

From Sexual Liberation to Gender Trouble: Reading "Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure"  
from the 1960s to the 1990s

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Source: *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Summer, 2000, Vol. 33, No. 4, The Culture of Risk  
and Pleasure (Summer, 2000), pp. 561-578

Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press. Sponsor: American Society for  
Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS).

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30054163>

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# R EVIEW ESSAY

## FROM SEXUAL LIBERATION TO GENDER TROUBLE: READING *MEMOIRS OF A WOMAN OF PLEASURE* FROM THE 1960S TO THE 1990s

*Peter Sabor*

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Sexual intercourse began  
In nineteen sixty-three  
(Which was rather late for me) —  
Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban  
And the Beatles' first LP.<sup>1</sup>

If 1963, as Philip Larkin claims, was a good year for sexual intercourse, it was an *annus mirabilis* for John Cleland's first novel, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*. Since its initial publication in two installments in November 1748 and February 1749, the *Memoirs* had been a best seller but an illicit one.<sup>2</sup> Although entirely free from vulgar terminology, it contains more explicit descriptions of a broad range of sexual practices than any previous work in English. Government action against the novel began in November 1749, when a warrant was issued for the arrest of the author, the printer, and the publishers. Cleland and his associates were found guilty in court, and the novel was withdrawn, at least officially, from circulation. Despite losing the case, however, Cleland seems to have escaped lightly; no record of any punishment exists. Shortly after his release, Cleland produced a heavily bowdlerized version of the *Memoirs*, entitled *Memoirs of Fanny Hill*,<sup>3</sup> published in March 1750.<sup>4</sup> Readers, not surprisingly, eschewed this anodyne, ostensibly didactic abridgement in favor of the banned original, which circulated widely in underground form for over two hundred years,

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*Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 33, no. 4 (2000) Pp. 561–578.

albeit with the omission of one crucial passage that I shall turn to shortly. Issued by small presses, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* appeared primarily in deluxe, illustrated editions, designed as collectors' items, and as such offering little provocation.<sup>5</sup> Reputable publishers stayed away; the novel was sold and read surreptitiously.<sup>6</sup>

All this changed in Spring 1963, when the American publisher Putnam's brought out the first commercial edition of the *Memoirs*, with an introduction by Peter Quennell, and was immediately prosecuted for doing so. After protracted court cases, the edition was eventually cleared by the New York State Supreme Court in August 1963 and by the U.S. Supreme Court in March 1966. The British paperback publisher Mayflower followed suit with its own edition in November 1963, and was prosecuted in its turn before the Bow Street magistrate, Sir Robert Blundell. The chief prosecutor, Mervyn Griffith-Jones, singled out for special opprobrium a flagellation scene, in which Fanny and one of her clients are sexually aroused by mutual beatings. Despite the arguments of several eminent defence witnesses, including Quennell, Marghanita Laski, Karl Miller, and Ian Watt, the novel was found obscene. Another prosecution took place in Manchester in 1964; not until the 1970s would Cleland's novel at last become safe from prosecution in the censorious British courts.<sup>7</sup>

It is against this background of repeated arrests, trials, and confiscations that the critical response to *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* in the 1960s and 1970s can best be understood. Quennell, for example, writing his Introduction to the Putnam's edition in anticipation of imminent prosecution, terms Cleland a "romantic sentimentalist," and notes shrewdly that "Fanny Hill would have shuddered at *Lady Chatterley*," cleared for sale by British and American court cases in 1960.<sup>8</sup> Marghanita Laski, in her role as defence witness, described the *Memoirs* as "a gay little book . . . a jolly book . . . It made me feel cheerful."<sup>9</sup> Gaiety, of the old school, was the order of the day. Brigid Brophy, in an upbeat *New Statesman* essay, termed the *Memoirs* "a highly engaging little erotic tale—perhaps the most engaging to emerge from . . . 17 centuries of European literature."<sup>10</sup> John Illo, in an article hedonistically entitled "The Idyll of Unreproved Pleasures Free," declared that unlike such degenerates as Henry Miller and Nabokov, Cleland celebrated "the supreme human happiness of . . . sensuously attractive sexuality, and, especially, wholesome heterosexuality."<sup>11</sup> Taking up a deft idea in an anonymous Publisher's Note to the Putnam's edition, Illo also compared the *Memoirs* to the *Kama Sutra*, another classic perfectly in tune with the times, noting that Cleland had lived in India and implying that he too could be recast as a 1960s guru.<sup>12</sup> This approach to the *Memoirs* lasted well into the 1970s; in 1978, for example, Erica Jong was still celebrating "the delightful cheerfulness of the heroine, the sheer healthiness and bounciness of its approach to physical love."<sup>13</sup>

An essential part of these and other readings of the 1960s and 1970s was the suppression of a potentially disruptive aspect of the text. Fanny, after all, the first-person narrator, does not just describe male genitalia in exhaustive detail but lingers over them with sensuous delight. Quennell concedes that "the formidable bodily equipment of [Cleland's] most accomplished lovers is apt to be described with quite unnecessary relish," but ascribes this shortcoming to the author's "adherence to the 'longitudinal fallacy'"<sup>14</sup>: for all his *Kama Sutra* sexual wisdom, Cleland exaggerated the importance of penis size. In an article of 1964, one of the earliest critical analyses of the *Memoirs*, B. Slepian and L. J. Morrissey take up this awkward issue at length. Marvelling at Cleland's gift for devising metaphors, they supply an extensive list of

his synonyms for the penis, including such phrases as “red-headed champion,” “flesh brush,” “battering ram,” “king member,” “dear morsel,” “beloved guest,” “plenipotentiary instrument,” “pleasure pivot,” “standard of distinction,” and “master member of the revels.” Reassuringly, they add that “the list for the female organ is just as long and just as comic,”<sup>15</sup> but they fail to provide any examples. They could have noted various metaphors for the vagina, including “dark and delicious deep,” “pleasure-thirsty channel,” “soft laboratory [sic] of love,” and “embower’d bottom-cavity,”<sup>16</sup> but the frequency of these terms should not be exaggerated: Fanny pays some attention to female bodies, but her overwhelming concern is with the male form, and especially with male genitalia. Introducing another edition of the *Memoirs* in 1965, the historian J. H. Plumb was perhaps the first to consider the implications of this concern. By writing his novel in the first person, Plumb observes, Cleland “was able to identify . . . with Fanny and her pleasures in such a way that the springs of his unconscious fantasies were released.” Plumb also alludes cryptically to Cleland’s getting into scrapes “in Turkey and India for reasons which were not revealed”<sup>17</sup>: implying, without stating, that homosexuality might have been responsible both for Cleland’s personal difficulties and for the phallocentrism of his novel.

While Plumb’s introduction was exceptional even in hinting at Cleland’s putative homosexuality, he had nothing to say about the passage near the end of the novel in which Fanny witnesses, through a peephole, a sodomitical encounter between two young men, and a two-paragraph description of the encounter is omitted from his text, as it had been from almost every edition since the novel first appeared. Readers of the Putnam’s, Mayflower, and other popular editions of the 1960s and 1970s would also find no trace of this passage. Quennell does refer briefly to the scene, but denies Cleland’s authorship. Samuel Drybutter, a bookseller to whom Quennell attributes the sodomitical episode, was held responsible for any overtly homosexual material in the *Memoirs*, and the passage itself remained unseen.<sup>18</sup> In 1965, David Foxon demonstrated conclusively that the sodomitical scene was part of the first-edition text,<sup>19</sup> but since he quoted none of the material readers still had no access to the episode in question.

Gay studies, of course, was hardly a flourishing enterprise in the 1960s and 1970s, and while a considerable number of articles and essays on the *Memoirs* appeared in those decades, none took an interest in a passage absent from all available editions. Instead, critics were primarily concerned with establishing the place of the *Memoirs* within the canon of English fiction: comparing Cleland to Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne.<sup>20</sup> Cleland’s connections to French novelists and *penseurs* were also explored: articles appeared, for example, relating Cleland to the Marquis d’Argens and to La Mettrie.<sup>21</sup> The sexually liberated and liberating Cleland of the 1960s was gradually replaced by a much weightier figure. The title of an article such as Michael Wilding’s “*Paradise Lost and Fanny Hill*” (1971) epitomizes Cleland’s new standing<sup>22</sup>; within less than ten years, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* had moved from being an underground text to one that could keep company with Milton.

Much the most important work on Cleland in the 1970s, however, was the biography by William Epstein, *John Cleland: Images of a Life* (1974), still the only book-length study of Cleland in English.<sup>23</sup> This biography paved the way for further research on Cleland; later scholarship has added considerably to Epstein’s findings, but in most cases following trails that he had already begun to explore. In examining

the complex circumstances surrounding the composition and publication of the *Memoirs*, for example, Epstein drew attention to a tantalizing entry in the records of the Beggar's Benison Society, a Scottish phallic-worshipping club based in Anstruther, Fife, founded in 1732, whose charter members included Robert Cleland, a distant relative of the author. In November 1737, according to the Society's minutes, "Fanny Hill was read."<sup>24</sup> Epstein was duly cautious in interpreting this cryptic phrase, but he did acknowledge the possibility that an early version of Cleland's novel was in the possession of the club members. Unknown to Epstein at the time, a remark by Cleland recorded by Boswell supports this early dating of the *Memoirs*. In a conversation of 1779, Cleland claimed to have written much of the novel in the early 1730s, "that is, the first part and half [the] second, which was all wrote by the time he was twenty. The last was done when he was older."<sup>25</sup> Much earlier, Cleland had made a similar claim. In a letter to Lovel Stanhope of 13 November 1749, he stated that the first part of the novel had remained in manuscript for over eighteen years, since about 1731, and that he had revised it and added a second volume during his recent imprisonment, in 1748–9.<sup>26</sup> Cleland could thus have sent the manuscript of at least volume one of the *Memoirs* to the Beggar's Benison members in good time for their 1737 meeting, although he himself returned from India to England only in 1741.

Epstein's biography also explores Cleland's dealings with one of his creditors, Thomas Cannon. When the two parts of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* were first published, Cleland was languishing in debtor's prison, charged with owing money to two men: Cannon and John Lane. His debt to Cannon, by far the larger of the two, was alleged to be £800. At exactly the same time as the *Memoirs* was being published, Cannon issued a pamphlet entitled *Ancient and Modern Pederasty investigated and exemplified*.<sup>27</sup> Epstein was unable to locate a copy of the tract or to throw light on the dealings between Cannon and Cleland, but it seems reasonable to assume that the two had been friends or business associates, before their relationship soured. In his characteristically splenetic letter to Stanhope, Cleland denounces Cannon for being "mad and wicked enough to Publish a Pamphlet evidently in defence of *Sodomy*, advertised in all the papers." The pamphlet, Cleland declares, was quickly forgotten, yet "if My Lords the Bishops had been so injudicious as to stir this stench they might have indeed provoked the public indignation, but its curiosity too."<sup>28</sup> In attacking Cannon's pamphlet in this manner, of course, Cleland was also drawing attention to the sodomitical material in his own novel. Epstein, however, avoids any discussion of this material, or of his subject's sexual preferences. Like other critics of the 1960s and 1970s, his concern was primarily to locate Cleland and his infamous novel in the mainstream of the English novel, not to give critics a further reason to condemn him.

Despite such attempts to rehabilitate what had for so long been an illicit book, its appearance in 1985 first in Oxford's World's Classics series, edited by myself, and, a few months later, as a Penguin Classic, edited by Peter Wagner,<sup>29</sup> produced a remarkable response. Both editors were interviewed on national television, Wagner in Germany and Sabor in Canada, and many British newspapers and magazines wrote up the event. In the *Sunday Times*, Norman Lebrecht claimed that Oxford and Penguin were "tussling feverishly for the favours of a notorious strumpet," and were "seeking to push her, unprotesting, into the university English literature syllabus," while *Books and Bookmen*, unkindly, recommended my edition to "prurient pedants (though they will need two hands to refer to the notes)."<sup>30</sup> Both editions were based

on the first-edition text, and thus made the homosexual passage, still largely unknown to Cleland's critics, available at last.<sup>31</sup> I devoted a page of my Introduction to the episode, pointing out that after witnessing the scene, Fanny hastens to denounce the two male lovers, but in doing so stumbles and knocks herself unconscious: I compare her predicament here to that of both Pamela in Richardson's novel and Shamela in Fielding's parody, who experience similar calamities. In his Introduction, Wagner notes that by describing a male homosexual act at length, Cleland "broke one of the major sexual taboos of the eighteenth century," and observes that Fanny's denunciation of the men is pronounced only "after a minute account of the physical details of the sexual act."<sup>32</sup> My Introduction, more concerned than Wagner's with Cleland's life, also draws attention to a note by Henry Merritt, quoting previously unpublished marginalia by the antiquary Josiah Beckwith, who claimed that in 1781 Cleland had the misfortune to "pass under the Censure of being a Sodomite, as he now does, and in Consequence thereof Persons of Character decline visiting him, or cultivating his Acquaintance."<sup>33</sup> I observed that the rumor might have had a factual basis (Cleland remained a bachelor) or may have evolved because of the homosexual episode in the *Memoirs*.<sup>34</sup>

With the unexpurgated *Memoirs* now readily available in two editions and with gay studies becoming an increasingly powerful force, it is not surprising that critics should have turned their attention to what had hitherto been the least-known part of Cleland's novel. What was surprising, at least to Wagner and myself, was that we should find ourselves castigated by G.S. Rousseau for our timidity in dealing with the homosexual episode. Rousseau's remarks, made in the course of one of his best-known essays—"The Pursuit of Homosexuality in the Eighteenth Century: 'Utterly Confused Category' and/or Rich Repository?"—appeared in 1985, only a few months after the publication of the two editions. He complains that Sabor and Wagner "say very little about the famous homosexual episode," and regrets these "lost opportunities in view of the scene's length and Cleland's rich literary devices reflecting social attitudes and fantasies then current about the illicit sexual practices of sodomists."<sup>35</sup> Since the homosexual episode had never yet been discussed in print—by gay studies scholars, Cleland specialists, or anyone else—it is hard to understand how Rousseau could call it "famous": famous for whom? And why were Cleland's editors being criticized after they had taken pains to bring the sodomitical passage to light?

Rousseau's critique of the two editions does, however, have some validity. In light of the rich body of gay studies readings of the *Memoirs* that have appeared since his article, both Wagner's and my own introductory comments have dated rapidly. Underlying both of our editions was the need to justify the appearance of the *Memoirs* in Oxford's and Penguin's august series: to present the novel not as marginal, underground pornography but as a canonical text. To do so, we both strove to place Cleland not only in the tradition of French and English libertine writers but also in the company of a variety of major authors. My Introduction, as well as making comparisons between the *Memoirs* and other eighteenth-century novels, considers Cleland's debt to Jacobean and Caroline erotic poetry, such as Donne's elegy "To his Mistress Going to Bed" and Carew's "The Rapture." Wagner produced an impressive list of eighteenth-century French erotic fiction published before the *Memoirs*, including several novels by Crébillon fils, and Diderot's *Les Bijoux indiscrets*.<sup>36</sup> The editions succeeded in their aims: they have gone through numerous reprintings, and helped make the

*Memoirs* so respectable that a 600-page concordance to the novel has been published, based on the Oxford text.<sup>37</sup> But in their quest to locate Cleland in the company of authors from Donne to Diderot and from Shakespeare to Sterne, both editions gave short shrift to those aspects of the *Memoirs* that gay studies readings, beginning with Rousseau's influential aperçu, would soon begin to explore.<sup>38</sup>

The earliest of these readings was an essay of 1988 by the historian Randolph Trumbach, who in a series of thoroughly documented articles and, most recently, in his magisterial book, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*,<sup>39</sup> has deepened our understanding of sexuality and gender roles in eighteenth-century England. While the primary concern of his essay is with Cleland's depiction of the lives of prostitutes, Trumbach also turns his attention to the sodomitical passage, placed, he contends, at "the heart of the second half of [Cleland's] prostitute's story—into the ideologically radical half of his book with its libertine, anti-Christian and materialist message."<sup>40</sup> Trumbach cites Nancy K. Miller's influential article, "I's in Drag" (1981), which uses the *Memoirs* as a test case for examining first-person female narrators created by male authors.<sup>41</sup> But where Miller had noted that Cleland's absorption with the female voice was a subterfuge for glorifying masculine authority, Trumbach specifically connects this absorption with Cleland's putative homosexuality. As for the condemnation of sodomy in the *Memoirs*, Trumbach ascribes this to Cleland's ostensible acquiescence in the eighteenth-century shift of gender roles, by which men were held to be men only "because they did not know what it was like to desire men."<sup>42</sup> In later essays, Trumbach returns to the *Memoirs*, making useful distinctions between the novel and the Restoration play *Sodom*, possibly by Rochester, which "presented sex between men and adolescent youths as a desirable alternative to sex between men and women"<sup>43</sup>: an ideological position, Trumbach contends, no longer tenable by the mid-eighteenth century.

Julia Epstein's article "Fanny's Fanny" (1989) also provided a valuable analysis of the sodomitical episode. Epstein is justly sceptical of the narrator's supposed "rage, and indignation" (159), which do not prevent Fanny from focusing her gaze on the scene. Noting, as I had in my Oxford Introduction, that Fanny is knocked senseless as she attempts to denounce the male lovers, Epstein relates the violence on Fanny's body to the novel's underlying homoeroticism: "As metonymic woman, Fanny is so sexually unnecessary in this scene that her fumbling voyeurism actually helps the lovers to safety."<sup>44</sup> Drawing on the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Epstein also contends that Fanny functions in the novel primarily as "a figure available for exchange in a transaction based on male homosocial desire as that desire reifies sociosexual ideologies."<sup>45</sup> Epstein's Fanny is thus a far more passive figure than the feisty construction of 1960s and 1970s feminist critics, none of whom would ever have termed Cleland's heroine "unnecessary."

In 1990, an article on the *Memoirs* by Philip E. Simmons further developed this approach to the sodomitical episode. Like Epstein, Simmons is struck by the "seemingly gratuitous violence against Fanny" as she trips and is knocked unconscious, which "raises the possibility that Cleland's sympathies actually lie with the two men, though in its ambiguity the scene also preserves the conventional sanction against homosexuality."<sup>46</sup> A year later Lee Edelman, focusing on the heroine's "spectatorial position" as she spies on the lovers, argued that Fanny is made to appropriate a "male-coded place in the erotics of vision." The violence of her fall, in turn, suggests the fragility of her putatively heterosexual milieu: lying unconscious, bottom

up, the heroine “embodies the instability of positioning that radiates out from the sodomitical scene and demonstrates that it was not without reason, after all, that Cleland named her Fanny.”<sup>47</sup>

By 1992, the *Memoirs* was well on its way to becoming a canonical text for gay studies critics. A collection of essays, *Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment England*, published that year featured two pieces on Cleland’s novel, more than on any other work. The first, by Kevin Kopelson, is concerned exclusively with the sodomitical passage. Noting that everything about the episode is singular—it is the “only voyeuristic episode in the novel in which the voyeur unwittingly discovers herself, as well as the only such episode in which the voyeur is stationed in a position of instability or insecurity,” it “denotes the only instance known to Fanny of successful anal penetration,” it “represents the only sexual act felt by Fanny to be morally outrageous”<sup>48</sup>—Kopelson, like his predecessors, seeks to account for Cleland’s simultaneous fascination and disgust with his subject. Citing Stallybrass and White’s theory of “phobic enchantment,” Kopelson turns Cleland’s sodomites into the unacknowledged heroes of the novel: “at once the Other one is not, the Other it is unthinkable to be, and the Other without whom one cannot be.”<sup>49</sup> Observing that Fanny witnesses the scene through a moveable partition, Kopelson points out that this places her literally in the same room as the sodomites. She is thus ideally positioned to experience a sexual epiphany, what Barthes terms “a floating flash” illuminating “an erotic blind spot.”<sup>50</sup> In Donald H. Mengay’s essay in the same volume, Fanny is seen as more than a heterosexual woman awakening to the Other: she becomes a sexually aroused man. We hear, Mengay observes, of the “firm hard swell” of her breasts, which were “raised in flesh,” and while her partner climaxes in sex, she too, she declares, “refunded a stream of pearly liquids, which flowed down my thighs.”<sup>51</sup>

In 1995, Felicity A. Nussbaum depicted Fanny in a similar fashion, though without taking notice of Mengay’s essay. Numerous critics have remarked that Fanny Hill’s name plays on the female genitalia, but Nussbaum adds that in giving his heroine an ejaculating clitoris, Cleland “radically implies that Fanny Hill’s body is both male and female.”<sup>52</sup> Declaring that Fanny’s prominent clitoris “explicitly resembles a penis in its sexual journey from flaccidity to erection,” Nussbaum finds textual support for her claim: the heroine’s “soft fleshy excrescence,” Fanny tells us, “limber and relax’d after the late enjoyment, now grew, under the touch and examination of his fiery fingers, more and more stiff and considerable” (76–7). Where Nancy Miller had presented Cleland as a male narrator in drag, Mengay and Nussbaum go further by depicting Fanny as a “drag persona,”<sup>53</sup> whose denunciation of the sodomites is merely parodic and justly punished by the violence of her collapse into senselessness and speechlessness. Epstein, in particular, draws on the deconstructive methodology of recent queer theory in depicting Cleland’s narrator as neither male nor female but as “an ambiguously gendered human embodiment that may resonate with recognized sexualities but may also invent others.”<sup>54</sup>

Fanny is not the only character in the *Memoirs* to declare her loathing of sodomy. When she describes the scene she has witnessed to the brothel-keeper Mrs. Cole, this usually indulgent figure responds with a diatribe on these “unsex’d male misses,” “stript of all the manly virtues of their own sex, and fill’d up with only the very worst vices and follies of ours” (159–60). Gary Gautier, in an article of 1995, links Mrs. Cole’s homophobia to her fear of males appropriating “the ‘maternal’ function”;



her brothel is on the point of disintegration, since the prostitutes Louisa, Emily, and Fanny herself are all about to leave, and she regards the male lovers as a threat to the quasi-family she has been nurturing.<sup>55</sup> Other critics have provided more traditional interpretations of Mrs. Cole's monologue. Robert Eggleston, in an unpublished paper of 1992, declares that the *Memoirs* "shuns the unbridled enthusiasm for all forms of sexual behaviour—lesbianism, flagellation, sodomy and homosexuality—which characterizes . . . imported erotica, and instead champions only the heterosexual passion of its heroine Fanny Hill and her one true love, Charles."<sup>56</sup> David Weed, similarly, in an article of 1997, suggests that in creating a "taxonomy of male identities," Cleland ultimately condemns "aristocratic men and sodomites for the various ways that they misuse and overuse pleasure."<sup>57</sup> In this reading, Mrs. Cole's jingoistic assertion that England's "air and climate" visibly imprint a "plague-spot" on "all that are tainted" with sodomy's "infamous passion" (159) is endorsed by Cleland himself. The *Memoirs*, Weed contends, "constantly inscribes a range of sexual practices only to thwart them in favor of vaginal intercourse between men and women."<sup>58</sup>

Most recent critics of the *Memoirs*, however, regard its ostensible denunciation of sodomy as a rhetorical strategy, rather than as an expression of Cleland's own values. Cameron McFarlane, for example, effectively deconstructs Mrs. Cole's and Fanny's responses to the sodomitical scene. Quoting Mrs. Cole's denunciation of homosexuals—"she could not name an exception hardly of one of them, whose character was not in all other respects the most worthless and despicable that could be" (159)—McFarlane points to the "one slight prevarication" in the words "hardly of one of them," and enquires: "does this ambiguous phrase not seem to imply that there are exceptions?"<sup>59</sup> In McFarlane's account, it is not the sodomites who are aberrant but Mrs. Cole: the *Memoirs*, he contends, is a "sodomitical fantasy," in which the young male lovers enact "what the text has been flirting with all along."<sup>60</sup> Fanny, moreover, who pierces a paper-patch with a bodkin in order to create the peephole through which she spies on the lovers, becomes a quasi-sodomite herself. Her clumsy attempt to have the men captured only warns them of their danger, and significantly the sodomites, "for all the narrative bluster, are not punished in any way for their sexual pleasures."<sup>61</sup> In contrast—although McFarlane does not make this point—Mrs. Cole, shortly after her diatribe, is forced into early retirement by the "tortures of a stubborn hip-gout, which she found would yield to no remedy" (172). The wealthy young sodomites will continue to enjoy life in London; their sternest critic, racked by arthritic pains, will support herself "with a decent pittance" (172) in the country.

While McFarlane reads the *Memoirs* as a sodomitical text, Lisa L. Moore contends that it makes a space for sapphists, gay males, and heterosexuals alike. A key figure in her innovative reading is Phoebe Ayres, a prostitute employed by the brothel-keeper Mrs. Brown to initiate the still virginal Fanny into sex. Reflecting on Phoebe's appetite for other women, Fanny describes it as "one of those arbitrary tastes, for which there is no accounting: not that she hated men, or did not even prefer them to her own sex; but when she met with such occasions as this was, a satiety of enjoyments in the common road, perhaps too a secret byass, inclined her to make the most of pleasure, where-ever she could find it, without distinction of sexes" (12). As Moore observes, in modern terms the passage "slides through the possibilities that Phoebe is heterosexual, lesbian, or bisexual; all three categories are invoked."<sup>62</sup> After demonstrating how polyvalent sexual identities are developed throughout the novel, Moore, like her predecessors, focuses on the sodomitical scene and the reactions it provokes from

Fanny and Mrs. Cole. Quoting Fanny's claim to have spied on the sodomites "purely that I might gather more facts" (159), Moore suggests that this is voyeuristic satisfaction of sexual curiosity, cloaked in the guise of "Enlightenment rational experimentation."<sup>63</sup> As for Mrs. Cole, Moore, like McFarlane, finds some striking ambiguities in her homophobia. "Whatever effect," declaims Mrs. Cole, "this infamous passion had in other ages, and other countries, it seem'd a peculiar blessing on our air and climate, that there was a plague-spot visibly imprinted on all that are tainted with it, in this nation at least" (159). Like so much else in the *Memoirs*, the remark can be read in quite different ways. Traditional readings, of course, focus on the phrases "infamous passion" and "plague-spot." Moore, however, emphasizes the words "peculiar blessing": in declaring that "our" homosexuals, unlike their more insidious European counterparts, are immediately recognizable, Mrs Cole can "make space for a distinctly English sodomy."<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the homophobic pamphlet *Satan's Harvest Home*, also published in 1749, which locates homosexuality in France, Italy, and Turkey, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, while purporting to condemn the practice, makes it an alarmingly domestic affair.

In their readings of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, critics such as McFarlane and Moore have moved from the ethos of sexual liberation to that of gender trouble: from the aegis of Erica Jong to that of Judith Butler.<sup>65</sup> By deploying a queer theory that emphasizes the performative nature of sexuality, they can substantiate interpretations of Cleland's novel that regard it neither as a hedonistic celebration of the female body, nor as a fictionalized onslaught on sodomy, but rather as an innovative text that recognizes the polymorphous nature of sexuality. Invoking the subtitle of Butler's study, "Feminism and the Subversion of Identity," critics of the late 1990s have shown that Cleland's characters have no stable sexual identity and that, like Phoebe Ayres, they "make the most of pleasure . . . without distinction of sexes" (12).

The movement towards such readings of the *Memoirs* can also be seen in the changing methodology of critics studying the novel as a male-authored, female-voiced narrative. In 1981, Anne Robinson Taylor detected "a strong undercurrent of dislike for women" in the *Memoirs* and treated the novel as pornography written specifically for heterosexual men, without considering its significance for gay and lesbian readers.<sup>66</sup> In the same year, Nancy K. Miller contended that "the erotics erected by female impersonation is a mirroring not of female desire but of a phallic pride of place, a wish-fulfillment that ultimately translates into structures of masculine dominance and authority."<sup>67</sup> Madeleine Kahn, ten years later, similarly argued that "Fanny's story of how she came to be a fulfilled woman is Cleland's attempt to educate women to be the uncomplaining and uncomplicated sexual toys that they were in his fantasy," not considering that women might have figured less prominently in Cleland's fantasy life than men.<sup>68</sup> Rosemary Graham, however, in an article of 1997, considers the possibility that Cleland might have adopted female personae to complicate gender roles, rather than confirm them. Graham compares the prostitute Harriet's story in the *Memoirs*, in which she tells her audience of watching a naked youth swimming, to the "twenty-ninth bather" episode in Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," in which a widow spies through a window on twenty-eight young men swimming naked in a river near her house. The episode, Graham contends, like Harriet's story, invites interpretation as "one where the poet 'disguises' himself as a woman in order to represent culturally-proscribed homoerotic desire and activity."<sup>69</sup>

At the same time as gay studies theorists were exploring issues of gender identity in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, historical critics, building on the pioneering work of Foxon and Epstein, developed our understanding of the composition and publication of the novel. The Beggar's Benison records were the subject of a 1997 essay by the Scottish historian David Stevenson, who suggests that in addition to reading Cleland's novel at one of their meetings, the club members adopted his characteristically periphrastic diction.<sup>70</sup> Fanny describes the sodomites' encounter as "a project of preposterous pleasure," playing on the literal meaning of "preposterous," back to front. Edelman, who (unknown to Stevenson) had previously commented on this phrase, notes that sodomy is viewed as "preposterous" in "giving precedence to the posterior and thus as confounding the stability or determinacy of linguistic or erotic positioning."<sup>71</sup> In the Beggar's Benison's constitution, similarly, homosexuality is denounced as a "preposterous and Contraband Trade."<sup>72</sup> Unnoticed by Stevenson is another point of verbal contact: the sailor's witty riposte in the *Memoirs* when Fanny rebukes him for misdirecting his penis, "any port in a storm" (141), also figures among the Club's list of bon-mots.<sup>73</sup> Just as Fanny's and Mrs Cole's denunciations of sodomitical behavior licensed Cleland, he believed, to depict it in detail, so did the Beggar's Benison constitution act as a warrant for the conduct of its members: a group of men who, at every meeting, indulged in penis-measuring contests, communal masturbation, and even comparisons of semen production, while solemnly condemning "preposterous" pleasures.

Historical critics have also begun to explore the full range of Cleland's writings. Thanks to articles by Roger Lonsdale (1979) and James G. Basker (1987), the extent of Cleland's remarkably diverse range of publications is becoming clear, and both scholars have established links between the *Memoirs* and his later writings. In his account of a hitherto unrecorded work by Cleland, for example, a translation from French of Charles Duclos' *Memoirs Illustrating the Manners of the Present Age* (1752), Lonsdale points out that Cleland's preface "constitutes his most sustained and serious statement about the nature of fiction," providing "an implicit explanation and defence of the technique he himself had employed to justify the fictional exploration of sexual psychology and mores."<sup>74</sup> Other new attributions by Lonsdale providing fruitful points of comparison with *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* include a pamphlet, *Physiological Reveries* (1765), clearly indebted to La Mettrie, in which Cleland speculates "about the similarity of saliva and semen" and conjectures that "animals breathe through every pore (thus becoming 'one great pneumatic machine')."<sup>75</sup>

Lonsdale's article was supplemented in various ways by Basker's essay on Cleland's later career. His findings include the important point that Cleland's one-volume expurgated version of his novel, *Memoirs of Fanny Hill* (1750), was not, as Foxon had speculated, banned along with the original, but was openly advertised by Ralph Griffiths for several years in *The Monthly Review*, and was still available to purchasers until at least 1753.<sup>76</sup> In my own article on the abridgement of 1985, I noted that Cleland could not refrain from slyly abusing his role as censor. When Fanny describes one of her sexual encounters at Mrs. Cole's brothel, for example, Cleland allows the expurgated text to suggest that she is being sodomized: "Coming then into my chamber, and seeing me lie alone, with my face turn'd from the light towards the inside of the bed, he, without more ado, proceeded to a repetition of the last night's

indulgence, and that in a way peculiar to a taste I was not till now acquainted with."<sup>77</sup> In omitting the sexually explicit details of the original, Cleland also omits the observation that Fanny's lover has "ascertain[ed] the right opening" (126); the reader of the abridgement is left in doubt.

In the case of Cleland's three linguistic treatises—*The Way to Things by Words, and to Words by Things* (1766), *Specimen of an Etimological Vocabulary* (1768), and *Additional Articles to the Specimen of an Etimological Vocabulary* (1769)—two recent critics, Frederick Burwick and Carolyn D. Williams, have made interesting comparisons between his theories and the *Memoirs*. Williams, in an article of 1998, rightly complains of an "enduring reluctance to connect Cleland's etymological work with his erotic fiction,"<sup>78</sup> although she herself writes in apparent ignorance of Burwick's essay of 1991. Much of her piece is concerned with Cleland's depiction of the penis in the *Memoirs* and in his linguistic treatises. In the *Memoirs*, she observes, the two largest members of all—those belonging to the footman Will and to the aptly named Goodnatur'd Dick<sup>79</sup>—are both compared to maypoles. Will possesses "a may-pole of so enormous a standard, that had proportions been observ'd, it must have belong'd to a young giant" (72), while in the case of the still more awesome Dick, Fanny prudently gives way to Louisa, "content in spite of the temptation that star'd me in the face, with having rais'd a may-pole for another to hang a garland" (162). Williams compares these passages with Cleland's later discussions of the Celtic maypole, but Burwick finds a more striking parallel: "In the *vacation-times*," writes the philological Cleland, "there was nothing extraordinary added to this May-pole . . . but when the days, consecrated to the administration of Justice, came on, the declaration was made by hanging a *garland* on it"<sup>80</sup>: a symbol both of sexual union and of the unity of the sexes.

Recent scholarship has also thrown new light on Cleland's dealings with several figures connected with the composition or reception of the *Memoirs*. Among the most important of these is the bookseller Samuel Drybutter. His name was first attached to Cleland's in 1864 by the bibliographer Henry G. Bohn, who claimed that after its initial publication, the language of the *Memoirs* "was considerably altered for the worse by Drybutter, the bookseller, who was punished for it by being put in the pillory in 1757."<sup>81</sup> In my edition of the *Memoirs* I noted, following Foxon, that the improbably named Drybutter was not responsible for the sodomitical passage, as Bohn had claimed, but wrongly conjectured that no such figure ever existed.<sup>82</sup> In 1992, however, Rictor Norton showed that Drybutter was a friend of the dramatist Samuel Foote, was depicted by Foote's adversary William Jackson as a sodomite in a pamphlet, *Sodom and Onan* (1776), had probably been arrested for attempted sodomy in 1770, and was the subject of a satirical engraving by Matthew Darly of 1771.<sup>83</sup> In his biography, Epstein briefly discusses Cleland's friendship with Foote, which dated from before 1753 until at least 1769, when Syllas Neville met them together in a bookshop. Epstein remains silent, however, about the legal proceedings for sodomy taken against Foote in 1777 and his subsequent flight from England, stating only that while his relationship with Cleland "may well have gone deeper than a mere interest in the stage . . . finally we can but note that they were friends."<sup>84</sup> More light can surely be thrown on the Drybutter-Foote-Cleland circle, which in turn should reveal whether Drybutter was indeed pilloried in 1757 for publishing an unexpurgated edition of the *Memoirs*, and whether he published this edition with Cleland's consent.

Like Foote, Tobias Smollett was associated with Cleland for several decades. As a reviewer for the *Monthly Review*, Cleland wrote favorable notices of Smollett's play *The Regicide* in 1749 and his novel *Peregrine Pickle* in 1751, while Smollett returned the favor with an equally positive review in 1751 of Cleland's second novel, *Memoirs of a Coxcomb*, and later, in the *Critical Review*, of Cleland's play *Tombo-Chiqui: or, the American Savage* in 1758, his poem *The Times: A Second Epistle to Flavian* in 1760, and, in the same year, his novella *The Romance of a Day*.<sup>85</sup> The standard biographies of Cleland and of Smollett, by Epstein and by Lewis Mansfield Knapp, both deal briefly with their friendship, noting that in 1771, a mutual friend wrote to Smollett that Cleland expressed his admiration of *Humphry Clinker* "with the enthusiastic emphasis of voice and fist; and puts it before anything you ever wrote,"<sup>86</sup> but neither explores the relationship in any depth. A further intriguing connection, unnoticed by Epstein, is the appearance of the Beggar's Benison in *Humphry Clinker*, in which a minor character, Cawdie Fraser, a "veteran pimp," proposes a series of bawdy toasts, including one to "The beggar's benison."<sup>87</sup>

Recent critics have been more concerned with relating Cleland's fiction to that of Richardson than to that of Smollett.<sup>88</sup> McFarlane, however, who devotes a chapter of his recent book to "Sodomitical Smollett," makes some illuminating comparisons among passage from the *Memoirs* and Smollett's works, and his contention that in *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*, as well as in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, "sodomitical practices seem to become the focus of sodomitical desire even as it is repudiated"<sup>89</sup> is persuasive. *Roderick Random* was published in January 1748, ten months before the first instalment of the *Memoirs*. It features two homosexual figures: the stereotypically effeminate Captain Whiffle, sporting a "white hat garnished with a red feather," a coat of "pink-coloured silk," and "crimson velvet breeches,"<sup>90</sup> and the much less flamboyant Lord Strutwell. In the *Memoirs*, perhaps emboldened by Smollett's example, Cleland brings the two types together in the bedroom shared by Fanny: one of the sodomites is a "tall comely young man" of about nineteen while the other, some two years his junior, wears his "yellowish hair long, and loose, in natural curls," and could be taken for a "girl in disguise" (157).

Among the new material on Cleland that has come to light since the publication of Epstein's biography is a revealing cache of letters from the 1750s and early 1760s to his mother's lawyer Edward Dickinson, from Dickinson to both Cleland and Cleland's mother, and from Mrs. Cleland to Dickinson, as well as a remarkable letter of 1758 from Cleland to his mother in person.<sup>91</sup> The correspondence provides a vivid portrait of the intensely hostile relationship between the respectable Lucy Cleland and her scapegrace son. In his only surviving letter to her, Cleland enquires dramatically: "what mother now unmercifully disowns and deserts a son? what mother abandons him to the cruelty of the world? a cruelty yet aggravated and even justified by its being a mother that abandons him? . . . I have now nothing left but a calm fixt grief that preys upon my vitals." In the same letter he compares himself to his father William Cleland, a friend of Pope, in terms of their financial improvidence, declaring that "it was exactly my father's, and has been but too faithfully transmitted with his blood to me. But I have not, as he had, a Mrs. Cleland to take care of me."<sup>92</sup> The assertion is teasingly ambiguous: is Cleland referring to his grandmother, the Mrs. Cleland who took care of his father, or to the wife, the Mrs. Cleland, that he has never had? In an undated letter to Dickinson, Cleland's mother is similarly opaque. She will not, she

declares, “enter into the abundance of reasons He [Cleland] must be conscious of, why I might excuse my self from doing Him any service. They are well known to you, and the world.” One such reason, of course, was Cleland’s improvidence, but whether the other reasons, “well known . . . to the world,” include sodomitical behavior, as Beckwith would charge some twenty years later, remains unclear.

Predicting the future course of literary studies is always a risky activity. In the case of Cleland, however, I believe that the present decade might see a fruitful combination of gender and queer theory approaches to *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* with further historical research. While readings of the novel have become increasingly reluctant to take a notoriously elusive text at face-value, and ever more adept at exploring its subtextual ramifications, they have not taken full advantage of research that has added much to our knowledge of its author, his milieu, and his oeuvre. Historicizing readings of the *Memoirs* will ensure that new interpretations do not merely create a presentist image of Cleland’s writings in tune with our own concerns, but help us come to terms with a novel that has long resisted cogent interpretation of any kind.

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#### NOTES

Versions of this paper were given at the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference, Montreal, in October 1999, and at the Johnson Society of the Central Region conference, Toronto, in May 2000. I wish to thank Benoît Melançon for inviting me to Montreal as a plenary speaker, and James Basker, Bernadette Fort, Marie Legroulx, and Lisa Moore for valuable assistance.

1. Philip Larkin, “Annus Mirabilis,” *Collected Poems*, ed. Anthony Thwaite (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1989), 167.
2. For the early publication history of the *Memoirs*, see David Foxon, *Libertine Literature in England, 1660–1745* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1965), 52–63.
3. Confusingly, the original novel is commonly known as *Fanny Hill*, a title that Cleland gave neither to the novel as first published nor to the abridgement.
4. Copies of this very rare book are held by the British Library and the Houghton Library, Harvard University. See Foxon, “The Reappearance of Two Lost Sheep,” *Book Collector* 14 (1965): 75–6, and Peter Sabor, “The Censor Censured: Expurgating *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*,” in *Eighteenth-Century Life* 9 (1995): 192–201, a special issue reprinted as *'Tis Nature's Fault: Unauthorized Sexuality During the Enlightenment*, ed. Robert Purks Maccubbin (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987).
5. The fullest bibliography of *Memoirs of a Woman Pleasure* remains that in Henry Spencer Ashbee’s *Catena Librorum Tacendorum* (London: privately printed, 1885), 60–91, supplemented by Patrick J. Kearney’s *The Private Case: An Annotated Bibliography of the Private Case Erotica Collection in the British (Museum) Library* (London: Jay Landesman, 1981), 136–42. Kearney’s *The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure (Fanny Hill): A Bibliography*, announced as forthcoming there, has not appeared. See also William B. Ober, “The Iconography of *Fanny Hill*: How to Illustrate a Dirty Book,” in his *Bottoms Up! A Pathologist's Essays on Medicine and the Humanities* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1987), 153–75.
6. In a pioneering article of 1935, almost thirty years before the novel became legally available, Ralph Thompson noted that “the book is probably more widely circulated today than ever before” among “a vast and heterogeneous reading public, despite official discouragement” (“Deathless Lady,” *Colophon* 1 [1935]: 207, 220).
7. For the trials of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* in the United States and Britain, see Charles Rembar, *The End of Obscenity: The Trials of Lady Chatterley, Tropic of Cancer, and Fanny Hill* (New York: Random House, 1968), and John Sutherland, *Offensive Literature: Decensorship in Britain, 1960–1982* (London: Junction Books, 1982), 32–40.

8. Peter Quennell, Introduction to *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1963), 13, 17.
9. Cited by Sutherland, *Offensive Literature*, 34.
10. Brigid Brophy, "Mersey Sound, 1750," *New Statesman*, 15 November 1963, 710.
11. John Illo, "The Idyll of Unreproved Pleasures Free," *Carolina Quarterly* 17 (1965): 20.
12. *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, ed. Peter Quennell, 26; Illo, "The Idyll," 22.
13. Erica Jong, Introduction to *Fanny Hill* (New York: Erotic Art Book Society, 1978), 7.
14. Quennell, Introduction to *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, 15–6.
15. B. Slepian and L. J. Morrissey, "What is *Fanny Hill*?", *Essays in Criticism* 14 (1964): 72–3.
16. *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, ed. Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1985), 76, 82, 116, 119, hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.
17. J. H. Plumb, Introduction to *Memoirs of Fanny Hill* (New York: New American Library, 1965), xiv. Cleland lived in India from 1728 to 1740, but there is no evidence that he was ever in Turkey; see William H. Epstein, *John Cleland: Images of a Life* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974), 213–4, n. 85. The report of Cleland's spending some years in Turkey, as consul in Smyrna, derives from the obituary by John Nichols in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 59 (February 1789): 180, which contains many inaccuracies.
18. Quennell, Introduction to *Memoirs*, 9. I shall return to the elusive Drybutter below.
19. Foxon, *Libertine Literature*, 60–3.
20. See, e.g., John Hollander, "The Old Last Act: Some Observations on *Fanny Hill*," *Encounter* 21 (1963): 69–77; L. J. Morrissey and B. Slepian, "Fanny and Moll," *Notes and Queries* 209 (1964): 61; Myron Taube, "Moll Flanders and *Fanny Hill*: A Comparison," *Ball State University Forum* 9:2 (1968): 76–80; Malcolm Bradbury, "*Fanny Hill* and the Comic Novel," *Critical Quarterly* 13 (1971): 263–75; Stanley J. Solomon, "Subverting Propriety as a Pattern of Irony in Three Eighteenth-Century Novels: *The Castle of Otranto*, *Vathek*, and *Fanny Hill*," *Erasmus Review* 1 (1971): 107–16; Edward W. Copeland, "*Clarissa* and *Fanny Hill*: Sisters in Distress," *Studies in the Novel* 4 (1972): 343–52; and Michael Shinagel, "*Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*: Pornography and the Mid-Eighteenth-Century English Novel," in *Studies in Change and Revolution: Aspects of English Intellectual History, 1640–1800*, ed. Paul J. Korshin (Menston, Yorks.: Scholar Press, 1972), 211–36. The apotheosis of this approach was attained in an essay by Douglas Brooks-Davies, "The Mythology of Love: Venerean (and Related) Iconography in Pope, Fielding, Cleland and Sterne," in *Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1982), 176–97, an "exploration of Venerean iconography in some English eighteenth-century poems and novels" (176), in which *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* is placed on an equal footing with major authors from Milton to Sterne.
21. See Barry Ikver, "John Cleland and the Marquis d'Argens: Eroticism and Natural Morality in Mid-Eighteenth-Century English and French Fiction," *Mosaic* 8 (1975): 141–8; Leo Braudy, "*Fanny Hill* and Materialism," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 4 (1970): 21–40; and Stephen Sossaman, "Sex, Love and Reason in the Novels of John Cleland," *Massachusetts Studies in English* 6 (1978): 93–106. James Grantham Turner later extended the comparison between Cleland and La Mettrie to include *L'École de la volupté* (1747) and *L'Art de jouir* (1748), as well as *L'Homme machine* (1747); see his "'Illustrious Depravity' and the Erotic Sublime," *The Age of Johnson* 2 (1989): 1–38.
22. Michael Wilding, "*Paradise Lost* and *Fanny Hill*," *Milton Quarterly* 5 (1971): 14–5.
23. William Epstein later supplemented his book with a biographical essay, "John Cleland," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 39, *British Novelists 1660–1800*, ed. Martin C. Battestin (New York: Gale Research, 1985): 101–2. A substantial work on the *Memoirs* in German, Peter Naumann's *Keyhole and Candle: John Clelands 'Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure' und die Entstehung des pornographischen Romans in England* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1976), has, regrettably, been ignored by Anglo-American scholars.
24. *Records of the Most Ancient and Puissant Order of the Beggar's Benison and Merryland, Anstruther*, ed. Alan Bold (Edinburgh: Paul Harris, 1982), 15; Epstein, *John Cleland*, 69–71. Epstein (218–9, n. 22) cites Louis C. Jones, who in *The Clubs of the Georgian Rakes* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1942)

had questioned the authenticity of the *Records*, but who “seems willing now to consider” that the entry on “Fanny Hill” “indeed may be genuine.” Epstein also (219, n. 25) cites Gershon Legman, who in *The Horn Book: Studies in Erotic Folklore and Bibliography* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1964) claims that the *Memoirs* “was first read aloud in manuscript by a relative of the author” (250), presumably Robert Cleland at the 1737 Beggar’s Benison meeting.

25. Boswell’s journal for 13 April 1779 in *Boswell Laird of Auchinleck*, ed. Joseph W. Reed and Frederick A. Pottle (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 76–7.

26. See Epstein, *John Cleland*, 68–9, and Foxon, *Libertine Literature*, 53–5. In both the conversation with Boswell and his letter to Stanhope, Cleland stated that the plan of the novel was suggested by a young friend of his, Charles Carmichael, who died at Bombay in 1732, aged twenty.

27. Epstein, *John Cleland*, 61–2.

28. Letter to Lovel Stanhope, 13 November 1749, in Foxon, *Libertine Literature*, 54–5.

29. Cleland, *Fanny Hill: or Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, ed. Peter Wagner (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985).

30. Norman Lebrecht, *Sunday Times* [London], 11 August 1985; *Books and Bookmen*, March 1985.

31. The passage had been previously printed by Patrick J. Kearney in *A History of Erotic Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 69. Kearney also (70–1) notes that the passage appears in editions of the *Memoirs* published in Paris by Isidore Liseux in 1888 and by Maurice Girodias in 1950, both extremely rare.

32. Sabor, ed., *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, xxiii–xxiv; Wagner, ed., *Fanny Hill*, 20. Wagner examined the novel further in two subsequent publications: “The Assertion of Body and Instinct: John Cleland’s *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*,” in *Le Corps et l’Âme en Grande Bretagne au XVIIIe Siècle*, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé and Suzi Halimi (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1986), 139–55; and his *Eros Revived: Erotica of the Enlightenment in England and America* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1988), 237–46.

33. Henry Merritt, “A Biographical Note on John Cleland,” *Notes and Queries*, 226 (1981): 306.

34. Sabor, ed., *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, xiii.

35. G. S. Rousseau, “The Pursuit of Homosexuality,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 9 (1985): 135–6.

36. Sabor, ed., *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, xvii–xxvi; Wagner, ed., *Fanny Hill*, 33–4.

37. Samuel S. Coleman and Michael J. Preston, *A KWIC Concordance to John Cleland’s Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (New York: Garland, 1988).

38. Shortly before such readings appeared, several critics challenged the 1960s construction of the *Memoirs* as a celebration of female sexuality: see Robert Markley, “Language, Power and Sexuality in Cleland’s *Fanny Hill*,” *Philological Quarterly* 63 (1984): 343–56; Paul Denizot, “Fanny Hill: Une Fille de Joye Heureuse?,” *Bulletin de la Société d’Études anglo-américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles* 20 (1985): 125–37; Roy Roussel, *The Conversation of the Sexes: Seduction and Equality in Selected Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Texts* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986); Carol Houlihan Flynn, “What Fanny Felt: The Pains of Compliance in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*,” *Studies in the Novel* 19 (1987): 284–95; and T. G. A. Nelson, “Women of Pleasure,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 11 (1987): 181–98. Two later articles, similarly, although unmarked by gay studies approaches, took nuanced approaches to the question of female pleasure in the *Memoirs*; see Liliane Gallet-Blanchard, “Rhetoric and Eroticism in *The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749),” in *L’Érotisme en Angleterre, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Jean-François Gournay (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1992), 61–76, and Marvin D. L. Lansverk, “‘Delightful Vistas’: Genital Landscapes in Cleland’s *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*,” *Transactions of the Northwest Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 20 (1995–96): 83–94.

39. Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, vol. 1, *Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999). A second volume, *The Origins of Modern Homosexuality*, is forthcoming.

40. Trumbach, “Modern Prostitution and Gender in *Fanny Hill*: Libertine and Domesticated Fantasy,” in *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1988), 74.



41. Nancy K. Miller, "It's in drag: The Sex of Recollection," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 22 (1981): 45–57.
42. Trumbach, "Modern Prostitution," 75.
43. Trumbach, "Erotic Fantasy and Male Libertinism in Enlightenment England," in *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500–1800*, ed. Lynn Hunt (New York: Zone Books, 1993), 267.
44. Julia Epstein, "Fanny's Fanny: Epistolarity, Eroticism, and the Transsexual Text," in *Writing the Female Voice: Essays on Epistolary Literature*, ed. Elizabeth C. Goldsmith (Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 1989), 149.
45. Epstein, "Fanny's Fanny," 148, citing Eve K. Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985).
46. Philip E. Simmons, "John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*: Literary Voyeurism and the Techniques of Novelistic Transgression," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 3 (1990): 61. Simmons's theoretical model is that of Georges Bataille, who in his book on eroticism contends that "often the transgression of a taboo is no less subject to rules than the taboo itself . . . Concern over a rule is sometimes at its most acute when that rule is being broken" (Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, trans. Mary Dalewood [San Francisco: City Lights, 1986], 65; cited by Simmons, 61).
47. Lee Edelman, "Seeing Things: Representation, the Scene of Surveillance, and the Spectacle of Gay Sex," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1981), rpt. in Edelman, *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 186.
48. Kevin Kopelson, "Seeing Sodomy: *Fanny Hill*'s Blinding Vision," in *Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment England: Literary Representations in Historical Context*, ed. Claude J. Summers (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1992), 175–6.
49. Kopelson, "Seeing Sodomy," 178–9, citing Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1986).
50. Kopelson, "Seeing Sodomy," 179, citing Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 53.
51. Donald H. Mengay, "The Sodomitical Muse: *Fanny Hill* and the Rhetoric of Crossdressing," in *Homosexuality*, ed. Summers, 191.
52. Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995), 104.
53. Mengay, "The Sodomitical Muse," 196.
54. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, 105.
55. Gary Gautier, "Fanny Hill's Mapping of Sexuality, Female Identity, and Maternity," *Studies in English Literature* 35 (1995): 486. See also Gautier's "Fanny's Fantasies: Class, Gender, and the Unreliable Narrator in Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*," *Style* 28 (1994): 133–45.
56. Robert Eggleston, "Middle-Station Members in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*," paper presented at the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Conference, Memorial University, 1992.
57. David Weed, "Fitting Fanny: Cleland's *Memoirs* and the Politics of Male Pleasure," *Novel* 31 (1997): 7–8.
58. Weed, "Fitting Fanny," 11. Weed also notes that "the younger sodomite becomes the only man in *Memoirs* to engage in sex without ejaculating" (12).
59. Cameron McFarlane, *The Sodomite in Fiction and Satire 1660–1750* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1997), 159.
60. McFarlane, *Sodomite*, 160, 168.
61. McFarlane, *Sodomite*, 172.
62. Lisa Moore, *Dangerous Intimacies: Toward a Sapphic History of the British Novel* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1997), 61.

63. Moore, *Dangerous Intimacies*, 70.
64. Moore, *Dangerous Intimacies*, 73.
65. McFarlane cites Judith Butler's influential *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) on several occasions.
66. Anne Robinson Taylor, *Male Novelists and their Female Voices: Literary Masquerades* (Troy, NY: Whitston, 1981), 93.
67. Miller, "I's in Drag," 54. See also Miller's chapter on the *Memoirs* in her *The Heroine's Text: Readings in the French and English Novel, 1722–1782* (Columbia, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1980), 51–66.
68. Madeleine Kahn, *Narrative Transvestism: Rhetoric and Gender in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), 158.
69. Rosemary Graham, "The Prostitute in the Garden: Walt Whitman, *Fanny Hill*, and the Fantasy of Female Pleasure," *English Literary History* 64 (1997): 595, n. 29.
70. David Stevenson, "Preposterous Pleasures in Maryland," *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 August 1997, 15–6.
71. Edelman, "Seeing Things," 183–4.
72. *Records*, ed. Bold, 5.
73. *Records*, ed. Bold, 18. Cleland's may be the earliest use of the phrase, which the *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, ed. F. P. Wilson, 3d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), records only from 1780. Its appearance in the *Records*, although without a date, supports Stevenson's conjecture that the style of the *Memoirs* inspired "the indecent wit of the Beggar's Benison documents" (16).
74. Roger Lonsdale, "New Attributions to John Cleland," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 30 (1979): 281.
75. Lonsdale, "New Attributions," 289. An article published in the same year as Lonsdale's, Raymond K. Whitley's "The Libertine Hero and Heroine in the Novels of John Cleland" (*Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 9 [1979]: 387–404), provides useful comparisons between the *Memoirs* and Cleland's neglected second novel, *Memoirs of a Coxcomb* (1751).
76. James G. Basker, "'The Wages of Sin': The Later Career of John Cleland," *Études anglaises* 40 (1987): 179; Foxon, *Libertine Literature*, 60.
77. Sabor, "Censor Censured," 196; *Memoirs of Fanny Hill*, 183.
78. Carolyn D. Williams, "The Way to Things by Words: John Cleland, the Name of the Father, and Speculative Etymology," *Yearbook of English Studies* 28 (1998): 250.
79. In a recent essay, John Sutherland conjectures that "Mr Dick, the amiable, kite-flying idiot in *David Copperfield*, conceivably owes his name—and possibly more—to the idiot in *Fanny Hill*" ("Where does Fanny Hill keep her contraceptives?," in his *Can Jane Eyre be Happy?: More Puzzles in Classic Fiction* [Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1997], 11–2).
80. Frederick Burwick, "John Cleland: Language and Eroticism," in *Erotica and the Enlightenment*, ed. Peter Wagner (Britannia Texts in English, ed. Jürgen Klein, vol. 2, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), 55–6, citing Cleland, *The Way to Things by Words*, 14, 32–3.
81. Henry G. Bohn, note in his edition of William Thomas Lowndes, *Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature* (1857–64; rpt. Detroit: Gale Research, 1967) 2:477.
82. Sabor, ed., *Memoirs*, xxvii; Foxon, *Libertine Literature*, 61.
83. Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England 1700–1830* (London: GMP, 1992), 176–8, 181. Drybutler had, moreover, been identified as the subject of Darly's print by the art historian Mary Dorothy George in 1935; see George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires . . . in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1935) 5:40, cited by Norton, 227, n. 17.
84. Epstein, *John Cleland*, 139–40.
85. For Cleland's reviews of Smollett, see Epstein, *John Cleland*, 116–8, 127; for Smollett's reviews of Cleland, see Basker, *Tobias Smollett: Critic and Journalist* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1988) 134–5, 138, 242–3, 258, and 260.

86. John Gray to Smollett, 8 July 1771; cited by Epstein, *John Cleland*, 127, and by Knapp, *Tobias Smollett: Doctor of Men and Manners* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1949), 296.
87. Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, ed. Thomas R. Preston (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1990), 219 and 413–4, n. 23. The passage is noted by Bold in his Introduction to the *Records*, [1].
88. See Anne Louise Kibbie, "Sentimental Properties: *Pamela* and *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*," *ELH* 58 (1991): 561–77, and Antje Schaum Anderson, "Gendered Pleasure, Gendered Plot: Defloration as Climax in *Clarissa* and *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*," *Journal of Narrative Technique* 25 (1995): 108–38.
89. McFarlane, *Sodomite*, 144.
90. Smollett, *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, ed. Paul-Gabriel Boucé (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), 194–5.
91. These letters, formerly in private hands, are now at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
92. John Cleland to Lucy Cleland, 6 March 1758.