

Tobias Smollett at 300: the work of writing

Online conference: 13 – 14 May 2021

Tobias Smollett (1721–1771) probably wrote more words than any other writer in the eighteenth century. This has often been overlooked because the words were not always his own. Smollett laboured over vast works of compilation, including historical works, reviews, magazines, translations and compendiums. Even his novels – which sit a little awkwardly in the stories that have been told about the rise of the novel – embraced a similar practice. As a result, Smollett has never been quite able to achieve the reputation which he rightly deserves – that is, as one of the great literary figures of the mid-eighteenth century.

This year marks the three-hundredth anniversary of Smollett's birth, which provides the excuse to ask some questions about his 'work of writing'. This is the kind of work that might stand as an image of the Enlightenment; it is also a labour that, as Smollett predicted, exhausted him and contributed to his death. We will want to ask how Smollett understood the task that he set himself. Is it right to speak of him as a historian or translator or critic or poet or novelist or hack? How can we understand the kind of creativity Smollett shows in his work? What might this tell us about the work of writing in the eighteenth century – or how might it change our understanding of the Enlightenment itself?

The conference is supported by the History of Books and Reading (HOBAR) research collaboration based in the Department of English and Creative Writing at The Open University, UK, and the Institute of English Studies, University of London.

Conference organiser

Dr. Richard J. Jones, Lecturer in English Literature at The Open University, UK

Abstracts and speaker biographies

Thursday 13 May 2021

Session 1 (15:00 – 15.15): Conference welcome and introduction

Session 1 (15:15 – 15.15): Smollett today

Daniel H. Ferris (Miles Community College, USA)

'Classless and Unconfined': Tobias Smollett, the Public Intellectual as Novelist

At the outset of the third decade of the twenty-first century, Tobias Smollett's name remains far removed from the spotlight, the result of treatment by hostile nineteenth-century critics. Many of Smollett's mainline biographers – Knapp, Kahrl, Martz, and Basker – attempted to reform Smollett's image as someone presentable and socially interesting or pigeon-holed his work as that of a journalist or travel writer. Ian Watt, the dominant post-World War II voice of eighteenth-century British literary criticism, exacerbated this trend by relegating Smollett to the back benches of the eighteenth-century literary order of merit.

The trend established by Watt continued into the early 2000s when Jeremy Lewis published the most recent general biography of Smollett and strangely undercut his own effort by admitting his personal inability to muster the desire to read more than a small portion of Smollett. Also percolating in this age, the modern literary studies crowd seeks to pick Smollett apart for various attitudes and tendencies at odds with modern social and political dogma. This paper intends to break away from the banal confines of academic taxonomy and expose the mind of a thinker who deserves to be considered alongside another often misunderstood, but somewhat better treated public intellectual, Albert Camus. Inspired primarily by Smollett's first and final novels, and the sadly overlooked study of Smollett's life by Donald Bruce, this paper shines a light on a universal Smollett, one whose major works should finally be understood as timeless testaments to the human condition.

Daniel H. Ferris began his journey in higher education in his native Virginia within the community college system, an institution which owes its existence to the spirit of Thomas Jefferson's vision of providing opportunities regardless of economic or social circumstances. Centered within the context of the Anglo-American Enlightenment, Daniel's interests include ancient philosophy and architecture, eighteenth-century British art, architecture and literature, and post-WWII philosophy and popular culture. His intellectual models include Seneca, William Hogarth, Tobias Smollett, Joseph Wright of Derby, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Camus. Daniel holds a doctorate in history from the University of North Dakota. A general humanist, he teaches courses in Humanities, Philosophy, and Western Civilization in the Montana Community College system.

Frank Felsenstein (Ball State University, USA)

Was Smollett into Body-Snatching?: Deciphering a Hitherto Unpublished Letter

My choice of title is dictated by the scabrous appearance of an extensive website on the eighteenth-century novelist that ranges from such minor matter as claiming that Tobias Smollett defrauded his tailor to the far more shocking imputation that he involved himself in the lucrative trade in cadavers by aiding anatomists to obtain human bodies for the purpose of dissection. As one who pursued a career in medicine while simultaneously fashioning himself into a full time writer, Smollett was well aware of the practice of body snatching, whereby anatomists employed ruffian gangs to bargain with the hangman for the unclaimed bodies of miscreants strung up on the gallows, or illicitly to dig up corpses of the freshly buried in the dead of night. In *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751), he derides physicians as 'a class of animals who live ... like so many ravens hovering about a carcass.' In the same year, his contemporary, William Hogarth, depicted the ultimate fate of his anti-hero, Tom Nero, who is being dissected by the surgeons in the grizzly final plate of *The Four Stages of Cruelty*.

The subtitle to my paper denotes the addition of a new letter to the slender corpus of Smollett's extant correspondence. I shall endeavour to explore the significance of this letter insofar as it has been interpreted – and I think wrongly misjudged – as evidence of the author's involvement, directly or by proxy, in body snatching. Instead, I shall propose an alternative interpretation relating to Smollett's treatment of and attitude to servants, which later finds vivid expression in *Travels through France and Italy* (1766) and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771).

Frank Felsenstein taught for most of his career in the School of English at the University of Leeds, and more recently as Reed D. Voran Distinguished Professor of Humanities at Ball State University from which he retired as Emeritus in 2017. He edited the Clarendon text of Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy*, later reissued with a shorter introduction in the Oxford World's Classics series, and subsequently revised and updated as a Broadview Press text. He is the author of *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830*, and editor of *English Trader, Indian Maid: An Inkle and Yarico Reader*, both with Johns Hopkins University Press. He co-authored with Dr. James J. Connolly *What Middletown Read: Print Culture in an American Small City* (U. Mass Press). He is at present completing a book on his parents' experience as refugees from Nazi Germany. He lives in Chicago.

Session 2 (16.30 – 17.30): Smollett and medicine

Sophie Vasset (Université de Paris, France)

Gall and glam: uses of Smollett's fiction as historical source

Many studies of eighteenth-century Bath quote from Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* to evoke the promiscuity of bodies wading in the water in the bath, echoing Matthew Bramble's anxieties over such unsanitary uses of water. What is most striking, more so than the recurrence of this reference, is the use that is made of it. Very often, in spite of the avowed fictional nature of the book, direct historical deductions are drawn from Smollett's writing. This phenomenon extends beyond Bath, and Smollett's fiction is a recurrent reference for the history of medicine and spas.

This paper will look at 300 years of historical uses of Smollett's fiction in relation to medicine and spas with one question in mind: what in Smollett's writing radiates such magnetic attraction for historical perspectives on the body? Part of this attraction lies in his triple authority as historian, medical doctor and literary reviewer, which secondary sources keep mentioning. The gall of his writing vein is legendary, but is it enough reason? Or is it the glamour of his belligerent persona, whose satirical outbursts spare no character and no institution and his hypnotic voice that attract readers probably more than they would like to? I will argue that his specific literary voice and his petulant use of poetics are another reason for luring his reader into multifold effects of reality.

Sophie Vasset is an Associate Professor at the Université de Paris. She has published extensively on eighteenth-century British literature (*The Physics of Language*, PUF, 2010), eighteenth-century history of medicine (*Décrire, Prescrire, Guérir*, Hermann, 2011; *Bellies Bowels and Entrails in the Eighteenth Century* with S Kleiman-Lafon & R. Barr) and she is currently writing a book on mineral waters in eighteenth-century Britain and Europe (*Murky Waters: Mineral Waters in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*), to be published with Manchester University Press. She is part of the steering committee of 'The Person in Medicine Institute' at the Université de Paris, and she obtained a CNRS research grant (*délégation*) at the IHRIM research center, Université de Clermont-Auvergne in 2019-20. She is also the director of the *Fondation des États-Unis*, Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris.

Laurence Sullivan (Northumbria University, UK)

‘Ladies with Facility’: Smollett, Self-Help and Women’s Domestic Medicine

This paper aims to challenge the perception of Smollett’s negative attitude towards women practising medicine by giving a brief overview of the more positive representation of domestic medical practice performed by the ‘Grave Matron’ in *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), and Tabitha Bramble in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), before moving on to examine how women’s domestic medical manuals were received by *The Critical Review* – for which Smollett was the first editor. Although we can infer something of Smollett’s views on women practising more professionalised forms of medicine – such as midwifery – from texts like the *Continuation of the Complete History of England* (1761), where the move of the practice into the hands of men is positioned as a positive development, nowhere is his opinion on women practising medicine in the domestic sphere stated openly.

By examining key instances of both the ‘Grave Matron’ and Tabitha exhibiting a practical knowledge of medicine and applying their associated skills to tangible effect, I present a pair of altruistic and efficacious healers. These moments are then compared with the advice contained within medical self-help manuals directed towards women, reflecting favourably on the practice of both characters, before concluding with an exploration of how *The Critical Review* received these types of texts from Smollett’s editorship onwards. The warm reception of these titles, when other periodicals were often scathing in their criticism – combined with the positive portrayal of the medical practice of two characters often critically maligned – all aim to shift our perception of Smollett both as an author and an individual.

Laurence Sullivan is a second-year PhD student at Northumbria University on the major Leverhulme-Trust funded project: *Writing Doctors: Writing Health from the Eighteenth Century to the Twenty-First*. His own research focuses on literary representations of women who practised domestic medicine during the eighteenth century, exploring the role medical self-help played in society, and how women could be empowered by being given the means to take ownership of their own health. He was recently awarded a Huntington Library Fellowship for his project: *Fashion Victims?: Women Mimicking, Moulding, and Managing Fashionable Disease in Eighteenth-Century Britain*.

Session 3 (18.00 – 19.00): Smollett and Scotland

Spartaco Pupo (University of Calabria, Italy)

Smollett, Hume and the Project of a National History Unaffected by Political Bias

This paper focuses on the complex history of the editorial project of the *History of England* as a reconstruction of national history and its two undisputed protagonists: David Hume and Tobias Smollett. They were rival historians united by mutual intellectual appreciation and a single interest: the defence of pure truth, freed from dogmatism, factionalism, ideological zeal and the Whiggism typical of their time. This intellectual freedom was the secret of their public success, which was immediate for Smollett and, in the case of Hume, suffered even more. But it was also the main reason for their friendship, which has been little explored so

far, since historiography has almost always stressed their ruthless competition.

Nevertheless, Smollett wrote very generous reviews of Hume's works. And Hume, despite a certain initial distrust, responded with words of sympathy. Although a group of London booksellers worked out a plan to quickly publish a general history of England before Hume's *History* found an English market, and the author they commissioned was Smollett himself, the threat posed by Smollett's work was never so serious as to disturb Hume's sense of proportion or his friendly attitude towards his fellow countryman. A pleasant acquaintance and correspondence continued between these two great writers, marked by respect and genuine friendliness.

Spartaco Pupo is Associate Professor of History of Political Thought at the University of Calabria. His research has mainly focused on David Hume's political thought, to which he has dedicated several works and paper in international conferences. He has edited and introduced the Italian complete edition of Hume's political writings (*Libertà e moderazione*, 2016), the first Italian edition of the Hume-Rousseau dispute (*Contro Rousseau*, 2017), and of the Humean youthful writings (*Civiltà e barbarie*, 2018). He edited the volume of Hume's essays *A Petty Statesman: Writings on War and International Affairs* (2019). He is member of the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society, of the Hume Society, and of the Association for Political Theory (USA).

Phineas Dowling (Auburn University, USA)

'This united kingdom': Tobias Smollett and the Writing of Anglo-Scottish Union After the '45

On April 16, 1746, at Culloden Moor, Charles Edward Stuart's attempt to reclaim the British throne for the Stuart line came to a definitive end. The battle ended the 1745 Jacobite Rising (the Forty-Five) and was followed by brutal reprisals against the Scots. The uprising's aftermath inspired one of Tobias Smollett's first published works, the poem *The Tears of Scotland*, and stuck with him into his later work as an historian, translator, and novelist. Smollett's writing was part of a larger cultural conversation about the significance of the uprising and its impact on Anglo-Scottish politics and memory. In this paper, I will argue Tobias Smollett used his writing to promote a vision of an ameliorative Anglo-Scottish Union and a shared British identity after the strife of the Forty-Five. My argument builds on similar recent appraisals of Smollett from scholars like Juliet Shields and Rivka Swenson. I will examine how Smollett responded to the aftermath of Culloden in the years following the Forty-Five in his poem, *The Tears of Scotland* (1746) and in his first novel, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748). While some might expect Smollett's work in this period to reflect a deep anger and anti-English stance, I argue Smollett channelled his disaffection into pro-Union literature and action. Smollett, through his writing, serves, as Elaine McGirr explains, as a 'cultural broker', attempting to bring Scotland and England closer, 'to forge a hybrid British identity' [*Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age*, 2007, p. 161].

Phineas Dowling earned his PhD in Literature from Auburn University and specializes in eighteenth-century British Literature. His dissertation, 'After Culloden: Anglo-Scottish Identity in the Wake of the 1745 Jacobite Rising' examines the ways Anglo-Scottish identity

and the Union are negotiated within literary and linguistic discourse during and after the Jacobite Rising of 1745. Using theoretical lenses of nation, racialization, identity, and ideology, he analyses how contemporary popular periodicals, the late works of Henry Fielding, and the early works of Tobias Smollett all participated in the literary and cultural negotiation of Anglo-Scottish national identity through their connection to the Forty-Five.

Friday 14 May 2021

Session 4 (10.00 – 11.30): Lightning papers: narratives and silences

Tania S Marlowe (Monash University, Australia)

'That exhale from a rose, and steam from a dunghill:' Reading *The History and Adventures of an Atom* through Object-Oriented Ontology

The History and Adventures of an Atom (1769) is one of Smollett's lesser known narratives. It is a scatological satire of the Seven Years' War, and is included in the genre of it-narrative, due to the nonhuman perspective of the titular atom which frames the entire narrative. Though originally published anonymously, Robert Adams Day's scholarship points to Smollett as the author of the text ['The Authorship of the Atom,' *Philological Quarterly*, Vol. 59 No. 2, 1980, pp. 187–93.], and yet there is still little scholarly work dedicated to this peculiar two volume novel [A. Douglas, *Uneasy Sensations: Smollett and the Body*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1995, p 134. Aileen Douglas makes the claim that readers and critics have avoided the text because of its focus on scatological humour and bodily functions.]

There is an increased interest in literary studies in the twenty-first century in using ecocriticism and posthumanism to read literature and reveal new ways of encountering the text which decentre the human perspective. This paper will aim to read Smollett's *History and Adventures of an Atom* through a philosophy called Object-Oriented Ontology, which argues against the privileging of human perspective and cognition above all other objects. Reading Smollett's novel with this framework opens up the text to twenty-first-century readers who may have never encountered this particular Smollett novel, and are interested in how to read an eighteenth-century text through a twenty-first-century philosophy.

Tania S Marlowe is a PhD student at Monash University, Australia. Her research focuses on the eighteenth-century genre of fiction called 'it-narrative', which features nonhuman protagonists and first person narration, and uses the twenty-first-century anti-anthropocentric philosophy of Object-Oriented Ontology to read these nonhuman protagonists.

Hanne Roth (University of Tübingen, Germany)

Avuncular Non-Development in *Peregrine Pickle*

While no study of Smollett's novels fails to mention the quixotic uncle figures that people the author's fictional universe, there has, as yet, been no systematic study of these memorable misfits and their unconventional lifestyle. To illustrate the findings of my dissertation on Smollett's uncles, my talk will focus on his most iconic avuncular figure:

Peregrine Pickle's Commodore Trunnion. Using queer theory, I will take a closer look at the arrested development and eccentric lifestyle of Trunnion and his companions. It is my contention that queer theory provides valuable insights into the more unpalatable and confounding aspects of Smollett's fiction. In particular the concepts of queer temporality and queer failure can help us appreciate Smollett's fascination with quixotic figures.

Attempts at rectifying Smollett's status as the most overlooked writer of the eighteenth century often try to find coherence and a developmental logic where there is in fact none. Thus, it seems a rather misguided endeavour to read *Peregrine Pickle* as a Bildungsroman. If the text startles (and sometimes wearies) us with its lack of narrative trajectory, should we not consider the possibility that 'meaning' is to be found in the failure to move forward itself? If, as a novelist, Smollett is uninterested in what Halberstam calls 'the usual developmental logic of narrative progression', it might be time that we took a closer look at what Smollett was interested in: non-development.

Hanne Roth is a PhD candidate at the University of Tübingen. Hanne has studied English Literature, Philosophy and Indology at the Universities of Tübingen, Stuttgart, Pune and Paris 8.

Györgyi Kovács (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary)

Hungarian References in *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*

David Punter mentions *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) by Tobias Smollett as an early gothic novel, published several years before Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) [*The Literature of Terror*, 2009]. Early gothic novelists often chose settings with significant distance from England to make the novel more exotic, such as Spain or Italy, and accuracy of the customs were not necessary for the success of the novels. The dubious protagonist of *Ferdinand Count Fathom* was born in Hungary and there are numerous references to the history of Hungary and some of its places.

Hungary was associated with exoticism and entered West-European thought in the early eighteenth century. After it came under Austrian jurisdiction in 1718, reports about the strange customs in South-Hungary began to be published in Wien and from Wien news travelled to West-Europe, giving birth to the vampire myth. The present paper aims to look at the representation of Hungary in the novel and how it contributes to the personality of the main character. It aims to separate fact from fiction to show the methods Smollett used when he built the background of his character.

Györgyi Kovács is a fourth-year PhD student at the Modern English and American Literature and Culture programme at the Doctoral School of Literary Studies at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary. His field of research is eighteenth-century Gothic literature, specifically the connection between sensibility and the supernatural in Ann Radcliffe's novels. I have presented papers at the *Gothic Hybridities* conference in 2018 organized by the International Gothic Association and at *The Place of Memory and the Memory of Place* conference held online in 2020, organized by the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research. My article "'I am all that stands between them and chaos": a

Monstrous Way of Ruling in *A Song of Ice and Fire*' was published this year by the Humanities and Social Sciences Communications.

Matthew Lee (University of Aberdeen, UK)

'The most agreeable period of my life': Tobias Smollett and the Atlantic slave trade

As the conference call for papers has noted, Tobias Smollett was perhaps the most prolific writer of the eighteenth century. Yet, he was remarkably reticent about the Atlantic slave trade and plantation slavery in the Caribbean. The silences that pervade Smollett's fiction are even more noteworthy given his personal experience of life in eighteenth-century Jamaica and his personal involvement in the slave trade. The first portion of this paper discusses Smollett's brief engagement with the slavery in *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, which distorts the horror of the Middle Passage and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, which includes depictions of enslaved people, enslavers and free people of colour. Thereafter, it outlines Smollett's confirmed connections to slavery in Jamaica and his personal role in the Atlantic slave trade. The paper suggests that Smollett's entanglement with slavery poses an important question about how he should be remembered today. The paper argues that a full account of Smollett's life and legacy must include a proper recognition of his involvement with the Atlantic slave trade.

Matthew Lee is an AHRC-funded PhD student in the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture at the University of Aberdeen. His PhD thesis is entitled 'Private Reflections and Public Pronouncements: Caribbean Slavery in the Scottish Consciousness, c.1750–1834'. This project is a collaboration between the University of Aberdeen and the National Library of Scotland. His interdisciplinary research combines archival work with analyses of texts produced by Scottish writers with personal acquaintance with slavery in the Caribbean. Matthew has a BA in History from the University of Strathclyde and an MLitt in Scottish History from the University of Glasgow.

Erin Severson (University of Oxford, UK)

The English Malady in Eighteenth-century Britain: Negotiating Illness and National Identity in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*

The undeniably prominent role of medicine in Smollett's writing has resulted in a form of cognitive dissonance among those who wish to bridge the gap between his failed medical career and how largely medicine figures in his novels. This paper ventures to take Smollett's medical writing seriously despite his apparent shortcomings as a physician. Drawing on readings of Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) and George Cheyne's *English Malady* (1733), I argue that Smollett's epistolary travel narrative *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) emulates principles of Burtonian cure through its erratic structure and that the novel's interrogation of national identity seamlessly conspires with its cure plot to dismantle ideals of nationality and disease that dominated eighteenth-century medical discourse. Cheyne and Smollett can be read as bifurcated responses to the crisis of English identity produced by English-Scottish unionism and increased colonial intervention in this period. While Cheyne attempts to concretize Englishness and anchor it in the ailing bodies of its countrymen, Smollett's novel reveals the fragility of a national identity predicated on

illness. Matthew Bramble's ailment is a performance of his Englishness. Thus, as Bramble adopts a more global mindset through his travels and encounters with diverse configurations of identity such as the Scottish-American hybrid Lieutenant Obadiah Lismahago, his health improves. Smollett's critique of the English Malady has never been more relevant as the world bears witness to discussions of illness encoded with harmful rhetoric surrounding nationality and disease. Is the 'English Malady' a far cry from the deplorable phrase 'Chinese' or 'Wuhan Virus', and what can we learn from studying Smollett's deconstruction of such pathologized nationalism?

Erin Severson is an Ertegun Graduate Scholar for the Humanities at the University of Oxford. Her research centres around eighteenth-century satire, material texts, and the history of science in the early modern period. Her former institutional affiliations include the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library in Los Angeles, the curatorial department of the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, CA, and the privately owned Loren & Frances Rothschild Library of Eighteenth-Century British Authors. Her thesis on Tobias Smollett and was awarded the Thompson Prize for Best Honors Thesis by UCLA English Department in 2019.

Session 5 (15.00 – 16.15): Humphry Clinker, letters and travel

Michaela Mudure (Babes-Bolyai University, Romania)

Metalepsis and the Fringe of Reality in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*

It is a well-known fact that the epistolary novel became so popular because of its authenticity claims which rely on a complex paratextual framing of the narrative matter and on the pretended authenticity of the epistolary mechanism itself. The author's foreword, the editor's foreword, sometimes, the characters' foreword, the letters themselves which apparently had been discovered somewhere or entrusted to someone with a view to publication, they are all part of that complex machinery which is meant to give fiction the verisimilitude effect, the mimicry of the real, which is so important in the Enlightenment fiction.

But in order to obtain this verisimilitude effect, Tobias Smollett also uses another strategy. He introduces himself into the narrative proper. As it is well known from Genette's narratology, metalepsis is a paradoxical transgression of the boundaries between narrative levels when the omniscient narrator participates or interacts with the narrated events. The aim of this paper is to analyze the metalepses in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* and account for their function(s).

Besides Genette, the scholarship on metalepsis also includes William Nelles and Monika Fludernik. The metalepses from Smollett's novel will be classified according to Nelles (intrametalepsis, extrametalepsis, proleptic, and analeptic) and Fludernik (authorial, narratorial, lectorial, and rhetorical). In conclusion, we consider that Smollett's metalepses are parodic critiques of the authoritarian and authoritative claims made by classic omniscience. Smollett's novel proves to be much more modern than expected from a canonized eighteenth-century novel.

Michaela Mudure is professor at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She has been guest professor in Turkey and the Czech Republic and a member of the Beatrice Bain Research Group at the University of California at Berkeley (2015-2016). Dr. Mudure is interested in the British Enlightenment, modernism, and the intersection between gender and ethnicity. Her publications include: *Feminine* (2000); *Katherine Mansfield. Plucking the Nettle of Impressions* (2000); *Ethnic America* (2008); *Lecturi canadiene. Canadian Readings* (2009). Dr. Mudure is also a versed translator from English and French into Romanian and from Romanian into English.

Phillip James M. Cortes (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA)

The Malaprop of Form in Tobias Smollett's *Humphry Clinker*

The letters of Smollett's epistolary novel simultaneously re-inscribe and subvert institutional domination. What emerges as an institutional inscription in this text is its form: the letters that constitute this novel. The letter formalizes not simply the virtues of propriety and clarity that letter-writing manuals champion, but also in turn the ideological preservation of class hierarchies. The letter-writers of *Humphry Clinker*, however, challenge these formal and ideological conventions: Matthew Bramble and Winifred Jenkins convey passionate and bodily discourse that verges on the opaque and improper, and they express an ambivalent fascination with hierarchical and social disruption. Formally, Jenkins' letters feature malapropic misuses of words, whereas Bramble's letters revel in malaprop-like hypochondriac over-readings of his social world.

In this paper, I adapt Gayatri Spivak's notion of the catachresis—which technically is synonymous with the literary device of the malaprop. A catachresis denotes an misuse of words, but, for Spivak, the catachresis represents the ways postcolonial criticism appropriates and subverts 'concept-metaphors' of colonial discourse, such as 'nationhood', to expose colonial authority's limits. My analysis, therefore, recognize that Bramble and Jenkins catachrestically misuses the letter to reaffirm and challenge British imperial values of hierarchy and politeness. Postcolonial analysis is a relevant method when one considers that the novel describes Britain's economic colonization of Scotland, and that Bramble represents a Welsh outsider and Jenkins a lower-class servant. Postcolonial critique, therefore, presents an opportunity to expose how these relatively marginal figures negotiate the normativity of British authority.

Phillip James M. Cortes received his PhD. in English from the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), in 2020. His dissertation and book project, *Melancholic Satires: Forms of Embodied Critique in the Eighteenth Century*, examines how satires during this period deployed literary form to develop modes of affective criticism. Currently, he is a Post-Doctoral Affiliated Scholar at the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center at UCSB, and he is a lecturer in UCSB's English Department.

Colton Valentine (Yale University, USA)

Tobias Smollett's Affective Aesthetics

'He set out with the spleen and jaundice,' Laurence Sterne famously lampooned, 'but every object he pass'd by was discolored or distorted. He wrote an account of them, but 'twas

nothing but the account of his miserable feelings.’ This paper turns Sterne’s critique on its head to argue that Tobias Smollett’s *Travels through France and Italy* (1766) offers a compelling countermodel to eighteenth-century aesthetics of disinterested interest. The argument builds on recent work re-evaluating that dominant theoretical lineage stretching from Shaftesbury to Kant (Cohen, Kramnick, Paulson, Zitin), but instead of identifying more materialist paradigms, it draws on contemporary affect theory (Ahmed, Berlant, Ngai, Tomkins) to explore Smollett’s ‘affective aesthetics’.

To do so, I first survey the emotional landscape of eighteenth-century travel writing, reconstructing the expectations for feeling, seeing, and composing while abroad. I then show how Smollett’s judgments of the beautiful and the disgusting are informed by dispositions, moods, and even a physical constitution that deviate from his era’s orthodox scripts. While most plaidoyers highlight the *Travels*’ journalistic veracity or satirical touches, I argue that Smollett’s idiosyncratic taste generates an idiosyncratic prose—resolving the threat of Bloomian “belatedness” that haunted the genre. To historically substantiate that case, I take up the text’s Georgian reception, tracking the links readers made between their own affects and aesthetic judgments. In closing, I turn to Smollett’s fictions, showing how these granular reconstructions can enliven a well-trod path in literary history: the relation between travel writing and the rise of the novel.

Colton Valentine is a PhD candidate in the Department of English at Yale University. His research focuses on travel writing, book history, and translation studies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His articles have recently appeared in the *Review of English Studies*, *Henry James Review*, *Journal of World Literature*, *Cabinet Magazine*, and *LA Review of Books*.

Session 6 (16.30 – 17.30): Book culture, criticism and Don Quixote

M. A. Katritzky (The Open University, UK)

Don Quixote in eighteenth-century British book culture: Tobias Smollett and Francis Hayman

Some specialists dismiss Tobias Smollett’s translation of *Don Quixote* as little more than a plagiarized rewrite of the translation of the Irish portrait painter, friend of Gay, Swift and Pope, Charles Jarvis or Jervas (c.1675 – 1739), posthumously published in 1742. Others value it as a popular and enduring version of Cervantes’ masterpiece, or even as the pre-eminent English translation. With this translation, Smollett attempted to tread a delicate middle path between the stuffily earnest and the comically ridiculous:

The Translators aim, in this undertaking, was to maintain that ludicrous solemnity and self-importance by which the inimitable Cervantes has distinguished the character of Don Quixote, without raising him to the insipid rank of a dry philosopher, or debasing him to the melancholy circumstances and unentertaining caprice of an ordinary madman; and to preserve the native humour of Sancho Panza, from degenerating into mere proverbial phlegm, or affected buffoonry.

The portraitist, history painter and book illustrator Francis Hayman (1708 – 1776) produced the drawings for the twenty-eight engravings illustrating Smollett’s original 1755 edition,

which also included editorial notes and a 'Life of Cervantes' by Smollett. In the late 1760s, Hayman also painted a series of oil sketches relating to his *Don Quixote* book illustrations. Drawing on my recent work on early modern transnational receptions of *Don Quixote*, and current researches into William Hogarth, book illustration and *Don Quixote*, my paper will revisit the impact of *Don Quixote* on eighteenth-century British book culture with particular attention to Smollett and Hayman, and their 1755 edition.

M. A. Katritzky is Barbara Wilkes Research Fellow in Theatre Studies (English Department), Director of The Centre for Research into Gender and Otherness in the Humanities, in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at The Open University, UK, and co-editor (with Pavel Drábek) of *Transnational Connections in Early Modern Theatre* (2020). Single author books include: *Healing, performance and ceremony in the writings of three early modern physicians: Hippolytus Guarinonius and the brothers Felix and Thomas Platter* (2012), *Women, medicine and theatre 1500–1750: literary mountebanks and performing quacks* (2007) and *The Art of commedia: a study in the commedia dell'arte 1560–1620 with special reference to the visual records* (2006).

Urmi Bhowmik (The Open University, UK)

Class and Taste in the Monthly and Critical Reviews

For the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*, an education in taste meant an education in class. The term 'literature' in the eighteenth century, as Raymond Williams has remarked, meant 'polite' or 'humane' learning, and thus 'specified a particular social distinction'. The *Reviews* posited the cultivation of taste as being superior to the accumulation of knowledge or the buying of books, thereby giving themselves a more elevated *raison d'être* than mere consumption. In earlier eighteenth-century periodicals, advertisements for a book and a review of the same closely resembled each other, which meant that reviews had to insist repeatedly on their freedom from commercial constraints. This freedom from necessity was embodied in the figure of the gentleman. In review articles, the authorship, involvement or patronage of aristocrats was consistently foregrounded as a mark of quality. A book of lectures on anatomy 'contains nothing new or curious', but the review mentions that it was dedicated to the Earl of Macclesfield (*CR*, December 1757). A review of *Rasselas* in Volume 20 of the *Monthly Review* castigates its author for his lack of awareness of social distinction, as demonstrated by Johnson's allowing all his characters, regardless of gender or rank, to speak in the same way. Once the readers were competent to recognize the nature and basis of social differentiation through their reading of reviews, they were equipped for the exercise of taste. I examine how an extract from Smollett's *Don Quixote* was used by the *Monthly Review* to demonstrate how distinction might pass from aristocrats to readers through the medium of reviewers, from those who possessed it to those who could discern its presence.

Urmi Bhowmik is an Associate Lecturer for the Open University, currently working on a history of periodicals from the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century. Her work has appeared in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* and *Literature Compass*.

Session 7 (18.00 – 19.00): Receptions and new editions

Peter Budrin (University of Oxford, UK) and Artem Serebrennikov (Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia)

Tobias Smollett's (Mis)fortunes in Russia, Being a Brief History of His Russian Reception in Two Parts

The paper traces the general currents of Smollett's reception in Russia, a subject never systematically explored before. His fortunes in Russia have been uneven, with long periods of neglect alternating with sparks of energetic interest. The first wave of attention came at the end of the eighteenth century, when *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphry Clinker* and *Roderick Random* all appeared in Russian translation almost simultaneously between 1788–89. Of varied quality, the translations nevertheless played their part in forming a vogue for the British novel in Russia. Newer translations of *Roderick Random* and *Humphry Clinker* (1860–61) left little lasting impact, while critics relegated Smollett to a foil to Fielding or a precursor of Dickens. In spite of rampant ideological pressure, the Soviet period, especially between 1930 and 1955, saw a steep quantitative and qualitative rise in Smollett's editions and critical assessment. This was largely facilitated by critical tendencies in Smollett's writing, which helped cement his reputation as an 'anti-capitalist' writer. However, Russian editorial and academic interest in Smollett seems to have been peaked in the late Stalinist era. After 1955, there were no new translations of Smollett's prose works, and new editions of previously translated novels appeared extremely sporadically.

The paper is intended to be delivered as in two parts, each constituting a separate presentation. Part One (from the eighteenth century to early twentieth century) is to be presented by Artem Serebrennikov; Part Two (Soviet period and beyond) by Peter Budrin.

Peter Budrin is currently completing his doctoral studies at the University of Oxford. The focus of his research is the reception of Laurence Sterne in Russia and the critical fortunes of eighteenth-century British authors in Soviet Russia. **Artem Serebrennikov** completed his doctoral studies at the University of Oxford in 2018 and presently teaches at the Higher School of Economics, Moscow. His research interests include the origins of the modern novel, Cervantes' influence on the British prose tradition, and three-way Anglo-Spanish-Russian literary relations.

Leslie Chilton (Arizona State University, USA)

The Best of Smollett, the Worst of Smollett: Reflections on Twenty Years of Editing Tobias Smollett

This presentation will have two parts. The first, an 'anecdotal' narration of the work of editing a title by Tobias Smollett for the University of Georgia Press, intends to give the audience an idea of how a new edition of an old work is prepared, from attributing a contested title to his canon, establishing a copy-text, proofing and reading the typescript against one or more editions, the emendations, and the historical collations, and the endless rounds of proofing. The second part grows out of the first, as I edited and assisted OM Brack Jr., Textual Editor of the *Works of Tobias Smollett* for the University of Georgia Press, from the early nineties to about 2010. In the editing of Smollett's minor works, contested works, less well-known works as well as his 'worst work', I grew to appreciate this

point: to really know and study an author, is to know as much as the author's canon as possible—not just the best, but the worst. This is not to say that Smollett's best and best known works, his novels, particularly his swan song, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, stand in complete contrast with his other works! In this way, I make my rebuttal of G.S. Rousseau's reductive statement, in his 1977 article 'Beef and Bouillon: Smollett's Achievement as a Thinker', that his reputation 'stands on his six novels or on very little else. The rest, as a matter of fact, is ephemeral hackwork.' In the spectrum of Smollett's canon, the end points of best and worst frame a remarkable variety of work including poetry, plays (including a masque with connections to no less than George Frederic Handel), 'medical literature', political pamphlets, his four works of translation beyond *Don Quixote*, criticism, history, 'compilations', and yes, plain old 'hack work'. Here, I admit that 'the worst of Smollett' is rather in short supply, but I nominate as his worst: the passionless *The Briton*, his early poetry of Pope-inspired *Advice and Reproof* and what truly emerges as 'ephemeral hackwork' – *Select Essays*, translated from *Journal Oeconomique*.

I became so fascinated with Smollett's many kinds of writing that I commenced, on my own, to edit many of his lesser known works in a two year hiatus of assisting Brack with textual editing. In all, as I wrote in the Introduction to *The Miscellaneous Writings of Tobias Smollett*, reading and editing his many different kinds of writing 'provides insight into his multiple identities: a professional translator, a surgeon physician, a Scots in England, a future historian, a frustrated playwright taking a chance with fiction that the reading audience had demonstrated a taste for, a man fearful of the moral philosophical fate of his adopted country, and a man reaching into himself, overconfidently at times, but demonstrating immense ability.'

Leslie Chilton completed her Ph.D. at Arizona State University in 1988, under the direction of O M Brack Jr. During her completion she also worked as Brack's assistant to his complex and demanding duties of textual editor of *The Works of Tobias Smollett*, published by the University of Georgia Press. Though her dissertation explored Oliver Goldsmith's under-appreciated *The Citizen of the World*, the Smollett bug had sufficiently bitten her, and under Brack's direction and support, she went on to edit three of Tobias Smollett's lesser known and contested translations, Fenelon's *The Adventures of Telemachus*, Alain Rene Lesage's *The Devil Upon Crutches*, and Alain Rene Lesage's *The Adventures of Gil Blas de Santillane*. Recently retired from Arizona State University, she taught first year composition, advanced composition, British literature, and film classes and coordinated the Writing Center. Though well versed in Smollett's minor, well known and contested works, she too has always loved *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, writing and directing an amateur play of the novel.

Session 7 (19.00 – 19.30): Conference conclusion (an informal discussion)