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A Collector of the Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Britain:
Dr William Hunter (1718-1783)



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Dr William Hunter 1718-1783

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**A Collector of the Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Britain:
Dr William Hunter (1718-1783)**

Abstract

Fine art, in the form of oil paintings, prints and drawings, accounts for a considerable proportion of the collection formed by the Scottish anatomist, Dr William Hunter. This thesis examines the contexts for the various works of art that were either bought or commissioned by him or were the result of donations and gifts. It covers the period from the 1740s, when Hunter arrived in London until his death in 1783 and follows his collecting activities from their origins in the specialist, anatomical-antiquarian interests of his predecessors in the 1750s to the more elaborate works that were increasingly available to him through his contacts with artists and dealers by the 1770s. This involves placing Hunter within a chronology of collecting during the eighteenth century, a period characterised by an expansion of cultural activity within all the arts. Such a *commodification* of culture brought with it various implications for the production and reception of the arts that had been predominantly the reserve of the aristocracy. William Hunter was a professional, a new type of Gentleman Connoisseur, whose motivations to collect were inspired by an innate empirical curiosity that dominated the era. Therefore, curiosity as a type of investigative phenomenon is considered in the thesis as the driving force behind the accumulation and calculation of collectible objects. Hunter's incorporation of a fine art collection within a museum dominated by anatomy and natural history calls for a re-consideration of the place of art derived from the close study of nature during the period. His influence as a teacher and patron of the arts is also reconsidered here by a closer examination of the part he played in the community of artists that emerged in London during the 1760s. The thesis employs a methodology that combines the techniques of micro-history, a close, cultural-anthropological analysis viewed through a framework of more general, theoretical themes, classicism, antiquarianism and consumerism that seek to impose an understanding on the sheer diversity and range of interrelated ideas that constituted the practice of collecting during the eighteenth century. It reveals that, rather than standing on the periphery, William Hunter played a crucial, if not central, role in the promotion and dissemination of the fine arts in Britain.

**A Collector of the Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Britain:
Dr William Hunter 1718-1783**

Introduction

Art and science, curiosity and commerce

A correspondent of the *St James's Chronicle*, May 25, 1779, included in his letter to the editor an extract from the poem *Ode to Curiosity*, by the Rev. William Tasker (1740-1800), inspired by Dr William Hunter's Museum at 16 Great Windmill Street, London. The author lamented that, despite 'being much visited and extolled by Foreigners, I am the more surprised that it hath not been more taken Notice of by English Writers'. He went on to observe that the *Ode*, 'with not small Propriety, makes Dr. Hunter's Museum the constant Reference of that fanciful Goddess ... Curiosity': ¹

ANCIENT or modern, all we know,
To thy bright Origin we owe;
The Healing Art is thine;
With the Coan Sage was fraught,
From thee deriv'd that heavenly Thought,
Which stamp'd his Work Divine.
"GALEN'S great Mind, thou led'st to view
Man's wondrous Fabric, whence he knew
The Harmony of Parts;
In his dark Age, Anatomy
Languish'd in feeble Infancy,
'Mong rude unfinish'd Arts.
"Succeeding Sages caught the Flame,
More nicely icann'd the human Frame,
To trace the arterial Way.
To trace the Veins from every Part,
Meandering to the Fountain heart,
Reserv'd for HARVEY'S DAY.
"To HUNTER thou hast lastly shown
(All that perchance shall e'er be known)
Of th' human Form Divine:
Thou didst direct his searching Eye,
The smallest Lymphaeduct to spy,

¹ Letter to the *Saint James's Chronicle*, or the *British Evening Post*, Tuesday, May 25, 1779.

And Nerve minutely fine.
 “Rais’d by the Wonder-working Hand,
 Behold thy own bright Temple stand
 Off spring of HUNTER’S Mind.
 ‘Mid Learning’s old and modern Lore,
 And Nature’s choice collected Store,
 There, Goddess, dwell ensrhin’d!
 CURIOSUS²

The poem describes how the foremost practitioners in the art and science of anatomy had been motivated by curiosity. William Hunter is singled out as the modern-day equivalent of Hippocrates, The Coan Sage, named after the island of Cos, where he was reputed to have been born, Galen, and Harvey, and his museum, his ‘own bright Temple’, the repository of that inheritance, where the products of Nature, gathered under curiosity, are preserved. Tasker’s poem is rich in anatomical vocabulary, with vivid phrases such as ‘Man’s wondrous fabric’, the ‘harmony of parts’, ‘the smallest lymph duct’, and ‘Nerve minutely fine’, conjuring an imagery rendolent of Hunter’s anatomy displays. He was a friend of Hunter, attending his anatomy lectures and presumably given free access to the museum while researching a highly illustrated book he had planned on the History of Physiology from Aristotle to Lavater.³

Anatomy, as Tasker’s *Ode* confirms, was considered in this period both an ‘art’ and a ‘science’. This lack of a clear distinction between areas of expertise and knowledge is of course symptomatic of a more general integration of what were to become during the course of the nineteenth century ever more specialized forms of enquiry. In common with many *virtuoso* figures of the day, Hunter’s active pursuit of anatomical research informed and stimulated his interests, his ‘curiosity’, in other aspects of the natural sciences as well as objects of use and beauty. His museum in Great Windmill Street brought natural and artificial curiosities into conjunction, encompassing minerals, shells, plant and animal life, corals, insects and birds, representative of Enlightenment ideas of the planet as a body, the earth as a living animal, where natural forms connected all living matter, as well as items of ingenious manufacture, of ancient and modern workmanship, drawn from Britain, the Continent and more far off, exotic locales, and including pottery, medals

² Tasker, Rev. W. ‘Ode to Curiosity’, stanzas III-VII, Poems by the Rev. W. Tasker, AB, *An Ode to the Warlike Genius of Britain, the Third edition with additions, an Ode to Curiosity*, London, 1779, pp. 30-32.

³ Rivers, David, *Literary Memoirs of Living Authors of Great Britain, arranged according to an alphabetical catalogue ... and including a list of their works ...* London 1798, pp. 294-295. In fact, Tasker’s Letter seems to include much of the material that was to make up this publication.

and fine art.⁴ There was a natural association between the study of antiquities and natural history, the collecting and appreciation of the fine arts and natural philosophy, not only apparent in the vast and varied objects Hunter amassed but in his affiliation with various institutional bodies that included the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Academy of Arts.

In his obituary of the doctor, the author Felix Vicq d' Azyr, (1746-1794), anatomist and member of the *Académie des Sciences*, Paris, summoned together the various strands of the collection, establishing connections between the visible knowledge on display and the conceptual framework that had existed in the collector's mind:

The precious and rare objects that can be admired there had not simply been arranged for the pleasure of the eye: each element of this great whole, was under Mr. Hunter's hand, a centre of instruction and enlightenment; and their gathering must be seen as a storehouse where his mind would recapture a picture of all his ideas, the summation of all his observations. In the midst of his cabinet, Mr. Hunter was the most, learned; and his collection itself took on a new meaning, inspired a new interest. Now the chain of all these truths is broken; all is silent in this vast structure, or rather all proclaims the loss of a great man, whose debris still deserves our homage, while adding to our regrets.⁵

This thesis addresses those 'objects', not simply there for 'the pleasure of the eye', that comprised Hunter's fine art collection and explores their place in both the 'storehouse' of the anatomist's mind and his Great Windmill Street home and workplace. Just as Hunter created a network of dealers and contacts in anatomy and natural history, so he was extremely well connected to the contemporary world of the fine arts. When he wrote to his friend and mentor William Cullen in 1768, on the eve of the founding of the Royal Academy of Arts saying that, 'I am pretty much acquainted with all our best artists and live in friendship with them' it was no exaggeration.⁶ As First Professor of Anatomy at the newly founded Royal Academy, William Hunter was at the very centre of a burgeoning London art world, during a period of rapid growth, expansion and professionalisation, marked by the advent of art institutions and an exhibition culture, widening audiences and an ever more vibrant print trade. Although the primary focus of

⁴ Porter, Roy, 'The terraqueous globe' in Rousseau, GS and Porter, Roy eds. *The Ferment of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980, pp. 285-324.

⁵ Vicq d'Azyr, *Eulogie in Oeuvres de Vicq d'Azyr, recueillies et publiées avec des notes et un discours sur sa vie et ses ouvrages*, par Jacques L. Moreau (de la Sarthe), 6 tomes, Paris, 1805, vol II, pp. 352-388. Translation by Anne Dulau.

⁶ Brock, C. Helen, *The Correspondence of Dr William Hunter, 1740-1783*, Pickering & Chatto, London, 2008, vo.1, p.288.

the thesis is Hunter's interest in the fine arts, with a particular emphasis on painting and printmaking, this is not to deny its connections with other aspects of the medic's collections. Indeed, restoring the interconnectedness between the fine arts and the practice of science overall, principally in natural history, within William Hunter's original museum is of primary concern.⁷ Hunter's role within the fine arts is explored by close analysis of specific examples that formed the collection as well as examination of the doctor's connections to various artists and art institutions during the period. Rather than provide a comprehensive survey of Hunter's collecting activities or his dealings with the artistic establishment, however, the thesis explores the diverse factors informing the making of the collection, together with the anatomist's varied associations with artists and dealers in accord with their rather extemporised nature. This is not to suggest that Hunter had no formal plan for the incorporation of the fine arts within his overall project. However, the evidence presented in this thesis suggests that the acquisition of paintings, prints and drawings was often determined by a series of favourable coincidences, meetings and exchanges. The expansion of networks across Europe brought about by the Grand Tour which opened up a much wider market for the fine arts, and the establishment of better, formal training for artists in Britain, together with the increase in economic growth as a whole were all conditions that Hunter could not have foreseen.

This thesis focuses on these in-determinant conditions and pursues Hunter's response to them. It requires that the study take the form of a close, analytical exploration of these activities and connections in order to develop a more nuanced appreciation of how collections and collecting actually worked in practice in the eighteenth century.⁸ While the drawbacks of such a narrow focus mean that the wider aspects of Hunter's scheme may appear neglected the advantages are that a previously little understood and seldom researched part of the collection will benefit from having its own historical context grounded in a firmer understanding of the period.

⁷ The associations between science and the fine arts in the period are still little investigated. The implications of Bernard Smith's work in this field, first published in the 1950s, are yet to be fully developed: see *European Vision and the South Pacific*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985. Notable recent exceptions to this general state of affairs include Donald, Diana, *Picturing Animals in Britain c1750-1850*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007; and Donald, Diana and Munro, James, eds. *Endless Forms: Charles Darwin, Natural Science and the Visual Arts*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2009.

⁸ This close, analytical study derives from the methodology suggested by Simon Schaffer that privileges a cultural biography of individual scientists and philosophers, taking into account, social, political, theological and philosophical contexts, an 'anthropological-cultural approach'. See Barnes, SB, *Scientific Knowledge and Social Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1974; Barnes, SB and Shapin, Steven, eds. *Natural Order: Historical Studies of Scientific Culture*, Sage Publications, London, 1979; Schaffer, Simon, 'Natural Philosophy' in Rouseau, GS and Porter, Roy, eds. 1980.

Contemporary authors such as Jean Lerond d'Alembert, in the preface to Denis Diderot's *Encyclopaedia or Universal Dictionary of arts, sciences, trades and manufactures* (1752) recognised the need to define the relationship between the various branches of knowledge, while allowing for the difficulties that this presented:

It is obvious upon Reflection, that the Parts of Knowledge have a certain Connection with one another, or, that the Arts and Sciences mutually aid each other; and are consequently all link'd together. But, if it be difficult to reduce any single Art, or Science, to a few Rules, or general Principles; it is not less difficult to reduce the infinitely various branches of human Knowledge into a single system.⁹

Later in the preface, d'Alembert raises the problematic issue of representing this interconnectedness within the fine arts and in the imitation of nature specifically, anticipating debates that became such a strong feature of artistic discourse in the second half of the century:

As the direct Ideas which strike us strongest, are those we remember best; so we the more earnestly endeavour to reproduce them in ourselves by imitating their Objects. And though agreeable Objects strike us stronger, when real, than when barely represented; yet this Defect in Point of Agreeableness, is, in some Degree made up by the Pleasure we receive from their Imitation. ... And in this Imitation of all Kinds of Objects, capable of raising lively or agreeable Sentiments in us, consists, in general, the Imitation of beautiful Nature.¹⁰

In this discussion d'Alembert's approach to the imitation of nature in the fine arts is hesitant. He questions whether a direct imitation of nature is achievable or even desirable and suggests that it is only in an 'improved' vision of nature that the viewer will derive pleasure. This interpretation, drawing on a long European tradition advocating the abstraction of particularised nature, is in contrast to the attitude of naturalists working in a British tradition and indebted to the writings of Francis Bacon, such as Thomas Pennant. In his 1768 publication, *British Zoology*, Pennant confronts artists directly, confidently asserting the benefits supplied by a profound knowledge and experience of nature. After introducing the practical application of natural knowledge in determining and measuring mineralogical details in paints, pigments and other artistic materials, Pennant argued:

But these advantages are small, compared to those derived from the knowledge of nature in the representation of objects: painting is an imitation

⁹ d'Alembert, Jean Lerond, *Encyclopaedia or Universal Dictionary of arts, sciences, trades and manufactures*, London, 1752, p. 3.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.36.

of nature; now, who can imitate without consulting the original? But to come to what is more particularly the object of our inquiries; animal and vegetable life are the essence of landscape, and often are secondary objects in historical paintings; even the sculptor in his limited province would do well to acquire a correctness of design with a perfect knowledge of the muscles of animals. But the painter should have all this and more: he should be acquainted with all their various tints, their manner of living, their various motions or attitudes, and their places of abode, or he will fall into manifest errors.¹¹

How the visual arts might contribute to the furtherance of knowledge in the natural sciences and in forms of natural history is one of the abiding concerns of the chapters that follow. It is introduced here to emphasise how the study of nature formed an intense, at times obsessive, influence on Hunter's work, reflected in his incessant exploration of corporeal form and function, and to stress the ways in which his interests and concerns intersected with a more general cultural fascination with the relationship and the role of the visual arts in the collation and summary of knowledge across a range of fields.

In exploring these issues, this study makes use of a model of analysis Simon Schaffer has described as 'cultural-anthropological'. However, William Hunter's relationship with the fine arts and the consideration of his collection as a whole requires a still more complex model, one that combines biography of the kind advocated by Schaffer with wider social concerns. This is provided by Bruno Latour's analysis of the history of travel and exploration, as explained in *Science in Action: How to follow scientists through society* (1987). Latour describes the system by which objects are brought back from far-flung places as a 'cycle of accumulation' and the museums and collections that they entered as 'centres of calculation'. These are designed to make sense of the distance that dictates their original production and eventual reception. Along with this 'accumulation' however the idea of consumption is also prevalent in Latour's description of how the networks that facilitated scientific exploration were asymptomatic to those of capitalism; not identical perhaps, but complementary. What is important for Latour is not trying to define the various categories of sociological or political ideas that are implicated in the formation of these cycles and centres but attempting to capture the 'unique movement', typified perhaps in the eighteenth century by curiosity, that allows particular centres of accumulation to have an influence and act with agency over others at greater or lesser distances.¹²

There are, clearly, similarities between the exploration of the world in terms of search of new products that will add to new knowledge and the seeking out of new

¹¹ Pennant, Thomas, *British Zoology*, London 1768-70, preface, pp. vii-viii.

¹² Latour, Bruno, *Science in Action, How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987, p.222.

commodities. The difference is, Latour explains, that these objects cannot constitute capital only but have some other form of usefulness that means their function is not simply to be reinvested into another cycle of accumulation. Commodities, having a use and exchange value, are implicitly what constitute the cycle of accumulation but it is their removal from the cycle of capital that Latour emphasises. While recognising the negative and positive aspects of this methodology, the objects at the centres of calculation are meant to combine both usefulness and curiousness.

Curiosity merged as it was with commerce was an important element in constituting William Hunter's collection, as it came to be formed during the second half of the eighteenth century; a period now characterised by historians as one of unprecedented consumer growth.¹³ Despite the fact that the commodification of cultural pursuits is often associated with the early nineteenth century and the founding of national museums and galleries of art, curiosity and commerce both feature strongly as contextual conditions for the creation of Hunter's museum.¹⁴ During the eighteenth century, curiosity was emerging and developing from its association with early modern inquiry and virtuosity and in Hunter's time the term held connotations that were grounded in scientific inquiry, derived from the phrase's etymological sense ('cura' in Latin meaning 'attention') as careful and precise empirical investigation.¹⁵ This is discernible in works such as Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism* (1765) that sets out to distinguish a rational and, therefore positive, sense for curiosity, amid increasing use of the word in a consumer

¹³ There is now a substantial literature on this topic. However, the key starting points remain Brewer, John, McKendrick, N, and Plumb, JH, eds. *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England*, Hutchinson, London 1982; Brewer, J, and Porter, R, eds. *Consumption and the World of Goods*, Routledge, London, 1993; Bermingham, A, and Brewer, J eds., *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800, Image, Object, Text*, Routledge, London, 1995.

¹⁴ Earlier histories of the emergence of museums in Britain highlighted the support of the state: see Bann, Stephen, *The Clothing of Clio: a Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth century Britain and France*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984; Minihan, Janet, *The Nationalisation of Culture: the development of state subsidies to the arts in Great Britain*, Hamilton, London, 1977. More recent publications have considered how growing audiences and consumer expectations impacted on the formation of museums and galleries: for example, Anderson, RGW, ed. *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century*, British Museum Press, London, 2003; and Bjurström, Per, *The Genesis of the Art Museum in the Eighteenth-Century*, Papers given at a symposium in *Nationalmuseum*, Stockholm, June 26, 1992, in cooperation with the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, *Nationalmuseum*, Stockholm, c1993.

¹⁵ As evidence of this definition, Nigel Leask points to Robert Boyle's meaning in *Curiosities in Chymistry, Being New Experiments and Observations Concerning the Principles of Natural Bodies*, London, 1691. Leask, (2003), p. 28.

culture, where the meanings of the term had become increasingly ambiguous and uncertain¹⁶. He defends this interpretation of the word thus:

Curiosity is the cause, which is a principle implanted in human nature, for a purpose extremely beneficial, that of acquiring knowledge; and the emotion of wonder raised by new and strange objects, inflames our curiosity with respect to such objects.¹⁷

Kames's definition of curiosity, much indebted to the writings of John Locke, places emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge which is useful, beneficial and rational, and of benefit for the purposes of scientific enquiry and so the betterment of man's lot. This sense of the term is applied in this thesis to describe what must have been William Hunter's own understanding of the term. This is not to suggest that Hunter operated outside a commodification of culture as described by Jurgen Habermas, but that his early instruction in Scottish Enlightenment thought meant that he would not have considered these two meanings of the terms as a conflict of interest as they came to be perceived in the second half of the century.¹⁸

William Hunter was born on May 23, 1718 at his family's modest farmhouse, Long Calderwood, East Kilbride, Scotland. He was the seventh of ten children born to Agnes Hunter (*nee* Paul) (1686?-1751) and John Hunter (1663?-1741). He was educated locally at Hamilton Grammar School and then enrolled at the University of Glasgow in 1731. As the university at this time was the locus of Scottish Enlightenment ideas, there has been no little speculation as to the extent of the influence of its leading figures on Hunter. It has been pointed out, in this context, for instance, that Francis Hutcheson (1649-1746) was Professor of Moral Philosophy (1730-1746) while Hunter was a student.¹⁹ Hutcheson

¹⁶ See Thomas, Nicholas, *Entangled Objects, Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England 1991, for a discussion of the complexities of the term 'curiosity' in the period.

¹⁷ Kames, Henry Home, Lord, *Elements of Criticism*, London and Edinburgh, 1765, p.245.

¹⁸ For example, Leask (2003) describes the divergent meanings of Curiosity in the early nineteenth century and the effect of consumerism on collections of natural history by comparing the careers of Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) naturalist and explorer and William Bullock (1795-1859) naturalist and founder of the Egyptian Hall Museum in London 1816-1825. Arguably, the freeing up of objects of Curiosity from princely or courtly collections and their entry into a wider market for collectible goods produced positive and negative reactions. On the positive side, Habermas's idea of the democratising of the public sphere by an emerging 'bourgeois' or 'professional' class meant greater access to objects of Curiosity; See Habermas, Jurgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1989. On the negative side this led to accusations of over-consumption and self-indulgence by collectors. See Benedict (2001).

¹⁹ Brock, 2008. Vol. 1, pp.2-4.

had already published *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1726), a text now recognised as instrumental in shaping Enlightenment aesthetics. His work has also been cited as an example of a moral justification during the period for the acquisition, accumulation and exchange of consumer goods as constituting a polite and civilised society.²⁰ Specifically, his *Inquiry* makes it clear that it is possible to perceive everyday commodities as objects of beauty and that appreciation of their aesthetic qualities can provoke sensations of shared pleasure and desire among friends:

Had we no such sense of Beauty and Harmony; Houses, Gardens, Dress, Equipage, might have been recommended to us as convenient, fruitful, warm, easy; but never as *beautiful*; and in Faces I see nothing which could please us, but Liveliness of Colour and Smoothness of Surface: And yet nothing is more certain, than that all these Objects are recommended under quite different *Views* on many Occasions: And no Custom, Education, or Example could ever give us *Perceptions* distinct from those of the Senses which we had the use of before, or recommend Objects under another *Conception* than grateful to them.²¹

Hutcheson's ideas, together with those of Lord Shaftesbury and later David Hume, provided a moral philosophy that responded to and corresponded with the development of a consumer culture in eighteenth-century Britain, explaining that the pursuit of wealth was a reflection of a civilised society. Therefore, William Hunter's education formed a moral basis for the equal treatment of the motivations of curiosity and commerce.

However, it is difficult to assess the full extent of this influence, other than in an anecdotal manner. It may have been that Hutcheson's style of delivering lectures in English, rather than Latin, that persuaded Hunter to do likewise. Alexander Carlyle (1722-1805) who attended the university a few years after Hunter in 1743, was to write of Hutcheson:

As his elocution was good, and his voice and manner pleasing, he raised the attention of his hearers at all times; and when the subject led him to explain and enforce the moral virtues and duties, he displayed a fervent and persuasive eloquence which was irresistible.²²

This resembles descriptions of Hunter's own style of delivery, albeit in Samuel Foart Simmons's 'embellished' account:

²⁰ Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century England*, Yale University Press, 1992, p.83.

²¹ Hutcheson, Francis, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue; in two treatises* ... London, 1726, p.14.

²² Carlyle, Alexander, *Autobiography of the Rev Alexander Carlyle, containing memorials of the men and events of his time*, 3rd edition, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1860.

As a teacher of Anatomy he has been long and deservedly celebrated. He was a good orator, and having a clear and accurate conception of what he taught, he knew how to place in distinct and intelligible points of view the most abstruse subjects of anatomy and physiology.²³

Hunter's first and closest mentor before he moved to London was William Cullen (1710-1790). Cullen was from a similar background to Hunter and their families were both connected to the community that surrounded the patronage of the Dukes of Hamilton. However, Cullen and other members of 'Scottish lowland intellectual elites', it has been suggested, developed a radical system of scientific investigation that paralleled similar inquiries into the nature of 'sensibility' and 'sympathy' by other Scottish Enlightenment intellectuals.²⁴ Medical historian Christopher Lawrence explains how the work by scientists such as Cullen was not unaffected by the social and, more importantly, the local, influences on individual experience. From a cultural-anthropological perspective these local manifestations of Enlightenment thought clearly impacted strongly on Hunter's own work and career, shaping a shared system of beliefs among his network of close friends and colleagues.

William Hunter's educational background, whether general or local, has been a feature of previous biographies that have mapped the doctor's history through a series of professional stages. The emphasis on his professional career has to some extent obscured the history of his collection, however. As Susan Stewart has commented, one of the difficulties in writing the history of a collection is to separate the fictions of the individual's life from the contextual biography of the incorporated objects.²⁵ Arguably, in Hunter's case this has been done many times in previous histories of both the person and the collection. Samuel Foart Simmons's *An Account of the Life and Writings of the Late William Hunter, MD FRS and SA*, published soon after Hunter's death in 1783, conflates its subject's character with the objects that constituted his collection. Simmons's text is interspersed with mentions of the coin collection, anatomical specimens, books and anecdotes about Hunter's time as a Professor at the Royal Academy of Arts. John Hunter's (1723-1793) copy of this text includes a number of annotations which contrast sharply with the mythologizing espoused by Simmons.

²³ Foart Simmons, Samuel, *An Account of the Life and Writings of the Late William Hunter*, MD FRS and SA, London, 1783. p. 28.

²⁴ Lawrence, Christopher, 'The Nervous System and Society in the Scottish Enlightenment', in Barnes, B, and Shapin, S, 1979, pp.19-40; Shapin, S, 'Social uses of Science', in Rouseau, GS and Porter, R, 1980, p.128.

²⁵ Stewart, Susan, *On Longing, Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1993, p. 155.

He was an early riser and when business was over he was constantly engaged in his anatomical pursuits, or in his museum. (JH: he was not an early riser, rather indulged in his bed when he might, and [was] naturally indolent, loved ease and social company, but his good sense and desire to be at the head of his profession, or whatever he undertook, made him active).²⁶

More recently, Helen Brock's *Calendar of Correspondence of Dr William Hunter 1740-1783* traces the anatomist's life through his letters with mention of the collections appearing only intermittently. The limitations of this study are that the objects become lost within the minutiae of Hunter's professional and personal correspondence and their significance to an understanding of the wider culture of eighteenth-century art and collecting is understated. Brock's purpose was to gather up the extensive letters and documents sent to and sent by Hunter and create a chronological sequence that roughly follows the pattern of his own career progression. However, in the process, the wider relevance of the doctor as a patron of the fine arts is concealed. The most recent addition to the historiography, *"My Highest Pleasures" William Hunter's Art Collection*, an exhibition catalogue edited by Peter Black, while taking a broader, more comprehensive view of the collection in incorporating information on his numismatic, anatomical and library holdings, focuses more especially on the painting collection.²⁷ This privileges aspects of Hunter's collection of classical antiquities, perhaps inevitably, but does not address any specific issues relating to his involvement with contemporary British art and artists, particularly with regard to the consumption of fine arts. It is a further aim of this thesis, therefore, to add to the significant research undertaken for *"My Highest Pleasures"* by setting out a critical understanding of Hunter's biography, positioning him as a provocative and controversial, while still clearly brilliant, figure within the culture of the period. This is also to acknowledge, however, that while the historiography of William Hunter's medical achievement is considerable his biography is still under researched, not least in terms of his extensive interest in and relationship to the contemporary art world.²⁸

²⁶ Simmons, 1783. P.28. See copy with annotations by John Hunter in Special Collections, University of Glasgow Library, Hunterian ADD. Q13.

²⁷ Black, Peter, ed. *"My Highest Pleasures" William Hunter's Art Collection*, Paul Holberton Publishing and the University of Glasgow, London and Glasgow, 2007.

²⁸ Publications surrounding Hunter's medical achievements are too numerous to cite here, however the main texts include, *The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus*, Baskerville, Birmingham, 1774, *Medical Commentaries Part 1. Containing a Plain and Direct Answer to Professor Monro Jun ...* London, 1762-1764, *Medical Commentaries, A Supplement*, London 1764, *Two Introductory Lectures, Delivered by Dr William Hunter, to his Last Course of Anatomical Lectures at his Theatre in Windmill-Street*, London 1784, (posthumously) and *On the Uncertainty of the Signs of Murder, in the Case of Bastard Children*, ed. Cummin, William, London, 1836, (posthumously). Hunter's

As for the collection of paintings, Hunter's first recorded purchases derive from the sale of Dr Richard Mead (1673-1754) and are informed by his encounter with a group of highly influential anatomist-antiquarians in London in the 1740s and 1750s.²⁹ At Mead's sale in March 1754, Hunter bought the portrait of *Sir Isaac Newton* (1642-1727), after Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723) (fig.1) The portrait was significant for Hunter, of course, as a representation of one of the most influential figures in the history of science. He acknowledged Newton's legacy to experimental theory and in his lectures on anatomy, commenting: 'That doctrine was the source of Sir Isaac Newton's and all of the improvements which have been made since the middle of the seventeenth century.'³⁰ Kneller as the foremost portrait painter of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century is also credited with having introduced a new form of portrait style into British art, as codified in the artist's so-called Kit Cat Club pictures. This was a more intimate style, suited to the newly-emerging professional class. This painting of Newton, at 75.5x63, does not conform strictly to the category of 'Kit-Cat' but does incorporate other characteristics of the genre: 'Instead of striking a posture of aristocratic insouciance, Kneller's sitters seem to fashion their muscles and facial expressions in a manner that implicitly acknowledges the presence of an audience'.³¹

Therefore, Kneller's portrait, placed in Hunter's collection signifies more than one ambitious scientist's emulation of another, it provides evidence that artworks were no longer the preserve of the aristocracy and that the best artists were now attainable by the professional classes. The portrait is a reminder of the shifting nature of British cultural life during Hunter's time and of the impact that other professionals such as Mead had on his collection. Ownership of an important artist's work is not enough however, to prove that easy social mobility was as yet a feature of eighteenth-century society. The gains made by William Hunter in his professional life were, of course, entirely dependent on the patronage of a previous generation of medical practitioners such as Mead. In Hunter's case, the important role played by Dr James Douglas (1675-

personal biographies, apart from Simmons's *Life*, quoted above include Mather, George R, *Two Great Scotsmen: the brothers William and John Hunter*, Maclehose, Glasgow 1893, Peachey, GC, *Memoir of William and John Hunter*, the author, Plymouth, 1924, Oppenheimer, JM, *New Aspects of John and William Hunter*, Heinemann Medical, London, 1946 and Bynum, WF and Porter, R, eds. *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.

²⁹ See Chapter one of this thesis.

³⁰ Hunter, 1784, p.52.

³¹ Solkin, 1992, p. 36; See also, Waterhouse, Ellis, *Painting in Britain 1530-1790*, Yale University Press, Pelican History of Art Series, 1994, p.138; Brewer, John, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, HarperCollins, 1997, p. 40.

1742) is significant in that it was most likely through Douglas that Hunter became involved with the circle of professionals around Mead and Sir Hans Sloane. The book dealer and co-founder, with his brother Andrew, of the Academy of Arts in Glasgow, Robert Foulis (1707-1776) had given William Hunter a letter of introduction to James Douglas, a distinguished man-midwife practising in London during the first half of the century. Foulis acted as an agent for Douglas and it was surely Douglas who was partly responsible for bolstering the 'lowland Scottish intellectuals' within elite cosmopolitan circles in London. Hunter was to also benefit from aristocratic and royal patronage, serving as Physician in Extraordinary to Queen Charlotte at the court of George III; a position he owed, no doubt, to the sponsorship of John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, then the king's favourite. These networks of patronage and professional ambitions within the medical profession were replicated within the London art world, as artists too sought to gain recognition and elevate the status of their work in a commercial market.³²

Tasker's tribute to William Hunter, cited at the beginning of this chapter, emphasises the 'monument' that he built to house his collection (fig.2). The Great Windmill Street Anatomy School and Museum originated in Hunter's own plans for a National School of Anatomy that he submitted to the 3rd Earl of Bute, during his short and highly controversial term as First Lord of the Treasury, 'a short time before he resigned that office', in late 1762 or early 1763.³³ The anatomy school and museum formed part of the burgeoning world of exhibitions and culture of spectacle in eighteenth-century London, but as a private museum its audience was still restricted to invited guests, students, and assistants. Rather than a fully commodified site, the displays bordered on the semi-public realm of a gentleman's cabinet. The building at Great

³² Walters, Alice N, 'Conversation Pieces: Science and Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England', *Hist. Sci.* vol. 35, 1997, pp. 121-154, Guerrini, Anita, 'Anatomists and Entrepreneurs in Early Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of the History of Medicine*, vol. 59, April, 2004, pp. 219-239, Jenkins, Ian, 'Dr Richard Mead (1673-1754) and his Circle', Anderson, ed. 2003, Jordanova, L, 'Portraits, People and Things: Richard Mead and Medical Identity', *Hist. Sci.* xli, 2003, pp. 293-313, Brock, Helen, *Dr James Douglas's Papers and Drawings in the Hunterian Collection*, Glasgow, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of Glasgow, 1994, Thomas, KB, *James Douglas of the Pouch and his Pupil William Hunter*, Pitman, London 1964, Lippincott, Louise, *Selling Art in Georgian London, the Rise of Arthur Pond*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1983, Pears, Ian, *The Discovery of Painting, The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1680-1768*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1988, Hargraves, Matthew, *Candidates for Fame: The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2006, Hoock, Holger, *The King's Artists, The Royal Academy and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840*, OUP, Oxford, 2003, Solkin, D, ed. *Art on the Line, The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2001.

³³ Hunter, 1784, pp. 117.

Windmill Street, designed by the Scottish architect, Robert Mylne (1733-1811) is 'reconstructed' in this thesis to reveal the innovative approach taken by the doctor and his architect to create a unique building in both scale and design: a conflation of anatomy theatre, hospital architecture, exhibition and assembly rooms that most clearly represents the interconnections between curiosity and consumerism.³⁴

Hunter's involvement with the second St. Martin's Lane Academy and the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, must have brought him into contact with contemporary exhibitions and displays that perhaps influenced his approach to his own museum exhibits.³⁵ Surprisingly, for a figure closely associated with the court, and as described in chapter three, Hunter's friends and acquaintances during this period were involved in radical politics that brought to the surface the positive and negative aspects of patronising a British school of artists. An examination of Robert Edge Pine's portrait of Hunter's sister, *Dorothy Hunter. Mrs James Baillie*, c1757 (fig.3) shows that both she and her brother were involved with a group of individuals that revolved around the historian Catharine Macaulay (1731-91) and her first husband, the obstetrician Dr George Macaulay (1716-1766) with whom Hunter worked at the Brownlow Street Lying-in Hospital. Both Pine and James Barry, who included Hunter in his series of paintings for the Great Room of the SEAMC, questioned the pervading system of patronage that appeared to them to restrict artistic freedom of expression and political allegiances.

By the 1770s, Hunter had acquired a selection of Old Master paintings chiefly at the sale of Sir Robert Strange in 1771. Once again, patronage is highlighted as an issue in chapter four where its meanings are unravelled in relation to Strange's and Hunter's approach to the complexities of national identity, religion and the reception of Italian art, particularly those derived from the naturalist schools of painting, in Britain. Both men were the products of a post-union education and their shared national identity was informed by a sense of North Britishness, dominated by ideas of 'improvement' and 'liberty'. As Colin Kidd, explains, the union of Scotland and England in 1707 was expected to provide 'improvement' for citizens in the North on a scale that matched the

³⁴ See Chapter two of this thesis and McCormack, H, 'The Great Windmill Street Anatomy Theatre and Museum', in Black, ed. 2007, pp. 101-117.

³⁵ Evidence that Hunter was lecturing to students at the St Martin's Lane Academy is derived from John Hunter's annotations in Samuel Foart Simmons, *An Account of the Life and Writings of the Late William Hunter*, MD FRS and SA, London, 1783, where he writes that, 'About this time [the 1750s] he [William Hunter] read lectures in anatomy to the Incorporated Society of Painters at their rooms in St Martin's Lane', Special Collections, University of Glasgow Library, Hunterian ADD Q13.

economic and social advances in England. It was a sense of exclusion from these benefits that often caused ‘occasional eruptions’ north of the border.³⁶

Linda Colley, in her influential account of the forging of the modern British nation state and emergent conceptions of Britishness has noted the implications which ‘occasional eruptions’, such as the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, had for Scots, like Strange, who were challenged by the political questions of monarchy.³⁷ As with other professionals however, Hunter gained one strong advantage under this combined British identity – access to the opportunities of wealth creation under an expansionist and imperialistic government.³⁸

Conflicts over questions of patriotism and national identity, described by Colley are apparent in Hunter’s teaching and writings. His lectures to students at the Royal Academy of Arts that promoted naturalist theory, and the anatomy lecture as a form of political engagement are described in relation to Johan Zoffany’s two portraits of the doctor painted in c1772 in chapter of five of this thesis. Hunter’s published lectures on anatomy are considered alongside unpublished manuscripts and lecture notes taken by his students in order to gain a fuller understanding of the anatomist’s ideas regarding the position of art derived from naturalist practice. Hunter’s commissioned paintings by George Stubbs are presented in this chapter to demonstrate how the actual work undertaken by artists associated with the Royal Academy’s teaching reflected a diverse and varied range, rather than a polarised, institutionalised method.

Apart from his anatomical collection, Hunter’s natural history specimens dominated his museum and it is worth considering briefly a few examples that demonstrate how vital these were to his overall scheme, particularly in relation to the fine arts, where objects of natural history became the focus for illustrated works. Before his death, Hunter had appointed three friends and colleagues to be trustees of his collection. These were Charles Combe (1743-1817), George Fordyce (1732-1802) and David Pitcairn (1749-1809). Between them the trustees delivered, along with the objects of the collection, to the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow in 1807, catalogues for each of the separate departments. Therefore the museum still hold catalogues to the Coins and Medals, Insects, Anatomical Preparations, Shells, Minerals and Printed Books. The natural history collection encompassed the range of interests reflected in Hunter’s social world. Between 1771 and 1782, Hunter had spent over £1500 on mineral specimens, and

³⁶ Kidd, Colin, ‘North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century Patriotism’, the *Historical Journal*, vol. 39, No 2, (Jun.1996), p. 361.

³⁷ Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, Vintage, London, 1996, p.6.

³⁸ Brock, Helen C, ‘The Happiness of Riches’ in Bynum, WF, and Porter, Roy, eds. *William Hunter and the Eighteenth Century Medical World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge,1985, p.35-56.

his collection of minerals and ores was renowned.³⁹ He communicated with the foremost dealers in this trade, Jacob Forster (1739-1806), a mineral dealer in London, Paris and St. Petersburg supplied him with specimens, and Peter Woulfe (1727-1803), a chemist and mineral analyst, supplied him with over 1000 specimens. The collection was well-known among some of the first authors to publish on this subject. William Pryce's *Mineralogia Cornubiensis: a treatise on minerals, mines, and mining: containing the theory of natural history of strata, fissures and lodes*, published in 1778, describes Hunter's specimens of gold:

I have, however, seen, in the possession of that curious investigator of natural productions, Dr William Hunter, a large specimen of mineralised Gold, which the doctor had from Germany.⁴⁰

Further on in the text, Pryce recalls how he witnessed Mercury poisoning that had penetrated into the bones of victims who had gold in their mouths believing this to be a precaution:

It is known to amalgamate with the Gold earrings of the salivated wearer, and I myself seen very minute globules in the rotten process of some bones, when I dissected under the instructions of the accurate Dr Hunter.⁴¹

In 1780 Hunter bought the collection of corals that had been left by his friend John Fothergill after he died. It was Fothergill's collection that had been used by John Ellis (1710-1776) who showed that corals were animals and not plants.⁴² Coral held a fascination for naturalists in the eighteenth century, as it appeared to be the link between inert and living materials. Concepts of extinction and 'evolution' of species were also highly significant in Hunter's natural history collections and the influence of these on the paintings he commissioned from George Stubbs, as discussed in chapter five, provide evidence of the immediate relevance of his collection to the scientific community not just in London but in Europe too, as demonstrated by the knowledge of the collection by European visitors, such as Felix Vicq d'Azyr :

He loved anatomy with passion, cultivated all branches of natural history, simultaneously; nobody was more appreciative of ancient Greek and Latin literature's beauty, and from his early youth he collected a few medals.

³⁹ Durant, Graham P, Rolfe, Ian WD, *William Hunter as a Natural Historian: His Geological Interests*, University of Glasgow, Hunterian Museum, 1984.

⁴⁰ Pryce, William, *Mineralogia Cornubiensis, a treatise on minerals, mines and mining: containing the theory and natural history of strata, fissures, and lodes ...* London 1778, p. 51.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 57

⁴² John Hunter obtained the original drawings for Ellis' 1755 and 1786 papers.

Which of these tastes did he devote himself to? To all, since everything, from his courage to his profession and his means could enable him to do so.⁴³

The scope of Hunter's collection cannot be encompassed in one volume and the research methodology of this thesis reflects the assorted procedures that were inevitably encountered by the collector himself. Tracing his friendships, correspondences and business arrangements, this thesis employs a form of micro-history to reveal the collecting activities of one of the most important, if most neglected, collectors of the eighteenth century.⁴⁴

Consumerism is important to stress as the actions of a collector such as Hunter are thought to occupy an ambiguous space between eighteenth-century networks of consumption and the pursuit of an educational and professional resource.⁴⁵ As the market for collectible objects grew and intensified, private collections were increasingly motivated and stimulated by the opportunities brought about by a consumer society and relatively new organisations such as the Society of Antiquaries, acted as facilitators to consumption practices. Antiquarian collections were not necessarily removed from these consumer networks and their position in the wider market place became less uncertain as collecting became an intrinsic part of professional life.⁴⁶

Concepts of consumption do not fit neatly into studies of collections this is partly explained by consumerism's association with mass markets and mass consumption. This is one of the 'myths' of consumerism explained by recent studies that denies the existence

⁴³ Vicq d'Azyr, 1805, vol II, pp. 352-388.

⁴⁴ This is microhistory in respect of the materials that are the subject of investigation, which are often ephemeral, letters, receipts, manuscripts, etc. Micro-history, of course, derives from cultural and social anthropology, and attempts to explain the reciprocal relationship between individual actions and experiences on the one hand and material life, institutions, and processes on the other. This is also evident in the model described by Schaffer above and is reflected in more recent writings on material culture as a form of historical methodology. See 'Is Small Beautiful? Micro-history and the History of Everyday Life', *History and Theory*, vol. 38, No. 1 (Feb. 1999). Micro-history is also a recognised method by historians of material culture as evidenced by the pioneering works, Douglas, Mary and Isherwood, Baron, *The World of Goods, towards an anthropology of consumption*, Routledge, London, 1996 (first published in 1979); Weatherhill, L. *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, Routledge, 1996; See also, Glennie, Paul, 'Consumption within historical studies' in Miller, Daniel, *Acknowledging Consumption*, Routledge, London 1995, pp. 163-202; Styles, J and Vickery, A, eds. *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007.

⁴⁵ Myrone, Martin and Peltz, Lucy, eds. Introduction, *Producing the Past, Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1999, p.9.

⁴⁶ Hilton, Matthew, 'The Legacy of Luxury: Moralities of Consumption since the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol.4, No. 1, (2004), pp. 101-123.

of a more 'authentic' past where human relationships to objects were considered less superficial.⁴⁷ This thesis, therefore, rejects the idea that the study of consumer behaviour must be confined only to the mass market and proposes that the roles of the collector and the consumer are, indeed, closely related. Clearly the acquisition of a collection requires the collector to act as a consumer, as alluded to in Latour's model above, in order to achieve his or her desired aim. That process of consumption does not stop when the objects or object enters the collection, however⁴⁸. Imagining the collection in terms of a number of commodities, objects with both a use and an exchange value, it represents consumption knowledge in synthesis: the aim of the collector is to achieve this synthesis and balance this on 'economies of scale'. In Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood's work on the anthropology of consumption, the collection is described as an information system, in a similar sense to Latour's centre of calculation the objects are removed from the cycle of capital and are placed in a unique integration of knowledge that often relies on a re-contextualisation of their original purpose.⁴⁹

Susan Stewart describes this re-contextualisation of the collection as a formalism that destroys original contexts and makes new contexts for its objects in a 'paradise of consumption'.⁵⁰ Her purpose is to show how the processes of consumption are employed in the formation of a collection to mask the origins of an object's production. For her, the collection represents a form of alienation that seeks to remove the product of someone's labour and replace this with an aesthetic value only – one of the criticisms levelled at curiosity in its very narrow sense. For Stewart, therefore, the collection masks the true worth of the collected object. This is in some sense a severely limited interpretation of the commodity itself and in terms of William Hunter's anatomical collection in particular, it was the labour of the anatomist and the usefulness of the preparation, which was privileged above aesthetic value.

However, Stewart does concede that the formalism of the collection is never an 'empty' formalism.⁵¹ As Nigel Leask has described, objects of curiosity were often described as 'useful' and 'valuable' and so the idea that they had an aesthetic value only, or that as 'Semiophores' their value was due to their link to the 'invisible' or 'distant' and

⁴⁷ Miller, Daniel, ed. *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies*, Routledge London and New York, 2002, p.24; Thomas, 1991, p. 26.

⁴⁸ Appaduria, Arjun, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, see in particular the essay by Igor Kopyoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things' and the process of 'singularisation' Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988.

⁴⁹ Douglas, M and Isherwood, B, 1996, p. 132.

⁵⁰ Stewart, 1993, pp.152-153.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.153.

therefore contained invisible capital implies that motivations of curiosity and commercialism are often interconnected.⁵²

In exploring the original contexts for William Hunter's collection, a wider approach to the process of consumerism and a more inclusive reading of curiosity is required; an approach that defines consumption as reciprocal and cyclical and is closer to the way that Hunter would have perceived curiosity as a motivational driver of consumerism. Douglas and Isherwood's anthropological approach to the processes of consumption, alongside Latour's centres of 'accumulation' and 'calculation' therefore, offers a view in which consumerism and curiosity co-exist in the form of material culture.

Emphasis is given in the thesis to William Hunter's account with Drummonds Bank, records of which are held in the Bank's Archives in Edinburgh (now the Royal Bank of Scotland) as evidence of the commercial aspects of Hunter's collecting. These accounts also testify to the amounts of money that he was willing to spend on objects for his collection and bring into focus contemporary ideas of curiosity over commercialism. For example, the pursuit of a collection that promoted the furthering of 'classical' or, rather, 'antiquarian' learning was a recognised approach taken by Britain's elite collectors to defend their activities in a society that precluded reverence of materialism, especially with respect to religious values.⁵³

For the purposes of this thesis, Hunter's role as both a scientist and a teacher of anatomy to artists is emphasised. His collection of fine art represents these combined disciplines of art and science, curiosity and commerce, an appealing image for many of his contemporaries.⁵⁴ Despite the neglect of his paintings, prints and drawings in the past, this thesis explains how these items were also an intrinsic element of Hunter's overall scheme. Hunter's perception did not deteriorate the deeper he investigated his subject, in fact, art, anatomy and natural history served to attune his perception even more sharply so that they informed the very core of his philosophical aim to combine his 'natural curiosity' with his innate commercial acumen.

⁵² Leask, 2002, p. 27. See also Chapter One of this thesis for a discussion of Pomian's formulation of the 'semiophore'.

⁵³ See Ayres, Philip, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth Century England*, Cambridge University Press, 1997 and Coltman, Viccy, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760 -1800*, both of which investigate the material culture of eighteenth-century elite collectors.

⁵⁴ Benedict, Barbara M, *Curiosity, A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2001, p.91.

Chapter one

Context and chronology: Forming the museum

These Ornaments People will have as well as what is absolutely necessary to Life, and as sure a Demand will be for them as for Food, and Clothes; as it is in some Other Instances thought at first to be Equally Superfluous, but which are Now become considerable Branches of Trade, and consequently of great Advantage to the Public.¹

Jonathan Richardson, 1719

As described in the introductory chapter to this thesis, William Hunter's earliest collecting activities coincided with a period of social and cultural transition in Britain. In terms of the history of collections, this is often characterised by authors as a development between the Cabinet of Curiosities and the Enlightenment project.² The contrast between the seventeenth century natural history cabinet, motivated by 'curiosity', and the earliest manifestation of museums is marked by a tendency to see these two versions of taxonomy as a progression from the spectacle or entertainment of the wonders of nature to a quiet, reflexive and reasoned study of natural philosophy. This aspect of the historiography of collecting had, arguably, dominated the topic until the early 1980s, when Arthur MacGregor and Oliver Impey revived the subject and introduced a more inclusive approach; allowing for flexibility in the categories of collected and collectable objects.

There is, however, no specific moment that historians can refer to as the turning point – when cabinets became museums and were therefore presented in a more rational, scientific way. The chronology of the emergence of museums is, in fact, a much more complex process. Clearly a change took place but this was not always to the advantage of the collection, for example in William Hunter's case, where the collection was separated into early nineteenth-century scientific 'categories' resulting in the loss of his original

¹ Richardson, Jonathan, *A Discourse on the dignity, certainty, pleasure and advantage of the science of a connoisseur*, 1719, p. 51.

² MacGregor, Arthur, Impey, Oliver, *The Origins of Museums, the Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe*, Stratus Publishing, England, 1985; 2001; Pomian, Krzysztof, *Cabinets of Curiosity: Paris and Venice 1500-1800*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987; MacGregor, Arthur, *Curiosity and Enlightenment, Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007.

schema, nor was it only as a result of changes in scientific theory. Social and economic movements impacted on the collection and the collector as a cultural phenomenon; the cabinets of curiosities in themselves were not clearly defined but this did not preclude them from having a rational, studious purpose. For example, in the *Origins of Museums*, William Schupbach describes the cabinet at Ste Genevieve in Paris in the 1670s:

The catalogues, illustrated with neat engravings, portray an elegant, well-proportioned collection formed by a taste for order, clarity and sound learning, an abhorrence of the bizarre, and an indifference to gratuitous marvels.³

The idea of an aesthetic suited to the planning and display of a cabinet/museum is often how the two are distinguished but as Schupbach suggests, this aesthetic did not result in a new category of museum presentation in the eighteenth century only, rather the aesthetic ideas were already present within early museums; the changes that occurred in the eighteenth century were as a result of a new form of cultural experience, an increasing public audience, the emergence of a new social, professional class and the changing nature of consumerism.⁴

Alongside sales by private agreement between collectors and others arranged by specialist dealers, public auctions made their appearance. These were better suited to the specific nature of the merchandise in question, that is, collection objects, since they gave free rein to combative behaviour in these encounters, where each bidder exposed simultaneously his taste, his capacity to sacrifice wealth in order to satisfy it and the exact extent of this wealth.⁵

In Pomian's elegant description of the practice of collecting in Paris and Venice 1600-1800, the role of 'money' and the rise of individual wealth are acknowledged as significant factors effecting change. His articulation of the role of 'semiophores', is useful for his explanation of the collection object existing between the 'visible' and the 'invisible' worlds. However, what the author appears to be describing is also recognisable by the word 'commodity' and the various aspects of use and exchange value attached to this. For

³ Schupbach, William, 'Some Cabinets of Curiosities in European Academic Institutions' in MacGregor and Impey, 2001, p.237.

⁴ For example, the idea of '*representatio*' as an interpretation of display is discussed in Thomas da Costa Kaufmann in 'Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: the *Kunstammer* as a form of "representatio"', *Art Journal*, 38:1, (1978, Fall), p.22; and the perceptions of 'copiousness' and 'lack of order' are examined in Jay Tribby's discussion of the collection formed by the Bolognese courtier Ferdinando Cospi (1606-1683) when it was incorporated within the newly-founded Institute of Sciences with the intention of imposing an early modern idea of 'civility' as a taxonomic method: Tribby, Jay, 'Body/Building: Living the Museum Life in Early Modern Europe', *Rhetorica*, 10:2 (1992, Spring, p.139)

⁵ Pomian, 1987, p.39.

example, the ‘semiophore’ is, as mentioned previously in the introduction to this thesis, an object which is ‘of absolutely no use’, whereas an object that could be consumed: ‘could provide a means of subsistence, render raw materials fit for consumption or even act as protection from the vagaries of the climate.’⁶ In this respect, the collection, particularly the fine or decorative art collection may be seen as made up of ‘semiophores’ only.⁷ Clearly the collection in eighteenth-century Britain constituted a knowledge of consumption and the basis for objects within the collection was not just their ‘usefulness’, if they did happen to have any, but their exchange value. Objects, even those that are situated outside of the free market economy, still retain their ‘exchange value’, and therefore, their ‘usefulness’.⁸ Pomian, is elaborating the term semiophore, to avoid the direct use of the word commodity because this has traditionally emphasised the production aspects of objects.⁹ For the purposes of this discussion, the word commodity is used in its more recent application in the study of the anthropology of consumerism and is more suited to an examination of eighteenth-century culture embedded in commercial practices.

Despite the fact that Pomian does not use the actual word ‘consumerism’ it is central to his analysis of the changing concepts of collecting where he identifies the emergence of a new social class:

The people who had no access to the new Semiophores were the members of the ‘middle classes’, whose lack of finance stood in the way of their ambitions to become fully-fledged collectors, and their number increased in step with economic growth and the spread of schooling. It was they Who started to press for the opening up of the collections which housed the various different Semiophores.¹⁰

Who made up this new social class? And how were they identified as a distinct group by their contemporaries?¹¹ In a sermon delivered in Bath, near the end of the century, the

⁶ Ibid, p.30.

⁷ See Thomas, Nicholas, ‘Licensed Curiosity: Cook’s Pacific Voyages’, in Cardinal, J, and Elsner, J, *The Cultures of Collecting*, Reaktion Books, London, 1994, p. 122.

⁸ See, for example, Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, p.13.

⁹ Miller, Daniel, ed. *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies*, Routledge, London and New York, 20002, p. 24. One of the most significant myths pertaining to consumption, according to Miller, is that its relationship with, and to, objects is, in contrast to production, seen as being intrinsically more superficial.

¹⁰ Pomian, 1987, p.41.

¹¹ Langford writes that the term ‘class’ was in regular use as early as the 1740s and 1750s, this was, however, in order to distinguish the ‘lower class’s specifically. The use of the term ‘middle class’ was not in common usage in the eighteenth century and the inclusion of this in William

Reverend William Keate, distinguishes the middle class as the most able community in society to bear the burdens brought about principally by war but also, as a consequence of war, the country's continually-changing economic circumstances:

But if the rich will disable themselves by their profusion, as the poor are disqualified by their necessities, from contributing their support; the middle class, the most useful, the most willing, and the most burdened part of the community, will shrink from their oppressions, and seek protection in other countries, where honest industry may be better encouraged, and patient merit more liberally rewarded.¹²

Keate's defines the middle-class in terms of industry and wealth creation, while recognisable as a separate class they are, however, sometimes viewed as merely mimicking the aristocracy. For example, JCD Clark employs an 'emulative' role for the newly-emergent class, rather than portray them as diverse and original in their pursuit of cultural interests.¹³ In terms of collectors, Arthur MacGregor adopts a similar argument to that of Clark, in *The Origins of Museums*, positioning them within an aristocratic lineage; portraying the middle classes as simply the inheritors of a superior social class, descendent from Lords Arundel and Buckingham, who, in the cultural sphere, were now moving away from 'curiosity' to 'aesthetics'.¹⁴

This neat summarising of the move from 'curiosity' to 'taste' and 'aesthetics' is misleading and, as explained in the introduction to this thesis, the role of 'curiosity' in the accumulation of collections had shifting meanings over the course of the century. There was no overall motive for collecting: taste and aesthetics are difficult to define but there appears to be no acknowledgement in these examples of the rise of the 'middle' or professional class as a multifarious group. The professional man and woman in the eighteenth century took advantage of the opportunities afforded by a consumer culture and, as Jonathan Richardson's quotation describes, what had been considered superfluous to daily life in the seventeenth century had become necessities in the lifestyles of Britain's eighteenth-century professional class. Like Jonathan Richardson, Adam Smith also identifies the appeal of consumerism, although his purpose is a moral defence of a continuing increase in consumption, in *The Wealth of Nations*, (1776),

Keate's *A Sermon, Preached upon the Occasion of the General Thanksgiving, for the late Peace*, July 29th, Bath, 1784, is, writes Langford, 'a comparatively novel expression'. See Langford, Paul, *A Polite and Commercial People*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 633.

¹² Keate, 1784, p. 25.

¹³ Clark, JCD, *English Society 1660-1832, Religion, Ideology and Politics in the ancien regime*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 211.

¹⁴ MacGregor, Arthur, 'The Cabinet of Curiosities in Seventeenth-Century Britain' in MacGregor and Impey, eds. 2001, p. 213.

collections are signalled out as 'durable' and therefore made up of commodities endowed with exchange and use values:

The revenue of an individual may be spent, either in things which are consumed immediately, and in which one day's expence can neither alleviate nor support that of another; or it may be spent in things more durable, which can therefore be accumulated, and in which every day's expence may, as he chuses, either alleviate, or support and heighten the effect of that the following day. A man of fortune may ... [be content with] a frugal table and a few attendants, he may lay out the greater part in adorning his house, or his country villa, in useful or ornamental buildings, in useful or ornamental furniture, in collecting, books, statues, pictures; or things more frivolous, jewels, baubles, ingenious trinkets of different kinds.¹⁵

This clearly had implications for the collector as markets opened up for all kinds of goods. The system of buying and selling also changed over the course of the century, with taste and aesthetics subject to the fluctuations of demands made from an unprecedented class of consumers.¹⁶

Not surprisingly, Langford points to the careers of John and William Hunter as marking the pattern of this new phenomenon of social mobility: 'It was easier to progress from rags to riches in law or medicine than it was in trades which required an expensive apprenticeship and a handsome capital. The two Hunter brothers ... came to London with 'no capital but genius, industry and integrity'.¹⁷

This chapter is concerned with William Hunter's early collection and situates this within a chronology of collecting practice. Hunter is presented here as an example of the type of professional that emerged during the period whose collection was influenced by a combination of wants, needs and desires, rather than a promoter of *virtu*. The context for his early collecting activities can be traced from the origins of the artisanal preoccupations of the London College of Physicians and the Royal Society (c1645), Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) and Dr Richard Mead (1673-1754). The history and philosophy of science together with early medical collectors prove other useful comparisons. Contemporary ideas of aesthetics and their powerful materialisation in all aspects of British commercial culture also influenced Hunter's choices. For example, a recent article on British antiquarians points up the lack of references to antiquarian influences over cultural life in general.¹⁸ This is despite the fact that the Society of Antiquaries included

¹⁵ Smith, Adam, *An Inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*, Dublin, 1776, p.113.

¹⁶ Langford, 1998, p.72.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Sweet, Rosemary, 'Antiquaries and Antiquities in Eighteenth-Century England', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, vol. 34, No. 2 (2001), p181.

within its original aims the study and dissemination of information on many aspects of the fine arts and on contemporary trade and manufactures:

Such a Society (says the author of this plan, who is probably Mr. Wanley) will bring to light, and preserve, all old Monumental Inscriptions, &c. Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Engraving, Musick, will come under their consideration; and the ancient methods being restored, many things may be used afresh ... and to promote Trade, Manufactures &c.¹⁹

The influence of the Society of Antiquaries and the pursuit of antiquarian study in particular may not have been more widely recognised as a resource for cultural historians; however the society has been identified as having had a profound impact on British contemporary arts in the eighteenth-century.²⁰

Although Hunter was not appointed a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries until 1768, his professional and personal interests drew him naturally into this circle of historians, and an antiquarian approach in Hunter's practice has been identified in specific works, for example in the *Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* (1774) in particular. Hunter's approach to this project is described a 'topography' of the body and that he perceives the study as a 'cartographer, lovingly recording all the details of the terrain'.²¹ Just as an antiquarian approach is evident in Hunter's perception of eighteenth-century visual culture, so it influenced his practice of collecting and display; and the professional pursuits of anatomists and antiquarians in Hunter's day were not so far removed.

Anatomist - Antiquarians

One of Hunter's mentors, the anatomist William Cheselden (1688-1752) was also an accomplished artist who had a close relationship with the painter Jonathan Richardson, the elder (1665-1745) and the founder and promoter of the Society of Antiquarians, William Stukeley (1687-1765) (fig.4). 'Stukeley took a medical degree at Cambridge in 1707-08 and then came to London to study anatomy under Rolfe (George Rolfe), who

¹⁹ Gough, Richard, 'Introduction containing an Historical Account of the Origin and Establishment of the Society of Antiquaries', *Archaeologia*, second ed. vol. 1, London, 1779, pp. xxxii.

²⁰ There are now a number of studies on visual culture informed by antiquarian practice, see, for example, Smiles, Sam, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994 and *Eye Witness: Artists and Visual Documentation in Britain, 1770-1830*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000; *Making History, Antiquaries in Britain 1707-2007*, exh. cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2007.

²¹ Jordanova, Ludmilla, 'Gender, generation and science: William Hunter's obstetrical atlas', in Bynum, WF, and Porter, Roy, eds. *William Hunter and the eighteenth-century medical world*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, p 395.

lectured at a house in Chancery Lane'.²² Cheselden and Stukeley's interests were shared by a number of friends and colleagues who revolved around the central figures of Richardson, Dr Richard Mead and Sir Hans Sloane. The working lives of these anatomist-antiquarians had a powerful effect on William Hunter, particularly Cheselden with his acute sense of the important role artists had to play in the circulation of medical and antiquarian knowledge and it was Cheselden who singled out Hunter's work while he was apprenticed to Dr James Douglas (1675-1742).²³ Several drawings and print proofs for Le Dran's *Surgery*, a pioneering textbook on surgery to which Cheselden contributed, are held in the University of Glasgow special collections.²⁴ These drawings, retained by Hunter, represent the collaborative nature of the research undertaken by these anatomist-antiquarians. Within this folder is an impressive engraving: *Sectio Cranii Elephanti*, (fig.5) by Stukeley and copied from a specimen in Sir Hans Sloane's collection.²⁵ This one illustration reveals Hunter's connections to the work of Sloane, Cheselden and, more importantly for this discussion, William Stukeley who, together with the draughtsmen of the early Society of Antiquaries, initiated a new 'topographical' aesthetic to the world of scientific research.²⁶ A comparison between Cheselden's major work *Osteographia* (1733) (fig.6) and his teacher, William Cowper's (1666-1710) *Myotomia Reformata* (1694) (fig. 7), shows a difference in approach to the study of anatomy, with Cheselden incorporating the tools of his trade within the book's imagery; acknowledging the progress made within anatomical research. While individual illustrations still follow a stylistic approach derived from Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (1555) the title page of *Osteographia*, for example, shows Cheselden using a

²² Cope, Zachary, *William Cheselden 1688-1752*, E&S Livingstone, Edinburgh and London 1953, p.87.

²³ "That Cheselden knew and admired William Hunter is evident from a reference to him in one of his comments appended to Gataker's translation of Le Dran's *Surgery*, London 1749, (SpColl Hunterian Z.5.11). Two inguinal herniae are illustrated in Tab. XXI and the comment runs: "The present cases I have from Mr Hunter, a pupil of his [Dr Douglas] who dissected many of those which were shown me by the doctor, and who, to all the good qualities of his great master, has added that of true philosophy". The reference must be to William since John did not come to London till after this book was published', Cope, Zachary, *William Cheselden 1688-1752*, E&S Livingstone, Edinburgh and London 1953, p 91. See also, Peter Black, ed. "*My Highest Pleasures*" *William Hunter's Art Collection*, Paul Holberton Publishing 2007, p.92-97.

²⁴ University of Glasgow, SpColl Ms Hunter DF 142/17-24.

²⁵ University of Glasgow, SpColl MS Hunter DF 141 (2). Stukeley described the dissection of two elephants that he and Sir Hans Sloane had overseen in *The Anatomy of an Elephant*, which was incorporated into the publication, *Of the Spleen, its Description and History, Uses and Diseases, being a lecture read to the Royal Society*, London 1722. SpColl Hunterian Aa.2.20.

²⁶ Sweet, Rosemary, *Antiquaries: the Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth Century Britain*, Hambledon and London, 2004, p.58.

camera obscura in order to draw the skeleton hanging from a tripod some feet away from him, assisted by John Belchier and Samuel Sharp.²⁷ Subsequently, in Le Dran's *Surgery* (1749), Cheselden provides technical illustrations of recommended surgical instruments. These are not idealised images, drawing on conventional artistic tropes.²⁸ They are skilfully produced instructions to convey the scientific nature of the work being presented – in an antiquarian sense they provide 'information and instruction' while offering a distinctive aesthetic quality.²⁹ Unlike ethnographic objects, the working tools of the surgeon are advantageously displayed in this kind of 'discursive deprivation' that deliberately decontextualises the objects from their association with humanity; formerly related to pain and suffering, these 'streamlined' working tools were now incorporated within the vocabulary of the anatomist-antiquarian presentation of nature as fact.³⁰ A further example of Cheselden's relationship with Stukeley is the *Prospect of Burrow Hill from Leicester Road*, September 8th 1722, (British Museum) engraved by Stukeley and dedicated to Cheselden as it was the surgeon's birthplace. Both Cowper and Cheselden knew Dr Richard Mead and Sir Hans Sloane. Mead had edited Cowper's *Myotomia Reformata* and some of Cowper's original drawings went to Mead, these were eventually acquired by William Hunter and are now in the University of Glasgow's special collections.³¹ However, it was Cheselden's sense of antiquarian topography that perhaps

²⁷ Although this identification of Belchier and Sharp cannot be verified due to a lack of comparative likenesses. According to previous biographies, William Hunter took over Sharp's lectures to naval surgeons in Covent Garden in 1746. See John Kirkup, 'Samuel Sharp and the Operations of Surgery', *Journal of Medical Biography*, 4. (1996), pp. 1-7. However, Helen Brock has commented that this is wrong and that Hunter may have used the premises only at a later date, because he was not qualified at that point to teach surgery; see Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.34.

²⁸ It is worth noting that this is a very eighteenth-century idea of perception and observation. See 'The Camera Obscura and its Subjects', in Crary, Jonathan, *Techniques of the Observer, On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 1992, p.42, where the author describes the relationship between the camera obscura and the observer and refers this to ideas put forward in John Locke's, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). That for two hundred years the sense of sight could not be comprehended as having a separate function to the body's other four senses.

²⁹ Smiles, Sam, 'The Art of Recording' in *Making History: The Antiquaries in Britain 1707-2007*, Royal Academy of Arts, exh.cat.2007, p.124.

³⁰ Nicholas, Thomas, 1994, pp.120-121. Thomas's discussion of the engravings made for publication of objects from Cook's Pacific voyages points up the problem of this decontextualisation of objects from their connections to everyday use and meaning and how this had implications for the term 'curiosity'. For the anatomist, the antiquarian abstraction of these images helped to remove them from their everyday associations, privileging their role as objects of scientific enquiry rather than transferable, personalised implements of a trade.

³¹ University of Glasgow, SpColl MS Hunter 655 (Dl.1.31); Black, 2007, p.93.

made more of an impact on the young William Hunter. Unlike Cowper, Cheselden does not appear to have been a member of the Society of the Virtuosi of St Luke (1689-1743); his association with members of the Society of Antiquaries gives the impression that he had less interest in social status and was more concerned with the practical role that art and anatomy could play within a commercial culture. When he was without a hospital appointment, for example, Cheselden set up his own series of lectures on anatomy and successfully created a career as a lecturer and teacher as demand grew for private tuition.³²

Cheselden's first published work, *The Anatomy of the Human Body* (1713) also conveys the surgeon's sense of commercial practice. The book was published in thirteen separate editions over twenty-five years and containing twenty-three copper plates by Cheselden (and some by James Douglas), was always intended to be a business enterprise. Cheselden acknowledged its 'practical' rather than its 'learned' content and as the popularity of the book grew, he adapted and revised editions, offering better quality at more expense. The fifth edition, published in 1740, was advertised at nine shillings on small paper and eighteen shillings on great paper.³³ The fact that Cheselden eventually sold his interest in the book to Charles Hitch and Robert Dodsley for the sum of £200, confirms the valuable intellectual property that remained with his original scheme and it is this characteristic of Cheselden's work, his very acute business sense that brings him into conflict with the Company of Barber-Surgeons in 1714.³⁴ Cheselden's influence on Hunter, therefore cannot be underestimated. By his association and great friendship with James Douglas, Cheselden makes manifest the shared knowledge and characteristics of this tightly-knit group of scientists and artists during the early years of the eighteenth century.

James Douglas, like Cheselden, was also an accomplished artist and William Hunter inherited his papers and drawings after his death, incorporating some of his anatomical specimens into his own collection.³⁵ Douglas, was the descendant of Scottish nobility, he was the third child of William Douglas (d.1705) of Baads, West Calder, five miles west of Edinburgh and he graduated MD from Rheims in 1699. As Roy Porter has noted, Douglas's social status in London by the time Hunter joined him from 1741, would

³² Zachary Cope notes in his biography of William Cheselden that: 'Cowper had died in 1709, Rolfe had left London and there was no one giving regular lectures on the subject', p.4.

³³ Cope, 1953, p.8.

³⁴ Ibid, p.9.

³⁵ Brock, C Helen , *Dr James Douglas's Papers and drawings in the Hunterian Collection*, Glasgow University library, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, Glasgow 1994.

have offered opportunities for introductions to some of the most important figures within an intellectual elite.³⁶

It is likely that Hunter knew both Mead and Sloane through his association with Douglas.³⁷ Quantifying the impact these two famous collectors had on William Hunter's own collection practice is difficult to assess. In terms of career progression, it is not an exaggeration to compare Hunter alongside Mead and Sloane. Doctor Richard Mead was physician to St Thomas's Hospital (1703), graduate of the University of Oxford (1707), Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (1719), and from 1719 physician to the Royal family. Sir Hans Sloane was appointed Physician in Ordinary to George II, elected President of the Royal College of Physicians (1719) and in 1727 became President of the Royal Society.³⁸ William Hunter, elected fellow of the Royal Society 1767, first Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy of Arts (1768); Physician in Extraordinary to Queen Charlotte (1762), could be cast in the same light but for his origins and education. As Roy Porter has identified, Hunter was a self-made man who did not have the advantages of wealth and status at birth.³⁹ As with his career, Hunter's purpose in collecting was as intensive as that of Sloane or Mead, his collection had a research and teaching purpose but it was also located, as I have stated above, within a highly commercial culture.

Hunter's collection differed from that of Mead and Sloane, not just in content, but also in the way that the collection was acquired. The networks of consumption by the mid-1750s had altered the way that collectors in Britain conducted business and it was 'easier' for a professional man such as Hunter to position himself as an *antiquario publico* in Pomian's terms, with money and contacts an overriding feature.⁴⁰

The date of 1755 has become an important marker in the history of William Hunter's collecting. This is when his account with Drummond's Bank was created and, between 1754 and 1755 the sale of Dr Mead's collection took place.

At Mead's sale William spent over £52 buying some 43 books; £75.6s on portraits of Dr Radcliffe (bap.1650-1714), William Harvey (1578-1657), Dr Charleton (1620-1707) and Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), all of which are in the Hunterian Art Gallery; £27 16s. 6d on what were described as 'the original drawings for Vesalius's *Humani corporis fabrica* (1543)' though now,

³⁶ Porter, Roy, 'William Hunter: a surgeon and a gentleman' in Bynum and Porter, eds. 1985, p.32.

³⁷ The range of personalities surrounding these two central figures cannot be dealt with in great detail here but it is worth noting that the artists Allan Ramsay (1713-84) and Jonathan Richardson were also prominent members of this circle; see Dulau, Anne, 'William Hunter: A brief account of his life as an Art Collector', in Black, ed. 2007, note 15.

³⁸ Martin, Benjamin, *The General Magazine of the Arts and Sciences, Philosophical, Philological, Mathematical and Mechanical*, London 1755.

³⁹ Bynum and Porter, 1985, p.28.

⁴⁰ Pomian, 1987, p.270.

except for the frontispiece, they are not accepted as such; £16 for original drawings for William Cowper's *Myotomia reformata* (1729) that had been edited by Richard Mead; and £13.13s on an Egyptian mummy.⁴¹

Clearly Hunter's interest in fine art was well-established by this period, his subscription ticket to Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), for example, is dated August II 1752 and his subscription ticket for *Four Prints of an Election*, also by Hogarth is dated for the same year. In fact, there is documentation that confirms Hunter's relationship with Hogarth from as early as 1751.⁴² However, it was not just his connection to artists that informed Hunter's visual perception. In early Georgian London, the work of anatomists, as discussed above, required advanced technical skills that included visual awareness not dissimilar to that required by fine artists. Hunter would have acquired these skills by his practice and association with anatomy. Evidence of this anatomist-antiquarian relationship exists within Hunter's collections and is explained further here in the portrait of Dr William Harvey (fig.8) that was bought at the sale of Dr Mead's collection at Langford's in 1754 for £42 by 'Oram for Dr Robert Taylor' (1710-1762) and was subsequently acquired by Hunter.⁴³ This portrait provides an insight not just into Hunter's professional interest in Harvey the scientist but in the history of the phenomenon of the British collector more generally.

Doctor William Harvey (1578-1657) was born at Folkestone, Kent. His father was a farmer and a carrier with a business between Folkestone and London. Harvey graduated from Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge and studied anatomy under Girolamo Fabrizi Acquapendente (Fabricius) in Padua from 1600. In 1602, he was awarded an MD from Padua and returned to England. Harvey became active in the College of Physicians, securing admittance to the College in 1604. The portrait of Harvey is described by Geoffrey Keynes as one of the most important sources of his likeness recorded.⁴⁴ Keynes clarifies this by noting that when the painting was in Dr Mead's collection, he allowed it to be engraved by the artist Houbraken, published in 1739, (Jacobus Houbraken 1698-1780) and the sculptor Peter Scheemakers used this portrait for his bust of Harvey now in the Royal College of Physicians. For Keynes, both of these facts confirmed that Mead had been convinced that this was a definitive portrait of Harvey. Although Harvey is recognised as the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, he was also an important

⁴¹ Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.70.

⁴² Black, 2008, p.92.

⁴³ Dr Robert Taylor (1710-1762) was a physician, Fellow of the Royal Society (1737); elected Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (1739); in 1755 he gave the Harveian oration. See, Bryn, Thomas K, 'William Hunter on William Harvey', *Medical History*, 9: 3 (1965: July), p.272-286.

⁴⁴ Keynes, Geoffrey, *The Portraiture of William Harvey, The Thomas Vicary Lecture 1948*, Keynes Press, 1949, p.12.

figure within the Royal court of King James VI (of Scotland) and I of England, then subsequently of King Charles I and acted as an assistant to Thomas Howard, the 14th Earl of Arundel.⁴⁵ Arundel's contribution to the history of collecting in Britain is now well established.⁴⁶ However, in Hunter's time his reputation was known only by a small number of connoisseurs who knew or had read of his collection. Hunter was extremely interested in Harvey's life, writing his own account of Harvey's career which he no doubt intended to publish.⁴⁷ He must have imagined some similarities between his own and Harvey's modest beginnings, his rise to fame as the confidant of Arundel and therefore to the King himself. This portrait is an important signifier of the associations between Arundel, Harvey, Mead and, eventually, Hunter.

While much has been written about Arundel as a collector, his relationship with Harvey has been underestimated. Only Geoffrey Keynes touches on the nature of their friendship, describing in detail the correspondence between Arundel and his contact in Italy, William Petty. In 1636, Harvey accompanied Arundel on a diplomatic visit, ordered by Charles I, to Germany and Austria to visit the Emperor Ferdinand II in Linz.⁴⁸ The return journey took around nine months, with Harvey travelling independently through Italy from July 1636, going as far south as Naples. Arundel had sent Harvey at the request of Charles I to source Italian paintings that he could add to the Royal collection. The fact that Harvey was unsuccessful in acquiring suitable paintings may be why this journey is not considered important by historians of collections. However, the significance of this responsibility being given to a physician would not have been lost on Mead or Hunter.

Keynes compares the Harvey portrait with that of fellow physician Sir Charles Scarborough (1615-1694) (Royal College of Physicians), and suggests that the two are companion portraits and perhaps by the same artist. The difference between the contexts

⁴⁵ Keynes, Geoffrey, *The Life of William Harvey*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994.

⁴⁶ See for example, Hervey, MFS, *The Life, Correspondence & Collections of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, Cambridge 1921; Springell, F, *Connoisseur & Diplomat*, London 1963; Howarth, D, *Lord Arundel and his Circle*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985; Penny, N, *Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, exh.cat. Oxford, Ashmolean, 1985.

⁴⁷ 'Historical Anecdotes of Dr. William Harvey by Wm. Hunter, collected from family papers, etc, communicated to me by Councillor Eliab Harvey of Lincoln's Inn-Fields, from the College Book, from his own writings, from writers, from the Records of St. Bartholomew's etc'. University of Glasgow SpColl MS Hunter 50 and MS Hunter 51. Much of Hunter's text is concerned with compiling an inventory of the known portraits of Harvey in order to place his own within an 'iconography' of the anatomist.

⁴⁸ Crowne, William, *A True Relation of all the Remarkable Places and Passages Observed in the Travels of Thomas Lord Howard Earle of Arundel and Surrey ... Anno Domini 1636*, London 1637.

for the paintings is that while they both show background images of Rome, Scarburgh apparently never visited the city but Harvey did. Keynes writes:

It was in the possession of Dr Richard Mead in the early eighteenth century and was sold with his collections in March 1754. It was bought for 40 guineas by Mr Oram for Dr Hunter and has remained in the Hunterian collection at Glasgow until the present day. The engraving made from this picture by Houbraken in 1739 states that it was painted by Bemmell (William van Bemmell, 1630-1708), so that this attribution must have been accepted by Dr Mead. In the collection of the late Dr GC Williamson there was a drawing of Harvey's head and shoulders by Jonathan Richardson the elder (1665-1745) with a note on the back in his hand stating that it represented 'Harvey AEt 80 ob 1657 from a picture in Dr Mead's collection'. It seems to have been done from III (the Hunterian picture) or IIIa (portrait now in St Bartholomew's Hospital). [Aubrey (John Aubrey 1626-1697, antiquary and biographer) notes, 'About 1649, he [Harvey] travelled again into Italy, Dr George (now Sir George) Ent, then accompanying him'. Few facts about Van Bemmell's career are known, but he was in Rome circa 1650. It therefore seems likely that the portrait was painted in Rome by Van Bemmell about this date (MAR).⁴⁹

Keynes's quotation from Aubrey suggests that Harvey visited Rome again in 1649. If correct, then a case for attributing the portrait as one painted in Rome makes sense, as in 1649 Harvey would have been 71 years of age and the portrait does show him as an elderly man. However, Keynes is not convinced that Harvey ever undertook a second trip to Italy. In his *Life of William Harvey*, he writes that George Ent was recorded as being absent from the Comitia of the College of Physicians from September 30 to December 23, and that this could possibly have been explained by a trip to Italy. However, Keynes also remarks: 'If these two distinguished doctors did really travel together to Italy in 1650 they would surely have left some traces of their presence at various centres of learning on their tour, but hitherto none has been discovered'.⁵⁰

Whether Harvey did make a second trip to Italy or not, the first trip in 1636 with Arundel locates him within a network of early travellers and collectors who were the precursors of eighteenth-century grand tourists. In *The Evolution of English Collecting*, Edward Chaney mentions Harvey being in Venice and quotes from Reymes (Bullen Reymes' *Diary* 1633-36) that Harvey had been given 'some employment to Mr Pettye,

⁴⁹ Keynes, 1994, p.372.

⁵⁰ Keynes, 1994, p.373.

about pictures for his Majesty by Arundel'.⁵¹ Chaney's essay, 'The Italianate Evolution of English Collecting', is concerned with the religious context of collections and any significance of the choice of Harvey by Arundel is overlooked in this essay. While Arundel may have held Catholic sympathies and been engaged with his own political ambitions, Harvey's purpose in visiting Italy would have been to reacquaint himself with colleagues from his university days in Padua. Travelling with Arundel implicates Harvey within the political context of British foreign policy at this date, but the descriptions of Harvey's behaviour during the visit gives the impression that he was much more involved in his own research, visiting forests and sketching the local flora and fauna for example, than becoming embroiled in diplomatic negotiations.⁵² Harvey's motivations for visiting Italy with Arundel may also have been misrepresented by scholars who make the assumption that, as a physician, Harvey would need to be 'inspired' by Arundel to travel to Italy.⁵³ In fact, besides his period of study in Padua, Harvey had also travelled with James Stewart, the fourth Duke of Lennox under the orders of King James VI and I, to France, intending to go on to Italy only to be prevented by the outbreak of war and plague. Harvey had written of this time:

I can only complain that by the way we could scarce see a dog, crow, kite, raven or any bird, or anything to anatomise, only some few miserable people, the relics of the war and the plague, where famine had made anatomies before I came.⁵⁴

It is also a misapprehension to present Harvey in 1636 as a novice in the ways of travelling, researching and collecting. When he is introduced to William Petty by letter from Arundel in August/September of 1636, both men were well aware of the talents that Harvey could contribute to the acquisition of new purchases for the collection. Harvey was detained in the Lazaretto at Treviso for three weeks not because he had not 'bothered to go through quarantine', but because he had been let down by diplomatic procedures.⁵⁵ He had been led to believe that all necessary paperwork had been completed for him as an envoy from Arundel's party.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Chaney, Edward, *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2003, p.57.

⁵² Keynes, p.375..

⁵³ Howarth, David, p.124.

⁵⁴ Keynes, 1966, p.194.

⁵⁵ Howarth, David, *Lord Arundel and his Circle*, Yale University Press, 1985, p124.

⁵⁶ Keynes, *The Life of William Harvey*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1966, p.247. Harvey despatched several letters to Lord Denbigh, British Ambassador in Venice, protesting at his treatment in the Lazaretto: 'I took my first *sede* under the seal of Ratisbon ... Since, in every place as I came, I caused my *sede* to be underwritten, so that there is no ground for them to lay any suspicion upon me'.

On his release Harvey eventually travelled to Venice and Florence, reaching Rome on October 5th. Keynes writes: 'In Rome Harvey was treated with great kindness by Cardinal Francesco Barberini, who styled himself "Protector of the English Nation". Harvey was at first full of hope and anticipation about the pictures he was going to buy, though in the end he was to be sadly disappointed'.⁵⁷

Harvey joined William Petty in Rome in October/November 1636 when Petty had at least two major negotiations for acquisitions for Arundel underway. The first was the sale of *Bartolommeo della Nave* picture collection in Venice and the second was the attempt to buy the Arundel 'Adonis.' (Roman copy of the early Antonine period of Hellenistic figure of the fourth century BC, Vatican Museum).⁵⁸

However, Arundel was unsuccessful with both of these attempts to buy. During his return voyage to England in December 1636, he wrote to Petty:

Dr Harvey told me here yesternight, that he is confident one thousand pounds sterling would buy all *Bartholomeo della Nave[s]* collection. I doubt his memory is quicker here upon the water than it was on the land, and his fancy outruns his desire of buying, especially good things, having made only such an unknown collection as you mention at Rome, whither he went with such a desire to buy some excellent things, and had credit at will. But now he lays all upon want of seeing the collection of Lodovisio, and that he could find nothing good to be sold ... I pray do you help me with things of Leonardo, Raphaell, Corregio, and such like.⁵⁹

Despite Arundel's remarks about Harvey's memory, this quotation makes it clear that Harvey was almost as closely involved with the negotiations over objects for the collection as Petty.

These are the powerful associations surrounding the portrait of Harvey that for Hunter would have represented the ideas and influences of two centuries on science and the arts. Such nuances are only legible when the portrait is examined in its role as an object within the collection. The biographies of both Harvey and Arundel have been extensively written and researched separately but it is not until Hunter's intervention, in buying Harvey's portrait and acknowledging its precedent as a work of art descended from other prominent collectors, that the relationship between Harvey and Arundel can once more be ascertained with the significance it had previously. For example, Harvey was an anatomist-antiquarian who drew his own illustrations to accompany his texts. Keynes has noted that Harvey's talents had been important for early antiquarians, particularly in the excavations in Stonehenge in where the doctor applied his knowledge

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.258

⁵⁸ Howarth, 1985, p.136.

⁵⁹ Keynes, 1966, p.261.

of comparative anatomy to help archaeologists distinguish between animal and human remains, which were the result of sacrifice.

More importantly, Harvey's training in Padua would have provided him with an aesthetic sense, one derived from the Italian schools of drawing and painting, a highly-prized attribute for gentleman scholars as early as the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ Harvey also describes a sophisticated method of visual perception that accompanies this aesthetic sensibility in his own work, for example in *Du motu cordis* where he considers 'observation' itself as a form of knowledge.⁶¹

For Harvey the distinction '... between art and knowledge is that "Art is the concept of the work implanted in the artist's mind" or "a habit concerned with doing", while, by contrast, "knowledge is a habit concerned with comprehending", and just as the former proceeds from the imitation of exemplars, so the latter proceeds from the cognition of natural things'.⁶² Harvey's formation of 'observable' knowledge is now recognised as deriving from earlier scientific works such as Francis Bacon's *Instauratio magna*, (Great Instauration) 1620, the seminal text which promoted an empirical methodology adopted throughout the sciences and was partly responsible for placing the sciences in the public realm.⁶³ Bacon's focus on the 'natural philosopher' as the principal leader of the scientific revolution brought the study of Nature to the forefront of empirical research. His 'active science' became a model of scientific enquiry but his methods brought into question the role of artists and artisans in the examination of nature. While he was impressed with the experiential quality of the mechanical arts and its practitioners, he was less than willing to bring the artisan within the remit of men of learning to whom his book is addressed, that is, the Royal Society.⁶⁴ On the other hand, perhaps, practitioners such as Harvey valued an element of *physique* rather than *metaphysique*, to use Bacon's terminology, in his research and his distinction between 'art' and 'knowledge' is concerned with 'objectivity' and how this could be achieved through direct contact with the objects of nature. William Hunter, as an inheritor of Harvey's methods, also

⁶⁰ Bermingham, Anne, *Learning to Draw, Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2000, p.34. Bermingham notes that the *Compleate Gentleman* (date) by Henry Peacham was written for William Howard, the second son of Thomas Howard, 14th Earl of Arundel.

⁶¹ Harvey, William *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus*, Frankfurt, 1628, SpColl Hunterian Ac.4.18. See, Wear, Andrew, 'William Harvey and the way of the Anatomists', *History of Science*, September 1983; 21:3-53, pp.223-249.

⁶² Salman, Philips, 'William Harvey and Art Misplaced', *Annals of Science*, 49 (1992), 3-19.

⁶³ Gaukroger, Stephen, *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, p. 221.

⁶⁴ Smith, Pamela H, *The Body of the Artisan, Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2004, pp. 232-234.

considered the close study of nature as the dominant intellectual value of artistic work, discussed in chapters four and five of this thesis.

Clearly, Harvey was an important member of Arundel's network of advisers and his contribution to Arundel's collecting activities was considerable. There is no doubt that Hunter would have made all of these connections with Harvey's portrait when it came up at Mead's sale. This is not to underestimate the role of Dr Mead also in this lineage of anatomist-antiquarians. Hunter considered himself the follower of Harvey and Mead, in Latourian terms, he looked to these early anatomist-antiquarians for a model of 'cycles of accumulation' and 'centres of calculation'; the difference in Hunter's case was that he had many more opportunities to create his own model by the investment of the proceeds of his successful, commercial career. The term *antiquario publico* is useful here not in a superficial sense, rather Pomian's identification of a particular kind of collector in early eighteenth-century Europe, of independent wealth and with an expanding market of collectible objects at his disposal, summarises the kind of collector Hunter was to become by the second-half of the century. He had ambitions, even in the early days, to achieve a collection on an 'Arundelian' scale.

***Antiquario publico* v The Gentleman Naturalist**

The painter, Jonathan Richardson understood very early on in the eighteenth century how theories of aesthetics were evolving alongside a consumer culture and explained the consequences of this for collectors:

If our people were improved in the Arts of Designing, not only our Paintings, Carvings and Prints, but the works of all our other Artificers would also be proportionately Improved, and consequently coveted by other Nations, and their price advanced, which therefore would be no small Improvement of our trade, and with that our wealth.⁶⁵

Along with its appeal to nationalist sympathies, Richardson's text is concerned to associate the promotion of the fine arts with the advance of consumerism itself. His ambition to create a chronology of painters and painting much along the same lines as some of his predecessors at the Royal Society is distinguished by his reference throughout to commercialism and trade.⁶⁶ Richardson's ideal connoisseur was someone who could succeed in acquiring a sophisticated knowledge of the arts while exploiting its potential

⁶⁵ Richardson, 1719, p.49.

⁶⁶ Gibson-Wood, Carol, 'Jonathan Richardson, Lord Somers's Collection of Drawings, and Early Art-Historical Writing in England', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 52, (1989) pp.167-187. Wood compares Richardson's project with that of John Evelyn's and Francis Bacon's Royal Society project on the 'History of Trades'.

as a business enterprise. For example, Richardson appears to be following a line of reasoning described as ‘commercial humanism’, a generalised view that would reconcile the opposing theories of Bernard Mandeville (*Fable of the Bees*, 1729) and Anthony Ashley Cooper the third Earl of Shaftesbury (*Characteristics*, 1711).⁶⁷ Relatively recent scholarship has encompassed this idea of commercial humanism within a wider description of the complexities of ‘politeness’ in eighteenth century society and, in particular, how politeness became embedded into scientific culture. Politeness, in the sense of a form of taste promoted by writers such as Richard Steele, David Hume and Joshua Reynolds, highlighted the difficulty that some members of the scientific community had in attempting to keep their personal appearance and mannerisms within the realms of gentlemanly good ‘taste’. Being seen as ‘narrow, bookish, crabbed or pedantic were considered socially unattractive kinds of knowledge’.⁶⁸

This description was applied almost exclusively to scientists and scholars.⁶⁹ The antiquarian too was often cast in this light, but during the course of the century, an encroaching consumer culture pressed its own demands on the ‘image’ of knowledge and the rules of aesthetic appreciation were applied to displays of knowledge.

This is particularly noticeable in the way that museum interiors had evolved by the second-half of the century from predominantly private to public spaces. The public perception of the scientist or scholar also changed with the introduction of the term ‘connoisseur’ and the contrasting presentations of collections based on scientific research or natural philosophy providing evidence of these changing views.⁷⁰ While Richardson advocates a kind of collecting enthusiast similar to that of the *antiquario publico* of the early modern period, by the middle of the eighteenth-century the notion of the gentleman naturalist was prevalent in London. William Hunter’s collection began as a presentation of anatomical knowledge, however by the second-half of the century he was cultivating the role of the *antiquario publico*. This idea is helpful in attempting to distinguish Hunter’s museum from those of his predecessors.

Whilst the great variety and range of collections in Britain and Europe during the eighteenth century can be discerned from Impey and McGregor’s *Origins of Museums*, more questionable is the level of access to and range of knowledge about these collections.

⁶⁷ Solkin, David, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century England*, Yale University Press, 1992, p.19.

⁶⁸ Klein, Lawrence E, ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’, *The Historical Journal*, Cambridge University Press, 45, 4 (2002), pp.869-898.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Oster, Malcolm, ‘The Scholar and the Craftsman Revisited: Robert Boyle as aristocrat and artisan’, *Annals of Science*, (1992), 49; 3, pp.255-276.

⁷⁰ Clark, William, Golinski, Jan, and Schaffer, Simon, *The Sciences in Enlightenment Europe*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1999; Schaffer, Simon, ‘Natural Philosophy and the Public Spectacle in the Eighteenth-Century’, *History of Science*, 21: 1-51, March, 1983, pp. 1-43.

As has been shown, within Britain, only a small number of individuals would have been aware of Arundel's collection. There is no doubt that the improvements in printing and transport during the period distributed collection-based knowledge further afield. However, in order to understand the impetus behind William Hunter's desire to create a museum, it is useful to consider the collections of which he had first-hand experience. In Scotland, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, Hunter, as assistant to William Cullen, may have had the opportunity to visit the fine art collection of the Duke of Hamilton at Hamilton Palace as this would have been one of the privileges enjoyed by Cullen as the fifth Duke's medical attendant.⁷¹ The possibility that such an opportunity was taken up by Hunter presents an image of the shifting boundaries between social classes, particularly in rural communities. However, access must have been strictly limited and only admitted on specific orders, according to rules of polite behaviour:

The production and sale of goods required little social intercourse with the customer; the provision of professional services often did. Professional men were expected to conduct themselves as gentlemen and knew well the commercial importance of doing so. In many small places they themselves were the elite.⁷²

These social boundaries were perhaps less strictly enforced by the educated professional class that Hunter entered when he moved to London and it is the collections here that will be given as a comparison to Hunter's own. This 'freedom', in a sense, afforded to Hunter by living in London is forcefully expressed in a letter from him to William Cullen, dated August 1, 1751:

I wish you would come up to London for a week or two. I have as much to say to you as would take up that time. I want to tell you many things about colleges, hospitals, professorships, chariots, wives, & c. & c.; and cannot write of these things. I'm busy forming a plan for being an author. In short my head is full of ... a thousand things.⁷³

⁷¹ See Dulau, Anne, "William Hunter A Brief Account of his Life as an Art Collector" in Black, ed. 2007, p.21. This speculation derives in part from remarks made in John Thomson's *An Account of the Life, Lectures and Writings of William Cullen MD*, where the author states: "...the Duke of Hamilton who held out various prospects of advantage to induce him [Cullen] to remain at Hamilton. Besides an annual salary, he was to have a chemical laboratory fitted up for him, and the superintendence of a botanical garden attached to the Palace. Indeed, both the Duke and Duchess seem to have been fully sensible of Dr Cullen's merits, and desirous to attach him to Hamilton by everything which could render his situation there agreeable". Thomson, John, Edinburgh 1832, p.17.

⁷² Langford, 1998, p.73.

⁷³ Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.57

Hunter was not admitted a fellow of the Royal Society until 1767 but his life in London from 1740, as stated previously, revolved around the various societies and cultural organisations emerging from interests in science and art. In 1756, Hunter was admitted a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (or College of Physicians as it then was). The collection, which had been formed by the College of Physicians, was an early influence on the collection of the Royal Society. William Harvey had contributed the money to pay for the museum building for the College that opened in 1654, but this had been destroyed in the Great Fire of London. A catalogue, prepared by the keeper of the Museum Christopher Merret in the year of the fire, details the range of objects of interest to the College. Michael Hunter describes them as having:

Forty of its forty-three pages were devoted to books. But the remaining three pages did list some 119 other items in the collection, forty-five entries detailing surgical instruments and seventy-four describing '*Res Curiosae & Exoticae*'.⁷⁴

He also points out that the College was interested in collecting medical as well as non-medical objects during the late seventeenth-century. Later, the College concentrated solely on medical subjects, leaving the newly-founded Royal Society to pick up on the rare and exotic objects of natural history. The Royal Society collection was added to by gifts from various benefactors, one of which was Robert Hubert, whose private collection was compared as second to that of the Tradescants in London. However it suffered through lack of adequate accommodation and having to move to different locations.⁷⁵ In Hunter's time the museum would have been in Crane Court, having removed from rooms in Gresham College, where, a purpose-built gallery was erected for it, almost certainly to a design by Wren, and the objects were rearranged.⁷⁶ The collection, however, remained one of 'curiosities', in a negative sense, with several attempts to impose a 'scientific' purpose upon it. By 1779 it was housed in rooms at Somerset House and eventually offered to the British Museum, '... because it was now apparent that a museum was more of a burden than the asset which it had appeared to be in the 1660s'.⁷⁷

Unlike the Royal Society Collection, those of Sir Hans Sloane and Dr Mead were regarded as exemplars of their kind and they existed in an exclusive world of scholarly Gentleman Naturalists. Overwhelmingly devoted to Natural History, they contained objects of fine art but their significance within the collection overall has sometimes been

⁷⁴ Hunter, Michael, 'The Royal Society's "Repository" and its Background', in Impey and MacGregor, 2001, p. 200.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p.225.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

misplaced.⁷⁸ Once brought within the British Museum at Montague House, Sloane's collection was roughly collated into three departments: Manuscripts, Medals and Coins, Natural and Artificial Productions, and the Department of Printed Books. The combination of Natural and Artificial Productions accommodated the display of works of fine art alongside those products of natural history, although Sloane's displays in his own home appear to have set products of nature at centre stage:

The Gallery, 110 feet in length, presented a most surprising prospect; the most beautiful corals, crystals, and figured stones; the most brilliant butterflies, and other insects, shells painted with as greater variety as the precious stones, and feathers of birds, vying with gems ...⁷⁹

The vastness of Sloane's collection has been recorded and described and its position as the foundation of the British Museum assures it a monumental legacy but while Sloane's collection was valued at approximately £100,000 at his death, Hunter was not far off with his estimated to be £60,000.⁸⁰ For a professional man without Sloane's inherited wealth, this was a noted achievement. Sloane's collection contained 310 paintings, around 700 cameos and intaglios, 1,125 antiquities (urns, instruments, seals, &c.) but the majority was made up of exotica, flora and fauna, shells, animals and plants. These included over 12,000 specimens of 'vegetables as seeds, gums, woods, roots &c. 334 *hortus siccus*, or volumes of dried plants', over 5,000 insects, and almost 3,000 birds and fish.⁸¹ Sloane's library also 'ultimately grew to 40,000 volumes, of universal scope, but with special

⁷⁸ For example, Edmund Powlett, writing after Sloane's collection had been incorporated into the British Museum remarks: 'When we read over the list of names that compose the Royal Society, the Trustees of this Museum, and that numerous Train of Britons who wish so much to encourage every Art, Science and Manufacture, can we possibly be at a loss for Trustees to manage with Impartiality and Propriety a more general Establishment?' Powlett's introductory remarks stress the combined interests across a range of different organisations, supporting science and art equally during the first half of the century. However, his text then goes on to describe the natural history specimens in detail while giving only a cursory mention of paintings and drawings. *The General Contents of the British Museum: with remarks serving as a directory in viewing that noble cabinet*, Robert Dodsley, London, 1762, p.2.

⁷⁹ An Account of the Prince and Princess of Wales visiting Sir Hans Sloane, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, London 1748, vol. 18, pp.301-2

⁸⁰ Faculty of the University of Glasgow, December 10th 1802, in the Records of Glasgow College, GUA 26696. The equivalent in today's money would be approximately £360,000.

⁸¹ Sloane, Hans, *Authentic Copies of the Codicils belonging to the last will and testament of Sir Hans Sloane, Bart. Deceased which relate to his collection of* London 1753, pp.34-36. See also, Anderson, Robert, and MacGregor, Arthur, eds. *Sir Hans Sloane: Collector, Scientist, Antiquary, founding father of the British Museum*, British Museum Press, London, 1994.

emphasis on works of medicine and natural history'.⁸² The Naturalist purpose of Sloane's project is clear from the preface included in *A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados, Nieves, St Christophers, and Jamaica ...* (1707-1725):

It may be ask'd me to what Purposes serve such Accounts, I answer that the Knowledge of Natural History, being Observations of Matters of Fact, is more certain than most Others, and in my slender Opinion, less subject to Mistakes than Reasonings, Hypothesis, and Deduction are ... These things we are sure of so far as our Senses are not fallible, and which, in probability, have been ever since the Creation, and will remain to the End of the World, in the same Condition we now find them. ... There appears so much Contrivance, in the variety of Beings, preserv'd from the beginning of the World that the more any Man searches, the more he will admire; And conclude them, very ignorant in the History of Nature, who say, they were the Productions of Chance.⁸³

These remarks by Sloane reiterate Bacon's, and later, Harvey's conviction to the idea of nature as fact and the development of observation as a form of knowledge itself. The early anatomist-antiquarians described above promoted this kind of 'curiosity' within their own professional circles. The generations that included Sloane, Mead and later William Hunter and his contemporaries, however, introduced 'observable' knowledge into the public sphere and the practice of *autopsia* represented the 'common ground between medicine and eighteenth-century visual culture.'⁸⁴

William Hunter's collection and his self-styled image as a collector is perhaps best compared with Dr Mead. It was Mead, more so even than Sloane, who encompassed the various traits of the *antiquario publico*, building up a significant and important library and collection while maintaining a busy and well-respected medical practice. He also actively encouraged and cultivated relationships with a number of contemporary artists:

He constantly kept in his pay a number of artists and scholars, and scarcely a curious undertaking appeared during the period of his success, that did not find a patron in Mead. He threw open his gallery in the morning for the benefit of students in painting and sculpture; and was in the habit of lending the best of his pictures to artists to copy.⁸⁵

⁸² Clarke, JA, 'Sir Hans Sloane and the Abbé Bignon: notes on collection building in the eighteenth century', *Library Quarterly*, 14, 1988, p.476.

⁸³ Sloane, Hans, *A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados, Nieves, St Christophers, and Jamaica, with the natural history of ... the last of those Islands*, vol. I, 1707-1725, p. 9.

⁸⁴ Jordanova, Ludmilla, 'Portraits, People and Things: Richard Mead and medical Identity', *History of Science*, xli (2003), p.293.

⁸⁵ Macmichael, William, *The Gold-headed Cane*, John Murray, London 1827, p.151.

Five separate catalogues were published when Mead's collection went up for sale, his books alone took twenty-eight days to sell completely.⁸⁶ The scope of Mead's collection also compares favourably with that of Hunter's, incorporating antiquarian interests with natural history and contemporary art. His specially-designed museum and library room must have influenced Hunter's own ideas for his museum at Great Windmill Street. This is discussed in the following chapter but it is worth noting a brief description here:

Visitors assembled in the library, a spacious room about sixty feet long ... the assemblage of marble statues of Greek philosophers, Roman emperors, bronzes, gems, intaglios, Etruscan vases, and other rare specimens of antiquity, was the most valuable. Ranged along one side of the room stood the busts of the great English poets, Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope: they were the size of life, of white marble, and by the hand of Scheemakers.⁸⁷

The cultivation of a polite and urbane personality, or identity, reflected in the surroundings of his home, has been recognised as part of Mead's charm and therefore his success. His connoisseurship has to some extent been attributed to his association and friendship with various artists, particularly with Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) when he was resident in London, between 1719 and 1720 and the impression that images and examples of French aristocratic deportment played in forming Mead's own self-presentation.⁸⁸ Mead's patronage of Watteau also reveals how the artist interpreted contemporary events concerning Mead's life within the paintings in his own collection. For example, Craig Hanson explains how Watteau's painting *Les Comédiens Italiens*, (1719-20) (National Gallery of Art, Washington) represents events surrounding the publication of a series of satirical pamphlets by a group of characters including Mead, Dr John Friend and Dr John Woodward, all involved with the Royal Society. The authors of the pamphlets employed *commedia dell'arte* characters within their texts, and Hanson states that the painting is a direct reference to this event. The reason why the subject of the painting had been largely misinterpreted previously is due to the fact that 'Dr Mead, the one individual mentioned in all the eighteenth-century references to the painting is

⁸⁶ The catalogues are listed as: *A Catalogue of the genuine and capital collection of pictures, by the most celebrated masters of that late and learned physician, Dr Richard Mead*, London, 1755; *A Catalogue of the genuine and entire curious collection of prints and drawings ... of the late Dr Mead*, London, 1755; *Bibliotheca Meadianum*, London, 1754; *Museum Meadianum*, London 1755; *A Catalogue of the genuine and entire collection of valuable gems, bronzes, marble and other busts and antiquities, of the late Dr Mead*, London 1755; and *A Catalogue of Pictures, consisting of Portraits, Landscapes, Sea-pieces, Architecture, Flowers, Fruits, Animals, Histories, of the late Richard Mead MD, sold by auction on March 1754*, London, 1755.

⁸⁷ Macmichael, 1827, p.83-84.

⁸⁸ Hanson, Craig, 'Dr Richard Mead and Watteau's *Comédiens Italiens*', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 145, No. 1201, April 2003, p.271.

conspicuously absent'.⁸⁹ The example of Watteau's *Les Comédiens Italiens*, demonstrates how the important role of the collector can often be overlooked when the objects of a collection become the subject of investigation. The intricacies of patronage and reception can be obscured by the imperatives of collation and attribution in a collection's history. As the following chapters of this thesis emphasise, however, patronage and the reception of art works need to be considered as continually interrelated.

William Hunter's collection of fine art represents this interrelation between the patron and the object and is, perhaps, even more strongly suggested by his role as first Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy of Arts. An important distinction between Dr. Mead's collection and that of Hunter's is the awareness by Hunter of the public's influence on exhibitions and displays of contemporary art and science. This is evident in his planning and design of the Great Windmill Street Anatomy Theatre and Museum. It is apparent that he had identified what Langford calls a 'cultural crisis' in viewing and exhibiting in public and private spaces.⁹⁰ The debates to which Langford refers emerge during the 1760s, with the introduction of regular exhibitions of fine arts aimed at the general public.⁹¹ Later, by the second-half of the century, the question becomes more pronounced with regular and highly-publicised exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Arts at Somerset House forming one of the major cultural sights of London. This state of affairs is best summarised by a comparison of two examples of contemporary writing that demonstrate the changing attitudes to the role of artists and their work within a public exhibition culture. In the *Sister Arts*, for example, published in 1734, the author evokes a pre-commercial condition for the artist, describing, with a sense of longing, an imagined world where the artist had no concern with the 'value' of artistic work besides its morally didactic role. He writes:

A painter was of old looked on as a common Good. These Artists thought their works too much concealed, if they were not exhibited in public places. Some of them chose rather to give their Labours gratis to their country, than to set any Value upon them ... A Painter must sacrifice almost all his Time to his Art, and scarce let a Day pass without doing something; he ought to love his Profession, and prefer the Truth and Perfection of it to any Interest besides.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid, p.267.

⁹⁰ Langford, 1998, p.73.

⁹¹ This is evidenced by the series of regular exhibitions held by the Society of Artists of Great Britain from 1760 onwards.

⁹² Hildebrand, Jacob, *The Sister Arts*, London 1734, p.8. See also, Copley, Stephen, 'The Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Polite Culture', in Barrell, John, ed. *Paintings and the Politics of Culture, New Essays on British Art, 1700-1850*, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp.13-38, where the author

Such a uniformity of aims described by Hildebrand was an impossibility for artists working in the highly commercial and competitive world of eighteenth-century London and a more realistic situation is depicted by the artist Mauritius Lowe later in the period:

[Artists] comply with the cry of the multitude, who require novelty: and at length, by a blameable complaisance, procure admirers and patrons. This brilliant success, it is true, is but of short duration; it is a mode brought into vogue that is soon replaced by another that is still more ridiculous: but they cause themselves to be talked of for a time, and that is sufficient. Imagination furnishes them with new resources to captivate the attention of the public; they play the part of Proteus, and assume a new form, when that they have already assumed no longer makes an impression.⁹³

In this critique of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1781, Mauritius Lowe incisively summarises how artists, by following demands made by the public, are being manipulated by fashion, like any other maker of commodities. Not only is fashion dictating the style and presentation of artistic work, but artists are playing to the audience, carefully constructing images and formats that comply with the Academy's constitution but which also satisfy consumer expectations.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, The Academy's rules of exhibition were designed to accommodate commerce from its inception. It was not its association to commercialism alone that would disqualify a piece of work from an RA exhibition but 'modes of display and representation'.⁹⁵ However, one of the criticisms levelled at the Academy was that it needed to distinguish its purpose as an exhibition space from those other commercially-oriented exhibits that were located in the west end of London.⁹⁶ Displays such as Cox's Museum of Automata at Spring Gardens, Rackstraws Anatomy Museum in Fleet Street, and the Lever Collection of natural history, displayed as the Holophusikon at Leicester Square, were all popular venues and provided

discusses the implications for artists of an increasing public audience for the fine arts during the period.

⁹³ Lowe, Mauritius, *An Ear-Wig: or an old woman's remarks on the present exhibition of Pictures of the Royal Academy*, London, 1781, p.3.

⁹⁴ See Myrone, Martin, 'The Sublime as Spectacle: The Transformation of Ideal Art at Somerset House', in Solkin, D, ed. *Art on the Line, The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*, exh. cat. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2001, pp. 77-92

⁹⁵ For example, in exhibitions of sculpture, while coloured waxes were not permitted due to their connections with 'debased' sculptural forms such as life-size, clothed wax figures, wax medallions and small busts by commercially-active sculptors such as James Tassie, and Alexander Mackenzie were accommodated within decorative portraiture. See Yarrington, Alison, 'Art in the Dark: Viewing and Exhibiting Sculpture at Somerset House', in Solkin, ed. 2001, p.174.

⁹⁶ Myrone, 2001, p.78.

entertainment of a sort that complemented the less accessible British Museum and Royal Academy of Arts.

While the term 'crisis' may be too strong, there was concern that these displays of *exotica* would have a detrimental effect on the morals of the public, writes Langford.⁹⁷ In his capacity as a Professor at the Royal Academy and as a patron of artists, Hunter would have been well aware of these debates; he would have been familiar with the Academy's ambiguous relationship to its general audience, taking notice, over time, of the changing demographics of the crowds attending. The public was an important component in Hunter's life and collection; his lectures on anatomy were, to an extent, addressed to the public, his museum was also intended for the public. However, it was Hunter's experience of antiquarianism and anatomy that provided a levelling of approach that is so evident in his own work. The craft skills of the anatomist, the delineation of information demanded by the antiquarian and an innate visual perception all combined with a heightened awareness of the growing opportunities in a consumer culture provide Hunter with a sensibility quite different to his predecessors, one that is clearly represented in his interiors at Great Windmill Street and discussed in chapter two of this thesis.

Hunter gained both materially and aesthetically from many of these commercially-oriented collections in London during the eighteenth century and there is evidence that some of his collection originated in Ashton Lever's museum. A catalogue entry from *A General Account of the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow* in 1807 lists:

A fragment of the most capital mass of the amber coloured ONACHINE CHALCEDONY, supposed to have been brought from the East Indies. It is partly formed in the cavitier, which have a fine polished mamillated or bubbled surface. Sir Ashton Lever, in whose museum it pre-eminently stood the admiration of all persons, presented this piece to the late Dr Hunter, and is now considered of the greatest rarity and value. L.800 was refused for the original specimen, being valued at L.1000. An elegant drawing in watercolours was made from it for the National Museum at Paris, by order of the Emperor Napoleon.⁹⁸

Sir Ashton Lever (1729-1788), a natural historian who came from a wealthy mercantile family, founded his own museum of natural *exotica* which had several locations around London in the second-half of the century. In an illustration that appears in the Companion Guide to the Museum (Removed to Albion Street, the Surrey End of

⁹⁷ Langford, 1998, p.609..

⁹⁸ Laskey, Captain J, *A General Account of the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow Including Historical and Scientific Notices of the various objects of Art, Literature, Natural History, Anatomical Preparations, Antiquities &c. in that Celebrated Collection*, Glasgow, 1807, p.40.

Blackfriars Bridge), 1787 the museum is shown centred around a rotunda; the majority of displays being exotic birds, while in the foreground are framed presentations of fruits and flowers which appear to be made from shells and other natural materials.⁹⁹ In contrast, the better-known image of the Museum by Sarah Stone (fig.9), dated 1786, shows the collection at Leicester House is dominated by an immense variety of shells, all within their own compartments, illustrating the changing tastes of collectors and the viewing public, and demonstrating Krzysztof Pomian's example of how conchology emerged as an intellectual pursuit for eighteenth-century collectors.¹⁰⁰

William Hunter clearly knew of the collection and its popularity. His interests would have been in its displays of animals and natural history, particularly, as is clear from Laskey's catalogue, the mineralogy. Lever's museum appears much later in the century but is still contemporaneous with Hunter's Great Windmill Street Rooms, a period when his collection was well-established and donations to the museum were not unusual. A sense of the scale of Hunter's collection before his bequest to Glasgow is made, is apparent from this extract from the Records of the Glasgow College:

The size of the building here is much too small for holding properly the museum. – Everything is compressed and hid, because the greater part of Dr Hunter's collection was made after the Building was erected. It is 50ft long, 27ft wide, and nearly 21ft high, inside measure. The collection is now so large as nearly to require three rooms to contain it, of this size, with one for the anatomical preparations, one for the natural history, and a third for the medals, books and pictures. This, I think is the natural division of the collection, and each will at least require a room 45ft long by 25ft wide.¹⁰¹

Matthew Baillie's description of Great Windmill Street after William Hunter's death allows for the collection to be historically divided into two separate spheres of endeavour, one pre-1768, before the Great Windmill Street project and post-1768 when Hunter began to make the greatest and most expensive additions, such as his paintings bought from Sir Robert Strange. Baillie also gives a clue as to how Hunter saw the natural division of the collection displays within the house, separated by three categories: anatomical preparations, natural history, and medals, books and pictures. Prior to 1768 and the move to Great Windmill Street, William Hunter's collection represented medical and scientific research, with a strong antiquarian purpose, after 1768, the collection takes on

⁹⁹ *Leverian Museum, A Companion Guide to the Museum, the Sale Catalogue of the Entire Collection 1806*, A facsimile reprint of the above two rare volumes, Harmer Johnson & John Hewett, London 1979.

¹⁰⁰ Pomian, 1987, p.123.

¹⁰¹ Extract from transcript of a letter from Dr Matthew Baillie to the Faculty of the University of Glasgow, December 10th 1802, in the Records of Glasgow College, GUA 26696.

a different role, with the inclusion of fine arts and numismatics and conchology, in natural history, taking greater precedence.

It is tempting to see this changing role of the purpose of the collection as a development or 'progress' of the phenomena of collecting generally and of Hunter's 'taste' as an individual. On a less formulaic level, the difference in approach to the Doctor's collection displays by the mid-century may also signify the many varied choices made as his social circumstances changed. The notion of 'taste', as pointed out earlier is difficult to quantify; in the eighteenth century, 'Taste offered disinterested discernment as a corrective to the crude gratification of appetites' and taste, as recent research has emphasised, was not uniform and precise – despite being written down as rules by eighteenth-century philosophers.¹⁰² It is, therefore, more useful to remember who or what led taste and how this was adapted and adopted by individuals in the period. For example, Roy Porter makes this generalisation with regard to Hunter's later collecting activities: 'Collecting was his symbolic act of assimilation into the values of high society, literally acquiring culture, while, as with the anatomy school, annexing tangible objects of control'.¹⁰³ Whereas, Hunter's brother, John, remarked that William Hunter's motivation for a collection of minerals was, in fact, because of the significant contribution made to his museum by the Lady St Aubyn in 1764.¹⁰⁴ No doubt, Hunter's collecting brought him into contact with members of elite society, but this was not solely due to a desire for upward mobility; as Langford describes, the professional classes in small, rural communities were often considered the elite in any case. Hunter's education had also already supplied him with a knowledge of classical culture and learning that constituted the social attributes of elite culture. While Hunter's collecting activities certainly helped him assimilate and cross over to a different social class, it was not his intention to emulate elite taste but to create his own opportunities and choices, achievable by his success at making money within a commercial culture. This is why Porter is right to say that what Hunter collected above all was 'cash elevated into culture' because he understood that it was money, above all, which would secure his legacy.¹⁰⁵

In a letter to William Cullen, dated February 22nd 1752, Hunter expresses his desire to invest his profits in his own creative work, he writes:

In two or three weeks I shall shew one plate finished, as a specimen of the figures of the Gravid Uterus. As a piece of painting I believe it will be found the finest anatomical figure that ever was done. So it may; it cost me a

¹⁰² Styles, John, Vickery, Amanda, eds. *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2006, p.15.

¹⁰³ Porter, 1985, p.30.

¹⁰⁴ Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.65.

¹⁰⁵ Porter, 1985, p.30.

devilish deal of money. I may be allowed to speak well of the drawing and gravings, you know; no merit thence to me.¹⁰⁶

Hunter is referring in this letter to Plate VI of the *Anatomy Human Gravid Uterus*, engraved by Robert Strange (fig.10). The image, as with the entire project itself, is complex, but the engraving demonstrates that as early as 1752 William Hunter was already ambitious to create a series of works that would encompass the ideas of the anatomist-antiquarians mentioned above and, in fact, surpass all previous works but also confirms that the work was to have a significant commercial appeal. As with the other artworks and objects presented in this chapter, Strange's illustration is a profound signifier of the range and scope of Hunter's connections and ambitions during his early years in London and in the early plans for his museum. It is rare to find an object in Hunter's collection that does not touch on the very immediate concerns of a vibrant and challenging culture that existed within London in the eighteenth century. Nor is there rarely an object that does not have a relationship to other collectors, dealers, artists and writers during this period.

In Jonathan Richardson's quotation cited at the beginning of this chapter, the author draws attention to the increasing availability of goods and services which, by the end of the century, would be taken for granted by the majority of people. As with everyday consumer goods, so the type of objects that found their way into museums became more readily available during the period but much of the literature on early museums like Hunter's, neglects the concept of consumerism within collections, as these objects are understood as non-consumable. Despite this, the examples given here represent the changing ideas and methods of display which occurred in museum presentations during the middle of the century, combining curiosity with commercial interests.

For example Stukeley's engraving from *The Anatomy of an Elephant*, represents the antiquarian society's ambition to develop a style of instruction that would also have an aesthetic appeal, an idea that would have been attractive to Hunter as a naturalist. The changes in anatomical illustration, as has been shown in the examples of Cowper and Cheselden, also impacted on forms of scientific displays, imposing a commercial appeal, with an increasing use of technology employed to capture natural phenomena.

The inclusion of a portrait gallery of 'great' men in scientific collections has been historically approached as a sign of emulation and admiration and while Hunter's

¹⁰⁶ Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.65. Brock continues to add that in the Autumn of 1752, Hunter invited subscriptions for the *Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* '... where one plate already finished by Mr Strange, may be seen as a specimen'. Robert Strange engraved plates 4 and 6 of the Gravid Uterus. According to Dennistoun (1855) Plate 6 required six months continual application for which his [Strange's] charge 100L. (See chapter four of this thesis.)

portrait of William Harvey clearly fulfils this purpose, it has also been presented in this chapter, alternatively, as representative of an interest in the chronology of collecting and collectors. The collections of Dr Mead and Sir Hans Sloane are, obviously, greatly important in terms of collection history in Britain, but, as I have argued, Hunter can also be placed within this historiography. The scale of Hunter's collection may have been smaller but in terms of importance, Hunter could be said to have created a new type of museum display in Britain, one that was visually appealing while providing instruction; from the outset Hunter was extremely aware of its audience. Unlike Dr Mead, Sir Hans Sloane and Sir Ashton Lever, William Hunter ensured his collection's pedagogical future in his bequest to the University of Glasgow. Despite the fact that Sloane's collection eventually went to the British Museum, this bequest was not always a certainty in the years just before and after his death; Lever's museum bankrupted him while Mead's was sold according to his own wishes. The context and chronology for William Hunter's museum, therefore, reflects the society evoked in Jonathan Richardson's text, 'ornaments' became 'objects of trade' and the Gentleman Naturalist was transformed into a more commercially-viable public benefactor, an *antiquario publico*, with a museum to match his public persona, as described in the next chapter.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Richardson, Jonathan, *A Discourse on the dignity, certainty, pleasure and advantage of the science of a connoisseur*, London 1719.

A Collector of the Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Britain:

Dr William Hunter 1718-1783

Chapter Two

The Great Windmill Street Anatomy School and Museum

He did not lose time trying out small pilot projects, gathering samples. His first project was great and worthy, either for the boldness of his views or for the sacrifices he was ready to make for its success. He buys land, builds there at great cost a monument he dedicates to anatomy and natural history. In this building, where luxury is permitted because he intends it for public use, a beautiful amphitheatre is to be used for teaching; and in a superb cabinet, where everything down to the light is arranged with art, will be organised the specimens of different species...¹

Felix Vicq d'Azyr, Paris, 1805

From its very inception William Hunter's house at Great Windmill Street, designed and built between 1767 and 1768, was a bold project. As stated in the quotation above, the plan to create a combined domestic dwelling, anatomy theatre and museum in the centre of London required strength of vision and an especially assertive confidence. In his eulogy to Hunter, Vicq d'Azyr, who would have been familiar with the story of how the Great Windmill Street anatomy theatre and museum came into being, makes reference to this history. Hunter had made sacrifices, not just financial but also, as will be shown, in terms of the risks that he was prepared to take. He had been extremely meticulous in organising the principal parts of the building and, in the way his museum was presented, he was attentive to every detail, from the application of decoration and ornament to the arrangement of the light. William Hunter's house at Great Windmill Street is presented in this chapter as a significant project that helps to place it within a chronology of the development of museums and sites of scientific interest in the eighteenth century. Vicq d'Azyr comments that Hunter did not waste time on 'small pilot projects, gathering samples' because his ambition by the 1760s was to create a different kind of research centre – 'a centre of calculation', in the terminology used by Bruno Latour – and it is evident that Hunter was physically forming the collection under this type of system, 'rendering objects mobile, next imposing a stasis, then applying a combinability

¹ Vicq d'Azyr, 1805, vol II, pp. 352-388.

throughout'.² However, as discussed in the previous chapter, Hunter was also acutely aware that his 'laboratory' was located in a highly visible and commercially-motivated city. He could not afford to waste time on small samples or trying to operate in isolation because the role of the scientist had changed so remarkably by the 1760s and the anatomist, in particular, was now a very public figure. Therefore how this public role impacted on the formal presentation of Great Windmill Street is also considered here.³

Before going on to describe the house in detail, of which only the façade now remains, it is important to recollect the origins of Hunter's plan which was first proposed to the Earl of Bute in 1763 as an idea for the establishment of a 'national academy' for the teaching of anatomy. Hunter's original letter to Bute survives in his collected correspondence deposited with Glasgow University.⁴ Written in the second person, it lists, modestly, the achievements that Hunter and his pupils had made in the study of Anatomy, despite the prejudices and difficulties they faced:

Scarce any science or art requires the protection of a prince more than Anatomy, as well on account of its great use to mankind, as because it is perfected by the prejudices, both natural and religious, of the multitude in all nations ... The difficulties, dangers, and expenses, that must be incurred, in procuring dead bodies, and in providing proper places for dissection, and the secrecy with which the business must be conducted, are such discouragements to the study of Anatomy, that few men, even of the

² Latour, Bruno, *Science in Action, How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1987, p.223.

³ This follows from the public perception of science and scientists in the seventeenth century that has been the subject of numerous recent studies. However, with particular importance for the ideas put forward in this chapter is, Shapin, Steven, 'The House of Experiment in Eighteenth-Century England', *Isis*, vol. 79. No. 3, September 1988, pp.373-404, where the author explains how the Royal Society and its members demanded a public presence be a formal requirement of experimental scientific work, and the implications of this on the presentation of scientists and their places of work and home within polite culture. A similar point is made by Pamela H Smith with regard to the public persona of the Dutch scientist Franciscus de Boe, Sylvius (1614-1672) who operated from a fashionable house in Amsterdam, complete with a collection of paintings and decorative arts. See, Smith, Pamela H, *The Body of the Artisan, Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2004, pp. 183-241.

⁴ GU Archives, Hunter 106. 1763. The proposal was published in 1784 as *Two Introductory Lectures delivered by Dr. William Hunter, to his last course of anatomical lectures at his theatre in Windmill Street, As they were left corrected for the press by himself to which are added some papers relating to Dr. Hunter's intended Plan, for the establishing of a Museum in London for the improvement of Anatomy, Surgery, and Physic*.

profession, ever attempt the practical part: and, without practice, there can be no great share of real and useful knowledge.⁵

Hunter remarked on how the practice of anatomy had changed and the science now required an element of public performance, to a great degree, and suggested that this could be contained and legitimised within a national institution. He writes:

A great school, provided with all the means of improvement, is much more necessary in this, than in any other branch of knowledge, *because it is less capable of being studied or improved in private*.⁶ (My emphasis).

While the Earl of Bute was Prime Minister, Hunter must have been confident that his plan would have a sympathetic hearing. However, in the end the proposal was given to Bute shortly before his resignation and this no doubt delayed its consideration significantly. News of the putative academy was also circulating in the press by January 1763. *Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle* reported:

We hear that an eminent physician intends to erect, at his own expense, in this city a noble Theatre in the form of the ancient Theatres at Rome; and that he also intends to establish an anatomy lecture to be read therein; the whole expense, it is said, will exceed 20,000l.⁷

The proposal appears to have been passed from Bute to his successor George Grenville (1712-1770) and then to the Surveyor-General's office and a list of possible sites for the school was compiled; Hunter was asked to provide a rough sketch of the layout for the building, and these appear in the 1784 posthumous publication:

It is required to find a convenient piece of ground within his Majesty's lands in Westminster, large enough for a Dwelling-house, a Theatre, and a Museum, for carrying out Dr. Hunter's plan into execution; but there being no petition or memorial from the Doctor, nor any reference to the Surveyor General; verbal directions were given by Mr Dyson, to the Deputy Surveyor, referring him to the Doctor for a quantity of ground and situation thereto; accordingly the Doctor delivered a sketch of his design, whereby it appears, that a piece of ground, of about thirty rod, or of the dimensions of one hundred and twelve feet in front, by seventy-one feet in depth, is wanted for his use.⁸

Despite the original Surveyor-General's report which stated that at the site at Scotland Yard it, 'does not seem possible to find one piece of ground there, large enough to answer the intended purpose', in a report that was given to George III by

⁵ Hunter, 1784, p.118.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle*, January 3rd 1763

⁸ Hunter, 1784, p.121.

Caesar Hawkins (1711-1786), Surgeon to the King, it was suggested that Hunter be given, 'two old houses in Scotland-Yard, which the proprietor has begun to repair for the twenty-five remaining years of his lease. He asks one thousand pounds for them. These, with a row of little houses belonging to the scullery, would answer the purpose for situation and space'.⁹ By January 1765, the plan still appeared to be under consideration, with *Lloyd's Evening Post* reporting:

A great anatomist at the West End of town has obtained the promise of a grant of a piece of ground in Scotland Yard for erecting a theatre there for reading public lectures in Anatomy, and it is also said, that a Professor will be appointed, with a salary of 100l per annum.¹⁰

However, in frustration at the lack of progress on securing the land at Scotland Yard, Hunter wrote to George Grenville, instructing him that if he had no response to his request for action on the proposal by February 1765, he was withdrawing his offer:

However, as this is the last time that I shall give you any trouble about this affair, to cut off all suspicion of my having made a sham proposal, I will take the liberty to say, that if any order be given for the ground, before the first day of February next, I shall be ready to go on with the plan: otherwise, I am so circumstanced that I never can, and never will.¹¹

It could be argued that William Hunter had been unfortunate in his timing of this proposal and that, no doubt, Grenville had his own reasons for ignoring the request. Nevertheless, 'the plan for a public school of anatomy, failing to obtain government support, came to nothing'.¹² There may have been more complex reasons than simply a change of administration, however, which put a halt to Hunter's ambitions. The study of anatomy may have been popular within the burgeoning professions of physicians and surgeons, but many others did not share this enthusiasm. Hunter's stress, in his letter, on the need for a continuous supply of cadavers for such a school—and his request that the King approve the business—would have caused government ministers to imagine a scenario where London would become renowned for tolerating, or worse, legitimising, a trade in human bodies, despite the fact, that on a less formal basis, this was already the case.¹³

By 1765, with Bute now in the background, Hunter had to take action into his own hands and he quickly set about finding a piece of ground in Westminster suitable for his

⁹ Ibid, pp.127-128.

¹⁰ *Lloyd's Evening Post*, January 21st 1765.

¹¹ Hunter, 1784, p.128.

¹² Brock, 2008, vol. 1, p. 194.

¹³ Guerrini, Anita, 'Anatomists and Entrepreneurs in Early Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol.59, No. 2. pp.219-239.

purposes. He commissioned the Scots architect Robert Mylne (1733-1811) to design a unique interior that was a conflation of anatomy theatre, hospital architecture, assembly and exhibition rooms. (fig.11). It was not the first time that the two men had worked together – according to Mylne’s diaries, deposited in the Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Hunter’s name appears in 1766, and then more frequently after 1777 with Mylne, apparently acting as his surveyor for a number of properties that Hunter had an interest in. The house at Great Windmill Street, however, was a significant project and committed both men to a collaborative venture that would secure an immensely popular site for medical teaching, in London, that continued throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.

Locating Dr Hunter’s House

The façade of William Hunter’s House at 16 Great Windmill Street is all that remains of what was once a grand and imposing structure in a relatively narrow space between the Haymarket and the Southside of Soho in London. This remnant of the house still manages to give an impression of the sheer scale of Hunter’s project, a sort of ‘country house’ but in the city. Originally, the façade was fronted with a porch of Ionic columns, similar to the famous Assembly Rooms at Almack’s (opened in 1764) which were also designed by Mylne and discussed later in this chapter.¹⁴

William Hunter had lived at several addresses in London from his arrival there in 1740 until the time he finally settled in Great Windmill Street in 1767/1768. These were, in chronological order: St Alban’s Street, Pall Mall (with the man-midwife William Smellie), Red Lion Square (in the household of Dr James Douglas), Hatton Garden, Covent Garden, Jermyn Street and Lichfield Street.¹⁵ Hunter’s pattern of addresses may seem transient but over a period of twenty-five years it is fairly static in nature, particularly when compared to other young professionals arriving in London. The mobility of the population and fluctuations in availability of accommodation in eighteenth-century London, where even the ‘middling sort’ typically lodged in one or two rooms in a shared house, is reflected in this constantly changing patterns of address.¹⁶

While Hunter’s social class and occupation provided him with a greater degree of security of housing, the prevailing conditions must have made it seem all the more important to find a permanent place to live and work. Hunter would have chosen the site

¹⁴ Woodley, Roger John, *Robert Mylne (1733-1811), The Bridge between Architecture and Engineering*, PhD Thesis (unpublished) Courtauld Institute of Art, London 1998, p.69.

¹⁵ Brock, 2008, vol. 1, pp.1-282.

¹⁶ Guillery, Peter, *The Small House in Eighteenth Century London: A Social and Architectural History*, Paul Mellon in association with English Heritage, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2004, p.30.

in Great Windmill Street very carefully and although his decision to move there would have encompassed some degree of chance, he was making definite statements about his social position and the place of his profession in London society. Within this crowded and transitional city, Hunter's house stops just short of the quieter and leafier newly-built areas of Westminster and is located, quite deliberately, around one of the busiest, commercial districts. The Rate Books for the Parish of St James's show that Hunter paid more than his neighbours, presumably due to the size of his house and museum.¹⁷

No doubt a move from Lichfield Street to Great Windmill Street was a move up the social scale and in this Hunter was following a pattern that had begun with artists and tradesmen by mid-century. For example, Giles Walkley remarks how 'a good third of the first (Royal) Academicians are seen to be directly engaged in the design and decoration of houses, not only houses in town but new or improved family seats in the country as well'.¹⁸ With the plans for his museum and anatomy school in mind, however, it is a proximity to artists, tradesmen/women craftsmen/women, dealers and shops which was important to Hunter. 'The south side of the [Panton] street had a pawnbroker, a cabinetmaker, and glover, a glazier, a brandy merchant, and milliners and mercers'.¹⁹

In Helen Clifford's comprehensive study of silversmiths in London, she summarises the commercial aspects of this area of London and emphasises the predominantly craft-oriented nature of its population; it was not an area dominated by the elite, but was made up of many Londoners who would have recognised themselves as artisans or journeymen, supplying goods and services to their artist neighbours, such as Benjamin West, for example, who lived in Panton Square from 1768 to 1775. The area had a distinctly 'middling-sort' ambience, with 'more than a third of Westminster's eighteenth-century electors broadly identifiable as artisans'.²⁰

The removal of the artisan class - the middling sort - and the elite from the areas around Covent Garden, westbound, spurred on much of the development of this part of Westminster. It was 'improved' to incorporate street lighting, paving slabs and open spaces, ensured by a number of Building Acts, (1764, 1772 and 1774). These improvements were part of an ongoing campaign to create work for artists, architects and designers that would have a beneficial effect on society in general. Westminster was

¹⁷ 'Dr William Hunter Rent £120. Poor Rate 8.10.0 Rates for cleaning the streets 10.0. Total 9.0'. Rents of those around him in the street were typically £8-15 per annum, Parish of St James's Rate Books, Westminster City Archives, Collection of Records of Westminster City Council and the various authorities which superseded it 1679-1962.

¹⁸ Walkley, Giles, *Artists' Houses in London 1764-1914*, Scholar Press, Aldershot, 1994, p. 3.

¹⁹ Clifford, Helen, *Silver in London, The Parker and Wakelin Partnership 1760-1776*, in Berg, Maxine, *Pleasure and Luxury in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Maxine Berg, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p.262.

²⁰ Guillery, 2004, p.17.

singled out as an example of how the ‘improved’ living standards enjoyed by the professional classes and the elite would soon spread to those of an inferior class:

In the same proportion as publick magnificence increases, in the same proportion will a love of elegance increase among all ranks and degrees of people, and that refinement of taste, which in a nobleman produces true magnificence and elegance, will in a mechanic produce at least cleanliness and decorum.²¹

Westminster, with its diverse population, was an up-and-coming area and the location served Hunter well as a respectable address for visiting clients and students. It was also convenient for a number of his professional activities: The Royal Academy, the British Lying-in Hospital (in Brownlow Street, where Hunter continued as a consultant after he resigned as its Physician) and The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, (which met initially in Rawthmell’s Coffee House, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden but by 1774 had moved into its present location – The Adelphi, off the Strand) were all a short stroll from Great Windmill Street. Hunter’s house, therefore, occupied a pivotal site within the cultural and commercial areas of eighteenth-century London society and Great Windmill Street itself (or rather Windmill Street) appears on Gwynn’s plan as a much broader and more significant street, at the junction of Haymarket and Piccadilly.

If the proposal of Windmill-Street &c. should take place, the market for hay, now a nuisance to the neighbourhood, should be removed to some more convenient spot for the purpose, as it would become a much greater thoroughfare than it is at present.²²

Therefore, Great Windmill Street was part of the ‘improved’ district, according to Gwynn, and no doubt, Robert Mylne, Gwynn’s great rival in the competition for the design of a new Blackfriars Bridge, was more than aware of the changes that were taking place in the district just as he was beginning work on Hunter’s house.

²¹ Gwynn, John, (1713-1786), *London and Westminster Improved*, 1766, p.17. Gwynn considered the artisan’s role as emulative, rather than inspired in this work and also in *An Essay on Design, including proposals for erecting a Public Academy ... for educating the British Youth in Drawing, and Several Arts Depending thereon*, Dublin, 1749. See, also. Craske, Matthew, ‘Plan and Control: Design and the Competitive Spirit in Early and Mid-Eighteenth-Century England’, *Journal of Design History*, vol.12, No.3, 1999, pp. 187-216.

²² Gwynn, 1766, p.132.

Architecture

Howard Colvin describes Robert Mylne as an architect who could: ‘...occasionally design something as strikingly original as anything by Dance or Soane’.²³ This comparison to George Dance the Younger (1741-1825) and Sir John Soane (1753-1837), the two most eminent ‘neo-classical’ architects of a generation after Mylne, is often overlooked.²⁴ Mylne is usually characterised as an engineer first, architect second. His interests did lie in engineering and, undoubtedly, his most famous work – Blackfriars’ Bridge (1760-9; dem. 1868) was commended for its innovative engineering techniques. However, Mylne clearly had aspirations as an architect and his designs, as Colvin remarks, pre-empt a ‘Neo-classical’ architecture popular in the later half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Mylne’s family credentials are well known: he was a direct descendant of the Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland and despite being apprenticed to Daniel Wright, a carpenter for six years and working at Blair Atholl, in Scotland, Mylne and his brother William took the decision to become architects and they travelled first to France and then Italy. In Rome, Mylne was the first Briton to win the award of the Silver Medal for Architecture at the *Accademia di San Luca*, for his design of a ‘public building with a memorial gallery to exhibit busts of eminent men’.²⁵ Winning this prize also assured him membership of the Academies of Bologna and Florence. Mylne’s success in Italy was intrinsic to his career development on his return to Britain and he quickly gained a reputation. William Hunter received a letter from Robert Foulis on February 5th 1761 asking for an introduction to Mylne for one of their students from the Academy of Fine Arts in Glasgow:

Dear Sir

I have given you the trouble of this by the bearer, William Cochran painter, who is come to London in his way to Rome, in order to fit himself for taking upon him the direction of the Academy here, and to copy some of the best of Raphael’s pictures in the Vatican for the use of this institution ... Having learn’d that you are an acquaintance of Mr Miln’s, Architect, I have presum’d

²³ Colvin, Howard, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840*, 3rd ed, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1995, p.680.

²⁴ The use of ‘neoclassicism’ is employed here in a ‘pluralistic’ sense, rather than an all-encompassing, monolithic meaning to suggest that architects and designers working in classical-revival styles in eighteenth-century Britain were motivated by cultural and educational forces, rather than simply a desire to imitate. See Coltman, Vicky, *Fabricating the Antique, Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2006. pp.1-16; Craske, Matthew, *Art in Europe 1700-1830, A History of the Visual Arts in an Era of Unprecedented Economic Growth*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, pp.7-22.

²⁵ RIBA Drawings, Reference: SA6413 (1-5).

to give you this trouble to procure a Letter to Mr Cochran to any of Mr Miln's friends at Rome whom he judges most proper.²⁶

Roger Woodley writes that by July 1759 Robert Mylne was lodging with a relative in Litchfield Street, south of Seven Dials, near Covent Garden.²⁷ Hunter also appears to have been living here at this time. Mylne and Hunter would have been well-known figures within the closely connected Scottish community in London and Mylne did become connected to the Hunter family through marriage (he married May Home, sister of Anne Home, wife of John Hunter, William's brother) but this was in 1770, after he had worked on 16 Great Windmill Street. Mylne was also the architect of Almack's Club in King Street, St James's. (1764-5) and would have been known to William Almack (d.1781) and his wife, Elizabeth, William Cullen's sister, whom Hunter naturally knew very well.

Robert Mylne's diaries show that he had a wide range of business interests in London all connected to property. As Woodley states, these diaries do not reveal much in the way of personal details – they appear to have been used by Mylne to keep track of his finances. There are a few glimpses of sources for Mylne's ideas and influences on his work. 'The right hand columns show regular purchases of George Richardson's publications of designs for ceilings, chimneypieces and so on' and a mention of the purchase of *Etchings of Ancient Ornamental Architecture* by Charles Heathcote Tatham (1772-1842).²⁸

William Hunter and Robert Mylne must have shared similar ideas with regard to architecture as Hunter's library contained many books on architecture and design – one of which is a pre-subscription copy of George Richardson's *Book of Ceilings* (1776) (fig.12). Howard Colvin explains that both Mylne and Richardson were influenced by the designs of the architect Robert Adam (1728-1792) and he describes Richardson as 'helping' Mylne with his interior schemes.²⁹ That Hunter was a subscriber to Richardson's designs, confirms that he actively sought to create contemporary, fashionable schemes for the decoration at Windmill Street.

The house was to present both function and decoration, with Hunter spending a great sum of money on achieving the right balance. He wrote to William Cullen in 1768, 'I am now collecting in the largest sense of the word, and I have already paid above

²⁶ Brock, 2008, vol. 1, p.123. Mylne was to become a significant contact between Scottish artists in Glasgow, Edinburgh, London and Rome. William Cochran went on to become a painter in Glasgow and painted the portrait of William Cullen which is now in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (PG 1479). Hunter also had a print of this portrait by Valentine Green in his print collection (Hunterian Art Gallery, cat 9120).

²⁷ Woodley, 1998, p.13.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 50.

²⁹ Colvin, 1995, p. 810.

£6,000 for my habitation in Wind-mill Street, which will cost me at least two more. I shall go into it in June'.³⁰ In *Creating Paradise*, the authors comment that a modest country house could be bought for £2,000.³¹ This brings into focus the amount of investment that Hunter was prepared to make in this venture.

Mylne had designed St Cecilia's Hall (1761-3) for the Musical Society of Edinburgh.³² The building combined a large room for musical recitals with a space for the collection and depositing of sedan chairs below. The music room was admired for its elliptical ceiling and overall shape, which contributed to its acoustics. An early nineteenth century description records:

Modelled after the design of the Opera House at Parma, but on a smaller scale, it is of an oval form; the ceiling, a concave elliptical dome lighted solely from the top by a lanthorn. Its construction is excellently adapted for music; and the seats ranged in the room in the form of an amphitheatre, besides leaving a large area in the middle of the room, are capable of containing a company of about five hundred persons. The Concert-room was in the upper portion of the building. Below was an arched and pillared vestibule, in which members foregathered prior to entering the hall. (The gallery shown in this image was added later in the nineteenth century).³³

The use of the ellipsis became a signature motif in Mylne's designs, although John Summerson describes him as having a liking for 'Neo-classical lunettes'.³⁴ Summerson dismisses Mylne fairly swiftly as an architect who was on the margins of 'Neo-classical' design in the middle of the eighteenth century. He points up the architect's preference for engineering but this underestimates the significance that technology, innovation and an interest in how buildings work held for architects and designers working in a neoclassical style.

Although Summerson writes: 'Robert Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra*, published in 1753, was the first of a series of works which made the English contribution to architectural scholarship of outstanding importance in the second half of the eighteenth century', he perhaps hesitates to acknowledge just how strong an impact these highly illustrative

³⁰ Hunter-Ballie papers, I, f.37, Royal College of Surgeons of England, London.

³¹ Wilson, Richard, Mackley, Alan, *Creating Paradise The Building of the English Country House 1660-1880*, Hambledon and London 2000, p.259.

³² Niddry Street, Cowgate, Edinburgh.

³³ Arnot, Hugo, *History of Edinburgh 1816*, quoted in 'The Musical Society of Edinburgh and St Cecilia's Hall by W Forbes Gray, extracted from the Nineteenth volume of the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, December 1933'. Information from the Sederunt books of the Society show a statement for the costs of the hall, with £3.12d being paid to 'Wilson, glazing the cupola'.

³⁴ Summerson, John, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830*, Pelican History of Art Series, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1953, p.273.

books of archaeology had on an architectural profession in its infancy.³⁵ Nicholas Revett and James Stuart's books were an important source for architects like Mylne not just for their delineation of the use of ornaments on ancient buildings but in how they functioned, how the materials suited their building types, and more importantly, how the buildings were used:

The works done during the republican stage of Rome are known by their simplicity and usefulness, while those of the emperors are remarkable for ornament and finery. Nor is it less difficult to distinguish the old simple dorick at Athens from their licentious Corinthian of a later age. But at Palmyra we cannot trace so visible a progress of arts and manners in their buildings; and those which are most ruinous seem to owe their decay rather to worse materials, or accidental violence, than a greater antiquity.³⁶

Here, the authors point to the use of materials as a contributing factor to the buildings' decay, not merely their age.

Of course, Robert Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia* (London 1764) exemplifies this type of investigation into building construction and engineering but earlier publications were also tentatively taking this approach. Stuart and Revett's next project, *The Antiquities of Athens* (1762) explored this interest in ancient technology further in their description of the Octagon Tower of Andronicus Cyrrhestes.³⁷ The authors' description of a *Clepsydra* or water dial, reveal their fascination for ancient methods of construction and design.³⁸

Hunter owned copies of both *Ruins of Palmyra* and *Antiquities of Athens*, he also owned a copy of Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia*. No doubt, Mylne, as an architect who had travelled in Italy and knew that landscape so well, had intimate knowledge of these works. It was this type of architecture

³⁵ Ibid, p. 252.

³⁶ Stuart, James, Revett, Nicholas, *The Ruins of Palmyra*, London 1753.

³⁷ This book, along with *Anmerkungen uber die Baukunst der Alten* by Winckelmann and *Emile* by Jean Jacques Rousseau, is cited as the motivation for architects to return to their 'primary sources' for technological inspiration during the eighteenth century. Watkin, David, 'Stuart and Revett: The Myth of Greece and its Afterlife', in Susan, Weber Soros, ed. *James 'Athenian' Stuart, The Rediscovery of Antiquity*, Bard Graduate Centre for the study of Decorative Arts, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2006.

³⁸ Stuart writes that on removing the deal floorboard, a white, marble floor was revealed which contained a 'certain number of cavities with channels. ... It is difficult to ascertain the purpose which these channels were designed to answer, some reasons however concur, to make it probable, that they are the remains of a Clepsydra or Water Dial'. The authors go on to make specific reference to the technological exactness of the construction.

and design that was to inspire the anatomy theatre and museum at Great Windmill Street School. (fig.13)

For his design of the City of London Lying-in Hospital (1770-73) a commission undertaken after his work on William Hunter's house was complete, Robert Mylne arranged a pedimented wing on east and west of the main central court with semi-circular-topped niches to incorporate statuary and the roof-line incorporated decorative urns. The whole effect is of a stark, neo-classical frontage, punctuated by windows and niches which resemble the columbarium and mausoleum architecture illustrated by Stuart and Revett. The interior, which Mylne designed in collaboration with Dr Hulme, the hospital surgeon and man-midwife, is described as having:

Above the central hall with staircase and back landing from which these wards were entered, was a large space used as a chapel or court room. Twenty five feet high, illuminated by windows at *piano nobile* level and the semi-circular light under the cupola. Only at roof level was any decoration permitted in the form of urns offsetting the cupola.³⁹

This description resembles the image which is known as the Great Windmill Street Anatomy theatre (fig. 14 and 15) and certainly fits in well with Mylne's architectural *oeuvre*. Constructed after 1768, Hunter's Anatomy theatre may have been the prototype for this chapel/court room.

Robert Mylne had been preparing the design of Almack's Club just before his work on Hunter's house started. As a highly fashionable place of recreation and pleasure, Almack's Club (1764-65) required a more decorative interior and it is here that Mylne may have collaborated with his associate George Richardson in the décor. This room was magnificent; over 90ft long, 40ft broad and 30 ft high, it was said to hold around 1,700 people. Almack's employs a typical Neo-classical stark exterior that gives way to a highly decorative and luxurious interior. *Life in London* represents the ballroom at Almack's as a highly elaborate and lavish space, decorated with pairs of Corinthian pilasters, swagged draperies, rococo mirrors, and two-tiered chandeliers.⁴⁰ This description appears later than Mylne's time but his reputation as an architect and designer was characterised by his ability to combine both luxury and utility, incorporated into a restrained, neo-classical style. However, ornament became a complex issue for the neo-classical architect,

³⁹ Woodley, 1998, p.50.

⁴⁰ *Real Life in London or the Rambles and Adventures Bob Tallyhoo, Esq and his cousin the Hon Tom Dashall, through the metropolis; exhibiting a living picture of fashionable characters, manners and amusements in high and low life*. Quoted in Rendell, Jane, 'Almack's Assembly Rooms – A Site of Sexual Pleasure', *Journal of Architectural Education*, ACSA Inc, 2002, p.144.

particularly when working on public buildings such as hospitals that required only the minimum of ornament, the priority for such building types was utility.⁴¹

Ornament became problematic when the building's function was that of public utility – excessive decoration suggested luxury and display and these were not considered appropriate on buildings that were often funded by charitable trusts and public subscription, a point made by Hugh Honour in his book on neo-classicism where he describes this complexity between form and function in an eighteenth-century sense: 'In neo-classical designs both decoration and function are dominated by purely architectural form, however impractical from the point of view of the builder and user (the pure sphere beloved of Ledoux is, indeed, an atectonic form which few would wish to inhabit). Function was suggested by form rather than decoration'.⁴² For Robert Mylne, the construction of an Anatomy theatre and Museum within a domestic town house must have pointed up some of these issues.

Anatomy Theatres

Ancient approaches to the living body and to the display of human remains came together with ideas of eighteenth-century commercialism at Great Windmill Street. Hunter's anatomy theatre needed to be functional but it also had to be fashionable. The demands of a consumer-led society eventually filtrated into the passages of those buildings that had hitherto been the isolated and confined spaces of the hospital and the schoolhouse.⁴³

While acknowledging the legacy of Ancient approaches to medicine, Hunter stressed the need for a contemporary advance of the subject:

After the restoration of Greek learning in the fifteenth century, it was so fashionable for two hundred years together, to extol the knowledge of the ancients in Anatomy, as in other things, that Anatomists seem to have made it a point of emulation, who should be most lavish in their praise; some from a diffidence in themselves; others through the love of detracting from the merit of contemporaries; many from having laboriously studied ancient learning, and having become enthusiasts in Greek literature; but more, perhaps, because it was the fashionable turn of the times, and was held up as the mark of good education and fine taste.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Stevenson, Christine, *Medicine and Magnificence, British Hospital and Asylum Architecture 1660-1815*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2000, p.198.

⁴² Honour, Hugh, *Neoclassicism*, Pelican Books, 1983, p.139.

⁴³ Stevenson, 2000, p.199.

⁴⁴ Hunter, 1784, p.14.

Just as the classical revival in Hunter's day signified a similar mark of 'good education and fine taste', it was simultaneously spurred by an eighteenth-century commercial culture that touched on all walks of life and the anatomy lesson increasingly took on a commodity status. To attract the best students – and his famous 'celebrity' guests – Hunter had to have a pleasing, rational, scientific space in which to display his talents. He would have known the very many precedents for anatomical theatre designs – having studied in Edinburgh, Leyden and Paris. He would also have been familiar with the Anatomy theatre at the Barber Surgeon's Hall, in the City of London, designed by Inigo Jones (1573-1652) and reproduced in William Hogarth's plate *The Rewards of Cruelty* (see chapter five of this thesis).

Anatomy theatres varied enormously depending on specific historical periods and cultural attitudes to the practice of Anatomy. The frontispieces to illustrated anatomical books give a good idea of just how varied these spaces were. They range from a single anatomist working alone in his study/room surrounded by his books and specimens (fig.16), *The Anatomist* by S. Van Hoogstraten to the crowded, bustling scene portrayed in the frontispiece to Andreas Vesalius's *De Humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, (sixteenth century).

What many of these interiors have in common, however, is their Baroque style of decoration. Some anatomy theatres were intended for public display and spectacle, and were suitably enriched with luxurious materials. The anatomy theatres at Padua and Bologna are perhaps the best known of these Renaissance scientific interiors. In Bologna and Padua, the main function of the anatomy theatre was not only as a space for teaching but a space for public display and ritual associated with the performances of the various professors at the Academies.

In Bologna ...the very design of the theatre – a large spacious room, its walls covered with engraved wood, inscriptions and sculptures – and the fact that the spectators had comfortable seats to sit on suggest a relaxed atmosphere, in total contrast with that conjured up by the anatomy theatre in Padua, where the students were forced to stand in six cramped rows, one on top of the other.⁴⁵

This description of the theatre in Bologna, is of a typical layout with the table to hold the cadaver in the centre of the room, around which are wooden benches. The seating arrangements were subject to a strict hierarchy of viewers, from professors and other dignitaries to students. There were musical performances and movement in and around the theatre was restricted by the conventions of rituals that had taken place over many years. The anatomy theatre was permitted to exist only if the professors allowed for one

⁴⁵ Ferrari, Giovanna, 'Public Anatomy Lessons and the Carnival: The Anatomy Theatre of Bologna', *Past and Present*, No 117, November 1987, p. 117

public dissection per year.⁴⁶ A second permanent anatomy theatre in Padua was completed by 1595 it was 'a more extravagant architectural construction ... Built of wood, the elegant oval shape created a streamlined effect. The stairs encircled the shell structure and served the ellipsis with various means of access, and there were eight windows, which existed in the previous construction of *Palazzo del Bo*'.⁴⁷

The dramatic, second, permanent anatomy theatre was also used for public displays of ritual and ceremony and was sometimes referred to as a panorama because of its elliptical shape and repetitive pattern of viewing stands that closely resemble the columbarium of ancient Roman and Greek mausoleums.

Robert Mylne's plan for William Hunter's anatomy theatre (fig.17) shows clearly that it was to be on the first floor and this seems to be a common location for anatomy theatres. This may be to prevent the theatre from being invaded/attacked by protestors against the practice of dissection. The space created by Mylne looks dramatically different in style to those at the Catholic Academies of Bologna and Padua. It is visibly stark – the only decoration appears to be the wall sconces in a neo-classical style, resembling ancient funeral urns. It is a modern, secular, space, adapted by Mylne to give a sense of rational scientific enquiry, not public spectacle, but it is also a fashionable, utilitarian space that coincides exactly with the type of early neo-classical decoration that was in demand in the second half of the eighteenth century and this must have contributed to the legitimacy of the practice of dissection taking place there.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that there was no trace of display or public spectacle in this space. This anatomy theatre had its own kind of patterns of ritual and ceremony that are described by in detail by William Hunter in his lectures:

Objects that are still more minute, and most of the preparations, must be sent round the company; that every student may examine them in his own hand. To prevent confusion, you will please to observe, that, in the first seat, the preparations are to go round from right to left; in the second bench, from left to right; and so alternately, to the farthest seat of all. To prevent loss of time, when you give a preparation to your neighbour, be so good as to point out the part, or circumstance which is then to be examined; as I shall do, when it is first handed round: and every student will recollect, that he is to confine his examination to that part only; for, were he to speculate upon other things in the preparation, he would not only wander from the subject in

⁴⁶ Klestinec, Cynthia, 'A History of Anatomy Theatres in Sixteenth Century Padua', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Science*, vol. 59, No 3, Oxford University Press, 2004.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

hand, which would reflect upon his understanding, but he would detain the preparation too long from the rest of the company.⁴⁸

Hunter's anatomical preparations were passed from student to student in a ritualistic manner; they take on a sepulchral quality. The preparations were not to be treated lightly; the serious business of making them and the nature of the objects themselves – human remains – gives the impression that they were handled in a ritualised manner, by the students, almost as precious objects in a religious ceremony.

However, William Hunter was keen to stress the modernity of his Anatomical theatre:

You may observe that this theatre is particularly well-constructed, both for seeing and hearing; a strong sky-light is thrown upon the table, and the glass being ground, that is, made rough upon one surface, the glare of sunshine is not admitted: the circular seats are brought as near the table, as ease in sitting would admit of; and, as they go back, they are a good deal raised which is a considerable advantage both in seeing and hearing; you may observe another circumstance in this theatre, which has not been sufficiently considered in buildings of that kind, *viz*, the table, where the object is placed, and by which the demonstrator stands, is not in the centre of the circular room, but about half way between the centre and the circumference; thence the seats make smaller segments of larger circles, in proportion as they are farther removed; and the spectators, in proportion as they are at a greater distance, are more directly before the object and speaker, which, both in hearing and seeing, makes compensation for the greater distance.⁴⁹

Clearly, Hunter had given this room much thought and consideration. Along with Robert Mylne he must have discussed the various designs and styles of anatomical theatres that they had both visited. While it is tempting to speculate that Mylne's treatment of this anatomy theatre was a case of: 'The physicist will instruct the architect about meek ornament, the beauty made by usefulness', this stark, neo-classical white cell is typical of Mylne's own ideas and architectural influences, from Carlo Lodoli to Robert Adam.⁵⁰

Museum

The contrast between the interior of the anatomy theatre and of the museum room in William Hunter's house must have been striking. A door placed at gallery level connected the two rooms, but despite their interconnectivity, they were quite distinct rooms with

⁴⁸ Hunter, 1784, p.112.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 111.

⁵⁰ Stevenson, 2000, p.198.

separate functions which only came together at specific times.⁵¹ Susan Stewart, in her book, *On Longing*, analyses the various forms and presentations of historical collections. She writes, 'the special organisation of the collection, left to right, front to back, behind and before, depends upon the creation of an individual perceiving and apprehending the collection with eye and hand. The collection's space must move between the public and the private, between display and hiding'.⁵²

Stewart's description here of the myriad ways in which the collection can come to summarise an individual's life or to become aligned to specific historical periods, illustrate the complexities involved in unravelling the intentions of Hunter's displays. For example, the anatomical displays were Hunter's working tools; they constituted his professional practice but they also worked as museum displays and for this reason would have been positioned by Hunter within the 'private, public, display and hiding', pointed up by Stewart.

As has been shown, historically, spaces in which anatomical collections were displayed and those where dissections took place often overlapped. However, in the frontispiece to Dr Frederick Ruysch's book, *Opera Omnia*, by CH Huyberts, (Amsterdam, 1744, (fig.18) the physician's collection of anatomical and natural history specimens is shown in the background, housed in an elaborate room, decorated with stucco detailing, pilasters and an ornate painted ceiling. Ruysch's own creations are placed on the top of the glass-fronted cabinets containing his anatomical preparations.⁵³ As in William Hunter's house, the museum room is given a distinctly separate space.

In Robert Mylne's plan, the room allocated as the 'library and museum' contained Hunter's natural history collections, books, coins, his extensive anatomical displays and, perhaps, some of his paintings. The proximity of the library and museum to the anatomical theatre is important and Mylne and Hunter designed the house deliberately to make a clear distinction between the practice of anatomy (dissection, preparing specimens) and the study of anatomy (displaying specimens). The design illustrates that both the architect and the doctor were carefully negotiating the working spaces of the

⁵¹ How William Hunter's collection functioned, spatially, between these two principal rooms of the house is described by Markus, T, 'Domes of Enlightenment: Two Scottish University Museums', *Art History*, vol.8, June 2, 1985, pp. 158-177. For a description of how William's house became a model for John Hunter's lecture theatre and museum, see Chaplin, Simon 'Nature Dissected or dissection Naturalised? The Case of John Hunter's Museum', *Museums and Society*, 6(2) July 2008, pp.135-151.

⁵² Stewart, Susan, *On Longing Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1993, p.155.

⁵³ Hansen, Julie V, 'Resurrecting Death: Anatomical Art in the Cabinet of Dr Frederick Ruysch', *The Art Bulletin*, vol.78, No 4, (December 1996), pp. 663-679.

house to comply with their ideas of, ‘... identity and difference which characterises the collection in accordance with the qualities of the objects themselves’.⁵⁴

William Hunter’s museum and library constituted the largest room of his house. The dimensions itself would have been impressive at 51ft long and 27ft wide, it was almost half those of Almack’s Assembly room, described above, and was, possibly, as intricately decorated, as Vicq d’Azyr, described in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, ‘luxury was permitted’. This room could have been accessed via the front of the house or by a passage which ran alongside the house, giving direct public access.⁵⁵

Ancient architecture and archaeology were the inspirations for Hunter’s anatomy theatre and this evocation of a classical, decorative scheme was also employed in the interior of the museum room and library. In his memoir to Hunter, Samuel Foart Simmons describes the house at Great Windmill Street: ‘In this building, besides a handsome amphitheatre and other convenient apartments for his lectures and dissections, there was one magnificent room fitted up with great elegance and propriety as a museum’.⁵⁶

The term ‘elegance’ is used here in a specifically eighteenth-century sense to describe a style that gave the impression of both luxury and comfort, ideas that were to become subject to intense debate during this period. John Crowley has emphasised how ‘Use of the term “elegance” increased dramatically in the 1790s ... Elegance had connotations of unpretentious, tasteful beauty. It implied neatness rather than extravagance. ... Elegance is a term applied to such objects as show a degree of refinement, or smoothness of surface, a delicacy of proportion, when compared with the general appearance of such objects’.⁵⁷

The room’s description closely resembles other interiors that Robert Mylne was working on at around the same period. As described above, St Cecilia’s Hall in Edinburgh employs a similar ellipsis-effect in the ceiling and overall shape. The caricaturist Thomas Rowlandson offers another impression of William Hunter’s museum room in *The Resurrection or an Internal View of the Museum in W-D M-LL Street on the last day 1782* (fig.19). Despite its satirical take on Hunter’s practice as an anatomist, the image

⁵⁴ Stewart, 1993, p.155.

⁵⁵ British History Online. Survey of London, vols. 31 and 32, St James Westminster, Part 2 (1963), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>, gives a very comprehensive history of the house and site at 16 Great Windmill Street.

⁵⁶ Foart Simmons, Samuel, Hunter John, *William Hunter 1718-1783 A Memoir*, Edited by CH Brock, University of Glasgow Press 1983, p. 24

⁵⁷ Crowley, John, ‘Landscape Architecture and the Cottage’, in Berg, Maxine and Eger, Elizabeth, eds. *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century, Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2003, p. 144. Here, Crowley refers to Dr Samuel Johnson’s definition of ‘elegance’ and ‘elegant’.

appears to be the only known visual depiction of the interior of Hunter's museum in Great Windmill Street. It corresponds with the written descriptions that mention a large room, double height, with a gallery and an elliptical ceiling.

Another contemporary viewer, the Danish entomologist, Johann Christian Fabricius, describes this room in 1782. It is worth repeating here in full:

The Cabinet takes the form of a large and high room topped by a dome through which the light enters. The lower parts of the side-walls of the main [Museum] room are fitted with lattices of iron wire, and in these is the library. A small gallery goes round all four walls of the room, halfway up, and in rows here is what is perhaps the finest collection in Europe of Anatomical preparations, partly dry and partly in alcohol. Behind these preparations are the fine large engraved copperplates of the Uterus, which Dr Hunter published some years ago. On the gallery itself are to be found hanging the weapons of savage nations, especially of the South Sea regions, animal horns, among them especially the gigantic horns of the Irish elk, and other large objects. At the entrance to it [the Museum room] stands a fine large mummy, and two fine, well preserved Egyptian deities in stone. In the middle of the room itself are two rows of double cabinets of mahogany for the collections ... The shells and the zoophytes, which last, through lack of space in the museum itself, have a room to themselves upstairs in the house, are especially fine. The collection of stuffed birds and a small number of quadrupeds fills two upper rooms in the house.⁵⁸

This account of Hunter's museum room is a reminder of how, in Nicholas Thomas's view, curiosity and the display of indigenous objects from the new world paralleled the accumulation and presentation of objects collected on the Eurocentric grand tour.⁵⁹ The juxtaposition of such objects within the same display, encapsulated the 'curious' approach that required evidence of first-hand experience of these artefacts, whereas the transmission of a discourse of colonial acquisition is, perhaps, less discernible.⁶⁰ Clearly the museum room made the greatest impression on visitors but the descriptions omit mention of how William Hunter presented his collection of paintings within the decorative scheme of the house. This is unfortunate because it was surely part of Robert Mylne's brief to incorporate Hunter's artworks into his plan. Mylne's rebuilding of the

⁵⁸ Fabricius, Johann Christian, *Briefe aus London vermischten Inhalts*, Dessau, Leipzig, 1784, translated by Professor Lawrence Keppie.

⁵⁹ Thomas, Nicholas, *Entangled Objects, Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1991, p. 126-144; Coltman, 2006, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁰ Thomas, pp.126-144.

home of Sir Abraham Hume (1749-1838) at Wormleybury, in Hertfordshire (1767-1769) was taking place while he worked on Hunter's house.⁶¹ Hume, who collected minerals and other precious stones, was a well-known patron of the arts, with a collection of over 140 paintings. Although Hume did not begin to acquire old master paintings until the 1770s, it must have been Mylne who planned the original layout and decoration of his interior.⁶² Despite its internal 'redcoration' by Robert Adam in 1777-79, parts of Mylne's original scheme appear to have been left *in situ*: 'On the entrance door side of the hall the columns are single, and on the end walls are tabernacles. These were unusual with Robert Adam, who thought that they had been overdone as internal features. It is more than probable that in outline they are part of Mylne's work which has been respected by Adam'.⁶³ However, early Georgian interiors often included tabernacle niches to frame wall paintings and this may have been their purpose here.

By 1767 William Hunter owned a number of what would have been considered substantial paintings, including works by Kneller, Reynolds, Rubens and Zuccarelli. All of these paintings would have required a particular allocation of space within the house.

Marcia Pointon has described, in *Hanging the Head*, how portrait paintings in the eighteenth century were given specific roles to play in the interiors of great, and modest, houses. They supplied a visual means of displaying a family's wealth and power in a way that was 'read' by visitors.⁶⁴ This function of paintings would have been all too familiar to Robert Mylne and William Hunter and their display in the house would have been given great consideration. Where paintings are positioned within museums and libraries, however, is not so clear. Giles Waterfield, in his recent essay on early institutional museums, writes: 'The assumption prevailed that works of art deserved a place in a museum collection primarily for iconographic purposes or as examples of skilful craftsmanship rather than as objects in their own right'.⁶⁵ From this it would seem that Hunter's museum and library may have incorporated some portraits at least. An image of Dr Mead's library, for example, shows pictures hanging on the wall, above the bookcases on top of which are displayed portrait busts, whereas Marcia Pointon remarks that in Sir

⁶¹ At Wormleybury, Mylne also designed additional offices, a kitchen, laundry and outbuildings, set around a long court to which access was given under a cupola gateway, *Country Life*, January 30th 1915. p.146.

⁶² Lloyd, Christopher, 'Hume, Sir Abraham, second Baronet (1749-1838)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, OUP, 2004.

⁶³ Bolton, Arthur T, Wormleybury, Hertfordshire, *Country Life*, January 30th 1915, p 148.

⁶⁴ Pointon, Marcia, *Hanging the Head Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993, p. 17.

⁶⁵ Waterfield, Giles, 'Anticipating the Enlightenment', in Anderson, AGW, Caygill, ML, MacGregor, AG, and Syon, L, *Enlightening the British, discovery and the museum in the eighteenth century*, British Museum Publications, London, 2003. pp.5-10

Robert Walpole's library at Houghton Hall (completed in 1738), the only painting included was George I in coronation robes by Kneller.⁶⁶

Therefore, the exact location of the paintings is difficult to assess particularly as any evidence is, at best, anecdotal. For example, among the Hunter-Baillie papers at the Royal College of Surgeons of England is a note from an ex-pupil of Hunter's describing his impression of the museum and anatomy theatre:

Many present remember, as I do, that the anatomical collection occupied only the gallery of the building in which the museum was placed. A most valuable and extensive library, and a costly collection of medals and minerals, filled the lower part of it, and served to demonstrate that the collector of these treasures could well estimate the value of other branches of knowledge, as well as those in the pursuit of which he was himself engaged. There was a collection of paintings also by the first masters, but deposited in other apartments.⁶⁷

This reference to a collection of paintings is contrasted with a letter from Matthew Baillie, Hunter's nephew, who inherited 16 Great Windmill Street, to Glasgow University, that describes 'the few pictures that are in the house'.⁶⁸ This, perhaps, refers to those paintings left in the house after the bulk of the museum collection had been sent to Glasgow. The artist, Robert Edge Pine (1730-1788) gives another clue to the possible location for Hunter's paintings: He writes, in a letter enclosing the two portraits of Dorothea Baillie and the Reverend James Baillie, on October 30th, 'I therefore ventured to reduce their size, as I presum'd the faces were what you principally would value, and they would take up less space in your room for better works'.⁶⁹ The words 'your room' could be a reference to the museum room as it was the largest and most significant room in the house.

The display of paintings in Great Windmill Street cannot be overlooked, however, as Hunter's collection represented his own relationship with artists, dealers and craftsmen. Just as Hunter began to collect and make anatomical preparations as his lectures increased in popularity, so his acquisitions of paintings grew in number after he was appointed first Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy in 1768. It is also important to stress that Hunter's role in the Academy and in its promotion of a British

⁶⁶ Pointon, 1993, p.21.

⁶⁷ The Hunterian Ovation, No 4; February 14th 1837, by Sir Benjamin C Brodie, p. 13, Hunter-Baillie Papers, vol. 6, RCSE, London.

⁶⁸ Letter reproduced in John Teacher, *Catalogue of the anatomical and pathological preparations of Dr William Hunter in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow*, James Maclehose and Sons, Glasgow, 1900.

⁶⁹ Hunter Baillie 1. f66.RCSE, London. These portraits are discussed in chapter three of this thesis.

School of painting places him in a position quite distinct from other medical collectors; it sets him apart from those who may have empathised with artists over their anxieties about the ‘relationship between head and hand, between learning and manual skills’.⁷⁰ Hunter’s practice as a teacher of art doubly complicates this relationship.

It is for this reason that the display of Hunter’s paintings must have had a specific purpose. At a time when there were very few public exhibitions of paintings — The Society of Artists exhibition in 1760 at the Society of Arts, was the first to show works by living artists — Great Windmill Street would have contributed another space that could be used for viewing works of art, albeit to a very privileged audience.⁷¹

A comparison with other museums, accessible to the public, in London during this period give a good indication of how extraordinary Hunter’s rooms must have been. For example, Rackstrow’s Museum of Anatomical specimens at Fleet Street, presented the typically macabre aspects of the practice that resembled Frederick Ruysch’s creations — with figures of women and children displayed alongside shell work and a ‘minute and accurate model of a seventy-four gun ship’.⁷² The bizarre attractions of Rackstrow’s were in complete contrast to the well-ordered and systematic displays designed by William Hunter and any comparison with Rackstrows, which had the usual displays of hermaphrodites and automata may have been looked upon unfavourably by Hunter.

The presentation of a collection of paintings — particularly Old Masters — in the same space as an anatomical museum would have served to ‘normalise’ these objects, in the public’s view, as ‘scientific’. By 1768, when Hunter took up residence in the house, the practice of painting was becoming increasingly professionalised, due to works such as Jonathan Richardson’s *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715) and *Two Discourses: 1*

⁷⁰ Jordanova Ludmilla, ‘Portraits, People and Things: Richard Mead and Medical Identity’, *History of Science*, xli (2003), p.305.

⁷¹ Recent studies have highlighted the diversity of exhibition spaces in London in the second-half of the eighteenth century, pointing out that the Royal Academy was only one of a number of exhibition sites. Although Hunter’s paintings and other aspects of his art collection were not on ‘public’ view they appear to have been made available to artists and other interested visitors to the house. Thus Hunter’s semi-public museum can be added to the ‘topography of display’ by the late 1770s. See Dias, Rosie, “‘A World of Pictures’: Pall Mall and the topography of display 1780-99”, in Withers, Charles WJ and Ogborn, Miles, eds. *Georgian Geographies: Essays on Space, Place and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2004, pp.92-113. This is also the subject of Matheson, CS, “‘A Shilling well laid out’: The Royal Academy’s Early Public’ in Solkin, D, ed. *Art on the Line, The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*, exh. cat. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2001. pp.42-

⁷² *A Descriptive Catalogue of Rackstrow’s Museum consisting of a large and very valuable collection of most curious anatomical figures and real preparations also figures resembling life; with a great variety of natural and artificial curiosities to be seen at No 197 Fleet Street, London 1792.*

An essay on the Whole Art of Criticism as it Relates to Painting ... II an Argument in Behalf of the Connoisseur, Wherein is Shown the Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure, and Advantage of it, (1719), described in the previous chapter. These acted as guides to the artist in how to behave and conduct himself in 'polite' society but also gave instructions to the connoisseur on judging and acquiring works of art. Both essays provided artists and collectors with a vocabulary that could be employed when making and choosing artworks. Although these books do not appear to feature in Hunter's library, he did own a copy of George Turnbull's *Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740), a book which has been referred to as being chiefly responsible for introducing the notion, to British art-theoretical discourse, that visual art's mission was to cultivate 'social' virtues. Its author was not an aristocrat and it was for this reason that the *Treatise* became an important text for artists such as William Hogarth (1697-1764) and Francis Hayman (1708-1776) and, perhaps, also for William Hunter.⁷³

As an alternative to the natural curiosities in Rackstrow's, Cox's Museum in Spring Gardens at Charing Cross – a location that Hunter would have known well for another great room used as an exhibition space by the Free Society of Artists of Great Britain - which opened in 1772, offers another type of museum space contemporary with Hunter's. James Cox was a well-known jeweller and goldsmith, famed for his intricate and luxurious designs, he took his work as an artist seriously and launched the museum as a place to display his own creations. By February 1771, he 'had engaged leading artists to refurbish the Great Room in the former Huguenot chapel in Spring Gardens, near Charing Cross. The Wyatt brothers, then completing the Pantheon in Oxford Street, may have been responsible for the major works, ... [they] also helped to design at least one of the grand exhibits, while others were ornamented with paintings by Johann Zoffany and sculpture by Joseph Nollekens and Agostino Carlini'.⁷⁴ And Cox's guide to the collection describes, first of all, the sumptuous interiors:

The room is fitted up and decorated in an elegant manner: On the ceiling of the dome are fine paintings in chiaroscuro, by a celebrated artists (perhaps Angelica Kauffmann) as are the sides of the dome by the same, with emblems of the Liberal Arts, Music, Sculpture, Painting and Mathematics, which are, in this Museum so eminently displayed ... the doors also are white

⁷³ Solkin, David, *Painting for Money, The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1992.

⁷⁴ Smith, Roger, 'James Cox (1723-1800): A Revised Biography', *Burlington Magazine*, vol 142, No. 1167, (June, 2000), pp.353-361. See also, Pointon, Marcia, 'Dealer in Magic: James Cox's Jewellery Museum and the Economics of Luxurious Spectacle in Late-Eighteenth-Century London', *History of Political Economy*, vol.31, Supplement, 1999, Duke University Press, pp.423-451.

and gold, finely ornamented. A carpet covers the whole room, also the stairs.⁷⁵

Hunter may have thought Cox's 'Museum', with its displays of natural 'exotica' transposed into precious jewellery, absurd, but there can be little doubt that he must have known of its contents and he may even have visited it⁷⁶.

Craftsmanship was an important element in William Hunter's assessment of his and others' work. In his *Two Introductory Lectures* on anatomy, he emphasises the increasing development of the skills of anatomists in his lifetime; wax works of previous generations he considers 'tawdry', they show 'unnatural colours, and so very incorrect in the circumstances of figure, situation, and the like, that though they strike a vulgar eye with admiration, they must appear ridiculous to the Anatomist'.⁷⁷ In Britain, and London in particular, much progress had been made in the development of the craft skills of the Anatomist. 'But those figures which are cast in wax plaister or lead, from the real subject, and which of late years have been frequently made here, are, of course, very correct in all the principal parts, and may be considered as no insignificant acquisition to modern anatomy'.⁷⁸ This comment could similarly be applied to an appraisal of the work of British artists during this period. The influx of trained craftsmen and women and designers into London created a wealth of teachers and instructors that impacted on the eventual teaching of the fine arts.⁷⁹ The technicalities and fine detailing of craftsmanship were intrinsically connected to the theoretical aspects of the arts for Hunter. In his lectures to students at the Royal Academy, which are elucidated further in chapter five of this thesis, he explains:

Thence, in every subject when a human figure is represented which is either new, or treated in a new manner, the Artist after having sketched out his Ideal Design must execute and finish all the parts from nature. He can neither do this from his memory or imagination, nor can he take it from some other work of Art, because it is a new subject. The great difficulty of the

⁷⁵ *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Several Superb and Magnificent Pieces of Mechanism and Jewellery, exhibited in Cox's Museum, at Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, London, 1772.*

⁷⁶ Smith, 2000, pp.353-361. Smith writes: 'It immediately became one of the sights of London and, succeeded in attracting the attendance and approval of fashionable society and cultural pundits alike'. Pointon notes that visitors to Cox's Museum included James Boswell and Fanny Burney. Pointon, 1999, p.426.

⁷⁷ Hunter, 1784, p.56.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ In her essay 'Design Instruction for Artisans in Eighteenth Century Britain' Anne Puetz points up – the complexities of artistic training in both design and the fine arts. While Reynolds and the Royal Academy espoused a hierarchical role, with the fine arts 'leading' the crafts, often this was a reciprocal role at the least. See *Journal of Design History*, vol. 12, No 3, 1999.

executive or mechanical part in Sculpture and Painting is a reason why so few have excelled in those Arts.⁸⁰

William Hunter's painting collection gives the impression that he had a feeling for the 'decorative' aspects of fine art – for example his choice of Zuccarelli (1702-88), *The Hunting of Actaeon by Diana* (before 1762) (fig. 20) and *Hercules slaying the Centaur Nessus* (before 1762) (fig.21). Zuccarelli is usually described as an artist who painted 'decorative landscapes' in a 'light' style, often cited in contrast to his friend Richard Wilson's (1713-1782) dark and melancholy Arcadian images.⁸¹

William Hunter's collection of paintings include subject genres such as landscape, biblical scenes, classical mythology and portraits of eminent characters, family and friends. The materials are varied, reflecting the most popular mediums employed by artists during each historical period represented, these are, copper, slate and canvas. There are no fashionable 'conversation' pieces or large history paintings, implying, perhaps, that Hunter knew the space for displaying them would always be on a domestic scale.

A predominant influence on eighteenth-century museums - and another reason to suppose that Hunter included some of his painting collection within the museum space – was the publication of *Museographia oder Anleitung zum rechten Begriff und Nutzlicher Anlegung der Museorum oder Raritäten Kammern*, published in 1727. This reference book for collectors was written by: '...the son of a Hamburg merchant named Jenckel, who composed his writing under the pseudonym CF Neikelius.'⁸² An important aspect of this work is that it promotes the work of art as having a legitimate place within the collection as a source of knowledge. 'The estimation of art presupposes that it is regarded as an original product of the human mind. Created by man, it can also be evaluated and judged by man ... In addition to self-contained collections of natural products, the museum was also to encompass an art collection of its own – God's creations to be shown beside man's creations'.⁸³ Neikelius included guidelines on how the collection should be ordered, drawing on Ancient precedents and this description is similar to the layout suggested by descriptions of Hunter's museum room:

The location of the collection within a building has its own significance.

Study of the ten books of Vitruvius's *De Architectura* led Neikelius to suggest

⁸⁰ Hunter, William, 'Lectures on Anatomy delivered to students at the Royal Academy of Arts', extracted from manuscripts contained in the University of Glasgow, GU SpColl H46.

⁸¹ Waterhouse, Ellis, *Painting in Britain 1530-1790*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1953 and 1994, p. 233.

⁸² Schulz, Eva, 'Notes on the History of Collecting and of Museums', in Pearce, Susan M, ed. *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, Routledge, London, 1994, p.183.

⁸³ Ibid, p.185.

the desirability of a favourable circulation of air and a south-easterly orientation for the room containing the collection. ...Vitruvius remarks in the third chapter of Book IV on the arrangement of a room for the display of paintings, that it should be twice as long as it is broad. Neikelius further elaborates this recommendation by suggesting a central entrance and the placing of a large table directly on the longitudinal axis of the room. Bookshelves are to be installed on one side and shelves for the natural products on the other side of the room. Furthermore, a 'General – *Catalogum*' must be on hand, by which the use of the 'Museum' for scientific purposes is to be facilitated.⁸⁴

Neikelius also included a list of all the most famous collections known to him and described in some detail the art collections of the Tribuna and the Uffizi, mentioning the works of Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci.

Although a copy of this book is in Glasgow University special collections (Sp coll Mu41.e.45), it does not have a William Hunter provenance. Hunter did own a copy of another significant influential book on early museum collections however, Michael Bernhard Valentini's *Amphitheatrum Zootomicum* ... Gissae, 1720, a work that emphasises the collection of natural objects over those of the fine arts. There is no doubt that by 1768, Hunter was an extremely knowledgeable and sophisticated collector who would have been well aware of these conflicting precedents to the ordering of a collection.

In summary, the presence of a pre-subscription copy of George Richardson's *Book of Ceilings* (1776) in Hunter's library is referred to here as an indicator of the anomalous experience of the eighteenth-century museum interior. Representing a space positioned somewhere between domestic (and therefore private) and commercial (and thus public) Hunter's museum room typifies the combination of curiosity and commerce that evolved from the rooms of scientific experiment and classical 'learned' libraries. More than a 'centre of calculation', Hunter modelled his home to suit the prevailing demands of a polite culture that required public figures to take notice of contemporary intellectual concerns and fashionable entertainments. George Richardson's name is intrinsically associated to that of Robert Mylne and from this architect originated a plan or scheme to create a classically-inspired interior, suitable for the display of an extensive collection that included a diverse array of objects. *A Book of Ceilings* may be a working designer's catalogue of decorative schemes but its intention is to evoke a classical world taken from sources such as Stuart & Revett, and Robert Wood's innovative archaeological surveys. Richardson was only one of a number of craftsmen working in mid-eighteenth-century London but his book, and its place in Hunter's library, represents the meeting of this classical world and commercial culture.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.185.

Robert Mylne's design for Hunter's house survived into the nineteenth century, and after the removal of the collection to Glasgow in 1807, its most famous resident, was the surgeon, Sir Charles Bell (1774-1842). Mylne's scheme still had an impact on the new resident, as Bell wrote to his brother:

It would delight you to see me the proprietor of this museum, which looks great, even now in its great confusion—a noble room nobly filled. It is a room admired for its proportions, of great size, with a handsome gallery running round; the class-room door opens from the gallery. It would require a month to go round the museum with a book in your hand.⁸⁵

Unfortunately, Sixteen Great Windmill Street was demolished in the late nineteenth century to make way for the Lyric Theatre. The façade of Hunter's house remains but it stands in a rather narrow, mean little street that does not bear much relation to the commodious thoroughfare anticipated by John Gwynn in 1766. However, Great Windmill Street did become, during the second-half of the eighteenth century, the preeminent medical teaching school in Britain, with many of its pupils going on to extremely successful careers throughout the country and North America. William Hunter did establish an Academy to Anatomy, albeit in a less formal capacity than he had hoped, and it is this inheritance that Sir Charles Bell acknowledged when he took over Hunter's 'noble' room. It was not just medical students that passed through the Great Windmill Street Anatomy School and Museum however, the site also became familiar to artists whom Hunter knew in London as he, perhaps unintentionally, created a site that helped introduce British artists to the European-inspired study of anatomical form

⁸⁵ British History Online. *Survey of London*, Vols. 31 and 32, St James Westminster, Part 2 (1963), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>.

Chapter three

Patronage and Patriots: Hunter and the British School of Artists

And if those students who are happily born with Talents for design will take pains to improve themselves in proportion to the opportunities which the King will give them, they cannot, surely, fail of success. They will be amply rewarded in their lives, and besides their names will be handed down with their works, as the ornaments of their country, now perhaps near its full height in riches, power, science and arts.¹

William Hunter, 1784

William Hunter measured his ambition in terms of fame, immortality and money². It is not surprising to find in his lectures to students at the Royal Academy of Arts, this reference to the riches that await the young artist who is willing to work hard and take advantage of the opportunities presented to him. Twenty-eight years after he first arrived in London, Hunter's appointment as the institution's First Professor of Anatomy was a notable achievement but he sincerely was convinced that this level of career fulfilment was attainable to all willing to put in the effort. As Roy Porter has written, 'Hunter's claim that there was room at the top ... should not be simply dismissed out of hand'.³ Just as Hunter had benefited from his own hard work and successful medical practice, so the chance was there for any young man to become rich, no matter how humble his origins. Incidentally, Hunter's words refer to a type of patronage of individuals ('the opportunities which the King will give them') that had been on the wane from the middle of the century and that had hardly been completely responsible for his own security and social status, despite the fact that the King's support was still important in terms of institutional patronage. Therefore, his words to his students need to be read within the context of the state of patronage in Britain at this time. His work with artists, through his teachings at and participation in the St Martin's Lane Academy,

¹ Hunter, William, *Lectures on Anatomy to Students at the Royal Academy of Arts, 1769-1772*, GU SpCollections, Hunterian H46(2), H46(5).

² Ibid.

³ Porter, Roy, 'William Hunter: A Surgeon and A Gentleman', in *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World*, Bynum WF and Porter R, eds. Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 13.

the Royal Academy of Arts and the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures provided support in the form of social engagement that provided, not just financial but also collective assistance to those artists associated with these organisations. It was such organisations that eventually began to work alongside aristocratic patronage in order to provide security for individual artists that did not rely solely on obligation and deference. The consumer culture of eighteenth-century Britain demanded different approaches to the buying, selling and production of art at a time when the purpose of art itself was being challenged and diversified. This point is made in *Selling Art in Georgian London*, a study of the artist and dealer, Arthur Pond, whose search for patronage in the early part of the century summarises this changing society, ‘... Pond and others found themselves in a new environment where the nature of demand was shifting and unpredictable’.⁴ All of the artists that Hunter came into contact with were faced with this uncertainty, as he would have been. Discovering how they responded to the challenges of consumerism makes an important contribution to the nature of Hunter’s relationship with the British School of Artists. This situation is intimated by Martin Craske in his study of the visual arts of this period where he sees these as essentially divided into two camps: ‘... between those scholars whose vision is of a European art world dominated by commissions and patrons, and those scholars who consider it to be dominated by consumers and artists who merchandised art products within a recognisably ‘modern’ form of consumer society’.⁵ Both ideas have merit because this was precisely the contemporary state of artistic production and consumption. Neither systems of patronage dominated, as Lippincott notes, the overwhelming feeling was that these were new and unpredictable times. There were those, like Hunter, who thrived in a competitive and entrepreneurial culture but others found it intimidating, insecure and sought refuge in traditional art-patronage:

Making one’s money in the capitalistic market place offered constraints as well as liberties. The patronage of ‘great men’ could promise an alternative to expending one’s energies in venting entrepreneurial ‘schemes’ or promoting one’s critical reputation with the public. It could also offer ambitious artists the chance of working on large creative projects over long periods of time. It was primarily for this reason that British painters who hoped to promote the production of great works of history painting continued to place their faith in the rise of liberal aristocratic patrons rather than consumer markets.⁶

⁴ Lippincott, Louise, *Selling Art in Georgian London*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1983, p. 56

⁵ Craske, Matthew, *Art in Europe, A History of the Visual Arts in an Era of Unprecedented Urban Economic Growth*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p.19.

⁶ *Ibid*, p.72.

The fragmentary evidence that now constitutes William Hunter's relationship with artists from the British School is the subject of this chapter. Those individuals that once would have played a significant role in Hunter's life in London from 1740 have been reduced, in the context of his collection, to a series of names that appear to have had only a tenuous connection to the doctor. This is unfortunate because clearly the artists that Hunter knew were his friends and colleagues whose personalities and lives influenced his life and work. The chapter will bring these relationships into context and provide a narrative for them within eighteenth-century systems of patronage. The questions raised through Hunter's particular situation are: As patronage is itself a form of consumerism, how does this work in practice? How do the connections between patrons, collectors, architects, artists and designers become apparent in ways that are based on consuming but which also define their relationship to one another as prescient?

The British School of Art was a newly-formed and dynamic art community that emerged from the development of a commercial culture and the inclusion within Hunter's collection of artworks by artists from this school needs to be considered within a general form of consumerism, as suggested by Douglas and Isherwood: 'There are political needs for information which even more vitally improve the future scope and influence of the individual who can meet them'.⁷ Patronage, in the form of social engagement, provided Hunter with the means to acquire information and, in return, distribute information that would be beneficial to him and his associates and this was as important in the burgeoning professional art world as it was in the medical profession.

Clearly, Hunter's association with British artists had advantages for him both professionally and politically. His appointment as first Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy of Arts was in recognition of this association as his Diploma inscription describes:

We have resolved to appoint certain professors to instruct the students in various branches of knowledge necessary to the arts. We, therefore, in consideration of your great skill in Anatomy, do, by these presents, nominate and appoint you Professor of Anatomy in our said Academy of Arts, hereby granting unto you all honours, privileges, and emoluments thereof, as are consistent with the nature of the Establishment and compatible with the instrument of Institution⁸

⁷ Douglas, Mary, Isherwood, Baron, *The World of Goods, Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, Routledge, London, 1996, p.128.

⁸ Extract from the inscription on William Hunter's Royal Academy Diploma, dated December 15th 1768. (Although this was only delivered to Hunter in 1771, along with a covering letter from Sir Joshua Reynolds, see Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.352).

In very direct terms, the Academy Diploma sets out exactly the type of advantages Hunter could expect in return for his work: honours, privileges and *emoluments*. This type of privileged patronage was bestowed on Hunter at a time when he was well-established in his career and business life. His library, collection and museum, immaculately presented at his home in Great Windmill Street, would have contributed to his public persona of the *antiquario publico*, whilst another requirement of this important role was to be seen to support a native school of artists.⁹ Arguably, Hunter had been supporting artists virtually upon his arrival in London. He was advertising his patronage of Robert Strange as early as 1752 for one of the plates of his *Human Gravid Uterus*, as described in chapter one, and publicising his relationship with William Hogarth, a connection that extended back to his teaching days at the St Martin's Lane Academy in the early 1750s.¹⁰ Other works in Hunter's collection testify to a strong commitment to employing British artists. Of course there were advantages for Hunter in securing the work of artists in the early stages of their careers, who were easily available in London and keen to build up a list of clients. For example, he is known to have commissioned at least four paintings by the artist George Stubbs (1724-1806); three of which are still in the Hunterian collection, *The Moose* (1770) and the *Nilgai* (1769) which was commissioned by him in relation to his paper on the subject, delivered to the Royal Society on February 28th 1771 and *A Pigmy Antelope*. These are discussed in further detail in chapter five of this thesis. The painter Allan Ramsay (1713-1784) was also a close friend of Hunter's, painting his portrait sometime between 1764-65. Allan Ramsay had also asked Hunter to intervene in an attempt to resolve a dispute that had emerged between both the painter and Robert Strange over an engraving of King George III's portrait, a dispute that cost Strange his reputation.¹¹ This episode is also discussed further in chapter four of this thesis. There is evidence of other artists that Hunter may have known; the Smith Brothers, for example, *Cavern Scene by Firelight*, in the Hunterian collection is attributed to William Smith (c1707-1764) were regular exhibitors at the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. The artists involved in the production of plates for the *Human Gravid Uterus* (1774) also included artists from the British School, particularly, Alexander Cozens.¹²

⁹ Pomian, Krzysztof, *Collectors & Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987, p.198.

¹⁰ Hunter, William, *Lectures Anatomical and Chirurgical ...*, III, 1775, Glasgow University Library SpColl MS Hunter 1 (3), p.56; Hopkinson, 1984; See also, Black, Peter, 'Taste and the Anatomist', in *"My Highest Pleasures" William Hunter's Art Collection*, Paul Holberton Publishing, 2007, p .91.

¹¹ Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.101-103.

¹² Marks, Arthur S, 'An Anatomical Drawing by Alexander Cozens', *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, 1967. Pp.434-8.

Of the evidence that exists to demonstrate Hunter's involvement with British artists in eighteenth-century London, however, three individuals emerge more strongly than the others: Robert Strange (1725-1792), James Barry (1741-1806) and Robert Edge Pine (1730-1788). Although Robert Strange's experience of patronage is similar, in some respects, to that of Pine and Barry, his influence on Hunter's collection becomes more significant in the 1770s with the buying and selling of, predominantly, Italian Old Master paintings.

As suggested previously consumerism, in the form of patronage, may not specifically be on a commissioning basis, and certainly, Hunter practised a particular type of consumerism that involved the use of artists to develop his collection as an information system.¹³ The construction of this system is considered here in an analysis of Hunter's dealings with Pine and Barry. The first example involves the work of Robert Edge Pine, which is either a commission from the doctor or a gift, while the other example considers the various ways in which Hunter supported the work of James Barry. The role played by Hunter in the life and careers of these two artists provides evidence of the 'shifting and unpredictable' nature of British patronage.

A portrait by Pine

Within this complex world of patronage and commercialism, the portrait of *Dorothy Hunter, Mrs James Baillie*, c1757, (fig.3) by Robert Edge Pine, William Hunter's younger sister, that forms part of a number of family portraits extant in the Hunterian collection, is considered here as an important example of a female portrait from an artist of the early British School of Painting; one that owes less to Sir Joshua Reynolds and more to the radical political community of mid-eighteenth-century London.¹⁴ The portrait has to be read in the light of changing approaches to patronage during this period: 'In Britain, where citizens had unparalleled freedom of political expression, the rise of political radical movements had polarised attitudes towards patronage in a more gradual though no less fundamental manner than that in France'.¹⁵ Hunter's involvement with Pine at a time when the artist was associated with a group of radicals who, 'found that their political convictions completely prevented them from conforming to established patronage conditions,' accentuates the diversity of his character. ¹⁶ It emphasises the need to see William Hunter as a man who was politically and socially aware, someone who was alert to the very immediate concerns of the rapidly-changing conditions in which he lived, with an astuteness in cultural concerns that motivated and guided his collecting activities.

¹³ Douglas, and Isherwood, 1996, p.128.

¹⁴ Black, ed. 2007, p.148

¹⁵ Craske, 1997, p.79.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Pine's portrait of Dorothy has been dated, speculatively, to c1757 – the year in which she was married to the Reverend James Baillie (1723-1778). Pine also painted his portrait, although the two are not pendants in the conventional sense of marriage portraits. The portrait of Dorothy is unusual in the way that the artist has portrayed his sitter in a 'classical' style. This convention is not in itself uncommon but the date of 1757 seems too early for such a stylised portrait of a relatively unknown Scottish woman.

A letter from the artist to William Hunter reads:

Dear Sir,

This accompanies the portraits of Mr and Mrs Bailley, which I had some hope of presenting to you myself in the Summer, but was prevented going to town, as the pictures had been so long painted and frequently chang'd their places, they came to accidents which damaged many parts of them. I therefore ventur'd to reduce their size, as I presum'd the Faces were what you principally would value, and they would take up less space in your room for better works ... I am willing to hope that in this I shall not be blamed, and I am sure of a kind and favourable judgment of them as pictures.

Mrs Pine and your fine Girls joyn in best respects, with Sir

Your most obligd and sincere humble servt

RE Pine

As the letter states, Pine had both paintings in his possession for some time and they appear to have been moved around several times, probably from London to Bath when Pine went to live there in 1772. It is more likely that the portrait was painted sometime between 1760-1765, when Robert Edge Pine was known to have been painting female portraits in 'classical' attire and is known to have influenced Joshua Reynolds's own approach to painting females. As Matthew Hargraves points out: 'In portraiture he rivalled Reynolds, even forcing him down new avenues, by exhibiting female sitters in classical garb and mythological guises to critical acclaim'.¹⁷ (In 1764 Pine exhibited *Portrait of a Lady in the Character of a Roman Matron Sacrificing to Jupiter Conservator*, at the Society of Artists of Great Britain exhibition). He stresses that Pine's radical politics and his rivalry with Sir Joshua Reynolds meant that his contribution to the history of the British School of Painting has been obscured:

Pine had played a decisive role in the foundation and development of public exhibitions. He was the first to call for a public art exhibition at the start of 1759 and had even suggested the newly-founded Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (SEAMC) as a likely

¹⁷ Hargraves, Matthew, *Candidates for Fame, The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2005, p.171.

ally. Before West arrived in England he led the field in history painting and was instrumental in helping to forge a history painting based on national subject matter.¹⁸

Hunter clearly knew and liked Robert Edge Pine from his association with the SEAMC. He had also commissioned his own portrait from the artist, dated 1765, (Royal College of Surgeons of England, London), which, interestingly is one of the few images of Hunter that includes a direct reference to anatomy. What is not clear is why there was such a delay in Hunter's receiving the paintings. More intriguing is why Pine thought it appropriate to paint the wife of a provincial Scottish Minister and sister of a successful and, increasingly famous, anatomist, in the pose and costume of a 'Roman maid', a visual allusion that can be seen as having an affinity with contemporary radical sympathisers.¹⁹ This was surely not simply a case of Pine following fashionable 'taste', Dorothy Hunter is styled in a deliberate way because Pine knew something of her personality and character and of her associates in London. The paintings stayed with Pine for so long because his portrait of Dorothy was a politically-sensitive piece of work.

The painting of Dorothy Hunter is closely related to a form of female portrait that became popular during the second half of the eighteenth century, particularly among the fashionable 'bluestocking' circle in London. For example, *Elizabeth Carter* (1717-1806) by Katherine Read c 1765 (fig.22) (Dr Johnson's House Trust) shows a similar pose and costume. Carter, a poet, translator, and writer is shown with a quill in her hand and her head covered, in the style of a Roman Matron, rather than maid. However, Pine's picture of Dorothy resembles his own painting of the historian *Catharine Macaulay* (1731-91) c1774 (National Portrait Gallery, London) (figs. 23 and 24), particularly in its attention to historical accuracy of hair and costume. Richard Samuel's *Nine Living Muses of Great Britain*, c1779 (NPG, London) (fig.25) includes both Macaulay and Carter in his allegorical group but this is a much later painting, produced when the form had become almost 'conventional' as a way of displaying educated and 'accomplished' women.

The similarities between Pine's *Dorothy Hunter* and *Catharine Macaulay* are clearly visible in the intricate hair style, pose and costume. The intention is to make a direct reference with women of the Roman Republic – a period that was identified by commentators during the eighteenth century as one of democratic and active citizenship in the ancient world.²⁰ For artists like Pine, this was summarised visually in the paintings of Nicholas Poussin (d.1665), with their historical accuracy and strict attention

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ D'Ambara, Eve, *Roman Women*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p.5.

²⁰ Ayres, Philip, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth Century England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.10-14.

to archaeological detail.²¹ The fact that Pine has portrayed Dorothy's and Catharine's hair in such fine detail points to a significant aspect of Poussin's paintings of female figures, for example, in *Rinaldo and Armida* c1630 (Dulwich Picture Gallery) and is characteristic of a break in the style of British female portraits from the seventeenth century: 'There was therefore a dichotomy in attitude. Roman dress was worn in portraits so that one's image might appear timeless, but nothing was done to the hair that would make it appear strange and abnormal to one's contemporaries'.²² The attention to detail in these portraits displays Pine's desire for historical accuracy.

It may appear at first sight that these two women had nothing much in common but it is likely that Dorothy Hunter and Catharine Macaulay knew each other well. In 1752, a year after William Hunter's mother Agnes died, Dorothy travelled to London to live with him. At this time Hunter was working with Dr George Macaulay (1716-1766) at the British Lying-in Hospital for Married Women in Brownlow Street – Macaulay married Catharine (Sawbridge) on June 18th 1760 at Olantigh, Kent. George Macaulay was a leading man-midwife in London, and he and William Hunter worked closely together at the British Lying-In Hospital, where he set up a course in midwifery for women. Macaulay also wrote up two cases for William Smellie's volumes on obstetrics; in the second volume, *A Collection of Cases and Observations on Midwifery* (1754).²³

Over the years Dr George Macaulay appears several times in William Hunter's correspondence. As Catharine Macaulay's biographer has written, 'Two brothers, John and William Hunter ... were among his other friends'.²⁴ In a letter dated July 11th 1761 to William from John Hunter in Portugal, he asks that he pay his compliments to Drs Makaulay and Pitcairn and to Dorothi and Mr Bailly. ²⁵ Tobias Smollett (1721-1777) was also a close friend of Macaulay and Hunter. Writing from Bath on October 2 1762²⁶, he sends compliments to Drs Macaulay and Pitcairn. Therefore, Dorothy would have been well-acquainted with this small circle of professional friends that congregated around her brother in the late 1750s, Pitcairn, Smollett and Macaulay. Smollett, in 1764, wrote to William Hunter from Bath:

²¹ Although it is argued that Poussin's 'accuracy' was also culturally mediated. See, Warwick, Genevieve, 'Nicholas Poussin and the arts of history' in Scott, K, and Warwick, G, *Commemorating Poussin*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, Cambridge, p.134.

²² De Marley, Diana, 'The Establishment of Roman Dress in Seventeenth Century Portraiture', *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 117, No. 868 (July 1975) pp.442-451.

²³ Wyatt Cook, James, Collier Cook, Barbara, *Man-midwife, Male Feminist: The Life and Times of George Macaulay MD PhD 1716-1766*, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2004, p.97.

²⁴ Hill, Bridget, *The Republican Virago, The Life and Times of Catharine Macaulay, Historian*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1992, p.12.

²⁵ Hunter-Baillie Papers, ii, f.14, Royal College of Surgeons of England, London.

²⁶ Hunter-Baillie Papers, I, f. 90. RCSE, London.

If your sister is with you still, pray offer her my most respectful compliments and those of my wife who is in good health and spirits and send her best respects to you also. Remember me kindly to Jock, to Drs Macaulay, Pitcairn, Dickson and all my worthy friends.²⁷

However, by 1767, a year after George Macaulay's death, Smollett gives some clues as to the tensions that may have occurred within this group of friends as others became increasingly radicalised. In a letter to Hunter containing a tirade against his attackers, Smollett writes:

... I shall rather than trouble them on their Thrones of Beatification, address my prayers to the spirit of honest George Macaulay, who I know will do me all the service in his power, notwithstanding the Discrepancy betwixt my notions of Government and those of his learned spouse, who I am told, is now masculine above low watermark – pray excuse this nonsense as a Thing of course from Dear Doctor your much obliged humble servt Ts Smollett.²⁸

John Sunderland has shown, the years 1760-1765 witnessed a conflation of political radicalism with a burgeoning public exhibiting programme for the fine arts.²⁹ In exploring ideas on what should constitute history painting in England, artists were forming their own political allegiances. Sunderland writes:

After the accession of George III to the throne in 1760, this view of English history took on not only a general but also a particular relevance to the politics of the day. The Whigs, radicals and moderates alike, were disturbed by what they considered to be a conscious policy on the part of George III's ministers, especially Lord Bute, to win back for the crown a political power unknown since the time of the Stuart Kings.³⁰

Both Sunderland and Bridget Hill, categorise David Hume and Tobias Smollett as historians with a clear Tory agenda, although Sunderland makes no reference to Catharine Macaulay, nevertheless, her *History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line* (1763-1783) was considered by her contemporaries as following in the tradition of a radical interpretation of English history, and particularly of the English Civil War. Artists such as Robert Edge Pine and his pupil John Hamilton Mortimer responded to these questions of historical interpretation and their relationship to contemporary events by producing work which Sunderland has characterised as anti-monarchist. Sunderland identifies Thomas Hollis (1720-1774) as a leading influence

²⁷ Hunter-Baillie Papers, I, f. 92, RCSE, London.

²⁸ Hunter-Baillie Papers, I, f. 92, RCSE, London.

²⁹ Sunderland, John, 'Mortimer, Pine and Some Political Aspect of English History Painting', *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 116, No. 855. (June 1974), pp.317-318+320-326.

³⁰ Ibid, p.321.

within this group of artists and friends. Hollis held important positions in the SEACM (RSA) and the Society of Antiquaries, London. It seems clear that Hollis would have been well-known to both William and Dorothy Hunter, both through his friendship with the Macaulays and as a member of the SEACM. It was Hollis, among others, who approved William Hunter's membership of the Society of Antiquaries, London.³¹ Hollis was also instrumental in furthering Catharine Macaulay's historical research by lending her original material.

Hollis and his friend and collaborator, Richard Baron, played a vital role in collecting seventeenth century material. They rediscovered, and made accessible, many texts and tracts of the period 1640-60 which had been mislaid or lost. They reprinted works of writers that, but for them, would have remained largely unknown to the eighteenth century.³²

Hill makes the point that it was Macaulay's access to this primary source material that distinguishes her *History* from that of Hume who did not consult any original source material.³³

Only one letter exists in Hunter's correspondence from Catharine Macaulay, a letter of recommendation for a post of Matron at the British Lying-in Hospital on behalf of the widow of a mutual friend, dated 19th September 1768.³⁴ This suggests that two years after George Macaulay's death, Catharine seems to be still on good terms with Hunter. However, as Catharine Macaulay's, Hollis's and Pine's reputations became increasingly controversial it must have become difficult for Hunter to maintain these friendships, particularly as their republicanism became closely aligned, among their contemporaries at least, to that of the American revolutionaries. 'The political discourse of the American revolutionaries and their supporters had effectively appropriated and radicalised traditional notions of civic virtue that had underwritten high-minded cultural activity in former decades'.³⁵ Robert Edge Pine's portrait of Dorothy Hunter, therefore, took on a different significance after 1765. The insistence on historical accuracy was used by artists as a political act at a moment of crisis within British colonial and imperialist

³¹ On the 26th November 1767 Hunter was proposed as a Fellow to the Society of Antiquaries by Charles Carlisle, Gregory Sharp, Owen Salisbury, Thomas Morell, J. Ayloffe, T. Hollis, W. Norris, H. Baker, J Parsons, and John Letch. On February 15th 1768 he was elected and paid his fee of 15 Guineas. Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.274.

³² Hill, 1992, p. 165.

³³ Ibid, p.47.

³⁴ Hunter-Baillie 1, f.37, RCSE, London.

³⁵ Myrone, Martin, 'Patriotism, Virtue and the Problem of the Hero: The Society's Promotion of High Art in the 1760s', in Bennet, Susan, ed. *Cultivating the Human Faculties: James Barry Commemorated* (RSA/William Shipley Group, 2005), pp.31-40.

expansion. It was only after this crisis had passed that William Hunter could risk being associated with Pine's portrait of his younger sister, Dorothy.

An epic by Barry

The delay in the delivery of the portrait of Dorothy marks a shift in the relationship between Hunter and Pine. Despite the fact that his patronage of Pine was a promising economic and social arrangement, Pine's credentials in the early 1760s, as stated previously, were promising and he was considered a rising star of the new British art contingent in London. By contrast, Hunter's involvement with James Barry seems a riskier investment; by 1777 when Barry began his series of paintings for the decoration of the Great Room of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Commerce, a work that includes distinctive portrait of William Hunter, (figs. 26 and 27). By this date the artist had already begun to attract attention over his criticism of the Royal Academy and its patronage by George III. Barry's etching and aquatint, *The Phoenix or the Resurrection of Freedom*, (1776) (fig.28) incorporates this view of the political patronage of the arts in Britain:

Barry includes a reference to the Royal Academy in his list of the abuses fostered by George III, for beneath the open book and the bust of Minerva with ass's ears lies a scroll which reads, 'Every like loves his like, Or 40 reasons why the shallow and half characters were in every Art so peculiarly selected and Patronised in this Reign.'³⁶

Of course, the '40 reasons' refers to the limit of 40 members of the Royal Academy who were allowed full membership and William Pressly has described this work as a powerful statement of Barry's radical sympathies. Hunter's collection of Barry's prints does not include *The Phoenix* but it does include a number of other etchings and aquatints that were either subscribed to by Hunter or were given to him as gifts from the artist. These works, executed between 1777 and 1779 were also controversial pointing to Barry's increasing radicalisation. For example, In *Job reproved by his Friends*, 1777 (fig.29) and *The Conversion of Polemon*, 1778 (fig.30) Barry makes several references to contemporary aesthetic theory (Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1757) and radical politics. *Job reproved by his Friends* is dedicated to the author of the treatise and as Pressly has emphasised, the dramatic scene evokes dread and dismay at the overreaching power of God's will. However, it also alludes to Burke's political career, his sympathies with American colonial dissenters (the masculine features of Job's wife, disfigured by God's wrath, are intended to resemble William Pitt the Elder, Lord Chatham, another politician who spoke out against British

³⁶ Pressly, William L, *The Life and Art of James Barry*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1981, p.78.

policy in America) and promoter of individual freedoms. The work is therefore recognised as a comment on contemporary politics, but, as Pressly points out Burke was by this time not on good terms with Barry; his patience had been tried too often by Barry's insistence on rejecting formal patronage arrangements. Burke had supported Barry for many years and funded his tour of Italy and France, once back in London the two friends became estranged.³⁷

A letter by Barry to Charles James Fox (published in *The Life and Works of James Barry*, 1809) makes the connection between the two works *Job reproved by his Friends* and *The Conversion of Polemon*, particularly in the facial features of Job's friend, with his hand pointing towards him and in Zenocrates, which are intended to represent Burke. This letter, written over two decades later, confirms Barry's intentions that the images had contemporary political and social meanings. These can be discerned clearly in *The Conversion of Polemon*; Polemon (Charles James Fox) is converted by the teachings of Zenocrates (Edmund Burke) and gives up his wayward lifestyle to tackle the serious issues of political life.³⁸ However, in this letter Barry also reveals an understanding of how patronage worked that is often underestimated and perhaps explains why his relationship with William Hunter lasted up until Hunter's death in 1783. Barry writes about his involvement with a community of radicals who met in St Paul's Coffee House:

About this time your (Fox's) political conduct upon ye American question was much distinguished and could not fail of being frequently upon ye Tapis at our Clubb. For a long time it gave me no small mortification to observe that, in certain matters relating to those grand questions, some of my excellent dissenting friends ... knew not how to make ye necessary allowances for ye fashionable follies of young men of rank and fortune & accordingly in one of my discussions on this subject at ye Clubb, I urged that as Mr Fox's eccentricities were in common with all ye young men of high rank of his time & that as his genius & fine qualities were not in common but were peculiar to his own.³⁹

In 1771 when Barry returned from Italy and became involved with this radical set he was 30 years old. He demonstrates an astute knowledge of social relationships and etiquette in tolerating a certain behaviour among men of his own age but of a socially superior rank. This practice of social circumspection is not often attributed to Barry. He is normally cast as a loner, someone who rejected social norms and who was unable to

³⁷ Barry, James, *His Life and Works*, 1809, London, p.252. Pressly notes that Burke's response to Barry's dedication of *Job Reproved by his Friends* was 'cool'. He sent a letter of acknowledgement, dictated by a servant while Burke was dressing.

³⁸ Ibid. p.81.

³⁹ Barry, 1809, p.252.

sustain a successful patron-artist relationship. Despite his evident anguish over his own shortcomings, however, Barry clearly understood the social dynamics at play; he wrote to the Burkes from Rome, in an undated letter: ‘... since these cavaliers (his critics), never so much as spoke with me, many of them never saw my face, and none of them my work, so that I see nothing even to hinder by being on good terms with them hereafter ...’.⁴⁰ By describing this aspect of his presentation as an artist, Barry is simultaneously conforming to polite behaviour while making it clear to others that he finds it difficult to do so, thereby constructing an identity for himself as an artist, struggling under the weight of his own self-consciousness – an aspect of his character discussed in recent scholarship: ‘... not that Barry was an outsider who forced himself upon a society that wanted simply to repel him. It is rather that what metropolitan society found repellent about Barry was also what gave his work currency’.⁴¹ Although, when reading Barry’s letter to the Burkes, there does seem to be a genuine fear of what was to confront him once he left Italy:

But I reflect horror upon such a fellow as I am, with such kind of art in London, with house-rent to pay, duns to follow me, and employers to look for. Had I studied art in another manner, more accommodated to the nation, there would be no dread of this.⁴²

These ideas present the complexities of the artist’s personality; like William Hunter, Barry’s work represented aspects of eighteenth-century life that did not sit comfortably with established ideas of politeness. Barry was striving to impose an ideal of ‘classical antiquity’ that valued the heroic individual, isolated and estranged from human relations, while Hunter promoted the practice of anatomy as an important progressive element to the curriculum of artistic training.⁴³ But their relationship goes beyond a shared interest in a ‘classical corporeal aesthetic’ and extends into an understanding of patronage that is accepting of both individuals’ values.⁴⁴

These shared values of both James Barry and William Hunter are represented by the series of paintings Barry undertook for the Society for the Encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, an integral part of the decoration of the Society’s Great Room between 1777 and 1783. Barry’s complex frieze was planned around a number of themes, all of which he explained in his book, *An Account of a Series of Pictures in the*

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.173.

⁴¹ Myrone, Martin, *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750-1810*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, p.94.

⁴² Barry, 1809, p.175.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 89.

⁴⁴ Myrone, 2005, p. 89.

Great Room of the Society of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, at the Adelphi (1783). By means of a conflation of contemporary society and the classical past, Barry sought to:

Illustrate one great maxim of moral truth, *viz.* That the obtaining of happiness, as well individual as public, depends upon cultivating the human faculties. We begin with man in a savage state, full of inconvenience, imperfection and misery; and we follow him through several gradations of culture and happiness, which, after our probationary state here, are finally attended with beatitude or misery. The first is the story of Orpheus, the second a Harvest-Home, or Thanksgiving to Ceres and Bacchus; the third, the Victors at Olympia; the fourth, Navigation, or the Triumph of the Thames; the fifth, the Distribution of Premiums in the Society of Arts &c; and the sixth, Elysium, or the state of final retribution; three of these subjects are poetical, and the others historical.⁴⁵

Barry's aim, therefore, was to display a didactic declaration, within a fairly public space, of contemporary Britain's achievements and explain its role within the progress of civilisation. Pressly has written: 'The paintings ambitiously attempt to show no less than the progressive stages of human culture, and behind this notion is the Enlightenment belief in man's ability to improve himself through education'.⁴⁶ Unlike the other paintings in the series, the *Distribution of the Premiums* is not historicised. The characters are portrayed in contemporary clothes and represent the most successful and ambitious personalities of the arts and commerce active during the middle of the eighteenth century. Barry's inclusion of a portrait of William Hunter within this painting confirms the anatomist's important position within this cultural elite. While it acts as a memorial to Hunter's achievements, the painting, like Barry's other works, can be interpreted within contemporary politics and ideology.

Hunter appears slightly incongruous among the range of individuals chosen by Barry to represent contemporary British (intrinsically metropolitan) society. He is placed between William Lock (1732-1810) art connoisseur and patron, to his right and the Duke of Northumberland (bap. 1712, d.1786) to his left, and behind him is the figure of Edmund Burke, left slightly in the shadows by Barry as his now 'former friend'.⁴⁷ He lacks the chiselled, aristocratic looks of the Duke of Northumberland and William Lock; nor does he evoke the mysteriousness of the figure of Burke. In his neat clothes and tidy

⁴⁵ Pressly, 1981, p.90.

⁴⁶ Pressly, 1981, p.92.

⁴⁷ Barry, vol 1, 1809.

wig—a type that was expensive and well made—Hunter’s social status is clearly intended to be interpreted as ‘professional’.⁴⁸

The painting is carefully constructed by Barry to be read from left to right. To the extreme left are those representing British industry, overseen by the Prince of Wales. The middle section represents women’s contribution to the progress of civilisation; women’s industries are represented alongside patrons in the form of Mrs Montagu and the Duchesses of Rutland (1765-1831) and Devonshire (1757-1831). To the extreme right is a group representing the fine arts and architecture and it is to this group that Barry acknowledges the contribution made by William Hunter. Much of the elaborate detail of Barry’s paintings is covered by Pressly in his book. He describes how Barry conceived of the project and, in the author’s view, successfully produced a group portrait bringing together these disparate individuals as a cohesive and harmonious gathering avoiding foregrounding any one individual over another. However, contemporary viewers of this painting would have been aware that the figures had been arranged and positioned to reflect not just their perceived contribution to cultural and economic life but their social status within eighteenth-century elite circles.

Pressly’s interest is in Barry’s technical ability to create a cohesive group portrait. He also, more interestingly, suggests that the iconography employed by Barry in these paintings contained allusions to Roman Catholicism intended to subvert the hegemony of what the artist considered a Protestant state which neglected to support a national system of art education and patronage.⁴⁹ If this was Barry’s intention, then the artist succeeded in cleverly concealing these conflicting interests. He did so not just at a level of nation and state but also at a level of the individual as Barry’s portrait of Hunter in this painting represents the artist’s support for a national school of anatomy in Britain (see previous chapter).

James Barry would have been aware of Hunter’s petitioning and of its ultimate failure and he would have considered this as another chance missed for the progress of art education in Britain. By portraying Hunter, posing with his anatomical model, Barry was making his own opinions public knowledge. Despite a lack of government support, Hunter, by 1777, was already running his own, extremely successful anatomy school at 16 Great Windmill Street, in central London and had been made Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy at its foundation in 1768. Barry made a similar point, in his allegorical *Navigation or Triumph of the Thames*, (the fourth in Barry’s series) according to Pressly, where by placing a portrait of the musician, Dr Burney, among a group of

⁴⁸ This type of wig is described as ‘expensive’, by Marcia Pointon in her exploration of the significance of wigs and masculinity in *Hanging the Head, Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993, p. 131.

⁴⁹ Pressly, 1981, p.92.

British explorers and navigators: ‘His presence was intended to offer a timely reminder of the need for a national school of music, and in his text, Barry was quick to point out that an earlier effort to establish such a school had been “set aside by the cabal of a few fanatics only”’.⁵⁰ The presence of an anatomist acknowledges the artist’s view that anatomy was also a valuable subject for the arts in general.

I am also not a little mortified at being obliged (from the same cause, want of room) to omit a very interesting matter in comparative anatomy, which it was my intention to have introduced in the hands of that hero in the science, Mr John Hunter; how fortunate, or rather how providential, that a genius, indefatigable and penetrating like his should have met with in his brother, the doctor, just such another to form and give it direction; and that the same exertions which give being to a virtuous affection amongst individuals, will be also productive of advantage to the public, to the arts, and to knowledge in general.⁵¹

The image of William Hunter also makes reference to the Doctor’s significant collection that he had now put on display in his London home. The portrait needs to be considered further, beyond the obvious norms of identity of the sitter, artist, date and provenance, as Ludmilla Jordanova has noted, the tropes contained within the convention of portraiture can include dress, hair, pose and any other related images.⁵² It is William Hunter’s pose that offers some clues to Barry’s feelings about Hunter’s place here; hunched in the small group to the far right of the painting, Hunter is pointing at a piece of sculpture in the form of a classical torso—similar to the famous *Torso Belvedere*. This is a reference to Hunter’s classical education, particularly in the arts and is derived from the portrait of him by Mason Chamberlin c1770 (fig.31) where he is shown in the process of lecturing, holding an *ecorche* figure, a type of anatomical prop developed by Hunter in his teaching capacity.⁵³ The motif is therefore a signifier of Hunter’s dual role as both anatomist and collector.

The pose has a precedent in the visual representation of collectors and their collections. One example is the *Artist’s Studio*, by Michael Sweerts (1624-1664) (fig.32), and dated, Rome, 1652. This painting shows the interior of an artist’s studio, with three standing figures surrounded by sculptures from Antiquity. The pose of the figure to the

⁵⁰ Pressly, 1981, p.103.

⁵¹ Barry, 1809, vol.2, p. 342, Barry’s intentions have been misinterpreted slightly: he did not mean to replace William Hunter with John Hunter, but instead include both brothers. See Allan, David GC, *The Progress of Human Knowledge and Culture, A Description of the paintings by James Barry in the Lecture Theatre or ‘Great Room’ of the RSA in London*, Calder Walker Associates, 2005, p.98.

⁵² Jordanova, Ludmilla, *Defining Features: Scientific and Medical Portraits 1660-2000*, Gallery/Reaktion Books, London, 2000, p.36.

⁵³ Black, 2007, pp. 92-97.

extreme left of the painting most resembles Hunter's pose. He too is pointing at a male, classical torso. (It is possible that Barry would have known this painting from his travels in Italy. According to the Detroit Institute of Arts, the painting was in the collection of Antonio Widmann, in Venice, until 1808.)⁵⁴ The gesture of pointing is used here to signify the artist's knowledge of antiquity but it is also a motif adopted in representations of collectors and collections. For example in the well-known image of Charles Townley and his collection by Johann Zoffany, *George Townley's Library at 7 Park Street, Westminster* (1781-3/98), where Townley points to an open page of a book, representing a dialogue between the literary and material manifestations of his collection of original and copied marbles.⁵⁵ Similarly, earlier in the period, Gawen Hamilton's *A Conversation of the Virtuosis ... at the Kings Arms (A Club of Artists)*, 1735, also portrays artists and collectors in a gesture of pointing at their objects of interest and to signify their expertise in the production and consumption of these works. Barry, therefore attempts to make no distinction between William Hunter's practice as an anatomist and his practice as a collector; both these occupations contributed to the advancement of knowledge, particularly for artists and Barry made use of Hunter's collection himself on a number of occasions. For example, in the early stages of his project, he wrote to Hunter asking if he could borrow medals for *The Crowning of the Victors at Olympus*, the first painting of his series for the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.⁵⁶ The letter is undated but gives Barry's address as 29 Suffolk Street, Haymarket:

Mr Barry presents his best compliments to Dr Hunter and would be extremely obliged to him for the loan of any medal or print after any medal or busts of the head of Pericles & Lycurgus, if there be any such which Mr Barry much doubts as there is nothing of either in the museum Florentinum, Capitolione, or in Fulvius, Wimms or Augustins but perhaps they (at least that of Pericles) may be in some other which Dr Hunter is much more likely to be informed of. It would be even of importance to be certain there were no heads of them as Mr B. be then justified in recurring to his invention those heads necessarily come into a very large picture he is now about and which from the importance of the subject will he flatters himself give Dr Hunter pleasure should he favour him with a visit.⁵⁷

Hunter was not able to supply the medals although Helen Brock notes that: 'Barry eventually obtained a head of Pericles from Henry Banks, the original of which had recently been found at Rome (Barry 1809) but too late for the painting and Barry had based the head of Pericles on Lord Chatham. No mention is made of what was used as the model for Lycurgus'.⁵⁸ No doubt

⁵⁴ Detroit Institute of Arts, 2004.

⁵⁵ Coltman, Viccy, *Fabricating the Antique, Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800*, University of Chicago Press, 2006, p.166.

⁵⁶ Brock, 2008, vol.2, p.262.

other artists made use of Hunter's collection; Barry, as Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy would have encouraged his students to request permission to visit the collection, and Hunter too would have invited his students from the Royal Academy to visit. In his own writings, he acknowledged the contribution made to the arts by medical practitioners, making sure to list William Hunter alongside Dr Mead and Sir Hans Sloane:

The professors of medicine have, (independent of their professional skill) been many of them eminently distinguished for various knowledge and great worth, and in no country more so than in England; our obligations to the public spirit of Sir Hans Sloane, and a Dr Mead, will be long remembered; and I am happy on this occasion, in returning my sincere thanks to that ornament of our academy, the father of English anatomy, Dr Hunter, for the assistance my pictures have received from the use of his most extensive and valuable collection.⁵⁹

William Hunter's appearance in James Barry's painting signifies more than a memorial, it provides evidence of a friendship that originated as patronage, as a form of consumerism, but which privileged shared values: both men used the other for commercial purposes and this included a form of political information gathering as Baron and Isherwood describe.⁶⁰ This is important to remember as Barry had strong views on the way that patronage was developing in Britain and devotes some long passages to this in his critique of 1798 – *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society* - a document that reveals Barry's perceptive views on contemporary economics:

Nothing can be more conducive to the true dignity or worthlessness of a people, to their real happiness, or real misery, than the way in which they are employed in dispersing that wealth, or overplus, which exceeds what is necessary for the conservation their existence, as it is from this root, or great source, that public happiness or misery flows over the land.⁶¹

How British collectors distributed their profits was of much concern to Barry but, unlike Hogarth, his worry was not that the money was being used to buy up 'foreign' art and not being used to support native-born artists, rather, his unease stemmed from a sense of a growing profligacy and luxury that promoted a kind of art other than the grand style. European-style patronage in the form of the church offered artists the freedom to work for a greater cause; this was not patronage in the sense that the British employed that word:

⁵⁷ Royal College of Surgeons of England, Hunter Baillie Papers volume 6, Ref: 52 108. P.10.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Barry, 1809, vol2, 1809, p.347.

⁶⁰ Douglas, and Isherwood, 1996, p.128-129.

⁶¹ Barry, James, *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society*, 1798, p.56.

In fashionable language, this mass of employment, this commerce of mutual considerations and advantages has been called patronage; a term the most impertinent and ill-applied, as is abundantly evident in the history of art, where unhappily we too often find its vigour and growth stunted and liable to blight when the great and their patronage came unluckily to interfere and tamper with it.⁶²

British collectors, in Barry's eyes, had no sense of this morality, this greater good. He writes:

This matter may not require much attention in countries that afford little more than the means of a bare subsistence, but it becomes of infinite importance in such nations as are exposed to a vast influx of wealth, which experience has shown can never lie dormant; and if it be not employed in arts that afford occupation and useful intellectual entertainment to the people at large will infallibly operate destructively, and produce such a corruption of public principle as must finally end in a worse than savage ferocity, and the consequent utter subversion of all civil establishments.⁶³

The strength of feeling expressed in *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society*, was responsible for the beginning of his process of expulsion from the Royal Academy and, inevitably, the end of his means of livelihood.⁶⁴

Commentators have noted what they consider to be Barry's self-imposed poverty. Pressly has described the artist's tendency to take up projects that were almost certainly bound to be commercial disasters, particularly, as with his paintings for the Society for the Encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, when he refused to solicit aristocratic patrons with engravings, preferring potential subscribers to approach him.⁶⁵ Martin Myrone has also distinguished this aspect of self-imposed exclusion in Barry's work.⁶⁶ *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society*, however, makes apparent the deep understanding that Barry had of how money and patronage worked in his immediate, everyday circumstances. For example, in the archives of the Royal Society of Arts there exist two receipts that Barry received for building services to his house at 36 Castle Street, one is dated 20th October 1800, the other 18th April 1805 – not long after the publication of *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society*. The receipts are striking for, despite the many first-hand descriptions of Barry's poverty, they reveal the extent to which Barry

⁶² Ibid, p.82.

⁶³ Ibid, p.82.

⁶⁴ Pressly, 1981, p.130.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Myrone, 2005, p. 89.

was excluded from normal, day-to-day consumer activities. On 20th October 1800, J. Tupper, collector at No 31 Castle-Street East, collected from Barry £3 14s 2d and this was for repairs to his windows, building insurance and land tax. The categories on the receipt for servants, carriages, horses, mules and dogs, four wheel carriages, two wheel carriages, taxed carts, horses for pleasure, horses, mules or dogs, are all blank. Similarly on April 18th 1805, John Berks, collector, No 2 Great Castle Street, collected from Barry £5 7s 8d for repairs to windows and building insurance. Barry received no shop men, clerks or porters; there was no charge for servants, hair powder, carriages with four wheels or with two wheels, taxed carts, horses for riding or drawing, horses in husbandry or mules, dogs, or armorial bearings (figs. 33 and 34).⁶⁷ Clearly Barry's deprivation and his lack of involvement in consumerism resulted in a skewed vision of his own superior morality. His pronouncements in *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society*, aimed at some of his colleagues in the Royal Academy, proved that he understood the mechanics of wealth and patronage but that he somehow believed that he could exist outside this commercial culture.

It appears ironic then, given his own personal circumstances, that Barry analyses in some detail the impact that collectors and collections can have on the fine arts in his *Letter to the Dilettanti Society*. Collectors he explained had the means to contribute to a worthier society: 'And so far as the expending large sums in collecting and making museums, filled with those antiquities for the study of the public, both artists and *cognoscenti*, the Medici family, and other great collectors, have been useful to art and great artists'.⁶⁸ And here Barry singled out William Hunter as the exception, a collector whose acquisitions could be of benefit to the public good.

These reflections [criticism of collectors] can by no means apply to the collections of such gentlemen as Mr Townley or the late Dr Hunter, the overplus of whose limited fortunes could not be more wisely, desirably, or usefully employed than when solely and exclusively thus applied in the service of the public, more especially when we recollect their manly patriotic disposition.⁶⁹

While Barry was losing friends quickly by the late 1770s, his loyalty to Hunter remained strong and perhaps because of their different nationalities (Barry as Irish and Hunter as Scottish) both men shared experiences of alienation within London's elite society, despite the privileges which came with membership of the Royal Academy and other fashionable cultural institutions. James Barry expressed these feelings to a much greater degree— in

⁶⁷ Papers relating to James Barry, Royal Society of Arts, London, AD.MA/104/10/403.

⁶⁸ Barry, 1798, p.89.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.90.

a form of extreme paranoia, while William Hunter rarely expressed this view although there is at least one example, recorded by Hunter's assistant William Hewson during a lengthy dispute between them, when he did express feelings of discrimination in his adopted country:

He was always then bent upon leaving his museum to the public and of establishing a School of Anatomy ... of late he had damned the country and said he would send his preparations elsewhere and not have them in a country where Scotchmen were so much abused ... at the time he was petitioning the government for a place to build on and was promising very liberally for the public.⁷⁰

As with other assistants, Hunter's brother John being just one example, Hewson became involved in a dispute with Hunter primarily over the ownership of anatomical preparations. Hunter also disapproved of Hewson's marriage and Hewson, in turn, accused Hunter of not allowing him access to his library – a privilege that he extended to others.⁷¹ It may have been Hewson's intention to cast William Hunter as bitter and resentful over the government's refusal to establish a school of anatomy but there can be no doubt that Hunter must have been frustrated at the lack of interest in government circles for his ambitions. Unlike Barry, he could not jeopardise his livelihood and career by making his most personal views public, but through his friendship with Barry, and other disenchanted artists and authors, he could participate in a community that shared a dissatisfaction and disappointment with a powerful cultural elite.

In *Pleasures of the Imagination*, John Brewer describes the type of critique contained in *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society*, composed by artists and aimed at connoisseurs.

The critique was not without effect. The public, whose knowledge of taste and art was largely derived from the annual RA exhibitions and newspaper commentary about them, became disposed to accept the view that artists who aspired to paint public history and adhere to a classical aesthetic should have greater authority than private collectors, whose concerns sometimes appeared disreputable.⁷²

⁷⁰ William Hewson, an assistant to William Hunter who entered into a dispute with him over his position as Anatomical Assistant. These notes are in the miscellaneous papers belonging to Helen C Brock, GU Sp Coll, H494, in which Brock has noted: 'This copied from notes evidently made by William Hewson in 1770 by Mary H Booraem'.

⁷¹ See Foart Simmons, Samuel, *An Account of the Life and Writings of the Late William Hunter, MD FRS and SA*, London 1783, SpColl GU Library, Hunterian ADD Q13.

⁷² Brewer, John, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, Harper Collins, London, 1997, p.281.

The view that artists had a moral obligation to produce work considered to be in 'good' taste was set against the 'enthusiasm' of collectors and this helped to promote the concept of arts derived from 'classical antiquity' as having a morally superior purpose. Artists such as Barry considered that art's purpose was to 'civilise' human nature and therefore the every day business of dealing and trading was of less significance. This is one reason why Barry in particular failed to understand that polite sociability, and therefore artistic success, depended crucially on commercial exchange and intercourse, unlike Hunter who knew this environment all too well.

In tracing the contemporary context for Pine's painting of *Dorothy Hunter*, *Mrs James Baillie*, and Barry's etchings and aquatints of *Job* and *Polemon*, within Hunter's original collection, the exchange of ideas that led to the commemoration of the Doctor's patronage on the walls of the Royal Society of Arts have been revealed in this chapter and with them, Hunter's prominence within the British School of Art. Rather than categorising Hunter's contribution to this community within the strict bounds of academic teaching and lecturing and attempting to position his work within a narrow definition of the fine arts, his commercial relationship with these artists has been stressed.⁷³

These two different instances of the range and nature of Hunter's patronage offer good examples of how relationships, defined through consumption practices, can be understood beyond the exchange of goods and services. For example, both these artists were committed to the practice of History painting but demonstrated an antagonism for a traditional form of patronage; one that tied them to the patron's affiliations and ideologies. A new type of patronage, therefore, based on consumer markets held more appeal for them, despite the fact that their ideas often meant working on one project over many months or years. Patronage such as that offered by William Hunter represented the shift in economic terms, identified by Brewer, Craske and Lippincott, where commercial relationships based on perceptive individual values could be exploited. It was a type of patronage that offered Hunter the opportunity to develop his collection into an extensive display of riches and power, science and art.

⁷³ Kemp, Martin, *Dr William Hunter at the Royal Academy of Arts*, University of Glasgow Press, Glasgow, 1975.

A Collector of the Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Britain:
Dr William Hunter (1718-1783)

Chapter four

Collecting Ambitions (1770-1783): The Grand Tour Paintings

Of that gentleman's extensive museum ... pictures were the only department in which his own knowledge was deficient. Mr Strange's connoisseurship was therefore freely pressed into the Doctor's service ...¹

James Dennistoun, 1855

James Dennistoun's observations on William Hunter's relationship with Sir Robert Strange reinforce the view that his painting collection reflected personal preference, rather than public benefit; that as primarily a collector of anatomy and natural history, Hunter was lacking in sound connoisseurial skills particularly with regard to the Old Masters and therefore relied on Strange's advice. It is a view that has persisted in much of the literature on William Hunter until recently.²

In Simmons's *Life*, the author describes Hunter's appointment as Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy: 'He now adapted his anatomical knowledge to the objects of painting and sculpture, and the novelty and justness of his observations proved at once the readiness and extent of his genius'.³ Despite this recognition of his talents, Simmons still manages to virtually ignore Hunter's significant painting collection. The paintings that Hunter bought from Strange's sale over three days in February 1771, one of the most significant sales of Italian Old Master paintings in London during the period, offer an insight into the ambitions that he held for his collection in the 1770s by which time Great Windmill Street was well-established and his various professional

¹ Dennistoun, James *Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange and of his Brother-in-Law, Andrew Lumisden*, Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, London 1855, vol. II, p.180.

² Laskey's catalogue lists 53 oil paintings within the Gallery of Paintings and Library in the Hunterian Museum Glasgow (1807) with very few comments or explanations of the pictures. See also Black, Peter, ed. *"My Highest Pleasures", William Hunter's Art Collection*, Paul Holberton Publishing, London, 2007 which reverses this view by providing some evidence for Hunter's knowledge and skill as a connoisseur and in the same catalogue, Dulau, Anne, 'William Hunter: A Brief Account of his Life as an Art Collector', pp.19-62.

³ For example, Simmon's *An Account of the Life and Writings of the Late William Hunter MD FRS and SA*, London 1783. Copy with annotations by John Hunter, GU SpColl Hunterian ADD Q13, p20; Brock, C Helen, in the *Correspondence* also provides little detail of the meanings and motivations for Hunter's paintings.

appointments offered him security of employment. The Strange sale offered a unique opportunity to change the direction of his collection by investing in a number of highly-regarded Italian works that were to now make up the majority of paintings in the collection. There are several reasons for this change of direction. This could be attributed to the friendship that existed between them in the 1730s when Hunter attended Alexander Monro's (1697-1767) Anatomy classes in Edinburgh and Strange, while apprenticed to Richard Cooper (1696-1764), worked on the Anatomical plates for Monro's publication of a version of Albinus's *De Ossibus Corporis Humani ad auditores suos* (1726).⁴ It has also been suggested that Strange and Hunter came together through an association with the artist Allan Ramsay (1730-1784) whose father owned a bookshop, presumably in Goosepie House, near St Giles Cathedral. The Ramsays were both involved in the Academy of St Luke, founded in Edinburgh in 1729, as were Alexander Monro, Richard Cooper and Robert Strange. Evidently, the art and medical worlds in Edinburgh were very closely connected and revolved around the demand in these professions for training and education based on a highly focused and naturalistic approach to their work⁵. This long-term, shared enthusiasm for the visual arts among their circle is an appealing image. Ultimately, however, Hunter and Strange's relationship had a commercial aspect to it, taking the form, at times, of patron and artist and of dealer and collector. However, there is no evidence to suggest that, apart from his lack of opportunity to see Italian works of art *in situ*, Hunter was indebted to Strange for his connoisseurship. In fact, the opposite may be demonstrated by the existence of a promissory note in Glasgow University archives, written by William Hunter:

I hereby oblige myself to give to Mr Strange upon demand a picture, in my possession, of Magdalen and St Lucia painted on copper by Guido. I bought it at his sale, but I did not pay for it, because there was a dispute to be settled first between us about another picture which Mr Strange from great delicacy would not settle till he had authenticated the subject. And in case of my death in the meantime I hereby leave him the *Death of St Francis*, a picture by Annibale Carracci, as a mark of the sense that I have of his many acts of disinterested friendship to me.

William Hunter, London February 3, 1772.⁶

⁴ Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.4.

⁵ See Duncan MacMillan, "The Scalpel and the Burin: Collaboration in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Art and Anatomy", Kemp, Dawn and Patrizio, Andrew, eds. *Anatomy Acts, How We Come to Know Ourselves*, exh. cat. Birlinn, Edinburgh, 2006, pp.81-97.

⁶ GU Archives, Ref: (11514).

The wording, 'there was a dispute to be settled first between us about another picture', suggests Hunter was not afraid to challenge Strange's authority on Italian paintings and was suitably confident in his own judgments to swap a 'Carracci' for a 'Guido' if the artist's attribution had been wrong. The note also makes clear that both Strange and Hunter were on such familiar and secure terms with one another that disputes and disagreements were not taken in bad faith, and the assurance of their commercial transactions were based on mutual trust, because, perhaps, they shared a sense of national identity, along with similar attitudes to religious and cultural beliefs.

As mentioned previously in chapter three, when under pressure, Hunter is known to have resorted to emotional feelings of discrimination and persecution against him based on his nationality. These were reactions common to members of the community of Scots in London in the middle of the century. Hunter enjoyed the company, support and patronage of a number of fellow Scots, often of very different political persuasion but who, nonetheless, came together through a sense of shared national identity.⁷ The characteristics of this identity, however, involved the incorporation of ideas of liberty and social improvement that had been the basis of Scottish assimilation into the Union between England and Scotland in 1707, referred to as North Britishness.⁸ The majority of Hunter's friends and acquaintances were imbued with this sensibility:

⁷ Reverend Alexander Carlyle mentions Hunter at just such a gathering in his memoirs. Carlyle recalls Hunter as gay and lively and his conversation was engaging. 'He was a famous Lecturer in Anatomy. Robertson and I express a wish to be admitted one Day. He appointed us a Day, and Gave us one of the Most Elegant, Clear, and Brilliant Lectures on the Eye, that any of us had ever heard'. Carlyle, Alexander, *Autobiography of Dr Alexander Carlyle, Minister of Inveresk, 1722-1805, Containing Memorials of the Men and Events of his Time*, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1860, p. 346.

⁸ This idea is explored in terms of the 'Periphery' and the marginalisation of various national cultural characteristics in the overall British expansionist project in Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, Vintage, London, 1992, and has attracted many responses. For example, Colin Kidd's 'North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century Patriotism', *Historical Journal*, vol. 39, no. 2, June 1996, pp.361-382, argues that the failure of a successful assimilation of Scottish and English cultural identities within the union was attributable to: 'The failure of politicians, historians and other nation-builders to construct an influential and genuinely pan-Britannic national identity [which] meant that traditional Scottish patriotism was not fully integrated within the prevailing Anglo-British conception of the incorporated nation's origins, history and constitution. Scottishness and Anglo-Britishness coexisted uneasily within a North British political culture dominated by the latter'. The Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745, of course, added to the complexities of the situation: see for example Sankey, Margaret, and Szechi, Daniel, 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism 1716-1745', *Past & Present*, No. 173, November 2001, pp.90-128.

For many of the more sophisticated North Britons brought up on the broadly-based moral philosophy curricula of the Scottish universities, pride in their fortuitous heritage of English liberty was rooted in a wider appreciation of the vicissitudes of European history. The desire for Anglicization did not stem from Anglo-centricity.⁹

The Jacobite rising of 1745 caused a crisis of loyalties among North Britons, particularly those, like William Hunter, who benefited from the prevailing political order.¹⁰ Elite culture was also forced to reconsider its allegiances despite decades of relatively calm assimilation between factions since 1715, with aristocratic Scottish families occupying high office in Whig government. Acknowledgement and consideration of past family loyalties with the Jacobites was an 'accepted' part of Scottish elite culture from 1715 onwards.¹¹

Religion and politics, for the North British, was therefore convoluted, but cross-party and religious toleration up until and, to some extent, after 1745 explains why William Hunter and Robert Strange could remain on good terms, despite Strange's involvement with the Jacobites and Hunter's allegiance to George III. Nevertheless, the shock-waves of the rebellion caused fear and hostility towards Scots such as Robert Strange in London during the 1750s and 1760s and developed into a wider aggression by 1762 with the publication on June 5th of the first edition of John Wilkes's *North Briton*, discussed later in this chapter.

The background to the relationship that existed between Hunter and Strange is the subject of this chapter. The dealings that emerge in the commercial exchanges between them over the sale of Italian paintings are underpinned by knowledge of each others' previous encounters both politically and socially. What Strange was selling and what Hunter bought reveals not just the changing values of the collection itself but also highlights wider issues such as the reception of Italian art that resulted in the development and appeal of a naturalist aesthetic, an expanding market for artworks in eighteenth-century London that offered up many new and different luxuries and the

⁹ Kidd, 1996, p.379.

¹⁰ Hunter must have stayed in London during the Jacobite rising of 1745. One letter, received by him from William Cullen, dated June 18, 1746 suggests that the two men corresponded erratically over a year while the war continued: 'I am extremely sorry our correspondence is not more frequent, and I should have dunned you oftner within this twelve months, if the situation of the country had not made one forget myself as well as my friends, but that is now over, and I remember you and your correspondence, with anxious wishes for the renewal of it'. Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.30-31. Cullen also makes it clear that he has had to be careful of his connections to particular 'friends' during this time.

¹¹ Sankey and Szechi, 2001, p.105

development of increasingly extensive grand tours.¹² As noted in the previous chapter the patronage of artists expanded and developed during this period, complicating these, sometimes precarious, relationships. Like James Barry and Robert Edge Pine, controversy often followed Robert Strange in his personal and public life and this impacted on the reception of his work as an artist. The fact that Strange is not a figure who features widely in the history of British art is worth consideration, given that he was an extremely well-known and highly regarded artist in his day. It could be argued that it was his exclusion from the Royal Academy of Arts that significantly contributed to his exclusion from subsequent histories of the period.¹³ Nevertheless, the Italian paintings that are, in art historical terms, significant in William Hunter's collection are there because of Strange's experiences and labour.

William Hunter's accounts from 1765 (the period when he started to plan his house in Great Windmill Street) and 1777 show that he made at least eight separate payments to Robert Strange totalling £1,394.68s in all; one payment of £925.5s on February 18th 1771 is, presumably, Strange's bill for the paintings bought at his sale.¹⁴ As with his support for the architect Robert Mylne, Hunter was consistent as patron of Strange's career, despite the artist's difficult circumstances.

Robert Strange and a methodology for collecting and copying Italian Art

The political ambitions of the Jacobites had seemed a reality to Robert Strange only a few years before 1745. After their defeat, however, he found himself struggling to revive his

¹² John Ingamells quotes several visitors to Italy who remark on the increasing number of tourists: 'By 1729 Lord Hope was commiserating with his uncle, Lord Annandale, that he could "easily believe [Rome] is much changed to the worse since you knew it first [1713], which I reckon is entirely owing to the British, especially with relation to the virtuosi". ... In March 1763, Winckelmann remarked that there were three hundred men in Paris who would all come on to Rome. In Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice there gathered communities of British who would exchange calls, eat together or agonise how best to avoid each other'. See Ingamells, John, 'Discovering Italy: British Travellers in the Eighteenth Century', Bignamini, Ilaria, and Wilton, Andrew, eds. *Grand Tour, The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, Tate Gallery Publishing 1996, p.25; Horace Walpole also comments disparagingly on the growth of travellers to the continent in his *Aedes Walpolianae* (1742): 'For however common and more reasonable the pretext, I believe, Ten travel to see the Curiosities of a Country, for One who makes a journey to acquaint himself with the Manners, Customs, and Policy of the Inhabitants'. p.96.

¹³ Robert Strange had been excluded from membership of the Royal Academy of Arts because he practiced as an engraver and not a painter, architect or sculptor. Strange, rightly, considered his exclusion as political and made his case against exclusion to his ex-patron Lord Bute. See *An Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts. To which is prefixed, A Letter to the Earl of Bute*, by Robert Strange, London 1775.

¹⁴ Hunter's total payments to Strange amount to approximately £83,680 in today's money.

career in a period of economic and political instability. Born and educated in Orkney, he married Isabella Lumisden (1721/2-1808), sister of Andrew Lumisden (1720-1801), who served as under-secretary to Prince Charles Edward Stuart during the campaign of 1745-46. In his *Memoirs* of the artist, James Dennistoun glosses over the political implications of Strange's involvement with the Jacobite rebels and resorts to a fictional portrayal of Strange as the victim of the desires of a lover – it is for Isabella that Strange risks his life for the Prince, a version of events that appears to have originated within the biographies of the family generally¹⁵. However, Strange appears to have been a Jacobite in his politics and in his religion sympathetic to Catholicism. He sacrificed the security of a career, having trained with the successful Cooper in Edinburgh, to join the Jacobite army; he fought at Culloden and was called on by the Young Pretender to design and print money for his army. Dennistoun transcribes Strange's own account of this event; of how the artist imagined a design for the currency and of how he could acquire the means of printing it. Strange describes how he relayed his designs to the Prince:

We now talked of a circulation of larger sums, which would likewise be required. I gave it as my opinion, that I thought they could not do better than issue notes in imitation of the Bank of England, or the Royal Bank of Scotland, in the execution of which there was very little labour: that it would be necessary, if possible, to see such notes in order to concert a form how they were to be drawn up, by whom paid, or at what period: if at a given time, that of the Restoration I imagined would be the properest. This produced a general smile.¹⁶

Strange recalls in this particular anecdote that he managed to find a carpenter and a coppersmith at Inverness whom he employed to build a press and copperplates for printing this currency, despite the fact that the work required to be done on a Sunday.¹⁷

¹⁵ See for example the manuscript for a *Memoir of Andrew Lumisden Esq Successively Secretary to the Son and Grandson of James II* and *In a letter by his Nephew Sir Thomas Strange to his son Lumisden Strange*, which reads: 'He had not, so far as I ever learnt, any early predilection for the interest of the House of Stuart. His habits of thinking in after life, according to all my observations, were abhorrent from the principles that too much influenced the Of that unfortunate, if not misguided family. My father's were liberal; in the best sense of the term. Serious he was but it was for good government, founded on the claims of all, without extravagant regard for dynasty or partisanship. My maternal grand father (Mr William Lumisden) on the contrary, embarked deeply in the cause which the young chevalier had come to Scotland to revive and maintain. And my excellent mother was in all her affections and teeming with that loyalty, by which her family had been distinguished, made it a condition with her lover, betrothed to him at the time, as she was, that he should fight for her Prince'. NLS MSS 2829-2902, p.2.

¹⁶ Dennistoun, 1855, p.53.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.54.

Strange's own religious faith appears to have been similar to that of Andrew Lumisden, that is, a form of Protestantism that followed an Episcopalian practice.¹⁸ The Jacobites may have had sympathetic Catholic allies, but some Scots followed Jacobite politics while adhering to the Episcopalian faith. Dennistoun notes in his *Memoirs* that Isabella Lumisden and Robert Strange were married in an Episcopalian service: 'Its secret celebration took place early in 1747; but we learn from the bride herself that, notwithstanding many difficulties, she adhered to set forms for her wedding- meaning, doubtless, the Episcopalian ritual'.¹⁹ While Andrew Lumisden and other exiles in the Muti Palace in Rome 'appear to have rarely mingled in the society of Rome, where possibly their adherence of Mr Lumisden and others to the Protestant Church may have been unfavourably regarded'.²⁰

Clearly, the overall aim of the Jacobites, the restoration of the Stuart monarchy as the rightful claimants to the British throne because of their belief in the divine right of monarchy, was bound up in the eighteenth century with issues of religion and national identity. As Linda Colley has described, sympathy for the Jacobite cause often came from Roman Catholics, who were discriminated against at all levels of Hanoverian society. In Scotland, however, it was not just religion but intimate family ties, as noted previously, that might prove a strong motivating force behind Jacobite loyalty. While acknowledging that, 'At the time, the Jacobite cause was essentially about access to military power' and that power aimed to be European-wide, for many these wider ambitions took second place to righting family wrongs.²¹ Colley is surely correct to point up that twentieth-century historians of Jacobitism have come from firmly 'Scottish Nationalist, Roman Catholic, and High Tory backgrounds'. This is scarcely surprising since anti-Unionist Scots, Catholics and High Tories – not Tories in general – were at the heart of active Jacobitism in the eighteenth century.²² Andrew and Isabella Lumisden descended from a family that had grievances against the Protestant political succession.²³ By the middle of the

¹⁸ 'In the eighteenth century the Episcopal Church of Scotland was politically identified with Catholicism. Episcopalians formed the mainstay of the Jacobite armies of the Catholic Stuart pretenders, and like the Catholic Church, were the object of penal laws where repealed in the early 1790s'. See Brown, Callum G, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, Edinburgh University Press 1997, pp.14-41.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.107.

²⁰ Ibid, p.143.

²¹ Colley, 1996, p.80.

²² Ibid, p.416, n.45.

²³ Dennistoun writes that both Andrew Lumisden's father and grandfather were victims of religious and political intolerance: Andrew Lumisden (grandfather) was an 'Episcopalian clergyman at Duddingstoun in 1681 ... At the Revolution of 1688 he however underwent that process of ejection which the Presbyterians called "outing", and which, in his case, was executed, on the 1st November,

eighteenth century, this grievance is made manifest in the political allegiances still held firmly by the Lumisden family, as the correspondence demonstrates:

Mrs Strange to Andrew Lumisden, Edinburgh 1750

My dear little Mary Bruce is as thriving an infant as ever was seen ...I have taken great care of her education: for example, whenever she hears the word Whig mentioned, she girns and makes faces that would frighten a beau, but when I name the Prince, she kisses me and looks at her picture, and greets you well for sending the pretty gum-flower; I intend she shall wear it at the Coronation, such is the value I have for it²⁴

These incidents from the lives of the Lumisdens and Robert Strange are important to recall as they provide examples of the kind of political and social events that are analysed by historians like Colley at the level of nation and state, on a more human level. To some extent these memories of Jacobite loyalties could be considered as part of a 'local' rather than 'national' context for the conflict between the Jacobites and Hanoverians. The historical facts combined with mythological legends surrounding the Jacobites conflated with a contemporary view that considered their cause as both appealing and repugnant in equal measure, as illustrated earlier with regard to national identity. This is an idea developed particularly in antiquarian approaches to the history of Britain as a united kingdom and goes some way in explaining the complexities involved in attempts to unravel these historical contradictions.²⁵

Histories of collections often deal with issues such as loyalties between family and friends that can then be interpreted on broader scale, as is the purpose here. Strange's

by a mob of infuriated fanatics, who plundered his manse, stoned his infant son in the cradle, and sent forth his family with outrage and insult for conscience sake. Driven for shelter to Edinburgh, he gradually gathered a congregation of the oppressed church, and was eventually consecrated Bishop there in 1727. William Lumisden (Andrew Lumisden's father) carried arms for the Stuarts in 1715, and refusing to take the oaths to government, could not pass at the Scottish bar, for which he had been destined'. *Memoirs*, p.73-74.

²⁴ Dennistoun, 1855, p.135.

²⁵ See, for example, Penny Fielding's discussion of 'North Britain' in *Scotland and the Fictions of Geography, North Britain, 1760-1830*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 13-39, where the author points up the importance of 'location' as a marker of how eighteenth-century historians viewed the landscape and of Scotland's place in particular in a wider geographical terrain of the 'North'. Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland MDCCLXIX*, is an obvious example of this approach. On seeing Culloden Moor, he writes: 'Passed over Culloden Moor, the place that North Britain owes its present prosperity to, by the victory of April 16, 1746'. (4th edition, Dublin, 1775.). A similar view is discussed by Philip Ayres in *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press 1997, pp.84-105, in the conception of Britannia-Romana, where the ancient kingdom of 'Caledonia' is incorporated within a mythology of Celtic-Roman tribe lands.

background, Scottish, High-Tory, Jacobite and Episcopalian, may have won him some sympathy in countries like France and Italy and it is the reason why he could move around Europe, like other dealers, with ease, making associates and networking, particularly in Italy. In Britain, however, these values created problems that even he, perhaps, could not have foreseen and the legacy of his previous political convictions was always suspect under the Hanoverian regime.

There is no stronger evidence for this than the dispute that emerged between Strange and the artist Allan Ramsay (1713-1784) and in which William Hunter became involved in an attempt to reconcile the two. In 1759, Ramsay had been working on two portraits, one of King George III as the Prince of Wales and one of the monarch's closest advisor, Lord Bute. According to Strange's *Inquiry* of 1775, where the author sought to give Lord Bute an account of what had transpired between the two artists in an attempt at a reconciliation with his ex-patron, Ramsay had approached Strange to be the engraver of the portraits. Strange had already been advertising that he was about to embark on a tour of Italy in order to make drawings from some of the most desirable collections: On March 20th 1759, Strange had placed an advertisement in the *Public Advertiser* announcing his trip to Italy and inviting subscriptions: 'Mr Strange proposes to visit the Treasures of Italy, where alone he can judge with Certainty the works Raphael, Coregio, Titian, Carachi, Dominichino, &c. and where there are a great Variety of capital pictures which have never yet been engraved. He proposes to spend some years in making drawings after the Works of the most celebrated Masters; some of which he may probably engrave during his residence at Rome or Florence'.²⁶ He told Ramsay that he did not want to postpone his trip and that the time that he would have to spend engraving the portraits (two – four years) for the sum offered (100 guineas) would not make economic sense.²⁷ He argued with Ramsay that, despite the potential for future patronage, he did not want to change his plans. The account Strange gave to Lord Bute in his *Inquiry* is a severely edited one, perhaps because it was written some time after the actual event and the artist was tired of recalling the scenario. In Dennistoun's *Memoirs*, however, the letters to and from Ramsay and Strange have been transcribed and are included as an appendix to the volumes.²⁸ These letters provide a more immediate

²⁶ *Public Advertiser*, March 20th 1759.

²⁷ Ramsay's offer, apparently from the King, of 100 guineas for 2-4 years' work should be compared with the fee of 100 guineas for one plate, (Plate VI) of Hunter's *Gravid Uterus* which took Strange six months to complete. Although Dennistoun in his *Memoirs* remarks: 'Lady Strange's statement to Dr Alexander Monro ... that when his [Strange's] price for it was asked, he said the labour being beyond all price, he would accept of none'. p.245 (vol. 1).

²⁸ Dennistoun remarks: 'The enclosed copies of letters between the late Sir R. Strange and Alan Ramsay the painter, about Strange's declining to engrave the present King's portrait by Ramsay, I

account of the strength of feeling on the subject between the two artists and the role that William Hunter played between the two artists and therefore extended extracts are presented here:

Mr Strange to Mr Ramsay, Henrietta Street, May 2. 1759

You had painted a whole length picture of HRH the Prince of Wales, which you were extremely solicitous I would engrave. At that time you said you came commissioned from the Prince and Lord Bute, but yesterday morning, you said spoke only in your own name. And both these things I must insist on: Was not my answer to this effect only, that I had no objection to engage in that undertaking, provided I was made secure that the time I must unavoidably employ upon such a work, at least fifteen months, should not be lost to my family, which is supported only by my labour? ... In the meanwhile allow me to say, with the utmost sincerity, that there is no man who would more cheerfully, and with more inclination [have] employed his talent that way as an artist, could he have done it consistently with what he thinks a much more valuable title, that of a good husband and a good father.

Mr Ramsay to Mr Strange, Soho Square, May 8 1759

... I never pretended to be acquainted with any of your political principles, but have so good an opinion of your understanding as to believe that they were, at the time mentioned, such as became an honest man, and a loyal subject to his Majesty King George. ...

Mr Strange to Mr Ramsay, Henrietta St. May 14 1759

... I have been told the same thing several times in London, that you have – artfully, shall I call it? Or rather – maliciously and falsely spread a report of my having declined engraving a picture you had painted, from political principles and disaffection to the Royal family. ... This Mr Ramsay, is what I desire you to own or deny, clearly and in plain terms.

PS If you make no reply to what I now desire you to clear up, I must understand your silence as an acknowledgement that the accusation is true.

Mr Ramsay to Dr William Hunter, Soho Square May 17 1759

Dear Doctor,

It is a ridiculous situation for a man to be in a state of enmity with those with whom he is not angry, and whom he never meant to injure or affront. The letter I wrote to your friend was written solely to satisfy and please him: if it has turned out unsatisfactory and disobliging, it has not answered my intention any more than his. You have had a great deal of trouble over this

found among the papers of Cumyng, the late secretary of the Antiquaries Society, Edinburgh'. George Chalmers, 30 August, 1793, vol. 2, p. 293.

affair; I must beg you to take a little more. Be so good as get me back my letter, and I will endeavour, with out advice, to new-model it into a more agreeable shape, by adding where it may want explanation, and throwing out what may appear foreign and useless. But as I have missed this mark once, I may miss it again, unless you, who know your friend's meaning better than I, will lend me half an hour's assistance when you can spare it best. I make no doubt of his coming into this amicable proposal. In every event, my having made it will leave no rather room for complaint against, Dear Doctor, your most affectionate and most humble servant,

Allan Ramsay

Mr Ramsay to Mr Strange, Soho Square May 25, 1759

Sir – I have had the favour of a visit from your friend Dr Hunter, who informs me that you do not find my answer to the last of your questions of the 2nd of May so clear and full as you expectedThe defect, as the Dr. has now pointed it out to me, does not ly, I believe, so much in my answer as in the imperfect manner of wording the question, which is as follows: “Did I ever, directly or indirectly, hint that it was from the least disaffection that I declined at that time, to engrave the picture you had painted?” the only answer required to this is that you certainly hinted no such reasons. The reasons you gave me were all of the money-getting kind, tending to prove the superior advantage that would accrue to your family by your employing so many months in the ordinary course of your business rather than in executing the command with which I told you you probably would be honoured. ... This second writing, which appears to me an unnecessary supplement to a very unnecessary letter, I send to you, upon being assured by Dr Hunter that it is all that is wanted to satisfy you, and to prevent me from being troubled with any more questions upon the subject: the Dr. having at the same time given me his word that he will not deliver it to you but upon these conditions.

Mr Strange to Mr Ramsay (undated)

Sir – Your last letter to me was indeed a direct and full answer to my question. I have taken time to consider it, and to weigh it with some positive information received from another quarter. The result is, I am sorry I ever thought of you my friend, and for my own safety must have no connexion with you for the future. Before I take leave of you I must inform you too that you make use of the term “money-getting” improperly in your letter to me. Surely, to come from *you* nothing could be more absurd; it implies meanness and covetousness. Had I been prevailed upon by a bag of money to engrave any picture of your painting, you might have given me your hand, and have

said, "*Brother money-getter*, we are now of the same honourable profession". I have now given you a hint of the only concealed reason I had for declining the employment you schemed for me. It was an obvious one to many, and one that I could not declare while I was

Your very sincere friend

Robert Strange

The very real threat of the revelation of Strange's close involvement with the Jacobite cause hovers over these letters. Strange had managed to escape imprisonment like other rebels by hiding in the Highlands of Scotland, for a time, before securing safe passage to London and then on to France. Unlike Lumisden however, Strange's 'name was neither included in the bill of attainder of May 1746, nor specially excepted from an Act of grace [a general amnesty] passed in June of the following year; so that from mid-summer, 1747, he was in no way amenable to justice for his political errors'.²⁹ Despite this legality, Strange must have continued to feel that his life was in danger with little prospect of re-assimilating into Edinburgh society. In 1748 Isabella, now Mrs Strange, wrote to her brother with regard to her husband joining him in exile in Rouen, describing Strange's predicament:

And to tell the truth which may either be overlooked or quite forgotten for some, I think my dearest is entitled to the esteem of every true Britain: for he has done more to serve his country than any servant his master has that I know of. Two years ago he was stript naked every way in his country's cause, since which he has got a wife and two children for the good of the public. He has also, by his own industry, provided for his growing young family to their full satisfaction.³⁰

Isabella Strange's use of the term 'true Britain', used by the patriot opposition since the time of Walpole, suggests that the Strange-Lumisden support for Prince Charles Edward Stuart's claim to the throne was not restricted to Scotland but to the union of Scotland and England, despite the fact that by the 1745 uprising, the Jacobites were proclaiming an anti-union stance.³¹

Allan Ramsay caused Strange offence not just by spreading a potentially harmful rumour that he refused to undertake the engravings because of a lingering loyalty to the Stuart line but more so by his insisting that he should be paid adequately for the work; Ramsay accused Strange of putting financial reward and commercial success ('money-getting') before duty to the Hanoverian Crown. This offended Strange all the more as he

²⁹ Dennistoun, 1855 vol I, p.68.

³⁰ Ibid, vol. I, p.117.

³¹ Colley, 1996, pp.82-91; Pittock, Murray, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans*, Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2009, especially chapter 4: 'Nationalists or Jacobites?' pp. 140-162.

understood that Ramsay knew better than others how difficult it was for an ex-soldier of the Stuart army to try to recoup the social and financial losses incurred by following the rebels. Strange also knew of Ramsay's own strategy for avoiding any association with the Stuart Court by deliberately keeping a distance from fellow Scots whom he had previously been on friendly terms. According to Paul Monod, 'The Scottish artist Allan Ramsay junior was in the Papal capital in the late 1730s. He quickly gained the favour of the Stuart court, and joined a Masonic lodge at Rome whose members were mostly Jacobite exiles. On his return to England, however, he attached himself to the Whig Duke of Argyll, a move calculated to allay questions about his loyalty'.³² This is borne out by Andrew Lumisden in a letter from Rome, in 1755, which describes how the Ramsay family, arriving there at Christmas, deliberately avoided any close association with him:

Though I never visit strangers that do not either first visit me, or inform me of their arrival and desire to see me (the reason of which will readily occur to you), yet I thought I might dispense with this rule in the case of Mr Ramsay, so I waited on them immediately on their arrival. The reception I met with was very dry. ... After laying some circumstances together, I easily perceived that my visits were not agreeable.... I shall only add that I have had the honour to be visited by lords, members of parliament, and persons of at least as great consequence and fortunes as A. Ramsay.³³

In June of that year, Mrs Strange also mentions the aloof behaviour of the Ramsay family in a letter to her brother:

I am vastly entertained with your lively and just remarks on 'the prudent ones'; how different is such prudence from wisdom! 'Tis so shallow that it does not deserve the low name of cunning. They are despised by one, the contempt of another, and laughed at by all. I am still on the same footing with AR and family; I have not seen or heard from one of them since I wrote: they shall enquire for me before I enquire for them.³⁴

Ramsay was an artist who made his career from portrait-painting; a common strategy employed by British artists by the middle of the century, partly in order to avoid the political and religious controversy over history painting and partly to be more commercially viable.³⁵ Strange, however, always had ambitions as a history painter – or at least an artist who engraved history paintings. After the debacle with Ramsay, he wrote to an anonymous friend in Edinburgh, 'I shall set out for Paris in a week or two

³² Monod, Paul, "Painters and Party Politics in England, 1714-1760" in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 26, No. 3 (Spring 1993) pp 367-398, p375.

³³ Dennistoun, 1855, p.279.

³⁴ Ibid, p.280.

³⁵ Monod, 1993, p.371.

hence, where I shall reside some little time, and so proceed to Italy: my stay there at present is undetermined, though I apprehend it may even extend somewhat more than two years. Upon the whole I think this scheme more rational than had I been sacrificing my time and reputation in engraving any modern portrait'.³⁶ Once in Italy, it was remarked upon how carefully Strange chose the subjects for his engravings: 'He is particularly careful in the choice of subjects, of which he has some very fine ones in view'.³⁷ Lumisden also writes that by 1761, Strange had been given an apartment in the Vatican and permission to erect a scaffold in order to copy the works there. However, of the frescoes by Raphael in the *Stanza della Segnatura* that conflated ancient with contemporary Catholic culture, Strange chose to produce prints of the allegorical figures of *Justice* and *Meekness (Poetry)* (1509-1511) (fig.35 and fig. 36) and not those parts of the frescoes considered to be the best works; the *School of Athens* and the *Disputation over the Sacrament* (1508-1512).

The reason for this appears to be a conscious decision by Strange to avoid copying works of art that would involve direct consideration of the ideology of the Catholic Church. Raphael was one of the most revered artists in Britain but, as Clare Haynes has shown, despite the incorporation of his *Cartoons* (commissioned by Pope Leo X (1475-1521) in 1515 and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum) into the iconography of artistic excellence in England, his religious paintings in the Vatican still evoked problematic Catholic meanings for grand tourists, in particular.³⁸ Robert Strange justified his decision not to paint particular works in a letter published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1761. Of the *Parnassus* he writes: 'the principal figure is amongst the most indifferent, and has the least grace of any that great master ever painted;...' observing the *School of Athens* that it is: 'indeed a wonderful and most glorious performance, and worthy of the hand of a divinity ... but at present the case is different; I have no idea of coming abroad to Italy but for a few years, and throwing that time away upon a work which ought to be carried on at the public expense, or by the patronage of a prince. I must leave things, my dear sir, those laborious undertakings, to some future genius: at present it is my scheme to vary my subjects and authors as much as possible, and that even those be of the most agreeable kind, such as will please the public and best suit the genius of a free people'.³⁹ Strange does not mention the *Disputation*.

³⁶Dennistoun, 1855, p.305.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.293.

³⁸ Haynes, Clare, *Pictures and Popery: Art and Religion in England, 1660-1760*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006, pp.42-73.

³⁹ Dennistoun, 1855, p.294; Part of a letter from Robert Strange to a Friend, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1761, pp.339-340.

It is evident from this letter that Strange was forming a methodology of appropriate images that would appeal in a commercial, Protestant country while allowing for those images to remain in the 'Historical' canon. After all, as Monod argues, 'In England, "history" painting continued to bear a political and religious taint, which made it a questionable pursuit for many Protestants, especially Whigs, and which all the special pleading of Pope and others could not erase. There were three main reasons for such an attitude: fear of Catholicism, anxiety about Jacobitism, and the lack of an acceptable royal model for patronage'.⁴⁰ Perhaps Monod's points are overstated here, with the real reason for the failure of history painting in Britain being the lack of royal patronage. However, as has been demonstrated, this fear of Jacobitism was very real for those that had supported the rebellion and those in opposition to it. Linda Colley has described this as a fear of the terrible consequences of a civil war and the repercussions of this on British trade and profits.⁴¹ Clearly by 1760, Robert Strange was concerned that his work should be incorporated into a general aesthetic sensibility that was now driving the commercialisation of the fine arts in Britain – he was driven by the pursuit of financial gain and the desire to avoid his previous experiences of exclusion and poverty.

In fact, Strange's route through Italy, as will be shown, acts as a map to his methodology and it is not surprising that when he encounters Richard Dalton (1718-1791) during his travels the King's librarian is keen to know about his projects. It became apparent that Strange was developing a highly sophisticated approach to copying historical works. It was this methodology that was applied in the selection of works that Strange put up for sale in 1771.

Northern Italian Naturalism

In his *Public Advertiser* notice of March 20th 1759, a long paragraph by Strange explains the decline of the art of engraving in Europe. In those countries where engraving was still practiced as a higher form of visual art, there was a serious lack of the Italian masters and this situation provoked debate among the artists involved in the St Martin's Lane Academy in London, particularly with regard to the preference given to copies after Dutch masters. It is worth considering this situation here in the following discussion of Strange's motivations and inspiration for his own work as William Hunter's print collection includes examples that are a result of these debates. In a bound volume of engravings by Thomas Major (1720-1799) the themes of the majority of the prints are of Dutch or Flemish origin, with the exception of two works after Poussin and one after Claude Lorrain, and with dedications addressed to Frederick, Prince of Wales, the Duke

⁴⁰ Monod, 1993, p. 371.

⁴¹ Colley, 1996, pp.78-79.

of Cumberland and other prominent collectors.⁴² Thomas Major, like Strange, trained in the studio of Philippe Le Bas in Paris in 1745, although his experience of this studio was dramatically different to Strange's, when in October 1746 he was imprisoned in the Bastille for three months, 'as a reprisal for the temporary imprisonment of the Frenchmen of Fitz-James's horse and the Irish regiments after the battle of Culloden. He was freed after strenuous intercession with the marquis d'Argenson (1696-1764) by le Bas, Gravelot (1699-1773), and the English banker Selwin'.⁴³ Major was in England by 1748 and working within the tradition of Le Bas' school of French engraving that emphasised a free and silvery effect, in contrast to, 'the laborious style of Vertue (George Vertue (1684) and Van der Gucht, (Michael van der Gucht (1660-1725)) which was Hogarth's inheritance, the Le Bas method is light and airy, with an emphasis laid on elegant drawing rather than elaborate tonal systems'.⁴⁴

After the death of his most important patron, Frederick Prince of Wales, in 1751, William, Duke of Cumberland (1721-1765) became the key supporter of Major's work and among Hunter's prints is an engraving after David Teniers (1610-1690) dedicated to him, There are also a number of engravings dedicated to his sister-in-law, Augusta, the Dowager Duchess.⁴⁵ The engraving by Teniers (fig.37) shows a typically Dutch genre scene of a country fair or festival where the peasantry are cavorting, their behaviour lewd and lascivious. To the left of the centre of the painting stand a much more sophisticated group of people – local gentry – keeping a distance from the rabble, but nonetheless, asserting their elevated moral position. The image suggests the imposition of a civilised order onto a chaotic scene, paralleling an opinion held at the time that the Hanoverians were responsible for the improvement of those parts of Britain that had been regarded as disorderly and morally corrupt. 'Towards the end of May [1746] Cumberland moved from Inverness to Fort Augustus and then to Fort William, to show the highlanders "that it is as much in his Majesty's power to march his forces into that country which they have

⁴² Major, Thomas, *A Collection of Prints Chosen out of the most Celebrated Collection in England and France*, Engraved and Sold by Thomas Major, Engraver to his Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, London 1754, Hunterian Art Gallery, D1.1.10. Besides the royal collectors there appear prints after paintings in the collections of Lord George Beuclerk, Sir Luke Schaub and William Lord, Bishop of Londonderry, all of which are by Dutch artists.

⁴³ Clayton, Timothy, *The English Print 1688-1802*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1997. Engravings after Dutch old masters proved popular with a small community of patrons involved with the early Society of Antiquaries but this popularity quickly spread among other dealers and collectors throughout England later in the century. See Lippincott, Louise, *Selling Art in Georgian London*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1983, pp.122-123.

⁴⁴ Godfrey, Richard T, *Printmaking in Britain, A General History from its Beginning to the Present Day*, Phaidon, Oxford, 1978, p.37.

⁴⁵ See Clayton, 1997 and Lippincott, 1983.

hitherto boasted as inaccessible as into any other part of his dominions”⁴⁶ Therefore, the scene derived from a Dutch painting tradition and dedicated to the Duke of Cumberland must have been deliberately chosen by Major to make just this point.

The prints in this bound volume explain Hunter’s knowledge of contemporary debates that revolved around the preferences for engraved copies after Dutch or Italian art. Stylistically, Thomas Major favoured a French/Dutch technique, privileging the work of Rembrandt, a much-revered artist in Britain in the 1740s. This was also a political choice, however, as Frederick, Prince of Wales’s collection contained many works from Dutch and Flemish masters, including Anthony van Dyke, Rubens and Rembrandt. Rembrandt’s technique of etching in particular was the focus of discussion, with printmakers such as Arthur Pond (1705-1758) executing prints in the ‘dry-point’ style, similar to Rembrandt.⁴⁷

William Hunter also owned a portfolio of loose prints from Charles Rogers’s *Prints in Imitation of Drawings*, published in two volumes in 1778, which further demonstrate the debates surrounding printmaking during this period. Rogers’s project was inspired by the publication *Le Cabinet Crozat* (1729-1742), by Pierre Crozat (1661-1740) which contained prints after drawings of Old Master works in French collections. Hunter’s portfolio contains prints attributed to contemporary artists’ collections which show those preferences for either engraving styles clearly. For example those from the collections of Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Hudson include prints that are deliberately in the Rembrandt etching style. Reynolds’s collection includes *Supper at the House of Simon*, after Paul Veronese, engraved by Simon Watts (fig.38) and *A Philosopher* and the *Entombment*, after Parmigianino, engraved by WW. Ryland, (fig.39). Thomas Hudson’s prints include *The Raising of Jarius Daughter*, after Rembrandt, also engraved by Simon Watts (fig.40). While a print from Mr. Hone’s collection, (this is presumably the artist Nathaniel Hone (1718-1784), *The Holy Family Resting*, after Guido Reni, engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi, (fig.41) is evidently a line engraving that does not pretend to imitate a drawing so directly that it could be mistaken for the original.

These issues were important to Robert Strange; as a line engraver, he sought to elevate the art of printing itself, rather than utilize its potential as a method of reproducing drawing styles. This was simply another way for artists to make money, an assertion he put forward in his *Public Advertiser* notice. The artist in Britain ‘having

⁴⁶ Quoted from the Cumberland Papers, 18/396, in Speck, WA, ‘William Augustus, Prince, Duke of Cumberland, (1721-1765)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004.

⁴⁷ Godfrey refers to two portraits by Pond, one a self-portrait and the other a portrait of Dr Richard Mead, both from 1739, which ‘are scratched in dry point in vigorous but heavy-handed emulation of Rembrandt’: Godfrey, 1978, p.38.

acquired a Degree of Reputation sufficient to attract the Notice and Favour of the Public, is too often seized with the Desire of turning this Reputation to the best Account, with respect to his private Circumstances. Instead of exerting all his Faculties for the Extension of his Genius, and the Improvement of his Art, his Endeavours centre in Schemes and Efforts to increase his Fortune'.⁴⁸ In other words, artists take up portrait painting and printmaking as a way to earn a decent living. Strange intended to unite both career satisfaction with financial gain: 'This indulgence, and the Love he bears to his Profession, has encouraged him to proceed in his favourite plan, and to devote himself entirely to the Study of Engraving historical pieces'.⁴⁹

There is no doubt that Strange displays a bias toward North Italian paintings when planning his itinerary. The names of artists whose work he intends to copy are predominantly from that Northern tradition, particularly Bologna and the surrounding areas: 'Coregio, Titian, Carachi, Dominichino, &c'.⁵⁰ As suggested above, the reasons for this bias may have been as much social and political as aesthetic; the imagery of the schools of painting from the North of Italy tend to address the ideology of the Catholic church less directly because of the importance placed on the ideas of naturalism; ideas that privilege the normal and the everyday, rather than the glorious and mysteriousness of religious iconography. This naturalism, of course, had an appeal for Strange who, by 1759 had been trained by the naturalists Cooper, in Edinburgh and Jacques Philippe Le Bas (1707-1783) in France and in his work he undertook for William Hunter's anatomical illustrations. The appeal of naturalism - which in its very simplest definition requires that the artist record exactly what he or she sees - was that it appeared unambiguous and therefore powerfully truthful. Strange, in his *Descriptive Catalogue* to the sale of his paintings, 1769, writes:

I forthwith took the resolution of proceeding to form a collection of pictures, upon a principle different from what the generality of purchasers had hitherto followed; viz, a collection selected from the various schools, which during the last two centuries and upwards, have made a figure in Europe; comprehending, if possible, specimens of the most remarkable painters who established, or did honour to those schools, ...whatever I saw that was excellent I coveted; and from time to time, the possession of one picture only raised a stronger desire of possessing another.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Strange, Robert, *Public Advertiser*, March 20th 1759.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Strange, Robert, *A Descriptive Catalogue of a Collection of Pictures, selected from the Roman, Florentine, Lombard, Venetian, Neapolitan, Flemish, French and Spanish Schools, to which are*

Conscious of the fact that he had no specific patron, Strange always addresses his remarks to the public: 'I hope to give some degree of sanction to the choice which I have made, and induce the public to receive, with indulgence, an entertainment which has been provided for them with some risk, and much labour and expense...'.⁵²

The different approach that Strange takes is in not considering Rome as the ultimate aim of his tour – the central destination for collectors, dealers and artists in the eighteenth century, despite the fact that Lumisden was settled there by 1760 and would have provided Strange with accommodation and an instant network of contacts and patrons.⁵³ As early as 1748, it appears that Rome had been Strange's principal goal:

Dear Andrew, I must now thank you for being so good as mind my dearest Robie, who, before I received your last, was resolved to have gone directly to Rome to have studied miniature painting; but now is determined to spend most of his time with you, as drawing is what he chiefly wants. When he's complete in that point he may go to Rome.⁵⁴

But the artist has a change of mind, opting to stay with Lumisden in Rouen, refining his skills. When Strange eventually sets out for Italy it is with a much firmer idea of where to visit and why. The idea of a distinctive Northern school of Italian painting was familiar to connoisseurs in Britain in the early eighteenth century. In his catalogue to his father's painting collection at Houghton Hall, Horace Walpole describes the artists from this school:

It will be easily observed that I have yet omitted one of the principal schools, the Bolognese; but as I began with the Roman, I reserved this to conclude with. This, which was as little inferior to the Roman, as it was superior to all the rest: This was the school, that to the dignity of the Antique, join'd all the beauty of living Nature. There was no Perfection in the others, which was not assembled here.⁵⁵

The special quality of the Bolognese school of painting for Walpole, therefore was in its ability to combine the antique with nature – it was its naturalism that gave it such appeal, not its religious meanings. Jonathan Richardson also attributes this quality to

added, Remarks on the principal painters and their works, Collected and Drawn during a journey of several years in Italy, by Robert Strange, London 1769, pvi, GU SpColl H.7.8.

⁵² Ibid, p.vii.

⁵³ Rome was considered the ultimate destination for the majority of grand tourists. See for example, Bignamini, Wilton, eds.1997; Black, Jeremy, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, Yale University Press, London and New Haven, 2003.

⁵⁴ Letter from Isabella Strange to Andrew Lumisden, reproduced in Dennistoun, 1855, vol. 1, p. 113.

⁵⁵ Walpole, Horace, *Aedes Walpolianae*, London, 1742, pp.78-9.

the popularity of painters from these regions and like Walpole adds that their works generally incorporate all the worthy aspects of the 'other' national schools:

The painters of the Roman School were the best designers, and had more of the Antique Taste in their Works than any of the Others, but generally they were not good Colourists; Those of Florence were good designers, and had a kind of greatness, but t'was not Antique. The Venetian, and Lombard Schools had Excellent Colourists, and a certain Grace but entirely Modern, especially those of Venice; but their Drawing was generally incorrect, and their knowledge in History, and the Antique very little: And the Bolognese School is a sort of Composition of the Others; even Annibale himself possessed not any part of painting in the perfection as is to be seen in those from whom His Manner is compos'd. ⁵⁶

The style of painting originating in Northern Italy, and in Bologna in particular, is acknowledged by Richardson and Walpole to combine all of the best qualities of Italian painting in general. This is a crucial element in the arguments that both authors put forward for the development of the fine arts in Britain during the eighteenth century. Both Haynes and Monod have cited Richardson and Walpole's anti-Catholicism in the attempts to incorporate fine art practices into British commercial culture and an important aspect of this was to distinguish as clearly as possible those elements of Italian art that did not derive solely from Papal influences. Northern Italian artists and the tradition of radicalism that characterised the university town of Bologna, for example in the work of the Carracci and Correggio, offered an alternative history of art that was sympathetic to contemporary British eighteenth-century notions of reason and nature.

Bologna by the late seventeenth century was an important centre of natural philosophy and the university had cultivated a radical teaching environment due to a new attitude to the exploration of the natural world. The dissemination of the new philosophy in and around Bologna has been ascribed to two influential figures: Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597) and Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605). Both men held highly significant positions within the social and cultural life of the city, Aldrovandi, a professor of natural sciences (or natural philosophy) at the University of Bologna, founded the city's first physic garden while Paleotti served as the city's Archbishop and shaped the church's ideology around the scientific theories dominating the university by publishing his *Discorso* (1582). Together they had a powerful influence over the ambitions of the city's artists.

⁵⁶ Richardson, Jonathan, *A discourse on the dignity, certainty, pleasure and advantage of the Science of a connoisseur*, London 1719, p.79; Gibson-Wood, Carol, *Jonathan Richardson, Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2000.

In their essay ‘Art, Science, and Nature in Bologna Circa 1600’ Giuseppe Olmi and Paolo Prodi concur that the qualitative impact of Aldrovandi’s and Paleotti’s teachings may be difficult to pinpoint to a specific artist at a specific moment. However, they describe the series of coincidences that take place over a short period of time that led to a change in direction for visual artists practising in Bologna. Paleotti published the *Discorso* in 1582 and by the end of 1583 the three Carracci won the commission to work on a fresco in the Palazzo Fava; during this time Ulisse Aldrovandi also worked with local artists to produce thousands of illustrations for his own work.⁵⁷

Aldrovandi had created a rich museum of natural specimens that, unlike his contemporaries was a focused, ‘microcosm of nature’; it was not a cabinet designed in the mannerist style where man-made and natural objects were juxtaposed in one overall display to highlight their curiosity.⁵⁸ He employed artists to illustrate and make prints of the collection, thus instilling local craftsmen with his belief in the objectivity or rationalism in naturalist visual productions: ‘Aldrovandi’s call for a direct vision of the real, for a new and fresh investigation of all creation would not overlook even what was most humble, most everyday’.⁵⁹ Thus while it would be difficult to credit one particular artist’s style to the influence of Aldrovandi and Paleotti, the feeling for everyday life and a restrained approach to religious iconography, which is evident in the work of the Carracci and Correggio can be discerned in the teachings of the scientist and the bishop.

The legacies of Paleotti and Aldrovandi, meant that Bologna held a great significance for both Strange and Hunter, in the long tradition of anatomists and artists working together. The city’s history was reflected in a contemporary sense between anatomists and artists practicing in eighteenth-century London. Bologna is also cited by John Anderson, Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Glasgow (1726-1796), when the negotiations between Hunter and the University were underway for the bequest of the collection. In a letter to Hunter, Professor Anderson compares the constitution of the University of Glasgow to that of Bologna, pointing out that both Universities are the product of European culture.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Olmi, Giuseppe, and Prodi, Paolo, “Art, Science and Nature in Bologna c1600”, in *The Age of Correggio and the Carracci, Emilian Painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 227.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.221.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.299.

⁶⁰ Letter from Professor John Anderson, University of Glasgow to William Hunter, n/d: ‘With Mr. Anderson's best Respects, this will serve as the Beginning of Queries etc. and he will have the pleasure of meeting Dr. Hunter this Night at Sir John Pringle and of talking of the Subject in going Home. The University of Glasgow was founded by Pope Nicholas Vth the great Promoter of ancient Learning, and with statutes similar to those of Bologna. On this

The practice of anatomy had been taught as a discipline in Bologna from 1595, and the university had pioneered the teaching of female students in the eighteenth century. The Palazzo Poggi housed an extensive collection of beautiful waxworks of human anatomy that, by the eighteenth century, became a sight for tourists on the grand tour and as these became familiar attractions to tourists. Bologna came to know of William Hunter's fame through guides that compared his lecturing skills with the best teachers in the city. For example, the famous wax sculptor and anatomist Anna Morandi Manzolini (1714-1774), whose collections in the museum combined human anatomy and obstetrics, with natural history.⁶¹

Naturalism, which has its origins in natural philosophy, has a long and complex place in the history of art and aesthetics; it was just as complex for eighteenth-century commentators as it is today.⁶² The Bolognese School may have understood naturalism – or nature – in a different way than the artists of its neighboring towns of Parma and further north in Padua and Milan. However, for eighteenth-century British artists such as Robert Strange it was widely believed that the progress that had been made in the

account its Constitution is different from that of Edinburgh which is a Protestant Foundation, and in some Respects even from that of Oxford which is of much greater Antiquity', Brock, 2008, vol.1, p.335.

⁶¹ Dacome, Lucia, 'Waxworks and the Performance of Anatomy in mid-eighteenth century Italy', *Endeavour*, vol. 30, No 1, March 2006 p.29; See also, Maraldi, Nadir M, Maxxotti, Giovanni, Cocco, Lucio, and Manzoli, A, Francesco, 'Anatomical Waxwork Modelling: The History of the Bologna Anatomy Museum', *The Anatomical Record* (New Anat) 261: 5-10, 2000; See, also, *Guide to the Brinsley Ford Archive*, unpublished typescript, *Aspects of the Grand Tour, Advice on Travel to Italy* by William Patoun, c1766: 'There is a famous female Anatomist at Bologna whose works in wax are extremely Curious. She is a very ingenious Modest Woman, and reads a lecture as well as Hunter or Monro'. Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, p.48.

⁶² Naturalism, primarily as it was understood by Hunter and his contemporaries in Britain in the eighteenth century is discussed in the next chapter. However, the diverse meanings of the term are evoked by the range of approaches to the subject in recent scholarship. For example, in landscape, see Hemingway, Andrew, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in early Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Cambridge University Press, 1992; Bermingham, Ann, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition*, Thames and Hudson, 1987. For the relationship between naturalism and consumerism, see Brewer, John, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, London: HarperCollins, 1997 pp. 620-628. Antiquarianism created its own demands on the aesthetic of naturalism, see for example, Smiles, Sam, *Eye Witness: Artists and Visual Documentation in Britain 1770-1830*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000 and 'The Art of Recording', *Making History, Antiquaries in Britain 1707-2007*, exhibition. Catalogue, Royal Academy of Arts and the Society of Antiquaries of London, 2007, pp.123-142. Also, Bermingham, Ann, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.

arts by Bolognese artists had influenced and been disseminated through the whole of the Northern regions of Italy.⁶³ This may seem like an homogenous approach to what was, in reality, a diverse and varied schema but this is perhaps best explained by the lack of an appropriate language to articulate this diversity than a deliberate attempt at diminishing its meaning.⁶⁴

For the purposes of this chapter it is the meanings that naturalism and Italian naturalism held for Robert Strange and William Hunter that are important. Hunter's collection of Italian paintings amounted to nineteen oil paintings, thirteen of which derived from Strange's sale in February 1771. Read alongside Strange's *Sale Catalogue* and his *Descriptive Catalogue* from 1769, his methodology of collecting and copying Italian art is revealed and can be transposed onto this particular collection. Although examples from various Italian schools featured, those from the Northern schools dominate; by his careful selection of subjects and his pursuit of naturalist art, Strange managed to avoid any overtly Catholic images. Hunter's most 'problematic' painting in this respect is *The Annunciation*, after Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) (fig.42) a work bought at Strange's sale in 1771. It seems an unusual selection as the Virgin is portrayed in the lower, left hand corner of the picture overwhelmed by an angel that emerges from a cloud, hovering over the scene. The Virgin is depicted in a semi-conscious state, experiencing a spiritual transformation; it is a form of imagery that was considered distasteful by the likes of Richardson and Walpole, as explained earlier. Besides this painting, it could be argued that Hunter's Italian pictures escape too literal an interpretation of Catholic ideology – even in his paintings representing saints it is the naturalist qualities that stand out. Guido Reni's (1575-1642) (fig.43) *St Catharine* (formerly attributed by Strange to Domenichino) portrays a fairly neutral figure of the

⁶³ For example, British artists would have imagined the North of Italy as it was in the Renaissance, that is: 'a time when the term Lombardy was more elastic – even Bologna, part of the Papal states from 1506, could be considered part of Lombardy' and this idea would have been perpetuated in Georgio Vasari's tendency, 'to lump together artist working in Ferrara, Modena, Parma, Mantua, Cremona, Milan, and Brescia in a chapter of his magisterial *Lives*'. See *Painters of Reality, The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy*, ed. Bayer, Andrea, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004, pp.4-5.

⁶⁴ Joshua Reynolds may have been aware of this diversity: see, for example, Charles Dempsey, 'Caravaggio and the Two Naturalistic Styles: Specular versus Macular', in Warwick, Genevieve, ed. *Caravaggio: Realism, Rebellion, Reception*, University of Delaware Press, 2006, pp.91-99. It is unlikely that he and his contemporaries would have articulated this in such a fashion; similarly with the ideas presented by Martin Kemp, 'Leonardo and the Idea of Naturalism: Leonardo's Hypernaturalism', in *Painters of Reality, The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy*, Bayer, Andrea, ed. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2004.

saint accompanied by her usual symbols; a crown representing the royal lineage which her legend describes, and the wheel on which she is martyred.⁶⁵ For Strange and Hunter this picture, whether by Reni or Domenichino (1581-1641) represented a material form of Northern Italian naturalism, where the form of the human figure is represented as genuinely as possible. Similarly, Hunter's other female saintly portrait, *St Apollonia*, attributed to Domenichino but now thought to be by Lorenzo Passinelli (1629-1700) (fig.44) displays a restrained form of Catholic imagery, inspired by the inherited ideology of the Carracci.⁶⁶ Passinelli was presumably unknown to Strange but his attribution to Domenichino is understandable, given the style and quality of this painting. Strange, in his *Descriptive Catalogue*, writes:

⁶⁵ Strange and Lumisden refer to two different depictions of *St Catharine* in their correspondence which is why this painting was originally attributed to Domenichino. In Strange's *Descriptive Catalogue*, No 39 is described as *St Catharine*: 'The whole of this picture is remarkably graceful. The character of the head is beautiful; and upon near examination of it, we find it is touched with an amazing delicacy of pencil; there is in the Colonna Palace at Rome a repetition of this figure, of which Guido has made a St Margaret; for in place of the palm, she holds a cross, and at the corner where the wheel is, he has introduced the head of a monster, which characterises St Margaret. This picture of St Catharine, I purchased before my journey into Italy. A print from it is nearly finished. Three feet three inches and a quarter high, by two feet seven inches wide'. The *Sale Catalogue* of 1771 mentions: 'Dominichino, Lot 148, *St Catharine*, thirty four and a half inches high x twenty four and a half inches wide'; while Lumisden is quoted in Dennistoun's *Memoirs* vol 2, p127: 'Mr Strange left this on the 6th Dec [1770] ... During his stay here, he bought several fine pictures, particularly a *St Catharine* by Domenichino – a half length figure, but perhaps one of the finest productions by that celebrated master'. Therefore, the Guido Reni *St Catharine*, from the *Descriptive Catalogue* was in Strange's possession before 1760-65 when he set out for Italy. The Domenichino *St Catharine*, was bought by Strange on his return visit to Lumisden in Paris in 1770. The descriptions of these two paintings have become confused. There is a painting of *St Margaret* by Guido Reni that was in the Colonna Palace in Rome, and has recently been auctioned at Sotheby's New York (January 29th 2009) but this painting does not resemble Hunter's *St Catharine*, judging by Strange's description. Therefore, Hunter's *St Catharine* must be the painting that Strange bought in Paris as a Domenichino and not the same as that listed in his *Descriptive Catalogue*. Strange's use of the phrase 'delicacy of pencil' belongs to a recognised form of vocabulary adopted by connoisseurs by the 1770s, derived from Matthew Pilkington's *Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters Containing a Complete Collection and Account of the Most Distinguished Artists who have Flourished in the Art of Painting*, London (1770).

⁶⁶ See the catalogue entry for Lorenzo Pasinelli by Andrea Emiliani: '... from Malvasia (1678; 1841 ed. 2: 383) his contemporaries were fully aware of the fundamental contributions made by Pasinelli, Cignani, and Canuti to the renewal of Bolognese painting in the second half of the seventeenth century', *The Age of Correggio and the Carracci, Emilian Painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, Cambridge University Press, 1986-87.

The graceful simplicity of this figure, the character of design throughout the whole, the force with which it is painted, do more than verify the saying of Poussin, that he knew no painter more intelligent than this artist, since the days of Raphael. The attitude is composed in an easy graceful manner, and the drapery varied with infinite taste and judgment.⁶⁷

In referencing both Poussin and Raphael alongside the author of this painting, Strange is deliberately placing this artist in a cultural tradition deemed acceptable to an eighteenth-century British audience, while emphasising to connoisseurs his own knowledge of the important role played by this style of painting in art history. Horace Walpole also reiterated this in his *Aedes*:

If Nature and Life can please, the sweet Dominichini must be admir'd. These two never met in one Picture in a higher degree than in Lord Orford's *Madonna and Child*, by him. One can't conceive more expression in two Figures so compos'd, and which gives so little room for showing any passion or emotion. Ludovico Caracci, the Founder of this great School, was more famous for his Disciples than his Works; tho' in Bologna they prefer him to Annibal: but his Drawing was incorrect, and his Hands and Feet almost always too long. In one Point I think the Bolognese Painters excell'd every other Master; their Draperies are in a greater taste than even Raphael's. The largeness and simplicity of the folds in Guido's *Dispute of the Doctors*, is a pattern and standard for that sort of painting.⁶⁸

Like Strange's comments, Walpole cannot help but remark on the restrained emotions and simplicity portrayed in this particular school of painting; Domenichino, 'gives so little room for showing any passion or emotion' and the technique in drapery is 'a pattern and standard for that sort of painting'. These are comments that could conceivably be interpreted as evading the subject matter of the painting. However, the identification of a particular technique in different schools of painting was a legitimate form of connoisseurship in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy, although relatively new to Britain.

The naturalist aim of William Hunter's Italian painting collection is not immediately apparent; it takes the form of a subtle, knowing selection on the part of both Strange and Hunter. With his Dutch paintings, for example, Philips Koninck's (1619-1688) *Landscape in Holland*, c1665 and Frans Snyder's (1579-1657) *Still Life with Dead Game*, the naturalist qualities are clear to see and the tradition of Dutch painting is conveyed. Hunter's examples of French painting too follow a naturalist preference, particularly in examples such as Matthieu Le Nain's (d. 1677) *Peasant Family at a Well*.

⁶⁷ Strange, 1769, p.38.

⁶⁸ Walpole, 1742, p.xxxv.

At first hand, the Italian paintings seem more problematic, but naturalism dominates Hunter's own ideas of the aesthetic qualities of fine art and he considers this not in a superficial way but in a deeply held conviction for the precedence of this in Greek and Italian art. The following quotation may appear conventional in terms of eighteenth-century ideas of the supremacy of Greek and Italian art, but as explained previously, Hunter's profound understanding of the origins and legacy of naturalism, particularly in Italian art, make this statement much more directly relevant to his own experiences.

... The works of English artists, in the course of a very few years may rival, did I say? Why not excel the finest production of Greece and Italy. When we have already gone so far beyond the ancients in science, in every thing besides, are we never to excel, not even to equal them in the works of imagination? Has Nature granted us with such compelling powers in all other things and denied it in that? No: Shakespeare, and Milton and Wren, shew that Nature is not a partial step-mother, that Genius is not confined to the latitudes of Athens and Rome.⁶⁹

In this extract from his lectures to students at the Royal Academy of Arts, Hunter points up the works of Shakespeare, Milton and Wren, two writers and an architect, but his point is to show that 'genius' is not confined to the Mediterranean and that Britain would also prove fertile ground for genius to flower, despite its 'unfavourable' climate. The examples are, however, carefully chosen for their appreciation of nature, Wren especially who, besides being the architect of St Paul's Cathedral, had provided illustrations for one of the first illustrated textbooks on the anatomy of the brain, Thomas Willis's (1621-1675) *Cerebri Anatome*, (1664) two copies of which Hunter owned.⁷⁰ Hunter's understanding and knowledge of the legacy of northern Italian culture in both the arts and science is carefully woven through his own writings on anatomy. In his praise for Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) he tells his medical students that this artist had an understanding of the human form far advanced than any of his contemporaries in art or medicine:

In tracing the great revolution of learning, which happened in the fifteenth century, I am enabled to carry the history of the improvement of anatomy farther back than has been generally done by our own writers; and to introduce into the annals of our art, a genius of the first rate, Leonardo da Vinci, who has been overlooked, because he was of another profession, and

⁶⁹ Hunter, William, *Dr William Hunter's Lectures on Anatomy to Students at the Royal Academy of Arts*, 1769-1772, GU SpColl H46. Reprinted, Kemp (1975); Black (2007).

⁷⁰ GU SpColl Hunterian Cf.4.42 and GU SpColl Hunterian X.6.4. See Noga Arikha, 'Form and Function in the Early Enlightenment', *Perspectives on Science*, vol. 14, no 2, 2006, p160.

because he published nothing upon the subject, I believe he was, by far, the best anatomist and physiologist of his time.⁷¹

It was the establishment of the Academy of Experiment (*Accademia del Cimento*) in Florence which Hunter describes as the foundation for other scientific organisations that followed and placed northern Italy at the centre of European intellectual advancement.

It was at this happy time [middle of the seventeenth century] that Malpighi (Marcello Malpighi, physician and biologist, 1628-1694) came forth, the great period for the study of all natural things. At this time the *Accademia del Cimento* (established 1657) arose in Italy, the Royal Society in London and the Royal Academy in Paris. And from that time, the important doctrine of rejecting all hypothesis, or general knowledge till a sufficient number of facts shall have been ascertained, by careful observation, and judicious experiments, has been every day growing into more credit. That doctrine was the source of Sir Isaac Newton's, and of all the improvements which have been made since the middle of the seventeenth century.⁷²

This establishes that for Hunter and most likely for Strange too, their perceptions of Italian culture as preeminent were not solely based on a hierarchy of artistic technique, nor did they have a view that, as a Catholic society, Italy was deprived of academic and intellectual achievement.⁷³ Italian art represented a radical change, a system of beliefs that was yet to be discovered in British visual culture – the dissemination of which could only be achieved through the networks of commerce and exchange fuelled by consumerism.

Collecting luxury

In her essay “*Felsina sempre pittrice*”, the later fate of Bolognese Painting’, Anna Ottani Cavina writes:

⁷¹ Hunter, William *Two Introductory Lectures delivered by William Hunter to his last course of Anatomical Lectures at his Theatre in Windmill Street*, London 1784, p.35.

⁷² Ibid, p.52.

⁷³ Both Hunter and Strange, because of their social and educational experiences, may have been sympathetic to Catholic ambitions for Enlightenment progress, as outlined in Goldie, Mark, ‘The Scottish Catholic Enlightenment’, *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (January 1991): pp.20-62; See also McCluskey, Raymond, ed. *The Scots College Rome, 1600-2000*, John Donald, Edinburgh, 2000. The College in Rome and its related institution in Paris, gave refuge to Jacobites after the rebellions of 1715 and 1745 but also provided the Catholic community in Scotland with a continuing relationship to European intellectualism for four hundred years; Goldie, in his article, describes how the archives of the Jacobites in Rome were deposited at the Scots College until they were passed in 1789 to Windsor Castle. The Paris Jacobite archives were similarly owned by the Scots College there.

When in fact did the cult of the Bolognese reach European horizons? To judge by collecting, the phenomenon exploded in the eighteenth century and involved particularly the French and English (the Germans remained more partial to the art of Venice). Before then, in the seventeenth century, enthusiasm for Bolognese art seems restricted to Italy.⁷⁴

Cavina explains that what had been restricted to a scholarly interest within Italy itself, developed with the grand tour and the emergence of collectors and agents in particular helped to establish the Bolognese tradition throughout the rest of Europe. Cavina describes how the Duc d'Orleans was collecting Annibale Carracci, Guido Reni, Albani, Domenichino and Guercino as early 1715, but it was the British dealers and collectors that launched the revival of north Italian painting. In 1773 Gavin Hamilton published, in Rome, a catalogue of his own painting collection *Schola Italica Picturae*, like Strange's it was an attempt to provide a guide to the different traditions of schools of painting in Italy but it was also a way for Hamilton to advertise his collection for sale. Unlike Strange, Hamilton lived permanently in Rome from 1756 and his knowledge of Italian painting could be said to have derived more intuitively from an interest in classical antiquities than from ideas of naturalism⁷⁵. Hamilton's catalogue focuses on the High Renaissance, Michaelangelo, Raphael, Correggio, Titian and Veronese, although he does include examples from the Bolognese school in his seventeenth-century paintings. As Cavina concedes, it is the market that dictates demands for Bolognese art by the middle of the eighteenth century and it is apparent that Strange's plan was designed to exploit this.

As mentioned previously, Strange did not look to Rome as the only place to find great works of art but, convinced that he could make use of some the works which he knew were in the lesser-visited towns of Parma, Bologna and Cento, he spent more time in these locations than the majority of British artists. For example, Richard Wilson (1713-1782) visited Venice, Ravenna, Rimini, San Marino, Ancona, Loreto, Foligno, Rome and Naples, but the majority of his time in Italy was spent in Rome and Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-1797) spent most of his sojourn in the south of Italy.⁷⁶ Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) went directly from Minorca to Rome, although he did travel to Bologna on his return. However, Reynolds's purposes for undertaking the journey to Italy were quite

⁷⁴ Ottani Cavina, Anna, "Felsina sempre pittrice", the later fate of Bolognese Painting', in *The Age of Correggio and the Carracci, Emilian Painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, Cambridge University Press, 1986-87, p.359.

⁷⁵ Lloyd Williams, Julia, *Gavin Hamilton 1723-1798*, Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, 1994; Skinner, Basil, *Scots in Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, publisher unknown, 1966, pp.20-22.

⁷⁶ Ingamells, John, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy (1701-1800)* Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1997, pp.904-906.

different to Strange's: 'Although at first disappointed by Raphael's *Stanza*, he came to appreciate Raphael as the model of unaffected style, in contrast with whom he thought Michaelangelo and Annibale Carracci were too wild, Domenichino too tame, and Guido Reni too effeminate'.⁷⁷ Reynolds had gone to look at works of art in Italy in order to take ideas from them, not to copy them for engraving, as was Strange's intention. Reynolds set out for Italy in 1749 at the age of twenty-five whereas Strange left when he was forty; his age and experience meant that his project was much more highly developed than some of his contemporaries, his was primarily a commercial venture.

Strange's journey to Italy is documented by Dennistoun in his *Memoirs*, where the artist's reception in Florence in 1760 is demonstrated using Strange's own letters to Andrew Lumisden. Strange was entertained in Florence at the home of Sir Horace Mann (1706-1786) and despite being cautious of the other British visitors around him, wrote to Lumisden: 'I foresee a field opening for me in this country as will secure me, I hope, immortale honour; and in the end an ample fortune'.⁷⁸ Strange recounts being pointed to in the street by well-wishers and how his work became known in Italy, especially in Florence, due to Horace Mann's help. Both Dennistoun and Ingamells, have recounted an incident in Florence where Thomas Jenkins (1722-1798) allegedly tried to pass off a drawing taken from Guido Reni's *Perseus and Andromeda* in the collection at Kensington Palace, as an original. Strange recognised the painting and in the presence of Lord Fordwich and other guests exposed the drawing as a fake.⁷⁹ This immediately alerted Lord Fordwich to the possibility that the provenance of other works in his collection might have been dubious and he therefore asked Strange to take a look at these. As an insight into the dealings of grand tourists, the story has some interest but it is particularly relevant here for the boost that it gave to Strange's status as a connoisseur and, despite his reservations at this awkward situation, in his letter to Lumisden, he is both apprehensive and intrigued at the same time: 'You see this is a disagreeable situation, and am really at a loss how to act, though I own at the same time I have a secret inclination to see this important cargo'.⁸⁰ In 1763 Strange left Florence, on his way to Parma. He stopped in Bologna where he met Richard Dalton and the account of this incident is also recalled by Strange in his *Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Royal Academy of Arts* (1775). During this incident Strange tells Dalton of his intention to

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.948.

⁷⁸ Letter dated Florence, June 30th 1760 from Robert Strange to Andrew Lumisden, NLS, Strange and Lumisden Papers, MSS 14263 (1-12).

⁷⁹ Ibid, and see also Dennistoun, 1855, pp.287-288, vol. 1; Ingamells, 1997, entry for Robert Strange.

⁸⁰ Letter dated Florence, June 30th 1760 from Robert Strange to Andrew Lumisden, NLS, Strange and Lumisden Papers, MSS 14263 (1-12).

make engravings of four famous works at Bologna: *The Circumcision* and *Abraham Putting Away Hagar* both by Guercino (1591-1666) and the *Aldrovandi Cupid* and *St Peter and St Paul* both by Guido Reni. Strange writes:

Here ended our conversation, and, next morning, I continued on my journey to Parma, where I remained about three months. Will it be credited, my Lord, when I inform you, that during my stay at Parma, M. Dalton had suspended M. Bartolozzi's return to Venice, and had employed him to make drawings of the very pictures, or such of them as he could get access to, which I had unwarily told him were the objects of my journey.⁸¹

Strange also mentions here that he took the opportunity to visit Ercole Lelli (1702-1766), an immensely important Bolognese scientist who developed the use of wax models in anatomical displays; an artist and engraver, he specialised in ecorche models, and must have been well known to Hunter and Strange.

'In the evening I went to pay my respects to Signor Lelli, an ingenious artist and an excellent anatomist. This gentleman was well acquainted with M. Dalton. During the course of our conversation, I related to him the particulars'.⁸² Both Strange and Lelli discussed Dalton's characteristics and motivations but it is significant that Strange makes the visit to Lelli, an important figure in the dissemination of naturalist philosophy and surely not the only anatomist that Strange visited in Northern Italy, although there appears to be no mention of any others in his correspondence.

When he returned to Bologna after three months in Parma, Strange found that his access to these works was denied on the basis that they had already been copied by the artist Bartolozzi, for Mr Richard Dalton at the request of King George III. The works which Strange had planned to copy were all by north Italian painters, the figures in *St Peter and St Paul* by Reni are some of the most naturalistic works by that artist and similar to Caravaggio. *Abraham Putting Away Hagar* by Guercino (fig.45) also contains believable, life-size figures; while the religious subjects, the *Circumcision* and the *Aldrovandi Cupid* do not contain overtly Catholic imagery and were considered works in an historical vein. Strange had carefully selected these works for a particular purpose so it is surprising that he appears to have been gullible enough to tell Dalton his plans. There is no doubt, the incident caused him trouble at Bologna, as he relayed in a series of letters to Lumisden in Rome. In this letter dated, Bologna, June 29th 1763, Strange conveys the frustration that he experienced while trying to copy Guercino's *Circumcision*, an altarpiece in the Church of *Gesu e Maria*:

It is the devil I find to have to do with women especially those who are veiled, the whole of this convent all under the influence of their priest and confessor,

⁸¹ Strange, *An Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Royal Academy of Arts*, London, 1775, p.25.

⁸² Ibid, p.30.

who was no friend in my case. They unanimously petitioned the Arch-Bishop that no such liberty as I required might be granted, however, from his gentle means to bring them over, and from the influence some persons of distinction had here with their selections in the Convent they have at last offered a scaffold to be erected, which I flatter myself will be done tomorrow. – you'll now be satisfied that I am not without employment here and indeed have not time to lose for I know I shall be persecuted while this drawing is unfinished. They would not hear of more than a month and I have promised to be there by ... and to admit of no interruption while I am at work.⁸³

By July 1763, Strange appealed to Lumisden to do what he can to gain access to these paintings, even if it meant using any influence he can with the Hanoverian court:

... I find it no secret in Bologna the Duke (of York) having wrote in my favour it is owing I presume to Cardinal Malvezzi mentioning the strong recommendations I had to him which I know he used as a great argument with the nuns. I want to smile when I think on Hanoverian and our own interests being used together on this occasion.⁸⁴

Strange goes on in this letter to discuss his chances of gaining membership of the Academy of St Luke, Rome, an important and influential accreditation:

... I have no doubt of my being received by the Academy of St Luke if the scoundrel Jenkins don't oppose it, I know he will never do it himself but as you know that all the Roman architects to a man are linked with him and the greatest part of them all no better than himself. I think on this occasion you might speak to Pompeo (Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787)) who I dare say will forward any motion in my favour. Before Dundas set out for Rome I recommended both him and his picture strongly which Dundas afterwards bought.⁸⁵

As this letter demonstrates, loyalties among the British in Italy were often split and in referring to the 'Roman architects', Strange is aligning Thomas Jenkins, with Sir William Chambers (1722-1796) who was to become Strange's enemy at the Royal Academy of Arts in London by the 1770s. In another letter, Strange relays to Lumisden how much he should pay for his membership of the Academy of St Luke:

.... I had a long epistle from the Abbe [Grant] (1708-1784) who assures me of everything from prince Alteiri in particular that my being admitted in the Academy of St Luke will be soon – inform yourself about the nature of the

⁸³ Letter from Strange to Lumisden, Bologna, June 29th 1763, NLS, Strange and Lumisden Papers, MSS 14263 (1-12).

⁸⁴ Ibid, Letter dated, July 2nd 1763.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

present and token it is made – I have heard that the Hallas (?) gave but twenty five or thirty [pounds] I think if we give forty it may do, the Adams' and Hamilton I know gave fifty. I have no intention you should lay out more money than you have of mine but rather that you give something⁸⁶

Clearly for membership of the European academies there was a fee charged and Strange is determined not to pay as much as the Adam brothers or Gavin Hamilton, perhaps because he had less to gain from it.

From Bologna, Strange then travelled to Cento, the birth place of Guercino, to work on a copy of the *Noli me tangere* an altarpiece by that artist in the church *Nome del dio*. He spent just over a month there before he was back in Bologna; his letters to Lumisden refer to a recommendation that he has been asked to provide for the architect and dealer, James Byers (1734-1817).⁸⁷

I shall do what I can to save Byars, but Morison has been warmly recommended to me as an antiquary, which I find he intends making his profession, and indeed I believe him better qualified than Byars – I certainly cannot recommend him as a preferable antiquary and in cases of this nature it is to be supposed one recommends the best, such recommendation must be in the light of an architect – if he could do without playing the antiquary it would certainly be best, for it can only breed ill blood – last winter was remarkable for Scots travellers but I know none of this.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Ibid, Letter, dated, July 30th 1763.

⁸⁷ James Byres of Tonley, Aberdeenshire, his father was a Catholic Jacobite who escaped to France after the 1745 rebellion. James Byers originally trained as a painter and in 1768 was elected *architetto* to the *Accademia di san Luca* in Rome. Although Strange is doubtful in this letter about Byres' reputation as an antiquary, he was recognised as an expert guide to visitors on the grand tour, acting as *cicerone* to Edward Gibbons in 1764 and responsible for the discovery and subsequent sale of the Barberini vase, (now the Portland vase in the British Museum). Strange's comparison of Byers' abilities with Colin Morison (1732-1810) reflects different accounts of their working relationship. For example Jeremy Black refers to Morison as Byers' 'major rival' in *Italy and the Grand Tour*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2003 p.47, while a contemporary guide suggests the two men worked together in business as *cicerones*: 'There are two young men at Rome at present who act in that capacity. Messrs. Morison & Byres, both scotchmen and both very worthy, tho the last circumstance is by no means a consequence of the other, Morison is esteemed the best medallist and classic scholar, Byres is the most agreeable and communicative. Having a regard for both, I cannot recommend one in preference to the other. ... They are both originally painters, and of course know the pictures as well as the antiquities', *Advice on Travel in Italy* by William Patoun, (c1766), *Guide to the Brinsley Ford Archive*, unpublished typescript, *Aspects of the Grand Tour*, forms part of the archive, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, p.49-50.

⁸⁸ Ibid, Letter, dated, September 15th 1763.

Byres left Rome in 1790 and returned to his estate in Aberdeenshire, where, in nearby Cluny, one of his only completed architectural projects was executed.⁸⁹

In his correspondence with his wife and Lumisden, Strange followed events back in Britain. In one letter to Lumisden he comments on the behaviour of the politician, John Wilkes (1725-1797). The first edition of the *North Briton* had been published in 1762 and its attack on Lord Bute (1713-1792) was the beginning of Wilkes's campaign to oust the Earl from his position as confidant of George III. The incident referred to in Strange's letter concerned John Forbes, the son of an Aberdeenshire Jacobite who escaped to France after 1745, and was now a captain in the French army.⁹⁰ Forbes, on seeing Wilkes in the street in Paris, challenged him over his allegations and demanded that Wilkes defend himself by duelling: 'Since you are Mr Wilkes, the person who has in some of your printed papers, insulted the Scots, in a way both scandalous unjust, I having the honour to be a Scotch gentleman, and a captain in the service of the King of France, desire that you immediately give me the satisfaction becoming a gentleman, i.e. that you fight me'.⁹¹ Wilkes refused to be drawn into a brawl with Forbes and managed to avoid an all-out confrontation. He later reported the incident to the French police and it was Forbes who was eventually forced to evade arrest. Strange remarks on this defence of Scots, wondering why it had taken this long, perhaps, for a public show of national pride:

I shall be sorry if Forbes had brought himself into any escapade on account of Wilks – from what I have heard of the north Briton I have been often surprised how the spirit of our countrymen lay so long hid. When I consider Wilks's opponents I cannot say but I wish he may triumph tho' in himself he little deserves it and is no more than the tool of a party.⁹²

Scots became an easy target for the 'mob' mentality that preceded Wilkes' campaign of the 1760s, symbolised by the recurrent physical attacks on the Earl of Bute in retaliation for his monopolisation of George III's court:

In November 1761, for example ... Bute was attacked and pelted with dirt by the London mob while on his way to dine with the Lord Mayor. The bruisers ... whom Bute had hired in anticipation of the attack, provoked the mob to greater violence and were unable to hold back the favourite's assailants; only

⁸⁹ 'This is the free-standing domed temple that he designed as a mausoleum for his neighbour Miss Eliza Fraser of Castle Fraser. See The Old Churchyard at Cluny, Cluny, Aberdeenshire, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Ref: NJ6ISE 5.01.

⁹⁰ Colley, 1992, p.112.

⁹¹ *The Scots Magazine*, No 25, October, 1763, p.533.

⁹² Letter, dated, September 22nd 1763, NLS, Strange and Lumisden Papers, MSS 14263 (1-12).

the timely intervention of a party of constables saved him and his coach from imminent destruction.⁹³

Bute became the focus of Whig political insecurities as George III allowed a number of Tories back into government, some of whom, in religion, followed Anglicanism and not Whig preferences for Protestant dissent and Wilkite politics. The Hanoverian dynasty, established in 1714, was believed to be under threat from these old Tory interlopers.⁹⁴

The powerful message that Wilkes conveyed was that because of Bute's nationality, he was a threat to English liberty, a type of constitutional freedom considered an achievement of Whig political reform. Bute's association with Scottish Tories signalled autocratic government by the back door. Strange, who had enjoyed Bute's patronage up until the dispute with Ramsay, must have considered his resignation in April 1763 as a betrayal by both Whigs and Tories, so much so that even he was prepared to support Wilkes, acknowledging the accepted view that ultimately he was merely a symbol of a particular aspirational political class.⁹⁵

As an artist working in Italy, Strange was a success and he, no doubt, wanted to replicate that success back in Britain. In fact, both William Hunter and Robert Strange are recognisable as members of the aspirational class described by Colley, individuals who accumulated wealth, 'moveable' property or cultural capital, and who were active in a much more inclusive form of political organisation. Wilkes was part of an extreme faction but others who signed up to groups such as the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, for example, may have considered themselves as belonging to a more general movement away from the old ties of patronage and whose activities, cultural and commercial, contributed to a stronger sense of nationhood than the demands of any one individual. This general shift in social class loyalties and aspirations accounts for a change in the perception of the collector and the collection by the 1760s, also, as described by Iain Pears:

The collection attained such importance primarily because it rested on conceptions which elevated its nature into a matter of national importance. Overshadowing the simple and individualist argument that collecting was a subtle and complicated version of conspicuous consumption, there was the

⁹³ Brewer, John, 'The Misfortunes of Lord Bute: A Case-Study in Eighteenth-Century Political Argument and Public Opinion', *The Historical Journal*, XVI, 1973, p.6.

⁹⁴ Colley, 1992, p.116.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.118: 'To them, Wilkes himself was little more than an attractive symbol for a campaign aimed at transforming the social distribution of political power and the theory on which it rested ... by arguing that liberty was synonymous with Englishness, they advanced their own superior claims as patriots. Individuals like themselves, men of movable property, whether dissenting or Anglican, not only had an equal right with the landed classes to active citizenship. They had a better right, for they were better Englishmen'.

theory which gave the accumulation of paintings a role in maintaining the political, economic and moral health of the entire country.⁹⁶

The resignation of Lord Bute and the emergence of Wilkes can be interpreted, on a general basis, as an expression of public engagement in the sense that Jurgen Habermas has articulated, in a manner that has exerted considerable influence over the direction of recent studies of this period.⁹⁷ The emergence of a defined 'public', or an informed, active body of consumers, therefore, had implications for the production and consumption of visual arts and this is evident in the changing approach to buying and selling collectable objects. When Robert Strange produced his *Descriptive Catalogue* of Paintings it was with the intention of attracting those buyers like Hunter who were aware of this changing role of the collection; buying into a collection of Italian works was buying into a luxury commodity, although it was perceived as something that had a didactic purpose.⁹⁸

This is why Strange's attributions of certain paintings and their provenance cannot be overlooked as he was buying, collecting and copying with this sense of the 'public' and its social, moral and political associations in mind. For example, one painting in Hunter's collection that appears in Strange's *Descriptive Catalogue* as *Laomedon Detected*, as by Salvator Rosa (1615-1673), (fig.46) bought at the 1771 sale is listed as:

Laomedon detected, [No 63]: Laomedon, King of Troy, having employed Neptune and Apollo to build the walls of the city, is afterwards surprised by

⁹⁶ Pears, Iain, *The Discovery of Painting*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1988, p.171.

⁹⁷ Habermas, Jurgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Polity, 1989, p 236: "Public opinion' takes on a different meaning depending on whether it is brought into play as a critical authority in connection with the normative mandate that the exercise of political and social power be subject to publicity ... in the service of persons and institutions, consumer goods and programmes'. Habermas placed the origins of modern ideas of "the public" in the eighteenth century: "The literate bourgeois public ... which had cut its teeth in literary discussions, took on a political role in the evaluation of contemporary affairs and, in particular, state policy... supported by a free press [it] formed a critical forum', quoted from, Outhwaite, William, *Habermas: A Critical Introduction*, Polity Press, 1994, p.8; It was this sharply critical element that developed from Wilkes's campaign and distinguishes the part it played in forming 'public' opinion. Two seminal works that incorporated Habermas' original ideas are: Solkin, David, *Painting for Money, The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England*, Yale University Press, 1992 and Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*.

⁹⁸ The list of buyers at Robert Strange's sale in 1771 includes the very type of professional, aspirational men described by Colley earlier. These included Dr Charles Chauncey (1709-1777) a physician and member of the Royal Society from 1740, he was a collector of paintings, prints, books and coins; The architects Mr Adam (Robert Adam (1728-1792)) and Mr Stuart, (James 'Athenian' Stuart (1713-1788)) and Mr Dundas (Thomas Dundas, of Kerse, first Baron Dundas of Aske, (1741-1820)).

the gods in the very act of concealing his treasure, when at the same time he had pretended he could not pay them. Whoever is acquainted with *Belisarius* of Lord Townshend, will at once see the similitude, and discover that they are both painted in the same stile and consequently about the same period.⁹⁹

The reason why Strange attributes this painting to Salvator Rosa is that he could make a direct comparison with a painting that he had seen in another British collection, that of Lord Townshend. The *Belisarius* by Rosa (fig.47) was said to have been given by Frederick the Great, while Margrave of Prussia, to Lord Townshend as a mark of appreciation for his services while Secretary of State ‘... The fame of the painting was such that it was installed in a specially named *Belisarius* Room at Raynham, Lord Townshend’s house in Norfolk; it was acquired by Sir Osbert Sitwell for Renishaw in 1947’.¹⁰⁰ The painting is still in the collection at Renishaw. While Jonathan Scott does not think that the dates correspond between Townshend and Frederick the Great, Townshend was definitely in Italy between 1745 and 1746 and in contact with Horace Mann there. Townshend [George], (1715-1769) served in the British navy and was stationed at Leghorn. He was a cousin of Horace Walpole, through marriage.¹⁰¹

Stylistically, Hunter’s *Laomedon* may not resemble other works by Salvator Rosa, but there is some evidence here that he and Strange had good reason to believe it was genuine.¹⁰² More importantly, making the connection between *Laomedon* and the *Belisarius* in Lord Townshend’s collection was fundamental for Robert Strange as it maintained the painting’s position within a British idea of the collection representing the moral health of the nation, as Iain Pears argues. Despite having an antagonistic

⁹⁹ Strange, *A Descriptive Catalogue of a Collection of Pictures*, p.123

¹⁰⁰ Scott, Jonathan, *Salvator Rosa, His Life and Times*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1995, p.120.

¹⁰¹ Ingamells, 1997, p.948.

¹⁰² *Laomedon* is also an unusual subject for Salvator Rosa who was better known as a landscape artist. However, ‘*Pictor Succensor*’, *A Study of Salvator Rosa as Satirist, Cynic and Painter*, Wendy Wassying Roworth (Garland, 1978) discusses how Rosa developed the idea of the cynic in a philosophical sense. *Laomedon*, having gained the advantages of the work of the Gods Apollo and Poseidon in building the walls of Troy, refuses to pay them. *Belisarius* was a general in the Roman army who won back glory for the Emperor Justinian but in his old age was left with nothing. These subjects seem to correspond with Rosa’s work at this period and in the features of the god Apollo, there are some similarities to his own self-portraits of his early career. A more recent attribution has been also tentatively suggested to that of Bernhard Keil (Helsingborg 1624-1687), a Danish painter working in Rome in Rosa’s lifetime. The painting also resembles another by PF Mola (1612-166), *An Old Man at a Brazier: Allegory of Winter*, where the character of the Old Man resembles *Laomedon* and the gestural action of ‘warming hands’ is also similar (See Black, ed. 2007, p.121). While, stylistically, this painting looks similar to Hunter’s *Laomedon*, the subject matter is less convincing.

relationship with the Admiralty (reflected, perhaps, in his identification with the character of Belisarius in the painting) Townshend was a member of a powerful aristocratic family whose disposable income, as described in the previous chapter, was the subject of concern among artists and connoisseurs. A painting that was contemporaneous with another important collection, gave Hunter's ownership of *Laomedon* heightened importance.

Hunter's Italian paintings occupy, in historical terms, a moment of transition in the history of collecting in Britain. If Hunter's collection represents a form of consumption knowledge in synthesis, then these paintings that are characteristic of a Northern Italian painting tradition, that represent a system of beliefs not yet familiar to British audiences, and that constitute increasingly expensive cultural capital, have to be assimilated within the overall synthesis and this happens by incorporating the works into the language of eighteenth-century consumer culture.

Only at the end of the eighteenth century did writers and critics set out to 'order the arts', to give a coherent, critical and historical account of literature, music, and painting that placed present-day achievements in a larger context ... Culture, so long the handmaiden of commerce, was becoming institutionalised.¹⁰³

William Hunter's collection represents the period between the ordering of the arts and its institutionalism, but nonetheless it was informed by an astute appreciation for commerce and with view to eventual public purpose. Strange's use of a *Descriptive Catalogue* is one example of this commercialisation of the objects of collections:

Along with quality, variety and novelty feature as central to the characteristics of goods, Consumers are not passive price takers, but active participants in taste formation ... in combining and recombining new and existing goods to create a social identity and a lifestyle. More durable consumer goods that became more attractive could induce substitution of expenditure away from necessities; historians argue that this is indeed what happened in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁴

Although Maxine Berg's interests lie in innovation and development of new domestic products, her description of consumers active in taste formation is relevant here. She describes the formation of a 'sensuous arousal' in the appeal of more diverse luxury

¹⁰³ Brewer, 1997, p.463.

¹⁰⁴ Berg, Maxine, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p.86.

commodities during the second-half of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Quoting William Hogarth's definition of variety as a key principle of the idea of beauty from his *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), Berg explains how the perceptions of luxury commodities, through their exchange and display, became central features of national debates on taste and style. Hogarth, 'Sought to displace moral judgment with an aesthetics of sensation and pleasure based in nature', and by doing so created a valid reason for the accumulation of pleasurable and luxury items.¹⁰⁶ Just as these ideas were adopted from discussions of aesthetics in fine art and adapted for debates on the production of manufactured goods, so fine art objects were incorporated into the language of commodity produce and this is particularly evident during the development of the grand tour. While organisations such as the Society for the Encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, where William Hunter took an active role, donating funds and distributing awards, along with commissioning artists involved with the society, could act as a conduit for the combined promotion of fine and manufactured arts, the less structured networks of travellers, dealers and artists that constituted the rediscovery of Italian Renaissance art, helped to shape a commercial vocabulary that merged aesthetics with the exchange and value of works of art.

It is in this context that William Hunter's choice of Italian paintings must be considered; they demonstrate his knowledge and connoisseurship of the history of North Italian naturalism and how this could be incorporated into his own collection, the purpose of which was to advance and develop a modern idea of naturalism, one that could have precedence over religious and political boundaries. With an innate understanding of the changing role of consumption within the philosophy of aesthetics, Hunter's collection considers its audience of educated, sophisticated, metropolitan professionals, beginning with the antiquarian-anatomists as described in chapter one. This audience is then presented with elaborate and fashionable displays in Hunter's own home and encouraged to imagine the possibilities and potential of a British School of artists; eventually leading to an ambitious group of Old Master paintings. Hunter's patronage of Robert Strange was part of his scheme, his information system, to create a future 'ordering of the arts' but it was a scheme that had as its foundation the promotion of natural history through anatomy, and Hunter achieved this by his skill as a writer, lecturer and demonstrator.

¹⁰⁵ This 'sensual arousal' describes the concern for the effects of the imagination on fine art and design that dominated philosophical debates during the period, deriving from Francis Hutchinson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725).

¹⁰⁶ Berg, 2005, p.88.

A Collector of the Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Britain:

Dr William Hunter (1718-1783)

Chapter Five

Art, Medicine, Nature

I wonder at my vast ignorance of anatomy for I had no more idea of it before I heard Dr. Hunter's lectures ... for I thought it was a great number of strings like ropes and that flesh was quite a distinct thing from muscle and only like stuffing to fill up the skin. Cheselden's is not of itself sufficient because the plates are too few though they are exceedingly well drawn but not well explained as those in Brown.¹

James Northcote, 1772

James Northcote (1746-1831), who enrolled as a student at the Royal Academy of Arts on October 25th 1771, summarises the typical experience of exposure to the mysteries of anatomical knowledge of a young artist in the eighteenth century when he perceived the inner workings of the body as composing 'strings like ropes' with 'flesh indistinct from muscle'. Artists in Britain had to glean knowledge of anatomy from textbooks or private anatomical lectures, where the emphasis lay on medical skills, rather than artistic matters. Besides the St Martin's Lane Academy, where William Hunter is thought to have lectured from the early 1750s, there were few chances for artists to learn a comprehensive, rigorous knowledge of anatomy.² However, this situation was to change

¹ Whitley, William, *Artists and their Friends in England 1700-1799*, London, Medici Society, 1928; James Northcote mentions here Cheselden's *Anatomy of the Human Body*, London, 1712 (subsequent editions contained more illustrations, for example, in 1722, the edition included thirty-one copperplates). John Brown's *Myographia nova, or a graphical description of all the muscles in the human body as they arise in dissection, six lectures, illustrated with forty-one copperplates*, London, c1700 is also mentioned as an anatomical textbook used by the young artists.

² Evidence Hunter was lecturing to students at the St Martin's Lane Academy is derived from John Hunter's annotations in Samuel Foart Simmons, *An Account of the Life and Writings of the Late William Hunter*, MD FRS and SA, London, 1783, where he writes that, 'About this time [the 1750s] he [William Hunter] read lectures in anatomy to the Incorporated Society of Painters at their rooms in St Martin's Lane', Special Collections, University of Glasgow Library, Hunterian ADD Q13), p.9. Kemp, Martin, *Dr William Hunter at the Royal Academy of Arts*, University of Glasgow Press, Glasgow, 1975, p.16 understood this to mean the second St Martin's Lane Academy (1735-1768) set up by William Hogarth and John Ellys in 1735, after the death of Sir James Thornhill in 1734 and points out that the Society of Artists of Great Britain, or the Incorporated Society of

by the end of the century when anatomical lectures, aimed at the public in general, featured increasingly within a wider culture of exhibition and spectacle.³ William Hunter was at the forefront of this entrepreneurial enterprise, with an extremely successful anatomical school at 16 Great Windmill Street, complete with his extensive collection of highly valuable and beautifully displayed anatomical preparations. Along with his practical skill as an anatomist, Hunter achieved a certain respect, and notoriety, for his lecturing skills that often went beyond the teaching of anatomy. Reporting news of a recent lecture given by Hunter to the poet William Mason, Horace Walpole, for one, was greatly concerned about the inappropriateness of politics entering the anatomical theatre:

This country is as lost as his, and nothing can save it. Do you want a new instance? Dr Hunter that Scotch nightman, had the impudence t'other day to pour out at his anatomic lecture a more outrageous Smeltiad than Smelt himself, and imputed all our disgraces and ruin to the Opposition. Burke was present, and said he had heard of political arithmetic, but never before of political anatomy, yet for a Scot to dare thus in the heart of London, and be borne, is proof enough that the nation itself is lost beyond redemption.⁴

Leaving aside, for the moment, Walpole's feelings towards Hunter's nationality, these remarks give a strong impression of the extent to which anatomy and its instruction had become part of the culture of intellectual and popular debate by the late eighteenth

Painters was not established until 1760; See Bignamini, 1991, p.8; Also, Hargreaves, Matthew, *"Candidates for Fame" The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2005, writes: 'Cleary John [Hunter] confused the St Martin's Lane Academy with the Society of Artists of Great Britain', p102.

³ Schaeffer, Simon, 'Natural Philosophy and Public Spectacle in the Eighteenth Century', *History of Science*, 21, March 1983, pp.1-43; Schaffer, Simon and Shapin, Steven, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*, Princeton University Press 1985; and Clark, William, Golinski, Jan and Schaffer, Simon, eds. *The Sciences in Enlightenment Europe*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999. How these spectacles became increasingly commodified is described in Altick, Richard D, *Shows of London*, Cambridge Mass; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978.

⁴ Walpole, Horace, Letter to the Reverend William Mason, Wednesday, 1st November 1780, *Correspondence of Horace Walpole*, Yale University Press Edition, p.86. Much of Walpole's correspondence at this date reveals like this extract the author's mixed reactions to events in America: 'Walpole's politics, allegiances and sympathies were inevitably divided by the war in America: whilst he was eager to condemn British military action against fellow subjects in the colonies, loyalty to the nation demanded support for defensive preparations at home against the traditional enemy, but American ally, the French'. See Bonehill, John, and Quilley, Geoff, 'Introduction', in idem, eds. *Conflicting Visions, War and Visual Culture in Britain and France c1700-1830*, Ashgate, England, 2005, p.8.

century.⁵ It is not known what Hunter said in this particular instance, as his lectures to the Royal Academy and at Windmill Street were not normally written-up.⁶ Judging by Walpole's reaction, Hunter must have made some remarks in favour of the monarch, George III, the war with America and to the detriment of the opposition. In describing the doctor's outpourings as 'a more outrageous Smeltiad than Smelt himself', Walpole made reference to a favourite of the King's, Leonard Smelt (1725-1800), a military engineer who had occupied various important government posts until he was made sub-governor to the Prince of Wales and Prince Frederick in April 1771. Smelt had outraged those who allied themselves with the Whig opposition, with his defence of George III during a meeting in York, widely reported in the press, opposing a recent petitioning for funds to support the war with America:

Let Reformation begin with the Body of the People; let it proceed from the Source from which our Calamities proceed; let us not impose upon ourselves, or be deceived into an Opinion, that it is a Zeal for the public Welfare that has prompted the measure proposed; it is not in the Leaders of the People that such a Zeal is to be found; no, Sir, the Influence of private Ambition actuates their Conduct; the disappointed Pursuit of Emoluments, that, while conferred on other Men, are made the Pretext for their seditious Murmurs, is the real and genuine Amount of their Grievances ... From the King alone it is that we may look for it [Redress] with Propriety; for besides that he is the only Power on which the Constitution directs us to rely, if there be a Patriot in this Country he is now upon the Throne: The King, Sir, is not only the first, the greatest, and the best, but, I am sorry to say it, I believe he is the ONLY Patriot in this Country.⁷

William Mason, along with others, had published this edition of Smelt's speech, positioning it centre stage with contemporary debates about the threat to liberty posed by

⁵ Guerrini, Anita, 'Anatomists and Entrepreneurs in Early Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, (2004) vol. 59, No. 2, pp. 219-239. Guerrini situates the public anatomical lecture within the development of displays of natural philosophy as described by Schaffer and Shapin, pointing out, however, that the anatomical lecture was less easy to accommodate within the culture of polite society as described in Klein, Lawrence, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 45, 4, (2002) pp. 869-898.

⁶ Some of Hunter's lectures to Students at the Royal Academy of Arts do exist in manuscript form in the University of Glasgow Library, GU SpColl H46; See also Kemp, 1975 and Peter Black, ed. "My Highest Pleasures", *William Hunter's Art Collection*, Paul Holberton Publishing, 2007, pp.167-174. There are also students' notes to Hunter's anatomical lectures.

⁷ *The Speech by Leonard Smelt, Esq. Delivered by him at the meeting of the county of York, December 30, 1779, with notes variorum*, York and London, 1780.

a powerful monarchy. The publishers, of this later edition, set the scene in the introduction by quoting directly from John Locke:

When the People are made miserable, cry up their Governours as much as you will for the Sons of Jupiter: give them out for whom or for what you please, the People ill treated, and, contrary to Right, will be ready, upon any Occasion, to ease themselves of a Burden that sits heavy upon them.⁸

To spout a 'Smeltiad', therefore, was to make a deliberately provocative political statement, defending the powers of the monarch and, by implication, disparage the Whig inheritance of liberty.

That these events and characters were drawn together in a lecture purportedly on anatomical instruction is evidence of the changed circumstances of the discipline by the close of the century. On another occasion Walpole imagines Hunter's anatomical lecture as a vehicle for the derision of historical English heroes:

Pray look into the [last] *Critical Review* but one, there you will find that David Hume in a saucy blockheadly note calls Locke, Algernon Sidney, and Bishop Hoadly, despicable writers. I believe that ere long the Scotch will call the English *lousy*! And that Goody Hunter will broach the assertion in an anatomical lecture.⁹

⁸ Locke, John, *The Spirit of John Locke On Civil Government, Revived by the Constitutional Society of Sheffield*, Sheffield, 1794, p.29.

⁹ Letter to the Reverend William Mason, February 5th 1781, *Correspondence of Horace Walpole*, Yale University Press Edition, vol 29, Mason II, p.105.; An Article had appeared in the *Critical Review*, December, 1780, p458, pointing out that in David Hume's posthumous edition of the *History of Great Britain*, the sentence, 'Compositions the most despicable both for style and matter have been extolled, and propagated, and read such as Rapin de Thoyras etc..' had been extended to include Hume's own corrections and additions and subsequently ended: 'Such as Rapin de Thoyras, Locke, Sidney, Hoadly etc'. Clearly Walpole took this to be an attack on some of England's greatest authors: Paul Rapin de Thoyras (1661-1725), John Locke (1632-1704), Algernon Sydney (1623-1683), and Benjamin Hoadly (1676-1761), and he goes on to compare these examples with the 'false' intellectuals of the Scottish enlightenment, such as David Hume (1711-1776), John Home (1722-1808), Church of Scotland minister, playwright and from 1757, Private Secretary to the Earl of Bute; Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), Judge and author; James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714-1799), Judge and philosopher; Adam Smith (1723-1790), moral philosopher and political economist. The correspondence between Walpole and William Mason contains many references deriding the Scots favoured by the King, at least those favoured by Lord Bute, who was still believed to be exerting an influence over the King. In Mason's *Epistle to Sir William Chambers ... author of a late dissertation on Oriental Gardening*, (1773), a satire on Chambers' preference for 'Oriental' gardening over a 'natural' English style, David Hume and Tobias Smollett are the victims of his wit:

The fattest hog of Epicura's sty;

Walpole conjures up the image of Hunter and Hume, as two Scotsmen, conspiring together to undermine English history. The letter goes on:

Not content with debasing and disgracing us as a nation by losing America, destroying our Empire, and making us the scorn and prey of Europe, the Scotch would annihilate our patriots, martyrs, heroes and geniuses. Algernon Sydney, Lord Russel, King William, the Duke of Malborough, Locke, are to be traduced and levelled, and with the aid of their fellow-labourer Johnson, who spits at them while he tugs at the same oar, Milton, Addison, Prior, and Ray are to make way for the dull forgeries of Ossian, and such wights as Davy and Johnny Hume, Lord Kaimes, Lord Monboddo, and Adam Smith! – Oh! If you have a drop of English ink in your veins, rouse and revenge your country! Do not let us be run down and brazened out of all our virtue, genius, sense, and taste, by Laplanders and Boetians, who never produced one single original writer in verse or prose.¹⁰

Walpole's patriotic rage reveals the tensions that existed in the early 1780s in London, where the war with America had brought memories of the Jacobite rebellions back into focus. His paranoia, that there was a Scottish ploy to indoctrinate the English with their own version of cultural history, extended to the belief that this was embedded within the royal court itself, as he also conveyed the vision of William Hunter teaching the young Prince Alfred 'his Erse alphabet' to Lady Ossory.¹¹ This is despite the fact that there is no evidence to suggest that Hunter read or spoke Scottish Gaelic and had, by all accounts, only a trace of a Scottish accent.¹²

Why did the form of the anatomical lecture hold such significance for Walpole? And how did the space of anatomical display become a theatre for the voicing of cultural and

Tho' drunk with Gallic wine and Gallic praise,
David shall bless Old England's halcyon days,
Thy mighty Home bemir'd so prose so long,
Again shall stalk upon stilts of song;
While bold Mac-Ossian, won't in ghosts to deal,
Bids candid Smollett from his coffin steal;

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Letter to Lady Ossory, December 25th 1781, Lewis, WS, ed. *Correspondence*, 33, Oxford University Press, p.319.

¹² Hunter's accent was described by Joseph Adams (1755-1818), an ex-pupil and biographer of John Hunter, who most likely attended William's lectures too: 'His dialect had all the polish of the Southern metropolis, with enough of the Northern recitative to preserve the close of his sentences from too abrupt a cadence'. See Adams, Joseph, *Memoirs of the Life of Johh Hunter Esq*, J. Callow, London 1818, p.118.

political commentary? These questions are posed here in the introduction to this chapter which focuses on William Hunter's involvement in lecturing and teaching to students of the fine arts and other interested parties. Just as his collection played an important role as the material manifestation of eighteenth-century approaches to natural history and philosophy, so Hunter's public performances transmitted the dissemination of the collection and guaranteed its survival even after his death. The public performance of anatomy, which was pioneered by practitioners in the eighteenth century such as William Cheselden, Francis Nicholls and William Hunter's mentor, James Douglas, as described by Guerrini, could be said to have reached its peak in popularity with Hunter's lectures at the Royal Academy of Arts. As Walpole noted, Edmund Burke (1729-1797) attended these lectures, along with other members of London's cultural and literary society, including Adam Smith, Tobias Smollett and the historian Edward Gibbon. In a letter addressed to Hunter, dated January 1777, Gibbon writes:

Mr Gibbons presents his compliments to Dr. Hunter, and proposes himself the pleasure of attending some of his Anatomical lectures. He sincerely laments that his literary and Parliamentary avocations will not allow him to enjoy the whole benefit of so interesting and instructive a course of study.¹³

For Gibbon, anatomy and chemistry are both subjects encompassed within the general heading of natural history, a subject that helped him to 'multiply my ideas and images', thereby providing the author with a seam of inspiration drawn from nature. The popularity of William Hunter's Royal Academy lectures is partly explained by this genuine curiosity and search for knowledge of the material world characteristic of the eighteenth century. His lectures were also, as shall be shown, problematic. On the one hand, anatomical display, within the confines and under the auspices of the Royal Academy, offered a legitimate space for the practice of dissection that, in the 1770s, was still inextricably linked to the activities at Surgeon's Hall, Tyburn and Newgate, and not the respectable, leafy surrounds of old Somerset House. On the other hand, these public performances, gave anatomists, especially those well-connected like Hunter, a public presence and an opportunity to express their views more generally.

Martin Kemp has suggested that the Academicians had not expected the Professor of Anatomy to be a controversial figure and this is why the Council recorded in their

¹³ Hunter-Baillie Papers, i.f.40. Brock, 2008, vol. 2, p.247. Brock adds that in his *Memoirs*, Gibbon writes: '1777. Nearly two years had elapsed between the publication of my first and the commencement of my second volume [of *The Decline and Fall of the Holy Roman Empire*]; and the causes must be assigned of this long delay. After a short holiday, I indulged my curiosity in some studies of a very different nature, a course of anatomy which was demonstrated by Dr Hunter; and some lessons of chemistry, which were delivered by Mr Higgens. The principles of these sciences, and a taste for books of natural history contributed to multiply my ideas and images and the anatomist and chemist may sometimes track me in their snow'.

minutes on February 14, 1769 that all Professors must submit their lectures to the Secretary for prior approval, with the exception of Dr Hunter.¹⁴ However, none of the other Academicians had the appropriate knowledge and experience to question or challenge Hunter's authority on his own specialist topic, and this was as likely the reason for his exemption from the process rather than any pre-conceived idea that he would be un-provocative. In fact, it is difficult to imagine how the other Academicians could not have found Hunter, as an anatomist, controversial. William Hunter's role in the Royal Academy of Arts, therefore, offers up an opportunity to explore the meanings of anatomical practice in eighteenth-century London by considering the anatomical lecture as a form of 'cultural capital'.¹⁵

Political Anatomy

Walpole's identification of Hunter with the pursuit of 'political anatomy' summarises accurately the state of affairs between the practices of art and anatomy in the years between 1768 and 1783 and is illustrated in two contemporary paintings of Hunter in his role as Professor of Anatomy. These are Johan Zoffany's *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, exhibited 1772 (fig.48), and in the Royal collection, and *Dr. William Hunter lecturing at the Royal Academy*, c1772 (fig.49), in the Royal College of Physicians, London. *The Academicians* has a fairly secure provenance, having been most likely commissioned by George III to commemorate the establishment of the Academy, while *Dr. Hunter lecturing* is generally considered to have been commissioned by Hunter himself.¹⁶ Both these paintings, of course, have a relationship to one another and are also closely related to an earlier work that depicts the life class in London in the 1760s and described later in this chapter.¹⁷ Hunter's portrait by Robert Edge Pine, c1765, in the Royal College of Surgeons, London (fig.50) and *William Hunter lecturing at the Royal*

¹⁴ Kemp, 1975, p.24.

¹⁵ The idea originates from Pierre Bourdieu, *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Routledge, London, 1986, and is discussed as a feature of anatomical preparations during the eighteenth century, in Chaplin, Simon, 'Nature Dissected or Dissection Naturalised? The case of John Hunter's Museum', *Museum and Society*, 6(2), July 2008, pp.135-151.

¹⁶ Bignamini, Ilaria, Postle, Martin, *The Artist's Model its Role in British Art from Lely to Etty*, exh. cat. University Art Gallery, Nottingham, The Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood, 1991, pp. 41 and 87. The painting was bequeathed to the Royal College of Physicians, London, in 1823 by William Hunter's nephew, Dr Matthew Baillie, presumably, as a family memorial of Hunter. This is why the painting was not included with the collection sent to Glasgow in 1807. See also Millar, Oliver, *Later Georgian Pictures in the Royal Collection*, Phaidon, London and New York, 1969: *The Academicians* is listed as no. 1210 and Millar refers to an 1841 catalogue that describes the painting as being in Buckingham Palace, 'Purchased from the artist by George III'.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp.40-41.

Academy, 1769, by Mason Chamberlin, which hung in the Council chamber of the Royal Academy of Arts and is still in its possession (fig.51), and a miniature, derived from this painting, by George Michael Moser, c.1770 (fig.52), are also considered here in a discussion of the doctor's role within the Academy of Arts and as a private instructor of Anatomy from the 1760s until his death in 1783. As Kemp has remarked, 'The visual and written evidence together provide a satisfyingly complete picture of Hunter's significant but neglected contribution to the Academy's early environment'.¹⁸ However, it is also telling that these visual records of Hunter's lectures are scattered across various collections. It is evidence that his lectures were a vital component of the medical *and* artistic culture of London during this period.

In medical history, the period between 1745, when the Barbers split with the Surgeons to form two separate companies, and 1752, when the Surgeons Company opened their newly-built Anatomical theatre at the Old Bailey, represents a lacuna in the teaching of anatomy in London, because there was no place where anatomical lectures could legitimately take place. This is one of the reasons that private anatomical lessons became so predominant in the period. Even after the establishment of their new home at the Old Bailey, near the site of Newgate, anatomical lectures were held erratically. Dissections were made of the bodies of convicted murderers, as a requirement of sentences imposed under the Murder Act of 1752. It was these dissections that attracted the public to the sight of the body of criminals exposed to view, as illustrated in William Hogarth's *The Reward of Cruelty*, 1750, which depicts the old Barber-Surgeons Hall in Monkwell Street, designed by Inigo Jones and demolished in 1784.¹⁹ While the Barber-Surgeons, and then subsequently the Surgeons Company, were occupied with carrying out state-imposed regulations and performing dissections as a means to deter criminal behaviour, private anatomical lectures were struggling to keep up with market demand and both John and William Hunter provided a consistent, regular series of lectures that satisfied both medical students and 'genteel' audiences, keen to distinguish themselves from the 'mob' that attended Surgeon's Hall.²⁰

¹⁸ Kemp, 1975, p.13.

¹⁹ Chaplin, Simon, '*John Hunter and the 'Museum Oeconomy 1750-1800'*', PhD thesis submitted to the University of London, Department of History, King's College, London, 2009, pp. 48-64 and Appendix 2; See Paulson, Ronald, *Hogarth's Graphic Works*, 3rd ed. Rev, British Museum, London, 1989, cat.no.190, p.151; Haslam, Fiona, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson, Medicine in Art in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, University of Liverpool Press, Liverpool, 1996, pp. 263-265 for a discussion of Hogarth's engraving.

²⁰ Chaplin, 2009, writes that between 1752 and 1800 there were 139 executions for murder in London. Of these, 117 bodies were brought to Surgeons's hall for dissection, while only 39 lectures were read using these bodies as subjects. Meanwhile John Hunter read 80 lectures in one season, while William Hunter read 60, presumably all incorporating dissected bodies and anatomical

Besides private anatomical practice, therefore, by the 1770s, Hunter's lectures, as delivered at old Somerset House, and which were open to the public, would have been one of the few places where anatomical displays could be seen in London. This is not immediately evident in Zoffany's paintings or in Hunter's portraits, where the extent of the anatomy on view is restricted to depictions of the male, half-naked life figure, or a small ecorché model. However, there is evidence that Hunter was dissecting bodies at the Royal Academy during his lectures there. The minutes of the Council meeting for January 15, 1770 read: 'The President was desired to make application to the Master of the Surgeons Company for a Body to be dissected in the Royal Academy by Dr. Hunter'.²¹

The sculptor John Deare's (1759-1798) account of anatomical instruction recalls students also attended dissections at Surgeons' Hall.²² Deare's account gives a good impression of the accommodation at old Somerset House, which consisted of two large rooms, for the life class and the cast room, respectively as well as a theatre where Hunter and the other Academicians delivered their lectures.

Where these dissections took place within the Royal Academy is less clear, however. Anatomical dissection was a gruesome affair and required much physical labour in the transporting and positioning of dead bodies. At Surgeon's Hall, Masters, Wardens and Assistants were employed in an attempt to limit the mess made by these dissections that involved blood, sawdust and smells caused by putrefaction. Indeed, the sheer physical difficulty of certain aspects of anatomical dissection was often the reason that the science could not progress.²³ None of these circumstances are evident in the images that exist of Hunter in his role as anatomical lecturer. In fact, he appears to have deliberately avoided the 'traditional' depiction of the anatomist carrying out a dissection

preparations. I am grateful to Simon Chaplin for allowing me to quote from his thesis. See also Foart, Simmons, Samuel, *An Account of the Life and Writings of the Late William Hunter*, London 1783, p. 10, where John Hunter adds that in the late 1740s, William Hunter's first course in anatomy consisted of 60-70 lectures, compared with the leading anatomists, such as Frank Nichols, which amounted to just 30 lectures.

²¹ Quoted in Kemp, 1975, note 16, p.28.

²² Whitley, William, *Artists and their Friends in England, 1700-1799*, The Medici Society, London and Boston, 1928, vol. 1, p. 277; Kemp, 1975, p. 17; Black, Peter, *"My Highest Pleasures" William Hunter's Art Collection*, Paul Holberton Publishing and University of Glasgow, London and Glasgow, 2007, p. 97.

²³ For example, the anatomy of the brain was particularly difficult to illustrate and this caused delay in research, 'But there was no shortage of imperfect images of the brain, precisely because it always tended to collapse before one had managed to draw it properly', Nicolaus Steno, 1669, *Discours sur l'anatomie du Cerveau. A Messieurs de l'Assemblée de chez Monseieur Thevenot*, Paris. Quoted in Arikha, Noga, 'Form and Function in the Early Enlightenment', *Perspectives on Science*, 2006, vol. 14, no. 2, p.161.

on a cadaver, as shown in *William Cheselden giving an Anatomical Demonstration* (c1733-35), (fig.53) for example, transforming himself into a 'genteel' practitioner, and depicting anatomy as a polite art.²⁴

In the *Academicians*, William Hunter is positioned in the centre of the painting. To his right is Sir Joshua Reynolds and to his left, the engraver Francesco Bartolozzi. The room shown in the painting is the life class at Old Somerset House. Clearly, Zoffany's painting is not intended to accurately portray the actual life class but memorialises the founding members of the Academy. As with other works, such as Zoffany's *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, (1772-1777) for example, this image contains references to a number of underlying themes and issues that were prevalent in the community around the Academy in its early years. Some of these are attributable to differences in personalities, so, for example, the figure of Nathaniel Hone (1718-1784), dressed in black, behind the nude model, is positioned as far away as possible from Reynolds, first President of the Academy. This may be an allusion to the differences of opinion between the two artists, which reached a critical point in 1775 when Hone's painting *The Conjuror* (National Galleries of Ireland) was removed from the Academy exhibition because of its thinly veiled attack on Reynolds's 'borrowings' from Old Master paintings and its scurrilous allusions to a romantic attachment between the president and the artist Angelica Kaufmann.²⁵ However, the overall theme of Zoffany's painting is, arguably, the workings of patronage, and, in particular, it shows how the founding Academicians in the 1770s were loosely arranged in order to show their proximity to their chief patron, George III. It is important to remember that the Royal Academy had its origins in a number of independent but interrelated artistic organisations: 'Fourteen members had connections to St Martin's Lane Academy. At least nine had been closely involved with a series of plans for an Academy in 1749-55, including the architect John Gwynn (1713-1786); seventeen had previously been directors of the Incorporated Society of Artists, and fifteen were members of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.'²⁶ It had also emerged from the internecine politics of these organisations.²⁷

²⁴ Jordanova, Ludmilla, *Defining Features, Scientific and Medical Portraits 1660-2000*, National Portrait Gallery and Reaktion Books, London, 2000. pp. 159-161. Jordanova describes how Hunter's portraitists must have carefully selected pose, fabrics, colours, light and shading in order to avoid any association with the doctor's everyday work as an anatomist.

²⁵ Newman, John, 'Reynolds and Hone: *The Conjuror* unmasked', in Penny, Nicholas, ed. *Reynolds*, exh. cat. Royal Academy of Arts, London 1986, pp.344-354.

²⁶ Hook, Holger, *The King's Artists, The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2003, p.31.

²⁷ Hargraves, 2005. As Hargraves writes, the foundation of the Royal Academy seemed to go against the majority of opinion among the London art community, which valued its independence: 'The RAs turned themselves into crown servants, for the Academy was the King's personal

Therefore, the Academy represented, for some artists, a political alignment with a monarch, whose judgment, as described in the previous chapter and as illustrated by Walpole's writings at the beginning of this chapter, was already being severely criticised by opposition government and followers of John Wilkes. The intervention of Royal patronage in so direct a manner, gave the Academy's critics the opportunity to describe it as an oligarchy, suppressing individual artists' views. Despite the fact that there was no evidence to suggest that the king was deliberately intervening in the Academy's teaching, the overwhelming feeling was that such a school was undemocratic and even a threat to liberty. This is particularly evident in the contemporary reports of how the Academy was established. *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians, while members of the Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain*, was published in 1771 and claimed that the small group of artists that had colluded together to gain control of that society had simply replicated their corrupt approach to power within the governing of the Royal Academy:

It is not much to be wondered at, that several of the leading and disinterested members of the society, began to be alarmed; they perceived how industriously the committee had made concealed advances to power and despotism, and therefore had their suspicions that something more formidable than the occasion of the present murmurs was intended.²⁸

Such a powerful control guiding the production of the fine arts in the country was seen, as Hargraves has remarked above, to be going against the ideas of a free market economy and placing restrictions on the intellectual independence of the artists themselves.

The Academicians, as portrayed by Zoffany, are not divided completely along patronage lines, but the small groupings of individuals give a sense of specific alliances. It is no coincidence, for example, that the group that revolves around Reynolds consists of Sir William Chambers, architect and treasurer to the Academy (1726-1796) as well as friend of the Earl of Bute and tutor to George III while Prince of Wales. By 1770

instrument, established by his prerogative alone and in no way accountable to Parliament. If this implied professionalism it went against the grain of contemporary trends'. pp. 90-91.

²⁸ *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians, while members of the Incorporated society of artists*, London, 1771, p. 16. Although the *Conduct* was published anonymously, the authors have been identified as Robert Strange, Robert Edge Pine, George Stubbs, John Hamilton Mortimer, James Paine, and William Woollett, see Hargraves, 2005, p. 112. Robert Strange also described the establishing committee of the Royal Academy as 'despots': 'Alarmed at the regular advances which the committee had made towards despotism, several ingenious and disinterested artists, who belonged to the society [Society of Artists of Great Britain], turned their thoughts to obtain an establishment that would be more favourable to the progress of the arts, and would prevent the abuses so frequently complained of: but their efforts were always counteracted by the committee'. Strange, Robert, *An Inquiry into the rise and establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts. To which is prefixed, A letter to the Earl of Bute*, London, 1775, p.66.

Chambers was Surveyor of the Board of Works to the King and, having been made a knight of the Order of the Polar Star by the Swedish King Gustav III, George III had granted him permission to adopt the address of English knighthood. Next to Chambers is Francis Milner Newton (1720-1794), a painter and Secretary to the Academy. Milner had studied at the St. Martin's Lane Academy and taken an active role in the Incorporated Society of Artists. He is shown in Zoffany's painting in close discussion with both Chambers and Reynolds, marking his important role within the Academy. To the right of Newton, are the two Sandby brothers Paul (1731-1809), watercolour and landscape painter, and Thomas (1721-1798), draughtsman and architect, as well as the first Professor of Architecture at the RA. Both Sandbys had close connections to George III. Paul, who wears a blue coat with a red collar and rests his arm on Thomas's shoulder, had been appointed Chief Drawing Master to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, only months prior to the founding of the Royal Academy of Arts, and Thomas held the post of Deputy Ranger of Windsor Great Park and was soon to be made joint Master of the King's Works with James Adam. The Sandbys depended on royal patronage for their livelihood to a greater degree than some of their fellow academicians²⁹. It is also of some significance that the Sandbys are shown with Dominic Serres, another artist well represented in the royal collection and known to have been loyal to George III. The composition also reflects social connections too, as Serres lived next door to Paul Sandby. Benjamin West (1738-1820), historical painter and President of the Royal Academy from 1792, as a great favourite of the king, is also positioned to the right of Reynolds, occupying a prominent position next to Zoffany, another favourite in court circles.

As might be expected, therefore, further to the left of the President are a number of artists that had less interest in, or patronage from, George III. As a brief example, the painter Edward Penny (1714-1791) is shown in conversation with Peter Toms (bap.1726-1777). Both artists, although successful, never reached the career heights of West and Zoffany, partly because they were never favoured to the same degree by George III. Penny also had associations with radical politics. His painting, *The Gossiping Blacksmith*, (Tate collection) was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1769 and included some lines from Shakespeare's *King John*³⁰. When the painting was engraved, it became

²⁹ Postle, Martin, 'The Sandbys and the Royal Academy', in Bonehill, John and Daniels, Stephen, eds. *Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain*, exh.cat, London, 2009, pp.29-37.

³⁰ A print based on Penny's painting was published in the *Oxford Magazine* in 1771 with the significant addition of a print of Wilkes hanging on the back wall of the forge. See Solkin, 1992, p.300-301, N.46; Solkin, D, 'Portraiture in Motion: Edward Penny's Marquis of Granby and the Creation of a public for English art', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 49 (1986), pp. 1-23; Solkin, D, 'Joseph Wright of Derby and the Sublime Art of Labor' *Representations*, no. 83 (Summer, 2003) pp. 167-194; Wind, E, 'Penny, West and the death of Wolfe', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld*

implicated in the propaganda campaign of John Wilkes and to some extent this had repercussions for Penny's career, although he was appointed first Professor of Painting when the Academy was established. Peter Toms, although taught by Reynolds, often argued with the President and although he worked with both Benjamin West and Francis Cotes (1726-1770), he too never achieved their level of patronage.

There are many other alliances and associations among the academicians relevant to a consideration of this painting beyond the scope of the present discussion. However, it is worth noting, finally, that the placing of Reynolds and Hunter in the centre of the picture is designed to convey the idea that neither depended directly on the financial patronage of the king but were self-made men. They are also, perhaps, portrayed independently of the other Academicians, as both were slightly removed from the day-to-day business of the Academy. Reynolds's role was 'presidential', in that he conveyed the public or institutional image of the Academy; while Hunter, as a member of the medical profession, was similarly independent of the minutiae of its everyday dealings. Their positioning in the painting, it has also been suggested, is meant to express their special relationship.³¹ However, it seems perfectly clear that Sir Joshua is turned away from Hunter and the Doctor is lost in his own thoughts, occupying his own separate space. As it will be argued later in this chapter, Reynolds and Hunter had different ideas about a type of art instruction that promoted direct copying from nature within the Academy. This could also be interpreted from Zoffany's placing of them in *The Academicians*, as Hunter is looking enquiringly at the positioning of the model. In fact, by comparing *The Academicians* with *Dr. William Hunter lecturing at the Royal Academy*, it is possible to imagine why Walpole took such exception to Hunter's 'political anatomy'.

Dr. Hunter lecturing at the Royal Academy of Arts shows a very different approach to the study of the body to that depicted in *The Academicians*, where the model is about to be posed in a manner recalling classical sculpture. Although both paintings include the ecorché figure that was probably made by Hunter for the St. Martin's Lane Academy, and brought to the Royal Academy along with other items from that school, the paintings do not depict the same room. In *Dr. Hunter lecturing*, the setting appears to be the lecture theatre at Old Somerset House, mentioned by John Deare, who, incidentally, described how plaster casts were placed on castors so that they could be moved around the rooms.³² Hunter stands on the podium, his audience, made up of academicians and students, with Reynolds positioned prominently at the centre of the group, distinguished by his ear trumpet. Hunter is looking out of the picture, at the viewer, and is shown in the full flow

Institutes, 10 (1947), pp. 159-162; Mitchell, C, 'Benjamin West's Death of Wolfe; and the Popular History Piece, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 7, (1944) pp.20-33.

³¹ Kemp, 1975, p.14.

³² Whitley, 1928, p.276.

of his lecture on the Muscles, describing their workings in the whole body, but specifically, here, the deltoids. In the lecture at this point, Hunter observed:

We find also that large radiated Muscles act in different portions as is plain from the pectoral muscle this can act with its upper or lower part or all together, the same of the Deltoid and we constantly find these muscles in joints intended for large motion (as the Humurous on the scapula) the better to adjust the rotary as well as every other motion ... There are two ways to demonstrate the muscles first in classes, second in order as they arise, the last is best being most applicable to the living body and where we can we shall demonstrate them in classes.³³

The level of detail in Hunter's lectures reveals that his teaching was not restricted to the superficial surface of the body. Rather, the inner workings had to be understood as well in order for artists to create truthful representations. His lectures change from the 1750s to the 1780s; partly in response to the style and delivery of the other professors they take on a more general appeal, reflecting the scope and range of his audience. However, the extent of anatomical detail, despite being combined with comments on the state of the fine arts in Britain, is not diminished in his lectures to the Royal Academy.³⁴

In *The Academicians*, the artists are portrayed contemplating the life class, the centre of artistic instruction in the European tradition. It was the importance placed on the study of the male nude figure that distinguished the Royal Academy schools from its predecessors in Britain. An earlier depiction of a life class, thought to be of the St. Martin's Lane Academy and possibly by Johan Zoffany (fig.54), shows a nude model, awkwardly posed on a dais, or pedestal, surrounded by casts taken from antique sculpture. Apart from the fact that the model is naked and therefore exposing his whole body to the students, there is no reference to anatomy. The room is cramped and overcrowded, as described by William Hogarth, and the purpose of the lesson is to draw from the model as one would from a piece of sculpture.³⁵ The inclusion of Hunter's ecorché figure in *The Academicians*, therefore, signals the Royal Academy's commitment to a form of teaching on European academic principles, but it also illustrates the impact that Hunter's lectures had made by 1771; introducing, alongside a tradition drawing on Italian anatomical instruction, a native, British style of anatomy pioneered by the Academy's own Professor of Anatomy and others of his generation.

³³ Hunter, William, *William Hunter's Lectures on Anatomy*, 1781, University of Glasgow Library, SpColl, MS General 702.

³⁴ As Martin Kemp has commented, 'It seems likely, therefore that he conducted only specialised anatomical teaching at the Academy during the winter of 1769, while his grand introduction to the aims of the artist – his "First Discourse" – was not delivered until the beginning of his second series in October 1770', Kemp, 1975, p. 18.

³⁵ Bignamini and Postle, 1991, p.41.

The composition of *Dr William Hunter lecturing to the Royal Academy* deliberately puts the anatomist at the centre of the image with all of the audience paying attention to him. Apart from one man in a blue coat with a red collar, similar to Paul Sandby's in *The Academicians*, who is looking backwards to talk to his colleague and another figure nearer the foreground of the painting, wearing the same coat, who, like Hunter, is looking out to the viewer, the listeners seem captivated. There are one or two groupings of individuals which may suggest another reference is being made to patronage here. However, the focus is on the performance of the lecture itself, combining the three forms of body types used for anatomical teaching: the skeleton, the ecorché and the living body. It is the pose of the living figure here which distinguishes the anatomical lecture from the life class. For Hunter, it is the moving, animated body that best relays its uniqueness:

If there were but few forms in the human body, or if they were simple, or if they were permanent, the Art of representing them correctly would in proportion be an easy acquisition: but they are infinite and every moment changing. This depends principally on the infinite variety of the actions of the muscles. So that there is not only a variety, each constituting a Character, in the whole body, which expresses, Sex, Age, Strength, action, sleep &c. but there is a peculiar character in every part of the body, in every joint and member corresponding to its state or employment: and if all these are not preserved in proportion there will be a loss of the effect, because in proportion it will be unlike what it means to represent.³⁶

These words were spoken by a man who made his living from dissecting human bodies, usually those of criminals or the 'lower' class; increasingly, in William Hunter's case, poor women. Walpole's aversion to Hunter was caused, at least in part, by the Doctor's close relationship to George III and, by way of association, the Earl of Bute.³⁷ He certainly objected to William Hunter's elevated position having been brought about by his political contacts. But Walpole, despite being an enthusiastic antiquarian, may also have been alert to and affronted by the incorporation of a 'scientific' view of art entering the Royal Academy, distancing it from the precepts of European fine art. Hunter's role as Professor of Anatomy introduced to the Royal Academy a type of naturalism, strongly associated with an Antiquarian approach to recording and documenting nature. This approach combined 'historical' with 'scientific' observation as matters of fact and was part of a general fascination during the period with methods of observation. Crucially, for Hunter, those practices that privileged scientific inquiry, personal inspection and scrutiny were

³⁶ Hunter, 1784. See also, Kemp, 1975, pp.31-47; Black, ed. 2007, pp.167-174.

³⁷ Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, Saturday, December 22, 1781: '... and were I to hear that Dr. Hunter was sent to Versailles to make a new Treaty of Paris with the Queen's *accoucheur* ... I would not dispute it'. Lewis, ed. *Correspondence*, 33, p. 318.

promoted by the interconnected interests of the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries. This had become a 'tradition' of sorts since William Harvey who adopted these methods in an effort to position 'observation' as itself a form of knowledge. Such scrutiny was at odds with a generalising academic theory, which concerned itself with the abstraction of particularised nature. However, rather than see these two as opposing views, it is suggested that both Reynolds' and Hunter's lectures, while operating in some tension within the early Academy, reflect the actual works being produced and exhibited that conveyed these complex and interconnected interests.

As Sam Smiles has recently observed, antiquarian projects designed to document and so preserve in paper form the crumbling historic fabric of the continent and increasingly Britain itself required that the resulting images be 'purged of stylistic mannerisms or other detrimental "artistic" qualities'.³⁸ Debates that emerged later in the period, regarding just how artists might best provide a pictorial record, centred on the extent to which images should display any flourish of artistic imagination. According to John Carter (1748-1817), draughtsman for the Society of Antiquaries, images should provide visual evidence not pretty pictures. He dismissed the type of illustrations that had appeared previously in engravings intended to illustrate ancient architecture. They were merely:

picturesque appearances produced by the skill of the Artists, in a certain disposal of light and shade toward what is called 'effect' in drawing; an effect of that kind we perceive when gazing at an object with the eyes half open, in a sort of dim fascination on the senses, whereby we catch a momentary gleam of the sublime; such sort of pencilled performances tending more to accredit the modern Delineator than the antient Architect.³⁹

However, producing the sort of images required by the Antiquaries still demanded that artists acquire and display advanced technical skills:

As our Cathedrals have in their designs such an endless variety of parts [it was expedient] to give the long line of each elevation, both externally and internally (exhibiting in such elevations at every ten, or fifteen feet some material change in the architectural parts) ... by adding examples of the uprights in a division of the several stories, the monuments, screens, and decorations most worthy of notice to a second or more enlarged scale than the

³⁸ Smiles, Sam, 'Record and Reverie Representing British antiquity in the eighteenth century', in Anderson, RGW, Caygill, ML, MacGregor, AG, and Syson, L eds. *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century*, British Museum Press, London, 2003, p. 177.

³⁹ Carter, John, Letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 4, 1803, p.106

general one ... [was] more satisfactory to the real admirers and professional imitators of our National Architecture.⁴⁰

Copying nature directly, in some respects, required even more finely-tuned skills than the artists who were 'improving' on nature, or indulging in artistic imagination. Just as Carter recognised the importance of craft skills for the development of architectural practice, so William Hunter correlated the craft skills of anatomy with the wider project of naturalist aesthetics, observing:

That anatomy is the very basis of surgery everybody allows. It is dissection alone that can teach us, where we may cut the living body, with freedom and dispatch; and where we may venture, with great circumspection and delicacy; and where we must not, upon any account attempt it. This informs the head, gives dexterity to the hand, and familiarises the heart with a sort of necessary inhumanity, the use of cutting-instruments upon our fellow-creatures.⁴¹

In comparing *The Academicians* with *Dr. Hunter lecturing to the Royal Academy*, it is easy to forget that anatomical preparations may also have been used in these demonstrations.⁴² Hunter's collection was vast, with many of the preparations made by him or his assistants.⁴³ Like the anatomical lecture, specimens and preparations were highly regarded in the eighteenth century as a form of cultural capital. Besides the medical knowledge that could be acquired from them, they possessed a certain value attributed to their careful and precise rendition by anatomical dissection.⁴⁴ Traditional anatomical preparations, such as those created by Dr. Frederick Ruysch, for example, added fabric and natural materials to disguise the marks of incision on body parts.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 107.

⁴¹ Hunter, William, *Two Introductory Lectures delivered by William Hunter to his Last Course of Anatomical Lectures at his Theatre in Windmill-Street*, London 1784, p.67.

⁴² Ibid, p. 112. Hunter gives precise instructions to students in his anatomical theatre as to the handling of preparations. 'It is reasonable to presume that he also used preparations during his lectures at the Royal Academy. Robert Edge Pine's portrait of Hunter (1765) includes a preparation under a bell-jar, which may also suggest that the specimens were transportable on certain occasions.

⁴³ See *Catalogue of the Anatomical Preparations of Dr. William Hunter*, compiled by Alice J. Marshall from the original catalogue (1899-1900) prepared by John Teacher, University of Glasgow 1970, where the author states: 'The collection consisted in 1894 of (1) 2607 jar preparations, of which 2,250 are mounted in spirit, 254 in turpentine, and 103 dry; (2) 19 large plaster of Paris casts; (3) 410 dry bones illustrating injuries and diseases of bone; and (4) 348 calculi and concretions, all of which were supposed to be Hunterian', p.xi.

⁴⁴ Chaplin, 2008, p. 142.

⁴⁵ Ruysch, Frederick, *Opera Omnia anatomico-medico-chirurgia ...* Amsterdam, 1737.

William and John Hunter, in contrast, displayed the marks of the anatomist's knife to full effect. Unlike John Carter and other antiquarian approaches that sought to eradicate the marks and the 'touch' of an artist, for Hunter, in respect of anatomical preparations, it was necessary to lay them out so the process was made apparent, indeed part of the instruction.

Hunter might well have used the Royal Academy lectures as a vehicle to display the 'treasures' of his own anatomical collection and thereby introduced into his performances objects that were created from an inherently 'impolite' art, successfully embedding these as another aspect of instruction in natural history and philosophy. 'Political Anatomy' was not only concerned with the nuances of patronage but also encompassed the debates surrounding the aesthetic worth of naturalism within the fine arts.

Naturalism

In his discussion of nationalism and naturalism, John Brewer points up the paradox of nature perceived as distant from the artificial, commercial and man-made. He explains how nature is itself a cultural artefact, evidenced by the growth and development of landscape painting and domestic tours of the national landscape in the eighteenth century, for example. However, the place of anatomical dissection and display is less easily accommodated in Brewer's neat summarising of the commodification of the natural environment.⁴⁶ The commercial aspects of anatomy; the lecture series, value and exchange of anatomical preparations and the role of anatomical study in the fine arts, are less discernible in this all-encompassing view of nature and natural history.

In fact, Brewer's summary of the position of nature within a formalised, aesthetic framework is too narrow and neglects the variety and diversity in the range of ways that consumerism merged with curiosity in the period to produce a much wider scope for the dissemination of natural history. Naturalism, an immensely complex feature of eighteenth-century culture became part of the debates surrounding the teaching of the fine arts in Britain, particularly at the Royal Academy. William Hunter was central to these debates, as he promoted his experimental practice and the idea that the human body, as with other forms in nature, could be so arranged as to reveal its patterns of health, disease, life or death and pro-creation. These views appear to have brought him into conflict with the prevailing doctrine of the Academy, under the President, Reynolds; that nature needed to be tempered and restrained, to be accommodated within the

⁴⁶ Brewer, John, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, HarperCollins, 1997, p. 623.

‘classical’ vocabulary of European tradition.⁴⁷ However, as described in the previous chapter, Hunter was more than aware of the place of anatomical knowledge in the instruction of artists, especially in the Italian academies. The idea that there was a struggle between these two separate views, with Reynolds advocating nature be restrained and Hunter claiming that nature should be represented in all its ‘imperfections’, is not particularly helpful and detracts from the actual situation.

Both Reynolds and Hunter were inspired and influenced by the new philosophy and approaches to the natural world, but how they considered these should be represented by artists may have been slightly different. While Reynolds favoured a highly polished virtuoso effect, Hunter placed more importance on the craft skills of the artist. There is no doubt, however, that ‘naturalist’ approaches were seen to be sympathetic to an indigenous strain of work being produced by students in the Royal Academy schools by the end of the century and certainly in the early years of the nineteenth century. This has been described recently by Holger Hoock as dominated by: ‘The Hogarthian tradition ... an essentially non-academic, naturalist approach ...[that was] now an integral part of British visual culture: the previous dominance of the Academy and academic theory had been curtailed’.⁴⁸ Of course, Hoock is referring here to the early to mid-nineteenth century and the deeply influential effects of naturalism on the development of a national School of painting, reflected in artists’ commitment to landscape imagery. Like Kemp, Hoock positions a ‘naturalist’ theory against an institutional ‘academic’ theory, represented by the figure of Reynolds. However, to what extent this reflects the actual teachings and experience of the students at the Academy is questionable, it seems too generalised. It also gives the impression that ‘academic’ teaching remained in stasis, when clearly the professors and students, as with any art school, were constantly questioning and reviewing their methods and practice. This is evident in the art works being produced in the Academy during its early years. Zoffany’s *The Academicians* is itself, arguably, in a ‘Hogarthian’ tradition, appearing on the surface to be a sophisticated conversation piece, it is also a subtle satire on the personalities of the founding members, and casts its parade of characters in a less than idealising light.

Hogarth is often described as having a ‘naturalist’ aspect to his work and the *Analysis of Beauty* (1753) as a challenge to styles of fine art and architecture derived from ancient precedence, such as Palladio’s *Quattro libri dell’ architettura* (1570) or in

⁴⁷ Kemp, 1975, p; See also, Kemp, Martin, ‘True to their Natures: Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. William Hunter at the Royal Academy of Arts’, Notes, Rec. R. Soc. Lond. 46(1), 77-88 (1992).

⁴⁸ Hoock, 2003, p.78.

painting Lamazzo's *Trattato dell'arte de la Pittura* (1598).⁴⁹ Clearly, Hogarth's method is that of an empiricist, he regards nature as simply 'what we see with our own eyes'.⁵⁰ Rather than consider Hogarth in complete opposition to the dominant treatise on artistic theory, however, it is helpful to encompass his ideas alongside those of the European academies, which, as described in the previous chapter, actively encouraged naturalism in all its forms. Taking this less polarised view the situation of the fine arts, in the early 1770s, partly explains how, in sharing a universal interest in the representation of nature, William Hunter and William Hogarth are both significant figures in the history of the Academy.

In March 1752, in the *Covent Garden Journal*, William Hogarth advertised for subscriptions to his proposed publication of the *Analysis of Beauty* and in August 11th 1752, William Hunter paid for his subscription.⁵¹ The genesis of the argument made in the *Analysis*, however, had taken form much earlier: the art historian and engraver, George Vertue, recalling the 'Line of Beauty' appearing in Hogarth's conversation as early as 1745.⁵²

Hunter's copy of the *Analysis* is in the University of Glasgow Library. His keen interest in Hogarth's work is, perhaps, expressed by this early subscription and in his subsequent ownership of a number of the artist's series of prints. Both men would have known each others' work when they were teaching at the second St. Martin's Lane Academy.⁵³ As Hunter mentions Hogarth specifically in his lectures, it seems reasonable to suggest that some of Hogarth's views on anatomy were informed by Hunter. Much of the anatomical description featured in *The Analysis* is strikingly similar to the text of Hunter's lectures, as these two passages that describe how the physiology of the skin was thought to determine its colour illustrate:

The cutis is composed of tender thread-like networks fill'd with different colour'd juices. The white juice serves to make the very fair complexion ...
These different colour'd juices, together with the different *mashes* of the

⁴⁹ Baridon, Michel, 'Hogarth's "living machines of nature" and the theorisation of aesthetics', in Bindman, et al, *Hogarth, Representing Nature's Machines*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001, p. 86.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Hunter's original receipt, signed by William Hogarth, is in the Hunterian Art Gallery.

⁵² Paulson, Ronald, *Hogarth, Volume Three, Art and Politics 1750-1764*, Cambridge Lutterworth Press, Cambridge, 1993, vol. 3, p. 57.

⁵³ Hopkinson, Martin, 'William Hunter, William Hogarth and The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus', *Burlington Magazine*, CXXVI, 1984, pp. 156-59; See also, Black, 2007, pp. 93-94; Hogarth is mentioned attending one of Hunter's lectures in 'Lectures Anatomical & Chirurgical by William Hunter', III, GU SpColl, MS General 790.

network, and the size of its threads in this or that part, causes the variety of complexions.⁵⁴

The Cutis is a strong thick universal Covering immediately upon the *Adipous* Membrane. It is compos'd of a close texture of fibres, of various kinds & likewise of veins and arteries variously disposed. ... The *Rete Mucosum* is suppos'd to be of the same substance with the cuticle, but we know nothing of either ... whence we account for their different composition.⁵⁵

However, it is the anatomist William Cowper (1666/7-1710), author of *Myotomia reformata* (1694), who is credited in *The Analysis* for Hogarth's knowledge of the subject. *The Analysis* does form a kind of alternative to the types of art historical texts that privilege the Greek and Roman standards, and the importance it places on the uses of the human senses appears to have derived from the writings of John Locke (1632-1704), particularly with reference to a 'Historical plain Method'.⁵⁶

Essentially, for all its ambition to be regarded as an empirical investigation, Hogarth's main concern was with the issue of taste and the fact that this was dominated in the first half of the eighteenth century by Shaftesbury and the civic humanists, with their commitment to follow models of ancient civic culture, as recent historians have suggested.⁵⁷ Returning to Hogarth's representation of the body:

The human frame hath more of its parts composed of serpentine lines than any other object in nature; which is a proof both of its superior beauty to all others, and, at the same time, that its beauty proceeds from those lines: for although they may be required sometimes to be bulging in their twists, as in the thick swelling muscles of the Hercules, yet elegance and greatness of taste is still preserved; but when these lines lose so much of their twists as to become almost straight, all elegance of taste vanishes.⁵⁸

Hogarth's criticism of artists like Reynolds and architects like Chambers was that they were attempting to impose too much control over the assorted characters of nature and represented a strict uniformity that he considered 'unnatural' and restricting. Teaching at the Academy was perceived as formulaic, whilst Hogarth was advocating a simpler, intuitive attitude. As suggested earlier, however, this divided view is misleading as many

⁵⁴ Hogarth, William, *The Analysis of Beauty*, London 1753, p. 134.

⁵⁵ Hunter, *Lectures on Anatomy*, 1752, p. 152, GU Library, SpColl. MS Gen 720-721.

⁵⁶ Bindman, ed. 2001. p. 94.

⁵⁷ This is argued most strongly in Solkin, 1993.

⁵⁸ Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty*, 1753, p. 57.

of the Academicians took both approaches into consideration. This is apparent in the provision of a wide range of instruction within the school, including anatomy.⁵⁹

This state of affairs was made possible because of the prevailing view that, as Brewer points out, nature was a cultural artefact. William Hunter's anatomy lectures were attended, as has been shown, by a varied audience, from writers and artists to mechanics and even hairdressers.⁶⁰ This corresponds with the aims and ambitions of the Royal Academy and its earlier manifestations, along with the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, who sought to improve the instruction of art and design, or to fill the design 'deficit' that existed in Britain compared with its European counterparts.⁶¹

That Anatomy was a feature of specialised museums by the nineteenth century is attributable to its important contribution to art and design education. In much the same way as the South Kensington Museum's original aim was to form a 'travelling' collection which toured the whole of the country, anatomical museums became a feature of the larger provincial towns and cities in Britain. (fig.55).⁶²

Anatomical *display* may have been incorporated into a general arts teaching curriculum by the later-nineteenth century, but in the second-half of the eighteenth century anatomical *practice* was still a contested discipline, particularly for artists, because at its core was dissection. John Brisbane's *Anatomy of Painting* (1769) advocated the study of anatomy for artists but the main purpose of his book was to promote the teaching of anatomy with models – not the dissected body:

Dissections of the human body, in schools of anatomy, are by far too frequent, and often to very little purpose; on the contrary, it would be an easy matter to teach the most useful part of anatomy, by models and figures alone, properly explained; surely so far as to satisfy every one, except those who studied it as a preparation for the practice of physic and surgery; and even in that case, anatomy might be taught in a much shorter and more agreeable manner than is commonly done.⁶³

⁵⁹ Hoock, 2003, p. 57.

⁶⁰ GU SpColl. MS Gen. 702 'Dr William Hunter's anatomical lectures ... in the year of our Lord 1781'. Vol. I. The name of the person who took the notes has been erased from the title page. On folio 5 verso is written, 'The remainder of these Lectures were copied by a Hair Dresser'.

⁶¹ Craske, Matthew, 'Plan and Control: Design and the Competitive Spirit in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Design History*, vol.12, No. 3, 1999, p. 702.

⁶² Forgan, S, 'Building the Museum, Knowledge, Conflict and the Power of Place', *Isis*, 2005, 96: p.573.

⁶³ Brisbane, John, *The Anatomy of Painting, or a Short and Easy Introduction to Anatomy, being a new edition, on a smaller scale, of six tables of Albinus, with their Linear Figures: Also a new translation of Albinus's History of that Work, and of his Index to the Six Tables: To Which are*

Brisbane's main objection appears to be the monopoly of private anatomy schools and in what he calls, 'the manifest abuses of dissection'.⁶⁴

For tho' physicians and surgeons have, for a long time, in a manner engrossed the whole business of teaching anatomy; yet painters, statuaries, and engravers, should assert their rights, and teach, and write upon this science, in a picturesque manner, suited to their own art; in which it is immediately and essentially useful⁶⁵

Brisbane's use of the words 'engross' and 'picturesque' are revealing. He evidently views anatomy as forming part of the natural world and of the natural sciences, but it is not to be exploited by a monopoly for the purposes of making profits.⁶⁶ The use of the term 'picturesque' also helps to place Brisbane in a category of writers and commentators who viewed nature in the raw as 'vulgar', promoting a naturalistic rendering, tempered by an aesthetic judgment of the kind discussed by Joshua Reynolds in his *Discourses* to students at the Royal Academy.

Picturesque Anatomy

William Hunter's 'difficulty' was to teach anatomy to students at the Royal Academy that accorded with the institutional aims of the organisation to provide knowledge and skills that would improve their employability and opportunities of patronage, while observing his own belief in the 'superiority of Nature over Art'.⁶⁷ However, the difficulty was really in deciding how far, or in what form, an aesthetic of naturalism should be defined. This was a problem shared by a number of commentators at the time and was not just confined to Reynolds and Hunter. As Hunter admitted to the students: 'There is a question about the Nature and excellence of the imitative Arts which I am afraid [is] beyond my reach and perhaps beyond the compass of much finer and more cultivated

Added the Anatomy of Celcus; with Notes and the Physiology of Cicero: With an Introduction giving a short view of Picturesque Anatomy, London, 1769. John Brisbane (1720-1776?) was born in Scotland and graduated MD from Edinburgh University in 1750. He became a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians in 1766 and held the post of physician at Middlesex Hospital from 1758-1773. Besides the *Anatomy of Painting*, he also published in 1772, *Select Cases in the Practice of Medicine*.

⁶⁴ Brisbane, (1760) preface.

⁶⁵ Ibid, preface.

⁶⁶ For example, as Matthew Craske has commented, 'engrossment' was recognised by Daniel Defoe as a feature of eighteenth-century business that had a detrimental effect on the economics of free trade. Craske, 1999, p.206.

⁶⁷ Hunter, William, *Lectures on Anatomy to Students at the Royal Academy of Arts*, 1770, GU SpColl. H46; See also Black, ed. 2007, p.170.

understandings'.⁶⁸ He was, of course, referring to how far art should imitate nature, or how accurately nature should be rendered in two and three-dimensional art. This was a subject that dominated discussions of fine art and design throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, particularly among the recently-founded cultural institutions. For example, the Society of Antiquaries in London experienced similar issues with regard to the visual recording of their researches. Sam Smiles describes the problems encountered by the Society with regard to aesthetic prejudices which associated British antiquity as inferior to European classical antiquities and their reproductions of these which were 'inescapably dull or prosaic'.⁶⁹

Hunter, as a member of the Royal Society (1767) and the Society of Antiquities, London, (1768), had inherited a passionate belief in empirical evidence, stemming from the ideas of the early scientists at the Royal Society, Robert Hooke and Robert Boyle. For them, the accurate cataloguing of visual data was every bit as significant as the recording of experimental researches themselves.⁷⁰ As discussed in Chapter one, this type of aesthetic became prevalent within textbooks produced by the anatomist-antiquarians.⁷¹ From the 1760s, however, this debate became much more sophisticated and pronounced, especially with the establishment of the Royal Academy. Hunter was a scientist and an antiquarian, and as John Gascoigne has demonstrated, these two interests were considered to be interrelated; the study of human history was comparative to the study of the earth.⁷²

The race to find a method of classification for each discipline modelled on the Linnaean system for botany, as described by Gascoigne, brought problems for organisations such as the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquarians as not all scientific and social experimentation was suited to such rigorous taxonomy. Anatomy of the human body was particularly difficult to bring in under the heading of natural history, for example, as this encouraged a belief in systematic lineage of species that

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Smiles, Sam, 'The Art of Recording', in *Making History, Antiquaries in Britain, 1707-2007*, exh. cat. Royal Academy of Arts, 2007, p. 123-124.

⁷⁰ Hartley, Beryl, 'The Living Academies of Nature: Scientific Learning and Communicating New Skills of Early Nineteenth-Century Landscape Painting', *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, vol.27, No. 2, p.150.

⁷¹ Although as the anatomist-antiquarians adopted more sophisticated tools, such as the camera obscura, in order to render their images free of the signature of the artist, William Hunter appears to have actively promoted the identification of certain artists working on his great atlas, *The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* (1774).

⁷² Gascoigne, John, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment, Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 1994. p. 120

incorporated human beings along with the animal world, placing the human and animal on the same systematic gradation.⁷³

As each scientific organisation sought its own methodology, the differences in their views appeared sharper as the eighteenth century progressed. Like Hunter, the gentleman scientist, Joseph Banks (1743-1820) was a member of most of the leading scientific and cultural societies in London. He continued to be a member of both the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries until his death in 1820. The membership of both these societies were so intimately connected that they organised their meetings in such a way that members could attend both. With other disciplines, however, Banks was not so convinced of their shared interests. For example, when John Hunter died in 1793, Banks did not try to persuade the government to buy the collection for inclusion in a public museum.⁷⁴

There are complex political reasons why John Hunter's museum was not bought by the government but this must have been in some part due to the nature of the museum collection itself. Unlike William, John concentrated his research on comparative anatomy and his museum reflected this research on the animal oeconomy. According to one early biographer, 'in the early part of his life', the younger brother:

took up the idea – that the structure and physiology of the human body, would never be made out clearly, but by attending to the structure of animals in general. On this principle his museum was formed: and it consists of preparations of every part of the human body, both wet and dry; with corresponding preparations of the same parts, in all other animals who posses them.⁷⁵

Therefore, John Hunter's museum reinforced the connectedness of all human life with animal life in a complete and profound manner. This 'uneasiness' at the close relationship between humans and animals was noticeable in the reactions of the public to images of animals in the visual arts during the period.⁷⁶

In the same year that Zoffany was working on *The Academicians* and *William Hunter Lecturing*, Hunter delivered his paper, *An Account of the Nyl-ghau, an Indian Animal not hitherto described*, to the Royal Society. The paper was the culmination of William Hunter's (although he was assisted in this by his brother, John) researches into the defining characteristics of animal species and the theory of extinction. It was during

⁷³ Ibid. p. 139.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 145.

⁷⁵ Foot, Jesse, *The Life of John Hunter*, T Becket, London 1794, p. 265-266.

⁷⁶ This became problematic in depictions of animals and predation in the early nineteenth century. See, Donald, Diana, *Picturing Animals in Britain, 1750-1850*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2007, p.66-76.

these researches that he had commissioned George Stubbs (1724-1806) in 1769 to paint *The Nilgai* (fig. 56) in order to have an accurate copy of the animal's likeness and he pointed out in his presentation the advantage of an image over a written description of such unusual animals:

Good paintings of animals give much clearer ideas than descriptions. Whoever looks at the picture which was done under my eye, by Mr. Stubbs, that excellent painter of animals, can never be at a loss to know the Nyl-ghau, wherever he may happen to meet with it.⁷⁷

This belief in the capacity of an image to inform and instruct in a way not readily reducible to language conforms with Hunter's antiquarian approach to the study of natural history. In this example, Stubbs is given credit for his ability to follow Hunter's precise instruction, producing a picture 'done under my eye'. However, the Nilgai is portrayed in a specifically, domesticated landscape and the painting describes more than just the physical features of the animal itself. For example its docile temperament was something which Hunter refers to in his paper in an almost anthropomorphised description:

All of the time that the two of them were in my stable, I observed this particularity, *viz*, that whenever any attempt was made upon them, they immediately fell down upon their fore-knees; and sometimes they would do so when I came before them; but, as they never darted, I so little thought this posture meant hostility, that I rather supposed it expressive of a timid or obsequious humility.⁷⁸

This is clearly expressed in Stubbs's paintings of animals and is one of the reasons why his work was so highly regarded by some. Read alongside Hunter's description, Stubbs's genuine, anatomically accurate image creates a sensibility that reflected an increasing compassion for animal welfare during the period.⁷⁹ Stubbs clearly does not fall into the category of artists that Joshua Reynolds describes in his third *Discourse* to Students at the Royal Academy, where he derides the method of representation adopted by naturalists: 'A mere copier of nature can never produce anything great, can never raise and enlarge the conceptions, or warm the heart of the spectator'.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Hunter, William, 'An Account of the Nyl-ghau, an Indian Animal not hitherto described', *Philosophical Transactions*, London, 1771.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ For example Dr. Johnson in *The Idler*, August 5· 1758 criticised those carrying out experiments on live animals, describing them as: 'wretches, whose lives are only varied by varieties of cruelty; whose favourite amusement is to nail dogs to tables and open them alive'. See Guerrini, Anita, *Experimenting with Humans and Animals, from Galen to Human Rights*, JHU Press, Baltimore, 2003, p. 60.

⁸⁰ Reynolds, Joshua, *Discourse*, delivered December 14th 1770, London 1771, p. 2.

Another of Stubbs's paintings commissioned by William Hunter, *The Moose*, 1770 (fig.57), also belies the notion of Stubbs as simply recording anatomical details. Hunter's comments during his researches on this animal shows that he also recognised the complexities in the images of artists working in a naturalist style:

Yet for many purposes, especially in the Arts, and in natural History there is a language which is both easily acquired, & tho' not so copious, is more expressive than any language in the world, and at the same time so plain that the unlearned as well as the learned, understand it at first sight: I mean the art of drawing. What a pity is that it had not been sooner introduced, and more generally used! As descriptions in this language are so expressive, so precise and well determined, they have more credit than descriptions in common language; especially too as they are all presumed to be taken from the Life.⁸¹

Stubbs shows the subject of Hunter's researches on the idea of extinction, the Moose, standing in a wild and stormy landscape, 'A sheer rock face plunges into a lake, its scale dwarfing the dead trees at its foot, and suggesting the harshness of the animal's natural environment'.⁸² The landscape imagery evoked by Stubbs was perhaps inspired by 'Winter' from James Thomson's *Seasons* (1760), where the author illustrates the habitat and inevitable fate of the Moose, and it is the reason why Thomas Pennant in his *Arctic Zoology*, (1784-85) uses a quotation from 'Winter' in his discussion of the Elk or Moose, incorporating Hunter's findings and an engraving of Stubbs's painting.⁸³

These two paintings by George Stubbs demonstrate the limitations in adopting a polarised view of teaching at the Royal Academy in its early years, as he quite clearly

⁸¹ Donald, 2007, p. 40. This quotation is taken from William Hunter's manuscript notes, GU SpColl. MS Hunter H150, 'Various Notes on the Orignal – Canadian name for the Moose', extracts of which were published in Rolfe, WD Ian, 'William Hunter on the "Irish Elk" and "Stubbs's Moose"', *Archives of Natural History*, no. 11, 1983, pp. 263-90.

⁸² Donald, 2007, p. 40.

⁸³ Pennant, Thomas, *Arctic Zoology*, London 1784-85, p. 20 and p.17. Thomson's poem creates the sublime atmosphere of Stubbs's representation of the Moose or Elk:

Rais'd o'er the heapy wreath, the branching elk,
Lies slumbering sullen in the white abyss.
The ruthless hunter wants nor dogs nor toils;
Nor with the dread of sounding bows he drives
The fearful flying race, with ponderous clubs,
As weak against the mountain heaps they push
Their beating breast in vein, and piteous bray,
He lays them quivering on th' ensanguin'd snows,
And with loud shouts rejoicing bears them home.

does not fall neatly into either category of purely naturalist or idealist. While artists such as Stubbs appear to have combined a naturalist technique, that is, the creation of images drawn from a direct contact with the original form, with a more generalised fine art aesthetic, other artists employed by Hunter, such as Jan Van Rymsdyk (d.1789), for example, had a more difficult time attempting to become established as a painter rather than an illustrator.⁸⁴ As Harry Mount suggests, Van Rymsdyk may have been an early victim of the debates that dominated discussion of the fine arts in the 1770s but he was not unusual in finding it difficult to gain entry into the exclusive world of successful history painters which, in every sense, even Reynolds was not completely a part of.

In fact, despite his popularity, George Stubbs also had an antagonistic relationship with the Royal Academy, exhibiting erratically during the 1780s. Stubbs had been elected an Associate of the Academy in 1780 and on February 13 1781 he was provisionally elected an RA with the usual condition that he must deposit a piece of work. Stubbs was aware that his use of certain materials, his enamel paintings on copper supports, for example, irritated other exhibitors and academicians who, generally produced oils on canvas.⁸⁵ However, he believed that the provision to deposit a piece of work in order to secure his RA status was a new rule that had been devised by certain members of the Academy and directed solely at him. Some of the founding members had not produced any work, citing that they were too busy to do so, a fact that seemed to be generally well-known.⁸⁶ A correspondent for the *Public Advertiser*, in an issue dated May 23, 1785, accuses the Academy of corrupt behaviour, creating rules and regulations that were essentially illegal and operating protectionist strategies:

Of Stubbs' refusal [to deposit a piece of his own work] men of spirit and led captains will think differently: with the difference of these opinions I shall not concern myself; thus much is certain, the law is *partial*, and therefore *unjust*: he was, either accidentally or intentionally, made its first victim; but thought he could not with honour to himself conform to their regulation, consequently they alone are answerable to the public for having by their dishonourable, partial, and unjust conduct, driven him from their society, and his works from their exhibitions.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Mount, Harry, 'Van Rymsdyk and the Nature-Menders: An Early Victim of the two Cultures Divide', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29, (2006), pp. 79-96. Mount remarks that Hunter did not acknowledge sufficiently the contribution made by Van Rymsdyk to *The Human Gravid Uterus*, 'not mentioning him by name in the preface even though he had produced the drawings for thirty-one out of the thirty-four plates in the book'. p.90.

⁸⁵ Egerton, Judy, *George Stubbs*, exh. cat. Tate Publishing 1984; 1996.

⁸⁶ *Public Advertiser*, May 23, 1785.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Perhaps Stubbs could also be considered an artist working in so literal a naturalist style that his work did not correspond with the overall aims of the Academy. However this is not apparent in the artist's work which was generally well-received and, despite never adopting the title of RA, the Academy did offer Stubbs a space in which to exhibit his naturalist art.

Beryl Hartley has described how experimental practice joined forces with artistic practice to create a generation of painters that, like Stubbs, she considers to be just as skilled in natural history as in art. However, while Hartley's concern is with the early years of the nineteenth century it seems clear that this type of approach was apparent in the work of an earlier generation of artists involved with the Royal Academy if perhaps not part of its ruling elite. It is within this earlier generation that William Hunter successfully incorporated anatomy, as natural history, as an essential requirement of an artist's training.

Hunter's *Discourse*, as Martin Kemp refers to it, of 1770 is the most detailed exploration of the anatomist's thoughts on this subject and it is most likely that Sir Joshua's *Discourse* of the same year was written in some respects as a response.⁸⁸ In his thoughts on the relationship between the imitative arts and nature, Hunter acknowledges that images must appear as adapted to our 'passions', he also considers, however, the sophisticated level of cognition of the viewer of art by the middle of the century and how the mind can be 'familiarised' with natural phenomena:

Another source of our dislike to such images is this; not that they are *too natural*, but that they appear *supernatural*. The embodied form imposes on the imagination; it appears to be what the judgment knows cannot be, the living object; this puzzles and distracts the mind, and thereby harries it into superstition and fear. But as soon as the mind is familiarised, and the effect thereby removed, the more natural the object is the more pleasing its effect on us will be.⁸⁹

The inner workings of the animal body is not something that many are familiar with, but, as Hunter argues, it is the artist's job to create those images that carefully mediate between the real and the ideal. He is more than aware that depictions of nature are not really what 'one sees with one's own eyes', but are always mediated in some respects by the artist and the viewer, which is why he is very specific in the choice of artist he employs. He also addresses his students to the complexities of the 'eye' and, in fact devotes a whole lecture to the subject, which goes beyond explaining anatomy to considering how visual skills can be developed through the knowledge of anatomy in general:

⁸⁸ Kemp, 1975, p. 22.

⁸⁹ Hunter, 1770.

All these observations put together prove that a very correct knowledge of Anatomy must be of the utmost consequence to every artist who is to make resemblances of the human body. It enables him to observe and distinguish clearly all the variations of form, because it explains their causes. It gives him a ready eye, correct judgment and distinct memory; and by dividing the larger portions of the body into their smaller constituent parts it brings out an arrangement and order in what would otherwise appear confusion. Above all it enables the artist to catch those fleeting forms which are the result of the quick and transient Actions of the Muscles and which he cannot see in the living body or any time together. An exact imitation of these requires an eye so perfectly of master of Anatomy as to observe and retain an instantaneous effect of muscular action.⁹⁰

An emphasis on sense-perception and on the visual skills that can be developed by the study of anatomy is evident in Hunter's lectures as early as 1755:

In taking notes at Lectures (a thing strongly recommended to you) we are caution'd against an endeavour to write much at that time, but rather advise to lend all our eyes and ears to the descriptions and parts described and having once got a clear idea of the thing, to mark a word or two; by looking upon which when at leisure, we may recollect the whole so as to pen a satisfactory account.⁹¹

Hunter also warns his students against relying on textbooks, recommending that they familiarise themselves with the actual organs of the body as displayed and once they can visualise these, then they can consult anatomical textbooks as secondary sources:

Pupils are dissuaded from consulting anatomical authors till they have been made acquainted with the parts described. Books will then, serving rather to perplex them and retard than facilitate their progress. When by seeing all the parts demonstrated and their uses explained, they have got a clear idea of them then reading will not only be useful but necessary both to fix the impression on the mind, and to inform them of the different opinions (on disputed points) for selecting what is just and good, and rejecting wholly erroneous.⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Wellcome Library, London, MS2965, Hunter, William, *Lectures on Anatomy*, c1755. Holography Notes taken down by William Brougham Monkhouse, Surgeon to Captain Cook 1768-1770, on his first voyage to the Pacific. 'This book was the property of Wm Brougham Monkhouse, Surgeon of His Majesty's Endeavour, 1768/1769. 1769/1770, dying at Batavia in November and was bought by W. Perry who succeeded him'.

⁹² Ibid.

In response to Hunter's 1770 lecture, with its importance on the specifics and intimate knowledge of the body, Reynolds, in his *Discourse*, delivered in December 1770, reiterates his preference for a universal aesthetic quality for the visual arts:

This great ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth. They are about us, and upon every side of us. But the power of discovering what is deformed in nature, or in other words, what is particular and uncommon, can be acquired only by experience; and the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists, in my opinion, in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.⁹³

Clearly, the preoccupations of specialists, like Hunter, distract from this universal appeal and the representing of nature, with all its defects, does not achieve the 'great style' to which Reynolds aspires. Perhaps the positioning of Reynolds and Hunter in *The Academicians* is designed to represent these subjects of debate between both men. Zoffany's careful composition certainly evokes these contemporary issues.

Where Hunter and Reynolds did agree in the training of students at the Royal Academy was in the acquisition of craft skills, although the anatomy professor seems to have placed more importance on this in a finished work. Like other artistic and cultural institutions, such as the Royal Society and the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, they placed emphasis on the value of learning repetitive skills, such as copying designs and drawing consistently from the antique:

I should be sorry, if what is here recommended should be at all understood to countenance a careless or indetermined manner of painting; for though the painter is to overlook the accidental discriminations of nature, he is to pronounce distinctly, and with precision, the general form of things. A firm and determined outline is one of the characteristics of the great style in painting; and let me add that he who possess the knowledge of the exact form, that every part of nature ought to have, will be fond of expressing that with correctness and precision in all his works.⁹⁴

In this respect, Reynolds's grand style bears a relationship to the work being produced by skilled draughtsmen, such as John Carter for example, working for the Society of Antiquaries and with Robert Strange and the other engravers employed on Hunter's *Gravid Uterus*. Reynolds extolled 'a firm and determined outline' and Hunter reminded students: 'The great difficulty of the executive or mechanical part in Sculpture and Painting is a Reason why so few have excelled in those Arts'⁹⁵. The true expression of

⁹³ Reynolds, Joshua, *Discourses*, December 14, 1770, p.7.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.19.

⁹⁵ Hunter, 1770.

naturalism was conveyed through the precision of craft skills, whether these were incorporated within the polished great style of Reynolds or in the life-like qualities of Hunter's anatomical texts. The history of naturalism and its association with experimental science and craft skills was embedded within Royal Society precedent, through the work of Francis Bacon.⁹⁶

Naturalist technique as expressed through craft skills is visible in another of William Hunter's legacies to the Royal Academy schools, in the form of the sculpture known as *Smugglerius*, (fig. 58) a full cast body of an executed criminal.⁹⁷ Unlike the small echorché figures, which derive from the tradition of Italian art academies and would have been very familiar to Hunter, especially those made by the contemporary producer of these models in Bologna, Ercole Lelli, *Smugglerius* does not fit neatly into the 'Ideal' style as dictated by Reynolds. Despite being posed in the form of a piece of ancient marble sculpture, *Smugglerius* fails to transcend those very 'local' attributes that the ideal style was intended to overcome. For example, during his tour to Italy, William Hunter's friend and correspondent, Tobias Smollett, singled out a copy of the *Dying Gladiator* in the Capitoline Museum: 'The course of the muscles called *longissimi dorsi*, are so naturally marked and tenderly executed that the marble actually emulates the softness of flesh; and you may count all the spines of the vertebrae, raising up the skin as in the living body'.⁹⁸ In *Smugglerius*, an anatomical teaching aid, the flesh is removed to show the muscles, as in Hunter's lectures. However, the cast bears the marks of the noose which had been around the convicted prisoner's neck and whilst this may be intended to evoke Winckelmann's reflections on viewing the ancient statue, it would also, for contemporary viewers, have an unintentional realism that recalled the origins and fate of this particular individual.⁹⁹ As Reynolds argued that the 'great style' in art should remove all traces of the vernacular and local, Winckelmann also argued that ancient

⁹⁶ Francis Bacon explored the relationship between the natural sciences and tacit knowledge and proposed a *Directory of Trades* in order to map their common origins. See chapter one of this thesis. Also, see for example, Ostler, Malcom, 'The Scholar and the Craftsman Revisited: Robert Boyle as Aristocrat and Artisan', *Annals of Science*, 49, (1992), pp.255-276; John Moxon, *Mechanick exercises, or the doctrine of handyworks. Applied to the art of smithing, joinery, carpentry and turning ...* London, 1701.

⁹⁷ As recorded in Whitely, 1928, vol. 1 p.127. John Deare recalls the event when a body was brought from Tyburn for dissection in the RA schools. Hunter considered the musculature of the man to be so perfect that he had his corpse positioned so as to replicate the pose of the Dying Gladiator. The man's crime was robbery and therefore, as an aside, the students and professors, named him *Smugglerius*.

⁹⁸ Smollett, Tobias, *Travels through France and Italy*, London, 1778, II, P.167

⁹⁹ Winckelmann, Johann, Joachim, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks ...* translated by Henry Fusseli, London 1765, p. 12.

Greek sculpture epitomised 'Ideal' beauty. The tension between nature and the ideal are clearly expressed in Hunter's casting of the body of a convicted prisoner. The sculpture denies the conventional form of beauty expressed by Winckelmann and Reynolds and fails to transcend the marks of the individual's social class, his history and environment.¹⁰⁰

By casting the corpse of a miserable criminal in the form of an ancient piece of sculpture, Hunter was attempting to create a work 'unformed or unmarked by history and environment', but by giving the sculpture a name that caricatures his crimes, and leaving the traces of his final punishment behind, the cast quite literally embodies how, in practice, ideas of Nature and the Ideal were accommodated within the Academy, despite the friction this may have caused.

Such tension may be interpreted from the two paintings depicting William Hunter within the Royal Academy. However, as pointed out earlier, teaching and instruction at the schools was always under review and even Reynolds's point of view changed over time. The President's later *Discourses* reveal that he was willing to accept that students needed to follow their own instincts, no matter how much this went against the Academy's view:

I have strongly inculcated in my former Discourses, as I do in this my last, the wisdom and necessity of previously obtaining the appropriated instruments of the Art, in the first correct design, and a plain manly colouring, before anything more is attempted. But by this I would not wish to cramp and fetter the mind, or discourage those who follow (as most of us may at one time have followed) the suggestion of a strong inclination: perhaps every student must not be strictly bound to general methods, if they strongly thwart the peculiar turn of his own mind. I must confess, that it is not absolutely of much consequence whether he proceeds in the general method of seeking first to acquire mechanical accuracy, before he attempts poetical flights, provided he diligently studies to attain the full perfection of the style he pursues.¹⁰¹

The important point for students to remember is the perfection of their craft skills. Reynolds in 1790 was also less harsh on the painting of the northern schools than in the early 1770s he refused to tolerate. He conceded that:

Many of the Flemish Painters, who studied at Rome, in that great era of our Art ... returned to their own country, with as much of this grandeur as they

¹⁰⁰ Potts, Alex, *Flesh and the Ideal, Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994, p.158.

¹⁰¹ Reynolds, Joshua, *Discourse* delivered to students at the Royal Academy, December 10, 1790, London, 1791, p.11-12.

could carry. But like seeds, falling on a soil not prepared or adapted to their nature, the manner of Michael Angelo thrived but little with them; perhaps, however, they contributed to prepare for that free, unconstrained, and liberal outline, which was afterwards introduced by Rubens, through the medium of the Venetian Painters.¹⁰²

In other words the naturalist approach of the Dutch school combined successfully with the finely crafted colourists of the Venetian to create a desirable method of painting that could serve as a model for British artists. Perhaps these debates and their effects on the visual arts during the period are best summarised in the conclusion to this chapter, by another portrait of William Hunter. This finely-crafted miniature (fig.52) by George Michael Moser (1706-1783), the gold-chaser and enameller, shows Hunter delivering a lecture to the students, the figure of Hunter is taken after a portrait by Mason Chamberlin (1769) that is still in the possession of the Royal Academy. He is shown holding his ecorché model, once again adopting the role of the collector alluding to his collection and the anatomist referring to his craft. The image has all the vitality and dynamism that was said to be characteristic of the doctor's style. But, more importantly, it also expresses the work of a craftsman and a form of tacit knowledge that was highly valued by Hunter and which he promoted and encouraged in his own work with the Academy.

¹⁰² Ibid, p.19.

Conclusion

Dr William Hunter was one of those few fortunate men who are placed early in life exactly in the situation for which nature and education design them. He had an innate love of order, which evinced itself in every part of his conduct throughout life: a solid understanding, a correct eye, with a perseverance which could only have been supported by a fondness for his occupation.¹

Joseph Adams, 1818

Joseph Adams' recollection of the character of Dr William Hunter follows observations made initially in the various obituaries published on the anatomist's death on March 30, 1783. He remarks on the doctor's 'solid understanding' and 'correct eye', his perseverance, scholarship and his dedication to his profession. Adams' tribute differs from those that appeared immediately following Hunter's death in that, in the first sentence, he acknowledges the propitious situation in which his subject happened to find himself during the early 1750s. Combined with his personal talents, Hunter's success was also, undeniably, attributable to the social, political, and economic conditions that prevailed in Britain during the second half of the eighteenth century and it is how these unprecedented times influenced his life as a collector that have been described in this thesis.

Socially, Hunter entered a community of professionals in London in the 1740s that was changing beyond recognition. Educated, self-made men such as William Cowper and his pupil William Cheselden, both of whom sought to make a profit from their work, had, in doing so, helped to establish a new type of professional anatomist. Social mobility has been described as an overwhelming feature of the eighteenth century and, as has been shown, William Hunter negotiated and promoted his own talents in order to benefit from these social changes. Clearly, social standing was still dominated by a patron-client relationship, defined by rank and privilege, deference and obligation, but certain rewards came from self-made wealth combined with education, rather than inherited wealth and privilege, although these were beyond the reach of the majority, greater access for some was created during Hunter's lifetime.² As Paul Langford has described, Adam Smith's progressive theory, as set out in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), became much more dominant in the later years of the century, but before Smith manufacturing, trade and

¹ Adams, Joseph, *Memoirs of the Life of John Hunter Esq*, London, 1818, p.118.

² Langford, 1989 and 1998, p. 652.

commerce in the proto-industrial period was accepted as meaning wealth creation for the benefit of all.³ This view was increasingly questioned after the publication of *The Wealth of Nations* drew attention to the possible social effects of changing status brought about by commercialism, throwing traditional categories into confusion.⁴

As the chief concern of this thesis has been the formation of William Hunter's fine art collection, his life before his arrival in London in 1740 has been considered only in passing, with some consideration given to his education and social origins in post-union Scotland, in recognition of the importance of the values and aspirations emanating from a construction of North Britishness to a figure like Hunter. A deeper investigation into how these ideas combined with established practices of trade and commerce in England and impacted on Hunter's own desires would be extremely useful in determining just how much he benefited from such social mobility in Scotland. The academic network surrounding the University of Glasgow in the early 1730s, the Foulis Academy of Fine Arts (est.1754) and its relationship to the Duke of Hamilton and Hamilton Palace, were all influential on the young William Hunter and deserve to be the subject of more rigorous research.

Politically, the years defined by the influential figure of the 3rd Earl of Bute, were favourable to many Scots of Hunter's generation. From 1747, and his first encounter with Frederick, Prince of Wales, until his resignation in 1763, the 3rd Earl used his power and influence within the Royal Court to arrange patronage for artists such as Allan Ramsay and the architect Robert Adam.⁵ William Hunter also benefited from this arrangement and, no doubt, as described in chapters two and three, it was Bute who was instrumental in Hunter's elevation to Physician in Extraordinary to Queen Charlotte in 1762 and giving him an indication that his request for a National School of Anatomy would be favourably received in the same year. The association between Hunter, the Earl of Bute and George III also requires further research.

As described in chapter five, William Hunter was an active figure among George III's circle but his political position is complex and intriguing. How much influence he carried with George III is demonstrated, for example, by Dr Johnson's appeal to Hunter to present the King with a copy of his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775):

I am very much obliged by your willingness to present my book to his Majesty. I have no courage to offer it myself, yet I cannot forebare to wish that He may see it, because it endeavours to describe a part of his Subjects, seldom visited and little known, and his Benevolence will not despise the

³ Defoe, Daniel, *A Plan of the English Commerce*, Charles Rivington, London 1728, p.80.

⁴ Langford, 1989, p.652.

⁵ Holloway, James, *Patrons and Painters in Scotland 1650-1760*, exh. cat. Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1989, p.130-137.

meanest of his people. I have sent you a book, to which you are very just entitled, and beg that it may be admitted to stand in your library, however little it may add to its elegance or dignity.⁶

Johnson's choice of Hunter, a well-connected Scot and owner of one of the best libraries in London, was, of course, planned to convey to the King Johnson's acknowledgment that here was, in the messenger himself, a product of that 'Subject, seldom visited and little known' land that had achieved such success under royal benevolence. How William Hunter operated within these political networks would benefit from further exploration and reveal a deeper understanding of the nuances of patronage during the century.

That William Hunter was positioned advantageously as far as economics in the eighteenth century is concerned is, undoubtedly, the most evident feature of his professional and private career.⁷ His bank accounts reveal impressive amounts of money being deposited and debited from the year 1759 until his death, with payments being made to artists such as Jan van Rymsdyk and Robert Strange, as well as regular amounts going to John Hunter and William Hewson, and, in the 1770s, payments to Charles Combe, George Fordyce and David Pitcairn, presumably for the work they had started on cataloguing the collections, which they continued as trustees after 1783⁸. At his death, the identifiable expenditure on his collections exceeded £26,000 – equivalent today to £150,000.⁹ Hunter profited from the unprecedented Government lotteries and opportunities to invest in the expanding colonies, with the East India Company providing the most lucrative returns until the company crash in 1770, after which he found it more profitable to invest in land, especially around his family home in Long Calderwood. This paid off and his property in Scotland, in 1783, amounted to £16,000 - £96,000 in today's money. As Helen Brock points out, however, the Drummonds Bank details held in the

⁶ This letter is dated 29 December 1774. See Brock, 2008, vol. 2, p.185. Helen Brock notes that Johnson wrote to Mrs Thrale in late December 1774 that he had heard that the 'King fell to reading the book as soon as he got it, when anything struck him, he read aloud to the Queen, and the Queen could not stay to get the King's book but borrowed Dr. Hunter's'. This is in contrast to Walpole's observation that, 'I have scarce been better diverted by Dr Johnston's *Tour to the Western Isles*. What a heap of words to express very little! ... The King sent for the book in MS – and wondering said, "I protest Johnston seems to be a Papist and a Jacobite!" – so he did not know why he had been made to give him a pension!' Walpole, *Correspondence*, vol. 32, The Countess of Upper Ossory, I, 1761-1777, p. 225.

⁷ See Brock, C Helen, 'The Happiness of Riches', in Bynum, WF, and Porter, R eds., *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, pp.35-49.

⁸ Customer Account Ledgers for Dr William Hunter, Drummonds Bank, now held at the Royal Bank of Scotland, Archives, South Gyle, Edinburgh.

⁹ Ibid, p.52.

archives of the Royal Bank of Scotland were most likely not Hunter's only bank account and the possibility that he had several accounts warrants further research. As his correspondence testifies, Hunter dealt on a financial basis with some of the most powerful families in eighteenth-century Britain; Bute, Sandwich, Shelburne, Rockingham and the Hertfords and their financial records may reveal more about Hunter's own commercial and political practices.

This thesis describes these contexts in order to present the multifaceted background to William Hunter's fine art collection; his social, political and economic positioning, as has been shown, all impacted on his activities as a collector. It may seem ironic, therefore, that this concluding chapter begins with a quotation from a biography of John Hunter. This thesis has concentrated on the life of William Hunter whose history has, to some extent, been obscured by his brother, as was noted in the introduction. This is for many and complex reasons, not least of which is the fact that John Hunter and his museum were adopted by the Surgical profession to represent the pioneering and innovative origins of that discipline. It could be argued that he benefited from a nineteenth-century tendency to cast medical practitioners in a Romantic and heroic role. William and his collection on the other hand have not received anything like the amount of attention lavished on John by biographers and historians alike.

This is a reversal of the cultural perceptions of the brothers during their lifetimes, however, when William was often privileged as the most intellectually and socially accomplished of the two, as demonstrated in an etching by Samuel Ireland, from a drawing by the artist John Hamilton Mortimer (1740-1779). This image, *Two doctors dissecting a corpse* (Fig.59) is understood to portray William and John Hunter examining a freshly exhumed corpse.¹⁰ The two figures certainly resemble the Hunters, with William on the left, wearing glasses and John on the right. The two birds on their heads are symbolic of the public persona of each of the brothers: William is represented as knowledgeable and scholarly by the placing of an owl on his head, while John, who was self-taught and known to work by intuition, is represented by a cockerel. However, Mortimer probably came to know John and William Hunter through their work with artists, first through the Society of Artists and latterly the Royal Academy. This drawing may be contemporary with Mortimer's appointment as Associate of the Royal Academy and the publication of John Hunter's book, *A Practical treatise on the diseases of the teeth; intended as a supplement to the Natural history of those parts*, in the same year, 1778, in which he describes his work on transplanting teeth and specifically an experiment where

¹⁰ The original drawing is in the Fry Collection, Yale. See Sunderland, John, *John Hamilton Mortimer: His Life and Works*, 52, 1986, Walpole Society, London, 1986.

he transplanted a human tooth onto the comb of a live cock.¹¹ This specimen is still in the Hunterian Museum in London. The other animals are, presumably, a reference to John Hunter's increasingly specialised work on the animal oeconomy, while the small skeleton perched on the edge of the casket is posed in a style similar to Hunter's ecorché figure placed in the Royal Academy schools. The depiction of the resurrection man's shovel slicing through the decapitated head of another victim to the left of the image is cleverly placed to predict the eventual fate of the cadaver, with the left side showing the face before decomposition, while the right side is portrayed as shrivelled and shrunken, with protruding eyes, like the mummified specimens in the anatomists' museums. Mortimer made several drawings of ecorché figures and skeletons that are now in the Tate Gallery collection. His interest in anatomy must have been encouraged by his acquaintance with both the Hunter brothers as contemporary critics commented on his anatomical knowledge.¹²

Despite Mortimer's placing of the brothers so closely together, the pair were, in fact, increasingly estranged from each other by the 1770s, mainly due to disputes over ownership of preparations and the origins of experiments and ideas that they had worked on together but which John believed William had claimed as his own.¹³ These professional divisions between John and William Hunter have caused the artworks that they collected to be viewed from very separate realms too, with John's collection given the label of naturalist, while William's is considered as 'classical' or a style of painting collection typical of a 'classical' scholar. Yet John and William were jointly patrons and teachers of contemporary British artists like George Stubbs and Mortimer. Some of John's collection of paintings was sold at Christie's after his death in 1793 but those remaining in the Royal College of Surgeons of England include works by William Hodges (1744-1797), Philip Reinagle, (1749-1833) and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Two eighteenth-century portraits that relate directly to John Hunter's interests in ethnography and comparative anatomy are those of *Omai*, c1775-6 by William Hodges (fig. 60) and *Tanche-qua* c1772 (fig. 61) thought to be by John Hamilton Mortimer, although the individual in this portrait looks quite different to Zoffany's painting of the sculptor included in *The Academicians*. John's portrait of Omai, a native of Society Islands, who was chaperoned around London by Sir Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander and who

¹¹ Hunter, John, *A Practical Treatise on the diseases of the teeth; intended as a supplement to the Natural History of those parts*, London 1778, p. 111-112

¹² A correspondent to the *Morning Chronicle* in 1778, writing in response to Mortimer's critics, observed that he was the 'most learned anatomist, the most powerful and perfect master of the human form that has ever appeared.' Whitely, William T, *Artists and their Friends in England, 1700-1799*, The Medici Society, London and Boston, 1938, vol. 1, p. 339.

¹³ See Brock, 2008, vol.2, pp.327-329.

visited, among many other sites, William Hunter's anatomical theatre, offers a very different image compared to Reynolds's famous full-length portrait of him c.1776, which is currently on loan from a private collection to the National Gallery of Ireland. The painting's focus is the distinctive physiognomic features of Omai; rather than an attempt to portray him in a generalised, classicising fashion.¹⁴ Tan-che-qua was a model maker from China who worked in London from 1769-1772, a description of his life during this time is featured in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1771:

This gentleman came over to England in the Horsendon East Indiaman, Capt. Jameson, the beginning of August 1769 ... Curiosity and respect for the British, induced him to visit this island. He is a middle-aged man, of a proper stature; his face and hands of a copperish colour, is elegantly cloathed in silk robes, after the fashion of his country; speaks the Lingua Franca, mixt with broken English; is very sensible and a great observer. He is remarkably ingenious in forming small busts with a sort of China earth, many of which carry a striking likeness of the person they are designed to represent. He steals a likeness, and forms the busts from his memory.¹⁵

This description matches the portrait in John Hunter's collection, where Tan che qua is posed wearing clothing of a style and fabric appropriate to his Chinese national identity. The portrait's painter had been unrecognised until recently and the Hunterian Museum in London now believe it to be by John Hamilton Mortimer. These two portraits, ostensibly commissioned as physiognomic gazetteers, also connect John Hunter as a patron to contemporary artists in London in the second half of the century and to a school of painters, motivated by a naturalist interest, as described in chapter five. While John Hunter's choice of subject and artist may suggest that he was interested in forming a collection of paintings that could act as 'visible knowledge', as discussed in the previous chapters, like William's collection, these images were not straightforwardly recordings of nature but complex visual documents relating to a particular school or community of artists during the period.

Further research on both brothers' collections simultaneously would no doubt reveal similarities or overlaps in aims and objectives; and, rather than envisioning these as two very distinctive and divergent collections, their collaborative qualities may emerge as a significant project to place the study of nature in all its manifestations, intuitive, theoretical and commercial, at the centre of artistic study.

Just as both painting collections need to be re-configured and re-assessed in terms of their contribution to British art of the eighteenth century, chapter four of this thesis

¹⁴ Quilley, Geoff, Bonehill, John, eds. *William Hodges, 1744-1797: The Art of Exploration*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2005, p. 134.

¹⁵ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 41 (1771: May) p. 238.

has highlighted the qualities of William Hunter's collection of Italian paintings, suggesting that these too be incorporated within his extensive and all-encompassing view of art derived from a close study of nature. The collection should also be reconsidered, however, in the light of recent research into the religious, political and social issues informing the reception of Catholic art in Britain in the later half of the century, as chapter four describes.

The grand tour made art derived from the Italian schools much more widely available and accessible, but how these works were received in Britain has not been extensively researched. William Hunter's painting collection, with its combination of Italian and Dutch Old Masters and contemporary British and French paintings, pre-empted early national ones such as the British Institution, which by 1805 mounted two annual exhibitions, one of Old Masters and one of living British artists.¹⁶ However, it is the detail of *how* the collection of Italian paintings was formed that requires further investigation and a contextual catalogue of these paintings would contribute much to the knowledge of how Hunter and the artist and dealer Robert Strange visualised the pre-eminence of European art within artistic training and connoisseurship in Britain, and help to restore Strange's significant role in the history of the grand tour more generally.

Of course, Robert Strange was not William Hunter's only connection to a European-wide network of collectors and collections. Other aspects of his museum collections, shells, minerals, insects and coins and medals, meant that he had an extensive range of contacts throughout the continent. As was noted in the introduction to this thesis, this network was intrinsically focused on Hunter's collection of natural history and the great number of receipts and correspondence extant in the University of Glasgow Library and the Hunterian Museum would benefit from a rigorous research project to collate and disseminate this information, making it accessible in digital form.

It was while in the process of forming his coin collection however, that Hunter came into contact with the most important British collectors and dealers in Europe. Correspondence exists in the collection between Sir William Hamilton (1731-1803), Thomas Jenkins (1722-1798) and Charles Townley (1737-1805) over the purchase of the Giraldis coin collection.¹⁷ This collection was offered to Hamilton who declined it but bought it on Hunter's behalf, convinced that it was a genuinely good deal: 'I can assure you this is no dealer's collection but is sold by the gentleman, whose father and grandfather made the collection in this country'.¹⁸ Hunter wrote to Charles Townley in October 1781, asking him to intercede in the transaction to 'conclude the purchase of Dr

¹⁶ MacGregor, Arthur, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007, p.99.

¹⁷ Brock, 2008, vol. 2, pp.344-346.

¹⁸ Sir William Hamilton, Naples, to William Hunter in London, August, 21, 1781.

Giraldi's medals'.¹⁹ The medals turned out not to be what Hamilton thought they were and subsequently he had to reimburse Hunter for the money he had paid out, £330 when the whole collection once in London was valued at only £83:

I was aware of the large bronze being ill preserved & of no great value but I was made to believe that the Silver Imperial & family Medals which I sent were very valuable - I was therefore thunderstruck when I saw in your letter of the 20th of June that the whole Collection produced no more than £83.2. I have been the Dupe of a rascally Abbé, whom I really did not suspect to be dishonest before - however tho' the loss is not indifferent to me I will think as little about it as possible ...²⁰

This exchange is an example of Hunter's involvement with some of the leading antiquarians and collectors in eighteenth-century Europe. As Hunter well understood, coins and medals were not exclusively restricted to antiquarian interest but were also an important resource for visual artists too, as demonstrated by James Barry's request to have access to the medal collection, described in chapter three of this thesis. There is, perhaps, a great deal of research potential in how William Hunter's collection is placed in the historiography of numismatic collecting in Britain generally, as well as in the realm of specialist interest.

A more successful contribution by Sir William Hamilton to William Hunter's collection is the bound volume of drawings by the Baroque artist, Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669). The donation by Hamilton is evidence of the high regard for Hunter's museum and library by his contemporaries. That Hamilton's other major donation was to the British Museum, brings into focus the extent to which he considered Hunter's collection as equally important. Hamilton's letter to Hunter explains: 'As I am truly sensible that these drawings of Pietro di Cortona could no where be placed to such advantage as in your museum, allow me to present them to you, I am happy in having this opportunity of giving you a small testimony of the very great regard and esteem'.²¹ (fig.62) Hunter refers to the drawings in a letter to the Swedish anatomist and naturalist Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777), discussing their origins and commenting on how the sequence of plates does not conform to any 'system of anatomy'.²² (Fig. 63) Hunter's collection of works by Albrecht von Haller is extensive and it is important to emphasise that in the exchange of correspondence between the two, there is a common

¹⁹ Charles Townley, London, to William Hunter in London, October 28 1781.

²⁰ Sir William Hamilton, Naples to William Hunter, London, August, 1782.

²¹ Sir William Hamilton, London, to William Hunter, London, March 3, 1772

²² William Hunter, London to Albrecht von Haller, August, 31, 1773. See also, Kemp, Martin, 'Dr William Hunter on the Windsor Leonardos and his Volume of drawings Attributed to Pietro Da Cortona', *Burlington Magazine*, CXIVII, 1976, pp.228-31.

understanding that their work on anatomy and natural history forms part of a lineage of great innovators such as Vesalius, Cowper, Douglas, and Smellie. Alongside the ownership of such a set of drawings, Hunter could envisage his own legacy to the tradition of anatomical history (fig.64). A more detailed investigation of the origins of the drawings may add information as to their use for anatomical teaching, particularly in an Academic tradition.²³

Much of the legacy that William Hunter intended to create by his collection of fine arts has been realised to a large extent in the research and exhibitions that took place in the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery in 2007, with the bi-centenary celebrations of the first Hunterian Museum in Glasgow and the publication of the first comprehensive catalogue of this collection. Early on in this research, it was realised that an even more neglected part of this history was William Hunter's house at Great Windmill Street and chapter two of this thesis is intended to go some way to restore his museum and anatomical theatre to the historiography of spaces of knowledge during the enlightenment. The presentation of natural history collections and the commodification of sights of scientific experiment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been the subject of much research in recent years.²⁴ Hunter's house was part of this scheme to carefully present scientific spectacle, particularly anatomical dissection, to a sophisticated, urban audience. As with their painting collections, further research may prove productive by a comparative investigation into the plan, design and function of both John and William Hunter's London homes.

This thesis has restricted its focus to William Hunter's life in London from 1740 until 1783. However, as research on the bi-centenary of the Glasgow's Hunterian Museum revealed, there is still much more that can be contributed to the history of museums in Britain and Europe more generally in following the progress of the collection from its arrival in Glasgow in 1807. The University of Glasgow holds extensive archives and records of the original museum building and contents and its visitor books could be usefully interpreted to show the impact that the collection had in its first few years in the city. Among these archives are letters from Professor Lockhart Muirhead, librarian and lecturer in Natural History, to his wife during the period in 1807 when he was in London at Great Windmill Street to oversee the packing and storing of the collection. These letters give a useful insight into the changing perceptions of museum collections, even in the early years of the nineteenth century as compared to the eighteenth century.

²³ That this volume of drawings had a didactic function may be suggested by the fact that a set of plates was engraved after them by Luca Ciamberlan, dated 1618, See Black, ed., 2007, p.162.

²⁴ For example, Ostler, Malcom, 'The Scholar and the Craftsman Revisited', *Annals of Science*, 49 (1992), pp. 255-276; Schaffer, Simon, 'Natural Philosophy and Public Spectacle in the Eighteenth-Century', *History of Science*, 21: 1-51 (1983) pp.1-43.

Commenting on the anatomical preparations, the professor seems instinctively uncomfortable in their presence: 'the wretched visible remnants of beings who have hoped and feared, reasoned and adored ...' There is a sense throughout the correspondence with his wife of distaste at the idea of these objects having had such a close proximity to the domestic life of William Hunter in Great Windmill Street.²⁵

William Hunter's fine art collections were given a separate home in the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery in 1980, thus further disconnecting them from their original place in the 'centre of calculation' alongside his other collected objects. Latour's wider vision of the mobilisation, stabilisation and combination of objects within a collection is usefully employed here in a return to context. If these conditions are met, writes Latour, then: 'A small provincial town, or an obscure laboratory, or a puny little company in a garage, that were at first weak as any other place will become centres dominating at a distance many other places'.²⁶ Arguably, this provincial city, Glasgow, holds within the Hunterian a collection of fine arts that tells a story of how and to what extent the arts were a feature of eighteenth-century British life. As the thesis has demonstrated, in an era of unprecedented social and cultural mobility this was a feature that was constantly debated and contested.

In his 1784 *Inquiry into the Fine Arts*, the Church of Scotland minister and author Thomas Robertson, makes the point that no dogmatic interpretation of the arts is justified and that, perhaps, the diversity and aspiration of the arts in eighteenth-century Britain was the most crucial aspect of cultural life. It is a view that may be read from Hunter's original collections:

There have been chiefly two modes of delivering the theory of the Arts we speak of. The one has given rules, proportions, and problems; has taught how to read and speak, rather than how to understand; and has employed, as if in preference, an abstruse and technical style. A field dreary and thorny; avoided, rather than courted, by the feet of men. The other has been more inviting; it has added, by way of example, a description of poems, pictures, buildings and other fine productions. But neither the two is what we would aspire at; for neither of them investigates a theory, distinguishes taste, gives a history, nor marks an influence upon mankind.²⁷

As the previous chapters have described, Hunter's fine art collection is not dominated by either of the practices of delivery outlined in Robertson's text, rather it is a collection that aims to 'investigate a theory', a wider view of the connections between human anatomy

²⁵ GUL MSS Gen. 1354/38-55.

²⁶ Latour, Bruno, *Science in Action, How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987, p. 223.

²⁷ Robertson, Thomas, *An Inquiry into the Fine Arts*, London, 1784, p.18.

and the natural world. If it 'distinguishes taste', it is a taste derived from eighteenth-century urban, contemporary culture, that offered so many opportunities for the doctor. The collection does offer up a history, as has been shown, that, given further investigation, would reveal the dynamism and multiplicity of British art and artists during Hunter's lifetime. Does the collection 'mark an influence on mankind'? Perhaps Robertson is alluding here to the highest ambitions of renaissance culture, a plea that was often made to artists during this period. Hunter's incorporation of a fine art collection within his 'centre of calculation' certainly secured these works within a kind of immortality that he envisaged by the establishment of the Hunterian Museum in 1807, marking his own influence, at least, on an historical age.

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Dr William Hunter 1718-1783

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