ANATOMY, VITALITY, AND THE ROMANTIC BODY:
BLAKE, COLERIDGE, AND THE HUNTER CIRCLE, 1750-1840

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ABSTRACT

STEPHANIE ADAIR RISPOLI: Anatomy, Vitality, and the Romantic Body: Blake, Coleridge, and the Hunter Circle, 1750-1840
(Under the direction of Reid Barbour and Paul Youngquist)

The Romantic Body brings together the works of Dr. William Hunter (1718-1783), his brother John Hunter, and his wife Anne Home Hunter (1742-1821) to provide a more sophisticated and socially situated understanding of the impact of the Hunters and their 'circle' both within and outside of the field of medicine. By attending to the emphasis in the Hunters' corpus on the phases of life (including embryology and developmental biology), sickness and decay, and death, I identify just how influential William was in his role as an anatomy professor in the fine arts. I also explore the ramifications of John's sustained interest in producing a universal theory to explain the interplay of organs, consciousness, and bodily development. Anne, a linchpin between science and poetry within the Hunter Circle, whose own poetry was not a private, domestic practice but rather a series of reflections both responding to and differing from John's questions about the boundaries between life and death.

John's theories not only shaped and provoked William Blake's (1757-1827) conception of the human body and his principles of life and cognition, but also influenced Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772-1834) philosophy of life and death. In framing the human body as the center of a concentric schema, Coleridge's *Theory of Life* informs my analysis of his earlier poetical works. Coleridge's poems were experimental inquiries that might provide answers to some of the questions about our psychosomatic selves.

This dissertation explores how a diverse cast of major figures in the long eighteenth century and in early nineteenth-century England participated in a series of conversations revolving around a coherent yet varied interest in the physiological and psychological aspects of bodies. At times these authors struggle with uncertainty and anxiety as they advocate different theories of life and death as a means to explain the human body in a way that might accommodate the exponential growth of anatomical knowledge during the period. They provoke and respond to one another in active, inventive, and also disputatious ways. *The Romantic Body* places metaphysics, fine arts, and science in dialogue with one another to produce a revisionary interpretation of the poetry and art of the pre-Romantic and Romantic periods. From this vantage, contemporary medical thought vigorously interacts with the social, gendered, metaphysical, visual, and rhetorical constituents of London in the age of Blake and Coleridge.

For Lyila, the Akita of my life

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In all the hours I spent dusting off forgotten folios, I found two esteemed scholars, also marvelous human beings, Reid Barbour and Jessica Wolfe who have instilled in me the love for archival hunts. They also taught me how to follow archival leads that are more than two hundred years old, and how to reshape their historical legacy into a meaningful and more rightful contemporary understanding of the past. My achievements stem from their unwavering support that I could never claim as all my own. Mary Floyd-Wilson and Inger S. B. Brodey provided illuminating readings of my work as it evolved to fit into a larger kaleidoscopic community of interdisciplinary researchers. My deep appreciation goes to Paul Youngquist for taking seriously an undergraduate querying about the overwhelming quantity of blood in the history of British Romanticism and scientific treatises discussing the elusive anatomical evidence of consciousness; and especially for encouraging me to continue to "travel the spaceways" to achieve my doctoral degree.

The generosity of two pre-dissertation fellowships from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and UNC's Global Initiatives afforded me the opportunity to traverse the special collections throughout the United Kingdom to piece together evidence for this dissertation's arguments. Above all, my formative years as a graduate student are chock-full of people who came into my life (and some who exited just as unexpectedly); but not without imbuing an idea about the blurry gradients of our deaths and lives. To those uncut gems, let us never forget that: *quod incepimus conficiemus*.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent criticism, there have been encouraging signs of life in the scholarly endeavor to dissolve the two cultures model separating the scientific from the artistic dimensions of Romantic culture. One can see these signs in a wide range of recent monographs, including Tristanne Connolly's *William Blake and the Body* (2002), Noel Jackson's *Science and Sensation in Romantic Poetry* (2008), Maureen McLane's *Romanticism and the Human Sciences* (2000), and Martin Wallen's *City of Health, Fields of Disease* (2004). Nonetheless, medical and literary historians alike still struggle to take seriously the Romantic interest in the body as something other than an allegory or a metaphor. For instance, in his *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (2003), Roy Porter described William Blake's (1757-1827) treatment of the body as "the body mystical". And he is partly right, especially in reminding us that Blake "hated the preachings of Churches which spied only evil in the flesh, were obsessed with discipline, and made 'thou shalt not' their credo" (438). However, Porter suggests that Blake is in battle only with orthodox Christianity. Any progressive interpretation of Blake, for Porter, becomes reduced to a Blakean cliché insofar as Locke, Bacon and Newton are Blake's enemy. Again, Blake is conceived as a "wayward, willful genius, entering into an ambiguous dance with the power or poison of the irrational" (445). *The Four Zoas* (c. 1796) is briefly mentioned but Porter relies heavily on Blake's visions of his predecessors such as Voltaire and Paracelsus as evidence of Blake's tendency towards the antinomian tradition. He also attempts to make the mysticism of Blake an argument for suggesting that Blake's ultimate project in relation to the human body was to

"combat all such reductionist tendencies and espouse a primitive faith which gave pride of place to imagination as the emanation of the divine" (445). I believe this version of Blake captures only part of the poet's thought, and even forces him back into obscurity. I do not want to downplay Blake's religious philosophies but rather to figure out how his anatomical knowledge might enhance our understanding of those philosophies without defaulting to a purely allegorical perspective of him.

In a broader context, there is some recent criticism suggesting that, perhaps, late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature and anatomy are not so different but that their mutual interest in the human body was fueled by a dark fantasy for omnipotent knowledge of ourselves. Various versions of this theme have been repeated in an abundant amount of secondary material, such as *The Body in Parts* (1997): "It could be argued that what lay[s] at the heart of both poetic and anatomical practices of dissection was the poet's or scientist's virtuoso display of a fundamentally scandalous art: it is in the masterful publishing of secrets of the body by means of a masterful wielding of an instrument that the medical dissector's art meets that of the poet-rhetorician" (Vickers 7). The image of anatomy conjured by Vickers is one of dark, taboo shame. While eighteenth-century dissections would hardly qualify as a walk in St. James Park during full-bloom, even so, anatomy was rarely a covert operation.[1] Descriptions used by Vickers and others have neglected to discuss the mutual fascination between anatomists and artists and fail to realize that neither understood themselves as practicing a "scandalous art"; rather they conceived their work as a part of a collaborative project aiming to contribute to and rectify knowledge pertaining to what Samuel Taylor

[1] How certain bodies ended up on their dissection table would be a more accurate discussion for dark secrecies of anatomical studies. It is interesting to note that during the Hunters' tenure in the medical community no doctors have criminal records for being arrested for practicing dissection.

Coleridge (1772-1834) would call our psychosomatic condition. Over the course of this dissertation I will recreate a conversation that leads from the Hunter Circle through Blake to Coleridge.

Dr. William Hunter (1718-1783) told his anatomy students during a lecture that anatomy can only be thoroughly explored when Judgment Day occurs (*Two Lectures*). That did not prevent, however, or slow down the explosion of anatomical treatises in the eighteenth century. But William is a figure within the history of science and fine arts whose current standing in scholarship still undermines the value and depth of his work within London's eighteenth-century intellectual culture. We have seen recent scholarship focused on William's art collection, most recently Peter Black's *My Highest Pleasures* (2007) cataloguing his paintings and coin collection; however, his library collection remains barely noticed at University of Glasgow's special collections. In the history of anatomy, William's legacy remains limited in scope and fixated on the bitter fallout between him and younger brother, John Hunter (1728-1783), or overshadowed by a tendency to showcase the anatomical illustrations from William's *The Human Gravid Uterus* (1794), those depicting the nine-month gestation period of the human fetus. In regards to William scholarship, Roy Porter and W. F. Bynum's collection of essays, *William Hunter and the eighteenth-century Medical World* (1985), remains the most recent criticism devoted to William's works. After that twenty-seven year silence, my project rehabilitates the full scope of William's interests by placing him as pivotal center between anatomy and fine arts. And I seek to understand more accurately William's commitment to the historical, moral, and social dimensions of medicine and anatomy. By not treating William's scientific and cultural interests as mutually exclusive, then we will see his work as well as himself participating in a broader

conversation pertaining to the human body, most obviously in dialogue with John Hunter, but ultimately, a key voice for later Romantic writers such as Blake and Coleridge.

Undoubtedly, John Hunter owed his start in anatomy to brother William, and yes, there was a falling out between the brothers, but these two thinkers overlapped in subjects that are not exclusively confined to anatomy or to the fine arts. Given that William taught John the arts of anatomy by taking him on as his assistant at his Great Windmill anatomy school, John's introduction to anatomy was atypical for a young man in London, home of several universities and teaching hospitals. However, John demonstrated a natural affinity for anatomy, and began his own inquiries into the uncertainties of the human body. Nonetheless those bloody brothers linked anatomy to larger cultural and philosophical concerns, in John's case, especially metaphysics. Whereas William tended to invest his energies in the ethical and historical framework of his anatomy and art students, John advanced his metaphysical musings in questions posed during his anatomy lectures and treatises that sought to account for the conditions of the human body that we all must confront.[2] He freely speculated and theorized on the stages of living and dying as reflections of the blood's capabilities in sustaining the original spark of life. It is my focus on this key concept in John that separates my project from the prolific production of scholarship examining the conceptions of life in terms of embryology and gestation.[3] My work looks beyond the initial uterus conception to demonstrate that the Hunters' concepts of life and death were not limited by the subject of a pregnant woman, but only began with the mother, and that both were interested in accounting

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[2] His nineteenth-century editors downplayed his metaphysical musings by eradicating his questions from his publications.

[3] See Denise Gigante's *Life* (2009), Tristanne J. Connolly's *William Blake and the Body* (2002), and Robert J. Richards' *The Romantic Conception of Life* (2002) for particularly well-known examples of studies focused on the gestational start of life.

for how life and death were negotiated within a human body throughout its life to answer how it arrived at its death.

While the studies of the Hunter brothers' work regarding gestation is important, they portray an incomplete picture of the Hunter brothers and their social network in eighteenth-century London. Prior to this dissertation, the stigma following William was one of cruel indifference to the welfare of humanity, partly driven by the anatomical illustrations of his (in)famous treatise, *Human Gravid Uterus*, along with his lifelong bachelorhood as somehow suggesting he had a misogynistic tendency. But if one reexamines his *Two Introductory Lectures* (1784) in light of his underappreciated archive in Glasgow then a different, albeit complicated picture of William emerges. He appears as a Scottish man that conceptualized the education of anatomy as both a British national project as well as a moral imperative that could cultivate succeeding generations of English anatomists. And he understood anatomy as intimately responsive to the fine arts. For him, there was a clearly defined symbiotic relationship between anatomy and the fine arts. Understanding how William conceptualized the dynamics of this relationship has been overshadowed by contemporary scholars' specialties, which intentionally and unintentionally treat William's archival materials as disparate parts rather than as fractions contributing to a single project that he nurtured throughout his life.

I have begun to forge into William's history and recovered some archival evidence that proves two major facets of William's identity: a complex Scottish man who attempts to appropriate a British identity and a prolific anatomist who did not confine himself to physiology, but devoted himself also to morality, history and the arts. He took seriously his role as an educator that ensured every anatomy student access to a cadaver as a reflection of

his role to promote the right type of anatomist. What did the "right type" look like? William's ideal anatomists was a human being that strove to progress the knowledge of our anatomical bodies but never lost sight of the ethical realization of their humanity within a long historical tradition. Within his *Lectures*, William outlines a particular framework that expects honor and a profound sense of history to pervade his students' careers. Those traits, for William, will cultivate a generation of anatomists that brings forth progress answering anatomical riddles that will, in turn, benefit these young anatomists' future patients. Collaboration was also a key element in William's lectures, but only if anatomists possessed a specific type of moral drive. In that manner, William functioned as a contributor to the convening moment between science and human values.

William was hardly alone in conceptualizing anatomy and the larger understanding of humanity as a joint project. His younger brother, John Hunter shared similar intellectual aims; however, he approached the metaphysical side of human identity aggressively and sought to locate the precise balance between life and death as a means of defining what living is for humans, animals, *and* vegetation. For William, such a universal spectrum was not essential to his anatomical projects, but John's project necessarily required a universal answer to ensure its authenticity as prevailing truth for all expressions of what he termed "the living principle". While for both William and John anatomy functioned as a site of great intrigue and change, for John, anatomy was restricted neither to the empirical nor to the philosophical. His approach to anatomical exploration as well as his treatment of patients took on a methodology that blended empirical knowledge with metaphysics. In approaching the human being through his double perspective, we can then understand how John's complicated legacy belongs within a larger cultural conversation, rather than as that of a lone

historical figure that has been repeatedly dubbed as "the father of modern surgery". By returning John in proximity to his contemporaries that were focused on the concept of the human being—in the most broadly construed framework—my dissertation then recovers a conversation between leading anatomists and their social network that overlaps with and inspires two prominent Romantic poets, William Blake and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Within this redrawing of London's social circles, an important figure emerges, one that has not been placed on equal footing with the Hunter brothers: Anne Home Hunter (1742-1821), John Hunter's wife.

A poet in her own right, and a member of a prominent literary salon, Anne engaged in similar questions that her husband explored throughout his work such as the life and death of any body. Caroline Grigson's recent anthology of Anne's poetry, *The Life and Poems of Anne Hunter* (2009), has shed some light on Anne's tenacity as a literary author; however, this anthology not only distorts the poems, but also offers no context in which to understand them. My discovery of Anne's engagement with the interests of her husband began with a mulberry tree. What I realized was that her poem "The Mulberry Tree an elegy" (c. 1767) coincides with John's experiment on a mulberry tree as he was trying to identify the moment at which life departs from the plant. Was this departure gradual? Instant? Her work provides not only an additional perspective to John's life, but also another voice to the conversation regarding the question of life and death in a human body.

For William, life and death served as a framework in which to develop a historical sense of anatomy. But also, life and death were concepts that contributed to William's prevailing sense of morality and ethics. By focusing on cultivating specific qualities in a young anatomist, William's sense of human history is enduring, but the individual's

opportunity to incite progress in the fields of anatomical studies and fine arts is brief. Hence, William insist on indoctrinating *both* his anatomy and fine arts students with history deeply influenced by human values: historicity, invention, and so on. On the other hand, John utilized life and death as a way to articulate his idiosyncratic philosophies of "the living principle," and to locate the precise moments of living and dying within a particular living body (humans, animals, and vegetation). In doing so, we see John less as a strictly empirical anatomist, and more as a thinker who speculated on the metaphysical more than scholars have previously considered. Metaphysical queries such as why the living body succumbs to death, or what keeps death at bay have haunted the history of anatomy. John's responses to these types of questions along with his questions pertaining to life and death reveal not only a lifelong project of his that weaved itself throughout his lectures and works (throughout his manuscripts and published works), but also a mind that was vested in purging the body of what he considered to be its weakness—dying. Anne, while engaged in John's metaphysics, took a different approach that saw understanding death as a necessary action if we wish to appreciate the finality of human life as we forge relationships within families, friendships, and professional circles.

Anne's interest in fine arts made her a frequent attendee at exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Arts, whose president Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) famously painted a portrait of John, but her friendships did not end there. Anne developed a caring friendship with James Barry (1741-1806), a painter whom William Blake admired, too. Both Anne and Blake saw Barry as the quintessentially misunderstood artist-genius; however, each came to the same conclusion for very different reasons. Anne saw Barry's fall from grace as a manifestation of the Royal Academy's inability to tolerate eccentric behaviors, despite the

obvious merit of his paintings. But Blake saw Barry's mental and physical decline as physiological proof of *precisely* how wrong were Sir Joshua Reynolds' discourses on art for the new generation of artists, with Blake conceptualizing Barry's erosion as Reynolds' undoing of "proper" art. The link between Anne Hunter and Blake through Barry, at the very least, encourages a more flexible redrawing of the Hunter Circle.

Scholars have known for a long time that Blake responded passionately to the works and career of John Hunter (see below). For Blake, there is more to the imagination of the human being that expands beyond its status of living and dying, more than traditional anatomists have allowed. Ultimately this requires Blake to drastically modify current anatomical understanding of the body. The human body, to Blake, is in dire need of liberation. Once the body is properly liberated without any future threat of domination, then connotations of shamefulness and uncertainty will cease to exist in discussions of the human being. It is this lack of shame associated with the newly liberated human body that helps prove just how loosely allegorical Blake is in his conception of the human being. The shadow Northrop Frye has cast over Blake scholarship has led to an overly reductive treatment of Blake as purely allegorical, one that has only in recent scholarship abated as there has been progress in rereading Blake's illustrations and works regarding the human being as more physiological than allegorical. In my reconstruction of Blake, we see how Blake's life overlapped with the Hunter Circle, but also how several key themes in his works converse with William's and John's anatomical works. For there, we see how Blake is not merely responding to anatomical discourse, but evolving his own concepts of the human body—anatomically and philosophically—by rectifying false notions through metaphysical

explanation that Blake believes to prove how incomplete the knowledge of the anatomical body is, and that for him, validates the necessity and capacity for self-reinvention.

In his *Vision of The Last Judgment* (1810), Blake writes that "Fable or Allegory are a totally distinct & inferior kind of Poetry. Vision or Imagination is a Representation of what Eternally Exists. Really & Unchangeably" (Erdman 554). This passage highlights his emphatic understanding that whereas allegory has a place within the repertoire of literary artists, it does not testify to the truth of a subject. The truth of a subject, for Blake, is not disseminated through allegory. The value of allegory is one of affirmation, but it is unable to convey original truths. By maintaining Blake's own distinctions between "allegory" and "vision," we will see the emphasis Blake places upon his recontextualizing of the human being as both a personal conviction and a lifelong intellectual endeavor, especially in *Four Zoas*.

The body, for Blake, was a dynamic subject-object in conservations with the Hunter brothers pertaining to the human being. The corporeal body necessarily exists to navigate diverse perspectives relating to creativity in the areas of invention, exploration, and social constructions. Without the physical body, the metaphysical creations of humanity could not exist or persist through historical changes. All the while, Blake believed the human body was hardly permitted to fully develop its potential capacity for creativity for one major reason. Namely, he believed that the hegemonic forces of cultural warfare restrained creativity in all of its manifestations of knowledge in fine arts and science. In *Island in the Moon* (c.1784-85), where he initially names John Hunter before redacting his name and renaming John as "Jack Tearguts," Blake credits Tearguts with having "… found the dropsy out & soon / Shall do the world more good / He took up fever by the neck / And cut out all its spots / And thro

the holes which he had made / He first discovered guts" (455). Thus Blake recognizes the productive value of anatomy, but does not lose sight of the gruesome activities anatomy must participate in to yield progress: "And formd a crooked knife / And ran about with bloody hands / To seek his mothers life" (454-5). Nevertheless, corporeality had its rightful place in a proper understanding of the human body. One example of his understanding of how corporeality is intimately bound up in "proper and true" wisdom is found in one of the rare, quirky, yet humorous biographical instances we have of the Blakes: when a patron visited Blake only to find him in his London garden naked along with his naked wife, Catherine Blake, reading Milton's *Paradise Lost* (*Records* xxvi-xxviii).[4] From this episode we can see clearly how important the state of his body was for his understanding of this influential literary work, a poem that frames the importance Blake places on the body as the nexus of *all* understanding and productivity. In my project's approach to Blake's conceptions of the body, beginning with the historical overlap with the Hunter Circle, and then ending with his revision of his contemporary anatomical theories, we see how Blake is similar to John Hunter in their attempts to explore the human body through a multi-conceptual framework. From Blake's earliest introductions to anatomy from the Royal Academy of Arts to his modifications of prevailing theories in *The Four Zoas*, he becomes a Romantic author that is hardly an allegorical artist, but rather an intelligibly conversational thinker that uses both illustrations and texts to convey his answers to the profound question of what it means to be human in eighteenth-century London.

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[4] When Alexander Gilchrist wrote Blake's first biography in 1863 this story has been casted as truth, revised as apocryphal, and labeled as false throughout succeeding generations of Blake scholars (until there is additional evidence to determine the story's legitimacy, then it is important that we treat it as secondary information).

With his own later, but also powerful response to John Hunter, Samuel Taylor Coleridge represents an extraordinary culmination of this dissertation's accounts of London's epicenter for the study of the human body. While Coleridge's foray into science has begun to receive scholarly attention, there has not been much work dealing exclusively with his *Hints Towards the Formation of a more Comprehensive Theory of Life* (1848). James Allard's *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body* (2007) discusses *Theory of Life* in relation to the Hunters' influence upon the succeeding generations of anatomists in Europe (Allard 31). Coleridge's scientific works build upon his early years as a young boy, when he had plans to become a surgeon following his brother Luke's career path at the London hospital. Later on, in preparation for achieving his goals, he attended Dr. Thomas Beddoes' lectures, the author responsible for translating Dr. John Brown's *Elements of Medicine* from Latin to English—a text whose frontispiece was illustrated by William Blake in 1795. It has been noted that Coleridge witnessed several of Humphrey Davy's experiments with nitrous oxide, and soon thereafter wished to build his own chemistry lab. But that was not all he wished to build for himself, as Eric G. Wilson explains: "By attending to Davy's lectures on the history and nature of chemistry, Coleridge wished to add to his collection of metaphors" (643). Science as both subject and object shaped Coleridge throughout his life, thereby offering a corpus that is deeply occupied with the functions and expressions of life discernible from the relationship between the body and mind. The engagement between the physical and the psychological states within a single human being intrigued Coleridge and prompted his intellectual desires to account for and explain that minute relationship that he so readily recognized as a singularly human characteristic.

Science and philosophy were not separate fields of inquiries in Coleridge's mind, but rather they served as hinges for his greatest pursuit to answer how the bridge between body and mind develops and sustains itself throughout life. The depth of Coleridge's interest in science and psychology makes his contribution to the *Oxford English Dictionary* seem rather appropriate. The word "psychosomatic" originated from Coleridge when he wrote that "Hope and Fear…have slipt out their collars, and no longer run in couples…from the Kennel of my *Psycho-somatic*," which is defined as an adjective that "involv[es] or depend[s] on both the mind and the body" (*OED*; emphasis added). In his project to unite science and philosophy, Coleridge's later writings relied heavily on contemporary anatomical treaties to produce one of his most complete scientific works other than *Essay on Scrofula* (1816), which is *Theory of Life*.

In Richard Holmes's *The Age of Wonder* (2010), we see Coleridge less as a poet and more as a comprehensive thinker deeply engaged with a multifaceted conversation focusing on the human being. However, Holmes and I differ in our work on Coleridge in the way in which we position his responses to his contemporaries. Whereas Holmes positions Coleridge's responses as secondary to Sir Thomas Browne, Davy, and other scientific thinkers, I place Coleridge in direct conversation with John Hunter and the two of them on equal footing. Thus Coleridge reemerges as a thinker who challenges our prevailing framework for an understanding of John's position in the Romantic era. And therefore what is especially poignant in Coleridge's *Theory of Life* is our acknowledgement of how profound his idolization of John Hunter was. Coleridge's naming of John has prompted my reconstruction of Coleridge as a dynamic conversationalist that engaged with John directly, but also felt so impassioned by John's works that he sought to build from John's unfinished

questions to provide a more coherent answer for the origin of life and all of its mutable expressions in the natural world. My intention is to help fill the scholarly gap surrounding Coleridge's work on life and death as anatomical questions that grew out of his lifelong desire to answer what is exactly meant when he states "I am". By shifting his thoughts from *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) to *Theory of Life* and ultimately to *Aids to Reflection* (1825), Coleridge reveals a growing awareness of the unknowability of life and death within *both* a human body and the history of humanity that had grown out of the conversation on what being human might mean in London's future.

When Coleridge names John Hunter and describes his imagined sensation of standing on his shoulders in the opening paragraph of *Theory of Life*, we see how science and human values are joined together to produce what will ultimately become Coleridge's groundwork for understanding life and death within a living body as a series of polarities. John's anatomy museum is Coleridge's textbook for morphing John's living principle philosophies into his own conception of the world as a single concentric framework that ascends to the central circle containing the human brain as the finest expression of living powers. In this manner, Coleridge exemplifies J. Bronowski's claim that "the progress of science is the discovery at each steep of a new order which gives unity to what had long seemed unlike" (15). Coleridge visualizes John as a quasi-divine leader in the realm of anatomy and even as proof of God, but later on recognizes that John fails to provide the absolute proof of the definition of life that Coleridge so desperately needs, and therefore Coleridge assumes control of John's project to locate the definition of life, ultimately backing away from his intention to complete John's project.

Scholars have speculated on why Coleridge does not adhere to his own proclaimed goal in *Theory of Life*. As noted by Roberta Brinkley, "in the light of modern research [on scientific progress] it is especially interesting to find that Coleridge warned against attempting to solve the mystery of life itself and especially stressed the danger of encroach meant of science on alien territory" (394). That foreboding warning helps explain why Coleridge appears to have effortlessly, in part, abandoned his *Theory of Life* manuscript before turning exclusively into a Christian writer. In an alternative theory John Beer proposes that Coleridge's long devotion to experimenting with life was undone by his inability to articulate an epic philosophy that would explain nothing short of the whole of existence. Beer suggests in his *Coleridge's Play of Mind* (2010) that Coleridge's writing is always a reflection of his "play of mind[s]" that strives to incorporate and examine a particular premise through all views available to him. In doing so, Coleridge burdens himself by trying to account for all perspectives, which quickly becomes impossible for Coleridge to manage: hence, increasingly frequency of abandoning projects in his later years. Both Brinkley and Beer are correct in accounting for Coleridge's archive of fragments and manuscripts, but *Theory of Life* is finished in one aspect: for a brief moment around 1816 Coleridge embraced John Hunter's literary works and anatomical collection. While Coleridge did not maintain his boyhood dreams to become a surgeon, he cultivated a mind that actively pursued the questions of life and death in a multifaceted approach through poetry, anatomy, and most importantly, psychosomatics.

This project has one goal, which is to recover a conversation that has not become so specialized in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century London as it will become in the later nineteenth century. This conversation involves workers in the fine arts, poetry,

philosophy, and anatomy. My dissertation is not aiming to put potpourri where putrid flesh truly lies, but rather to dismantle stereotypes by showing a more complicated history in which there is no preference for the fine arts or medicine. By clearing away false conceptions of the chief anatomists and medical theorists of the Romantic period and rebuilding the lives of these major figures, I cultivate the idea that the Hunters, Blake, and Coleridge were aggressive and inventive in formulating their own theoretical origins of life and of how the human body functioned. They did so by generating a rhetoric that freely builds on and borrows from concepts in an era when the languages of medicine, metaphysics, and fine arts were interwoven in posing the question: by what means are we human?

PART I: BLOODY BROTHERS: PURSUING THE DEFINITION OF LIFE

There is no short cut, nor 'royal road' to the attainment of medical knowledge. The path which we have to pursue is long, difficult, and unsafe. In our progress, we must frequently take up our abode with death and corruption, we must adopt loathsome diseases for our familiar associates, or we shall never be acquainted with their nature and dispositions; we must risk, nay, even injure our own health, in order to be able to preserve, or restore that of others.

-John Abernethy, from his Hunterian Oration (1819)

Dead, we become the lumber of the world;
And to that mass of matter shall be swept;
Where things destroyed, with things unborn are kept;
Devouring Time swallows us whole,
Impartial Death confounds Body and Soul.

-Rochester, translation of a chorus from *Seneca's Troas*

I. Death: An Anatomical Origin

The brothers, Dr. William Hunter (1718-1783) and John Hunter (1728-1793), have been reductively treated in the histories of medicine and other fields of scholarship, but so too has their relationship with one another. Scholars tend to focus on specific anatomical practices pertaining to the biographies of each brother. For instance, we see a heavy emphasis on Dr. William Hunter's *Human Gravid Uterus* (1784) and its anatomical illustrations, and for John Hunter the focus is upon his anatomy museum and its diverse collection containing some prolific specimens amassed under contentious circumstances. However, their medical thinking and how it interacts with the larger intellectual culture of eighteenth-century London has remained distorted by maintaining the focus on the brothers' anatomical activities as outliers and thereby ignoring the philosophies surrounding their work. Medical empiricism has contributed to the permutation of the Hunters as scientists divorced from the metaphysics of the human body. In this dissertation, the ramifications of contextualizing the brothers solely through a medical empirical lens will be revisited to reconstruct a fuller picture of the Hunter Circle as both reflective of the eighteenth century and yet progressive in their speculations.[5]

By the end of this section, we will have three frameworks: a broader picture of William and John as thinkers, their relationship to one another, and finally their effect on their contemporary culture as well as posterity. My revision is based not only on their printed writings, but also on archival research such as student notebooks and lecture notes. The

[5] To avoid confusion, the first names of Dr. William Hunter and John will be used from this point onwards.

reason these archival manuscripts have not been reconciled with the brothers' printed works is because medical historians and literary scholars tend to look through a narrowed scope, so that the Hunters' anatomical collections overshadow the complicated theories that underpin the various specimens. As I cover the neglected dimensions of William's and John's writings, one of the most revealing, but profoundly neglected aspects, has to do with their understanding of the relationship of death to life, one that preoccupies the theorist as well as the anatomist.

In a few key letters from the West Indies, John's reflections on his case studies during his post abroad mark the growing difference between John's previous work under William and his anatomical studies during ravishing warfare. Despite the fact that John left London with plenty of experience in dissecting dead bodies, the development of his skill in trying to preserve life was a new territory for John. His letters reveal his perplexity regarding his insufficient skills to save lives, and this may have fueled John's tendency to ask metaphysical questions such as: What is life? Where is the boundary between life and death? And is it ever possible for us to know that boundary? Clearly on these issues John is no simple empiricist. Student notebooks reflect these neat fascinations.

It is not until the publication of John's *The Natural History of the Human Teeth* (1771), that we see in print the germinations of his metaphysical musings—albeit much more restrained than those contained within his students' notebooks—along with his struggles to develop a universal spectrum of Nature encompassing plants, animals, and humans. Interestingly, very few scholars have noted the profundity of John's attempt to negotiate these three categories as interrelated. If we recognize his approach as metaphysical as well as empirical, then we can read his philosophies and anatomical observations as both pursuits to

define life. In defining life, John aims to develop a series of dynamic relationships between life and living actions, and decay and death. In his studies of a body's stages of life, John is all too aware of the dangerous susceptibility of those thinkers that wish to conceive humans as superior animals, partly because such hierarchical thinking tends to perpetuate observations that heavily rely on the notion of mankind's infallibility. In turn, such thinkers forget that the natural world circumscribes mankind. He explains further in *Teeth*:

> Natural Historians have been at great pains to prove from the Teeth, that man is not a carnivorous animal; but in this, as in many other things, they have not been accurate in their definitions; nor have they determined what a carnivorous animal is. If they mean an animal that catches and kills his prey with his Teeth, and eats the flesh of the prey just as it is killed, they are in the right; man is not in this sense a carnivorous animal…But if their meaning were that the Human Teeth are not fitted for eating meat that has been catched [sic], killed, and dressed by art, in all the various ways that the superiority of the human mind can invent, they are in the wrong. (41)

What we glean from the quoted passage are the rudimentary beginnings of John's methodology of conceptualizing human and comparative anatomy as a shared enterprise rather than as a hierarchical stratum. He believes there is a fundamental principle connecting the two anatomies of humans and animals, but how and why this is so remains elusive to him. John's drive to qualify his theoretical suspicions is consistently found throughout his lifetime. Over a decade later after *Teeth*, a student named Mr. Twigge copied John's philosophical thoughts on how his study of mankind, both anatomically and psychologically, entailed his desire to know what qualifies life: "The facility with which a Man thinks give him preference (advantage) over another. Few have observed Nature with more attention than myself, yet even now I think myself almost unequal to the Task. A Man will be ignorant of the knowledge he possesses till he arranges his Ideas" (Twigge). As stated in *Teeth* and in Twigge's notebook, John distrusts a prevailing assumption that man's mind was always

superior to the natural world. If the mind is fallible about its relationship to its corporeal embodiment as well as its relationship with external reality, then where do we start in trying to navigate these complexities? In short, John is concerned about the possibility that for all of his anatomical expertise, he does not truly understand life and its relationship to death.

Medical historians have underestimated the extent to which death continued to haunt late eighteenth-century physicians. Clinical advances did not shut off conceptual concerns regarding death. It is precisely because of decisive advances in medicine that physicians suddenly were in the position to understand life and death. Death was not an end to their meditations. In fact, we see a cultural shift wherein they realized that in order to think about life one begins at the concept of death. For instance, John would not have thought of the idea to invent the bellows to bring life to drowning victims if he did not approach their demises in reverse. Furthermore John and William did not understand the human body as a fixed entity, nor did they understand death as the end of a case. The competing philosophies circulating around the body and its functions in London's intellectual culture testify to the convictions that the somatic body is dynamic.

The human body, for John and William, constantly acts and reacts to its environment, but they ask how an organism negotiates the two states of its life and death. Both William and John carefully avoid reducing life and death simply to two opposing forces. John does not conceive death as a radically antithetical power to nature's will. Instead he believes that the susceptibility to death does not have to be universal. Moreover, by discovering the nature of death, we might be able to overcome death. And in doing so, we might find the universal principle that unites all living forms. In their pursuit to find answers, however, the brothers grapple with questions pertaining to life and death albeit through different lenses. Nor did the

brothers restrict their enquiries within the confines of anatomy. For William, the philosophical mediations on these subjects bring about such ambivalence in his writings that at times he leaves these questions to the divine. Instead he gravitates towards an emphasis that he can control namely the morality and sensibilities of anatomists. In contrast, John roots questions of life and death within a larger question of what makes a body alive that asks what and where is the network of actions and reactions in which a body is so deeply enmeshed that it desperately requires to sustain its life. The brothers' diverse approaches to the questions of life and death show a common, united interest, but also their mutual differences in their theoretical applications.

Theories of Dissection and its Relation to Deadness

In 1777, William Hunter wrote that "…for anything we know, the passive submission of dead bodies, their common objects, may render them less able to bear contradiction" (*Commentaries* iii-iv). Dead corporeal matter and its legacies as a battleground of mistakes is are recurrent themes in William's works. In his second introductory lectures, he warns his audience again, "an error which has been very generally introduced into the writings of the best modern authors, is the drawing conclusions with regards to the *living* body, from experiments made up the *dead* body. This, in many cases, will be found to be fallacious" (*Lectures* 96). He reminds us that such causal and sloppy inference produces the "similar absurdity, that of explaining the functions of our body, upon mechanical principles; arguing still from *dead* to *living* matter" (96). Dead cadavers and their undeniable deadness pose a problem for William, especially the problem of pervasive inaccuracies and a consistent source of perpetuated mistakes that hamper the progress of anatomical arts. Hence, he aims

to cultivate the proper mindset for his students so that they never lose sight of fact that the dissected body will *always* be missing the essence of life.

Far more carefully than John's lectures tend to be, William's opening comments lay out a basic dilemma: dissection is necessary but its capacity to account for how the living body functions can only ever be approximate: "Anatomy is the art of examining animal bodies by dissection. It teaches the structure and functions of those bodies, and shews *nearly* on what life and health depend" (*Lectures* 62; emphasis added). His word choice "nearly" reveals his agreement about the great educational value of dead bodies to teach us, but also it demonstrates his equivocation and intellectual discord about the dead body's ability to explain the actions of life. It is not that William believes it is impossible to account for the living actions of bodies, for "nature, in thus varying and multiplying her productions, has hung out a train of lights that guide us through her labyrinth," but the act of dissecting is only a fraction of a proper understanding of the body (4). William's perception of anatomy as an inexhaustible source of education is synonymous with the longevity of its object of interest, the fleshy body, for "we see that the subject is still so far from being exhausted, that is to this day, and must be to the end of time, new, entertaining, useful, and inexhaustible" (62). By tying the end anatomy to the Apocalypse William associates the completion of anatomical knowledge with a final divine judgment.

Contrary to the standard view that William is completely optimistic about anatomy, he is ambivalent of just how much progress an anatomist can make in his lifetime. How then does dissection aid in William's theories of death and deadness? If we consider a repeated phrase throughout William's lecture—"the effects of death upon the body"—we see him hinting at death as an unnecessary demise of a body. If only anatomists and physicians had

the requisite knowledge, or at the very least, could reconceptualize death by treating it as a disease of the corporeal body, then death would be a bodily flaw that might be potentially overcome. If we understand the properties leading to death in bodies where there is no overt explanation of a particular cause of death, then we might just be able to answer why bodies must succumb to their corporeal demise in permitting the ravishes of decay. In turn we might account for what defines life. What we cannot yet anticipate is the fact that for William a definition of life will end up taking a moral turn.

Anatomy for William is "knowledge of our body, through all the variety of its *structure* and *operations* in a *sound* state, it is by Anatomy only that we can arrive at the knowledge of the true nature of most of the diseases which afflict humanity" (72). But dissection often acts as a corrector in identifying diseases whose "symptoms are often equivocal…frequently mistaken, even by the most sensible, experienced, and attentive physicians" as well (72). The pain of revealing physicians' mistakes in the dissected cadaver affects those working on the case. Their "fatal mistakes" according to William "are shocking to humanity but it would be invidious, and even cruel, to expose such as I myself have known; because it would involve he innocent with the guilty; as in our profession, the best are liable to error" (72). Thus in dissection it behooves the anatomists to "be humble, to confess our ignorance, and to encourage every study that is likely to improve us" (72). While striving for accurate empirical knowledge, William's ideal anatomist must maintain a strong moral character.

Ultimately, for William the primary value of dissection is that it educates the novice in a highly practical means for healing the injured body.

> That Anatomy is the very basis of surgery every body allows. It is dissection alone that can teach us, where we may cut the living body, with freedom and

> dispatch; and where we may venture, with great circumspection and delicacy; and where must not, upon any account, attempt it. This informs the *head*, gives dexterity to the *hand*, and familiarizes the *heart* with a sort of necessary inhumanity, the use of cutting-instruments upon our fellow-creatures. (67)

This statement about the value of anatomy does not demonstrate that William is callous; rather it confirms his beliefs that an honest anatomist will recognize the real limits of anatomy, namely that it teaches about physiological structure of the body, but does not account for the living operations of the body. Within his confines of dissection as an educational tool, both advancements and mistakes must be endured, which prompted his infamous description of dissection as "necessary inhumanity." By putting the phrase back in its original context, we no longer see William as a hazardous explorer wielding a scalpel. He is justifying a Baconian-driven anatomy that teaches "the true nature, and therefore the most proper cure of the greatest number of local diseases," rather than perpetuating ancient cures that kill patients far more consistently than salvaging their precarious health (67).[6] William's trinity of parts—head, hand, and heart—also indicates a descriptive order that physicians must conscientiously undergo each time they prepare to perform surgery, for "Every young Surgeon is to study[,] to cut firmly & boldly, so as to never be disappointed of his intention" ("Advice to Surgeons" 38). The process of learning anatomy therein requires a mental shift that demands that the students learn to acknowledge, yet suspend their sympathy with their patients. In other words, he tells his students that they must not imagine the patient's pain, or they will falter and prolong the pain of the scalpel. Dissection taught physiology, but also served to teach his students humility towards death.

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[6] He names two popular ancient curatives in specific: "It were just as reasonable to assert, that the bark, and mercury are useless, in the cure of disease, because the bark does not cure a pox; nor mercury, an intermittent; or, because neither of them cures all disorders" (67).

In all contemporary dissections, William agrees, there has been progress but he argues there is still much more to uncover. As we will see, William's emphasis on the humility of the modern anatomist will lead him to show considerable respect for the history of anatomy. History, for William, takes on a narrative of consistent progression. He readily acknowledges a sense of incompleteness, but views contemporaneous advancements as a gift to prosperity. But nothing shows William sense of anatomy's limits thus far as his appreciation of Nature's complexities, both as a historical construct and yet as a site of undiscovered works of Nature: "as Nature's Intentions are various, her Workmanship is varied accordingly. These are obvious Reflections, and, perhaps, as old as the Inspection of dead Bodies. But modern Anatomists have gone further: They have brought the Articulations, as well as the other Parts of the Body, under a narrow Inquiry, and entered into the minutest Parts of their Composition" ("Cartilages" 514-5). As the state of anatomical knowledge delves into the minutest structures of the body, William obviously believes that a good anatomist has proper book training and extensive direct experience (*Lectures* 87).[7] Despite the importance William places on the value of each anatomy student dissecting his own cadaver, he insists that they come to the dissection table only after completing a course of lectures: but what is surprising about his instruction to his students is his emphasis that they need more than strict anatomical training experiences. What we learn in fact is that they need a proper awareness of the history of anatomy and its rhetoric; a strong commitment to the moral fiber of the anatomist; and even an active imagination. Crucially all of these facets depended on the students' ability to imaginatively dissect as well.

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[7] This might explain why William felt it was necessary that John's first test on the dead arm without his assistance was the most accurate manner in determining John's proclivity in assisting him.

> Let us then, in our imagination, *make* a man: in other words, let us suppose that the *mind*, or immaterial part, is to be place in a corporeal fabric, to hold a correspondence with other material beings by the intervention of the body; and then consider, *a priori*, what will be wanted for her accommodation. In this enquiry, we shall plainly see the necessity, or advantage, and therefore, the *final cause* of most of the parts, which we actually find in the human body. And if we consider that, in order to answer some of the requisites, human wit and invention would be very insufficient; we need not be surprized [sic], if we meet with some parts of the body, whose use we cannot yet make out, and with some operations or functions which we cannot explain. We can see, and comprehend, that the whole bears the strongest characters of excelling wisdom and ingenuity: but the imperfect sense and capacity of *man*, cannot pretend to reach every part of a machine, which nothing less than the intelligence and power of the *Supreme Being*, could contrive and execute. (*Lectures* 73)

The striking part of William's lectures is that death shapes our relateability to one another as we struggle to define life. The tension between life and death also lends a conceptual relationship to William Blake's (1757-1827) theories pertaining to the human body. All three authors are vested in discerning how the body interacts with itself, interiorly. Blake creates myths that advance his particular anatomical theories. On the other hand, William and John join in this anatomical conversation with Blake in that all three desire to know how the body communicates with itself and simultaneously negotiates its external reality.

While the theories of death and dissection for John share similar cornerstones with William's theories, John's metaphysical mind carried these questions of life and death to radically different ends and with far greater elaborations. Death for John is at the very nexus of his pursuit to define life. It is not how we are conceived or formed in utero that preoccupies John, but rather, why our body takes the shapes it does. Why and how do our bodies know to form two legs or arms, and not five? Even more fascinating for John is the question of what composed that "living spark" that we all so readily recognize in distinguishing between the living and the dead. Yet he admits the distinction is somehow

hard to make, for "dead animals [or] as much organized as the living," and therefore "life is not necessary to the organization of Life—Life does not arise out of, or depend on organization" (Twigge).

Life, undeniably to John, is a characteristic that is "superadded to matter" (Twigge). Death, too, is added to matter and is not a state but "… apparently a process peculiar to the dead animal or vegetable" (Twigge).[8] For John, the distinctions separating animal and vegetable exist; however, both clearly can—and do—demonstrate the differences between life and death. John examines humans, animals, and plants as an attempt to achieve a universal answer to what defines life. Vegetable matter poses an interesting twist insofar as we distinguish its life capacity by contrasting it to decomposition. And fossils pose yet another philosophical problem. In order to accurately define life, all three facets—humans, animals, and plants—must be accounted for within the spectrum of living. Death, for John, is not nearly as congruent with dissection as in William's perspective, but it occupies a serious place in his metaphysics as it pertains to flesh.

Dissections, for John, usually operate as a site providing validity during anatomical inquiries. For example, he explains how his past dissections provide him with evidence to oppose what anatomists had previously supposed as accurate. John refers to his numerous dissections as proof of fallacious anatomical knowledge: "Many other kinds of obstruction are described by authors, none of which I have ever seen, and as probably have opened more urethras after death, where there was an obstruction of the passage, than all the authors who have written on this subject, I am inclined to believe that they wrote from imagination only"

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[8] "This mode of turning Hens into Cocks is much such an improvement for <u>its utility</u> as that of Dean Swift's, where he proposes to obtain a breed of sheep without wool." (Twigge)

(*Venereal* 111). John's attention towards dissection operates on a more meditative level, rather than as the part of a larger education that it is for William. In 1789, Benjamin Bell validates John's self-reflection of his veracious dissection experiences: "[referring to corrosive metals upon flesh] a curious fact, first taken notice of by that very ingenious practitioner Mr. John Hunter of London" (*Surgery* 370). As a Scottish man without a formal medical degree, John relied on his expertise in dissections as a premier avenue towards accruing anatomical knowledge and gaining professional recognition from his contemporaries. John built theories upon private dissections and vivisections, which in turn stimulated the meditative content for his public lectures: "Mr. Hunter, after telling us [students], the substance of these Lectures were founded upon his own experience" (Anon., 1779). Understanding dissection as a process that serves to (in)validate anatomical inquiries is a view uniting these two brothers. But more emphatically and unequivocally, John tells us "…Death points out to us what Life is" (Anon., 1771).

Some scholars have argued that it is precisely John's atypical introduction into anatomy that cultivated his avant-gardism. Regardless of the source, John's theories of death were preoccupied with discovering what causes putrefaction in order to conclude what prevents its manifestations in the living body. When John mentions dissections in both his lectures or published works, they tend to serve as an illustrative point in confirming his suspicions on incorrect anatomical assumptions, to demonstrate his findings, or alternatively to further explore his speculations of the corporeal embodiments as well as psychological aspects of our humanity. Often, as we will see, John intertwines his metaphysical postulation with his endeavors to locate its corporeal manifestation.

From his work on decay, the concept of a "living principle" evolves as John's mantra. In his essay "On the Digestion of the Stomach after Death," published in the *Philosophical Transactions* in 1772, a year after *Teeth*'s publication, John appears for the first time to name his "living principle":

> But as an animal body undergoes changes after death, or when dead, it has never been sufficiently considered what those changes are; and till this be done, it is impossible we should judge accurately of the appearances in dead bodies. The diseases which the living body undergoes (mortification excepted) are always connected with the *living principle*, and are not in the least similar to what may be called diseases or changes in the dead body: without this knowledge, our judgement of the appearances in dead bodies must often be very imperfect, or very erroneous; we may see appearances which are natural, and may suppose them to have arisen from disease; we may see diseased parts, and suppose them in a natural state; and we may suppose a circumstance to have existed before death, which was really a consequence of it; or we may imagine it to be a natural change after death, when it was truly a disease of the living body. It is easy to see therefore, how a man in this state of ignorance must blunder, when he comes to connect the appearances in a dead body with the symptoms observed in life; and indeed all the usefulness of opening dead bodies depends upon the judgement and sagacity with which this sort of comparison is made. (447-8; emphasis added)

To know what defines life, John must—accurately—define death. This living principle is "always acting and preserving the substance, which it inhabits, from dissolution, and from being changed according to the natural changes, which other substances, applied to it, undergo" (448). John conceives of this "living principle" as a dynamic force that is not statically superadded to corporeality. He makes it clear that anatomical knowledge is largely dependent on the tenacity and veracity of the dissector. Within the same passage we see John's adoption of William's understanding of dissection not as an instant revelation, but as a process of discovering information in solving anatomical riddles. Even in his conversations at the Rainbow Coffee-house, William vocalized this conceptual shift, one that is especially highlighted in John's industrious application of dissection-as-experiment. The concept of

revealing the body's organs presupposes that an opened body would, theoretically, display to the observer a complete and rational system of knowledge pertaining to the material body. But the Hunter brothers understand dissecting a body as a process of discovery, thereby shifting the anatomist from a position of translator to scientific explorer.

Even still, death was not an abrupt end for John, since he conceived death as a gradual dynamic process that a body undergoes: "After the suspension of action, there is a small interval between it and death, the length of which depends on various circumstances—A certain degree of action only is necessary for the continuance of life; and in some instances a very small degree—" (Anon. Student Notebook, 1777). Not only is death incremental and reacts in a symbiotic relationship with the living actions of the body, it is also idiosyncratically expressed in each distinctive body's dying moments. In another student notebook in 1779, John still maintains his notion of gradual death as natural: "…in common, or natural death the Body is alive, after it is dead, there is a gradual decay of Animal life" (Anon., 1779).

By articulating a conceptual framework of death that operates gradually, rather than immediately and definitively, John articulated what will prove to be theories of sympathy and its subepidermal operations that explain its actions and its role in the decomposition process. John explains:

> I have asserted that life simply is the principle of preservation in the animal preserving it from putrefaction; but there is a curious circumstance attending life which would appear to be contradictory to itself. Life is the preserver of the body from putrefaction, and when life is gone putrefaction would appear soon to begin. But this is not uniform; it is sooner in some cases than in others; therefore there must be some other cause than the simple deprivation of life to account fro this difference in time. In the most striking instances of rapid putrefaction after death, it does not appear to arise from the process of putrefaction having gong to some length before *total death* took place…But there is a process or an action in life which predisposes the body for many

> diseases, and which becomes the remote cause of them; and there is an action in life which disposes the body for a species of putrefaction (or decomposition) when dead, and very probably death is the effect of this action in these cases. (Palmer 225; emphasis mine)

In John's view, death and life are neither allegorical nor moral issues. Rather John wonders if death is just an unfortunate end or in fact a complex process. What permits the life in a body to cease? Like William he asks just how natural death is. He does adamantly declare that putrefaction relates to death, but it also pertains to the living body. Indeed he asks how putrefaction should be categorized and remains uncertain: "What diseases is this to be classed with I do not know" (226). As he expresses his concerns about his inability to precisely locate or distinguish the minute shades of differences in rotting, death, and life's dwindling actions, he explains that "death itself produces an action in all the muscular parts when there is nothing to prevent it. If a man's head be cut off, he becomes stiff; he is not stiff while there is real life: for there is a difference between visible life and real life…. The action of real death is that which takes place in the stiffening of the body, and till then it is not dead (expect when killed in a peculiar manner—killed universally before the stimulus of death can be given,—and then it remains lax" (227). Real death, for John, comes when the dead object no longer shares characteristics that it displayed when alive. Within that rigid definition of "real death," he gives putrid flesh an indeterminate status.

Somatic Sympathy and the Indeterminacies between Death and Life

How does John relate sympathy to death? Sympathy is defined by John as "a principle in Animal Bodies so connected with every possible expression of actions, that we can have no proper conception of the latter without taking in the former every part acts accoding [sic] to its own nature. Therefore Sympathy becomes one of the most extensive parts in the whole Animal Œconomy" (Anon., 1779). He further lays out his identifying rules

of corporeal sympathy: "it's either similar or dissimilar and it may be divided into three parts [belonging to the body], it belongs to the first principle of Life, to the sensative [sic], and to the mind"; and most importantly he tells his students that sympathy "takes place where there is no natural communication …the uses of sympathy answer very important purposes" (Anon., 1779). By "natural communication," John refers to ocular proof of a process in which one can reasonably see the contact of one bodily substance with another so that this contact incites action. For instance, the lung expands with air and touches the diaphragm that separates the abdominal cavity from the chest cavity, thus taking on the shape of surrounding organs. Even in the disappearance of a natural communication system in death, we can still discern its effects; thus his concept of sympathy allows John to speculate on other parts of the body when he argues that the evidence of its corporeal effects is visible, despite the original cause remaining unproven in dissections or living bodies. In a later lecture, he revisits this concept and succinctly says that "By sympathy we mean sensation or action induced in one part in consequence of some impression made on some distinct part: the latter call'd the impressed, the former the sympathizing" (Anon., 1779). He informs his students that "Universal sympathy may be either immediate or secondary either sympathizing from the Disease itself or from sympathy of the Diseases" (Anon., 1779). To answer the haunting question of why living things die, John offers an answer to help explain *how*, rather than *why* by introducing the idea of decay as a disease that governs under universal sympathy. In other words, he sees the effect of putrid flesh and even goes so far as to determine its progress, but he cannot locate or identify why decay suddenly originates in a body. Thus by subsuming the transmission of decay as a extension of the body's sympathy operations, John is able to uphold the body as a permeable, dynamic network of action, attraction, and repulsion. By

placing decay as the intermediary between life and death, John maintains an intriguing notion: the rotting flesh from limbs and wounds reflects the capacity of death and life to exist *simultaneously* in a body. For instance, a gangrene-infested limb does prohibit us from pronouncing the individual as totally dead, even despite the demonstrably dying limb. The intervention of an amputation—usually—increases the individual's life over death, all of which is why John answers with a resounding 'no' when asked by his students if a "body become putrid when life ceases" (Anon., 1778).

II. Monsters: The Liminality between Death and Life

In outlining the study of the human body, William separates anatomy and physiology.[9] Anatomy, he says, "relates to the matter and structure of its parts" and the latter "relates to the principles and laws of its internal operations and functions" (*Lectures* 84). Matter, for William, is a general term to describe physical substances of the body. He does separate matter into solids and fluids, but it is the laws of the body's mechanisms that produce evidence of life. Crucially, matter is neither impenetrable nor unyielding to circumstances of the body: "And, as it is the nature of matter to be altered, and worked upon by matter; so, in a very little time, such a living creature must be destroyed, if there is no provision for repairing the injuries which she must commit upon herself, and the injuries which she must be exposed to from without" (77). Matter can influence other matter, for the "animal man must necessarily be complex in his corporeal systems, and in its operations" (79). By contrast John treats matter as "only an abstract Idea":

> … all Matter, Originally, is of but every few kinds, therefore we are only Acquinted [sic] with some of its properties. We are led to suppose it has

[9] Interestingly, William considers animal oeconomy as an extension of physiology. See page 84 in his *Lectures* for further details.

> existence by Matter in general, we meant the World, which is composed of several substances all which, we (learn? term?) under different properties peculiar to Matter (viz.) The Properties, of Simple Attraction[10], Attraction of Cohesion, & Elective Attraction, which least is with its various effects constituted Chemistry and is a property which makes our species of Matter fonder of uniting with other substances in another. Also Magnitude, Figure, Solidity, & which with their various Applications to one another constitute Mechanism, Repulsion is rather suspected not to be an Universal Principle, but is peculiar to some matter only. Fermentation is peculiar to animal and vegetable matter only. These then are the general properties of rude Matter for the purpose of forming the World & it will be necessary to have clear Ideas of all Animal Bodies, the Human, I shall chiefly treat of; Matter has undergone such Changes, as to form, as it were, a new Creation, between which, and the last, no traces have been even supposed to be. (Anon., 1778)

Matter for the brothers is limited to physical form, but John distinguishes the properties of matter beyond William's designation of their physical states: fluids and solids. John informs us that "it is not Matter itself, which makes the Impression on our Senses, but only the different effects which it produces, for instance: we do not really see any thing but only the different shades of light that are reflected from it—nor when do we hear a drumbeat, hear the drum itself, but solely the action of which it is formed in the air…it is only Motion which is given to the surrounding air that makes the impression on our ears" (9). For a brother who is typically depicted as one without refinement, or classical education, John tends to indulge far more thought than William on the topic of what constitutes and distinguishes matter. And John elaborates to his students that "matter is endowed with life, which is something superadded to its modification;" however, he does not attribute free will to matter for he cautions us that while "matter may be alive," it does not necessarily "admit of action" (Anon., 1779). From there, John explains another crucial aspect of his definition of life:

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[10] He explains further: "Simple Attraction, or a disposition in the particule of each particular species of Matter to approach each other, without adhering together, as Sand &c. In some Matter this disposition is described, so as to form a fluid only; but in this case, attraction will no always take place, unless there is some degree of affinity, between the two applications, thus oil & water will not readily unite. In others the desire to approach each others particles is so great as to form the 2nd species, Attraction of Cohesion."

> Life is every part of an Animal, each part, is as much alive, on the whole, Life, is in every part, independent of any other & is Essential to it, & the preservative, of preservation, which consists without Action; before, which can take place the parts must be disposed, into form, which disposition of living particles, is Organization, and the parts, are found, proper to support their intended Actions, & it is the power of Actions which distinguishes, the living, from the Dead; …therefore, Life, is not Action, but is supported, & continued by it, there are instances of some living several weeks without Action; Action, is only necessary for the various purposes, the Animals is intended for. (Anon., 1779)

John situates matter as the foundation from which he can build his metaphysical philosophy of the "living principle." By contrast for William the concept of matter seems to play a minuscule part in the education of young anatomists, thus explaining his drive to insist that the content of anatomical education shares an importance with the cultivation of anatomists' morality.

Prior to the seventeenth-century, "proponents of an Aristotelian and Galenic tradition that emphasized the fit of anatomical form to physiological function, … regarded monsters as organisms that had failed to achieve their telos, their perfect final form…they also asserted the ugliness of monsters from the standpoint of Aristotelian final causes:" by the time the bloody brothers developed their own understanding of monsters within their anatomical education, monsters—anatomically speaking—were no longer secondary studies, but rather took on importance alongside typical bodies in our understanding of nature (Datson 202). Ascribing "failure" as the rationale for monsters would have diminished them as an acceptable source for further study for the Hunters and their students. How could anatomists dismiss these bodies as failures if anatomy was the study of dissecting all bodies to discover knowledge of their structure? John's diligence in studying anatomy through the broadest lens possible results from his attempts to set forth an outline of universal structure that circumscribed all facets of the corporeal flesh, monsters included. As Datson notes, "by the

early eighteenth century, however, the anatomical study of monsters increasingly drew its justification from the knowledge it could provide, by contrast, about the functions of the normal organism, rather than from the wonder to be gleaned by examining singular cases in great detail" (204). As deviations from the typical body, monstrous constructions drew more scrutiny as a legitimate source of scholarship, for "anatomists no longer exclaimed over the rarity of a malformation, but rather over its perverse functionalism" (205). Instead, malformations and unexpected differences were yielding more profitable results in accruing anatomical knowledge than the repetitious study of typical bodies.

Despite their agreement on the significance of monsters William and John did not entirely agree on the value of its medical history. William felt an obligation to teach his students that history; for John it was simply much more important to make a clean break. For William a good physician honored the past with due allegiance. For John what matters was a visionary dialogue between speculation and dissection. Monsters were proving that anatomy was no longer relegated exclusively to defining the typical spectrum of bodies. In order to understand structures and forms, now anatomists had to root their answers in the organisms' waking life, too. Despite the myriad bodies and lives, "monsters did not—could not— violate nature's laws, but in infringing upon society's customs, they cast doubt on the stability of both orders" (214). Precisely so, the eighteenth-century intellectual culture of London could not "converge in an single theoretical explanation for monsters," so they used the "anatomies of monsters" as "the general framework of inquiry" (204). Through careful observations of monsters' living actions John developed some of his most illuminating speculations on the philosophy of mind and embodiment. Monsters provided William with

demonstrable evidence of Nature's persistence to strive for life above all corporeal circumstances.

Living, breathing monsters present a dilemma to John's curious theoretical definitions of life and death. Monsters had nurtured John's philosophies as more than aberrations of nature. His compiler and editor, James F. Palmer attributes John's large collection of monstrosities to "the studying of abnormal productions" as a directive to "not only … to acknowledge … the fact that nature is subjected to certain laws, even in her most striking deviations from the usual order of things, but also … to throw much light on the laws of normal or natural formation" (Palmer 148). The term "laws of abnormal formations" becomes Palmer's categorical rationale for John's extensive, both large and minute, anatomical specimens of such abnormality (from humans to animals). John left a manuscript that classifies monsters according to their physicality, "1. Monsters from preternatural situations of parts, 2.—addition of parts., 3.—deficiency of parts., 4.—combined addition and deficiency of parts, as in hermaphroditical malformation" (Owen 90). By contrast William tended to organize his monster specimens separately from the "diseased" and according to their location at time of death. For example, one will find under William's "Foetal Monsters" examples of spina bifida, hydrocephalus skulls, and conjoined and parasitic twins. That is not to say William did not make exceptions to his own classification system.

Owen, one of John's most important nineteenth-century editors, explains that John's work with monsters in his "Account of an extraordinary Pheasant" enabled him to conclude that "every species of animal, and every part of an animal body is subject to congenital malformation; but he knew such appearances were not attributable to a freak of Nature, or a

matter of mere chance; for he observes that species has a disposition to deviate from Nature in a manner peculiar to itself" (25). Owen further observes that John articulates one of his "most remarkable laws of aberrant formations" in which John writes that "I should imagine that monsters were formed monsters from their very first formation, for this reason, that all supernumerary parts are joined to their similar parts, as a head to a head, &c., &c." (25). It was not just anatomical specimens displaying monstrous qualities that John collected. In his notebooks and lectures, he recounts stories of monsters passed on to him. For instance, Gould and Pyle cite evidence of John's notes on cases of cynecomastia or gynecomazia, in which men develop mammary glands sufficient to produce milk. In John's records, he writes of a sailor who managed to nourish his infant son after losing his wife three days before his mammary glands were able to produce sufficient milk. And in another case, a Chippewa man who lost his wife to childbirth prayed for milk to nourish his child, and was apparently able to do so (see 395-7).[11] Whether John grants such stories authority of fact, his records of such cases explain Youngquist's assessment of monstrosities in "British culture during the Romantic period" as having "presented less a psychological than a somatic challenge" (9).

The narratives John collects fall under the same classification and contribute to the difficulty he has in placing monsters within his definitions of life and death. For instance, why do hydrocephalus infants seem unable to live past a few months? Why does their living principle seem to dissipate despite having all corporeal qualities of an infant in a less "imperfect stage"? For he states in his treatise "On Monsters" that "every animal is formed from a portion of animal matter endowed with life and actions, being either so arranged in itself as only to require new matter for it to expand itself according to the principle inherent

[11] I have reservations because I have not been able to locate another instance of John's interest in cynecomastia other than in Gould and Pyle's work.

in itself" (Owen 239). All animals are formed for the same initiative of what John refers to as the living principle. In his "thick prose" as Youngquist righty terms John's rhetoric, he states that all animals *prior* to their birth are formed with a predisposition towards life because of the vitality in their blood. John identifies blood as the corporeal substance that provides the source of the living principle, which in turn induces life in the body. But when do monstrous forms take place? John searchingly asks "whether the principle of monstrosity be coeval with the first arrangement, or arise in the progress of expansion, is not easily determined in many [instances of monstrosity]; but it is certainly not the case in all; for many take place at a late period, and would seem to be owing to accident, or to some immediate impression; but still there must be a susceptibility for such, which susceptibility must be original" (Owen 240; his editorial brackets). His question asks whether the principle of monstrosity is contained in the blood that carries the living principle or whether it is introduced to the body externally. Both theories have massive implications for the physiological philosophies of corporeal creation. John realizes as much and restricts the occurrence of monstrosity as likely a "preternatural formation" and maintains that it "might be reduced to the same principle as that of accidental injury, from which parts cannot recover perfectly, but recover defectively or with deformity" (240).

Monstrosity, for John, occupies a refracting place; for instance, a perfectly functional and shaped bull replicates its particular animal species, from which the monstrous bull veers away. John generalizes this point when he notes that "if we were capable of following the progress of increase of the number of the parts of the most perfect animal, as they first formed in succession from the very first, to its state of full perfection, we should probably be able to compare it with some one of the incomplete animals themselves, of every order of

animals in creation, being at no stage different from some of those inferior orders; or in other words, if we were able to take a series of animals from the more imperfect to the perfect, we should probably find an imperfect animal corresponding with some stage of the most perfect" (Owen 26).

In monstrous vegetables, John attributes an entirely separate cause for their malformations, defining them as "a deviation from the common principles in some of its productions, either in form, flower, seed, or colour". Quickly moving to describe these deviations as producing "variety in every species" (*Memoranda* 22-3), he attributes monstrous tendencies in plants to human "cultivation [more] than any other immediate cause" because "when left to the natural mode of continuance, they [plants] will go back to the original again, or at least it is not certain what will be the produce; a new monster many arise" (*Memoranda* 23). In what for John is an unusual interpretation, human intervention—or cultivation, if you will—is the source of vegetable monsters. John shrewdly points out that we do not consider the alternation of colors and shapes in plants as monstrous because we ascribe cultural reward to its significant changes.

What if humans view the monstrous plants as innocuous because we distance ourselves from them by maintaining our superior status? Neither brother explicitly states that the process of humans cultivating monsters in plants could potentially be extended to their responsibility for those monstrous births in humans and animals. John comes closer to assigning the source of monstrous humans to humans themselves. By focusing on a specific genealogy, John claims that "monsters, or the deviations from the common course, or what may be called the original principles, in nature, have in them an hereditary principle. We may first observe that animals, not monsters in themselves, shall have the principle of producing

monsters" (Owen 246). John believes that monsters follow a principal code akin to typical bodies.

John asks himself if "particular Species [are] subject to peculiar Monstrosities" and answers that "it is more probable that monsters are common to every animal; at least it appears so by all those we are acquainted with. From the rarity of any peculiarity in the production of malformations of any particular kind of animals, one would be so inclined to believe that there is but one principle governing these formations" (Owen 248). A universal definition for anatomical function and structure must also encompass the psychological dimension of bodies. Monsters, for John, present a complex, and yet a beautiful mystery of the monster's body coupled with its natural behaviors:

> …it is not necessary that the constitution of the brain should perfectly agree with the constitution of the body; the brain being calculated for a more compound body than what it has; because a new part, having the powers of action, must produce an action in some common part of the brain, in order to put it into motion. / Do not monsters show that the mind and the formation of the body do not necessarily correspond?—that is to say, that the formation of the mind dos not arise out of the formation of the parts; for although the body may be strangely formed, yet the mind, if properly formed, shall have all the natural dispositions for the natural actions of the body; just as if the body had been perfectly formed in correspondence with the brain; but as the parts are not formed for such action, they cannot be complicated. My monstrous horse, although the penis stood out behind, when erected, and did not come along the belly, yet leaped upon the mare to cover her, which he certainly would not have done if the instinctive principle of action had arisen out of the construction of parts. (Owen 247-8)

John questions the brain's cognizance of its own deviated anatomical structure. Monsters do not understand or recognize their own limitations when driven by instincts, which John defines as "whatever impulse of action we have which does not arise from the knowledge of the event, or from a motive, is 'instinct;' and whatever action arises from an intention, is 'reason'" (276). Instincts become the pivotal characteristic bridging monsters and typical

bodies to one another. Is it possible for a comprehensive study of instinctive properties to reveal a universal rubric that will define the action of life contained in all corporeal bodies? While it is clear that John observes instincts overriding any alternations of a body's structure, he does not offer an account to explain why it was so, perhaps in part because he himself simply did not know. John was far more willing to acknowledge uncertainty, whereas William tends to shift these uncertainties to the realm of divine knowledge. If we are perfect, William believes, it is because God has made us. By contrast John devotes more attention to monsters precisely because he is more interested in defining what is universally true by way of anatomical speculation.

In regards to deformities in infants, William traces one source of damage back to the unrestrained use of forceps in difficult deliveries. But thanks to an encounter with William Hogarth (1697-1764), William has come to view the fetus' compaction as a marvel (or sublime awe).[12] We learn about this from the anatomical specimen of a stillborn that William shows to his students:

> Now we can not say to a Woman let me cut a piece out of you & besides don't stir that I may see how it lies: we can not do that, but we must guess by feeling different Women, where there is a little water. I find frequently that the Part either projecting downwards the right or left side which must either be its shoulder, Head, or Knees. It cannot be the Back, because that is a large round Mass, however, I will not take upon me to say what it is. You cannot conceive an thing snugger than the Foetus in Utero. This puts me in mind of Hogarth, he came to me when I had a Graved Uterus to open I was amazingly pleased, Good God, he cries, how snug & compleat the Child lies, I defy all

[12] To capture the uneasy position of a man-midwife, I have in mind the following passage of William's lectures: "I have already mention'd yet it ought never to be a rule with Gentleman to gain reputation by doing your business quick, always take time, particularly in applying your forceps & when if pain is [illegible] them. Yet you may not squeeze the child's head & when the head is deliver'd I often take away the forceps that I may have my hand more at liberty to support the woman. In a few cases I think of forceps as useful instrument. To a poor woman who is quite exhausted they may be of considerable service, but I wish to God, they had never been contriv'd. I am convinced they have kill'd & I may say 10 women to one that they have sav'd & therefore we should never use them on any occasion, but where they are absolutely necessary.—" (Chirurgical, 1775)

> our Painters in St. Martins Lane to put a Child into such a Situation. We had a good Eye, look it off & in drawing afterwards uniform oblong Body. As the Child lies in this sung position, there is a strong expression of a pleasant Sleep, a seclusion or retirement from the world it is very expressing. Here is a poor thing who died in the Act of Reaching. The Men who steel our dead Bodies generally place them with their Head down to their Thighs & each Leg bent back to their Thighs—. (*Chirurgical* 1775)

In this particular passage William is acutely aware of the pain involving childbirth, and also blurs the line between the perfectly formed versus the monstrous baby. By referencing Hogarth's intrigue as well as his initial shock, William undermines the cultural assumption of what is perceived as normal versus what nature is capable of inducing to ensure man's survival. And the same sight that jolted Hogarth is evidenced nearly twenty years later in William's *Human Gravid Uterus*. Dr. Matthew Baille (William's and John's nephew) explains how the very situation that prompted Hogarth's remark is always a latent possibility for linking the creation of a monster as a cause-and-effect of its structure within its womb: "From want of room in the uterus, and some accidental awkward situation of the parts, children are sometimes born with such apparent deformity in their hands or feet, that nurses, and people of a higher rank in other respects, but upon a perfect quality with them in natural knowledge, are frightened, and believe it to be a monstrous, or incurable deformity" (*Uterus* 64). If William claims that the study of the human body is akin to studying the works of God, then the material existence of in utero monsters represents an uneasy acknowledgement of God's mistakes. However, John does not permit divinity to suffice as an answer for his questions about the cause of monsters, and thus frees his thinking to explore the law that binds monstrous creations within nature's paradigm of bodies.

III. Life: Before Death of an Organism

Theories defining Life

In recent scholarship there has been a tendency to conceptually link the theme of life to a history of gestation by framing a historical conflict between preformation and epigenesis, and while this is necessary for the history of science, the eighteenth-century discussion concerning life after one manages to survive the perils of birth has been somewhat understudied. William's career as a male midwife tends to examine what we look like but he also stresses other human factors such as national identity, morality, theories of histories, as well as the significance of fine arts. By contrast John focuses on two distinctive approaches to understanding life. On the one hand, he sees life as tending to reside in the minute structures of the anatomical body. For he tells us "Every individual particle of animal matter, then, is possessed of life, and the least imaginable part which we can separate is as much alive as the whole" (Twigge) On the other hand, he is also invested in asking metaphysical questions about the source of life.

It is not only in John's or William's lectures that we find encompassing theories of life. As F. Wood Jones rightly points out, "John Hunter's great unwritten book" is that of his anatomy museum, for he explains: "It is the medium by which he sought to express those great principles of life, which he so profoundly understood, but which neither speech nor by writing could he make clear to his contemporaries" (778). One of John's editors, Palmer describes how "the original design of Hunter, in the formation of his museum, was to furnish an ample illustration of the phenomena of life exhibited through the vast change of organized beings, by a display of the various structures in which the functions of life are carried on" (Palmer 148). And within John's museum, as well as his works, we see the sagacity of his drive not only to define his "living principle" or "vital principle," but also to locate the origin of these principles in each living body. By keeping Wood's evocative description of John's

museum and its anatomical specimens in our minds, we will discern his occasional frustrations with his inability to precisely articulate the originating cause of life in the body. Towards the end of his life, he was increasingly aware that his bouts of angina signaled *his* impending total death, and he began to worry about the amount of unfinished theories he was leaving behind for his heirs in anatomy. He had the foresight to clarify his struggles by explaining some of his peculiar rhetorical choices:

> I have used the word consciousness, because we have no language existing answerable to all my views of the animal oeconomy, and to coin words would not answer the purpose, beach then I must have a dictionary accompany my own. I have not a word for expressing the cause of those actions which take place in the body, as if it was conscious that such and such things were going to take place. There are actions in the body which come nearest to consciousness of the mind of anything that I can conceive and therefore I make use of this word; but it is commonly applied by philosophers only to the mind. (Palmer 236)

It was that "consciousness" of a body's action that John viewed as crucial for explaining life not as merely the recording of movement, or observation of action, but rather, as something more intangible.[13]

John lodges a complaint against the common analogy of explaining the life of a body akin to a watchmaker setting a watch: "Some have compared it to the spring of a Watch, for they say, altho' ev'ry part of the watch should be perfect, yet if it wants the Vital Principle, or the spring, it cannot go" (Keats). A watch cannot mandate its own movements without external propulsion; the flaw John finds in this particular analogy is that we can reasonably expect our hand to move before us if we want to grab an object. Furthermore, a watch cannot will itself to show eight o'clock rather than ten o'clock. The purely mechanical model

[13] As John explains further: "When an animal moves, we doubt not the existence of life in it, but it does not follow that when the motion ceases life ceases also: if so, when action ceases as it does during suspension of respiration by hanging or drowning, it would put it out of human power to restore life as that requires the power of Creation" (Anon., 1779).

ignores the will of the human mind. And yet, John is careful not to reduce his definition of the vital principle to mere psychology. If that were true, he explains, we could will ourselves to live forever, but we must die, as all living things must—so far.

Thus, John's studies of anatomy are not restricted to the somatic. He theorizes upon the psychosomatic relations and how they manifest themselves within individuals. In a posthumous essay, John spends some time deliberating on his observations on human psychology. The interiority of the mind fascinates John because it might help explain first how the body communicates within itself and second how it *simultaneously* interacts with its external environment. In both cases John seeks to understand "consciousness," which he defines as: "…an impression of the mind of our own existence at the time, or rather of the existence of the mind and of its actions: for, I say 'I am conscious that I exist;' which can be only in thought; for, that I exist in body, can only influence the mind by its being sensible of the presence [of the body], as it may be of any other body; for, although it feels its own body, and is conscious of it, it can also be made sensible of another body and is conscious of that also; therefore both [acts of consciousness] refer to the mind" (Owen 252). Consciousness, for John, is the mind's process of acknowledgements and the state of awareness of the body's existence separate from external reality. Our consciousness, for John, interrelates with the mind's decisions, for he visualizes the brain as the physiological organ that produces these actions. On the opposite side, the brain "can be so employed respecting the mind as neither to feel the body, nor be capable of thinking, and *vice versa*" (261). Crucially, the consciousness is the primal *and* necessary site for a body's capacity to verify its existence separate from its perception of others; as he clarifies, "consciousness has always a relation to ourselves" (253).

And yet, death and the act of dying shape the way our consciousness understands life: "this self-consciousness not only regulates many of our natural actions when in health, but the actions of the machine while under disease, both in the whole and in a part. We have an internal monitor of our powers, and we use them accordingly. This is often so strong that many know they are dying—a thing that cannot know from experience" (254). In simpler terms, John tells us that our "consciousness is a conviction of the existence of one's self, or it is a feeling of itself, but is not a sensation; it is the reflection of one's own existence, both as to personal existence and the existence of the mind" (252). John furthers his thoughts by developing a tripartite structure of how the consciousness, mind, and the brain work as a process to aid in the body's perception in conferring evidence for the mind to acknowledge. The first interception is "sensation and demonstration [which] are absolute and the same," then John haltingly wonders if "perhaps, conviction is the next or second," and then confirms that "belief [is] the third" (253).[14] These thought-processes are not confined to the wakeful body, for John explains: "what we think of when awake, we only see in the mind's eye; but what we think of when asleep appears to be an object immediately of the senses…. and if we connect a few of those ideas together so as to make a little train of thinking, it is almost liking connecting real objects together" (257). These objects that our mind connects along with our ideas relating to them "are sensible as much [as] the objects of sensation as [external causes of sensation] itself; we can reason about them" (259; second editorial bracket is Owen's).

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[14] John defines conviction as "an impression on the mind which is equal in that mind to sensation or demonstration; therefore it is not necessary first to produce sensation or demonstration. To produce actions will be according to the circumstances that become the cause of conviction, whereby our causes of actions, and our actions, are increased beyond what they otherwise would be" (253).

Reason alone is not enough, for John, to determine life.[15] As John explains, the problem with rationalism is that "we often want to reduce [mind] to reason, or to that principle which arises entirely from sensation, viz. reasoning about real things. This becomes the basis of religion" (259). The problem lies in the fact that reason itself is too narrowly individualistic.

Even still, processes of the body's realization of its separation from external reality underpin John's definition of life, which is why he attributes the mind's formation to two causes—"the state of the body and sensation" (259). He further explains that "the actions arising from the state of mind are 'instinct'" and that the "state of mind may arise from state of body only, as hunger; or from the senses only, as love; or from both, as love and lust combined; for these are two different feelings. A man may be in love, while he has no power of lust; a man may be lustful, and not in love" (260). If the mind were not subject to the body's sensorial input, where it is supposed to provide the groundwork reason to understand its received information, then the state of mind would become an anarchy of its will: "when a state of mind takes place without the natural leading cases, where reason is [not] called in as a direction, it is *madness*" (260, editorial brackets are Owen's; emphasis mine).

The mind continually sustains our collective intrigue because, as John argues, "perhaps there is nothing in Nature more pleasing than the study of the human mind, even in its imperfections or depravities: for, although it may be more pleasing to a good mind to contemplate and investigate the applications of its powers to good purposes, yet as depravity is an operation of the same mind, it becomes at least equally philosophical and equally necessary to investigate, that we may be able to prevent it" (268). Our minds are not

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[15] Reason as defined by John: "Reasoning may be called either immediate or habitual: the immediate is when we are obliged to go through the whole process before we can drew the conclusions: the habitual is when we are so well acquainted with subject as to draw the conclusions at once, as it were jumping over the investigation; but this often leas us into errors by taking premises for granted" (262).

reducible to dual contraries, John explains, for "when we consider the mind of man as possessing a thousand qualities which are distinct attributes in themselves…we must be sensible how complicated the mind is; but as they are often mixed in the same person, they produce contraries in character which form the basis of all the oddities or inconstancies we meet with" (268). John names the mind, not consciousness, as the more interesting study of the two precisely because the mind directs the brain to enact its will power. The action of the person relates back to the decision on the level of the mind. Studying the mind is not merely an amateur sport. Far from it, John advises his contemporaries to delegate some of their anatomical studies towards the psychological because of patients' tendencies to misrepresent their diseases: "If medical gentlemen would apply this to their practical knowledge of mankind, they would see that their opinions of such minds and practice perfectly coincided; and, to strengthen this idea, let us see who they are that are most subject to practice this kind of deceit" (269). He expands this point by telling us that "whoever has paid attention to this subject will agree with me in thinking that those minds [deceitful minds] are far from what they really wish us to think them to be; and that they are little minds" (269).

If John tells us that we cannot confine the definition of the vital principle to the visible action of the body, then what foundation does he rest his theory upon? He wants to know how the body contains the capacity—or knowledge—to function. In other words, how do the lungs know to expand to hold oxygen and compress to expel carbon dioxide? Nothing specifically teaches us to do so. And yet our bodies carry out these actions without our ever knowing or explicitly compelling our bodies to carry out the necessities of bodily perseverance. He poses the same question with regards to plants, and asks how certain types know to root underground and how others know to sprout leaves. He answers these questions

by locating the impetus for action in stimulation. The stimulus that provokes action, whether it is internal or external to the body, along with the body's reaction is how we can define life. Action is demanded by all living beings:

> When we speak of action we do not mean any peculiarity of action, as of muscle or nerve, but action in general; we may here also distinguish Action, from Motion, for inanimate powers may be made to possess motion. With respect to Stimulus, no particular kind is mean, for what may be a stimulus to one, may not be to another, but whatever has the power of exciting Animal and Vegetable Matter to Action, is what I mean by Stimulus. Thus then we offer as the definition of Life, the deposition to Action on the application of Stimuli. Its true that this approaches near to irrisability [sic] but we don't confine ourselves to Muscular Action. We extend our definition to all organized bodies. (Twigge)

In 1764, John locates the residence of the living principle within the blood of a body.[16] It is not until his 1794 posthumous publication, *Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation, and Gun-Shot Wounds*, that we realize the profundity of his theory. And he admits as much himself: "it is probably impossible to say where the living principle first begins in the blood" (*Blood* 91). He suggests that it makes a certain sense that blood would be "endowed with the principle of life" because it seems "to be the most simple body we know of" (77). John recognizes his theory that "blood has life…is perhaps carrying the imagination as far as it well can go; but the real difficulty arises merely form its being fluid, the mind not being accustomed to the idea of a living fluid" (77). Life, for John, is defined by the stimulation arising from blood's fluidity within the body, but more importantly, it is the only corporeal substance that could physically carry the living principle throughout the body by circulating throughout the entire body.

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[16] François Duchesneau explains that "Hunter draws a significant distinction between the organization of animal matter and the self-supporting conditions for the living principle in very rudimentary forms of material structures" (291).

Blood in William's *Lectures* is treated as an anatomical substance that is important to the life of a body, but he does not state an overt opinion on John's living principle theory. Strangely, William maintains silence on his brother's definition of life.[17] There remains an omission of William's rationale for his quietness on John's peculiar theory, but perhaps it is explained by William's own definition of life taking a less anatomical, and a more 'sensible,' that is to say, a more cultural direction than John's. William's discussion of life shares no resemblance to the metaphysical and psychosomatic depth of John's anatomical focus. William discusses life mainly as a cultural phenomenon, which is in part due to his conception of anatomy as *de facto* the art unifying humanity because each of us is corporeally embodied. He viewed his great skill as an educator in anatomy as carrying responsibility and authority in molding the younger generation. From the perspective of an older gentleman he tells his students:

> This [teaching anatomy] affords me an heart-felt comfort, now, when years and reflexion have given me the clearest view of the uncertainty, the shortness, and the miseries of human life. I sincerely pray that a great number of you may enjoy such a comfort in the close of life; when, I am certain, the most diligent, the most conscientious, and the most humane, among you all, will most ardently wish, that you could have done still more service to the cause of your poor distressed fellow-creatures. (*Lectures* 62)

If anatomy unites us, then how does William define life? The study of anatomy operates as a cultural nexus for London's intellectuals and artists. With Baconian undertones, he identifies how the "successive labour and attention of many ages" along with universal collaboration aid in the growth of anatomical knowledge, thereby benefiting all of mankind. He identifies

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[17] Biographically speaking, it is noted that William and John stopped speaking to one another from a feud over who should properly receive credit for discoveries pertaining to the circulation in utero as seen in William's *Human Gravid Uterus* illustrations. However John discussed his philosophies years prior to this argument and continued to do so until his death, and William still did not offer his views.

the greatest improvement made to anatomy since Galen took hegemonic control as truly beginning with Leonardo Da Vinci in the fifteenth century, and he explains how Leonardo "has been overlooked, because he was of another profession… I believe he was, by far, the best Anatomist and physiologist of his time…Leonardo was certainly the first man we know of who introduced the practice of making anatomical drawings" (37). There is no rhetoric of mutual exclusivity in William's description of Da Vinci as both artist and anatomist. Da Vinci represents—historically—the ideal anatomist as envisioned by William because Da Vinci treats the human body as the epicenter of *all* types of knowledge. For William intertwining of morality alongside anatomical instruction reflects his synthesis of an anatomist's integrity as an extension of personal intelligence and allegiance. For example, he defines honor and its value over achieving immortality in the history section of his *Lectures*, from which also we see how William's classical learning shaped his philosophies: "Honour is acquired only by merit; immortality by any thing very striking or interesting to mankind, whether meritorious, or sagacious, or accidental and neutral" (40). The more metaphysically inclined John did not dwell on his role within a historical-cultural continuum of humanity to the degree William does in his *Lectures*. William understands that his role as an educator is not to merely impart knowledge, but also, to cultivate a generation of honest, innovative thinkers. In his first lecture, he concludes by reminding his students that "the history of Anatomy should stimulate us all to cultivate it with diligence" (62). Anatomy, for William, was not simply a career decision; it was the study of the living self within its cultural context, and as such it carried great responsibility towards posterity. Hence, the demise of anatomy was intrinsically linked to the duration of mankind.

Just as John rejects the watchmaker-mechanistic model of the human body, William ridicules the historical concept depicting the body as a mirror of the expansive and intelligent universe: "The human body has been, commonly enough known, by the name of microcosmus [sic]; *as if* it did not differ so much from the university system of nature, in the symmetry and number of its parts, as in their size" (63; emphasis added). William separates anatomy from the traditional conception of our corporeality by defining human beings not as reflections but as original entities interacting with a world composed of other such entities. However, his rhetoric in advocating this idea still contains residual Galenic awe for our body, which also resonates with the Burkean notion of sublime: "Can we seriously reflect upon this awful subject [anatomy], without being almost lost in adoration?" (64). An anatomist who fails to understand the question he has just posed is one who "labour[s] under a dead palsey, in one part of his mind," and William invokes the authority of Milton to exemplify how an author who could not see light was nonetheless able to write *Paradise Lost* (1667). In William's thinking the intricate intertwining of anatomy and the fine arts serves to affirm the grandeur of humanity. It was no surprise that Sir Joshua Reynolds invited William to become the Royal Academy of Art's first Professor of Anatomy.[18]

Anatomical Studies at the Royal Academy of Arts

On 27th December 1769, a year after William accepted Reynolds' invitation, the Royal Academy passed a resolution enabling him to have "free access to all General Assemblys" relating to the administration of the academy (Kemp 27). The result of this resolution was that William had more freedom to express his synthetic vision between anatomy and the fine arts than we typically see in the later anatomical lectures at Royal

[18] See Figure 1.

Academy. William treats the Royal Academy and anatomy theater as proof of his conviction in Britain's rising greatness. Without hesitancy, William elevates the works of artists along with the novel discoveries in London's intellectual culture:

> If we do our part, if the rising generation particularly, can be smitten with a laudable ambition, with a noble emulation' the works of English Artists, in the course of a very few years, may rival, did I say? why [sic] not excel in the finest productions of Greece and Italy. When we have already gone so far beyond the ancients, in since, in every thing besides, are we never to excel, not even to equal them in works of imagination? Has Nature granted us with such compelling powers / powers in all other things and denied it in that? No: Shakespeare and Milton and Wren shew that Nature is not a partial step-mother, that Genius is not confined to the lattitudes [sic] of Athens and Rome. We are actually at this time making rapid progress, and Why should not posterity be able to say that the later half of the 18th Century was not the most distinguished period in the annals of human Genius? (33-4)

For William, each single contribution further advancing Britain's growth, regardless of the field it advances, was proof of Britain's riveting imagination and life. Imagination propels and incites animation, and animation becomes a necessary facet to his theory of life. He explains, "if there is not a great deal of Life, of soul, of animation in it, the sense will not be properly impressed, and the imagination will be fettered with the dull and staring reality of the Canvas" (40). Art shares with anatomy a common desire to depict and explain the human body. An anatomy of the body in motion—and a correctly formed one—is a sign of active life within art, and great art has the ability to convey living activity: "…there appears to me to be more composure, more inactivity in the figures than we see in real life…Representation in the imitative Arts is a Substitute for reality; and except in matters of curiosity, effects us only as such, that is by giving us the impression of the original reality" (40). An art's failure to produce these desirable affects means that the artist failed at the rendition of life.

As a major patron of Hogarth, William advises artists throughout his Royal Academy lectures not to forget to add "elegance, and beauty and grace and dignity," but also to add "animation, Spirit, fire, force and violence, which make a considerable part of the most interesting scenes" (43).[19] And thus William's definition of life is intimately bound up with expressions of animation: color, psychosomatic tension, and production. His theory of art claims that it is the various expressions of animation, colors, the complexities and ambiguities of the mind/body dynamic forces that enable a discernable observation of life. Since William offers a flexible integrative framework for distinguishing life, not a concise, anatomically rigid outline defining life, his concept of life is hardly categorically driven but rather admits of a certain ambiguity.

As the first Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy, William honed his tastes as an avid art collector amongst other collections of artifacts (coins, zoology, etc.). However, Peter Black points out that the trustees of his will did not catalogue his art collection, despite their commitment to catalogue his coin, library, and anatomical collections. Black describes this omission as the trustees' understanding of William's art collection "as a function of Hunter's wealth rather than as a part of his intellectual programme as a museum builder" (63). William intended his marriage between art and anatomy to reflect the study of the human body as an extension of the divine: for William says that anatomical art is the "contemplation of the highest work of God" (Black 63; Kemp 32). The human body becomes a site for William to renegotiate its existence and its functions in relation to its natural environment as divine works.

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[19] Black has noted that John and Anne's parlour at their Leicester Fields house contained "framed sets of the Rake's and Harlot's *Progresses* and the *Election"* (Black 81).

Arguably the first-year lectures at the Royal Academy amounted William's attempt to justify his presence before a classroom of artists. But do his actions to justify his value as a professor for student-artists make sense? Archival records indicate that William's first art purchase was in the early 1750s, which would mean that he had been seriously collecting art for almost two decades prior to his Royal Academy lectures. What exactly did he collect and how did it contribute to his lectures' themes? His first art purchase was at the auction of Dr. Richard Mead's collections of fine art, anatomical specimens, and books, including Dr. Mead's painting of Newton as well as his Egyptian mummy (Black 67). In 1756, William purchased Rembrandt's "Capital Landscape," which modern art historians have proven to be a Philips Konick painting instead. It was not until 1771 that William secured his purchase of a legitimate Rembrandt canvas, *The Entombment* (1634). Black attributes several other misrecognitions of Rembrandt works within his collection to William's naïve victimization and to his desire to transition from a Scottish background to London's gentility. During the heyday of his major art purchases; William befriended not only Hogarth, but also Robert Strange, and George Stubbs who would become famous for his anatomical depiction of equines. As Black shows, William purchased twenty-four paintings from Strange and Stubbs, major expenses resulting from William's desire to build his Great Windmill anatomy school as the site of his home and museum.

Given William's well-known friendship with Reynolds as well as the latter's dazzling painting of John, we ought to treat William's professorship as a cultural reflection of the Royal Academy's drive to combine art and intellectualism as characteristics of a proper

Londonite.[20] William represented the product of the cultural pressures on an Enlightenment male-midwife but also taught his students a foundation in philosophical and moral integrity as a contribution to the strength of the British Empire. William told his student-artists that he "shall endeavor to improve, to share in the pleasure of *learning*," and he emphatically claims "that what imitates Nature most is most striking; and that it will be likewise *more pleasing* if the subject be properly adapted to our passions." In this way he positions himself and his students as observers of Nature (Kemp 37, 39).

For William an intentional purpose of art is to invoke the imagination of the viewer: "If there be but a single transgression, it strikes a correct eye, disturbs the imagination, and like an absurd Player in a moving scene, breaks the charm; thus the sweet delusion vanishes, and nothing is left but canvas, lines and colours" (41). Effects are absolutely crucial to distinguishing great art from plain art. To highlight the importance of achieving such artistic greatness, William explains how intellectuals, theoretically, have access to the same general knowledge of imaginative literature and art, but to translate those raw materials in order to produce novelty requires that individuals overcome any and all self-imposed boundaries. Alternatively William describes the same process as one's natural inclination for attaining agency, and thereby freedom from boundaries and from what he calls "human powers:"

> Shall we be discouraged and listen to indolence which is seducing our hearts, and whispering to us that every noble enterprise is beyond our abilities. No—Human powers are capable of going much further in most things than we could easily believe. If men would set out with a good plan, with Spirit to undertake, and with preserving resolution to carry on the design, there is scarcely any thing that might not do. (42)

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[20] It is noted that Sir Joshua Reynolds was a neighbor of John and Anne Home Hunter at their Jermyn-Street residence.

While William does acknowledge that access to education is predicated on both financial wealth as well as the proper introductions, he believes that personal initiative and steadfast commitment are the best moral aptitudes in determining an individual's capacity for genius. He uses this method to validate his own credentials for teaching his student-artists. In 1777, William explains that if "a man has not such a degree of enthusiasm, and love of the [anatomical] art, as will make him impatient of unreasonable opposition, and of encroachments upon his discoveries and his reputation, he will hardly become considerable in anatomy, or in any other branch of natural knowledge" (*Commentaries* iii). By professing his commitment to the fine arts along with a dissemination of correct anatomical knowledge, William exemplifies that open dialogue pertaining to the body is more about what people contribute, rather than their background.

Within the same Royal Academy lectures, William weaves a strand of human productivity into his theory of art that strives to delineate the human form, while incorporating the morality of human character. As he explains, "In Poetry, the description of forms is so vague, so much is always left to the imagination, that when the Idea is once fully conceived it is easy to express it in language. But in the other Arts, every part of form must being determined and made out. Thence, in every subject when a human figure is represented which is either new, or treated in a new manner, the Artist after having sketched out his Ideal Design must execute and finish all the parts from Nature" (45). Imagination needs help. Indeed, William conceives of imagination as a Lockean *tabula rasa* that derives its forms and content from the human experience.[21] How can we express what our imagination conceives without language? William uses poetry to point out the flaw in language in that it yields an

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[21] William's library records show that he owned a 1690 edition of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding.*

undefined picture of the poet's intentions; he explains further that "what imitates Nature most, all things else being equal, will *strike* us most: and it will be more *pleasing* too, […] the artist requires much judgement both in the choice of subject, and in the management of it. This is the Station where a happy Genius distinguishes itself" (45). It is because nature has an infinite variety that our imagination is infinite, too. In short, nothing exists outside of nature, for as Richard Terdiman defines "actuality", "Nothing exhausts reality. Everything has a limit and an outside. This externality or otherness may be temporal, spatial, conceptual, or material, but it always exists" (169).

In a 1746 letter from William to Dr. William Cullen (1710-1790), Hunter expresses that his next aim is to open an anatomy school; this goal highlights William's awe for nature and her untold secrets as well as her beguiling dangers. Even more significantly, Nature serves as an intellectual's boundary from slipping into a nebulous chaos that prevents progress:

> Well, how does the animal economy appear to you, now that you have examined it, as one may say, with precision? I have good reason to put the question to you, because in my little attempts that way, since I begin to think for myself, Nature, where I am best disposed to mark her, beams so strong upon me, that I am lost in wonder, and count it sacrilege to measure her meanest feature by my largest conception. Ay, ay the time will come when our pert philosophers will blush to find that the have talked with as little real knowledge, and as peremptorily of the animal powers, as the country miller who balances the powers of Europe. But, if I follow out this train of thought, I shall become as per as those I blame; therefore I'll drop the point.
> (Brock 122)

Experience, too, guides the intellectuals' endeavors, but it often paralyzes progress; in 1774 Dr. William Rowley publicly chastised William for relying too much on his own experience and confidence as a male-midwife: "I hope, Sir, that these observations will not only be of some service to the public, but answer another purpose, and be an instruction to you: it may

teach you, for the future, that a successless [sic] effort in your practice, out to incite you to look farther than the limits of your own knowledge; and that every probability of relief should be embraced in cases of extreme danger. Let, then, some principle of benevolence, for the future, moderate your ambition: for be assured, that it is the approbation of one own's conscience, which must give a value to the encomiums of mankind" (Rowely 34). The burden of uncertainty fuels William's interest in risk and exploration as well as his vagueness about the necessity of imagination and experience, but he also believes the two share an uncomfortable alliance with one another. Somewhere between the relationship of imagination and experience, William finds that it is the intellectual's mind that binds the two.

When he was a student in Dr. John Theophilus Desaguliers' (1683-1744) course of experimental philosophy as a part of his medical curricula in London, William was exposed to Desaguliers' explanation for our urge to seek knowledge. In his dedication to Frederick, Prince of Wales, Dr. Desaguliers writes that "To contemplate the Works of God, to discover Causes and their Effects, and make Art and Nature subservient to the Necessities of Life, by a Skill in joining proper Causes to produce the most useful Effects, is the Business of a Science" (1).[22] William would carry such beliefs throughout his career as a male-midwife, physician, anatomist, lecturer, and as a fine arts collector. In his residence at Jermyn-Street in London, as a student W.B. Monkhouse recorded in his notebook (c.1755), William's opening lectures clearly echo his early foundations with Desaguliers and Frank Nicholls insofar as they understood anatomy as a linchpin of the enterprise of discovery relating to the body:

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[22] At Kew, Prince Frederick was known to have a room full of Desaguliers' instruments. For a more indepth understanding of Desaguliers, see Patricia Fara's 'Desaguliers, John Theophilus (1683–1744)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009. [http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/view/article/7539, accessed 12 June 2012]

> From this time the Art got ground apace, and when to the knowledge already aquir'd the great Harvey added his discovery of the Circulation and that an animal body was an Hydrulic Machine, it was tho't to have arriv'd at perfection: All disease were not suppos'd to be eas'ly found out and as eas'ly cur'd, but time and experience teach us far otherwise, and Convince Man that there is still ample filed for the Exercise of human wit and sagacity: May we not rather think that more still remains to be discover'd than what is already come to our knowledge? (*Notes*)

William's educational upbringing emphasized autonomy in one's thoughts in which, Beekman explains, "[William] had been taught, principally, the importance of an independent mind when in search of knowledge; 'the right of an individual to form his own opinions from the evidence on hand.' Along with this freedom of thought, he had developed a healthy skepticism and an open mind which, together with a natural curiosity and an extraordinary determination, provided him with the most important of the necessary qualifications for a successful investigator" ("Education" 76). By harking back to his winter studies in 1740-41 with Desaguliers, in which he learned the relationship between experimentation and inductive reasoning, William strove to teach his student-artists and his anatomy students a moral rubric that is not necessarily knowledge-content specific, but rather aims to produce an intellectual profile that—he hopes—is predicated on the freedom of moral intelligence. This profile should be guided by a proper indoctrination in Britain's ethos in what amounts to an imperial British transatlantic identity.

Anne Home Hunter: The Missing Link

When in 1804 the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields rejected Anne Home Hunter's monumental inscription to John for her husband's grave, she captured the contemporary sentiment of John as a genius who illuminated the dark labyrinth of nature's mysterious marvels where he travelled as a lone explorer. Nevertheless, his Herculean persona in

anatomy was mitigated by his humanness. In her original manuscript, Anne describes her husband as having a "love of truth" that sustains his lifelong interest in the corporeality of living bodies, but more importantly, she attributes his lifetime dedication to his attempt to alleviate the universal failures of the human body:

> Hunter, if Years of toil, of watchful care
> If the vast Labours of a pow'rful mind
> To sooth the ills Humanity must share
> Deserve the grateful plaudits of Mankind,
>
> Then, be each human weakness buri'd here
> Envy would raise, to dime [sic] a Name so bright.—
> ("Epitah" Manuscript, c. 1804)

To argue that Anne was only a domestic mother and a devoted wife is to misconstrue her own engagements with John's questions surrounding life and death. For Anne, too, had her own developing theories of how to define life. Yet like William, she sought to situate life and especially death within the wider net of culture. In this way, Anne provides a missing link between the worlds of the Hunter brothers. As we will see, she also provides a link between the Hunter Circle and William Blake.

If we take Anne's suggestion to conceptualize John as "those specks which on the Orb of Day appear / Take nothing from his Warm and Welcome light," then we see how she situated herself within a larger, culturally important narrative attempting to answer what being human meant. In one of her earliest poems, "An eregular [sic] ode to—" (c. 1766), Anne describes the fragile symbiosis between life and death as a necessary metaphor for human connection that similarly reflects our corporeal fragility: "Till Life shall reach its latest Sand / Tho' gay desires, and Chearful Youth / Fly far away / Let Friendship last as long as this frail gesture of decay" (Grigson 92). In a double gesture, she is mapping both the

limits and duration of flesh to the human connectivity of friendship. The interaction of friendship between two people shares a longevity similar to the human body. While friendship may end long before a person's demise, Anne conceives of its span as being intimately linked to the vulnerability of life.[23]

Anne pens quite a few elegies to her dear friends as well as famous artists she admired and socially entertained. In several of her elegies to her friends, they are united by a common concept that Anne developed in order to deal with her grief over loss. She names her poetical theory "The Dear Idea," which stems from her participation in the elegiac tradition honoring the dead. But Anne does not confine her elegies to particular individuals, nor does her "Dear Idea" necessarily wholly correlate to the popular pastoral elegies of her period.[24] Her "Dear Idea" is a mental practice that helps her justify human connections through the fragility of life. Death constantly thwarts her desires to prolong her personal relationships, but in order to avoid cynicism, she believes each relationship is a contribution to her grand, metaphysical idea that a necessity for humanity is socialization. Whether that socialization takes the form of language, fine arts, literary salons, or dissection rooms, it creates the fabric producing solidarity.

In another poem, "The Mulberry Tree an elegy" (c. 1766), she responds to John's "living principle," pointing to her overwhelming frustration at elegies' inability to alleviate turmoil and pain.[25] Concluding that "Verse just points to Memory where they Lie," she

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[23] I suspect in the line "Till Life reach its latest Sand" that Anne is referring to Greek mythology's underworld, River Acheron or Styx that is ferried by Charon.

[24] Her approach to the elegiac shares a remarkable, conceptual similarity to Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux's (1636-1711) second book of *Art poétique*.

[25] Even as late as February 1886, trees from the Hunters' Earl Court home were put up for auctioned thus showing London's interest in the Hunterian gardens "Hunter Family Album" (c.1900-50).

regrets that elegies perform only the agonizing act of remembrance, and cannot and do not answer the wish to feel the sensation of the departed subject's or object's return (100). In other words, elegies are soothing conversation pieces, but cannot resurrect the living action of the dead. We see Anne's frustrations in her epitaph to John, but Anne's poem "Mulberry" is a reflection of this practice and responds directly to John's *Of the heat, &c. of animals, and vegetables* (1778).[26] In *Heat*, John explains his experiments on trees' longevity in regards to the temperatures: "is every tree dead that is frozen?" (*Heat* 36), a question John revisits in his *Blood* treatise in 1794. Anne's poetical responses to John's experiments show that she was not excluded from John's experiments, nor was she unaware of the philosophical problems of life and death surrounding his speculations. For she, too, explores those themes:

> For bright ey'd Science mark'd the growing Shade
> That Shade which I—'s friendly hand improv'd
> His care more fresh its early Verdure made
> Ye Muses mourn the Tree, your I—so lov'd[27]
>
> […]
>
> The Red-breast now in vain shall hope to find
> They spreading Leaf to shade the Wanderers Woes
> No more tormenting Ills of Human-kind
> Thy Balm shall soften, for no more it flows.
>
> The time is past now never to return
> In vain for thee shall smile the vernal Spring
> Soft onye Wings of Night, ye Zephyrs mourn,
> Sigh thro' the Willows, in whose shade I sing.
>
> For ah! it fell, no pitying Power to save
> The verdant Joys, the early Honors die. (100)

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[26] Read at the Royal Soceity June 19 and November 13 in 1777.

[27] In Grigson's transcription of "Mulberry," she believes that "Anne's 'I' and 'J' were the same, so that 'I'— in this poem she strongly suggests that it refers to John Hunter" (100).

Anne's response to John's experimentation in trying to locate life in the plants of their garden induces her own introspections that capture the impact of John's inquiries upon her poetry as well as her personal meditation on life and death. In using her elegy to contest the validity of its poetical practice to provide relief, she wonders if perhaps life manifests itself only to provide fodder for death: "Me thinks as we grow old, our only business here is, to adorn the graves of our Friends, as we dig our own.—" (Poems 69). Is life only meant to remember the dead? Anne is acutely sensitive to the vulnerability of humanity.

For Anne understands that each moment of life contains a fragment of death. John explains this action in plants' capacity to suspend action of the living principle "although the living power is still existing; and probably this power can lay much longer inactive in the vegetable than in the animal", which suggests the suspension invites 'partial death' (*Memoranda* 21). But it is the trees' newest branches that demonstrate plants' close resemblance to the human body's dynamic stages of life and death: "…but as the last shoots of plants are the weakest, we find this effect mostly in those. In many hard winters the last shoots shall die, and we shall see the living part next to the dead, shoot out its leaves; …those leaves shall fade and wither away, and those lower on the vigorous stalk or branch below shall live" (22). Death and life are constantly present in every body as an interplay of principles of living power, and Anne applies John's theories to her relationships.

Unlike William and John, Anne adds the concept of time to her philosophies of death. For her, time is the only consistent and predictable guarantee throughout mankind. Changes are measured by the notches of time. Seasons tell us when another year passes us by. She casts Time in a masculine role that may be implicitly referring to Chronos, the Keeper of Time, as she describes his duties: "And drag to light the sordid slave; / But from affection's

temper'd chain / To free the heart he strives in vain" (200). She describes Time as her measuring ruler of life and death, and more importantly she configures her narrative by Time's pain to endure onwards despite her inability to alleviate her discomfort: "In spite of time methinks I see / Eyes once so fondly fixed on me; / I hear that voice, whose magic sound / My soul in soft enchantment bound; / Again the shadowy image flies, / And every sense but sorrow dies" (200).[28] John's death marked the end of her marriage, but her hauntings of John's voice continues to disrupt her reality. Let us recall that while John muses on the differences of total death, real death, and partial death, he omits emotional receptivity surrounding the death. By contrast Anne depicts a small death of herself as an annihilation of all senses except her emotional affections, though emotions are not considered a part of the five senses of the human body. And yet, emotional responses to art were imperative in separating great art from decent art in William's lectures at the Royal Academy. By implicitly referring to John, she reminds her most eminent husband that he had forgotten to address emotions within his theories of death. As Oppenheimer observes "John's biographers…have omitted to point out explicitly to what degree her traits supplement his own…. Her contribution cannot be measured along 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" (444). While Anne may have contrasted with and at times complemented John, she was hardly aloof in her own speculations of what role death played in the eighteenth-century London's intellectual culture.

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[28] This poem's subject was suggested by Dr. James Gregory (1753-1821), a Scottish physician who is the author of *Theory of Moods of Verbs* (1787). Also, he showed copies of Anne's poems to Robert Burns, who lately copied them to excel in his poetical arts. For the latter, see Oppenheimer's "Anne," pg. 443.

In another poem, Anne meditates on the death anniversary of their infant son, James (d. 1775), composing a poem that stresses a mother's untimely loss of her infant child. In her elegy for James, the greatest flaw of life is that we must experience death and its traumatic losses. Death shades the experiences of life, a reality that seeps into and shapes Anne's conception of life. And her conclusion is that life is a slave to death:

> Must memory too the present evils aid,
> And tinge with darker hues life's deep'ning shade?
> Must woes on woes accumulated roll,
> And cloud with care the sunshine of the soul?
> Such is our wretched lot, ill fated kind!
> Our thread of life with misery entwin'd;
> Capricious fortune's sport, or passion's slave;
> Till peace takes root, and blossoms on the grave.
> Can I forget the days of anxious pain,
> When that dear angel form I watch'd in vain?
> Can I forget the agonizing hour
> When those lov'd eyes were clos'd, to wake no more?
> […]
> When lost in grief, my eyes refus'd a tear,
> Instinctive fondness south his silent bier,
> Hope whisper'd, 'sure he sleep,' I wildly press'd
> The lovely image to my aching breast,
> And felt the fearful chill of nature's awful rest.
> Beyond the point to which the mind can bear,
> Reason is blunted by the heart's despair
> In apathy the struggling passions cease,
> And time by slow degrees restores the soul to peace. (195)

John expressed his own lamentations about James' untimely demise and his inadequacies compared to Anne's strength during their grief. Nevertheless, Anne's loss is particularly compounded by the inability of John to save James' life. After all, her husband was a man who had boasted that he dissected more bodies than his colleagues, and often had his hands working on a cadaver when someone stepped into his dissecting room. While her earlier poems reflect an emotional depth and reaction that provide us a glimpse into their private

lives, they also show her awareness of her husband's experiments as they affected her own philosophies. Anne's originality in responding to John's metaphysics lies in her demand that any deliberation on death must acknowledge its profound isolation, in antithesis to her definition of life—interaction.

PART II: BUILDING THE CORPOREAL HUMAN BODY WITH BLAKE'S SOMATIC IMGINATION

Once the game is over, the King and the Pawn go back in the same box.

-Italian Proverb

Consciousness is present only to the extent that consciousness is useful. It cannot be doubted that all sense perceptions are permeated with value judgments.

-Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*

I. A Neurohumanities Apparatus

It is well known that William Blake (1757-1827) ridicules John Hunter by name in an early manuscript that does not emphatically name others but types of personalities. But in later revision Blake changed the name to Jack Tearguts. I will argue that the naming of John Hunter and the subsequent change suggests Blake's intense, but ultimately complex engagement with the works of John. In the previous section we have seen that neither William nor John is as simple as historians of science have claimed. For William's part, the anatomist must be a person of moral caliber, culture, and even imagination. For John the anatomist doubled as a metaphysical thinker, while his wife Anne connects John to the world of London world that is so important to his brother William. In this section, I will present evidence not only that Blake knew the Hunters but also that in devising his own theories of the body and imagination he engaged, critiqued, and transformed some of the brothers' theories. In particular, as with Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), so too with John Hunter, Blake moves from a simplistic attack to a more mature assessment of a worthy opponent. By rethinking Blake's relationship to the Hunter Circle we can gain a better understanding of what he meant in his complex analogy: "Science remains thro Mercy: & by means of Science, the Three / Become apparent in Time & Space, in the Three Professions / Poetry in Religion: Music, Law: Painting, in Physic & Surgery" (Erdman 125).

Through the salvation of the mind, Blake hopes humans will undo the cruelties history has inflicted upon the understanding of the human body, and thereby both reorganize and free the trapped body. Emotions play a pivotal role in the Blakean question of whether

we will remain imprisoned in our bonds or free of them. Emotions abound and shift throughout Blake's rhetoric, revealing particularly momentous changes in his life. His works contain a range of sorrow, elation, dreams, nightmares, repose, hostility, and death. These emotions are hardly stable and fixed, but are akin to the dynamism of our psychosomatic body. In Blake, there are no definite parameters of our bodies' capacities or its limitations. However, one of the few things Blake is relatively consistent about throughout his works is his insistence that our individual perspective truly determines how we physically and mentally manifest our lives, how we conceive of reality, and how we allow those conceptions to alter the forces of individual and cultural creativity.

As he seeks our salvation, one of the schisms Blake tries to fuse is the separation between the psychological and the somatic body. When we examine Blake's work *All Religions are One* and *There is No Natural Religion*, we see his attempts to diminish the conviction that any particular set of religious expressions is the 'correct' version. Instead, Blake points to the "Poetic Genius [as] the true Man" (1). The absolute value of the Poetic Genius as truth, Blake claims, proves itself whenever we attain cognition though living experiments that are sanctioned by experiences. Our corporeal body is a derivative of the Poetic Genius: "and that the forms of all things are derived from their Genius. Which by the Ancients was call'd an Angel & Spirit & Demon" (1). Our bodies contain each of the facets of the spiritual realm, which for Blake is not exclusively ethereal. In the original life of the Poetic Genius it was a single entity that—over the eons of history—became fragmented, and now pervades each human body existing as a residual substance. Because this residual Poetic Genius is in every body, Blake argues that when we produce knowledge, it comes from the part of our composite Poetic Genius as we strive for truth. If humanity unites, then the

fragmented slivers of the Poetic Genius embedded in each living body would come together and then the Poetic Genius awakens in a transformed wholeness.[29] Because humanity continues to endure the incompleteness of the Poetic Genius too often our fragmented selves give away to the somatic demands of the individuated body, thereby creating a foggy confusion in intellectual exchanges. Hence Blake says that the "Poetic Genius adapted to the weaknesses of every individual" (3).

Blake disseminates the fragments of Poetic Genius as a residual and necessary part in each living body that helps us as we navigate the world and also contributes to the production of novelty; thus he considers the Poetic Genius "the Spirit of Prophecy" (1). In other words, all the novelty we produce has already happened prior to the fragmentation of the Poetic Genius. Prophecy in Blake's conception of the world is not an act of discovery, but a massive recovery of the single mind belonging to the original Poetical Genius. Alternatively, we know what will happen, futuristically, because it *already* happened. The dilemma we face is that we remain in a perpetual state of sleepwalking. In *Jerusalem* (c. 1804-20), Blake writes, "I see the Four-fold Man. The Humanity in deadly sleep / And its fallen Emanation. The Spectre & its cruel Shadow / *I see the Past, Present & Future, existing all at once* / *Before Me*; O Divine Spirit sustain me on thy wings! / That I may awake Albion from his long & cold repose" (159; emphasis added). This collapsing of time in *Jerusalem* is also a notion Blake describes to Thomas Butts on 6 July 1803: "only rememberd by my Understanding to be a Memento in time to come & to speak to future generations by a Sublime Allegory which is now perfectly completed into a Grand Poem that This World Contains. Allegory addressed to the Intellectual powers while it is altogether hidden from the Corporeal Understanding is

[29] We find out in later works that the complete Poetic Genius is named Albion.

My Definition of the Most Sublime Poetry…This Poem shall by Divine Assistance be progressively Printed & Ornamented with Prints & given to the Public" (730). The Poetic Genius living and expressing in Blake sees no distinctions in time, which enables Blake to remain confident in his prophesies regarding the future because the future is a simultaneous unfolding of history. While David Bindman considers *Jerusalem* to be "a final synthesis of his poetic vision and the medium he had invented for its expression", I argue it is more than Blake's philosophy of poetry (Bindman 297). It is his absolute and final rendition of the actuality of our world, and ultimately of our corporeal selves. *Jerusalem* shares with *There is No Natural Religion* a trajectory of thoughts that reflects the timeline of Blake's elucidation of the Poetic Genius as he aims to define us—to the most complicated audiences—ourselves.

It is important to address Blake's early interest in the human body and its intellectual systems in order to trace how his understandings of these facets of humanness underpin his account of the imagination and how it relates to anatomy. The question is whether Blake's argument for rethinking our embodiment is metaphysical or somatic. Part of Blake's criticism tends towards the former as a result of Northrop Frye's *Fearful Symmetry*. However, Thomas Frosch understood that Blake's lack of specificity suggests a more comprehensive approach in dealing with the psychosomatics of our cleansing. Frosch disagreed with Frye's steadfast commitment to a mythopoetical treatment of Blake's body, arguing that Frye's insistence on maintaining a distinction between "sense" and "imagination" makes Blake "difficult to understand" by obscuring how "the imagination could be liberated by an expansion of our perceptual organ. The body drops out of Frye's interpretation, and he become disturbingly figurative when he reads Blake on these matters, tending to make the poet tame and 'sensible' when he is most highly unusual" (Frosch 28-9).

In further elaboration, Frye "becomes excessively allegorical" and neglects a "quite literal sense of the risen body" (Frosch 29). Both scholars share a degree of validity in their assessment of Blake's conception of the body, but neither discusses Blake's originating point of interest in the human body. When Blake confronts the limitations of our perceptions, scholars tend to believe he refers to an act of "awareness" of something that was previously obscured. Take for example his claim that "Mans perception are not bounded by organs of perception. He perceives more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover…. The bounded is loathed by its possessor. The same dull round even of a univer[s]e would soon become a mill with complicated wheels". In such cases we often suspect that Blake refers to cleansing of sorts that will reveal a sixth sense (Erdman 2). That is part of the answer, but Blake is also advancing a project to expand our perceptions as a parallel means to engage with the prevailing anatomical theories in order to offer a more comprehensive theory.

In *There is No Natural Religion*, Blake sets up his argument that "Man has no notion of moral fitness but from Education. Naturally he is only a natural organ subject to Sense" to point to the obvious truism of his foes' beliefs that "the desires & perceptions of man untaught by any thing but organs of sense, must be limited to objects of sense" (2). Blake himself argues that "Mans perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception" and raises a contrary note that "if it were not for the Poetic or Prophetic character. The Philosophic & Experimental would soon be the ration of all things & stand still, unable to do other than repeat the same dull round over again" (3). Imagination, for Blake, becomes not only the outlet for overcoming a restrictive rationality, but also a means to explain our bodies prior to the indoctrination of eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Hence, *The [First] Book of Urizen* serves to explain Urizen's domination over our collective understanding of the human body.

Frosh writes, "Urizen is a limit of expansion, an arbitrary *ne plus ultra* that bounds thought and perception and seeks to bound desire and imagination" (Frosch 20). In order for Urizen to attempt to exert domination over our perception—humanity—he has to somatically exist. Eternals, for Blake, are kindred to us not by divinity, but rather by physicality. Crucially, Blake explains that Urizen, the demigod who controls us through his "net of religion," must be someone we recognize in order to explain the longevity of his domination as well as humanity's inability to acutely perceive Urizen's labyrinth. Accordingly Blake depicts Urizen as intimately involved with our bodies, physical flaws, and most importantly, our fears. Increasingly, it becomes necessary for Blake to set up a framework to explain a perception of the self to describe the physicality of subconscious mind and its extraordinary capacity to both dominate the body and to undermine itself. To demonstrate the threat of that Urizenic control, Blake needs to engage with the prevailing anatomists in London to prove his familiarity with anatomy so that he might claim authority to introduce his own anatomical theories. Let us turn to Blake's days as a student at the Royal Academy of Arts, when I believe his path crossed the Hunter Circle, and he found seminal material for his conception of the psychosomatic body.

James Basire and James Barry: The Social Network at the Royal Academy of Arts

In the beginnings of the Royal Academy of Arts, scientific thinkers engaged with contemporary artists and they sought out artists for their anatomical engravings as well to enjoy the prestige that came with attending the Royal Academy's exhibitions and lectures. As mentioned in the first section, Dr. William Hunter was the first Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy; and John and his wife, Anne Home Hunter were major supporters of the Royal Academy's artists. The Hunter Circle's relationships to the Royal Academy were not

merely as spectators, but rather, they were notable figures within the social network circumscribed by the Royal Academy. By focusing on two major art figures, James Basire (1730-1802) and James Barry (1741-1806), we will see how Blake's awareness of the nuances of the Hunter Circle extends beyond the local celebrity of the brothers' anatomical collections.

One artist particularly, James Barry, had an amiable relationship with the Hunter Circle as well as Blake. Here is a timeline of possibilities for their overlapping networks in London. James Barry's time at the Royal Academy from 1771-c.1780s overlapped with William's tenure as Professor of Anatomy from 1768 to 1783. As an avid art collector, William purchased several of Barry's aquatints (*Correspondences* 450). He was also a major supporter of Barry's painting *The Distribution of Premiums in the Society of Arts* (Oil on canvas, 11ft. 10in. x 15ft. 2 in.) to the extent that he received public gratitude from Barry.[30] William L. Pressly offers convincing evidence that Barry painted the head of William in the oil painting *William Hunter, M.D.* (c.1780). Barry's relationship to William was hardly superficial, but rather they shared an enduring friendship because of their appointments at the Royal Academy.

We know that John accompanied his wife, Anne Home Hunter to the same annual art exhibitions attended by William. The Royal College of Surgeons in London holds Anne's notebooks of unpublished poems that contained an ode to Barry, which is undated but probably dates to c.1806; but unique within Anne's collection of poetry were her

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[30] As C. Helen Brock notes, "James Barry, engaged on a great mural for the Society of Arts, hoped William could lend him coins with the heads of Pericles and Lycurgus. William, unfortunately, could not oblige … But he [Barry] gave public expression to his gratitude to 'Dr. Hunter for the great assistance my pictures had received from the use of his most extensive and valuable Collections'" (*Hunter*, 45).

footnotes to her ode on Barry.[31] In these footnotes, Anne reveals her friendship with Barry along with her commentary on Barry's livelihood at the Royal Academy.[32] In her notebooks, we trace the depth of her relations to the Royal Academy in her thoughts on her visits to the exhibitions as well as artists she befriended. And analogous to Blake, she contributes her own criticisms on the public's reception of Barry and his intellect:

To the Memory of James Barry Esq Professor of Painting in the Royal Academy.

Eccentric Barry. resting now in peace
Within the friendly shelter of the tomb
Thy care worn form from suffering must cease,
While thy freed Spirit from the murky gloom
Of its dark prison house of mortality
Thro' realms of light Eternal, wings its way.

Nature on thee bestow'd no common mind,
At once capacious penetrating, bold;
Imagination, with those gifts combin'd,
And honest pride was mingled with thy mold:
A thirst for knowledge, a desire for fame,
[1.] And industry unequl'd, mask'd thy name.

Yet, some strange lessen (?) working tho' [i.e. thro] the whole
[2.] Stole fro they art the happy pow'r to please
[3.] Suspicion damp'd the ardour of thy soul
And disappointment, foster'd the disease.
[4.] Incompass'd by a World, to thee unknown
Then liv'dst neglected, comfortless, alone.

Unhappy, not unjust the Man I deem
Whose fancy, like a Meteor thro' the storm
Shoots forth a Wild, uncertain, fistful (?) gleam
Of lurid light; on each surrounding form
Mocking with fearful shapes, his mental blew
Shading his cheerless path, with mournful Yew.

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[31] I am aware of Caroline Grigson's *The Life and Poems of Anne Hunter* (2009), but her editorial philosophies are incongruent with academic standards.

[32] I have included the entire poem as transcribed from the manuscript as well as her footnotes.

Ah! who? shall blame when tem'prement inclines,
To aggravate the ills of human Life?
[5.] Or when in high ambitious vast designs
The haughty Spirit, with his fate at strife
Must yield with sullen fortitude to bear
The chill of blighted Hope; almost despair.

[6.] Still tho' repuls'd, the social feeling wove
A web of comfort, for declining Age;
Humanity & Friendship kindly strove
The parting pang of Nature to assuage;
The grateful Arts, the last sad duty pai'd
And the Muse sings a requiem to thy shade.

See Notes.—

1. No one who has read or heard Mr. Barry's Lectures on the theory of the art of Painting as given at the Royal Academy; or who has seen his series of Pictures at the Society of Arts and manufactures at the Adelphi, will deny him the praise of superior endorsements; or of patience and persevering application in the study and exercise of his art.

2. Mr. Barry's execution was not always equal to his conceptions, nor was his designs always in good taste. In the series of Pictures I have mentioned, the portrait of Doctor Burney swimming up the Thames with his hair full dripped (?) and surrounded by Water Nymphs, is a failure in taste and propriety too obvious not to strike every beholder in colouring his Eye was defective.

3. An unfortunate persuasion that his Brother Artists were jealous of his talents, led him to suspect them of being disposed to injure him. The Author of their notes (?) once heard Mr Barry aucr (?) that the late Sir Joshua Reynolds had by underhand means, obtained possession of a Cask sent him from Rome containing casts from Antique Statues, besides rare drawings; and he was convinced that they were secreted in Sir Joshua's cellar.

4. His ignorance of the world made him apt to fancy himself slighted. An acquaintance happening to be engaged when Mr Barry wished to visit him, was sufficient to break off an intimacy of many months standing: and thus he was reduced to live in a Solitude of his own making.

5. Mr Barry had the Soul of a great Historical painter. But he failed in the execution—his resent of Success soured his temper, and undid him negligent of the ordinary decencies of Life, and social intercourse.

> 6. From a combination of circumstances Mr Barry's affairs became so much deranged, that his friends secure his future subsistence, subscribed & purchse him an annuity. The Society for the empeacement—[33]

The first line of her poem conveys her awareness of Barry's eccentric personality, one bordering on madness because of the public's ridicule, but the immediate solace she conveys through her hopes that Barry has found everlasting peace demonstrates her special affections for his peculiarities. And Anne should know, after all, since John and she lived two blocks from his last residence. Her kindness to Barry was also the cause of John's visit to Barry's house to offer his medical expertise; however, Barry would not permit John to cross the threshold of his house because Barry suspected John was working for Sir Joshua Reynolds who had painted John in 1786.[34] Not only did Anne try to console Barry, but also she tried—through her ode—to dispel rumors of Barry's insanity, describing him as "a roman spirit with true attic taste" (Grigson 201). Because his artistic genius is a facet of his destiny, she argues, Barry had no control over the events of his life, or over the reception of his works. She describes him as one "born to achieve a glory of thy own, / To rise unaided, and to shine alone; / Thy genius takes its elevated stand / Above the level of thy native land, / Grasping at once beyond the world's controul, / The painter's fancy, and the poet's soul; /… / Commands whole ages in one fleeting hour" (201). By explaining his peculiarities as effects of his destined role as an artistic genius, she depicts Barry as a misunderstood genius, but that did not exclude him from her critique (for example, see her first footnote).

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[33] Any words that were difficult to decipher are followed by a (?) to indicate uncertainty in my own transcriptions; Royal College of Surgeons London (H-BMS0014).

[34] I speculate that he would have let William treat him, but William had passed away in 1783.

In Blake's annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds' lectures, he critiques Barry's artistic skill in a similar method to Anne's, except they differ in their comparison of Barry's perceived relation to Sir Joshua Reynolds. Anne considers Reynolds as a family friend, and respects his skills as a portrait painter, whereas Blake holds Reynolds as both the voice and the cause of the commercialization of art at the cost of imaginative creativity.[35] Blake sees the rise of Reynolds as symptomatic of the devolution of humanity and its artistic productivity: hence "The Arts & Sciences are the Destruction of Tyrannies or Bad Governments Why should a Good Government endeavour to Depress What is its Chief & only Support" along with his supposition that "The Foundation of Empire is Art & Science Remove them or Degrade them & the Empire is No More—Empire follows Art & Not Vice Versa as Englishmen suppose" (Erdman 636). Given Blake's resentment towards Reynolds along with prominent figures supporting his work at the Royal Academy (both financially and publicly), Blake readily identifies with Barry's conviction that the Reynolds camp intended to destroy Barry's art and to silence his philosophies pertaining to the education and cultivation of art.

The following excerpt offers the best evidence that Blake personally met Barry and it describes the tension within the Royal Academy atmosphere: "Who will Dare to Stay that Polite Art is Encouraged, or Either Wished or Tolerated in a Nation where The Society for the Encouragement of Art. Sufferd Barry to Give them, his Labour for Nothing A Society Composed of the Flower of the English Nobility & Gentry—Suffering an Artist to Starve while he Supported Really what They under pretence of Encouraging were Endeavouring to

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[35] See Hazard Adams' *Blake's Margins: an interpretive study of the annotations* (2009) for a thorough analysis of Blake's attacks upon the philosophies of Reynolds and his successful artworks. Wisely, Adams explains Blake's extended attacks on eighteenth-century culture.

Depress.—Barry told me that while he Did that Work—he Lived on Bread & Apples" (636). Blake, unlike Anne, sees no flaws in Barry's artistic skill, but both Anne and Blake share the viewpoint that Barry was a deeply misunderstood genius. To Anne, Barry let paranoia destroy his reputation, but Blake attributed the destruction of Barry's sanity to the Royal Academy's founders and London's shifting cultural ideologies.

Even before James Barry's prominence and subsequent decline, the Hunter Circle had already overlapped with Blake's life. During Blake's apprenticeship under James Basire, we see another network that offers us a glimpse into the blurring of anatomist and Romantic literary figures. In the twentieth century, Jane Oppenheimer left us with an especially strong link between William Blake and John Hunter, one that has been neglected from a lack of historical evidence to corroborate their connection. Extrapolating from Blake's "Public Address" where he writes that "I knew the Men [Woolett & Strange] intimately from their Intimacy with Basire my Master," she emphasized John Hunter's relation with James Basire as an engraver for his projects (573). Scholars have offered a vague acceptance of this working partnership between John Hunter and Basire, but until now, our understanding of the extent or timeline of this relationship has lacked firm evidence.

J.F. Palmer's compilation, *The Works of John Hunter* (1837; 4 vols) included plates clearly showing that John had retained Basire's engraving services for both his *The Natural History of the Human Teeth* (1771) and his "Philosophical Transactions" papers from the years 1787-1794.[36] But a recently discovered manuscript in the Royal College of Surgeons of

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[36] Evidence is found in a subsequent volume of J.F. Palmer's *The Works of John Hunter* (1837) containing plate from Palmer's compilation of Hunter's works. In Palmer's volume of Hunter's illustrations you can clearly see James Basire's name along with several others such as: William Bell, William Sharp, James Roberts, William Skelton, George Scharf, J.V. Riemsdyk, James Stuart, and James Gilpin. These names, including Basire's, are not always visible in our digital archives such as *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (ECCO) and *Journal Storage* (JSTOR).

England demonstrates not only that Hunter employed Basire's services, but that he did so precisely during the time in which Blake was his apprentice. William Clift (1775-1849), one of John's last secretaries, and the initial curator of the Hunterian Museum after the government purchased his anatomical collection, corroborates John's relationship with Basire. In his personal journals (RCSE; MS0007), Clift speaks of copying "a handful of [John] Hunter's remaining papers" and remarks that they include accompanying illustrations by Basire. Clift gives them a date range of 1775-1780; these crucial years overlap with Blake's apprenticeship with Basire.

Unfortunately, it is quite possible we may never see the papers mentioned by Clift since they were given to Sir Everard Home (1756-1832) who destroyed about two-thirds of John's work to avoid charges of intellectual theft.[37] Nonetheless, we can believe in the veracity of Clift's meticulous transcriptions and his steadfast dedication to John's works; among those contemporaries that admired Clift was Richard Owen, the succeeding Hunterian Museum curator, whose letters speak of Clift's integrity as an individual and as a naturalist.[38] Clift's note regarding John's papers with Basire illustrations during Blake's apprentice years, along with the knowledge of the working relationship that spanned over a quarter of a century between John and Basire, provides us with a robust circumstantial connection between these three men extending beyond Blake's caricature of Hunter in *Island in the Moon*. Blake did originally write "Jack Hunter" in his *Island* manuscript but eventually

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[37] According to Clift's 'Notes on the destruction of the Hunterian Manuscripts' (c. 1824).

[38] Sir Humphry Davy is largely instrumental for Clift's induction into the Royal Society in 8 May 1823. In a 1945 letter from Arthur Keith to George Grey Turner, he described Clift as a 'meticulous gatherer of small facts'. According to Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Clift was 'praised by the surgeon John Flint South, Sir Benjamin Brodie the elder' and Sir Joseph Banks. Accessed January 20, 2011 at: www.oxforddnb.com

struck through "Hunter", leaving us our present "Jack Tearguts". Yet even this action demonstrates that Blake still thought of John long after his days in Basire's shop, and perhaps had come to regret the insult.[39]

Blake's overlap with the Hunters Circle at the Royal Academy is hardly restricted to their mutual affinities for select artists. After Blake's apprenticeship with Basire ended, he was admitted as a student at the Royal Academy in 1779 and consequently was required to attend William's anatomy lectures.[40] Scholars have typically assumed the dates of Martin Kemp's transcripts of William's lectures from 1768-1772 as the range William's tenure at the Royal Academy. This is because Helen C. Brock stated in *Correspondences* that, "though William never published his Royal Academy lectures, rough notes for the lectures from 1769-1772 have survived. From these, Martin Kemp has reconstructed much of the contents of the introductory lecture, together with the material for succeeding lectures"; we tend to too readily consider Kemp reconstruction as the authoritative version (293). Kemp's work is extremely valuable for understanding the content of William's lectures, but he has misled us on the chronology of William's appointment. First of all, we know that in the spring of 1771 "the King helped alleviate the overcrowding in the Academy's Pall Mall building by providing rooms in the under-used Royal Apartments at old Somerset House in the Strand—there is a Zoffany painting of Dr. William Hunter […] lecturing to students and academicians in these rooms" (Taylor 5). Furthermore, the Royal Academy's mandate in Section III stipulates, "There shall be a Professor of Anatomy, who shall be elected from the most

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[39] There is a curious catalog record at the Hunterian Collection at University of Glasgow MS Gen 1652/19 that relates Dr. William Hunter to Basire as well as to Blake: "Papers relating to the research into two pen and watercolour paintings by James Basire; 'The Garden of Gethsemane' and 'The Last Supper' (1798), created to illuminate forgery by William Blake and to satirize some of his work. By Nicholas Valentine, Lower Largo, Fife, 1997. 27 Sheets. 2 photographic prints (colour) mounted."

[40] Records of Blake's exact attendance have proven difficult to narrow with certainty.

eminent men in that branch of Science. He shall read annually Six public Lectures in the Royal Academy, adapted to the Arts of Design; and shall continue in office during the Queen's pleasure" (Sandby 426). Since John Sheldon, F.R.S. (1752-1808) did not succeed William as the Professor of Anatomy at the Royal Academy until 18 July 1783, then there is an elapse of eleven years in current scholarship regarding William's tenure at the Royal Academy.[41] I believe William held his professorship until Sheldon's appointment, and repeated his six lectures in those eleven years.[42] In summary, given the King's mandate but also that there is no other anatomy lecturer between William and Sheldon we can conclude that William continued to give his lectures through the time during which Blake was required to take them.

In a two-volume work of *The Lives of the Artists*, the gossipy eighteenth-century biographer Whitey explicitly places Blake in William's classroom at Old Somerset House:

> Dr. William Hunter's lectures on anatomy were strong features of the instruction at Old Somerset House, and bodies of criminals who had been executed were from time to time allotted to the Royal Academy for purposes of demonstration. Some the actual dissection appears to have taken place at Surgeons' Hall. [John] Deare, writing when he was only sixteen, to his father in the country, says he has been to see two men hanged and afterwards witnessed the partial dissection of one of them at Surgeons' Hall. The muscular development of the second man was so remarkable that Hunter declined to dissect the body, saying that it was worth preserving. It was therefore carried to the Academy schools, where [Agostino] Carlini the sculptor undertook to make a cast from it. That body, which was that of a smuggler, was placed in the attitude of the Dying Gladiator, and Carlin's cast, known always to the students as 'Smugglerius,' remained in the schools for many years afterwards.
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> The earlier students at Old Somerset House included … John Flaxman, … William Blake… (Whitey, 277, vol.1)

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[41] See "John Sheldon" entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for further consultation. Accessed 23 June 2012.

[42] Professorship in anatomy at the Royal had five year terms, but however, eligible for re-election (Sandby 361).

In *Jerusalem* Blake designates "Somerset" as one of the "Forty Counties of England […] divided in the Gates Of Rube" and therefore a geographical space created in the world from Jerusalem's bosom, which Blake extends to describe the contemporary postlapsarian world (Erdman 160). Given Whitey's identification of Blake as one of William's students at the Old Somerset House, along with the fact that Blake's first exhibition premiered at the newly reconstructed wing of Somerset house in May 1780, then Blake's identification of Somerset in one of his longest illuminated works adds another explanation for his loathing for this London landmark.

Finally, by revisiting Blake's homework assignment (anatomical sketches) for his Anatomy and Life lectures, we can argue that its production resulted from William's lectures. Thus Blake's initial introduction to the Hunter Circle began at the Royal Academy, and it was one of his earliest exposures to prevailing anatomical theories. By revising William's timeline at the Royal Academy, we can begin to reconstruct a social network that connected the Hunter Circle and Blake. With that in mind we can examine how Blake's *Urizen*, *Milton*, and *Four Zoas* operate in not only a political or allegorical framework but also within a somatic context.

Anatomical Rhetoric in Blake's Corpus

Blood. Guts. Creation. These are objects that Blake boldly touches upon in his hauntingly beautiful illuminated book, *The [First] Book of Urizen* (1794).[43] Blake published this illuminated book roughly six years after he invented relief etching, which ushered in an intense history of producing his illuminated books in the 1790s. In these books, Blake's

[43] In 1818 (copy G), Blake contracts the original title, *The First Book of Urizen* to *The Book of Urizen*, which has produced numerous claims by scholars investigating the implication of the contracted title in regards to *The Book of Los* and *The Book of Ahania*, and whether they form a relational context to one another or are individualistic. See Viscomi, *The Idea of the Book*, pp. 279-88 for a detailed history on *Urizen*'s production history in relation to other illuminated books.

illustrations, combined with his poetical texts, have been the subject of many scholarly debates. In the following three illuminated books *Urizen*, *The Book of Los* (1795), and *The Book of Ahania* (1795), Blake explores themes concerning origins. He especially focuses on the origins of man, religious authority, and social norms in these illuminated books. The forms of his works are creation myths attempting to explain how we arrived at the present day notion of ourselves. His answers to the complex question of who we are requires a close examination of how his poetic and illustrative processes incorporate contemporary medical ideas as he explains, in *Urizen*, the metaphysics and the materiality of our composition.

Urizen focuses on the origins of man to explain how man has become enslaved by the religious systems that Blake believes restrain minds and bodies. In the literary structure of *Urizen* Blake parodies the Book of Genesis, both in his use of double columns and chapters, and in narrative sequence. Before Blake can show the relationship between a human body and the restrictive systems of society, he begins with a mythological "Eternity," a preexisting place that is home to the "Eternals," the demigods of Blake's corpus. In Eternity, Urizen, one of the Eternals, begins to withdraw from the other Eternals, which announces the impending division of Eternity.[44] In the process of his exodus from Eternity, Urizen, who becomes the central autocrat of the poem, undergoes various radical changes to his states of being (Worrall 10).[45] In darkness, Urizen works on his "Book of Brass" and "His iron laws," when Los—Blake's alter ego—an important character in Blake's myth representing imagination, is torn from Urizen's side "in a way analogous to Eve's division from Adam" (Erdman 72: 44,

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[44] Please note that my italicized "*Urizen*" refers to the poem, whereas the non-italicized "Urizen" refers to the figure Urizen. I follow these distinctions throughout the paper.

[45] All 8 copies are ordered differently and vary in the number of plates, from 25 to 28 plates. Out of theses 8 copies of *Urizen*, it is interesting to note that Worrall believes *Urizen*, copy C (1794) is the authoritative ordering of *Urizen* because he believes Blake omits plates depicting Los to emphasizes the title, *The Book of Urizen*.

81: 26 and Worrall 10). When Urizen confronts the Eternals in his bid for a world where dynamics cease to exist and therefore, the world is "without fluctuation," he causes the final schism in Eternity to occur (Erdman 71: 11). Then darkness consumes Urizen's environment. Thereafter, Urizen is confined to a circular space where blood begins to pool and "a human heart" describes the newly Urizenic world (73: 36). As this abyss of darkness expands, Urizen's formlessness of "unmeasurable death" undergoes a transmutation (74: 8).

In reaction to the Eternal's fury and Eternity's strife, Los tries to prevent Urizen's changes by condemning him to corporeality, which I will demonstrate later on in this section. After Urizen is rent from Los's side, Los fears Urizen's "fathomless void for his feet; / And intense fires for his dwellings" (74: 5-6). So, as Urizen lies "in a dreamless night," Los uses his blacksmithing skills to "bound every change / With rivets of iron & brass" of the formless Urizen (74: 9-10). As a consequence of this, Urizen condenses into a human body because of Los's relentless blacksmithing; Los also witnesses the creation of the first female form, Enitharmon, with whom Los will eventually beget Orc (a son of revolution). After his body is corporeal, Los endures a "stony sleep" as "ages roll'd" over him, after which he awakes to the newly created material world (74: 2, 5). He sets off to explore this world and finds that his children are unable to maintain his "iron law," which makes his "soul sicken'd" (81: 26, 23). In order to ensure his rule in this world, Urizen, freshly separated from Eternity, weaves an impenetrable web over the cities he visits. As the material world continues to grow, ironically, it becomes the world we know. This new world is without "eternal life" and ruled by false laws and systems that bind mankind (71: 39).

In the myriad creation narratives in *Urizen*, Blake's use of blood precedes the creation of Urizen's (and Enitharmon's) human body. David Worrall further explains, "Life

takes on a human form Blake describes as a 'globe of life blood trembling', Blake's two-way image of both a blood corpuscle and planetary universe" (22). In other words, Blake focuses on blood to introduce Urizen because of blood's corporeality and its familiarity as a material substance common to all living objects. The use of blood to introduce Urizen's bodily changes is Blake's contribution to the debate surrounding the notion of blood as the origin of material bodies. His poetic diction and metaphors are not alone in signifying the complex relationship between blood and its capacity to aid in the production of a body. His illustrations that accompany the text, and also his full-page illustrations sharpen Blake's focus on the link between blood and body formation.[46]

The idea of relating a creation myth to a primal anatomical substance makes one wonder why Blake is unusually precise in anatomical rhetoric in his explication of Urizen's body formation (as well as Enitharmon's). As noted, *Urizen* parodies Genesis, but it seems unlikely that Genesis was Blake's source for describing the formation of man's body: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, & breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soule [sic]" (KJV Chapter II).[47] In *Urizen*, Blake dedicates three plates (*Blake Books* 10, 11, and 13) and forty-six lines to track Urizen's body formation from a formless entity into a material human body. In *The Illuminated Blake*, David V. Erdman describes Urizen's fetal positioned skeleton as a moment in the long process of fleshing Urizen's body: "We see a cowl of flesh begin to form over the spine and behind the

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[46] Unless otherwise noted, I refer to *Urizen*, copy A (1794) from The William Blake Archive (www.blakearchive.org) throughout this paper for visual illustrations. I use copy A because it is the earliest printing of *Urizen* and is the only one of two copies to contain all 28 plates (copy B printed in 1795 is the other copy).

[47] I cite from a 1611 King James Version familiar to Blake.

head of his aged greenish bones, and a blue spinal nerve" (190).[48] Blake's elongated and highly concentrated elucidation of Urizen's body suggests that he did not find inspiration for Urizen's body in Genesis.

The detailed piecemeal presentation of Urizen's body parts after a large quantity of blood suggests that Blake used a widely known anatomical treatise by John, *A Treatise on The Blood, Inflammation, and Gun-Shot Wounds* (1794). As I will argue, the anatomical knowledge displayed in *Urizen* derives from John's treatise, which reflects Blake's familiarity with this text as well as competing theories of anatomy in his day.[49] The popularity of John's posthumous treatise marks a shift in anatomy not only to explain how our bodies' structure works, but also to delve into the origin of the body's materiality. John's obsession during the last years of his life was to locate the "original spark" of a human body, and this proved the impetus behind his research to write *Blood*, in which he states repeatedly that blood is the origin of a body. Blake's use of *Blood* provides him with another opportunity to satirize, but also to modify John by using his theories of body formation to create the contemptible Urizen.[50] I will demonstrate how Blake's and John's texts engage with one another, as they both attempt to answer the fundamental late eighteenth-century question of why our physical bodies manifest as they do.

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[48] Please visit www.blakearchive.org to see *The [First] Book of Urizen*, copy B, object 11 for a clear visual.

[49] From this point onwards, I will cite John's treatise by its abbreviated form, "*Blood*."

[50] The first instance of Blake's satirizing of John Hunter is the character 'Jack Tearguts' from *An Island in the Moon* (1784): "Ah said Sipsop, I only wish Jack [*Hunter*] Tearguts had had the cutting of Plutarch he understands anatomy better than any of the Ancients hell plunge his knife up to the hilt in a single drive and thrust his fist in, and all in the space of a Quarter of an hour. He does not mind their crying—tho they ever so hell Swear at them & keep them down with his fist & tell them hell scrape their bones if they dont lay still & be quiet" (Erdman 454).

My focus on Urizen's body and the sequence of materials that Blake used to create his body aims to show that Blake is aware of the philosophical debates about the structure and development of the material components in bodies that preoccupied eighteenth-century anatomists. Blake's application of John's specific sequence of body parts as they form from blood suggests that we are able to trace how *Urizen* enlists but also critiques *Blood*'s theories. Blake's construction of bodies seeks not to comment on the body-as-an-idea, but rather to link our bodies to Urizen's body in order to free the original Poetic Genius. To fully understand the repercussions of Blake's adaptation of John's philosophical inquiries on the origins and structure of the human body, we must first direct our attention to Blake's use of blood to understand why material substances appear as they do in *Urizen*. By doing so, we are able to read *Urizen*'s body construction scene as not only a creation myth, but also as an attempt by Blake to render Urizen's body as a similitude for ours.

History of Blakean Scholarship on Urizen's Body

The eight extant copies of *Urizen* come with a puzzling printing record in that "the problem of arranging the plates is confusing, for each of the seven [eight] copies is bound quite differently from the others … [and] despite the extraordinary inconsistency of the orders in which copies are numbered and bound, the proper arrangement of the text is fairly plain" (*Blake Books* 171-2).[51] The enigmatic history of *Urizen*'s technical production combined with the vivid full-page color illustrations has caused much speculation around *Urizen* and its textual meanings. Therefore, a brief survey of past scholarship on Blake's *Urizen* will provide us with a historical spectrum of the body criticism focused on Urizen's body.

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[51] Bentley did not know of copy J at the time he published *Blake Books* (1977).

D. J. Sloss and J. P. R. Willis, coauthors of an early twentieth-century Blake edition, *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake* (1926), explain the phrase "globe of life blood" and its visual representation as a feminine symbol that is intended to invoke "the idea of corporeity," while serving as a reminder of the "distracting influence of mundane environment upon the visionary, the appeal of the physical beauty, of social, moral, and artistic conventions" (96, fn. 39). In 1965, forty years after Sloss and Willis's edition, S. Foster Damon published *A Blake Dictionary* that connects Urizen's stages of materialization to the nine-month gestation period of a human's embryology. He writes that *Urizen* is about "spiritual conflicts" which in turn "create[s] the physical body, tracing the development of the embryo to the foetus" (422). Damon's parallel between the development of Urizen's body and that of a human embryo remains the current interpretation amongst Blake scholars. Moreover, recent critical works strengthen Damon's claim by reinforcing the parallel between Urizen's body and human embryology using historical connections, such as to Dr. William Hunter's *Human Gravid Uterus* (1774).[52]

Stefani Engelstein's *Anxious Anatomy* (2008) psychoanalyzes the position of bodies displayed in *Urizen*'s illustrations under the pretense of an embryological framework established in Damon's *Blake Dictionary*. She explains *Urizen* as Blake's "most explicitly embryological text," concluding from that premise that:

> Blake's images in this work look like a bizarre distortion of an obstetrical atlas: a skeleton curls itself into a fetal position, an old man floats in dark amniotic-fluid, a young wound in the coils of a serpent that resembles the umbilical cord falls head downward in accordance with the late-term fetal

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[52] This folio edition is known for its exquisite detailed depictions of a pregnant uterus in the last trimester and the manner it is presented. As the reader progresses, each plate reveals what is beneath the layer removed in the dissection. In recent criticism, this book has attracted attention because the mother's body is displayed with her limbs (head, arms, and legs) hacked off and its incision points are just as detailed as the uterus.

> position, a womb-like globe swollen with blood floats outside any body, attached by branchy forms to the exterior of a male figure. (79)[53]

After her explication of Urizen's body formation scene, Engelstein suggests, "Like [Dr. William] Hunter's texts, Blake's poem is simultaneously an embryological account and an atlas" (84). From this point, she departs into the anatomical history of obstetrics to highlight Blake's use of words that she believes connote fetal imagery.[54]

As Engelstein relates *Urizen* to William's *Uterus*, she informs us that her reading of *Urizen* differs from Tristanne Connolly's earlier work, *William Blake and the Body* (2002), because she goes "a step further and demonstrate[s] how Blake's celebration of the body coexists with his antagonism toward contemporary trends in the natural sciences" (71). For Engelstein, Connolly's survey of the body in Blake's work is more akin to Northrop Frye's and Kathleen Raine's "canonical readings" of Blake's "antagonistic position toward nature and the natural history," resulting in an understanding of Blake as "an antimaterialist Neoplatonist" (71). However, Connolly, too, sees *Urizen* in relation to William's *Uterus* and other obstetrical treatises.

In the course of her readings, Connolly makes *Urizen* analogous to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* because of the similarities the characters in both works share, which for her cannot be coincidental, despite other numerous works with themes of the history and creation of the world. The shift of Urizen's body from non-corporeal to corporeal is termed "metamorphosis" by Connolly, which allows her to bring in *Metamorphoses*; however, one cannot tell whether *Urizen* or *Metamorphoses* is the focus of her chapter on embodiment.

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[53] She uses *Urizen,* copy G c. 1818, for what appears to be for her own aesthetic preference. I provide my examples of the illustrations she analyzes from copy A for the reasons I stated in fn. 46.

[54] Considering that she has a chapter titled "'Natural' Reproduction and Reproducing Nature," it is interesting to note the absence of Damon in her bibliography.

The symbol of metamorphosis that Connolly ascribes to Urizen's body transformation affords her the opportunity to bring in human embryology via the Hunter brothers.

Connolly starts with this line of inquiry: "Images of foetal development are appropriate to *Urizen*'s story of beginnings, but why in reverse?" (80). Her answer is that "Blake could be hinting that creation is more of a regression than an advance. Creation is at odds with itself: supposed to come into being, for Blake it is a step closer to nonexistence" (80). This also applies to those who study embryos: "[I]n their concentration on the empirically perceptible material body, they do not really discuss life" (80). If she had read either of the Hunters' works carefully, she would have found plenty of instances in which the Hunters cite their philosophical stance on the origins of life, even as they admit they have no empirical proof for their beliefs. She freely cites from William's *Uterus*, failing to address the fact that William did not compose the text. William dissected the pregnant cadavers while Jan van Rymsdyk (fl. 1767-1790) engraved the stages of his dissection. In the 1794 edition, a decade after William's death, his nephew, Matthew Baillie, composed the accompanying text, the content of which was deemed unsatisfactory to contemporary anatomists and was especially disagreeable to John, who had helped with the dissection.[55] She concludes, in light of obstetrics, that prevailing theories of fetal development during Blake's composition of *Urizen* "enable a link between metamorphosis and foetal development. The changes of Urizen play with both concepts, preformation and epigenesis," and that Urizen's formation ought to be understood as a mode of "embodiment [that] is not the same as the birth of a child: it is the binding of an eternal" (81, 94). From Connolly's perspective, then, the changes

[55] Connolly cites the 1774 edition of *Uterus* in her bibliography; however, there is no text in the 1774 edition that I have personally examined and I know of no other 1774 edition that *does* contain text. It seems to me that she cites text found in the 1794 edition thinking Dr. Hunter would have wrote those words in 1774 had he not been so hesitant to elucidate a theory on embryology at a time when it was rife with conflicts from a theological standpoint.

of Urizen's body are a conceptual rather than a somatic rendition of prevailing anatomical theories of Blake's day: "Blake's description of it echoes the transformations of the foetus, and, through the alienation of metamorphosis, the ambivalence of human birth" (94).

In "William Blake and Eighteenth Century Medicine" (1979), F.B. Curtis, too, examines *Urizen* as a commentary on the creation of mankind through eighteenth-century theories of embryology. However, Curtis traces three prevalent terms in Blake's works—"spine," "bones," and "fibres"—to multiple obstetrical works.[56] For *Urizen*, he understands these three words as aids in signifying "the frequent association of pains of gestation and childbirth, ironically inverted by Blake: Man's entry into the world as a child promises freshness and youth" because it is in the womb that such body parts are formed (196). As we saw with Engelstein, Connolly reads the scene of Urizen's shift from a dark abyss into a human body as representing the embryology (or gestational) process without addressing the minute details Blake incorporates into the scene. It is only at the end of the formation process that Urizen's newly formed human body receives attention from the critics. The actual minute process of Urizen's formation becomes just a facet of embryology in their readings. Whether intentional or not, each critic's reading does confirm Damon's original claim that Urizen's body formation models the human embryological process. Curtis concludes that Blake's choice to use an embryological narrative for Urizen's body formation scene explains how "Blake gain[s] by using anatomical imagery" in order "to locate the creation of his figures firmly within the context of birth and therefore of pain" (197).

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[56] Curtis characterizes the following medical works as influences in *Urizen*: W. Osborn's *Essays on the Practice of Midwifery* (1792), J. Bell's *The Anatomy of the Bones, Muscles, and Joints* (1794), and J. Aitken's *Essays on several important subjects in surgery* (1771).

In "Evolution and William Blake" (1965), Carmen Kreiter argues that *Urizen* indicates the increased likelihood that Blake had direct contact with John, Kreiter writes, "Blake could also have drawn the embryological changes of Urizen from material seen in [John] Hunter's museum, for Hunter had made many sketches of stages of development of various animals, in which he had illustrated how first the heart develops, then the brain, the spine, and so on" (113). From that premise, Kreiter believes Blake's use of "conglobing" allows for the strong possibility that Blake witnessed open heart surgery: "'Conglobing' is not a term that describes the heart's action as deduced from the appearance of the chest wall; such terms are the common 'beating' or 'pounding'. Blake's term, on the contrary, describes something only seen when the heart is viewed through a surgically opened chest" (114). In other words, Blake might have stood next to John as he dissected or performed surgery on a living patient.

While I do agree that Blake is familiar with the Hunter brothers, I am not willing to accept Kreiter's speculation about an actual meeting between Blake and John Hunter (at this point in my archival research). Furthermore, Kreiter believes Blake's use of embryological terms derives from two pioneering classic studies by William Harvey that John Hunter must have "undoubtedly owned" and discussed with Blake during their meeting (116).[57] Hence, Kreiter believes that Urizen's body creation is "not merely an arbitrary invention," but rather "that it echoes with considerable accuracy the seven-staged description of embryogenesis made by John Hunter's famous seventeenth-century predecessor, William Harvey" (116). Kreiter is right to highlight the uncanny parallels in Urizen's formation to anatomical works. However, his assumption of a meeting between Blake and John is too circumstantial without

[57] Kreiter specifically points to two of Harvey's famous works: *An Anatomical Disquisition of the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals* (1638) and *De Generatione* (1651).

any support from viable archival evidence. In addition, Kreiter selection of medical texts that Kreiter believes are reflected in Urizen rests entirely upon the assumption that John shared them with Blake.

Despite the historical tendency in Blakean scholarship to conceptualize Urizen's body scene as an embryological process without regard to Blake's unusually specific anatomical language, John Mee in "Bloody Blake: Nation and Circulation" (2006), analyzes a specific anatomical object often repeated in *Urizen*. He traces Blake's use of the word "blood" in *Urizen* to reveal Blake's source in the works of John Brown. In doing so, Mee theorizes how Blake's use of "blood" from a particular medical text reflects how Blake modifies "blood" to comment on the social ills of the eighteenth century. In the next section, I will provide a close reading of how Mee defines Blake's rationale and source for his notion on blood. Subsequently, I will examine the historical source Mee believes to be the primer of Blake's anatomical knowledge.

Mee is right to detect an underwhelming amount of scholarship devoted exclusively to Blake's treatment of blood, specifically in *Urizen*. He argues that Blake's use of blood suggests that we ought to read its role in *Urizen* as part of a larger metaphor, namely circulation. Mee does not focus on the corporeality of the substances Blake employs to create Urizen's human body. Instead, he examines how blood helps, metaphorically speaking, circulate Urizen's actions and desires before and after Eternity's split. Mee argues that circulation and its opposing force, "blockage," were "central to the ideas of the health of the nation both literally and metaphorically. The circulation of goods was regarded as the lifeblood of the nation," which is why he believes Blake uses the same conceptual framework to aid his readers through contemporaneous literary themes (63). From this perspective, Mee

conceives Urizen's body as a micro-example of England's body politic. Mee's examination of the metaphors of circulation in *Urizen* harks to a rich eighteenth-century trope that Mee believes is evident of Blake's commercial work as an engraver on Dr. John Brown's *Elements of Medicine* (1795).[58]

According to Mee, Blake's circulation metaphors are inspired by Dr. Brown's idea about the body's operation as "a self-contained system of energy rather than its causes" (69). This theory, Mee suggests, is why *Urizen* is really about "the broader ideas about formatted space" and "the operations of sympathy in body politic" (74). Despite his disregarding the possibility that Blake uses blood as a corporeal substance, Mee discusses why blood is a metaphoric component of circulating spaces within *Urizen*:

> The 'wheels of blood' are not exactly regulated into any arterial system of exchange. Equally when the cardiovascular system emerges as the dominant trope in *The Book of Urizen*, it is not simply part of an opposition between blockage and circulation, but also between two different ideas of circulation. Urizen's is 'Self-closd, all-repelling.' … Yet for all that he is identified with 'solid obstruction,' Urizen does not exactly block circulation as such. Rather he wants to produce (he never exactly succeeds) a codified system of rigidly formatted space, 'The net of Religion,' through which constrained forms of sympathy may circulate. (76)

What we see is that Mee's analysis is mainly concerned with how circulation benefits Urizen's newly reformatted world (the post-Eternity material world). He reads Urizen's shift from a formless entity into a solid (corporeal) body as representing the forces of expansion and contraction, respectively. These spatial manifestations can then be read as indicating the "desire of Urizen to abstract a more orderly space from these bloody passions" in which "'whirlwinds and cataracts of blood' are eventually formatted into a more orderly space

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[58] Blake engraved the front piece, which is a portrait of the author. This is a translated edition (from Latin to English) published by Joseph Johnson.

organized around the universal laws of the moral sentiments" (78). By circulating moral sentiments, Mee means that the motions of circulation are precisely what enables Urizen to spread his ideologies for "One command, one joy, one desire, / One curse, one weight, one measure / One King, one God, one Law" around his new world (Erdman 72: 38-40).

In his quest to "circulate" his desires, Urizen also opposes Eternity's delightful fires of frenetic energy by "cooling down like an antiphlogistic doctor, but his idea of stability only brings death" (Mee 79). Mee believes Blake's association of coolness with Urizen's body intends to slow the energy of Eternity, and, in response to Urizen's coolness, the "Eternals think Urizen's formatted universe brings death rather than life" (79). For Mee, the circulation metaphor and polar temperatures in *Urizen* are proof of "Blake's ability to acknowledge the material conditions of the world-as-it-is and at the same time his insistence on the importance of another kind of circulation entirely as the proper basis of human relationships" (79). With this belief, Mee displaces the circulation metaphor into the realm of metaphysics, therefore, reading Blake's use of blood as rooted in a larger project that comments upon abstract human relationships. The legitimacy of these relationships is directly tied to their (dys)functional paths of circulating desires, or their blockage in such paths. Mee thinks Blake's greatest source of inspiration for using circulation as a metaphor to talk about human relationships comes from Dr. Brown's excitability chart (see Figure 2) that attempts to classify levels of excitement in a person's body as a diagnostic tool.[59]

Brown's chart, Mee argues, serves as the basic guide for Blake's use of the eighteenth-century's popularization of "the trope of circulation" that was "capable of being conceived in different ways" which Blake demonstrates in *Urizen* (79). The idea of

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[59] See Figure 2.

systematically mapping a body's range of responses is not original to Brown; however, he did popularize its reception among medical and laymen alike. In fact, *Elements* is more of an empirical account arising out of Renaissance's humorism, which was becoming increasingly outmoded and unable to withstand the new advances in anatomical knowledge.[60] Dr. Brown salvages the humoral theory by grounding it in empirically derived categories. For instance, he takes a common disease and records its effects on the body in terms of agitated or languid states. Figure 2 depicts the center of this scale as having a zone that represents a healthy body. The healthy body's equilibrium consists of the two states of excitement: *sthenic*, when energy is excessive and *asthenia*, extreme weakness. The symptoms of a common disease are noted on the chart according to the degrees of excitability a body exhibits as it suffers. Thus their cures—according to Dr. Samuel Lynch, who created this chart for Dr. Brown—are based on "support[ing] the excitement" or "diminish[ing] the excitement" (Brown 163). Dr. Brown condenses the four humors into two states: excitement and death. According to the chart, perfect health is narrow in scope. There are five degrees in either direction, which become a "predisposition" towards an illness. The content and development of this chart span the two volumes of *Elements* as it discusses many other diseases and cures in light of this chart. But it is odd for Mee to rely on Dr. Brown's chart for his primary understanding of Blake's use of blood if Mee is also treating Blakean blood as a metaphor. In fact, *Elements* cannot offer us textual clues in indentifying Blake's source of anatomical knowledge. The problem is that Dr. Brown hardly discusses blood, since his text is more concerned with how to stabilize the body's states of excitement in order to prevent death.

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[60] Humorism: The doctrine of the four bodily 'humours' and their relation to 'temperaments' and to diseases (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The four bodily humors are: black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood. The four temperaments commonly associated were: melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic, and sanguine.

Dr. Brown's discussions of body parts are neither specific nor the central to his chapters. Body parts such as the brain, the eye, or blood are used as reference points to describe diseases and their location in the body. Dr. Brown never delves into a body part to explain its functionality in relation to the body or how it forms. It is doubtful that Blake's knowledge of body parts in the order he presents them in *Urizen* or his use of blood derives from a thorough reading of *Elements*. The lengthy two-volume text has one goal: to explain the body's excitement levels and its desire to maintain health within the five degrees on his chart. Everything else reads as a manual designed to help us restore our body's equilibrium when ill.

Lastly, there is another oddity to Mee's connection between *Urizen* and *Elements*: the chronology between the two texts. It is ahistorical because Blake put a date of 1794 on *Urizen*'s title plate, but his engraving of Dr. Brown's portrait for Johnson was published May 1, 1795.[61] While one might argue that Blake might have spent the preceding year working on the portrait—he was, but along with other projects such as *Songs of Experience* (1794), *Europe* (1794), and *Poems of Catullus* (tr. J. Nott March 10, 1795)—this still implies that Blake had access to the newly translated pages from *Elements*. This is problematic. It is generally assumed in Blake scholarship that Blake did not know Latin. Since Dr. Thomas Beddoes translated the 1794 edition of *Elements* from eccentric Latin into English to be published in March or April 1795, it would have been necessary for Blake to have contact with Dr. Beddoes to have the translated pages. I have not been successful in locating proof that puts Blake in proximity to Dr. Beddoes in order to have access to the translation before it was published. Nonetheless, Joseph Johnson, the book's publisher, would not have viewed it

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[61] See Figure 3.

necessary for Blake to read *Elements* before completing the portrait. Therefore, it seems to me that the English edition could have only been available to Blake shortly before it was published or when it was actually available to the public in May 1795. These dates suggest it would have been much too late for Blake to incorporate Brown's theories in *Urizen*. To avoid these chronological potholes, Mee believes that Blake's work on *Urizen* and Dr. Brown's portrait overlapped during 1794 and suggests that the 1794 date on *Urizen*'s title page was written before the illuminated book was completed. Furthermore, he concludes that "Blake did not necessarily have the Brown volume in his possession to engrave the portrait, but the sudden infusion of blood into his poetry suggests that he either read it or knew something of it" (Mee 74). If Blake did not know Latin or Dr. Beddoes, I am uncertain as to how Mee concludes that Blake had access to the translation to have read it. Even if he "knew something of it," there still remains the other aforementioned issue, that *Elements* does not treat blood as an extensive topic.

Mee's original intention to highlight the presence of blood in Urizen is a valid point of inquiry. However, by treating blood as a metaphorical component of yet another metaphor, circulation, Mee does not entertain the notion that Blake's use of blood could very well be just what it is—blood, a corporeal substance. My treatment of Blake's use of blood rests on the view that Blake regards each body part and substances as corporeally as possible. By treating Blake's anatomical rhetoric as signifiers of anatomical references, I will examine how *Urizen* engages with John's *Blood* and its attempts to explain the origin of a material body and its major organs via blood. Nonetheless, in other works, we will see, blood for Blake is not simply reducible to anatomy but takes on the larger meanings of life and prophecy.

Mixing Blood to form the Hunterian Body of Urizen

John identifies blood as the carrier of the "original spark" of life because it ubiquitously participates in every function of the body—from structural composition to the sustainment of bodily actions. To develop this concept further, he devotes chapter six in *Blood* to explaining the philosophical and empirical accounts of blood's connection with "living solids" and ultimately how blood has the ability to create a body.[62] Or alternatively, as Youngquist succinctly phrases it: "Thus the blood, which circulates throughout the body to enliven it and coagulates when necessary to rebuild it, is alive" (Youngquist 11). Interestingly, John explains the need for chapter six despite his long publishing history exploring blood-as-living because "without some such principle all we have been examining is like dissecting a dead body without having any reference to the living, or even knowing it had ever been alive" (*Blood* 76). I will now investigate the rhetorical presence of blood in Blake's *Urizen* to elucidate the specificity of Blake's use of blood for Urizen's impending bodily construction. By approaching the first corporeal substance identified by Blake in *Urizen* we see how his initial association of blood with Urizen serves as a building block for Urizen's body. This successive ordering follows the chapter outline of John's treatise, *Blood*, in which he states in the introduction that his text is written to pursue his "ideas of life further than has commonly been done," starting with a natural historical account of blood (3). Blake and John use blood as the first corporeal subject in their works, and as John argues, blood is the origin of a body; therefore, Blake's use of blood to bring about the corporeal creation of Urizen suggests that John's opening discussion of blood also influenced why Blake thinks of blood as the first bodily substance.

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[62] John's use of "living solids" is a general term that refers to any body part that is not composed of blood. For example: muscles, nerves, organs, and bones.

After *Urizen*'s preludium, Blake describes an entity that is "Dark revolving in silent activity: / Unseen in tormenting passions; / An activity unknown and horrible; / A self-contemplating shadow" (Erdman 71: 18-21). We are told that "dark Urizen" is preparing for a battle by gathering his forces of "ten thousands of thunders" (71: 28). As Urizen stores up his energies for an epic battle, Blake reminds us that we are reading a creation story by giving us a temporal perspective of Earth: "Earth was not" and "Death was not, but eternal life sprung" (71: 36, 39). A warning reverberates throughout Eternity:

> The sound of a trumpet the heavens
> Awoke & vast clouds of blood roll'd
> Round the dim rocks of Urizen, so nam'd
> That solitary one in Immensity[.]
> (71: 40-3)

Making its first appearance in the poem, blood is directly associated with Urizen, since the blood's motion rolls upon objects belonging to Urizen. While the blood swirls around Urizen, with trumpets blaring throughout Eternity, Urizen speaks from his "dark solitude" to reveal how he has "books formd of metals" in which he has "written the secrets of wisdom" (72: 24-5). As Urizen concludes his apocalyptic speech, his quasi-face is revealed to the rest of the Eternals: "The voice ended, they saw his pale visage" (72: 1). Shortly thereafter, Blake again invokes blood with Urizen: "Rage, fury, intense indignation / In cataracts of fire blood & gall" (72: 45-6). Blake will repeat "In whirlwinds & cataracts of blood" for a third time before making explicit that blood transforms Urizen's formlessness into his corporeality and therefore removes Urizen from the realm of mere allegory (73: 13).

In his opening chapter of *Blood*, John states that he must begin with a natural history because blood is present in every living thing and very few comparative anatomical works have been exclusively devoted to studying blood. He hopes "this publication will, at least,

have equal good with those I have before produced, not only enabling persons to write the same subject, who could not otherwise have done it, but even become critics in matters of which, till then, they were entirely ignorant" (*Blood* 2). John is attempting to produce a work that deals with blood exclusively in order to make his claim that blood is the origin of bodies. It was uncommon for blood to receive serious attention by anatomists, much less be a major part of a treatise. In past treatises, if blood received attention at all it was often as a byproduct of the anatomist's explanation concerning vessels or the mechanics of circulation. Treating blood as an authentic source of inquiry in the dissection room and not as a mere byproduct of cutting bodies, John hopes to explain its pervasive presence in living bodies.

Blood's states of solidity and fluidity are the first tactile category that John decides to tackle in the first part of *Blood.* Believing that solidity and fluidity are "General Principles of the Blood" (*Blood*'s Chapter One Title), John supposes that all solids must first exist in a fluid state:

> The whole material world has been very properly divided into solids and fluids; these being only essentially different states of matter as we are able to observe. From one of these states, to the other, matter appears to be continually passing, but with these restrictions, that no species of matter can assume a solid form, without having first been in a fluid state; nor can any change take place in a solid till it be first formed into, or suspended in a fluid. The living animal body is obedient to these general laws, for all solid and animal matter has first been fluid, and having passed into this solid form, becomes a recipient for other fluids, out of which the solids may themselves be renovated and increased. … the fluid part of an animal body, in its natural state, has but one appearance, which is that of blood. (12)

Our perceptivity determines our ability to distinguish between solid and fluid, and indeed John explains the ubiquitous tendency to conceive the world in this dichotomy. We see the same dichotomy occurring in *Urizen* when we consider the two forms Urizen takes: formlessness and a human body. Urizen's states share remarkable similarity with John's

passage on fluidity and solidity. The trajectory of Urizen's body from the opening plate to the preceding lines of Urizen's entrapment, in which solidification occurs, parallels John's claim that all solid animal matter must first exist as fluid. Blake's repetition of "blood" with Urizen leads to a specific type of solidification.

The Eternals fight against Urizen's demands for a world of inflexibility by corralling his dark entity through their affinity for fires:

> Fires pour thro' the void on all sides
> On Urizens self-begotten armies.
> But no light from the fires. all was darkness
> In the flames of Eternal fury[.]
> (Erdman 73: 15-8)

At first Urizen runs from their fires "To hide, but He could not" and retaliates by making "mountains & hills in vast strength, / He piled them in incessant labour" until "hoary, and age-broke, and aged, / In despair, and the shadows of death" (73: 21-3, 26-7). Once Urizen slows, solidification commences. The last two mentions of blood with Urizen describe it as a superfluid object much like Blake's descriptions of fire. Blake's relationship between blood and fire replicates John's belief that "heat in the animal body, principally in those which are called warm animals, has been commonly considered as depending principally on blood" (*Blood* 15). Moreover, just as John understands blood's ability to coagulate as an intermediary state between fluid and solid (20-5), Blake too, constructs a similar transition. When Urizen finally expends his energy fighting Eternal's fury and submits, he, comparatively, coagulates. The following is the last scene in which Blake associates blood with Urizen's formlessness before he turns corporeal:

> And a roof, vast petrific around,
> On all sides He fram'd: like a womb;
> Where thousands of rivers in veins
> Of blood pour down the mountains to cool

> The eternal fires beating without
> From Eternals; & like a black globe
> View'd by sons of Eternity, standing
> On the shore of the infinite ocean
> Like a human heart struggling & beating
> The vast world of Urizen appear'd.
> (Erdman 73: 28-37)[63]

As the blood pours in a womb-like enclosure—hence the valley where the blood is pouring down to cool—Urizen's newly delimited world is like "a human heart struggling & beating". Blood is no longer associated with heat, and, as it cools, it produces an environment for Urizen that is not only an organ pertinent to all life forms, but specifically a human heart. In John's explication of blood's natural history, he points to the necessity of blood's ability to coagulate to form first the heart, then the vessels, and finally the rest of the body's necessary structure for life (*Blood* 11). While John does not outright note what causes coagulation, he explains "that it [blood] coagulates from an impression: that is, its fluidity under such circumstances, being no longer proper or no longer necessary, it coagulates to answer now the necessary purpose of solidity" (25). The first solid form that blood takes, in John's opinion, is a heart. This pattern, where blood first solidifies into a heart, strongly suggests that Blake is using John's developmental theories, which in turn suggests that Blake's sequence of corporeal parts is, also, indebted to John.

If we read Urizen's two states not as "expansion" or "contraction" as Mee does, but rather as states of fluidity and solidity along with blood's presence, we can begin to see how Urizen's bodily descriptions match Blake's incorporation of *Blood*. In the next section, I will analyze Urizen's body formation. Blake uses a very specific pattern of body parts in exactly

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[63] John remarks the prevailing use of conceiving circulation as water systems: "The distribution of water from the sea, is similar to the arterial system; and the rivers returning to it have an analogy of veins" (15). Compare with Blake's: "Where thousands of rivers in veins / Of Blood" (Erdman 73: 30-1) .

the order discussed in *Blood* to create Urizen. Furthermore, Blake does not leave his *Urizen* project completed in 1794. In *The Small Book of Designs* (1796), he will revisit the plate of a "red globe" to enunciate the corporeal meaning more concretely and this time, to provide a textual caption that resonates more clearly with his anatomical knowledge.[64]

II. Ordering Urizen's Corporealization in a Hunterian Method

After Eternity's schism, where "the stars are apart from the earth," Los, Blake's alter ego representing Imagination, experiences extreme pain because Urizen is "rent from his side" (Erdman 73-4: 42, 4). After Los's torn side heals, he sees Urizen lying "cold, featureless, flesh or clay" and becomes frightened by Urizen's "formless unmeasurable death" (74: 5, 8). To control Urizen's "formless" entity, Los decides to "bound every change / With rivets of iron & brass" that are "the changes of Urizen" by employing his blacksmithing skills (74: 10-2). Los continually binds Urizen in blacksmithing metals such as sordor, iron, and brass, until Urizen suddenly beings to corporealize regardless of the ensuing efforts of Los:

> Los beat on his fetters of iron;
> And heated his furnaces & pour'd
> Iron sordor and sodor of brass
>
> Restless turnd the immortal inchain'd
> Heaving dolorous! Anguish'd! unbearable[.]
> (75: 28-33)[65]

Los's work that spanned over "hours, days & years" abruptly brings about the corporealization of Urizen's body (75: 18). The first body part named is the spine, then the ribs. After blood, the next anatomical object identified is Urizen's skeleton. We know that

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[64] Please visit www.blakearchive.org to see *The [First] Book of Urizen*, copy A, object 11 for a clear visual.

[65] Please visit www.blakearchive.org to see *The First Book of Urizen*, copy B, object 11 for the text's accompanying illustration.

John considers blood as "the moving material of life, and taking a part in every action of it," and that he believes that blood is the "original spark" of life because it ubiquitously participates in every function of the body—from structure composition to the sustainment of bodily actions. He names this concept "the living principle" (*Blood* 71, 76). To develop this concept further, he devotes chapter six in *Blood* to explaining the philosophical and empirical accounts of blood's connection with "living solids" and ultimately how blood has the ability to create a body.[66] It is clear that Blake is not dissecting in *Urizen*: he is very much invested in creating Urizen with familiar materials. Before returning to the particulars of how blood transforms into "living solids," it is necessary to consider the opening lines of Urizen's body formation and see how these lines parallel with John's notions.

The first part of Urizen's skeleton that Blake identifies is the skull: "Till a roof shaggy wild inclos'd / In an orb, his fountain of thought" (Erdman 75: 33-4). Damon has demonstrated that "orb" often correlates to skull throughout Blake's corpus (362). The rest of the skeleton is as follows:

> A vast Spine writh'd in torment
> Upon the winds; shooting pain'd
> Ribs, lie a bending cavern
> And bones of solidness, froze
> Over all his nerves of joy. (75: 37-41)

Urizen's form from Los's blacksmithing has caused him to acquire a human body in a piecemeal process: his body does not simply appear as a whole (completed) body. Bones are first in Blake's procession of parts to create Urizen, as it was with John's highly respected *The natural history of the human teeth* (1771) wherein he proved bones were living. This line of thought is carried into *Blood*, where John writes that "It is within these fifty years

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[66] John's use of "living solids" is a general term that refers to any body part that is not composed of blood. For example: muscles, nerves, organs, and bones.

only, that bones have been allowed to be alive" (76). He further explains that when blood "becomes a solid…its solidity becomes the ultimate end of the blood, as blood to produce living callus of bones" (78, 92). Blake has effectively condensed this process as described by John into one line—"And bones of solidness"—which suggests that Blake was following John's assumption that blood as fluid must necessarily turn solid, which produces the solid parts required for a body to exist.

Blake returns to a minute component of blood—that is, its "globules"—to create the next major section of Urizen's body: his vessels and organs. The leap from bones back to blood, then forward to organs reflects a disorganization of John's chapter on blood's living principle. Blake, too, commences with a stanza on Urizen's skeletal framework, then revisits Urizen's blood ("a red / Round globe") in the following stanza and resumes with Urizen's organs in the third stanza: "two little orbs / and fixed in two little caves" (Erdman 75-6: 35-43, 1-9, 10-8). Similarly, as John is developing his philosophical grounding, he will step back to reintroduce data he collected from previous experiments with blood to arrive at the next step in a body's formation:

> I shall endeavour to show that organization, and life, do not depend on the least on each other; that organization may arise out of living parts, and produce action, but it can never rise out of or depend on organization. An organ is a peculiar conformation of matter, (let that matter be what it may) to answer purpose, the operation of which is mechanical; but, mere organization can do nothing, even in mechanics, it must still having something corresponding to a living principle; namely, some power. (*Blood* 78)

John goes on to explain that through his tracking of the growth of a chick embryo, he has observed how blood solidifies into bones. The production of vessels ensues because blood must be permitted to travel throughout the developing body: "[B]lood has the power of action within itself" to provide nourishment for the body since it is the only anatomical

object freely fluid throughout the body (26, 72). Blake, too, replicates John's chronological theory of blood's capacity for life:

> From the caverns of his jointed Spine,
> Down sun with fright a red
> Round globe hot burning deep
> Deep down into the Abyss:
> Panting: Conglobing, Trembling
> Shooting out ten thousand branches
> Around his solid bones.
> …
> His nervous brain shot branches
> Round the branches of his heart.
> (Erdman 75-6: 1-7, 11-2)

A subsequent plate will continue to add the last parts to Urizen's body, such as his ears, nostrils, stomach, throat, and tongue (76: 21, 1, 6-8).[67] However, the lines above are the epitome of Blake's understanding of the Hunterian body. Therefore, I will devote the rest of this section to the parallel between Blake's anatomical language and *Blood*'s examples. Object 11 from *Urizen*, copy A (visit www.blakearchive.org) depicts a figure hunching over a red circle. Blake connects the figure to the red circle by depicting veins from the base of the figure's spine to the circle below. This circle most likely illustrates: "From the caverns of his jointed Spine, / Down dun with fright a red / Round globe hot burning deep," which also captures the effect of "Shooting out ten thousand branches / Around his solid bones" (75-6: 1-3, 6-7). We know that the "globe" represents blood for it is named as such by Blake later in the poem—"a round globe of blood" (77: 58). The specificity of the vessels' exit from the body reflects John's comment that "the cavity of the veins…pass off from the body…and at last terminate in the common trunk" (*Blood* 181), that is, in the torso of the body.

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[67] The order of these body parts, too, follow the same order that John discusses them in his part two of *Blood* chapter "Union by the First Intention" (255-85).

This suggests that, in one plate, Blake visually captures the fundamentals of John's concept of blood as it pertains to the development of a body. The globe of blood attracts a good deal of the viewer's attention just as John's attention to blood spans nearly half of *Blood*'s 634-page text. The body above the globe and the vessels connecting to the body show Blake's understanding of blood as the first primeval anatomical substance by placing it at the bottom. As viewers work their way up the illustration, they will witness the increasing complexity of blood's development as it corresponds to key passages in *Blood*. Interestingly, Blake goes so far as to capture John's uncertainty about why blood is a living fluid: "It is probably impossible to say where the living principle first begins in the blood" (91).

Furthermore, Blake clarifies his intentions on this plate to reflect Hunterian thought well after completing the first copy of *Urizen* in 1794. In copies C, D, and F (1794), the effects of Blake's emphasis on making the vessels from the body more reddish to avoid confusion with the figure's hair are easily discernible. Copy B (1795) depicts the same globe of blood; however, it differs from the other copies mentioned in that the globe is now covered in bluish veins, which more closely resemble John's illustrations of his experiment with a chick embryo.[68] In a separate work altogether, Blake revisits John's concept in the same plate illustration in his color prints for *The Large Book of Designs* and *The Small Book of Designs* (*SBD*) (1796). I believe Blake's modification on this illustration served to render more distinctively his Hunterian allusions. In *SBD*, the plate contains more intricately painted vessels, contrasting with the blackness inside of the globe. This causes an intense

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[68] Please visit www.blakearchive.org to see *The [First] Book of Urizen*, copy B, object 19 for a clear visual of the changes of the globe of blood. And then compare aforementioned Blake plate to John's illustration of his chick embryos (Figure 4).

three-dimensional rendition of the globe as compared to the eight copies of *Urizen*. The complex three-dimensional effect enhances the notion that Blake's use of blood is not metaphorical but ought to be read more corporeally than previously acknowledged in past Blake scholarship. Even more remarkably, a recent issue of *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* (Fall 2008) published images of an additional copy of *SBD* made available to the public for the first time. The illustration in discussion now contains a textual caption: "Vegetating in fibres of Blood" (Butlin 68). The caption along with the intensification of vessels in the globe of blood that Blake creates two years after he completed *Urizen*, Copy A, allows us to read the elapsed time as Blake's attempt to reinforce his original Hunterian allusion that traces back to *Blood*.

The corporeal Urizen inherited from Blake's illuminated work is not an isolated product of Blake's poetic genius, but rather intertwines with the rich field of eighteenth-century anatomy. Urizen's transformation from formlessness into a corporeal body is an affirmation of Blake's anatomical knowledge, rather than mere poetical fancies. Thus, we should revisit his other works that use anatomically precise terminology to recast Blake, a poet and illustrator, as an artist who uses anatomy not only to render a degree of realism but also to comment upon prevailing ideas about the origins of the material self. It is not a coincidence that he engages an anatomical treatise to fabricate Urizen's corporeal origin. Instead, Blake is using his anatomical knowledge to vividly create a work that does not just simply emphasize the commonality between our bodies and Urizen's, but also highlights our perceptions of our bodies as they are—incomplete.

III. *Vala, or The Four Zoas*: Building a Communal Anatomical Body

For Blake, the body is so impassioned and imprisoned that it needs a complete transformation in order to reveal a body that is more suitable to Blake's own concepts of freedom and imagination. What this means is that the body at its best is neither allegorical nor anatomical. What emerges over the course of *Four Zoas* (c. 1796) is that Blake's anger at his own complicated relationships with local patrons and artists overwhelm any sympathy he might have for anatomists. This is the work where Blake's anger propels him from embracing the body as good into the realm of a disembodied myth.

The Four Zoas demonstrates man's internalization of language, while simultaneously offering an anatomical body in print; it is not an anti-anatomical language, but he does attempt to create an anatomy based on the redemption of the Zoas and the emanations. To ignore his anatomical language, we ignore Blake's desire to truly produce an anatomical body that his readers could feel and understand, for he sought to produce a different language that intends to rehabilitate a human embodiment and drive contemporary anatomical language away from reductionism. Blake's alternative approach to anatomy provides a refuge for conceptualizing the human body and its anatomical parts as a collective identity inherently formed out of nonlinear complexities, ultimately dependent upon a communal organization. Even here, though, Blake's refusal to create a hierarchy of organs resembles John's approach to organs. For William Hunter each major organ was classified into a hierarchal order according to its mechanical value in respect to the body; and the heart was "The Centre of the System," especially due to the heart's location in the "middle of the whole Mass of the Body" (*Royal Academy* 35). William goes on to list each system in descending importance. Since the brain is classified as the second most important system, its influence

limited to exerting muscular motion and sensory perceptions, the brain is then a passive mechanism.

Despite evidence that such a perfect body does not exist, William Hunter's anatomical discourse builds a meta-anatomical structure that purports to objectively investigate the body on a linear path. The body is conceptualized as a straight line that remains uniform and unable to accommodate any outliers. A history of increasing technological efficacy reveals a merger between systematic data and bodies, as Burke and Ornstein point out: "The ability to reduce people to numbers and graphs…[permitted] ways to reduce data on the human body to many more subcategories," allowing for a taxonomy of bodies to appear within anatomical discourse (226, 232). Any descriptive anomaly is excluded from the taxonomy as "a modification caused by a wrong arrangement or construction of parts, which will produce unnatural action, by which means the natural action may be known" (*Principles* 19). Those monsters in William's anatomy collection are outliers that could never be integrated into his philosophy of the standard body.

For Blake, William Hunter's hierarchy of organs would be as repulsive as his social elitism. In Blake's anatomy, as in John Hunter's, the body is not deduced from linearity but communicative. He argues that each organ contributes to its own mechanical role through a communal language within the body, which narrates itself in its own environmental framework. The linear body is conceived as a mammoth machine fueled by smaller machines, which are in turn operating on minuscule machines and so on. In that perspective of the body, there is a loss of independent agency on the behalf of organs and the body; oddly, William does not locate a starting point for these machines. But Blake's theory of the body "subsists in its activity and its motion" without attempting to structure body forms into

a linear hierarchy (Frosch 143). Any compositional bodies that create outliers are not seen as defunct but rather as an individuation of the body's communal language. For Blake the body's valuation shifts from mechanical to communicative.

The introduction of a collective identity to the body in Blake's anatomy relies heavily on the notion of interdependent communication within a single body. For Blake the living body is always communicative. This site of communication between the body and other organs lies in the brain: "Tho in the Brain of Man we live, & in his circling Nerves / Tho' this bright world of all our joy is in the Human Brain" (Erdman, FZ 11: 15-6). The body begins with the brain since it mediates sequential events both inside and outside of it. In other words, the body is a continual, interactive system. The invocation of the brain as the site of imaginative will appears in the beginning of Blake's *Milton*, psychosomatically capturing the interaction that takes place within his body as he begins to engrave:

> Come into my hand
> By your mild power; descending down the *Nerves* of my right arm
> From out the *Portals of my Brain*, where by your ministry
> The Eternal Great Humanity Divine. (2:5-8; emphasis added)

The interaction not only occurs in the brain but traverses the body to an outward form, writing. Language is not a by-product of humanity; rather, it is a necessity for the body to exist. Language bespeaks us, and for the body to function, it must achieve nothing short of perfect communication among its parts. If the body exists, after our use of language, then anatomical discourse is manufactured after dissecting the body.

What angers Blake so much is that the language of anatomy in William's works as well as several of his prominent students tends towards a body described in a confined order. This type of structure in anatomical discourse understands the body without Blake's vision of

mutability. Blake realizes that anatomists produce massive norms on a minuscule scale of actual dissections: "In ignorance to view a small portion & think that All, / And call it a Demonstration: blind to all the simple rules of life" (*Jerusalem*, 65: 27-8). Without the precision of calculations, anatomical discourse cannot master any form of language between organs. Instead, they are limited to predicting possible outcomes. For Blake, the body's communal language is a democracy among the organs in which there are no hierarchies, each fulfilling its own distinct role that no other organs could duplicate. The precise linguistic components of the body's communal language are unintelligible to anatomists because they describe only what they see. Blake labors to restructure our minds to perceive the body's communal language. Whereas the anatomist's subjective model of a healthy organ becomes a universal standard, Blake perceives organs as individual agencies communicating with other distinctive organs within their bodily community; any discrepancies among the organs result in diseases or degenerative modes of bodily functions. Organs demonstrate their lingual dexterity by adapting to the constant changes within the collective body, for health or sickness: "Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect Integrity / At will Contracting into Worms, or Expanding into Gods" (55: 36-7). Organs have the freedom either to decide their own agenda within the body as productive and cohesive members or to resort to anarchy. Blake's anatomical theories waged a war in opposition.

If Blake is angered in part by the kind of restrictive body that William's anatomy tends to produce, he is also perturbed by the kind of uncertainty that John tends to confess regarding organ responsiveness. For Blake John has asked the right questions but provides no answers when he cryptically confesses: "An organ is a peculiar conformation of matter, (let that matter be what it may) to answer some purpose, the operation of which is mechanical;

but, mere organization can do nothing, even in mechanics, it must still have something corresponding to a living principle; namely, some power" (*Treatise* 72). John knew organs were co-dependent on each other but fails to explain what creates that coherence in the body.

The body remains a collective identity without regards to the hierarchy espoused in William's anatomical treatises. Anatomical discourse cannot dictate what the organs say and do within the body. For Blake, the supposedly powerless organs described by these very anatomists have the potential to destroy the body and other organs by failing or refraining to communicate to one another. If an organ encounters a harmful pathogen and fails to collaborate with other organs to overcome the invasion, this is because the organ has failed to communicate. The failings of communal language within the body are the causes of Albion's countless deaths and seemingly timeless reposes within *Four Zoas*. Blake turns towards the body and its faculties as a site for where a "world *made into* words" constructs its own anatomical narrative (Adams 217). Even the location of divinity has its place in the distortion of bodily power, which changes each body into mystical scenes found in traditional perceptions of divinity. Anatomists purport that they cannot *see* a soul in dissection; therefore, it has to be either mystical or fictitious. In Blake's anatomy, the human body *is* the soul. A double dissection occurs—the body and soul—hence Blake's outrage at the anatomists' blindness and deafness to the body's communal language. The greater part of the medical community has mutilated the vast world contained in body. Their malpractice provokes Blake to deconstruct the contemporary anatomical discourse in order to reveal the collective body of humanity, which is Albion. And through Albion, Blake revolutionizes anatomy lessons and starts with the concept of "soul" to reconstruct that anatomical discourse abandons through dissection.

In the history of Blake's engravings and drawings, there are spectacular scenes where Blake demonstrates his ardor for the body. Let us turn to Blake's *The Grave*. We can see in one illustration that the focus is upon the body leaving the soul. For Blake, the body is the site of divinity. Divinity has an organic residue originating in the body, and therefore it ends accordingly. These designs fuse the gap between soul and body, liberating death from the tradition of the soul as a shapeless mystical cloud. Often the soul is depicted as an ascending aura. But the iconoclastic Blake makes it undeniably physical. By drawing a bodily form for the aura, he refuses any clear distinction between body and soul maintained by anatomists. Conversely, Blake designed an etching where a soul welcomes its departure with an obliterated imagination. In both etchings, the dying body breeds a dying soul.

The autonomy of Blake's visions elicited various apprehensive remarks, most notably from the *Antijacobin Review*, which described it as an "outrage done to nature and probability" (*Blake Records* 439). His design prompted this elusive commentary from Robert Southey: "Among Blake's strange designs for Blair's poem of the Grave, is one representing the reunion of the body and the soul; the highest genius alone could have conceived it, and only madness have dared to attempt the execution" (439). Even his peers were reluctant to entertain Blake's shift in the body's ownership of soul. The same concept he illustrated in *The Grave* is also reflected in the *Four Zoas*, in which Blake captures the soul's fear to be without a body: "Spirit Separating / Their Spirit from their body. Terrified at Non Existence / For such they deem the death of the body" (Erdman, FZ 116: 3-5). While he was renovating anatomical discourse, he was challenging the framework that was a patron to its success—empiricism.

The establishment of Newtonian science in London did little to facilitate Blake's anatomy theories. As empiricism permeated the culture, Blake increasingly associated it with an attempt to make the human nonhuman. In *Milton*, he describes empiricists as those "Who creeps into State Government like a catterpiller to destroy" (41: 11). Blake implores empiricists to leave the body alone: "To cast off Bacon, Locke & Newton from Albions covering" (41: 4). As precisely as possible, he pins their damage to the physical body, not the abstract mind. Albion is the representative body of humanity, but empiricism adversely affects human fulfillment for Blake, as Johnson and Wilkie describe: "Newton could have seen his apple as uniquely beautiful being of reds…but he chose to reduce it to the controllables of mass" (228). In another poetic expression, Night I of *Four Zoas*, Urizen—the epitome of a jealous god—encases man in an ironclad hand of empirical discourse by denying the individuality of each body and mind. For Blake, anatomy can be restrictive and empirical, or dynamic and imaginative. Without unbridled human intellect and emotion, Urizen could not have been born in the mind. Out of the abstract mind, the concepts of religion and all of its ramifications threaded themselves into the language of humanity and its practices. From then on, each distant generation viewed their bodies as a by-product of divinity, instead of its source. While Albion lingers in repose, Urizen finds himself, "as he stood in the Human Brain" (FZ 23: 12), at a loss. What body can Urizen control, if the body he controls (Albion's) has fallen into a mystifying formlessness abyss?

For Blake, the imagination is a crucial part of anatomy, and its denial in anatomy books implies an incomplete framework: "The Eternal Body of Man is The IMAGINATION / … / All that we See is VISION from Generated Organs gone as soon as they come / Permanent in The Imagination; considered as Nothing by the NATURAL MAN" (Erdman,

Laocoön, 273) . Imagination is adaptation, and it works through communal language. In other words, a bodily imagination creates the forms a body can possess throughout its existence. By contrast the empirical language of the dominant anatomical discourse has no way of explaining why the body can change forms, as in the case of circumstantial disabilities.

Initially Albion suffers from this empirical language and replicates the master/slave dualism, a relationship that we see when the four Zoas become Albion's slaves. In Night I of the *Four Zoas,* Luvah, who resides in "porches of the brain" (21: 29), knows that the language dictates the public outcome of a body's standing in society: "my Word shall be their law" (21: 35). Luvah aims to dominate the only body he has ever known: his own. Albion is caught in limbo between these chasms—empirical discourse versus the bodily imagination—in which each signifies a separate use of language to explain a unique body and its status among the population of other bodies. While the Zoas bicker, the real opportunity for advancement in bodily freedom withers away as they all clamor for a faux body of perfection. Bodily imagination crumbles, and what is lost in the retrospective process is the understanding that humans—the articulators of language—create their own confinement in anatomical discourse. The body dies an untimely death at the hands of mechanical impulses, while the brain's importance increases as the organs become diminutive. Blake sees what the empirical anatomists do not see: "Without the body of Man an Exudation from his sickning limbs" (18: 10).

The empirically inclined anatomical discourse results in various systems of classification, often translated loosely into hierarchies founded upon a linguistic basis. General descriptions become normative or deviant by arbitrary means. Moreover, these generalities become principles that are guidelines in relation to the truths about bodies.

Although it is not entirely fair, Blake would have seen someone like Dr. William Hunter as flourishing with his use of a purely observational technique, presenting the body as it laid on a dissecting table apart from its marks of individuality. Blake, too, examines the body in the beginning of *Four Zoas*—"The Mans exteriors are become indefinite opend to pain" (20: 40)—in order to demonstrate the fragile state the body remains in until the Poetic Genius is reassembled and awakened.

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake pinpoints the traditional dichotomy of Heaven and Hell as a persistent metaphor that keeps the body in prolonged conflict. The canonical conception of Heaven as a reward only perpetuates the grandiose illusion, that of a sinful body that duels with its soul, as if they were *still* wholly separate:

> But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged: this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which is hid.
>
> If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is: infinite.
>
> For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern. (39)

Blake's cavern is the epidermis shell over the body's organs. The vital organs are prerequisite in the maintenance of the body, and each organ contains within itself an essence of life. For Blake, the "chinks" of the cavern, the body's neural pathways are a starting point for understanding the body's interior construction. Each organ serves a twofold purpose—unique from other organs—to foster both their own and a collective identity of the body. If any organ refuses these purposes, the body morphs into a battle ground: "The Human Nature shall no more remain nor Human acts / Form the rebellious Spirits of Heaven. but War &

Princedom & Victory & Blood" (FZ 11: 23-4). In the *Four Zoas*, the Emanations enlist themselves in a war that begins by closing the organ of speech: "The daughters of Beulah terrified have closd the Gate of the Tongue / Luvah & Urizen contend in war around the holy tent" (21: 11-2).

The lines begin to blur from intellectual engagement with anatomical discourse to outright hostility in the *Four Zoas*, in which Blake struggles to situate the interconnectedness of the body's own language, rather than dualistically dividing language away from the body. This excision of language conceptualizes the body as an inarticulate object in a perpetual state of waiting. The denial of the body's communal language also denies the dynamic interaction of the brain and the organs: "Man cannot naturally Perceive. but through his natural or bodily organs" (2). The empirical study of anatomy is the disruptive drive to control bodies through a self-contained language, which harnesses the bodily imagination and drives it into submission.

Blake's anatomy argues that "bodily organs" are able to perceive other organs: "Mans perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception. he perceives more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover" (2). In the *Four Zoas*, Blake's anatomical rhetoric subverts the gist of empirical discourse. Each emanation attempts to move up the ladder of hierarchal statuses, causing Albion's body to increasingly lose functionality. The effect of such discord causes Albion's deep, perennial repose. When the body slumbers, it remains alive but suspended in stagnation: "And Luvah strove to gain dominion over the mighty Albion / They strove together above the Body where Vala was inclos'd / And the dark Body of Albion left prostrate upon the crystal pavement" (FZ 41: 13-5). Since Blake believes body hierarchy is a function of language, which causes the body to wither under the pressures of empiricism

Albion's body succumbs to a fraying identity as his organs rage for sole domination. This competition among the organs accounts for the fragmentation in the *Four Zoas*. Blake attempts to reconstruct Albion's collective body, but it must have the capacity to interact with external stimuli, which requires a unity of the interior body: "These Spectres have no [*Counter(parts)*] therefore they ravin / With the food of life Let us Create them Coun[terparts] / For without a Created body the Spectre is Eternal Death" (87: 36-8). In other words, by Night VII, the vast majority of the Emanation's epiphanies attest that if the body acts in opposition to a collective identity, it will cease to exist; and shortly thereafter, they will too. Without collectivity among the organs Albion necessarily dies. Or alternatively, emanations are subjected to the dying body; inversely, they also need the body to persist. The aim of Blake's engagement with contemporary anatomy is "To bind the Body of Man to heaven from falling in to the Abyss" (33: 17). A collective body becomes an individualized site of divinity, rather than a common product of empirical science: "In Eden; in the Auricular Nerves of Human life / Which is the Earth of Eden, he his Emanations propagated" (4: 12-3). The adjective "Auricular" suggests heard language as it is actualized in Albion's nerves. Albion hears with his nerves, which run throughout the body. In the *Four Zoas*, Blake defines the nerves as the matrix of communal language within Albion's body. The Zoas, impervious to the others, at first cannot comprehend that their individual falls are invariably linked to the falls of the other three Zoas. The opportunity for salvation comes through an unbinding of their subjective-objective relationship with one another by their intercommunication.

In the *Four Zoas*, we notice that Blake confines his whole mythology to the interior of Albion's body, despite its unpredictable states of consciousness: "The Fallen Man

(Albion) takes his repose: Urizen sleeps in the porch / Luvah and Vala woke & flew up from the *Human Heart* / Into the *Brain*; from thence upon the pillow Vala slumber'd." (10: 11-2; emphasis added). If we see the Four Zoas as restrictive to Albion's physiology, we can see how Blake reinforces his conception of a psychosomatic communal language. In the end, Albion's body regains equilibrium through a communal feast with the Zoas. The equal participation of consuming subsistence in turn nurtures the body: "The feast was spread in the bright South & the Eternal Man / Sat at the feast rejoicing" (9: 2-3).

Milton, a Poem (c. 1804-1811)

In the introduction of a facsimile *Milton, a Poem* (1993), the editors argue that it is an allegorical poem that "lacks the stability of one-to-one relationship we find in its medieval forebears" (9).[69] Yes, but a strictly allegorical reading of Blake's *Milton* ignores his creative use of contemporary anatomy. By contrast, I explore the poem's intricacies by examining how Blake views the eighteenth-century discourse of anatomy as profoundly inadequate. In fact Blake is dismayed how shortsighted this discourse is. On top of the undoing of Antiquity's grip on anatomical knowledge, in *Milton* and *Four Zoas* Blake expands the metaphysics of the interactions between the human mind and body without losing sight of his anatomical theories. In doing so, Blake engages with the conversation of what being human means in order to redress the battle wounds of empiricism and to rejuvenate the human body. His contrary views are not quite as idiosyncratic as the editors of *The Blake Trust* series tend to depict them: "Blake's critique of selfhood goes to the heart of Western metaphysics… that posits a unitary self as the basis of existence. It is an existence Blake wished to overcome and replace with a more fluid and open concept of being where the gulf between self and other is

[69] It is worth noted that Blake incorporates significant parts from *The Four Zoas* four years after he completes its manuscript into *Milton* (usually without major revisions).

bridged—indeed, annihilated" (12). To some degree this is true as Blake seeks to proclaim a new philosophy about the selfhood, its corporeal body, and its natural, communal interior language. But clearly *Milton* is a poem that is deeply indebted to historical sources, not just to the poetry of Milton, but also to the anatomical legacies of the Hunters. In other words Blake is not as angry as he is in the *Four Zoas*.

In the preface to *Milton*, Blake exhorts the younger generation to join in his cause of ushering in a new model of knowledge pertaining to the body and the mind: "Rouze up O Young Men of the New Age! […] For we have Hirelings in the Camp, the Court, & the University. who would if they could, for ever depress Mental & Corporeal War" (Erdman 95). As Blake calls upon his Muse, Milton, he invites him to enter his body and circulate inspiration: "Come into my hand / By your mild power; descending down the Nerves of my right arm / From out the Portals of my Brain, where by your ministry / The Eternal Great Humanity Divine" (96). Blake asks Milton to incite his imagination by soaking in Blake's brain, and then directs Milton to descend upon his right hand—his etching hand—to create the plates of *Milton* both visually and rhetorically. Imagination, inspiration, and creative production can only exist if there is a human body to produce the effects. Blake is acutely aware that without a healthy, relatively functional body, he could not create his art, philosophies, nor share his visions. By focusing on the anatomical philosophies, Blake makes the human body's act as centrifugal to his mythopoetical project.

Nearly ten years after *Urizen* (1794), which responds to John's theory of the body's order of composition, Blake still maintains the same order in *Milton*: eyes and eye sockets, ears, nostrils, digestive system, arms, and feet (97). By repeating Urizen's corporeal manifestation, Blake reminds his readers that all bodies originate from "a red Round

Globe," something akin to John's "living principle". And then again, we are reminded that Los weeps over the existence of the red globe not because Urizen's body and ours have been created, but because they have been created and maintained under a false ideology of its creation. In other words, the body is not as fixed and certain as Urizen's rationalistic "net of religion". The flaw lies not in the corporeal construction, but rather, in how Blake's contemporaries explain the functionality of the body insofar as it perpetuates its limited use:

> Ah weak & wide astray! Ah shut in narrow doleful form
> Creeping in reptile flesh upon the bosom of the ground
> The Eye of Man a little narrow orb closd up & dark
> Scarcely beholding the great light conversing with the Void
> The Ear, a little shell in small volutions shutting out
> All melodies & comprehending only Discord and Harmony
> The Tongue, a little mostiure fills, a little food it cloys
> A little sound it utters & its cries are faintly heard
> […]
>
> Can such an Eye judge of the stars? & looking thro its tubes
> Measure the sunny rays that point their spears on Udanadan
> Can such an Ear filld with the vapours of the yawning pit.
> Judge of the pure melodious harp struck by a hand divine?
> Can such a closed Nostrils feel a joy? or tell of autumn fruits
> When grapes & figs burst their covering to the joyful air
> Can such a Tongue boast of the living waters? or take in
> Ought but the Vegetable Ration & loathe the faint delight
> Can such gross Lips perceive? alas! folded within themselves
> They touch not ought but pallid turn & tremble at every wind
> […]
>
> And Mathematic Proportion was subdued by Living Proportion[.] (99)

If the body's construction and its capacity are wrongly understood, Blake says, then inferring and utilizing whatever one perceives from that initial and misunderstood premise means that all conclusions are conditionally wrong, too. Hence in the last line, he resorts to a prophecy that mathematics loses its powerful grip, and he prizes individualism as the source of authenticity. Blake's phrase "living proportion" cues us towards the body and its experiences

within the living, natural world. Blake is wondering how we can understand the photons of light waves or gravity if we still do not understand the very body we inhabit.[70] If we achieve complete anatomical and metaphysical knowledge of the body, then we will understand the environment we inhabit. When we achieve such aims, then Albion—Ancient Britain and a grand version of ourselves—will reign as freely as Blake desires.

Until the "Spectre of Albion" shatters, the current creation of society begins with Los' hammer and on Enitharmon's looms. Her looms combine the vibration theories of David Hartley's *Observations of Man* (1749) along with the ancient myth of the Sisters of Fate and their independent and yet necessary role in weaving every mortal's fate from their beginning to end. This role includes the snipping of each thread of life they spin according to their own inexplicable creed. In Blake those three Sisters of Fate are concentrated into one emanation, Enitharmon, who like most of Blake's emanations play several roles, such as being Los' female twin and yet a separate entity that brings forth poetic beauty and inspiration by representing Space:

> […] vibrate with soft affections, weaving the Web of Life
> Out from the ashes of the Dead; Los lifts his iron Ladles
> With molton ore […]
> Here the Three Classes of Mortal Men take their fixd destinations
> And hence they overspread the Nations of the whole Earth & hence
> The Web of Life is wove: & the tender sinews of Life created
> And the Three Classes of Men regulated by Los's hammer.
> The first, The Elect from before the foundation of the World:
> The second, The Redeem'd. The Third, The Reprobate & form'd
> To destruction from the mothers womb: follow with me my plow! (100)

Contemporary culture is stratified by those three categories. The 'Reprobate' class is history's repetitious mistake: each time creating the next generation. Through *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, Blake believes we will climb higher into the second class, redemption, and

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[70] In the next section, I explain how Samuel Taylor Coleridge speculates on a similar Newtonian dilemma.

springing from that stratum we will achieve a quasi-nirvana that brings us to the beginning of a clean slate of humanity. The second return to that very slate does not allow for the possibility of another postlapsarian era because Blake believes the memory of Urizenic control will ensure that the second epoch of humanity retains its rightful knowledge of self-creativity by living through its corporeality freed from the Enlightenment's limitations. Until the first class of mortals returns to the shores of Albion, Enitharmon is left weeping at Los' inability to free the third class, and his creation of Urizen. In other words, Los' good intentions have brought an immense amount of corruption into the universe, and in turn, affected the trajectory of humanity. In Los' attempt to curb the corruption stemming from his blacksmithing of bodies, he stuns his horrid creations by putting them in a state of perpetual sleep or alternatively, a reposeful death, until he fixes his errors. As we, the errors, pile up themselves we create a labyrinth of mistakes and contrived solutions that backfire, thereby leading to only one solution, that, is an apocalyptic annihilation that will return us to the beginnings without being bounded by a faulty legacy:

> Then Los & Enitharmon knew Satan is urizen
> Drawn down by Orc & the Shadowy Female into Generation
> Oft Enitharmon enterd weeping into the Space, there appearing
> An aged Woman raving along the Streets (the Space is named
> Canaan) then she returnd to Los wear frighted as from dreams
>
> The nature of a Female Space is this: it shrinks the Organs
> Of Life till they become Finite & Itself seems Infinite.
>
> And Satan vibrated in the immensity of the Space! Limited
> To those without but Infinite to those within
> […]
>
> Every thing in Eternity shines by its own Internal light: but thou
> Darkenest every Internal light with the arrows of they quiver
> Bound up in the horns of Jealousy to a deadly fading Moon
> And Ocalythron binds the Sun into a Jealous Globe
> That every thing is fixd Opake without Internal light

So Los lamented over Satan, who triumphant divided the Nations[.] (104)

In providing a corporeal form to Satan-viz-Urizen, Los has darkened the "Internal light" within each mortal that was woven by Enitharmon. The "Internal light" binds humanity and permits Blake to link the diverse representation of bodies as a single entity, until we recognize and use that "Internal light" to free us from unknowingly self-imposed restraints. Meanwhile, Satan has declared war on Albion's body: "The Spectre of Satan. he furious refuses to repose in sleep / […] / Glorying to involve Albions Body in fires of eternal War" (106). Blake believes that the shackle of corporeality is maintained by incomplete anatomical knowledge of our bodies, so that human beings continue to deny their capacity for far greater freedom in perceptions and experiential sensations.

IV. Corporeal Multiplicity: A Blakean Mode in *Milton*

In assessing Blake's debts to the language of anatomy, we must finally reconsider the question of why Blake fills his works with the cycles of birth and dying. In *Milton*, Blake curiously reveals an osmosis between bodies, and one that is not necessarily akin to his spiritual invasion of historical persons such as Paracelsus and Voltaire. This Blakean phenomenon, which I am terming "corporeal multiplicity," explains how Blake's concept of death and histories is cyclic and unresponsive to time as he engages in this peculiar osmosis.[71] This concept of corporeal multiplicity extends Blake's commitment to the idea that human bodies are engaged in a larger communal network. Communality is not just for the organs within a body, but also for connecting humanity as a single community.

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[71] This concept is different from Barbara Maria Stafford's observation of Blake's similarities with George Berkeley's (1685-1753) *Siris* insofar that Blake agrees with the idea of a "whole world of visible objects bec[o]me transmuted into phatasmagoria hovering in the camera obsura brain" (381).

Milton stands before his own shadow as he faces "eternal death," where he sees "A mournful form double; hermaphroditic: male & female" and then "In one wonderful body […] he enterd into it" (108). Milton still retains his own proper identity but adds an additional facet to a single body. This is the first instance of corporeal multiplicity in *Milton*, and Blake immediately provides us with two theories of the body: in one persons retains their original identity as they traverse through bodies, then in the second theory they lose their original identity as they enter said new bodies. The dreamscape adds limitless possibilities to Blake's conception of bodily layering, and provides the best context for him to explain to us the shifting perception of truth and illusion that is not rooted in empiricism. Dreaming gives men opportunities to see and realize their mortal body, but this is only one version and the waking body offers another version:

> As when a man dreams, he reflects not that his body sleeps,
> Else he would wake; so seem'd he entering his Shadow: but
> With him the Spirits of the Seven Angels of the Presence
> Entering; they gave him still perceptions of his Sleeping body;
> Which now arose and walk'd with them in Eden, as an Eighth
> Image Divine tho' darken'd; and tho walking as one walks
> In sleep; and the Seven comforted and supported him.
>
> Like as a Polypus that vegetates beneath the deep!
> They saw his Shadow vegetated underneath the Couch
> Of death: for when he entered into his Shadow: Himself:
> His real and immortal Self: was as appeard to those
> Who dwell in immortality, as One sleeping on a couch
> Of gold; an those in immortality gave forth their Emanations
> Like Females of sweet beauty, to guard round him & to feed
> His lips with food of Eden in his cold and dim repose!
> But to himself he seemd a wanderer lost in dreary night.
>
> […]
>
> The nature of infinity is this: That every thing has its
> Own Vortex; and when once a traveler thro Eternity.
> Has passd that Vortex, he perceives it roll backward behind
> His path, into a globe of itself infolding; like a sun:

> Or like a moon, or like a universe of starry majesty,
> While he keeps onwards in his wondrous journey on the earth
> Or like a human form, a friend with whom he livd benevolent.
> As the eye of man views both the east & west encompassing
> Its vortex […]
> Thus is the earth one infinite plane, and not as apparent
> To the weak traveler confin'd beneath the moony shade.
> Thus is the heaven a vortex passd already, and the arth
> A vortex not yet pass'd by the traveler thro' Eternity. (109)

By erasing the confines of time, Blake shows the travelers' innate capacity to traverse forms and places are effortless Blake asserts as long as humans are not paralyzed by belief of corporeal limitations. Blake considers that each spatial or time shift we experience—whether tactile or through various stages of consciousness—is but one vortex that we passes through in a string of alternative vortexes. By claiming an infinity of vortexes, Blake makes Earth into a transitory stage. All these vortexes are separated by Blake's concept of a "Sea of Time & Space," which is a state of suspended death. This place represents the equilibrium between life and death, where we float throughout indistinguishable Time and Space until we are swayed to either state. In *Milton*, we find Albion and Urizen floating in the same sea, while the Miltonic protagonist navigates the "vegetated Earth" to set in motion the cleansing apocalypse so vital to the second slate of humanity.

Throughout *Milton*, corporeal multiplicity supports Blake's permeable rhetoric of "I" with several figures that render his experiential philosophies. Through corporeal multiplicity, Blake is able to travel through all these vortex-entities and absorb their memories, knowledge, and emotions. The "Human Form" is Blake's negative reaction to his contemporaries' erroneous understanding of anatomy, while advancing his own anatomical theories that add his corrections while allowing for a greater acceptance of corporeal multiplicity as a natural extension of the human body.

Bodies in the Blakean worldview are entirely malleable and subject to reinvention, which is akin to Blake's creation of illuminated books. For instance, in Milton's retribution to Urizen pouring icy liquid on his brain, he uses clay to give Urizen a new human body:

> But Milton took of the red clay of Succoth, moulding it with care
> Between his palms: and filling up the furrows of many years
> Beginning at the feet of Urizen, and on the bones
> Creating new flesh on the Demon cold, and building him,
> As with new clay a Human form in the Valley of Beth Peor. (112)

As Milton creates a new human body for Urizen, whose origins into corporeality follow John's theories of blood as well as his living principle, he is also following the method of creating anatomical models. What if Blake is blurring the distinction between anatomist and artist by advancing an argument that both professions are capable of modifying the fleshy body according to their own perspectives? If so, then Blake is anatomically proving his premise in *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *There is No Natural Religion* from almost twenty years prior to *Milton*. In the following example we see not only corporeal multiplicity, but also another reinvention of body-creation: "She ties the knot of nervous fibres, into a white brain! / She ties the knot of bloody veins, into a red hot heart! / Within her bosom Albion lies embalmd, never to awake" (113). Blake's belief in these osmotic abilities of bodies and environment helps explain the continual inversions of protagonists throughout *Milton*. Even Milton is subject to these bodily shifts: "Thus Milton fell thro Albions heart, travelling outside of Humanity / Beyond the stars in Chaos in Caverns of the Mundane Shell" (114). This is how Milton can enter Blake/Los' foot, enabling him to see "the nether / Regions of the Imagination"; but Blake did not know it was Milton per se "for man cannot know / What passes in his members till periods of Space & Time / Reveal the

secrets of Eternity: for more extensive / Than any other earthly things, are Mans earthly lineaments" (115).

These various demonstrations of the flexibility in the flesh as well as the adoption of current anatomical language throughout *Milton* help clarify the conceptual struggles within *Four Zoas*. We need to keep in mind that there is hardly a coherent, straightforward narrative line linking these two works. And because of that, I treat these works as evidence of a dynamic mind that engaged various types of subjects: art, philosophy, medicine, science, and literature. Thus we see the tenacity of Blake's mind, especially as he tells us he is becoming Los because Los has entered his body: "And I became One Man with him [Los] arising in my strength: / Twas too late now to recede. Lose had enterd into my soul: / His terrors now posses'd me whole!" (117). Because of corporeal multiplicity, Blake's body not only becomes Los' *simultaneously*, but shares his emotional responses along with his histories. This type of bridging between two lives is neither allegorical nor metaphorical. This is the method that enables Blake to claim that his knowledge of humanity is more comprehensive than what his experiences would suggest: "The generations of men run on in the tide of Time / But leave their destind lineaments permanent for ever & ever" (117). The beginnings, in-betweens, and ends of lives prior to Blake's provide him with information and experiences to continue the battle to free humanity from its own invisible grips of limitations, just as Blake convinces us that "very Generated Body in its inward form, / Is a garden of delight & a building of magnificence" (123).

Another of *Milton*'s aims is to rouse the sleepy imagination, whose rudimentary steps Blake sees in his contemporary intellectual culture's explosion of curiosity: "… Every scatterd Atom / Of Human Intellect now is flocking to the sound of the Trumpet / All the

Wisdom which was hidden in caves & dens, from ancient / Time; is now sought out from Animal & Vegetable & Mineral" (121). The hunger to know is what drives Blake's insistence that the eighteenth century is the dawn of a revolutionary framework of humanity, which is the shift into Eternity. For there Blake explains how all of the fields of knowledge converge and exist in a wonderful symbiosis of discovery:

> But in Eternity the Four Arts: Poetry, Painting, Music
> And Architecture which is Science: are the Four Faces of Man.
> Not so in Time & Space: there Three are shut out, only
> Science remains thro Mercy: & by means of Science, the Three
> Become apparent in Time & Space, in the Three Professions
>
> Poetry in Religion: Music, Law: Painting, in Physic & Surgery:
> That Man may live upon Earth till the time of his awaking,
> And from these Three, Science derives every Occupation of Men. (125)

If Blake is right, then Eternity will reveal to us that our quest for empiricism is a step forward to something far greater; however, we must not fall into the trappings of narrow thought and fragmented study of parts that ignore the whole. Blake cautions that so much work remains to achieve the bodies we are capable of inhabiting, and time is measured according to that body: "Every Time less than a pulsation of the artery / Is equal in its period & value to Six Thousand Years" (127). The epicenter of perception is intimately tied to the human body. By counting six thousand years to the pulse of our artery, Blake heavily emphasizes the possibility of the infinity as non-metaphorical.

If so much time exists within a pulse, then what of the blood content? To see blood, according to Blake, is to witness the power of living creation. A blood cell becomes an anatomical vehicle for Blake's belief that it matters not where, individually, we come from, but that we are all involved in the process of returning home: "We are not Individuals but States: Combinations of Individuals" (131). However, this process is neither geographical

nor exclusively spiritual. Through our neuro-anatomical philosophies, Blake hopes we will see the authentic body as a portal to an infinite string of universes. The wonders of scientific instruments prove, as Blake purports, the limitations of our collective knowledge:

> As to that false appearance which appears to the reasoner,
> […]
> The Microscope knows not of this nor the Telescope. they alter
> The ratio of the Spectators Organs but leave Objects untouchd
> For every Space larger than a red Globule of Mans blood. opens
> Into Eternity of which this vegetable Earth is but a shadow[.] (127)

If objects can morph their shape through the microscope, then the uncertainty of our perceptions should assure us that our multifaceted Earth is hardly singular. Blake struggles to understand how his contemporaries are enthralled with these instruments and are delighted with new views, but fail to apply the same methodology to anatomy. Our own visual ability to shift perceptions proves Blake's philosophy of corporeal multiplicity. Indeterminate sights fuel Blake's conviction that our bodies are just as indeterminate, thereby enabling a recreation of the human body. A historical example of how Blakean contraries abet advancement, "Without Contraries is no progression," explains his highlighting of the conflict between ocular uncertainty and anatomical certainty (34).

What I have endeavored to demonstrate in this section is that when Blake removes John Hunter's last name in *Island*, changing "John Hunter" to "Jack Tearguts", he was conceding that the recent surge of anatomical discoveries could not simply be rejected. But in fact John had taken a role similar to Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), namely as a worthy opponent that incited some of Blake's most profound philosophies of human identity. In the final section we will see that when Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) turns to the metaphysics of life in the second decade of the nineteenth century his engagement with John's legacy is both elaborate and reverential.

PART III: 'LIFE ITSELF IS NOT A *THING*': SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE'S PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE

All this knowledge, all our knowledge, has been built up communally: there would be no astrophysics, there would be no history, there would not even be language, if man were a solitary animal.

-J. Bronowski, *Science and Human Values*

To know and feel all this and not have the words to express it makes a human a grave of his own thoughts.

-John Donne, *Eclogue*

In my dissertation we have seen how the metaphysics of the Hunter brothers shaped a conservation that dealt with questions of life and death prompted by anatomical exploration. Proceeding from the Hunters, we saw how Blake's time at the Royal Academy of Arts as well as his attendance in Dr. William Hunter's lectures influenced his complex relationship with anatomy in his *Four Zoas*. Blake also engages with John Hunter's *Blood* in *Urizen* and *Milton* as he advances his own philosophies on what it means to be human. In Blake's responses to the Hunter Circle, the social dynamics of local artists and anatomists prove to be hardly hierarchic, but rather, collaborative and explorative as they articulated their theoretical underpinnings in elucidating how the interior body functions as well as negotiates its external reality. There is yet another Romantic poet that speculated on the intricacies of life. In what follows we will see how Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772-1834) theories on life reveal the depth of his response to the medical culture of eighteenth-century London, but also, the intensity of his interest in answering questions pertaining to the human body between 1815-1820s. From early on, Coleridge showed interest in the philosophies pertaining to life, especially in his poems "What is Life?" (1829) and "The Eolian Harp" (1796). Coleridge wrote a letter to Poole in 1801 centralizing the active mind in his anatomical theories: "I believe the Souls of 500 Sir Isaac Newtons would go to the making up of a Shakespeare or a Milton…. Newton was a mere materialist—Mind in his system is always passive—a lazy Looker-on on an external World…there is ground for suspicion, that any system built on the passiveness of the mind must be false, as a system" (Griggs, 2: 709). But it was really in his metaphysical writings era in 1816, prior to his intensely Christian writings, that we are able

to see how the concept of life and death became a fascination for Coleridge. As it turns out, this coincided with his profound admiration for the life work of John Hunter.

If we accept J. H. Haeger's estimated date range for the *Hints towards a more Comprehensive Theory of Life*'s (1848) composition at the end of 1816 to as late as 1820, then we are able to trace how Coleridge's metaphysical works played a part in developing his understanding of the anatomical body.[72] It is crucial that we understand that Coleridge does not conceive of himself as exclusively a philosopher or a poet. By encompassing both anatomical specificity *and* metaphysical paradigms in his works, Coleridge confirms his resistance to such labels. For example in his lecture on Shakespeare's works, he writes:

> The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material: as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes, as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form…—each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within,—its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror. (*Essays* 46-7)

The concentric circle imagery underpins Coleridge's negotiations between interiority and the externality of bodies. As these concentric mirrors develop, what we really see is Coleridge's image of a sustainable world that is pulsating, thinking, and throbbing in constant change throughout time and space. All movement of life that takes place within each circle could potentially and freely affect others, much like the ripple effect from a pebble tossed in a pond. Whereas Blake saw our bodies as macrocosms and the natural world as microcosms engineered by our fears and absolute domination, Coleridge saw our

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[72] See J. H. Haeger. "Coleridge's 'Bye Blow': The Composition and Date of 'Theory of Life'". *Modern Philology*. V.74.1 (August 1976). Pg. 20-41 for more on the editorial history of "Life".

mind as the microcosm of God's metaphysical mind and our flesh as the microcosm of the natural world that was God's creative art.

In "The Eolian Harp" Coleridge explains that the mind's propensity for creative production as the very breeze playing softly throughout its physical embodiments:

> O! the one Life within us and abroad,
> Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
> A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
> […]
>
> Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
> And many idle flitting phantasies,
> Traverse my indolent and passive brain
> […]
>
> And what if all animated nature
> Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze
> (Perkins 399-400)

In the confines of "The Aeolian Harp," then, Coleridge suggests that the physical body, without the instrumental mind, cannot give rise to an active brain. In the last stanza I quoted, Coleridge's questioning of the "intellectual breeze" as one that transpires through all living beings and geological extensions of nature also reflects the beginnings of what becomes a long-held Coleridgean belief of unity through the many. Or as Eric G. Wilson aptly explains Coleridge's initial fervor for Davy's scientific philosophies that brought together seemingly disparate objects through one subjective force: "Davy had substantiated the dreams of the alchemists—those visions of a cosmos ruled by a pervasive and intelligent spirit, a universe in which everything manifests the 'one Life within us and abroad'" (643).

In the poem "What is Life?" (1805), Coleridge asks the very question he will set out to answer physiologically and metaphysically nearly a decade later in his *Theory of Life*

(1848). But at the point of composing "What is Life?" at the age of thirty-three, Coleridge is still searching for absolute answers to the question of what defines life:

> Resembles life what once was deem'd of light,
> Too ample in itself for human sight?
> An absolute self—an element ungrounded—
> All that we see, all colours of all shade
> By encroach of darkness made?—
> Is very life by consciousness unbounded?
> And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,
> A war-embrace of wrestling life and death?
> (Perkins 436)

Here life is being questioned through the scope of Newtonian optics, but without the emphatic declaration that reduces the universe to minuscule material objects: photons, ether, continuous motion of indivisible particles prompting a mechanistic world. Extraordinarily similar to Blake's anti-Newton stance, Coleridge rejected "Newton as a speculative thinker whose immense prestige as a physician had vain impetus to a metaphysical world-view, the 'Corpuscular and mechanic Philosophy', that had reigned for the preceding century" (Abrams 117). Thus the importance of initially answering his question of "what is life" through *Opticks*' terminology is in part a cue to his reader of the Newtonian debate as well as a declaration of his own proficiency in sciences. However, Coleridge imbues Newton's theory of light with psychological traits of the human body, in the process using terms such as "consciousness" and "thoughts, pains" as signifiers of the balancing weights between life and death. By uniting the psychological with the physiological, Coleridge brings the same charges against Newton that Blake did; to ignore the uncertainty of humanity's psychological depths is to render an incomplete projection of ourselves.

We see this accusation best exemplified in his poem, "Kubla Khan" (c. 1796). The give-and-take relationship between the mind and its natural environment seen in Blake's

visionary world is also seen in Coleridge's poem, especially when we consider how he negotiates his uneasy acknowledgment of opium's capacity to create new worlds that takes on a quasi-divine power to create. In the preface, he clearly describes to his reader the physiological state of his body as this particular opium dream commenced: "The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him *as things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions without any sensation or consciousness of effort" (Perkins 430-1). By way of digestion, opium initially interacts with his physical body as it dissolves into his bloodstreams, then it affects his consciousness by producing a hallucinogenic dreamscape. In this regard, "Kubla Kahn" anticipates the more pronounced claim Coleridge makes in *Theory of Life* that living is a throbbing, interdynamic engagement between a series of organic forces. In "Kubla Kahn," those forces are: Coleridge's body, opium, compositional skills, and his metaphysical toolbox cultivated from his literary background. But it is the wobbly, uncertain structure within "Kubla Kahn" that respects the mysteries of creativity's origins, but also brings to the forefront the pressing question of Coleridge's metaphysics: why does life seemingly appear to ascend—concentrically—towards progress, but contemporaneous living appears to reveal itself as a precarious play of forces? During a pivotal phase in his intellectual development Coleridge turned passionately, but complexly to John Hunter for answers.

Scholars such as Wilson, Trevor H. Levere, James Allard and others have noted Coleridge's scientific interests, especially during his time in Germany (1802-5). In more recent scholarship we see a collective effort to trace his biographical roots in London's elite

medical culture. In turn, I reread Coleridge as an individual who was not only addicted to the "*free-agency annihilating* poison," but also lived a life that teeter-tottered between dissolution and ascents of creative production. Crucially Coleridge was as a polyglot thinker that pulled incessantly from various fields in an attempt to answer a crucial question of why the human mind and body had come to exist despite our persistent unfamiliarity with what the mind is (Griggs, Collected Letters, 3: 495). As M. H. Abrams noted in Coleridge's chronology of literary projects, "The years 1815-19 are for Coleridge as metaphysician and critic what the years 1796-98—the time of *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*, as well as his hardly less innovative 'conversation poems'—are for Coleridge as a bard" (Abrams 115). In portraying the full scope of Coleridge's projects and their significant reception in posterity, Abrams elaborates, "the range and quality of his achievement in these latter years would for any man be remarkable; for Coleridge, give the circumstances of his life, it must count as a feat of massive spiritual heroism" (115). It was in his metaphysical writings of these years that Coleridge concentrated his efforts in engaging with medicine in general and with John Hunter in particular. I will begin by delineating the main themes in Coleridge's *Theory of Life*. In doing so I will argue that his accelerated production of writings in 1815-19 reflects an optimism that medical discourse might provide answers to his questions about human life that had haunted his earlier poetry. One implication of my argument is that in his writing career up through *Theory of Life* one sees a crescendo in his poetical and medical investigations of life. It is only after the mid-1820s that Coleridge writes exclusively in Christian framework that creates such a chasm in his corpus.

In a more straightforward manner than his earlier poetry, Coleridge as a medical metaphysician attempts to craft a theoretical framework that responds to the many impressive

discoveries of the long eighteenth century. In this regard, Coleridge's awareness of his lifetime within the span of human history prior to his works shares the same historical awareness expressed by Dr. William Hunter in his *Lectures*. But what is peculiarly Coleridgean is his attempt to universalize the definition of life through a neurohumanities scope that is deeply indebted to William's brother, John Hunter. We will see how the anatomical brain versus the multi-conscious mind proves to be an uneasy tension that Coleridge struggles to reconcile. In turn this dilemma leads to another set of questions that sustain Coleridge's pursuit in answering what is "human": what qualifies as real living, and what is the nature of the soul in the anatomical framework?

In 1816 Coleridge moved in with Dr. James Gillman in Highgate where he would live out his remaining years. There he wrote "An Essay on Scrofula" in collaboration with Dr. Gillman.[73] The opportunities afforded by Coleridge's living arrangements provided him with access to a medical library as well as conversations with both physicians and Dr. Gillman's visiting patients. This intellectual environment provided Coleridge with both the physical and literary material to create his own conceptions of life and death. In the essay Coleridge raises the need for defining life:

> …the necessity of a distinct conception of life itself, or, as it has been the fashion of late years to name it, of the living principle … I anticipate that the investigation of this question likewise, nay, even the mere reference to it as a problem, the solution of which remains not the less desirable on account of its difficulty, will be conceived by many as visionary & seducing us beyond the bounds of clear conceptions. (11: 238)

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[73] It has been argued by several scholars that Coleridge wrote a large majority of "Scrofula," and Dr. Gillman only provided anatomical specificity while lending his credibility as a physician. Notwithstanding those possibilities, it is necessary to give Coleridge the benefit of the doubt that he was genuinely interested in medicine, both factually and philosophically.

He lays down the origin of his exploration of life as a way to address its manifestations in humanity in several varieties: psychological, metaphysical, and crucially, physiological. In doing so, Coleridge is attempting to articulate a philosophy of life that can expand and contract to accommodate all expressions of life (mammals, insects, humans, and geological formations), which adapts the conceptual and rhetorical apparatus of John Hunter's corpus. In the latter part of the passage quoted above, Coleridge is definitely setting up boundaries to his philosophy of life as one that must provide evidence rooted in experience. This reveals his demand for an absolute answer that is not too emphatically metaphysical. As we see in the continuation of the same passage:

> And truly if by clear conceptions we must mean only distinct images, & that the mind can conceive nothing but what the fancy can make pictures of, they are in the right, & their censures well-grounded. … for all rational thinking—an expurgation which would make their [materialists] vocabulary collapse into a very slender & starveling form… But nothing short of absolute demonstration would convince (me) that the problem *is a chimera worth of a place (among) the subtile* [sic] *questions proposed by the laughter-stirring Rabelais*, the solution of which was regarded of such importance by the greatest benefactors of our Art, & the soberest as well as deepest thinkers of our profession, from Harvey to Haller & from Haller to John Hunter… (11: 478-9)[74]

Within this passage, Coleridge is announcing his desires for an absolutely true framework pertaining to what defines life and death. If the thinkers cannot demonstrate absolute proof, then he is ready and willing to treat their theories as nonsense by satirizing their words. Thus Coleridge reveals his dissatisfactions with contemporary discourses regarding the meaning of what a life is within a human being and its existence within the expansive natural world. However, his dissatisfaction does contain elements of reverential respect for the innovative

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[74] Parenthetical words belong to the editors of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (16 vols.) as they speculated on words in the manuscripts that were illegible.

ideologies prior to his *Theory of Life*. In comparing John Hunter to Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777), Coleridge is downplaying John's lack of formal education while associating his broad interests with Haller's reputation as a man of both botany and anatomy excellence, but also Haller's lifelong preoccupation with his personal poetical compositions.

By selecting Haller as John's predecessor, one well versed in science and fine arts, Coleridge is staking his admiration on the ideal scientific thinker that also has a deep sense of the metaphysical side of his anatomical interests. In the same process, Coleridge is implicitly arguing for the same benevolent admiration of himself. For he is a well-known poet at the point of his *Theory of Life* composition, and believes his mutual interests shared with Haller and John allow his work to join to their ranks. Furthermore, by cultivating a sense of awe for anatomists that are proficient in the delicates of the metaphysics of human life, he advances the intimate relationship between anatomy and fine arts in the fashion that Dr. William Hunter treated both fields of knowledge at the Royal Academy of Arts. However, Coleridge's admiration proves to be short-lived; he ultimately becomes disillusioned and adopts an exclusively Christian context for the rest of his life after the 1820s.

In this densely packed argument for the need to carefully outline a conceptual framework defining life, Coleridge lends credibility to what he will come to call the psychosomatic legacy of John Hunter, all the while positioning himself among the leading anatomists. He explains that in order to properly conceive of a definition regarding life, it must not be purely metaphysical or materialist. Any overwhelming tendency towards a specific branch of knowledge as the foundation for defending and proving what life is will necessarily fail because of its lack of a panoramic view of reality. But he also insists on an absolute demonstration of its rightness. With no room for error, it must be as an absolute as

his God. In this sense, Coleridge exemplifies the Latinate notion of "convince" as to "cause (a person) to admit, as established to his satisfaction, that which is advanced in argument; to bring to acknowledge the truth *of*" (*OED*). It is crucial for us to be clear here that unlike in his Christian phase in the 1820s, Coleridge is not seeking to find the solution to death in achieving spiritual immortality. He desires to stand at the fracture of life and death and to articulate a universal definition of reality that is limited to no single strain of thought. In his methodology, he attempts to erase dichotomies between the growing specialized fields of knowledge in the early nineteenth century. This is because he realizes that defining life will require a synthesis in yielding a theory that can, truthfully, account for universal life and what sustains it, yet be flexible to accommodate the outliers of the natural world such as monstrosities.

In his poem "Human Life, on the Denial of Immortality" (c. 1815) Coleridge gives us his version of Hamlet's soliloquy on death that meditates on the brevity of life and the certainty of death. If we are right in dating this poem around 1815, then we see that Coleridge is struggling to pin down his understanding of life and death at the very moment he begins to praise and rely on John Hunter. By describing our deaths as a facet of nature's finicky climate, Coleridge offers a panoramic view of human history and its births and deaths as mere moments within the span of earth's geological age: "If dead, we cease to be; if total gloom / Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare / As summer-gusts, of sudden birth and doom, / Whose sound and motion not alone declare, / But are their whole being!" (Perkins 438). The transitory hum of life and death in a human being prompts Coleridge to conceptualize death as simply an end. He offers no further explanation or even speculation, which he is usually prone to do, as to why death exists. By treating death as merely a

nihilistic ending, Coleridge turns his energies in "Human Life" towards convincing his readers that they should "Be Life itself, and not its task and tent" for "even a soul like Milton's can know death" (438). If one chooses to live mechanistically, and without a life of the mind, one lives as a "vessel purposeless, unmeant," when in fact the mind is the "drone-hive strange of phantom purposes! / Surplus of Nature's dread activity" (438). The current of dreams and nightmares through the slumbering consciousness is the mark of the living mind ceaselessly trying to break from its chains to incite imagination and thereby usher in creative progress. Nature crafts the content of humanity's subconsciousness artistically, but Coleridge finds its lack of purpose causing him to rethink his Galenic commitment to teleology: "she gazed on some nigh-finished vase, / Retreating slow, with meditative pause, / She formed with restless hands unconsciously. / Blank accident! nothing's an anomaly!" (438). Coleridge does not say that accidents are Nature's error, but rather he pauses and realizes that "nothing" is actually a time-and-space anomaly. Coleridge's earlier premise in the poem that death is nothing, and his subsequent discovery that nothing is an anomaly fuse the two views of death to offer the elusive meaning within "Human Life"; death is an anomaly of nature. In all likelihood, this is the context in which Coleridge looks to John Hunter not for anatomical knowledge on its own but for a metaphysics of life to assuage his own insecurities about death.

Just as the Hunter brothers and Blake did, Coleridge wonders how death relates to living functions, especially in the mind. Death, for Coleridge, is "sudden or otherwise, but having no demonstrable Action or Consequence than that of removing or incapacitation the means and existing conditions of the manifestation of Life and Mind; and of course, therefore, suspending the manifestation itself" (11: 423). Hinging "Life and Mind" together,

he argues that the separation of the two because of death would suggest that despite a corporeal death, the mind could persist in living. In order to sustain a living distinction between the body and mind, Coleridge says that one would have to admit to feelings and thoughts imperceptible to the body as well as sensations of the body as unaffecting the mind. Not surprisingly, Coleridge deems the separation an impossibility that would allow for the existence of a body separate from the mind, thus creating a human that would "have no more responsibility, or fitness to be loved and esteemed, than a Looking Glass!" (11: 425). From thence, language would succumb to an endless chaotic meaninglessness, "without it Esteem, Love, Responsibly, would be words without a meaning—nay, even Pain, Pleasure, Happiness would be all nothing *to me*" (11: 425). By "it," he means the sympathy between body and mind that constantly responds to and causes the emotions and actions of a human. By situating the body and mind in a union that is equally subjected to the cycle of life and death, Coleridge argues this union is "to cause the Idea, Self, Consciousnesses, or the I to rise as a product and as a necessary part of the same series with Body, Organization" (11: 425). Without a symbiotic relationship between body and mind, Coleridge argues that the selfhood cannot exist or function. The self's capacity to experience various pains and to think, along with the body's capability to exert action and receive tactile information, confirms one's existence. In turn, he modifies Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" into "I think, and I act; therefore I exist as I am," or as he clarifies in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), "I am, because I affirm myself to be; I affirm myself to be, because I am" (Chapter 12). The human being's affirmation of self-consciousness —a metaphysical gesture—proves the existence of corporeality.

Although Coleridge often depicts a harmonious fusion between man and nature, he does not maintain a decisive stance on death's relation to life. In "Human Life" death is nature's anomaly, but then in another work he positions life and death not as antithetical, or as parasitic to one another, but instead as a means to recognize and enhance living powers of the meditative mind. This strand of thought is best exemplified in his own epitaph that he penned:

> Beneath this sod
> A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he.
> O, life one thought in prayer for S.T.C.;
> That he who many a year with toil of breath
> Found death in life, may here find life in death! (1834)
> (PW v.1: 491-2)

The flipped perspective is partly an idealized striving towards his freedom from his opium addiction as well as his angst from his lost love, but it also reveals his commitment to his *Theory of Life* insofar as that death and life are not polarities, nor are they orbiting stages; instead, he finds life and death as an osmosis within a being, which in turn reenacts the same process within the grander scale of the natural environment. Coleridge remains committed to the task that he delegated to himself in 1803 when he wrote in his notebook, "seem to have made up my mind to write my metaphysical works, as *my Life*, & *in* my Life—intermixed with all the other events/or history of the mind & fortunes of S.T. Coleridge" (CN 1: 1515). Just before he turns fully to Christianity, he views his mind as a parallel to his conception of life as an oscillating, highly responsive entity of energies.

I. The Living Energies as Life's Essence

Keep in mind that even before Coleridge reached adulthood, he seriously considered the prospect of becoming a physician. As a young schoolboy he spent his Saturdays following his older brother, Luke Coleridge, a young surgeon at the London Hospital. In

preparation for his medical studies, he attended Dr. Thomas Beddoes' lectures. Allard reminds us how Beddoes "claimed that the works of John Hunter […] 'may be regarded as the foundation of a new science, not less generally interesting than any of the preceding'" (31).[75] This could be another source in explaining how Coleridge came into contact with Hunter's theories. Coleridge also attended Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's biology lectures at the University of Göttingen.[76] In fact, Linde Katritzky describes Coleridge's arrival at Göttingen as that of an individual who was "steeped in progressive scientific notions, and fresh from communication with enthusiastic scientists, many of whom had interacted with Lichtenberg and Blumenbach for years" (267).[77]

A good way to see what was at stake in *Theory of Life* is to consider Seth B. Watson's critique of this work. As the nineteenth-century editor of this book, Watson may be the son of Mr. Watson who worked with John Hunter when John departed from Dr. William Hunter's Great Windmill anatomy school. In editing the book, Watson describes its definition of life as one that "disclaims the division of all that surrounds us into things with life, and things without life; and contends, that the term Life is no less applicable to the irreducible *bases* of chemistry, such as sodium, potassium, &c., or to the various forms of crystals, or the geological strata which compose the crust of our globe, than it is to the human body itself, the acme and perfection of animal organization" (Watson 8). But Watson raises his own personal contentions with Coleridge's blanket application of the word "life" and argues that

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[75] Quoted from Beddoes *Observations* 1: 1xxxiii. Also, Dr. Beddoes translated Dr. John Brown's *Elements of Medicine* (1795), in which there is an illustration of Dr. Brown by William Blake. Additionally, Louis I. Bredvold notes that Coleridge "attended lectures by Dr. [Thomas] Beddoes … and when he was at the University of Göttingen, he had the opportunity of hearing Blumenbach's lectures in biology. Upon his return to England, he frequently observed experiments of Humphrey Davy" (393).

[76] Interestingly, one of Blumenbach's sponsors for being elected to the Royal Society was John Hunter.

[77] *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*. Vol. 49, no. 2 (1995)

he wishes Coleridge had restricted the term to mankind. Watson disagrees with Coleridge's belief that "rocks and mountains, nay, 'the great globe itself' share[s] with mankind the gift of life" (9), further objecting to Coleridge's use of "Nature" that it is "extremely apt to make a false impression on young or thoughtless minds" (9). Watson explains that nature "is not a person; it is not active; it neither creates nor performs actions more or less energetically, nor learns, nor forgets, no reexerts [sic] itself, nor recruits its vigour" (10). Watson attempts to exert corrections upon readers by noting that "Nature in any intelligible sense, means nothing but that method and order by which the Almighty regulates the common course of things" (10). To emphasize his condemnation of Coleridge's intertwining of poetry with science, Watson states that "figurative language is very much misplaced in strict philosophical investigations; and these particular figures, which might be quite consistent with the atheistical philosophy of Lucretius, sound ill in the mouth of a pious Christian, which Mr. Coleridge undoubtedly was" (10-1). Given the severity of Watson's displeasure in his introduction to Coleridge's *Theory of Life*, we must acknowledge the pressure Watson puts on the readers prior to their reading the first line of chapter one. It is the reverse, but equally powerful editorial pressure constraining John's nineteenth-century publications. Both John's and Coleridge's works were fundamentally altered by the dismissive editors who often undervalued their complex approaches to subjects that are not typical within their respective fields of inquiry.[78] Generally speaking, these editors overtly shared the attitude that a poet should not be discussing anatomy and an anatomist should refrain from delving into metaphysics.

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[78] At this point, we do not have a full understanding of Dr. Watson's editorial principles, or an explanation of how he came to possess a manuscript of Coleridge's *Theory of Life*.

In his introduction, Coleridge immediately identifies John as the premier voice leading an open dialogue about the metaphysics of life. Coleridge may have known about John in part as a result from the William Lawrence (1783-1867)-John Abernethy (1764-1831) debates from 1799 onwards. Lawrence was a former student of Abernethy who became his adversary by promoting an overtly materialistic approach to the origin of life. On the other hand, Abernethy, a former student of John Hunter, was a major proponent of advancing vitalism through an exclusively metaphysical scope that was explicitly indebted to John. These debates caught Coleridge's interest insofar as they demonstrated a deadlock between two schools of thought pertaining to the philosophies of life, but also caused Coleridge to desire an absolute philosophy to avoid the stalemate by incorporating parts from both Lawrence's and Abernethy's works. The fulcrum between the two thinkers, for Coleridge, was John Hunter.

In the years around 1816-20, just after his first admiring reference to John, Coleridge announces that John's work on the definition of life has acquired a virtually divine significance to him. Coleridge clarifies his perception of John's profundity, first by stating his familiarity with John's published works, and then by sharing his experience of revelation in visiting John's anatomy museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Inside the museum, which Coleridge compares to an Augustan temple with John Hunter himself as its priest, he seizes upon the fusion between the metaphysical and scientific strains in John's work on themes life and death. He writes:

> When we stand before the bust of John Hunter, or as we enter the magnificent museum furnished by his labours, and pass slowly, with meditative observation, through this august temple, which the genius of one great man has raised and dedicated to the wisdom and uniform working of the Creator, we perceive at every step the guidance, we had almost said, the inspiration, of those profound ideas concerning Life, which dawn upon us, indeed, through

> his written works, but which he has here presented to us in a more perfect language than that of words—the language of God himself, as uttered by Nature. (17)

John, for Coleridge, was not simply an anatomist preoccupied with experimental and empirical data, but he was also a genius who searchingly labored over questions about our bodies' longevity and their propensity towards death. By identifying John as a genius, Coleridge models the Romantics' conception of genius as a bard for humanity, and thus John is promoted as a divinely sanctioned bard-anatomist. And as Coleridge reads the anatomical specimens in John's collection he treats the museum as a book that left no body unexamined while revealing God's secrets. Coleridge is praising the museum for offering what he wanted, "absolute demonstration" not in the language of man but in the language of anatomy. He gives John credit for exhaustive insight in positioning all living bodies (humans, animals, and plants) on a single spectrum. In doing so, Coleridge recognizes that John's search for the original spark of life was also an attempt to construct a universal account of this phenomenon. Coleridge concludes his celebration of John by exclaiming that "the true idea of Life existed in the mind of John Hunter I do not entertain the least doubt" (17). John's museum is the perfect teleological proof of the true idea of life. Coleridge expresses absolute confidence that John's works virtually embody the divine mind's idea of life. If the written works are the dawn of revelation, then the anatomy museum is high noon.

Coleridge recognizes that John's rogue personality may not have been sensible like his older brother's, but Coleridge asks us not to let this fact hamper the brilliance of his works in that John was the first to seriously advance the project of defining life as a separate inquiry from embryological studies. In that manner, Coleridge partly recognizes the ingenuity of John in defying the formal education of anatomists, but he readily accepts and

propels the novelty of John's metaphysics. Nonetheless Coleridge's own assessment of John's limited education prompts Coleridge to envision a way, in which as a poet, he might contribute to John's project:

> …it may, perhaps, be doubted whether his incessant occupation, and his stupendous industry in the service, both of his contemporaries and of posterity, added to his comparatively slight acquaintance with the arts and aids of logical arrangement, permitted him fully to unfold and arrange it in distinct, clear, and communicable conceptions. …in his writings the light which occasionally flashes upon us seems at other times, and more frequently, to struggle through an unfriendly medium, and even sometimes to suffer a temporary occultation. …To this effect we must, as it were, climb up on his shoulders, and look at the same objects in a distincter form, because seen from the more commanding point of view furnished by himself. (18)

This analysis stems from Coleridge's keen observation in recognizing John's struggles with the English language. The medical metaphysicians' struggle with language takes on two forms. For one thing John simply lacks his brother's formal education and culture. For another, by referring to the works in an "unfriendly medium," Coleridge also expresses his fear that the English language itself lacks words for meditative speculations pertaining to anatomical unknowns. Here again Coleridge wants an absolute demonstration of a linguistic character. In acknowledging John's novelty as well as his linguistic battles, Coleridge argues that it is precisely because of such intellectual frictions between language and the anatomy specimens that it is necessary for someone like Coleridge to produce additional perspectives to the study of defining life. Given Coleridge's educational background in medicine, he feels that coupled with his literary skills, he has something to offer to the complex—unfinished—metaphysical project of John's.

And thus Coleridge begins *Theory of Life* by quoting Bichat's definition of life, "Life is the sum of all the functions by which death is resisted," then by raising his major contention with Bichat's definition in that it neglects to offer "the *law* of the thing" (22, 25).

In his disappointment with Bichat's definition, Coleridge argues that scientific study is supposed "to be causative, but by introduction of imaginary somewhats, natural or supernatural, under the name of causes, but by announcing the law of action in the particular case, in subordination to the common law of what all the phenomena are modifications or results" (25). By structuring the nature of inquiries as one that actively seeks to explore and explain ambiguity, Coleridge contributes to John's project by accommodating John's foundational speculations, but Coleridge wants to add the study of the conscious human mind as a crucial topic within the philosophies of life and death.

From a historical perspective, Coleridge claims that the birth of science precipitates humanity's interest in defining life, precisely because it demonstrates the unfolding awareness of our desire to understand the philosophical differences between life and death: "the 13th century the first science which roused the intellects of men from the torpor of barbarism" (28). In this sense of history, Coleridge shares a similarity with William in that both utilize a historical narrative to highlight progress as well as to ensure humility among contemporary thinkers. But they differ in that William framed historical topics in his *Two Lectures* as a moral and ethical framework, whereas Coleridge's treatment of history was overtly Hegelian. He believes the initial impetus for humanity's desire to define life began when humanity "wonder[ed] if truths, that appeared to reveal the secret depths of our own souls, should take possession of the whole mind, and all truths appears trivial which could not either be evolved out of similar principles, by the same process, or at least brought under the same forms of thought, by perceived or imagined analogies?" (28). The capacity for a human mind to examine its subjectivity and to search for a rationale of its existence within the natural environment marks civilization's progress. Coleridge believes our inability to

define that rationale of life gave rise to religious metaphysics; even still, the very core of metaphysics pertaining to ourselves remains a perpetual question with an elusive answer: what drives and retains life within its corporeal manifestations, or as Coleridge calls it, "the sacred adyta of organic life," suggesting that somewhere within our bodies there is an interiority sustaining and protecting life akin to an especially secret sanctuary inside an ancient Greek temple (32). The language and recapitulation of a priest-and-temple relationship suggest that Coleridge has greater confidence in religion's capacity to define life than we see in the *Lyrical Ballads*. The Romantic Prophet proves to be problematic in that this figure often takes on an isolated voice, and the medical philosopher is also problematic because it tends towards either a strictly mechanistic or a divine framework, and therefore Coleridge firmly roots himself in Christian dogma in his remaining years. This final shift indicates that medicine, for Coleridge, is a pivotal transition phase from revolutionary poetry to exclusively Christian philosophizing.

A major motivation for Coleridge is his desire to escape his reputation for supernaturalism that developed from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798). Accordingly he cautions all readers of *Theory of Life* that he "disclaim[s] all intention of explaining life into an occult quality" (33). In other words he does not want his readers to think his analogies between John's anatomy museum and an Augustan temple to be supernatural. He intends his comparison of the two to be of a fundamentally different source from his earlier poetry, that is, psychosomatic rather than supernatural. In sharing with John the struggles with *how* to define life, Coleridge is clearly worried about his own legacy post-*Theory of Life*.

In his troubles in explaining the phenomena of life, living, and their relationship to putrefaction, Coleridge finds his definition of life: "I define life as *the principle of*

individuation, or the power which unites a given *all* into a *whole* that is presupposed by all its parts. The link that combines the two, and acts throughout both, will, of course, be defined by the *tendency* to *individuation*" (42). This definition addresses John's attempt to produce a philosophy of life that included amputated bodies and yet recalled a pre-amputated life. For example, an arm by itself is not alive. The arm can only express a recognizable sign of life when it is attached to the human body. No one would claim a human being dead because of an amputation, and the reverse proves true; an arm separated from its body could not be said to be alive.[79] For Coleridge, the sum of all individual parts to create a whole, thereby becoming recognizable as an object to us, is a requisite in defining life.

Coleridge sees that the activity of individuation also reveals a body's property of gravitational union, or in other words, the property by which individual parts remain connected to the whole. He argues that what keeps our internal organs within our bodies and from freely floating around depends on gravity's inclination to maintain wholeness amongst parts. Coleridge attributes that union to "the opposite tendency to connect, even as the centrifugal power supposes the centripetal, or as the two opposite poles constitute each other, and are the constituent acts of one and the same power in the magnet" (50). Borrowing from John's ideas on sympathetic union, Coleridge makes similar claims as Blake does in *Jerusalem* and *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "They take the Two Contraries which are calld Qualities, with which / Every Substance is clothd, they name them Good & Evil" and "Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human Existence" (Erdman 152, 34). Yet Coleridge is more

[79] This also captures William Blake's interest in regeneration; especially noted by his fascination with polyps. See Stefani Englestein's *Anxious Anatomy* (2009) for further details on Blake and polyps.

teleological than Blake, for the aggregated whole and its ability to maintain that objective whole drive Coleridge's *Theory of Life*.

Astutely aware that he is treading a fine line between empirical sciences and highly abstract philosophies as a self-proclaimed "medical philosopher," Coleridge argues that an interplay between the two extremes is necessary to guarantee a comprehensive examination of life:

> Life, then, we consider as the copula, or the unity of thesis and antithesis, position and counterposition,—Life itself being the positive of both; as, on the other hand, the two counterpoints are necessary conditions of the *manifestations* of Life. These, by the same necessity, unite in a synthesis; which again, by the law of dualism, essential to all actual existence, expands, or *produces* itself, from the point into the *line*, in order again to converge, as the initiation of the same productive process in some intenser [sic] form of reality. (51)

Quietly he points out that a definition of life must not be reducible to a single action or principle, or even a single cause; but rather it must be able to explain the contentions that a body endures to preserve life among differentiated parts. Coleridge notes that "the identity of the two counter-powers, Life *sub*sists; in their strife it *con*sists: and in their reconciliation it at once dies and is born again into a new form, either falling back into the life of the whole, or starting anew in the process of individuation" (52). The fight to survive is an attempt *simultaneously* to live and to continually recreate. Coleridge is trying to explain that the perpetual struggle for every living body is *also* a process of creativity. Or alternatively, the propensity towards an interactive adaptation to one's environment reflects a body's innate creativity to persist in living.

But what exactly is that propensity or "strife"? Coleridge argues that it is not locatable in, or determined by a specific organ. A flawed physiologist can only think in terms of anatomy, but Coleridge expands his definition to argue that the "universal law of

life" is found in Time and Space (53). The necessary relationship between time and space, or "the oneness" of the two concepts strikes Coleridge as the "predicate of all *real* being" (53). He argues that one concept cannot be determined without the other. In other words, we cannot distinguish time without space, and vice-a-versa: "if we exclude space by an abstract assumption, the time remains as a spaceless point, and represents the concentered power of unity and active negation, i.e. retraction, determination, and limit, *ab intra*. But if we assume the time as excluded, the line vanishes, and we leave space dimensionless, an indistinguishable ALL, and therefore the representative of absolute weakness and formlessness" (54). It is the "interpeneration and co-inherence" of time and space that makes these concepts perceptible to our minds, but also "the condition and meaning of a—*thing*" (57). As noted by C. U. M. Smith, the Romantics' use of "… space, time, substance, causality, and so on, are not observables but the very conditions which make meaningful observations possible. They are ordering relations imposed on our "sense data" by ourselves so that we can make sense of our observations" (Smith 223). Thus Coleridge exemplifies the need for space and time to articulate his own philosophies of life and death. There are echoes of the Cartesian "I think, therefore I am" in Coleridge's explanation of life, but only insofar as he uses time and space to claim how we use the activity of thinking to recognize living from the unthinking dead. Thus life is indefinable solely in terms of physiology, theology, or philosophy. Life cannot be found in a single, unique substance. For Coleridge explains "Life itself is not a *thing*—a self-subsistent *hypostasis*—but an *act* and *process*" (Watson 94). Hence space and time necessarily exist to explain the capacity of self-recognition in our thinking as well as to mark the minute differences of life as a tangled process that intercedes within *all* bodies, vegetable and animal. And metaphysically

speaking, notions of space and time serve as concepts marking powers that express what Coleridge claims as "the power to suffer, as well as the power to act" (93). The histories of the human mind demonstrate, all too harrowingly, our capacity to express both powers.

Dead material, both plant and animal, is the product of a disintegrated relationship between counteractive forces. As Coleridge explains: "decomposition, in short, the relations of unproductive particles to each other; so that in every instance the result is the exact sum of the components qualities, as in arithmetical addition. This is the philosophy of Death, and only of a dead nature can it hold good. In Life, and in the view of vital philosophy, the two component counter-powers actually interpenetrate each other" (63). When the integration of polar forces ceases to negotiate the peculiarities of their attraction and repulsion, then the singularity of somatic particles is now *both* distinguishable and decaying. The inability to determine a single object for what constitutes life (i.e. blood, ether, etc.), Coleridge claims, is the definition of living because it is not a single entity that yields life, but rather, life is a result of a conglomeration of energies.

And yet, at the height of his Christian works in the 1820s, *Aids to Reflection,* he divides death into two types, physical and spiritual: "… besides that dissolution of our earthly tabernacle which we call death, there is another death, not the mere negation of life, but its positive opposite. And as there is a mystery of life, and an assimilation to the principle of life, even to him who is the Life; so is there a mystery of death, and an assimilation to the principle of evil; a fructifying of the corrupt seed, of which death is the germination" (*Aids* 251). Interestingly, he assigns the concept of death the same philosophical genealogy as John's "principle of life". Coleridge may cloak death in mysteries, but he explicitly identifies death as an extension of evil. Despite his convictions in *Theory of Life* that our fallacies tend

to originate from our narrow perception as a human being, he assigns death a human moral value, but for no other stage of a human's life does he offer a moral explication.

Death is the end of nature's creativity, too. Nature's response to the inherent conflict within a body begets evolution, for "the great fundamental truth that all things spring from, and subsist in, the endless strife between indifference and difference. The whole history of Nature is comprised in the specification of the transitional states from the one to the other" (68). Metamorphosis is the creative clash between polarities yielding to the universal array of natural diversity. In general terms, this is precisely what Coleridge sees when viewing the entirety of John's "Book of Life" in his anatomy museum. He visualizes the transitional phases of nature in comparable terms to how William Blake sees vortexes as the dimensions of universes: "the progress of Nature…and that she expands as by concentric circles" (70). The boundary of each outwardly radiating concentric circle represents the "endless strife" and the ultimate and subsequent rise of the next phase of transition. Coleridge elaborates, "the whole *actual* life of Nature originates in the existence, and consists in the perpetual reconciliation, and as a perpetual resurgency of the primary contradiction, of which universal polarity is the result and the exponent" (70). The human body "ascend[s] from the laws of attraction and repulsion, as united in gravity, to magnetism, electricity, and constructive power, till we arrive at the point of representative of a new and far higher intensity" (71). Whereas Blake sees a series of interlinked vortexes as the explanation for the infinite numbers of human, animal, and plant bodies, Coleridge views all of nature by looking downward in one instance to visualize not individually linked vortexes, but only one set of concentric circles that emanates until it arrives at what he views at the "last and most consummate of her [Nature] combined energies," which represents the human brain (73).

Our bodies, containing the human brain, an organ that his describes as being "disguised in the subtlety and multiplicity of its evolution," reflect his uncertainty of whether human beings are the final circle or will transition into another phase (73). By placing the human brain at the very center of the last concentric circle, Coleridge signifies our varied states of consciousness. C. U. M Smith is right to point out the link between Coleridge and Galen's "idea of an indwelling power working from within outwards" (Smith 42). Coleridge attributed this power to divine origins, but he looked for anatomical proof. Our human mind, says Coleridge, is the "whole force of organic power" that has "attained an inward and centripetal direction" (85). The fleshy body that expresses the mind "has the whole world in counterpoint to him, but he contains an entire world within himself. Now, for the first time at the apex of the living pyramid, it is Man and Nature, but Man himself is a syllepsis, a compendium of Nature—the Microcosm! ... he is a revelation of Nature" (85-6). Nature has created man through eons of polar confrontations.

As the concentric circles narrow towards the center—the apex—Coleridge suggests the last great battle of polarity will take place between Nature and Man—Maker and Prodigy, or Master and Slave—leading towards an apocalyptic battle. Until that final struggle occurs, he keeps his focus on the forces within a human body. When he writes that "the difference of magnetism and electricity, and the powers illustrated by them, is an essential part of my system, but that the animal Life of man is the identity of all three," he is positioning man as the synthesis of energetic engagements (87). Man does not proceed *a priori* to magnetism or electricity, nor is man endowed with a particular substance: "I hold the organized body itself, in all its marvellous contexture, to be the produce and representant of the power… the unceasing *polarity of life, as the form of its process, and its tendency to progressive*

individuation as the law of its direction" (66-7). Man, to Coleridge, is the result of intermingling forces constantly negotiating polarities; it is from these battles that man achieves his dominance. Without opposites, life ceases, and decomposition begins. Coleridge understands that the process of decomposition of a body is actually a slow dissolution of the body's conglomeration of individual parts into singular, indivisible parts as tangible proof that death is definable as the absence of energies' dualities.

II. Reframing *Theory of Life* in relation to Coleridge's Philosophy of Consciousness

We must look at several works prior to *Theory of Life* to gain a comprehensive understanding of Coleridge's concept of interiority and its polarities, both subjectively and objectively. In his essay fragment, "On the Concept of 'Depth'" he sets up the premise that "the idea of *Depth* is one and the same with that of *inward*, or the *inside*" (CL 11.1: 452). If one does not account for interior substance, depth, then one will only conceive of length (11.1: 452). Coleridge argues for the necessity of depth because "Space has relation only to the *outside*. Depth therefore must be that *by* not *with* which Space is filled" (11.1: 453). If depth is not a perceptible, tangible characterization of bodies then, exactly, what is it? He writes of this depth that "it must be a Power, the essence of which is *inwardness*, outwardness being its effect and mode of manifesting itself" (11.1: 453). By synthesizing depth with the animation of bodies, Coleridge creates a union between the corporeal and metaphysical. Then the body, he claims, "cannot be essentially *material*—but that *Depth*—i.e. a power, manifesting itself in Space, and contemplated in its phœnomena, Length and Breadth, is what we mean by BODY" (11.1: 453). Depth is the expression of a distinct object from space and time. If our bodies create depth, and we can perceive depth in separate bodies from ourselves, then we arrive at the metaphysical power of feeling. He

defines "feeling" as self-confirmation: "in all languages—deep feeling, profound thought: substantial Truth … But feeling is a Self-Finding" (11.1: 454). If we feel "depth," then we confirm its separateness from our bodies, thereby recognizing life. Feeling is an action that happens because one is alive. For Coleridge, one cannot have a feeling without a mind, and therefore the mind needs to be posited at the crux of a universal definition of life; hence the human brain is the very center of the concentric depiction of all living bodies.

Even as much as Coleridge likened us to God in his metaphysical writings, he still maintained that thoroughly knowing the universe was not in perfect harmony with human ambition or understanding; Coleridge emphasizes the value of admitting uncertainty. He admires thinkers' ability to admit the limitations of their knowledge, and wishes to conceive this admittance as a confirmation of integrity as well as demonstrating the necessity of pursuing uneasy questions concerning ourselves. To some degree then Coleridge recognizes that his desire for absolute demonstration is impractical. In his fragment, "On the Existence of Evil and the Uncertainty of Progress" (1816), he writes that "the Physician is worth of no thanks, who determines the true name and nature of the Malady and refers it to its right seat and source, even tho' he should confess himself unable to prescribe for it…If he draws off those, who have been losing themselves on the wrong scent, if he guard the Patient against unprincipled Empirics and Remedies worse than the Disease, I do not see why those, who in all other things so highly extol the division of Labor, can consistently deny him the credit of having *paid in* to the Public" (11.1: 421). Coleridge is attempting to ensure validity in the practice of speculating on life and death despite the evasiveness of absolute answers. Humanity's irreconcilable desire to justify its mental speculations is reflected in a short note of Coleridge's, "On the Mind" (c. 1814): "Beauty—Mind in the form of *Life*.—Then,

definition of Mind as from basis—& Life—what is this?—" (11.1: 348). The uncertainty of his note assures Coleridge of his own integrity as a thinker in discussing life and death. The very fact that many of these text are left in manuscript or in fragmentary states underscores Coleridge's appreciation of provisional knowledge, especially given the fact that he is still thinking about issues that have intrigued him his whole adult life.

Nevertheless, Coleridge does not hesitate to participate in his own anatomical explorations like the Hunter brothers. For example, in "Fragmentary Advice" (c. 1816), he examines the anatomical marvel of our eyes' capacity to focus on single objects despite our panoramic sight. He asks how our eyes are able to take "converging rays of Light or Warmth in the *Air*" and translate those photons into a focused picture, which in turn "our sight and feeling acts precisely as if a solid flesh & blood reality were there" (11.1: 423). How is it that our eyes impress form upon the rays of light to create objects of recognition? Then he inquires further and attempts to describes how "focal entities, we are all more or less in the habit of creating for ourselves in the world of Thought…Thought after Thought, Feeling after Feeling, and at length the sensations of Touch…Infinitesimals that make up our sense of existing…The focal word has acquired a feeling of *reality*—it heats, & burns, makes itself be felt. If we do not grasp it, it seems to grasp us, as with a hand of flesh & blood, and completely counterfeits an immediate presence, an intuitive knowledge" (11.1: 423). The original anatomical aim shifts as he asks whether our anatomy or our consciousness determines the objects of our shared reality. His question from an anatomical inquiry into the human eye shapes Coleridge's attempt to legitimize both our sensorial and psychological apprehension of the world to describe processes, external and internal, to the human body.

In his manuscript essay "Consciousness and Self-Consciousness" (c. 1816), we see how Coleridge works out similar concepts of the human mind and identity prior to the publication of *Biographia Literaria* in 1817. Take for instance its Thesis VI: "the SUM or I AM; which I shall hereafter indiscriminately express by the words spirit, self, and self-consciousness. In this, and in this alone, object and subject, being and knowing, are identical, each involving and supposing the other. In other words, it is a subject which becomes a subject by the act of constructing itself objectively to itself; but which never is an object except for itself, and only so far as by the very same act it becomes a subject. It may be described therefore as a perpetual self-duplication of one and the same power into object and subject". Here Coleridge is working out a metaphysical question he raises in "Consciousness" that meditates on how the soul knows itself, corporeally and metaphysically. In "Consciousness" he answers that the soul can only be said to know itself from "the Soul's distinguishing it [any object or subject from itself] from her Self, as a modification of the ground from the ground—and then comparing herself thus modified with her Self as the ground of other pervious or co-existent modification…she is not only the *ground* as receptive Being but a *cause* as a *will*, or a productive energy, as a *spontaneous* Life" (11.1: 427). If the soul can actively distinguish concepts, then there is proof of a living aspect. He argues it is necessary for the soul to be identified as our self-consciousness in order to account for our internal monologues, which act as a filtered separator between the internal and the external reality. Coleridge considers the soul as the glue that binds the human body and mind: "We must attribute to the Soul, as a self-conscious personal Being, not only a unity that cannot be divided; but this unity must contain distinctnesses [sic] that cannot be confounded. The Soul must not only be distinct & therefore distinguishable, *from* other Souls

& other Objects, but she must be capable of actually distinguishing herself" (11.1: 427-8). The soul is our divine pathway to realizing the existence of God, but this conclusion leads to another disorienting question for Coleridge.

If he is correct that there are multiple layers of consciousness, then do those layers cause multiple competing perceptions? In an annotation regarding "On David Hartley *Observations on Man*" (1800), however entirely stricken out, Coleridge wrote, "is not Perception a *habit*? Upon the whole perhaps it is better to consider Perception as painful & pleasurable only by the association with bodily + present *feelings*" (11.1: 107). He seems to be suggesting that consciousness influences our perceptions because we are able to discern what we perceive by checking its reception against the body's sensorial memory bank, a point that he elaborates in *Biographia*: "all the organs of sense are framed for a corresponding world of sense; and we have it. All the organs of spirit are framed for a correspondent world of spirit: though the latter organs are not developed in all alike. But they exist in all, and their first appearance discloses itself in the moral being" (Chapter 12). Here Coleridge is arguing that the soul is a spiritual umbilical cord to the divine spiritual body that ensures the existence of morality in our fleshy anatomy.[80] The soul and human mind both act as mediums between the worlds of the tactile and spiritual within a human being.

If we look at another fragment, "On the Four Convictions Natural to Man" (1816), we see how Coleridge identifies four key concepts that position the body between the metaphysical and the tactile world. These four concepts constitute the basis for what he qualifies as knowledge in understanding the human body's negotiations of interiority and

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[80] See Coleridge's fragment "The Soul and the Universe" for the origins of this quote: "As no one every doubted, that all the visible & tangible part of the Universe bore some analogy to his Body, tho' it were but as an oyster shell to an eye: so it always seemed to me strange, and wilful [sic] and almost wicked not to believe equally that what cannot be seen touched, or heard, bore an equal analogy to his soul" (Essays, 154).

reality throughout its life span: "First, those derived from the senses by aid of the Understanding. Second, those derived from the Understanding by reflection on its own acts and processes. Third: those derived from the pure Reason. Fourth: those derived from the Conscience. The first Class comprises all matters of *Fact*, the sum of man's sensible Experience" (11.1: 412). Without sensorial impressions, bodies cannot understand or make use of themselves in a natural environment without collaborating with their consciousness. From within the consciousness, facts are determined about ourselves, objectively and subjectively. The body, for Coleridge, is always the liminal space between the thinking and acting.

In his "Suggestions for J.H. Green's Lectures on Anatomy and Surgery" (c. 1824), Coleridge outlines the position of our neurological bodies through an anatomical framework. Experience, as defined by Coleridge, involves "seeing *intellectually*," which he further describes in his claim that "*Seeing* can supply any ground for *judging* and *determining*" (11.2: 1088). He turns to a twofold model in explaining how experience operates in exploring our anatomical selves: if "we learn all *by* experience; but not all *from* experience," this permits alternative sources of knowledge to exist within the human capacity, but unites humanity though a universal truism that to live is to experience (11.2: 1089). However, Coleridge complicates this seemingly straightforward notion by introducing his "idea of life" as a "power which acquires its form by evolution and its mass by assimilation" (11.2: 1090). Here Coleridge is extrapolating his definition of life from a human perspective and attempting to define all living things, which is akin to John Hunter's museum being conceived as a visual representation of the "Book of Life". But Coleridge differs from John in that his "Idea of Life" is supposed to act as an eternal concept that ties to an ascension

philosophy, whereas John discarded the notion of The Great Chain of Being. However, Coleridge explains that "there is yet another mode of conveying a just philosophical notion of Life (by considering it in the relation of a *Subject* to an *Object*)…Except the single instance of Self-consciousness, a Subject can never be an Object; and in no instance can it become an Object to another, thro' the medium of the Senses" (11.2: 1092). Because for Coleridge the self-conscious is a gateway, the body of senses serves as a medium between the metaphysical and the physiological. The mind is a threshold that experiences, reflects, and creates: "that as MIND may be defined a Subject *is* its own Object; so may LIFE be defined, a Subject that tends to produce an Object for itself—the Object thus produced being its Organismus, or Body considered as a complexus of Organs, or Instruments" (11.2: 1092).

The mind is the subject of its physiological embodiment, which seems to have prompted Coleridge's creation of the word "psychosomatic"—the interactive process between mind and body. The result from a psychosomatic relationship is manifested in the activity of creation. If the creation process stems from a psychosomatic polarity, then the thinking consciousness is the site of the creative genius in explaining how humans rationalize their existence within nature. In Lecture 11 (8 March 1819), Coleridge writes:

> At once the most complex and the most individual of creatures, man, taken in the ideal of humanity, has not been inaptly called the microcosm of the world in compendium, as the point to which all the lines converge from the circumference of nature. This applies to his sum of being, to his powers collectively; but we find him gifted, as it were, with a threefold mind: the one belonging to him specifically…and by this he beholds all things perceptively from his relative position as man; the second, in which those views are again modified, too often disturbed and falsified by his particular constitution…By this third and highest power he places himself on the same point as nature and contemplates all objects, himself included, in their permanent and universal beings and relations. (8.8: 461)

A threefold mind offers an anatomical model of consciousness. After the initial self-affirmation that one exists as distinct from external reality, then a process of experience follows in shaping the individual's understanding of itself within the natural world, and then—and only if—properly thinking human beings develop as they attempt to make sense of themselves within a universal paradigm to account for why humanity exist. When Coleridge writes, "Nature excludes nothing. She takes up all, still subjecting the higher to the less so, and ultimately subjecting all to the lower thus taken up," he is returning to the Galenic notion from *De usu partium corporis humani* that the contemplation of nature's vastness is the mark of a cultivated human mind (8.1: 461). By hitching his conception of the human mind to Antiquity's notion that nature does not produce anything without reason and its design is always perfectly executed, his view of the mind as a focus in *Theory of Life* as a means to understand humanity's and nature's tendency to create is also his identification of a living action that takes on a quasi-divine role.

By focusing on the mind—conscious and subconscious—as the pinnacle of human life that mirrors and illuminates nature, Coleridge argues that "there is in Genius itself an unconscious activity—nay, that is *the* genius in the man of Genius" (5.2: 222). The close proximity of the human mind to nature yields "living and life-producing Ideas, which contain their own evidence and in that evidence the certainty that they are essentially one with the germinal causes in Nature, his Consciousness being the focus and mirror of both—for this does he for a time abandon the external *real*, in order to return to it with a fully sympathy with its internal & actual" (5.2: 222). As the mind wanders towards its subconscious state and momentarily ceases to engage with the external, it is gestures towards the understanding of life. It is the ebb and flow of the subconscious travelling that allows one to confirm the

existence of separateness from one's mind: "each thing, that lives, has its moment of *self-exposition*, and each period of *each* thing" (5.2: 223). When Louis I. Bredvold writes, "Coleridge warned against attempting to solve the mystery of life itself and especially stressed the danger of the encroachment of science on alien territory," he may not have realized Coleridge was much more consistently interested in answering why and how the living force sustained presence (Brinkley 394). For Coleridge, that meant he was acutely observing and intellectually philosophizing about the powers of living bodies, and thus his "opinion is this—that deep Thinking is attainable only by a man of deep Feeling, and that all Truth is a species of Revelation" (400). By maintaining an organic framework between feeling and thinking throughout his scientific works, Coleridge is able to seamlessly weave in his metaphysical philosophies in the process of championing organic practices without hesitation. By doing so, Coleridge denies the false schism between anatomy and the fine arts because the human body is the linchpin that binds both fields together in their mutual study of the human. In addressing the human without bounded categories, Coleridge's intellectual pursuits at this point in his career highlight the intricate complexities of the human and the dangers of studying only one facet of the human. Such neglect is a Coleridgean nightmare.

In bridging over the false separation between anatomy and fine arts just as the Hunter brothers and Blake did, Coleridge conceives the two fields interacting as powers do in a body, as a "series of surges and relapses, creation and quiescence, and constancy of productive tendency coupled with variety of productions" (Levere 167). The indefinite, or indeterminate, boundaries are proof of the fields' and bodies' proclivity towards experimental progress. As he explained in *Theory of Life*, "nothing real does or can exist corresponding to either pole *exclusively*," but instead the real is "the synthesis of opposing

energies. That a thing *is*, is owing to a co-inherence therein of any two powers" (Watson 69). In other words, the greyish ambiguous areas between medicine and fine arts is the area that most intrigues Coleridge. It is precisely because of that ambiguity that Coleridge sustains his belief in a philosophy of life defined by interactive energies that are constantly participating in a series of transformations. In a crucial passage below, Coleridge positions himself as a human being aware of both his distant relation to simpler forms of life but also his physiological advancement as historical evidence of nature's continual attempt to weave a more perfect existence of life:

> I seem to myself to behold in the quiet objects, on which I am gazing, more than an arbitrary illustration, more than a mere *simile*, the work of my own fancy. I feel an awe, as if there were before my eyes the same power as that of the reason—the same power in a lower dignity, and therefore a symbol established in the truth of things. I feel it alike, whether I contemplate a single tree or flower, or meditate on vegetation throughout the world, as one of the greatest organs of the life of nature. Lo![81]—with the rising sun it commences its outward life and enters into open communication with all the elements, at once assimilating them to itself and to each other. At the same moment it strikes its roots and unfolds its leaves, absorbs and respires, steams forth its cooling vapour and finer fragrance, and breathes a repairing spirit, at once the food and tone of the atmosphere, into the atmosphere that feeds it. Lo!—at the touch of light how it returns an air akin to light, and yet with the same pulse effectuates its own secret growth, still contracting to fix what expanding it had refined. Lo!—how upholding the ceaseless plastic motion of the parts in the profoundest rest of the whole it becomes the visible *ogranismus* of the entire silent or elementary life of nature, and therefore, in incorporating the one extreme becomes the symbol of the other; the natural symbol of that higher life of reason, in which the whole series (known to us in our present state of being) is perfected, in which, therefore, all the subordinate gradations recur, and are reordained *in more abundant honour*. We had seen each in its own cast, and we now recognise them all as co-existing in the unity of a higher form, the crown and completion of the earthly, and the mediator of a new and heavenly series. Thus finally, the vegetable creation, in the simplicity and uniformity of its internal structure symbolising the unity of nature, while it

[81] Coleridge's own footnote in the 1822 edition: "… without reference to any theological dogma, or any religious obligation to receive it as a revealed truth, but traced to the law of the dependence of the particular on the universal, the first being the organ of the second, as lungs in relation to the atmosphere, the eye to the light, crystal to fluid, figure to space, and the like" (77).

> represents the omniformity [sic] of her delegated functions in its external variety and manifoldness, becomes the record and chronicle of her ministerial acts, and inchases the vast unfolded volume of the earth with the hieroglyphics of her history. (*Aids* 76-9)

One can recognize the history of the Great Chain of Being structuring his thoughts as he insists upon an internal similarity throughout all living beings. In doing so, he is able to maintain his conviction—shared with the organizational principle of John Hunter's anatomy museum—that living is the relatable, tangible thread uniting vegetation, animals, and humanity. Without this thread, we miss our real history by losing the ability to read the "vast unfolded volume of earth" which contains the "hieroglyphics of her history," thus disenfranchising the human from the natural world. Coleridge feared what the violence of such a separation would imply in future generations. He must have seen the rudimentary fractures and attempted to address these growing contentions within his own philosophies of life and death as a result of seeing the foreboding signs of London's role as an epicenter of a great divide between science and humanities in the late nineteenth century. He realized that such a rift could occur because anatomists and fine artists would insist on a narrow scope to define life through their specialties. We can only wonder whether, if Coleridge had not radically confined himself to Christian writings in the two remaining decades of his life, he would have accounted for the next concentric level of higher reason and life beyond the eighteenth-century human being.

Coleridge concludes his *Theory of Life* by positioning the human body as nature's model of perfection. That the structure of a human body is in tandem with nature's secrets provides fertile grounds for Coleridge's remaining years as he attempts to recover from the failures resulting from various disillusionments stemming from his *Lyrical Ballads* project

with William Wordsworth, a failed love, a crushing opium addiction, and finally psychosomatic medicine's inability to offer a satisfactory answer to what a human being is and to why humans exist in the way they do. As he places human bodies as nature's inexplicable form of perfection, Coleridge describes the human body as crowning jewel of nature:

> Man possesses the most perfect osseous structure, the least and most insignificant covering. The whole force of organic power has attained an inward and centripetal direction. He has the whole world counterpoint to him, but he contains an entire world within himself. Now, for the first time at the apex of the living pyramid, it is Man and Nature, but Man himself is a syllepsis, a compendium of Nature—the Microcosm! Naked and helpless cometh man into the world. Such has been the complaint from the eldest time; but we complain of our chief privilege, or ornament, and the connate mark of our sovereignty. *Porphyrigeniti sumus!* In Man the centripetal and individualizing tendency of all Nature is itself concentrated and individualized—he is a revelation of Nature! Henceforward, he is referred to himself, delivered up to his own charge- and he who stands the most on himself, an stands the firmest, is the truest, because of the most individual, Man. (Watson 77)

Here we see a radical departure from the premise with which Coleridge opens the *Theory of Life*. Before this quotation, he adamantly declares that he will contribute to John's speculations by enhancing John's major points that were eroding under the pressure of former students as vitalism started to fade from the conceptual and rhetorical toolbox of anatomists and philosophers. Now Coleridge argues that man is a perfect artwork of nature, in making this claim he is starting to lay the foundations for his Christian works that position man in a direct relationship with God. However, he restrains himself in the praise of man; while the body is a perfect work of nature the metaphysical will of the human being is secondary to divine powers. As he explains:

> In social and political life this acme is inter-dependence; in moral life it is is independence; in intellectual life it is genius. Nor does the form of polarity, which has accompanied the law of individuation up its whole ascent, desert it

> here. As the height, so the depth. The intensities must be at once opposite and equal. As the liberty, so must be the reverence for law. As the independence, so must be the service and the submission to the Supreme Will! As the ideal genius and the originality, in the same proportion must be the resignation to the real world, the sympathy and the inter-communion with Nature. In the conciliation mid-point, or equator, does the Man live, and only by its equal presence in both its poles can that life be manifested! (85-6)

Nature and divinity form the polarity man finds himself within. While he seems to permit the human body an opportunity to be equal in strength to nature, he clearly submits the powers of the human mind beneath the divine will. Perhaps this awkward polarity is indicative of the historical fact that Coleridge is merely a few years away from confining himself to a Christian context after *Theory of Life*. Coleridge's trajectory started with a young man asking the weightiest of questions pertaining to human life, tormenting himself with their elusive answers, and one that ended with his finding solace only in regulating the indefinites of life and death as a confirmation of God's existence. Midway between the start and finish, Coleridge sought out John Hunter's medical metaphysics for his answers. The resigned Coleridge may not have accomplished his initial goals as set forth in the beginning of *Theory of Life*, but he seems to never have lost his inclination to explore the condition that animates our body—life—and those conditions that bring about the finality of the human mind—death—for he conceived these questions as being pertinent to discover the absolute truth about our humanness.

FIGURES

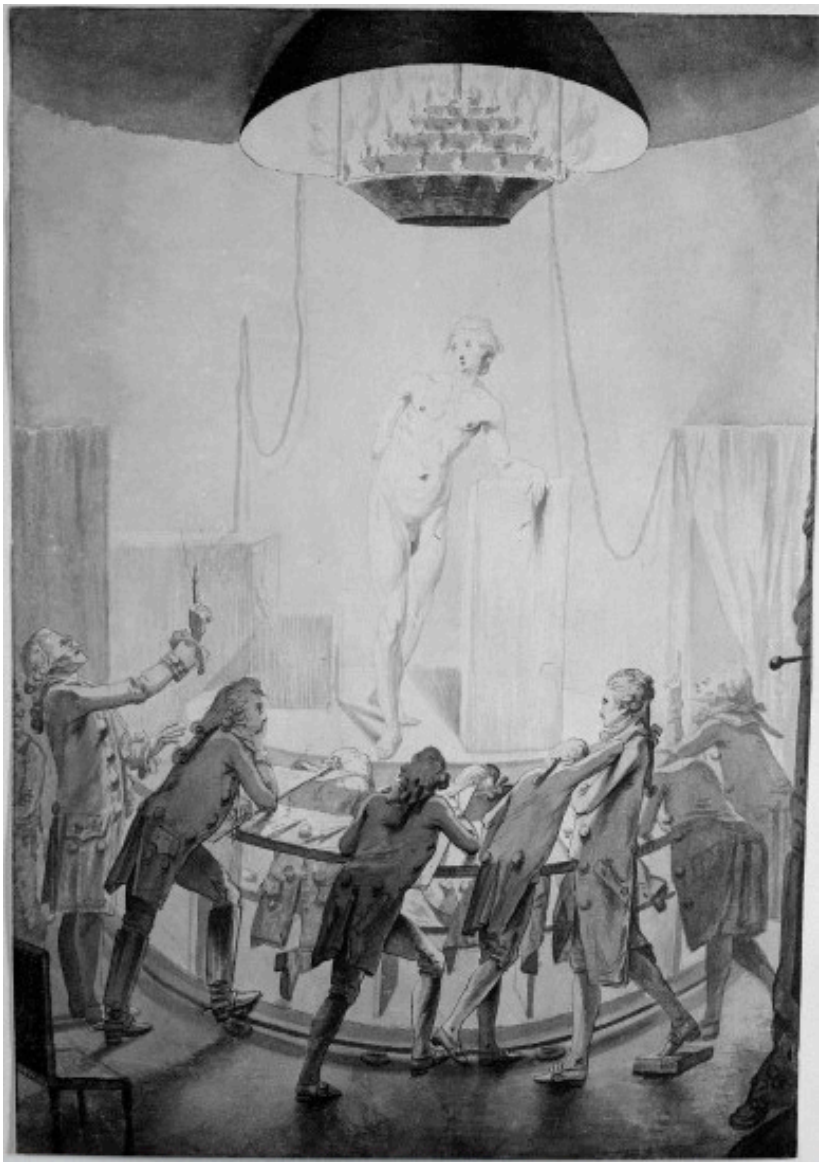

Figure 1. Drawing. "The life school at the Royal Academy of Arts, London with William Hunter" attributed to Elias Martin (c. 1770). Dr. Hunter is standing far left of the drawing. [Accessed January 2014; courtesy of Wellcome Images.]

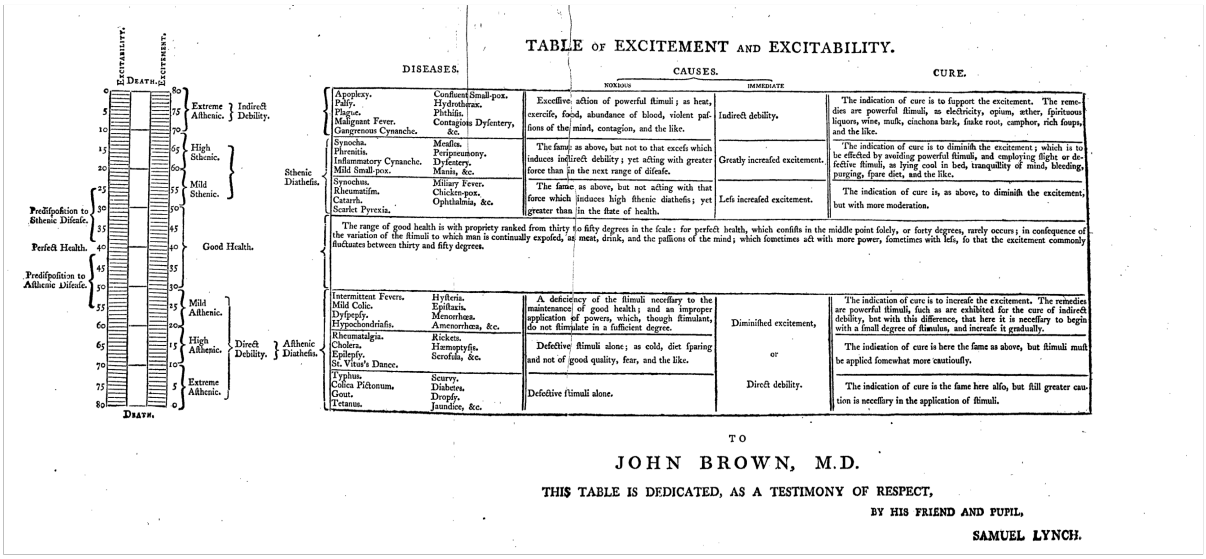

TABLE OF EXCITEMENT AND EXCITABILITY.

			DISEASES.		CAUSES. NOXIOUS	CAUSES. IMMEDIATE	CURE.
Extreme Asthenic. (Indirect Debility.)	Sthenic Diathesis.		Apoplexy. Palsy. Plague. Malignant Fever. Gangrenous Cynanche.	Confluent Small-pox. Hydrothorax. Phthisis. Contagious Dysentery, &c.	Excessive action of powerful stimuli; as heat, exercise, food, abundance of blood, violent passions of the mind, contagion, and the like.	Indirect debility.	The indication of cure is to support the excitement. The remedies are powerful stimuli, as electricity, opium, æther, spirituous liquors, wine, musk, cinchona bark, snake root, camphor, rich soups, and the like.
High Sthenic.			Synocha. Phrenitis. Inflammatory Cynanche. Mild Small-pox.	Measles. Peripneumony. Dysentery. Mania, &c.	The same as above, but not to that excess which induces indirect debility; yet acting with greater force than in the next range of disease.	Greatly increased excitement.	The indication of cure is to diminish the excitement; which is to be effected by avoiding powerful stimuli, and employing slight or defective stimuli, as lying cool in bed, tranquillity of mind, bleeding, purging, spare diet, and the like.
Mild Sthenic.			Synochus. Rheumatism. Catarrh. Scarlet Pyrexia.	Miliary Fever. Chicken-pox. Ophthalmia, &c.	The same as above, but not acting with that force which induces high sthenic diathesis; yet greater than in the state of health.	Less increased excitement.	The indication of cure is, as above, to diminish the excitement, but with more moderation.
Predisposition to Sthenic Disease. / Perfect Health. / Predisposition to Asthenic Disease.	Good Health.		The range of good health is with propriety ranked from thirty to fifty degrees in the scale: for perfect health, which consists in the middle point solely, or forty degrees, rarely occurs; in consequence of the variation of the stimuli to which man is continually exposed, as meat, drink, and the passions of the mind; which sometimes act with more power, sometimes with less, so that the excitement commonly fluctuates between thirty and fifty degrees.				
Mild Asthenic.	Asthenic Diathesis.	Direct Debility.	Intermittent Fevers. Mild Colic. Dyspepsy. Hypochondriasis.	Hysteria. Epistaxis. Menorrhœa. Amenorrhœa, &c.	A deficiency of the stimuli necessary to the maintenance of good health; and an improper application of powers, which, though stimulant, do not stimulate in a sufficient degree.	Diminished excitement, or Direct debility.	The indication of cure is to increase the excitement. The remedies are powerful stimuli, such as are exhibited for the cure of indirect debility, but with this difference, that here it is necessary to begin with a small degree of stimulus, and increase it gradually.
High Asthenic.			Rheumatalgia. Cholera. Epilepsy. St. Vitus's Dance.	Rickets. Haemoptysis. Scrofula, &c.	Defective stimuli alone; as cold, diet sparing and not of good quality, fear, and the like.		The indication of cure is here the same as above, but stimuli must be applied somewhat more cautiously.
Extreme Asthenic.			Typhus. Colica Pictonum. Gout. Tetanus.	Scurvy. Diabetes. Dropsy. Jaundice, &c.	Defective stimuli alone.		The indication of cure is the same here also, but still greater caution is necessary in the application of stimuli.

TO

JOHN BROWN, M.D.

THIS TABLE IS DEDICATED, AS A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT,

BY HIS FRIEND AND PUPIL,

SAMUEL LYNCH.

Figure 2. Dr. John Brown's "Table of Excitement and Excitability" from his *Elements of Medicine* (1795) (1: 163).

JOHN BROWN, M. D.

London Published May 1.1795, by J. Johnson, St Paul's Church Yard.

Figure 3. Dr. John Brown's frontispiece in his *Elements of Medicine* (volume 1).

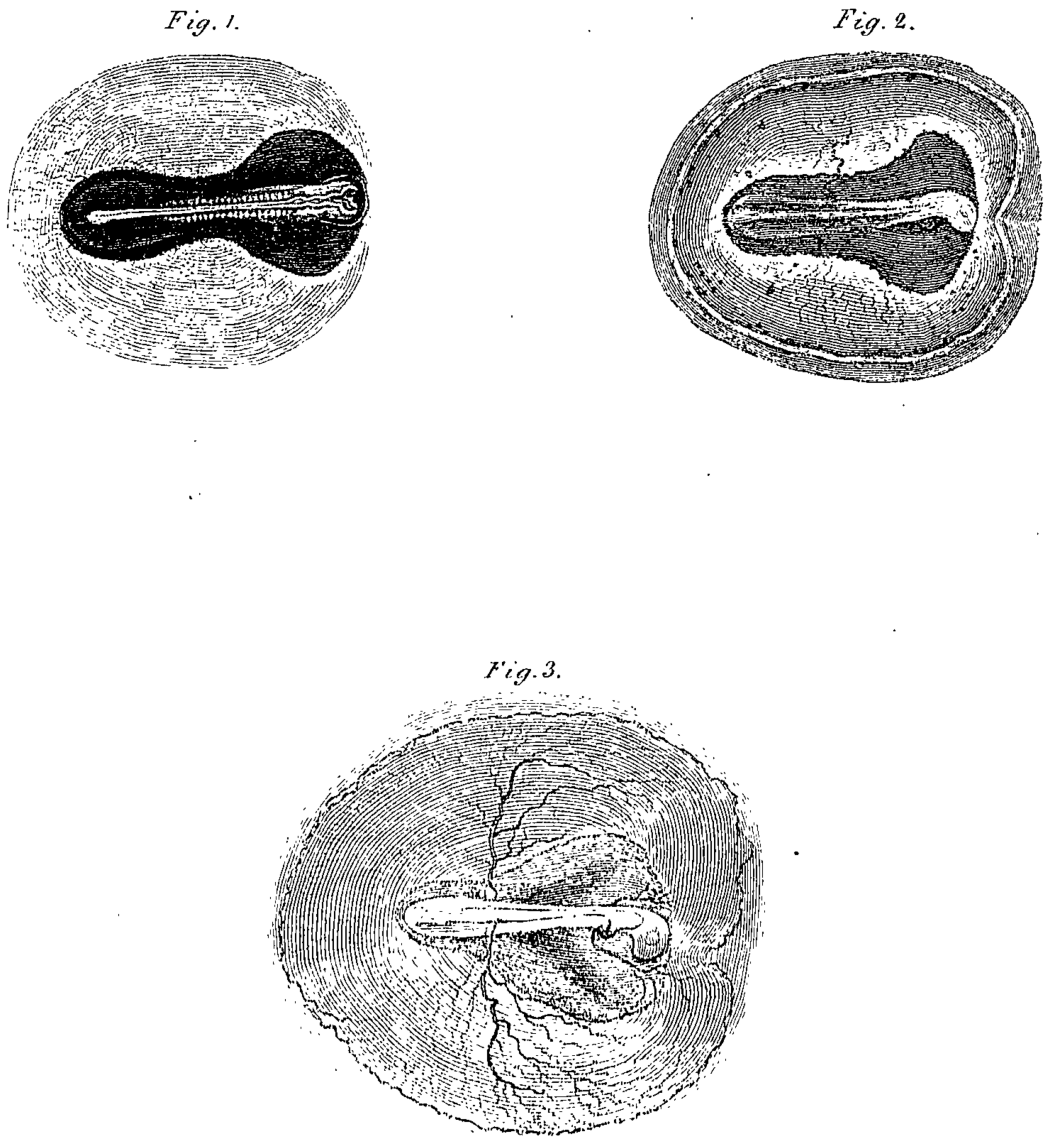

Figure 4. John's illustration of consecutive developmental stages of a chick's embryo from his posthumous publication, *Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation and Gunshot Wounds* (1794) (566).

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--. *The [First] Book of Urizen*, copy B. *The William Blake Archive*. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. <http://www.blakearchive.org/>.

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