A Garden for the Living and a Gallery for the Dead:
Consuming Animal and Preserved Specimen Exhibitions in Nineteenth-Century London

by

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Abstract

Throughout the nineteenth century, a diverse array of wildlife arrived in London, the center of both a nation and a global empire. Once in Britain, live animals were exhibited for adoring, middle- and upper-class audiences in two of the city's most popular entertainment venues, the Exeter Change Menagerie and the London Zoological Gardens. Here, visitors interacted with animals by viewing, feeding, touching, and riding upon them, all ways formulated to consume an animal that, unlike pets, could not actually be purchased by the average Briton. In lieu of this constraint, these modes of interaction provided a way for visitors to feel a sense of transitory ownership over these creatures, thereby turning interactions with animals into a sort of immaterial capital to British consumers. Many animals were already dead before they arrived in Britain—including dinosaurs harbored in the earth for eons—or died in London after a life in captivity. Just as living creatures were exhibited, so too were deceased animals displayed in scientific museums, exhibition venues, and entertainment halls. Britons flocked to see and touch these enormous taxidermies and skeletons, astounded that such colossal creatures had been captured and supplanted from their natural environment for perpetual display in the metropolis. Bridging the gap between life and death and exemplifying the contentions of each prior chapter, this thesis concludes by examining the celebrity elephant Chunee's lifecycle through London, from his time acting on the stage to his skeleton's display long after his death.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

"It is quite a world of itself," exclaimed author Charles Ross when recounting his visit alongside his son, Thomas, and friend, Jeremiah, to the London Zoological Gardens in his guidebook *Wicked London*. They began their visit by watching the Cape buffalo interestingly "wag its ears very artfully," before moving next to the storks that Ross found comical owing to their awkward, gangly walk.[1] The sea lions were delightful entertainment, performing a variety of stunts, prompting Ross to claim that the seal's kisses and "pretty tricks are among the best things to be seen in the Gardens."[2] The primate house was next, where Ross's hair was ripped from his head by standing too close to the grabby monkeys. "I am not anything like so luxuriantly curly on top as I was half a minute ago," he rued.[3] Not dampening their enthusiasm, however, the trio progressed to feed a disinterested lion and an elephant with an insatiable appetite before ending the day by meeting the famous hippopotamus Obaysch, who Ross described as a "sedate, middle-aged, married gentleman."[4]

The following day the trio visited the "most curious and interesting" artifacts on display at the British Museum.[5] Ross introduced the children to the Museum with an anecdote about preserved animals, preparing them for exhibits waiting inside. As a child, Ross was exposed to specimens from an uncle who, "used to stick pins through butterflies."[6] Ever since he had "often wondered why, and whether to be stuck pins through and to be labelled with a hard name is the end and object of butterfly existence. . . And if so, why butterflies couldn't submit to their fate in

[1] Charles H. Ross, *Wicked London. A Good Guide* (London: Henry Vickers, 1881), 14.
[2] Ross, *Wicked London*, 14.
[3] Ross, *Wicked London*, 14.
[4] Ross, *Wicked London*, 15.
[5] Ross, *Wicked London*, 17.
[6] Ross, *Wicked London*, 16.

a calmer spirit, without so much wriggling and writhing."[7] Ross mulled over the idea that the fate awaiting deceased creatures was preservation by human hands as he took a "meditative stroll through the British Museum," while much to his disdain, his companions rushed straight for the mummies. This unwholesome entertainment upset Ross's sensitives by displaying a desiccated, ancient royal's carcass to the vulgar public.[8] Nonetheless, he found enjoyment in the Egyptian Gallery by "contemplating the mummy of a sacred cat," finding no fault with exhibited preserved creatures.[9]

Ross's account is not unique among other contemporary commentators on both living and preserved animals in nineteenth-century Britain. His interactions with living animals and his curiosity for specimens place his account within a shared, collective recorded experience. This thesis seeks to provide a detailed account of how Britons experienced London's animal entertainments throughout the nineteenth century. It examines London, since it was where "The nation's popular cultural interests remained focused" throughout the nineteenth century, owing to its status as a center of both the nation and Britain's global empire, according to Richard Altick.[10] This thesis argues that Britons interacted with exhibited animals in a leisurely, pleasurable, unscientific fashion whereby individuals consumed the displayed creatures as unaquirable commodities. Most Britons could afford neither to purchase nor to maintain these animals. However, interacting with them created memorable experiences and a sense of transitory ownership, forming into a memory that served as immaterial capital. Despite a growing interest in natural history, the prevalence of rational recreation's educational ideology, and that exhibits drew their customers overwhelmingly from the ranks of the middle- and upper-

[7] Ross, *Wicked London*, 15-16.
[8] Ross, *Wicked London*, 16.
[9] Ross, *Wicked London*, 16.
[10] Richard Altick. *The Shows of London (*Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 3.

classes, Britons interacted with living animals in an unknowing manner by engaging in sensory stimulation, artificial fright, and anthropomorphic entertainments.[11] For specimens, visitors likewise were beholden to shock-and-awe tactics when gazing up at colossal skeletons and enormous taxidermies, all rendered in collections that compared the diminutive human body to the megalithic proportions of wild behemoths. Understanding the everyday experiences of Britons engaging with animal exhibitions aids historians attempting to understand a moment when a society grappled with a burgeoning mode of leisure based on interaction with other creatures that, in under a century, shifted from a relatively exclusive to a tremendously popular form of mass entertainment across the Western world.

Most of the research on live animal exhibitions in nineteenth-century Britain focuses on the London Zoo, owing to its primacy as the first British zoo and its status as the foremost zoological institution in the British Empire. Harriet Ritvo, in her groundbreaking studies of animals in Victorian Britain, argues that both domestic and exotic animals were viewed chiefly by nineteenth-century Britons as manipulative objects under humanity's thumb owing to Enlightenment ideology. [12] Displaying animals in London's early exhibitionary venues, like the Exeter Change Menagerie, projected British dominance over foreign societies and exotic animals, the latter which also entailed controlling nature. This dual domination was furthered in the London Zoo, which served as an even greater projector of British hegemony over nature and the foreign. When viewing Victorian human-animal interactions, Ritvo sees a power dynamic at

[11] Bernard Lightman, *Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1-3, 168-87, 219-23; Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 5-6, 35-38, 56-57, 67, 170; Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.), 2-4, 7-8, 47-98, 107-08.

[12] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in Victorian England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Harriet Ritvo, "The Order of Nature: Constructing the Collections of Victorian Zoos," in *New Worlds New Animals*, ed. R. J. Hoage and William A. Deiss (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Harriet Ritvo, "Zoological Nomenclature and the Empire of Victorian Science," in *Victorian Science in Context*, ed. Bernard Lightman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

work whereby visitors exerted dominance over a creature when interacting with it, for example, when feeding an animal.[13]

Ritvo's interpretation remains the dominant historiographical interpretation. Robert Jones also claims that the London Zoo served as a showcase for glorifying the imperial mission by corralling exotic animals that Britons consumed through sight (equivocating sight to control in the imperial context) and which combined spectacle with imperial prestige to produce the "imperial imagination."[14] Other recent works also continue to support Ritvo's interpretation. John Simons argues that London's animal exhibitions inextricably connected with empire and therefore an imperial lens of analysis must be utilized to rightfully understand its cultural impact.[15] Sarah Amato understands the London Zoo as an imperialistic enterprise that tamed wild, captive beasts stationed in the civilized metropole.[16] Despite focusing on Manchester's Zoo, Ann Colley likewise sees it exemplifying the ideologies of industrialization and empire, whereby these two interconnected themes worked together to glorify Britain's imperial project.[17] Even when viewing the London Zoo through contemporary art, Diana Donald claims that artwork depicted the subjugation of exotic animals while advancing the tripartite ideology of empire, exploration, and science.[18]

Not every historian is satisfied with the prevalence of empire as an investigatory framework. Takashi Ito, for example, argues that the imperial interpretation of the London Zoo

[13] Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 11-14, 210-11, 220.
[14] Robert W. Jones, '"The Sight of Creatures Strange to our Climate': London Zoo and Consumption of the Exotic," J*ournal of Victorian Culture* 2 (1997), 4-7.
[15] John Simons, *The Tiger that Swallowed the Boy: Exotic Animals in Victorian England* (Faringdon: Libri Publishing, 2012), x.
[16] Sarah Amato, *Beastly Possessions: Animals in Victorian Consumer Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 18.
[17] Ann C. Colley, *Wild Animal Skins in Victorian Britain: Zoos, Collections, Portraits, and Maps* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 17.
[18] Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain: c. 1750-1850* (London: Paul Mellon Centre, 2008), 185.

"has been stereotyped."[19] Ito claims that viewing the Zoo as an extension of empire is unsatisfactory since many of its animals hailed from outside the empire and that collecting and displaying wildlife was possible chiefly on account of the desire for scientific advancement. Furthermore, Ito contends that using empire to explain visitors' experiences is misguided since the heyday of imperialistic ideology broadcast through channels of popular entertainment occurred late in the century and cannot be read backward as prevalent throughout the Zoo's existence.[20] Lastly, Ito believes the insistence on empire distances the Zoo from London's other leisurely venues, like music halls, wherein numerous influences manifested beyond the empire to produce visitor's occurrences.[21] Ito contends that divergent interpretative models, such as popular science or the everyday experience, must be utilized to understand the extent that imperialism played in zoogoer's experiences. Similarly to Ito, Caroline Grigson also argues that emphasizing an imperial lens exclusively misses the average zoogoers' experience. Grigson proposes that Britons visited animal exhibitions to gaze upon interesting wildlife on their own accord instead of only absorbing a foreign creature's imperial identity.[22]

Despite these complicating arguments, the insistence on an imperial perspective for understanding preserved animal exhibitions remains prevalent.[23] Seen in this light, these specimens are comparable to the foreign treasures gathered by Maya Jasanoff's imperial collectors.[24] Both imperialism and collecting are also crucial in Sujit Sivasundaram's account of

[19] Takashi Ito, *London Zoo and the Victorians, 1828-1859* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 17.
[20] Ito, *London Zoo*, 54.
[21] Ito, *London Zoo*, 55.
[22] Caroline Grigson, *Menagerie: The History of Exotic Animals in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 264-65.
[23] Simons, *Exotic Animals in Victorian England*, 171; Colley, *Wild Animal Skins*, 4-5; Amato, *Beastly Possessions*, 18.
[24] Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage, 2005), 9-10.

wayfaring British missionaries serving as imperial agents in the Pacific.[25] Missionaries gathered natural artifacts for display in London that lionized the empire and condemned natives whose existence was tightly interwoven with the natural world.[26] Sivasundaram contends that Britons took pride that industrialization had significantly distanced their society from nature. In fact, the distance between nature and the modern, urban consumer is one broader hypothesis to explain the rise of natural history museums across nineteenth-century Europe. Liv Thorsen, Karen Rader, and Adam Dodd argue that although Western Europeans distanced themselves from nature throughout the century, many still sought a connection with it. Animal exhibitions served this end, whereby Europeans equated preserved animals as fundamentally similar to living animals and interacted with them in an unscientific fashion.[27] Able to reach innumerable visitors and kept for decades, preserved animals presented a shrewd tactic to make nature visible.[28] Similarly, Rachel Poliquin argues that animals transported to Britain throughout the century were so alluring that their deaths also inspired memorialization.[29] Poliquin attaches a "narrative of longing" to these animals that served as souvenirs: incomplete reminders of their life. In line with Thorsen, Rader, and Dodd, Poliquin contends that specimens bound humans to nature, since they manifested the "desires and daydreams surrounding human relationships with and within the natural world."[30] The historiography thus is shifting from viewing specimens exclusively as expressions of empire to seeing them serve as a catalyst working to splice humanity and nature in an era when industrialization and urbanization increasingly distanced the two.

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[25] Sujit Sivasundaram, *Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific, 1795-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5, 12.
[26] Sivasundaram, *Nature and Godly Empire*, 179, 187.
[27] Liv Emma Thorsen, Karen A. Rader, and Adam Dodd, eds., *Animals on Display: The Creaturely in Museums, Zoos, and Natural History* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 3.
[28] Thorsen, Rader, and Dodd, *Animals on Display*, 3.
[29] Rachel Poliquin *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 3.
[30] Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo*, 6.

Empire and animal exhibitions were certainly interlinked. However, as Ito proposes, other factors also must be examined to provide a holistic visitor experience.[31] The historiography's overemphasis on empire has forsaken other investigatory methods. This study adheres to Ito's claim that a reductionist approach to coloring the London Zoo in the oversaturating shade of empire smothers the panoply of divergent experiences that occurred there.[32] This thesis seeks to fill the gap in the literature by contending that a much richer, more nuanced visitor experience lies beneath the insistence on empire not only in the London Zoo, but also in the Exeter Change Menagerie. By examining human-animal interaction through other modes: sensory engagement, artificial fear, and anthropomorphization, it will show that nineteenth-century Britons' encounters with exhibited animals were defined by more than imperial chauvinism, supporting Grigson's belief that a creature's alluring novelty also facilitated visitor interest. By uncovering new interactive methods, the prevailing narrative of Britons consuming imperial ideology when attending animal exhibitions becomes one experience among many instead of the *only* experience. Furthermore, while some historians have begun moving away from London to examine other British zoos, this thesis demonstrates that London's animal exhibitions still have much to tell us about human-animal interaction in nineteenth-century Britain.

The imperial thesis likewise remains prevalent in the historiography for preserved specimens in nineteenth-century Britain, but also has been encroached on by recent scholarship that asserts specimens made nature visible to reconnect a modernizing populace with the natural world. Whereas previous scholarship has reiterated a longing to reconnect with nature, this research proposes that the prevalent connection was not positive in that Britons saw themselves

[31] Ito, *London Zoo and the Victorians*, 14-15.
[32] Ito, *London Zoo and the Victorians*, 54-55.

as but one part of an interconnected natural world, but as the apex predator subjugating all other animal life. As Poliquin asserts, connecting with nature is not inherently positive; it can manifest as rejection and destruction.[33] Collecting and displaying specimens to assert dominance through a mausoleum of nature functions similarly. In this framework, specimens connected Britons to nature in a self-aggrandizing mode by placing Victorian humans as the preeminent living being across eons of time and miles of earth. Dominion over nature, despite appearing to be distancing (as evidenced in Sivasundaram), actually served as a connection to nature. Whereas Ritvo claims that animal exhibitions expressed British dominion over nature, historians have not claimed a similar relationship concerning preserved specimens. This research therefore expands Ritvo's claim that collections served as examples of dominating nature. It thus also strengthens Jesse Oak Taylor's recent claim that London represents the epicenter for the Anthropocene, since just as nineteenth-century Londoners created a polluted sky they too made nature perpetually visible in an urban metropolis through the exhibition of living and preserved animal specimens.[34]

This thesis is composed of three chapters. The first examines living creatures in the Exeter Change Menagerie and the London Zoological Gardens. It argues that the living creatures contained in these venues were experienced as commodities by visitors, however, ones that had to be engaged with only in their respective venues since they were unable to take them home. Visitors instead engaged with and consumed these creatures through sensory interaction; both sight and touch provided consumers interactive modes that produced a plethora of emotional reactions that served as virtual souvenirs of their encounters. Meanwhile, visitors demarcated creatures into "wild" and "civilized" camps, desiring respective entertainments that only could be provided by members from a particular group. Anthropomorphization helped civilize animals

[33] Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo*, 9.
[34] Jesse Oak Taylor, *The Sky of our Manufacture, The London Fog in British Fiction from Dickens to Woolf* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 1-2.

in Britons' minds, leading to selected creatures becoming so notable they featured human names, ate human food, and were reported upon in the popular press like contemporary human celebrities. By examining living creatures throughout the century, this chapter seeks to uncover what brought visitors to live animal exhibitions and how they interacted with animals while there.

The second chapter analyzes preserved specimens in the British Museum, the Hunterian Collection at the Royal College of Surgeons, and a handful of other popular exhibition venues throughout London. Just as consumers engaged with living creatures as commodities by interactions through sight and touch, they did the same with preserved specimens, albeit with different results. Sensory interaction led Britons to hone in on the largest specimens on display, the preponderance of which I argue served as representations of humanity's triumph over the largest creatures nature had ever produced. In life, an animal's habits and character were used to stir the visitor's imagination, creating fanciful thoughts to supplant reality. However, in death, an animal's static body or skeleton served as an incomplete reminder of its life, explaining why Britons interacted differently with living and deceased animals. Examining a diversity of contemporary reactions to the colossal, from detailing enormous creatures' measurements in guidebooks to recounting the astonishment that Britons produced when gazing upon gigantic iguanodons, this chapter examines the infatuation with giant specimens that brought Britons to exhibitions throughout the century.

The third and final chapter serves as a case study that builds on the insights of the two preceding chapters by examining the life and death of the celebrity elephant Chunee. It uses the events of his fifteen-year life in London and his subsequent postmortem existence for over a century to support the arguments featured in the prior chapters, and by doing so it attempts to

show how Chunee's individual case is indicative of a wider phenomenon. After examining how Chunee's situation support each previous contention, the chapter concludes with a final claim on the human-animal divide in nineteenth-century Britain. It argues that by examining the outrage that occurred as the result of the pachyderm's gruesome death, a shift between the roles of human and animal, and therefore wild and civilized, occurred that made many Britons profoundly uncomfortable.

This research thus provides further insights into the complex web of human and animal interaction, one complicated by the alienation of the natural relationship between humans and animals that arose in modernity. Britons from across the empire experienced animal exhibitions in London, the epicenter of entertainments in the Anglo-world throughout the nineteenth century. Consumers interacted with living creatures in ways distanced from the prevalent focus on empire through sensory interaction, artificial danger, and anthropomorphization. Visitors too found deceased animals interesting, and ventured to see colossal specimens whose collections projected dominance over nature. By understanding how Britons interacted with a new form of entertainment that became commonplace by the end of the century, the field of leisure studies and a more holistic picture of everyday British culture can also be comprehended. How Britons perceived animals, some wild and some seemingly human, some alluring and others hideous, and some representing the largest creatures to ever exist, collectively reveals insights into British culture by understanding not just how, but also which, animals the Victorians found especially entertaining.

There is no definitive reason why humans enjoy interacting with animals. However, as this study suggests, one principal reason is that animals provide humanity with what it desires: a sense of entertainment, an alluring object, or a controlled body that projects a sense of human

power. Victorians used animals to facilitate numerous modes of entertainment, and their successors largely continue this practice today. Our contemporary society is not the first to interact with exotic or ancient animals in the confines of a zoo or museum, and we will not be the last. Understanding the continuing evolution of human-animal interactions shows how this phenomenon is heavily influenced by changing cultural ideologies, social constructions, and geopolitical interactions.

Chapter 1

"Well Worthy the Inspection of the Curious": Consuming Live Animal Exhibitions in Nineteenth-Century London

"If I have cares on my mind, I come to the Zoo, and fancy they don't pass the gate. I recognize my friends, my enemies, in countless cages."[35]
William Thackeray

In the 1903 edition of *Sunday Reading for the Young*, naturalist Theodore Wood penned the article "The Zoo: Past and Present," which examined the London Zoo's history. The Zoo's hippopotamus warranted special attention in Wood's commentary. It descended from Obaysch, a creature that produced intense fanfare upon his arrival in London in 1850:

> The public was immensely interested. And men, women, and children turned out in the thousands to see it. Every station was thronged as the special train which conveyed the animal passed by. . . At last the little hippopotamus reached the Gardens, at a total cost of over one thousand pounds, and for many months afterwards the hippopotamus house was the principal centre of attraction.[36]

After describing the commotion of transportation, Wood detailed Obaysch's acclimation to his new abode. The hippo's popularity exploded once in captivity. An article in *Punch* described his transformation into a cultural icon, the muse of artists and fashionable Londoners: "Ur [sic] fat friend at the Zoological Gardens, is certainly not beautiful. Hey may be odd. He is grotesque. We are therefore, the more surprised, to see him figure as a work of art… What his effigy is meant for—we have no conception."[37] While typically affable for his adoring fans, Obaysch harbored a temper that made keepers fearful. Perhaps this stemmed from his isolation; he was the only hippo

[35] William Thackeray, *Roundabout Papers* (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 104.
[36] *Sunday Reading for the Young* (New York: E. & J. B. Young & Co., 1903), 76.
[37] "The Hippopotamus is a New Character," *Punch,* Vol. 19 (1850), 92.

in Britain. To rectify this, he was provided with a mate named Adhela. The pair suffered through the deaths of two offspring before she successfully birthed and reared a calf named Guy Fawkes. Adhela was notoriously possessive of her calf: keepers had to blast her with a water hose to take the infant away for medical tests. Ultimately, this calf matured to become the animal Wood described in his article, the lone biological remnant of Obaysch's time in London.

Obaysch's experience at the London Zoo encapsulated numerous facets of the British obsession with foreign fauna during the nineteenth century. His exotic image was constructed by his location of capture, an island on the White Nile. He journeyed to England as an eminent Victorian on steamship and railroad car. Once in London, he was not placed in a cage but in a "home" equipped with a "bath," and was then provided one mate for a life-long commitment. He was attractive to the senses, especially sight. This is not say he was beautiful; most visitors derided him as comical or hideous. These practices all anthropomorphized the animal, creating a creature functioning akin to a human in the public consciousness. Despite this, he remained animalistic by being territorially aggressive and having tantrums, but these uncivilized behaviors were glossed over with a façade of propriety. Viewed by zoogoers as a civilized animal, the spectacle surrounding Obaysch's life in captivity illuminates how nineteenth-century Britons consumed exotic animal entertainments.

A panoply of foreign creatures reached London throughout the nineteenth century owing to an expanding British Empire and increased predation by animal traders. These factors allowed middle-class Britons to experience an extensive array of interesting beasts.[38] The preponderance of, and accessibility to, London's animal entertainments mirrored the human performances

[38] Paul S. White, "The Experimental Animal in Victorian Britain," in *Thinking with Animals, New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 59.

described by Sadiah Qureshi.[39] Once in the metropolis, exotic animals served as commodities in the marketplace, however, not in the traditional sense as most Britons could never afford the hefty purchase price of, for example, a rhinoceros. Pet keeping was prevalent in Britain beginning with elites during the eighteenth century and spread to middle-class consumers throughout the nineteenth century.[40] In this context, the typical pet was a small creature, such as a dog, cat, other small mammal like a guinea pig, or exotic songbird. However, while these animals became cheaper over time which democratized their accessibility to become synonymous with the middle classes, most creatures that served as attractions at exhibitions, like the aforementioned rhinoceros, remained unacquirable to the majority of the British populace. Unable to purchase these exhibited animals, Britons formulated ways that allowed for sensory interaction to serve as a method of consuming an otherwise unobtainable commodity. In this chapter's initial argument, both proprietors and customers constructed consumptive methods based upon interaction with living creatures through visual and tactile experiences. Whereas the historiography of consumerism has focused on acquirable commodities, exhibited animals were consumed in similar ways to enticing goods by relying on familiar advertising methods, like exoticism, and harboring comparable attractive qualities—for example, novelty.

Consumers desiring interaction with animals leads to this chapter's second claim that the myriad attractive opportunities available in live animal exhibitions, such as showcasing beauty or depicting "wildness," supports the notion that visitors attended animal exhibitions seeking

[39] Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 2-3.
[40] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in Victorian England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Ingrid Tague, *Animal Companions: Pets and Social Change in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015); Louise E. Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Kathleen Kete, *Beasts in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

interactions with animals as opposed to engaging primarily in social comparison with different Britons, as other scholars have argued. They contend that the London Zoo shared this tendency with other popular Victorian entertainment venues and even London's streets.[41] However, contemporary evidence suggests instead that the animals represented the primary visitor attraction consumed at London's zoos and menageries. With this notion in mind, the chapter's final argument is that while attending exotic animal exhibitions, visitors were caught up in a romanticized spectacle.[42] Britons left exhibitions with new sights, sounds, and experiences that, while entertaining, held little educational value despite contemporary claims that sought to place them within the century's ideas of rational recreation, one that undergirded many popular Victorian pastimes.[43] Altogether, these arguments provide an explanation for how Britons experienced London's live animal exhibitions in a way that diverges from existing scholarly interpretations.

Beginning with the first claim, in a system of commodification where the consumer cannot take the consumable home, watching and touching became the standard consumptive modes. Memories acquired individually or those expressed to others, a form of immaterial capital, became visitors' proof of purchase. Just as travelers to London sought out notable landmarks like St. Paul's Cathedral or The Tower, locking these sights away in their memory banks, a similar phenomenon occurred in animal exhibitions. Sight, modernity's most venerated sense, was crucial to human-animal interaction since the simplest and most predominate

[41] Sarah Amato, *Beastly Possessions: Animals in Victorian Consumer Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 105; Tony Bennet, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1998): 76-79; Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 62-73.
[42] Caroline Grigson, *Menagerie: The History of Exotic Animals in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 264-65.
[43] Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 5-6.

consumptive mode was peering at the captive animal.[44] Visual impressions were not uniform. Perception depended on the animal: the beautiful zebra produced admiring gazes while hungry lions oft inspired wide-eyed terror. Londoners became so enamored with the sight of some creatures, like Obaysch, that these animal's identities transformed from that of a wild creature into a public pet.

While sight was a determining factor facilitating human-animal interaction, it was only one sense that, combined with others, produced a holistic consumer experience. Tactile encounters, such as touching or feeding animals, were also frequent occurrences at animal exhibitions. Visitors stroked animals, like wombats, and rode atop others, especially elephants. They even fed creatures themselves, which, as Harriet Ritvo has argued, allowed guests to feel both "proprietorship and dominion" over an animal.[45] Britons wedged their hands through enclosures in hopes of touching rare beasts. However, visitors were relegated to viewing during dangerous events, like when zookeepers fed butchered oxen to hungry tigers. Though skin-on-skin contact engendered a multitude of diverse reactions between human and animal, as Ann Colley argues, visitor's reactions moved beyond purely epidermal fascination to encompass an animal's cultural identity in Victorian society.[46] Opposed to the prevalence of sight and touch, auditory experiences were infrequent and typically described shocking loudness. To understand how this method of sensory consumption differs from acquiring consumables, it is useful first to examine the existing historiography on popular consumerism.

[44] For sight's prominence in the Victorian City, see: Nead, *Victorian Babylon*; Christopher Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).
[45] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 220.
[46] Ann C. Colley, *Wild Animal Skins in Victorian Britain: Zoos, Collections, Portraits, and Maps* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 6, 128-29.

The existing historiography of consumerism in Britain beginning in the eighteenth century is one chiefly concerned with material objects.[47] Britons began widescale consumption during that century's "industrious revolution."[48] This transformation radically reoriented life in Britain into a culture of consumption by changing how commodities were manufactured, marketed, and purchased, especially concerning the transition into a cash economy where credit was frequently extended. During this revolution, advertising rose and proliferated while physical shopping space also underwent a marked reorientation. Maxine Berg claims that this "product revolution" posits a situation where the middle classes purchased innovative, novel, and sensual "new luxury" goods that defined social identity.[49] Old goods continually fell away to be replaced by new commodities, spurred on by a tide of constant innovation and ever-changing fashionable tastes that propelled fresh, enticing consumables out into the marketplace.[50]

Beyond the sensory attractions of alluring materials and designs, how one used consumable goods helped create an individual's identity and a shared socioeconomic culture.[51] In addition to fashion and novelty, comfort drove the consumption of numerous goods from warm coats to soft sheets.[52] The emphasis on fashionable and comfortable consumer goods continued into the nineteenth century, when increased mechanization allowed for commodities to be produced in larger quantities and even quicker frequencies. Deborah Cohen has detailed how Victorians acquired goods in an ever-greater quantity, particularly for the domestic interior which became the site of middle-class indulgence wherein possessions expressed identity,

[47] Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 12.
[48] T. H. Breen, "Baubles of Britain: The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 119 (May, 1988); Jan De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*.
[49] Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, 5-7.
[50] Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, 253-54.
[51] Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How we Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2016), 1, 3.
[52] John E. Crowley, "The Sensibility of Comfort," *The American Historical Review* 104 no. 3 (June, 1999), 750-52.

morality, and sociability.[53] This trend continued steadily into the twentieth century with mass consumerism becoming a crucial element in the culture of modern, industrialized societies where citizens defined themselves by what they consumed.[54]

Advertising and imagination both drove the rise of consumerism. Romantic tropes, like exoticism or uniqueness, frequently contributed to commodity desirability.[55] This is no different from animal exhibitions, which offered fanciful experiences placed within domestic confines. Just as Londoners browsed numerous stores for their favorite Wedgewood tea sets or pinchbeck shoe buckles, searching until they found just the right item, visitors paid to browse the living collections at the Exeter Change Menagerie and the London Zoological Gardens, perusing the collections until they found the creatures that satisfied their own tastes and desires. In each case, the commodities on display shared a set of values Berg identifies as being common to all consumer goods, including: "novelty, variety, complexity, and surprise."[56] The main difference was that the animals could not be taken home.

There is no coincidence that the first private menagerie in London—The Exeter Change Menagerie—placed prominently along the Strand, inhabited a building that also served as a shopping mecca to the city of London. The Menagerie's first owner, Thomas Clark, was not even a naturalist, but a cutlery merchant by trade. The ability to transition effectively from selling physical goods to sensory commodities suggests that the relationship between acquirable and unacquirable consumables was at least somewhat interwoven in contemporary British minds. While certain goods were attainable only to particular social classes and, after purchase, helped

[53] Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xi, x-xii.
[54] Trentmann, *Empire of Things*, 1; Cohen, *Household Gods*, 170-201.
[55] Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 1-2.
[56] Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, 250.

construct their identities, so too was entry into these exhibitionary venues. For example, admittance into the London Zoo was restricted to Zoological Society members until opening to the public in 1847. Long afterwards, however, a combination of entry fees and cultural mores continued to bar undesired visitors from entering the Zoo.[57] While the historiography of British consumerism focuses on how acquirable objects function within society, a holistic history also must consider the physically unaquirable—in this context, purchased experiences like attending exotic animal exhibitions.

What exactly did this sensory engagement create in visitor's hearts and minds? Briton's experiences with animal exhibitions fell into three common formats: sensory pleasure, illusory fear, and anthropomorphized entertainment. The examined body of sources thus paints a different picture from that offered by Sarah Amato, who contends zoogoers' primary interests was looking at each other rather than at the creatures on display.[58] Instead, this research contends that exotic animals represented the principal focus of attention. Much like seeing a beautiful necklace or stroking a new woolen coat, visitors relished the sensory aspects of animal exhibits. Londoners expressed a range of emotions when viewing animals, exemplifying Colin Campbell's argument for a romanticized consumerism wherein "emotional expression was indulged in for the intrinsic pleasure which it yielded."[59] Visitors were carried away with an animal's beauty, thrilled from an interesting touch or repulsed by a frightful noise. Sensory exploration thus played a major role in constructing human-animal interaction by facilitating consumption through experiences.

[57] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 212.
[58] Amato, *Beastly Possessions*, 18, 105.
[59] Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic*, 141.

Beyond the aversion felt toward certain creatures, visitors experienced fearful reactions during carnivorous animal feedings. Despite safely remaining out of harm's way, guests perceived a very real danger from the creatures that Ritvo claims were perceived by Britons as both "dangerous and depraved."[60] The spectacle of animal feedings aligns with the framework of violent Victorian pastimes that Rosalind Crone demonstrates remained at the center of popular urban entertainments, suggesting they were not holdovers from preindustrial life, but new bloody entertainments with a specific nineteenth-century appeal.[61] Preindustrial entertainments relying on violence towards animals, like bear-baiting, fell away early in the century. New entertainments constructed for spectators, for example, Carnivora feedings, replaced these older popular traditions. These earlier violent entertainments were attacked throughout the 1820s and 1830s by reformers spreading a culture of distaste for inhumane spectacles and by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which successfully lobbied for the passage of laws providing rights for the safety of animals and to maintain social order and propriety.[62] While some historians claim that these new entertainments pushed violence to the peripheries of Victorian culture as part of a "civilizing process," animal feeding's prominence in guides and recollections indicates that violent entertainment remained attractive in certain contexts.[63] While the violent attraction of public feedings thrived, it was bolstered by numerous peaceable pastimes, like riding and petting other creatures. Thus, London's animal entertainments were characterized by a mix of both gentle and violent leisure.[64]

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[60] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 25.
[61] Rosalind Crone, *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2012), 7-8
[62] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 144-66.
[63] Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 2-3; Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (London: Basil Blackwell Publishers: 1994).
[64] Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 6.

Finally, visitors anthropomorphized animals. While carnivores were depicted as untamable and dangerous, herbivores and omnivores were viewed in the opposite fashion. Visitors treated the latter categories as acquaintances and celebrities, placing them in gender and class structures since they performed distinctly "human" actions. This prevalent anthropomorphism is crucial for understanding human-animal interactions in nineteenth-century Britain, expanding Paul White's claim that the phenomenon "persisted in the childhood of every individual and in persons unschooled in scientific knowledge and methods. Indeed, among a substantial and influential portion of Victorian society, anthropomorphism was rife, resistant, and even hostile to science that would displace it."[65] Nineteenth-century Londoners used animals to "perform [their] thoughts, feelings, and fantasies."[66] Anthropomorphized creatures often became stars, as Ritvo observes.[67] Diverging from her claim that these creatures were popularized by scientific or imperialistic qualities, however, this study views celebrity animal notoriety arising instead from placing human qualities on top of the creatures in a fantastical guise. Heavily influenced by anthropomorphic ideas, herbivores and omnivores existed in a limbo whereby their human qualities differentiated them from other animals, placing them above "barbarous" carnivores but still below civilized human Britons.

Throughout the nineteenth century, animals were exhibited in numerous venues that had divergent missions and that relayed equally varied messages from proprietors to consumers. The stated purpose of these exhibitions did not always align with visitors' accounts. While menageries were principally designed for entertainment, the London Zoo embodied numerous ideological layers. According to Ritvo, it served as an elite institution where upper-class visitors

[65] White, *Thinking with Animals*, 59.
[66] Lorraine Datson and Gregg Mitman, "The How and Why of Thinking with Animals," in *Thinking with Animals*, 13.
[67] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 217.

scrutinized encaged foreigners in a hegemonic projection of British imperial power.[68] Beyond its connection with empire, the London Zoo also was designed to project scientific authority. Despite this, in practice the Zoo functioned similarly to menageries in that visitors primarily watched or fed animals instead of appreciating their scientific or imperial value. Although the Zoo conformed to the Victorian ideology of rational recreation, a concept undergirding numerous contemporary pastimes as instructional and morally uplifting, in reality visitors' remarks rarely mentioned educational qualities.[69] Attempts to move zoogoers away from basic sensory reaction failed completely. Like the nineteenth-century exotic human entertainments described by Qureshi, animal exhibitions were "populist, spectacular entertainment of little, if any, scientific significance."[70] It follows from this claim that Amato's argument that animal entertainments, like the Zoo, were "were morally uplifting and instructive as well as entertaining," must be reconsidered.[71]

Exotic animals had been held in the Tower of London as part of the Royal Menagerie since roughly 1204 CE.[72] In the closing decades of the eighteenth century, former exhibitionary practices, namely beasts belonging to royalty as a show of personal grandeur, changed with the growth of popular animal menageries. London's menageries catered to the contemporary desire to see a panoply of strange beasts, forgoing much instruction along the way.[73] Owing to its extensive collection of animals and prominent London location, the most popular menagerie was the Exeter Change Menagerie, located inside the Exeter Exchange along the Strand. Thomas Clark first arranged his collection here in 1778, admitting customers from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. for

[68] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 209-210.
[69] Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, 5-6, 35-37.
[70] Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 4.
[71] Amato, *Beastly Possessions*, 18, 105.
[72] Grigson, *Menagerie*, 1.
[73] Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, 206.

one shilling.[74] Venturing inside Exeter Change, a visitor could shop for cutlery or perfume in one of its many small shopping spaces before journeying up to the grand ballroom on the second floor to mull over the animals and select their favorite. The menagerie occupied Exeter Change until 1828.

The London Zoological Society (LZS) formed in 1826 under the leadership of Sir Stamford Raffles. Society members desired an institution to rival the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, and one that featured a collection of exotic animals to study breeding practices, acclimatization, and possible usefulness to society.[75] With these goals in mind, the London Zoological Gardens opened in 1828, only admitting LZS fellows and their guests.[76] In 1847 the Zoo opened to the British public, which dramatically increased its popularity. It grew substantially during the nineteenth century, expanding from five acres and a scant collection of animals in 1826 to thirty-one acres and a population of 2,413 animals by 1903.[77] This gradual growth set in motion the downfall of the Exeter Change Menagerie.

Menagerie owner Edward Cross, facing urban redevelopment, established the Surrey Zoological Gardens outside London at Walworth Manor in 1830. Unlike the London Zoo, Cross's venture possessed no social stipulations that precluded entry. "[It] may be looked upon as a regular commercial speculation, having for its aim to attract and amuse the millions of London,—by purse, however, and most legitimate means," noted Charles Knight.[78] The two

[74] Grigson, *Menagerie*, 98-99.
[75] Amato, *Beastly Possessions*, 109.
[76] William Kidd, *Kidd's New Guide to the "Lions" of London* (London: C. Whittingham, 1832), 54.
[77] Hannah Velten, *Beastly London: A History of Animals in the City* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 170; C. V. A. Peel, *The Zoological Gardens of Europe: Their History and Chief Features* (London: F. E. Robinson & Co., 1903), 187, 190.
[78] Charles Knight, *Pictorial Half-Hours of London Topography* (London: Charles Knight, 1851), 10-11; Lee Jackson, "Surrey Zoological Gardens," *The Dictionary of Victorian London*, http://www.victorianlondon.org/index-2012.htm, accessed September 30, 2017.

institutions competed until Cross's death in 1854, when his animals were relinquished to the London Zoo.

Visitors to both the Menagerie and the Zoo sought out three unscientific tendencies all focused on human-animal interaction: sensory stimulation, artificial danger, and watching anthropomorphized animals. Commodification of the unacquirable was achieved through sensory stimulation that elicited experiences linking visitors to animals, ranging from feelings of friendship, ownership, desirability, and awe. These experiences functioned as immaterial capital in that they connected visitors to animals: time spent interacting with a creature allowed the bond to grow between the two disparate parties. Sensory stimulation typically arose from gazing upon an animal's complexion or movements, touching them, or riding atop them. Nearly all were encapsulated by author Richard Doyle's astute observation in 1849 that zoogoers partook in three main activities: "star[ing] at, and feed[ing] and pok[ing] the Animals."[79] Analyzing these actions in order, we will begin with "staring."

Journalist Blanchard Jerrold noted, upon visiting the Zoo, the preponderance of guests absorbed in judging the captive creatures: "[Vistors] were to be seen sauntering pensively from cage to cage and house to house, marking the condition of each favorite."[80] The guests Jerrold described leisurely browsed the Zoo's wares, just as any studious shopper noted and ranked their favorite objects, scouting the field while mentally rating each one before deciding on a purchase. Their gaze registered a creature's favorability, and if it was not to the visitor's liking then they moved on to the next, forever rating and remembering each creature as they went. Similarly, zoogoers examined animals, categorized them, and then visited their most-favored creatures for closer scrutiny across multiple visits. Before any favorite could be selected, visitors were forced

[79] Richard Doyle, *Manners and Customs of Ye English, Drawn From Ye Quick* (London: T. N. Fouls, 1849), 70.
[80] Gustave Dore and Blanchard Jerrold, *London, A Pilgrimage* (London: Grant & Co., 1872), 111.

to reckon with the immense variety on hand. In the Zoo, geographic space was radically collapsed as an astonishing array of creatures lived in one confined area.

Visitors to the Menagerie and Zoo saw not just a random assortment of wildlife, but, as William Wordsworth claimed when recounting his experiences in London, a prodigious assortment of "birds and beasts of every nature."[81] William Drew, an American visitor to the Great Exhibition of 1851, proclaimed that the London Zoo's animals "Are worth a month's journey to visit," in addition to asserting that, "The Zoological Gardens are a point of universal attention to all strangers in London."[82] Drew, a native of Maine, was immensely impressed with the entire collection, and believed that all visitors to London, regardless of background, must lay their eyes on "The greatest [zoo] in the world, being superior to the collections in Paris, Antwerp, or Vienna."[83] While not explicitly noted by Drew, his account can be paralleled with nineteenth-century department store shopping. Visiting the London Zoo was akin to visiting the Harrods Department Store in 1880s London—a store that combined an unparalleled variety of purchasable goods with an opulent display and whose motto proudly proclaimed to offer "all things, for all people, everywhere."[84] Akin to the later-century department store, the Zoo's assortment of wildlife situated in an elaborate pleasure garden placed it above all other exhibitionary venues for living animals in Britain, and no doubt many other across the globe.

More than any other group, children were depicted as being spellbound when witnessing the stupendous variety on display at the Zoo. Describing the Zoo's allure, one travel guide proclaimed that "The youngsters revel in this place above all others, when in its magic circle

[81] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, Or, Growth of a Poet's Mind: An Autobiographical Poem* (London: Edward Moxon, 1850), 181.
[82] William A. Drew, *Glimpses and Gatherings, During A Voyage and Visit to London and the Great Exhibition in the Summer of 1851* (Augusta: Homan and Manley, 1852), 129, 301.
[83] Drew, *Glimpses and Gatherings*, 301.
[84] Cohen, *Household Gods*, 56-57.

they find every forest creature they have pondered over in their picture books, or made acquaintances with in magazines."[85] No matter which animal a child gazed upon in a book, chances were they could see a living, breathing example at the London Zoo. Similarly, the children's author Mary Seymour proclaimed how her nephew Arthur "delighted in the Gardens, chiefly because they contained so many strange animals from far-off lands, which he could not have seen unless he had gone there."[86] While seeing animals in a book first piqued a child's interest, it was incomparable to the astonishment produced by visiting the Zoo, where "animals from all climes" lived in one confined space.[87] Just as Walter Benjamin argues that the Parisian arcades functioned as dizzying dream worlds full of color and excitement, the Zoo possessed the fantastical ability to make colorful illustrations of exotic creatures come to life.[88] While the voluminous collection allured children and adults alike, many were drawn to the individual megafauna in particular, as Drew claimed, noting, "Those which seem to attract the most attention are the *Carnivora*, or Wild Beasts and the *Pachydermata*."[89]

Carnivora was the contemporary term for large, carnivorous animals. Within this group, visitors dedicated considerable attention to the big cats, perpetually among the most popular animals on display owing to their striking beauty. Naturalist Andrew Lang summed up succinctly how many felt watching them: "A lion has only to gaze for a few moments at a man, and he completely fascinates him."[90] Much like London's fantastic storefront displays detailed by Lynda Nead that bewitched shopper's eyes, once noticed, the lions captivated viewers just as

[85] C. L. Mateaux, *Rambles Around London Town* (London: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1885), 48.
[86] Mary Seymour, *Little Arthur at the Zoo and the Animals He Saw There* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1892), 9.
[87] Drew, *Glimpses and Gatherings*, 302.
[88] Beatrice Hanssen, *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006), 237-38.
[89]Hanssen, *Walter Benjamin*, 301.
[90] Andrew Lang, *The Red book of Animal Stories* (London: Longmans, Green, And Co., 1899), 65.

intensely.[91] From their initial display at the Tower of London Menagerie in the eighteenth century, visitors were consistently enthralled by the magnificence of large, exotic cats. In his 1808 account of the Tower Menagerie, Richard Philips individually described each cats' impressive physical beauty. For example, he labeled "*Duchess*, a remarkably handsome leopardess brought from the Malabar coast… The brightness of the colours of this animal is beautiful in the extreme… [and]… *Miss Peggy*, a black leopardess. This animal is a great curiosity: although her skin is black, it is varied with spots of a deeper black, and her form is the most delicate that can be imagined."[92] Using intense descriptors like "beautiful in the extreme" and "her form is the most delicate that can be imagined," Phillips signified a beauty so profound that language proved inadequate to wholly describe it. The guide's descriptions failed to imprint a satisfactory image in the reader's mind, but instead potentially instilled viewers with a temptation to lay their eyes on an incomparably majestic animal through their own personal experience.

Similarly to Phillips's account, one anonymous naturalist described leopards as "one of the most beautiful of all the animals of the cat tribe. Its form is very graceful, and its skin is covered with beautiful spots."[93] The poet Lord Byron was impressed by another enormous feline at the Menagerie: "The handsomest animal on earth is one of the panthers."[94] Numerous visitors remarked on the stupendous beauty of big cats, whether attractive as a commodity or handsome as a human man. Regardless, these alluring creatures overshadowed the drab, domestic animals of the everyday and their pulchritude was described akin to a commodity, marketing them as one would an immaculate piece of porcelain. For example, similar language can be detected in

[91] Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 86-87, 179-180.
[92] Richard Phillips, *1808; Being a Correct Guide to all the Curiosities, Amusements, Exhibitions, Public Establishments, and Remarkable Objects, in and Near London* (London: W. Lewis, 1808), 122-23.
[93] *Pictures of Natural History* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1870), 13.
[94] Thomas Moore, *The Life of Lord Byron* (London: John Murray, 1844), 200.

Charles Lamb's essay *Old China*, where he described a recently purchased, lovely ancient blue tea set as "extraordinary," and a "*speciosa miracula*."[95] While striking in the moment, the Menagerie's lions produced enduring memories, forever proof of a visitor's trip to Exeter Change, as children's author Mary Lamb (sister of Charles) expressed in a letter to a close friend: "I never hear them without thinking of you, because you seemed so pleased with the sight of them, and said your young companions would stare when you told them you had seen a lion."[96] While familiar to Lamb, such a revelation remained impressive to those who could not visit the spectacular collection. This is an example of how an experience turned into an immaterial commodity; by expressing this view to others ignorant of ever gazing upon a real lion, Lamb's message broadcasted social status, leisurely opportunities, and cultural life all in a single tale.

While alluring, big cats were not the sole targets of eager visitor's eyes. The giraffes were a favorite at the Zoo, known to arouse visitors' curiosity concerning their beauty and grace, as well as for "their gentle, inoffensive manners [that] make them general favorites."[97] Zoogoers consistently sought them out for their gratifying features: "And though last, not least in attraction or in beauty, the fine herd of giraffes."[98] Literary critic Leigh Hunt claimed giraffes were "interesting from their novelty, and from a singular look of cleanliness, delicacy, and refinement, mixed with a certain *gaucherie*."[99] To Hunt, the giraffe embodied a multifarious attractiveness, running the gamut of material, aesthetic, and moral appropriateness. They shared the novelty and cleanliness of any new metallic home good, ranging from tea urns to tongs, that flew out of

[95] Charles Lamb, *Old China and Essays of Elia* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1895), 71.
[96] Anne Gilchrist, *Mary Lamb* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 265.
[97] *The Land Creation: From the Monster to the Monad* (London: R. Yorke Clarke & Co., 1845).
[98] Knight, *Pictorial Half-Hours of London*, 9.
[99] Leigh Hunt, *Men, Women, and Books: A Selection of Sketches, Essays, and Critical Memoirs, From His Uncollected Prose Writings* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1870), 42.

Birmingham and into the homes of desirous British consumers attracted by not just their function, but by their shiny, alluring beauty.[100] The giraffes remained beautiful in a delicate sense and were even refined, their supposed manners appearing morally pleasing.

The giraffe's African compatriot, the zebra, was another favorite. Author Thomas Garner, writing a guide to Exeter Change, claimed that "the distinguished works of the Creator are wonderfully displayed in the beauty and elegance of this extraordinary animal."[101] The zebra rose above the lion, reaching a divine level of beauty evidenced by its stripes (fashionable and novel) and graceful movements. Garner was not alone in lauding the animal in such a way. Another commentary on the Menagerie shifted from praising the zebra's beauty to its rarity and physicality: "[It is] so wild and remarkably swift in its movements," that it was "considered a great rarity, and a present worth the acceptance of a king."[102] Directly referenced here as a commodity available only to the purview of royalty, the zebra remained unobtainable for most Britons, viewable only in captivity. Both the giraffes and zebras were alluring and impressive, albeit for different reasons. Visitors found contrasting aspects to enjoy in different animals. Just as variety grew to satisfy the desires of T. H. Breen's colonial American consumers, visitors to both the Menagerie and Zoo desired a plethora of displayed choices to browse through until staking a claim as to their personal favorite. [103]

While sight played a major role in facilitating pleasurable sensory enjoyment, touch was also prevalent to an extent that would shock twenty-first century zoogoers. Tactile experiences occurred in both the Menagerie and Zoo. Some animals were explicitly exhibited with the

[100] Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, 163-64.
[101] Thomas Garner, *A Brief Description of the Principal Foreign Animals and Birds, now Exhibiting at the Grand Menagerie* (London: G. Pidcock, 1800), 19.
[102] *Tommy Trip's Museum; or, A Peep at the Quadruped Race Part 1* (London: J Harris and Son, 1827), 5.
[103] Breen, "Baubles of Britain," 78-81.

intention of being touched by guests, while others featured keepers that oversaw interaction. Furthermore, though some creatures were intended to remain untouchable, visitors frequently flouted these constraints. Touch was another way that visitors commoditized animals, since these interactions were remembered countless years later and often regaled to listeners as impressive tales. While seeing a favored animal was awe-inspiring, it was another act entirely to touch an exotic creature, even more so if it was labeled a "man-eater." Touch thus remained a crucial component of the consumer process throughout the century, showing that sight's long march of progress as the chief sense employed in zoos today took a considerable time to achieve.

Evidence of both gazing and touching exhibited animals is found early in the century in a print (Figure 1.1) depicting the interior of Exeter Change.[104] Eleven out of sixteen guests concern themselves with the lions, tigers, and boars placed in cages that tower up the room's right wall. Standing at a distance as they collectively view the tiger is enough for a gaggle of guests in the foreground, while those in the background are not so satisfied to play it safe. This group stands directly upon a barrier between them and a boar while a keeper inserts his hands into the cage. For the other guests distracted by the numerous brighty-colored birds along the left wall, three of them attempt to insert their fingers into the cage to either touch the birds or perhaps offer food. Regardless of their position, men, women, and children are all dressed in loud, stylish clothing, further delineating the bourgeois crowd that consumed the spectacle of animal menageries in the early 1800s.

Beyond this print, textual sources also indicate that numerous other animals were touchable at Exeter Change. The Menagerie's lioness birthed a litter of cubs in 1825; the only

[104] *Exeter Change*, ca. 1820.

surviving cub was "perfectly tame and fondled in the arms of visitors."[105] Another anonymous author included a nearly identical report in his London guide, claiming that the cub "was stroked and patted by the company, without the least danger."[106] Commenting on the sheer delight afforded by interacting with the cubs, it was noted in a press release in *The Sphynx* that "Nothing can exceed the fondness displayed by this Queen of the brute creation, nor the delight of Ladies and Children, when allowed to take one in their arms."[107]

Unlike the helpless cat, touched whether it wanted to be or not, the burly rhino was noted as possessing "A peaceable disposition, and allowed all parts of his body to be touched."[108] For the price of just one shilling, therefore, guests touched two animals from the wilds of Africa, an impressive return on investment. Separated from the lovable lion or the docile rhino that allured visitors with sleek fur and a rugged hide, were large snakes. Henry Templeton labeled the Menagerie's Boa-constrictor a "black, twisted, and self-involved" creature that made a "cold shudder creep through every part."[109] Despite producing discomfort due to its enormous size (fourteen feet long) or its piercing, devilish eyes, visitors eagerly queued up to touch the serpent.[110] Touch was not just for animals deemed pleasant to caress. Pleasurable touch existed independently in each visitor's mind as they experienced a diversity of hides throughout their visit. Each one was collected in the visitor's mind, creating a databank of exotic skins that were part of enjoyable experiences spent in London's animal exhibitions.

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[105] Grigson, *Menagerie*, 199.
[106] *London Scenes, or a Visit to Uncle William in Town* (London: John Harris, 1825), 120.
[107] *The Sphynx. Journal of Politics, Literature, and News* (November 10, 1827), 304.
[108] Garner, *A Brief Description of the Principal Foreign Animals and Birds*, 17.
[109] Terence Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, Vol. 11 (1824), 364.
[110] Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," 364-5.

Touch-based consumption was just as common at the London Zoo. Caressing was tempting, especially considering that some animals appeared to be built especially for petting. For example, take the case of the wombat, an unlikely creature to win the hearts of nineteenth-century Britons on account of it lackluster size, lack of physical uniqueness, and general docility. The first wombat in England, however, made a quite a stir when displayed at Exeter Change in 1807, where it "allowed children to pull and carry it about, [and] when it bit them did not appear to do it in anger or with violence."[111] Even when the wombat bit back, this apparently failed to diminish the attraction and desire to touch it; instead this was played off as inconsequential. Once the London Zoo acquired a specimen of the diminutive Australian creature, it quickly became a favorite. The Rev. Charles Williams informed potential zoogoers in his 1840s natural history book that "Wombats, when tamed, appear rather to be habituated to the presence of men in general, than to distinguish or know them as individuals. All their motions are excessively slow. They suffer themselves to be carried off without resistance, and when set again on the ground they move no faster than before."[112] While the wombat was not especially impressive, a sluggish, restrained, affable creature, nevertheless it was dear to visitors' hearts because they petted it, forging a deeper bond in the process. For example, William Thackery claimed that he and his sons headed straight for the wombat when visiting the Zoo: "We went to our favorite places. Our dear wombat came up, and had himself scratched very affably."[113] Journalist Blanchard Jerrold thus did not exaggerate when he proclaimed that, "I have known human lovers of the wombat".[114] Accessible, tactile experience ensured that this could be the case, showing how sensory stimulation turned an animal likely to be an afterthought into a notable attraction.

[111] Grigson, *Menagerie*, 119.
[112] Charles Williams, *Child's Natural History of Beasts* (Philadelphia: Loomis and Peck, 1847), 119.
[113] Thackeray, *Roundabout Papers,* 104.
[114] Dore and Jerrold, *London, A Pilgrimage*, 110.

While touch was commonly employed, interaction at exhibitions could also go one step farther: riding atop. Both elephants and camels were available to ride by 1800 at Exeter Change.[115] At the London Zoo, camels also featured there since its opening and elephants and alpacas were added later in the century. The elephant was the most desirable form of leisurely mobility at both venues. At the Menagerie, the elephant was praised for its reliability, skill, and intelligence: "[he] learns to bend his knees for the accommodation of those who mount him; allows himself to be clothed, and seems highly gratified when covered with gilded harness and brilliant trappings."[116] Unparalleled in size with other vehicular animals, the elephant was trained to not only be a safe means of conveyance but also a proper gentleman in both decorum and dress. With this anthropomorphism in mind, it is understandable that the elephant rose to be visitors' favored form of exotic transportation.

There was perhaps no greater means to create a romanticized consumerism whereby consumers could "indulge temporarily in the fantasy of wealth," than by allowing visitors to substitute their familiar mount for a humongous pachyderm.[117] This trope was employed early on and lasted throughout the century; as early as 1799 an advertisement for Exeter Change depicted a group riding atop an elephant (Figure 1.2). On the playbill, a man surmounted a jovial pachyderm on a tremendously tall ladder as a woman beckoned him up. Another woman sat behind the elephant's head and removed its top hat, proving again, that the elephant was a gentleman![118]

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[115] Grigson, *Menagerie*, 108.
[116] Thomas Smith, *The Naturalist's Cabinet, or Interesting Sketches of Animal History Vol. 1* (London: James Gundee, 1807), 126.
[117] Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 91.
[118] Thomas Bewick, *Poster for Pidcock's Menagerie* (London: W Glendinning, 1799), The British Museum.

Both children and adults rode atop elephants. At the London Zoo, elephants' saddles consisted of two perpendicular benches holding twelve guests at one time.[119] In an 1890s photobook detailing major London attractions, zoogoers were depicted riding atop two elephants (Figure 1.3). The elephants pass near one another, each walking in opposing directions.[120] A child almost runs into the first elephant's path before being snatched up. Another mother and child walk in front of an oncoming elephant, not worried about danger while the pachyderm's passengers look out in every direction. Guests on benches gaze at the unfolding scene that appears reminiscent of city traffic: the elephants pass one another on opposite sides of the street, pedestrians scamper across the path, while numerous others cover the walkway's peripheries. Inside the Zoo, a mock experience of traffic combining sensory pleasure with artificiality created a pleasant attraction for visitors riding atop an exotic mount, albeit for just one short trip.

On rare occasions riding an animal diverged from the prescribed methods. The celebrated actor John Kemble wandered home drunk one night and decided, emboldened by his spirits, to ride atop the Exeter Change's rhinoceros. After paying an enormous sum, the keeper warned him, "Gently, sir. This is *raythe*r a crusty buffer; if you makes him unruly he'll pitch you off, and rip you up." Kemble responded, unworried about harm, "Rip *me* up! Ha! Ha! Ha!"[121] A crowd assembled in the intervening moments that watched Kemble ride down Southampton Street before dismounting and boasting that, "I have done that which no living being can say ever accomplished."[122] Despite being forbidden, Kemble used his fame and wealth to haggle until he finally succeeded, producing an unheralded interactive experience in the process.

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[119] *The Juvenile: An Illustrated Penny Magazine for Children Vol 1.* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1853), 124.
[120] *The Queen's London, A Pictorial and Descriptive Record of the Streets, Buildings, Parks, and Scenery of the Great Metropolis* (London: Cassell & Company, 1896), 196-197.
[121] "The Portfolio of Mr. Peter Popkin (Deceased) No II," *Bentley's Miscellany*, 1840, 376-78, italics in original.
[122] "The Portfolio of Mr. Peter Popkin (Deceased) No II," 378.

As we have seen thus far, significant attention was directed at admiring animals through the senses, such as watching a graceful motion or feeling a pleasant touch of fur, that made interactions with exotic animals serve as transactions whereby wildlife served as unacquirable commodities. Diverging from these pleasurable emotions, sensory stimulation also produced fear that provided visitors a different emotional experience. While praised for their beauty, big cats simultaneously produced apprehension, as evidenced by E. Wallis's description of the London Zoo's tiger that "though the most beautiful, is the fiercest of animals. It delights in blood, and though gorged to excess, will still destroy for the mere pleasure of carnage."[123] Beyond watching the beast, hearing produced a further sense of dread. One anonymous menagerie visitor claimed that, "The roar of the lion and tiger is so loud it is dreadful to hear."[124] The illustrator Richard Doyle agreed, claiming that, "Their yelling and howling in hunger is most horrid musique."[125] Big cats attracted viewers with their beauty while at the same time repulsing them with their frighteningly wild characteristics, similar to the concept of a "low-other relationship" whereby viewers reject an object as morally reprehensible but remain enchanted by its charged nature, as proposed by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White.[126] Consumerism does not always entail purchasing an experience that is peaceable. Just as numerous different styles of furniture with different woods, finishes, and styles were produced to satisfy desirous Victorian consumers, a diversity of entertainments from tame to thrilling existed to saturate a heterogenous marketplace.[127] While Victorians admired the beautiful hides and graceful movements of certain

[123] E. Wallis, *A Stroll in the Gardens of the London Zoological Society; Describing the Various Animals in That Interesting Collection* (London: Samuel Bentley, 1828), 16.
[124] *Tommy Trip's Museum; or, A Peeper at the Quadruped Race Part 2* (London: John Harris, 1832), 3.
[125] Doyle, *Manners and Customs*, 70.
[126] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 5.
[127] Cohen, *Household Gods*, 37-39; Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 1-2, 5-11.

animals, they too sought an unsettling, emotional rush when interacting with more frightening creatures.

Beyond the big cats, numerous other creatures produced sensory discomfort in much the same way. The hyena, a popularly despised animal owing to its perceived cowardice, also featured an unpleasant voice: "Its howl is very loud and dreadful, and for its size it is the most terrible of all quadrupeds."[128] The diminutive hyena sounded worse than the giant cats, placing it on the must-see itinerary at the Zoo. An even smaller creature, the Tasmanian Devil, only received mention due to its fearsome rage: "It always seems to be in the worst possible temper… It will dash at the bars of its cage snarling and screaming with passion".[129] Despite the fact that the elephant was typically praised for its obedient nature, it too had a frightening demeanor. One anonymous author exclaimed, "I think I would almost rather meet a lion than an angry elephant. When anything has put him out, you should see how he storms and stamps along… Shrieking, or trumpeting, as it is called, with very rage."[130] This afforded a rare view of the elephant that, despite its anthropomorphizing, showcased its ever-present animality in frightful fashion in another example of Stallybrass and White's low-other relationship. Fear was not the exclusive reaction to the megafauna or Carnivora, but was produced by a variety of factors including size, ferocity, and noise. Even creatures that hardly moved provoked unsettling emotions; the Zoo's snakes made countless visitors squeamish, including Doyle, who recalled "With pleasure, yet horror, did view the snakes and lizards in the reptile house, and glad they could not get at me."[131]

[128] *Tommy Trip's Museum Part 2*, 6.
[129] *Sunday Reading*, 141.
[130] *Bears, Boars, & Bulls, and Other Animals, True Stories for Children* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1870), 129.
[131] Doyle, *Manners and Customs*, 70.

While Doyle was thankful that the reptiles were safely cordoned off from him, numerous visitors forwent the barriers, reaching into cages in hopes of touching a dangerous animal. Regardless of the potential for danger, visitors extended their arms through bars in hopeful anticipation of experiencing a rare and exciting rush of adrenaline. While many reached inside, numerous other visitors stood against the containments and lacked the courage to go further. In a scrapbook clipping from the 1850s (Figure 1.4), two guests stand directly against an enclosure, grasping its bars, as they gaze at two kangaroos. Given that kangaroos were known to be powerfully strong creatures, this was not the best place to stand.[132] In another clipping (Figure 1.5), a family leaned up against a cage holding a lion, which, for added protection, has a ring around the enclosure. The father, however, reached past it, inching his hand into the cage without fear as his family idly looked on.[133] In a similar photograph of the Carnivora house at the London Zoo later in the century (Figure 1.6), visitors also queued up to peer at one of the numerous lions. One guest leaned over the railing, hoping to get as close as possible to the captive cat.[134] While proximity was enough for many to excite the senses, other unsatisfied visitors reached inside the creatures' abodes.

Visitors certainly sought their money's worth by reaching inside cages in the hopes of touching a forbidden animal. William North, when recounting a youthful Zoo visit, recalled pulling a tiger's tail hanging out from its enclosure. This resulted in the tiger roaring in agony while a keeper removed young North from its proximity. North was not fearful of harm when he pulled the tiger's tail, but excited about the potential to touch an exotic beast that acted as his

[132] *Scrapbook*, 1852, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana; Williams, *Child's Natural History of Beasts*, 99.
[133] *Scrapbook*, 1852, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
[134] *The Queen's London,* 196-97.

muse for so much of his youth.[135] Similarly, a popular postcard from the Zoo depicted a child sticking his hand into the rhinoceros enclosure, a wanton act that makes the viewer fearful of an impending hand being lost.[136] Beyond reaching in, some visitors provided animals with snacks smuggled in from outside the Zoo. In a woodcut titled *Sunday Afternoon at the Zoological Gardens* (Figure 1.8), two bourgeois women stand directly against the hippo's pen, sticking their delicately gloved hands within, nonchalantly feeding Obaysch as they look away without fear of losing any fingers despite the beast's frenzied eyes and gaping mouth full of monstrous teeth.[137] Similarly, an article in *The Times* detailed more disregard to caution. Owing to their inebriation, two young men tricked numerous animals into ingesting gin at the Zoo by reaching into cages harboring wolves, esquimax dogs, and even a badger, which the duo proceeded to kick as it writhed in agony after ingesting the unpleasant substance.[138] While visitors desiring an exhilarating experience got extremely close to captive animals, these events also served as unrivaled stories and popular memories, fascinating those who had never visited the Zoo and besting those of other visitors not bold enough to take the same risks. In addition to these wanton acts, there were daily, sanctioned attractions that sent adrenaline pulsing through visitor's bodies: public Carnivora feedings.

While visitors frequently remarked on their discomfort owing to loud and erratic animal behavior in general, this occurred to a greater extent during public feedings. Visitors were not curious over educational particulars like dietary science or feeding habits; they were enthralled by watching a frenzied animal tear into flesh. Anthropomorphism was absent during these feedings; once the lunch bell sounded the animals literally went wild. Much like the Punch and

[135] William North, "East and West: Reminiscences of the Old and New World," *The Pen and Pencil, A Weekly Journal of Literature, Science, Art and News*, Vol. 27 (July 2, 1853), 84.
[136] Depicted in Colley, *Wild Animal Skins*, 122.
[137] Percy McQuaid, *Sunday Afternoon at the Zoological Gardens-Beauty and the Beast*, 1853.
[138] *The Times*, September 29, 1852, 7A.

Judy shows or violent theatrical productions like *The String of Pearls* (Sweeney Todd), visitors to the Zoo watched an artificially violent act unfold that served primarily as entertainment.[139] Despite spectating in close proximity to violent amusement, viewers nonetheless remained safe from the carnage. However, many still felt a real danger emanating from the feeding frenzy, as hungry animals served as both popular entertainment and a sensationalist bloodbath.

Whereas violent, earlier animal entertainments fell away throughout the nineteenth century, feedings, a new entertainment revolving around violence, was a notable attraction at the Menagerie and Zoo. Naturalist James Rennie was furious that despite "education, the chastisement of law, or the power of public opinion" violent animal entertainments still flourished.[140] While he appreciated that cruelly inhumane sports, like bear-baiting, were dying out, he still found fault that Britons "absolutely rejoice and feel proud in witnessing the fierce contests of animals who passions have been artificially excited."[141] Visitors watched lions, tigers, and other creatures fed raw meat (or live animals), rejoicing all the while much to Rennie's chagrin. Feeding times were featured prominently in London guidebooks. For example, *Black's Guide to London* delineated the Zoo's daily schedule: "the pelicans, etc., are fed at half-past two o'clock; the otters, at three; the eagles, at half-past three; and the lions, etc., at four."[142] *The Golden Guide to London* (1879) reproduced a similar schedule of feedings, adding that snakes were fed at three and that "As many of the animals only show themselves at meal times the visitor will do well to remember these hours."[143] This suggested that even visitors who cared little about feedings must attend to see their favorite animals. Featuring feedings in guidebooks,

[139] Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 1-3, 6, 40, 124-5.
[140] James Rennie, *The Menageries: Quadrupeds Described and Drawn from Living Subjects* (London: Charles Knight, 1831), 188.
[141] Rennie, *The Menagerie*, 189.
[142] Adam Black and Charles Black, *Black's Guide to London and its Environs. Illustrated by Maps, Plans, and Views* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1870), 168.
[143] *The Golden Guide to London* (London: Lambert and Co., 1879), 66

wedged in between sensory descriptions of animals and anthropomorphic updates on their favorite public pets, again supports the claim that viewers visited exhibitions to, above all, experience animals. In this case, especially to see them gorge.

Another guidebook, *A Comprehensive History of London*, also echoed the draw of feedings, claiming they not only were entertaining but also featured animals at their most ferocious intensity: "The voracious and savage nature of the beasts is most interestingly displayed during the feeding time, and particularly as contrasted with their familiarity to their keeper before."[144] Feedings absolutely must be on the visitor's itinerary if they wished to see animals acting savage. While the act of feeding was marketed, the spectacle began even before any meat was thrown to the hungry tigers. A visitor to Exeter Change recalled their fright at watching a lion react to a horn signaling the impending feeding: "No sooner were the flat notes sounded, than he sprung up, endeavored to break loose, lashed his tail, and appeared to be enraged and furious, so much so as to alarm the female spectators."[145] Despite their ghastly nature that alarmed visitors, lion feedings were heralded as popular draws for all ages, "Boys and girls can hear the lion roar without the need to tremble, and stand quite near the cage to see him and his lioness fed with the raw meat they love."[146] Although numerous commentators labeled these events frightening and grotesque, they were nonetheless recommended for viewing by children, suggesting that their inclusion in guidebooks made Carnivora feedings function as a Victorian family entertainment.

In contrast to big cat feedings were the large snake feedings where visitors gazed intently as pythons crushed their prey. "Presently," one account in a mid-century children's periodical noted, "a snake gazes steadfastly at [a pigeon], and, in an instant, quicker than you can see it, the

[144] George Grant, *A Comprehensive History of London* (Dublin: James M'Glashan, 1849).
[145] Quoted in Grigson, *Menagerie*, 208.
[146] Seymour, *Little Arthur at the Zoo*, 10.

blow is struck."[147] The writer even claimed that the snake hypnotized its prey, striking once in a trance; a sight not afforded to visitors watching lions blindly devour butchered oxen. Not everyone was enthralled by the snake feedings. Richard Doyle left disappointed: "Hoped to see the Boa Constrictor swallow a live rabbit: but did not."[148] That the snake did not devour a living creature in front of Doyle disappointed him, no doubt because he had read or heard about this event and ventured to the Zoo hoping to see one animal ingest another. While snake feedings were interesting, no other violent animal entertainments were more popular with Victorians than lion feedings.

A detailed commentary on the pleasures of public feedings comes from writer Terence Templeton in a letter detailing his visit to the Exeter Change Menagerie with his country cousin. While Templeton delighted in the collective variety of feedings on offering, proclaiming that "The Lord Mayor's feast is a fool to it; and the coronation banquet itself was but a *half-crown ordinary* in comparison," he was most impressed with the Carnivora feeding.[149] Templeton described the frightening scene as the dinner gong rang: "A huge discordant roar bursts from almost every den at the same moment; and the inhabitants of each rush against the bars, rampant, and with their eyes flashing fire, and seem on the point of tearing their way into the open space where the spectators are standing."[150] While this picture conjures up a fearful, hellish atmosphere, the visitors remained safe from bodily harm: "And yet in the midst of all, we felt the pleasantest of all securities, which exists in the presence of, and almost in contact with, danger and death."[151]

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[147] *The Juvenile*, 124.
[148] Doyle, *Manners and Customs*, 70.
[149] Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," 361.
[150] Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," 365.
[151] Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," 365.

Danger and safety were the two paradoxical conditions that Templeton experienced during the feeding, comparing his situation to sailing upon the ocean on a plank or standing with a lit match in a fire-damp coalmine—each situation presenting one simultaneously with safety and impending doom. However, Templeton understood this feeding also remained different, as in each previous situation the actor was in danger—a storm would distance the board from the sailor and the flame could cause the mine to explode. In contrast, the feeding was different by remaining safe: "We are here surrounded, and as it were, looked upon, by death under its most frightful form; and yet we hold our life as securely as if we were seated at our own hearths."[152] However, he then reneged on his earlier presumption:

> But here, the danger is visible to our eyes—it rings and rattles in our ears—it actually moves our whole frames; for the roarings and ramping of the beasts shake the very building in which we stand. And yet here we stand, as if it were a mere *performance* that we were witnessing—an imitation, and not the real thing. But that it *is* the real thing, is the secret of the pleasure, or whatever it is to be called that we derive from it.[153]

One point lost on Templeton was that this *was* a staged act of an artificial nature; a poor simulation of eating habits in the wild at best. Yet, Templeton could not decide if the feeding he witnessed was real or a sham. Regardless, it conjured up genuine emotions in his heart. As his narrative winds down, Templeton concluded that Londoners watched these events to harden a "degree of healthful strength of nerve," a commodity drifting away from British society as "the habits of modern life" have destroyed "the nerves of our nobility and gentry" while rendering

[152] Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," 365.
[153] Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," 365-66, italics in original.

"nervousness an indispensable qualification for a fine lady."[154] Templeton positioned himself as one of modernity's discontents, approving of, "public execution[s]… combats of gladiators and athletae, and battles of wild beasts, as they had in the days of old," arguing that by perpetually jolting Britons, these violent entertainments helped to maintain, "a healthful strength of nerve."[155] While most viewers would not have approved of reintegrating these archaic bloodsports, the new attraction of live animal feedings provided viewers with a violent entertainment that was intensely frightening and yet completely safe, and one that allowed animals to act out on their own accord incited—but no longer attacked—by human hands.

Thus far, we have seen exhibited animals consumed through numerous modalities; they were adored by countless visitors, fondled in the arms of children, fed by eager guests, and watched with horror during meal times. Just as Victorians enjoyed watching pandemonium unfold in front of their eyes during orchestrated feedings, they enjoyed more peaceable entertainments that allowed for personal interaction through the feeding or caressing of their favorite creatures. Returning our attention to Obaysch, we will now examine how numerous popular animal's actions and temperaments were considerably anthropomorphized, which further contributed to their popular appeal. Zookeepers did this by having animals perform tricks, eat foods, and act in contemporary mannerisms. I believe that this was in part to facilitate consumption, since zoogoers more readily related to animals that mirrored themselves. This supposition served as a two-way street whereby visitors also played into anthropomorphizing animals, owing to consumer's romanticized belief that these creatures could "perform [their] thoughts, feelings, and fantasies."[156] Despite the fact that the Zoo adhered to an educational

[154] Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," 366.
[155] Templeton, "The Wild Beast's Banquet," 366.
[156] Daston and Mitman, *Thinking with Animals*, 13.

mission that sought to lead visitors to science, zoogoers instead transplanted their own wishes and imagery onto animals. While Carnivora were understood, and therefore treated, as wild beasts, herbivores and omnivores were anthropomorphized, turned into creatures that visitors both adored and appreciated for their novelty and artificially-constructed humanity.

For animals harboring a sweet tooth, feeding again represented one of the key modes of anthropomorphized visitor-animal interaction. As William Thackery proclaimed, "It is a world quite of itself, this Zoological Gardens…Where lions and tigers and other strange monsters are 'at home' all day long, and happy to see you, and more happy still to see your nuts and biscuits."[157] To Thackeray, the Zoo was not a containment center for wild creatures, but a neighborhood where each animal was happy to see guests sharing savory treats among friends. The most popular feeding area at the London Zoo was the bear pit (Figure 1.9). Here, guests purchased buns, fruits, and cakes to place on the end of a pike to dangle over the pit. The hungry bears surmounted their pole and, once in range, snatched off the treats.[158] The length of the pole minimized the potential harm for visitors; if the bear became aggressive it was blocked by the fence.[159] Still, visitors leaned in over the pit to ensure the bear could reach their snacks, which appeared to not worry many participants since the bears "Devoured an incalculable number of buns, provided by the liberality of visitors, for which they were always prepared to make an ascent to the summit of their pole."[160] Since the bears exhibited human characteristics—they were omnivores, and followed their appropriate queue up the ladder—visitors felt safe to interact with them in ways impossible with the Carnivora. As a result, the bears lived a life of plenty in the Zoo. Theodore Wood asserted, "no more contented animals can be found in the Gardens. All

[157] Charles H. Ross, *Wicked London. A Good Guide* (London: Henry Vickers, 1881), 15.
[158] Kidd, *Kidd's New Guide*, 50.
[159] George Scharf, *Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park*, 1835.
[160] D. W. Mitchell, *A Popular Guide to the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London* (London: R. S. Francis, 1852), 28.

day long they loll about in their cages, or sit up begging for the buns and biscuits which the visitors are always ready to throw to them." [161]

While feeding the bears was all in good fun, writer Leigh Hunt offered a witty supposition of what might occur if they usurped their bondage. "What a sensation would ensue," he mused, "if that pretty-coated creature, which eats a cake so good-naturedly, were suddenly out of its cage, and the cry were heard—"A tiger loose!"…Fancy the bear suddenly jumping off his pole upon the cake-shop!"[162] Hunt left the reader to ponder what a tiger escaping from its cage might entail. From the evidence provided in the prior section, it would likely send visitors into a panic, fearing the threat of a sharp set of feline teeth and claws. In contrast, the bears, so familiarized with metropolitan life, were depicted forgoing carnage and instead ransacking the unattended bake shop. Since the bears only sought sweet buns, no visitor need fear offering them a treat; if they fell in the pit, the cake would be seized upon as prey. If the bears once harbored a taste for human flesh, their confinement turned them into slaves of the civilizing sweet bun—at least in the eyes of contemporary human visitors.

The bears were not the only animals that visitors frequently fed human foods. Whether this arose due to anthropomorphized animal diets or a lack of understanding about proper nutrition, a substantial amount of human food ended up in exhibited animal's stomachs. It was a common practice for visitors to Exeter Change to pay keepers for small foodstuffs for distribution to the animals. Visitors, for example, participated in a mock transaction where the elephants "take a piece of money from any person in company, and present it for bread, fruit, &c. to a boy who attends for the purpose, and return the benefactor a printed bill, with his

[161] *Sunday Reading*, 187-89, 252.
[162] Hunt, *Men, Women, and Books*, 37.

description."[163] Naturalist Francis Buckland recalled visiting the menagerie as a child and "being taken to feed Billy [a hyena] with cakes, and of later years I paid frequent visits of inquiry, always with satisfactory results; he was always in a good humour."[164] This was not just a onetime event, but occurred at numerous occasions throughout Buckland's life despite the fact that a cake was the last thing Billy, an oddly anthropomorphized carnivore, probably needed. Describing a similar transaction, Charles Ross reminisced how during his childhood he fed a monkey, Joe, "chocolate drops and liqueur bon-bons and he used to shake hands with me."[165] In each instance, visitors provided human foods to an animal to form an immediate bond, turning an unfamiliar beast into a seeming friend that was recalled warmly later in life.

Beyond feeding animals human foods in orderly, predictable fashions, anthropomorphized creatures also performed in popular shows. These performances typically consisted of interesting tricks and innovative acts that went seemingly beyond the bounds of normal animal behavior. They overwhelmingly lacked scientific value or educational explanations, instead relying on amusement, creating familiarity, or shock and awe to entertain visitors seeking an anthropomorphized experience ranging from elephants curtsying, kangaroos boxing, or hippos bathing.

There was no more frequently mentioned darling of the animal exhibition than the "ever-attractive elephants," which received unrivaled admiration as spectacularly wise creatures.[166] The naturalist William Charles, for example, was not alone when asserting that "of all land animals, the Elephant is the most interesting to the curious observer of nature," and that the animal's "supposed sensibility and intelligence have caused him to be almost ranked with reason and

[163] Garner, *A Brief Description of the Principal Foreign Animals*, 4.
[164] Francis T. Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History, Volume 2* (London: Richard Bentley, 1860), 50.
[165] Ross, *Wicked London*, 14.
[166] Knight, *Pictorial Half-Hours of London*, 19.

reflecting man."[167] While visitors watched animals *act* like humans, elephants were viewed as more than just mere actors, but oddly similar, prompting questions of how different elephants were from humans?

Elephants displayed their profound intelligence in numerous feats at Exeter Change. The Menagerie's first elephant was regarded as "scientific" and "stupendous."[168] The pachyderm performed numerous tricks, such as using his trunk to transfer his keeper's objects into visitor's pockets and grasping a broom to sweep his cage. The elephant professed an awareness of its surroundings and developed maneuverability, as well as expressing abstract thought by adapting a manmade implement for use by a creature lacking hands.

The Reverend Thomas Smith was delighted after watching the elephant correctly answer her keeper's questions concerning how many candles lit the room—using her trunk to express her count—and later in the performance even unlocked her cage. He was even more shocked by how she grasped an out-of-reach coin while remaining stationary. Using her trunk "she blew strongly and repeatedly in such a curious direction that every blast drove the shilling from the wall towards her, till at length it came within reach." In astonishment, he proclaimed that this feat, "seemed to require even *thought* and human ingenuity."[169] Numerous commentators also noted that the elephant possessed an intellectual capacity at levels approaching a human, placing the elephant above the majority of wildlife and below only humanity.

While the elephant's problem-solving skills were highly developed, so too was its dining etiquette. While we have already learned how Terence Templeton was impressed with the Carnivora feeding, he was also captivated by the elephant's feeding, comparing it to elite London

[167] Williams, *Child's Natural History of Beasts*, 8.
[168] *The True Briton* (December 12, 1795), quoted in Grigson, *Menagerie*, 108.
[169] Smith, *The Naturalist's Cabinet*, 160. Italics in original.

banquets: “Which of them all, I say, can in these particulars pretend to compare with alderman Elephant, who takes off a cart-load of carrots by way of dessert—washes them down with a washing-tub of water—and then wipes his trunk on a truss of hay by way of a towel, and eats it afterwards?”[170] Templeton was astounded not just by watching the elephant eat, but also by how he ate, specifically viewing it akin to an elite Londoner. He was satisfied, and even appears proud, that the elephant did not mindlessly gorge itself but devoured its food with gusto while remaining prudent enough to clean up afterwards. Further evidence that the elephant, unlike most animals in captivity, would not blindly devour its food was provided by Charles Ross. When visiting the Zoo in the 1880s, his son gave an elephant a bit of chewing tobacco, but “the elephant [did] not at all approve of it.”[171] The elephant did not devour it nor spit it out, but tried it, considered it, and then did not approve of it. The elephant was a discerning diner at least in the eyes of the typical Victorian observer.

Beyond its intelligence and etiquette, elephants were believed to express a pronounced morality. Thomas Garner described how one elephant emotionally touched the audience at the Exeter Change Menagerie. The elephant “will take up a tankard of any kind of liquor, but particularly ale, blow it into his mouth, and in return for favours received, make a bow to the audience, which shews a strong sense of his gratitude.”[172] Describing an elephant aware and gracious of his adoring audience, the elephant’s gentility was constructed from interspecies interaction as well. Menagerie owner Gilbert Pidcock was moved when his male elephant returned from tour to see his new female counterpart. He recalled how the pachyderm “made her a very long bow; and the female, with all the sagacity and complaisance imaginable, returned

[170] Templeton, *New Monthly Magazine*, 361.
[171] Ross, *Wicked London*, 14.
[172] Garner, *A Brief Description of the Principal Foreign Animals and Birds*, 3.

him a handsome courtesy."[173] This elephant was not only respectful to humans, but even with other elephants, but through a distinctly human etiquette. Owing to the elephant's modesty, Garner professed praise unattributed to any other animal: "By his intelligence, he makes as near an approach to man as matter can approach spirit."[174] This quotation encapsulates how the elephant was believed to possess a developed intellect that almost breached the bonds of what constituted human intelligence. The elephant served to delight audiences who came to see it exhibited throughout London, whereby its intelligence allowed for its anthropmorphization on levels not associated with other creatures.

While the elephant performed numerous peaceable entertainments relying chiefly on intelligence, the boxing kangaroo was a violent aberration founded on a cultural trope still pertinent in contemporary society. In 1805, a kangaroo in Exeter Change was trained to box with its keeper, literally pitting man against nature. When visiting the Menagerie in 1806, Thomas Smith watched the pair spar for upwards of fifteen grueling minutes. During this time, the kangaroo showed profound skill and strategy,

> Turning in every direction to face his opponent, carefully watching an opportunity to close with him, and occasionally grasping him with his fore paws, while the right hind leg was employed in kicking him upon the thigh and hip, with equal force and rapidity. The struggle was indeed obstinate, and the keeper acknowledged that the animal was sometimes almost superior in point of strength.[175]

[173] *The True Briton* (December 12, 1795), quoted in Grigson, *Menagerie*, 108.
[174] Garner, *A Brief Description of the Principal Foreign Animals and Birds*, 4.
[175] Smith, *The Naturalist's Cabinet*, 235.

According to Smith, the kangaroo did not enter the fray as a clumsy brute, but showed skill, dexterity, and strength, almost besting his keeper. While inhumane and comparable to archaic animal entertainments like bear-baiting, this duel also represented an unusual instance of a human fighting an animal comparable in size and strength. The keepers must have felt that the kangaroo displayed enough intelligence and athletic acumen to learn boxing, and that it fought skillfully begged the question of where exactly the kangaroo fit between civilized and savage, animal and human. Though the kangaroo was described harrowingly as possessing a tail "which is said to be of such strength as to break a man's leg with a single blow," showmen nevertheless got into the ring and, typically, came out the winner.[176] Although distanced from older violence towards animals, savage entertainment thus did not fade away entirely. Instead of animals abusing one another in the past, for example, in bear and bull baiting, now humans directly committed the act against an exotic, upright, bipedal animal. An engrossing spectacle for viewers, this performance further asserted dominance over the kangaroo—literally through physical contact—after already colonizing its homeland, transporting it to London, and teaching it to fight.

While the kangaroo was forced into a spectacle of violence, monkeys served in a more relaxed role as miniature human imitations. Acting like an eminent Victorian at the London Zoo, the monkey Happy Jerry seated himself in an armchair, smoked a pipe, drank grog, and dined on veal with roasted vegetables. Jerry did not just eat or drink as numerous other exhibited animals did, but uniquely smoked from a pipe, an act that required training, skill, and experience. Another captive monkey, Sally, performed a variety of tricks relying on intelligence. For example, she discerned the lengths of cut fruits and vegetables, picking the ones her keeper

[176] Williams, *Child's Natural History of Beasts*, 99.

instructed her to select. Additionally, she had two contrasting ways of drinking water; one sloppily and wild and the other refined and civilized.[177] Sally was a rare anthropomorphic hybrid in that she behaved as both civilized and wild on command. While nineteenth-century spectators enjoyed watching monkeys on display, and viewed them with, "an almost family interest," according to Jerrold, the primates were even mourned upon their death .[178] Charles Ross claimed that when his favorite monkey died, he "mourned the death of poor old Joe as that of a brother."[179] (Ross found consolation in that Joe went "where all the good monkeys go."[180]) In animal exhibits, monkeys were made to act as humans in life, foreshadowing Ross's claim that they journeyed to another realm in death, again underscoring how creatures with similar likenesses to humans were depicted by numerous nineteenth-century Britons.

The Victorians were preoccupied by the boundary between human and ape, especially the thought that the former naturally arose from the latter, which was engendered by ongoing debate between evolutionists and traditionalists in the years leading up to the publishing of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. Britons went so far as to label other peoples they perceived as subhuman brutes capable of violence and destruction—especially the Irish—as "prognathous brutes with enormous jaws and tiny brains" when caricatured in the press.[181] Viewing the Irish in relation to primates eased contemporary moral panic by having them serve as a barrier between civilized Victorian and savage ape as argued by L. Perry Curtis, Jr. Comparatively, watching an encaged chimp mirror human actions under a keeper's thumb likewise provided sufficient distance from

[177] Lang, *The Animal Story Book*, 193.
[178] Dore and Jerrold, *London, A Pilgrimage*, 110.
[179] Ross, *Wicked London*, 14.
[180] Ross, *Wicked London*, 14.
[181] L. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (New York: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971), 102.

real human qualities so that an anthropomorphized charade allowed for primates to serve as a popular entertainment for visitors to both the Menagerie and Zoo.[182]

Like contemporary celebrities, certain animals possessed a tremendous popularity, even inspiring popular followings outside of the Zoo. Again not unlike popular consumer goods, these animals functioned akin to a new, stylish, fashionable commodity that was all the rage. These animals became so popular that they occasionally became cultural sensations, turning into a "Public Pet" in the process.[183] Instead of caring about their worth as scientific specimens, visitors were most interested in their daily activities as reported in the popular press which transformed these animals into anthropomorphized celebrities. There was perhaps no greater "Public Pet" to the Victorians than the hippopotamus, Obaysch.

Despite frequent ridicule in satirical journals like *Punch*, which labeled him "a very heavy, stupid animal," Obaysch's rarity placed him in the center of the public consciousness and his droll antics made him a star. [184] The London Zoo's attendance rose during his first year in captivity from 168,895 to 360,402.[185] Once on display, Obaysch's image graced a diverse array of consumables, from sculptures to coat buttons. To allow for numerous guests to see their dearest animal, Obyasch received a pool that allowed for 1,000 spectators to watch him swim.[186] So elaborate was this tub-like space that one zoogoing-child asked his sister where Obaysch's bath towel was once he stepped out of his pool.[187] *Punch* reported that, "As many of our country readers naturally feel anxious to know how the hippopotamus passes his time in a strange land,

[182] Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, 103.
[183] *Punch*, Vol. 74 (1878), 132.
[184] *The Juvenile*, 127.
[185] *Punch*, Vol. 74, 132.
[186] *A Full and Interesting Account of the Great Hippopotamus or River Horse: From the White Nile! By a Distinguished Zoologist* (New York: Steam Books and Job Printer, 1863), 19.
[187] Quoted in John Toman, *Kilvert's World of Wonders, Growing up in mid-Victorian England* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2013), 78.

where he is so far away from home and all his relations, we have gone to the expense of procuring the following particulars."[188] The writer proceeded to list the hippo's daily routine, ending the article by claiming Obyasch was so overworked he needed a relaxing, seaside vacation since he has "Been the 'observed of all observers' and the centre of attraction to the whole metropolis."[189] Obaysch, having worked all year to please the Zoo's record-setting crowds the journal's authors argued, deserved the same holiday in Brighton afforded to every hard-working, middle-class Londoner.

After three years in captivity, Obaysch was provided with his mate Adhela. To complete their love story, the two "lived happily ever after."[190] However, their marriage was not always congenial. A squabble forced the nurturing mother to defend their offspring, tossing Obaysch into the pool during the altercation, and this incident was reported as if describing domestic violence as opposed to raw, animal aggression.[191] Though thirty years had passed since Obaysch's arrival in London, the venerable hippo remained popular enough for Charles Ross to include him in his 1881 London guide. To Ross, Obaysch was "Quite a sedate, middle-aged, married gentleman… and sociable and harmless enough withal." Just as Obaysch was fawned over in life, his death was treated as one afforded to an English dignitary. His death inspired a sorrowful, eloquent dirge in *Punch*, labeled the "Hippo's Farewell," that concluded:

Farewell the gazing crowd, the children's fun,
The lavish apple, the superfluous bun,
And all the toothful memories of the Zoo,
Methinks that not a few
Of old and young admirers will be loth,
To bid-Urm'p! Urm'p!—a long and last good-bye,
Piping regretful retrospective eye,
To Behemoth!

[188] *Punch*, Vol. 19, 20.
[189] *Punch*, Vol. 19, 50.
[190] Mateaux, *Rambles Around London Town*, 99.
[191] A. D. Bartlett, *Wild Animals in Captivity*, ed. Edward Barlett (London: Chapman and Hall, 1899), 84-5.

In death, Obaysch was not remembered as a rare specimen or an object of study. Instead, the memories of his sights, sounds, and actions that distanced him from animals and likened him to Victorians were what remained forever in visitor's hearts.

For celebrity animals like Obaysch, the Victorians constructed an elaborate, anthropomorphic framework in an effort to make him or her appear almost human. Londoners throughout the nineteenth century turned a host of animals into quasi-humans by transplanting their thoughts onto an animal, attempting to change a wild creature from what it was to what it should or could be. While expected in the Exeter Change Menagerie, a venue where science possessed a negligible influence, the same dynamic was equally visible at the London Zoo, an institution championing a scientific mission that most visitors ignored. This rampant anthropomorphizing suggests a society not content to see a Zoo full of wild creatures. Instead, it depicts a society testing the boundaries of the human-animal divide by incorporating human traits into a captive creature's lifestyle to gauge if certain animals, namely herbivores and omnivores, could mimic humans if exposed to shared cultural elements. It appears that, to a considerable degree, these animals took on human identities in visitors' minds, complete with unique personalities, bonds of friendship, and happy memories spent together.

While Victorians attached their identities to anthropomorphized animals, they sought no bond of commonality with the wilder carnivorous ones, instead viewing them as interesting commodities for expressions of violence. The Carnivora existed beyond the realm of human comparison, remaining truly wild creatures both untamable and furious. This led to these dangerous animals eliciting fear in visitors during public feedings, but just as they did this they paradoxically also broadcast beauty. Meanwhile, numerous other creatures, whether dangerous

or not, were viewed as alluring commodities to the senses, owing to their brilliant hides, fantastical movements, or eagerness to let a human ride atop them. However, since Britons could not take these creatures home, sensory experiences linked consumers to these animals which became a form of an immaterial capital that provided evidence of a visit to the Zoo or the Menagerie. These sensory activities, encompassing seeing, hearing, touching, feeding, and riding, brought numerous visitors to animal exhibitions to consume their sights, sounds, and tactilities, leaving with nothing but memories to show for their entry fees. In these spaces of exhibition, visitors reveled among a romanticized collection of animals that, through commodification and anthropomorphization, manifested as comfortable friends and frightening foes, as alluring commodities and repulsive brutes, and as terrifying savages and dignified gentleman.

Chapter 2

Grand Monuments of Nature:
Exhibiting Colossal Ecological Specimens in Nineteenth-Century London

> *"A party of scientific men, artists and promoters of the Crystal Palace, dined in the body of the Iguanodon, and Professor Owen sat not only at the head of the table but in the head of the counterfeit monster, as he does at the head of the science which has compassed a knowledge of the monster and of the world in which he lived. The scene, indeed, was the type of that power which henceforward must command the world; that power, of which even those who aid it do not yet thoroughly appreciate the nature or the intent."*[192]

On May fourth, 1859, a coterie of hucksters ran an advertisement in *The Times*, inconspicuously wedged between notices for two of the most popular entertainments of the day, the London Zoological Gardens and the Crystal Palace. Their product was a dead whale, or, as they described it, "The Wonder of the Mighty Deep… A MONSTER WHALE," that they had killed, dragged to the coast, and anchored on the beach.[193] They were not selling its oil, a fluid used to light homes and lubricate steam engines, or whalebone, a rigid animal product needed to manufacture crinolines. What they sold was the chance to see an enormous whale in the flesh, a rarity unafforded to most Britons. Owing to Gravesend's location just twenty-one miles from London, the promoters hoped to attract middle-class vacationers curious enough to take a weekend trip to gaze at the titanic cetacean. To help get across its size to a possibly unfamiliar audience, it was noted as "Weighing upwards of 100 tons." Lastly, the advertisement pleaded a sense of urgency: "Caught May 1… Now exhibiting for a few days only."[194]

Naturalist Francis Buckland was among the curious Londoners that responded to the notice. While visiting the whale, he took measurements of its length, inquired upon the nature of its death, and then climbed atop, just as an intrepid climber surmounted a towering peak, even

[192] "Progress Viewed from the Head of the Iguanodon," *The Leader*, (January 7, 1854), 14.
[193] *The Times*, May 4, 1859, 1C.
[194] *The Times*, May 4, 1859, 1C.

though the whale's owner was fearful it might explode. Buckland, "With some difficultly climb[ed] up. It was dangerous walking, as the skin had become loose and very slippery from decomposition… which felt under the feet like a mountain of highly-oiled India-rubber."[195] He visited it twice more before Rosherville Gardens purchased the carcass to permanently display its skeleton. The Gravesend Whale was not an aberration, but one instance that illustrates the British public's infatuation with gigantic natural specimens throughout the nineteenth century.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, an ever-increasing number of exotic animals reached London during the nineteenth century to fill zoos and menageries. Britons did not typically discard the carcasses of their "coveted imports" that died in captivity.[196] Death did not remove animals from the loop of consumerism but just shifted their stage, demonstrating Sarah Amato's claim that, "These objects reflected the Victorian and Edwardian belief that animals should be useful to humans, even in death."[197] Just as live animals were interesting due to their novelty, exoticism, and anthropomorphic qualities, so too were preserved creatures exhibited in a plethora of London venues. Death had advantages for displaying wildlife. Ann Colley claims that "compared to a struggling and all-too-vulnerable living creature, hides and feathers seemed more durable and portable: it was thought that they could more easily be labeled, displayed, or stored."[198]

Deceased animals reconstructed by zoologists were not the only attractions. As the field of paleontology professionalized over the course of the century, scientists collected and analyzed

[195] Francis T. Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, Volume 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1860), 333.
[196] Rachel Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 3.
[197] Sarah Amato, *Beastly Possessions: Animals in Victorian Consumer Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 183.
[198] Ann C. Colley, *Wild Animal Skins in Victorian Britain: Zoos, Collections, Portraits, and Maps* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 4.

fossilized remains.[199] Nineteenth-century collections distanced themselves from the old cabinets of curiosity that were regular features of the early modern era. Instead, museums that featured categorized collections increasingly became the standard embodiment of scientific exhibitions. As Barbara Black observes, "the nineteenth century gave birth to the modern museum," wherein a multitude of cultural factors intersected, including "British involvement in imperialism, exploration, and tourism…, advances in science…, the growing hegemony of the middle class…, and commodity culture."[200]

What was the particular appeal of exhibitions of deceased animals for nineteenth-century Britons, especially given the notoriety surrounding some of the largest displayed specimens? This chapter argues that Britons were infatuated with exotic and ancient colossal specimen exhibitions because they not only exemplified the world of heightened consumer choices associated with the modern era, but also because they expressed dominance over nature, a defining characteristic of the Anthropocene. In the nineteenth century, massive animals were rendered, preserved, and displayed in excess. Londoners funneled large natural specimens into museums and other popular venues where they served not just as imperialistic trophies (as Colley has proposed), but also as trophies of modernity in the struggle to triumph over nature's colossal manifestations.[201]

What Britons sought when interacting with living animals as opposed to deceased creatures differed substantially. While they colored living creatures in a sizable palette of descriptors, including (but not limited to) the shades of civilized and wild, attractive and

[199] A. Bowdoin Van Riper, *Men Among the Mammoths, Victorian Science and the Discovery of Human Prehistory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Gowan Dawson, *Show Me the Bone, Reconstructing Prehistoric Monsters in Nineteenth-Century Britain and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Michael Freeman, *Victorians and the Prehistoric: Tracks to a Lost World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
[200] Barbara J. Black, *On Exhibit: Victorians and the Museum* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 9.
[201] Colley, *Wild Animal Skins*, 4.

repulsive, and heavily anthropomorphized, deceased creatures largely forwent comparable labeling. Instead, Britons, as Rachel Poliquin claims, sought to preserve animals to serve as a souvenir that told only bits and pieces of their life story.[202] I contend that beyond nineteenth-century wildlife, this mode of thought also informed British responses to fossilized remains, creatures that no human ever witnessed alive and that, therefore, no one remembered. Whereas a living creature's habits were framed in ways that enriched the Victorian imagination, a dead creature remained static and devoid of personality, left with nothing but its skeleton or skin.[203] Accounting for exotic and ancient specimens, the attention afforded to living animals' habits, movements, and actions fell away to be replaced with a reverence for what was left—in this case, their enormous size that tantalized visitor's imaginations when viewing a creature that towered over their bodies. In spite of this gulf in size and power between Briton and animal, the enormous creature had been defeated by the minute, fragile human and displayed in their museums, inspiring awe in the minds of countless visitors who ventured to gaze upon the preserved remains of nature's giants.

Londoners experienced preserved specimens similarly to live, exotic animals in that specimens represented an unaquirable commodity. Visitors paid a fee to enter a museum and engage with exhibits during their allotted time. Once customers finished their tours, they left with nothing more than memories as proof of purchase. Middle-class consumers likewise experienced specimens through a combination of the senses, again chiefly via sight and touch. Visual consumption was the primary mode of sensory consumption promoted by proprietors. For example, playbills detailed extraordinary lengths and weights supposedly incomprehensible

[202] Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo*, 7-8.
[203] Lorraine Datson and Gregg Mitman, "The How and Why of Thinking with Animals," *Thinking with Animals, New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 13.

without seeing the specimen in person. Creatures frozen in time allowed for individualized examination. As Will Abberley notes, "Anatomical models displayed normally unperceived structures and details through their stasis and permanence, which enabled close-up, protracted scrutiny."[204] Additionally, gigantic specimens required inspection from a multitude of angles to grasp them, which allowed for the act of making nature visible, supporting Black's interpretation that the enormous variety of oddities in museum collections echoed "the intense visuality of Victorian London Life" found in the metropolis's ever-changing cityscape.[205]

Just as Victorian visitors experienced both living animals and preserved specimens through sight, this investigatory method was shared by Britons who were not content just to use their eyes to examine specimens. They also frequently sought to touch the exhibited specimens, allowing their fingers to construct a holistic sensory experience. Grazing the surface of an enormous animal that dwarfed the visitor or running his or her fingers over ancient bones the size of tree trunks tantalized visitor's imaginations. Furthermore, touch is indicative of Colley's claim that, "this desire to link skin to skin gave visitors direct access to the exotic other."[206] This sensory combination allowed for Londoners to holistically experience the remains of exotic and ancient beasts, stripped from nature and supplanted in numerous metropolitan exhibitionary venues.

What attracted visitors to exhibits, as well as what they remarked upon while and after they visited, were the colossal natural specimens.[207] It should come as no surprise that just as visitors sought out large creatures like elephants and lions at animal exhibitions, they looked for

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[204] Will Abberley, "Replicating Bodies in Nineteenth-Century Science and Culture," *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* 24 (May 2017): 29.
[205] Black, *On Exhibit*, 24.
[206] Colley, *Wild Animal Skins*, 6.
[207] Enormity appears to command attention even today. It is telling that Stephen Asma begins his introduction by detailing the enormity of Charles O'Brien, the Irish Giant, displayed prominently in the Hunterian Gallery, in his book: Stephen Asma, *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

enormous dinosaurs and mammoths inside museums serving as wildlife mausoleums. Largeness served to attract visitors in two modalities. First, massive specimens from one region of the globe stood near other comparable creatures from other continents. This method of display collapsed space by allowing creatures that lived thousands of miles apart to inhabit the same exhibit space, much like the reorientation of space in the Crystal Palace Exhibition. It circumvented geographic constraints by corralling objects from across the globe in thematic groupings, such as "raw materials" or "sculptures and fine arts," creating what Paul Young terms a "blueprint for a borderless world."[208] When examining preserved specimens in the museum setting, this method of display created both a world without borders and sense of shared time. Additionally, it allowed for gargantuan individual specimens to compare with one another and with proximate diminutive specimens, allowing for a visitor to juxtapose a delicate starling to a gargantuan mammoth in one gaze. Both promotional guidebooks and contemporary men and women's recollections overwhelmingly noted the megafauna when indicating major attractions. Visitors sought out gigantic beasts ripped from nature and transplanted in museums, testimony to Britain's power to seize the largest creatures from their natural environments, or from deep within the earth, to satisfy Britons' curiosities.

The modern, Western fascination with the gigantic is the subject of Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby's aptly titled book, *Colossal*. Grigsby focuses on megalithic structures that towered upward and on gargantuan building projects that drastically altered landscapes, both serving as manifestations of Western ideals of progress and modernity. While neither a giant sloth nor Greenland Whale dwarf a human in comparison to the Eiffel Tower, scale rectifies this problem

[208] Paul Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition: The Victorian New World Order* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 63-70.

she argues, since "scale has always been understood to be comparative."[209] When applying scale to preserved animal exhibits, most specimens towered over Britons. In this way, the spectacle of nature's giants in the nineteenth century paralleled the same era's veneration of colossal manmade public works. Additionally, this study describes an instance in which a culture highlights size even when consuming an unacquirable commodity, expanding Grigsby's argument and pushing it back to an era of imperial infancy, demonstrating that "to look at Western modernism in conjunction with capitalism is to see that immense size became a supercharged value at the peak of imperial expansion."[210] While this argument has been split to examine the two interconnected phenomena, namely sensory interaction and veneration of size, these two claims will be spliced in the narrative's body since sensory experiences facilitated the stupendous reaction to the colossal; one event did not occur without the other.

The exhibition of gargantuan specimens likewise furthers scholars' claims that museum collections harnessed and expressed power in an age when premodern spectacles of power fell to the wayside. However, whereas Tony Bennet argued this served to dominate citizenry, this interpretation shifts to view museum collections as a means of dominating nature.[211] Collecting and displaying gargantuan animals decreed a mastery over nature writ large, reminiscent of Sujit Sivasundaram's argument regarding the collection of natural artifacts in the London Missionary Museum. Here, as in other Victorian museums, "attitudes to nature could serve as a public benchmark for assessing civilisation."[212] By collecting nature's giants, Victorians asserted hegemony over both the natural world and other societies. Displaying numerous examples of

[209] Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Colossal: Transcontinental Ambition in France and the United States During the Long Nineteenth Century* (Pittsburgh: Periscope Publishing, 2010), 17.
[210] Grigsby, *Colossal*, 19.
[211] Tony Bennet, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1998): 78.
[212] Sujit Sivasundaram, *Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific, 1795-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 179.

earth's enormous wildlife functioned as not just an affront to nature whereby Briton's hands penetrated into the realm of death by disobeying natural decomposition to create an *abnatural* memorial.[213] It too served as a provocation to other Western, industrializing nations in a race to showcase the broadest, most thorough collections of scientific specimens.

Thus, exhibiting preserved specimens also fits into the wider narrative of Britons' grasping hold of nature to showcase their power over natural processes, much like the electrical experimenters in Iwan Rhys Morus's *Frankenstein's Children*.[214] Sir Humphrey Davy, for example, posited that, "If we look with wonder upon the great remains of human works… [with] how much deeper a feeling of admiration must we consider those grand monuments of nature, which mark the revolutions of the globe."[215] Davy, a contributing force in the establishment of the London Zoo, likely attributed his admiration to the diverse biological variety evidenced when displaying an array of fauna. To gaze upon exhibitions of colossal natural specimens was likewise productive of admiration, but perhaps not in the sense Davy envisioned. Britons admired these creatures, but in doing so they were also idolizing their representation of human triumph over nature as opposed to appreciating the specimen's scientific value.

In pre-nineteenth-century London, a multitude of house museums existed largely as cabinets of curiosity crammed full of oddities both rare and valuable.[216] If any division of artifacts existed, it was typically a separation between natural and artificial curiosities, with the "natural" defined as things arising in nature and the "artificial" designated as those manufactured by humans. Throughout the seventeenth century, private museums became more widespread

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[213] Jesse Oak Taylor, *The Sky of Our Manufacture: The London Fog in British Fiction from Dickens to Woolf* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 5-6.
[214] Rhys Iwan Morus, *Frankenstein's Children: Electricity, Exhibition, and Experiment in Early-Nineteenth-Century London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 44.
[215] Sir Humphrey Davy, "Study of Nature," in *Arcana of Science, and Annual Register of the Useful Arts 2* (London: John Limbard, 1829), 129.
[216] Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 8.

owing to an increase in wealth and heightened education of the domestic elite, as well as a pervading sense of antiquarianism.[217] In the eighteenth century royal societies and prodigious collectors, like John Hunter, constructed early museums that emphasized scientific categorization of specimens. These museums allowed both the curious to gawk and the studious to learn, although entrance was limited mainly to society fellows or other elites. In the nineteenth century, however, museums opened to professionals and the middle class, broadening the scope of their influence.

The two museums examined closely here are the Hunterian Collection at the Royal College of Surgeons and the British Museum. John Hunter, surgeon, anatomist, and collector of natural oddities, amassed a substantial collection that, upon his death, was purchased by Parliament in 1799 and offered to the Corporation of Surgeons. The Hunterian Collection opened in 1813 and was enlarged in 1836 and 1852. Hunter's immense collection contained 13,683 specimens and filled most of the available space.[218] The British Museum originated with the collector Hans Sloane's body of artifacts, which were collected in their entirety in 1753 for what was an idea to place them together in a museum that was not opened until 1759, in Montagu House in London. Though the museum remained in its original location, it expanded dramatically over the nineteenth century. Although these two museums promoted scientific classification and educational ideology, adhering to the ideals of rational recreation, the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the educational influence of these museums was limited—just as the goals of rational recreation failed to impress upon the minds of visitors at living animal exhibitions, it too foundered when Britons visited scientific museums.

[217] Altick, *The Shows of London*, 10.
[218] *Synopsis of the Contents of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1867), 4-7; Altick, *The Shows of London*, 28.

Other institutions devoid of any scientific principles also exhibited preserved animals in leisurely venues across London. These localities were comparable to menageries that exhibited living animals; both were designed for consuming an entertaining spectacle and promoting little additional knowledge along the way. These exhibition spaces displayed some of the most popular specimens that featured in the metropolis throughout the century. For example, the King's Mews at Charing Cross was a fashionable space in which numerous tremendously popular whale specimens were exhibited. A diverse array of preserved creatures also featured prominently in numerous other spaces that promoted spectacle and awe. There were, for example, dinosaur models displayed at the elaborate Crystal Palace Exhibition and, at the Cosmorama, a building known prominently for featuring panoramas, but that also displayed whales and other large aquatic creatures. These venues, along with museums and many other smaller spaces, displayed a multitude of animal specimens to popular audiences.

Before discussing the impressive nature of individual colossal specimens, museum visitors first reckoned with an immense variety of contrasting scale. This exhibitionary technique affected viewers both visually and tactilely. Differentiating scale among specimens was crucial to exhibitionary practices and was even featured as part of museum procedure. During the British Museum's renovation in the 1880s, for example, one of the museum's key tenets was that "in the new edifice ample space will enable the Curator to display the specimens on a scale 'adequate to the purposes of comparison of species.'"[219] Varying scale produced an imposing array of size throughout the overall collection and among profoundly large specimens. As Black claims, the diversity of artifacts "bewitched with their abundance."[220]

[219] Herbert Fry, *London in 1887* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1887), 127.
[220] Black, *On Exhibit*, 3.

Differentials of scale invited comparisons both between the viewer and the specimen, and with the individual specimen and numerous others within the visitor's field of vision. The collective assortment of creatures produced an immensely variegated landscape all within an individual gallery, simultaneously awing and overwhelming the visitor. The author of the guidebook *London Scenes* described a gallery of the British Museum as featuring "A beautiful collection of birds, beasts, shells, and minerals, with some truly interesting petrifications, and other fossil remains."[221] While this description provides a sense of the variety of objects on display, the description from an 1851 guide to the Gallery of Organic Remains at the British Museum provides a better description for gauging the diversity of monumental exhibits, which the guidebook's author compared to a panorama: "The *coup d'œil* is very imposing, for the model of the gigantic *Megatherium* arrests the attention of the visitor on entering the apartment and beyond it stands the fine skeleton of the *Mastodon* of the Ohio; and between these two grand monuments of a former state of the globe, is the skull with its enormous tusks, of an extinct species of Elephant from India."[222] This example details the profound variety on exhibit while diverging from listing every displayed creature. Instead, the author cataloged the abundant giant specimens all within one gallery, each competing for his attention. While the variety itself was impressive, the multiplicity of enormous creatures was especially alluring.

The visual spectacle created by the divergent scales between a plethora of colossal creatures is visually represented in an image from the 1830s (Figure 2.1) depicting a busy day in the Hunterian Collection in the Royal College of Surgeons.[223] Like those of the British Museum, this gallery also contained multiple large specimens that compared with one another in height

[221] *London Scenes, or A Visit to Uncle William in Town* (London: John Harris, 1825), 138.
[222] Gideon Algernon Mantell, *Petrifications and Their Teachings, or, a Hand Book to the Gallery of Organic Remains of The British Museum* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1851), 461. Italics in original.
[223] *Hunterian Collection, Royal College of Surgeons,* ca. 1830.

and girth while contrasting with the many smaller specimens inside the cases. A group of visitors stare upwards to the plethora of megafauna, while one lone visitor dressed in white, the focal point of the print, gazes intently at one specimen in particular: the giant sloth. The man is planted at a distance from the sloth, allowing him full view of the gigantic skeleton frozen in an action pose, climbing upon a giant tree limb. Furthermore, the emphasis on the focal point allows for the print's viewer to contrast the scale between the man and the sloth. While this visitor captivatingly eyes the enormous beasts, others in the background gaze upward at the numerous other gigantic specimens, including an elephant, the giant Moa, and the Irish elk, among others. Heads turn in every direction since the variety provided visitors with an imposing showcase of enormous ancient and exotic specimens.

A similar image from later in the century (Figure 2.2) depicted a bevy of specimens also serving to showcase contrasting scale in the British Museum.[224] In the center of the room, open to scrutiny and touch, are the glorious specimens of contemporary megafauna: an elephant, a rhino, and two giraffes, one retaining its skin and the other a skeleton. A gentleman and his wife gaze upward at the skeletal giraffe, while on the opposite side of the room a child points excitedly to the clustered behemoths, attempting to drag his rooted mother over for closer inspection. These giant creatures are the focal point of the image, and yet, in the background, a gigantic gorilla perched upon a branch, frozen in a frightening gesture, looks down upon two interested visitors. Another rhino and a hippo are planted on the opposite side, and they too feature a crowd thronged around them. Scale between giants themselves, as well as amongst larger and smaller specimens, is showcased throughout this print. Additionally, the visitors overwhelmingly hover around the colossal exhibits, again suggesting these were the chief attractors of museum-goers' admiring gazes.

[224] *Mammalia Saloon, British Museum*, ca. 1860.

This print mirrored contemporary guidebook descriptions of the British Museum's Mammalia Saloon. The megafauna, the author noted, were all placed in the room's center where, "the larger quadrupeds, which are too bulky to be placed in these cases, are supported on pedestals or planks on the floor."[225] Another guidebook echoed this aesthetic choice while also detailing the larger specimens a visitor encountered throughout the room: "Some of the larger mammalia are placed on the floor, such as giraffes or cameleopards, and morse or walrus from the North Sea. Over the cases are placed the horns of oxen, the largest of which are those of the arnee, or great Indian buffalo… On the floor are arranged the different species of rhinoceros, an elephant, and hippopotamus."[226] Lastly, "the center of this room is occupied by the Indian rhinoceros, the African hippopotamus, the Cape buffalo, and the celebrated wild Chillingham bull."[227] The largest specimens were thus placed in the center of the floor for immediate access, unobstructed scrutiny, and the ability to take in the collective in a single gaze. The attractive, enormous specimens fulfilled visitor's desires for intense visual stimulation. Sight, however, was not the only exploratory mode available to, or employed by, visitors.

Much like contemporary zoos and menageries, nineteenth-century Britons not only wished to gaze upon a plethora of preserved megafauna, they also wanted to touch them. Taxidermy exhibitions were often places where tactile experiences occurred. Buckland, for example, noted how "visitors to museums are very apt to touch and handle specimens,—this is an itching which seems natural to us all."[228] One exhibition that allowed visitors to both see and touch specimens was the Pantherion inside Bullock's Museum, a popular London attraction in the early decades of the nineteenth century. A companion guide to Bullock's described the

[225] Charles Knight, *Pictorial Half-Hours of London Topography* (London: Charles Knight, 1851), 196.
[226] Edward Robert Kelly, *Kelly's Post Office Guide to London in 1862, Visitor Handbook to the Metropolis, and Companion to the Directory* (London: Kelly & Co.), 207.
[227] *The Golden Guide to London* (London: Lambert and Co., 1879), 205.
[228] Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 60.

Pantherion by highlighting its assortment of enormous wildlife, since it "presents a scene altogether grand and interesting. Various animals, as the lofty Giraffa [sic], the Lion, the Elephant, the Rhinoceros, &c. are exhibited as ranging in their native wild[s] and forests… The whole being assisted with a panoramic effect of distance and appropriate scenery."[229] The "panoramic effect of distance" was intended to "Make the illusion produced so strong, that the surprised visitor finds himself suddenly transported from a crowded metropolis to the depth of an Indian forest."[230] Much as in the guide to the British Museum, placement influencing scale was identified as a desirable component in the visitor experience.

The Pantherion received its own mini-guide within a larger book dedicated to the museum, providing a thorough description of the exhibition's artificial habitat that allowed for unlimited viewing by "keeping them [the specimens] at the same time in their classic arrangement, and preserving them from the injury of dust or air."[231] An 1810 print depicting the Pantherion (Figure 2.3) once again illustrates numerous visual and tactile experiences.[232] This area was full of wildlife haphazardly crammed together, frozen in "action poses"; for example, a snake is fixed slithering up a tree to attack a perched bird it will never reach. A wooden enclosure strictly demarcated this environment from the outside space, creating a barrier that distinguished an otherwise orderly museum from the exotic, tropical wild. What was most prominently depicted however, once again, were the megafauna. In the background, a man reaches out with his cane to touch an elephant, the largest and most prominent creature in this variegated exhibit. On another side of the enclosure a couple chat while they lean slightly over the railing, coming close to touching a water buffalo. Perhaps the oddest member among this

[229] William Bullock, *A Companion to the London Museum, and Pantherion* (London: Whittingham and Rowland, 1816), iv.
[230] Bullock, *A Companion to the London Museum*, 98.
[231] Bullock, *A Companion to the London Museum*, 97.
[232] *Bullock's Museum*, June 11, 1810.

group of tropical megafauna, a polar bear, juts outside of the enclosed area, allowing for constant touching by visitors either from choice or from accidently bumping into it.

This same image also highlighted the effects of scale as the Pantherion. Chairs are depicted throughout the venue which provided resting places for visitors while also enhancing their sense of wonder by allowing for a different viewpoint. A woman depicted as sitting in one of these seats placed her arms upon the railing and gazed upward at the numerous specimens around her—whether at zebra towering over her, the emu towering over it, or the elephant reigning supreme over all of the other inhabitants of the Pantherion. Meanwhile, other visitors stand back and look at the assortment with an eye to the collective scene.

While nineteenth-century visitors to the galleries of the Hunterian, British Museum, or the Pantherion were fascinated by the sheer volume of massive specimens on display, gazing at a collective assortment, comparing individual specimens within this collective unit, and reaching out to touch stuffed exotic creatures, this was not the only mode of inquiry available. Certain monumental individual specimens commanded particular attention throughout the nineteenth century. These enormous specimens of ancient and exotic beasts provided Britons with the experience of gazing upon a preserved megalithic creature that dwarfed their diminutive human bodies. Despite the significant physical gap between Londoner and behemoth, the outmatched human—the exhibit implied—by using their brain to circumvent size constraints, proved to be the victor in the perpetual contest to best nature.

Owing to their enormity, colossal specimens were usually placed upon pedestals in a museum gallery's center or hung from the ceiling, both common features in the Hunterian and the British Museum. Both methods were orchestrated to catch the visitor's gaze and promote these objects as the collections' crown jewels. While these specimens were not enclosed (and

thus available to touch), smaller specimens were typically placed behind glass along the gallery's edges to ensure their safety. Ancient megafauna, ranging from the Irish elk that roamed the earth in the not-too-distant Pleistocene to the Iguanodon, a truly primeval creature from the depths of the Cretaceous, were among the most popular specimens on display. Ancient specimens catered to a growing Victorian "fascination with all aspects of the prehistoric world," according to Michael Freeman, that also showcased the emerging field of paleontology that scouted, dug, and rebuilt creatures in a way that stamped scientific authority on animal's remains.[233] From mundane shells washing upon Britain's sandy beaches to giant lizards reminiscent of "supernatural dragons," the Victorian fascination with exhibited ancient creatures spoke to a nation captivated by extinct wildlife, who consumed them in a variety of formats ranging from their depictions in the popular press, books featuring colorful illustrations, and in numerous museum collections, as well as the gardens of the Crystal Palace Exhibition.[234]

Numerous noteworthy ancient specimens originated from British localities. The Irish elk was a popular attraction throughout the century at the British Museum due to its enormous body that was further complemented by a colossal set of antlers.[235] Numerous nineteenth-century guidebooks showed its attraction over time by consistently remarking on its prominent size. In Samuel Leigh's 1819 guide to London, he proclaimed how the museum possessed "a very perfect specimen of the skull and horns of the large Irish elk, by far the most remarkable known fossil remains of ruminant animals."[236] Leigh was infatuated with the elk, believing it was not just an interesting animal on account of its size, but claimed it was the "most remarkable known

[233] Michael Freeman. *Victorians and the Prehistoric: Tracks to a Lost World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 4-6, 148; Bernard Lightman, *Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2-3.
[234] Freeman, *Victorians and the Prehistoric*, 148-161.
[235] *Records of the Copyright Office of the Stationers' Company: Photographs* (London, 1898), 531.
[236] Samuel Leigh, *Leigh's New Pictures of London* (London: W. Clowes, 1819), 368.

fossil." From the entirety of specimens in the British Museum, an anonymous author likewise remarked on only two creatures by name in 1825, one being the elk ("A fine specimen of the skull and horns of the colossal Irish elk.").[237] In crafting his 1851 London guide, W. J. Adams also described the elk's height and weight in an attempt to provide an inkling of its immensity for readers: "Skeleton of the gigantic extinct deer… The span of the antlers, measures in a straight line between the extreme tips, is eight feet… Height of the skeleton to the top of the skull is, seven feet six inches; weight of the skull and antlers, seventy-six pounds."[238] While detailing its immensity in a guidebook, it is unlikely most Britons familiar with contemporary deer could fathom a realistic depiction of its ancient relative that featured an eight-foot span between its antlers without gazing upon it in person. Owing to its immensity, this super-sized deer attracted visitors throughout the century. While the solitary elk attracted countless visitors, it was not the exclusive resident of its gallery. It was stationed among other preserved megafauna including an elephant, an American elk, and a giraffe to facilitate a variegated scale amongst other impressively large creatures, providing the enormous deer with a variety of competitors for visitors' gazes.

Another domestically discovered ancient specimen that became a public sensation was the Iguanodon. Unearthed in a Sussex cave, the dinosaur fascinated Victorians both due to its local origin and substantial size. In his popular book of geological anecdotes, J. L. Comstock noted the Iguanodon's impressive dimensions as being "three or four times as large as the largest crocodile, having jaws equal in size to those of the rhinoceros."[239] Another author echoed how "the Iguanodon…was much larger than any reptile now in existence, one of its thigh-bones

[237] *London Scenes*, 138.
[238] W. J. Adams, *Adam's Pocket London Guide Book* (London: E. L. Blanchard, 1851), 166.
[239] J. L. Comstock, *Outlines of Geology: Intended as a Popular Treatise on the Most Interesting Parts of the Science* (New York: Pratt & Co., 1843), 228.

having been found to measure, in the smallest part, twenty-two inches in circumference, which is a greater dimension than is possessed by the largest elephant ever seen."[240] Each account labeled the Iguanodon as unparalleled in size to any existing creature, featuring a monstrously frightening jaw and gargantuan legs. Shocking depictions such as these potentially tantalized visitor's imaginations with the possibility of what this creature looked like. Comparable to the simultaneously attraction and repulsion of Stallybrass's and White's "low-other relationship," evidenced in the previous chapter when zoogoers viewed carnivorous animals, Britons were attracted to learn more about this creature despite the fact that it was physically immense and depicted as profoundly terrifying.[241] Inquisitive Britons were finally given a glimpse of what this creature looked like in 1853.

A scale model of the Iguanodon was one of the stars of the Crystal Palace Exhibition. Though the Crystal Palace originally opened in 1851, it took until 1853 for naturalist-sculptor Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins to craft the Iguanodon. An article in the London radical political newspaper *The Leader* commented upon the many fantastic ancient creatures held at the Crystal Palace, emphasizing their tremendous size that could frighten and bewilder even the most prudent and courageous Britons. "Seeing is believing," the writer observed,

> Among great specimens at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham, will be those of the gigantic animals that peopled the world… Even the sensible Rosamond of Miss Edgeworth might be forgiven for screaming if she saw jumping towards her a frog as broad as three buffaloes abreast; and the Duke of Wellington might have

[240] "Rambles of a Geologist," *The Gentleman's Journal* (August 1872), 13.
[241] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 5.

> hesitated if he had met on the banks of the Thames the Iguanodon lizard, thirty-five feet in length.[242]

The enormous lizard was of such a colossal size that the journalist believed it possessed the ability to frighten members of both sexes, whether they be a prudent fictional character or a heroic national icon. Regardless of its propensity for inducing shock and awe, countless visitors flocked to see the Iguanodon. Its popularity spawned a host of other enormous dinosaur exhibits to complement the lone colossal reptile at the Crystal Palace. The Iguanodon even attracted nationwide attention later in December of 1853 when a group of more than twenty scientists held a dinner party inside the creature. The extreme novelty of dining inside the massive prehistoric beast lead *The Leader* to ponder, "What would our readers say to an invitation to dine within the carcase [sic] of a model monster?"[243] The dinosaur's substantial length of thirty-five feet, height of twenty-three feet, and girth of twenty-five feet allowed for Hawkins to invite his fellow scientists for dinner inside the Iguanodon, and the meal attracted notoriety in the press as an act of supreme novelty coupled with elitism and decadence.[244] Not only were scientists reconstructing the bodies of colossal ancient creatures, but owing to their size they were simultaneously colonizing their innards as they saw fit.

Beyond naturalists, leisure-seeking Londoners, and visitors to the metropolis, even Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were taken aback by the Iguanodon and accompanying dinosaurs when visiting the Crystal Palace. *The Leader* noted that "The gigantic Iguanodon, the Ichthyosaurus…created no ordinary impression upon the minds of the illustrious strangers."[245] The Iguanadon's visitors, from commoner to royalty, had every right to be apprehensive. When

[242] "Progress Viewed from the Head of the Iguanodon," *The Leader* (January 7, 1854), 14.
[243] "Dinner to Professor Owen in the Iguanodon," *The Leader* (January 7, 1854), 6.
[244] "Dinner to Professor Owen in the Iguanodon," 6.
[245] "The Queen at the Crystal Palace," *The Leader (*November 5, 1853), 3.

writing a guide to the British Museum, Gideon Mantell described the Iguanodon by comparing its individual parts to extant megafauna. "The existing animal creation," he argued, "presents us with no fit objects of comparison. Imagine an animal of the lizard tribe, three or four times as large as the largest alligator, with jaws and teeth equal in size to those of the rhinoceros, and with legs as massive in proportion as the limbs of the elephant."[246] Mantell depicted the Iguanodon as a frightening monster that combined numerous colossal parts from the largest existing animals and placed them, some supersized to even larger proportions, together to create this new dinosaur. Regardless of whether it delighted or upset its viewers, the Iguanodon was one of Britons' favorite primordial giants. Mantell rightly claimed that, "From the enormous size of the bones of these animals, their remains have excited the curiosity even of the common observer… Their dimensions are sufficiently stupendous to satisfy the most enthusiastic lover of the marvelous."[247] Its enormity baffled countless viewers as it made its way to becoming a Victorian sensation. However large and intimidating the Iguanodon may have appeared to nineteenth-century Britons, another ancient creature was believed to be so stupendously gigantic that this mighty reptile would have easily fit in the space between its four wooly legs.

While the Irish Elk and Iguanodon were extinct locals, numerous other extinct, colossal animals also filled London's exhibition halls, having been wrested from the earth thousands of miles from Britain's shores. There was perhaps no other foreign fossil that captivated the British imagination more than the mammoth. Over the course of the century, paleontologists discovered large elephantine bones from Siberia to the Rocky Mountains, and debate ensued concerning whether these bones were from Biblical giants or an extinct creature.[248] A quote from an article

[246] Gideon Algernon Mantell, *Petrifications and Their Teachings, or, a Hand Book to the Gallery of Organic Remains of The British Museum* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1851), 337.
[247] Mantell, *Petrifications*, 226.
[248] Edward J. Wood, *Giants and Dwarves* (London: Richard Bentley, 1868), 39-40.

in *The Saturday Magazine* described the bewilderment still being created among nineteenth-century Britons by the discovery of mammoth bones, observing that, "Fossil remains of certain huge species of elephant have been dug up, which species now exist nowhere."[249] Furthermore, discerning whether the bones hailed from a mythical creature or from one that lived alongside early man, held startling ramifications for both natural history and the Victorian Christian-centric worldview.[250] The earliest mammoth remains in London were featured in the British Museum, where the mammoth was noted for its detail and prized for its size: "The under jaw and other bones of the fossil Siberian elephant which is the real mammoth, and of the gigantic North American mammal, which likewise has been called mammoth."[251] Furthermore, the Museum was noted to possess "various bones of the fossil Siberian elephant, which is supposed to be the real mammoth."[252] Unsure where exactly the bones originated, their megalithic size caused them all to be labeled as part of the new, exciting giant known as the mammoth.

Not to be outdone by the British Museum, the Royal College of Surgeons also exhibited mammoth bones. An 1860s museum guidebook noted how the collection possessed a variety of pieces from the different species of ancient pachyderms, notably including, "a fine specimen of the entire tusk of Mammoth, showing its great size and extensive double curvature."[253] Even without a complete skeleton, one large piece from the behemoth remained a laudable acquisition. Despite the impressive nature of mammoth remains in London, including individual pieces but also complete and partial skeletons, Rembrandt Peale, son of the American paleontologist Charles Wilson Peale, noted ruefully in his treatise concerning recently discovered fossils in Asia

[249] "The Utility of Geology," in *The Saturday Magazine, Volume the Sixteenth from January to June* (London: John William Parker, 1840), 53.
[250] Van Riper, *Men Amongst the Mammoths*, 6-10.
[251] Leigh, *Leigh's New Pictures*, 368-69.
[252] *London Scenes*, 138.
[253] *Synopsis of the Contents of the Museum*, 68.

that "There are several specimens of these in the British Museum, but none so large as this."[254] The competition to collect ever larger specimens echoed that to discover humanity's origin, as well as the prehistoric creatures that humans had once coexisted with. For example, A. Bowdoin Van Riper argues that a pronounced competition occurred amongst geologists, paleontologists, and historical archeologists from across Great Britain, Western Europe, and the United States, who all attempted to bring the prehistoric past to light.[255] In this spirt of competition, Peale promoted the newly discovered fossils from other regions that dwarfed those already on display in London. He believed that larger could always be larger, and many nineteenth-century Britons agreed with him.

German showman and fossil hunter, Albert Koch, took notice of the contemporary desire to continually witness bigger and bolder exhibits. In 1841 at the Egyptian Hall in London, the stakes were raised considerably when Koch displayed his colossal specimen the "Missouri Leviathan," or, the "Missourium." Excavated in Missouri, Koch took the bones on a tour of the United States before sailing across the Atlantic to continue the tour in Europe. The playbill promoting the behemoth (Figure 2.6) stated in its opening line that, "This [sic] unparalleled Gigantic remains, when its huge frame was clad with its peculiar fibrous integuments, and when moved by its appropriate muscles, was Monarch over all the Animal Creation; the Mammoth, and even the mighty Iguanodon may easily have crept between his legs."[256]

The Missourium thus was a direct competitor in the battle of bigness that relegated the laudable Iguanodon to status as a puny lizard and the newly discovered mammoth as its diminutive wooly cousin. Furthermore, it proclaimed that, "Now standing erect in all its

[254] Rembrandt Peale, *Account of the Skeleton of the Mammoth* (London: E. Lawrence, 1802), 43.
[255] Van Riper, *Men Amongst the Mammoths*, 13-14.
[256] *Missorium Theristrocaulodon Playbill* (Dublin: C. Crookes, 1842).

grandeur, the beholder will be lost in wonder and astonishment, at its immensity."[257] Regardless of comparisons to other creatures, Koch made a definite claim that, once scale was applied between the viewer and specimen, the viewer would feel absolutely dwarfed in the enormous creature's shadow and in awe of its enormity.

Koch marketed the Missourium similarly to the Iguanodon in that he compared it to other enormous animals (like the whale) to articulate contrasting scale. The book length description Koch authored opened by emphasizing the beast's gargantuan measurements: "This gigantic skeleton measures 30 feet in length and 15 in height," before moving on to list numerous dimensions ending with its molars, a startling 7 inches long by 4 inches wide.[258] Not satisfied with banking on its enormity to ensure the creature's popularity with exhibition goers, Koch threw his hat into the ensuing religious debate to publicize his specimen by devoting one-fifth of his manuscript to Biblical scripture in an effort to connect the Missourium to the Old Testament "Behemoth."

Throughout the eighteenth century and continuing into the nineteenth, large bones discovered across the globe were believed to point to the existence of giants, supporting Biblical Scripture. However, owing to the development of the fields of anatomy and zoology, naturalists, like Hans Sloane, increasingly labeled these enormous bones as the lone surviving relics of extinct animals, and as a result these naturalists often faced ridicule as "heretics and contradictors of the Bible."[259] What these bones originated from held profound implications for the Victorian worldview and for Britons' understanding of their place within the natural world.[260] The debate (still occurring at midcentury) between naturalists asserting that fossilized bones

[257] *Missorium Theristrocaulodon Playbill*.
[258] Albert Koch, *Description of the Missourium, or Missouri Leviathan* (London: E. Fisher, 1841), 7-9.
[259] Wood, *Giants and Dwarves*, 40.
[260] Van Riper, *Men Among the Mammoths*, 4-6.

were part of an ancient wooly elephant and clergy asserting that these bones were proof of the Behemoth allowed Koch and others a lucrative audience for their exhibitions.

Naturalist William Clift was skeptical of Koch's monster, and wary of the stupendous claims that American showmen often made when touring in Britain. He sent a letter to his friend and paleontologist Richard Owen in response to hearing of the Missourium that showed, nonetheless, his interest in the giant. "A person of the name of Koch has recently imported from America the fossil remains of a gigantic animal," he noted, quoting much of the original language featured in the playbill, "between whose legs, it is said, the mammoth and even the mighty iguanodon, may have strutted with ease. Since the arrival of this huge skeleton, it has attracted the attention of the curious and scientific."[261] Despite his skepticism, Clift was awestruck upon visiting it, writing "Yesterday paid it a visit. It is certainly the largest skeleton I've ever saw."[262] As debate raged over whether Koch's creature was a new species (Clift and Owen were some of Koch's notable antagonists), both scientist and laymen turned out in droves to gaze at what was likely the largest terrestrial creature they had ever—or would ever—witness. For nearly two years the skeleton perambulated across Britain's greatest cities as the religious, the curious, and the skeptical all turned out to gaze up at the breathtakingly colossal Missourium, enchanted by its immensity.

Before ending the discussion of alluring ancient creatures that bedazzled Londoner's eyes and imaginations, it is worth taking a moment to examine how British connections to areas both inside and outside of the empire facilitated an ever-increasing number of specimens flowing into London's museums. Without the global framework that imperialism provided, countless remains would have never made their way to Britain. Numerous historians argue that imperial

[261] William Clift to Richard Owen, August 31, 1841, Digital Repository Research Library of the American Museum of Natural History, http://hdl.handle.net/2246/6601 (accessed April 5, 2018).
[262] Clift to Owen, August 31, 1841.

connections represented the vital source by which specimens flowed into London and thus shaped how they were understood by visitors.[263] Whereas Ritvo argues that captive animals functioned as representations of dominion over nature and foreign societies, numerous fossilized specimens served these dual roles as well.[264] Just as Britain reinvented itself from a marginal nation to a world power by collecting precious foreign artifacts (as argued by Maya Jasanoff), collecting enormous specimens showcased British attempts to establish global hegemony by usurping the rights of other foreign societies and seeking to best other competing European powers—while simultaneously asserting dominance over nature all in one sweeping movement.[265]

For example, in the 1860's a large specimen was placed at the entrance to the north gallery of the British Museum. An 1862 guide to London noted that "in the lobby, between the Bird Gallery and the Gallery of Minerals and Fossils, is a restored model of the shell of an extinct fossil tortoise, of gigantic size, from the Siwalik Hills, in India."[266] An enormous turtle shell from British-controlled India served as the centerpiece in the entryway to the gallery displaying the museum's entire collection of ancient specimens. This fossil served as an example of dominion over both nature and the Indian populace by relocating a precious ecological treasure from the colony to the metropole. Comparable to the many exhibited treasures from Tipu Sultan, ranging from the infamous pipe organ known as Tipu's Tiger to his elaborately adorned chairs and tables from his palace, once displayed in Britain these artifacts served as what

[263] Simons, *The Tiger that Swallowed the Boy*, 171; Colley, *Wild Animal Skins*, 4-5.
[264] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 205.
[265] Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage, 2005), 9-10.
[266] Edward Robert Kelly, *Kelly's Post Office Guide to London in 1862, Visitor Handbook to the Metropolis, and Companion to the Directory* (London: Kelly & Co., 1862), 208.

Jasanoff describes as imperial propaganda.[267] The sentiment was replicated with Australia, as Britons brought home, "large extinct quadrupeds of the marsupial, or pouched order, which has been recently discovered in tertiary formations in Australia, the most gigantic is the *Diprotodon Australis*, the skull of which measures upwards of three feet in length."[268]

In the *Golden Guide to London* (1879), the author also described an assortment from the museum including specimens from South America, Britain, and Africa—a plethora containing objects from within and outside the empire: "[The] *Middle Museum* is entirely devoted to the fossil remains of extinct vertebrated animals, including a skeleton of the *Megatherium Cuvieri*, the most gigantic specimen of the extinct ground sloth… A perfect skeleton of the Mylodon Robustus (giant sloth); the outer armour of the extinct gigantic Armadillo; a skeleton of the male Irish Elk, also extinct; one of a gigantic four horned antelope."[269] These fossils too served in similar ways to Annie Combes's artifacts from Africa that functioned as spectacular imperial trophies whose entertainment value extended across Britain's numerous urban centers and throughout its divergent social classes.[270] For example, this array of fossils form both within and outside of the British Empire was comparable to the artifacts on display at London's Horniman Museum, whereby an impressive assemblage of ivory carvings from Africa, China, India, and Inuit tribes, along with carved deities from India, Peru, and Scandinavia were all featured together, marketed in guidebooks and understood by visitors as both interesting curiosities and trophies of the civilizing imperial process.[271] Paleontological networks informed British

[267] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, 178-183.
[268] Kelly, *Kelly's Post Office Guide*, 209.
[269] *The Golden Guide*, 232.
[270] Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture, and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 2-3.
[271] Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 115-16.

scientists of discoveries across the globe, and their political and financial resources ensured that the fossils featured in these discourses ended up in London.

One of the oddest specimens that became a star attraction, the giant sloth (labeled the "Megatherium") featured prominently in the older (Figure 2.1) 1830s version and the updated 1840s version (Figure 2.5) of the same print, both depicting the Hunterian Collection at the Royal College of Surgeons.[272] While the lone visitor in white, serving as the image's focal point, stared up at the sloth in Figure 2.1, the updated, 1840s depiction placed all of the visitors in the room, save one, gazing up at the Megatherium as they gesture to it while engaged in hearty debate. In the intervening years the majority of specimens had either been rearranged or disappeared entirely. Despite the decade's difference in time between the two prints, the sloth remained a focal point for both the visitors featured in the print as well as the image's viewer, overtaking the countless smaller specimens and its massive competitors clustered throughout the gallery. Another contemporary guide pointed visitors in the direction of the Megatherium as the most interesting specimen at the Royal College of Surgeons, with the second being its ancient cousin placed in close proximity, the Mylodon, both unearthed near Buenos Aires.[273] Even when naturalists could not connect a scattered assortment of bones into a recreated skeleton, they displayed the bones individually for their gigantic proportions. The London Museum of Natural History held "various specimens of the whale tribe, of fossil remains, those vestiges of a gigantic and unknown race of animals existing before the flood; the examples are numerous, such as teeth, bones, horns, and other relics appertaining to animals resembling the elephant, mammoth, hippopotamus, and other stupendous creatures."[274] Whether from nearby Sussex or the distant

[272] *Hunterian Collection, Royal College of Surgeons,* ca. 1840.
[273] *The Golden Guide*, 65.
[274] Richard Phillips, *1808; Being a Correct Guide to all the Curiosities, Amusements, Exhibitions, Public Establishments, and Remarkable Objects, in and Near London* (London: W. Lewis, 1808), 284.

Argentinian River Plate, the largest creatures to ever wander the globe were excavated by British paleontologists who shipped them home for exhibitions that excited curious middle-class audiences, while also providing tools of study to the growing field of professional naturalists and paleontologists.

Colossal creatures from eons ago, however, were not the only enormous attractions that captivated nineteenth-century Britons. Preserved specimens of existing species were also prevalent, none more so than whales. Exhibiting whales was a European phenomenon during the nineteenth century, with prominent whale exhibitions occurring in Britain, France, and Germany. Alluring from their physical immensity and mysterious from their life spent countless fathoms beneath the sea, most Britons would never see a living whale. In lieu of this constraint, their skeletons, and occasionally a preserved body, were frequently displayed in London. While many Londoners were captivated by a dead whale, some remained unimpressed. One anonymous mid-century Londoner could not wait for the time when living leviathans featured in the London Zoo's aquarium, wishing that "Perhaps the day may come when the main attraction to which the public will flock will be 'the Whale and her Calf,' 'the Great Shark from Port Royal,' or 'the Mammoth Turbot."[275] Until that point, however, Britons had to be satisfied with reconstructed skeletons and, very rarely, by a semi-preserved leviathan.

One of the earliest (and most notorious) whale exhibitions occurred at the King's Mews on Charing Cross in 1831. Here, "The Pavilion of the Gigantic Whale," featured an enormous skeleton (Figure 2.7) "whose size may be formed from the following particulars: The total length of the animal is… 95 feet… Weight of the animal when found, 249 tons, or 480,000 pounds."[276] Beyond these noted statistics, a plethora of additional measurements and weights were provided

[275] "A Glance at the Zoological Gardens in 1852," *Bentley's Miscellany* (January 1, 1852), 624.
[276] William Kidd, *Kidd's New Guide to The "Lions" of London* (London: C. Whittingham, 1832), 39-40.

by the promoters to depict the monstrous nature of the deep-sea giant exhibited in the heart of metropolitan London. To provide a better comparison than listing a series of incomprehensible numbers, a detailed advertisement for the same whale exhibition (Figure 2.8) portrayed a family and an individual in relation to the whale in order for visitors to gauge the impressive scale between human and leviathan.[277] This handbill went as far as to claim that this creature was not just any ordinary whale, but "Proclaimed, by the naturalists and professors of Paris, as the largest in the possession of man."[278] Just like Koch's Missourium, the whale's proprietors threw their hat into the contest for largeness by not just proclaiming its immensity, but by claiming its enormity over all others. Just as a competition to build the tallest building or construct the most ambitious canal spurred forward a colossal building race amongst nineteenth-century Western imperial powers, a similar dynamic also took place within the museum gallery and popular exhibition space.[279]

Price of admission to gaze at the leviathan was one shilling, while for two shillings guests had the option to literally venture inside of the whale's superstructure and "Sit in the belly of the Whale."[280] Once visitors sauntered inside, they found many books and pamphlets to entertain them during their stay. Tea was even served to encourage visitors to stick around longer, and while not a regular event, the playbill noted that on one occasion "Twenty-four Musicians performed a Concert" inside the creature's remains.[281] Numerous visitors recalled rubbing their hands over the bones while inside the interior of the Charing Cross Whale; two neer-do-wells even carved short epitaphs and jokes on the ribs. While access to the interior of the Iguanodon was offered only to scientists as a dining room (and on just one occasion), any customer paying

[277] *Gigantic Whale Playbill*, ca. 1832.
[278] Francis T. Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, Volume 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1860), 315.
[279] Grigsby, *Colossal*, 15-19, 170.
[280] Kidd, *Kidd's New Guide*, 40.
[281] *Pavilion of the Gigantic Whale* (London: T. Brettel, 1831).

just two shilling could venture into the belly of the aquatic giant and take tea there. In this way, entering the interior of the largest extant creature became a democratized experience for a significant swath of curious, middle-class Londoners. They entered a place no human had ever previously ventured, a site only opened owing to the progressive march of science.

The Charing Cross Whale received enthusiastic reviews in the popular press. A journalist for *The Mirror* visiting the whale claimed that, enticed by both the prospect of viewing it and walking inside, "the Pavilion of the Gigantic Whale is one of the pleasantest places we have visited this season."[282] Far beyond the purview of the scientifically inclined, to many the whale was just a "pleasant" leisurely venue. It produced such a sensation that the area featured the moniker "A tub for a Whale" or, parodying the British royal family, the "Palace of the Prince of Whales" many years after the exhibit was removed.[283] This leviathan was so popular that the Greenland whale became Britain's favorite cetacean henceforth. Its notoriety was significant enough for Herman Melville to remark upon in *Moby Dick*, published over twenty years after the whale's initial exhibition. "The Greenland whale," he asserted, "without one rival, was to them [the British] the monarch of the seas. But the time has at last come for a new proclamation. This is Charing Cross; hear ye! Good people all,—the Greenland whale is deposed,—the great sperm whale now reigneth!"[284] Regardless of Melville's bold proclamation that Moby Dick's likeness had usurped traditional British allegiances, the Greenland whale remained Londoner's favorite well into the nineteenth century.

The Charing Cross Whale was not an isolated exhibition, but just an immensely popular precursor to what became an increasingly common phenomenon. The Cosmorama, a venue for panoramas and exotic entertainments, hosted a whale exhibition in 1837 where again the

[282] *The Mirror* (August 13, 1831), quoted in Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 316.
[283] Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 316.
[284] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (Boston: The St. Botolph Society, 1892), 127.

animal's gigantic proportions were conveyed on the handbill to entice visitors. "The wonderful remains of an enormous head, 18 feet in length, 7 feet in breadth, and weighing 1,700 pounds," noted one such notice.[285] A popular site for exhibiting other enormous sea creatures as well, the Cosmorama hosted an exhibition of the "Wonder of the Sea! The Gymnetrus Northumbricus or Sea Serpent" in 1849.[286] This enormously elongated fish was displayed in a preserved form as well as by "An immense oil painting" that described the scene of its spotting and capture in the wild.[287] Owing to its extreme length, an article from *Punch* commenting on the hubbub surrounding the serpent joked, "We have been referred to a subsequent page for the continuation of his very elaborate tail."[288] Likely displayed at the same time as the serpent, another handbill described a whale exhibited at Charing Cross: "Have you seen the WHALE Recently Captured and fresh as when caught, measuring 50 feet in length… Only a Few Days."[289] The proprietors, using a sense of urgency that echoed the advertisement for the Gravesend whale, hauled a rotting carcass into London that presented a unique opportunity to see a whale with its skin, if only for a brief time. As a rare sight that was substantially different from seeing only the whale's skeleton, visitors had to prioritize examining the rotting behemoth in all its fleshy glory before the beast wasted away.

Almost as rare as seeing a freshly deceased whale, a preserved whale with skin intact offered a more true-to-life image and feel unafforded by only seeing its gigantic skeleton. Buckland visited one such preserved whale in Whitechapel in 1857. Upon entering, he was taken aback by both the whale's size and the spectacle of its remaining skin. "I entered a tent," he

[285] Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 319.
[286] *The Wonder of the Sea!*, ca. 1849.
[287] *The Wonder of the Sea!*, ca .1849.
[288] *Punch*, Vol. 16 (1849), 220.
[289] J. Holden Carmichael, *The Story of Charring Cross and its Immediate Neighborhood* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906), 328.

recalled, "and for the first time in my life enjoyed a full and uninterrupted view of the monster. I had expected to have seen a skeleton; but instead, the proprietor had preserved, stretched on a framework, the skin entire… It was a stuffed whale that I went to see, and not a skeleton."[290] He continued, "It rarely happens that Londoners have a chance of seeing a specimen of the largest animal in creation. Pictures certainly convey an idea of a whale; but to have a notion of its huge bulk, the thing itself must be seen extended on the ground, examined by the eyes, and felt by the fingers."[291] While it was one thing to see a whale on a handbill or depicted in a book, to grasp its immensity and appropriate scale one had to see the behemoth in person, and, if possible, touch it. This experience was different from the other preserved whales Buckland had visited, and he believed that every interested Londoner must gaze upon these remains to understand the leviathan's true nature, something a skeleton alone simply could not engender. As Buckland examined the megalithic beast he grappled with its immensity by comparing its organs to manmade implements to grasp its scale, contrasting its heart to a washtub or its liver to a horse cart.[292] Incomparable to seeing just a skeleton, a semi-preserved whale that could be touched, as well as seen, added another sensory experience to aid the human mind in grappling with its enormity.

Beyond street exhibitions that exhibited whale carcasses for popular entertainment and public spectacle, whales also were the crowning jewel in science museum collections. Museums hung impressive skeletons at their entrances or in their main galleries that served as focal points of the entire collection, promoting attitudes of wealth and power through immense skeletal displays. Upon entering the British Museum, for example, one visitor immediately noticed that, "The Great Entrance Hall contains skeletons of whales and other objects requiring plenty of

[290] Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 320-21.
[291] Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 321.
[292] Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 322.

room."[293] Additionally, in the eastern section of the museum was hung "a skeleton of a full-grown Sperm whale."[294] By the nineteenth century's close, the British Museum had amassed such an extensive collection of whales that the administration opened a specific Cetacean Gallery where visitors passed by "a large skull of a sperm whale" as they entered the room.[295] The preoccupation with exhibiting colossal whales appeared to never abate, persisting and expanding as the decades passed.

Just as the British Museum exhibited whales, the Royal College of Surgeons followed suit. In 1866 the College exhibited a Greenland whale suspended upon poles that promoted an intimate inspection.[296] A print featured in an article detailing the exhibit (Figure 2.9) depicted a crowd surveying the whale from a multitude of angles: in front, behind, up-close, at a distance, and from underneath. A guidebook noted how the giant was prominently placed to attract the attention of the curious: "The skeleton, mounted upon six iron columns, is a striking object on entering first of the two principal saloons."[297] Producing shock and awe to the unaware visitor, the "striking" skeleton interested visitors due to its size and unique method of exhibition. The guide also noted its weight of over two tons and length of forty-six feet, as well as the "Extraordinary size of its head."[298] The particular emphasis on the enormous size of its head compared to the whale's body showed that the infatuation with size could even work on the different parts of a single organism, creating a gradation of scale when viewing the creature itself. "The immense size of the head," one guidebook noted, "compared with that of the body,

[293] Fry, *London in 1887*, 127.
[294] *The Golden Guide*, 232.
[295] *A General Guide to the British Museum (Natural History)* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1889), 111.
[296] *The Illustrated London News* (February 14, 1866), 176.
[297] *The Illustrated London News* (February 14, 1866), 176.
[298] *The Illustrated London News* (February 14, 1866), 176.

and especially the great development of the upper and lower jaws, cannot fail to arrest visitor's attention."[299]

When Herbert Fry visited the Royal College of Surgeons in his London guidebook, the only exhibits he mentioned by name were those of enormous creatures—specifically, whales. "In the center [of the central gallery] is a skeleton of a Greenland whale."[300] Again in the Eastern Gallery, "From the middle of the ceiling is hung the skeleton of a sperm whale."[301] Buckland likewise journeyed to see whales not only in temporary exhibitions throughout London, but also at museums as well: "At the College of Surgeons there is an enormous head of a whale. It would contain three heads of the Whitechapel whale and an infinity of children."[302] Despite all the megafauna Buckland had seen by this point, visiting this whale at the Royal College of Surgeons astounded him still because of its immense size, dwarfing the previous specimens he had viewed on earlier occasions. To him, each new whale presented the chance to encounter a creature larger than the last, and the pursuit of an ever-larger behemoth served to perpetually pique his curiosity and amazement. Even Pidcock's Menagerie, the exotic animal exhibition at Exeter Change, prominently displayed a whale skeleton despite normally only exhibiting live animals.[303]

Overall, the whale uniquely removed the megalith from the exclusivity of the museum gallery and placed it into the popular street entertainment of the day. It also remained as one of the crowning centerpieces of museum collections, however, which sought to acquire more species of whale skeletons as the century progressed. As the largest living creature during the nineteenth century, it comes as no surprise that the whale had a multifarious existence in numerous exhibitionary venues in London. Combining the whale's colossal physique with its

[299] *Synopsis of the Contents*, 6.
[300] Fry, *London in 1887*, 147.
[301] Fry, *London in 1887*, 147.
[302] Buckland, *Curiosities of Natural History*, 331.
[303] Phillips, *1808; Being a Correct Guide*, 289.

mysterious nature of life in a treacherous, alien environment—one that made its capture even more difficult—the preserved whale served as the paramount example of the growing human power to circumvent nature's multiple constraints in the nineteenth century.

In addition to the enormous denizens of the briny deep, impressively large terrestrial animals also were in no short supply in London's museums and popular exhibition venues. Among the most notable of megafauna for its odd physical makeup—proving that enormous could still be delicate—were the giraffes. Until the Zoological Gardens opened to the public in 1847, the artist Thomas Landseer noted that "the majority of [Londoners] whom may have had no other opportunity of forming any judgement of the general appearance of the living Giraffe than the notions they may have formed from the two colossal skins presented… to the British Museum."[304] The British Museum's giraffes were originally part of Bullock's Museum, where in his guide it was proudly noted that these animals were "by far the tallest of all known quadrupeds, measuring the extraordinary height of seventeen feet three inches from the hoof to fore foot to the top of the head."[305] Giraffes were difficult to ship to London alive and to keep healthy in captivity, but as a preserved specimen they remained constantly available to the upturned heads of visitors who were eager to see a creature that reached higher than other megafauna, like the Iguanodon or the Irish elk, and yet proved delicate and alluring, and that thus served to enlarge the parameters of what constituted colossal.

A herd of towering giraffes had been placed prominently on the grand staircase of the British Museum by the 1820s. These giraffes were depicted, for example, in a painting by George Scharf (Figure 2.10) where visitors, whether standing close or at a distance, craned their necks upward to examine the creatures, showing the differing vantage points that make up the

[304] Thomas Landseer, *Characteristic Sketches of Animals Principally from the Zoological Gardens, Regents Park* (London: Moon, Boys, and Graves, 1832), 1.
[305] Bullock, *A Companion to the London Museum*, 123.

expression of scale.[306] A child pointed up in wonder while his mother followed his gesture upward with her eyes. Even the specimens themselves gazed upward, the smallest giraffe looking up longingly at its superior. Additionally, these giraffes were placed together to create a sense of scale between them, as well as with a proximate rhinoceros. While the rhino was a substantial specimen in its own right, it appeared utterly diminutive compared to the enormous giraffes. Finally, these specimens were placed atop the staircase, at a natural spot for visitors to examine as they walked up the stairs. Thus, the museum proprietors' method of display was calculated to make these creatures appear even larger in the viewer's gaze by further highlighting their size.

Scharf was not the only visitor moved by the giraffes. An anonymous narrator described how during his trip to the Museum in 1825 he spotted "a male and female Camelopardalis," as he ascended the stairs.[307] The staircase, a focal point all visitors traversed during their visit to the Museum, was a space reserved solely for the megafauna. The giraffes were accompanied with polar bears and a musk ox to further provide differing scale between the numerous large specimens. The same exhibition strategy was employed in other London institutions. A print depicting the London Missionary Museum (Figure 2.11) portrayed a studious man and a woman with a child—three out of five characters in the print—all gazing intently up at the giraffe who towered over every other exhibit in the room, including even the shelving.[308] This print depicts a scene where the colossal specimen almost reaches the ceiling, dwarfing the other natural specimens in the room, ranging from a vulture to a snake. Among all the treasures returned from the exotic localities visited by missionaries, the giraffe reigned supreme, having to be placed beneath what appears to be a skylight due to its height. The Royal College of Surgeons also

[306] George Scharf, *Staircase of the Old British Museum, Montague House*, 1847.
[307] *London Scenes*, 137.
[308] *London Missionary Society's Museum*, ca. 1853.

displayed a "Skeleton of a large male giraffe which died in the Zoological Gardens in 1867."[309] Owing to its above average size, the giraffe ensured it perpetual postmortem notoriety by rendering it important enough to stand beside the body of the famous elephant Chunee. While the giraffes captivated visitors, odd creatures whose spindly legs and necks rose mightily above most other animals, its neighbor on the African savannah, the elephant, was another oft-exhibited specimen that, while still enormous, embodied distinctly different qualities.

Elephants, noted for their intelligence, ingenuity, and complaisance, were prominent features in exotic animal exhibitions throughout the nineteenth century. Some Britons even believed they were the lone remnants of primordial life on earth, as the naturalist Andrew Lang claimed in his 1890s children's book: "One beast still remained to tell the story of those strange old times, and that was the elephant."[310] The infatuation surrounding elephants shifted from highlighting its intelligence in life to its size in death, as elephant specimens were frequently found in a variety of venues, from museums to popular fairs. These enormous pachyderms were even intermeshed with living collections; in addition to the whale described previously, the only other skeletal specimen displayed in Pidcock's Menagerie was that of an elephant.[311] Early in the century, Bartholomew's Fair featured a variety of animal performances. In the 1820s, Menagerie owner George Wombell lost his elephant, his star attraction, just as he began the trek to London, ruining his chances of financial solvency. In a moment of brilliance (or madness), Wombell painted a sign advertising the only dead elephant at the fair that stole the spotlight from competing attractions: "A live elephant was not a great rarity, but the chance of seeing a dead elephant came only now and then. Atkins's [a competing menagerie owner] was deserted;

[309] *The Golden Guide*, 233.
[310] Andrew Lang, *The Animal Story Book* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 321.
[311] Phillips, *1808; Being a Correct Guide*, 289.

Wombell's was crowded."[312] The enormous creature was a popular draw alive or dead, but this time the rarity afforded to a dead giant won out. Scrutinizing the deceased animal at closer range and placing the control firmly in the eyes and hands of the viewer made a dead elephant tantalizing in a way a living one could never be on account of the agency possessed by the living creatures (even those in captivity).

Taxidermized elephants were frequently centerpiece attractions to collections and exhibitions. The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 was no exception where the star of the Indian Court was a preserved elephant outfitted with vibrant trappings. The grand elephant was the subject of numerous prints, and even featured in them prominently when he was clearly not the subject, as demonstrated in one contemporary print. (Figure 2.12.)[313] That the specimen was notably featured in prints when it did not even represent the primary focuses of the image showed its immense notoriety, serving as an oddity that might pique the viewer's curiosity when they noticed a giant pachyderm lurking in the print's background in a way that made the specimen literally impossible to ignore. Notably, in another contemporary print from the Crystal Palace Exhibition (Figure 2.13), a group of visitors gaze down from the balcony, placed at an opportune vantage point that allowed the visitor to tower above the behemoth; a rare experience indeed.[314] Looking down on the elephant provided another sense of power that only the Crystal Palace Exhibition, a microcosm of modernity and empire that crammed the world into one exhibitionary space, could provide.

This same elephant was featured in prints with and without people, and in the ones that featured visitors it dwarfed the humans in tremendous fashion. In yet another print depicting the

[312] Thomas Frost, *Circus Life and Circus Celebrities* (London: Nsley Brothers, 1876), 75-76.
[313] Louis Haghe, Joseph Nash, and David Roberts, *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London, 1854), 14, 16.
[314] Haghe, Nash, and Roberts, *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures*, 16.

exhibition (Figure 2.14), the artist used their artistic license to depict the elephant towering over humans in an unnatural way, building up the creature to an even-larger extent than it was in reality. Elephants were even featured in recreated scenes in the Indian section of the 1875 Colonial Exhibition, where Frank Cundall recalled the two notable exhibits that possessed megafauna: "the two trophies of Jungle Life and Elephant Hunting… have attracted considerable attention. In the Jungle are specimens and groups of great game… [and] The scene represents a hunting elephant, preceding the beaters, which has come upon a group of tigers."[315] While the scenes attracted considerable attention for their entertaining scenes depicted with taxidermized creatures, each one prominently featured the elephant, in addition to other notable megafauna, that without such inclusions would have been lost in the countless unmentioned wildlife displays. Known for their sagacious tricks and affable personalities in life, the enormity of the elephant ensured many ended up in exhibitionary displays upon their inevitable demise.

Britons were forced to reckon with immensity in the nineteenth century. As the national capital grew in size and scope over the century, Londoners contended with a megalopolis that no longer served as the center of a nation, but of a global empire. Many monumental public works that made harrowing effects on the modernizing cityscape reshaped London, like the Metropolitan Railway or the Thames Embankment.[316] Mirroring London's urban sprawl and gargantuan building projects, a size revolution also occurred in museums and exhibitionary spaces. Nineteenth-century Britons venerated megalithic mastodons, enormous elephants, and gargantuan giraffes. They went to lengths to experience them and paid to sit inside the bodies of skeletal behemoths. Despite the fact that they could not own these specimens, visitors were enchanted by their size. They witnessed nature's giants and grappled with the sheer gulf of scale

[315] Frank Cundall, *Reminscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1886), 24.
[316] Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 53-56.

that separated human from megafauna. Exotic beasts obtained from the colonies, behemoths acquired from the ocean deep, and monsters that stalked a primordial world excavated from the earth and reassembled eons later, were all displayed for the consuming eyes of eager Londoners and the city's countless visitors. Permanent display allowed the viewer to decide when they were satisfied to saunter over to another creature, beginning the process again. The largest wildlife were collected and exhibited for desirous consumers infatuated with the colossal in all its forms, whether natural or artificial.

In conclusion, we return to Francis Buckland one final time. Never tiring of describing whales, Buckland began a chapter in a book of musings on wildlife published in 1882, with the observation that, "There is something very attractive to the human mind, whether educated or not, about the word 'Whale.' It may be that man, knowing his own inferiority of size and strength as composed to many gigantic animals living either on the earth or in the water… looks upon the whale as very embodiment of size and strength."[317] By killing, preserving, and displaying the whale in an exhibitionary space, these traditional roles shifted forever. The whales Buckland adored dwarfed a human in both size and strength, and yet, whales, dinosaurs, mammoths, and countless other colossal creatures were displayed throughout London. In modernity, the puny human body became the dominant force in nature, ushering in the ensuing Anthropocene. Britons could not tame the whale, but by exhibiting it, they nonetheless articulated their power over it. The colossal whale, like other megafauna and countless other creatures, struggled in vain against the tide of modernity. Caught in the riptide of industrial capitalism it washed upon the shore, where its enormous size served as the prime attractor in the commodification of nature's giants.

[317] Francis Buckland, *Notes and Jottings from Animal Life* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1882), 313.

Chapter 3

A Fallen Star:
A Case Study of the Celebrity Animal Chunee

"Not the cure of Kehama,
The Protection of Bramah,
Nor Ganesa the wise,
Could save.
The great and noble beast
From Siva's bloody feast."[318]

"And I too weep! A dozen of great men
I could have spared without a single tear;
But, then,
They are renewable from year to year…
But not another Chunee!"[319]
-Thomas Hood

The Londoner Robert Burns traversed down the Strand on a wintry March afternoon alongside a friend. The duo planned to partake in spirituous libations at the Edinboro Castle Tavern. However, once near the Exeter Change Menagerie, the pair encountered an enormous crowd clogging the street. Moments later Burns, a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, recognized the unmistakable booms of discharging muskets. Panic stricken, he inquired, "Lads, lads, what is't—murdering or practeezing?"[320] More shots rang out before he received an answer from another Londoner captivated by the hullaballoo: an elephant was being killed. Bewildered, Burns responded, "Killing an elephant? They're mad to ha'e shuved him up the stairs, I think. How could the cretur live and breathe there."[321] While wretched living conditions would make anyone unhappy, an excited Burns sought to know just why the elephant deserved such treatment. The anonymous pedestrian responded that it was unruly and destructive. Burns knew this elephant's

[318] "Death of Old Chunee, of Exeter Change," in *The Leisure Hour* (London, Stevens and Co., 1852), 362.
[319] Hood, *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hood*, ed. Walter Jerrold (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), 413-14.
[320] Robert Burns, "The Elephant, A Higherlandman's Epistle," *The Morning Post* (London), March 4, 1826, 3E.
[321] Robert Burns, "The Elephant," 3E.

history—that it had spent eleven cooperative years in the menagerie, and that now when it desired "liberty and his ain [own] pleasure," his brutish, impetuous captors eliminated him.[322]

"Ma conscience!" Burns shrieked as he heard yet another bullet penetrate the pachyderm's flesh. He exasperatedly asked his accomplice why the killers could not be more humane. Burns believed one expertly-placed hit to the elephant's jaw would render it unconscious, thereby ending its suffering. No such shot occurred. It took nearly two hours and hundreds of shots before the pachyderm finally fell. Before closing his remarks detailing his abject sorrow, Burns remarked on the brutality and rashness of killing the elephant, comparing it to his experience on the battlefield. "[I've] seen thousands o' Christian souls fa' in defence o' our liberties; but we ha'e nae time to think in the field: there too, we are het wi' enthusiastical spirit; we ha'e a 'cause' for killing: but I grieved as I thought o' this poor, noble Elephant."[323] Burns, despite seeing carnage in battles across Egypt, Spain, and at Waterloo, felt a deep sorrow for a creature who touched the hearts of countless Londoners during his amicable years at the Exeter Change Menagerie. This was not a chaotic battlefield where decisive action reigned supreme. It was a metropolitan menagerie, a leisurely space of popular entertainment where men and women could indulge in prudent judgement instead of "enthusiastical spirit." Burns was disturbed with the creature's inhumane treatment throughout Chunee's life and especially during his death. He was not the only Londoner left deeply distraught upon hearing of the elephant's death; his was but one voice among many.

After examining the exhibition of both living and deceased animals in the preceding chapters, one unique exhibited creature possessed a pronounced fame throughout his life that followed him beyond the grave. He was *the* celebrity animal and public pet of nineteenth-century

[322] Robert Burns, "The Elephant," 3E.
[323] Robert Burns, "The Elephant," 3E.

London whose fame surpassed all other creatures. This animal was the elephant Chunee. From his arrival in London, destined for Covent Garden Theatre's stage, to his early retirement at the Exeter Change Menagerie, to his death in 1826, and finally during his afterlife on display in the Royal College of Surgeons, this particular pachyderm remained on Britons' minds by inhabiting their physical day-to-day realities and literary imaginings. However visitors interacted with Chunee—whether watching him perform in a melodrama or gazing at his skeleton—he was London's longest-lived public pet, holding this role for over a century from his well-publicized arrival in 1810 to his skeleton's unfortunate destruction in 1941 during the Blitz.

Owing to Chunee's celebrity status, it is worth examining the historiography concerning celebrities in nineteenth-century Britain. Leo Braudy's concept of fame is one based upon a subject's perpetually developing image that is continually placed into the public consciousness through a variety of mediums, ranging from a likeness featured on a coin to a story broadcast in newspaper, and that is latched upon by the consumer who finds something intriguing about the famous person.[324] Whereas the celebrity phenomenon had previously occurred in Britain, placing supremely influential individuals, such as Lord Nelson or Napoleon Bonaparte, into the public consciousness, Edward Berenson contends that the celebrity phenomenon failed to explode until the advent of cheap literature—namely books—and easily communicative methods, like newspapers and other periodicals, to transmit information quickly and easily throughout society.[325] This failed to occur until post-1867 after the second British Reform Bill, which by increasing the range of suffrage also provided impetus for the growth of the press and popular media through a spirt of democratizing public education. Thereafter influential individuals who appeared to unite a nation's disparate populous by proclaiming to speak to, and identify with, its

[324] Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown, Fame and its History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 5-6, 9.
[325] Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 5, 9-10, 18-19.

entirety (as well as inculcating its citizens in proper character) latched onto this phenomenon, utilizing their networks of fame to become enormously notable.[326] Despite Berenson's claim that this phenomenon occurred later in the century on a nationwide scale, Chunee's account already intimates that it was occurring throughout Britain earlier during the nineteenth century. The notoriety surrounding his death—reported in newspapers far from London in localities as diverse as Bristol, Ipswich, Hull, and Edinburgh—attests to literary networks already spreading news of famous individuals and notable occurrences throughout Britain.[327]

Crucial to the concept of fame is the charismatic individual, described by sociologist Max Weber as possessing abilities that are "supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities."[328] Furthermore, charisma, as understood by philosopher Stephen Turner, surprises viewers' preconceived expectations, making them believe more than they previously thought possible.[329] With these two understandings of charisma in mind, it is possible to see how Chunee, an elephant that appeared supernatural by acting on the stage, displaying intelligence and skill by performing numerous tricks in the Menagerie, and serving as a friend while engaging in seemingly-human actions, served in this capacity as Britons who visited the pachyderm received far more than they bargained for once encountering the shrewd elephant.

Chunee's lifecycle provides historians with a fruitful case study to test the arguments featured in the preceding two chapters. Britons experienced Chunee through sensory modes of

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[326] Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 6, 8-9.
[327] "Death of Mr. Cross's Elephant," *The Bristol Mercury* (March 6, 1826), 2B; "Destruction of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Ipswich Journal* (March 4, 1826), 2B; "Death of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Hull Packet and Original Weekly Commercial, Literary, and General Advertiser* (March 7, 1826), 4C; "Death of the Elephant at Exeter 'Change," *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh) (March 6, 1826), 2E.
[328] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Geunther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 241, quoted in Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 16.
[329] Stephen Turner, "Charisma and Obedience: A Risk Cognition Approach," *Leadership Quarterly* 4, nos. 3-4 (1993): 246-47, quoted in Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 16.

consumption, chiefly sight and touch. Visitors watched him act capably upon the stage and touched him while he performed interactive tricks (or laid lazily) in the Menagerie. Chunee remained a paramount attraction regardless of his venue. Londoners ventured to the theater and the Menagerie to see him perform; he was featured on ephemera and in hawker's cries as the star of the show. Beyond any other attraction, including other animals and human entertainers, visitors sought him out when visiting London's attractions. Chunee likewise was considerably anthropomorphized. Visitors cared little for his value as a scientific specimen. Instead, Britons adored his elephantine intelligence manifested through captivating performances and innovative tricks. They treated him like a dear friend, as one of the finest actors to grace the London stage, and as an extraordinary figure whose presence perpetually enriched life in the metropolis.

After his death, visitors to his skeleton, on display in the Hunterian Collection of the Royal College of Surgeons Museum, also experienced him through sight and touch and were attracted to his gargantuan size. Visitors interacted with him through the senses, gazing up at his enormous skeleton that towered over other adjacent specimens while rubbing their hands over the mighty pachyderm's bones. While Chunee's celebrity status figured into the reasoning behind his postmortem display, there was another major rationale—Chunee was an exceptionally large elephant. Just as largeness ensured numerous other specimens were painstakingly shipped to Britain, assembled, and displayed, Chunee's abnormal size ensured his skeleton's continued prominence as his fame owing to his tricks and personality ebbed away with each ensuing generation.

While Chunee's lifecycle exemplifies each component of the preceding chapters' arguments, the elephant's moment in London also further illuminates how nineteenth-century Britons related to animals in another respect. In the eyes of many Britons, Chunee's death

reversed the traditional Western roles between wild animal and civilized man, which led to widespread expressions of condemnation and shock from the British public. Britons placed animals into a variety of conceptual boxes—the bookends being "tame" and "wild"—with themselves firmly stationed atop the summit of the great chain of being. This classification diverged from the previous uncertainty and fluidity that marked human-animal relations that had existed throughout much of the eighteenth century, where the boundaries between humanity and animality could be, and were, crossed.[330] This fluidity began to change into a rigid divide between the two factions at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While menagerie-goers sought out animals that appeared to act civilized in ways similar to themselves, like Chunee, or those wild and barbaric who were likened to savage brutes, like Nero the lion, visitors were uncomfortable when humans, now segregated from animals with a firm, impassible line between civility and animality, degenerated into wildness.[331] Chunee's personable qualities and endearing nature produced an anthropomorphized character that made Londoner's perceive the elephant not as an alien brute, but as an oddly similar and familiar acquaintance.

Owing to this prevalent sentiment, it is understandable that Britons were shocked when a public pet with city-wide renown and a legion of fans and friends fell victim to a raving, uncivilized contingent of Londoners who, driven by panic and fear, murdered the encaged creature inside a metropolitan menagerie with lethal weaponry. Numerous Britons labeled Chunee's death a grossly inhumane and uncivilized act, one unheralded for a normally cooperative and benign creature. The outpouring of emotion on the part of the British public was indicative of a society mourning a pitiable creature while simultaneously vilifying his human killers as wild, ignorant, and rash. Chunee's death resonated with sections of the British public in

[330] Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 141-43.
[331] Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self*, 140-41.

ways that questioned animal cruelty and the human conscience, causing an otherwise minor incident to develop into an infamous act that lived long in British memory.

Chunee features in the historiography of numerous influential books on nineteenth-century Britain. In each study he serves as a highlight, a notable example, but he is never given prolonged scrutiny. Given the existence of a large cache of underutilized material, Chunee features as the sole focus of this chapter. His history is used to support the preceding two chapters' arguments and to make further inferences into the cultural assumptions undergirding British society's relationship to animals. Chunee, a profoundly important nineteenth-century cultural icon, deserves a prolonged examination to understand how he relates to, and how he differs from, the numerous other exotic animals displayed in nineteenth-century London.

Chunee reached the national capital by boat on a hot summer day in 1810, fresh from Bombay and just five years old.[332] He was purchased by Thomas Harris, owner of the Covent Garden Theatre. This was the route that Chunee followed to begin acting, first performing later that year.[333] One of the theater's frequent visitors and owner of the Exeter Change Menagerie, Stephen Polito, took a pronounced interest in the pachyderm. Polito paid to share Chunee with the theater, housing him at his menagerie when the elephant was not performing on the stage. Upon Polito's death in 1814, his former superintendent, Edward Cross, purchased both the menagerie and Chunee, who henceforth remained solely in Exeter Change Menagerie.

Once on display, Chunee became the Menagerie's star attraction.[334] One route to stardom involved performing a multitude of captivating tricks relying on his intelligence and dexterity that wowed audiences. In addition, his affable, gentle nature allowed for intimate contact with

[332] Henry Goddard, *Memoirs of a Bow Street Runner* (New York: William Morrow And Company, 1957), 36.
[333] William Hone, *The Every-day Book and Table Book; or, Everlasting Calendar of Popular Amusements* (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1838), 323-324.
[334] Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 310.

visitors, typically by caressing and feeding him, and this further enhanced his reputation and fame when not performing. Chunee lived in the Exeter Change Menagerie until 1826, rarely having any violent outbursts or mishaps. In late February of that year, however, he began acting odd. At first, keepers treated him with copious amounts of different drugs, hoping to cure his supposed malady. The medicine had no effect, however, and as Chunee's health declined his behavior degenerated from odd mannerisms into violent actions.

Chunee became increasingly aggressive and destructive in the following days. Contemporaries offered a range of different accounts attempting to explain Chunee's ailment: an infected molar or tusk, an annually occurring paroxysm, or even that he was rutting.[335] Once dead, it was determined that one of his tusks in fact had substantially decayed, giving poor Chunee a marvelously painful toothache.[336] However, since his keepers were unable to isolate or alleviate this problem while he was still living, Chunee became ever angrier, furiously ramming himself into his specially-fortified cage. The bottom floor of Exeter Change was evacuated for fears that the elephant might fall through the ceiling, and despite his cage's superior fortification (featuring bars "upwards of three feet in girth… strongly bound on all sides with iron"), Chunee smashed open an upper part of his cage, making menagerie staff fear of impending harm.[337]

The unruly pachyderm thus raised understandable concerns for Cross. After some trepidation, he ordered Chunee poisoned with arsenic. To Cross's chagrin, the elephant refused the arsenic in both raw form and mixed with strychnine and siphoned inside his favored oranges;

[335] Rutting is a common phenomenon when an elephant becomes aggressive and destructive, typically during mating season. Tame elephants oft exhibited a violent paroxysm at some point during the year, typically let loose to work off their frustration in a settlement's hinterlands. George Orwell describes the elephant he killed exhibiting this behavior in his essay *Shooting an Elephant*, found in: George Orwell, *A Collection of Essays* (New York: Harcourt, 1981).
[336] "Dosage Extraordinaire," *The Dental Record: A Monthly Journal*, Vol. 16 (January-December 1896): 384.
[337] "Destruction of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Times* (March 2, 1826), 3F.

the wise creature knew better than to willfully ingest the toxin.[338] (Had Chunee foreseen what fate ultimately awaited him, he would have likely eaten the poison.) Frustrated with Chunee's obstinacy, Cross ordered the elephant eliminated. Cross left the Menagerie to enquire for help, which led him to procure a handful of rifles for his staff before inquiring with anatomist Joshua Brookes on how best to use their weaponry when eliminating the elephant. He returned to the Menagerie where, finding Chunee even angrier than when he left, he rushed out again to find more help. Cross journeyed to nearby Somerset House where a small garrison was perpetually stationed, which could spare only two soldiers who were provided to help eliminate the perturbed elephant. Despite searching for more hired arms this was the only military assistance he received. Once assembled back at the Menagerie, the rag-tag group composed of zookeepers, concerned locals, and redcoats all armed with muskets and spears began the onslaught, showering Chunee with an estimated 260 musket balls before the elephant ultimately was killed.[339] The elephant shrieked in pain as the bullets entered his flesh for nearly two hours. As keepers jabbed him with pikes accompanying each volley, Chunee furiously rammed against his cage until his exasperated keeper yelled the command for Chunee to kneel and hoist his head upward—a position that normally promised him incoming treats and affection. Chunee did as he was told, and the keeper entered his cage and bayoneted his exposed neck. The elephant was no more. Londoners had brutally murdered Chunee, the wildly popular public pet, over a toothache.

Chunee's massive carcass that weighed numerous tons presented the problem of just how to remove it from the Menagerie. Many London businessmen, ranging from tanners to butchers to anatomists, immediately began bidding for his body the day after he died. Initially unsure of what to do, Cross allowed Chunee's body to be publicly dissected, conducted by the same

[338] "Destruction of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Political Examiner* (London) (March 5, 1826), 3B.
[339] William G. FitzGerald, "The Romance of the Museums," in *The Strand Magazine: January to June, 1896*, ed. George Newnes (London: George Newnes, Ltd., 1896), 180.

anatomist who he inquired upon how best to kill the pachyderm, Joshua Brookes.[340] Cross, willing to cash in on the pachyderm's body and the ensuing publicity, subjected Chunee to a public dissection—a fate that was normally reserved only for London's executed criminals.[341] As Chunee's body was taken apart, he ended up in many different hands.[342] His skin, weighing an astonishing one ton and taking a prolonged twelve hours to strip from his body, was purchased by a Mr. Davis, a tanner, before a team of anatomists and surgeons began the dissection, one undertaken with "uncommon precision and celerity" by the team of at least ten physicians dissecting the enormous beast for nearly twelve hours in total.[343] In the process, two steaks were cut from his rump that were shared by anatomists and other curious attendees that, while not abhorrent, were not the recipients' favorite dish. One journalist believed that his skeleton, the largest one ever seen in Britain, despite a bid offered by "an Anatomical Theatre on the Continent," would not leave England, arguing that the Royal College of Surgeons would want to secure the skeleton for their own collection.[344] His prediction proved to be prophetic. Despite initially remaining in the Exeter Change Menagerie for cleaning and display, Chunee's skeleton was subsequently purchased by the College for exhibition amongst their other anatomical models as part of the Hunterian Collection. Once secured by the Royal College of Surgeons, Chunee served as one of their prime attractions, standing boldly in their Hunterian Gallery for over a century, beginning in 1829 when the Exeter Change Menagerie moved to the King's Mews, and until 1941, when his skeleton, still on display in the gallery, was destroyed by a German bomb during the Blitz that also razed a considerable portion of the overall collection.

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[340] "Public Dissection of the Elephant," *The Morning Post* (London) (March 3, 1826), 3E.
[341] Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 196.
[342] "Dissection of the Elephant," *The Morning Chronicle* (London) (March 6, 1826), 3E
[343] "Dissection of the Elephant," 3E
[344] "Dissection of the Elephant," 3E.

Long before Chunee's colossal skeleton was destroyed by the Luftwaffe, however, the elephant's life experiences in London shared numerous characteristics indicative of other exhibited animals which lacked comparable fame to the pachyderm. Like the countless other animals exhibited at the Exeter Change Menagerie and London Zoo, visitor interactions with Chunee also produced numerous sensory experiences arising from both visual and tactile interactions. The acquistional mode that endeared Chunee to Britons, physical engagement with a living being that produced experiences that turned, over time, into memories, likewise exemplifies another instance where consumers acquired the unacquirable. Within a few months of his arrival in England, Chunee had already taken to providing captivating theatrical performances on the London stage. John Nix, writing for *The Strand Magazine* almost a century later, proclaimed that, "For elephantine intelligence Chunee has had no equal, and no freak has enjoyed so much popularity… Chunee had plays especially written to suit his particular style of acting."[345] The playgoing public swooned to see such an odd performer, an anthropomorphized "freak," taking him beyond the realm of animal entertainers and placing him firmly in that of so-called human oddities, like the Hottentot Venus or the Elephant Man.

Chunee was promoted similarly to other notable nineteenth-century "freaks" and exotic human performers by relying on novelty and curiosity. Just as the elephant's notoriety arose from his actions upon the London stage, entertainments involving humans were often promoted by highlighting the spectacle of the performer's actions. Historian Sadiah Qureshi has described how proprietors advertised their exhibitions by promising shows of entertaining religious ceremonies and ethnic performances, ranging from Zulu's singing traditional songs to Native

[345] John Nix, "Sideshows of the Past," in *The Strand Magazine: February, 1902, to July, 1902*, ed. George Newnes (London: George Newnes, Ltd., 1902), 693.

Americans performing a mock battle complete with a depiction of scalping.[346] Furthermore, Chunee's status as a "freak" by existing beyond the bounds of normalcy allowed for him to attract attention in ways beyond just serving as an exemplification of exoticism. Numerous other contemporary "freaks" owed their popularity to the novelty present in diverging from what was deemed normal and appropriate in Victorian society. For example, Madame Polonawsky—the infamous bearded lady—combined sensually alluring bodily features, a cultured decorum, and articulate speech with the oddity of a fully-bearded face. Although in strikingly different fashion, Chunee mirrored the qualities of going beyond what was expected from an entertainer, in his case how an elephant was expected to act in the minds of contemporary Britons.[347]

Chunee did not perform alone, but played alongside two female actors who served as his rider and accomplice in the pantomime *Harlequin and Padmanaba, or the Golden Fish*. Aside from performing capably alongside his compatriots, Chunee was the main character in over twenty scenes throughout the play. He later performed in *Bluebeard* where his character was importantly tasked with saving the doomed damsel at the play's conclusion. Nix commented on how the elephant had delighted audiences. "Chunee is, of course, the hero, and gives an excellent impersonation of character distinguished for affection, loyalty, and courage."[348] Through the pachyderm's expert acting, he exemplified three distinct emotional qualities that resonated with the public. Furthermore, Nix claimed that Chunee's talents produced more base, sensory emotions in the audience; "As became a great artist, [he] gave poignant expression to the emotions of love, pity, fear, anger, etc. which would be natural to such a character."[349] Beyond

[346] Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 121-24.
[347] Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 105-107.
[348] Nix, "Sideshows of the Past," 693.
[349] Nix, "Sideshows of the Past," 694.

creating emotions by acting, the song-writer Thomas Hudson comically praised Chunee's ability to best all other actors' decibel levels, so much so that it was likely shocking to playgoers, "when on Covent Garden boards, no Actor e'er roar'd louder."[350] Despite at first appearing as an unlikely luminary, "rumping" (turning one's backside to the audience, a faux pas for a professional actor) in his first performance, Chunee improved and, in time, graced Covent Garden's stage as one of London's favorite actors.[351] His performances implanted his adoring audience with numerous feelings and emotions. Yet, Chunee's time on the stage lasted just three short years before he became the star attraction at Exeter Change. Once there, visitors no longer watched him from afar, but instead intimately interacted with London's favorite public pet.

After his brief foray into acting ended in 1814, Chunee became the Exeter Change Menagerie's principal attraction. This radically altered how Londoners interacted with the elephant since they were no longer distanced by the physical barriers or space involved in live performances. Annie Stuart, recollecting her experiences with Chunee in the children's magazine *St. Nicholas*, recalled the pleasant days she spent with the elephant when visiting her aunt in London. She most of all enjoyed feeding the pachyderm, who was "so intelligent, so gentle," and, when fed, "so grateful for the 'goodies.' I used to take him."[352] Among Chunee's repertoire of tricks, Stuart's favorite involved placing a silver coin upon her palm which Chunee took from her before ringing a bell to signal his keeper. Once he arrived Chunee deposited it into his pocket while "always trumpeting his 'thank you' for favors received."[353] Just as Stuart visited Chunee

[350] Thomas Hudson, *Comic Songs* (London: Gold and Walton, 1830), 26.
[351] Altick, *The Shows of London*, 311.
[352] Annie F. Stuart, "Poor Chunee!," in *St. Nicholas: Scribner's Illustrated Magazine for Girls and Boys, November 1875, to November 1876*, ed. Mary Mapes Dodge (New York: Scribner & Co., 1876), 740.
[353] Stuart, *St. Nicholas*, 740.

regularly, so too did "every well-brought-up London child," according to Richard Altick.[354] Not only were children delighted by his intelligence and thoughtfulness, so too were many adults.

Countless other visitors interacted with Chunee in the Menagerie. Chunee, for example, "had kept up an intimate acquaintance with [actor] Edmund Kean, whom he would fondle with his trunk, in return for a few loaves of bread."[355] Chunee not only knew the famous actor, but the pair shared an intimate bond where delicious gifts were frequently exchanged in return for a loveable caress. Similarly, in poet Thomas Hood's 1826 lamentation for Chunee's death entitled *Address to Mr. Cross, of Exeter 'Change*, the poet noted that he had been "Tenderly fondled by his trunk compliant; Whenever I approach'd, the kindly brute flapp'd his prodigious ears, and bent his knees."[356] Chunee, possessing the mental faculties to perceive friend from foe, supposedly bowed to acknowledge Hood as an acquaintance while also providing him with the ability to caress his trunk. Even Lord Byron was delighted with the elephant's novel tricks, quipping, "The elephant took and gave me my money again—took off my hat—opened a door—trunked a whip—and behaved so well that I wish he was my butler."[357] The pachyderm's prudence and compliance were so pronounced that Byron felt the elephant followed orders better than did a human servant. Interactions lavishing praise upon Chunee when watching or feeding him both originated in, and contributed to, his stardom, as individual pleasurable experiences accumulated in personal memories and public encounters, reinforcing the elephant's reputation as a jovial character and as Exeter Change's star attraction.

Regardless of the venue, Chunee served as its paramount attraction. There was no greater animal that commanded Londoner's interest. John F. Nott, a Canadian amateur naturalist, put it

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[354] Altick, *The Shows of London*, 311.
[355] Edward Walford, *Old and New London: A Narrative of Its History, Its People, and its Places* (London: Cassell & Company, 1890), 116-17.
[356] Hood, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 412.
[357] Thomas Moore, *The Life of Lord Byron* (London: 1844), 200.

succinctly in his history of popular captive animals, noting that the elephant "was a favorite animal with the British public."[358]Twenty-first-century historian Caroline Grigson agrees, claiming that the elephant "became the talk of the town and [his activities] were reported on almost daily in the London papers."[359] Taking to the stage within just a few months of his arrival, Nix proclaimed that, "One of the strongest 'attractions' in London a hundred years ago was a remarkable performing elephant named… 'Chunee.'"[360]

Chunee was no different once encaged in the Menagerie. Harriet Ritvo argues his fame grew tremendously once there, becoming a "national pet," comparable to this study's concept of a public pet, further supporting my contention that Chunee was *the* public pet of nineteenth-century Britain. Upon his introduction to Exeter Change, Chunee was prominently featured in hawker's cries. These popularizers dressed as faux Beefeaters and yelled to the crowd perambulating up and down the Strand that the "The wonderful great elephant Chunee" waited inside.[361] *The Times*, when noting his death, described Chunee as "the pride and boast of the well-known menagerie at Exeter Change."[362] This sentiment was echoed in *The Leisure Hour* where an anonymous author recalled Chunee's attractiveness during his own visit: "We had used to visit the rattle-snakes, and Nero the lion, and the other wild beasts of the menagerie, but longer than with all the rest we lingered with old Chunee."[363]

Chunee was so popular that he had little patience for any would-be competitor. In Thomas Hood's 1825 poem *Remonstrary Ode*, Chunee wrote the actor Charles Mathews, claiming that, "It makes me roar with anguish," that Chunee's crowds were diminishing because

[358] John Fortune Nott, *Wild Animals Photographed and Described* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1886), 293.
[359] Caroline Grigson, *Menagerie: The History of Exotic Animals in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 191.
[360] John Nix, *The Strand Magazine*, 693.
[361] Goddard, *Memoirs of a Bow Street Runner*, 35.
[362] "Destruction of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Times* (March 2, 1826), 3F.
[363] "Death of Old Chunee, of Exeter Change," in *The Leisure Hour 1852* (London: Stevens And Co., 1852), 362.

Mathews performed next door at the English Opera House.[364] Chunee fumed that no matter which anthropomorphized entertainment he acted out, including purchasing food from children, singing "God Save the King," or sorting currency, Mathews popularity drew his crowd and therefore needed to change venues. Since Chunee was larger and therefore harder to move, he claimed Mathews should go. In a sportsmanlike gesture, Chunee implored that "No true great person (and we are both great In our own ways) would tempt another's fate."[365] The pachyderm need not fear Mathews overshadowing his fame, for the elephant would be dead within a year. With his death, Exeter Change lost its icon. In Edward Walford's memoirs, he expressed the belief that the Menagerie forever lost its gravitas once its star took his last breath: "The greatness of the Exeter 'Change departed with Chunee."[366]

While Chunee's death ended his stint as the Menagerie's star attraction, his skeleton, prominently displayed at the Royal College of Surgeons, became a major attraction in its own right. Much of the textual information concerning Chunee's notoriety will be examined later in this chapter when highlighting his enormity. However, utilizing pictorial sources as evidence of his skeleton's prominence, it is useful to recall the prints examined in chapter two. Collectively, these prints feature Chunee as the gallery's centerpiece, complementing his natural enormity with artistic rendering that ensured his notoriety radiated off his pedestal. The first print, noted in the previous chapter as emphasizing the attractive Megatherium, depicts a busy day in the Hunterian Collection in the 1830s (Figure 2.1).[367] While the solitary visitor in white gazes up at the giant sloth, behind him sits the largest single contingent of museumgoers. Numerous individuals in this crowd gaze up at Chunee from a distance while even more visitors in the

[364] Thomas Hood, "Remonstratory Ode, From the Elephant at Exeter Change, to Mr. Mathews, at the English Opera House," *The London Magazine* (May-August 1825), 190.
[365] Thomas Hood, "Remonstratory Ode," 191.
[366] Walford, *Old and New London*, 117.
[367] *Hunterian Gallery at the Royal College of Surgeons*, ca. 1830.

extreme background huddle around the giant pachyderm. The elephant commands attention, from both the illustrated visitors and the viewer of the print, since he dwarfs the surrounding specimens, including a giant Moa, a camel, an American and Irish elk, and even the famed Irish Giant. Even Chunee's positioning in the back center of the gallery, at the end of a long walkway directly opposite the gallery's entry, allowed him to immediately capture the gaze of every entering visitor. In an updated print from the 1840s (Figure 2.5) the crowd is absent; the only visitors examine the Megatherium.[368] However, Chunee's enormous skeleton still dominates the scene. While numerous other adjacent specimens were replaced in the intervening years, the elephant nonetheless towers over their replacements, including a giraffe and an unidentifiable quadruped. Remaining the largest specimen in the scene and placed again in the frame's center, the viewer cannot examine the image without their eyes being led straight to the enormous elephant.

Years removed from these prints, another image from 1854 (Figure 3.1) depicted an entirely reoriented gallery.[369] Once prominent attractions, like the Irish Giant and the elks, have been replaced with more fashionable megafauna to captivate Victorian tastes, now obsessed with dinosaurs like the Ichthyosaurus. However, one notable specimen remains planted in the exact same location: Chunee. The gigantic skeleton reaches up past the second story, placed upon a pedestal to further highlight his prominence. When other attractions fell to the wayside as time deteriorated their fame, the elephant successfully weathered the passing of fads and changing tastes. Throughout the century, Chunee remained on display as the chief specimen exhibited at the Royal College of Surgeons, a testament to his fame that lasted long after his death.

[368] *Hunterian Gallery at the Royal College of Surgeons*, ca. 1840.
[369] "New Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons," *The Illustrated London News* (May 20, 1854), 465.

Chunee remained a star attraction even when his body was not physically present. For example, in William Gardiner's collection of elephant anecdotes, Chunee's irreplaceable tale was saved for the book's climax: "We cannot close our history of the elephant without giving an account of the death of that which was for several years exhibited in Exeter Change."[370] Although nearly 200 pages were covered by this point, Gardiner framed his book to lead up to one story that if left untold, he argued, created a gaping hole in elephantine history. Furthermore, in a poem lamenting Chunee's death, the primacy of the elephant was again showcased with his body entirely devoid from the scenery. In Thomas Hood's 1826 dirge, *Address to Mr. Cross*, both "Brutal and rational lament his [the elephant's] loss."[371] Hood depicted a panoply of creatures in mourning: "The Hyaena's laugh is hush'd, and Monkey's pout, the Wild Cat frets in a complaining whine," even the vulture "shakes his naked head, and pineth for the dead."[372] Both humans who worked at the Menagerie and the animals imprisoned there all, at least in Hood's mind, lamented a creature's passing that would not likely have mourned them if the inverse had occurred. To Hood, the remaining creatures in the Menagerie were but mere sidekicks to the lordly superstar and rightfully sent their condolences when their superior passed away.

Diverging from literary representation, Chunee even remained the star in contemporary artwork. Stephen Polito was so infatuated with the elephant that he had Staffordshire potters create for him an elaborate mantelpiece (Figure 3.2) to boast of the Menagerie's success that had brought him such good fortune.[373] Framed with other creatures including lions, tigers, parrots, and monkeys, once again in the center, Chunee reigned supreme over the piece. The pachyderm's likeness as the ceramic's chief focal point, depicted as the largest and most notable

[370] William Gardiner, *The Four Footed Monarch, or, Anecdotes of the Elephant* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1826), 199.
[371] Hood, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 413.
[372] Hood, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 413.
[373] *Polito's Royal Menagerie Mantelpiece*, ca. 1811-14, Victoria and Albert Museum.

animal, was comparable to his status in the Menagerie. Chunee's prominence here was indicative of Polito's own sense of the elephant's power as the star attraction and as the Menagerie's major moneymaker. Regardless of Chunee's station in life, acting on the stage, sitting in the Menagerie, on display at the Royal College of Surgeons, and even featured in the pages of a book or on a ceramic collectible, he remained the focus of attention, attracting the eyes, the fingers, and the minds of countless consumers to the pachyderm regardless of the venue or medium.

Chunee's status as the star attraction was in large part due to his anthropomorphized character. Chunee, like the majority of exhibited elephants in nineteenth-century Britain, was considerably anthropomorphized. Whether serving as an efficient butler, a confident actor, or a loving friend, we have already seen numerous examples of Chunee's anthropomorphization. However, the pachyderm fit into still more human roles, like that of a banker. Unique from other exhibited creatures, Chunee was said to have acquired wealth with a discerning eye. Author William Gardiner recalled a visit to Exeter Change where the elephant "was so sagacious that he could distinguish good money from bad."[374] Persuaded by the wily keeper, a Londoner and a French tourist both threw in a half-crown from their respective nations. Chunee, after examining each coin, picked the English one up and deposited it in a box. Beyond acting miserly, the pachyderm served as a good Briton and loyal subject by refusing the French coin at the expense of grasping the British one. After performing the trick, the offended Frenchmen wanted his coin back since Chunee refused it. The keeper declined to do so, claiming that the elephant, just like his fellow man, did not enjoy people taking away his hard-earned money. After all, if forced to

[374] William Gardiner, *The Four Footed Monarch, or, Anecdotes of the Elephant* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1826), 126.

relinquish it how would Chunee pay for the sweet treats and ripe fruits brought to him by children eager to see the giant pachyderm devour their snacks?[375]

Beyond collecting and using money, Chunee possessed a palette for human foods. Author John Thomas Smith recollected in his *Book for a Rainy Day* when he and a friend passed a drowsy Chunee led by keepers into Exeter Change in the middle of the night. The pair followed the group, and once the obedient pachyderm was secured in his cage the two were cajoled by the keeper "that if he would offer the beast a shilling, he would see the noble animal nod his head and drink a pot of porter."[376] The elephant gently took the coin and eagerly awaited the return of a large pot of "Barclay's Entire" (a strong dark ale), and proceeded to slurp up the majority in one giant snort while kindly saving just enough for his purchasers to share. Chunee worked capably, used money, and ate human foods, acting as a human to the delight of contemporary Britons.

Even after his death, Chunee remained the target of anthropomorphic discourses. One advantageous way to examine this phenomenon is to scrutinize the titles attached to Chunee by numerous authors throughout the century. Writers labeled the pachyderm with numerous monikers definitively reserved for humans. Perhaps the earliest example appeared in *The Times* on March 2, 1826: his obituary. Having an obituary not only placed the elephant firmly in the realm of human affairs, but the author also referred to Chunee's captivity in Exeter Change as a sort of prison sentence, noting he "had been an inmate at the Menagerie for 11 years."[377] Helping to further craft his image as confined against his will, the article detailed his period of captivity as if Chunee was serving time for a crime. However, Chunee had never committed a crime to

[375] Thomas Garner, *A Brief Description of the Principal Foreign Animals and Birds, now Exhibiting at the Grand Menagerie* (London: G. Pidcock, 1800), 4.
[376] John Thomas Smith, *A Book for a Rainy Day, or Recollections of the Events of the Years 1766-1833* (London: Metheun & Co., 1905), 107.
[377] "Destruction of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Times* (March 2, 1826), 3F.

wind up imprisoned, except, perhaps, being an animal. When detailing his death in an issue of *The Popular Science Monthly* in 1882, the author also chose to use the original language used in Chunee's obituary in *The Times*, again referring to Chunee as "an inmate."[378] While captive creatures were referred to with a variety of monikers, typically wild beasts or animals, Chunee received the uniquely human descriptor as an inmate.[379]

While at times labeled with somewhat derogatory descriptors, Chunee was styled respectfully in other formats. In an 1876 article detailing his ghastly death in the children's magazine *St. Nicholas*, he was referred to as "Mr. Chunee."[380] Perhaps, owing to the audience, it was felt proper to dress up the adult elephant (a mature twenty-year-old pachyderm upon his death) with an air of authority when detailing his events to a youthful audience. In another work long after his death highlighting his time on the Covent Garden's Stage, John Nix described Chunee not as an animal, but instead as "an actor, and his name stands as high in his line of performers as Garrick does in his."[381] To Nix, Chunee was not just a performing animal, doing tricks and acting silly for the cheers and treats of an adoring crowd. Instead, the elephant was depicted genuinely as an actor—and quite an accomplished one at that—by comparing him to the immensely influential English actor and playwright David Garrick. Beyond all other terse descriptions labeling him a gentleman or actor, Thomas Hood's depiction of Chunee in his sorrowful dirge *Address to Mr. Cross* cast the elephant as a dear, gentle friend while showcasing sensory pleasures of touch, sight, and anthropomorphizing all in one poem:

> To think of it!—No chums could better suit
> Exchanging grateful looks for grateful fruit,

[378] Andrew Wilson, "About Elephants," in *The Popular Science Monthly Vol. 21, May to October, 1882*, ed. E. L. Youmans and W. J. Youmans (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882), 492.
[379] Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. "Inmate (Definition 1B and 2, Example 8)," accessed April 5, 2018, http://www.oed.com.spot.lib.auburn.edu/view/Entry/96219?redirectedFrom=inmate#eid.
[380] "The Greatest Toothache Even Known" in *St. Nicholas: Scribner's Illustrated Magazine for Girls and Boys, November 1875, to November 1876*, ed. Mary Mapes Dodge (New York: Scribner & Co., 1876), 462-63.
[381] Nix, "Sideshows of the Past," 693.

For so our former dearness began
I bribed him with an apple, and beguiled
The beast of his affection like a child;
And well he loved me till his life was done
(Except when he was wild):
It makes me blush for human friends—but none
I have so truly kept or cheaply won![382]

While beginning with a pleasant look that engendered compassion between Briton and animal, the relationship further blossomed by Hood offering the pachyderm favored fruits. Once the relationship was established, Hood derived an intense affection by interacting with Chunee, and received his love until nearly the pachyderm's very end. Comparing this relationship between elephant and Englishman, it was so pronounced in the poet's mind that Hood felt its immediate connection and enduring strength produced a bond unafforded to any relationship with his fellow humans. For those who might call into question this poem's validity, instead claiming that Hood romanticized their "chumminess," Hood's son later wrote in an edited anthology to confirm their relationship: "The friendship spoken of between my father and the beast is no fable."[383] Chunee, labeled with human terms as he performed distinctly human actions, was not perceived as a wild animal by numerous Londoners, but instead—like Hood—as a worthy friend.

The origins of many of these previous beliefs, from friendship beginning with a gentle caress to astonishment engendered by seeing an elephant perform upon a stage, lay in accumulated sensory experiences. Chunee fits into the tripartite argument laid out in the first chapter in that visitors interacted with him in ways gratifying to their senses. Visitors watched him on the stage and within his cage; they noticed him do numerous tricks and innovative feats; and they touched and were touched by him physically and emotionally. He was the star attraction

[382] Hood, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 413.
[383] Thomas Hood, *The Works of Thomas Hood*, ed. Thomas Hood the younger and Frances Freeling Broderip (London: Ward, Lock, & Co., 1882), 159.

regardless of what venue he was stationed in, and his identity and actions were anthropomorphized by Britons.

While Chunee's life events have been examined thus far, the notable pachyderm remained famous far longer in death than in life. Once his skeleton was displayed in the Royal College of Surgeons, Chunee was interacted with like countless other megalithic specimens, from whales to mastodons. The elephant's postmortem attraction, owing to his gigantic size and experienced chiefly through sight but also touch, ensured his afterlife as an attractive natural specimen lived long in the British public's consciousness.

Chunee's enormous bulk was rarely mentioned in life, overshadowed by his personality. However, once his characteristic disposition suffered annihilation in death, he was increasingly identified and understood chiefly by means of his enormous size. In line with the numerous other colossal specimens exhibited throughout London, Chunee's skeleton too served as souvenir or incomplete reminder of his past life, his personality and tricks steadily vacating public consciousness to be replaced by his enormity with each ensuing generation.[384] This representational shift had already manifested in the days immediately following his destruction. So great was Chunee's weight that upon death, it was unclear what to do with the corpse. A writer for *The Political Examiner* noted the conundrum: "A considerable difficulty is said to exist as to the disposition of the body, weight of which is nearly five tons."[385] As previously noted, in order to dispose of his body, a dissection was held by a coterie of scientists and his remains sold to the highest bidders. Later in the century Edward Walford noted both the weights and measurements of multiple parts of the butchered pachyderm, highlighting his immensity just days after his death: "The elephant weighed nearly five tons, stood eleven feet in height… the

[384] Rachel Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 7-8.
[385] "Destruction of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Political Examiner* (London) (March 5, 1826), 3B.

bones weighed 876 pounds."[386] Despite the fact that more than six years had passed since Chunee's skin was stripped from his carcass and sold to a tanner, once the finished product was completed it warranted a brief notice in *The Observer* on account of its immense weight at 269 pounds.[387] After his flesh was sorted and sold, his skeleton was purchased by the Royal College of Surgeons. Naturalists reconstructed his skeleton and displayed it prominently in the center of the Hunterian Gallery. Chunee's skeleton, owing to its immensity, once again became the star attraction.

It was here Chunee commanded attention as one of the largest skeletons on display, as well as owing to his prominent location inside the gallery. His immense size, coupled with his fame, ensured legions of guidebook authors and curious visitors noted Chunee when examining the Hunterian Collection. The following are a small sample, taken from accounts throughout the century, that highlight Chunee's skeleton while noting its immensity. The first comes from a guide from 1851: "The large skeleton in the centre will be looked at with interest; it is that of the Elephant *Chunee*."[388] Beyond noting the skeleton's immensity, the author assumes the reader will know who Chunee was, not bothering to explain his past history nor his greater significance. Another guide echoed this claim in 1879, emphasizing Chunee's largeness over the events of his death: "The skeleton [is that] of the large male Asiatic elephant so long exhibited at Exeter Change."[389] Herbert Fry also highlighted the elephant when visiting the museum in 1887; as he gazed up at the colossal whale hung from the ceiling he looked down to the ground floor where towered, "The skeleton of the elephant of old Exeter Change."[390] Beyond calling it to attention, Fry provided its enormous measurements: "The Frame of elephant Chunee, twelve feet and four

[386] Walford, *Old and New London*, 116.
[387] "Sporting Intelligence: Latest State of the Odds," *The Observer* (October 15, 1832), 1D.
[388] E. L. Blanchard, *Adam's Pocket London Guide Book* (London: W. J. Adams, 1851), 166.
[389] *The Golden Guide to London* (London: Lambert and Co., 1879), 233.
[390] Herbert Fry, *London in 1887* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1887), 147.

inches high."[391] When detailing the impressive collection for the *Woman's Tribune* in 1900, Chunee was the only specimen noted by the journalist aside from the skeleton of the Irish Giant, Charles Byrne. Finally, a reference work from 1896 also echoed the other measurements, noting that "The skeleton… is 12 feet 4 inches high," while also going one step further by making the bold claim that the pachyderm's giant frame staked his claim as being "the largest elephant ever brought to England."[392]

Beyond textual sources, Chunee's immensity and notoriety were likewise depicted in the previously examined prints. However, one last print focusing solely on Chunee and a visitor (Figure 3.3) is worth mentioning. [393] Comparable to the previous chapter's whale posters that compared the Briton to the leviathan, this print depicted Chunee's exceptional size compared to a solitary visitor who gazed up at his skeleton, dwarfed in its shadow. The scale depicted allowed a contemporary viewer to grasp a sense of Chunee's immensity without seeing the pachyderm in-person. However, there are no accurate descriptors measuring height that accompany the image. While the gentleman only reached the immense elephant's breastbone, it was up to the individual to visit the skeleton to test their own height against the monumental pachyderm. Chunee's immensity was an impressive attractor in its own right, featuring prominently in numerous guidebooks that instructed both visitors to, and the inhabitants of, London how to best spend a day in the metropolis.

Beyond his sheer size, numerous commentators drew attention to Chunee's infected tusk. This interesting addition, and the reason for his demise, added a further layer to Chunee's mystique beyond his fame and colossal stature. *Black's Guide to London* for 1870, for example,

[391] "Editor's Walks in London," *The Woman's Tribune* (July 28, 1900), 4A.
[392] E. Cobham Brewer, *The Reader's Handbook of Allusions, References, Plots, and Stories* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1896), 187.
[393] *Chunee, The Royal College of Surgeons*, ca. 1850.

noted how the "Skeleton of the gigantic elephant Chunee, formerly exhibited in London" was displayed, and still prominently featured his inflamed tusk that had resulted in "Ungovernable rage, so that it became necessary to kill him."[394] Likewise, Walter Thornbury noted in *Haunted London* that the "vast skeleton of Chunee, the famous elephant" was on display at the Royal College of Surgeons, and that it notably featured evidence of the infamous toothache, "the base of his tusk is still shown, with a spicula of ivory pressing into the pulp."[395] By highlighting the decayed tusk, authors like Walford suggested a lingering uneasiness with putting down the sagacious pachyderm. The displayed tusk provided a defense to a guilt-laden nation that showcased proof of the animal's madness, flying in the face of those who cried out against the murderers that had administered his inhumane death.

Beyond reactions found in guidebooks to seeing Chunee's skeleton on display, numerous authors commented on his skeleton in poetic verse. His afterlife provided impetus to the mind of lyricist Thomas Hudson to compose a song where Chunee's ghost returned to the Menagerie, imploring the lion Nero to take his body off display,

> There was a time when life I had-oh, no Beast could be provider,
> And when on Covent Garden boards, no Actor e'er roar'd louder;
> They put a stop to all my roaring, when my life they ended,
> They took my bones to pieces first, and now they've got them mended.
> See there I stand (my bones I mean), and I really can't stand it.[396]

Viewed in an anthropomorphic framework, Chunee's death is not what Hudson believed was a "good death." Hudson's song implied the elephant desired a proper burial to provide a sense of closure, and yet, Chunee's bones were displayed prominently, forever showcasing his megalithic size while entertaining visitors who never saw him alive. The songster suggested that the

[394] Adam Black and Charles Black, *Black's Guide to London and its Environs* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1870), 148.
[395] Walter Thornbury, *Haunted London* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1865), 184.
[396] Hudson, *Comic Songs*, 26.

anthropomorphized elephant would never rest until, just like a human, his remains were off display and buried beneath the earth. Thomas Hood, in his poem *Address to Mr. Cross*, detailed the elephant's enormous bulk upon his death:

Well! He is dead!
And there's a gap in Nature of eleven
Feet high by seven—
Five living tons!—and I remain—nine stone
Of skin and bone!
It is enough to make me shake my head
And dream of the grave's brink[397]

Despite noting previously that Chunee was irreplaceable, Hood did not tell why. The elephant's antics, tricks, or general friendliness are unmentioned, and yet, he notes his particulars—length, height, and weight. Characteristically of the British infatuation with megafauna, he then compared the creatures enormous size to himself, bewildering his mind in the process. Lastly, turning back to his living weight having been stripped from his bones, Hood's mourning made a cyclical revolution, moving from lamenting the elephant's demise to pondering his own inevitable death. However, while he claimed to contemplate his demise, it is likely he too pondered over Chunee's fate being carved up and doled out to numerous buyers. Chunee, unlike Hood, will never have postmortem bodily integrity, not afforded the luxury of agency over his body in life or death.

Similarly pitying Chunee's lack of agency over his corpse after death, an anonymous comic poet remarked on the pachyderm's fate as Londoners slaughtered the creature and dined on elephant chops, which did occur as he was parceled out during his public dissection. Chunee's "mournful ghost, that has its body lost, looks grim," since he "Should meet death but not get a grave."[398] Again, Chunee serves as one example within the larger concept of the culture of

[397] Hood, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 414.
[398] "Lay for Chunee,"in *The Ass: Or, Weekly Beast of Burden, Issues 1-16* (London: Cowie and Co., 1825), 45-6.

remembrance concerning preserved animals as articulated by Rachel Poliquin. His skeleton expressed a "desire to remember in a physical, tangible way" for all those who ventured to gaze up at the pachyderm's skeleton.[399] All animals that were useful in life were useful in death, both figuratively in the pages of storybooks and actually in the form of skin and meat, even the one-of-a-kind pantomime pachyderm that had once graced the London stage. However, death was not all bad for Chunee, or so Hudson claimed, since it provided him the appearance of being a bit taller since his girth was shed,

> I thought he was quite done with me, as living Beasts his trade is,
> How foolish 'tis to show my ugly foot to all the ladies;
> I should not mind they're thinking me a foot or two the taller[400]

Whether from appearing taller since his girth was shed, leaving nothing but his ghostly white bones, or that he was placed upon a pedestal like other impressively large natural specimens, Chunee, Hudson claimed, would appreciate appearing a bit taller. In death, Chunee received a heightened boost that ingratiated him to his many visitors, or at the very least, just to the ladies. Visitors familiar with Chunee's sad story experienced the elephant in a variety of ways, ranging from gazing at his enormous height, remembering him in life, and wanting to see the famed tusk that brought about his demise. He remained on display until long after anyone living remembered seeing him alive, his colossal skeleton preserving his presence into the twentieth century as his notoriety and enormity captivated Britons for generations.

By exemplifying each component of the preceding chapter's arguments, Chunee serves as an individual, microhistorical actor that sheds light on a wider phenomenon by gauging how one creature flowed through this system of commodification and consumption. Accounting for his relationship within the collective, the remainder of this chapter shifts to argue that Chunee's

[399] Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo,* 203.
[400] Hudson, *Comic Songs*, 26.

death suggested a uniquely unsettling reorientation of the human/animal divide within British society. Harriet Ritvo argues that animal entertainments functioned as projections of power over lesser forms of life. On this basis, she contends that Chunee's death served as an example of how animals suffered vicious reprisals when disobeying captivity's stipulations.[401] This study diverges from this claim since it views Chunee's inhumane death as the result of panicked frenzy, not as an example of punishing an insubordinate creature. The events surrounding his death encapsulate a situation where Britons turned from acting as civilized caretakers to wild aggressors, inhumanely eliminating an otherwise obedient creature. The suffering elephant became a martyr after succumbing to the raving mob's punishment; the perpetrators appeared vile, callous, and excitable—attributes the Victorians did not associate with the civilized, but the wild and the savage. A pronounced contingent of Londoners was disturbed by these events, feeling that an obedient servant, a docile creature, and, above all else, a friend had been viciously killed. The keepers supposed to contain the creature's outrage, owing to their higher intelligence and human virtue, acted from their base instincts instead of their rational minds. One commentator, naturalist Charles F. Partington, believed that Chunee's death was not a calculated, humane execution, but instead one characterized by cruelty and impetuousness. Partington astutely stated that the events appeared to be "perhaps [a] murder."[402]

Before even considering the ghastly nature of Chunee's death, killing an elephant was on its own an astonishing occurrence in the metropolis. Hone's *Everyday-day Book* highlighted the event's peculiarity when describing Chunee's death: "The most remarkable incident in the metropolis, since 'the panic' in the neighborhood of the Royal Exchange, in January, 1826, was

[401] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 226.
[402] Charles Frederick Partington, *The British Cyclopedia of Natural History* (London, 1835), 402.

the death of the celebrated elephant at Exeter Change."[403] The death of an elephant, the shrieking beast and the incessant gunfire, were comparable to the bustle and dismay afforded to the panic of 1826 financial crisis, another drastically different yet entirely shocking event in its own right.[404] That the death of a solitary creature encaged within a menagerie is comparable to a market crash following financial misappropriation itself provides striking evidence of the degree of Chunee's notoriety. Remarkable and unexpected as this event was, once it began news of it spread like wildfire throughout the Strand and the rest of London (and beyond). *The Times* noted how "repeated discharge of musketry, the noise of which, together with the agonized groans of the poor beast, being distinctly heard in The Strand, caused such immense crowds to assemble."[405] A crowd of curious Londoners huddled around the entrance desiring to see the events unfolding inside. Despite in some cases even offering to pay, all eager witnesses were forbidden. They would not wait long for information, however, as the gruesome event flooded the next day's papers.

The elephant's death was commented on heavily by the London press, supporting Ritvo's claim that "his agony inspired unprecedented national attention and an outpouring of public grief."[406] Owing to Chunee's rampant anthropomorphization, as previously noted, his death featured in the obituary section, typically reserved for human deaths, including in papers, like *The Morning Chronicle*, and even those distanced from London, such as Edinburgh's *Caledonian Mercury*. After mentioning the events leading to his death, *The Times* described the gruesome scene when the elephant finally expired: "The quantity of blood that flowed from him

[403] William Hone, *The Every-day Book and Table Book; or, Everlasting Calendar of Popular Amusements* (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1838), 321-322.
[404] D. Morier Evans, *The History of the Commercial Crisis, 1857-58, and the Stock Exchange Panic of 1859* (London: Groombridge & Sons, 1859), 13.
[405] "Destruction of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Times* (March 2, 1826), 3F.
[406] Harriet Ritvo, "The Order of Nature: Constructing the Collections of Victorian Zoos," in *New Worlds, New Animals*, eds. R. J. Hoage and William A. Deiss (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 49.

was very considerable, and flooded the den to a considerable depth."[407] Commenting on the moment following the elephant's demise, a writer in *The Morning Post* echoed *The Times*. However, *The Morning Post's* account was far more gruesome in its description: "Soon it floated like another Leviathan in its own gory ocean, indeed, so great was the quantity of blood, that keepers were obliged to procure wherry boats from Waterloo stairs, in order to row about the place to save the rest of the wild beasts from being drowned in their dens."[408] A concerned Oxford citizen ("Great Tom") wrote to *The Morning Post*, claiming that a traveler from London had described to him a comparable scene with so much blood that "the narrow part of the Strand was quite inundated," so much so that coaches had to take an alternate route to not get mired in the gore.[409] Imagining the scene where blood spewed forth from Chunee, splattering upon the faces of his killers and piling up around their ankles, turning Exeter Change into a sea of blood, depicts a putrid scene that represented the very essence of inhumanity—directly the opposite of how any humane execution supposedly took place.

Beyond press reports detailing the disturbing nature of his death to the British public, numerous contemporary etchings showcased the event's brutality. One print is indicative of the majority of images depicting Chunee's death (Figure 3.4) which adhered to an image of a crowd of redcoats and townsfolk firing projectiles into the pitiable entrapped elephant with blood spewing from his numerous wounds. In a late-century article on big-game hunting featured in *Baily's Monthly Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, the anonymous author aptly noted how Chunee was killed by "a concentrated volley, as they do when called upon to carry out capital punishment in time of war."[410] This author was not alone in likening Chunee's execution to a

[407] "Destruction of the Elephant at Exeter Change," *The Times* (March 2, 1826), 3F.
[408] "The Great Elephant. To the Editor of the Morning Post," *The Morning Post* (London) (March 6, 1826), 1D.
[409] "The Great Elephant," 1D.
[410] "Borneo and its Wild Sport," *Baily's Monthly Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Vol. 39 (August, 1882), 218.

firing squad; each print depicting his death showcased a scene reminiscent of the ordeal whereby frenzied Londoners lined up, each with their own weapon in hand, and worked together to eliminate the poor, trapped elephant. Framed in this manner, these prints likely contributed even more to the already uncomfortable situation of the elephant's extermination, arising from the British public's extreme distaste for firing-squad executions. Capital punishment overall was relatively rare in the British army during the early nineteenth-century, and death by firing squads was typically reserved for deserters who joined the opposing forces.[411] If these two corollaries were connected in the contemporary Briton's mind, the entrapped elephant's killing appeared an even more reprehensible action.

In the assortment of prints depicting Chunee's death, multiple commonalities are found in each artwork. Each print's focal point depicts a visibly enraged elephant rattling against his cage while blood pours from his wounds. Meanwhile, a crowd composed of layman and soldiers, typically arranged in an orderly line, fire away while an enormous cloud of smoke collects. Orange blazes shoot-out from each musket in the colored prints, insinuating motion and deafening noise. Closer to the elephant stand keepers wielding pikes, some nearby and some wedged into the pachyderm. The entire collection showcases a pronounced violence in action as a unit of Londoners slays an encaged elephant. While the prints appear similar, there are notable differences featured in each print that further depict abject brutality. In two prints (Figures 3.4 and 3.5), the enraged elephant was depicted with his foot having smashed open a hole in his cage. This is mentioned in no textual source, yet was likely depicted to add a sense of excitement and validation for the brutality evidenced by killing the creature in such a way as it appears likely to burst free at any moment. Perhaps more affecting than any other rendition, in multiple

[411] John R. Grodzinski, "'Bloody Provost': Discipline During the War of 1812," *Canadian Military History* 16, no. 4 (2012): 30.

depictions (Figures 3.4 and 3.5) the anthropomorphized elephant cries tears of blood from his enraged eyes as he gazes in horror at the frenzied crowd, frightened and yearning for the unjust onslaught to end. Beyond blood streaming from his eyes, in a final gruesome image (Figure 3.6) Chunee's stomach has been wounded from musket fire and stab wounds, and now blood gushes out from his torso as the crowd continued their onslaught. In each print (and there are even more prints available, but these provide a strong survey of depictions), Chunee's death was represented as a chaotic action as his killers shot away at the poor pachyderm. While there were key differences, some pleading for the sad creature while others romanticizing the event to decree it just, they all depicted brutal inhumanity toward the captive elephant.

Beyond harrowing newspaper accounts and frightening sketches, numerous individual reactions were recounted in the days—and decades—following Chunee's death. To return to our outraged Scotsman Robert Burns, he ended his lengthy letter regarding the inhumanity of killing Chunee to *The Morning Post* by contending, "Pardon this libertie, but the *Man'o Feeling*, MACKENZIE, my countryman, taught me to feel for dumb bodies; and for the life o' me, I could na prevent tears o' sorrow frae fa'ing, as I heard the report o' the implements o' death levelled at a defenceless auld public performer and servant."[412] Just as Harley, the protagonist in Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*, wept bitterly when seeing how the mentally ill were exploited during tours at Bedlam Hospital, Burns felt tremendous sorrow for another poor creature locked up for the enrichment of Edward Cross and the entertainment of countless other Britons.[413] Burns cared for Chunee as a wild animal, a "dumb body," and as an anthropomorphized one, as a "public performer and servant." In each guise, he was brought to tears and disgusted at how his fellow Britons treated the animal.

[412] Robert Burns, "The Elephant," 3E.
[413] Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (London: T. Cadell, 1771), 61-66.

Annie Stuart, who we encountered previously when she recalled visiting Chunee often as a child, also commented how years later his death continued to affect her. "Poor, dear Chunee! How badly I felt when, several years after… I heard of his sad death."[414] Even after the creature had long succumbed, it nonetheless made her sorrowful to hear such dreadful news.

Compared to the relatively obscure accounts of Burns and Stuart, the literary luminary Charles Dickens likewise noted how, "The death of the elephant was a great shock to us; we knew him well; and having enjoyed the honour of his intimate acquaintance for some years, felt grieved—deeply grieved."[415] Dickens grieved at the loss of an intimate acquaintance, words and sentiments reserved for a human, not an animal. Chunee's death saddened many Londoners like Dickens who understood Chunee as a dear acquaintance, not an animal whose life needed to be violently extinguished. Historian Diana Donald argues that Londoners were dismayed that an anthropomorphized animal reverted to a wild state, and once there, deserved his punishment. However, since Chunee followed orders to kneel before his death, she claims he recaptured his civility and thereby warranted Londoner's pity.[416] However, the preceding accounts show Londoners that pitied the pachyderm were not swayed by his paroxysm; they believed the inhumane treatment was unfounded regardless of his momentary uproar.

Condemnation of the perpetuators as inhumane and barbarous continued deep into the century, appearing in numerous sources when recounting Chunee's death. In *The Leisure Hour*, an article described the elephant's death as a "slaughter," where "it was piteous to see the poor brute running madly around his den," and "even more piteous to hear his shrill cries of

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[414] Stuart, *St. Nicholas*, 740.
[415] Tamara Ketabgian, *The Lives of Machines: The Industrial Imaginary in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 63, quoted in Altick, *Shows of London*, 316, quoted in John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson, *Dickens at Work* (London: Metheun & Co., 1957), 55. Butt and Tillotson claim that a quote about Chunee was part of Dicken's lamentation of the changing London landscape. Dickens only included it as part of the introduction to the story "Scotland Yard" in the second edition of *Sketches by Boz*. They contend that no copy of this second edition remains.
[416] Diana Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain: c. 1750-1850* (London: Paul Mellon Centre, 2008), 172.

agony."[417] Aside from depicting the horrendous nature of events, numerous other periodicals described the impetuousness or ignorance of his killers. When recollecting the story in the publication *All the Year Round*, the anonymous author noted that in squelching Chunee's excitable state that "those in charge of him lost their heads."[418] Another author proclaimed how killing Chunee in such a way proved the rash action and lack of knowledge on the part of the executing crew. As shot after shot failed to bring him down, "This act of ignorance as to the anatomy of the African head, was severely commented upon by the 'vox populi.'"[419] The inhumane treatment of Chunee, highlighting the multifarious weaponry that brought him down, was also discussed when recounting Chunee's death using hindsight to gauge the antiquated event: "In the present time, when we read of hunters shooting elephants, two at a time, with the right and the left barrel, the above description is sickening, and exhibits gross stupidity and ignorance."[420] Despite the passage of time, Chunee's inhumane death still stung enough for numerous authors to critique the foolish way that Chunee was forever silenced, hoping it would never occur again in a more "civilized" time.

Just as any eminent British public figure elicited numerous sorrowful dirges upon his death, Chunee was no exception. His demise inspired numerous requiems from both poets and lyricists. In one from *The Ass: Or, Weekly Beast of Burden*, Chunee's death was lamented while Cross was vilified as a vile man, a "Most ungrateful elf" who massacred an otherwise peaceable and compliant animal known as "So well paying a lodger."[421] Since Cross had Chunee "Slain in

[417] "Death of Old Chunee," in *The Leisure Hour*, 363-64.
[418] *All the Year Round, A Weekly Journal, Volume 3, From January 4, 1890, to June 28, 1890* (London: Crystal Palace Press, 1890), 152.
[419] "Borneo and its Wild Sport," *Baily's Monthly Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, Vol. 39 (August, 1882), 218.
[420] John Fortune Nott, *Wild Animals Photographed and Described* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1886), 297.
[421] "Lay for Chunee," *The Ass*, 46.

his blooming prime," the author claimed Exeter Change will henceforth be cursed.[422] The poem utilized hyperbole to paint a gruesome picture of Chunee's demise, one rife with the chaos and fury of warfare where his killers appeared as a troop armed with enough weaponry to ensure a bloodbath. The event was depicted as Cross's Waterloo, and while the author believed that Cross rejoiced in victory by ensuring his building's safety, in time the poet predicted he would see it as a horrendous loss:

Your Waterloo,
You yet shall rue,
To your loss.
With words,
And swords,
And pikes,
And bludgeons, bars, and spikes,
With warriors,
And carriers,
And foot guards,
And brute guards,-
With leaders
And feeders
And lions roaring,
And bullets pouring,
Pierced by ten thousand balls,
And fifty swords,
Without more words,
Drowned in his blood,
Like Noah's flood,
He falls;-
Alas! Poor Chunee![423]

This poem depicted tremendous caches of weapons, from fifty swords to ten thousand balls, that were gathered and used to eliminate a captive elephant. The quickly-assembled contingent of killers were portrayed as hardened veterans, regimented and organized with varying levels of command, plowing into the battlefield to carry out their deed at once "without more words." At the ordeal's conclusion, mirroring the newspaper accounts, the profuse blood, in amount and

[422] "Lay for Chunee," 46.
[423] "Lay for Chunee," 46.

fury, is comparable to the cataclysmic flood of the Old Testament. This anonymous author thus perceived Chunee's death not as simply killing an elephant, but as a vile act of war.

While the previous poet focused on Chunee's inhumane slaughter, Thomas Hood instead concerned himself with Chunee's irreplaceability. As noted earlier, Hood perceived Chunee as a close friend, and claimed that the magnificent deceased elephant never would be equaled:

Fate might supply
A second Powell if the first should die;
Another Bennet, if the sire were snatched;
Barnes—Might be matched;
And Time fill up the gap
Were Parsloe laid upon the green earth's lap;
Even Claremont might be equaled—I could hope
(All human greatness is, alas, so puny!)
For other Egertons—another Pope,
But not another Chunee![424]

While numerous great men fell away into the shadows to be overtaken by fresh new luminaries, Hood believed the sensational creature Cross had killed never could be replaced. Chunee's void forever lurked in the Menagerie, leaving a gaping hole that no other elephant could ever adequately fill. Before these stanzas, Hood noted how everyone lamented Chunee's passing: the keeper working in Exeter Change morosely glanced upon the empty cage, Cross's wife's tears fell into her tea as she wept in despair, and the numerous captive animals, from lion to vulture, all expressed an overwhelming sorrow for Chunee's absence. Hood proclaimed that both "Brutal and rational lament his loss."[425] Regardless of social station, gender, species, or biological characteristics, Hood described a condition wherein everyone, from Briton to beast, missed the attractive elephant.

[424] Hood, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 414.
[425] Hood, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 413.

Even after a quarter of a century had elapsed, Chunee's death remained a topic of deep sadness. Recounting his death in an article penned for its twenty-fifth anniversary, an anonymous author began his prose with a heartbreaking, poetic verse:

> Some sights there are that melt the soul with ruth,
> E'en though the gazer's heart be ne'er so bold;
> Some tales, so full of terror and of truth,
> They blanch the cheek and make the blood run cold.[426]

So grizzly was Chunee's death that the passage of time had not entirely healed the wound. By placing this warning at the article's introduction, the author implied that his death remained a blood chilling tale too frightening to the unforewarned reader. Chunee was even depicted as a ghost by song-writer Thomas Hudson, an assured thought to make one's "blood run cold," when imaging the vengeful elephant's wraith. His song depicted Chunee manifested as a phantom that finds fault with Cross for inhumanely killing him, dissecting his corpse, and for exhibiting his skeleton. Chunee believed he had suffered a grave injustice, unable to rest until his skeleton was properly buried in the Judeo-Christian sense of bodily integrity. He told the lion Nero that if Cross was not sufficiently punished he will take matters into his own hands, threatening him with a potential haunting: "Tho' now a Phantom Elephant,--if he is not admonish'd, I'll walk into his bedchamber, and then he'll be astonished."[427] Not content with his cruel death or his corporeal fate, Chunee has returned to seek vengeance with Cross. Chunee's death provided poets and lyricists with inspiration to compose numerous works heralding the elephant's affable qualities in life and his inhumane and unjust death while forever placing him into the canon of popular literature.

In an ironic twist, a play ran on the London stage in April of 1826 about Chunee's gruesome death titled "Chuneelah; or, The Death of the Elephant at Exeter 'Change," at Sadler's

[426] "Death of Old Chunee," *The Leisure Hour*, 362.
[427] Hudson, *Comic Songs*, 26.

Well Theatre.[428] In his memoirs, Thomas Dibdin recalled how the idea for the play was formulated: "the proprietors thought the death of the elephant at Exeter Change a fit subject to attract full galleries," and their astute idea paid off since it was "successfully acted many nights."[429] The deceased acting elephant had once again sustained his legacy in yet another method beyond the printed word. Chunee's death galvanized the London public. He remained the star of metropolitan culture, appearing as a popular topic in metropolitan papers, numerous etchings and prints, in journals and periodicals, and even upon the London stage. These mediums, as well as seeing his bones displayed in the Hunterian Collection, kept Chunee's grotesque death in nineteenth-century Britons' hearts and minds. He was mourned unlike any other animal, possessing a gravitas owing to his affability, intelligence, and interactivity that made his cruel death horrendously shocking for such a sagacious creature.

After detailing Chunee's gruesome death, one commentator summed up the hopes of many Britons expressed throughout this chapter in that it "can never occur again, thank God, in England."[430] Nineteenth-century Britons placed themselves upon the summit of civility, separated by a firm line above animal characteristics, including rashness, brutality, and, above all, wildness. However, as journalists, artists, individual commentators, and poets noted, Chunee's death was a grossly inhumane act, one unsuited for a creature that had acted cooperative and benign for the majority of his time in London. Chunee had been a faithful servant, earning his owners a significant amount of money while touching, both physically and figuratively, the hearts of generations of Londoners as the star attraction wherever he went, even when nothing was left but his ghastly white skeleton. While enjoying watching relatable, captive

[428] Altick, *The Shows of London*, 315; Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900, Volume 4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 278.
[429] Thomas Dibdin, *Reminisces of Thomas Dibdin* (London: Henry Colburn, 1837), 333.
[430] Andrew Wilson, "Elephants," in *The Eclectic Magazine: Foreign Literature, Science, and Art, Volume 36, July to December 1882* (New York: E. R. Pelton, 1882), 196.

creatures like Chunee, Londoners attached their identities to anthropomorphic animals while they sought no bond of commonality with the wild ones, instead viewing them as interesting commodities for expressions of violence. Chunee, a considerably anthropomorphized public pet with nation-wide renown and a large body of both fans and friends, became the victim of a raving, uncivilized contingent of Londoners who, driven by panic and fear, massacred an encaged creature in a menagerie with weaponry afforded for use on the battlefield.

Chunee's death reversed the British roles placed between wild animal and civilized man, deeply disturbing numerous Londoners over both how the elephant was treated and how his killers reacted. The responses to his slaughter depicted a society mourning a creature as they would a human while vilifying those who carried it out as wild animals. The countless exotic animals transported to Britain throughout the nineteenth century were useful in both life and in death, but Chunee, whose fame transgressed his life's boundaries unlike any other animal throughout the century, proved uniquely serviceable to Victorian society. [431] When Chunee's last gasping, gurgling breath escaped from his nostrils and he fell to the floor, never to rise again under his own power, his fame did not die. His infamy had just begun. Chunee remained a star—albeit, a fallen star.

[431] Sarah Amato, *Beastly Possessions: Animals in Victorian Consumer Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 183.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, we have examined the variety of living and preserved animal exhibitions available to Britons in nineteenth-century London, offering up numerous insights into why these exhibits appealed so strongly to curious visitors, as well as asking what this phenomenon tells us about the role of exotic animals in a modernizing, industrial society. From those who ventured to the London Zoo in the hopes of catching a glimpse of the infant hippopotamus Obaysch, to those who gazed up at the skeleton of an enormous whale hanging from the rafters of the British Museum, to the grief and outrage expressed over the brutal killing of the celebrity elephant Chunee, we have repeatedly witnessed nineteenth-century Britons utilizing animals for pleasure, entertainment, and emotional fulfilment, but rarely for education or enlightenment.

Animals of all shapes, sizes, and colors increasingly flooded into London's popular entertainment venues and scientific galleries throughout the century to satiate consumers' desires to watch and touch their favorite creatures on display. Exotic animals were captured and transported to the metropolis from areas under imperial control as well as from areas where Britain lacked formal political power. An ever-expanding network of animal traders ensured that interesting creatures continually flowed into the metropolis throughout the century, populating its numerous exhibitions, menageries, and zoological gardens with wildlife from every continent. Creatures that were killed in foreign localities, as well as those that died after serving their time in captivity in Britain, also were taxidermized for display in museums or other popular exhibition venues. As the century progressed, the fossilized remains of ancient mammals, sea creatures, and reptilian dinosaurs likewise began populating London's scientific galleries and entertainment locales. To middle-and upper-class consumers, encountering exotic and ancient animals through advertising playbills, London guidebooks, science museums, menageries, zoological gardens,

and other popular entertainment destinations, human-animal interaction became an increasingly common leisure activity available to a substantial swath of British society. Nineteenth-century Britons ventured out to caress wombats and gaze up at the skeleton of a giant sloth just as they attended music halls and football matches. Whereas past scholarship explains the typical visitor's experience at animal exhibits as one that glorified empire by showcasing wildlife and specimens as imperial trophies, the evidence examined here demonstrates that the ways that Britons interacted with these exhibits were characterized by a more multifarious nature, relying on sensory interaction that produced mostly pleasant—and yet sometimes also frightening—reactions to the displayed creatures.

Nineteenth-century Britons interacted with exhibited animals in a leisurely, pleasurable, unscientific fashion whereby individuals consumed the displayed creatures as unaquirable commodities. Most Britons could afford neither to purchase nor to maintain these creatures. However, interacting with them created memorable experiences and a sense of transitory ownership, creating memories that served as immaterial capital. Despite a growing interest in natural history, the prevalence of rational recreation's educational ideology, and exhibits that drew their customers overwhelmingly from the ranks of the educated middle- and upper-classes, Britons interacted with living animals in an uninformed and unscientific manner by engaging in sensory stimulation, artificial fright, and anthropomorphic entertainments. In the case of preserved specimens, visitors likewise were influenced more by a sense of shock and awe than rigorous intellectual engagement when gazing up at colossal skeletons and enormous taxidermies, all rendered in collections that compared the diminutive human body to the megalithic proportions of wild behemoths.

When interacting with living creatures in the Exeter Change Menagerie and the London Zoological Gardens, Britons experienced these creatures as commodities, however, ones that could be consumed only in their respective venues since visitors were unable to literally acquire animals and take them home. Visitors instead engaged with and consumed these creatures through sensory interaction; both sight and touch provided consumers interactive modes that produced a plethora of emotional reactions that served as virtual souvenirs of their encounters. Meanwhile, Britons demarcated creatures into "wild" and "civilized" camps, desiring respective entertainments that only could be provided by members from a particular group. Anthropomorphization helped civilize animals in Britons' minds, leading to selected creatures becoming so notable they featured human names, ate human food, and were reported upon in the popular press like contemporary human celebrities.

Just as Britons consumed living animals in the Exeter Change Menagerie and the London Zoo, they also interacted with preserved specimens in the British Museum, the Hunterian Collection at the Royal College of Surgeons, and a handful of other popular exhibition venues throughout London, including the Crystal Palace Exhibition, the Kings Mews at Charing Cross, and the Cosmorama. In these venues, Britons also engaged with creatures as commodities through the use of sight and touch, albeit with different results. Sensory interaction led Britons to hone in on the largest specimens on display, the preponderance of which served as representations of humanity's triumph over the largest creatures nature had ever produced. Whereas an animal's personality could be used to promote a visitor's imaginative thoughts that they could then transfix upon the creature, in death, an animal's static body or skeleton served as an incomplete reminder of their life. This lack of vitality is the reason why Briton's interacted differently with living and deceased animals. From featuring weights and heights in guidebooks

to draw in visitors, to the same visitors commenting chiefly on enormous specimens while visiting the exhibits, accounts from both proprietors and visitors emphasized the nineteenth-century British infatuation with giant specimens that brought them to exhibitions throughout the century.

Accounting for the insights uncovered in these previous two chapters, the prior arguments' parameters were tested with a case study that examined the lifecycle of one particularly notable animal displayed in nineteenth-century London: the elephant Chunee. Chunee's introduction in London upon Covent Garden's stage, his life in captivity at the Exeter Change Menagerie, and his postmortem display in the Royal College of Surgeons all demonstrate how the case of this one creature was indicative of a wider phenomenon of London animal exhibitions throughout the nineteenth century. In addition to exemplifying the arguments of the two preceding chapters, however, the history of Chunee's life and—especially—his death also offers important insights into British conceptions of the human-animal divide in the nineteenth century. The outrage that occurred as the result of the pachyderm's gruesome demise seemed to shift the assumed roles of humans and animals, and with them the wild to seemingly civilized, making Britons profoundly uncomfortable. Whereas normally Britons placed themselves above all animals, demarcating the remainder into factions ranging from wild and seemingly civilized, they were not comfortable when the tables turned and some of their own countrymen shifted to become the callous brutes and the animal shifted from wild and impetuous to a restrained martyr.

While this thesis has drawn upon a substantial amount of primary source evidence to produce new insights into the human-animal interaction in Great Britain's capital, other recent scholarship that has focused on nineteenth-century animal studies has distanced itself from the

bright lights of London. Instead, it has moved to examine exotic animal menageries that traveled around the British Isles, analyzed zoological gardens in areas as diverse as Manchester, Hamburg, and Calcutta, and probed museum collections that displayed elaborate collections of taxidermies and skeletal, fossilized remains from Edinburgh to Philadelphia. The diversity of histories being written has a variegated narrative of human interaction with animals that becomes increasingly more complicated over time by adding further layers of information onto an already complex history. In addition, the contemporary focus on animal studies is helping to produce a considerable amount of innovative and insightful scholarship on a burgeoning topic that has long been neglected by the academy. However, in this progressive wave of inquiry, the contemporary scholar must not lose sight of the locality where a substantial portion of this scholarship originated. While London's animal entertainments were some of the earliest examined, researched by Wilfrid Blunt, Richard Altick, and Harriet Ritvo decades ago, and followed in the intervening years by other historians, the rich history of London's animal entertainments is by no means exhausted.

As this thesis shows, there remains an abundant historical record of human experiences with animals in nineteenth-century London that diverges from the majority of the past imperial-centric scholarship. This study reveals that a deeper, more nuanced historical experience occurred when nineteenth-century Britons interacted with animal exhibitions during a period when a rapidly modernizing populace grappled with the implications of enjoying a plethora of newly available entertainments. Instead of turning away from London, believing that scholarship on animal entertainments in Britain's capital and largest city have become over saturated, historians must continue to analyze its entertainments as there is much more waiting to be found that will add further layers of understanding to the complex phenomenon of human-animal

interactions both then and now. Future scholarship will no doubt add to the insights that have been produced in this thesis, which has moved beyond understanding wildlife exhibited in London exclusively as artifacts of empire. For Britons traveling to these exhibits, seeking to interact with the displayed creatures since they were unable to purchase them, visitors instead experienced them by taking in the ever-present sights, the fleeting moments of tactile enjoyment, and the often frightening noises offered up by these living creatures who served as alluring commodities, quasi-humans, and wild beasts and likewise by engaging with preserved specimens which functioned primarily as colossal natural trophies attesting to humanity's power in the industrial age.

The nineteenth century witnessed the drastic reorientation of human relations to and with nature in Great Britain. Modern society increasingly viewed the natural world as a commodity, asking what it could produce that would benefit humanity, and then taking these products as they saw fit. Virgin forests were felled for precious timber and replanted with human-selected species that forever reoriented the natural ecosystem. Mountains were split open for railways to pass through and were bored deeply into to tear out coal and other precious minerals, while farmland expanded across wide swaths of open territory owing to innovative implements, mechanized equipment, and artificial fertilizers. With these drastic environmental changes in mind, it should come as no surprise that the living, breathing embodiments of nature's progeny—animals—suffered a similar fate. Animals, in life and death, were wrenched from their native habitats—and from their natural lifecycle—to serve as commodities, even though these exhibited creatures were unable to be purchased by most middle-class Britons. Instead, alive or deceased, they populated London's exhibition venues that catered to the desire for entertainment, pleasure, and power in the hearts and minds of nineteenth-century Britons.

Appendix of Figures

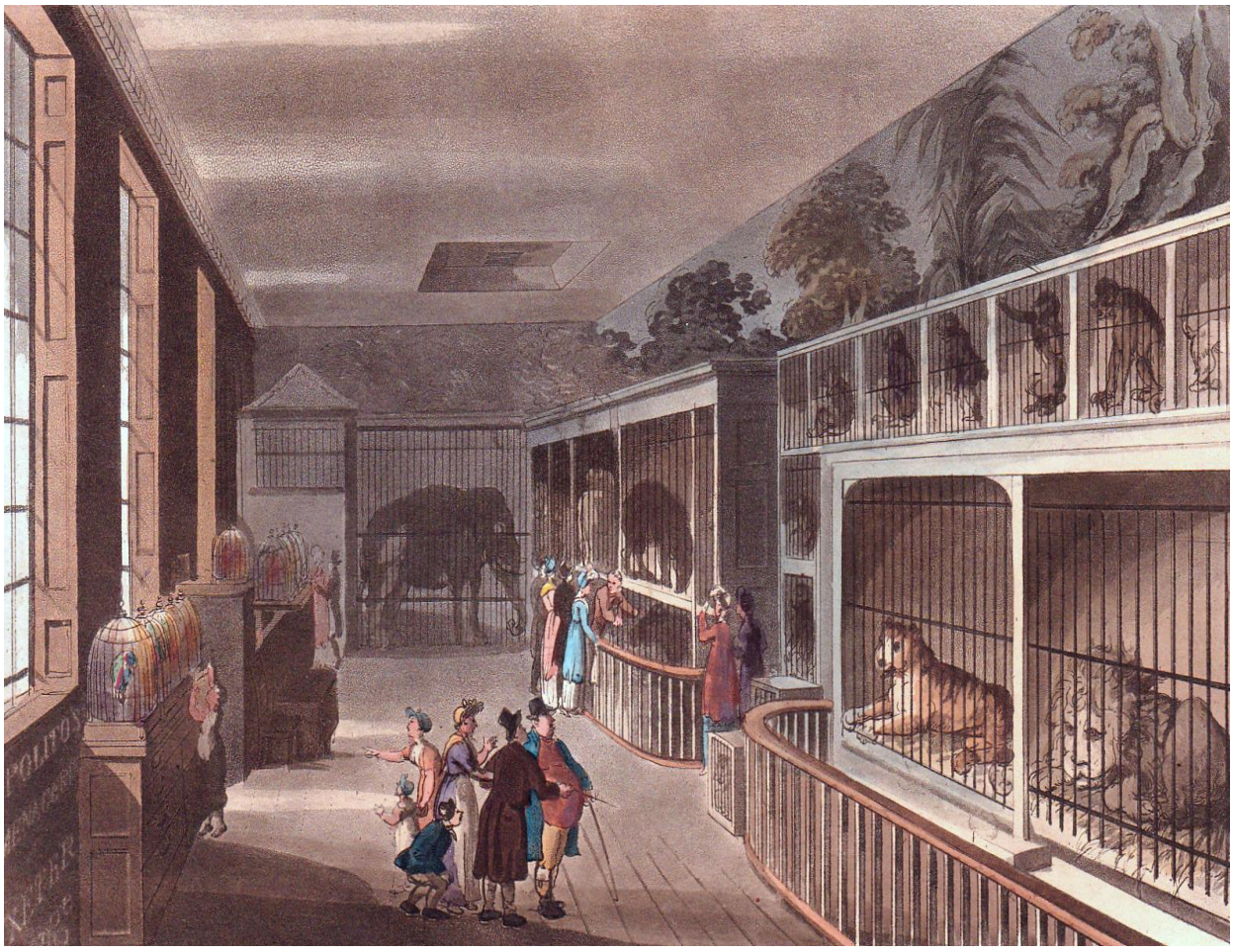


Figure 1.1: *Exeter Change Menagerie*, ca. 1820. A busy day in the Exeter Change Menagerie where a plethora of visitors interact with animals by both viewing and touching them.

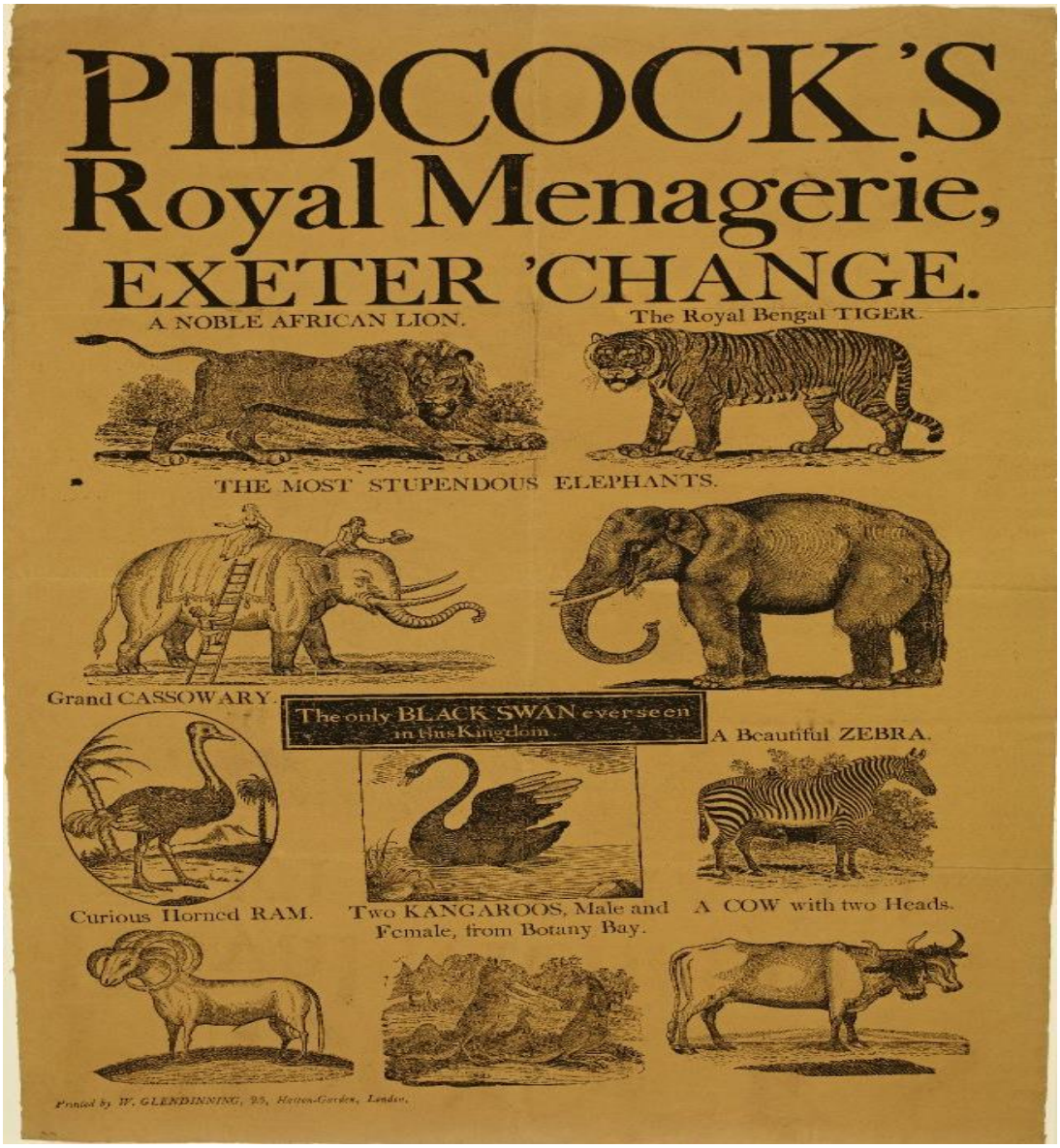
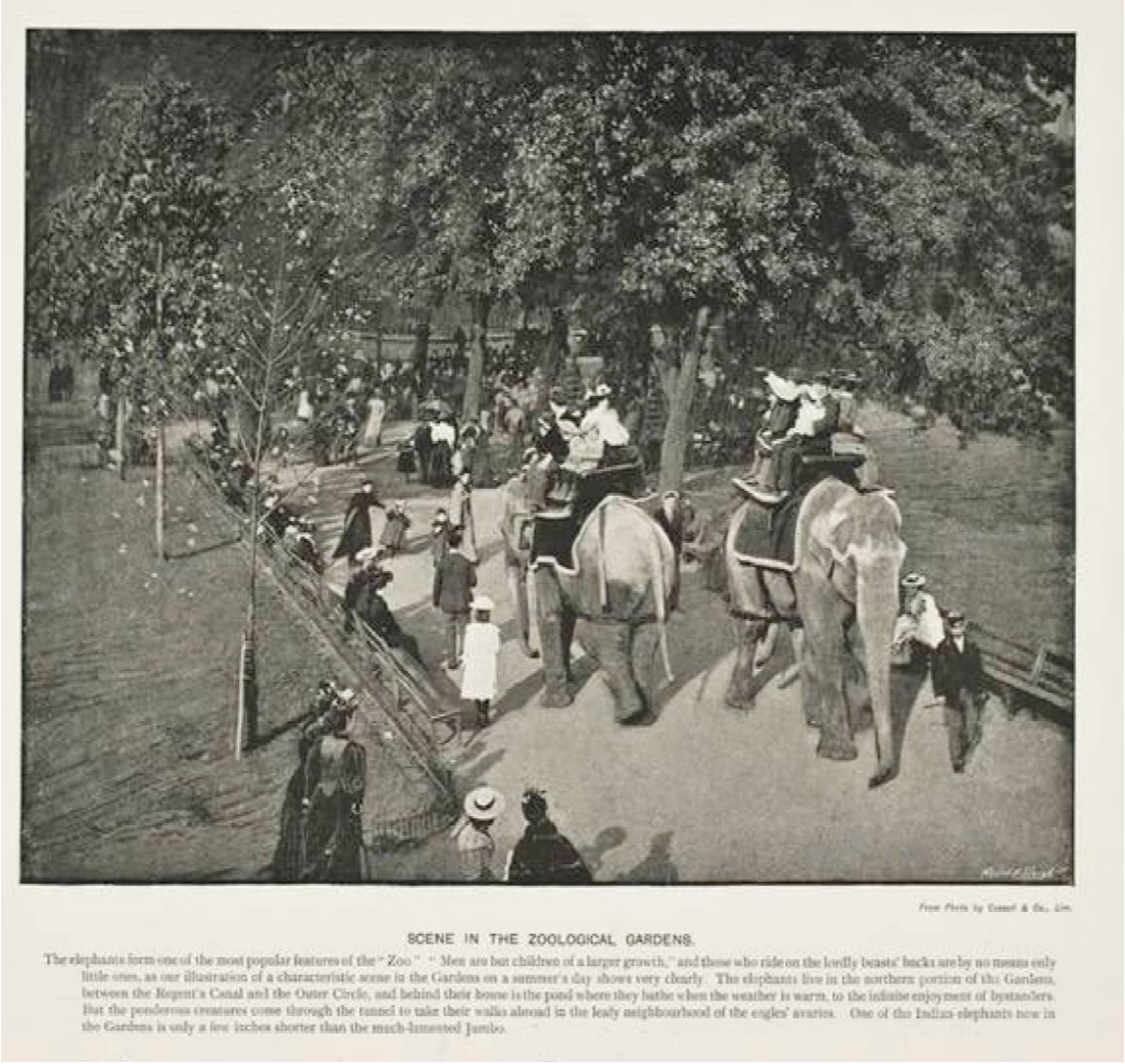


Figure 1.2: Thomas Bewick, *Poster for Pidcock's Menagerie* (London: W. Glendinning, 1799), The British Museum. An early playbill for the Exeter Change Menagerie where tigers, elephants, and other exotic beasts were featured as the major attractions.



SCENE IN THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

The elephants form one of the most popular features of the "Zoo." "Men are but children of a larger growth," and those who ride on the lordly beasts' backs are by no means only little ones, as our illustration of a characteristic scene in the Gardens on a summer's day shows very clearly. The elephants live in the northern portion of the Gardens, between the Regent's Canal and the Outer Circle, and behind their house is the pond where they bathe when the weather is warm, to the infinite enjoyment of bystanders. But the ponderous creatures come through the tunnel to take their walks abroad in the leafy neighbourhood of the eagles' aviaries. One of the Indian elephants now in the Gardens is only a few inches shorter than the much-lamented Jumbo.

Figure 1.3: *The Queen's London, A Pictorial and Descriptive Record of the Streets, Buildings, Parks, and Scenery of the Great Metropolis* (London: Cassell and Company, 1896), 197. A busy day in London Zoo where elephants perambulate up and down the sidewalk, each carrying a coterie of guests.

Figure 1.4: *Scrapbook*, 1852, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Two visitors to the London Zoo look upon kangaroos while grasping the bars.

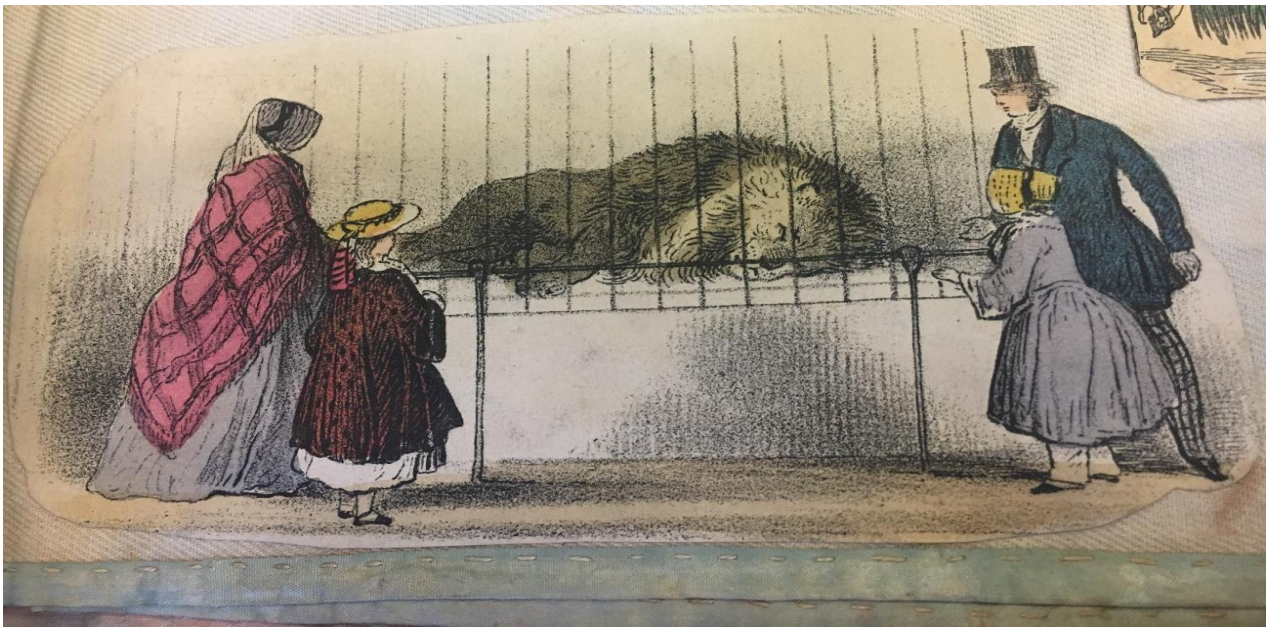


Figure 1.5: *Scrapbook*, 1852, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. A family gets close to a sleeping lion and the father circumvents the barrier by reaching his hand into the cage.

From Photo by Cassell & Co., Ltd.

THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS: THE LIONS' HOUSE

Without question, one of the chief attractions of the Zoological Gardens is the Lions' House. The present building is 230 feet long by 50 feet wide, and is admirably adapted for its purpose, being well warmed and ventilated. The cages are roomy, and separated from teasing visitors by a broad barrier. Every afternoon when the lions are fed the house is crowded, so much so that warnings to "beware of pickpockets" are prominently displayed: but on Sundays, when admission to the Gardens can only be obtained on presentation of a Fellow's order, the "function" can be seen with less difficulty. In the Lions' House is a bust of the first President of the Zoological Society, Sir Stamford Raffles. The London lions, although not a numerous collection, are splendid specimens of their tribe.

Figure 1.6: *The Queen's London, A Pictorial and Descriptive Record of the Streets, Buildings, Parks, and Scenery of the Great Metropolis* (London: Cassell and Company, 1896), 196. While many guests at the Carnivora house are satisfied to sit back and take in the sights, some lean over the railing to facilitate intimate contact with the encaged lions and tigers.

Figure 1.7: Percy McQuaid, *Sunday Afternoon at the Zoological Gardens-Beauty and the Beast*, 1853. Despite the hippo's frenzied eyes and gaping mouth full of dagger-like teeth, two bourgeoise guests at the London Zoo look on idly as they hand a treat through the bars to Obaysch.

Figure 1.8: George Scharf, *Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park*, 1835. Visitors enjoy the Bear Pit, one of the London Zoo's most popular attractions throughout the century. While viewing was a family affair, males, including a father feeding a bear directly and a boy dangling a treat into the pit, were frequently the only visitors depicted feeding the animals.

Figure 2.1: *Hunterian Collection- Royal College of Surgeons,* ca. 1830. A busy day at the museum where the Megatherium, Moa, Irish elk, Chunee, and other specimens are all on display.

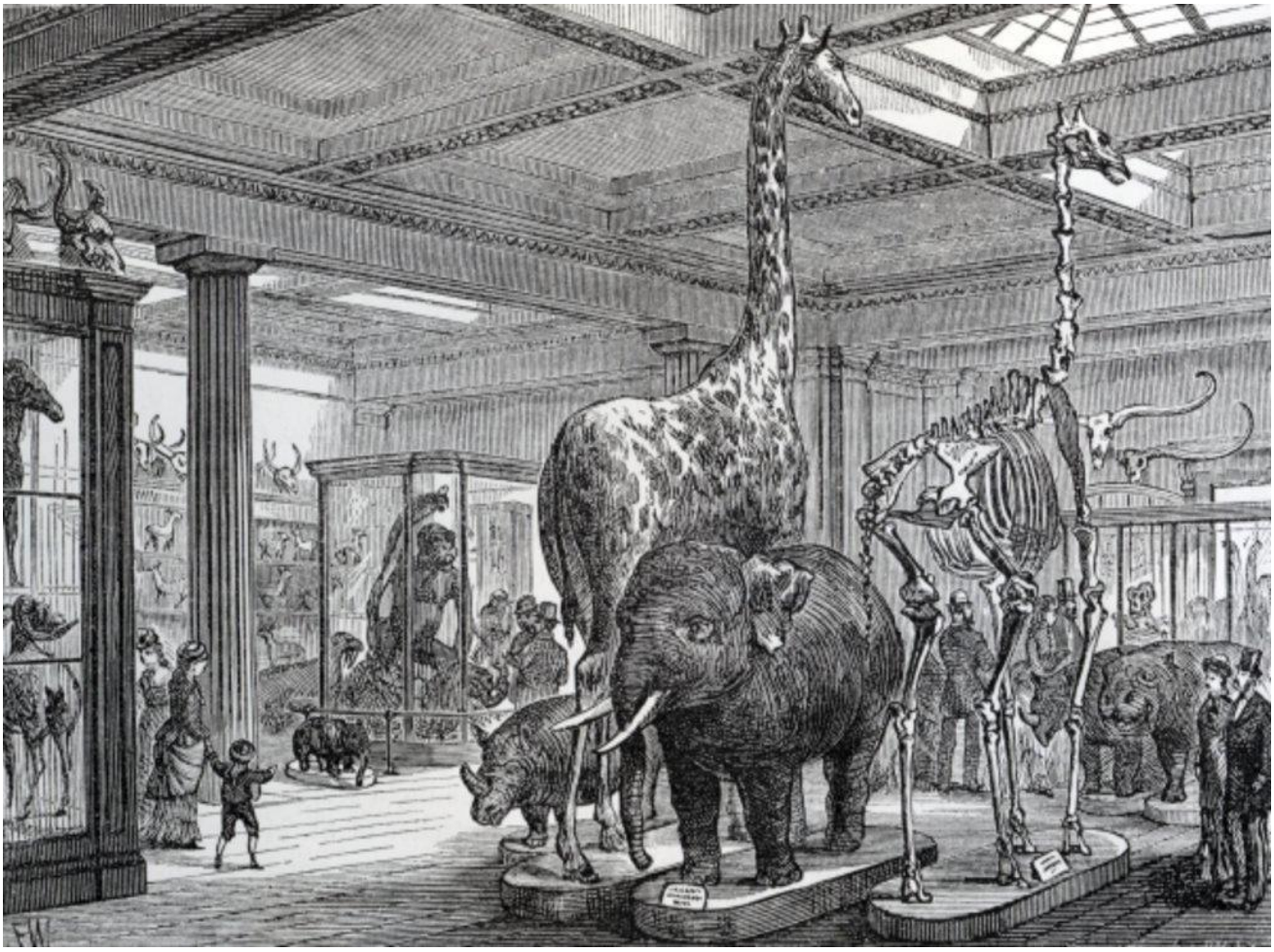


Figure 2.2: *Mammalia Saloon, British Museum*, ca. 1860. Note the numerous large exhibits from throughout the globe, ranging from a walrus in the far-right corner to a hippopotamus in the left, all displayed in one space.

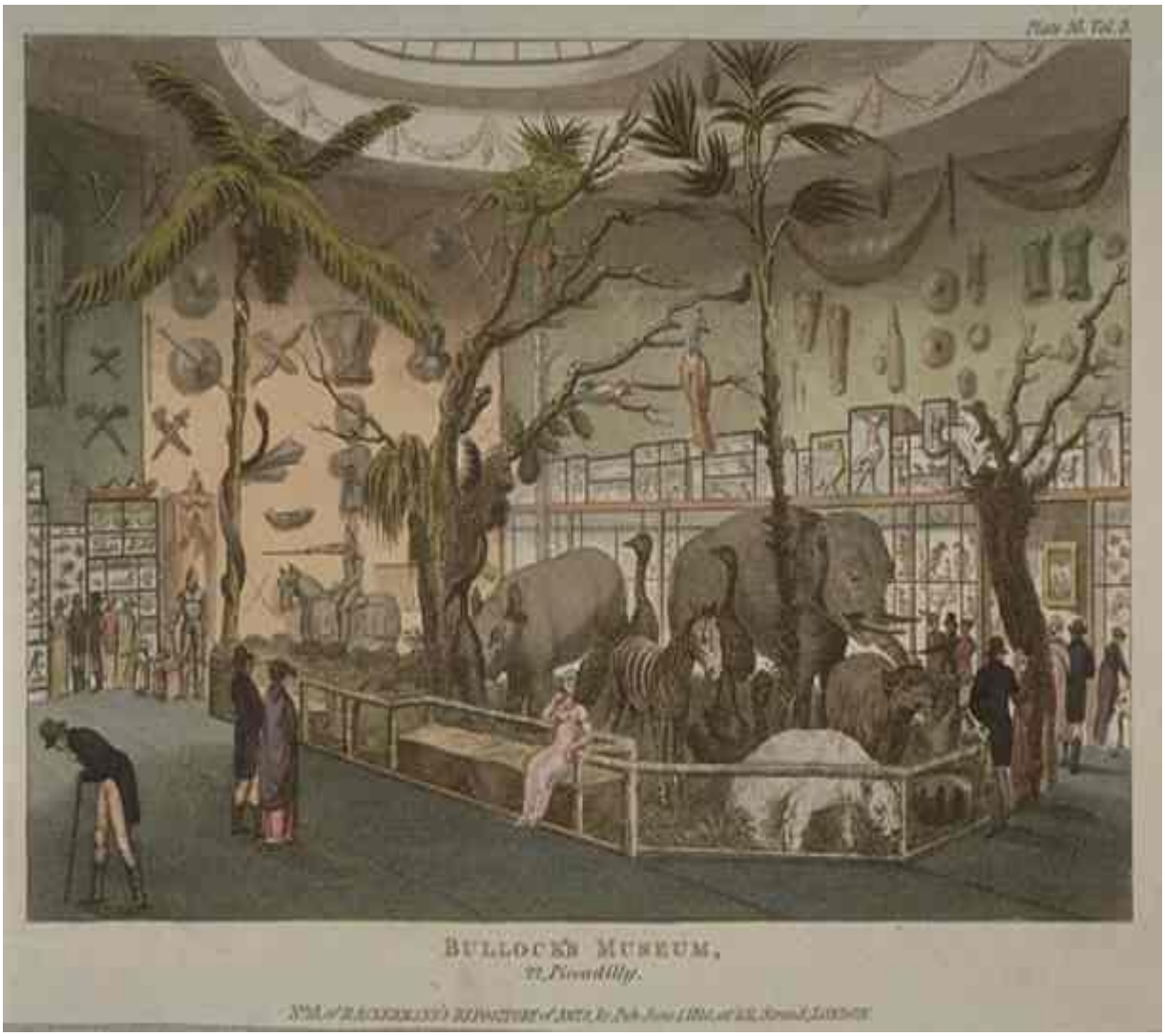


Figure 2.3: *Bullock's Museum*, June 11, 1810.

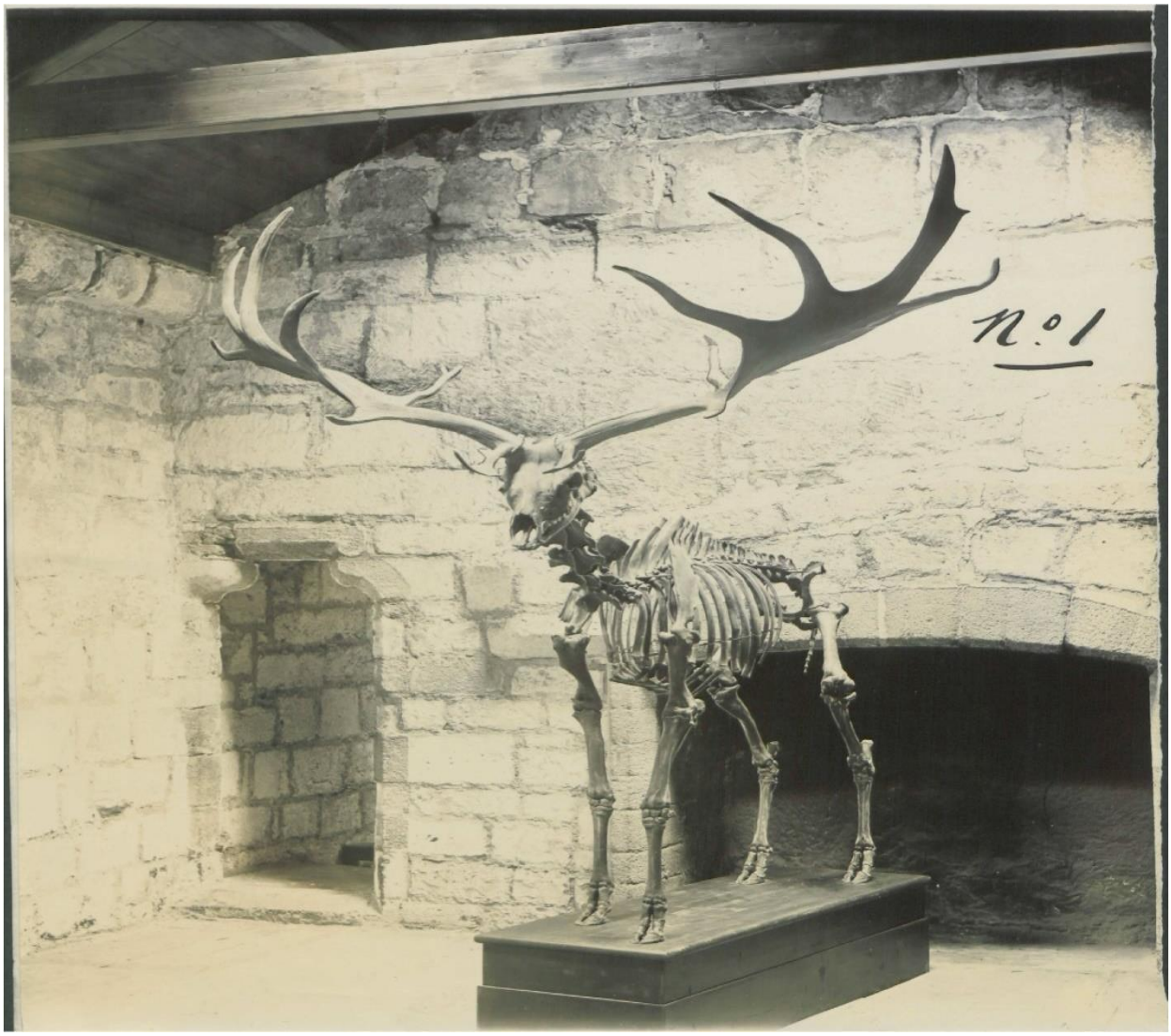


Figure 2.4: *Records of the Copyright Office of the Stationers' Company: Photographs.* London, 1898. The Irish elk in a private collection, attached to showcase its enormous antlers.

Figure 2.5: *Hunterian Collection-Royal College of Surgeons*, ca. 1840. The same background but with a new crowd all interested in the enormous sloth. New additions include a giraffe in the background and a large carapace in the foreground.

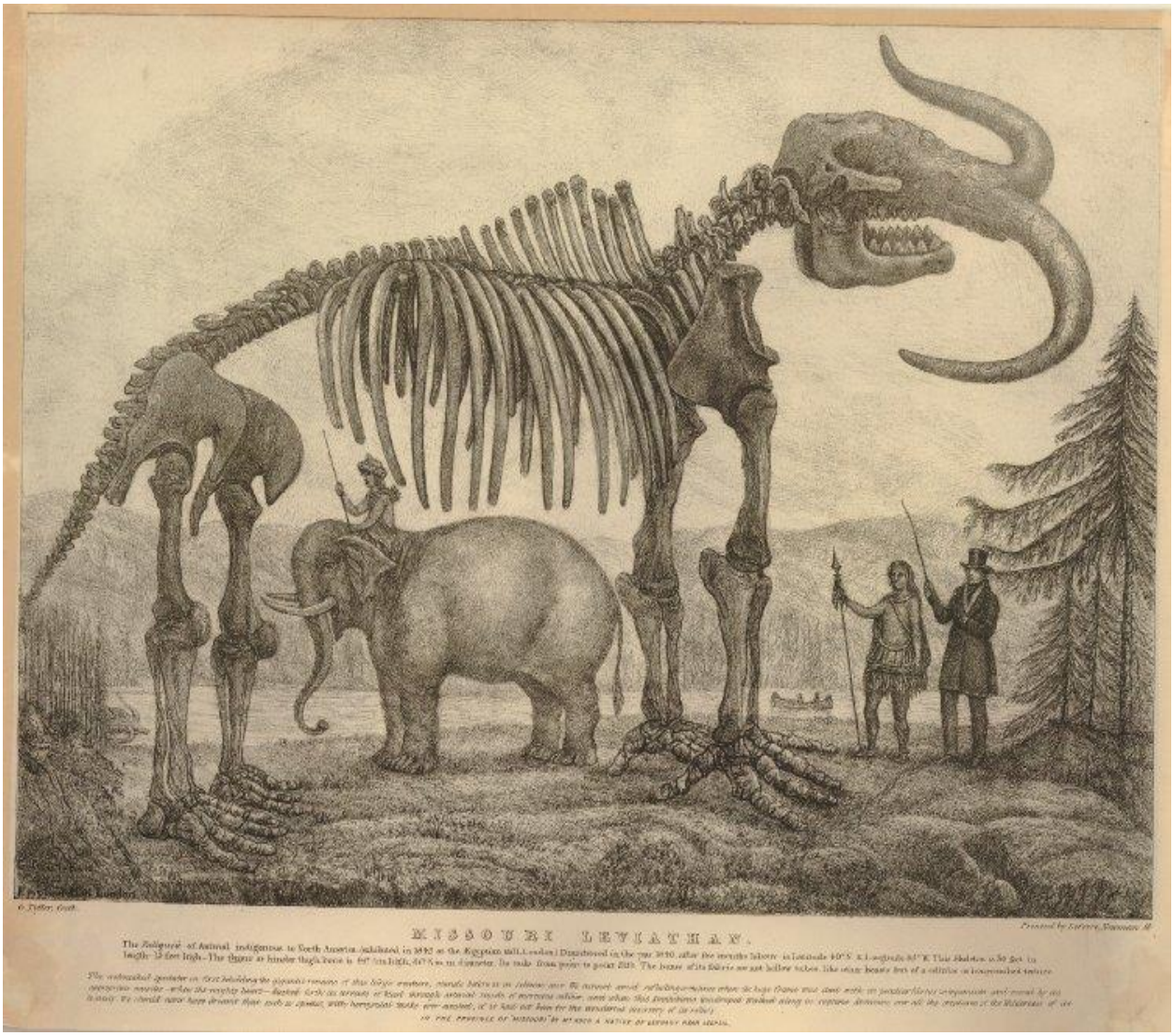


Figure 2.6: *Missorium Theristrocaulodon*. Dublin: C. Crookes, 1842. An advertisement for Albert Koch's infamous "Missourium." Note the Native American and American looking and pointing upwards, as well as the elephant fit snugly within its gigantic frame.

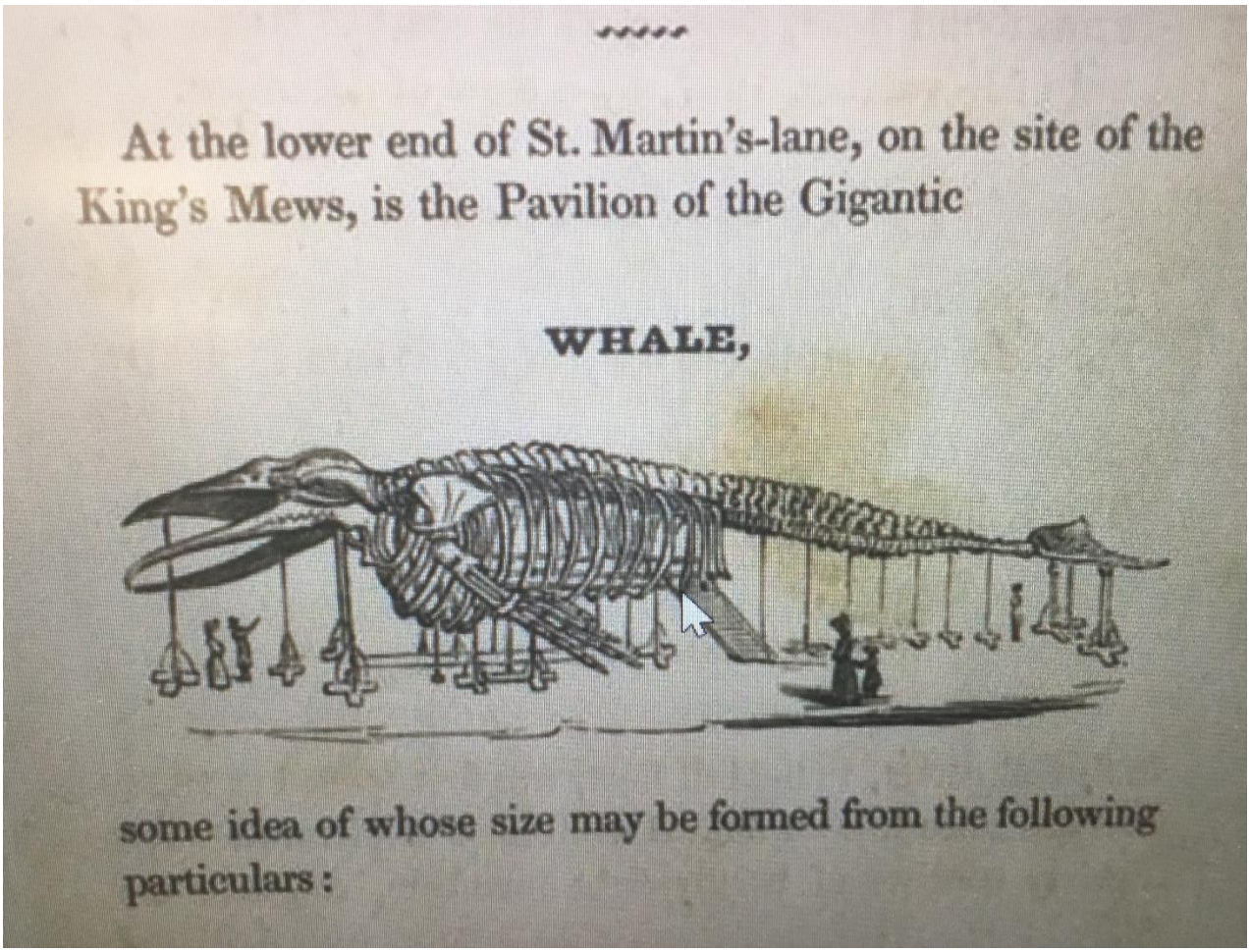


Figure 2.7: William Kidd, *Kidd's New Guide to The "Lions" of London* (London: C. Whittingham, 1832), 39. An early depiction of the Charing Cross Whale, with numerous visitors circling it and the gangway is in place to venture inside.

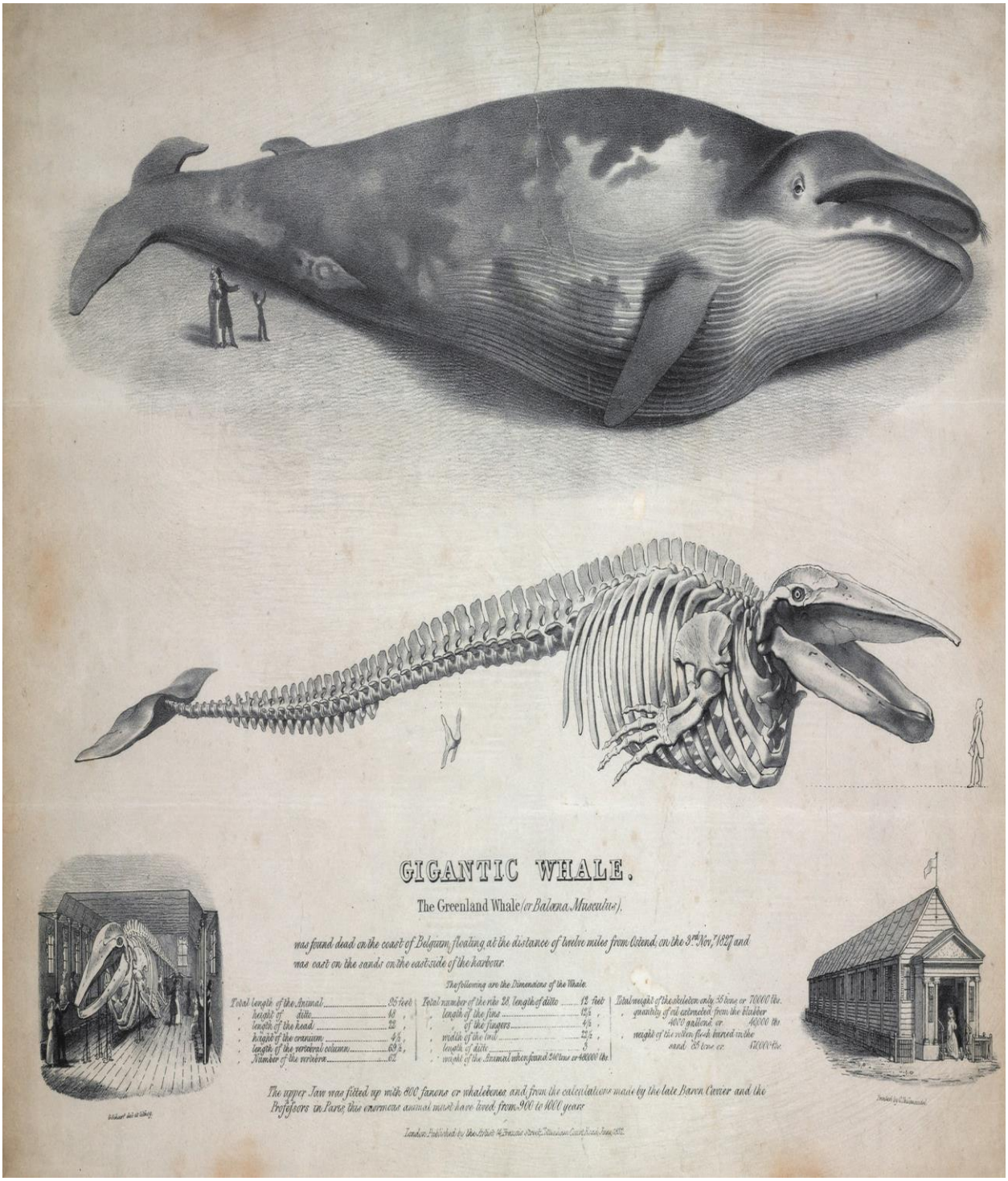


Figure 2.8: *Gigantic Whale Playbill*, ca. 1832. A far more elaborate print advertising the Charing Cross Whale. Note the contrasting scale between the whale and the humans as both a living organism and skeleton. Also, a model of the exhibition is provided, as are numerous other enormous measurements.

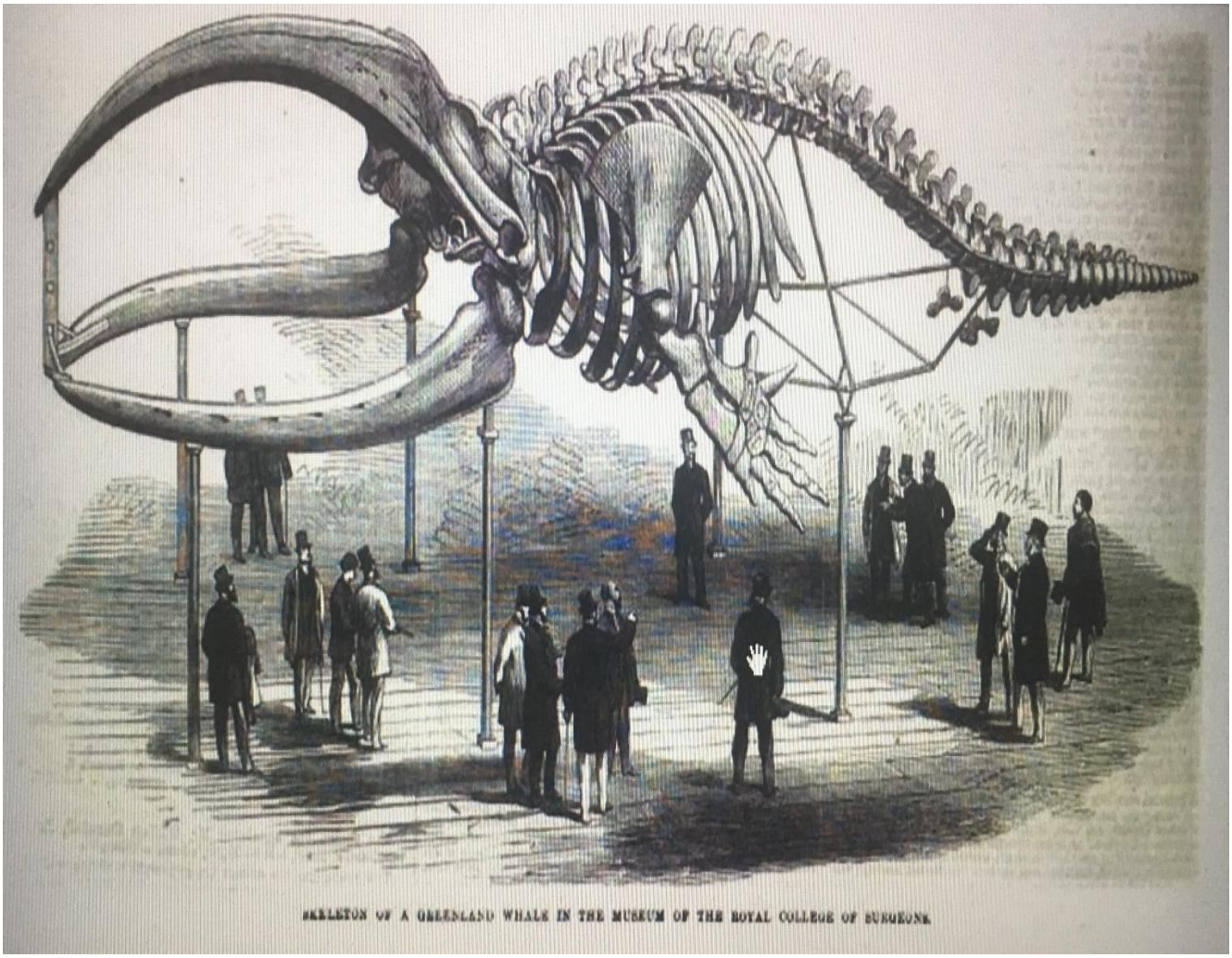


Figure 2.9: *The Illustrated London News*, February 14, 1866. This whale's skeleton is hoisted up at the Royal College of Surgeons while visitors circle around, taking in the sights afforded to such a unique exhibition.

Figure 2.10: George Scharf, *Staircase of the Old British Museum, Montague House*, 1847.

Figure 2.11: *The London Missionary Society's Museum*, ca. 1853.

Figure 2.12: Louis Haghe, Joseph Nash, and David Roberts, *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London, 1854), 14.

Figure 2.13: Louis Haghe, Joseph Nash, and David Roberts, *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London, 1854), 16.

Figure 2.14: *Crystal Palace Elephant*, ca. 1851.

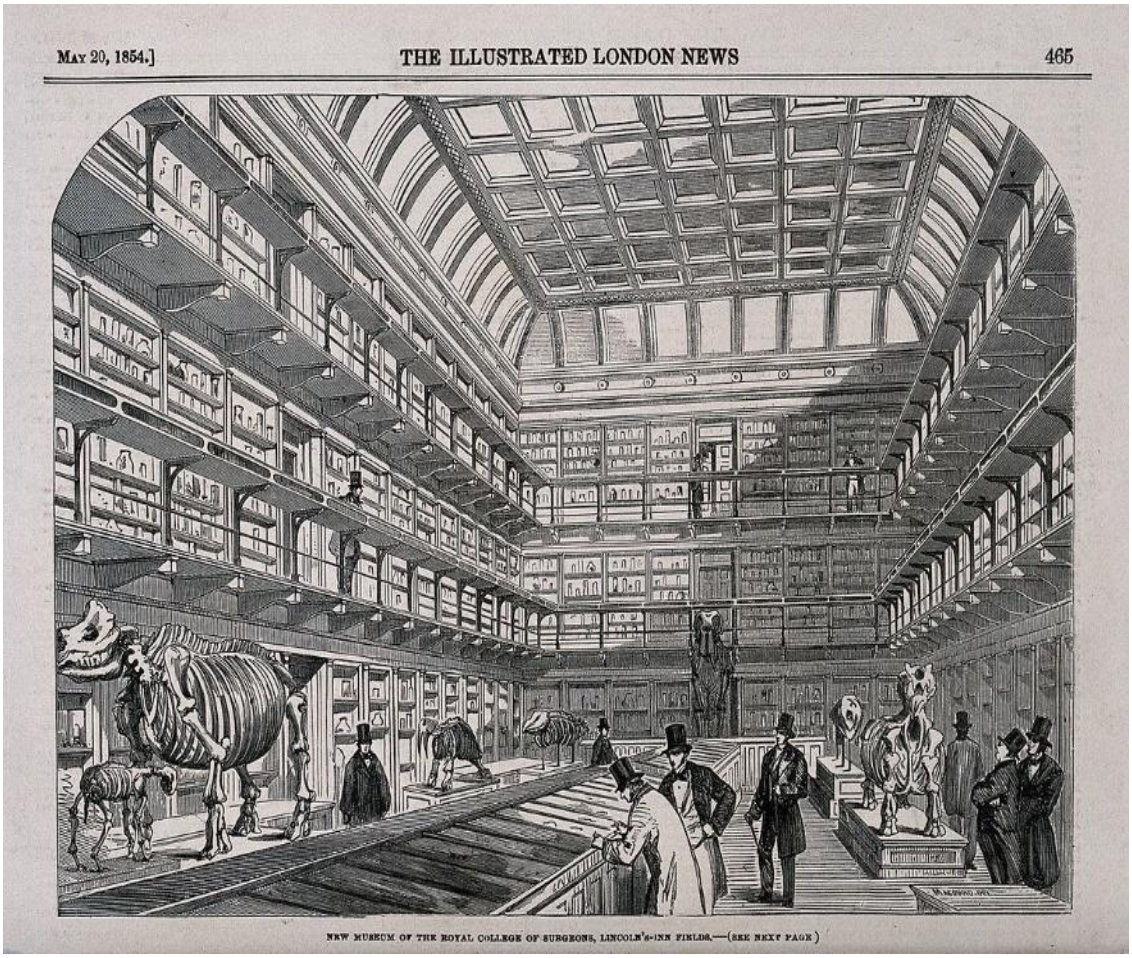


Figure 3.1: "New Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons," *The Illustrated London News*, May 20, 1854. Although the exhibits have changed remarkedly in the years since the previous print was drawn, Chunee remains standing in the same location, towering over all other displayed specimens.

Figure 3.2: *Polito's Royal Menagerie Mantelpiece*, ca. 1811-14, Victoria and Albert Museum. Stephen Polito had this mantelpiece manufactured during the latter years of his life to celebrate his menagerie which has won his both substantial wealth and tremendous notoriety. His major attraction, Chunee, commanded a central location and large size on the piece.

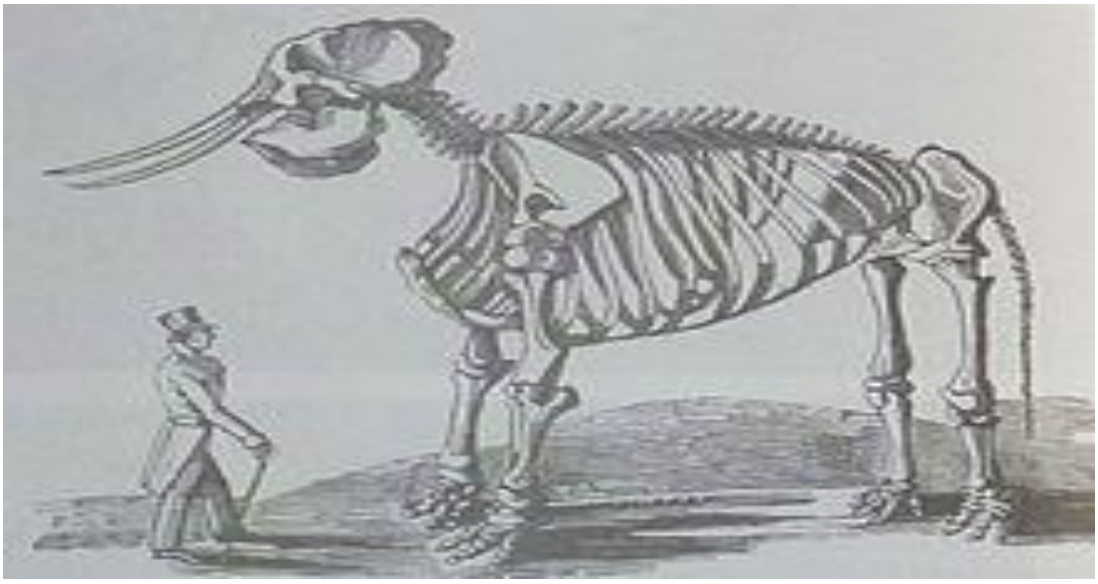


Figure 3.3: *Chunee, Royal College of Surgeons*, ca. 1850. A visitor to the Hunterian Collection gazes up at Chunee, barely reaching the enormous pachyderm's breastbone.

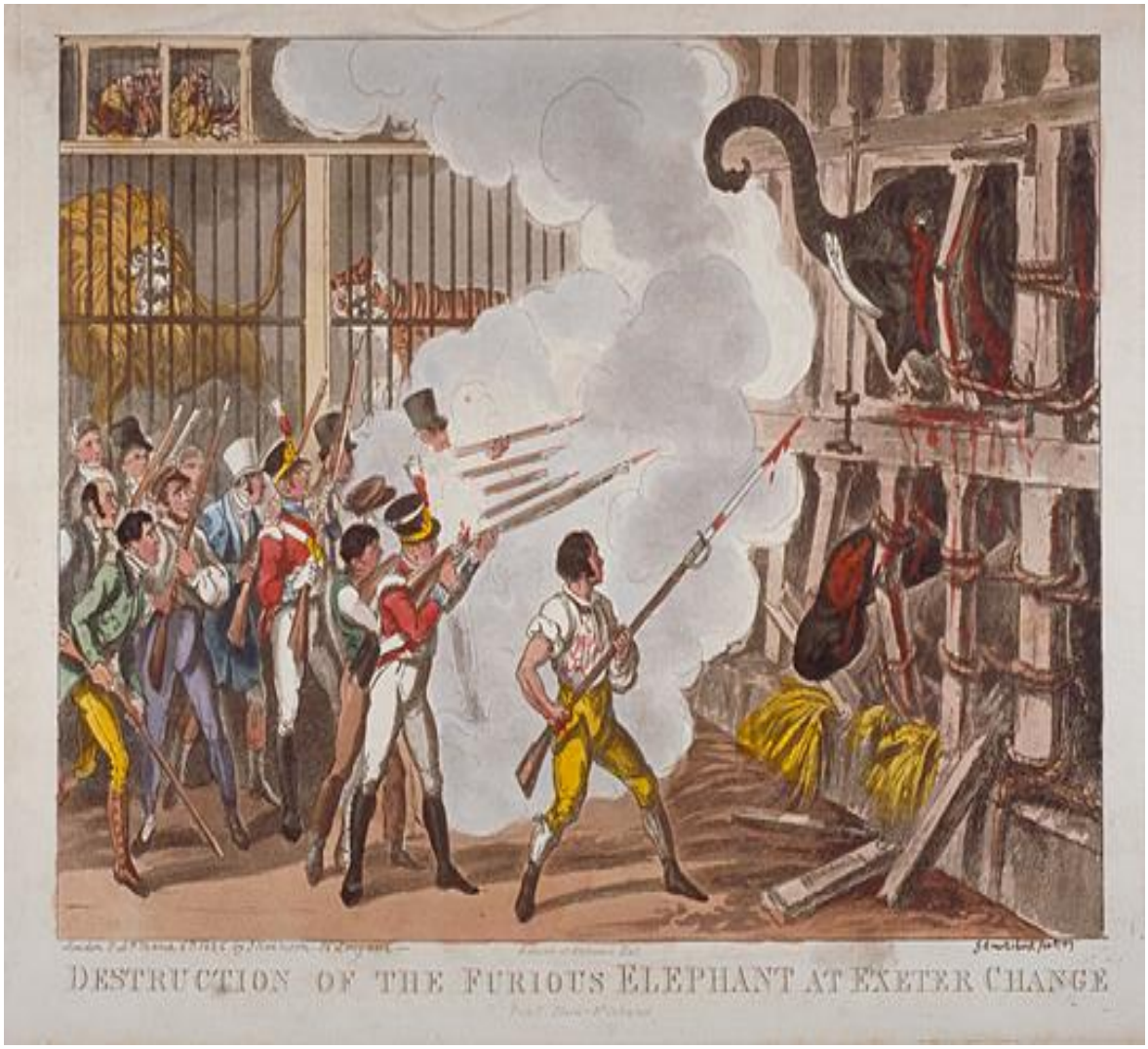


Figure 3.4: *Destruction of the Furious Elephant at Exeter Change*, ca. 1826.

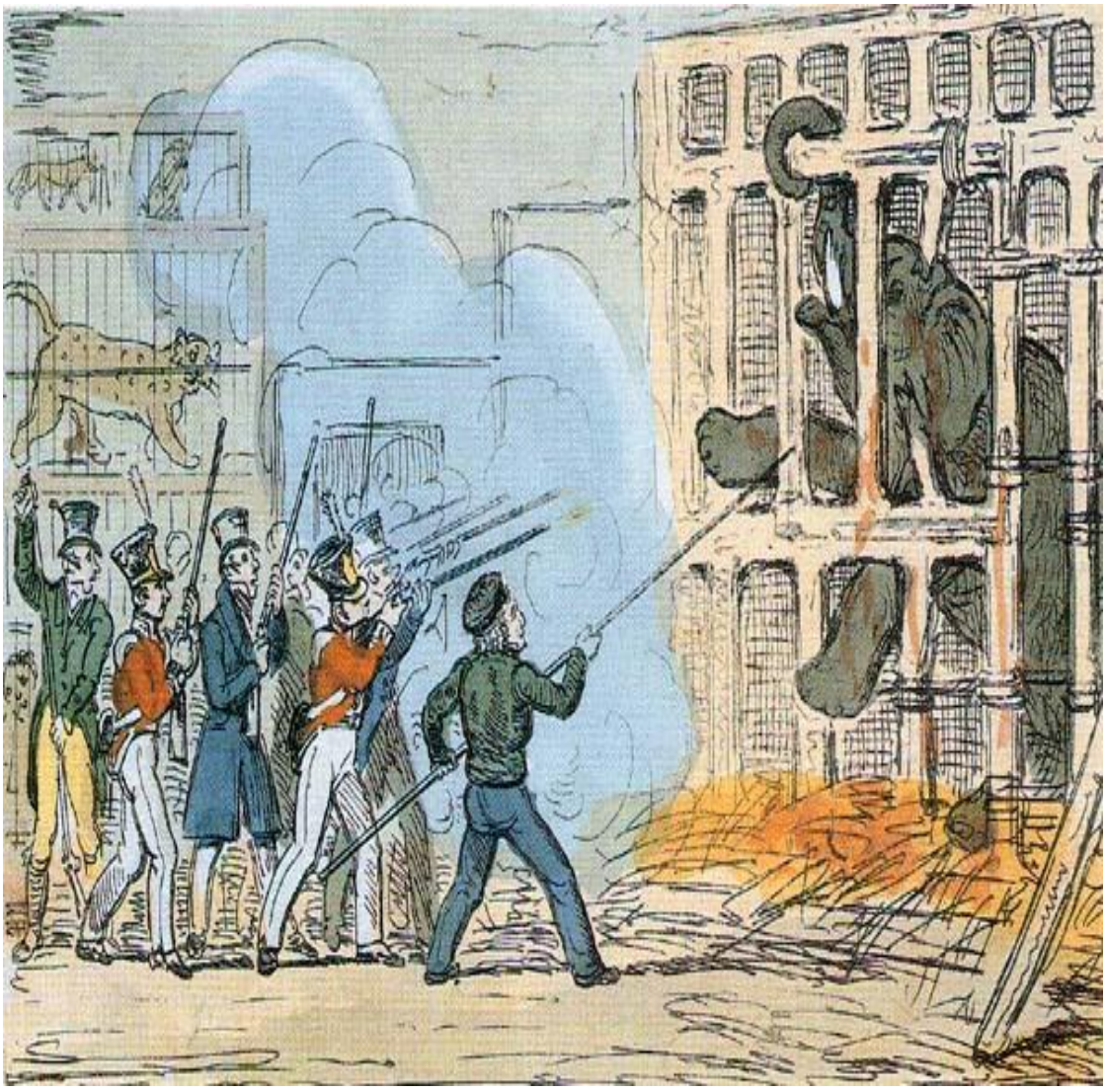


Figure 3.5: *The Death of Chunee*, ca. 1826.

AN EXACT REPRESENTATION OF THE MANNER OF

DESTROYING THE ELEPHANT,

On Thursday, March 2nd, 1826, at Exeter Change, Strand.

The death of this stupendous Animal was accomplished by the discharge of 152 Musket Balls, which were lodged in various parts of its body. It was about 22 years old, and has been exhibited at the Change 17 years; was the largest in the Kingdom, and was valued at upwards of £1000— It was dissected on Sunday by Dr. Brookes, Waring, Clarke, Spurzheim, Mr. H. Mayo, Morgan, Varrall, C. Hawkins, Bell, and other Surgeons. Its Skin weighed One Ton, for which Mr. Cross was offered Fifty Pounds.

Printed and Published at 28, Bowling Green Lane, Clerkenwell.

Figure 3.6: *An Exact Representation of the Manner of Destroying the Elephant, On Thursday, March 2nd, at Exeter Change, Strand*. 1826.

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