

Nature dissected, or dissection naturalized? The case of John Hunter's museum

Simon Chaplin*

The Royal College of Surgeons of England/King's College London

Abstract

At his death in 1793 the museum of the surgeon and anatomist John Hunter contained over thirteen thousand specimens and objects. Although many were the familiar stuff of natural history, the core of the collection consisted of over seven thousand human or animal body parts or 'anatomical preparations'. They were testament to and the product of Hunter's assiduous work as a dissector of dead bodies; a practice which, though becoming more widespread among medical practitioners, nevertheless possessed discomforting associations of personal and public impropriety. This paper explores the way in which the display of anatomical preparations served to legitimize dissection as a mode of natural historical inquiry, and by extension defused some of the social and moral anxieties surrounding the activities of private anatomy teachers in Georgian London.

Keywords: anatomy, anatomical museums, natural history, dissection, public display

One day last week Mr John Hunter opened his very curious, extensive and valuable museum at his house in Leicester-fields, for the inspection of a considerable number of the literati.... What principally attracted the notice of the cognoscenti was Mr Hunter's novel and curious system of natural philosophy running progressively from the lowest scale of vegetable up to animal nature. Mr Addison has a paper upon this subject in the Spectator, in which, as a moralist, he touches with his usual feeling and perspicuity; but is reserved for Mr Hunter's genius and ardent zeal in his profession to develop, in this instance, the wisdom of Providence in its works. (General Evening Post, 29 May 1788)

Introduction

As reported in the London press, the museum of the surgeon and anatomist John Hunter (1728-1793) presented – or was perceived as presenting – a vision of natural order. To the 'literati', it invited comparison not with any specialist tome in natural history, but rather with the poet and essayist Joseph Addison's celebrated encomium to the 'wonderful and surprizing' knowledge to be gained from 'Contemplations on the World of Life'.¹ By association, the museum promoted Hunter's agency in creating and managing this natural spectacle: although the wisdom manifested within it was perceived as divine in origin, it was Hunter's skilled touch that brought it to light. In this Hunter had achieved what can only be described as a sleight of hand. While his museum contained much that would have found a place in the cabinet of a gentleman-naturalist, the bulk of his collection was formed of specimens that were significantly different in character, namely preserved human and animal body parts. They were the products of a 'profession' that was, by the standards of the time, far from genteel (Lawrence 1998). Hunter was a surgeon, and more particularly a teacher of surgery and anatomy, and his 'ardent zeal' was directed towards the study of living bodies and the dissection of the dead.

It is Hunter's character as a dissector and as an exhibitor of dissected body parts that forms the focus of this essay. Like his brother William Hunter (1718–1783), whose collections formed the basis for the Hunterian Museum of the University of Glasgow, John Hunter's posthumous reputation has been inextricably linked with the museum which he created. Much of the collection survives today in The Royal College of Surgeons of England's Hunterian Museum, a connection which has fostered John Hunter's emblematic position as the 'founder of scientific surgery' (Jacyna 1983). This association, with its tendency toward hagiography, has tended to obscure rather than reveal: the museum has been termed Hunter's 'unwritten book', and its contents have been 'read' as an unproblematic material incarnation of Hunter's medical and scientific theories (Wood-Jones 1951). For medical practitioners, and surgeons in particular, Hunter has provided a rich source of inspiration, a process which has usually involved the uncritical application of modern medical concepts or disciplinary identities (e.g. Allen 1986).

In contrast, professional historians of medicine and natural history have long eschewed the teleological continuity of Whiggish 'insider' history. Particularly influential – and directly pertinent to the case of John Hunter – has been Foucault's claim for the emergence of 'modern' clinical medicine, and of the anatomico-pathological model of medical authority upon which it was predicated, as a specific product of French medical practice in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Foucault 1973: see also Ackerknecht 1967). For Foucault, this in turn formed part of a wider discursive discontinuity manifested in the natural sciences, namely the shift away from a 'Classical episteme' based upon regimented relationships of static, external forms to one which privileged dynamic, internal processes – a science of life (Foucault 1970). Although featured only peripherally in Foucault's work, Hunter has nevertheless been identified as a pivotal figure in such transformations, even by those who have sought to challenge the chronology or geography of Foucault's epistemic shifts (e.g. Cross 1981, Keel 1998). Yet here too the role of Hunter's museum as a physical, as well as an ideological, space for negotiating change has been largely overlooked – a criticism which echoes that made by, for example, historians of natural history, who have sought to emphasize the localized and contingent nature of disciplinary identities (Jardine and Spary 1996: 7).

What follows is therefore an attempt at this kind of 'local' historiography. My research has tended to start from the collection, and has looked not only at the strategies by which Hunter sought to project himself or his ideas in material or visual form, but also at the ways in which spectators developed their own meanings from it. My approach is therefore essentially a constructivist one (Golinski 2005): rather than taking the epistemological status of Hunter's collection for granted, my concern is with the ways in which its value as a source of natural knowledge was negotiated – giving emphasis to the 'how', as well as the 'what'. It acknowledges recent work in museum studies, and in cultural history more generally, which privileges an active role for the cultural consumer (Miller 1995, Price 2004). In the case of John Hunter's museum, an emphasis on the agency of the viewer encourages a deeper consideration of the kinds of people who had access to the collection, and the degree to which their prior experiences and expectations may have shaped their responses to it. More particularly, it prompts the question of how, and by whom, John Hunter's work as a dissector came to be seen as 'natural'.

In answering this question, my aim is threefold. First, I seek to expose the ways in which Hunter's museum functioned as a mechanism for promoting a specific concept of human and animal life – the 'animal oeconomy' – developed through anatomical study. As I will show, Hunter's work as an anatomist and a naturalist involved an extension of established fields of inquiry – the study of human bodies in health or disease, and the 'natural histories' of living things – to embrace the detailed examination of internal structure. By aligning the medical practice of human dissection with the dissection of animal bodies John Hunter actively reshaped the boundaries of what might be considered the 'natural' interests of the surgeon-anatomist. Hunter's work can therefore be seen as a form of cultural or political effort, highlighting the importance of perceptions of Hunter's work among a wider class of social actors.

Second, while this work was made manifest through the established disseminative structures of medical and scientific societies, in print and through lectures and conversation, it was also presented in material and visual form as anatomical preparations. Although sharing some physical and functional qualities with a wider class of natural historical specimens, preparations formed a distinctive category of collectable object, closely aligned in their

production and use with the practice of dissection and with the teaching of anatomy. The manufacture, accumulation and exhibition of preparations on a scale unjustified simply by their functional use as didactic tools or research objects suggests that they also played an important role a form of 'cultural capital', as objects which not only embodied values of a community of practitioners, but served to project these values to a wider audience.

Third, through a more detailed examination of the strategies adopted by Hunter for showing his collection, and by considering the nature of his audience as well as the material they viewed, I seek to reveal the role of the museum as a space in which the art of dissection was itself 'naturalised' through the display of preparations. One function of the museum was to confer upon dissection a degree of epistemological legitimacy (as a valid way of knowing about living things) in the eyes of 'expert' spectators drawn from Hunter's medical and scientific peers. As important, however, was the role of the museum as a space for displaying dissected bodies to a non-medical audience, which I will characterise as coterminous with the literati who attended the salons hosted by John Hunter's wife, the poet Anne Home Hunter (1742-1828). The ability of these 'lay' spectators to perceive Hunter's preparations as a form of 'natural' spectacle, and to make sense of them in ways that were not necessarily dependent on prior medical or scientific expertise, made the museum an important space for establishing the social legitimacy of dissection within the 'public sphere' of Georgian civic society.

John Hunter as anatomist

John Hunter's life and career have been well documented (Peachey 1924, Moore 2005). Born in East Kilbride in Scotland, Hunter moved to London in 1748. He trained as a surgeon and, after a spell in the army, forged a successful career as both practitioner and teacher of surgery in London. He was elected surgeon to St George's Hospital in 1768, and from the early 1770s he gave informal lectures in surgery and anatomy to his hospital pupils. In 1775 advertised his lectures more widely, continuing to give them each year until his death. He also maintained an extensive private practice, and held several influential appointments including that of Surgeon-Extraordinary to King George III (1776-1793) and Surgeon-General and Inspector of Hospitals to the army (1790-1793).

Like the vast majority of British surgeons in this period Hunter had no academic qualification. Unlike most of his contemporaries, John Hunter did not pursue a traditional apprenticeship in his craft either; instead, he had been 'bred-up' to anatomy in the dissecting-room run by his brother William, who from 1746 had carved out a career for himself as one of the most successful private teachers of anatomy in London. As Susan Lawrence (1996) has shown, John Hunter's career coincided with a significant period of change in the organisation of medical education and practice in London, and of a lasting shift in the relative status of physicians and surgeons. The Hunters were only two of some sixty or so practitioners, mostly surgeons, who advertised private courses of lectures in anatomy, surgery or midwifery in London in the second half of the century (Lawrence 1996: Appendix III). Although some taught in hospitals, the majority worked from private premises for personal profit (Lawrence 1988). Most emphasized the importance of close anatomical study gained from hands-on experience in the dissecting-room (Lawrence 1995). Alongside their lectures, students also took the opportunity to gain clinical experience by 'walking the wards' at London's charitable hospitals, and it was these two forms of practical teaching that became the distinctive features of metropolitan medical education during the late eighteenth century (Keel 1988).

One reason why surgeons were well-represented among London's anatomy teachers was the socially precarious nature of the business of dissection. Although an established part of medical teaching, research and practice by the end of the seventeenth century (Cunningham 1975, 2003, Harley 1994), dissection retained a stigma that owed less to any formal religious objection than to the noisome and avowedly manual nature of the act itself (Cohen 1997). On a purely practical level it was, as Anita Guerrini has noted, 'quintessentially impolite' (Guerrini 2004). In the eyes of its critics, dissection was presented as antithetical to the refined sensibility demanded of the physician (Wolfe 1961). Nor was the threat to personal character the only deterrent to genteel physicians. To compete effectively in what was essentially a flourishing free-market, anatomy teachers had to be willing to work on the margins of the law to secure

sufficient 'fresh subjects' for their courses. 'So sure as the Anatomical Lectures begin, so certainly do the Resurrection Men go to work', commented *The Times* on 11 October 1793. Although not technically illegal, the trade in dead bodies upon which the private anatomists depended was the subject of deep-seated popular resentment, particularly among the urban poor (Linebaugh 1976, Richardson 2001).

Given these hazards, it can be argued that the pursuit of private anatomy teaching appealed more to those who had less to lose and more to gain. For surgeons, already tarred as bloody operators and regarded as socially and professionally subordinate to physicians, the risks associated with dissection were balanced by the potential rewards. John Hunter certainly benefited from the patronage of doctors who, while recognising the value of dissection, were nevertheless reluctant to perform it themselves. Among them was the physician John Pringle (1707-1782), who frequently called on John Hunter to conduct post-mortems on his behalf (Moore 2005: 167-8). Pringle's willingness to endorse (if not practise) post-mortems, and the degree to which this was accepted by his patients, suggest that the moral and social anxieties that attended dissection were tempered by belief in its utility. Although several eighteenth-century surgeons were called before the courts to answer charges of bodysnatching their punishments were comparatively mild. Stating his defence against charges of receiving a stolen body in 1785, the surgeon Thomas Young (d.1812) claimed that he had done all within his power to ensure that 'every possible attention was paid to decorum and decency that the eye and ear of the public, or even of any individual, might not be offended' (*The Times* 7 May 1785, 3). Newspaper reports tempered their outrage with sympathy to the surgeons' situation, noting that 'to punish men for an action that injures no living person, but tends to the safety and health of the public, can scarcely be called justice' (*The Times* 22 Feb 1785: 3). The leniency accorded to anatomists such as Young is evidence of the successful strategies adopted by proponents of dissection to promulgate the value of their work. The recasting of dissection as a form of personal improvement (Payne 2007), and the recognition of anatomical expertise in legal contexts (Forbes 1980) or cognate fields such as the teaching of artists (Darlington 1986) can be seen as elements of this process. So too were the application of dissection to natural-historical inquiry, and the role of museums as formal spaces for the display of the products of anatomical investigation. It is these that I focus on here, to consider John Hunter's work as a naturalist and exhibitor.

John Hunter as naturalist

To his contemporaries, Hunter's wider interest in the natural world marked him out from his fellow anatomical and surgical lecturers (Ottley 1835:135). As in medicine, the application of dissection to the study of natural history (in the form of comparative anatomy) was not novel, but neither was it unproblematic. While animal dissections did not pose the same social tensions that attended human dissection, it was still a messy manual practice that demanded a specific repertoire of technical skills. While natural historians were not a uniform social or professional grouping, many of those who pursued an interest in natural history were drawn from a cultured and educated elite, among which physicians featured prominently (Allen 1976: 26-51; Cook 1986). Surgeons, by and large, did not feature prominently, at least in the middle decades of the century, but as in medicine an interest in seeing the results of dissection while not actually performing it provided opportunities for those who possessed anatomical expertise to offer their skills. It was Hunter's proficiency in dissection, as much as his interest in natural history per se, that brought him to the attention of gentleman-naturalists such as the merchants John Ellis (1705-1776) and John Walsh (1726-1795); the lawyer and antiquary Daines Barrington (1727-1800);² as well as Joseph Banks (1743-1820) and Daniel Solander (1733-1782). Many – if not all – of these contacts were developed through the Royal Society, in which a number of Hunter's medical patrons (Pringle included) had prominent positions, and which played an important role in the development of Hunter's career (Moore 2005: 203-4). As well as performing dissections of animals for others, Hunter pursued copious investigations on his own behalf, many of which were published in the Society's *Philosophical Transactions* (Hunter 1786). Hunter was also a member of the Society for Promoting Natural History, founded in 1782, and issued his own *Directions for preserving animals for the benefit of travellers* – whom, he hoped, would be able

to furnish him with further material for his researches (Hunter 1785). As well as seizing every opportunity to dissect dead animals Hunter made careful records of those he observed alive: he was close to most of the menagerie-keepers, exhibitors and dealers in birds and animals in London (Dobson 1962) and kept his own private menagerie at his country house at Earl's Court (Merriman 1881, Schupbach 1986). Hunter also used the gardens at Earl's Court as a research resource: one visitor noted that Hunter was 'very curious in plants' (Baird 1793: 38).

Despite the breadth of Hunter's interests his status as a naturalist was open to doubt. Writing after Hunter's death even his great patron Joseph Banks was privately equivocal about the importance of Hunter's contribution to the study of natural history, and asserted that in this regard at least Hunter's museum 'was not of consequence' (Ottley 1835: 141). His comment, made in a letter to Lord Auckland in 1796, may have been a matter of self-interest; at the time the government was looking for a suitable institution to take ownership for Hunter's museum. Banks' ambivalence also reflected a general worry about the relationship between comparative anatomy and natural history. This was partly a matter of 'professional' politics: in natural history, as in medicine, reliance on dissection effectively limited the range of authoritative practitioners able to engage in such activity to those possessed of anatomical expertise (Farber 1975, Stermerding 1993, Loveland 2006). It was also a question of focus: a concentration on practical dissection and detailed morphological study was perceived as limiting, ignoring the objects of those for whom the imposition of systems of order on an increasingly complex and varied natural world was the principal objective of natural history (Ritvo 1997: 15-19; Huxley 2003).

Yet there was also a more profound philosophical concern about the kind of 'natural history' that could be developed through anatomical study. Writing on the relationship between the two disciplines Hunter expressed dissatisfaction with 'the describers of form [who] conjectured what the structure ought to be by consulting the works of the anatomist', and also with 'the anatomist [who] conjectured what the living history is or ought to be from the Natural History of the others'. As a consequence, he claimed, 'it is no wonder...that the whole is imperfect' (Hunter 1861: Vol. 1, 24-25). By seeking to integrate the study of external features and the 'mode of life' with internal structure Hunter not only highlighted the contingency of classificatory systems based solely on form, but shifted the focus of inquiry from the listing and description of the differences between living things to the nature and organisation of life itself, in the form of the 'animal oeconomy' (Cross 1981). This approach mirrored Hunter's view of medicine, in which he sought to correlate the 'natural history' of the patient – gained through clinical observation – with normal and morbid anatomical structures elucidated through dissection. In his work both as a surgeon and a naturalist, Hunter's approach has been seen as prefiguring early nineteenth-century interest in the structure and function of bodies, whether living or dead, human or animal, as the 'natural' object of medical and scientific study (Keel 1988, Tröhler 1989, Desmond 1989, Sloan 1992).

Anatomical preparations and specimens of natural history

Just as dissection underpinned Hunter's work as a naturalist and an anatomist, so too did the art of preserving the evidence of these researches as 'preparations' – pieces of human, animal or plant tissue preserved in spirit ('wet preparations') or in desiccated form ('dry preparations'). The use of 'preparation' to denote these preserved body parts appears to have gained currency in the late seventeenth century. Its adoption signalled the variety of processes used in their manufacture – not only dissection, but also injection, fixation, maceration and mounting (Pole 1790). It also carried with it connotations of utility, as objects made for the purpose of anatomical research or teaching. As such, 'preparations' were distinct from those objects classed as either 'humane rarities' or 'anatomical curiosities' in early-modern cabinets (Appleby 1996), as well as from the un-dissected preserved animal bodies, plants and fossils known more generally as 'specimens' of natural history (Prince (ed.) 2003). This is not to suggest that 'specimens' were in any sense less obviously the products of manufacture, nor that they lacked the functional properties ascribed to preparations; rather, it reflects the difference in the kinds of preparatory techniques employed, and by association the sorts of uses to which they were put.

There were some areas of overlap between the methods used to make 'preparations' and 'specimens'. These included the use of spirit (in the form of alcohol or oil of turpentine) as

a medium for preserving the whole bodies of small animals and the parts of larger ones, or the methods used to clean and articulate skeletons. In other respects there were important differences, even when the objects to be preserved or displayed were – as in the case of animal bodies – ostensibly the same. These are revealed by a comparison of texts such as the physician-cum-naturalist John Coakley Lettsom's *The naturalist's, and traveller's companion*, containing instructions for collecting & preserving objects of natural history (1774) and John Hunter's *Directions for preserving animals, or the parts of animals* (c.1785). For the former, the principal object was to preserve (and where necessary reconstruct) the outward appearance of animals. Like his contemporaries Johann Reinhold Forster (1771) and Edward Donovan (1794), Lettsom dealt almost exclusively with the preservation and stuffing or mounting of the skin, for which the removal (and discarding) of all soft tissue was regarded as an essential preliminary step. In contrast, Hunter's directions were premised on the idea that the proper object of natural history was the correlation of modes of life with inner structure. Hunter dealt only briefly with the preservation of skins, and instead dwelt at length on the methods of conserving internal organs and soft tissues. His instructions assumed a range of technical skills available only to those who were well-versed in practical anatomy – in dissection, and the use of a trochar and syringe to inject preserving spirits, for example (Hunter [1785]: 26). They also demanded a tacit acceptance of the principle that the true nature of living things could only be revealed through anatomical study: large animals were, for example, to 'be divided into such parts as characterise them' before preservation (Hunter [1785]: 6).

The distinction between specimens and preparations was also reflected in their patterns of use and ownership. Like specimens, preparations served a functional purpose as objects for study and research. They were particularly useful for recording morbid features and abnormalities, as well as the remains of exotic animals. They were used to record the results of specific observations or experiments, and were often cited by authors as evidence of priority in anatomical discovery (e.g. Eales 1974). Most notably, preparations played a crucial role for teaching in anatomy, surgery and midwifery, where they were used alongside, rather than instead of, cadavers as a means of demonstrating normal or morbid anatomical structures. Their utility was partly a function of their physical properties. While not impervious to decay preparations were more stable than fresh tissue and lacked the noisome qualities of freshly-dissected cadavers. Moreover they could be handled and transported in ways that cadavers or unfixed tissues could not. Yet the process of fixing and preserving tissues also made their status as 'natural' objects problematic. William Hunter was among many who asserted the importance of preparations, while also noting that as a result of their manufacture 'they lose almost all of the natural appearance' (Hunter 1784: 90). Learning to 'read' preparations was one of the specific practical skills which anatomy teachers sought to inculcate in their students, by encouraging their use as one element of a tripartite autoptic system that also involved observation of the dead cadaver and the live patient (Hunter 1784: 89-92; Lawrence 1993: 165-70). Students were also encouraged to make their own preparations as a way of becoming familiar with their properties as material objects, and to amass their own collections of preparations for private study (Hunter 1784: 110).

One consequence of this process of habituation was to foster a sense of community centred upon the manufacture, ownership and viewing of preparations. As manufactured objects preparations could circulate as legitimate commodities: they were bought and sold in private sales or at public auction (e.g. Paterson 1778), and were treated as legal property in wills and ownership disputes (e.g. Stevenson 1953). They could also be invested with immaterial but significant affective values, for example as gifts or bequests.³ The nature of preparations as economic objects deserves greater study than this essay affords, but several points are worthy of note. First, evidence of the ownership of preparations reveals a significant asymmetry. Unlike either specimens or the earlier category of 'anatomical rarities', which were owned by medical and non-medical collectors alike, ownership of anatomical preparations was very closely correlated with those who were active proponents of dissection. By and large, preparations did not feature in more general antiquarian or natural history collections in the latter part of the eighteenth century. They were signally absent from, for example, the collections of the Duchess of Portland and Sir Ashton Lever, both of which otherwise embraced all kinds of natural objects (Lightfoot 1786, King 1996). In contrast, many of those anatomists who did make and own

preparations also collected more widely in the field of natural history.⁴

Second, the scale of anatomists' collections was often disproportionate to the actual requirements of lecturing – the Hunters' collections included thousands of preparations, but notes of their lectures suggest only a few hundred were actually used in their courses. While their collecting can be seen as symptomatic of what David Haycock and George Rousseau have described as a culture of 'collectorial consumption and personal excess' in Georgian Britain (Haycock & Rousseau 2000), the question remains as to why anatomists chose to collect preparations – as opposed to other potentially less problematic kinds of natural historical or art objects – on this scale.

Third, an appreciation of the value of preparations beyond their immediate use in teaching is demonstrated by the trouble taken in their arrangement and display. Both William and John Hunter invested significant sums – upwards of £6,000 – in the construction of purpose-built structures for housing their collections. Again, they were not alone: other surgeons known to have invested heavily in the construction of private museums include John Heaviside and Joshua Brookes (Peachey 1931, Dobson 1952). Taken together, these three features suggest that preparations functioned as forms of cultural capital; that is, as objects which were valued not only for their commercial worth, but for their perceived ability to hold and project forms of knowledge or skill (Bourdieu 1986). While ownership of preparations was restricted to those practitioners who possessed – or wished to lay claim to – anatomical expertise, preparations nevertheless served as agents through which the identity of the dissector could be more widely presented.

John Hunter's museum

A useful analogy to the use of anatomical preparations as a means for projecting a public identity for the private anatomist can be drawn with other nascent 'professional' roles in which private pedagogic or research collections were promoted as public resources (e.g. Withers 1993). This echoes a wider interest on the part of historians of eighteenth-century natural philosophy in issues of audience and spectatorship (Schaffer 1983), and in the role of collections as mechanisms for defining personal and institutional identity (e.g. Hamm 2001, Alberti 2002). In considering the specific case of John Hunter it is interesting to note the point at which his collection was more formally designated as a 'museum' – a term which, by the latter half of the eighteenth century, had begun to assume specific connotations of public accessibility and utility (Hunter 1985: 226–7). Although John Hunter's collection is known to

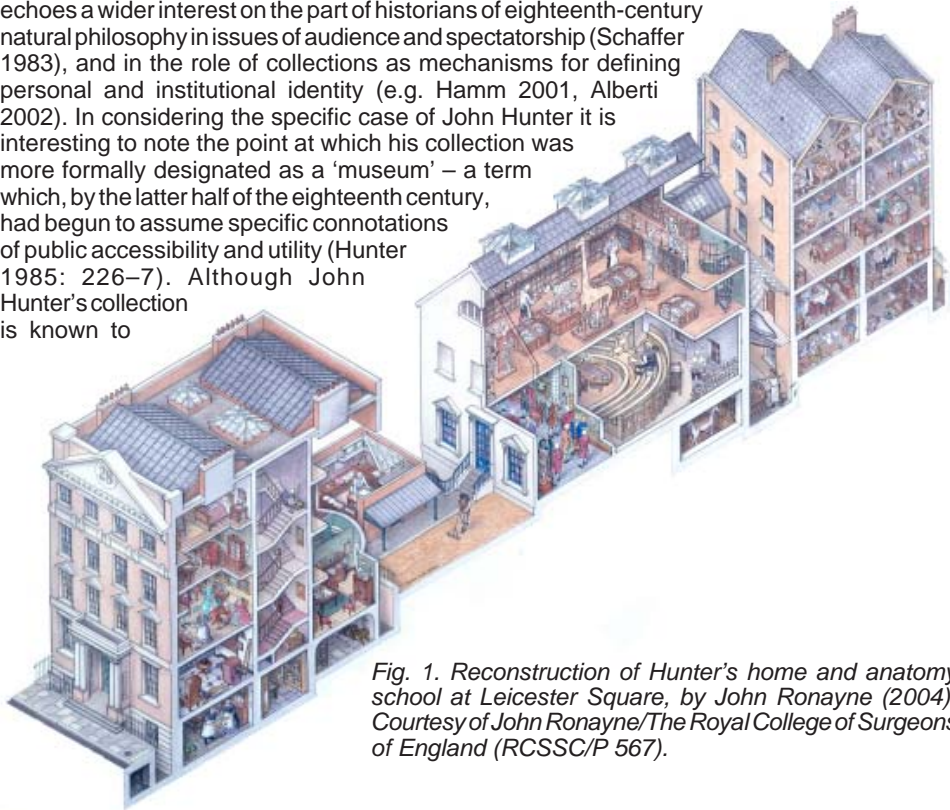


Fig. 1. Reconstruction of Hunter's home and anatomy school at Leicester Square, by John Ronayne (2004). Courtesy of John Ronayne/The Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCSSC/P 567).

have been housed in separate rooms or out-buildings behind his house in Jermyn Street in the early 1770s (Cartwright 1792: 125–6), it was only after Hunter's move to Leicester Square in 1783 that his collection was more widely referred to as a museum. The change accompanied a significant alteration to the organisation of Hunter's personal and professional lives, for it was only after the move that Hunter taught and advertised classes in dissection at his principal residence. The same is true of William Hunter, who lived and taught at separate premises prior to his move to Great Windmill Street and the construction of his own museum in 1768 (Peachey 1924).

The implication that the accommodation of dissection within John Hunter's home was in some way dependent upon the construction of his museums is further reinforced by the architectural organization of the site. The general plan of John Hunter's Leicester Square property is shown in fig. 1.⁵ John Hunter's lease encompassed two existing houses: 28 Leicester Square, which formed the main residence for John Hunter and his family; and 13 Castle Street, which housed Hunter's students and the dissecting-rooms. Between them Hunter had a third building erected, containing his museum as well as a lecture theatre and 'conversazione room' (Chaplin 2005). The layout mirrors adopted by William Hunter for his home-cum-anatomy school in Great Windmill Street in 1767, which in turn was based upon a proposal drawn up in 1763 for William Hunter's putative 'national academy' for anatomical teaching (Hunter 1784: 122; Markus 1993: 192–6; McCormack 2007). Each shows a tripartite division, with domestic accommodation at one end of the site, the spaces for anatomy teaching and dissection at the other, and the museum interposed between them. Thomas Markus has suggested that the central role assigned to the museum within these buildings is evidence of the 'spatial dependence' of private anatomists on their collections (Markus 1985: 160–65). As a physical space the museum served a mediating role, providing a degree of separation between the social and professional lives of the anatomist. At the same time, it provided a means of connecting these spheres of activity. Unlike the dissecting-rooms, which were restricted to a strictly regulated audience of paying pupils, the museum was open not only to their pupils and to other medical or scientific guests, but also to a wider audience. John Hunter is known to have opened his museum to a private audience of his students and medical peers throughout the year, but also on specific days in May to a more heterogeneous public audience of 'Ladies and Gentlemen' (Austin 1991: 37).

Tracing the identities – and experiences – of these public visitors to John Hunter's museum is a difficult task. If Hunter kept visitors' books for his museum they have not survived. However it is likely that they were drawn from the same social circle as those who attended the literary salons hosted by his wife Anne (1742–1821) in the drawing room on the first floor of the Leicester Square house. According to the bibliophile William Beloe (1758–1817), Anne Hunter's 'conversation parties' were attended by 'elegant individuals of both sexes, whose acquaintance was generally cultivated for their abilities, their knowledge or their taste' (Beloe 1818: vol. 1, 416). Guests included a mixture of prominent political and literary figures, among them William Eden, James Boswell, Horace Walpole, Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Carter (Oppenheimer 1946). In the absence of any more detailed record, the demarcation of Hunter's museum visitors by reference to the known audiences for the salon and the dissection room/lecture theatre represents one strategy for reconstructing their identities. My characterisation of Hunter's public guests as 'lay', rather than expert; and as 'literary', as opposed to medical or scientific encourages consideration of a more varied range of visitor responses. These 'lay' visitors were unlikely to possess any detailed theoretical knowledge of Hunter's lectures or publications, nor did they possess the visual, tactile and cognitive skills acquired by students through their attendance in the dissecting room and hospital wards. Yet this is not to suggest that their impressions of the museum were either facile or inconsequential. Rather, the 'lay' audience addressed by Hunter was possessed of a degree of cultural awareness, political power and social standing far more potent than that of his medical peers. By opening his museum, Hunter was not seeking the approval or sanction of the population at large, but was instead appealing to the participants of the 'public sphere', whose discourse policed the boundaries of civil society (Habermas 1989). Their views are likely to have been informed by the general appearance of the space; and by those parts of the collection that possessed immediate visual appeal or which had other resonances with a cultured and well-read spectator,

and it is in these contexts that the qualities of the museum as a form of natural spectacle should be judged.

The museum as natural spectacle

One immediate visual response to Hunter's collection was undoubtedly the product of its sheer scale. No complete list of the collection was produced in Hunter's lifetime, but the subsequent catalogues of the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons provide a reasonable measure of its scope, at least by the end of Hunter's life (Table 1).

| Class | No. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Human and animal skeletons | 963 |
| Preparations of normal anatomy (wet and dry) | 4362 |
| Preparations of morbid anatomy (wet and dry) | 1932 |
| Calculi | 536 |
| Fossils | 1215 |
| Natural history (whole animals, invertebrates and corals) | 1343 |

Table 1: Summary of John Hunter's collection (Synopsis 1850).

Numerically, the anatomical preparations far outnumbered Hunter's otherwise substantial collections of natural history specimens, and their display – arranged on shelves around the walls of the museum, as well as in the lecture theatre on the ground floor – gave them a visual dominance over the physical space of the museum building. The preparations were divided into two broad categories, illustrating morbid and normal anatomy respectively. Both classes included human, animal and a small number of vegetable remains: the exact balance (in the absence of any complete original catalogues) hard to determine, but based on those that still survive in the Hunterian Museum roughly 80% of the morbid preparations were human, while in the normal anatomy series the ratio was reversed.

The morbid preparations – which were displayed in the theatre on the ground floor – were arranged in three subdivisions, illustrating the general principles of morbid actions; specific diseases and the appearance of diseases in different organs (Proger 1966). No distinction or hierarchy existed between human, animal or vegetable remains in these series, with preparations ordered solely according to the type of process or kind of part being shown. Those illustrating normal anatomy – which were arranged in the museum proper – were split into two main classes, consisting of parts 'illustrative of the functions which minister to the necessity of the individual' and those which 'provide for the continuance of the species' (Dobson 1970). Within these broader classes preparations were grouped according to specific functions – organs of motion, digestion and sense, for example – and within each of these sub-series were further sorted in ascending order according to the complexity of the structures themselves. Although conforming in broad terms with the idea of the 'chain of being' (Lovejoy 1964), these hierarchical series were, in their detail, less conventional, with the order in which species were placed varying according to the part in question (Rolfe 1985: 317–8).

Hunter's subtle subversion of the scala naturae did not deter his lay visitors from perceiving the collection as a paean to progressive natural order. Those of a literary bent drew an analogy with the moral writings of Addison or his contemporary Alexander Pope (1688–1744) on the relationship between divine, natural and social order. That the museum might be read as a direct representation of an established natural hierarchy was therefore less a consequence of the actual arrangement, but rather a function of its appearance. In both the normal and morbid series, preparations were mounted in common formats, either as wet or dry preparations, and mostly mounted into glass jars or under glass domes. No image of the interior of the museum survives, but an early nineteenth-century watercolour of the museum of another surgeon, John



Fig. 2. *Interior of John Heaviside's Anatomical Museum, by John Howship, 1814. Courtesy of The Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCSSC/P 321).*

Heaviside, shows a similar arrangement of banked shelves of preparations (fig. 2). The effect in Hunter's museum is likely to have been similar, with the massed ranks of jars providing a kind of visual continuity that linked dissected human, animal and vegetable remains together into a unified whole. The regularity that visitors saw – and read as a reflection of a preconceived notion of 'natural' order – was therefore highly artificial, and depended on the anatomist's art as dissector and preparator to transform messy and complicated bodies into abstracted and neatly presented objects. As an aesthetic strategy it mirrored contemporary 'naturalistic' representational practice in medical or scientific illustration, in which objects were generally presented without contextual imagery or symbolic adornment; a process which, it has been suggested, emphasized the 'disciplined objectivity' of the observer (Daston and Galison 1992). In the case of preparations, the act of dissection was itself a means of stripping away the kinds of visual landmarks that might have aided the non-expert spectator, drawing attention to their nature as objects of specialist knowledge even among those who did not possess such expertise (Thomas 1994). In Hunter's museum, the uniformity of the preparations as made objects invited admiration for the skilled labour of the anatomist while discouraging their reading as heterogeneous 'curiosities' – a strategy that contrasted with those adopted contemporaneously by self-proclaimed 'virtuosi' such as the antiquary Richard Greene (Greene 1773) or the gentleman-naturalist Ashton Lever (Haynes 2001).

This is not to say that the preparations in the museum weren't capable of engendering more varied meanings among the 'literati'. For at least some of these guests, a narrative was provided by Hunter himself, who delivered as 'a kind of peripatetic lecture' lasting 'two to three hours' (General Evening Post, 22 May 1788). Yet guests were not dependent on Hunter's exhaustive (and exhausting) commentary to find stories in his Hunter's preparations. In some cases these may have been based on visitors' own personal experience or knowledge, or from their knowledge of the experiences of others. Horace Walpole, writing after a particularly virulent attack of gout, boasted that he 'had produced from my finger a chalkstone, that I believe is worthy of a place in Mr Hunter's collection of human miseries' (Walpole 1937: Vol.15, 241). His language suggests the manner in which he perceived objects as possessing personal histories – a quality which heavily influenced Walpole's own collecting at Strawberry Hill (Lewis 1978). While the morbid preparations may have been a particularly rich source of sympathetic

sensation, the same qualities were also true of the animal remains. For example, among the latter was the mounted skin and skeleton of a giraffe, brought back to Britain by the explorer William Paterson and presented to Hunter by Paterson's patron (and Hunter's patient), the Countess of Strathmore (Paterson 1790:127). Its presence excited much interest, not least because, according to one reporter, 'it was hitherto much doubted by naturalists whether such an animal did really exist or not' (Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser 6 June 1788). Yet the giraffe was not simply a zoological wonder, nor a reminder of Paterson's travels (details of which were not published until 1790). Rather, its particular interest derived from the very public scandal surrounding the Countess, whose 'domestic miseries' – including abduction, accusations of adultery and a divorce case in which Hunter was called as a witness – were also alluded to in the newspaper report (Moore 2007).

The popular literary vogue for 'novels of circulation', which presented tales told through the perspective of inanimate objects or animals, indicates one manner in which literary visitors might have invested the objects in Hunter's museum with their own narratives (Blackwell 2007). Not all such stories were acts of imagination, for in some case patients' histories were appended to jars, while in others the names of patients or (for the animal remains) collectors were painted on to their lids. Real or imagined identities invited comparison with published case-histories and travellers' accounts, both of which enjoyed wide circulation among a lay readership in the late eighteenth century (Porter 1985, Leask 2002). As Thomas Laqueur and Mary Pratt have shown, one function of these circulated narratives was not only to valorize the role of the author as heroic practitioner or explorer, but to provide a kind of moral imperative for their actions (Laqueur 1989, Pratt 1992). In the museum, the 'reading' of such accounts through preparations served to connect Hunter's work as an anatomist with a wider range of virtuous discourses. While they may have been far removed from Hunter's own reading of the collection, they nevertheless suggest at least some of the ways in which his lay spectators made sense of the collection in ways that were 'natural' to them.

Conclusion

In an essay on the idea of the museum as an imagined space in the discursive space of the eighteenth-century Gothic novel, Emily Cohen suggests that the genre is defined by 'a manifestation of a desire to create personal histories, in which all of life is experienced as a kind of museum' (Cohen 1997: 883). My reading of Hunter's museum suggests that the converse may also have been true. Within it, dead and dissected bodies were invested with kinds of virtuous vitality, not only as representations of living bodies which formed the objects of medical or scientific study, but also as objects through which a more varied register of lively stories were developed. On a grand level these included the established narrative of the chain of being, with its implication of hierarchical order manifested and replicated in divine, natural and social form. On a more intimate scale, they included literary tropes of heroic endeavour, of vicarious experience and of humane sensibility or sympathy to the travails of others. Such narratives were not constructed by Hunter as proprietor or author. Nevertheless they served to render his collection familiar to spectators, making a collection that might otherwise have been seen a ghoulish repository of disembodied remains into a temple of nature, and thus 'naturalizing' the unnatural art of dissection.

Received 12 May 2008
Finally accepted 30 July 2008

Notes

- ¹ Addison's essay 'On the Scale of Being' was originally published in *The Spectator* in October 1712, and was widely reprinted throughout the eighteenth century.
- ² Hunter was elected FRS in 1767 with the support of Solander and Ellis, for whom Hunter had provided notes on the anatomy of the 'mud-iguana' (*Siren lacertina*) in the previous year (Hunter 1766).

- ³ See for example the will of the surgeon and anatomy teacher Joseph Else (1731-1780), preserved in The National Archives, Kew (*PCC PROB 11/1062*).
- ⁴ William and John Hunter's collections are the best known examples, but the collections of John Sheldon, Joshua Brookes and John Heaviside all included substantial numbers of specimens of natural history (Hutchins 1787, Heaviside 1818, Brookes 1828).
- ⁵ This drawing was prepared for the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in 2004 (RCSSC/P 567). Although speculative in some details, it is based on substantial evidence for the architecture of the site, including a sketch plan of the house prepared by William Clift in 1832, a surveyor's drawing made for the Royal College of Surgeons in 1801, and a fire insurance plans late 19th century (RCS Library MS0253 and ADD.MS603; Westminster Archive Goad Series, Sheet 3, 1889).

References

- Abernethy, J. (1819) *Surgical Works of John Abernethy*, London: Longman.
- Ackerknecht, E. H. (1967) *Medicine at the Paris hospital, 1794-1848*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Alberti, S.J.M.M. (2002) 'Placing Nature: Natural History Collections and Their Owners in Nineteenth-Century Provincial England', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 35, 291-311.
- Allen, E. (1986) 'John Hunter - the father of theoretical surgery', *Theoretical Surgery*, 1, 162-167.
- Appleby, J. (1996) 'Human Curiosities and the Royal Society, 1699-1751', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 50 (1), 13-27.
- Austin, F. (ed.) (1991) *The Clift Family Correspondence, 1792-1846*, Sheffield: Centre for English Cultural Tradition & Language.
- Baird, T. (1793) *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Middlesex*, London: J. Nichols.
- Beloe, W. (1818) *The Sexagenarian; or, the Recollections of a Literary Life*, London: R. and R. Gilbert.
- Blackwell, M. (ed.) (2007) *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, Lewsiburg: Bucknell University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) 'The Forms of Capital', in J. Richardson (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York: Greenwood Press, 241-58.
- Brookes, J. (1830) *Museum Brookesianum... Embracing an Almost Endless Assemblage of Every Species of Anatomical, Pathological, Obstetrical, and Zootomical Preparations, as well as Subjects in Natural History*, London: printed by Richard Taylor.
- Brown, T. (1982) 'The Changing Self-Concept of the Eighteenth-Century Physician', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 7, 31-40.
- Cartwright, G. (1792) *A Journal of Transactions and Events, During a Residence of Nearly Sixteen years on the Coast of Labrador*, Newark: Allin and Ridge.
- Chaplin, S. (2005) 'John Hunter and the Anatomy of a Museum', *History Today*, 55, 19-25.

- Cohen, E. (1997) 'Enlightenment and the Dirty Philosopher', *Configurations*, 5, 369-424.
- Cook, H. (1996) 'Physicians and Natural history', in N. Jardine, J. Secord and E. Spary (eds) *Cultures of Natural History*, Cambridge: CUP, 91-105.
- Cross, S. J. (1981) 'John Hunter, the Animal Oeconomy, and Late Eighteenth-Century Physiological Discourse', *Studies in History of Biology*, 5, 1-110
- Cunningham, A. (1975) 'The kinds of Anatomy', *Medical History*, 19, 1-19.
- Cunningham, A. (2003) 'The Pen and the Sword: Recovering the Disciplinary Identity of Physiology and Anatomy before 1800', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 34, 51-76.
- Darlington, A. (1986) 'The Teaching of Anatomy and the Royal Academy of Arts 1768-1782', *Journal of Art & Design Education*, 5, 263-271.
- Daston, L. and P. Galison (1992) 'The Image of Objectivity', *Representations: Special Issue: Seeing Science*, 40, 81-128.
- Desmond, A. (1989) *The Politics of Evolution: Morphology, Medicine, and Reform in Radical London*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dobson, J. (1952) 'Eighteenth Century Anatomists: Joshua Brookes', *Practitioner*, 180-4.
- Dobson, J. (1962) 'John Hunter's Animals', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 17, 479-86.
- Dobson, J. (ed.) (1970) *Descriptive Catalogue of the Physiological Series in the Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England*, London and Edinburgh: E & S Livingstone.
- Eales, N. (1974) 'The History of the Lymphatic System, with Special Reference to the Hunter-Monro controversy', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 29, 280-94.
- Farber, P. (1975) 'Buffon and Daubenton: Divergent Traditions within the Histoire naturelle', *Isis*, 66, 63-74.
- Forbes, T. (1985) *Surgeons at the Bailey: English Forensic Medicine to 1878*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1970) *The Order of Things*, London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1973) *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. A.M. Sheridan, London: Routledge.
- Golinski, J. (2005) *Making Natural Knowledge: Constructivism and the History of Science*, (2nd Ed.)edn, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Greene, R. (1773) *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Rarities, in Mr. Greene's Museum at Lichfield*, Lichfield: Morgan.
- Guerrini, A. (2004) 'Anatomists and Entrepreneurs in Early Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 59, 219-39.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hamm, E. (2001) 'Unpacking Goethe's Collections: The Public and the Private in Natural-Historical Collecting', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 34, 275-300.

Harley, D. (1994) 'Political Post-Mortems and Morbid Anatomy in Seventeenth Century England', *Social History of Medicine*, 7, 1-28.

Haynes, C. (2001) 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner: Sir Ashton Lever and his Holophusikon', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 24, 1-14.

Heaviside, J. (1818) *Catalogue of the Museum of John Heaviside, Esq. : Comprising Human Anatomy, Natural and Morbid; Comparative Anatomy; and Natural History*, London: printed by G. Woodfall.

Hunter, J. (1766) 'A Supplement to the Account of an Amphibious Bipes' *Philosophical Transactions*, 56, 307-10.

Hunter, J. ([1785]) *Directions for Preserving Animals, and Parts of Animals, for Examination*, London: [printed by the author].

Hunter, J. (1786) *Observations on Certain Parts of the Animal Oeconomy*, London: [printed by the author].

Hunter, J. (1861) *Essays and Observations on Natural History, Anatomy, Physiology, Psychology, and Geology*, ed. R. Owen, London: John van Voorst.

Hunter, M. (1985) 'The Royal Society's "Repository" and its Background', in O. Impey and A. MacGregor (eds) *The Origins of Museums: the cabinet of curiosities in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe*, Oxford: Clarendon, 217-29.

Hunter, W. (1762) *Medical Commentaries*, London: A. Hamilton for A. Millar.

Hunter, W. (1784) *Two Introductory Lectures*, London: J. Johnson.

Hutchins, H. (1787) *A Descriptive Catalogue of a Very Extensive and Capital Collection of Anatomical Preparations... and natural history*, London.

Huxley, R. (2003). 'Challenging the Dogma: Classifying and Describing the Natural World', in

K. Sloan (ed.) *Enlightenment: discovering the world in the eighteenth century*, London: British Museum Press, 70-79.

Jardine, N. and E. C. Spary (1996) 'The Natures of Cultural History', in N. Jardine, J. A. Secord and E. C. Spary (eds.) *Cultures of Natural History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jacyna, L. S. (1983) 'Images of John Hunter in the nineteenth century', *History of Science*, 21 85-108.

Jones, D. and R. Harris. (1998) 'Archaeological Human Remains: Scientific, Cultural, and Ethical Considerations', *Current Anthropology*, 39 253-264.

Keel, O. (1988) 'Les rapports entre medecine et chirurgie dans la grande école anglaise de William et John Hunter', *Gesnerus*, 45, 323-42.

Keel, O. (1998) 'Was Anatomical and Tissue Pathology a Product of the Paris Clinical School or Not?' in C. Hannaway and A. La Berge (eds.) *Constructing Paris Medicine*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 117-83.

- King, J. (1996) 'New Evidence for the Contents of the Leverian Museum', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 8, 167-86.
- Laqueur, T. (1989) 'Bodies, Details and the Humanitarian Narrative', in L. Hunter (ed.) *The New Cultural History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 176-204.
- Lawrence, C. (1998) 'Medical Minds, Surgical Bodies: Corporeality and the Doctors', in C. Lawrence and S. Shapin (eds) *Science Incarnate: Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge*, London: University of Chicago Press, 156-201.
- Lawrence, S. (1988) 'Entrepreneurs and Private Enterprise: the Development of Medical Lecturing in London, 1775-1820', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 62, 171-92.
- Lawrence, S. (1993) 'Educating the Senses: Students, Teachers and Medical Rhetoric in Eighteenth-Century London', in W. Bynum and R. Porter (eds) *Medicine and the Five Senses*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 154-78.
- Lawrence, S. (1996) *Charitable Knowledge: Hospital Pupils and Practitioners in Eighteenth-Century London*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lawrence, S. C. (1995) 'Anatomy and Address: Creating Medical Gentlemen in Eighteenth-Century London', in V. Nutton and R. Porter (eds) *The History of Medical Education in Britain*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 199-228.
- Leask, N. (2002) *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, W. (1978) *Rescuing Horace Walpole*, London: Yale University Press.
- Lightfoot, J. (1786) *A Catalogue of the Portland Museum...* [London]: Skinner.
- Linebaugh, P. (1976) 'The Tyburn Riot against the Surgeons', in D. Hay *et al.*, *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, London: Allen Lane, 65-118.
- Lovejoy, A. (1964) *The Great Chain of Being*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Loveland, J. (2006) 'Another Daubenton, Another *Histoire naturelle*', *Journal of the History of Biology*, 39 (3), 457-91.
- MacDonald, H. (2005) *Human Remains: Episodes in Human Dissection*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Macdonald, S. (2005) 'Accessing Audiences: Visiting Visitor Books', *Museum and Society*, 3 (3) 119-36.
- Markus, T. (1985) 'Two Domes of Enlightenment: Two Scottish University Museums', *Art History*, 8, 158-77.
- Markus, T. (1993) *Buildings and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types*, London: Routledge.
- McCormack, H. (2007) 'Housing the Collection: The Great Windmill Street Anatomy Theatre and Museum', in P. Black (ed.) *"My Highest Pleasures": William Hunter's Art Collection*, Glasgow: University of Glasgow in association with Paul Holberton, 101-16.

Merriman, J. (ed.) (1881) *John Hunter at Earl's Court, Kensington 1764-1793*, London: Wakeham & Son.

Miller, D. (ed.) (1995) *Acknowledging Consumption*, London: Routledge

Moore, W. (2005) *The Knife Man*, London: Bantam.

Oppenheimer, J. (1946) 'Anne Home Hunter and Her Friends', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 434-45.

Ottley, D. (1835) 'Life of John Hunter', in J. Palmer (ed.) *The Works of John Hunter*, London: Longman, vol.1, 1-198.

Paterson, S. (1778) *Museum Falconarianum: A Catalogue of the Entire and Capital Museum of Anatomical Preparations, and Other Subjects of Natural History...*, London: [printed for S. Paterson].

Payne, L. (2007) *With Words and Knives: Learning Medical Dispassion in Early Modern England*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Peachey, G. (1924) *A Memoir of William and John Hunter*, Plymouth: William Brendon.

Peachey, G. (1931) *John Heavyside, Surgeon*, London: St. Martin's Press.

Pole, T. (1790) *The Anatomical Instructor; Or, An Illustration of the Modern and Most Approved Methods of Preparing and Preserving the Different Parts of the Human Body, and of Quadrupeds. By Injection, Corrosion, Maceration, Distention, Articulation, Modelling, &c*, London: printed by Couchman and Fry for the author.

Porter, R. (1985) 'Lay Medical Knowledge in the Eighteenth Century: The Case of the Gentleman's Magazine', *Medical History*, 29 (2), 138-68.

Price, L. (2004) 'Reading: The State of the Discipline', *Book History*, 7, 303-20.

Prince, S. (ed.) (2003). *Stuffing Birds, Pressing Plants, Shaping Knowledge: Natural History in North America, 1730-1860*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.

Proger, L. (ed.) (1966) *Descriptive Catalogue of the Pathological Series in the Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England*, London & Edinburgh: E & S Livingstone.
Richardson, R. (2001) *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, (2nd Ed.) London: Phoenix.

Ritvo, H. (1997) *The Platypus and the Mermaid, and other Figments of the Classifying Imagination*, London: Harvard University Press.

Rolfe, W. (1985) 'William and John Hunter: Breaking the Great Chain of Being', in W. Bynum and R. Porter (eds) *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 297-319.

Rousseau, G. and D. Haycock (2000) 'The Jew of Crane Court: Emanuel Mendes da Costa (1717-91), natural history and natural excess', *History of Science*, 38, 127-70.

Schaffer, S. (1983) 'Natural Philosophy and Public Spectacle in the Eighteenth-Century', *History of Science*, 21, 1-43.

Schupbach, W. (1986) 'Earl's Court House from John Hunter to Robert Gardiner Hill', *Medical History*, 30, 351-56.

Sloan, P. (1992) 'Introductory Essay: On the Edge of Evolution', in P. Sloan (ed.) *The Hunterian Lectures in Comparative Anatomy, May-June 1837*, London: Natural History Museum, 1-72.

Stemerding, D. (1993) 'How to Make Oneself Nature's Spokesman? A Latourian Account of Classification in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Natural History', *Biology and Philosophy*, 8, 193-223.

Stevenson, L. (1953) 'William Hewson, the Hunters, and Benjamin Franklin', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 8, 324-28.

Synopsis of the Arrangement of the Preparations in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (1850), London: Printed by R. and J.E. Taylor for the College.

Thomas, N. (1994) 'Licensed Curiosity: Cook's Pacific Voyages', in J. Elsner and R. Cardinal (eds.) *The Cultures of Collecting*, London: Reaktion, 116-36.

Tröhler, U. (1989) 'The Doctor as Naturalist: The Idea and Practice of Clinical Teaching and Research in British Policlinics 1770-1850', in H. Beukers and J. Moll (eds) *Clinical Teaching, Past and Present*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 21-34.

Walpole, H. (1937) *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. S. Wilmarth, New Haven.

Withers, C. (1993) 'Both Useful and Ornamental: John Walker's Keepership of Edinburgh University's Natural History Museum, 1779-1803', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 5, 65-77.

Wolfe, D. (1961) 'Sydenham and Locke on the Limits of Anatomy', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 35, 193-220.

Wood-Jones, F. (1951) 'John Hunter's Unwritten Book', *Lancet*, 258, 778-80.

* **Simon Chaplin** is Director of Museums and Special Collections at The Royal College of Surgeons of England, and is completing a Ph.D. on 'John Hunter and the Museum Oeconomy, 1750-1800' at King's College London.

Address

The Royal College of Surgeons of England
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3PE
Email: schaplin@rcseng.ac.uk
Phone: 020 7869 6570
Fax: 020 7869 6564