphor—"black as the sky"—to acquire violent, material force: the racial category that already named his relation to capitalism and empire is precisely what dissolves him perceptually into a landscape to be interpreted as the impersonal bearer of risk and threat. The lascar's disappearance into the landscape is perhaps where the legal logic of vagrancy becomes most apparent. After all, if vagrancy law is centrally concerned with the management of risky spaces, then his seeming transformation into the landscape that so frightens the traveler enacts the figuration of vagrancy as diffuse threat that blurs distinctions between person and place.

Meanwhile, the lascar's "transport" here is, as Miranda Burgess argues, a figure of both affective and geopolitical removal; for Burgess, Romantic "transport" links the material capacities of transport—the ever-increasing mobility of goods, people, and information between colony and metropole and throughout the globe—to what Adela Pinch terms the "vagrancy of emotions" and the particular anxieties attending the possibility of being emotionally moved against one's will.⁴⁴ As Humberto Garcia notes, Robinson employs the language of antislavery in her figurations of sympathy blocked by racial difference, such as when she ventriloquizes the lascar's lament that he cannot "touch the soul of man, and share / a brother's love, a brother's care" (247–48).⁴⁵ Thus, even his plea for recognition as a creature of fellow-feeling is a citation that crosses oceans. Before his encounter with the traveler, the lascar constantly voices and

incites “transport” in his figurations of vast global geographies condensed palimpsestically into hellish prospects of dislocation.

In conjuring these vagrant prospects, Robinson most insistently engages vagrancy and police when the poem is at its least lyric and when it flirts instead with the locodescriptive. After all, if vagrancy law offers an optic to render potential unseen threat perceptible and to transform risky spaces into safe and economically productive ones, then this mode of perception resonates with the locodescriptive prospect and its ability to condense the vast reaches of deep time, state power, and the intangible forces of economic circulation into visible features of a landscape.⁴⁶ As Kevis Goodman argues, even as earlier eighteenth-century georgic and locodescriptive modes were eclipsed by variations on the lyric, these modes “could persist in concerns for positioning and sense reception, for the instruments and feelings—the channels of sensation and perception—by which later readers sought to know the world.”⁴⁷

The lascar is therefore less a vagrant subject than a vagrant optic. For instance, the lascar’s complaint morphs into a prospect view that condenses imperial geographies and traverses vast extremes of scale from world to tomb:

Shut out the Sun, O! pitying Night!
 Make the wide world my silent tomb!
 O’ershade this northern, sickly light,
 And shroud me, in eternal gloom!
 My Indian plains, now smiling glow,
 There stands my Parent’s hovel low,
 And there the tow’ring aloes rise
 And fling their perfumes to the skies!
 There the broad palm Trees covert lend,
 There Sun and Shade delicious blend;
 But here, amid the blunted ray,
 Cold shadows hourly cross my way! (37–48)

The lascar’s descriptions here bring metropole and colony into the same frame; he registers both the immediate imaginative presence of his “Indian plains” and their immense distance from where he stands under the “blunted ray” and “cold shadows” of England. These geographies are further mingled later; suffering under the heat of the midday sun in a “sultry waste” (108), he wanders through an English countryside rendered in terms that could equally call to mind colonial figurations of India.

If the lascar begins the poem as a voice that condenses metropole and colony, he ends it as a silent corpse that obtrudes into the pastoral. In an idyllic village where “the Lark, on flutt’ring wings, / Its early Song, delighted sings” (293–94) and “the Swains their flocks to shelter lead” (296), the lascar takes shelter in a tree, from which he gracelessly falls when he dies of his wounds. Only then attracting the attention of the villagers, he is an object that disrupts the pastoral—a newly inert condensation of the transports and removals of global capitalism.

The dispossession wrought by English enclosure (and memorialized as insularly English in poems such as “The Deserted Village”) was never strictly domestic, as dispossession and dislocation accompanied the creation of new global, colonial divisions of labor.⁴⁸ Vagrancy law was particularly crucial to the policing of that transnational space where historical lascars concentrated and where, more broadly, the empire’s reliance on global flows of capital, commodities, and labor was most immediately and locally visible: the docks. If “The Lascar” figures vagrancy in how a person can also be a landscape, then crucial 1790s innovations in policing similarly relied on a conceptualization of vagrants as condensations of global geographies and on the policing of local spaces as metonymic for policing an empire.

Patrick Colquhoun, alongside fellow magistrate John Harriot, was hired by the Committee of West India Planters and Merchants in 1798 to help establish a private police force to patrol the river and docks, with the aim of both preventing theft from ships and instituting tighter control over dockside labor.⁴⁹ This same committee was also instrumental in advocating for the construction of the new West India Docks. The West India Docks Company, which administered the docks, instituted tight controls on the space of the docks, requiring ships to use company laborers for loading and unloading, rather than allowing them to hire their own labor, and preventing anyone other than company employees or revenue officers from entering the docks without supervision.⁵⁰ This intensive control over a space designated for one specific regional trade was relatively new, but there was precedent for singling out the Thames and its docks as a uniquely vulnerable space requiring uniquely extensive powers of crime prevention. For example, the 1756 Lead and Iron Act (29 Geo. II c. 30) authorized magistrates to demand that those who were in possession of metals suspected of being stolen from ships or warehouses give an account of how these items came into their possession. Meanwhile, the Bumboat Act of 1762 (2 Geo. III c. 28) allowed for the summary conviction of those who were in possession of cargo suspected to have been stolen from a ship in the Thames.⁵¹

Colquhoun's proposal for an officially sanctioned version of this private police force, published as an appendix to his *General View*, names these acts as the legal prototype for police power more generally. After critiquing existing law for being limited to "*penalties and legal powers*" rather than preventive policing, he argues for the expansion of "provisions authorizing *slight* penalties, inflictible by summary procedure, on *circumstantial* evidence, aided by the *examination* of the delinquent, as under the *Bumboat* Act, and *Stolen-metal* Act."⁵² At the same time, Colquhoun's interest in summary conviction was crucial to his spatial understanding of policing: this is the particular legal tool he advocates as the best way to manage spaces and the populations that move through them. The Thames River Police, which was a crucial predecessor of Peel's New Police, took the exigencies of managing the economically and legally unique space of the London docks as a model for preventive policing more generally.⁵³ Police both designates spaces of colonial exception and transports this exception to the heart of the metropole.

In dwelling on vagrancy as a condensation of colonial geographies into one body out of place, Robinson does not simply reflect legal logic. The poetic prospect, as an eighteenth-century model of perception, frequently offered visions of civic and political intervention, and its afterlives were not limited to poetry alone.⁵⁴ Indeed, a gesture toward the prospect is one of Patrick Colquhoun's most prominent rhetorical moves. In his *Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* (1796), Colquhoun repeatedly invites his readers to contemplate prospects that traverse scales from the local to the global, proposing police as the organizing force that can manage these scales and their relations. After describing London as an "assemblage of moving property," he then turns to the potentially criminal types that pose a threat to this property: "Let the mind pass from the contemplation of this vast aggregate of floating wealth, exposed to depredation in ten thousand different ways, and examine the present state of the morals of the Metropolis by a reference to the various classes of individuals who live idly and support themselves by pursuits that are either criminal, illegal, dissolute, vicious, or depraved; it will then be discovered that acts of delinquency and the corruption of manners, have uniformly kept pace with the increase of the riches of the Capital."⁵⁵ The long, miscellaneous catalogue of people that follows, including categories such as "Strangers out of work who have wandered up to London in search of employment," "Strolling Minstrels, Ballad Singers, Show Men, Trumpeters, and Gipsies," "Unfortunate Females of all descriptions, who support themselves chiefly or wholly by prostitution," and "Common Beggars and

Vagrants asking alms,” resembles a vagrancy law in its form and content but with a key difference: each type is quantified.⁵⁶ Colquhoun’s quantitative tallies of vagrants and disorderly people in the *Treatise* suggest a theory of crime that privileges spatially oriented population management over individual moral reform. He does not claim to predict which particular vagrants will commit which particular crimes, but he does claim that any city with such a high population of vagrants must necessarily be at risk.

The same geographic contraction that allows London to become metonymic for its global commercial reach also renders the city a unique vantage point for comprehending an underworld of crime: “London is not only the grand magazine of the British Empire, but also the general receptacle for the idle and depraved of almost every Country.”⁵⁷ Just as the vast array of colonial goods circulating through London allows the city’s populace to encounter, materially and immediately, the reach of empire, so does the quantified circulation of criminalized bodies allow Colquhoun to imagine policing as a gaze that can comprehend crime as a totality. Saree Makdisi argues in his reading of the *Prelude* that Wordsworth’s London is “simultaneously the center of empire and a condensed or miniature version of the entire space . . . of which it is the center.”⁵⁸ This statement could just as easily describe Colquhoun’s figuration of the global metropolis as it does Wordsworth’s.

In condensing metropole and colony into a radically porous space, and in simultaneously embodying the vast reach of empire and the disorder thought to threaten it from within, the lascar does for the *Lyrical Tales* what the docks do for Colquhoun. While Colquhoun imagines a new institutionalization of police that could bring unruly transnational spaces into the ambit of centralized surveillance, Robinson does not share this aim. Instead, she critically takes up the spatial imagination of police. If police, for Colquhoun, designates colonial spaces of exception and then uses the tactics demanded by these spaces as a model for policing the metropole, then Robinson resignifies this logic, using it to locate colonial depredation in the very heart of the English countryside.

Poetic Collection and Legal Parataxis

The formal structure of vagrancy law, which proliferates potential multitudes instead of homing in on a subject, is central to the construction of “vagrant” as a resolutely open-ended legal category. The 1714 Vagrancy

Act (12 Ann. c. 23) consolidated previous vagrancy laws into one act and provided the basic prototype for English vagrancy law until 1824.⁵⁹ This statute defined as “vagrants”

all Persons pretending themselves to be Patent-gatherers, or Collectors for Prisons, Gaols, or Hospitals, and wandering abroad for that purpose; all Fencers, Bear-wards, Common Players of Interludes, Minstrels, Juglers; all Persons pretending to be Gipsies, or wandering in the Habit or Form of counterfeit *Egyptians*, or pretending to have skill in Physiognomy, Palmestry, or like crafty Science, or pretending to tell Fortunes, or using any subtil Craft, or unlawful Games or Plays; all Persons able in Body, who run away, and leave their Wives or Children to the Parish, and not having wherewith otherwise to maintain themselves . . . and refuse to work for the usual and common Wages; and all other idle Persons wandering abroad and begging.⁶⁰

The long list of categories of people deemed vagrants under the law gathers together a number of social and economic practices: unauthorized and itinerant performance, the economic fraud of “counterfeit *Egyptians*,” fortune-telling, and begging under false pretenses, and the simple refusal to work.

The *form* of the list, however, is just as important as its content. While the broader category of vagrancy implies some measure of conceptual unity, the statute’s long, colorful catalogue of disparate types does not propose an essential theory of vagrancy but proliferates the many forms that vagrancy might take while leaving open the possibility that the list could expand to include figures and actions not yet imagined. This effect—one not of hierarchically organized taxonomy but of endlessly proliferating proximities—is produced through the list’s parataxis. By evoking the “vagrant” through proliferation rather than the theorization of a particular kind of subject, the parataxis at the heart of vagrancy law grants an equally expansive discretionary power to apprehend figures whose form cannot be known in advance.

The *Lyrical Tales* is densely populated with strange and solitary figures: people who have disappeared from somewhere else, only to end up here. From “The Alien Boy,” who “lives / A melancholy proof that Man may bear / All the rude storms of Fate, and still suspire / By the wide world forgotten” (137–40) to the “Poor, Singing Dame,” who dies in prison, and “The Fugitive” or “Poor Marguerite,” the *Lyrical Tales* portrays countless figures displaced by war, the administration of the

law, and simple social abandonment. Each of the variously dispossessed figures traversing this collection appear in acute, often painful singularity. At the same time, however, collecting these figures and placing them side by side in a book of poetry draws meaning from their contiguity. The miscellaneous contiguity of figures here resonates aesthetically with the form of a vagrancy statute, and the paratactic gathering on the table of contents—"The Lascar, in Two Parts"; "The Widow's Home"; "The Shepherd's Dog"; "The Fugitive"—is reminiscent of the colorful and expansive catalogues that proliferate in vagrancy statutes but constitute no cohesive theory of "the vagrant," constructing instead an expansive, discretionary scope of state violence in the form of police. This is perhaps the most striking similarity between the treatment of vagrancy in the *Lyrical Tales* and in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*: both collect alienated, dispossessed figures under the aegis of a broader aesthetic of miscellany, generic juxtaposition, and dynamic hybridizations of the lyric.⁶¹ What comes into focus in such a collection is ultimately not "the vagrant" as a kind of subject but rather the protean legal net that can entrap so many multitudes.

It is hardly a new claim to argue that Romantic lyric did something other than apotheosize the expressive individual as the paradigmatic lyric subject. As Anne Janowitz and Michael Nicholson have argued, for instance, the Romantic lyric "I" could be collective, expansive, unfixed in time and space—even vagrant.⁶² But in the *Lyrical Tales*, vagrancy's legal workings resonate most where the lyric "I"—whether singular or collective, present or absent—simply unravels. Attending to this unraveling thus allows us to see the poetic valences of the vagrant's constitutive counterpart, which might otherwise be occluded: that "nowhere-tangible, all-pervasive, ghostly presence in the life of civilized states" that Walter Benjamin names as the police.⁶³

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NOTES

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1. Barbara Johnson, *Persons and Things* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 188.
2. Barbara Johnson, "Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion," *diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 28–47; Johnson, *Persons and Things*, 189.

3. Johnson, *Persons and Things*, 195.
4. Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 8.
5. Jackson, 114.
6. Johnson, *Persons and Things*, 207.
7. Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery*, 100.
8. See, for instance, William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765–69), 4 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1:119.
9. See, for instance, Blackstone, *Commentaries*, for civil and natural death as nonidentical (1:128). Black's law dictionary defines a "person" as a "human being considered as capable of having rights and of being charged with duties" but also immediately expands the definition to exceed the human being: "Persons are divided by law into *natural* and *artificial*." Henry Campbell Black, *A Dictionary of Law* (St. Paul, MN: West, 1891), 892.
10. Johnson, *Persons and Things*, 199.
11. Johnson, 200, 204.
12. Gary Lee Harrison, *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry Poverty, and Power* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 80; Quentin Bailey, *Wordsworth's Vagrants: Police, Prisons, and Poetry in the 1790s* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 30; see also Toby Benis, *Romanticism on the Road: The Marginal Gains of Wordsworth's Homeless* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000). Cf. Karen Swann's important argument that Wordsworth's resistance to the law inheres instead in his experimentation with the gothic, resulting in "a poetry that maps the psychological across the social realm, and thus resists the narrative of exemplary individuality." Swann, "Public Transport: Adventuring on Wordsworth's Salisbury Plain," *ELH* 55, no. 4 (1988): 812.
13. David Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination: The Poetry of Displacement* (London: Methuen, 1987); Anne Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of the Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1993); Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession: Form, Class, and the Logic of Early Romantic Cultural Production* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); Alex J. Dick, "Poverty, Charity, Poetry: The Unproductive Labors of 'The Old Cumberland Beggar,'" *Studies in Romanticism* 39, no. 3 (2000): 365–96.
14. Celeste Langan, *Romantic Vagrancy: Wordsworth and the Simulation of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17.
15. Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), xx, xiii.
16. Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 46–51; Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micropolitics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c. 1550–1750* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 2004); Norma Landau, *The Justices of the Peace, 1679–1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 24–25.
17. Nicholas Rogers, "Policing the Poor in Eighteenth-Century London: The Vagrancy Laws and their Administration," *Histoire Sociale / Social History* 24 (1991): 127–47; Rogers, "Vagrancy, Impressment and the Regulation of Labour in Eighteenth-Century Britain," in *Unfree Labour in the Development of the Atlantic World*, ed. Paul Lovejoy and Nicholas Rogers (Ilford, UK: Frank Cass, 1994), 102–13.

18. A. L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560–1640* (London: Methuen, 1985), xxii; Risa Goluboff, *Vagrant Nation: Police Power, Constitutional Change, and the Making of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 27.
19. Bryan Wagner, *Disturbing the Peace: Black Culture and the Police Power after Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 40.
20. F. M. Dodsworth, "The Idea of Police in Eighteenth-Century England: Discipline, Reformation, Superintendence, c. 1780–1800," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no. 4 (2008): 586–87; J. M. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London, 1660–1750: Urban Crime and the Limits of Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 77–82; Santiago Legarre, "The Historical Background of the Police Power," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law* 9, no. 3 (2006–7): 745–96; Christopher Tomlins, *Law, Labor, and Ideology in the Early American Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 35–39.
21. Markus Dirk Dubber, *The Police Power: Patriarchy and the Foundations of American Government* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 62; Blackstone, *Commentaries*, 4:162.
22. Markus Dirk Dubber, "The Comparative History and Theory of Corporate Criminal Liability," *New Criminal Law Review* 16, no. 2 (2013): 228. See also Goluboff, *Vagrant Nation*, 28.
23. David Taylor, *The New Police in Nineteenth-Century England: Crime, Conflict, and Control* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 16–17; F. M. Dodsworth, introduction to *The Making of the Modern Police 1780–1914*, vol. 1 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014), xxv–xxxiv.
24. William Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England*, vol. 25 (London: Longman, 1815), 910.
25. Cobbett, 900, 889.
26. Andrew Harris, *Policing the City: Crime and Legal Authority in London, 1780–1840* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 38.
27. Stuart Curran, "Mary Robinson's *Lyrical Tales* in Context," in *Re-visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776–1837*, ed. Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 30.
28. Daniel Robinson, *The Poetry of Mary Robinson: Fame and Form* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 217. For Robinson's formal experimentation, see also Stuart Curran, "Mary Robinson and the New Lyric," *Women's Writing* 9, no. 1 (2002): 9–22.
29. All quotations from the *Lyrical Tales* are taken from Mary Robinson, *Selected Poems*, ed. Judith Pascoe (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2000) and are cited by line number.
30. See James Garrett, *Wordsworth and the Writing of the Nation* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 13–42; and Aaron Fogel, "Wordsworth's 'We Are Seven' and Crabbe's *The Parish Register*: Poetry and Anti-Census," *Studies in Romanticism* 48, no. 1 (2009): 23–65, for Wordsworth's engagement with enumeration, population, and the state.
31. I am indebted to Celeste Langan for this observation on the multivalence of the poem's title.
32. Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 7–35. See also Fogel, "Wordsworth's 'We Are Seven.'"
33. Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London: J. Johnson, 1803), 531.

34. Thomas Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 161–62.
35. Sophie Gee, *Making Waste: Leftovers and the Eighteenth-Century Imagination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 37, 121.
36. Joanna Innes, "Prisons for the Poor: English Bridewells, 1555–1800," in *Labour, Law and Crime: An Historical Perspective*, ed. Francis Snyder and Douglas Hay (London: Tavistock, 1987), 42–58; Caleb Smith, "Detention without Subjects: Prisons and the Poetics of Living Death," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 50, no. 3 (2008): 244.
37. Patrick Colquhoun, *A General View of the Depredations Committed on the West-India and Other Property in the Port of London* (London: H. Baldwin, 1799), 5.
38. Colquhoun, 2.
39. Abigail Swingen, *Competing Visions of Empire: Labor, Slavery, and the Origins of the British Atlantic Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015); Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, "Visible Bodies: Power, Subordination and Identity in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 1 (2005): 39–64; Simon Newman, *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 48–49.
40. John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–2, 18.
41. Michael H. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600–1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 137–39. See also Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto, 2002), 3–44; and Norma Myers, *Reconstructing the Black Past: Blacks in Britain, 1780–1830* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 108.
42. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, 149–50. For historical accounts of lascars that challenge eighteenth-century British characterizations of them as helpless objects of pity, see Devleena Ghosh, "Under the Radar of Empire: Unregulated Travel in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 2 (2011): 497–514.
43. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, 146–49; Humberto Garcia, "The Transports of Lascar Specters: Dispossessed Indian Sailors in Women's Romantic Poetry," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 55, nos. 2–3 (2014): 262–65.
44. Miranda Burgess, "Transport: Mobility, Anxiety, and the Romantic Poetics of Feeling," *Studies in Romanticism* 49 (2010): 249; Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 10.
45. Garcia, "Transports," 261.
46. Suvir Kaul, *Poems of Nation, Anthems of Empire* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 152–82; Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42–62.
47. Goodman, *Georgic Modernity*, 22. Of course, as Kurt Heinzelman has argued, loco-descriptive and lyric are not mutually exclusive in the Romantic period. Heinzelman, "Roman Georgic in the Georgian Age: A Theory of Romantic Genre," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33, no. 2 (1991): 182–214.
48. Jordy Rosenberg and Chi-ming Yang, "Introduction: The Dispossessed Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 55, nos. 2–3 (2014): 137–52.
49. Ruth Paley, "Colquhoun, Patrick (1745–1820)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., January 2008; Walter M. Stern, "The

- First London Dock Boom and the Growth of the West India Docks," *Economica* 19, no. 73 (1952): 62.
50. Stern, "First London Dock Boom," 75.
 51. For the place of these acts in the development of summary conviction in the eighteenth century, see Bruce P. Smith, "The Presumption of Guilt and the English Law of Theft, 1750–1850," *Law and History Review* 23, no. 1 (2005): 154–55.
 52. Colquhoun, *General View*, 37, 43.
 53. Norma Landau, "Summary Conviction and the Development of Penal Law," *Law and History Review* 23, no. 1 (2005): 189. Another important colonial force—the militarized and uniformed police of Dublin, first instituted in 1786—also offered a direct model for the later professionalization of police in London. Stanley Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland, 1780–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), xvii.
 54. See, for instance, Frans de Bruyn's argument that the statistical table owed much of its geographic logic to poetry. De Bruyn, "From Georgic Poetry to Statistics and Graphs: Eighteenth-Century Representations and the 'State' of British Society," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 17, no. 1 (2004): 112–13.
 55. Colquhoun, *Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*, 3rd ed. (London: H. Fry for C. Dilly, 1796), vi.
 56. Colquhoun, x–xi.
 57. Colquhoun, xi.
 58. Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 33.
 59. New vagrancy laws were passed throughout the eighteenth century, including in 1792, but while the 1792 act changed some of the provisions of enforcement, its fundamental definition of "vagrant" remained largely unchanged. Audrey Eccles, *Vagrancy in Law and Practice under the Old Poor Law* (London: Routledge, 2016), 16.
 60. Vagrancy Act 1714 (12 Ann. c. 23), in William Hawkins, *Statutes at Large from the Magna Charta to the Seventh Year of King George the Second, Inclusive*, 6 vols. (London: John Baskett, 1735), 4:585.
 61. On the aesthetic of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* as a collection, see James Averill, "The Shape of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798)," *Philological Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (1981): 387–407; and Alan Boehm, "The 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* and the Poetics of Late Eighteenth-Century Book Production," *ELH* 63, no. 2 (1996): 453–87. For Robinson's treatment of dispossession via her overt engagement with the *Lyrical Ballads*, see Ashley J. Cross, "From *Lyrical Ballads* to *Lyrical Tales*: Mary Robinson's Reputation and the Problem of Literary Debt," *Studies in Romanticism* 40, no. 4 (2001): 571–605.
 62. Anne Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Michael Nicholson, "The Itinerant 'I': John Clare's Lyric Defiance," *ELH* 82 (2015): 638–39.
 63. Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 1, 1913–1926, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 243.