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'Wonderful Objects' and 'Disagreeable Operations': Encountering the Leverian Museum in Writing for Children, 1800-1805

The frontispiece of the 1790 *Companion to the Museum, (Late Sir Ashton Lever's)* depicts the interior of the institution commonly known as the Leverian Museum.[1] On either side of the arched entryway that frames the image, there stand two groups: on the left, a man and two children, one of whom kneels to peer into a glass case; on the right, a young girl looks enquiringly at her mother. Behind them, occupying the centre of the picture, stands an elegantly dressed man who looks out of the engraving. Holding his tri-corn hat in his right hand, he appears to welcome the viewer: to invite their eye to follow him into the interior of the museum and to explore the wonders it contains. The circular walls of the 'grand saloon' in which he stands are lined with glass cases containing a staggering variety of taxidermied birds. In the background, more visitors examine the exhibits, including a young girl who cranes her neck to admire an object on a table. It is an image that identifies the museum as a site of discovery and wonder, offering both education and delight. The depiction of children in the engraving informs the subject of this article: the museum's representation in the period's children's literature. More specifically, this article focuses primarily on two works that take the museum as their subject: the anonymously authored *The School-Room Party, Out of School Hours* (1800) – in which a young girl regales her school friends with a detailed account of her trip to the museum – and Anthony Ella's *Visits to the Leverian Museum* (c. 1805), which follows a boy and his unnamed adult companion as they survey the museum over the course of four days.[2] In addition to these neglected texts, I refer to the brief but resonant reflection on the Leverian Museum that appears in Charlotte Smith's *Conversations, Introducing Poetry* (1804).

From its opening in 1775 to its closure in 1806, the Leverian museum was visited frequently and written about widely. International visitors such as the German Sophie von la Roche and the American Benjamin Silliman recorded their impressions of viewing

the collection, while poets such as James Ogden and Percival Stockdale rhapsodised about it in verse.[3] The museum also played a prominent role in the period's natural history writing, offering reference points for works such as Thomas Pennant's *History of Quadrupeds* and George Shaw's *Musei Leveriani Explicato* or *Museum Leverianum*.[4] As well as a site of scientific value, the museum was a popular spectacle, featuring in guidebooks such as John Feltham's influential *The Picture of London*.[5]

Collectively, these works have enabled scholars to undertake important work on the cultural, scientific and ethnographic significance of Lever's museum. Richard Altick's influential *The Shows of London* considers it alongside other metropolitan sights of the period, while Clare Haynes explores the 'interpretative framework' that informed Lever's curatorial practices.[6] More recently, Sophie Thomas has focussed on the museum's holdings of items from James Cook's third voyage, demonstrating how the 'material encounters' that took place in the museum allowed 'imaginary relations and geographies to arise'.[7] To date, however, no sustained attention has been paid to the museum's presence in children's literature.

This article addresses that neglect. The texts it discusses might best be described as museum-guides that take the form of fictional narratives. These works shed further light upon the cultural history of the museum; they also offer an insight into the museum's value to writers of children's literature, who seized upon the Leverian as a site of pedagogic value. However, while the museum's scientific 'utility' has been convincingly articulated, the collection's capacity to elicit affective and imaginative responses should not be overlooked.[8] Focussing on the unpredictable encounters that take place within the Leverian, this article explores how fictional narratives for children respond to the materiality of the museum in order to offer complex meditations on the relationship between sympathy and science.

In writings about the Leverian, children confront – and are confronted by – a profusion of objects and taxidermied specimens from around the planet. Although children's literature frequently imparts the kind of rational knowledge that will provide its readers 'with an early mastery of the world they [inhabit]', the affective encounters depicted in these texts eschew 'mastery' in favour of offering an analytical and sometimes emotive examination of the way in which the natural world is mediated through the museum.[9]

This critical focus complicates these texts' identification with what has been termed the 'rationalist tradition' of writing for children.[10] Alan Richardson has suggested that within such works the child 'is never to lose its sense of self-possession […] for a moment of pleasing (or frightful) wonder'.[11] My discussion challenges that assertion. While these texts impart rational knowledge by offering empirically precise accounts of the museum, they demonstrate that 'the thinking and knowing children of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment' were also *feeling* children.[12] For these child-protagonists, 'self-possession' is only tenuously maintained: their reactions to the museum range from the cerebral to the emotional, encompassing feelings of fear, wonder, and bewilderment. Acknowledging the representation of affective, as well as intellectual, responses to the museum thus challenges and enriches current critical understandings of the ostensibly rational, pedagogical children's literature of this period. I begin with a brief overview of the museum and a consideration of why it made an appealing subject for children's literature in the first decade of the nineteenth century, before examining in detail some of the unsettling encounters depicted in my primary texts.

I. Pleasurable Astonishment and Wonder: The Leverian Museum and Children's Literature

The Leverian Museum bore the name of its founder, the 'naturalist and curio collector' Ashton Lever.[13] In 1774, Lever moved his collection of over 27,000 natural history objects from Alkrington in Lancashire to Leicester House in London, where it proved phenomenally popular with the public. Nevertheless, the expense of maintaining the museum proved overwhelming, forcing Lever to dispose of it by lottery in 1786. Under the stewardship of its new owner, James Parkinson, the museum moved once more, this time to a purpose-built site at Albion Place on the south bank of the Thames. It remained there until 1806, when the museum was closed and the collection sold off in an auction lasting some sixty days. The auction meant that the collection was dispersed among various collectors, with individual items purchased by both local and European bidders.[14] However, contemporary pictorial and written records of the museum enable us to reconstruct the context in which these objects were originally exhibited. A range of artists painted both the museum and its contents, most notably Sarah Stone, who also depicted the interiors of the Leicester House and Albion Place sites.[15] Perhaps the most comprehensive written account is the *Companion to the Museum*, compiled by James Parkinson in 1790. Originally envisioned as a longer work, only two parts of this 'concise Description' of the museum were published.[16] Nevertheless, it provides a list of the museum's holdings matched in detail only by the sale catalogue of 1806.

In addition to these documents, the museum's contents and spatial organisation were presented in narrative form in the children's literature on which I focus. Featuring child protagonists, *The School-Room Party* and *Visits to the Leverian Museum* provide a systematic tour around the museum's contents while offering enticing descriptions of its many highlights. By the time these texts were published, the museum was entering its final years. Lever had died in 1788, having lost possession of the museum to James Parkinson two years previously. As Thomas notes, it appears that Parkinson 'ran the institution relatively successfully' for the duration of his stewardship, although Altick

describes the period of his ownership as 'a sad anticlimax'.[17] The museum 'survived, in increasing neglect' until 1806, when Parkinson auctioned off its contents.[18]

Why, then, did texts discussing the museum flourish in the final few years of its existence? While these works may have functioned as puff-pieces for the museum, there is no obvious evidence of commercial links between Parkinson and the authors and publishers of these texts. A more likely explanation is that the museum provided an ideal subject for authors and booksellers who wished to capitalise on the dominant trends in children's literature of this period. For decades, writing for children had 'played a significant role in disseminating […] Enlightenment thought and science' and this tendency intensified under the influence of the 'moral and rational middle-class pedagogies' that rose to prominence in the late eighteenth century.[19] Writing about the museum enabled authors to circulate knowledge about the natural world, while providing a vivid description of its contents for those unable to view them at first-hand. The scientific lessons the museum offered could also be grounded in the expressions of religious faith that were a mainstay of children's literature. Evoking the physico-theological thought that emerged in the early eighteenth century, the *School-Room Party*'s child-narrator describes how the museum opens 'Nature's Volume'.[20] Its pages, she states, will 'charm our young minds, enlighten our understanding, and of course lead us to look up with adoration to Nature's GOD'.[21] By exhibiting 'the wonders of Nature', the museum enables children to learn about their position relative to other species within a divinely-ordered universe.[22]

As an example of the inclusive tendency of eighteenth-century natural history, Lever's museum provided the ideal environment for this undertaking. Along with many specimens of quadrupeds and birds from Britain and abroad, his museum featured rocks and fossils, historical clothes and weapons. It was also notable for holding a range of ethnographic objects from the South Pacific, gathered during Captain Cook's second and

third voyages. Although the museum's collection was not arranged according to the Linnaean principles that dominated natural history in this period, Lever was 'praised for the order, neatness and labelling of his displays'.[23] Nevertheless, the sheer scale and variety of the collection made a dramatic impression upon visitors, as the frontispiece of the *Companion to the Museum* illustrates. The careful acts of observation depicted in the engraving are endorsed in *The School-Room Party* and *Visits to the Leverian Museum*. However, these works also gesture towards an underlying tension between education and pleasure, shedding doubt on Lever's claim that the museum was 'the most rational, and […] instructive Entertainment ever opened to public view'.[24] This is evident at the beginning of the *Visits*, when the unnamed adult narrator describes Henry's reaction as he enters the museum. The boy's attention is captured by the large mirror that is visible at the centre of the Skelton engraving, which a fashionable-looking lady is using to adjust her hair. In contrast to this act of fashionable self-absorption, in *Visits to the Leverian* the mirror is a source of disorientation:

> [Henry's] eyes were fixed on the mirror at the extremity of the apartments, and as he approached he fancied that they became every moment more extensive and numerous. His raptures exceeded all bounds. He thought there could be no end to examining such a multitude of beautiful and splendid objects.[25]

The *trompe l'oeil* that the mirror performs – by which the room seems to expand as the viewer advances through it – is indicative of the museum's heterotopic identity as a site of indefinite accumulation. As Michel Foucault notes, within such spaces 'everything' is gathered into 'a sort of general archive'.[26] Henry's initial awe illuminates two competing ideas within this conception of the museum: while it promises to assert categorical order upon its diverse contents, to the juvenile imagination its extensive collection appears on the brink of spiralling out of control. The prospect of its limitlessness finds an analogue in Henry's mind, as his raptures exceed 'all bounds'.[27]

Even after he realises that he has been 'deceived by a looking glass', Henry's enthusiasm is scarcely dulled.[28] Sophie Thomas's observation that the spatial organisation of Lever's museum '[invites] the eye to function as an agent of exploration' is evident here, as Henry '[casts] his eyes round the circular apartment', naming the birds he sees in rapid succession: 'Here are the ostrich and the cassowary: see there's an owl, and there an eagle; and there, sir—oh, what a beautiful parrot is there! I am so delighted, that I can scarcely express the pleasure I feel!'.[29] While Henry's eye retains a degree of mobility, it facilitates only a superficial mode of observation that skims over the surface of the museum with a rapidity and momentum that make deeper forms of inquiry impossible. This excitable survey is subdued by Henry's adult companion, who dictates the terms on which the museum should be encountered. 'Let us turn our faces towards the entrance', he tells Henry, 'and begin our employment on the left of the door-way; from thence we will proceed regularly round the apartment'.[30]

A similar tension between the child's panoramic gaze and the adult's clear-headed focus is played out in *The School-Room Party*. Once again, the child's initial response to entering the museum is depicted in dramatic terms, as Miss Thomson recounts how she and her brother

> had but just time to give [our mother] our grateful embrace, before we found ourselves entered therein, and our eyes beholding a variety of wonderful objects.
>
> Mamma smiled at our pleasurable astonishment; but my dear children, said she, as soon as you have recovered yourselves a little, we will begin our view at the first part of the collection, and proceed regularly forward[.][31]

The text does not account for the rapidity of their entry, but it is clear that crossing the museum's threshold induces an altered state of consciousness, identified here as 'pleasurable astonishment'. Haynes has observed that descriptions of the museum as a 'challenge to the mind' are 'intended as a compliment to Lever's huge collection'. But while she notes that writers often employed 'the discourse of sublime' to convey their

response, it might be more fitting to think of these texts as utilising the discourse of wonder.[32]

As Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park have demonstrated, the discourse of wonder has played an important role in the history of scientific enquiry, where it has been employed to articulate emotional responses to the natural world.[33] However, as an emotion produced by the 'instinctive recognition of difference', wonder is a combustible state of being. In Stephen Greenblatt's words it has the potential to be 'thrilling, […] dangerous, [and] momentarily immobilizing, charged at once with desire, ignorance, and fear'.[34] As many observers have noted, the 'modern definition' of wonder was formulated in the mid-seventeenth century by René Descartes, and elements of his thought are apparent in Miss Thomson's reaction to the museum.[35] As Descartes puts it in *The Passions of the Soul*, wonder is ignited by a 'first encounter with some object [that] surprises us'.[36] While this ideally leads to 'attentive inquiry', Descartes presents an alternative prospect in which 'an excess of wonder' produces 'astonishment': a state that 'makes the entire body remain immobile like a statue, and renders one incapable […] of acquiring a more specific knowledge of [the object]'.[37]

Although the author of *The School-Room Party* describes Miss Thomson experiencing a specifically 'pleasurable' form of 'astonishment', the negative trajectory described by Descartes remains a possibility. As an arresting spectacle, the museum threatens to inhibit, rather than inspire, rational enquiry: upon viewing its 'wonderful objects', Miss Thomson is seemingly stupefied – rendered 'immobile' – to the point that she and her brother require time to '[recover themselves] a little'. This state of suspension is only resolved by the mother's intervention: under her guidance, the children will 'proceed regularly forward' rather than standing in awed astonishment. As Sarah Tindal Kareem notes, many eighteenth-century formulations of wonder describe a 'temporal trajectory' that sees individuals move from a state of ignorance to knowledge.[38]

The directive to 'proceed regularly' issued by the adult figures in both *The School-Room Party* and *Visits to the Leverian* inspires an appropriately purposeful form of enquiry: in both cases, the stasis of astonishment is replaced by a more dynamic and pedagogically effective mode of experiencing the museum.[39] Both texts thus feature an identical tension: while they imply that the study of natural history can be constructed from a series of positive affective encounters, they register discomfort with the transporting effects of wonder.

II. 'Admirable Preservation' and 'Disagreeable Operations': Responses to Taxidermy

With its detailed information about the collection and rigorous guidance on how best to appreciate it, *The School-Room Party* offers a reminder of the pragmatic uses to which the museum may have been put. As its subtitle announces, the book provides 'a most pleasing companion to the Leverian museum'. Nevertheless, by mediating information through the responses of their child protagonists, both *The School-Room Party* and *Visits to the Leverian* convey the ethical complexity that can accompany the scientific scrutiny of the museum's exhibits. *The School Room Party* is perhaps the more straightforward in conveying the pleasure to be gained from self-collected acts of observation, as when Miss Thomson pauses to examine the some of the birds on display. Her delight is evident:

> The lower walls of this Grand Room, that is, those which reach from the gallery to the floor, are lined with great judgment (Mamma says) by glass cases containing the largest Birds in the Collection; for, being on a level with them, you can view them at pleasure, compare them with each other, and teach yourself to confess, how wonderful in form—how curious in plumage—and in what admirable preservation they are! for there is only the voice wanting to make you recollect that they are not alive.[40]

Miss Thomson carefully examines the birds, making systematic comparisons between them – something that seems to be encouraged by the spatial organization of the

museum. Like the child in the foreground of the Skelton engraving, Miss Thomson is able to position herself in front of the glass cases and achieve the kind of static viewing position that her mother encourages. But although she puts herself 'on a level' with the birds, this is not an egalitarian gesture. The museum was not ordered according to Linnaean principles but the text makes a point of informing us, through the authoritative interjection of Miss Thomson's mother, that the specimens have been arranged 'with great judgement'. This phrase evokes what Mary Louise Pratt refers to as the 'extractive, dissociative' operations of natural history.[41] However, within *The School-Room Party* the striking visual appearance of the birds sweeps this decontextualizing power out of view: the illusion of continuing life almost obscures the birds' existence as inanimate specimens. It is only the absence of their voices that reminds Miss Thomson that the birds before her eyes are lifeless objects rather than living subjects.

Elsewhere in *The School-Room Party*, the recognition that the birds on display are no longer alive produces a more poignant tone. For instance, Miss Thomson draws attention to another of the taxidermied exhibits: 'A Virginian Nightingale stopped me for a moment, and the wish of my heart was, to have heard its sweet note: but the wish was idle, and I walked on smiling at my own folly'.[42] Known today as the northern cardinal, the 'Virginia Nightingale' was celebrated in the eighteenth century for the sweetness of its song, making it a 'desirable […] vocal cage-bird'.[43] The bird referred to in *The School-Room Party* was one of many in the Leverian to be painted by Sarah Stone, whose precise watercolour shows the bird sitting upon a branch next to a waxwing.[44] With its scarlet feathers and flamboyant crest, the cardinal would surely have caught the eye of visitors to the Leverian Museum. Indeed, the visual impact of the bird is hinted at in the text's uncanny phrasing: Miss Thomson's assertion that the nightingale 'stopped [her] for a moment' renders her passive while animating the taxidermied bird with the illusion of agency. In this moment of suspension, Miss Thomson forsakes rational enquiry for the

'wish of [her] heart': to hear the song of the cardinal. While this desire is written off as an instance of 'folly', Miss Thomson's temporary loss of agency points towards the limits of taxidermy as a mode of natural historical enquiry. While it can convey the appearance of an animal, and perhaps even hint at its characteristic movements, the taxidermist's art can never hope to capture a creature's immaterial qualities: the bird's voice remains elusive and the viewer is forced to 'recollect that [it is] not alive'.[45]

The pathos conjured by the absence of the cardinal's 'sweet note' is taken a step further in Charlotte Smith's *Conversations, Introducing Poetry*. Although Smith is better known as a novelist and poet, she wrote several engaging and influential books for children. Focussing on the activities of a mother, Mrs Talbot, and her two children, George and Emily, in many respects *Conversations, Introducing Poetry* is typical of the period's children's literature. Its dialogic structure imparts lessons on the virtues of charity and the folly of vanity, while Mrs Talbot consistently encourages her children's curiosity about the natural world. The text also emphasises the necessity of treating animals with compassion – an injunction that informs its discussion of the Leverian Museum. The museum enters the *Conversations* when George Talbot tells his mother that he has been to see '[a] collection of natural curiosities' that includes a range of birds from around the world.[46] He passes on an invitation to visit the collection, to which Mrs Talbot responds by saying that the sight of the birds will 'bring to our recollection those we saw at the Leverian Museum'.[47] This prompts her to reflect on the experience of viewing preserved birds, insects and quadrupeds. Her reaction to the specimens is in marked contrast to that portrayed in *The School-Room Party*:

> I cannot, however, say, that I feel as much pleasure in the contemplation of these objects, however beautiful, as I do in looking at a collection of plants.—The birds, or insects, or quadrupeds, though they may be very well preserved, lose that spirit and brilliancy, which living objects only can possess. The attitudes of the birds are stiff and forced, and without their natural accompaniments. Their eyes are seldom so contrived as to resemble those of the living bird; and

> altogether, their formal or awkward appearances, when stuffed and set on wires, always convey to my mind ideas of the sufferings of the poor birds when they were caught and killed, and the disagreeable operations of embowelling and drying them.[48]

The 'extractive' power of natural history is apparent here, with the jarring appearance of the animals attributable, in part, to them being stripped of 'their natural accompaniments'.[49] Where Miss Thomson in *The School-Room Party* sees nothing but 'admirable preservation', Mrs Talbot's thoughts are carried to the 'sufferings' of the birds and the violence inflicted upon their bodies by the taxidermist.

Her sensitivity may seem excessive; but the extent of the 'disagreeable operations' to which she refers is evident in the guidance that Lever gave to those in a position to collect animal specimens for him. His detailed advice on how best to preserve small birds makes for grisly reading: the collector must first 'extract the Entrails […] then introduce a tin Tube at the orifice, through which an Iron Scewer [sic] red hot may sear the inside and dry up the Juices'. After piercing the roof of the mouth and removing the eyes, Lever recommends that the bird is hung by its feet and a mixture of 'Pepper and Ginger liquified [sic] by Spirit of Wine' poured into its now vacant body. He also states that the empty eye sockets must be filled with pieces of cork 'to keep them in their natural size'.[50] Despite these efforts, Mrs Talbot's reactions suggest the challenge of retaining a 'natural' appearance: as she scrutinises the birds for a sign of interiority, their ill-contrived eyes and the visibility of the wires that support them betray their status as hollowed-out objects. As Dahlia Porter notes of Smith, her enthusiasm for natural history is tempered by an awareness of 'the professional scientist's […] lack of sensibility'.[51] In this case, it is clear that both the scientific and the aesthetic appeal of these 'beautiful' objects is subordinate to the ethical standards that shape Mrs Talbot's appreciation of the natural world.

In contrast to Smith's *Conversations*, ethical judgements rarely trouble the acts of observation undertaken in *Visits to the Leverian*. This text frequently this text confirms Rachel Poliquin's suggestion that taxidermic specimens 'act as portals through which Europeans could experience and, in a sense, possess exotic lands […] and outlandish creatures without travelling'.[52] For instance, having been disgusted by the lethargy and supposedly rapacious appetite of the three-toed sloth, the young Henry immediately turns to a different specimen, proclaiming: 'I can contemplate with much greater pleasure this young *zebra*; and could even find amusement in fancying myself transported to the extensive plains of Africa'.[53] The rapidity and ease with which the boy turns from the arboreal sloth of Central and South America to the African zebra hints at the authority that the museum grants to its human visitors, who are able to traverse the globe with a turn of their head. Indeed, Poliquin's suggestion that such objects act as 'portals' to other lands implies that acts of imaginative travel confer mastery upon the viewer. In the case of Smith's *Conversations*, Mrs Talbot refuses to exercise this power: the sight of such objects merely transports her to their suffering and to the taxidermist's table. By contrast, Henry's imagination faces no such obstruction: his imaginary journey to 'the extensive plains of Africa' simply confirms his dominance.

Nevertheless, *Visits to the Leverian* does present readers with several startling demonstrations of the unsettling power of taxidermy. When, towards the end of the text, Henry encounters an animal with which he is familiar, he is finally able to register taxidermy's alienating, transformative effects. This is apparent when Henry views a roe deer and recollects that he has seen the species living in England:

> 'How different it appears when alive and at liberty, from what its skin does when stuffed and in a case! All its beauty and all its interest are now comparatively lost.'
>
> That of course must be the case with nearly every species of animal which we have examined in this museum; and it is only because you have not seen them in a living state, that you have been thus pleased with them.

> 'I must not think too much on the subject; for I find that, in order to enjoy it properly, I ought not to reflect that I am only in a kind of catacomb, and surrounded by dead bodies'.[54]

At this point, Henry is able to perceive vividly the difference between a living animal and a stuffed specimen. He brings his own existing knowledge and experience to bear and with this understanding, the museum is transformed from a site of imaginative delight into a morbid, almost gothic space, in which the 'strange, unsettling power of taxidermy' is laid bare.[55] Rather than offering an experience of fulfilment or acquisitive mastery, here the museum presents Henry with a troubling sense of loss. This arises principally from his new awareness of taxidermy's limited representational power. Surveying the development of taxidermy, Jane Desmond has suggested that the emergence of increasingly sophisticated techniques produced a 'history of increased "realism"'.[56] But in this instance, as in Smith's *Conversations*, the mimetic ambitions of taxidermy fail: the process cannot revive the 'beauty' and 'interest' of the living animal. Rather than being portals through which the viewer is transported, these specimens hinder the workings of the imagination: Henry cannot see beyond the material presence of the individual specimen 'stuffed and in a case' before him, while the thoughts of Smith's Mrs Talbot are carried only to the 'disagreeable operations' that take place at the hands of the taxidermist. Following Bill Brown, these can be described as moments in which the specimens cease to be 'objects' that 'we look *through*' and instead become 'things' that we look *at*, in a manner that re-orientates the 'subject-object relation'. As Brown puts it, this 'thingness' emerges when an object's 'flow within the circuits of […] consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily'.[57] Certainly, the melancholic emotions excited by the Leverian's taxidermic specimens derail the economy of 'consumption and exhibition' that takes places within the museum. Yet, rather than exploring the ethical questions this raises, the *Visits* actively seeks to repress the kind of

moral enquiry pursued by Smith in the *Conversations*. As Henry says, he 'must not think too much on the subject', lest the museum take on the atmosphere of 'a kind of catacomb'.

However, rather than reinstating Henry's self-possession, the attempt to repress his morbid thoughts inspires a perverse reaction. Instead of the abject environment of the catacomb, Henry imagines an equally unsettling counter-scenario, in which the Leverian's specimens return to life:

> But I see some animals that I should not like to be in the same room with if alive, unless they were better secured, than by glass-cases. A *lion*, *tiger*, *leopard*, *white* and *black bear*, would be somewhat dangerous company, besides the multitudes of smaller beasts of prey that might start out of their cases upon me. My little body would not allow them a mouthful apiece.[58]

The museum's abundance, previously a source of astonishment and wonder, here becomes an object of fear and anxiety. Previously, even when he finds particular animals disagreeable, Henry is able to reconcile himself to them. For instance, despite his revulsion at the 'disgusting' habits of the three-toed sloth, its existence is accounted for by acknowledging that it must '[fill] with propriety the station that Providence has assigned to it', taking its proper place in the 'chain of creation'.[59] By contrast, any notion of divine hierarchy is absent in this scene: the idea that the 'dangerous company' of large predators might, along with the 'multitudes of smaller beasts', escape their glass cases represents the failure of the 'striving for order, classification and universal systems' associated with the Enlightenment museum.[60] In keeping with this hierarchical disorder, Henry imagines the loss of his privileged spectatorial position. In this nightmarish inversion, he becomes – quite literally – the object of consumption. Instead of gazing upon the bodies of lifeless animals, Henry's own vulnerably 'little' human body comes into focus, along with the realisation that it cannot hope to satisfy the ravenous appetites of these animals, scarcely affording them 'a mouthful apiece'. As he imagines his body

being divided into 'mouthfuls', Henry seems to inflict upon himself the violation of corporeal integrity that taxidermy enacts upon non-human bodies: he is taken apart and consumed. Rather than observing the museum with rational detachment, Henry experiences the failure of the distinction between self and other, as the boundaries between observer and observed, human and animal, and life and death, threaten to dissolve.[61]

III. 'Objects of Astonishment and Admiration': Reactions to the Monkey Room

These accounts of the Leverian's taxidermic specimens provide a vivid demonstration of the museum's capacity to disorientate its visitors. The pathos, revulsion, and fear that these objects provoke are characteristic of Lever's distinctive curatorial method, which sought to combine rational edification and affective stimulation. The most striking encapsulation of the museum's ambiguous status is presented by what was referred to as the 'Monkey-Room'. When Lever first opened his museum to the public in 1775, an advertisement placed in *The Morning Post* drew particular attention to this room: 'As Mr. Lever has in his collection some very curious monkies and monsters, which might disgust the Ladies, a separate room is appropriated for their exhibition, and the examination of those only who chuse it'.[62] The 'curious' quality of these stuffed monkeys was a result of the anthropomorphic manner in which they were presented. One early visitor to the museum, Susan Burney (the sister of Frances Burney) described encountering 'a room full of monkeys—one of which presents the company with an Italian song—another is reading a book—another, the most horrid of all, is put in the attitude of the *Venus de Medicis*, and is scarce fit to be look'd at'.[63] As Burney indicates, the monkeys were dressed in human clothes (or purposefully deprived of them, in the case of the Venus) and arranged in a variety of poses, many of which were intended to mimic particular professions and social types. The sale catalogue of 1806 records a broad

array of monkeys 'grotesquely set up' in human attitudes, including a barber, a dentist, a fop and a watchman. It is possible that others shared Burney's reaction to the 'horrid' Venus de Medici: the catalogue makes no mention of any such monkey, suggesting it may have been disposed of – or perhaps clothed – in the years between Burney's visit and the museum's closure almost three decades later.[64] Nevertheless, her letter demonstrates the allure of such spectacles: although they were 'scarce fit to be look'd at', the items in the monkey room proved an object of fascination.

Both *The School-Room Party* and *Visits to the Leverian* imply that this fascination extended to the children who visited the museum. However, both texts also suggest that the monkey-room provided an interpretative challenge: how was the explicitly 'grotesque' nature of the room's contents to be reconciled with the museum's identity as a site of rational education? The 1775 advertisement in the *Morning Post* suggests that in the museum's Leicester-House location the anthropomorphic monkeys were set aside from the rest of the collection: their placement in 'a separate room' seems intended to demarcate a distinction between the museum's identity as a place of scientific enquiry and its status as a site of popular entertainment. When the museum moved to its new home at Albion Place this division was removed: the 'Monkey-room' was retained, but the 'grotesque' specimens were displayed alongside unclothed, putatively naturalistic, specimens. As Haynes puts it, 'anthropomorphic representation' was 'played off against "realism"'.[65] The contrast is discernible in the account of the room that appears in *The School-Room Party*, when Miss Thomson describes entering

> an apartment that displays a most laughable scene—A collection of Monkeys from all corners of the earth, which Sir ASHTON LEVER, it seems, amused himself with having set up in characters. One represented a Tooth-drawer in the very act of drawing a tooth—(in Mama's opinion) excellently well done—A second, dressed up like a Fop, with a watch-chain dangling by his side—A third a Porter, with a Box on his shoulders—A fourth a Watchman, with his mouth wide open as if crying the hour, and so on—Besides many of the most rare

> creatures of the Monkey tribe ever yet brought to Europe. But these are not rendered objects of mirth, but objects of astonishment and admiration.[66]

Miss Thomson's attention is initially seized by the 'laughable scene' of the monkeys 'set up in characters'. Her description provides a vivid sense of how their arrangement seems designed to capture particular moments of time: the dentist is suspended 'in the very act of drawing a tooth'; the Watchman's mouth is 'wide open as if crying the hour'. However, rather than creating the illusion of life that featured in Miss Thomson's account of the birds' 'admirable preservation', the monkeys' stasis seems to rob them of agency, rendering them a passive tableau offered up for the amusement of the viewer. For Miss Thomson, the monkeys' fixed attitudes highlight the absurdity of their cross-species imitation, confirming her first impression of the room as a 'laughable scene'. It is notable, though, that laughter is banished as her description concludes. Miss Thomson turns instead to the 'rare creatures' displayed alongside their clothed counterparts, noting that these monkeys are '*not* rendered objects of mirth' (my italics). While this statement may be intended to convey information, its tone verges on the peremptory, as if Miss Thomson's auditors – and the book's readers – are being instructed in how to respond appropriately to the room's contrasting subjects. This didactic note enforces the distinction between those objects that merit laughter, and those that deserve the heightened response of 'astonishment' coupled with 'admiration'. Having initially succumbed to the popular appeal of the former, Miss Thomson turns to the sober pleasures of the latter. In doing so, she deflects attention from the self-indulgence that saw Lever '[amuse] himself' by 'set[ting] up' the monkeys 'in characters', and focuses instead on his accomplishments as a respectable collector whose museum is conducive to the public good.

A similar combination of contrasting reactions accompanies the treatment of the monkey room in *Visits to the Leverian*. Here, though, the relationship between the child-

viewer and his adult companion plays a more prominent role. Henry's initial reaction is one of unabashed amusement:

> 'What a set of grotesque fellows are here! Monkies, I suppose, sir, of almost all kinds, and from all countries. How d'ye do, Mr Baboon. Pray what is that large and sapient looking animal, clothed in grey?'
>
> It is the *dog-faced baboon*, and has been brought from the Cape of Good Hope.
>
> 'Do, I beg, sir, stop a moment and suffer me first to look round at them all before you begin to describe them. How ridiculous! Some, I observe, are placed in human attitudes, and seem occupied in employments that belong only to men. A family watchman—a family barber—the clerk of the monkey-room—the beau of his family. You are indeed a set of droll fellows! What amazingly long arms the ape has near the corner! Though he nearly stands perfectly upright, he can nearly touch the ground with his fingers.'
>
> That is a very curious and valuable specimen. The animal has of course the name of the *long-armed ape*.[67]

Throughout the text, Henry's enthusiasm is typically channelled by his adult companion into more 'regular', and regulated, modes of appreciation. In this instance, however, rational discourse is suspended by the sheer spectacle of the clothed monkeys: almost as soon as the adult begins his customary factual recital, he is requested to 'stop a moment' to allow Henry to experience the museum on a purely visual level, uninterrupted by explanation and description. His attention subsequently shifts from the clothed apes – described as 'droll fellows' – to an unclothed specimen: a long-armed ape (or lar gibbon). His excited reaction to the ape's 'amazingly long arms' suggests that the distinction between 'mirth' and 'admiration' is less distinct than in *The School-Room Party*; nevertheless, it provides an opportunity for the adult's informative commentary to resume. Within both texts, the act of looking precedes, and temporarily obstructs, the process of learning. At first sight, the 'grotesque' image of the clothed monkeys excites a visceral, bodily reaction consisting of instinctive laughter and amazement rather than rational reflection. In this respect, the monkey room replays the pattern of responses that

the children experienced upon entering the museum: a journey from astonished wonder to interrogative observation.

While its 'grotesque' exhibits may have presented a 'ridiculous' spectacle, the monkey room's ambiguous space has far-reaching implications. Its presence within these works demonstrates how children's literature responded to what Laura Brown describes as the period's 'complex imaginative engagement with the hominoid ape and the problem of that being's relationship to the human'.[68] The best-known eighteenth-century exponent of the view that apes and humans were of the same species was James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, and at least one visitor to the museum alluded to his theories when making sense of the specimens housed in the monkey room.[69] Neither *The School-Room Party* nor the *Visits* refer explicitly to Monboddo, but both acknowledge the possibility of human-ape kinship. This prospect assumes heightened significance in children's literature: as Jane Spencer notes, children were 'perceived as less rational and closer to nature than adults' and therefore 'thought to have a special affinity with animals'.[70] Within the period's writing for children, this 'affinity' often underpins lessons in the necessity of treating animals with kindness. There were, however, limits to the level of cross-species sympathy that children should exhibit; writers frequently reminded their young readers that, as human beings, they stood apart from, and above, other animals. According to Harriet Ritvo, the need to distinguish between humans and non-humans 'appeared most clearly when the resemblance was most striking', and she notes that '[d]escriptions of apes and monkeys often vacillated between admiring recital[s] of their resemblances to man and firm denials of their closeness.'[71] This tendency is particularly evident in *Visits to the Leverian*, in which the representation of the monkey room becomes enmeshed with contemporary scientific and philosophical thought.

As the previous example indicates, one of Henry's first responses to the monkey room is a gesture of identification. His polite, if comical, greeting – 'How d'ye do, Mr

Baboon' – sees him anthropomorphise one of the room's unadorned primates. As Henry turns to the 'dog-faced baboon', the comical tone diminishes, and a more analytical mode takes precedence as he asks about the identity of the 'large and sapient looking animal clothed in grey'.[72] In the sale catalogue, the museum's dog-faced baboon (known today as a mainland drill) was described as '*very rare*'.[73] The respectful tone with which Henry describes it appears to indicate its exceptional status. But his comment also draws attention to the interpretative possibilities produced by taxidermic representation, particularly as it relates to contemporary debates about the status of hominoid apes. The reference to the baboon being an 'animal, clothed in grey' is particularly relevant in this regard. In a room containing several monkeys dressed in human clothes, the description of this 'realistic' specimen being 'clothed' in his natural skin draws attention to the relationship between exterior and interior. This relationship was pivotal in contemporary discussions of the connections between humans and apes. Monboddo argued for a correlation between exterior and interior, asserting that 'the Orang Outang is an animal of the human form, inside as well as outside'. Like Henry in the *Visits*, Monboddo employed a sartorial turn of phrase, when he suggested that the '*natural dress* of the animal is […] a sign of the inward constitution'.[74] A contrasting view was offered by Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. While he acknowledged that the ape is 'a brute of a kind so singular, that man cannot behold it without contemplating himself', Buffon added that at the moment 'man' acknowledges this visual resemblance, he becomes struck with the conviction that 'his body is not the most essential part of his nature'.[75] The prospect of cross-species kinship is no sooner recognised than it is dismissed, with Buffon insisting that external appearances are purely superficial: the 'essential' component of human identity resides internally, and it is this that apes lack.

Henry's response to the baboon can be read in light of both Monboddo's and Buffon's arguments. His suggestion that the ape is 'clothed' in his natural skin echoes

Monboddo's assertion that the animal's external form is mere 'drapery', beneath which exists its 'real', human-like personality: a point seemingly proved by the baboon's legibly 'sapient' features. However, were one to read this moment from Buffon's perspective, the question arises: is this a 'sapient' animal, or merely a 'sapient *looking*' animal, whose hominoid-exterior bears no relation to his or her underlying 'nature'? This impasse exposes once more the limitations of taxidermy: when an animal is represented merely by its stuffed skin, the relationship between surface and depth is impossible to discern. While both interpretations are plausible, Henry's imaginative engagement with the baboon recognises the possibility, at least, of human-ape kinship. This prospect is further hinted at by the text's use of the word 'sapient' – a term that is surely intended to echo the name Linnaeus coined for humans in 1758: 'homo sapiens', the wise man.[76]

These assertions of likeness appear to narrow the species boundary, drawing children into sympathetic relationships with non-human animals. Ultimately, however, the *Visits* resorts to the 'firm denials of [apes'] closeness' to humans that Harriet Ritvo suggests is inevitable in such accounts.[77] As the description of the monkey room continues, the conversation turns to the 'ourang outangs', which, the adult states, 'have a name that signifies wild men of the woods'. This information provokes a question from Henry:

> 'What, are they considered to be men?'
> By no means: it is only from their distantly rude and disgusting external resemblance to human beings, that this name has been given to them. They are destitute of every appropriate attribute of man, and are in reality, what the filthiness of their manners plainly indicate them to be, perfect brutes.[78]

In contrast to the ambiguous nature of Henry's identification with the 'sapient looking' baboon, his companion suggests there is no relationship between what Monboddo refers to as the 'external form' and the 'inward constitution' of hominoid apes.[79] In this instance, taxidermic representation is supplemented by the adult's authoritative

commentary, which supplies what the static physical specimens lack: an illustration of the apes' 'filthy' manners. Clearly, Henry's companion adheres to Buffon, rather than to Monboddo. For him, an 'external resemblance' to humans is no indicator of an internal resemblance: the apes' behaviour confirms that they are 'destitute of every appropriate attribute of man'. This leaves Henry with no choice but to recognize their true identity as 'perfect brutes'.[80]

As if to underscore the text's denial of kinship between humans and other primates, Henry next views the manteger (known today as the mandrill). As this example demonstrates, when the animal's appearance is less human-like, Henry's guardian feels no need to disassociate its external form from its characteristic behaviours. Henry observes:

> 'What enormous teeth he has got! If he were alive I should not like to come within his reach. From his appearance, even now he is dead and can do no injury, I should suppose, sir, he has once been a savage animal.
>
> There are very few of the ape tribe which […] are more ferocious in their disposition, than the manteger.[81]

Once more, the sight of the lifeless taxidermic specimen leads Henry to imagine the experience of encountering the living animal. In this instance, the manteger's 'enormous teeth' come to signify his 'savage' nature and his distance from humanity. Within a few short pages, Henry's reaction to the monkey room has transformed from cordial recognition to fear and revulsion, confirming the distance that separates him, as a developing human child, from the realm of the non-human. The depiction of the monkey room thus provides a further example of the fluctuations characteristic of this text. Henry's responses shift from empathetic identification to detached observation, just as the prospect of human-ape kinship is momentarily entertained before being swiftly and unequivocally disavowed. In this instance, *Visits to the Leverian* fulfills a function common to much children's literature of the period, by conveying an anthropocentric

worldview in which children are separated from, and granted superior status to, non-human animals.

Conclusion

In *The School-Room Party* and the *Visits*, children experience unpredictable and sometimes unsettling encounters with the museum's exhibits. Despite this, both works present themselves as having a pedagogic, instructive character: the subtitle of *The School-Room Party* describes itself as '*a Most Pleasing Companion to the Leverian Museum*' while the *Visits* announces that it is '*Intended for the Instruction of Young Persons in the First Principles of Natural History*'. Similarly, both feature authoritative adults attempting to regulate children's responses to the museum, suggesting that these texts possessed (or at least aspired to) a disciplinary function. However, as I have observed, these works' didactic characteristics jostle with their accounts of affective experiences that temporarily disturb children's sense of self. In this respect, these narratives do not conform to Alan Richardson's suggestion that rationalist children's literature of this period refuses to depict children losing their 'sense of self-possession […] for a moment of pleasing (or frightful) wonder'.[82] Rather, these texts depict a range of reactions that veer between wonder and astonishment, comic bemusement and melancholy, recognition and revulsion. Like much of the children's literature produced in this period, *The School-Room Party* and the *Visits* aim to provide an education in natural history that will 'enlighten', 'improve, and […] inform' their readers.[83] But by situating these lessons in the heterogeneous environment of the Leverian Museum, these works thrive upon the tensions that emerge when children encounter the transporting power of 'wonderful objects'.[84]

Notes

[1] The engraving appears in *A Companion to the Museum, (Late Sir Ashton Lever's) Removed to Albion Street, the Surry End of Black Friars Bridge* (London: [n.p.], 1790). Attributed to William Skelton, the engraving is based on a painting of the museum's interior by Sarah Stone and Charles Reuben Ryley. See Adrienne L. Kaeppler, *Holophusicon, The Leverian Museum: An Eighteenth-Century English Institution of Science, Curiosity, and Art* (Altenstadt: ZKF, 2011), p.14, 29.

[2] [Anon.], *The School-Room Party, Out of School Hours: A Little Work, That Will be Found for Young Ladies and Gentlemen of Every Description, a Most Pleasing Companion to the Leverian Museum: So Called From its Original Possessor, the Late Sir Ashton Lever* (London: T. Hurst, 1800), hereafter referred to as *SRP*; [Anthony Ella], *Visits to the Leverian Museum; Containing an Account of Several of its Principal Curiosities, Both of Nature and Art. Intended for the Instruction of Young Persons in the First Principles of Natural History* (London: Tabart, [1805]), hereafter referred to as *Visits*. The authorship of the *Visits* is ambiguous. As Margery Moon notes, '[t]he Preface is signed "Anthony Ella" but makes no claim to authorship' although it is implied. See Marjorie Moon, *Benjamin Tabart's Juvenile Library: A Bibliography of Books for Children Published, Written, Edited and Sold by Mr. Tabart, 1801-1820* (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1990), p.33. In addition to these narrative works, in 1796 Eleanor Fenn published *A Short History of Quadrupeds* and *A Short History of Insects*, both of which were, according to their subtitles, intended to be a 'companion to those who visit the Leverian Museum'. Despite this, these works offer relatively few direct references to the museum.

[3] La Roche's and Silliman's recollections both feature in Richard D. Altick's *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), p.29-30. For poetic accounts, see Percival Stockdale, *Three Poems* (London: W. Flexney, 1784) and James Ogden, *A Poem, on the Museum at Alkrington, Belonging to Ashton Lever, Esq.* (Manchester: J. Aston, [1810]).

[4] See the preface to Thomas Pennant, *History of Quadrupeds*, 2 vols (London: B. White, 1781) and George Shaw, *Musei Leveriani Explicatio, Anglica et Latina*; *Museum Leverianum, Containing Select Specimens from the Museum of the Late Sir Ashton Lever, Kt. With Descriptions in Latin and English* (London: James Parkinson, 1792). The museum also featured in natural history writing for women, appearing in Ann Murry's *The Moral Zoologist*, which was published serially in *The Lady's Magazine* from 1800-1805. Gilbert White also refers to the museum in *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789).

[5] John Feltham, *The Picture of London, for 1802; Being a Correct Guide to All the Curiosities, Amusements, Exhibitions, Public Entertainments, and Remarkable Objects, In and Near London* […] (London: R. Phillips, 1802), p.205.

[6] Clare Haynes, 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner: Sir Ashton Lever and his *Holosphusikon*', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 24:1 (2001), p.11.

[7] Sophie Thomas, 'Feather Cloaks and English Collectors: Cook's Voyages and the Objects of the Museum', in Illeana Baird and Christine Ionescu (eds), *Eighteenth-Century Thing Theory in a Global Context: From Consumerism to Celebrity Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p.70.

[8] Haynes, 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner', p.2.

[9] Andrew O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child: Children's Literature and Childhood in the Late Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.107.

[10] Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.58.

[11] Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism*, p.57.

[12] Lissa Paul, *The Children's Book Business: Lessons from the Long Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p.3. Paul goes on to include the quality of 'feeling' in her account of Enlightenment children. See Paul, p.166-7.

[13] Altick, *Shows of London*, p.28.

[14] In a remarkable work of scholarship, Adrienne Kaeppler has identified the whereabouts of many of these items, which are now located in museums around the world. See Kaeppler, *Holophusicon, The Leverian Museum*.

[15] For more information about these artists see Kaeppler, *Holophusicon* and Christine E. Jackson, *Sarah Stone: Natural Curiosities from the New Worlds* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1998).

[16] *A Companion to the Museum*, Preface (unpaginated); see also Kaeppler, *Holophusicon*, p.13.

[17] Thomas, 'Feather Cloaks', p.80; Altick, *Shows of London*, p.32.

[18] Altick, *Shows of London*, p.32.

[19] Mary V. Jackson, *Engines of Instruction, Mischief, and Magic: Children's Literature in England from its Beginnings to 1839* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p.11; O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child*, p.135.

[20] Physico-theology, as formulated in the scientific writings of figures such as John Ray and William Derham, was informed by the belief that the wisdom of God could be discerned through the study of nature. For more on this topic see David Fairer, 'All manag'd for the best: Ecology and the Dynamics of Adaptation', in Samara Anne Cahill and Kevin L. Cope (eds), *Citizens of the World: Adapting in the Eighteenth Century* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2015).

[21] *SRP*, p.75.
[22] *SRP*, p.31.
[23] Haynes, 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner', p.2.
[24] This assertion featured in an appeal to potential subscribers, which perhaps explains the hyperbole. See W. J. Smith, 'Sir Ashton Lever of Alkrington, and his Museum 1729-1788', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 72 (1962), p.80.
[25] *Visits*, p.4.
[26] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. Jay Miskowiec*, Diacritics* 16:1 (Spring 1986), p.26.
[27] This mirror was also a source of confusion when the museum was located in Leicester House. In *The School-Room Party*, Miss Thomson notes that as it provides 'a view of the objects around you' many visitors '[ran] against it, on the belief that they were going into another room'; to prevent this, a rail was erected before it. This rail, Miss Thomson notes, 'undeceives you on the instant' (p.54). Clearly, the author of the *Visits* chose to overlook the existence of this barrier.
[28] *Visits*, p. 5.
[29] Thomas, 'Feather Cloaks', p.80; *Visits*, p. 5.
[30] *Visits*, p. 6.
[31] *SRP*, p.2-3.
[32] Haynes, 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner', p.9.
[33] See Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001).
[34] Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p.20.
[35] Beth Lord, "'A Sudden Surprise of the Soul": Wonder in Museums and Early Modern Philosophy', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 79 (October 2016), p.97. See also Daston and Park, *Wonders*, and Sarah Tindal Kareem, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction and the Reinvention of Wonder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) (especially p.35-42).
[36] René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen Voss (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), p.52.
[37] Daston and Park, *Wonders,* p.317; Descartes, *Passions*, p.58.
[38] Kareem, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, p.9.
[39] *SRP*, p. 3; *Visits*, p. 6.
[40] *SRP*, p.50-1.
[41] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p.38. In Pratt's influential account, the discourse of natural history was an assertion of imperial power, which drew 'the planet's life forms […] out of the tangled threads of their life surroundings' and rewove them 'into European-based patterns of global unity and order'. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p.31.
[42] *SRP*, p.71.
[43] Jackson, *Sarah Stone*, p.75. The seventeenth-century naturalist John Ray notes that this bird's North American origins and 'rare singing' caused it to be known as 'The *Virginian Nightingale*'. John Ray, *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby of Middleton in the County of Warwick Esq* (London: John Martyn, 1678), p.245. The sweetness of the cardinal's song may have come to wider attention as a result of the success of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's comic-opera, *The Duenna* (1775), where Don Louisa's singing is compared with that of the Virginia nightingale. These references are taken from John Robert Moore, 'Goldsmith's Degenerate Song-Birds: An Eighteenth-Century Fallacy in Ornithology', *Isis* 34:4 (Spring 1943), p.324.
[44] Stone's painting is reproduced in Jackson, *Sarah Stone*, p.74-5.
[45] *SRP*, p.71.
[46] Charlotte Smith, *Conversations, Introducing Poetry: Chiefly on Subjects of Natural History. For the Use of Children and Young Persons*, 2 vols (London: J. Johnson, 1804), vol. II.42. Hereafter referred to as *CIP*.
[47] *CIP*, II.64.
[48] *CIP*, II.64-5.
[49] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p.38.
[50] According to W. J. Smith, Lever printed a similar leaflet in 1770 before producing the 'more elaborate' document, quoted here, in 1773. The leaflets were 'were sent by Lever's friends to their friends and agents in different parts of the world.' See Smith, 'Sir Ashton Lever', p.68. The leaflet is reprinted as Appendix I in J. C. H. King, 'New Evidence for the Contents of the Leverian Museum', *Journal of the History of Collections* 8:2 (1996), p.177.
[51] Dahlia Porter, 'From Nosegay to Specimen Cabinet: Charlotte Smith and the Labour of Collecting', in Jacqueline Labbe (ed.), *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), p.38.
[52] Rachel Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), p.18.
[53] *Visits*, p.157.

[54] *Visits*, p.155-6.
[55] Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo*, p.39.
[56] Jane Desmond 'Displaying Death, Animating Life: Changing Fictions of "Liveness" from Taxidermy to Animatronics', in Nigel Rothfels (ed.), *Representing Animals* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p.161.
[57] Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry* 28:1 (2001), p.4.
[58] *Visits*, p.156.
[59] *Visits*, p.157.
[60] Beth Lord, 'Representing Enlightenment Space', in Suzanne MacLeod (ed.), *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions* (London: Routledge, 2005), p.147.
[61] *SRP*, p.3.
[62] *The Morning Post, and Daily Advertiser*, 710 (4 February 1775).
[63] *The Early Diary of Frances Burney, 1768-1778*, ed. Annie Raine Ellis, 2 vols (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1913), vol. II.248.
[64] The auction catalogue lists a number of specimens under the heading 'monkeys grotesquely set up'. See *Catalogue of the Leverian Museum* (London: [n. p.], 1806), p.53, 68, 105, 124. The catalogue was published in six numbered parts (paginated consecutively), with an additional appendix and a further, unnumbered section detailing the final three days of the auction.
[65] Haynes, 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner', p.8.
[66] *SRP*, p.39-40.
[67] *Visits*, p.126-7.
[68] Laura Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes: Humans and Other Animals in the Modern Literary Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), p.31.
[69] See Benjamin Silliman, *A Journal of Travels in England, Holland, and Scotland, and of Two Passages Over the Atlantic, in the Years 1805 and 1806*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Boston: T. B. Wait, 1812), vol. I.203-5.
[70] Jane Spencer, 'Creating Animal Experience in Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33:4 (2010), p.470.
[71] Harriet Ritvo, 'Learning From Animals: Natural History for Children in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Children's Literature* 13 (1985), p.82.
[72] *Visits*, p.126.
[73] The dog-faced baboon was put up for sale on the third from last day of the auction and appears in the final, unnumbered section of the sale catalogue (p.2).
[74] James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: J. Balfour; London: T. Cadell, 1774), p.289, 336. As Laura Brown notes, Monboddo often uses the term 'Orang Outang' 'to refer broadly to the anthropoid ape'. See Brown, *Homeless Dogs*, p.55, n.48.
[75] Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Natural History, General and Particular*, trans. William Smellie, 3rd edn, 9 vols (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1791; repr. Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2000), vol. VIII.41.
[76] See Gunnar Broberg, '*Homo Sapiens*: Linnaeus's Classification of Man', in Tore Frängsmyr (ed.) *Linnaeus: The Man and His Work* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p.175.
[77] Ritvo, 'Learning From Animals', p.82.
[78] *Visits*, p.128-9.
[79] Monboddo, *Origin and Progress,* p.289, 336.
[80] The etymology of 'perfect' underlines the species distinction: evoking the Latin 'perfectus' – meaning 'fully realized complete, [or] finished' – this term is deployed defensively, to reassure Henry that orangutans are a separate achievement of creation, with no prospect of becoming more human-like. See 'perfect, adj., n., and adv.', *OED Online* (accessed April 11, 2018).
[81] *Visits*, p. 129.
[82] Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism*, p.57.
[83] *SRP*, p.49.
[84] *SRP*, p. 2.