

## Chapter II. Public and Private

### **“Moral Sentiment” and “Physical Truth”: the Upstairs and Downstairs of Anne and John Hunter**

What, besides a couple of inches of newsprint, might have connected the worlds of Anne and John Hunter? Anne Hunter’s poems, set by Haydn as canzonets, and John Hunter’s work and reputation do not immediately suggest themselves to be kindred. Admittedly, Hunterian biographies, which are considerably unified in their treatment of the couple, strongly tend to suggest that neither spouse was influential in the pursuits of the other. The *British Critic* set the tone in 1802: “Such a union of science and genius has seldom been contemplated by the world, as in the persons of John Hunter and his lady,” wrote an anonymous reviewer. “The former, investigating physical truth with a zeal and acuteness not often equaled; the latter, adorning moral sentiment with the finest graces of language.”<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Hunterian biographical literature of the next two centuries, husband and wife are made to represent an ideal juxtaposition, playing opposite, though complementary, roles.<sup>2</sup>

John Hunter, who held the title Surgeon Extraordinary to George III, earned distinction for his significant contributions to medical knowledge, especially in the areas of gunshot wounds, venereal disease, and aneurysm. In order to investigate “physical truth” he assembled an extensive collection of

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Nares, “Art. 12. Poems. By Mrs. John Hunter,” *The British Critic* 20 (1802).

<sup>2</sup> The earliest book-length biography, written by Jessé Foot just one year after Hunter’s death, provides the main exception. Foot’s dislike for the surgeon appears to have strongly influenced his retelling of his subject’s life; however, the document is nevertheless valuable as an antidote to the Hunterian mythologizing that gathered enormous momentum in subsequent decades. See Jessé Foot, *The Life of John Hunter* (London: Beckett, 1794). On the mythologization of John Hunter, see L. S. Jacyna, “Images of John Hunter in the 19th Century,” *History of Science* 11 (1983).

specimens, which he used in his celebrated series of evening lectures, as described by the *European Magazine* in October 1782:

This course of lectures is illustrated by a collection of diseases and of comparative anatomy which in point of curiosity, accuracy, and comprehension is equal to any collection in the world. It has been made by Mr. Hunter himself and what chiefly contributes to its extraordinary value and advantage is, that he knows the particular history of the greater part of the diseases which he has preserved -- the patients were under his observations in the hospitals -- he has minuted the progress and accounted for the various appearances and effects of each disease, with a fidelity that now renders his collection a most instructive school for the student.<sup>3</sup>

Spilling from his house in Jermyn Street to his country property at Earl's Court, John Hunter's "museum" also contained many exotic specimens, both living and dead, including at various times live leopards, lions, buffaloes, vipers, and bats; a peacock with a thermometer lodged in his feathers; and pigs fed madder-root until their bones were dyed red. The collection even seeped into the household décor: skulls lined the periphery of the pond, shells and stuffed animals hung on the walls of the interior, and alligators' jawbones yawned their greeting to guests at the entry. Outside sat an enormous copper cauldron where the surgeon boiled down corpses for skeletal study. When in 1783 John bought a lease on 28 Leicester Square the additional property was similarly devoted to medical pursuits but on an even grander scale. Every bit of profit John earned as a surgeon went to building his museum and its vast collection, at his death numbering approximately 6000 bottles of anatomical preparations, 2000 dry preparations, 1000 "deceased parts," and 1000 fossils, shells, and insects.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> George Charles Peachey, *A Memoir of William & John Hunter* (Plymouth: Brendon, 1924), 171.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 232. Meanwhile, John neglected to provide for his family after his passing, despite being fourteen years his wife's senior and in consistently bad health. His secretary described the family's financial straits after 1793:

...as the Bills hereafter will show, together with the large outstanding Debts, and money borrowed at Interest, of Gawler; old Mr. Clarke, Cuttler, of Exeter Change; of

The extravagance that John devoted to his professional endeavors matched his ferocious passion for work. Even his arch-enemy Jessé Foot called him “one of the most industrious men.”<sup>5</sup> Rising at six o’clock to dissect for three hours before breakfast, he then saw patients at home, made house calls, visited St. George’s hospital, and presented lectures, not retiring until after midnight. He responded to interruptions with “disgust and impatience”; minor irritations would cause him to “swear in the most outrageous manner.” Hunter defined hard work as tireless hands-on experimentation; in the words of the G. T. Bettany, “most of what he knew he acquired himself, and he attached perhaps undue importance to personal investigation.”<sup>6</sup> This rejection of book-learning extended to formal education in general; most biographies include some version of the following self-description:

“When I was a boy, I wanted to know all about the clouds and the grasses, and why the leaves changed colour in the autumn; I watched

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Hannah Appleby; of Mrs. Home, etc., and the great expense of increasing and supporting the Museum, and the large prices he gave for individual Preparations; and the large sum he expended in building the stabling, Conversazione and lecture room, and Museum over them, with an immense Skylight over the yard to protect the Whale’s Skull – of perhaps 500 superficial feet of glass – with Entrance Galleries, &c., and the expensive but ineffectual *Empyreal* warm-Air Stoves by Jackson & Moser, with the Great Draw-bridge and slope made to let the Chariot down from the Street, and consequent necessary great alterations of the House, in Windows and Doorways for that purpose – at more than 6,000 pounds – on a lease of about twenty years. Notwithstanding the expense of keeping up two establishments of Coaches and 6 Horses, Coachmen and Footmen, &c., &c., Mr. Hunter was always on the look-out for bits of Land adjoining to his previous possessions at Earl’s Court; and for bargains, many of them of little use, as an enormous Electrifying apparatus; a splendid but unfinished Air Pump invented by the Earl of Bute, together with a grand Chemical furnace and apparatus by ditto; a magnificent and highly finished Turning Lathe which was made for the great Duke of Cumberland [...] The large number of animals, both tame and wild, that were kept both in London and at Earl’s Court, which consisted not only of presents, but often considerably expensive purchases; serve only to make one Wonder that Mr. Hunter had not died more involved, or that he should have left anything for the support of his family after all his Debts had been liquidated.

See Stephen Paget, *John Hunter, Man of Science and Surgeon (1728-1793)* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897), 156.

<sup>5</sup> Foot, *The Life of John Hunter*, 285.

<sup>6</sup> G. T. Bettany, “Hunter, John,” in *The Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1917).

the ants, bees, birds, tadpoles, and addisworms; I pestered people with questions about what nobody knew or cared anything about," [Hunter recalled]. He hated his school-books; nor did he see the good of learning even at Oxford, in a couple of months that he wasted there long after boyhood was over. "They wanted to make an old woman of me, or that I should stuff Latin and Greek at the University; but these schemes I cracked like so many vermin as they came before me."<sup>7</sup>

The message that Hunter needed neither books nor education buttresses an insistence on his total originality; Hunter's accomplishments are presented as owing no intellectual debts whatsoever:

His doctrines are drawn from personal observations made in the course of an indefatigable life, with the constancy of a most adventurous mind. His ideas, his mode of reasoning, as well as his arrangement of diseases are new: and he therefore has received little aid from books or from other professors. The novelty of his ideas occasion also the application of new terms, and those which he has given, he may consider as clear and explanatory, since they are adopted by others and brought into use.<sup>8</sup>

Novelty and originality, in turn, serve to justify Hunter's large opinion of himself, an opinion usually described as couched in appropriate deference to the unbounded nature of knowledge. Referring to his hospital colleagues, he said, "I am but a pigmy in knowledge, yet I feel as a giant, when compared with these men."<sup>9</sup> Nor did he have much patience for minds smaller than his own: "Impatient, blunt, and unceremonious, he was often rude and overbearing, but candid and unreserved to fault."<sup>10</sup> Drewrey Ottley describes John's misanthropy with this anecdote:

On returning late one evening after a hard day's fag, he unexpectedly found his drawing-room filled with musical professors, connoisseurs, and other idlers, whom Mrs. Hunter had assembled. He was greatly irritated, and, walking straight into the room, addressed the astonished guests pretty much in the following strain: "I knew nothing of this kick-

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<sup>7</sup> Paget, *John Hunter*, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Peachey, *A Memoir of William & John Hunter*, 169, quoting the *European Magazine*, October 1782.

<sup>9</sup> Paget, *John Hunter*, 103.

<sup>10</sup> Bettany, "Hunter, John," 290.

up, and I ought to have been informed of it beforehand; but, as I am now returned home to study, I hope the present company will retire." This intimation was of course speedily followed by an *exeunt omnes*.<sup>11</sup>

Ottley's description of John in terms of a comparison with Anne brings into relief the organizing principle that underpins the biographical literature on the Hunters. Anne is in everything the opposite, or the counterpart, to John. With papers and specimens strewn across every usable surface, the downstairs of the Hunters' country house was dedicated exclusively to John's collections and dissections. "Moral sentiment," then, found its home upstairs -- both literally and figuratively "above" John's pursuit of "physical truth." Anne filled her lofty drawing-room with music, painting, poetry, and refined conversation with her friends. These artistic and literary pursuits were conducted under the watchful eye of the mythical characters Cupid and Psyche, whom a relative of Anne's (and in some accounts Anne herself) had elegantly painted "in true classic chastity" in watercolors on the door panels. Anne saw to it that her mythical companions would accompany her in a move to city quarters, for "each compartment was bordered with a circular ornament, which concealed the nails by which it was attached to the wall, that the whole might be readily removed when the house was deserted for the winter season."<sup>12</sup> Psyche -- the most beautiful female in the world, the mortal whose pure love and rejection of physical desire brought her immortality -- was a current favorite heroine on the stage at the Haymarket Theater. Theologian Robert Nares, a friend of the Hunters (and editor of the *British Critic*), published *Remarks on the Favourite Ballet of Cupid and Psyche; with Some Account of the Pantomime of the Ancients and Other Observations* (1783), in which

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<sup>11</sup> John Hunter, *The Works of John Hunter* F. R. S., ed. James F. Palmer (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1835), 41.

<sup>12</sup> Paget, *John Hunter*, 91.

he interpreted the myth as a religious allegory: Psyche, embodying the “delicacy,” “grace,” and “elegance” of superior human beauty, represented the human soul in its quest for Divine Love.<sup>13</sup> Appealing to contemporary taste for all things classical, Nares connected artistic enterprises with morality:

This, then, is the time for the genius of Britain, if ever it can hope to do so, to rival that of Greece. Good sense, taste, opulence, leisure, security, all operate in its favour: it is the business of those who consider the polite arts philosophically, to excite, and, as much as possible, to assist the efforts of genius.

Painting, sculpture, music, poetry, eloquence, are objects truly worthy of attention. The superficial consider them as mere amusements: the morose as trifling, and perhaps pernicious luxuries. But the Ancients thought, and not without reason, that good taste was essentially connected with morality.<sup>14</sup>

As a symbol of the higher purpose to which polite arts aspired, Psyche made an apt backdrop for the high-minded enterprises of Anne’s drawing room. Upstairs at Earl’s Court, and later at Leicester Square, Anne’s Thursday evening salons hosted the legendary “Bluestocking” social circle and other members of the cultural elite. Frequent guests included Nares, who came to discuss sermons and religious articles, and political activist and novelist Maria Edgeworth, who borrowed some of Anne’s verse for her moralistic children’s literature, including lines familiar to early Victorian youth: “Go on, Dear Boy, ‘tis virtue leads/ He that determines half succeeds.”<sup>15</sup> Anne’s other guests included Elizabeth Montague, a central figure in the Bluestocking circle; Elizabeth Carter, admired by Samuel Johnson; and Joseph Haydn, who attended the gatherings during his first visit to London in 1791-92.

While Anne is depicted as presiding, even excelling, in a space dedicated to elevated endeavors, her biographers are also quick to insist that

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Nares, *Remarks on the Favorite Ballet of Cupid and Psyche* (London: J. Stockdale, 1788), 30-31.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> Flora Masson, “Mrs. John Hunter, the Surgeon’s Wife,” *Blackwoods Magazine* 177 (1905): 232.

she remained the picture of modesty. Her membership in her elite circle was not due to the slightly suspicious advanced learning of some of her colleagues, but rather an unlearned, intrinsic gift: "Connected by long friendship with Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Delany, she well deserves to have her name recorded with those amiable as well as eminent females: not indeed for deep learning, which she neither possessed nor affected, but for poetic genius, sagacity, and good taste."<sup>16</sup> Nares described her talent for poetry as inborn, not learned. Anne's inspiration derived from her personal relationships with others, especially her children: "throughout her life, whatever strongly moved her feelings became the occasion of some expressive strains. For her father, she wrote a short but characteristic epitaph. The education, marriage, or death of her children, produced similar effects; and never surely was there a mother who more affectionately watched or more sincerely felt for all the various fortunes of her offspring."<sup>17</sup> Anne would have been content to reach only her inner circle with her efforts:

Notwithstanding [her] facility of writing, she never assumed, or in the least affected, the character of a poetess; but with modesty delivered productions in manuscript to a favoured few. At length on the suggestion of friends, she collected those which she most approved, in a small but elegant volume, which she inscribed to her son, then stationed as an officer at Gibraltar.<sup>18</sup>

This disclaimer takes up reasoning similar to that found in Jackson's preface to his *Twelve Canzonets*, discussed above. The poems are marked unequivocally "private sphere" productions and they make their way to the larger public only by virtue of intervention by parties other than the author. In Anne's case,

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Nares, "Memoir of Mrs. Hunter, by Archdeacon Nares," *Gentleman's Magazine* 91 (1821). Reprinted in John Bowyer Nichols, "Memoir of Mrs. Hunter," in *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century* (London: J. B. Nichols and Son, 1848), 639.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Roodhouse Gloyne, *John Hunter* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1950), 47.

<sup>18</sup> Nichols, "Memoir of Mrs. Hunter," 639.

the gesture provides further insurance, for writing with the intent to publish, or generating any formal plan aimed at the development of her talents, would have put her in the position of genuinely paralleling or even challenging her husband. But the Anne of the biographical literature does not transgress her female duties to venture into the realm of “published poet”; the impetus behind her publication is not her self-motivation but rather her friends’ urging, or, according to Nares, an intrinsic, almost coincidental quality of the poetry that is somehow separate from its creator, for: “Her poems have long burst from confinement, by their own innate spirit.”<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the familial themes and dedication to her son further frame her writing as an extension of her primary calling, motherhood. Anne is depicted as the family cornerstone, holding the family together despite the eccentricity and unpredictability of her husband. S. Roodhouse Gloyne offers this glowing picture:

It must have been a full and anxious life for Anne Hunter, with a young family and a husband who would not take care of himself, with patients coming and going at all hours in sedan-chairs and carriages, with resident pupils and anatomical assistants to cater for, with specimens occupying much-needed rooms and artists busily drawing them. [...] In spite of the temperamental handicaps of a husband with genius and ill-health, the marriage was a happy one, and the credit is largely due to the patience and good temper of Anne, against whom even [John’s outspoken enemy] Jessé Foot had not a word to say.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This reading accords with Richard Leppert’s description of the “trap” that musical performance set for women: on the one hand, their ability to sing and play reflected well on their husbands or fathers. And yet, the *display* of musical talent directly threatened the gender hierarchy; the performing woman was

upstaging her husband and implicitly suggesting to her husband’s friends that she was out of control, leading a life of her own not defined by domestic regulations and responsibilities. A well-bred woman who took music so seriously constituted a threat to social boundaries. Accordingly most courtesy and conduct literature charged women to view music as a trivial pursuit, like virtually everything else they did apart from bearing and raising children.

See his *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 39-40.

<sup>20</sup> Gloyne, *John Hunter*, 47.



Just as Anne won implicit approbation for circumscribing her poetic activity strictly within the boundaries of modest propriety, the content of her poetry itself won praise not for extending into originality, but for the more cautious alternative of bringing a fresh approach to the familiar. Reviewers applauded her treatment of well-worn subjects such as romance, nature, and family. According to the *Monthly Review*,

Most of the subjects, to which [the collection's] contents relate, may well be supposed to have exhausted the splendid efforts of genius and invention. To celebrate with novel effect and in moving numbers the gloom of winter, the sweets of affection, or the pangs of disappointment, has become difficult because it has been often attempted; and to manage hackneyed topics with more than ordinary dexterity is to merit praise.<sup>21</sup>

Throughout the literature, then, Anne's sphere is depicted as having little in common with John's: husband and wife operated in different spaces, displayed different demeanors, and engaged in dissimilar pursuits. In these descriptions, Anne excels at poetry while John privileges the practical, claiming to his brother-in-law Matthew Baillie, "...I am no Scholara, therefore do not feel the beauty of language when I do not see the use of it."<sup>22</sup> While his work is experiential, her metier is conceptual, even moral or spiritual. John scorns the "stuffing of Latin and Greek" in the university, while Anne keeps company with the unusually highly educated, such as Elizabeth Carter, who had published translations of Classical texts. John's contribution is seen as directed to society and posterity, hers to an inner circle of friends and family. Devoted to family while he obsesses over work, she is modesty to his pride, sociability to his misanthropy, familiarity to his originality. Jane Oppenheimer's account lays these distinctions bare:

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<sup>21</sup> "Poems, by Mrs. John Hunter," *The Monthly Review; or Literary Journal* 41 (1803): 420-25.

<sup>22</sup> Paget, *John Hunter*, 119.

For John, who scorned the written word, to devote himself to the substantiality of flesh and bone, she was beauty intellectual and spiritual; for him, who was candor and bluntness, she was delicacy and charm. But more than that, for John who was irascible and turbulent and harassed, she was grace, serenity, and peace. Her contribution cannot be measured alone by the quantity and quality of her published lines, but must rather be evaluated in the light of what she gave to John, who has invested us with so strong a heritage.<sup>23</sup>

### Separate Spheres as Critical Heuristic

The dualities on which the Hunterian biographies are based are a common means of conceptualizing experience in terms of opposed categories, as well as, moreover, miniature hierarchies, in that one concept of each pair (male/female, professional/amateur, original/conventional, etc.) is typically privileged over the other. In this literature, the endlessly repeated insistence on opposition serves to elevate John's role and contribution to posterity; Anne is at least an embellishment to his legacy, and at most, as Oppenheimer puts it, a supporter and enabler. Anne's gift was to John, John's gift was to the world.

That Anne's musical activity figures as "private" as opposed to "public" partakes of a familiar means of conceptualizing musical practices and genres.<sup>24</sup> Private-sphere music is understood in the conventional wisdom of musicology to be small scale, and its introverted style, appropriate for amateurs or non-professional musical lovers, considered to be typical of domestic spaces controlled by women. Public-sphere music belongs to the public stage in the larger world controlled by men, with its extroverted style rendered by large, professional forces. For example, Robert Winter's music

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<sup>23</sup> Jane M. Oppenheimer, "Anne Home Hunter and Her Friends," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 1 (1946): 444.

<sup>24</sup> In a chapter indebted to Edward Said, Leo Treitler writes of gender as the "archetypal duality" embedded in the Western tradition. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Leo Treitler, "Gender and Other Dualities of Music History," in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

history textbook *Music for Our Time* (1992) explains in a subsection entitled “Public Music and Private Music”:

For the general public, composers wrote operas (including arias derived from operatic models), symphonies, and solo concertos. [...] For private performances, composers wrote chamber music -- solo keyboard sonatas and four-hand piano music (played by two performers at the same instrument), as well as duets, trios, quartets, and quintets -- for voices with instrumental accompaniment or for instruments alone. [...] We can better understand a distinction that the Classical period took for granted by likening public music to a professional basketball game played in a large sports arena before a paying audience, and by likening private music to a pickup game played among friends.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, as Winter describes, contemporaries in the 18<sup>th</sup> century perhaps “took for granted” certain general correlations, such as between string quartets and performances in private settings. With the exception of Haydn’s Op. 71 and 74 string quartets, which J. P. Salomon arranged to have performed in a London concert series, chamber works of this genre were not typically heard in “public” settings. This is a fact easily overlooked today, when public performance is almost essential for works to remain within the public consciousness at all.

The problem with the dualities that underpin the Hunterian biographies, or the “public” and “private” categories in which we understand musical eras past, is not their truthfulness *per se* but the tendency for their attendant hierarchies to go unspoken, as if they were self-evident and universally accepted. Janet Levy, in her 1987 article “Covert and Casual Values in Recent Writings about Music” is particularly insightful on the subject of valuing language. Descriptive, metaphoric, opinionative language enriches our insights and understanding, she argues, but when such language

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Winter, *Music for Our Time* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), 286-87.

keeps its nature and its sources covert, it closes the door to further dialogue.<sup>26</sup> In other words, values themselves should not be eliminated, but rather brought into the open where they can be considered part of the argument rather than asserted as accepted dogma about which there is no room for discussion. One of Levy's most revealing examples, in fact, has to do with the rhetoric surrounding chamber music. On the one hand, chamber music is celebrated for its clarity and directness, with every part described as both an independent component and an indispensable contributor to the whole. At the same time, the genre's associations with connoisseurship and the upper echelons of society linger, vicariously providing the listener with "the best of both worlds -- the aristocratic and the democratic!"<sup>27</sup> The slipperiness of valuing terminology assigned to music of the private sphere is particularly apparent in the present context, since the labels that celebrate chamber music of the string quartet variety are often essentially the same as those used to denigrate other forms, such as the canzonet. What is immediacy or economy in the former might likely be understood as banality or trivialness in the latter, for example.

A straightforward and already well-established mode of reconsidering the public/private dichotomy in musicology involves questioning and challenging the attendant values of the type that Levy identifies. Musicologists Ruth Solie and Marcia Citron, among others, have led this charge. Citron exposed the simple falsity of the assumption that *lieder* written by women were not worthy of attention on textual grounds. "The achievements of female *lieder* composers between 1775 and 1850 were

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<sup>26</sup> Janet M. Levy, "Covert and Casual Values in Recent Writings About Music," *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987): 27.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*: 12-14.

magnificent and admirable," she wrote, adding a musicological "call to arms": "Overall there is a rich trove of lieder [written by women], most of it presently inaccessible to the musical public, awaiting serious, scholarly investigation. [...] The music of gifted female musicians of this period grew out of the complex sociological conditions facing them and attests to their brilliant responses to that environment. We today could be greatly enriched by their accomplishment."<sup>28</sup> But what would a history of such music look like? In a chapter resurrecting the book *Music and Women* published in 1948 by Sophie Drinker, Solie began to articulate and shape the new methodologies that would be needed to address the vast "new" corpus of material being uncovered -- methods that include understanding music as communal production and experience, embedded within culture, but also resisting a ghettoization of women's music exclusively to the domain of anthropology and ethnomusicology.<sup>29</sup>

In order to recuperate the neglected parallel sphere, the increasingly common projects such as these, while nullifying the framework of values attached to public and private, continue to make use of the opposition itself, and to assume that its categories are somewhat or even largely mutually exclusive.<sup>30</sup> Without significant fanfare, a few musicologists have taken a different approach. Jeanice Brooks's study of Nadia Boulanger shows how the private-sphere salon of the Princess de Polignac served as an essential training and testing period for the composer/conductor/pedagogue to launch her

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<sup>28</sup> Marcia Citron, "Women and the Lied, 1775-1850," in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 242.

<sup>29</sup> Ruth Solie, "Sophie Drinker's History," in *Disciplining Music*, ed. Katherine Bergeron and Philip Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>30</sup> Julian Budden has examined changes in Verdi's portrayal of the influence of the public sphere on the private. See his *The Operas of Verdi*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

international career. Both new and (neglected) old works were performed in the salon as part of a requisite process by which they were eventually heard by the larger public.<sup>31</sup> Thomas Christensen's investigation of (private-sphere) four-hand piano transcriptions of (public-sphere) opera, concert, and chamber music similarly collapses public/private, professional/amateur, and male/female dichotomies and chronicles the fluid understanding and reception that resulted from the transcriptions' widespread publication and popularity.<sup>32</sup> Mary Hunter points out that although Haydn's London quartets are understood to be "public" pieces and his trios "private," the terms themselves held very different meanings in the 1790s than they do today: because of the high price of admission, or the necessity of attendees to belong to a "subscribers' list," public concerts were essentially private affairs restricted to the elite. Private concerts, held by invitation only, were such sociable affairs that conversation and audience mobility would have resulted in a more public experience of the music than could be had in concert halls given the arrangement of seats, increasing expectations of quiet and attention, and (eventually) darkened room. "Public" and "private," Hunter argues, refer not only to venues or ticket arrangements, but also to reception, consumption, and comprehension: "when we change to these terms, 'public' and 'private'

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<sup>31</sup> Jeanice Brooks, "Nadia Boulanger and the Salon of the Princesse De Polignac," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46 (1993).

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Christensen, "Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 2 (1999); id., "Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera," in *Music and the Cultures of Print*, ed. Kate van Orden, *Critical and Cultural Musicology* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 2000). Leonard Ratner suggests that private music served to "assimilate material from other [public] genres and deliver it to the rapidly growing musical public of the late eighteenth-century in neat and manageable packages." See Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 142. James Parakilas argues that arrangements played a key role in the formation of the canon. See James Parakilas, "The Power of Domestication in the Lives of Musical Canons," *repercussions* 4, no. 1 (1995).

function more as simultaneous and contrapuntal strands of experience than as the two poles of a single continuum."<sup>33</sup> For Brooks, Christensen, and Hunter, historical connections between spheres and values not only obscure more than they reveal, but also beg the very question of separation itself. Rather than retune the public/private model, then, these scholars more productively explode it.

As both Brooks and Christensen note, scholars in fields outside musicology have already made the public/private model a lively topic of debate, the impetus for which derived from the publication in English of Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Private Sphere* in 1989.<sup>34</sup> According to this influential theory, the private, domestic sphere nurtured the belief that humans carried a subjective core, independent of class status -- a belief that, in turn, inspired the will to collective reasoning constitutive of the public sphere. Within the public sphere, differences in social status were disregarded in favor of recognition based on persuasiveness of argument; access was ideally available to all. Anyone with the power to reason was therefore able to participate. It is imperative to note that, in addition to describing "idealistic" features of the public sphere, Habermas also insists that the public sphere "was not mere ideology" but rather a real relationship of

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<sup>33</sup> Mary Hunter, "Haydn's London Piano Trios and His Salomon String Quartets: Private Vs. Public?," in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 108.

<sup>34</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Berger (Cambridge: Polity, 1989). Certainly the centering of the feminist movement on questions regarding public and private boundaries dates back to the 1960s and 70s, most obviously in the slogan "the private is political." The academic arm of the feminist movement, in the form of Women's Studies, subsequently took up the gender as a category of cultural analysis. See in particular Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Jeffrey Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75 (1988); Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989); Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986).

related events and activities that actually occurred, albeit for a limited time, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup> Habermas's narrative of the public sphere's historical rise begins in the classical Greek city states which embodied a bipartite structure -- two realms in which a male citizen held roles: head of a private household (oikos) and participant in public discussion (polis) centered on the marketplace. In the European Middle Ages, however, a distinct public sphere did not exist for the citizenry: the common man was a private man; a feudal lord "was" the land: "lordly" was synonymous with "public," and lordship was something publicly represented.<sup>36</sup> Such "representative publicness" had its heyday in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, but thereafter was gradually replaced by the emergence of a civil society separate from the king -- a new model which came about through several concurrent, though gradual, processes involving confrontation between absolute authorities on the one hand and incipient bourgeois individualism on the other. For example, the Reformation gradually replaced the church's supposedly divine authority with (so-called) religious freedom, which became a matter of private autonomy. Similarly, the aristocracy began to fracture: the military, government bureaucracies, and the prince's personal upkeep became funded by separate budgets, and nobility found themselves answerable to public authority in the form of parliament and legal courts. Economically, the rise of capitalism brought increased exchange of both goods and news, sparking a hunger for information about cost, availability, and demand, which in turn led to the notion of the printed word as a resource for the common good. As a result, print culture exploded: journals and newspapers took up cultural, then social and political issues (by

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 6-7.



means of commentary and satire), rather than consisting solely as compilations of (often anonymous) notices. Because the press constantly held the state before the people and subjected it to public scrutiny, the state consequently transformed. Constitutional states arose, in which freedom of speech was guaranteed and the public sphere's political role became explicitly recognized by the law.<sup>37</sup>

Within the development of the public sphere came a precursor form, the literary public sphere, devoted to discussion and criticism of literature and art. Toward the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the "publisher replaced the patron as the author's commissioner and organized the commercial distribution of literary works."<sup>38</sup> Similarly the bourgeois public moved into the theaters: "the main floor became the place where gradually the people congregated who were later counted among the cultured classes without, however, already belonging to the upper stratum of the upper bourgeoisie who moved in the salons."<sup>39</sup> By 1766, for example, Germany had the Deutsches National Theater. Art exhibitions had become regular after 1737; La Font capture the spirit of their abundance: "A painting on exhibition is like a printed book seeing the day, a play performed on the stage -- anyone has the right to judge it."<sup>40</sup> Concert life is for Habermas a particularly vivid illustration of the new publicity:

First, private Collegia Musica appeared on the scene; soon they established themselves as public concert societies. Admission for a

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<sup>37</sup> A compatible account may be found in the *History of Private Life* series edited by Philippe Ariès, which chronicles a move toward separate spheres in conceptions of modesty surrounding the body, the valorization of self-discovery in art and literature, arrangements of domestic space, childhood, and religious imperatives to "authentic" behavior. See especially Roger Chartier, ed., *Passions of the Renaissance*, vol. 3, *A History of Private Life* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987).

<sup>38</sup> Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 38.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 40.

payment turned the musical performance into a commodity; simultaneously, however, there arose something like music not tied to a purpose. For the first time an audience gathered to listen to music as such -- a public of music lovers to which anyone who was propertied and educated was admitted.<sup>41</sup>

One of the most interesting outgrowths of Habermas's work has been explorations of the position of women in the heuristic he proposes. Habermas suggests that the marginalization of women from the public sphere and relegation to the private sphere (a circumstance which he acknowledges) was simply one respect in which the public sphere fell short of its ideal. In marked contrast, several scholars have responded that women's exclusion was hardly a circumstantial or accidental failure, but was in fact another *constitutive* aspect of the public sphere; as John Thomson puts it, "the public sphere, as it was articulated in the political discourse of the time, was juxtaposed to the private sphere in a gender-specific way."<sup>42</sup> Joan Landes points out that Habermas never asks "whether certain subjects in bourgeois society are better suited than others to perform the discursive role of participants in a theoretical public."<sup>43</sup> She claims that Habermas loses track of the ways in which the public sphere worked to marginalize "a whole range of [female, private-sphere] interests associated with those actors who would not or could not master the discourse of the universal";<sup>44</sup> in other words, because social

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>42</sup> John Thompson, "The Theory of the Public Sphere," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 10, no. 3 (1993). Other critical responses to Habermas from feminist perspectives are found in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992); Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Joan Landes, *Feminism, the Public and the Private* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). For an accessible and broadly illustrated survey of the contemporary tension between public and private, see Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?*, ed. John Stevenson, *Themes in British Social History* (London and New York: Longman, 1998).

<sup>43</sup> Joan Landes, "The Public and the Private Sphere: A Feminist Reconsideration," in *Feminists Read Habermas: Gendering the Subject of Discourse*, ed. Joanna Meehan (New York: Routledge, 1995), 97.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

inequalities and special rights supposedly ceased to matter when participants came together for disinterested debate in the forum of the public sphere, and because femininity represented particularity and partiality, participants in the public sphere were excused -- indeed prevented -- from dealing with women's interests. The very definition of the public sphere as distinct from family meant that concerns labeled "private" were considered inappropriate for public debate. When women did gather, they could not do so without transgressing the basic, foundational characteristics of the public sphere.

In addition to attributing women's exclusion to their "otherness" or "particularity," Landes briefly mentions justifications based on women's "nature": women in public life "risked disrupting the gendered organization of nature, truth, and opinion that assigned them to a place in the private, domestic but not the public realm."<sup>45</sup> This portion of her argument passes too quickly, for indeed efforts to define what it meant to be a woman were at the heart of the birth of the separate spheres concept. The "problem" lay in the egalitarian nature of reason. If, as Enlightenment thinkers such as Descartes and Locke suggested, reason was a universal human attribute, independent of property ownership or class, and if at the same time, reason was the sole qualification for participation within the public sphere -- then the (for many, threatening) possibility emerged that the public sphere could be open to the fair sex. In response, new doctrines about the nature of femininity were sought that would elaborate a set of "fundamental" feminine attributes, justifying women's exclusion from the public sphere and consequent restriction to the private sphere.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 98.

On account of the increasingly rigorous demand for verifiable and empirical evidence characteristic the Age of Reason, these doctrines would need to be found to derive from scientific or biological bases. Doctors took it upon themselves to concentrate on cataloguing sex differences in thorough detail. Some “differences” were simply assertions that held very tenuous connections to science, such as descriptions of the female skull as smaller than the male one, which “proved” that he had more room for the brain -- or the reverse, which “proved” that she was arrested at an earlier stage of evolutionary development. But from mid-century, doctors threw themselves into documenting, with empirical data, what they called fundamental differences in every fiber of the human body, from bones to muscles to nerves.<sup>46</sup>

This pursuit of -- this obsession with -- probing and explicating the “true nature” of Woman characterized the world surrounding Anne Hunter and encroached on her upstairs haven.<sup>47</sup> Her collaborations with Haydn, and the English canzonet genre at large, reflect in their own way the fascination and the anxiety operative in that obsession.<sup>48</sup> The genre naturally found its home in bustling, commercialized London, the urban center where Habermas locates the birth of the public sphere. But my study reverses Habermas’s heuristic. I address the shaping influence that public-sphere inquiries about the nature of woman exerted on a form of domestic, private-sphere cultural

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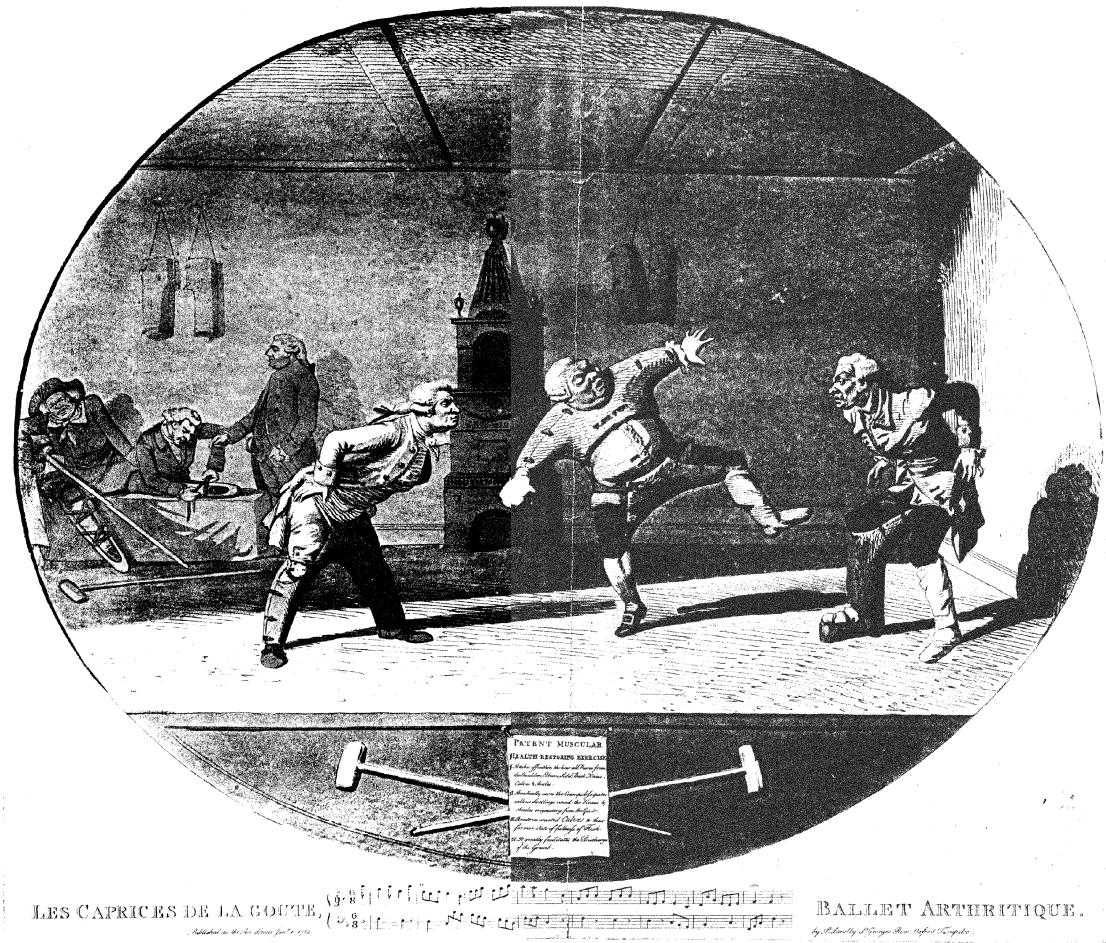
<sup>46</sup> Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

<sup>47</sup> Richard Leppert examines iconography in which women are connected “by nature” to motherhood. See, in particular, his *Music and Image*, 28-34.

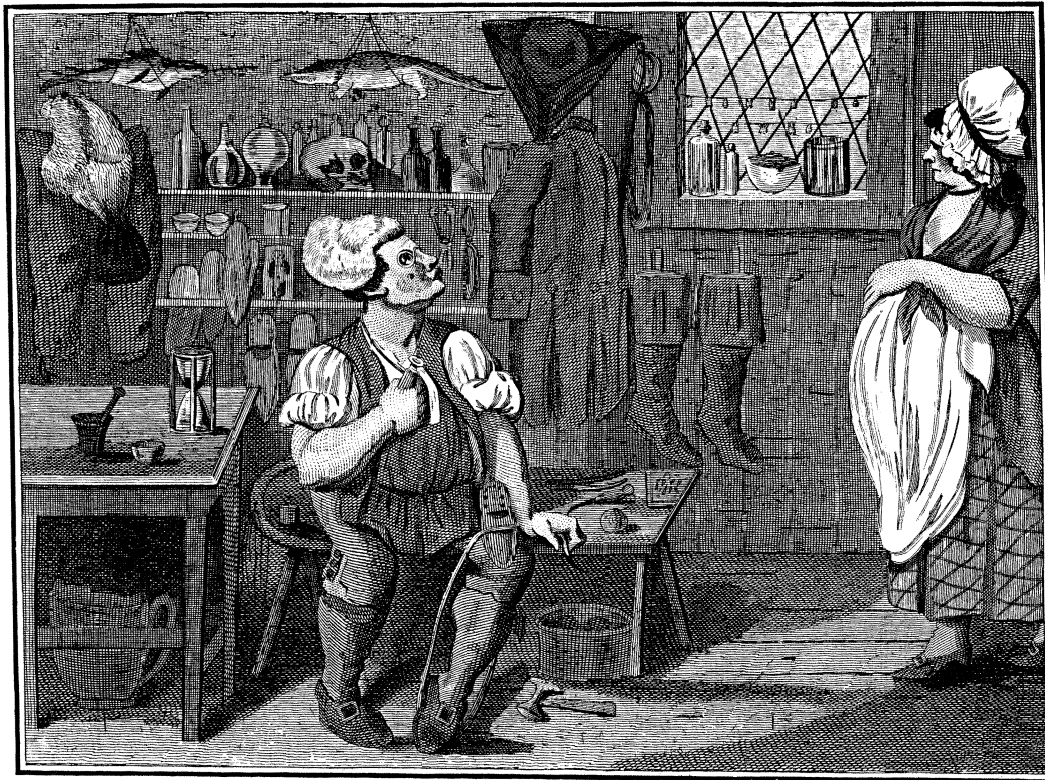
<sup>48</sup> The conception of musical performances in the private sphere as a stage for the working out, not to mention contestation, of scientific discourse also motivates Tia DeNora’s investigation of botanical metaphors in Mozart’s operas. See Tia DeNora, “The Biology Lessons of Opera Buffa: Gender, Nature, and Bourgeois Society on Mozart’s Buffa Stage,” in *Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna*, ed. Mary Hunter and James Webster (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

expression -- a formulation which itself suggests that the so-called "private" enjoyed little privacy.

### The Staircase Flattened: Shared Spheres in Late Eighteenth-Century London

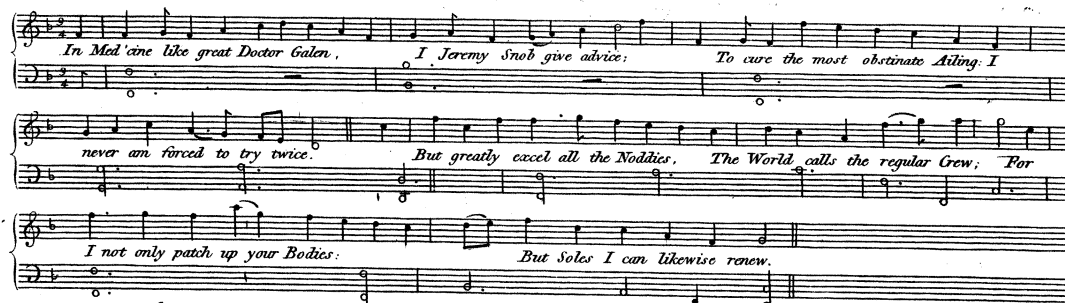


**Figure 2.1** P. Sandby, *Les Caprices de la Goute, Ballet Arthritique* (1783)



### DOCTOR JEREMY SNOB.

Written by J.G. MAXWELL.



<sup>2</sup>  
A Patient whose Habit was nervous,  
In haste had me call'd tother Night;  
Lest Death with a Warrant should serve us:  
I posted away Main & Might.  
My med'cine I made a mistake in,  
We all may when hurried too fast;  
I quite cur'd his Limbs of their shaking:  
But laid him as dead as a Last.

<sup>3</sup>  
My Wife a poor dropsical Creature,  
I thought it might be for her good;  
Being put up and bloated with Water:  
To take a few Ounces of Blood.  
My lancets were out of the Way,  
Yet my Awl did the Business as well;  
She died as a Body may say:  
But the Reason I never could tell.

<sup>4</sup>  
A Barber whose purse was consumptive,  
His Throat cut to finish his Woes;  
In the midst of his Efforts presumptive:  
Fear hinder'd his Work I suppose.  
With a good Tackers End and a Bristle,  
I soon put him out of his Pain;  
For I sowed up the Slit in his Whistle:  
And set him a Shaving again.

<sup>5</sup>  
I gave to a friend who'd the Gripes,  
With a violent purging and Lax;  
In Order to strengthen his Trips:  
A large Bolus of shoemakers Wax.  
A Med'cine so easy and pleasant,  
No regular Doctor would give;  
It did him no Harm 'till at present  
Few suffer their Patients to live.

<sup>6</sup>  
I'd almost forgot to inform you,  
That Corns without cutting I cure;  
And if the Scotch Fiddle should warn you:  
My Ointment to cool it is sure.  
I've Glusters, Emetics, and Poyges,  
That even the Devil would drench;  
And will when Necessity urges:  
Assist you to Doctor the French.

Published 1<sup>st</sup> October 1798.  
By LAURIE & WHITTLE,  
53 Fleet Street London.

Figure 2.2 J. G. Maxwell, *Doctor Jeremy Snob* (1798)

Music and medical inquiry came within inches of each other, literally, on the front page of *The Sun*, but that was not a chance first introduction. The satirical print *Les Caprices de la Goute, Ballet Arthritique* (Fig. 2.1) depicts the clinic of Abraham Buzaglo, who claimed to cure gout with muscular exercise. Patients with wooden braces strapped to their legs or arms lumber about in awkward contortions, the comedy of which is compounded by the accompaniment of an elegant minuet tune in 6/8 meter below the frame. *Doctor Jeremy Snob* (Fig. 2.2) similarly pairs an image of a quack doctor *qua* shoe repairman together with a musical tune, in this case a pun-filled song about the doctor's unique set of talents: "I not only patch up your Bodies, But Soles I can likewise renew."

My wife a poor dropsical Creature  
 I thought it might be for her good;  
 Being puft and bloated with Water  
 To take a few Ounces of Blood.  
 My lancets were out of the Way  
 Yet my Awl did the Business as well  
 She died as a Body may say  
 But the Reason I never could tell.

A Barber whose purse was consumptive  
 His Throat cut to finish his Woes  
 In the midst of his Efforts presumptive  
 Fear hinder'd his Work I suppose.  
 With a good Tackers End and Bristle,  
 I soon put him out of his Pain  
 For I sow'd up the Slit in his Whistle  
 And set him a Shaving again.

I have to a friend who'd the Gripes  
 With a violent purging and Lax  
 In order to strengthen his Tripes  
 A large Bolus of shoemakers Wax.  
 A Med'cine so easy and pleasant  
 No regular Doctor would give  
 It did him no Harm and at present  
 Few suffer their Patients to live.

The familiar figure of the quack doctor was supposed to prey upon the ignorant and unaware, but the threat of being “taken in” by a medical man was a very real one, as John Hunter suggests in his endorsement of Rymer’s pills. These prints use humor to tell a pertinent story, for in the face of rapid and vast improvements in medical knowledge it was difficult to know what was legitimate. The images also exemplify contemporary resonances between science, music, and entertainment.

Principal actors in areas of art and science not only met and mingled frequently in late 18<sup>th</sup>-century London, but were in many cases one and the same people, since seemingly comprehensive knowledge of both realms was still a conceivable goal for the well educated. Scientists were particularly and keenly interested in music throughout Hunter’s lifetime -- not just in acoustics and instrument design, as tends to be the case today, but also in the spiritual and emotional effects of music, as well as the intersection of music and anatomy. In 1799, Everard Home, Anne’s brother and John’s surgical assistant, presented a lecture to the Royal Society of London on the “Structure and Uses of the Membrana Tympani of the Ear” in which he envisioned the ear drum as an organic musical instrument -- specifically, a monochord, “of which the membrana tympani is the string; the tensor muscle the screw, giving the necessary tension to make the string perform its proper scale of vibrations; and the radiated muscle acting upon the membrane like the moveable bridge.”<sup>49</sup> Home believed that exposure to music refined the ear muscles, thereby improving musicality, but if muscles were allowed to languish or were damaged by injury or disease, “the effect [...] will be similar

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<sup>49</sup> Leta Miller and Albert Cohen, *Music in the Royal Society of London 1660-1806*, ed. J. Bunker Clark, vol. 56, *Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, Inc., 1987), 29.



to that produced by playing upon a musical instrument which is not in tune.”<sup>50</sup> Papers on birdsong married music and science: John Hunter’s protégé Edward Jenner wrote on cuckoos, while Daines Barrington’s argument that birdsong was a learned, not inborn, skill was published in the Society’s transactions with an accompanying musical composition “for two piping bullfinches.”<sup>51</sup>

Not only was music of interest to anatomy, but anatomy was considered to be of particular importance to art. David Hume, a cousin of Anne’s father, described anatomy in 1748:

The anatomist presents to the eye the most hideous and disagreeable objects but his science is useful to the painter in delineating even a Venus or an Helen. While the latter employs all the richest colours of his art, and gives his figures the most graceful and engaging airs; he must still carry his attention to the inward structure of the human body, the position of the muscles, the fabric of the bones, and the use and figure of every part or organ.<sup>52</sup>

For William Hogarth, muscles and bones provided prime examples of his S-shaped, serpentine line that embodied ideal visual beauty. He was familiar with William Cowper’s 1724 *Myotomia Reformata: or an Anatomical Treatise on the Muscles of the Human Body* and included drawings of numerous body parts, with and without skin, in his *Analysis of Beauty*.

Of these fine winding forms then are the muscles and bones of the human body composed, and which, by their varied situations with each other, become more intricately pleasing, and form a continued waving of winding forms from one into the other, as may be best seen by examining a good anatomical figure, part of which you have here represented, in the muscular leg and thigh [figure 65, plate 1]: which shews the serpentine forms and varied situations of the muscles, as

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 32. Eighteenth-century attributions of the origins of music to birdsong are discussed by Matthew Head, “Birdsong and the Origins of Music,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 122, no. 1 (1997).

<sup>52</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp, *Oxford Philosophical Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 90.

they appear when the skin is taken off. It was drawn from a plaster of paris figure cast off nature, the original of which was prepared for the mould by Cowper, the famous anatomist. In this last figure, as the skin is taken off the parts are too distinctly traced by the eye, yet the winding figures of the muscles, with the variety of their situation, must always be allow'd elegant forms: however, they lose in the imagination some of the beauty, which they really have, by the idea of their being flayed; nevertheless, by what has already been shewn both of them and the bones, 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.<sup>53</sup>

Music historian Charles Burney wrote not only on music but also on astronomy, publishing a book on comets in 1769. The Hunters themselves moved in eclectic circles. Edmund Burke, whose interests spread from aesthetics to politics, also attended the London lectures on physiognomy given by John's brother, William. (Indeed William himself appears to have felt little compunction to adhere exclusively to his advertised subject during his lectures, as a result offending Horace Walpole with an extended panegyric on the King in 1780.)<sup>54</sup> Before his engagement, John had been a regular at

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<sup>53</sup> Ronald Paulson, ed., *William Hogarth: The Analysis of Beauty* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 53. The fact that Hunter lived next door to the house where Hogarth had lived for thirty years until his death in 1764 elicited the following comparison which appeared in *History of St. George's Hospital*:

Living in the south-eastern corner of Leicester-fields; humane, generous, kind-hearted and truthful; proud and sensitive, but somewhat rough and unpolished; critically observant, industrious and painstaking; working to the last, until struck down suddenly by valvular disease. Whose portrait is this? It might be that of John Hunter: it is that of Hogarth. Of course, there were points of difference between them; but the vanity of the painter was not entirely unrepresented by the surgeon. Each was a genius, and each recognized his power.

See Peachey, *A Memoir of William & John Hunter*, 182.

<sup>54</sup> Walpole recorded the event in a letter to the Rev. William Mason:

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.

Bedford Coffee House, where he first met Walpole, Alexander Pope, and Richard Sheridan. Later he attended regular dinners at the home of artist Sir Joshua Reynolds, making the acquaintance of artists and writers including Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Edward Gibbon, David Garrick, and others.

The Hunters' residence at Leicester Square was an epicenter for cross-fertilization of ideas. Neighbors included Hogarth's widow (next door), Sir Joshua Reynolds (at the opposite corner), and Charles and Fanny Burney in St. Martin's Street on the south side. On Thursday evenings Anne hosted her salon; on Sunday evenings John held a "levee" at which guests were "regaled, with tea and coffee, and treated with medical occurrences."<sup>55</sup> Anecdotes from the hospital were part of the evening's entertainment, accompanying the drinks and the propelling conversation. Medical knowledge served as entertainment as well as information, and John provided anecdotes that fed his peers' fascination with the astonishing and grotesque. The Gothic novelist Horace Walpole, for example, admired and even emulated the surgeon. The Hunters had recently promised a visit when Walpole wrote their mutual friend Robert Nares:

I have thought it long, Sir, since I had the pleasure of seeing you, and should have asked that satisfaction here, with the company of Mr. And Mrs. Hunter, who promised to acquaint me with their return; yet had they done so within the last ten or twelve weeks, I could not have profited by it. I have been ill of the gout in four or five parts, and produced from one of my fingers a chalkstone, that I believe is worthy of a place in Mr. Hunter's collection of human miseries -- he best knows whether it is qualified to be a candidate there -- I do know that on

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See Jane M. Oppenheimer, *New Aspects of John and William Hunter: 1. Everard Home and the Destruction of the John Hunter Manuscripts. 2. William Hunter and His Contemporaries*. (New York: H. Schuman, 1946), 154. Leonard Smelt was a member of literary society as well as a sub-governor for the Prince of Wales. "Political arithmetic" presumably refers to *Essays on Political Arithmetic* of Sir William Petty.

<sup>55</sup> Foot, *The Life of John Hunter*, 271.

*delivery*, I had it weighed, and its weight was four grains and a half; and with two detached bits, five grains. I little thought when I began my own museum that it would be increased by curiosities from my own person – nor is this the first, though the most magnificent, nor would probably be the last, were I likely *to go my full time* with two- or three- and-twenty others, of which I am *pregnant* -- I must not say *big*, as a word unsuitable to my skeleton -- my fingers literally resembling the bag of eggs in a fowl, as you may have observed.<sup>56</sup>

Similarly, John made this appearance in the diary of Hester Thrale (later Piozzi, intimate friend of Samuel Johnson): “The heart of a Frog will not cease to beat *says John Hunter* for four hours after it has been torne from the Body of the Animal Poor Creature.”<sup>57</sup> It was even said that medical treatment would be endured for the sake of an invitation to the party -- according to a niece of the Hunters, “One lady was so anxious to obtain admission [to Anne’s salon] that she resorted to the expedient of sending to Mr. Hunter to bleed her, in the hope of thus producing an acquaintance.”<sup>58</sup> The “social stream” of Anne’s receptions and the “fashionable patients” of John’s waiting room drew from the same population.<sup>59</sup> Twice a year, the museum was open “for the inspection of his friends and acquaintances [...] in October to the medical profession and in May to those noblemen and gentlemen who felt an interest in such subjects.”<sup>60</sup> John kept a printing press in his house, where he produced and sold his writings to a wide readership, not just specialists.

The Hunters’ relatives, too, represented an alloy of scientific and artistic circles. Anne’s sister was married to architect Robert Mylne, Christopher Wren’s successor as architect of St. Paul’s cathedral; nephew Matthew Baillie, a famous physician, was married to Joanna, a poet friendly with and admired

<sup>56</sup> Paget Jackson Toynbee, ed., *The Letters of Horace Walpole* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 15:211 (Oct. 5, 1793).

<sup>57</sup> Katherine Balderston, ed., *Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale, Later Mrs. Piozzi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), 1:67.

<sup>58</sup> Paget, *John Hunter*, 191.

<sup>59</sup> Gloyne, *John Hunter*, 90.

<sup>60</sup> Hunter, *The Works of John Hunter F. R. S.*, 107.

by Sir Walter Scott. Musical accomplishment was dominated by female relatives -- in addition to Anne and her sister, John's mother was known to have been musical, and daughter Agnes Hunter is fixed in a portrait playing harp (later, as Lady Campbell, she published two sets of canzonettas of her own).<sup>61</sup> But brother-in-law Buchanan (husband of John's sister Janet) was known for his fine voice, and Edward Jenner (a member of the Hunter household as a resident pupil and later a friend, famously associated with the smallpox vaccine) played flute and violin. The Hunters enjoyed a great deal of entertainment, and John Hunter was said to have refused collecting medical fees from artists, authors, or clergy.<sup>62</sup>

While the members of Anne's and John's worlds reflect an amalgam of interests across the scientific-artistic spectrum, so also do the spaces in which they were held. John was an eager art collector, a penchant that extended him well beyond his means financially. The large "converzatione room" at Leicester Square was decorated with "an acre of landscapes and figures painted by Zuccarelli as models for Tapestry"; other decorations included "Chinese Ivory puzzle-Balls" and "a very fine collection of proof prints by Hogarth, Strange, Woollett, Sharp – of the latter artist several hundred pounds worth; besides Chinese Josses and beautiful nodding mandarines; and several original pictures by Zoffany, Vandewelde, Xuys, Ostade, Teniers, Stubbs, &c, &c."<sup>63</sup> These items of fine art, meanwhile, kept close company with exotic anatomical specimens, such as the shells and animal bones described above. "His first floor and back apartments were filing apace [with specimens],"

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<sup>61</sup> Agnes M. Campbell, *Four Canzonetta's with Accompaniment for Harp or Piano Forte, Composed & Inscribed to Mrs. John Hunter* (London: Lavenue & Mitchell, 1803), Score; id., *A Second Sett of Two Canzonetts, with an Accompaniment for the Harp or Piano Forte, Composed & Inscribed to Mrs. John Hunter* (London: Lavenue & Mitchell, 1805), Score.

<sup>62</sup> Gloyne, *John Hunter*, 89; Hunter, *The Works of John Hunter F. R. S.*, 134.

<sup>63</sup> Paget, *John Hunter*, 157, quoting John Hunter's secretary Clift.

wrote Jessé Foot, “ -- insomuch that he was not able to find room, for the *Camella Perda* given him by Lady S-----, the tallest animal known, and which browses upon the branches of trees: he therefore, -- that it might be in sight, -- cut off its legs, and fixed it, in the passage.”<sup>64</sup>

Because of the physical overlap of scientific pursuits with domestic space, women were likely and apt participants, thanks especially to their training in drawing.<sup>65</sup> Ottley describes a household busily united in a common purpose:

Burke used to say that it was impossible for any man to arrive at great eminence by his own unassisted talents: the power to combine the assistance of inferior men, in subservience to his own views, used always to constitute an essential part of his definition of a truly great man. This power Hunter possessed. All his pupils and intimate friends contributed more or less to the formation of his museum; [...] he called in the aid of the ladies of his family in the prosecution of his researches on the economy of bees [...] There were no drones in his hive.<sup>66</sup>

Given that women were participants in, not absent from, scientific pursuits, Ottley’s description of Anne as “a little of a *bas bleu*, fond of gay society, a taste which occasionally interfered with her husband’s more philosophic pursuits” begins to appear exaggerated, condescending, and ideologically motivated.<sup>67</sup> At least, it is hard to imagine that John truly harbored the

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<sup>64</sup> Foot, *The Life of John Hunter*, 246.

<sup>65</sup> Ann Bermingham describes women’s participation in illustration:

The establishment of taxonomies of plants, animals, and minerals depended on skills of dissection, experiment, and observation. Drawing became an indispensable tool in this process of classification. The study of natural objects, in particular, through microscopy, dissection, and visual analysis depended on drawing when the collection and circulation of actual specimens was impractical. The dissemination of this information in the form of scientific treatises, catalogues of plants and animals, and anatomical texts required illustrations that were accurate visual descriptions of the objects discussed in the text.

See Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 64. For further discussion of women illustrators see Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex?*, 68.

<sup>66</sup> Hunter, *The Works of John Hunter F. R. S.*, 54.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

“horror of feminine interference” that figures so heavily into the gender oppositions operative in the biographical literature.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately, the conjunction of Anne’s and John’s social spheres and the literal overlap of their physical spaces invites skepticism with regard to the rigidly binary, “upstairs-downstairs” portrayals of Anne and John in the biographical literature. Indeed, it becomes hard to imagine that Anne’s cultural endeavors -- her poetry, her collaboration with Haydn, her musical performances -- could remain uninfluenced by the culture of anatomical investigation that surrounded them.

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<sup>68</sup> Peachey, *A Memoir of William & John Hunter*, 156.