



Personal Effects: Wigs and Possessive Individualism in the Long Eighteenth Century

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In his seventeenth-century tract *The Unloveliness of Lovelocks*, William Prynne complains about men who try to pawn other people's hair off as their own. "Men who weare false Haire, or Periwigs," he writes, "doe commonly affirme, *and sweare them to be their owne*, (perhaps, upon this evasion, that they have paid well for them) and would have all men deeme them for their naturall, and native Haire."¹ Prynne is perturbed both by the artificial enhancement of appearance, with its attendant manipulation of God-given traits, and by the deception of the unsuspecting observer. Prynne's irritation, however, goes beyond scorn at the evident falsity of an ill-fitting hairpiece; his remarks focus on a troubling proliferation of possible senses of possession. The hair is one's own ("natural"), but the wig is made ("false"); the hair is not one's own (it grew on the head of another), but the wig is one's own (because it was purchased). The provenance of the hair, the labor of the wig-maker, the purchase and wearing of the wig all enter into the notion of in what measure—or whether—the wig belongs to its wearer. When Prynne insists that hair culled from another's head is not part of the self, whatever the price paid, he is refusing to sanction the elusive link between what is purchased or worn and what is "one's own."² Lurking beneath the querulousness of Prynne's text, then, is an anxiety about the nature of the self and its pos-

sessions: how do we know what is proper to us? And how do we take things as our own?

The existence of a thriving market in hair in eighteenth-century England at times makes it difficult to decide where one person's parts end and another's begin. The wig's physical nature—the way it shuttles among different individuals, recomposing the body and its surfaces—erodes the boundaries that set the individual subject off from the world. The tracts on wigs betray anxieties about the way the worn thing can redefine not only what it means to possess but also what constitutes the individual doing the possessing. Two rival forms of the person surface in eighteenth-century discussions of the wig, where the liberal idea of the subject as an individual jostles against the notion of the self as the possessor of detachable parts. If the individual is composed of removable and attachable layers that it owns, what exactly is doing the owning? Consider Prynne's remarks with which we began. For Prynne, the wig reveals that the individual self (in its depths) possesses manipulable external qualities (surfaces). Worse, these interchangeable parts can be bought and sold. That one person's lopped-off locks may be appropriated by another undermines organic self-possession and threatens the God-given integrity of the body. Prynne himself wore his hair at chin-length to conceal the fact that his ears had been cut off by royal edict for his writings.

The expression "one's own" postulates both a capacity to possess and a subject ("one") capable of possessing. Just such a concept lies at the heart of the "possessive individualism" that C. B. Macpherson famously argues is the fundamental principle of the seventeenth-century concept of the individual. According to Macpherson's account of Hobbes, Locke, and the Levellers, the individual is considered to be "essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. The individual is seen neither as a moral whole, nor as part of a larger social whole, but as an owner of himself."³ Macpherson's language implies a division among styles of self, as if the person doing the possessing could be pried away from the person possessed, as if one self labors while the other reaps political autonomy from that labor. His logic presupposes the existence of a self prior to its proprietary claims over the outer world: the subject comes before the objects it labors upon and appropriates. The paradox of the wig in the context of "possessive individualism" lies in the fact that the object meant to proclaim its wearer to be a freestanding individual is harvested from the bodies of other people: to wear a wig is to make another's

parts an integral part of one's own personal appearance. The important role played by the wig in establishing, even constituting, the identity of its wearer exposes the dependence of the autonomous individual upon his possessions. If the wig belongs to the wearer, there is also a sense in which the wearer belongs to the wig. By tracing the fluctuating values and powers assigned to the wig from its ascendancy in the late seventeenth century to its decline at the close of the eighteenth century, this essay addresses the shifting relation between personal possessions and personal identity, between the objects one owns and the characteristics individuals are deemed to possess.

The wig tracts teem with different constructions of possession. The materials used in this essay are united only by a shared reference to an object and are, as may be expected, scattershot in genre, origin, method, and intent. Fashions are ephemeral, and much of what we know of wigs comes from anecdotal as well as documentary evidence: letters and diaries, newspapers, advertisements, religious polemics, satires on fashion, taxes on luxuries like hair powder, and treatises on hairdressing, as well as images, from Kneller's Kit-Kat club portraits to the plates accompanying the manuals on wigmaking to Hogarth's 1761 parody of the Vitruvian architectural orders, *The Five Orders of Periwigs* (figures 1 and 2). I begin with a brief history of the wig, before turning to the various ways the wig was seen to alter the nature of its wearers. Whereas seventeenth-century Puritan polemics rail against the gender-eroding and soul-corrupting potential of outer layers, eighteenth-century writers on wigs are principally concerned with distinctions of rank, nation, gender, and occupation. The movement of hair between male and female bodies, between laborers and aristocrats, creates material but unacknowledged bonds between different spheres of society, undermining the masculine identity wigs ostensibly uphold. The circulation of the wig on the free market allows men to purchase the signs of rank and profession without possessing the interior quality; late century tracts thus satirize the gap between what the wig proclaims (dignity of office, wisdom of years) and the "true" identity beneath. The rapidly changing styles meant to create social distinction render the wig a protean object and the wig wearer, the plaything of mercurial fashion. The wig ceases to be the sign of masculine autonomy and becomes instead a declaration of one's subjection to fashion and of one's overvaluation of mere things. By tracing the fluctuations in the treatment of wigs from the late seventeenth to the close of the eighteenth century, I hope to address how

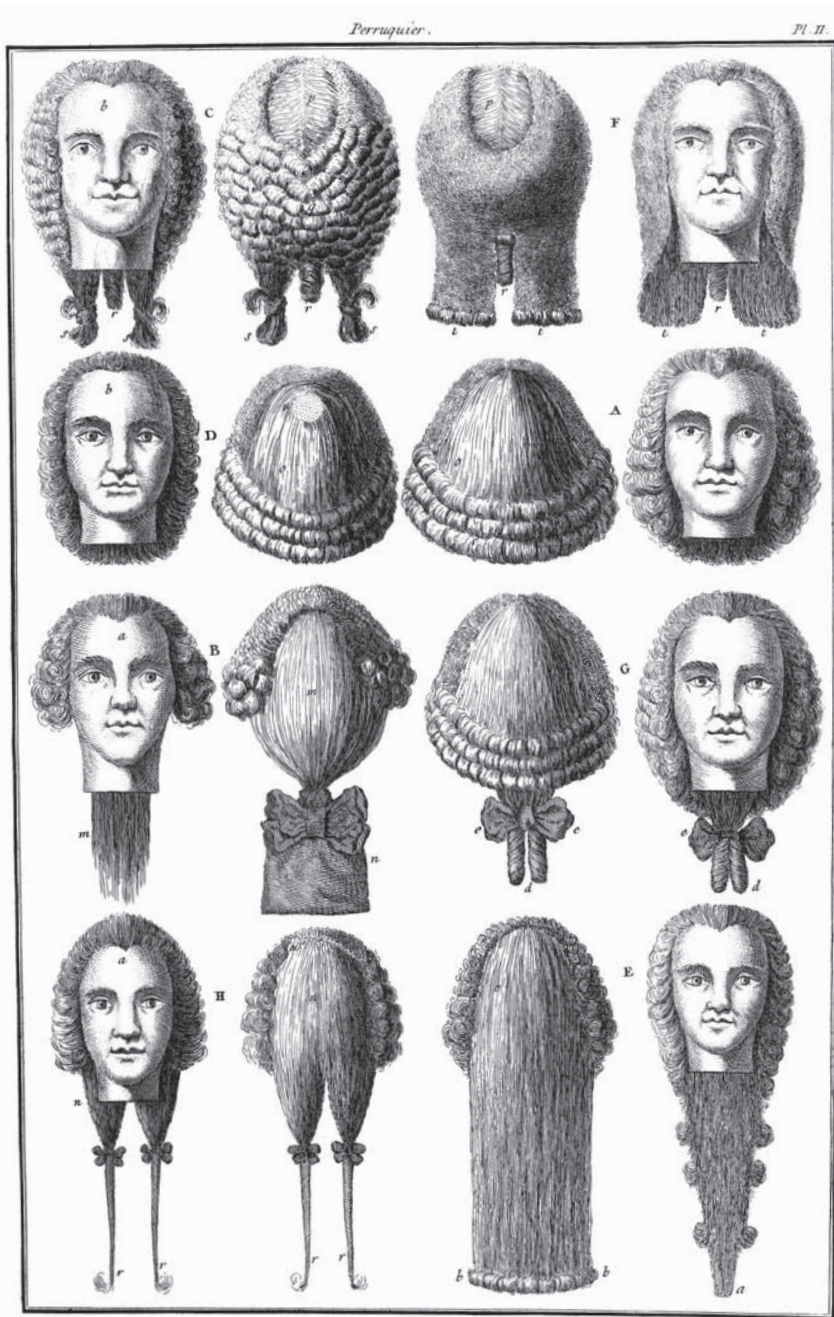


Figure 1. Examples Of Styles of Wigs. François Alexandre de Garsault, *L'art du perruquier* (1767). Courtesy of Kress Collection of Business and Economic Literature, Baker Library, Harvard Business School



Figure 2. Hogarth, *The Five Orders of Perwigs* (1761). Courtesy of the Houghton Library, Harvard University

the rival forms of possession that surface in the wig tracts signal a larger transformation in representations of the modern male subject.

The Wig Ascendancy

Although Prynne's comments, with which we began, were made prior to the rise of the wig to the heights of fashion, they anticipate and set the terms for the ensuing debate over wig wearing throughout the long eighteenth century. The controversial nature of the wig is seemingly belied by its ubiquity; even the most glancing familiarity with eighteenth-century portraiture reveals rows of similarly clad and bewigged men, as well as women whose natural hair (supplemented by prosthetic tresses) raises their coiffures to dazzling heights. From the late seventeenth century until the 1760s in England, wigs were worn by men from the aristocrats featured in elegant portraits to the slaves described in advertisements for runaways.⁴ Although wigs were initially the province of the wealthy, as the century progressed, they were being worn by all men who could afford them. The Swede Pehr Kalm remarks in 1748 on the ubiquity of the wig in England: "Farm-servants, clodhoppers, day-labourers, Farmers, in a word, all labouring-folk go through their usual every-day duties with all *Peruques* on the head. Few, yea, very few, were those who only wore their own hair."⁵ Since a wig at the time cost at least one guinea, a farm worker earning eight shillings a week was probably wearing a hand-me-down from the local squire or his household; the provision of "one good and sufficient wig yearly" was routinely included in the articles binding journeyman apprentices.⁶ A moderately sized market town like Northampton could support its own wigmaker, and even village barbers would have some knowledge of how to fashion a peruke.⁷ The practice was nearly universal among Englishmen.

Although the dates of the wig tracts, and hence the periodization of this paper, perforce follow the vicissitudes of fashion, the question of why wigs were almost universally worn and then fell into relative oblivion deserves further consideration. The long eighteenth century witnesses seismic shifts in normative personal appearance. Even contemporary writers acknowledge that wig wearing could be seen as an odd cultural aberration: "Certainly, if an inhabitant of the Cape of Good Hope were to behold the stiff horse-hair buckles, or the tied wigs, of our Lawyers, Physicians, Tradesmen, or Divines," Richard Graves writes in 1773, "they would

appear as barbarous and extraordinary to them, as the sheep's tripes and chitterlins about the neck of a Hottentot do to us."⁸ In his 1801 history of wigs and false hair, the German author and bookseller Friedrich Nicolai asks whether we ought to say that our "ancestors were right to cover their shaved heads with a peruke, and that their present-day nephews are wrong to go without? The singularity of modes consists but in change; our eyes accustom themselves to the most bizarre things, as the habit of wearing enormous wigs proves."⁹ Even wig wearers themselves have trouble explaining the practice. When a puzzled Pehr Kalm is moved to ask the English "the reason for the dislike of, and the low estimation in which they held their own hair," he is told "it was nothing more than the custom and *mode*" (52).

Eighteenth-century explanations for this "custom and mode" tend to fall back on psychological, sociological, or economic causes, beginning with the obvious fact that the wig allows men who have lost their hair to get it back. The same reasons surface with tiresome regularity. The vanity of a bald Louis XIII and a balding Louis XIV results in imitative scrabbling of Versailles courtiers to acquire false hair, a psychological explanation usually buttressed with an anecdote claiming that Louis XIV's barber Binet was the only one to see his Majesty wigless.¹⁰ (Louis XIV in fact wore his own hair into the 1670s, well after the fashion had taken hold in England and France.) Contemporary accounts use timeless motives of vanity, ambition, or conformity to explain sartorial change. Thus the fact that the 200 members of the French Guild of Barber/Wigmakers in 1673 had swelled to some 850 strong by 1760 becomes a kind of natural accumulation arising from emulative consumerism.¹¹ If the French rise of the wig is typically attributed to the court's imitation of royal sartorial choices, in England wigs are given a continental pedigree, having crossed the channel during the 1660 Restoration. Charles II, one writer (inaccurately) proclaims in a 1770 *Treatise of the Hair*, "was the first that ever wore a peruke in England."¹²

Writers also argue that wigs became fashionable because they served pragmatic functions—ease of access to an itchy scalp or the time that might be saved by having the hair dressed off the head, for example.¹³ A reluctant Samuel Pepys observes that he has "no stomach" for wearing a wig, "but that the pains of keeping my hair clean is so great."¹⁴ Unlike the human head, the wig could be taken off and sent to the wigmaker to be combed, deloused, recurled, and powdered. Wig styles throughout the

century were modified to answer to such practical demands. During the War of the Spanish Succession, military officers found that full periwigs got in their eyes and adopted the practice of wearing hair tied back, which became standard for informal military dress after the 1706 Battle of Ramillies and subsequently, during the 1730s, for general wear.¹⁵ The bagwig (in which the hair was gathered in a black purse) likewise attained great popularity; the bag both protected clothing from hair powder and pomatum and sheltered hair from the injury of the elements.

Explanations based on function assume that fashions are rational, but this is belied by the fact that many fashionable items are uncomfortable to wear.¹⁶ Indeed, the expenditure, inconvenience, and uselessness of fashion in part create its symbolic value. Only those possessed of leisure and wealth could afford the hours it took to dress a head, not to mention the price of a “pound of hair and two pounds of powder.”¹⁷ That practical concerns were not a priority is most graphically illustrated in the extravagance of macaroni heads and women’s hairstyles in the 1770s. Natural hair, supplemented by purchased tresses, was stiffened with powder and pomade and brushed over wool, hemp, or wire pads (figure 3). Hair could attain heights up to two feet, often embellished with ribbons, living flowers (with vials of water nested in the hair to keep them fresh), pearls, models of ships, coaches, and windmills (figure 4). As satiric prints show, such extravagant styles made it difficult to get in and out of coaches and through low doorways; they also obstructed views at the theater (figures 5 and 6). These elaborate headdresses might remain “unopened” for up to a month, causing problems of a different order. “Let any person consider,” an English periwig maker suggests in 1767, “what smell is likely to come forth when the hair is opened; where powder, pomatum, and the perspiration of the head, has been denied an airing for three months together.”¹⁸ Heads could become potential nesting grounds for all sorts of insects and even rodents. Thus a 1777 advertisement for a silver wire nightcap in the *Salisbury Journal* warns of “the many melancholy accidents that have happened in consequence of mice getting into ladies’ hair at the night time.”¹⁹ Because wigs could be removed and dressed off the head, men were able to avoid some of the problems encountered by ladies.

Yet the wig might also be an encumbrance. Wigs were expensive and easily damaged, lost, or stolen.²⁰ The curl or buckle (from the French *boucle*) could be ruined by rain; the wig might fall off during vigorous activities. For instance, when in 1785 Lady Louisa Stuart asks a guest to dance



THE VILLAGE BARBER.
and D. only by J. H. 1778.

Figure 3. "The Village Barber," from *Darby's Comic Prints of Characters, Caricatures, Macaronies, &c.* (1776–79). Courtesy of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection, the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library, HEW 14.10.8F



BUNKERS HILL
or America's Head-Dress

Figure 4. "Bunkers Hill," from *Darby's Comic Prints of Characters, Caricatures, Macaronies, &c.* (1776–79). Courtesy of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection, the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library, HEW 14.10.8F



THE OPTIC CURLS ·
OR THE OBLIGEING HEAD DRESS ·

Figure 6. "The Optic Curls, or the Obliging Head Dress," from *Darby's Comic Prints of Characters, Caricatures, Macaronies, &c.* (1776–79). Courtesy of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection, the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library, HEW 14.10.8F

tury, with his towering wig in blond, black, or white hair, is succeeded by a smaller-headed, low-heeled, neatly bewigged creature with ordered curls powdered white or gray. The weighty full bottom wig popular in the late seventeenth century used roughly ten heads of hair and was so large that it came in three parts (one in the back and two in front); it could cost upwards of £50.²⁵ As wigs became smaller, they also became more affordable, leading to a proliferation of styles. With the death of Queen Anne in 1714 and of Louis XIV the following year, the full bottom wig was gradually supplanted by (among other styles) the tie wig (in which the hair was drawn back in a queue), the bagwig (in which the queue was enveloped in a silk or satin bag), the bob wig (a short wig without a queue, favored by those who could not afford the expense of a long wig), and the scratch wig (a rather haphazard arrangement designed to resemble real hair worn by farmers and outdoor laborers). Cheaper wigs for the less affluent were also made from horsehair (taken from the mane), goat's hair, and even feathers.²⁶ The owners of bob wigs might also save money by attaching supplementary pieces to create different styles. The type of wig one elected to wear indicated, among other things, gender, rank, occupation, and political leanings. Although my focus here is not the specific meanings of these codes, the prevalence of political labels such as Roundhead and Cavalier and slang terms like bigwig, all originating from wig and hair styles, suggests the wig's importance in marking its wearer as a member of a particular group.²⁷

Perhaps the most compelling explanation for the prevalence of wig wearing in the eighteenth century is the one offered by Marcia Pointon in her remarkable study of eighteenth-century English portraiture. She argues that the wig serves as a sign of austere masculine authority, articulating the claims of professional men in an emerging public sphere. The wig's undeviating form, Pointon contends, also creates gender solidarity by muting differences of rank, political interest, region, and even natural endowment. "What imaginable Difference is there now between a Head adorned with the finest Tresses that the Art of Painting can represent, and a wither'd Pate almost bereft of Hair?" the *Gentleman's Magazine* asks in 1736. "A Bag or a Black Ribbon cover all alike." Given the prevailing fashions, "One Man's Hair is as like that of another as two Drops of Water."²⁸ Designed to cancel out individual vagaries, the wig does not derive meaning from its wearer; instead, it confers a corporate identity upon the individual, marking him as a member of a profession, a person of rank, a public man. The wig defines the body as a political entity, and it thereby also helps to define the body politic

as a gendered entity. Indeed, in the seventeenth-century treatises attacking the wig, it is gender rather than courtly or parliamentary politics that most concerns the Puritan divines. It is to these tracts that we now turn.

The Nature/Couture Split

The majority of Puritan polemics against wigs were written in the mid-seventeenth century, before the wig's heyday in the long eighteenth century. These jeremiads furnish a foil to readings of the wig as a sign of austere masculinity. To purchase and wear another's hair, the Puritans contend, is to deviate from the divine template in ways that destroy the stability of God-given identities. To exhibit discontent with one's form by wearing a wig is, in Prynne's words, to "taxe and censure God, and labour to correct, and change his Worke." Replacing God's endowments with "the hairie excrements of some other person" is tampering with the perfection of God's creation.²⁹ Both the Roman Catholic and the reformed clergy debate the merits and demerits of hairstyles, picking up on a sartorial controversy dating back at least to the Council of Rouen's 1096 reaffirmation of the biblical interdiction on male long hair. That even clerics wore wigs in the seventeenth century compounds the problem. Indeed, the superabundance of wig-wearing clergy prompts the Abbé Jean-Baptiste Thiers, parish priest of Champrond, to publish at his own expense the 1690 *Histoire des perruques*, a 550-page exposure of wicked wig-wearing priests.³⁰

The absence of any biblical prohibition explicitly directed against wigs obliges the tract writers to argue that such prohibitions are too self-evident to require iteration, even as Solon "made none against Parricide as not to be supposed."³¹ Otherwise, the tracts fall back on the rule against long hair on men and polled hair on women (1 Corinthians 11), coupled with the interdiction on cross-dressing in Deuteronomy. These passages require the tract writer simultaneously to maintain the wig as hair (in Corinthians) and to constitute it as clothing (in Deuteronomy). "The Lord," we are told by Thomas Hall, pastor of Kingsnorton, in his 1654 diatribe against hair excesses at the Stuart court, "expresly forbids the confounding of the Sexes, (*Deut., 22.5) by wearing of that which is not proper to each Sex. . . . Though that Text speak Literally of apparell, yet Analogically, and by way of allusion, it may fitly be applied to long haire."³² The wig is affiliated with clothing by virtue of its detachability, its ornamental nature, and its function as a covering. And yet, if the wig is clothing, may it not be a modest

covering? Certain writers defend wigs on the grounds that perukes serve to cover the head and therefore are a sign of modesty, but how is the onlooker to distinguish a wig-wearing woman of virtue (hair as covering) from a whore (hair as display)?³³ Hall warns, "Better weare an hundred caps than one Periwig" (16). For Hall, a cap is a covering, not a "surface"; it shrouds rather than displays. A wig, by contrast, may either cover or display. As the anonymous Puritan author of the 1664 *Looking-glasse for Women* writes: "It is but a seeming covering, and no reall covering, and it will appeare that it is rather an uncovering as you use it, then a covering, in that you take it out of its proper place, to hang it down in another place."³⁴ Hair purportedly covers when it is in "its proper place" but displays when placed on another's head. Critically, what is alluring is not the body beneath the covering (a body that could be hidden as well by a cap as by a wig), but the layer itself. Hair, like the Freudian fetish, allures as an object, and not just because it is a substitute for something else (e.g., Freud's missing maternal penis, one's real hair). Wigs excite otherwise dormant desire "which our owne naturall Haire and feature would not moove."³⁵

It is vital to distinguish cosmetic supplementation from bodily alteration. "True," writes Hall, "a man or woman may cover a naturall defect by lawful meanes; but by no meanes may they set a new face, or forme upon the body" (105). At what point, however, does the face or form become "new"? For the Puritans, a covering becomes unlawful when the seams are invisible, when the application of an additional layer *indiscernibly* alters the bounds of the body. Because such alterations are more fully incorporated into the body, they potentially remake the being within. "A Malady which hath its beginnings in the extreme or outward parts of the body," writes the anonymous author of the 1676 *Coma Berenices*, "oftentimes invades the vitals, and proveth mortal" (5). The fear here is not just that the disguise will be good enough to pass, but that the outer layer will convert the interior. Wearing someone else's hair does not change the wearer into the original person, but like the coat of Nessus, which killed Hercules, it brings a sort of moral death. As the author of *Coma Berenices* continues,

It is also reported that Goats hair which was once used about the
Tabernacle, is made use of to adorn the Temples of some of the female sex;
were I one of their number I should be afraid of this new invention, lest it
should prove an inauspicious Presage to what squadron I should belong,
when the Judge of all the earth shall divide the sheep from the Goats.
(32–33)

The part transforms the whole in a kind of corporeal domino theory. As the goat hair mutates from that “once used about the Tabernacle” to a wig adorning the “Temples of some of the female sex,” the implied temple (home of the tabernacle) slides into temples (of the head), both images converging on the sorting of the sheep from the goats on Judgment Day. To wear goat’s hair is to be judged as a goat, is to be a goat.

The primary concern of the Puritan tracts is that purchasing and wearing another’s hair may tamper with the gender of the whole body, “man unmanning, woman’s hair to buy,” as the Quaker Richard Richardson writes in his poem “Metamorphoses.”³⁶ Yet the wig does not transform the whole body, but instead creates what Richardson calls “hermaphrodites” (Leslie, 7:467). Thus when Hall writes that “a female head to a male face is married now in every place” (preface), the part retains its sexed nature even when attached to another body. The face is male, the head is female (based presumably on the scalp of origin). The matrimonial metaphor (“is married now in every place”) invokes a cultural wedding of male and female to stabilize the union of disjointed parts, while punning on “marred.” An accessory like the wig complicates the way sex can be localized on the body.³⁷ Londa Schiebinger’s work on the gendering of skulls, brains, skeleton, and beards in eighteenth-century natural histories has shown that the traits that distinguish sex need not be the genitals and secondary sexual characteristics.³⁸ The wig tracts suggest that these traits need not be part of the body at all. Worn primarily by men, but made from hair grown primarily on female heads, wigs disrupt gender distinctions based on the surface of the body. If the seemingly fixed referents that signify sexual difference can travel, how is one to secure gender?³⁹ What happens when the symbolic attributes of gender cannot be lined up with the biological traits of sex?

The Puritan divines grow agitated about the provenance of the hair itself and the potential alteration of the body, in part because they regard sex and gender as divinely given. By contrast, as Dror Wahrman has recently argued, “The firm grounding of sex in nature [in the eighteenth century] made possible the conceptualization of masculinity and femininity as social and cultural attributes, distinct from male and female bodies. . . . The consequent autonomy of gender from the dictates of sex . . . created a *space for play*, that is, a space for imaginable dissonances of gender over (supposedly) stable sexual bodies.”⁴⁰ On these terms, the wig permits its user to appear male in the face of increasingly fixed biological differences. The daughter clapping on her father’s wig is a literary topos that

surfaces not only in Charlotte Charke's childhood attempt to "be the perfect Representative of my Sire" by appropriating his "enormous bushy Tie-wig," but also in Frances Burney's *Camilla*, where the ten-year-old heroine "metamorphose[s]" her uncle into "a female, accoutring him with her fine new cap, while she enveloped her own small head in his wig."⁴¹ Whereas the wig potentially tampers with sex for the seventeenth-century Puritans, in the eighteenth century it enables men and women to play with gender roles. The symbolic usurpation of paternal power through masquerade suggests the transformative power of our possessions, as well as the ease with which such signs might be appropriated.

If the wig is worth commandeering, it is because it carries such symbolic weight. Its importance as a shared, ostensibly stable signifier of masculinity is suggested by the moral and political disarray represented by its *absence* in, for example, Hogarth's 1732–33 *Midnight Modern Conversation*. The presence of undeviating rows of neatly wigged men in formal portraiture, as Marcia Pointon has argued, mutes differences of rank and political interest and thus allows "conflicting discourses of gender, of masculinity, of sexuality and of class to be stabilized even if not resolved."⁴² Although the metaphorical and symbolic weight of the male wig hides the hairless head, the connotations of these "dangerous excrescences" (the wig's supplementary nature, its sexual allusiveness, its dubious theological status) and the ease with which the wig could be removed undermine its mission of reasserting an absolute and austere masculine authority. The paradox of the wig, Pointon argues, is thus "the dilemma of a masculinity that required the artificial covering of the head as a sign of virility, station and decency but that was simultaneously threatened by the connotations—religious, moral and sexual—of the only item that could secure the signification" (128). The symbolic power of the wig is challenged by the fact that it is made from hair taken from persons of different genders, rank, occupations, nations, and political parties. As tracts show, the material origins of the wig may undercut both the symbolic work performed by the wig and the stability of the very identity it is meant to proclaim.

This Little Wig Went to Market

Discussions of wigmaking are preoccupied with the hair's origins and its relation to the head to which it was originally attached. That hair exists (quite literally) on the fringes of the body makes it malleable both in fact

and in concept. Hair's historical classification as excrement and its ability to replenish itself when lopped off pose problems for those authors who would define the natural or, at least, the organic relation between the head and the hair. David Ritchie, whose 1770 *Treatise on the Hair* is primarily designed to sell his customized hair products and to promote his mail-order wig service for "Ladies and Gentlemen, in the remotest parts of the British empire, as well as in the metropolis" (iv), dedicates twenty pages to medical opinions on the organic properties of hair. The hairdresser James Stewart likewise includes an extended discussion in his 1782 *Plocacosmos, or the Whole Art of Hairdressing*:

The ancients held the hair to be a sort of excrement, fed only with excrementitious matter, and no proper part of a living body. . . . Their chief reasons being, that the hair being cut, will grow again apace, even in extreme old age . . . nay, that it will grow even on dead carcasses. They add, that the hair does not feed and grow, like the other parts, by intro-susception, i.e., by juice circulating within it; but like the nails, each part, next the root, thrusting forward that immediately before it.⁴³

Created out of waste, hair is a condensation of the rejected detritus of the body. It is a kind of dead excess, "no proper part of a living body." Hair is not anthropomorphized; it "does not feed and grow" as a whole of itself, but increases in size by displacing parts of itself further away from the body's surface. Stewart goes on to historicize this notion of hair, noting that "the moderns are agreed that hair doth properly and truly live." He distances living hair from the life of the whole body, however: "In propriety, the life or growth of hair, is of a different kind than that of the rest of the body, and is not immediately derived them from [*sic*], or reciprocated therewith. . . . Though they draw their nourishment [from the body], yet each has as it were its separate life and distinct œconomy" (173). Though alive, hair exists in a parasitical, nonreciprocal relationship with the rest of the body, neither entirely part of nor entirely separate from the whole. Terms such as "propriety" and "œconomy" in turn invoke the social circulation in which this detachable part will become implicated.

Despite its excremental status, hair is integrally related to the body and mind of the person on whom it grows. The humors and the hair are connected; bad hair may be a sign of more than a bad day. "So generally is the strength of the hair connected with that of the fibres of the body," writes Stewart, "that those whose hair sheds, runs thick, lank, or refuses

buckle . . . ought to be careful of falling into nervous disorders" (175–76). The body that produces disorderly tresses encases a disordered mind. The association of disease and symptom is transformed elsewhere into a causal relation. Pepys notes that wig sales plummet in times of pestilence out of the fear that hair might have grown on and been culled from the heads of plague victims.⁴⁴ But hair is not only the carrier of physical infection: the spiritual qualities of its human origin are also the subject of speculation. Ignorance of the moral merits of the original head occasionally produces anxiety, as if the wig wearer might be corrupted by osmosis.⁴⁵ "How many bad women," Snarl asks Brim in a 1690 *Weekly Comedy*, "do you think have laid their heads together to complete that mane of yours?" (Corson, 224).

Both social and medical contamination provoke anxiety. Before processing, the excrements of some are more disgusting than those of others: "*A greasy Barber*," one Dalrymple informs us in his contribution to a vicious 1758 feud between Edinburgh barbers and wigmakers over who had the right to cut hair, "covered all over with *Suds*, and the *excrementitious Parts of the Beards of nasty Mechanicks*, is no very proper *Utensil* for the *Dressing-room* of a *Gentleman*, and much less of a *Lady*. The *Sight* is enough to some, the *Smell* loathsome to many, and the *touch* intolerable to all."⁴⁶ The stubble, the suds, the detritus of the body, all produced by shaving, are repudiated here; the possible mingling of the excrement of many classes, from "nasty Mechanick" to "gentleman," suggests a threatening collapse of social distinctions that might easily have been voiced by Smollett's Matthew Bramble. Couched in terms of class deference and servility, Dalrymple's strictures create social distinction by consolidating hierarchies of clean and unclean. Class standing is demonstrated through the correct visceral response to waste not proper to the lady or gentleman in question. One's own hair is not repugnant, but that shaved from another and not processed into a wig is revolting.

The rejection of the detritus of the body places wigs in an awkward position, for the hair used in wigs often was grown on the heads of the humble, and these low origins create unacknowledged physical bonds between different levels of society. "What does a barber do?" the Parisian hairdressers ask in a 1769 lawsuit against the guild of barbers: "They shave heads, buy hanks of hair and no longer curl living locks but rather, hammer them into plaits. They arrange the hair of a Savoy peasant on the head of a marquis."⁴⁷ The barber, like the wigmaker, reveals the labor and material goods involved in producing social status (figure 7).⁴⁸ As the "perruke"

Figure 7. "The City Tonsor,"
from *Darby's Comic Prints
of Characters, Caricatures,
Macaronies, &c.* (1776–79).

Courtesy of the Harry
Elkins Widener
Collection, the Houghton
Library of the Harvard
College Library,
HEW 14.10.8F



THE CITY TONSOR.

Publ'd accordg to Act of Parl. July 1. 1771 by J. Darby del. & J. S. A. sculpsit.

entry of the *Encyclopédie* tells us, the wigmaker of Louis XIV "said that he would pluck the heads of all the king's subjects to cover that of the king."⁴⁹ There is a certain irony in the fact that the reviled other, unfit to touch the foot of the king, might in fact sit, albeit in a transmuted state, upon his head. The social solidarity upon which the wig seems to insist is contradicted by the material origins of the object. If the wearing of a certain style of wig definitively marks one's social rank, nation, or sex, such markers exist only by virtue of the depilation of the heads of *other* ranks, *other* nations, and another sex. The plural social origins of the material object erode the singular class identity the wig ostensibly proclaims. At times as many as ten heads of hair were required to make a single wig. Dishonest hair merchants eked out their supply of new hair with "old hair, which perhaps have been upon twenty different people's heads, either as old braids, [or] men's old false tails" (Stewart, 303).

It was not, however, the social but the national origins of hair that concerned economic writers in the eighteenth century. The prevalence of the fashion meant that hair and wigs became significant objects in the balance of trade. Thus François Alexandre de Garsault notes that Colbert sought to abolish the wig on the grounds that the large quantities of hair imported into the country created a trade deficit, relenting only when the perukemakers proved that the wigs exported counterbalanced any seeming losses.⁵⁰ In the 1730s in Britain, a series of tracts addresses the economic and social consequences of the trade deficit created by the international market in hair. Tract writers insist that British hair must be raised and tended like any other national product: the frequent use of hair “of *French* growth” arises from national “Negligence in the Cultivation of *British* Human-Hair.”⁵¹ One writer advocates “adding to the Duty on Foreign Human-Hair” in order to increase “the Value of *British* Human-Hair.” The money kept within the kingdom might then be “expended in Commodities of our own Produce,” thereby aiding “the Recovery of our Foreign Trade.”⁵²

British human hair is in competition not only with continental human hair but also with hair culled from animals (usually goats). The use of brute hair has implications for the entire economy. As one writer observes,

According to common Computation, the Number of Subjects in *Great Britain* and *Ireland* amount to Ten Millions; allowing every twentieth Person to sell their Hair annually at an increased price of only One Shilling, it will add to the common Market 25000 *l.* a Year, most of which would be converted into Linen and other Commodities, the Product of our Fellow-Subjects Labours. (*Some Considerations*, 3)

The language of the passage neatly changes hair from the by-product of “every twentieth Person” to a certain price, to a collective sum (£25,000) that is immediately converted “into Linen and other Commodities.” The transformation of hair into money in this passage sounds like an easy process, but in fact it is difficult to assign a price to an object valued for heterogeneous properties, such as color, curl, length, thickness, and weight. “There is no certain price for hair,” James Stewart notes in his 1782 *Plo-cacosmos*, “but it is sold from five shillings to five pounds per ounce, according to its quality.”⁵³

If the wig as a finished product affirms its wearer’s autonomy, the market in hair reminds us of the proprietary rights of another class of people. The writers do not of course acknowledge the individual’s relation to the

hair reaped for the market; to do so would be tantamount to meditating on the sheep's sentiments about shearing. They do, however, affirm that the individual possesses property rights over the body and its by-products—not least when they decry the practice of some hair hunters who hack off the hair before negotiating a price. Above all, the tracts are concerned that the use of brute hair will erode the value of human hair: “The People are universally hurt, who heretofore had Reason to consider their Hair as much a Part of their Estate, as the Wool upon their Sheep, but since the Use of Brute-Hair has been so prevalent, the former has been of little value” (*Some Considerations*, 1). That the people's hair is considered a “Part of their Estate” and thus comparable to the fleece of their sheep suggests a relation to the body as an income-producing entity, whose parts as commodities are subject to the vagaries of the market.⁵⁴

The wig's status as a commodity is, however, but one stage in its “life history,” in what the anthropologist Igor Kopytoff has called the “cultural biography” of a thing.⁵⁵ Hair is bought and sold as a commodity, and as a wig it also becomes absorbed in the life and body of the individual. It blurs the distinction between the ostensibly inalienable person and his or her alienable possessions. Like cloth and clothing, wigs take on the shape of their wearers. The wig both receives us and, quite literally, *is* us.⁵⁶ Wigs and hair, like the rest of the body, are “dressed.” The absorption of wig into self (and vice versa) complicates the way we think about the wig as a commodity and about the person as an individual, returning us to the questions posed by Prynne at the beginning of this essay. In what sense is purchased hair one's own? What will guarantee that the identity proclaimed by the wig is that possessed by the wearer?

Professed Identities

For most of the eighteenth century, the wig is an immediately legible sign of rank and occupation. “All conditions of men,” the hairdresser James Stewart notes, “were distinguished by the cut of the wig” (204). The wig is thus not an expression of individuality in the modern sense; indeed, it is meant to erase distinctions between men. On these terms, the wig should be seen as a vestige of an earlier sartorial regime, described by Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, in which objects like clothing confer social identity rather than express the idiosyncratic personality of the

wearer. From the Renaissance until the early eighteenth century, Stallybrass and Jones argue, identities were known and acquired through livery, through costume, and through worn signs like wigs: "It was investiture, the putting on of clothes, that quite literally constituted a person as a monarch or a freeman of a guild or a household servant. [It was] . . . the means by which a person was given a form, a shape, a social function, a 'depth.'"⁵⁷ One does not read through the wig to the person beneath; the wig itself suffices to designate one's station in life. It is for this reason that John Ireland repeatedly uses wig styles to resolve debates about the identities of figures in Hogarth's paintings: "The artist," he notes of one controversial character, "intended to delineate a lawyer, [as] is clearly intimated by his old, uncurled tie-wig, and the baize bag. We cannot mistake these obtrusive ensigns of the CRAFT, or MYSTERY, or PROFESSION, of which this hoary villain is a member" (1:29).

As the wig ossified into a conventional sign, however, its legibility, and the ease with which it could be taken on and off, led to anxiety that outsiders would appropriate these signs and impersonate members of other groups. In the course of the eighteenth century, social, economic, and geographic mobility all allow men and women to project alternate identities: "In large and populous cities," Bernard Mandeville notes, "where obscure men may hourly meet with fifty Strangers to one Acquaintance," clothes and other accoutrements allow people to be "esteem'd, by a vast Majority, not as what they are, but what they appear to be."⁵⁸ Wigs and other removable items of dress render personal appearance changeable. Such shifts in the nature of one's possessions coincide with a reappraisal of the way property expressed personality. As J. G. A. Pocock has influentially argued, the emergence of new types of financial institutions and instruments (the stock market, the national debt) generated a model of political personality founded not in the solidity of "real" property—the aristocrat whose title is grounded in his estate—but in the intangible powers bestowed by credit and guaranteed by rights. As Pocock puts it, "Once property was seen to have a symbolic value, expressed in coin or in credit, the foundations of personality themselves appeared imaginary or at best consensual: the individual could exist . . . only at the fluctuating value imposed upon him by his fellows."⁵⁹ Rather than conferring identity, wigs are increasingly seen as the means and by-product of self-fashioning directed at the appraising eyes of others. Wigs call into question the existence of the person hidden beneath—the potentially duplicitous "deep" entity capable of manipulating

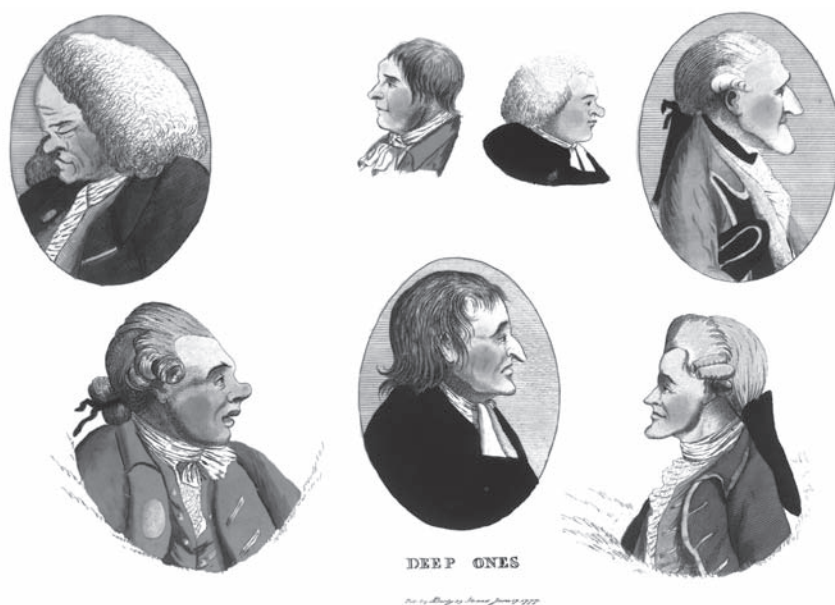


Figure 8. "Deep Ones," from *Daryl's Comic Prints of Characters, Caricatures, Macaronies, &c.* (1776-79). Courtesy of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection, the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library, HEW 14.10.8F

surface attributes. And yet the notion of such "depth" may come to seem a matter of surface representation (figure 8).

Although the wig originally stood for a particular profession, rank, or character, the hairdresser David Ritchie observes in 1770: "These signs, by the circulation of men and things, occasioned by commerce, or the transmigration of people, and the settling of the colonies, [have been] . . . confounded in many respects, and [have] obliterated those delineations of character transmitted by the ancients" (2). The proliferation of wig styles, each with its own meaning, is astonishing; there were over 200 names for different kinds of wigs. Wealthy men often owned several, changing them in much the same way as clothing. The incredibly popular satirical "lectures" offered in the 1760s and 1780s by George Alexander Stevens and Edward Beetham used wooden heads and interchangeable props like wigs and hats to alter the character of the individual about whom they discoursed.⁶⁰ Whereas in earlier treatises, the wig confirms a preestablished social identity, by midcentury, it becomes a means of producing it. The eighteenth-century individual, as Jones and Stallybrass put it, exists "prior

to his or her wardrobe. . . . Standing at the end of the livery system," he or she "is intensely aware of the materials that construct the self either as subject or individual" (276).

The fact that the wig (and what it stands for) can be assumed and shucked off at will implies the existence of an intentional "deep" subject residing behind these shifting layers and surfaces. Although the writers of the wig tracts appeal to the notion of a "self" inhabiting a body in parts and layers in order to anchor the individual, they also contemplate the possibility that there is nothing beneath the inflated sartorial expressions of the wig. "No man," R. Campbell writes in his 1747 *London Tradesman*,

is ignorant that a Taylor is the Person that makes our Cloaths; to some he not only makes their Dress, but, in some measure, may be said to make themselves. There are Numbers of Beings in and about this Metropolis who have no other identical Existence than what the Taylor, Milliner, and Perriwig-Maker bestow upon them: strip them of these Distinctions, and they are quite a different Species of Beings; have no more Relation to their dressed selves, than they have to the Great *Mogul*, and are as insignificant in Society as Punch, deprived of his moving Wires, and hung up upon a Peg.⁶¹

Without the outer carapace of dress, Campbell's marionette-men collapse into a shapeless heap; the only personality and social identity they possess is conferred by their clothes. The individual is constituted and even animated by his clothing. The question posed in figure 9—to wig or not to wig—transforms Hamlet's deliberations on suicide—to be or not to be—into a sartorial debate, suggesting that fashionable adornment confers social being.

Since the detachable signs of rank and profession can be bought by any and all who can afford them, they reflect neither merit nor the fixity of social hierarchy. One can own an exterior sign without possessing the interior trait. Not just anyone has the qualifications of a doctor, but any person with sufficient cash can buy a physician's wig. If wigs offer the possibility of masquerade, they also occasion inquiry into the ways identity arises from surface markings. "Who," Jacques Dulaure asks in his 1786 *Pogonologia, or a Philosophical and Historical Essay on Beards*, "in this enlightened age, would put the least confidence in a physician who wears his own hair, were it the finest in the world? . . . Strip a physician of his wig, gold headed cane, ruffles, and diamond ring: what will he have left?"⁶² The satiric use

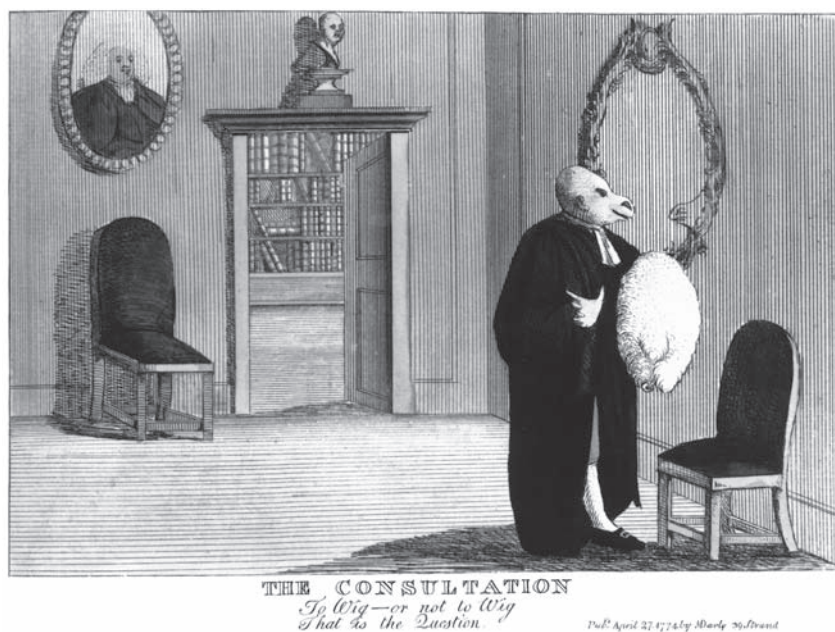


Figure 9. "To Wig or Not to Wig?," from *Darley's Comic Prints of Characters, Caricatures, Macaronies, &c.* (1776–79). Courtesy of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection, the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library, HEW 14.10.8F

of the wig as a synecdoche for the individual or an entire class of people (particularly doctors, lawyers, judges) suggests the ways the sign could be turned against those who sought to employ it.⁶³ "The largeness of the doctor's wig," Oliver Goldsmith caustically observes, "arises from the same pride with the smallness of the beau's queue. Both want to have the size of their understanding measured by the size of their heads."⁶⁴ "A HEAD," George Alexander Stevens quips in his *Lecture on Heads*, "is a mere bulbous excrescence, growing out from between the shoulders like a wen . . . to fill up the hollow of a wig" (3). Jests about the emptiness of heads covered with wigs abound. It is not just that the wig may be a *misrepresentation*, but also that nothing is there to be misrepresented. As Barbara Maria Stafford puts it, "What was new to the eighteenth-century experience—as codes of polite behavior spread to broader and lower strata of society—was the frightening possibility that nothing stood behind decorum. No gold standard guaranteed inflated or deflated currency; no original preexisted

the copy; no durable skeleton shored up the frail anatomy."⁶⁵ Fashionable accoutrements help project a self that may or may not exist.

The problem for fashion, however, is not so much that "no original preexisted the copy," but that the copies exist along with the original. For if the want of a "gold standard" permits endless permutation, it also necessitates it. Changing styles are driven by the desire to recreate difference, to escape the copycat. As *The World* put it in 1755:

A kind of perpetual warfare between the *good* and *bad company* in this country, hath subsisted for half a century last past, in which the former have been perpetually pursued by the latter, and fairly beaten out of all their resources for superior distinction; out of innumerable fashions in dress, and variety of diversions, every one of which they have been obliged to abandon, as soon as occupied by their impertinent rivals. In vain have they armed themselves with lace and embroidery, and intrenched themselves in hoops and furbelows; in vain have they had recourse to full-bottomed perriwigs and toupees; to high heads and low heads, and no heads at all: trade has bestowed riches on their competitors, and riches have procured them equal finery. Hair has curled as genteelly on one side of Temple Bar, as on the other.⁶⁶

That money enables the middle classes to purchase the trappings of rank is an eighteenth-century commonplace, but here the "good" company as well as the "bad" are trapped in a cycle of desperate consumerism. Hoops and lace become arms in class warfare, as the upper ranks retrench in an effort to differentiate themselves from encroaching lower-class rivals. Fashion changes for no reason but variety, spurred on by the need to modify the trappings of the self: "high heads and low heads and no heads at all." But exterior markers of identity are ephemeral grounds for marking "real" difference, as the hair curls "as genteelly on one side of Temple Bar as on the other." Since the merit of fashion stems from difference, no fashion possesses innate value. The endless transformation of styles allows sartorial codes to extend beyond a fixed relation of sign to meaning. Nothing tethers people to their possessions.

The reversibility of values (the low head that is unfashionable this week may become all the crack next week) means that wig styles, like other modes, do not always trickle down from the top; indeed, eighteenth-century observers complain of the reverse. French visitors to England repeatedly observe that British aristocrats adopt the low dress of their social inferiors.

"At Paris the Valets de Chambre, and Ladies-women are frequently the apes of their masters and mistresses in dress," the Abbé Le Blanc writes in 1745. "At London 'tis just the reverse: masters dress like their valets, and dutchesses copy after their chamber-maids."⁶⁷ The poet Soame Jenyns in 1756 complains that "our very footmen are adorned with gold and silver, toupees and ruffles. . . . Meanwhile, we debase ourselves by a ridiculous imitation of their dresses" (Cunnington, 18). The carnivalesque social inversion Jenyns describes is not the lower seeking the high, but also the high courting the novelty of the low until the two blend together. Not only the hair itself but the style of wearing it may come from the people. Bob wigs, for example, initially the sole province of the middle classes, rose gradually on the social scale, until they were worn by all ranks. Far from trickling down from the aristocracy, wig wearing was shaped from below.

By the 1760s, the wig was already declining in popularity, particularly among young men or those with hair of their own beneath the wigs. Although the wig still speaks, its message is garbled and increasingly unreliable. In 1765 the wigmakers petitioned George III, "setting forth the distresses of themselves, and an incredible number of others dependant upon them from the almost universal decline of the trade, occasioned by the present mode of men in all stations wearing their own hair."⁶⁸ Since many of them were not themselves wearing wigs, the mob seized the barbers "and forcibly denuded [them] of their natural hair."⁶⁹ The request that the king enforce wig wearing by law prompted the "body Carpenters" to issue a mock petition "ludicrously framed" to implore "his majesty to wear a wooden leg himself, and to enjoin all his servants to appear in the royal presence with the same badge of honour."⁷⁰

The fact that the wig vanishes is often associated with an augmented interest in "natural" styles associated with the popularity of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.⁷¹ Some of the terms we saw in the Puritan debates return, with reference not to God, but to nature. "Can any thing look more respectable in the human species than man?" one wigmaker asks in 1767. "If not, this custom of wiggng folks is very ill-suited to aggrandize the appearance of the human figure."⁷² This interest in natural appearances is in turn correlated with a historical trend towards ever-greater self-expression. In May 1767 one Syllas Neville notes in his journal, "Had my hair clipped off for the last time, being resolved to let it grow, as it is much more natural and agreeable than a wig, except in some extraordinary cases."⁷³ Such remarks should not, however, be understood as a proto-Romantic sign of individu-

ality, since contemporaries remark on the almost universal abandonment of the wig. It is a phenomenon that transcended individual choice and even class. "A disorder in the head, which could not support the violent heat of periwigs," the *Town and Country Magazine* for 1769 announces, "seems universally to have prevailed from the magistrate upon the bench to the link-boy in the street; so that a few straggling hairs, dressed *à l'aile de pigeon*, *à la grec*, or in a club or a bag, are to be met with either at the chocolate-house at St. James's, or the soup-cellar in St. Giles's" (1:61).

The ascendancy of more "natural" modes (people wearing their hair unpowdered, people wearing their own hair) is often understood to be part of the triumph of middle-class ideology—what J. C. Flügel famously called "the great masculine renunciation" of sartorial excess.⁷⁴ Towards the end of the century, the argument goes, refined and subtle taste, cut rather than color, become masculine modes of self-distinction. Rational, sober clothing represents the diligent and modest work ethic of economic man, while the flamboyant aristocrat flaunts his leisure through high-maintenance outfits. And yet, for an interval at least, a single article of clothing may carry contradictory meanings. Seen as part of the spectacular sumptuary display of the aristocracy, the wigs are signs of aristocratic idleness; viewed as part of the sober uniform of respectable men, wigs represent the industry and rectitude of the rising middle classes. If wigs fluctuate in meaning, however, so too do the social, economic, and gender categories that they are asked to represent.

Recent scholarship has challenged the narrative of masculine renunciation, seeking to explain changes in fashion by examining the struggles between the aristocracy and the middling sort to appropriate the signs of male civic virtue. Modesty of dress, David Kuchta claims, revealed republican virtue and a rejection of the luxurious excess indulged in by aristocrats and merchants alike. "Spurning the materiality and seeming effeminacy of fine fabrics made a gentleman's values less susceptible to being purchased by upstarts," Kuchta contends. "Fashionability meant following the crowds, submitting to the ruling passion."⁷⁵ The kind of anxiety about the conflation of the sexes visible in the seventeenth-century Puritan treatises thus resurfaces in the 1770s around the figure of the macaroni, whose excessive preoccupation with adornment is regarded as effeminate, even degenerated (figures 10 and 11).⁷⁶ The excessive interest shown by the macaroni in fashion is seen to erode British autonomy. Attention to personal adornment is perceived not as a productive investment in the self, but as an unproduc-



THE FLUTTERING MACARONI

Say little, foolish, fluttering, thing, &c.

Published as the Act directs Nov 17 1774 by M. Darby, 30, Strand.

Figure 10. "The Fluttering Macaroni," from *Darby's Comic Prints of Characters, Caricatures, Macaronies, &c.* (1776–79). Courtesy of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection, the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library, HEW 14.10.8F



THE COVENT GARDEN MACARONIES.

Pub by Marry Street Feb 24th 1779 near G. do.

Figure 11. "Covent-Garden Macaronies," from *Darby's Comic Prints of Characters, Caricatures, Macaronies, &c.* (1776–79). Courtesy of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection, the Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library, HEW 14.10.8F

tive expenditure upon it. Interest in one's surface implies a lack of interest in one's depths. The late-century beau is so preoccupied with personal adornment that he sees only himself. Thus the 1775 *Matrimonial Magazine* print of "A Bath Adonis Worshipping the Idol of His Affections" features a solipsistic young dandy transfixed before a mirror. "Our modern monkey of manhood," the magazine expounds, "is by name a soldier; but never felt any ball, but a wash ball; nor ever smelt any powder; but hair-powder; who never saw any service, but that of the table and the toilet."⁷⁷ Because such men "created themselves as spectacles of commodities rather than, for example, spectacles of heroic and sympathetic imperial masculinity," Miles Ogborn argues, these "monkies of manhood" conflate the distinction between thing owned and owner, between the worn object and the wearer.⁷⁸ Both the objects one consumes and the act of buying alter the person. As the *Macaroni Jester* succinctly puts it, "manhood is a thing unbought."⁷⁹

The accusations of effeminacy leveled against macaronis in particular, and men of fashion in general, were based less on the elision of gender categories than on matters of political, national, and moral economy. Thus in 1767 an "English Periwig-maker" explicitly condemns the docile subjection of the British to French modes: "Suppose it was the mode at Paris to wear a pair of ram's horns, must I believe that the human figure is beautified by such a mode? . . . As an Englishman of common sense, I have a right to reject modes where nature, ease, and gracefulness, is [*sic*] not duly attended to" (*Dissertation*, 17, 15). Mercurial fashions subject the sartorially inclined to a fluctuating market in outward appearances, eroding their autonomy. Fashionable adornment suggests a sheep-like devotion to the vicissitudes of modes set by others, particularly the French.⁸⁰

These questions of autonomy and personal liberty have different meanings for men of different ranks. The elite choose to follow the fashions; others may not do so. The macaroni's headdress, worn presumably by choice, and the footman's wig, imposed as part of his uniform, mean different things. Thus in Peter Pindar's 1785 mock epic, *The Lousiad*, George III's discovery of a louse in his dinner prompts him to order his cooks to shave their heads: "Cooks, scourers, scullions too, with tails of pig, / Shall lose their coxcomb curls, and wear a wig."⁸¹ The order incites insurrection in the kitchens. "Dread sir!" the cooks protest, "We really deem our heads our own, / With ev'ry sprig of hair that on them springs" (II, 654–55). The wives of the cooks accuse the king of usurping the individual's power over his own body: "Yours is the hair," they inform their husbands, "th'Almighty gave ye, /

And not a king in Christendom should shave ye" (II, 766–67). The self-possession of the cooks extends to the numbered hairs on their heads; the command to shave infringes the liberties of all Britons: "In France, where men like spaniels lick the throne, . . . *their* locks belong unto the *Grand Monarque*," but in England, all heads and hairs are free (II, 656, 658). Indeed, the cooks observe that lice are democratic in their choice of home; the louse may well have come from the king's own head. "Let him who *owns* the crawler lose his locks" (II, 677), the cooks suggest in a moment of *lèse-majesté* that verges on revolutionary. The wig as a signifier of rank imposed from the outside becomes an intolerable encroachment on the right to choose one's mode of self-fashioning. The wig increasingly serves as a symbol of an earlier social order that has been or will be supplanted.

Thus the wig's aristocratic associations lead to its decline during the French Revolution. Indeed, a 1790 tract addressed to the French National Assembly contends, perhaps with some exaggeration, that the wigmakers are "une des classes de Citoyens qui a le plus perdu . . . à la révolution."⁸² The wig, Revolutionary writers claim, eliding wig with aristocratic wearer, simply got too big: "L'élévation est donc toujours le présage de la chute. . . . Trop enflée de sa rapide fortune, la perruque perdit la tête."⁸³ The thing supplants the person as the wig becomes anthropomorphized. The wig's detachability allows for the sign of aristocracy to be discarded without loss of the head beneath. As one writer jubilantly proclaims, "Partout est proclamée la liberté des têtes" (De Guerle, 15–16).

Wig wearing in England would survive the French Revolution, only to receive its final blow with Pitt's 1795 guinea tax on hair powder. The bill passed despite objections regarding the uncertain revenues to be collected from such a tax. As Fox observed, objects like hair powder that depended upon fashion "could never be considered as a source of permanent revenue. . . . A fashion of long duration has indeed been said to be a kind of second nature; but have not fashions of the most established custom varied? . . . How far was it prudent to reckon a receipt of 200,000/ and upwards per year from such an unsure resource?"⁸⁴ Fox's notion that fashionable accoutrements are a kind of optional extra is rejected by Henry MacKenzie, writing under the pen name Brutus. Taxes, MacKenzie contends, may impinge on the liberties of citizens, with pernicious side effects for the nation as a whole. Acceptance of the current mode is, he argues, a sign of "a good citizen," since to defy fashion is "to expose myself to contempt and ridicule, by making myself singular, and setting example at

defiance." To make oneself "singular" is to set oneself against the whole in an act of sartorial rebellion. We are all governed "by an indispensable obligation, as well as duty, of submitting to the rules and customs of that community, of which we are component members."⁸⁵ We know that we belong to a community because we submit to certain customs; that such customs are sometimes absurd is less important than that the individual follows the whole of which the custom is a "component" part. Those who fail to wear wigs tamper with the social, not with the divine, but the consequences are potentially equally devastating.

As a naked attempt to raise revenue, the tax is construed as an encroachment on the liberties of Englishmen and, indirectly, as a restoration of sumptuary laws. The government, one barrister notes, wishes to glean revenues from "the obligation of purchasing or paying in future for the right of doing an action, which social nature before enabled every person indifferently to do."⁸⁶ The government is thus adding a surcharge on the prerogative of individuals to express their personality through their possessions. Yet the barrister contends that the tax can only be imposed upon those who are already self-possessed individuals: the legal status of married women under coverture and infants, he argues, exempts them from the tax. One cannot lay a tax on the personal property of those who do not have control over themselves.

The tax on hair powder finds support by those concerned about the impoverished, since the powder is often composed of flour, needed for bread. "Suppose, for example, every individual wearing this superfluous ornament, instead of wearing it, were to distribute its real value to the hungry poor, and put the superfluous price which he pays for this spoiling of this flour into his pocket," John Thelwall proclaims in his political newspaper *The Tribune*: "Let me ask if he might not find plenty of indigent individuals, by relieving whom he could purchase for himself a more noble satisfaction than this paltry superfluity can afford?"⁸⁷ Wearing powdered hair, John Donaldson contends in his 1795 *Letter to Pitt on the use of hair powder*, is an obscenely wasteful practice, and reveals the hypocrisy of clergymen and politicians:

What clergyman can publicly pray for daily bread, and a blessing on the fruits of the earth, when the powder on his head, exhibits a disregard to the desire of our Saviour, who after he fed the multitude, commanded the fragments to be gathered up, that nothing might be lost? . . . And how absurd and sinful would it be in overseers of the poor, and others, who

make collections for their relief, to use hair powder, when it raises the price of bread, and deprives the people of Great Britain of more than thirty millions of quartern loaves annually.⁸⁸

Donaldson provides extensive calculations that transmute the quantity of powder used on an individual head into loaves of bread, conjoining a single act of self-adornment to the starvation of the masses. Rather than functioning as a sign of prestige, hair powder becomes a sign of callous indifference to the nation's poor.

Whereas Donaldson supports the tax because flour was necessary for people's subsistence, Peter Pindar opposes it on the grounds that such taxes allow the government to devour its own people. Pindar proffers his own modest proposal for an alternate tax. Pitt should tax more indispensable but potentially profitable items:

Say, what the tax thy brain will next provide?
 Alas, why not attack the human hide?
 Lord, Lord! how much it must the nation aid!
 Folks may be *scalp'd* with safety—why not *flay'd*?

 Think of the spatterdashes, boots and shoes
 And think thou of the *millions* people use:
 Such, form'd from human hides, would brave the weather,
 And save *such* quantities of foreign leather."⁸⁹

If wigs involve the commoditization of the body in the sale in hair, taxation is a metaphorical excising of a pound of flesh. Pindar's domino theory of taxation moves from hair powder, to hair, to scalp, to human hide. Flesh becomes worn leather, as owner and owned swap places with dazzling fluidity: the wearer (the person who has skin) is transmuted into the object worn ("spatterdashes, boots and shoes"). Under the guise of mercantilism, Pitt converts the nation into goods bought and sold.

However profitable Pindar's tax on hides might have been, the tax on hair powder brought in the not inconsiderable sum of £210,000 in its first year, earning the nickname of "guinea pig" for those who paid the guinea tax.⁹⁰ But by the spring of 1795, Fox's contention that few would pay for a dispensable vanity proved true. *The Times* reported on the formation of the Crop Club, "every member of which is obliged to have his head cropped to evade the tax on powdered heads. . . . The new crop is called the Bedford level," named for the Duke of Bedford, the first to stop using hair powder

in protest against Pitt (Woodforde, 57–58). Certain groups—clergy earning under £100 per annum, the royal family and its household, the army and the magistrates—were exempted from the tax, which perhaps explains the persistence of wig wearing among select members of the population.⁹¹ During the flour famine in 1800, for instance, it was estimated that the quarter million men in the military used one pound of flour a week per head (Piper, 145). From asserting the authority of English masculinity, the wig became the relatively arcane sign of specialized professions: servants of nobles, clergy, and judges.⁹² By the mid-nineteenth century, wigs were hawked in street markets for sixpence apiece: the buyer fished into a barrel and kept whatever came to hand. The wigs that once crowned the heads of kings and commoners alike were reduced to the humblest of household tasks as dustmops or polishing rags—a lesson in the vanity of worldly things that doubtless would have pleased Prynne (Corson, 265).

Conclusion

As a powerful token of masculine identity, the eighteenth-century wig betrays the paradoxical power of worn objects to constitute social and even personal identities. As a proclamation of rank, nation, gender, occupation, the wig defines the identity of its wearer. Yet the wig's mobility undermines the relation between wig and wearer, between what the object ostensibly signifies and the qualities of its owner. The burgeoning capitalist marketplace requires subjects who are not constituted through their objects; the expansion of political enfranchisement and increased social mobility require that status not be locked in place by livery, by titles, by possessions. Yet the wig proclaims that the doctor and the judge rely upon such signs to confer identity upon them. If Pitt's hair-powder tax ultimately puts an end to wig wearing, it is not only because individuals were unwilling to pay the guinea; it also because the legislation makes the decision to wear powder into a declaration of one's unwillingness or inability to give up an object. Wigs come to proclaim one's dependence upon things rather than one's independence from them. They expose the way worn signs produce the identities men are supposed always already to possess as freestanding individuals, anterior to and independent of their possessions. Crudely put, the hair-powder tax obliges men to renounce the wig in order to show that it is not constitutive of their identities. In exposing the way assertions of iden-

tity depend upon what one wears—as well as what one does not wear—the wig attests to the fragility of the very self-sufficiency it was once meant to proclaim. It ceases to be a sign of the autonomy, and becomes instead a humbling intimation that we may be possessed as much by things as things are possessed by us.

Notes

For their comments and suggestions, I wish to thank Peter Stallybrass, Juliette Cherbuliez, and Rayna Kalas.

1. William Prynne, *The Unloveliness of Lovelocks* (London, 1628), 21.
2. See also Sir John Harington's "Epigram 66: Of Galla's Goodly Petiwigge" [based on Martial], from *The Most Elegant and Witty Epigrams of Sir John Harington* (London: by G. P. for John Budge, 1618): "You see the goodly hayre that *Galla* weares, / 'Tis certain her own hair, who would haue thought it / She sweares it is her owne; and true she sweares: / For hard by Temple-barre last day she bought it" (F3–5V).
3. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), 3. For critiques of Macpherson, see *Democracy and Possessive Individualism: The Intellectual Legacy of C. B. Macpherson*, ed. Joseph Carens (Albany: SUNY, 1993) and *Powers, Possessions and Freedom: Essays in Honour of C. B. Macpherson*, ed. Alkis Kontos (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto, 1979).
4. On the universality of wig wearing, see David Piper, *The English Face* (1957; rep. London: National Portrait Gallery, 1990). On wigs and slaves, see David Waldstreicher, "Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic," *William & Mary Quarterly* 56 (1999): 254.
5. Pehr Kalm, *Kalm's Account of his Visit to England on his way to America in 1748*, trans. Joseph Lucas (London: Macmillan, 1892), 52.
6. On wig prices, see John Woodforde, *The Strange Story of False Hair* (London: Routledge, 1971), 48–49. On the apprentices, see Richard Corson, *Fashions in Hair: The First Five Thousand Years* (New York: Hastings House, 1965), 267.
7. See the confession of John Mulliner, barber and wigmaker of Northampton, in his *Testimony against Periwigs and Periwig-Making* [1677] (London, 1708).
8. Richard Graves, *The Spiritual Quixote, or the Summer's Ramble of Mr. Geoffrey Wildgoose*, 3 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1773), 1:187.
9. Friedrich Nicolai, *Recherches historiques sur l'usage des cheveux postiches et des perruques, dans les temps anciens et modernes*, trans. Jansen (Paris: Léopold Collin, 1809), 145.
10. Woodforde, *Strange Story*, 16. *Binette* is still a jocular French word for a head as in "quelle binette!" or "What a face." See David Ritchie, *A Treatise on the Hair* (London: printed for the author, 1770), 46.

11. Woodforde, *Strange Story*, 16.
12. Peter Gilchrist, *Treatise on the Hair* (London, 1770), 7.
13. Intriguingly, there are few references to health in the vindications of wig wearing. An edict of Louis XIV notes that "l'usage des Perruques . . . ne contribuant moins à l'ornement de l'Homme, qu'à sa santé," which justifies the establishment of a guild. See *Edit du Roy, donné à Versailles au mois de Janvier 1706* (Grenoble: Alexandre Giroud, 1706), 1. The rhetoric of disease is far more commonly employed in *condemning* wigs: "This Epidemical fashion or disease of wearing Artificial hair." See *Coma Berenices; or, The Hairy Comet* (London: Jonathan Robinson and John Hancock, 1676), 22.
14. Entry of 9 May 1663, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1970–84), 4:130.
15. Diana de Marly, *Fashion for Men: An Illustrated History* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), 63.
16. Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (New York: Virago, 1985), 49.
17. Susanna Centlivre, *The Gamester* (London: W. Turner, 1705), I.i.284. The time spent in dressing hair, the *Lady's Magazine* 20 (April 1789) observes, "has been very serviceable to reading. Look at the popular books of a circulating library, and you will find the binding cracked by quantities of powder and pomatum between the leaves" (177). The *Monthly Review* 35 (November 1766) compares the novel's frivolity to that of the wig: "Pretty tittle tattle for the amusement of Miss Polly, while *Monsieur* is preparing her Parisian wig, and quite as proper furniture for the inside as that is for the outside of her head" (407). Both passages quoted by John Tinnon Taylor in *Early Opposition to the English Novel: The Popular Reaction from 1760 to 1830* (New York: King's Crown, 1943), 8.
18. An English Periwig-maker, *A Dissertation upon Head Dress* (London: J. Williams, C. Moran, and Edward Macklew, 1767), 39.
19. Cited by C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington in *Handbook of English Costume in the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Dufour, 1957), 28. John Donaldson, in *Letter to . . . Pitt on the Use of Hair-Powder*, 2nd edn. (London: T. Cadell, 1795), notes that the quantity of flour used in powdering the hair attracts rodents, and recounts the story of a female rat giving birth in a young lady's headdress during the night (16).
20. Wig theft was a lucrative trade: "Nor is thy flaxen wigg with safety worn; / High on the shoulder, in a basket born, / Lurks the sly boy; whose hand to rapine bred, / Plucks off the curling honours of thy head." From John Gay, *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London* [1727] in *The Poetical Works of John Gay*, ed. G. C. Faber (London: Oxford Univ., 1926), 79.
21. Lady Louisa Stuart, Letter to Lady Caroline Dawson, Countess of Portarlington, May 1785, in *Gleanings from an Old Portfolio*, ed. Alice Georgina Carolina Strong Clark, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: privately published, 1895), 2:23–24.
22. Horace Walpole, Letter to Mann, 4 January 1745, from *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1937–83), 18:561.

23. Frances Burney, *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* [1782], 5 vols. (London: T. Payne and T. Cadell, 1783), 2:222–23.
24. John Ireland, *Hogarth Illustrated*, 3 vols. (London: J. and J. Boydell, 1793), 2:165–66n.
25. Woodforde, *Strange Story*, 16; Corson, *Fashions in Hair*, 223.
26. See *Gentleman's Magazine* 20 (May 1750): 234. Brute hair appears to have passed easily for human hair. See *Subjects of Enquiry relative to the Barbers petition: Eleven queries about the making of perukes, particularly about those made of brute-hair* ([London?], ca. 1730), 1.
27. See Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), 85–100.
28. *Gentleman's Magazine* 6 (July 1736): 378. Yet the erasure of such differences does not incite unequivocal jubilation. “Though every body has a different taste,” Lady Anne Wortley writes to Mary Wortley Montagu in 1710, “yet all pursue money, which makes people choose great wigs because their neighbour sinks under them, and they dare not be out of the fashion.” See *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Lord Wharncliffe, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1837), 1:154, and Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1993).
29. Prynne, *Unloveliness of Lovelocks*, 16. Prynne’s interdiction on “correction” extends only to those types of labor that erode gender distinctions; acts that are necessary to uphold the visible distinctions of the sexes (men polling their hair, for example) are not considered renovations but upkeep. Since there is no material difference between male and female hair, the tract writers are obliged to assign a gender to hair in terms of its style: by the way it is cut, by the way it is dressed, and above all, by its length. Because hair is not naturally one length in men or in women, efforts to naturalize sexual difference via hair length wind up exposing the vulnerability of cultural distinctions based on changeable bodily traits.
30. Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Histoire des perruques où l’on fait voir leur origine, leur usage, leur forme* (Paris: au dépens de l’auteur, 1690).
31. Richard Richardson, *A Declaration against Wigs or Periwigs* (London, 1682), 3.
32. Thomas Hall, *Comarum: The Loathsomnesse of Long Haare: or, A Treatise wherein you have the Question stated, . . . With an Appendix against Painting, Spots, Naked Breasts, &c* (London: Nathanael Webb and William Grantham, 1654), 25, 26.
33. “And truly,” T. H., in *A Looking-glasse for Women, or A Spie for Pride* (London: for R. W., 1644), states, “those godly women that do use this outward adorning of laying forth the hair, a man can hardly know them from the women of the world” (2).
34. *Looking-glasse for Women*, 6. For the Quaker John Mulliner, barber and wigmaker of Northampton, even the labor of producing the wig was problematic. His anguished testimony in his 1677 account of his conversion to Quakerism acknowledges the fantastic power of things to hold sway over the soul. Both the quiet censure of his Quaker friends and his own conscience lead the wigmaker to see the outward manufacture of such vanities as a sign of his own sinful interior, as if the making of wigs makes him into a taker of souls. See Mulliner, *Testimony against Periwig*, 1.

35. Prynne, *Unloveliness of Lovelocks*, 17. In this eighteenth-century version of "asking for it," the fault lies with the object of the gaze, not with the gazer: "To be excessively carefull about the haire and the skinne, and those parts that draw the eyes; this is *crimen prostitutionis*, the sinne of the prostituted whore." Hall, *Comarum*, 109.

36. Richard Richardson, *Declaration against Wigs*, 4. A version of this poem, "Metamorphoses," is also included in Charles Leslie's *Theological Works of the Reverend Mr. Charles Leslie*, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1832), 7:466.

37. As Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), puts it, "'Becoming' a gender is a laborious process of becoming *naturalized*, which requires a differentiation of bodily pleasures and parts on the basis of gendered meanings. Pleasures are said to reside in the penis, the vagina, and the breasts, or to emanate from them, but such descriptions correspond to a body which has already been constructed or naturalized as gender-specific" (70).

38. See Londa Schiebinger, "The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23 (1990): 387–405; *Nature's Body: Gender and the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon, 1993); *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1989); and Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1990).

39. Peter Stallybrass, in "Speculating on the Boy Actor," from *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman (New York: Routledge, 1992), addresses the detachable and the prosthetic as manipulable signs of gender in his fascinating discussion of the undressed boy actor's body in Restoration theater (64–83).

40. Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale Univ., 2004), 42–43.

41. Charlotte Charke, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke*, ed. Robert Rehder (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999), 10. Frances Burney, *Camilla*, ed. Edward A. and Lillian D. Bloom (New York: Oxford Univ., 1983), 18.

42. Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 124–25. An abbreviated form of the chapter entitled "Dangerous Excrescences: Wigs, Hair and Masculinity" appears as "The Case of the Dirty Beau: Symmetry, Disorder and the Politics of Masculinity," in *The Body Imaged: The Human Form and Visual Culture since the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (New York: Cambridge Univ., 1993), 175–89.

43. James Stewart, *Plocacosmos, or the Whole Art of Hair Dressing* (London: for the author, 1782), 172.

44. Pepys, entry of 3 September 1665, *Diary*, 6:210. Stewart, in *Plocacosmos*, notes that the government puts human hair in quarantine "for fear of its bringing the plague, or any other terrible disease" (302).

45. In 1642 the octogenarian Dr. Ralph Kettel of Oxford believed periwigs were "the scalpes of men cutt off after they were hang'd and so tanned and dressed for use." Quoted by Janet Arnold in *Perukes and Periwigs* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), 7. The wig may be, Hall notes in *Comarum*, made of the long hair of "some harlot, who is now in Hell, lamenting there the abuse of that excrement" (15).

46. Sir Hew Dalrymple, *Information for the Hairdressers in Edinburgh against the Incorporation of Barbers*, 2nd edn. (Edinburgh, 1758), 23.
47. Quoted by Maria Jedding-Gesterling in *Hairstyles: A Cultural History of Fashions in Hair from Antiquity up to the Present Day*, ed. Jedding-Gesterling and trans. Peter Alexander and Sarah Williams (Hamburg: H. Schwarzkopf, 1988), 136.
48. See Don Herzog, "The Trouble with Hairdressers," *Representations* 53 (1996): 21–43.
49. "[Il] disait qu'il dépouilleroit les têtes de tous ses sujets pour couvrir celle du souverain." See *Encyclopédie*, 35 vols. [1765], facsimile ed. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann, 1966), 12:401 (q.v., perruque).
50. François Alexandre de Garsault, *The Art of the Wigmaker* [1767], ed. and trans. J. Stephens Cox (London: Hairdressers' Registration Council, 1961), 2.
51. *Some Considerations on the present state of the Hair Trade* ([London?], 1730), 1.
52. *Subjects of Enquiry relative to the Barbers petition, or, Eleven queries about the making of perukes, particularly about those made of brute-hair* ([London?], [1730?]), 1.
53. Stewart, *Plococosmos*, 184. The *Encyclopédie* lists prices ranging from 50 to 80 livres per ounce (12:401, q.v., perruque).
54. In the midst of a dispute over whether marriage constitutes the sale of the woman to her husband, Bernard de Mandeville, in *The Virgin Unmasked* [1724] (London: A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, 1731), has his man-hating maiden aunt tell her niece to "cut off your Head of Hair and I'll give you Five Guineas," to which the astute and market-aware Antonia replies, "Thank you, Aunt, I might have above ten for it, if I would sell it" (8). In 1700, a young girl reportedly received the vast sum of £60 for a head of hair. See Trichocosmos, *Notes . . . on the Hair and Beard* (London: Read, [185–?]), 54–55.
55. Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge Univ., 1986), 64. But Appadurai, in his "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value" to *Social Life of Things*, criticizes the vagueness of Kopytoff's definition of singularity as opposed to classes, noting that "some of the most interesting cases . . . involve the more or less permanent commoditizing of singularities" (17).
56. See Peter Stallybrass, "Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity on the Renaissance Stage," *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 1996), 289–320.
57. Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (New York: Cambridge Univ., 2000), 2.
58. Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (London: J. Roberts, 1714), 103.
59. J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ., 1975), 464. See also Pocock, "The Mobility of Property and the Rise of Eighteenth-Century Sociology," in *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge Univ., 1985), 103–23.

60. See George Alexander Stevens, *A Lecture on Heads* [1764] (London: for G. Kearsley, 1788), and Edward Beetham, *Moral Lectures on Heads* (London: T. Robson, 1780).

61. R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (London: T. Gardner, 1747), 191.

62. Jacques-Antoine Dulaure, *Pogonologia, or a Philosophical and Historical Essay on Beards*, trans. anon. (Exeter: printed by R. Thorn and sold by T. Cadell, 1786), 9, 9n.

63. See for example *The Wig: A Burlesque Satirical Poem* (London: W. Flexner, 1765); the satiric advertisement of Monsieur de la Papillotte in *The London Magazine or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* 22 (August 1753): 380; and Bonnell Thornton, *The Battle of the Wigs, with an additional canto to Dr. Garth's Poem of the Dispensary* (London: J. Lister, 1768), reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 38 (March 1768): 132–33.

64. Oliver Goldsmith, *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, 8 vols. (London: J. Nourse, 1774), 2:100.

65. Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge: MIT, 1993), 86.

66. Adam Fitz-Adam, *The World* no. 125 (22 May 1755), 3 vols. (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1755–56), 3:107. In 1747, Campbell's *London Tradesman* would describe the wigmaker's struggle to keep up with French fashions; he "has his fashions from Paris, like all other Tradesmen, and the nearer he can approach to the Patterns of that fickle tribe, the better Chance he has to succeed with his *English* Customers. . . . The continual Flux and Reflux of Fashions, obliges him to learn something new almost every Day" (204).

67. Abbé Jean Bernard Le Blanc, *Letters on the French and English Nations*, trans. anon., 2 vols. (London: J. Brindley, 1747), 1:18.

68. *The Gentleman's and London Magazine, or Monthly Chronologer* 35 (Dublin: J. Exshaw, 1765): 123. See also Walpole, letter to Hertford, 12 February 1765, 38:509 and the *London Chronicle* 17 (12–14 February 1765): 154.

69. Woodforde, *Strange Story*, 57. See also J. Stevens Cox, "Wig Riot," *An Illustrated Dictionary of Hairdressing and Wigmaking* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational, 1984), 167.

70. *The Gentleman's and London Magazine* 35 (February 1765): 123.

71. Jennifer Jones, "Repackaging Rousseau: Femininity and Fashion in Old Régime France," *French Historical Studies* 18 (1994): 939–67.

72. English Periwig-maker, *Dissertation upon Head Dress*, 8.

73. *Diary of Syllas Neville, 1767–88*, ed. B. Cozens-Hardy (London: Oxford Univ., 1950), 7, cited by de Marly, *Fashion for Men*, 69.

74. J. C. Flügel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (New York: AMS, 1976), 110. Simplification and uniformity of dress, Flügel argues, created social cohesion and set forth the greater respectability of work (112–13, 132–36, 216–21).

75. David Kuchta, "Making of the Self-Made Man: Class, Clothing, and English Masculinity, 1688–1832," in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1996), 64. See also Philip Carter, "An 'Effeminate' or 'Efficient' Nation? Masculinity and Eighteenth-Century Social Documentary," *Textual Practice* 11

(1997): 433. On Francophilia in England and national feeling, see Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740–1830* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987).

76. For examples of the problems of determining “the Thing's sex,” see *Town and Country Magazine* 4 (1772): 243; Ferdinand Twigem, *The Macaroni, A Satire* (London: G. Allen, 1773), 15; *The Connoisseur* 65 (24 April 1755): 389; and Robert Hitchcock, *The Macaroni* (York: A. Ward, 1773), I.i.74–77.

77. *The Matrimonial Magazine, or Monthly Anecdotes of Love and Marriage* 1 (February 1775): 59. The image of Adonis is reproduced between 32 and 33. The passage is also cited by Miles Ogborn in “Luxury, Sexuality and Vision in Vauxhall Gardens,” *Textual Practice* 11 (1997): 453. Twigem, in *Macaroni*, tells his Macaroni butt, “Our valiant fires of old, / By scars and wounds their love-tales always told / But you, unfit for such a glorious race, / To meaner objects give a shameful chase” (15).

78. See Ogborn, “Luxury,” 453. On the gendering of consumption, see Victoria de Grazia, “Introduction,” *Sex of Things*, 11–24.

79. *Macaroni Jester, and the Pantheon of Wit* (London, 1773), 108, cited by Ogborn, “Luxury,” 453.

80. According to John Donaldson, in *Letter to . . . Pitt*, “It seems remarkable that at this time when so many people talk about liberty and freedom, yet they themselves are willing slaves to this sinful, dirty, and unhealthy fashion of wearing powder, and that they should put themselves into the hands and power of a French hair-dresser, to give them the appearance of a gentleman” (10).

81. Peter Pindar [John Wolcot], “The Lousiad, an Herio-Comic Poem” [1785], *The Works of Peter Pindar*, 4 vols. (London: Walker and Edwards, 1816) vol. I, Canto I, ll. 237–38.

82. *Secondes et respectueuses remontrances à l'Assemblée Nationale* (Paris, 1790), 1.

83. Jean Marie Nicolas De Guerle, *Éloge des perruques* (Paris: Crapelet, 1799), 14–15. John Lafoy's mock-heroic *Complete Coiffeur* (New York, 1817) traces the origins of the French Revolution to the English control of the wig trade: “Towards the end of the 18th century, the plebeian heads of France trampled under foot those imported wigs that disfigured them, and in their place adopted a sort of cap of a lively colour” (105). Nicolai, in *Recherches historiques*, notes that bereaved lovers and spouses save the hair of the executed to create new wigs (144).

84. Great Britain Parliament, *An Impartial Report of the Debates in the Two Houses of Parliament in the Year 1795*, 4 vols. (London: T. Chapman, 1795), 2:179. See also *The Parliamentary Register: Or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons*, 112 vols. (23 March 1795), 41:68–72, and (30 March 1795), 41:155–56.

85. Brutus [Henry MacKenzie], *Cursory Remarks on Mr. Pitt's New Tax of Imposing a Guinea per Head on Every Person who Wears Hair-Powder* (London: Daniel Isaac Eaton, 1795), 7, 10. William Prynne, in *Unloveliness of Lovelocks*, employs a similar rhetoric of liberty with regard to fashion, but draws very different consequences: “Are not most of our young Nobilitie, and Gentry, yea, the Elder too, under the Barbers hands from day, to day? Are they not in dayly thraldome, and perpetuall bondage to their curling Irons, which are so many chaines, and fetters to

their Heads, on which they leaue their Stampe, and Impresse" (A3v), he demands, adding, "Would they not rather haue the Common-wealth disturbed, then their Haire disordered?" (A3r2).

86. A Barrister, *An Exposition the Hair Powder Act* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1795), 15.

87. John Thelwall, *The Tribune, a periodical publication*, 3 vols. (London: printed by the author, 1795–96), 1:80. In J. C. Lettsom's *Hints respecting the Distresses of the Poor* (London: C. Dilly, 1795), the author suggests that if "the great men and women of the land would allow their hair to be cherished by nature, and totally relinquish the dirty fashion of starch and grease, the poor might really experience the benefits of their forbearance of a custom, filthy to clothes, and abstractive of personal charms" (15).

88. John Donaldson, *Letter to . . . Pitt*, 7–8. Donaldson's text is also cited by Lettsom, *Hints Respecting the Distresses*, 15. According to Steven Laurence Kaplan, in *Paris and the Bread Question, 1700–1755* (Durham: Duke Univ., 1996), in France, Voltaire and Rousseau, "despite their antagonistic views on the social utility of luxury, joined hands to assail the prodigal waste of precious flour in wig preparation and cosmetics" (24).

89. Peter Pindar, "Hair Powder: A Plaintive Epistle to Mr Pitt," from *Works*, 3:26.

90. Great Britain Parliament, *Impartial Report*, 3:91; also Jedding-Gesterling, *Hairstyles*, 151. The fashion did persist: in 1799, there were more than 150,000 still paying the tax out of a population of ten million. See Great Britain Parliament, *The Parliamentary Register; or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons*, 12 vols. (London: J. Debrett, 1797–1800), 12:631. Donaldson, in *Letter . . . to Pitt*, asks: "What tradesman will refuse credit to a powdered person, who proves by his appearance, that he gives a guinea a-year to the revenue, for a license to use a luxury in dress?" (7).

91. John Smee, *A Complete Collection of Abstracts of Acts of Parliament and Cases*, 2 vols. (London: J. Butterworth, 1797), 1:274–302.

92. See Woodforde, *Strange Story* and R. Turner Wilcox, *The Mode in Hats and Headdress* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1948), 144.

