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Review of: Richard Nash, *Wild Enlightement: The Borders of Human Identity in the Eighteenth Century*

Peter Hulme

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excellence. Cheek is perhaps more successful and illuminating in her localized discussions of topics such as the ideal brothel (a real tour de force) than in her theoretical efforts aimed at "placing sex" in the new global world of the later eighteenth century, though her arguments are always substantiated and provocative. Conversely, one might have wished that Turner had offered more in the way of a theoretical overview than the almost unrelieved "Deluge" of local libertinage and radicalism he so expertly serves up and analyses. Finally, I wish to call attention to the lamentable omission of bibliographies (apparently current university press policy for Cambridge, Stanford, and others).

Robert A. Erickson
University of California, Santa Barbara

Richard Nash. *Wild Enlightenment: The Borders of Human Identity in the Eighteenth Century*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003. 248pp. US39.50. ISBN 0-8139-2165-1.

While general consent would be given to the idea that the struggle over notions of "nature" and "wilderness" and "savagery" was central to the Enlightenment and to eighteenth-century thought more generally, little attention has been paid to the exemplars of wildness who were examined and assessed by writers and scientists of the period, constituting a complex *alter ego* (the "wild man") to the abstraction of the "citizen of Enlightenment," who comes to embody the ideal inhabitant of the emerging public sphere. Richard Nash unearths the stories of these "wild men" and demonstrates in convincing detail the impact they had on literary texts that are now too often read in ignorance of historical context.

Nash's century runs from 1699 to 1818, but the book focuses intensively on particular years: 1726, 1773, and 1816. Its "wild men" include Tyson's orang-outang, "Lord Peter," the Wild Youth of Hameln, and Victor of Aveyron—the best known of feral children, in part because of François Truffaut's film *L'Enfant sauvage*. The literary texts illuminated by *Wild Enlightenment* include *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Frankenstein*.

The critical thrust of *Wild Enlightenment* is historicist in the sense that it encourages us to understand the terms of early eighteenth-century debates before the consolidation of terminology (and thought) that we associate with Linnaeus. "Human" was still a deeply contested term, and Nash's book brilliantly illuminates some of the debates around the notion, debates that

laid the foundations of modern anthropology, in particular, and of the whole raft of human sciences more generally.

As an aid to thinking beyond the binary divisions that often limit consideration of these issues, Nash tentatively offers a version of Greimas's semiotic square. Here the opposition between Enlightenment citizen (social/rational) and feral children (solitary/passionate) is mediated by orang-outangs and Yahoos (social/passionate) and castaways (solitary/rational) (8). This square recurs periodically, never forcing the author's thought in particular directions but often clarifying just what is at stake.

More than half the book focuses intensively on 1726, the year in which "Lord Peter," the wild youth who had been found running naked through the forests of Hanover, was presented at the court of George I. Several pamphlets alluded to Lord Peter, and Nash offers some detailed readings of the ways in which his case was interpreted and, in particular, of the role it played in the emergence of a political opposition during that summer. Several of the pamphlets have clear Scriblerian associations: Nash argues that *It cannot Rain but it Pours* may well have been written by Swift, an attribution common in the eighteenth century but usually rejected in recent years. He also supports the contested attribution of another little-known work about Peter, *Mere Nature Delineated*, to Defoe. The arguments about attribution are carefully made, but Nash's purposes are in no way limited to claims about authorship. He uses both discussions about Peter to illuminate the great work of that year, *Gulliver's Travels*, and the slightly earlier *Robinson Crusoe*.

The penultimate chapter takes as its central moment the famous meeting between Dr Johnson and Lord Monboddo, whose views were the butt of Johnson's humour for his steadfast belief in the kinship of humans and apes (often made with reference to the figure of Peter). As with his earlier reading of Edward Tyson's *Orang-Outang, sive Homo Sylvestris*, Nash makes sense of Monboddo's arguments and complicates the relationship with Johnson, seeing both men as staging their differences for Boswell's benefit.

Nash's story ends in 1818, by which time the 1811 edition of Blumenbach's *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* had insisted on the unity of the human species, removed Linnaeus's category of *Homo sapiens ferus*, and consigned Peter of Hameln and Lord Monboddo to the obscurity of historical minutiae. Victor of Aveyron therefore entered a very different world from his feral predecessor. As Nash notes, "Where Peter's innocent fellows were at once humbling reminders and the foil for satires on corruption and knavery, Victor ... contains a spark of romantic potential that flickers and gives way to sober disillusionment" (161). The discursive link here runs through the radical scientist William Lawrence (Percy Shelley's doctor at the time *Frankenstein* was written), who offered a visit to the orang-outang at Exeter Change as a way of refuting Monboddo's (and Rousseau's) views on the human-ape relationship—a visit that Mary Shelley paid at least twice. While Nash offers

a close and persuasive reading of *Frankenstein* based on disentangling the few words spoken by William Frankenstein, the monster's first victim, *Wild Enlightenment* actually ends with a welcome retrieval of Peacock's *Melincourt*, which features the wonderfully named Sir Oran Haut-ton. Nash makes a good case for appreciating the topical radicalism of *Melincourt*, which, "positioned in a Romantic era but looking backward to Augustan models of satire and literary involvement in the public sphere, brings both sociability and language use centre stage in seeking to redefine the role of the responsible citizen" (187).

Wild Enlightenment can interestingly be compared with Felicity Nussbaum's *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2003). Although their periods and general approach are close, the two books hardly overlap at all—only Dr Johnson is a significant figure in both. However, both books bring new material into eighteenth-century studies in exciting ways, demonstrating the relevance of the period to twenty-first-century concerns through careful attention to the historical background of the works they discuss. Both books offer the very best of contemporary eighteenth-century scholarship.

Peter Hulme
University of Essex

George Butte. *I Know That You Know That I Know: Narrating Subjects from "Moll Flanders" to "Marnie."* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004. viii+270pp. US44.95. ISBN 0-8142-0945-9.

In a pivotal scene from Austen's *Persuasion*, Captain Wentworth places a fatigued Anne Elliot into a carriage, and his delicacy implies he may yet have feelings for her. Worded thus, a simple enough action and implication—yet as George Butte adroitly demonstrates in *I Know That You Know That I Know: Narrating Subjects from "Moll Flanders" to "Marnie,"* Austen's rendering is, in fact, considerably more intricate, suggestive, and skilful. Using an omniscient narrator to voice the heroine's consciousness, what the text actually represents is a series of reverberating perceptions in which Anne, grasping that Wentworth has noticed her weariness and reacted with surprising tenderness, responds to her-sense-of-his-sense-of-herself with a mix of pleasure and pain. Wentworth speaks his part with "his will and his hands," and for Anne too, the exchange is about bodies as well as intentions (112–13). *I Know That You Know* looks to novels and films from *Persuasion* to *Broadway Danny Rose* for selves defined in such complex relational terms—characters and sometimes