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“BE NOT SOLITARY, BE NOT IDLE”: TOBIAS SMOLLETT’S *EXPEDITION OF
HUMPHRY CLINKER* IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY MODERN CURE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

BY

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ABSTRACT

“BE NOT SOLITARY, BE NOT IDLE”: TOBIAS SMOLLETT’S *EXPEDITION OF HUMPHRY CLINKER* IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY MODERN CURE

BY ERIN E. SEVERSON

This thesis investigates the function of the medical in Tobias Smollett’s novel *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771). The first chapter restores meaning to the form of *Humphry Clinker* by explicating the divertive capacity of Smollett’s epistolary travel narrative through a comparative reading of the novel and Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Turning then, in the second chapter, to a slightly different articulation of cure, George Cheyne’s medical treatise *The English Malady* (1733) implicates national identity in debates about health and disease, bringing into focus how medicine is never apolitical, and thereby prompting a full investigation of national identity in *Humphry Clinker*. Matthew Bramble’s quest for health and the interrogation of Englishness in the novel are thus revealed to be codependent narratives. While the arguments presented in this thesis do not depend on Smollett’s skill as a physician, their conclusions nonetheless promote a more favorable attitude toward Smollett’s medical acumen. Smollett’s *Humphry Clinker* can be uniquely well-understood when read in the context of early modern cure.

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And to anyone, of course, than can bear the length of this thesis—I hope you enjoy it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| I. | INTRODUCTION..... | 4 |
| II. | SMOLLETT'S EPISTOLARY TRAVEL NARRATIVE AS BURTONIAN CURE..... | 8 |
| III. | THE ENGLISH MALADY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN: NEGOTIATING ILLNESS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY..... | 33 |
| IV. | CONCLUSION..... | 51 |

I. INTRODUCTION

Only take this for a corollary and conclusion, as thou tenderest thine own welfare in this and all other melancholy, thy good health of body and mind, observe this short precept, give not way to solitariness and idleness. “Be not solitary, be not idle.”

Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*¹

The great direction which Burton has left to men disordered like you, is this, Be not solitary; be not idle: which I would thus modify;—If you are idle, be not solitary; if you are solitary, be not idle.

Samuel Johnson, in a letter to James Boswell²

The title of this thesis is a dual reference to Robert Burton (1577-1640) and Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). The former, writing in search of better health for himself and his readers, offers up the phrase “Be not solitary, be not idle,” as the penultimate takeaway of his bible-length volume on melancholy. The phrase encapsulates Burton’s program for treating melancholy and bespeaks his overarching intent to cure himself and others through his writing. His “short precept” is catchy and mobile by design. Over a hundred years later, the phrase is taken up by Samuel Johnson—who is famous for dealing in proverbs just like Burton’s³—and given new life. Johnson quotes Burton in a letter to his young friend James Boswell. The two men often

¹ For sake of convenience, citations of Burton’s *Anatomy* correspond to pages in a modern reprint of Holbrook Jackson’s 1934 edition of *The Anatomy* published by the *New York Review of Books* (2001); however, research on the text was conducted in reference to a copy of the first edition (1621) held by the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library and the modern authoritative edition produced by Oxford and Clarendon Press (1989). Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. William H. Gass and Holbrook Jackson, (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001), iii.432. Citation refers to volume and page.

² The letter is dated October 27, 1779, sent from London. James Boswell, *Boswell’s Life of Johnson: Including Boswell’s Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides, and Johnson’s Diary of A Journey into North Wales*, ed. George Birkbeck Norman Hill and L.F. Powell (London: Oxford University Press ; Clarendon Press, 1934), iii.415.

³ Helen Deutsch writes on the function of proverb and anecdote in the construction of a “portable Johnson.” Deutsch, *Loving Dr. Johnson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

commiserated in their shared illness of the learned. They understood themselves as sufferers of melancholy, although this should come with the caveat that melancholy belonged to a broader class of illness which included hypochondria, afflictions of spleen, and different sorts of nervous disorders, otherwise known as “the vapours” or “the hyp.”⁴ Johnson advises Boswell in the words of Burton to help him keep away the “black dog”⁵ of melancholy which plagued them both. Johnson’s quotation of Burton is a useful representation of how the Burtonian tradition was carried through the eighteenth century and will subsequently be revisited multiple times in the course of this thesis.

The history of the phrase “Be not solitary, be not idle” brings into focus the character of early modern cure and its significance among eighteenth-century men of letters, and for the purposes of the this paper, establishes the appropriate framework to understand Tobias Smollett’s novel *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771). The context of early modern cure gives meaning to the structure of *Humphry Clinker*, reveals greater consistency between its form and content, and provides insight into the political leanings of the novel. By reading the structure of *Humphry Clinker* as Burtonian cure, the first chapter of this thesis resolves the problem of form in Smollett’s final novel. The book’s fractured, erratic style resonates with the logic of Burtonian cure, in which the afflicted are healed by arousing their spirits and diverting their

⁴ The term “mentally ill” or any such references to “diseases of the mind” are purposely avoided in this paper for their anachronism, but moreover because such terms do not accurately reflect early modern conceptions of the body. The origin point of melancholy was the spleen, and diseases were more often linked to the gut than the head. Which is not to say that Burton had little knowledge of the brain; rather, the notion that the body was coursing with fluids that were hardly distinct discouraged articulations of disease as strictly localized phenomenon.

⁵ “Black dog” is one of Johnson’s euphemisms for melancholy. Melancholy literally means black bile, which was thought to be the substance responsible for the disease.

humors.⁶ The text's structure, then, is a defense against idleness. That which formerly constituted Smollett's greatest criticism (i.e. that his novels lack a unified plot or vision) is revealed to be the ultimate genius of his work. Furthermore, eighteenth-century medicine was embroiled in debates about national identity. The second chapter interrogates the ideology of George Cheyne's treatise *The English Malady* (1733), which posited a unequivocal interrelation between the geography, climate, and social habits of a country and the health of its inhabitants. Cheyne pathologized Englishness; but in effect he concretized English identity during a moment of great political instability. Since national identity and illness were mutually reinforcing concepts in the eighteenth-century, the dissolution of Englishness and the trajectory toward Britishness in *Humphry Clinker* are essential components of the cure plot of the novel. This reading of *Humphry Clinker* thereby reconciles the formerly discrete branches of Smollett scholarship which investigated, respectively, national identity and medicine in the novel.

Through a brief history of early modern cure, problems in Smollett scholarship seem to resolve themselves, demonstrating more broadly that the field of medicine is an appropriate framework by which to read Smollett. The literary and the medical were far from discrete disciplines in the early modern period and Smollett's life is a testament to that. Although Smollett's enduring legacy is founded almost entirely on his novels, his early years were dedicated to pursuing a career in medicine. He studied at the University of Glasgow, he served as

⁶ Humoral medicine, if no longer the dominant framework for medicine in the eighteenth century, still remained the foundation for how early moderns understood the body. Essentially, the body was thought to consist of four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile), and the health of an individual depended on the balance between these humors. For a concise history of humoral medicine, see Vivian Nutton, "Humoralism," in *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine*, ed. W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993). Descartes articulation of mind-body dualism provides an example of how early moderns relied on "animal spirits" to provide a material explanation for the interaction between mind and body. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines animal spirits as "The (supposed) agent responsible for sensation and movement, originating in the brain and passing to and from the periphery of the body through the nerves; nervous action or force."

a ship's surgeon on the HMS Chichester on its voyage to Carthage, and for a brief period of time he had his own medical practice in London. Critics mark the 1750s—shortly after he published his break-out novel *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748)—as the end of Smollett's medical career and the beginning of his literary one.

And yet, the undeniably prominent role of medicine in Smollett's writing has resulted in a curious sort of cognitive dissonance among scholars who read his work. Few are able to effectively bridge the gap from his failed medical career to how medicine figures into his novels. "Smollett's medical career was brief and inglorious," says Jeremy Lewis in his introduction to the Penguin edition of *Humphry Clinker*, "but his training as a surgeon-apothecary strongly influenced his work as a novelist."⁷ The maneuver is complete but clunky and unsatisfactory. The supposed "influence" of Smollett's medical career on his fiction-writing is too vague to hold any meaning and ultimately relies on a too-sharp distinction between the literary and the medical. Even more complimentary representations of Smollett's medical career fall short of providing a dynamic model of literature and medicine; that is, the two are regarded as always distinct, with medicine falling into a static position. "No other English writer leaves to posterity so clear a picture of contemporary medicine as does Tobias George Smollett. With his training as surgeon and physician, he enters the history of the English novel on the heel of Henry Fielding," says Claude Edward Jones in his introduction to Smollett's *Essay on the External Uses of Water* (conspicuously labeling Smollett English rather than Scottish), "Through the fabric of Dr. Smollett's work, the "red thread of medicine" is apparent in thumbnail sketches of medical men, in medical observations, in exploits involving medical figures and in satirical comments on the

⁷ Jeremy Lewis, "Introduction" to *Humphry Clinker*, by Tobias Smollett, ed. Shaun Regan (Penguin Books, 2008), xi.

state of healing at his time.”⁸ The image of the “red thread of medicine” is generous in allowing that Smollett’s interest in medicine persisted throughout his life, but is ultimately predicated on a flat and stagnant conception of his “past” medical career, rather than endowing Smollett with the ability to actively intervene in medical debates of his time. The first half of this paper is dedicated to illustrating how the structure of Smollett’s writing, by early modern standards, itself had the power to heal. The latter half shows how Smollett recognized the broader political reach of medicine, and beyond simply regurgitating Cheyne’s beliefs, Smollett’s novel forms a critique of them in its defeat of the English Malady.

The present study serves as a warning against reductive characterizations of Smollett’s life, not exactly because they may be poor reflections of Smollett’s actual achievements, but rather because such perspectives have produced centuries of misreadings of Smollett. What distinguishes this thesis most from other Smollett scholarship is its willingness to take Smollett seriously, especially in a medical capacity. The fact that Smollett ceased practising medicine formally⁹ does not preclude any meaningful connection between his literary work and the medical. This thesis proves the contrary. Without recourse to Smollett’s abilities as a surgeon or knowledge as a physician, it shows that Smollett’s work can be uniquely well-understood when

⁸ Claude Edward Jones, “Introduction,” in *An Essay on the External Use of Water*, by Tobias Smollett (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935).

⁹ Notice the qualification communicated by the term “formally.” Even into the late years of his life, Smollett practiced medicine within his private circles. The most prominent examples include Smollett’s self-treatments and the manner in which he collaborated with doctors. He writes, for example, in February 1767 (just four years prior to his death), “I had my Hand dressed before them and proposed a course for the cure, which they approved.” Tobias Smollett, “Letter 100: To John Moore,” in *The Letters of Tobias Smollett*, ed. Lewis M. Knapp (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1767), 130. Also, for an example of Smollett dispensing medical advice, see the letter written in the spring of 1754 in which he responds to an inquiry from his friend Alexander Carlyle about the health of a mutual acquaintance. “His disorder is certainly no other than a weakness or relaxation occasioned perhaps by a superpurgation or an excessive discharge from the Glands of the Urethra after a venereal Complaint in a Scorbutic habit...[etc.]” Smollett, “Letter 22: To Alexander Carlyle,” in *Letters*, 36-38.

read in a medical context. In other words, while the arguments presented in this thesis do not rely on Smollett being a masterful physician (they do not, in fact, require him to be associated with medicine in any capacity), their conclusions nonetheless suggest his understanding of popular medicine was quite perceptive.

In sum, the present intervention in Smollett scholarship is in the first degree a reading of *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* which demonstrates how early modern medical perspectives give meaning to Smollett's final novel, both in rationalizing the idiosyncrasy of its form and in broadening the political reach of its content, and in the second degree a promotion of revisionary readings of Smollett's biography. That Tobias Smollett has long been underappreciated is a point which hardly needs to be argued.¹⁰ Instead of lingering over the extent of his apparent neglect, the present study limits itself to discussion of particular trends in Smollett scholarship as they pertain to the central claims of this paper. Because what is truly most astonishing about the years since Smollett's passing is not how he has faded into obscurity but rather that, in all this time, Smollett has in some form or another remained under critical scrutiny and still his reputation is so profoundly damaged that scholars find it necessary to discuss whether he is worth studying.¹¹

¹⁰ On the contrary, the intent of this chapter being so far from denigrating the contributions of the scholars who have given their time and efforts to Smollett scholarship—some of whom are listed in the following chapters and many others who are not—it follows that any attempt to dramatize the neglect of Smollett would be the very definition of counterproductive. For an example of the risk one runs by engaging the question of relative scarcity of Smollett scholarship, see Albert J. Rivero's review of John Skinner's *Constructions of Smollett* (1996). The virtues of Skinner's work are obscured by his undue exaggeration of critical disregard for Smollett. Skinner conspicuously omitted five major works on Smollett from his own literature review. "One could argue, in fact" says Rivero, "that there is a revival of interest in Smollett." Albert J. Rivero, review of *Constructions of Smollett: A Study of Genre and Gender*, by John Skinner, *Studies in the Novel* 29, no. 2 (1997): 258–60. For a study of Smollett's critical reception from the eighteenth-century to the mid-twentieth, see Fred W. Boege, *Smollett's Reputation as a Novelist* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton university press, 1947).

¹¹ No trope of Smollett scholarship is more common than a prefatory lamentation over scarcity of works on the man. A representative example may be found in the first chapter of Donald Bruce's *Radical Doctor Smollett*, "A Laurel at his Tomb." (1964): 11-21.

II. SMOLLETT'S EPISTOLARY TRAVEL NARRATIVE AS BURTONIAN CURE

Robert Burton's master work *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) epitomizes the total interrelation of the literary and the medical in the early modern period. Enigmatic, long, and yet incredible awarding to those who hazard a reading,¹² Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* defies taxonomy both in its willingness to use literary and medical sources alike (quoting Homer on one page, Galen on the next, and the Bible throughout) and in the style Burton chooses to convey himself. In the preface (often labeled "satirical") Burton explains the meaning of his literary persona "Democritus Junior" by offering vignettes of Democritus's anatomical studies on melancholy and describing how they relate to his own; significantly, Burton does so in verse nearly as much as he does in prose. The nature of Burton's *Anatomy* is perhaps best conveyed by his infamous catalogues—exhaustive lists of examples which commonly run across several pages uninterrupted. Covering topics medical, theological, philosophical, and more, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* "ranges over all times and places, driving into the past, dipping into the future, and even glancing ironically at the present. Although his theme is melancholy, he contrives by a method of intermission and digression to glance at almost every human interest or endeavour."¹³ Burton's method of digression, his indefatigable cataloguing, and the overall

¹² Boswell famously wrote of Johnson that Burton's *Anatomy* was "the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise." James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson: Including Boswell's Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides, and Johnson's Diary of A Journey into North Wales*, ed. George Birkbeck Norman Hill and L.F. Powell (London: Oxford University Press ; Clarendon Press, 1934), ii.121. The quote often appears in introductions to the *Anatomy* as a testament to the power of its influence. See NYRB edition or the one by Oxford-Clarendon Press, for examples.

¹³ Holbrook Jackson, "Introduction to the 1932 Edition," in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, by Robert Burton, New York Review Books Classics (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001): xxiii.

“roving humour”¹⁴ of his work are essential components of the text’s ability to cure writer and reader alike. That is, while the medical and the literary are linked topically in Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, no less vital to its curative properties are the structure and style of his work.

By contrast, Tobias Smollett’s satirical novel *Humphry Clinker* (1771) seems a book in a very different vein. Ostensibly, the text has no further aspirations than the documentation of a journey across the English countryside. However, Smollett’s novel shares with Burton’s work its tendency to digress, to obfuscate, to reach outward in search of breadth in lieu of depth often (as some have said)¹⁵ at the expense of narrative cogency. Both texts have subsequently accrued legacies of structural incoherence which borders on the illegible.¹⁶ Thus, the present reading wishes to restore meaning to the structure of Smollett’s work through a comparative reading of *Humphry Clinker* and *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. By reading Smollett’s epistolary travel narrative through the lens of Burtonian cure, the fractured, erratic nature of *Humphry Clinker* is revealed to have curative potential. In effect, features of Smollett’s work which formerly constituted his greatest criticism—that his novels are plotless, that his characters lack depth,

¹⁴ Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, i.17. Stephanie Shirilan’s outstanding essay on the curative nature of Burton’s style has greatly informed the present argument on structure in Smollett and Burton. Shirilan, “Exhilarating the Spirits: Burtonian Study as a Cure for Scholarly Melancholy,” *Studies in Philology* 111, no. 3 (2014): 486–520.

¹⁵ The reality of alleged charges of formlessness on Smollett is difficult to determine. John Skinner’s relatively recent monograph *Constructions of Smollett* (1996) takes the problem of form as the central issue he wishes to debate, yet his citations in that section are conspicuously sparse. In 2015, Juliet Shields takes up Skinner’s crusade for form, but Skinner serves as her only reference on Smollett’s abuse by formalists. The discussion of formalist criticism in this paper relies mostly on the word of G.S. Rousseau (who is discussed later in the body text of this chapter). Rousseau cites Donald Bruce’s *Radical Doctor Smollett* (1964) and M. A. Goldberg’s *Smollett and the Scottish School* (1959) as two works that distort Smollett’s works in order to fit a general theory of novel. He places a resurgence of formalism in the 1930s, when he says “New Critics” and “Chicago Aristotelians” attempt and largely fail to distinguish themselves in the ability to understand Smollett’s form. For the full discussion, see Rousseau, “Beef and Bouillon: Smollett’s Achievement as a Thinker,” in *Tobias Smollett: Essays of Two Decades* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), 80–123.

¹⁶ On the illegibility of Burton in particular, see Shirilan’s article on the *Anatomy*. Shirilan, “Burtonian Study as a Cure for Scholarly Melancholy,” 486–520.

etc.—have hitherto unappreciated medico-cultural valences which may redeem him from the censure of formalist critics whose voices have long dominated Smollett scholarship.

Although Burton describes many ways to stave off idleness and solitude (including prayer, bloodletting, and hunting), Burtonian cure is characteristically literary. In his preface to the *Anatomy*, Burton famously proclaims, “I write of melancholy, by being busy to avoid melancholy. There is no greater cause of melancholy than idleness, ‘no better cure than business.’” In the same paragraph, he reiterates the same claim, saying the primary goal of his work is “to exercise myself,” “to ease my mind by writing,” and “make an antidote out of that which was the prime cause of my disease.”¹⁷ From the outset of his *Anatomy on Melancholy*, Burton links melancholy with literary study in particular, even though large sections of the text address other forms of the illness such as religious melancholy and love-melancholy (to which the entire third partition is dedicated). Burton also says in his section on cures for melancholy, “amongst those exercises or recreations of the mind within doors, there is none so general, so aptly to be applied to all sorts of men, so fit and proper to expel idleness and melancholy, as that of study.”¹⁸ Burton’s *Anatomy* is thus a testament to literary illness as both an exhaustive study of the phenomenon and an embodied attempt to conquer the disease. Samuel Johnson, whose lifelong dedication to Burton serves as an example of how Burton was read in the eighteenth century, demonstrates an understanding of Burtonian cure that is appropriately broad but nevertheless centered around writing and reading literature.

Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed, ‘A man so afflicted, Sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them.’ BOSWELL. ‘May not he think them down, Sir?’ JOHNSON. ‘No, Sir. To attempt to think them down is madness. He should

¹⁷ From Burton’s preface, “Democritus Junior to the Reader,” *Anatomy of Melancholy*, i.20-21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ii.86.

have a lamp constantly burning in his bed-chamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book, and read, and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise.’ BOSWELL. ‘Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course in chymistry?’ JOHNSON. ‘Let him take a course of chymistry, or a course of ropedancing, or a course of any thing to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself. Burton’s “Anatomy of Melancholy” is a valuable work. It is, perhaps, overloaded with quotation. But there is great spirit and great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind.’¹⁹

In this scene from Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*, Johnson acknowledges that just about any type of diversion can ease an ailing mind, but nonetheless gives literary pursuits the privileged position as uniquely suited for combating melancholy. Thus, when Johnson famously writes to tell Boswell, “Be not solitary, be not idle,” the quotation underscores the more pointed advice Johnson gives earlier in the letter—he encourages Boswell to pursue one or both of two literary projects, suggesting that writing will keep the “black dog” of melancholy away.²⁰ Burtonian cure, though extended to include all sorts of divertive activities, reserves a special place for literature. Smollett’s novel is thereby well-suited to employ Burtonian cure as a literary structure.

The Expedition of Humphry Clinker distinguishes itself from Smollett’s other novels foremost in point of structure. The novel is a polyphonic epistolary travel narrative; that is, the body of the text consists of 83 letters written (for the most part) by five different characters to each of their respective correspondents concerning the group’s encounters on a trip through the

¹⁹ James Boswell, *Boswell’s Life of Johnson: Including Boswell’s Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides, and Johnson’s Diary of A Journey into North Wales*, ed. George Birkbeck Norman Hill and L.F. Powell (London: Oxford University Press ; Clarendon Press, 1934), ii. 440.

²⁰ Johnson tells Boswell to either “enquire into the old tenures and old charters of Scotland” in anticipation of a potential volume on Scottish cultural history or to begin drafting “a History of the late insurrection in Scotland, with all its incidents.” Samuel Johnson to James Boswell, October 22, 1779 in *Boswell’s Life of Johnson*, iii. 414-415. The political dimension of this advice is explored in the next chapter.

English and Scottish countryside.²¹ The cast of characters who author letters includes Matthew Bramble, his sister Tabitha Bramble, their niece Lydia and nephew Jeremiah (“Jery”) Melford, and Tabitha’s maid Winifred Jenkins.²² The five travel together from southern England all the way up through Scotland, visiting towns just north of Glasgow, and back down into northern England. The letters are chronologically arranged but some events are told from the perspectives of multiple letter-writers. Because the story lacks a narrator, the adventures are all mediated through the perspectives of each correspondent. Smollett’s other epistolary travel narrative, his *Travels Through France and Italy*, occupies a space closer to what one might call “nonfiction” and is accordingly monophonic.²³

While Smollett enthusiasts such as Lewis M. Knapp praise *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* as “Smollett’s final and best novel, long distinguished as being among the finest pieces of eighteenth-century fiction, and often regarded as the most successful epistolary novel in English”²⁴ (quite lofty claim for a text published in the wake of Richardson’s great epistolary novels *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748)), formalist scholars have faulted the work for being a

²¹ The text also contains a frame story in the form of two letters between Reverend Jonathan Dustwich, the “owner” of the letters and Mr. Henry Davis, the “bookseller” who is helping Dustwich publish them. For a discussion of these letters, see the following chapter on national identity.

²² Lydia Melford’s suitor, under the pseudonym “Wilson” though eventually revealed to be the gentlemanly figure George Dennison, authors a single letter at the beginning of the volume and his character resurfaces through the perspectives of other letter-writers near the end of the book. He plays a relatively minor role in the narrative, but he and Lydia get married at the end of the novel.

²³ The *Travels* will be treated of later in this chapter since much of what can be said about the curative potential of *Humphry Clinker* may also be extended to Smollett’s *Travels*.

²⁴ The late Lewis M. Knapp was a distinguished contributor to Smollett criticism. His biography *Tobias Smollett, Doctor of Men and Manners* (1949) and detailed collection of Smollett’s letters (1949) are foundational texts for every Smollett study for the past fifty years, and have yet to be surpassed. Lewis M. Knapp, “Introduction,” to *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, by Tobias Smollett, Oxford English Novels (London, New York [etc.]: Oxford University Press, 1966), ix.

particularly shapeless iteration of Smollett's already loose form. Commonplace is the sentiment, "Smollett has no sense of form at all, that his works are lawless, ill-considered productions."²⁵ Damian Grant construes this witchhunt for "form" in Smollett's work as a "pseudo-problem," arguing more broadly that, "The main impulse behind formal description is the need to discover unity, 'that unity upon which,' Paulson suggests, 'all good art depends for its verisimilitude.'"²⁶ Because most hard-core formalist criticism of Smollett was produced in the mid-to-late twentieth century, critics like Grant have since condemned this type of reading of Smollett's works. Far from surprising, then, is how the most fruitful discussions of Smollett in recent years involve focused critical studies of how Smollett engages issues of representation and genre (Rivka Swenson's chapter on Smollett and Scottish identity, Aileen Douglas's readings of the body in his novels, and earlier, Paul-Gabriel Boucé's reading of morality in *Clinker* and Ronald Paulson's study of satire),²⁷ thereby tactfully avoiding the issues of form altogether. So, although twentieth-century formalist criticism was thrown out years ago, the so-called "problem of form" in Smollett is far from being resolved.

²⁵ See note 15 (above) for additional discussion of formalist criticism of Smollett. Damian Grant, *Tobias Smollett: A Study in Style* (Manchester : Totowa, N.J: Manchester University Press ; Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), 40.

²⁶ The desire for unity in aesthetic production can be traced all the way back to Aristotle's *Poetics*. *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* may thus be touching a particular critical nerve in violating all three classical unities (that of action, that of time, and that of space). Grant, *Tobias Smollett: A Study in Style*, 40. Grant cites Ronald Paulson, *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-century England* (New Haven, Conn., 1967), 49.

²⁷ Rivka Swenson, "Writing Reunion, Rewriting Union for the Atomic Scot: Tobias Smollett's Traveling Types after the '45 and Seven Years War," in *Essential Scots and the Idea of Unionism in Anglo-Scottish Literature, 1603-1832*, *Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture, 1650-1850* (Lewisburg : Lanham, Maryland: Bucknell University Press ; Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 67–110. Aileen Douglas, *Uneasy Sensations: Smollett and the Body* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Paul-Gabriel Boucé, "Humphry Clinker or the Adventure of Morality," in *The Novels of Tobias Smollett* (London ; New York: Longman, 1976), 191–251. Ronald Paulson, "Satire in the Early Novels of Smollett," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 59, no. 3 (1960), 381–402. See also, Michael Rosenblum on the function of "space, geography, and location" in *Humphry Clinker*. Rosenblum, "Smollett's Humphry Clinker," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 175–97.

Another great writer of isolated readings of Smollett is G. S. Rousseau, whose hodge-podge volume of readings *Tobias Smollett: Essays of Two Decades* epitomizes the piece-meal quality of Smollett criticism.²⁸ In retrospect, Rousseau's 1977 essay "Beef and Bouillon: A Voice for Tobias Smollett, with Comments on His Life, Works and Modern Critics" prophetically ushers in this age of Smollett criticism by first signalling the underexploited potential of studying the formal aspects of Smollett's novels, then almost comically shunting such a course of inquiry, "I believe that questions about his [Smollett's] ultimate achievement are profoundly related to his formal experimentation," says Rousseau, "But something of a logical dilemma present itself here. How to comment on this experimentation without making value judgments of the type: 'Smollett in this mode' is better than 'Smollett of that mode'—ostensibly in the name of singling out his achievement."²⁹ For Rousseau, reading form in Smollett has become an intractable problem. Thus, even critics who long ago sensed the genius of Smollett's style were plagued with anxiety over the old traps constructed by the formalism that inhibited so many decades of Smollett scholarship. John Skinner's 1996 monograph *Constructions of Smollett: A Study of Genre and Gender* is a more recent addition to the ash heap of Smollett criticism that perceptively identifies the faults of past generations but produces little to no solutions. Albert J. Rivero's review of *Constructions of Smollett* expresses admiration for Skinner's second chapter on modern game theory and "narrative hybridization" in *Peregrine Pickle*, but faults Skinner for virtually everything else. Rivero acknowledges that

²⁸ Rousseau, *Tobias Smollett: Essays of Two Decades* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982).

²⁹ Rousseau somewhat contradicts himself later in the article by saying that the way to break free from orthodox formalist critique is to dispense with, for the moment, all formal questions and try to focus on "contents." Rousseau, "Beef and Bouillon: A Voice for Tobias Smollett, with Comments on His Life, Works and Modern Critics," *The British Studies Monitor*, (1977), 10, 16.

Skinner is justified in his staunch opposition to “novel-centric” readings of Smollett, even though he believes “Skinner is vigorously pummeling a hackneyed critical approach,” by producing readings which “break virtually no new ground.”³⁰ Skinner’s chapter on *Humphry Clinker*, for example, vaguely gestures toward romance and adventure story as possible frameworks for understanding the novel. Ultimately, with few isolated attempts to be spoken of,³¹ critics have yet to restore meaning to the structure of Smollett’s novels—*Humphry Clinker* being his most complex experiment in form, and thereby the furthest from salvation.

Critics who seek to understand Smollett’s novelistic productions have often turned (for better or worse) to Smollett’s articulation of the novel in his dedicatory preface to *The Life and Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753).

A Novel is a *large diffused picture*, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groupes, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of an *uniform plan*, and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient. But this plan cannot be executed with probability, or success, without a *principal personage* to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at last close the scene, by virtue of his own importance.³²

³⁰ Rivero also faults Skinner for a major critical oversight. Skinner exaggerates the neglect of Smollett by omitting five books from his bibliography of Smollett scholarship. Thus, however noble Skinner’s intention, his credibility was tragically undermined. Skinner’s *Constructions of Smollett* overpromised and underperformed in producing novel readings of Smollett. Rivero, review of *Constructions of Smollett*, 258–60.

³¹ Wayne Paul Lindquist’s attempt to explain the structure of *Humphry Clinker* through the quest for health is interrogated later in this chapter. Lindquist, “Humphry Clinker: Success with Design,” in *Smollett and the Structure of the Novel* (High Wycombe, England: University Microfilms, 1968). In a quite different vein, Juliet Shields argues that across all of Smollett’s novels, the “plot” or “structuring principle” is a marginalized character’s quest for British identity. This reading is interrogated in the following chapter.

³² Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, ed. Jerry C. Beasley and O. M. Brack, *The Works of Tobias Smollett* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1988): 4. The passage is often cited and therefore well-known among Smollett critics. See also, William Bowman Piper, “The Large Diffused Picture of Life in Smollett’s Early Novels,” *Studies in Philology* 60, no. 1 (1963), 45–56. Emphasis mine.

Ferdinand Count Fathom was written early in Smollett's literary career, and is appropriately considered one of his "early novels." The author's shift in style in his later years is precisely what necessitates such a designation. Many of Smollett's novels belong to the picaresque tradition. A typical picaresque (as Smollett well knew)³³ consisted of a roguish or misanthropic central figure (i.e. the "picaro") who makes his way through a corrupt society; picaresque novels, in agreement with Smollett's definition of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, have no plot per se and are instead centralized around a single character. Smollett's prefatory remarks on the novel in *Ferdinand Count Fathom* is roughly an articulation of the organization of the quintessential picaresque novel. As stated above, in many ways *Humphry Clinker* marks a departure from Smollett's early works. Namely, while his early novels can be unequivocally categorized as picaresque (*The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748) being the representative example), the label becomes less useful when talking about his later works.³⁴ The structure of the picaresque (defined as "loosely episodic" by S. Ortiz Taylor)³⁵ may be retained in Smollett's later work, but the central figure of the picaro is either displaced³⁶ or nonexistent in *The Expedition of Humphry*

³³ Smollett was intimately acquainted with (by some measure) the greatest picaresque novel of all time Le Sage's *The Adventures of Gil Blas*. He published his translation the work in 1749 and openly acknowledges his debt to Le Sage in the preface to own first novel *Roderick Random*—which is far closer to being a true picaresque with its fidelity to a single protagonist.

³⁴ Paulson links the early novels to "adventures of a central character" (i.e. a picaro) but describes the shift in his later work as a move "from a picaresque narrative to a discursive travel book" with explicit reference to *Humphry Clinker*. Ronald Paulson, "Satire in the Early Novels of Smollett," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 59, no. 3 (1960), 382.

³⁵ S. Ortiz Taylor, "Episodic Structure and the Picaresque Novel," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 7, no. 3 (1977), 218–25.

³⁶ That Smollett's final novel is entitled *Humphry Clinker* is itself a reference to the novel's vexing structure in that Clinker is a minor character, who is introduced only when the journey is well advanced (on page 91 of a total 392). Clinker authors no letters himself and often recedes from the narrative completely even after he is introduced.

Clinker.³⁷ In other words, however reliant Smollett's early work was on a "principal figure" to organize the narrative, his later work does not depend on a central character to hold the story together.

What readers may take from this passage, however, and what critics may also in turn come to understand, is that for Smollett the intelligibility of a novel was not contingent upon its sharpness, its depth, or its adherence to a single focused narrative. In his definition of the novel, the "large diffused picture" precedes the organizing principle of the picaresque. Furthermore, the components of a novel may vary (such as they do in the phrases "different groupes" and "various attitudes"), but for Smollett that does not interfere with the intelligibility of a text. With this formulation of narrative in mind, there is no mystery to how orthodox formalists who read *Humphry Clinker* in search of unified plot came away disappointed. The fact that Smollett knowingly incorporated a broad, unfocused formulation of the novel into even his earliest work provides a context for the structure of *Humphry Clinker*. This passage also shows how far Smollett had come from his earlier work in the novel genre in that *Humphry Clinker* is clearly his least organized novel by his own standards—that is, the text has no single "principal personage to attract," "unite," "unwind," and "at last close" the narrative, but rather half a dozen possible main characters. However contingent the relationship between Smollett's articulation of the novel in 1753 and his production of *Humphry Clinker* in 1771, the passage is useful in demonstrating how Smollett readily acknowledged the scattered nature of his work and

³⁷ Robert Donald Spector has attempted to find the picaresque in each of Smollett's novels by employing a rather broad definition of the genre. His chapter on Smollett's final novel, for example, is entitled "*Humphry Clinker*: The Picaresque Ménage." Rousseau was not convinced, "Spector's interpretations must be considered tentative; if the Bramble family is anything collectively speaking, it is certainly not a "picaresque ménage." Robert Donald Spector, *Tobias George Smollett* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989). Rousseau, "A Voice for Tobias Smollett," 45 n.11.

ultimately did not find it contradictory to the organizing principle (or “uniform plan”) of the work as a whole. In *Humphry Clinker*, Smollett seems to sketch the “large diffused picture” of which he once spoke, yet the novel involves no recourse to a “principal personage” for organization. In the making of *Humphry Clinker*, perhaps Smollett’s masterful touch failed in his old age, perhaps he no longer found a “uniform plan” useful, or perhaps Smollett realized more benefit could be derived from chaos than could ever be from order.

According to the logic of early modern cure, superficiality and disruption can be good things. That which is deeply or narrowly focused, if overmuch so, was pathologized. The culmination of Burton’s *Anatomy* in his edict “Be not solitary, be not idle,” followed directly from the characterization of disease as isolation and stagnation. Just as Smollett characterizes his style as that which is “different” and “various” composing in sum a “large diffused picture,” so too does Burton articulate his own style, “As a good housewife out of divers fleeces weaves on piece of cloth, a bee gathers wax and honey out of many flowers, and make a new bundle of all...I have laboriously collected this cento out of divers writers.”³⁸ Smollett’s epistolary travel narrative is a cacophony—not a symphony—of diverse voices, a jumble of short letters, and a story that is literally displaced with each passing day. *Humphry Clinker* shares the “roving humour” of Burton’s *Anatomy*, even if it is manifested in different ways. Where Burton employs catalogues, digressions, and meticulous sectioning (and subsectioning) of his work to produce a light, rollicking style, Smollett uses the brevity of the letter, episodic action, and the travel narrative (which may be read as a type of long-form physical digression) to produce a narrative that is comparably idiosyncratic.

³⁸ Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, i.24-25.

Burton and Smollett both allow for the meandering of a narrative; but what Burton makes clear is that the meandering and superficiality is *essential* to the success of his work because these are the very qualities which divert the humors of a melancholy man. The present reading suggests, however, that *Humphry Clinker* may itself be a form of Burtonian cure in the way it diverts rather than commands the attention of its reader. Although this proposed rationale for Smollett's form may not explicitly stated in his work (and has hitherto not been explored by critics), Burtonian cure provides a plausible and intelligible context for the design of *Humphry Clinker*. Not only, then, does the essentially fractured structure of *Humphry Clinker* fulfill Smollett's own vision of the novel as a "large diffused picture"; the centerless, ever-moving, divertive quality of Smollett's epistolary travel narrative renders the form of the text itself potentially curative within the economy of early modern medicine.

The function of diversion in Burtonian cure is to excite "the irrational and pre-rational faculties and the powers of suggestion whereby melancholics were understood to be both cured and afflicted."³⁹ The privileged role of the imagination in early modern medicine dictates that the ideal regimen for the ill⁴⁰ be consistent exposure to many and diverse stimuli. Burtonian cure is distributed in measured doses, however—the limitation of which is nothing other than human

³⁹ Stephanie Shirilan, "Exhilarating the Spirits: Burtonian Study as a Cure for Scholarly Melancholy," *Studies in Philology* 111, no. 3 (2014), 487.

⁴⁰ The term "mentally ill" or any such references to "diseases of the mind" are purposely avoided in this paper for their anachronism, but moreover because such terms do not accurately reflect early modern conceptions of the body. The origin point of melancholy was the spleen, and diseases were more often linked to the gut than the head. Which is not to say that Burton had little knowledge of the brain; rather, the notion that the body was coursing with fluids that were hardly distinct discouraged articulations of disease as localized phenomenon. This distinction is crucial because hypochondriac diseases were associated with other physical ailments, so conversely treatments for melancholy had greater potential to cure things beyond things purely "intellectual." Note how Matthew Bramble suffers in all parts of his body, including his issues with gout, yet the source of all his pain seems to be his "hypochondriac" tendencies and afflictions of "spleen."

capacity for mirth and the exhaustion of attention. Burton is sensitive to how certain literary forms are able to excite and arouse readers whose faculties of attention are at their limits. He says of imagination and digression:

Of which imagination, because it hath so great a stroke in producing this malady, and is so powerful of itself, it will not be improper to my discourse to make a brief digression, and speak of the force of it, and how it causeth this alteration. Which manner of digression howsoever some dislike, as frivolous and impertinent, yet I am of Beroaldus his opinion, “Such digressions do *mightily delight* and *refresh* a weary reader, they are *like sauce to a bad stomach*, and I do therefore most willingly use them.”⁴¹

Although *Humphry Clinker* lacks a narrator to voice any metafictional attention to the reader of the text, his earlier work *The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves* (1760) includes addresses to the reader which demonstrate a sensitivity to readerly experience analogous to Burton’s, with particular reference to the brevity of text, “as the ensuing scene requires fresh attention in the reader, we shall defer it till another opportunity, when his spirits shall be recruited from the fatigue of this chapter.”⁴² Smollett’s narrative, thus, operates on an economy of spirit which equates the act of reading with the excitation of the spirits, and thereby something which should be checked by frequent breaks in the narrative. *The Adventures of Launcelot Greaves* is a case wherein Smollett exploited this concept in full. *Launcelot Greaves* was one of the first novels to be published serially.⁴³ The text appeared in his publication *The British Magazine* beginning in January of 1760 and ending in January 1762. The breaks in narrative for *Launcelot Greaves* were

⁴¹ Burton, *Anatomy*, i. 253. Emphasis mine.

⁴² Tobias Smollett, *The Life and Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*, ed. Robert Folkenflik and Barbara Laning Fitzpatrick, *The Works of Tobias Smollett* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 114.

⁴³ *Launcelot Greaves* was “the longest work of original fiction yet to appear in an English periodical, and it was the first serially published novel ever to be illustrated.” Tobias Smollett, *The Life and Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*, ed. Robert Folkenflik and Barbara Laning Fitzpatrick, *The Works of Tobias Smollett* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2002), xvii.

a matter of weeks or even months as opposed to relatively minute pauses encouraged by the opening and closing of short chapters, yet the principle of disruption is largely the same. In *Humphry Clinker*, the fracturing of narrative is a function of the polyphonic, epistolary form; the letters are short, of varying length, and each is told using one of five different voices. Suspension of narrative operates on a concept of respite for Smollett and Burton alike, who both privilege the role of the imagination in the health of an individual.

The imagination, as it was understood in the early modern period, was like a bridge between intellectual faculties and more visceral, embodied experiences (including but not limited to the passions). Humoral medicine entailed a fluidity between parts of the body now thought of as distinct, and this concept of interrelated experience within the body persisted even after the terminology of “nerves” and “fibers” came to replace that of “choler” and “bile.”⁴⁴ The dynamic interplay between intellectual and corporeal is articulated by Matthew Bramble in his initial representation of his illness as being “equally distressed in mind and body”⁴⁵ and this idea is argued quite forcibly throughout *Humphry Clinker*. Bramble writes, “I find my spirits and my health affect each other reciprocally—that is to say, every thing that discomposes my mind, produces a correspondent disorder in my body; and my bodily complaints are remarkably mitigated by those considerations that dissipate the clouds of mental chagrin.”⁴⁶ The imagination

⁴⁴ For one a concise history of humoral medicine, see Vivian Nutton, “Humoralism,” in *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine*, ed. W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993). Furthermore, Descartes may have published his theory of mind-body dualism in the seventeenth century but his belief that the two systems wholly distinct by no means defined the early modern understanding of relations between mind and body, especially for those who were engaged in physic as opposed to natural philosophy. See, Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 1637.

⁴⁵ Tobias Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*, ed. Shaun Regan (Penguin Books, 2008). All subsequent citations refer to the Penguin Classics edition, although other editions are cited throughout.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 172. Similarly, in describing the woeful condition of his friend Baynard, Bramble expresses his hopes to see his friend “perfectly at ease both in his mind and body, for the one had dangerously affected the other,” 389.

articulated as such is the mechanism by which Burtonian cure operates. Smollett's representation of how the body works in *Humphry Clinker* is perfectly suited for a literary cure which exerts its influence through the excitation of the spirits.

While one might say in a general sense that Smollett's epistolary novel is attuned to the foundational principles of Burton's philosophy, that which links Burtonian cure and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* most definitively is the notion that travel is a particularly effective means of cure. When it comes to battling idleness and solitude, travel is highly recommended by Burton, for him there being "no better physic for a melancholy man than change of air and variety of places, to travel abroad and see fashions."⁴⁷ Travel is an effective course for those who seek health and, in Burton's opinion, preferable for its capacity for mirth.

But the most pleasant of all outward pastimes is that of Aretæus, *deambulatio per amœna loca* [strolling through pleasant scenery], to make a petty progress, a merry journey now and then with some good companions, to visit friends, see cities, castles, towns...to walk amongst orchards, gardens, bowers, mounts, and arbours, artificial wildernesses, green thickets, arches, groves, lawns rivulets, fountains, and such-like pleasant places.⁴⁸

In advising his readers to take up travel, Burton's words conjure up a sort of virtual tour. The length and specificity of his list at once evokes his own pleasure over thinking of such a journey and invites readers to join him in the imaginative moment. In his preface to the *Anatomy*, the imaginative potential of travel is exhibited when Burton fashions his reader as a traveller and himself as a guide, making the traveller's journey a metaphor for the text itself.

And if thou vouchsafe to read this treatise, it shall seem no otherwise to thee than the way to an ordinary traveller, sometimes fair, sometimes foul; here champaign, there enclosed; barren in one place, better soil in another: by woods, groves, hills, dales, plains, etc. I

⁴⁷ Burton, *Anatomy*, ii.67.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, ii.74

shall lead thee *per ardua montium, et lubrica vallium, et roscida cespitum, et glebosa camporum* [over steep mountains, slippery glades, wet grass, and sticky fields], through variety of objects, that which thou shalt like and surely dislike.⁴⁹

The passage is another tour in miniature, with the verbose latin inviting readers to imagine themselves there, to experience the steepness, the wetness, and the stickiness of the landscape. In these and other examples, Burton makes clear that he puts actual travel and imaginary travel on the same playing field. He admits to personally having “never travelled but in map or card, in which my unconfined thoughts have freely expatiated,”⁵⁰ and yet his volume extols the many virtues of journeys, often to faraway countries. Because the mechanism of remedy is the imagination, Burton affirms that the mere contemplation of travel—including that induced by travel literature—operates just as well on the spirits as any physical action entailed by travel.⁵¹ As a work of travel literature, *Humphry Clinker* combines both of Burton’s most highly recommended cures—travel and literary study.

Without reference to Burtonian principles of superfluity and disruption, cure also operates as a sort of structuring feature in *Humphry Clinker* at the level of plot. The novel is roughly bookended by the story of Bramble’s journey from illness to health. He introduces his disease in the the inaugural letter of the narrative, “I am as lame and as much tortured in all my

⁴⁹ Ibid., “Preface,” i.32.

⁵⁰ Burton, “Preface,” *Anatomy*, i.18.

⁵¹ Elsewhere Burton writes, “But amongst those exercises or recreations of the mind within doors, there is none so general, so aptly to be applied to all sorts of men, so fit and proper to expel idleness and melancholy as that of study...What so full of content, as to read, walk, and see maps, pictures, statues, jewels marbles, which some so much magnify, as those that Phidias made of old so exquisite and pleasing to be beheld, that, as Chrysostom thinketh, “if any man be sickly, troubled in mind, or that cannot sleep for grief, and shall but stand over against one of Phidias’ images, he will forget all care, or whatsoever else may molest him, in an instant”?” Burton, *Anatomy*, ii. 86. Stephanie Shirilan also cites this passage as evidence that Burton felt that the mere contemplation of travel was good for the health.

limbs as if I was broke upon the wheel: indeed, I am equally distressed in mind and body,” while he begs relief in the form of medication from his correspondent Dr. Lewis.⁵² His concluding letter presents a striking contrast; Bramble then writes in good humor, “As I have laid in a considerable stock of health, it is to be hoped you will not have much trouble from me in the way of physic.”⁵³ In fact, at a crucial moment, Bramble reflects on his improved condition in a distinctly Burtonian manner. He writes to Dr. Lewis:

Your objection to my passing this season of the year at such a distance from home, would have more weight if I did not find myself perfectly at my ease where I am; and my health so much improved, that I am disposed to bid defiance to gout and rheumatism - I begin to think I have put myself on the superannuated list too soon, and absurdly sought for health in the retreats of laziness - I am persuaded that all valetudinarians are too sedentary, too regular, and too cautious - We should sometimes increase the motion of the machine, to *unclog the wheels of life*; and now and then take a plunge amidst the waves of excess, in order to case-harden the constitution. I have even found a change of company as necessary as a change of air, to promote a vigorous circulation of the spirits, which is the very essence and criterion of good health.⁵⁴

The structure and the content of *Humphry Clinker* thus work in tandem, just as Burton’s method cure is both discussed in text and demonstrated in his style.

Beyond the Bramble’s personal quest for health, the structural features of *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* that contribute to its curative power are its multiplicity of voices, the centrality of travel, and its epistolary form. The polyphony provides variety, the letters provide semi-regular disruption of the narrative, and the journey of the Bramble party provides constant physical disruption for the characters, mental disruption for readers, and constant variety in the

⁵² Smollett, *HC*, 9.

⁵³ Smollett, *HC*, 390.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 377.

changing scenery. The structure of *Humphry Clinker* is a three-pronged attack on idleness because the epistolary travel narrative is basically the antithesis of idleness. Perhaps contrary to common sense (that is, the common sense defined by the present cultural moment), says Stephanie Shirilan, “it is precisely by meditating upon “*superfluous industry about unprofitable things*” that Burton diverts his own melancholia and advises we do the same.”⁵⁵ This reading of *Humphry Clinker* then also accounts for the narrative’s seemingly less crucial moments. If Bramble’s journey to health is treated as central, the interpolated romance plot of Lydia Melford and her lover “Wilson,” Jerry Melford’s pranks on various gentlemen, Tabitha Bramble’s letters concerning the management of her household, and Winifred Jenkin’s gossipy snippets to her friends all contribute to the divertive quality of the narrative.

Bramble is one possible beneficiary of *Humphry Clinker*’s Burtonian cure. Tobias Smollett himself is another. The position shared by Burton and Smollett as writers of cure is enough to invite comparison between the two; however, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* was also written at an incredibly low point of Smollett’s health, in the years he spent searching high and low for remedy. *Humphry Clinker* may have been a therapeutic project for Smollett. Smollett’s final novel was published just three months before his death, when he was experiencing innumerable health complications like difficulty breathing, loss of muscle mass, and decreased mobility in his hands. Between 1762 and 1763, when many think Smollett began writing *Humphry Clinker*, Smollett wrote often to his friends to saying things like “the State of my Health becomes a very serious affair” and expressing worry that he would never see them again. In a moment of macabre humor, for example, Smollett writes in 1771 (the year of *Clinker*

⁵⁵ Shirilan, “Exhilarating the Spirits,” 499.

and his death), “With respect to myself, I have nothing to say but that if I can prevail upon my wife to execute my last will, you shall receive my poor carcass in a box, after I am dead, to be placed among your rarities. I am already so dry and emaciated that I may pass for an Egyptian mummy without any other preparation than some pitch and painted linen.”⁵⁶

Smollett’s account of his own *Travels Through Italy and France* (1766) is possibly modeled as a Burtonian project as well—that is, one he writes as much for his own benefit as for that of his readers. Barring the possible distinction between fiction and nonfiction, *Humphry Clinker* and Smollett’s *Travels* are quite similar books. What has been said about the epistolary genre and travel narrative must apply to the *Travels* as well as *Humphry Clinker*, if in lesser degree (*Clinker* being polyphonic, the *Travels* being monophonic). The narrator of Smollett’s travels (whether he may be rightly equated with Smollett himself is a point of contention)⁵⁷ voices a quasi-Burtonian notion of self-service in acknowledging the diversion to be had by writing.

Dear Sir, You laid your commands upon me at parting, to communicate from time to time the observations I should make in the course of my travels, and it was an injunction I received with pleasure. In gratifying your curiosity, I shall find some amusement to beguile the tedious hours, which, without such employment, would be rendered insupportable by distemper and disquiet.⁵⁸

In addition to providing a rationale for the existence of these letters, Smollett’s writing of the letters is itself diverting (in both the sense of being “amusing” and the more literal sense of

⁵⁶ Smollett “Letter 106: Extract from a Letter to John Hunter,” in *Letters*, ed. Knapp, 140.

⁵⁷ John F. Sena’s article figures most prominently in this debate as the first to suggest Smollett constructed a persona in the writing of his *Travels*. John F. Sena, “Smollett’s Persona and the Melancholic Traveler: An Hypothesis,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 1, no. 4 (1968): 353–69, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2737856>.

⁵⁸ Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy*, ed. Frank Felsenstein (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 2.

redirecting one's attention). The personal gain to be had by the author seems less like a hollow pleasantry when put in conversation with Burton's intent to "write of melancholy, by being busy to avoid melancholy."

The present discussion of Burton and Smollett has brought even closer to the fore a crucial question, hitherto unanswered. Did Smollett read Burton's *Anatomy*? The short answer is that there is no definitive evidence he did. Few of Smollett's personal documents survive (at least in the public domain). Relative to his contemporaries, only a haphazard smattering of his letters have been preserved and subsequently made their way into critical editions.⁵⁹ Of the letters published, none contain reference to Burton. If Smollett's personal library was ever catalogued, the inventory of its contents has never been published. Overall, access to Smollett's reading habits is extremely limited. But, as the Johnson quotation serves in part to show, Burton's *Anatomy* was enthusiastically read, admired, and shared among eighteenth-century men of letters. In terms of geography and chronology, Smollett and Johnson were close contemporaries.⁶⁰ Furthermore, two other literary greats of the eighteenth-century, Jonathan Swift and Laurence Sterne owed a lot to Robert Burton. Both Swift's crazed parody of learning, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) and Sterne's insanely digressive *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759) draw freely

⁵⁹ Knapp's collection is the largest yet, boasting a total of 108 letters, which he admits pales in comparison to the correspondence collections of Richardson, Sterne, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Johnson (respectively). Smollett, *Letters of Tobias Smollett*, ed. Lewis M. Knapp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), viii.

⁶⁰ Smollett is credited with bestowing the title of "great cham of literature" on Johnson, but the two men were never more than acquaintances. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* records a single instance of the two men of letters interacting, in which Johnson asks Smollett to intercede in an issue concerning his friend. Smollett agrees to speak on his behalf although he himself indicates that the two "were never cater-cousins" (meaning "good friends," according to the OED). For a conjectural analysis of their relationship (in spite of the lack of documentation), see Lewis M. Knapp, "Smollett and Johnson, Never Cater-Cousins?," *Modern Philology* 66, no. 2 (1968): 152–54. "Cater-Cousin, N.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, n.d.), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/28899>.

from Burton's *Anatomy*. They both exploit the technique of digression, in particular, to great comic purpose as a way of pathologizing narrative and narrator.⁶¹

From the popularity of Burton among his close contemporaries, it may be safe to assume Smollett read Burton's *Anatomy*. However, the most suggestive evidence is that Smollett's conception of cure was characteristically Burtonian. Notwithstanding the deficiency in material evidence that Smollett read Burton, their shared ideology indicates that Smollett endorsed Burtonian medicine, whether or not he associated it with its original author. Smollett even subscribed to one of Burton's most eccentric forms of healing; he believed in the curative power of horseback-riding.⁶² Smollett writes of trying change of air, sea bathing, and "the Exercise of riding on Horseback" to improve his own condition,⁶³ and Matthew Bramble mentions this method (with approbation) at least thrice within the course of *Humphry Clinker*.⁶⁴ Above all, though, that which links Smollett to Burton is how largely travel figures in terms of Smollett's health. Tobias Smollett staked his life on the curative properties of travel. In the summer of 1763, he left England thinking he would not survive the journey. He writes to his friend John Home in December 1762, "Dear Sir, My Flesh continues to waste, and I begin to think the best

⁶¹ On the whole, Swift's parody of learning takes much from Burton's prolific, erudite style. On the shared focus on religion in Swift and Burton, see Thomas L. Canavan, "Robert Burton, Jonathan Swift, and the Tradition of Anti-Puritan Invective," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, no. 2 (1973): 227–42, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2708727>. For some readings of Burton quotations (and misquotations) in *Tristram Shandy*, see Melvyn New and Norman Fry, "Some Borrowings in 'Tristram Shandy': The Textual Problem," *Studies in Bibliography* 29 (1976): 322–30.

⁶² Horseback-riding was also popularized by Doctor George Cheyne (author of *The English Malady*); although, that possibly only underscores the influence of Burton because the next chapter treats Cheyne as a reformulation of Burton.

⁶³ Tobias Smollett, "Letter 87: To John Moore," in *The Letters of Tobias Smollett*, ed. Lewis M. Knapp (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1762), 107.

⁶⁴ Smollett, *HC*, 9, 16, 74. For one of Burton's many references to horses, partition ii, page 74 mentions "riding of great horses" and "horse-races"

chance I have for Recovering will be a Removal into a warmer climate,” (and in close form to Burton mentions he seeks employment because he is “unwilling to eat the Bread of Idleness.”)⁶⁵ Following many touching farewell letters to his close friends Smollett writes again from abroad, “I am now gone to the South of France in order to try the Effects of that climate, and very probably I shall never return.”⁶⁶ Smollett did return in the summer of 1765, and shortly after published his *Travels Through Italy and France*, saying “I hope the Performance may be usefull to other valetudinarians who travel for the Recovery of their Health.”⁶⁷ Smollett was a devotee of Burtonian medicine, whether he read Burton’s *Anatomy* or not.

Part of the point, however, is Smollett did not have to read Burton or have the medical acumen he did for the *Anatomy* to provide an appropriate context for *Humphry Clinker*. This is a subtle distinction; because while Smollett’s engagement with medicine lends support to the connection between Burton and Smollett, *Clinker* would still be a form of Burtonian cure if Smollett had no medical experience. Part of what enable this reading, is a broader definition of the medical which expands into something closer to “culture,” a definition of the medical which *Humphry Clinker* participates in and reinforces. That is to say that Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* did not merely affect those within the field of medicine. His work may in some sense be understood as a value system which is steeped in the medical but not confined to it. In sum, Burton’s program for treating melancholy augmented the cultural value of the superficial

⁶⁵ Smollett, “Letter 89: To John Home,” in *Letters*, ed. Lewis M. Knapp, 110.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, “Letter 90: To Richard Smith Esq., of New Jersey, North America,” 112.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, “Letter 97: To John Moore,” 126.

and the disruptive, and thereby provides a rational system for understanding Tobias Smollett's *Humphry Clinker*.

This chapter has focused specifically on the structure of *Humphry Clinker* in the context of Burtonian cure; hence, it has leaned heavily on Burton's edict, "Be not idle," and neglected his advice to "be not solitary." However, the social aspect of Burtonian cure has been an essential feature all along. The epistolary genre is fundamentally social and Bramble's cure is in large part owed to his interactions with other characters in the story. On a subliminal level, the form of the novel also reinforces the sense of community among the members of the Bramble party even if they are not writing to each other, because narrative form makes them into their own sort of community. Benedict Anderson's theory of *Imagined Communities* is in part scaffolded on a metaphor of novel. Anderson famously claims that "all communities are imagined," but, to clarify what he means by that, Anderson uses the eighteenth-century novel as a model for community.⁶⁸ The aspect of community implied by Burton's program for health has been left to the side, so it may be treated of more fully in the next chapter. Burton remains an essential part of the equation throughout this paper, but the following chapter turns to a slightly different articulation of early modern cure, this one from the eighteenth century.

⁶⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London: Verso, 2016).

III. THE ENGLISH MALADY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN: NEGOTIATING ILLNESS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was encountered in the eighteenth-century as often (if not more) in remediated form as he was read and enjoyed in his own right.⁶⁹ The Johnson quotation this essay adopts as part of its title at once represents the enthusiasm with which eighteenth-century men of letters took up Burton, the solemnity with which they heeded his words, and—significantly—the ways in which Burton's work was debated and revised in the century following his death. The full quotation reads as such, "The great direction which Burton has left to men disordered like you, is this, Be not solitary; be not idle: which I would thus modify;—If you are idle, be not solitary; if you are solitary, be not idle."⁷⁰ Johnson first advises his correspondent (James Boswell, that is) using Burton's exact words;⁷¹ but then Johnson puts his own spin on it. The present chapter is concerned with how the *Anatomy of Melancholy* was reworked in the eighteenth century insomuch that the central argument relies on a particular reformulation of Burton that placed greater emphasis on the cultural context of disease, laying bare the political implications of illness which, if present in Burton, was only subliminally so.⁷²

⁶⁹ Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* enjoyed an enthusiastic readership in the eighteenth-century in spite of what may be suggested by its publication history. No new edition of Burton was issued in the eighteenth-century. The eighth edition was published in 1676 followed by a hiatus of over a hundred years which was ended by the ninth edition, published in 1800. Sarah Bixby Smith, Margaret Mulhauser, and Paul Jordan-Smith, eds., *Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy and Burtoniana: A Checklist of a Part of the Collection in Memory of Sarah Bixby Smith (1871-1935)* (Claremont, Calif: Printed for the Honnold Library of the Associated Colleges by Vivian Ridler at the University Press, Oxford, 1959). That Burton retained cultural currency in the absence of new printed editions of his *Anatomy* only further underscores the point argued above by indicating at once the profound influence of Burton's work and the likelihood that Burton was often encountered in mediated form in the eighteenth century.

⁷⁰ From a letter Johnson wrote to Boswell in October of 1779. Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ii.415.

⁷¹ "Be not solitary, be not idle." Burton, *Anatomy*, iii.432.

⁷² Burton's reference to individual nations is characterized by his wide reach and lack of singular focus. Thus, his famous "Digression of Air" for example, mentions Europe, the Mediterranean, the Baltic seas, Holland, Finland, Nova Zembla, California, Venice, Jerusalem, and Greece all on a single page. *Ibid.*, ii.35.

George Cheyne's medical treatise *The English Malady* (1733) is a text very much in the Burtonian tradition.⁷³ Cheyne also takes up melancholy (and, like Burton, the full spectrum of sedentary disease, which he prefers to call "Nervous Disorders") as his principal object. Likewise, the aspects of health Cheyne is most concerned with—such as the effect of climate and diet (the source of Cheyne's fame)⁷⁴—can all be found within the pages of Burton's *Anatomy*, albeit to a lesser degree.⁷⁵ For the purposes of this paper, Cheyne is best understood as a rearticulation of Burton—founded on the same principles but with a shift in focus. As the title alone indicates, above other revisions, *The English Malady* distinguished itself from Burton's *Anatomy* by bringing the issue of national identity to the forefront of debates on disease and cure. His preface famously declares:

The Title I have chosen for this Treatise, is a Reproach universally thrown on this Island by Foreigners, and all our Neighbours on the Continent, by whom nervous Distempers, Spleen, Vapours, and Lowness of Spirits, are in Derision, called the ENGLISH MALADY. And I wish there were not so good Grounds for this Reflection. The Moisture of our Air, the Variableness of our Weather, (from our situation amidst the Ocean) the

⁷³ Johnson was also a great reader of Cheyne. Like Burton, Cheyne's work is among the texts that Johnson prescribed to his friend Boswell. Eric T. Carlson's introductory note to the facsimile edition of *The English Malady* is a useful summation of Cheyne's relative position in polite English society. "Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth-century writer and wit, had words of high praise both for his former physician, Dr. George Cheyne, and the book Cheyne authored in his 60th year, *The English Malady*. On more than one occasion Johnson recommended that James Boswell, his friend and biographer, read it for his recurrent "black fits." Cheyne's name was known to many Britishers who suffered from nervous or hypochondriacal disorders and was mentioned, among others, by the novelist Henry Fielding, though Cheyne was a friend and partisan of Fielding's literary rival, Samuel Richardson." Eric T. Carlson, M.D., "Introduction," in *The English Malady (1733)*, by George Cheyne, A facsim. reproduction with an introd, History of Psychology Series (Delmar, N.Y: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1976), v. For more on the broader cultural context of the English Malady, see Oswald Doughty, "The English Malady of the Eighteenth Century," *The Review of English Studies* 2, no. 7 (1926): 257–69.

⁷⁴ A Cheyne's proposed "chief Design" of his work is "to recommend to [his] Fellow Creatures that plain *Diet* which is most agreeable to the Purity and Simplicity of uncorrupted *Nature*, and unconquer'd *Reason*." Cheyne, *English Malady*, [A2]. Emphasis not mine.

⁷⁵ Burton's statements on climate are mostly found within his "Digression of Air," ii.34-69. For Burton on diet as a cause of melancholy, see his section "Bad Diet a Cause," i.216. And for his discussion of change in diet as a subsequent cure, see "Diet Rectified in Substance" ii.21.

Rankness and Fertility of our Soil, the Richness and Heaviness of our Food, the Wealth and Abundance of the Inhabitants, (from their universal Trade) the Inactivity and sedentary Occupations of the better Sort, (among whom this Evil mostly rages) and the Humour of living in great, populous, and consequently unhealthy Towns, have brought forth a Class and Set of Distempers, with atrocious and frightful Symptoms, scarce known to our Ancestors, and never rising to such fatal Heights, nor afflicting such Numbers in any other known Nation. These nervous Disorders being computed to make almost one third of the Complaints of the People of Condition in England.⁷⁶

In the opening passage of his text, Cheyne links the climate, geography, and moreover, social behavior—defined as wealth, leisure, consumption of both books and decadent food, inclination to metropolitan social structures, and all else implied—of England to what he perceives as the country’s greatest health issue. That which defines England as a country and burgeoning mercantile empire also predisposes its inhabitants to “a Class and Set of Distempers, with atrocious and frightful symptoms” on enormous scale.⁷⁷ While sharing with Burton the concern for those afflicted by diseases of the mind—perhaps most recognizably in his gesture toward the relationship between learning and illness implied by “the Inactivity and sedentary Occupations of the better Sort, (among whom this Evil mostly rages)” —Cheyne redefined cure for the eighteenth century and beyond by yoking together issues of national identity and illness. Burton’s imperative, “Be not solitary,” is thus revealed by Cheyne to be a command of national importance, a non-neutral concept. The principle of socializing the solitary, or curing by way of community (if the alliteration may be excused), is far from being divorced from political context.

⁷⁶ George Cheyne, *The English Malady (1733)*, A facsimile reproduction with an introduction, History of Psychology Series (Delmar, N.Y: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1976). i-ii.

⁷⁷ One should note that Cheyne is not referring to England as a clearly defined nation so much as he himself is defining a certain brand of Englishness which bespeaks gentility, learning, technological advancement, and luxury. The significance of Cheyne authoring this type of English identity is discussed later in this chapter.

Cheyne's most significant contribution to medicine is how he situates illness in a larger framework of national identity in a manner unprecedented by Burton.

With regard to *Humphry Clinker*, although the structure of Smollett's novel relies on principles defined by Burton and possibly shared by Cheyne, *The English Malady's* articulation of disease has profoundly different implications for *Humphry Clinker*; that is, Cheyne's work demonstrates how illness and cure, rather than being abstract concepts divorced from any particular context, is in fact embedded in a larger culture of national identity. Therefore, narratives studied individually by previous critics of *Humphry Clinker*—that of cure as a form of plot in the novel and the text's engagement with questions of British national identity, respectively—are fundamentally, inextricably linked and moreover, irreducible. They should not, in other words, be understood as the same plot using different terminology, as some critics have implied.⁷⁸ The political and the medical are, instead, complementary narratives. The present chapter aims to enrich critical discussions of Smollett's *Expedition of Humphry Clinker* by illustrating how the novel's negotiation of national identity (and possible endorsement of British identity) is embedded in eighteenth-century medical discourse and, conversely how questions about disease and cure are never without social-political ramifications.

While the previous chapter revealed how the structure of *Humphry Clinker* resonates with the logic of early modern cure, the notion that Englishness itself was central to conceptions of

⁷⁸ Juliet Shields, for example, does not recognize Bramble's quest for health as anything distinct from the novel's negotiation of national identity; and yet, she consistently uses the phrase "cure" to describe character development. The term appears at least three times in her article. Her use of "cure" in a metaphorical sense represents how readings tend reduce the medical to something which always signifies something else and vice versa. In her case, illness signifies prejudice and health signifies the defeat of prejudice. Shields, "Brutish or British?" Aileen Douglas's work must, again, be exempted for its matchless perception. Her work on Smollett and the body hinges upon her understanding that bodies simultaneously exist and signify or in her words, "Smollett's novels reveal the body as synthetic, cultural product, but his works also emphasize that bodies are matter. If you prick a socially constructed body, it still bleeds." Douglas, *Uneasy Sensations*, xxii.

disease in the eighteenth century demands a study of national identity in Smollett's final novel. That Smollett was Scottish is a fact lost on virtually no one. His critics often weaponized this part of Smollett's identity, labeling his name with such titles as "Sawney Mac Smallhead" ("Sawney" being a popular means of calling someone a generic Scot, with predictably negative connotation).⁷⁹ Smollett lived in the early years following the formation of the United Kingdom—that is, the unification of Scotland and England in 1707—and through the years surrounding the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, in which Scotland became the epicenter and instrument of political insurgence in the United Kingdom, turning public favor even more against the Scots. Scottish emigration was also a hot button issue in Smollett's lifetime. The 1770s in particular were "a dramatic decade for Scottish emigration" with an estimated "10,000 per year" leaving the country. The years were marked by an exodus of Scots who flocked to English metropolises in search of work not to be found in Scotland. Some Scots (like *Clinker's* Lieutenant Lismahago) fought in the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and never returned to Scotland. The proliferation of Scottish immigrants in a politically charged eighteenth-century England bred an effusion of Scotophobic stereotypes (such as those which portrayed Scots as parasites and lice).⁸⁰ Suffice to say, any ill-feelings toward the Scots harbored by eighteenth-century Englishmen were far from resolved by the end of the century. *Humphry Clinker* situates itself in this world; from its very first pages the novel invokes anti-Scottish stereotypes and the Seven Years War is

⁷⁹ Anonymous, "The Battle of the Reviews," in *Tobias Smollett: The Critical Heritage*, Lionel Kelly, ed., The Critical Heritage Series (London ; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 162–69.

⁸⁰ Swenson, *Essential Scots and the Idea of Unionism in Anglo-Scottish Literature, 1603-1832*, *Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture, 1650-1850* (Lewisburg : Lanham, Maryland: Bucknell University Press ; Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 114.

mentioned. As the Bramble party moves northward, they increasingly engage issues of English-Scottish relations and debate the virtues of the union of the two countries.

While a limited number of critics read Smollett in a strictly Scottish context,⁸¹ the majority of readers who are concerned with issues of national identity recognize the broader political reach of Smollett's novels. *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, according to Robert Crawford, for example, is "arguably the first fully *British* novel."⁸² Crawford tracks the "erosion of anti-Scottish prejudice" throughout *Humphry Clinker*, a narrative thereby culminating in a triple wedding (particularly that of Tabitha Bramble and Lieutenant Lismahago) which epitomizes the total defeat of prejudice and the embrace of unionism. Crawford's reading invites revision in that it relies on a too-sharp distinction between the "prejudice" of the English (as embodied by the Bramble party) and the Scottish defeat of such prejudice (performed almost single-handedly by Lieutenant Lismahago). Crawford's case for unionism is exaggerated. Rivka Swenson interrogates the very definition of unionism in her discussion of *Humphry Clinker*. Swenson argues that the resolution of *Humphry Clinker* "does not simply affirm the Union, but radically reimagines unionism" by promoting the adoption of an identity more accurately

⁸¹ Critics such as Evan Gottlieb and Catherine Jones, for example, represent a movement that seeks meaningful connection between the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment and works of Scottish Literature from the same period. Their aim is to contradict the notion that achievements of early modern period fiction writers paled in comparison to Scotland's "groundbreaking achievements in moral and natural philosophy, medicine and natural history, and the critical arts" (see the introduction to *The Scottish Enlightenment and Literary Culture*, the book containing Jones's chapter). Smollett's work is thus situated in the properly Scottish tradition to further this aim. Gottlieb, "'Fools of Prejudice': Sympathy and National Identity in the Scottish Enlightenment and Humphry Clinker," *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 18, no. 1 (2005): 81–106, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ecf.2006.0007>. Jones, "Tobias Smollett, Travel Writing, and Medical Botany," in *The Scottish Enlightenment and Literary Culture* (Bucknell University Press ; Rowman & Littlefield Pub. Group, n.d.), 53–75. Kenneth Simpson's argument takes on a similarly narrow scope, but for him reading *Humphry Clinker* within the Scottish literary tradition in itself resolves questions about Smollett's "concomitant lack of depth" and predilection for the "unusual and grotesque." Simpson, "The Scot as English Novelist: Tobias Smollett," in *The Protean Scot: The Crisis of Identity in Eighteenth Century Scottish Literature* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 14–50.

⁸² Robert Crawford, "British Literature," in *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1992), 55. Emphasis not mine.

described as “Scottish-Welsh” or “Pan-Scottish.”⁸³ For the purposes of the present discussion, however, the distinction is perhaps of little importance. Notwithstanding minute critical differences, Crawford and Swenson both put English-Scottish unionism at the center of questions of national identity, consequently giving the character Lieutenant Obadiah Lismahago the privileged role as the key to understanding the national politics of Smollett’s *Expedition of Humphry Clinker*. Moreover, critics who aim to determine which national tradition Smollett’s novel belongs to work upon the assumption that this is a question which can sufficiently be answered. The following discussion challenges this assumption.

If Lismahago and Tabitha Bramble’s marriage symbolizes the unification of Scotland and England, the circumstances of their personal union thereby form a critique of its larger political analog. For one, Tabitha Bramble is represented as an extremely fickle woman⁸⁴ and even as her courtship with the Lieutenant reaches its apex, she holds little genuine regard for him. “She attached herself to Lismahago for no other reason but that she despaired of making a more agreeable conquest,” Matthew says of his sister. In the presence of a man with better prospects, Tabitha “behaved very coldly to the captain, and strove to fasten on the other’s heart.”⁸⁵ Furthermore, the very institution of marriage is not looked upon favorably by the patriarch of the Bramble family. Immediately following the letter in which Bramble gives Lismahago permission

⁸³ Rivka Swenson, “Writing Reunion, Rewriting Union for the Atomic Scot: Tobias Smollett’s Traveling Types after the ’45 and Seven Years War,” in *Essential Scots and the Idea of Unionism in Anglo-Scottish Literature, 1603-1832*, *Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture, 1650-1850* (Lewisburg : Lanham, Maryland: Bucknell University Press ; Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 97.

⁸⁴ Smollett’s sexual politics are admittedly disconcerting. John Skinner has (timidly) suggested that Smollett’s representations of women are not as bad as they seem even while he admits that “in our day, Smollett might have scored poorly on political correctness.” Skinner, “Conclusion: Constructions of Femininity,” in *Constructions of Smollett: A Study of Genre and Gender*, 216–43.

⁸⁵ Smollett, *HC*, 383.

to marry Tabitha, he writes to his correspondent Dr. Lewis, “Thank heaven, Dick, that among all the follies and weaknesses of human nature, I have not yet fallen into that of matrimony.”⁸⁶ The precarious marriage of Lismahago and Tabitha seems far from an ideal union, and thereby not the picture-perfect representation of English-Scottish unionism that Crawford makes it out to be.

Moreover, if *Humphry Clinker* is, as Crawford says, “a novel about prejudice,”⁸⁷ he is wrong to suppose that the resolution of the novel implies the defeat of prejudice because Scotophobic attitudes are built into the frame story of *Humphry Clinker*, which remains tragically untouched/unaffected by the defense of the Scottish people by Lismahago himself, the symbolic wedding of the Lieutenant and Tabitha, or the reformed beliefs of the entire Bramble family. Technically, the first two letters of *Humphry Clinker* are not attributed to any of the Bramble party; instead, a letter exchange between “Mr Henry Davis, Bookseller, in London” and “the Revd. Mr Jonathan Dustwich” supplies a brief metafictional frame story for the *Expedition*. The exchange is part of a literary convention which offers a rationale for how this set of letters came to be discovered, assembled, and published.⁸⁸ The letters stand in complex relation to the text in that they precede the narrative of *Humphry Clinker* but are supposedly written after the events of the journey unfold and the letters are acquired by Reverend Dustwich. His criticism of Lismahago’s character through an iteration of a Scottish stereotype is interesting in that it

⁸⁶ Smollett, *HC*, 327.

⁸⁷ Crawford, “British Literature,” 55.

⁸⁸ The two most famous epistolary novels of the century, Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, include such prefaces that claim to “reveal” the circumstances of the text’s production. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, Or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, Or, The History of a Young Lady*, ed. Angus Ross (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 2004).

transcends the chronology of the text and, from the very beginning, undermines the possibility of defeating anti-Scottish prejudice in the novel.

[A]lbeit, I am much surprised that more care is not taken to exclude from the commission all such vagrant foreigners as may be justly suspected of disaffection to our happy constitution, in church and state—God forbid that I should be so uncharitable, as to affirm positively, that the said Lismahago is no better than a Jesuit in disguise; but this I will assert and maintain, *totis viribus* [with all my strength or might], that, from the day he qualified, he has never been once seen *intra templi parietes* [within the temple walls], that is to say, within the parish church.⁸⁹

To call Lismahago a “Jesuit in disguise” is to call him deceitful, to view him as a “vagrant foreigner” is to associate him with the class of unwelcome Scots who immigrated to England in search of work,⁹⁰ and to insinuate his very presence is a threat to the “happy constitution” of England is to reiterate the essence of the prejudice which *Humphry Clinker* seemed to deconstruct. So, although Matthew Bramble and his party may be convinced “that the contempt for Scotland, which prevails too much on this side of the Tweed, is founded on prejudice and error,”⁹¹ in one fell swoop Reverend Dustwich subverts the novel’s ability to reform English attitudes toward the Scots.⁹² The conversion of the Bramble party may promote favorable attitudes toward the Scotts, but Dustwich’s Scotophobic comments represents a built-in skepticism toward the defeat of prejudice of *Humphry Clinker*, perhaps suggesting it is idealistic.

⁸⁹ Smollett, *HC*, 4. English translations of the Latin taken from Regan’s notes to the Penguin edition.

⁹⁰ The stereotype of the traveling Scot will be explored more fully later in the present chapter.

⁹¹ Smollett, *HC*, 311.

⁹² Reverend Dustwich’s persistent Scotophobia potentially complicates/contradicts Rivka Swenson’s work on *Humphry Clinker* in particular because Dustwich is a resident of the Welsh city Abergavenny and Swenson’s argument hinges in part on the Brambles’s reclamation of their Welsh heritage and the significance of Wales as a form of compromise between England and Scotland geographically realized.

Despite the amount of critical attention devoted to him, Lieutenant Obadiah Lismahago is far more complicated than any individual study credits him for. He is a Scotsman, no doubt, and to a certain extent the embodiment of Scottish stereotypes⁹³—he is a loud, indignant, retired naval officer, who is easily incensed, fiercely loyal to his country, and a perpetually transient being (which the narrative establishes in part to deconstruct). And his induction into the Bramble family (and thereby English society) certainly does offer him up as a symbol of British citizenship and English-Scottish unionism. But, as a result of his time spent in North America, Captain Lismahago is also an arbiter of English colonial power and an adopted member of the Native American tribe the “Miamis.” In fact, Lismahago is equally characterized by his experiences with the Miamis as he is by his Scottish heritage.⁹⁴

From the Bramble party’s first encounter with Lismahago they observe how his character is marked by his time with the Native Americans. When he attempts to gracefully dismount his horse to impress the ladies, he slips and falls, “...down came the cavalier to the ground, and his hat and perriwig falling off, and displayed a head-piece of various colours, patched and plaistered in a woeful condition.” This first exposure of Lismahago is colored by his experience in America. He explains that he owes the appearance of his head to a time when “a party of Indians rifled him, scalped him, broke his skull [sic] with the blow of a tomahawk, and left him for dead on the field of battle.” He only reveals himself as Scottish when he addresses Jerry,

⁹³ Dustwich’s comment invites readers to see Lismahago as a stereotype.

⁹⁴ Unfavorable reviewers often took offense to this part of Lismahago’s identity. One reviewer of *Humphry Clinker* says “I think the book abounds in masterly strokes, and has a great deal of merit; though I hate that Hottentot, Captain Lismahago, and the ridiculous letters of Mrs. Tabitha Bramble” Anonymous, “Unsigned Review of Humphry Clinker,” in *Tobias Smollett: The Critical Heritage*, Lionel Kelly, ed., The Critical Heritage Series (London ; New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1771), 218.

Lydia, and Tabitha and “paid his respects in the Scotch dialect.”⁹⁵ Lismahago’s time with the tribe is substantial; he lives among them for at least two years and becomes an integrated part of their society. “By this time, Mr Lismahago was elected sachem, acknowledged first warrior of the Badger tribe, and dignified with the name or epithet of Occacanastaogarora, which signifies *nimble as a weasel*.”⁹⁶ Even his name serves as a dual-reference to Scotland and his time in the Americas. His military title—he is often referred to as merely “the lieutenant” or “the captain”—is a reference to the time he served in America while his surname is “taken from a place in Scotland so called.”⁹⁷

Returning once more to the symbolic value of Lismahago and Tabitha’s union, those who wish to uphold their marriage as a representation of English-Scottish unionism have totally disregarded the North American dimension of Lismahago’s character. And yet, Tabitha and Lismahago’s relationship is founded upon his experience with the Miamis, which only later gives shape to her positive attitude toward Scotland. In response to hearing of Lismahago’s injuries sustained at Ticonderoga, “Tabby’s heart was melted.”⁹⁸ After Lismahago gives his full account of his life among the Miamis (long preceding his defenses of Scotland), Tabitha and he begin their courtship, “An ogling correspondence forthwith commenced between this amiable pair of originals,” says Jerry, during which Lismahago “even made her a present of a purse of silk grass, woven by the hands of the amiable Squinkinacoosta,”—that is, his wife from the Native

⁹⁵ Smollett, *HC*, 210-211.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 216. Emphasis not mine.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 211.

community who passed away.⁹⁹ So, if Tabitha Bramble does have any particular regard for Obadiah Lismahago, her affection is based on his experiences in North America rather than his Scottishness.

Furthermore, their great marriage scene, which has been taken as the apex of Scottish-English unionist propaganda in *Humphry Clinker*, is itself dotted with Scottish and American symbols alike. Lismahago replaces Tabitha's embroidered green coat with "a fur cloak of American sables," but the ring he produces is "a curious antique, set with rose diamonds [which] had been in the family two hundred years." The gifts he bestows upon his in-laws are overwhelmingly American; for Matthew Bramble he had "fine bear's skin, and a Spanish fowling piece," for Jerry "a case of pistols curiously mounted with silver," and for Mrs. Jenkins "an Indian purse, made of silk grass, containing twenty crown pieces." And yet, they break a cake on Tabitha's head "according to the custom of the antient Britons."¹⁰⁰

The full complexity of Lismahago's hybrid identity—as Scot, as colonizer on behalf of Britain, as adopted member of a Native American tribe, and eventually as British citizen operating in English society—on its face complicates the ability for him to be placed in any single national tradition. In a certain light, the text's concern with North America furthers the argument for the broad designation "British" as a possible reference to not only domestic politics (i.e. English-Scottish unionism) but also England's colonial powers (anticipating perhaps, the British empire of the nineteenth century, which is incontrovertibly defined by its operations on a global scale).

⁹⁹ Smollett, *HC*, 220.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 386-387.

However, Charlotte Sussman's careful investigation of Lismahago's North American adventures points to the destabilization of the very notion of national identity in *Humphry Clinker*. Sussman argues that America represents the encroaching cultural import which threatens "England's idea of itself as a coherent, homogenous society."¹⁰¹ Although Sussman's intervention in debates on *Humphry Clinker* and national identity operates on a global scale, she stops short of connecting this relating this to (or even mentioning) the nation which is most central to *Humphry Clinker*—Scotland. Between Crawford and Swenson, the issue of national identity in *Humphry Clinker* poses itself as a potentially intractable problem. They sought to determine which national tradition Smollett's novel belongs to, working upon the assumption that this question may sufficiently be answered and the more basic assumption that this is even a question worth asking. Sussman's work, however, distinguishes itself by asking a slightly different question. What is the function of *Humphry Clinker*'s interrogation of national identity? How does it fit into a larger picture of the political moment Smollett was writing in? This is the question the present chapter pursues, and in the process of answering it, resolves issues between Swenson and Crawford.

Matthew Bramble may not be the most immediately striking case of national identity in *Humphry Clinker*, but his character lies at the unique intersection of disease and Englishness, implicating him both in the plot which tracks journey from illness to health and in the plot which tracks the interrogation of national identity. Such narratives have hitherto been studied independent of one another,¹⁰² but Cheyne's *English Malady* shows how nationality and illness

¹⁰¹ Charlotte Sussman, "Lismahago's Captivity: Transculturation in *Humphry Clinker*," *ELH* 61, no. 3 (September 1, 1994), 598, <https://doi.org/10.1353/elh.1994.0030>.

¹⁰² Juliet Shields reads the quest for identity as plot throughout Smollett's entire novelistic oeuvre. "Although Smollett's novels have been charged with formlessness, this article argues that their "plot" or structuring principle is

were codependent categories in the eighteenth century. That Matthew Bramble is himself a case of English Malady has been noted by critical¹⁰³ and popular¹⁰⁴ editions of *Humphry Clinker*, but the implications of this facet of his identity have never been fully investigated.

First and foremost, Bramble is introduced (or introduces himself, rather) as an ailing body. Bramble's first letter to Dr. Lewis commences the entire narrative as the first letter authored by anyone in the Bramble party. Thus, his articulation of his disease is the reader's first introduction to his character as well as the reader's first entry point into the story.

Doctor, The pills are good for nothing - I might as well swallow snow-balls to cool my reins - I have told you over and over how hard I am to move and at this time of day, I ought to know something of my own constitution. Why will you be so positive? Prithee send me another prescription - I am as lame and as much tortured in all my limbs as if I was broke upon the wheel: indeed, I am equally distressed in mind and body[...]¹⁰⁵

Bramble's character is synonymous with his ailing body. The text underscores this point by later focalizing the introduction to Bramble through the perspective of his nephew Jeremiah Melford. Jery similarly identifies Matthew by his disease. "My uncle is an odd kind of humorist, always

the marginalized protagonist's progress toward a British identity." Shields, "Tobias Smollett, Novelist: Brutish or British?," March 4, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.124>. Reid studies the plot cure in *Humphry Clinker*, Reid, B. L. "Smollett's Healing Journey." *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 41, no. 4 (1965): 549-70.

¹⁰³ A note by Thomas R. Preston flagging the word "splenetic" from the current authoritative edition of *Humphry Clinker* printed by the Georgia Press, reads as such, "Matt is consistently called splenetic. The spleen, supposedly the organ for purging melancholy humor, became the general eighteenth-century term denominating melancholia, hypochondria, moroseness, and ill nature. The English were thought to be especially prone to the spleen, and the disease was generally called the English Malady. Dr. George Cheyne was probably the most noted physician, among many, to write extensively on the subject." Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, ed. O. M. Brack, The Works of Tobias Smollett (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 348 n. 11.

¹⁰⁴ Shaun Regan's note to the same moment in the Penguin Classics edition, "*splenetic*: Ill-humoured, irascible or peevish. Descended from the melancholy of black bile of Galenic humoral theory, 'spleen' was one name for what was also know during this period as hypochondria, nervous disorder, the vapours and the 'English malady'." Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*, ed. Shaun Regan (Penguin Books, 2008). 401, n. 14.

¹⁰⁵ Smollett, *HC*, 9.

on the fret, and so unpleasant in his manner, that rather than be obliged to keep him company, I'd resign all claim to the inheritance of his estate.—Indeed his being tortured by the gout may have soured his temper, and, perhaps, I may like him better on further acquaintance.”¹⁰⁶ In due form, Jery does come to like Bramble better over time; and his developed understanding of his uncle's disease is essential to him knowing Bramble better as a person. Jery thus offers his revised impression of Bramble, “I was once apt to believe him a complete Cynic; and that nothing but the necessity of his occasions could compel him to get within the pale of society - I am now of another opinion. I think his peevishness arises partly from *bodily pain*, and partly from a *natural excess of mental sensibility*; for, I suppose, the mind as well as the body, is in some cases endued with a morbid excess of sensation”(emphasis mine).¹⁰⁷ Getting to know Matthew Bramble better is to understand the full nature of his illness. The excess of mental sensibility points specifically to a hypochondriac condition, and as Jery's tone indicates, this is a most forgivable affliction. In his own eyes and from the standpoint of those who know him, Matthew Bramble's illness is an essential component of his identity.

The English Malady was published during a crisis of English identity. The eighteenth-century involved the penetration and redrawing of English borders, both with regards to English-Scottish unionism and its broader colonial reach. The power of Cheyne's *English Malady* is in how the text concretized English identity right when it was on the verge of dissolution—or, as Sussman puts it, when the “fantasy of English self-sufficiency” was being challenged.¹⁰⁸ Cheyne does not refer to the English nation so much as he wills one into being. He

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰⁷ Smollett, *HC*, 22.

¹⁰⁸ Sussman, “Transculturation,” 597.

perpetuates the fantasy of homogenous, distinct English identity and the role of illness is essential to the reality of his vision. That is, with *The English Malady*, the reality of Englishness was inscribed on the bodies of its citizens. Abstract concepts of gentility, learning, and empire are manifested in tangible ways in the pores, fibres, and blood of the English subject. Somehow, in a gentleman's susceptibility to climate and geography, he is made a vessel of his own country, and when he ails, he demonstrates how he brings his country with him. Thus, every time Bramble ails, he performs and reasserts his Englishness.¹⁰⁹

However, it follows that Bramble's trajectory from prejudiced ailing Englishman to open-minded healthy Welsh-English-British Scotch-lover forms a critique of Cheyne's *English Malady*. Bramble's improvement with health corresponds to the interrogation of his English identity. As Evan Gottlieb states, "Critics have often noted that Bramble's physical and mental ailments improve as the travelling party moves towards and through Scotland; I would add that his rehabilitation also accompanies his growing bond with Lismahago."¹¹⁰ Bramble's growing fondness for Lismahago, a man with a highly convoluted national identity, signals a dissolution of Bramble's Englishness and the subsequent return of his health. In his final letter to Dr. Lewis, Bramble interrupts his vow of good health to mention his companionship with Lismahago.

¹⁰⁹ In this respect, he is quite similar to Lismahago; Just as Lismahago is a man who carries his homeland with him (as represented by his name), Bramble's carries his Englishness with him in the form of disease. The subtle interrelation between disease and identity is more fully explored by Helen Deutsch. Deutsch explores how eighteenth-century men of letters fashioned their identities out of disease, but also how this culture of male self-fashioning depended on the silencing of female voices and the writing-over of female bodies. Helen Deutsch, "Symptomatic Correspondences: The Author's Case in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Cultural Critique*, no. 42 (1999): 35–80, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354591>.

¹¹⁰ Though closely aligned with the present argument, Gottlieb argues that the mechanism of Bramble's cure is a form of Smithian sympathy. He writes in service of connecting Smollett to the schools of Scottish philosophy, but his argument is complementary rather than contradictory to the present one. Evan Gottlieb, "'Fools of Prejudice': Sympathy and National Identity in the Scottish Enlightenment and Humphry Clinker," *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 18, no. 1 (2005): 81.

As I have laid in a considerable stock of health, it is to be hoped you will not have much trouble with me in the way of physic, but I intend to work you on the side of exercise.—I have got an excellent fowling-piece from Mr Lismahago, who is a keen sportsman, and we shall take the heath in all weathers.—That this scheme of life may be prosecuted the more effectually, I intend to renounce all sedentary amusements, particularly that of writing long letters; a resolution, which, had I taken it sooner, might have saved you the trouble which you have taken in reading the tedious epistles of MATT. BRAMBLE.¹¹¹

The passage is a rich conclusion to the tale of one who suffered from the English Malady.

Bramble acknowledges that his literary engagements have been the source of his ailment and thus “renounce[s] all sedentary amusements.” Bramble wishes to exchange such solitary and idle (if that be not too obvious) activity for the company of his peers. And yet, what is perhaps most crucial about this paragraph is the blithe interjection of his fellowship with Lismahago.

Lismahago is responsible for the defeat of Bramble’s prejudice through his companionship but also the way in which he represents a multifaceted, diverse national identity. That Matthew Bramble, proud sufferer of the English Malady, owes his health to Obadiah Lismahago (and more broadly, to his journey in the northern part of the United Kingdom), is no coincidence. Rather, the return of Bramble’s health is a direct function of the dissolution of his English identity and his trajectory toward a British one. This however, does not necessitate the embrace of British identity (as Crawford suggest) because it is the interrogation rather than the resolution of national identity that cures Bramble. And this, is the ultimate critique of the English Malady—that which recognizes the fragility of an English identity founded upon the ailments of its citizens.

The story of English Malady healed is the story of English identity dissolved. *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* suggests, however, that this is a good thing. British identity isn’t

¹¹¹ Smollett, *HC*, 390.

exactly taken up by Bramble at the conclusion of the novel, even when his health returns and his Englishness subsequently evaporates. The point being that the interrogation, rather than the resolution of national identity is what cures Bramble in the end. In that sense, *Humphry Clinker* endorses British identity—precisely because it is not yet defined. Rivka Swenson is right that *Humphry Clinker* “radically rewrites unionism,” but it does so in the broader context of English national politics, not just in terms of English-Scottish relations.

In conclusion, an excerpt from one of Smollett’s letters to Alexander Carlyle, seems to parody the English Malady through Smollett’s desire to live in Scotland.

I do not think I could enjoy Life with greater Relish in any part of the world than in Scotland among you and your Friends, and I often amuse my Imagination with schemes for attaining that Degree of Happiness, which, however, is altogether out of my Reach. I am heartily tired of the Land of Indifference and Phlegm where the finer Sensations of the Soul are not felt, and Felicity is held to consist in stupefying Port and overgrown Buttocks of Beef, where Genius is lost, Learning undervalued, and Taste altogether distinguished, and Ignorance prevails ¹¹²

Smollett’s longing for Scotland and unflattering characterization of England is like a comical inversion of Cheyne’s *English Malady*. He follows suit with Cheyne in defining the nation by its consumption, learning, and illness (i.e. “Phlegm”), but Smollett is astoundingly unimpressed by England’s “Learning” and “Taste” and borderline repulsed by its “stupefying Port and overgrown Buttocks of Beef.” Read in conversation with Cheyne’s preface, Smollett’s words expose how ridiculous it is to construct English identity from food, learning, and illness.

¹¹² Smollett, “Letter 21: To Alexander Carlyle,” in *Letters*, ed. Knapp, 33. From “Chelsea, March 1, 1754.”

IV. CONCLUSION

In the context of early modern cure, Smollett's *Expedition of Humphry Clinker* seems a master work of English remedy. The similarity in structure between Smollett's *Expedition of Humphry Clinker* and Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* speaks to the power of superficial and the borderline chaotic. Smollett himself and the readers of his final novel, may perhaps benefit from the Burtonian structure of his epistolary travel narrative just as Matthew Bramble himself benefits from a form of Burtonian cure. Furthermore, the way *Humphry Clinker* engages with George Cheyne's *English Malady* demonstrates that he was incredibly perceptive of how medicine was deeply entrenched in the national politics of his time. The complex interrogation of national identity in *Humphry Clinker* culminates in the dissolution of English identity as such and the trajectory toward a more broadly defined British one, which accommodated the English nation, the newly enjoined Scottish one, as well as its broader colonial powers. Hopefully, the complexity of *Humphry Clinker*'s engagement with the medical will promote more favorable attitudes toward that aspect of his own identity; and, the present study may serve as a model for the types of readings that can come out of that.

With one final glance at the quotation which operates as a framework for this thesis, it no longer seems like a coincidence that Samuel Johnson, the great Cham of English literature, prescribes a literary cure (that of two Scottish literary projects) to his young Scottish friend, James Boswell. Without going so far to say the two represent a microcosm of English-Scottish relations, the political context of their exchange may serve as a reminder that issues of illness and health never occur in a vaccum, but rather, are situated at the very heart of national relations.

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