Commodification and the Figure of the Castrato in Smollett’s Humphry Clinker

James P. Carson
Kenyon College, carson@kenyon.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digital.kenyon.edu/english_publications

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digital.kenyon.edu/english_publications/14

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact noltj@kenyon.edu.
COMMODIFICATION AND THE FIGURE OF THE CASTRATO IN SMOLLETT'S *HUMPHRY CLINKER*

James P. Carson

On 23 June 1826, Mary Shelley wrote to Charles Cowden Clarke, praising the last great castrato, Giovanni-Battista Velluti: "If he has not all the boasted energy of that vain creature man he has what is far better, a strength all his own, founded on the tenderness & sympathy he irresistibly excites." Shelley's defence of Velluti is paradoxical, first, because castrati were reputed to be even more vain than men. But a second and deeper paradox resides in the strength that Shelley declares to be all Velluti's own, since what is all his own is the response that he irresistibly arouses in others. Mary Shelley here presents a version of the opposition between man and eunuch that Peggy Kamuf has delineated in the story of Heloise and Abelard, an opposition between "boasted energy" and imaginative identification, "between the literal reduction of sexual desire to phallic potency and itsfigural elevation to the beyond of the absent phallus." Mary Shelley uses the figure of the castrato in advancing a new model of masculinity, one based not on the full and fertile stability of phallic potency but rather on a conception of strength in which what is one's own depends wholly on others.

In a novel published half a century earlier, another woman letter-writer, in this case a fictional one, likewise praises a castrato. In her letter of May 31, Smollett's Lydia Melford writes of her visit to the pleasure gardens at Ranelagh: "There I heard the famous Tenducci, a thing from Italy—It looks for all the world like a man, though they say it is not. The voice, to be sure, is neither man's nor woman's; but it is more melodious than either; and it warbled so divinely, that, while I listened, I really thought myself in paradise." The terms of her praise of Tenducci's voice place Lydia Melford in a long tradition of the near deification of the castrato. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the translator of Charles Ancillon's *Traité des Eunuques* writes that the voice of the castrato Pauluccio "had all the Warblings and Turns of a Nightingal, but with only this difference, that it was much finer, and did not a
man know the contrary, he would believe it impossible such a Tone could proceed from the Throat of any thing that was human." In our own time, a recent article in a medical journal nostalgically describes the quality of the voices that have been lost: "The voce bianco, or white voice, was not really human; there was a certain detachment and depersonalization, almost godlike." Like Mary Shelley, Lydia Melford might be said to place the castrato in a realm of figuration or imagination, since Ranelagh, in Humphry Clinker (1771), "looks like the enchanted palace of a genie" (91). But with the idea of imagination there ends the similarity between the letters of the real and the fictional woman. The opposition between eunuch and man that Shelley works out in order to criticize traditional gender relations is replaced in Lydia Melford's letter by the unstable and destabilizing triangle of man, woman, and thing. Within the letter of the young fictional woman, the voice of the thing that once was male brings "ravishing delights," but Lydia Melford's own "voice" is contained within the larger construction of a male author.

For Tobias Smollett, the figure of Tenducci is a frightening image of the effects of luxury and female power. The figure of the castrato can serve as a valuable index of the gynophobic nature of Smollett's critique of the social and economic changes he perceives in the world of late eighteenth-century England. In this essay I shall show that the castrato opera singer, though mentioned briefly only once in Humphry Clinker, is carefully integrated into the structure of oppositions and analogies through which Smollett indicts English luxury in that novel. In this, his final novel, Smollett accords moral value to the figure of the "feminized," benevolent man. However, he finds it necessary to deploy the figure of the castrato to demarcate a limit on acceptable transformations of masculinity, a limit that, not surprisingly, stops short of that advocated by Mary Shelley. Ultimately, I shall argue that Smollett contains the threat of the castrato through an appeal to familiar themes: the critique of luxury, marked as specifically female (or effeminate) and foreign (mainly influenced by decadent Italy), and the commodification of women.

Why is the castrato a good figure for the ravages of luxury? We might approach this question by looking first at Tenducci himself, who merits a paragraph in Lewis Knapp's biography of Smollett. When the novelist was sent to the King's Bench Prison in November 1760 for libel,

Within the high walls was also confined the famous Italian tenor, Signor Tenducci, who because of debt had been incarcerated since June 1760. There is a tradition
that Smollett, while in prison, was so touched by this singer’s plight that he paid his bills and so set him free, but though Smollett may well have given him some money, there is doubt as to whether Tenducci owed his liberation to Smollett. Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci, not a tenor but a soprano, was born in Siena in the mid-1730’s and came to London in 1758. He is an apt figure for luxury, first, on account of his noted extravagance, his imprisonment for debt in 1760, and his subsequent departure from England in 1776 in order to avoid another such imprisonment. Angus Heriot writes that most castrati “were born . . . of humble parents; for only those in fairly pressing need of money would have consented to the mutilation of their children.” At the height of their careers, however, the most successful of the castrati could have an annual income in the order of £5,000 (Heriot 98). Hence, the extravagant Tenducci, rather than appearing an object of sympathy, might have seemed to Smollett “a mushroom of opulence,” like those whom Matthew Bramble encounters in Bath (56, May 5).

Tenducci had been the source of scandal more recently than the imprisonment that took place a full decade prior to the publication of Humphry Clinker, for after a journey to Edinburgh the soprano travelled to Dublin where he married in 1766, very much against her parents’ wishes, Dora Maunsell of Limerick. In 1768 there appeared a pamphlet, A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci, which detailed the persecutions of the young couple by the family of the bride. According to this pamphlet, published in the form of a letter from Dora Maunsell Tenducci to a friend at Bath, the Maunsell family charged Tenducci with seduction for carrying off their daughter by force, and then had him indicted for perjury. While Tenducci suffered in a miserable prison, Maunsell was threatened by her family with “surgeon B———t’s private mad-house, near Dublin” and then with confinement “in a remote mountain, for the remainder of my days” (35). Maunsell (or the author of the pamphlet) in fact claims to have been imprisoned in “a kind of fortified castle” (42) in “a country as wild and dreary as you can imagine” (40), where she is subjected to the unwanted sexual attentions and menaces of one of her captors. He intercepts her letters to Tenducci, forges a letter under Tenducci’s name, and when she asks for a prayer book gives her a copy of Fanny Hill (43, 44, 47). What is most surprising about this pamphlet is that it is a romance of parental persecution, seemingly intended for a young, largely female, audience, and that it entirely fails to exploit the sensationalism of a young woman’s marriage to a castrato. Given the intense eighteenth-century interest in the sexual abilities or disabilities of castrati, exploited particularly in satiric verse epistles about Senesino and Farinelli, the almost total ab-

This content downloaded from 138.28.20.205 on Wed, 5 Nov 2014 15:18:18 PM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions
sence of allusions to sex in *A True and Genuine Narrative* is remarkable.

No doubt, the inappropriateness of the marriage between an Italian castrato and a young Irish beauty motivates Smollett’s reference to Tenducci in *Humphry Clinker*. Smollett would have seen such a marriage as evidence both of a reprehensible mingling of classes and of an unleashing of female desires from the bounds of procreative sexuality. Indeed, the romance narrative purportedly written by Tenducci’s wife is an attack on patriarchal authority. Dora Maunsell attributes the persecutions she suffers at the house of her sister to her sister’s husband, “whose nature is arbitrary and severe” (35). Dora Maunsell chooses for a husband something other than what Mary Shelley calls “that vain creature man,” and Maunsell does choose. As she tells her father, in order to defend Tenducci against the charge of seduction, “my marriage with Tenducci was all my own seeking. I first proposed it, and urged it to him” (*Narrative* 21). That Smollett’s Lydia Melford should speak in almost sexual terms of her admiration for Tenducci—“the most ravishing delights of musick” (*Clinker* 91)—reminds us that she has appeared susceptible to the same kind of imprudent or, what Smollett would regard as unnatural, attachment. Dora Maunsell eloped with a castrato, in order to escape the disagreeable marriage urged on her by her friends (*Narrative* 6); Lydia Melford has fallen in love with Wilson, a fellow who appears to be nothing more than a strolling player. For its representation of a challenge to patriarchal authority, *A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci*, then, may help to explain Smollett’s reference to Tenducci; the pamphlet, however, betrays not the slightest interest in the poetical, medical, and historical controversy about the sexual capacities or incapacities of castrati.

Eighteenth-century English poems about castrati, on the other hand, indicate that contemporaries were uncertain about whether or not castrati were sexually potent, even though everyone assumed that they were infertile. Such poems may thus provide a privileged point of access to eighteenth-century notions about female desire beyond procreative bounds. The poems about Farinelli (Carlo Broschi, 1705-82) focus on the possibility of non-generative sex with a potent half-man. Thus in *An Epistle to John James H—dd—g—r, Esq; on the Report of Signior F-r-n-lii’s being with Child*, it seems likely that the lascivious Clarinda will have to return to “hug her beastly Lap-dog,” should Farinelli be found to be a woman:
WHAT Words can speak the chaste CLARINDA's Woe!  
Who now must all her hop'd-for Bliss forgoe?  
Her lovely Eunuch to a Woman turn'd,  
For whose secure Embrace so long she's Burn'd!10

This epistle ends with a suggestion on how to avoid in future the potential deception of women opera singers posing as castrati:

And serve your Eunuchs as they serve the Pope  
Before they sign let every Member grope.  
You'll this Advantage gain to the Op'ra Tribe,  
That all the Ladies too will then subscribe:  
At least you should, beside the Sing-song Patrons,  
Admit an honest Jury of good Matrons,  
And each fair Judge, before that you have heard it,  
Should on her Oath give in her modest Verdict;  
That she has seen and felt how Matters stand,  
With her own naked Eye and naked Hand. (6-7)

In emphasizing the eagerness of ladies to subscribe, the poet acknowledges the existence of female desire but satirizes any expression of it. And, if Farinelli were thought to be completely impotent, the apparent pun here on the word stand would be quite pointless.

A 1735 epistle to Farinelli, purportedly by Constantia Phillips, is even more explicit about the capacities of castrati. Recourse to the sexual services of castrati would make it possible for women who wish to avoid pregnancy to abandon the practice of coitus interruptus: “Eunuchs can give uninterrupted Joys, / Without the shameful Curse of Girls and Boys.”11 In constrast to the castrato, “Bragging Boasters” tend to suffer from premature ejaculation: “Whose Pow'r to please the Fair expires too fast, / While F—lli stands it to the last” (6). This poem, too, puns on the word stand. A few lines later, the author of the poem contends once again that castrati are infertile but in other respects capable of giving pleasure: “What tho' you can't acquire a Father's Name, / If yet, in all Things else you prove the same” (7). Like Mary Shelley, “Constantia Phillips” criticizes those vain creatures men, with their sexual boasts, their “scrubbing Brushes” of beards, their excessive clumsiness that tears when it “attempts to stroke,” and the thundering voice that “the Ears thin Membrane breaks” (3). The double entendre of the “thin Membrane” suggests that female desire, far from being contained within the bounds of conjugal procreation, cannot be confined even to the paradigm of penetration.

The poems on Senesino (Francesco Bernardi, c. 1680-c. 1750) tend to revolve around doubles entendres, not about the erect penis, but about impotence. Hence in “An Epistle from S——o, to A———a R———n,” the castrato informs Anastasia Robinson
that “I can’t advance one Inch—beyond Respect”; and, moreover, since “My Childhood robb’d me of the Means to please;/ My utmost Length of Love can only tease.”¹² In another epistle, the pun on stand works in the opposite direction from the way it did in the poems about Farinelli. In an epistle supposedly from Senesino to the opera singer Signora Faustina, the castrato contrasts their situation with that of Galatea and Pygmalion:

Kind Venus heard his Pray’rs, and cas’d his Pain:
The senseless Statue own’d a mutual Flame,
And harden’d Iv’ry Flesh and Blood became:
But here the Goddess other feats must do,
And if she’d have poor $—n—o wooe,
Must change soft Flesh into a Stone or two.
Worse than that Statue!—that cannot stand—
The fruitless Movements of your artful Hand!¹³

The sexual capacities of castrati and the nature of female desire are likewise central issues in Charles Ancillon’s Traité des Eunuques (1707), translated in 1718 for the scandalous printer Edmund Curll, under the title Eunuchism Display’d. The justification given in the Preface for the existence of the work is that it was originally composed to help dissuade a young lady from marrying the castrato Nicolini (vii-viii). In this respect, Eunuchism Display’d prefigures the 1766 marriage that may have prompted Smollett’s allusion to Tenducci. Alain Grosrichard situates Ancillon’s Traité in the context of eighteenth-century fears about depopulation, rural impoverishment, and urban luxury. Grosrichard observes that many French authors argued that Bourbon despotism, conceived on the model of the Turkish sultans, would create an entire nation of eunuchs.¹⁴ According to Ancillon’s history, the practice of castration was first introduced on account of female desire—both the lust for power and sexual luxury. Semiramis, Queen of the Assyrians, introduced such mutilations, “drest herself in Man’s Cloaths, and brought her Son up like a Girl” (4), in order to deflect criticism from a mere woman’s usurpation of the Assyrian throne. Moreover, Semiramis enjoyed sexual intercourse with many of her handsomest soldiers, whom she subsequently “made Eunuchs through an Effect of Jealousie, least after having received from her the greatest Favours, they should go and have Engagements with other Women” (5).

Semiramis’ jealous motives for castration suggest, of course, that eunuchs were incapable of sexual intercourse, but the matter is not quite so clear-cut for Ancillon.¹⁵ Toward the end of the book, he seeks to answer the objection that the prohibition of marriage ought not to be extended to all eunuchs, “since there are some
capable to satisfy the Desires of a Woman” (205). Ancillon concedes the premise of this objection, and indeed notes that “Father Raynauld in his Book de Eunuchis . . . laughs at the Confidence People repose in [eunuchs], in trusting them with the Care of their Wives and Daughters” (206). But Ancillon nonetheless maintains that the prohibition against the marriage of eunuchs ought to be general, given the nature of the desires they may be able to satisfy: “it is certain that an Eunuch can only satisfy the Desires of the Flesh, Sensuality, Impurity, and Debauchery; and as they are not capable of Procreation, they are more proper for such criminal Commerce than perfect Men, and more esteem’d for that Reason by lewd Women, because they can give them all the Satisfaction without running any Risk of Danger” (206-07). In answering this objection, Ancillon is led to contradict his acknowledgments elsewhere of the validity of female desire—for example, in his description of how the wives of impotent men are liable to pine away (167), since their “Nights will grow long and tedious” (220). But here, in maintaining the need for a general prohibition against the marriage of eunuchs, Ancillon also insists on strict limitations on legitimate female desire. As he bluntly puts it, “The lawful Desires of a Woman are to have Children” (210). When we think of the problem of female desire in Smollett’s *Humphry Clinker*, we are less likely to think of Lydia Melford, even though she is ravished by the voice of a castrato, than of Tabitha Bramble, in whose tireless husband-hunting Smollett both acknowledges the existence and satirizes the presence of sexual desire in women. However, both the romantic, sentimental young female character and the older one whom Smollett depicts as grotesque and sex-starved betray nonprocreative desires that the novel seeks to contain within patriarchally approved marriages.

Lydia Melford’s admiration for the castrato points beyond her own false taste and imprudence to the foreign and luxurious caprices of such women characters as Mrs. Burdock and Mrs. Baynard. In the absence of appropriate patriarchal direction, Lydia Melford might come to resemble Smollett’s negative paradigms for the female character: Mrs. Burdock is proud, arrogant, and domineering (160-61, June 26); Mrs. Baynard, totally lacking in understanding and taste, comes to rule her generous but weak husband while she herself is driven by the ruling passion of vanity (276, Sept. 30). Smollett corrects Lydia Melford’s admiration for town pleasures through the letters of Matthew Bramble, who, even if he is peevish, is older, wiser, and male. Bramble, disgusted by the noise and lack of clear social distinctions at
Ranelagh, believes that such confusion is favorable to the reputations of the vocal performers, since “they cannot be heard distinctly” (88, May 29). For Bramble and Smollett, the castrato, an undefinable “thing,” would be a perfect image for London: “this mishapen and monstrous capital, without head or tail, members or proportion” (89). People may indeed gratify their bad passions in London, “but, in the course of this gratification, their very organs of sense are perverted, and they become habitually lost to every relish of what is genuine and excellent in its own nature” (117, June 8). Whereas Lydia Melford praises the “fine imperial tea and other delicious refreshments” at Ranelagh (91), Matthew Bramble repudiates the products of foreign trade and condemns the adulteration and sophistication of food and drink in London, expressing his disgust at, among many other articles, the London rabbits that are “delicious in flavour” (120). Lydia Melford’s admiration for the voice of an Italian castrato results from an urban perversion of the senses, signalled by an appreciation of the delicious. Her taste and hearing have been led astray in London so that she is at risk of being governed by a false aesthetic—a perverse appreciation of the false and unnatural.

An even better analogy for this perversion of the senses appears in the “delicious perfume” that appeals, according to Dr. Diederich Wessel Linden, to yet a third sense—the refined Italian sense of smell. Jery Melford tells how the doctor asserted that “the last Grand Duke of Tuscany, of the Medicis family, who refined upon sensuality with the spirit of a philosopher, was so delighted with that odour, that he caused the essence of ordure to be extracted, and used it as the most delicious perfume” (19, April 18). But here, according to Linden, it is not only the sensual Italians and French who are pleased with stink, but also “nations . . . in a state of nature, undebauched by luxury,” such as the Hottentots, Greenland savages, and “the Negroes on the coast of Senegal” (19). Smollett is, of course, mocking the French by comparing them to the Hottentots, but he is also quite seriously enunciating his belief that the extremes of refinement and of savagery meet, and that nature, in his terms, resides at a mid-point between the two. As we shall see, just as in the matter of stink, the extremes also meet in the case of castration.

For now, we should insist on how the voice of the castrato is a product of surgery, a sophistication of the voice achieved at the cost of natural development and the natural power of generation. Smollett’s argument from nature is a phono-centric as well as a phallic-centric one. The voice is the medium of full human contact,
but the castrato’s voice is artificial and secondary, already like writing—at least from a phonocentric perspective.\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Humphry Clinker} is a novel about the rejection of writing, as in Lydia Melford’s declaration to Laetitia Willis that “I more than ever feel that vacancy in my heart, which your presence alone can fill” (320-21, Oct 14), or in Bramble’s final intention “to renounce all sedentary amusements, particularly that of writing long letters” (336, Nov 20). The activity of writing in this epistolary novel, more than in others, may be aptly embodied in the figure of the castrato, here associated with infertile intercourse; for given the circumstances of travel the correspondences tend to be one-sided and constitute, according to Lydia Melford, “a very imperfect enjoyment of friendship” (296, Oct. 4). Given this analogy between infertile sexual, and one-sided epistolary, intercourse, it is tempting to place Lydia Melford’s “imperfect enjoyment” into the context of the seventeenth-century sub-genre of the “imperfect enjoyment” poem.\textsuperscript{17} The impotence of the decadent, luxurious rake and the infertility of the castrato are equally images for the loss of wholeness and presence felt by the more sentimental correspondents in Smollett’s novel.

The figure of the castrato in \textit{Humphry Clinker} may be further illuminated by turning briefly to the novel Smollett published twenty years earlier, \textit{Peregrine Pickle}. The earlier novel contains a brief reference to Francesco Bernardi, the contralto commonly called Senesino, since, like Tenducci, he was born in Siena.\textsuperscript{18} In \textit{Peregrine Pickle} Smollett situates Senesino in the context of the luxuries of ancient Rome and the despotism of France. Smollett’s poetic republican doctor, based on Mark Akenside, gives a great feast in Paris after the manner of the ancients—a feast which nauseates the guests and drives the French chef mad. This cook has been forced by the terms of his contract to prepare food against the principles of his own art, “so that his brain seemed to have received a rude shock, and, in all probability, he would never be his own man again” (234). The cook suffers a loss of mental autonomy and is thus metaphorically unmanned by the terms of his employment, which deprive him of independent judgment. Though the cook would like to claim the status of an autonomous artist and citizen, he is demeaned by having exchanged his independence for a contractually arranged fee.\textsuperscript{19} Like the castrato, moreover, he is employed in the production of unnatural luxuries.

At the conclusion of the feast, Peregrine Pickle requests that one of the guests, the painter Pallet, sing an English drinking song, which offends “the delicate ears” of an Italian count (241). That
Smollett apparently regards the refined tastes of the count as perverse and unnatural is immediately suggested by the homosexual advances that the Italian makes toward a German baron, arousing Pickle’s “just detestation for all such abominable practices” (242). After the two noble male lovers have been beaten with a cane and driven out of the hotel by the landlady, Pickle persuades Pallet to accompany him to a masquerade in a costume chosen by the landlady, “a woman’s dress” (243). The frolic of cross-dressing is opposed to, yet colored by its association with, the “abomination” of homosexuality. Smollett presents both homosexuality and cross-dressing as threats to clear distinctions between the sexes. While at the masquerade, Pallet encounters a common difficulty of transvestites, whether to relieve himself by retiring to the room furnished for the men or to that for the women. He chooses the men’s room, whereupon he is molested by a prince, before being rescued by Pickle. For the insults they subsequently offer to a prince of the blood, Pickle and Pallet are confined to the Bastille. But fearful of creating an international incident, the French ministry consents to their release after three days.

Pickle, however, has another cruel jest to play on Pallet, who cannot understand French. He informs the painter that there are conditions attached to his release: “as the offence was committed in the habit of a woman, which was a disguise unworthy of the other sex; the French court was of opinion that the delinquent should for ever forfeit the privileges and characteristic of a man, which he had so shamefully deposited, or in other words, be deprived of his virility” (252). As an inducement to Pallet to submit to the necessary operation, Pickle observes that Pallet’s “voice, which was naturally sweet, would improve to such a degree, that he would captivate the ears of all the people of fashion and taste, and in a little time be celebrated under the appellation of the English Senesino” (253). The association between cross-dressing and castrati would have seemed a natural one, since the castrati especially in the first few roles of their careers typically appeared in female parts. This episode from Peregrine Pickle, then, begins with the “unmanning” of a French chef in a luxurious feast in the ancient Roman manner, and continues with the chastisement of aristocratic homosexuality and the comedy of cross-dressing, before concluding with the fantasized transformation of a singer of English ballads into one whose voice “would captivate the ears of all the people of fashion and taste.” The condition of the castrato is a punishment for behavior unworthy a man and an
independent citizen, behavior indeed that threatens clear gender distinctions.

Commerce threatens the status of the independent citizen both through contractual wage relations and through luxury. The French cook is "unmanned" contractually, while the spread of luxury is sapping the martial virtues of the traditional military classes. Not only Italian but also German aristocrats are guilty of "abominable" sexual practices, and English drinking songs threaten to give way to the castrato's aria. Tenducci, as well as Senesino, is implicated in this web of luxury, homosexuality, and loss of civic virtue, as it appears from a 1770 essay in the London Museum, attacking foreign music and the Grand Tour in general and Tenducci in particular:

Will not the soft transporting voice of our beauteous countrywomen, captivate the soul, without raking amongst the nerveless sons of Italy for eunuchs! Shall all the advantages of a tour be centered in a catamite, a fiddler, and a voice! Shall we, by travel, give up our reason, give up the Hebes of this isle, for turpitude and Ganymedes! . . . Shall a beauty too of these kingdoms resign the growth, the glorious breed of Ireland, for a sapless, yellow Tenducci! Shall the first personages amongst us, allow such cat-gut enchanters to possess, and receive at their hands double the pay of an Admiral or a general! Shall the highest of our highest nobles devote their time to private consorts and strum a guitar, instead of firing at the sound of a cannon?22

The anonymous author of the essay in the London Museum resembles Smollett in his fear of the declining reason and growing effeminacy of aristocrats; here, the Grand Tour provides the means by which continental infection has spread into England. The nobility of the sword has deteriorated with the rise of commerce and luxury. Like Adam Smith, Smollett was struck by the military abilities of the Scottish highlanders, whose successes against English regular troops in the 1745 rebellion seemed a forceful demonstration that an earlier "feudal" stage of society fostered military virtues that were threatened by commerce (245-46, Sept 6).23

In Humphry Clinker commerce and luxury are the major threats to clear sexual and social distinctions, and the driving force behind luxury is woman. Matthew Bramble remembers the estate of his friend Mr. Baynard as a "garden, which was well stocked with the best fruit which England could produce," and now finds nothing "but a naked circus of loose sand, with a dry bason and a leaden triton in the middle" (275, Sept 30). The Baynard estate has been reduced from its past fertility to its present desiccated condition by the influence of Baynard's wife. Mrs. Baynard, the former Miss Thomson, brought her husband a fortune acquired in the East Indian trade. She is associated both with the commerce of the City and with the imperial wealth that so disgusts Bramble at Bath.
Smollett offers a pessimistic conservative inversion of the old bourgeois story in which the landed estate is saved by means of a marital alliance with a citizen's daughter.

More specifically, in Bramble's analysis, the self-sufficiency of the country estate has been destroyed by luxury and by Baynard's "unmanly acquiescence under the absurd tyranny" of his wife (281). Baynard's estate is only one of four "within the same county... in a fair way of being burst by the inflation of female vanity" (282). Although he spends twice his income, Baynard finds no pleasure "within the rotation of absurdity, to which he is doomed for life" (279). Smollett uses the same image of pointless circularity to describe luxury earlier in the novel, in Bramble's description of the Rotunda at Ranelagh: "One half of the company are following one another's tails, in an eternal circle" (88). The repetition of the image should prompt us to reread Lydia Melford's praise of Ranelagh and Tenducci in the light of Mrs. Baynard's unmanning of her husband. What the country gentleman perceives as absurd circularity seems a paradise to women, even to such a woman as Lydia Melford: the voice of the unmanned Tenducci "warbled so divinely, that... I really thought myself in paradise" (91). A woman's heaven, according to Smollett, is predicated on the mutilation, commodification, and reification of man. Woman seeks to overturn the system of exchange between men on which our culture has been based. She seeks to become not only a consumer, but to make men the objects of exchange. But Smollett cannot imagine a man as a commodity, so emasculation must precede commodification. Tenducci is "a thing from Italy" (91), and he has been transformed from a potential man into a thing to satisfy the false taste and false wants of a fashionable marketplace, presided over by women. The threat to the independent artistry and ultimately the masculinity of the Parisian cook in Peregrine Pickle has been taken to an extreme in Humphry Clinker. The cook was metaphorically unmanned by the development of a "free" market in labor; the castrato has been literally emasculated in order to be made into a commodity for the consumption of luxurious women. Under the dominion of women, men undergo the same kind of desiccation as the national and estate economies, producing such creatures as the "sapless, yellow Tenducci."

The sapless castrato represents a substitution of money in place of a proper regard for the family, and that in two ways. First, and, it would seem, most obviously, the castrato cannot engage in sexual reproduction. Hence, Ancillon remarks of eunuchs, that "having
no domestick Tyes and Obligations, and natural Engagements, like other Men, they caressed their Riches, which they looked upon as their dearest Children” (Eunuchism Display’d 85). But the castrato is a figure for the failure of family in a second respect as well. Ancillon blames parents for the making of castrati: “they are generally the Persons who execute this cruelty on their Children, in hopes they may one day be a Help to them, and raise the rest of the Family” (39). He adds this reflection: “So fatal is it in Italy to be the Son of a poor Man, and have a fine Voice” (40). The castrato, then, is often a child who is mutilated as an investment. Economic considerations take precedence over familial bonds.

Failed by his own parents and unable to become a parent, the castrato stands in stark opposition to the family of Brambleton Hall. John Sekora has shown how both Jery Melford and Humphry Clinker find a benevolent tutor-father figure in Matthew Bramble.25 Bramble charitably clothes and employs one who proves to be his son; Clinker saves the life of one who proves to be his father. The story of discovering and building a family for Brambleton Hall finds its nightmarish inversion not only in the castrato, but in all the luxurious households of the novel. Mr. Burdock’s son, as Bramble informs us, has “just returned from Italy, a complete fidler and dillettante, and he slips no opportunity of manifesting the most perfect contempt for his own father” (161, June 26). Indeed, he goes beyond contempt to something approaching attempted parricide, in insisting that his father, having been injured, should undergo the dangerous and unnecessary operation of trepanning, which should perhaps be regarded as an upward displacement of castration.26 If castrati are the products of the cruelty of parents and the luxury of women, and if young squire Burdock is the product of Italy and the Grand Tour, the young Baynard heir is similarly at risk of becoming less than a man or, at least, than a gentleman. Mrs. Baynard bore her husband “three children, of which the last only survives, a puny boy of twelve or thirteen, who will be ruined in his education by the indulgence of his mother” (278, Sept 30). Humphry Clinker is opposed to young Baynard on account of his vigor and natural sense of chivalry, and to young Burdock by the actions he performs to preserve his father’s life.

But no doubt the most perfect contrary for Clinker in the novel is the castrato Tenducci. Clinker, according to Bramble, “is stout and lusty” (329, Oct 26), quite the reverse of yellow and sapless. That Smollett intends an opposition between Clinker and Tenducci is suggested by the simplicity of character that Clinker reveals in
enumerating his qualifications as a servant. Among his many accomplishments are musical ones: “I can play upon the Jew’s-harp, sing Black-ey’d Susan, Arthur-o’Bradley, and divers other songs” (82, May 24). Thus Clinker and Tenducci together recapitulate the musical transformation with which Peregrine Pickle threatens Pallet—from English balladeer to Italian opera singer. But there is a moral transformation here as well, from the English servant nostalgically portrayed as participating in precontractual relations of dependency and paternalism to the luxurious, highly remunerated, and yet extravagant opera singer. The opposition between effete Italian decadence and lusty English simplicity is emphasized as well by one of Clinker’s rural qualifications: “as for the practice of sow-gelding, I won’t turn my back on e’er a he in the county of Wilts”(81). The Italian sings opera and has suffered castration; the young Englishman sings ballads and is skillful in the art of gelding.27

In a mock trial report, for the imaginary county of Gelding, published a few years after Humphry Clinker, pigs paradigmatically replace castrati: “there is no possibility of having an Italian Opera performed without the assistance of the Castrati, by reason of their pigs throats, the Italian music abounding in shrill notes, exceedingly acute, and as high as the upper stories of the tower of Babel, which no animal but a pig is able to reach.”28 One of the specific targets of this Remarkable Trial, which blames the castrati for such disasters as potential national bankruptcy and defeats in the American Revolutionary War, is Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci. The Counsel for the Crown in the mock trial notes how “the managers of one of the Royal Theatres . . . gave about two thousand pounds for Count Rascalucci, taking him for the finest pig in Christendom” (11-12). The presiding Justice later notes how Count Rascalucci’s wife repented of her marriage (34), referring to the annulment of Tenducci’s marriage to Dora Maunsell, which took place on 28 February 1776 (Melicow 755). Smollett’s contrast between Tenducci and Clinker is informed by the powerful cultural opposition to Italian opera in England during the 1720’s and 1730’s, marked by the development of such native forms as the ballad opera, an opposition that survives into the late 1770’s in such a work as The Remarkable Trial of the Queen of Quavers. Clinker’s enumeration of his British accomplishments leads Matthew Bramble to exclaim, “Foregad! thou art a complete fellow” (82). The Italian Tenducci, on the other hand, is a figure of the incomplete.
Singing and castration are brought together in one further episode of the novel, providing support for Eric Rothstein’s contention that Smollett structures his fictional works by means of analogy.29 We have already seen how, in the matter of “stink,” Smollett effaces the apparent opposition between the advanced society of France and the savage nations, “in a state of nature” (18). He presents the opposition again, in the mouth of Obadiah Lismahago, only to collapse it by means of the theme of castration. In response to Tabitha Bramble’s inquiry about whether his Indian bride “had her hair dressed in the Parisian fashion” (189, July 13), Lismahago introduces his description of the fantastic and grotesque wedding ornamentation of Squinkinacoosta with this praise of her people, the Miamis: “he said . . . that neither the simplicity of their manners, nor the commerce of their country, would admit of those articles of luxury which are deemed magnificence in Europe; and that they were too virtuous and sensible to encourage the introduction of any fashion which might help to render them corrupt and effeminate” (189). But the fact that Squinkinacoosta’s wedding dress includes “the fresh scalp of a Mohawk warrior” (190) suggests that the principle of basing female fashion on male mutilation operates among the Miamis just as it does in Europe where women find paradise in the voices of castrati.

This interpretation, which implicates Lydia Melford in luxury and savage female violence for her admiration of Tenducci, is substantiated by Lismahago’s account of why he rather than his more handsome companion Murphy receives Squinkinacoosta as his bride:

... in passing through the different whigwhams or villages of the Miamis, poor Murphy was so mangled by the women and children, who have the privilege of torturing all prisoners in their passage, that... he was rendered altogether unfit for the purposes of marriage; it was determined therefore, in the assembly of the warriors, that ensign Murphy should be brought to the stake, and that the lady should be given to lieutenant Lismahago, who had likewise received his share of torments, though they had not produced emasculation. (188)

In order further to establish that female dominion is the source of the violence inflicted on both Murphy and Tenducci, Smollett adds the detail “that Murphy died with great heroism, singing” (188). Just as the Italian mutilated by female luxury divinely warbles, so the Irishman tortured by female savagery stoically sings. The Stoicism for which the American Indians were so frequently praised, from Montaigne into the nineteenth century, is here transferred to the two soldiers, an Irishman and a Scot, whom Smollett views as both agents and victims of English
imperialism. And for Smollett the driving force behind English imperialism is the importation of luxury goods desired by women.

Although Smollett seems to approach the model of development through four stages of society that the Scottish historical school had begun to explore, the episode of the Miamis shows that he is attracted instead to an older cyclical model in which savagery and extreme refinement meet. Even though Humphry Clinker depicts a hunting society with the Miamis, a pastoral society in the Scottish Highlands, an agricultural society on the relatively self-contained estates of Bramble and Dennison, and a commercial society in London, Smollett does not finally regard these different societies as stages in a natural and law-governed progression. Indeed he partially effaces the distinction between a hunting society and a commercial one, and his motive for this effacement would seem to be a conviction of the fundamentally unchanging nature of women and of human sensuality. Female violence, Smollett maintains, is equally fierce in the hunting society of the Miamis and the commercial society of London. Similarly, the odor of excrement is equally enjoyed by the Hottentots and by luxurious Italian aristocrats. While Smollett’s critique of female luxury and the effeminacy produced by commerce is a response to eighteenth-century economic conditions, his analysis of the problem is based on a universalization of what he regards as a female threat to masculinity and social order.

But the mutilation of men that Smollett fears—whether it results from the market value of the castrato’s voice, from “the inflation of female vanity,” or from the sadistic pleasures of un-feminine American Indian women—is countered in Humphry Clinker by a familiar strategy: the commodification of women. Lieutenant Lismahago’s second wife, Tabitha Bramble, is simultaneously an entrepreneur and a commodity, an agent of the new economic order and a more than willing object for male consumption. She seeks to exploit the luxury of the times by turning certain produce of her brother’s estate from traditional agrarian uses to luxurious commercial ones: the buttermilk that fed a farmer’s pigs “may be sold for a halfpenny the quart” (75, May 19), now that a famous physician is prescribing it for consumptive patients. Yet Tabitha Bramble herself has just been (ironically) termed by her brother a “precious commodity” (74).

However, Smollett’s most effective strategy for containing the female threat is to show not primarily that women have been commodified by a patriarchal and increasingly commercial society, but rather that they are the agents of their own commodification.
If Italian boys are made into things to satisfy luxurious female desires, women transform themselves into commodities through their own vanity and lust. Hence Smollett has one female character, Lydia Melford, charge another, Tabitha Bramble, with having “gone to market with her charms in every place where she thought she had the least chance to dispose of her person” (251, Sept 7). Lydia Melford’s development in the novel consists of, in Sekora’s words, a “transformation and permanent conversion to her uncle’s views” (Sekora 257). By the end of the work the strolling player with whom she has fallen in love has been transformed into the ideal gentleman George Dennison. Along with the threat of the mingling of social classes, the sexual threat of Lydia Melford also fades. 

So while one of her early letters divinely contained the voice of the castrated male, by the end of the book Bramble’s or Smollett’s voice has become predominant and Lydia Melford has been reduced to a patriarchal ventriloquist’s puppet. Smollett’s impersonation of this young sentimental woman may be seen as a stabilizing instance of “female impersonation” in epistolary fiction.

But then Matthew Bramble is not an unambiguously patriarchal figure. Bramble, superficially misanthropic, represents Smollett’s fullest development of the new man of feeling. Such critics of sentimentalism as George Starr and Jean Hagstrum have argued that the new sentimental hero is sometimes a feminized man and not infrequently an impotent one. Smollett is attracted to a new benevolent model of masculinity, one in which a man’s strength resides in his sympathy for others, if not exactly, as with Mary Shelley’s Velluti, with others’ sympathy for him. Still, for a male author such as Smollett, limits must be placed on this transformation of masculinity, and those limits are at least partially drawn by deploying the nightmare figure of the castrato.

However, the last word is not given to (or should we say taken by?) Bramble or even Lydia Melford, with her newly adopted country gentry values. Instead, Winifred Jenkins, Tabitha Bramble’s former servant, now married to Matthew Loyd (formerly Humphry Clinker), writes the final letter. When the Bramble party visited Newcastle, Winifred Jenkins attended the theater adorned and coiffed quite unsuitably for one of her low social condition. Now at the end of the novel she regards herself as “removed to a higher spear” (337, Nov 20). The last letter of the novel is devoted to Jenkins—like Tenducci, another figure of social mobility—and to the circumstantial details of her wedding dress. Social mobility and fascination with the consumption of luxuries make their final,
forceful impression on the reader, betraying Smollett’s recognition of the inevitability of the new commercial economy and the social disruption it has brought. And with one of the final strokes of Winifred Loyd’s pen, the violence of female orthography transforms a male “person” (Clinker himself) into something resembling a commodity or money—“his pursing” (337). Has Smollett securely contained the threat of woman’s reification and emasculation of men, after all?

But this story has one further twist, for Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci is “said to have had two children” by Dora Maunsell. It was at least widely reported that this castrato was not so sapless after all, and that the failure of parenting had been greatly exaggerated. The phonocentric perspective from which the voice of the castrato sounded artificial and mediated is dissolved in the surprising fertility of writing.

NOTES

I wish to thank Frances Ferguson, Ronald Paulson, David Marshall and the members of the 1990 NEH Institute on “Art and the Emergence of Aesthetics” for their criticisms and comments on this article. George Haggerty, Deborah Laycock, and John C. Ward made valuable comments on earlier versions of this paper.


2. Peggy Kamuf, Fictions of Feminine Desire: Disclosures of Heloise (Lincoln, 1982), 103.


4. Eunuchism Display’d (London, 1718), 31. The most famous English incident of the defication of a castrato occurred at a performance by Farinelli, at which a lady is said to have cried out, “One God, one Farinelli.” This incident was memorialized by William Hogarth in Plate 2 of “A Rake’s Progress.” See the commentary by Ronald Paulson, comp., Hogarth’s Graphic Works, 3rd ed. (London, 1989), 92-93. See also the account in the Gentleman’s Magazine 5 (March 1735):145: “a Fellow, who is only fit to enervate the Youth of Great-Britain, by the pernicious Influence of his Unnatural Voice, shall be recompensed, for the Mischiefs he does, beyond the first Nobleman in England, for his Services. But can any thing be too considerable, for one, of whom it was said, in the Pit, after one of his Songs, One God, one Farinelli!”


6. Lewis Mansfield Knapp, Tobias Smollett: Doctor of Men and Manners (Princeton, 1949), 235-36. In his poem “On Signior Tenducci’s Singing JUBAL’S LYRE. By a Prisoner in the King’s Bench,” Smollett does not focus on the physiological or cultural significance of the castrato nor even on Tenducci’s personal extravagance. Instead, the poem attacks the hard-hearted creditors who exploit the system of imprisonment for debt. The imprisoned poet writes that Tenducci’s voice is capable of miracles greater
even than those feigned of Orpheus, since the castrato's strong, soft, and clear voice might dissipate a creditor's rage and "With magic pow'r would charm his savage ear; / Calm all his angry passions into rest, / And into pity melt his frozen breast!" (British Magazine 2 [January 1761]:48). Thomas Preston refers to this poem in his helpful note on Tenducci in the Georgia edition of Humphry Clinker (369, n.4).


8. A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. and Mrs. Tenducci (London, 1768), 33.

9. Jill Campbell considers the poems on Farinelli in an essay on Fielding's plays, thereby providing the best discussion of the figure of the castrato in recent English literary criticism: "When Men Women Turn: Gender Reversals in Fielding's Plays," in The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature, ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (New York, 1987), 62-83. Campbell's focus on the "disabled phallus" (68) relies, in part, on the exploration of the medical dimension of castration in Enid Rhodes Peschel and Richard E. Peschel, "Medicine and Music: The Castrati in Opera," Opera Quarterly 4 (1986):21-38. The Peschels maintain that one of the effects of prepubertal castration is "an infantile penis" (27), but their argument that a castrato could not "have consummated a sexual relationship with a woman" (31) seems to me inconclusive. Most of their evidence points merely to infertility rather than to impotence. The urologist Meyer Melicow suggests, on the contrary, that under certain conditions and depending on the type of operation performed it might have been possible for a castrato to be sexually potent (Melicow 754).

10. An Epistle to John James H—dd—g—r, Esq; on the Report of Signior F-r-n-lU's being with Child (London, 1736), 4.

11. The Happy Courtesan: Or, the Prude Demolish'd. An Epistle from the Celebrated Mrs. C——— P———, to the Angelick Signior F—n—li (London, 1735). 6. Howard D. Weinbrot quotes these lines and persuasively argues that they were not written by Constantia Phillips. He also asserts, more dubiously, that the speaker of the poem is "inviting Farinelli to dildo her," in "The New Eighteenth Century and the New Mythology," The Age of Johnson 8 (1990):384. Given the reference to the "scrubbing Brushes" of men's beards earlier in The Happy Courtesan (3), the relevant context for this poem would not appear to be the "wax dildoes" of Fielding's The Historical Register, as Weinbrot claims, but rather John Dryden's translation of Juvenal's Sixth Satire:

There are, who in soft Eunuchs, place their Bliss; To shun the scrubbing of a Bearded Kiss: And scape Abortion; but their solid joy Is when the Page, already past a Boy, Is Capon'd late; and to the Guelder shown, With his two Pounders, to Perfection grown. When all the Navel-string cou'd give, appears; All but the Beard; and that's the Barber's loss, not theirs.


15. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers seem to have thought that the sexual potency of eunuchs depended upon how the operation of castration was performed. In

This content downloaded from 138.28.20.205 on Wed, 5 Nov 2014 15:18:18 PM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions
1658, John Bulwer writes: “Two waies there are of this unnaturall dilapidation of the body, one is performed by contusion, the other by excision, the last being more approved of; for they who have suffered the contusion of their Testicles, may now and then affect to play the man, some part (as it is likely) of the Testicles lying hid within,” in Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform’d: Or, the Artificial Changling, 2nd ed. (London, 1658), 359. In the Turkish scragglies, however, no chances were taken with the eunuchs: “they are all of them not only gelt, but have their Yards also clean cut off” (360). Deborah Laycock brought to my attention the chapter in Bulwer’s book entitled “Strange Inventive Contradictions against Nature, Practically Maintained by Divers Nations in the Ordering of Their Prity-parts,” from which I have taken the above quotations.


19. Even if the French cook were not compromised by contractual relations, he could not possess the virtue of the classical republican citizen as it has been described most notably in the work of J. G. A. Pocock. The cook would still have been too specialized, on the one hand, and, on the other, he would have lacked the independence and the concern for public good guaranteed by arms or landed property. Even though the cook is not the perfect example, Smollett clearly holds to the ideal of the autonomous propertied man who has alienated none of his capacities and who has preserved an undivided personality. In the eighteenth century, as Pocock notes, the division or alienation of personal autonomy brought about by public credit and the extension of capitalist relations of production was figured as a feminization. See “The Mobility of Property and the Rise of Eighteenth-Century Sociology,” in Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1985), 114.

20. Robert Adams Day includes a brief discussion of this episode from Peregrine Pickle as part of the impressive evidence he marshalls to support his thesis that Smollett’s idiosyncratic “sexual myth” centers on an obsession with analeroticism, in “Sex, Scatology, Smollett,” in Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé (Manchester, 1982), 232. He defines this sexual myth most succinctly toward the end of his essay: “bad, equated with effeminate, men may or ought to be ‘punished’ by sodomy;
they will then turn into females (inferior beings)" (299). In *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford, 1986), Terry Castle has shown in general how conservative writers like Smollett tended to see in the masquerade sexual chaos and "the decay of civilization" (viii). Castle argues that the "squeaking" voice characteristic of masqueraders both obscured identity and "mystified gender." For men the use of a masquerade falsetto suggested comic emasculation: the ambiguous eighteenth-century figure of the castrato may have been parodied here" (56). Smollett's reference to Senevino would seem to follow inevitably, then, from Pallet's cross-dressing at the masquerade.

21. In *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 1967), Ronald Paulson uses Pickle's behavior toward Pallet as evidence in support of his argument that the Smollett hero is a Juvenalian satirist: Pickle "produces a satire on the gullible, stupid, and terror-stricken painter and on castrato sopranos, wives, the English, and so on" (182). At the same time, argues Paulson, the disinterested cruelty of Pickle's practical jokes, as in his treatment of Pallet, provides the material for Smollett's moral "inquiry into the nature of satire in relation to the individual who practices it" (186).

22. Quoted in Frederick Petty, *Italian Opera in London 1760-1800* (Ann Arbor, 1980), 3.4. The castrato makes a figure in more purely economic writing in the mid-eighteenth century, especially when luxury is the target. In an anonymous pamphlet of 1743, Bernard Mandeville's defence of luxury and the figure of the castrato are both attacked in the course of a single paragraph: "Private Vices cannot be publick Benefits. *Nemo repente fit pessimus:* Vice comes by Degrees; from Fashion often proceeds those Ills, which Custom and a long Standing render incurable: Else whence can it come, that our Ladies should prefer the Singing of an *Italian Umbra Viri* before the more natural Harmony of their own Sex? but it is no doubt but our Gentlemen, in bare Compliance to the Fair Sex, imitate their Taste; and may they not find Shakespeare's Saying, by sad Experience, too true, viz. that the Toe of the Peasant follows so close the Heel of the Courtier already, that it galls his Kibe": *An Enquiry into the Melancholy Circumstances of Great Britain* (London, 1743). 34. That Smollett's attack on luxury derives from a similar conservative vision of social hierarchy is suggested by Matthew Bramble's alluding to the same passage from *Hamlet* the very letter in which he objects to the vocal performances at Ranelagh: "The hod-carrier, the low mechanic, the tapster, the publican, the shop-keeper, the pettyfogger, the citizen, and courtier, all tread upon the kibes of one another" (87-88, May 29).


26. In his famous commentary on Hoffmann's "The Sandman," Freud remarks on how not only the fear of losing one's eyes but also the fantasized screwing off of Nathaniel's arms and legs serve as castration equivalents: Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" in Vol. 17 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London, 1955), 231-32. The cutting out of a piece of Burdock's skull, in the operation of trepanning, would be a similar sort of maiming to those discussed by Freud. Notably, prior to the operation, the "York surgeon" wants to "take off the scalp" (162). We may thus compare the activities of Burdock's wife and son to those of Lishmahago's American Indian bride, who wears "the fresh scalp of a Mohawk

27. Of course, the opposition between the opera singer and the footman is not exact, since Clinker is proficient in the gelding of female pigs. In John Buwer’s discussion of the castration of women in Anthropometa morphosis, the two British examples he cites both concern sow-gelders who turned their skills from cattle to women. The second of the two instances provides a sadistic extreme of the patriarchal control of female sexuality: “this succeeded well to a certain Sow-gelder, who suspecting his Daughter guilty of Adultery, violently extracting the Wombe, spaded her after the manner of Cattle, that afterwards she might be unfit for bearing of Children” (365). In the light of this particular rural qualification, Clinker could be seen as a figure capable of avenging the male sex for the crimes of female passion and luxury.

28. The Remarkable Trial of the Queen of Quavers, and Her Associates, for Sorcery, Witchcraft, and Enchantment, at the Assizes Held in the Moon, for the County of Gelding, before the Rt. Hon. Sir Francis Lash, Lord Chief Baron of the Lunar Exchequer (London, 1778), 111.


31. John P. Zomchick has pointed out and explained the important fact that, in Humphry Clinker, “whereas all the female correspondents marry, the male correspondents do not. If female nature suffers from the association with vanity, expense, and disorder, then it stands to reason that it must be contained in some way”: “Social Class, Character, and Narrative Strategy in Humphry Clinker,” Eighteenth-Century Life 10 (October 1986):185, n.15. My argument about the disruptive force of the novel’s final letter parallels Zomchick’s contention that Winifred Jenkins’s voice provides a contradiction to the apparent social consensus that has been achieved through Smollett’s comic ending (184).


34. The most remarkable thing about Jenkins’s dress when she accompanies the foppish servant Dutton to the play is “the frisure of her head, which rose, like a pyramid, seven inches above the scalp . . . .” (202, July 18). Neil McKendrick has described the crucial role of servant girls in spreading new fashions outward from London to the provinces and downward in the social scale, in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society (Bloomington, 1982), 59. Jenkins’s remarkable appearance might be glossed by McKendrick’s comment on the hairstyles of this period: “The ultra fashionable went to prodigious lengths to keep ahead of the pack in the 1770s and 1780s. Live flowers—with concealed bottles of water to keep them fresh—large butterflies, baskets of fruit, cater-pillars in blown glass, even models of coaches and horses sprouted from, or galloped across, or merely inhabited the mountainous hairstyles then
in vogue. In 1778 even vegetables were in fashion as hair accessories." (63) Jenkins’s gaudy dress should remind us as well of Squinkinacoosta’s wedding ornamentation, especially given Tabitha Bramble’s inquiry about whether Lismahago’s bride wore her hair “in the Parisian fashion” (189). The pyramid on Jenkins’s head, with its suggestions of the phallus and of death, resembles “the fresh scalp” about Squinkinacoosta’s neck.

35. Noting numerous instances in Shakespeare’s works, Marc Shell argues that “[t]he symptomatic association—indeed, conceptual interchangeability—of person and purse . . . is typical of Christian feudal and capitalist states in general,” in Money, Language, and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era (Berkeley, 1982), 65.