The Mask of Civility

Portraits of Colonial Women and the Transatlantic Masquerade

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John Wollaston's half-length depiction of Charlestonian Ann Gibbes (frontispiece) is one of the most elegant and unusual portraits painted in the American colonies. Gibbes's glossy black hair, swept from her neck into a loose bun, sets off the creamy skin revealed by her low-cut bodice and the delicate pink flush of her cheeks and corresponding shade of her lips. The shimmering satin of her gown, the elaborate lace of her collar and cuffs, the black-and-white ermine trim of her stole, and the lustrous pearls that dangle tantalizingly from her dress all contribute to the sitter's opulence and sensual appeal. In her extended right hand she grasps the bottom edge of a mask. Its stark blackness, turned-down mouth, and vacant eyeholes attract the viewer's attention and offer a severe contrast to the sitter's pleasant visage.[1]

Ann Gibbes's mask is of the Venetian style. First worn at the carnival, it became one of the types commonly assumed at British masquerades to disguise the participant's identity. A 1772 engraving by English publisher Carington Bowles, for example, shows "Lady Betty Bustle" and her maid "preparing for the MASQUERADE at the PANTHEON" (fig. 1). Betty holds up a full-face black mask, which resembles the one in Gibbes's portrait. Bowles's print suggests the tremendous popularity that masked balls, also known at the time as mock-carnivals, enjoyed in London during the eighteenth century; paying members of the public attended large masquerades held at the theater at the Haymarket, the pleasure gardens at Ranelagh, and eventually the Pantheon. William Hogarth's engraving *Masquerade Ticket* (fig. 2), first published in 1726 and reproduced frequently thereafter, depicts one of Count Heidegger's famous "Midnight masques," which attracted seven to eight hundred people weekly until the masked ball's precipitous fall from fashion in the 1780s. Like other new sites of public culture in the city, masquerades were the subject of much conversation and frequent condemnation. Numerous critics decried them for the sexual license they allowed anonymous revelers, the mixing they facilitated between classes of people, and the possibility they offered participants to assume a new identity. Dressed as shepherdesses and chimney sweeps, nuns and devils, or kings and Moors, masqueraders delighted in becoming Others—members of other races, other classes, other cultures, other genders.[2]

Gibbes's portrait makes the most explicit reference of any extant artwork

John Wollaston, *Portrait of Ann Gibbes (Mrs. Edward Thomas)*, 1767. Oil, 30 1⁄16 x 25 1⁄8 in. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, Museum purchase

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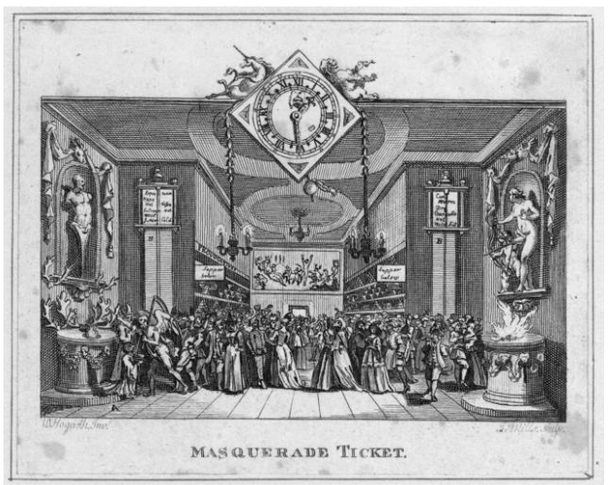
1 *Lady Betty Bustle and Her Maid Lucy Preparing for the Masquerade at the Pantheon*. Printed by Carington Bowles, 1772. Mezzotint, 14 x 10 in., cropped. British Museum, London. Photo © Trustees of the British Museum

2 William Hogarth, *Masquerade Ticket*, 1700s. Engraving, 3 7/8 x 4 13/16 in. Winterthur Library, Wilmington, Delaware, Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera



produced in colonial America to the masquerade. Perhaps the artist recognized its rarity, because it is one of the few works he signed, inscribing "Wollaston, Fecit, 1767" on the curved edge of the painting's marble slab table, just below the sitter's mask. Gibbes's depiction, however, fits within a group of portraits painted by the English artist in Charleston, South Carolina, between 1765 and 1767 that cast southern women as masqueraders. By the time he reached Charleston, John Wollaston (1707–1775) had traveled the colonies for sixteen years, painting more than three hundred portraits of elites in the urban centers of New York, Philadelphia, and Annapolis, and from the plantations of Maryland, Virginia, and the West Indies. The artist's London training had exposed him to portraits in the most fashionable styles, including those of men and women in masque dress, which many English patrons favored at midcentury. Indeed, Wollaston is believed to have spent several years as an assistant in the shop of London's most famous drapery painter, Joseph Van Aken, and he may have helped to complete masquerade portraits by such prominent artists as Thomas Hudson during this time.[3]

By choosing portraits that showed the sitters in masque-inspired costume, Charlestonians proclaimed their common British identity, presenting themselves in the newest London mode. Portraits produced in the metropolitan fashion held great appeal for Charleston's planters, whose preference for English goods was remarkable, even compared with that of elites in other colonial port cities, and whose tremendous wealth enabled them to keep abreast of changes in English taste. In pointing to fashionability as the primary reason colonial patrons adopted

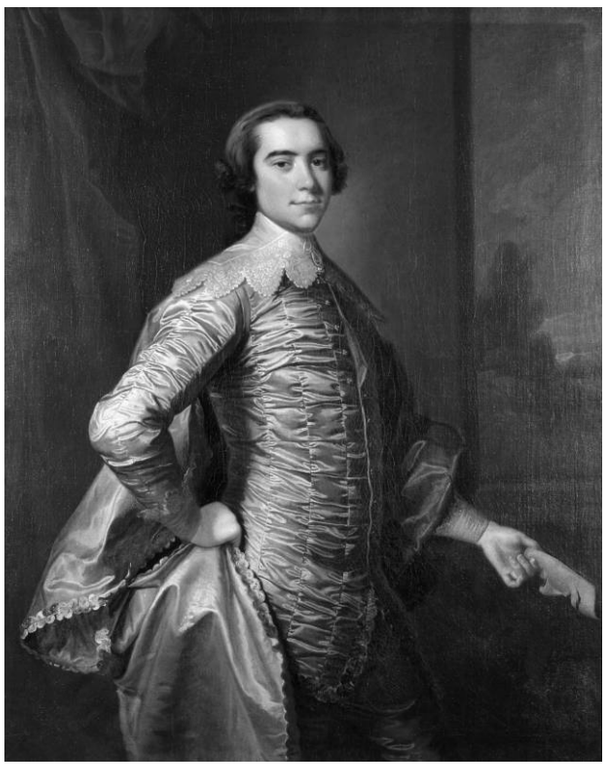
the masquerade portrait, however, scholars have overlooked the cultural power the masque held for Britons across the Atlantic. Close examination of Wollaston's paintings of female colonists in masquerade dress, along with a study of their reception in the colonies, reveals that these depictions did more than establish connections to the metropole. The masquerade portrait harnessed the event's carnivalesque energy to consider issues at the heart of both the colonial project and the colonial portrait: the mutability of a civilized persona—especially that of a woman—and the potential of the New World to inspire dangerous behavior in civilized subjects.[4]

Wollaston's exuberantly sensual depictions of Charleston's elite women thwart our expectations of how the oftentimes formulaic colonial portrait should look as well as what larger cultural work it could perform. Art historians have identified two dominant but interrelated interpretations of the portrait's social function in colonial America: as a tool to define status and as a means to promote familial obligation. While portraits unarguably played an active part in colonists' self-fashioning and the continuation of elite family lines, Wollaston's images encourage us to consider the colonial portrait a flexible form equipped to satisfy multiple and changing needs. The artist's Charleston pictures were both individual representations and objects through which colonists addressed their fears about the threat women's sexuality posed in a colonial environment. In addition, they were sites through which elites questioned the possibility of maintaining civility in a North American context amid those they deemed to be "savage" Others. Investigation of these masquerade depictions suggests that colonial portraits could not only inscribe gendered and rank-based identities but also question and destabilize such identities.[5]

Atlantic Exchanges

Wollaston's oeuvre affords a promising avenue to gain new insight into the role of the colonial portrait because his paintings remain understudied. Although valuable work has been done in discovering and cataloguing the English artist's extensive production, the nationalistic approach that dominated the study of American art for much of the past century kept his depictions from receiving the kind of intensive analysis afforded those works produced by native-born artists who painted primarily in North America. The artist's Charleston portraits in particular have been casualties of the field's bias toward art that was made in the major urban centers of the Northeast. Now that art historians have started to question the limitations of an approach based on national boundaries, Wollaston's transatlantic career and colonial portraits gain new importance. Reinserting the artist's Charleston images within a transatlantic context enables us to gain a fuller picture of the range of portraits that hung on walls throughout the colonies and to recover the complex cultural interactions between colony and metropole, as well as between Britons and indigenous peoples, that shaped art making and reception in North America.[6]

Situating colonial portraiture within the space of the Atlantic world requires analysis of both the connections that bound colonies to London as well as the unique circumstances that differentiated life in North American port cities. Although Wollaston crafts the illusion that Ann Gibbes is on her way to, or has just returned from, a masked ball, it is unlikely that the portrait documents the sitter's attendance at an actual event, since no masquerades are known to have taken place in British North America during the colonial period. Many colonists trumpeted Americans' abstention



3 Thomas Hudson, *Robert Carter III of Nomini Hall*, 1753. Oil, 50 x 40 in. Virginia Historical Society, Richmond

from the masque as a moral victory, including one author who exulted in the *Boston Evening Post* in July 1752, "Among all our vices and follies," colonists were "yet restrained from . . . masquerades," those "incentives to *lust* and *debauchery*." Undoubtedly colonial Charlestonians' attitudes toward the masquerade were more permissive than those of New Englanders; one eighteenth-century visitor commented that "the inhabitants of Charleston are different from those of other North American cities," exhibiting "a higher degree of taste and less frugality." Indeed, the city's residents witnessed the first known performance of an opera in the colonies at the early date of 1735, and their leisure activities included "plays, balls, . . . concerts, bear-gardens, horse-races, [and] cock-matches," a set of pursuits other colonists condemned for their depravity. Nevertheless, the first public masked ball did not take place in Charleston until 1801, well after the Revolution. Only those colonists who traveled to England participated in masques firsthand. Portraits of young male southerners, completed in London during their education, document their exposure to the activity. These include Thomas Hudson's portrait of Virginian Robert Carter III (fig. 3). In a pose reminiscent of Ann Gibbes's, Carter holds a white mask as if he has just taken it from his face.[7]

If Wollaston's female sitters did not participate in a masked ball directly, they engaged with the masque through a variety of modes before having their portraits painted. Masquerades became a popular entertainment in urban areas throughout Europe, but they almost immediately transcended this narrow function and exploded into a fully transmedia phenomenon that stretched across the Atlantic. In addition to viewing and displaying English satirical prints that featured the masquerade, such as Hogarth's *Masquerade Ticket*, colonists attended plays that contained a "masquerade dance," including a 1767 Philadelphia production of *Romeo and Juliet*, and spectators in Boston and Charleston watched the displays of an itinerant showman who exhibited "A complete set of Artificial [waxwork] Figures, representing diverse Masquerade Characters." They purchased porcelain figures that animated the owner's dessert course by presenting miniature masqueraders reveling at London's Ranelagh Gardens (fig. 4). Americans also vicariously masqueraded through texts, reading detailed masque scenes in novels popular throughout the British Atlantic, including Samuel Richardson's *Pamela Part Two* (1741) and Henry Fielding's

Tom Jones (1749) and *Amelia* (1751), and observers' accounts of masked balls printed in colonial newspapers. Articles in the *Virginia Gazette* and *Pennsylvania Magazine* described famous personages' disguises and spurred colonists' interest in what the *Boston Evening Post* labeled a period "run masquerade mad."[8]

Wollaston's depiction of Charlestonian Rebecca Bee Holmes (fig. 5) weaves the sitter's literary encounter with the masque into her portrait. Prominently displayed on the table before her is a bound volume of the *Spectator* (1710–14), a London periodical frequently found in the libraries of elites in Charleston, whose authors, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, commented extensively on urban amusements, including the masked ball. (In one memorable essay, for example, Addison described how he was "attacked" at a masquerade "by half a Dozen female Quakers, who seemed willing to adopt [him] . . . for a Brother," but who, on closer examination, revealed themselves to be prostitutes.) As Holmes, her head supported by gracefully arched fingers, gazes introspectively out of the picture, we are encouraged to imagine the sitter daydreaming about one of the riotous London masquerades described in the *Spectator*. Holmes's costume contributes to the blurring of reality and fantasy, since she wears Vandyke dress, a form of costume frequently donned for the masquerade.[9]

Masqueraders, inspired by seventeenth-century portraits of the English aristocracy by Anthony

4 *Group of Chelsea Porcelain Masqueraders*, 1759–63. Soft-paste porcelain, 7½ to 8½ in. high. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia

5 John Wollaston, *Rebecca Bee Holmes*, ca. 1758. Oil, 30¼ x 25 5⁄16 in. Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, Gift of Herbert L. Pratt (Class of 1895)

6 After Sir Anthony van Dyck, *Henrietta Maria*, ca. 1632–35. Oil, 43 x 32½ in. National Portrait Gallery, London. Photo © National Portrait Gallery

van Dyck and Peter Lely, melded elements of earlier portrait costume—such as the large lace collar, puffed sleeves, and pearl necklaces featured in a portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria after Van Dyck (fig. 6)—with fashionable dress and exotic accessories to create Vandyke dress. Vandyke costumes were historically based palimpsests that suggested but never exactly replicated seventeenth-century costume. The popularity of such dress for the masquerade is evident in Horace Walpole's description of an assembly he attended in 1743: "There were quantities of pretty VanDykes and all kinds of old pictures walked out of their frames." Walpole's comment indicates that Vandyke dress encompassed both disguises that recreated specific historic portraits, such as Peter Paul Rubens's image of Helena Fourment, and those that adopted only some features of the dress found in seventeenth-century portraits, like the costumes Wollaston depicted in his Charleston pictures. The capped sleeves and pearls threaded across Rebecca Bee Holmes's stomacher and tied into a bow are common elements of Vandyke dress, and a period observer would have recognized similar Vandyke references in Ann Gibbes's dress, noting that her elaborate double lace collar, voluminous padded sleeves kept in place with a pearl pin, and prominent lace cuffs were loosely adapted from seventeenth-century portraiture, and that the lavish ermine of her stole was inspired by Turkish costume, a frequent source for masque disguises.[10]

Elements of the eighteenth-century reimagination of Van Dyck's portrait dress are prominent in the eight portraits of female Charlestonians painted by Wollaston that have been identified.[11] In Wollaston's depictions of Elizabeth Izard Blake and Mary Ross Beale (figs. 7, 8), for example, the sitters' hair, necks, and gowns are bedecked with multiple strands of pearls, while the ribbons festooning Blake's puffed sleeves derive from portrait dress of the previous century, as do the scarf tied around Beale's waist as a sash and her split bodice, which gapes to show her chemise underneath. The fantastical grandeur of the Charlestonians' Vandyke dress becomes most apparent through comparison with Wollaston's portraits completed in other colonial cities. Though painted at least fifteen years earlier (soon after his arrival in the colonies), the artist's depiction of New Yorker Cornelia Beekman Walton (fig. 9) offers a striking contrast to his Charleston portraits. She wears a lace-trimmed mob cap, blue satin

7 John Wollaston, *Elizabeth Izard (Mrs. Daniel Blake)*, 1765–67. Oil, dimensions unknown. Private collection

8 John Wollaston, *Mary Ross Beale (Mrs. John Beale)*, 1765–67. Oil, 30 x 25 in. Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), Old Salem Museum & Gardens, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

open gown, gold silk petticoat, and white stomacher, a generalized but realistic costume that all of the artist's female New York sitters chose for their portraits. Walton's tasteful yet simple ensemble is a form of dress that she and her fellow elite New Yorkers frequently donned, setting their costumes apart from the Charlestonians' Vandyke pastiches.[12]

Certainly other artists in the colonies besides Wollaston employed Vandyke dress. Joseph Blackburn, John Singleton Copley, and later Charles Willson Peale occasionally incorporated elements of seventeenth-century dress within their larger use of imaginary costume, which included *turquerie* and classically inspired garments. Vandyke dress carried rich associations of both the masquerade and imagined portrait dress; not only were Van Dyck's original costumes fictitious hybrids of fashionable clothing and the theatrical garments worn to court masques, but in the eighteenth century, as women chose to have their portraits painted while dressed in Vandyke garb, they further blurred the distinction between artistic representation and masquerade costume. The inclusion of a mask in Ann Gibbes's portrait connects her Vandyke dress directly to the masked ball, but on the whole the range and specificity of Wollaston's quotation of seventeenth-century costume convince the viewer that the Charlestonians' fictitious gowns were costumes appropriate for a masked ball and distinguish his use of Vandyke dress from that of other colonial portraitists.[13]

9 John Wollaston, *Cornelia Beekman Walton (Mrs. William Walton)*, ca. 1750. Oil, 50 x 40¼ in. The New-York Historical Society, New York

Masquerades and Female Civility

Wollaston's Charleston portraits use the protean nature of the sitters' costumes to move the women away from the quotidian reality of life in the colonies and resituate them within the playful world of the masquerade. Each of the artist's Charleston depictions effectively integrates likeness and whimsical Vandyke dress into a believable fiction that facilitates a kind of role-playing. The women are dressed to intentionally subvert distinctions between past and present, exotic and local, real and imagined, enabling their portraits to create a carnivalesque fluidity of identity. The multivalence of their portraits is directly related to the gender of the sitters. Although male colonists such as Robert Carter III chose to be portrayed in masquerade costume while in London, none of Wollaston's portraits of men, from any region, shows them wearing masque-inspired dress. Indeed, in several pendant portraits, including those of Charlestonians John and Mary Ross Beale, Wollaston pictured the husband in realistic formal costume (fig. 10) and the wife in Vandyke garb (see fig. 8). The decision on the part of colonial artists and their patrons to depict women, but not men, in masquerade costume is consistent with arguments, running throughout British Atlantic discourse, warning that women's civility was more flexible than men's—and thus ideally suited for the ambiguity that masquerade dress encouraged.[14]

Civility, defined by Samuel Johnson in his *Dictionary of the English Language* as both "politeness, complaisance; [and] elegance of behaviour" and "freedom from barbarity," entailed the constant containment of base passions and dangerous desires, including anger, greed, and lust, through bodily discipline and moral control. To rid himself or herself of uncivil behaviors, a person had to embrace the ideals and objects of polite culture, but he or she also had to eschew "savagery"—understood to be excessive violence, sexuality, and hedonism. Britons on both sides of the Atlantic embraced the concept of civility as it developed over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in their struggles to define themselves in an expanding empire that brought them into contact with unfamiliar flora and fauna and diverse peoples. For colonists especially, employing the opposing polarities of "savage" and "civilized" in interactions with varying populations

10 John Wollaston, *John Beale*, 1765–67. Oil, 30 x 25 in. Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), Old Salem Museum & Gardens, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

of Native Americans and enslaved Africans provided a means to proclaim their own position as polite Britons. In projecting their fears of "barbarity" onto the Others they encountered, elite British colonists collapsed diverse Native and African groups into a monolithic and undifferentiated category of "savages"—peoples who were imagined to be civilizable to greater or lesser degrees but who were characterized by their violent passions.[15]

Maintaining civility required unceasing effort for members of both sexes, but popular authors and aesthetic theorists preached that women's politeness was so permeable and precarious that it was significantly affected by environmental factors, social situations, and outside influences. Women, like "savages," were believed to be naturally more apt to be controlled by their base desires and easily tempted to abandon civility, whether by listening to an opera, walking in a pleasure garden, or attending a masquerade. For metropolitan and colonial commentators, the masque symbolized the erotic inflaming of women's base desires more than any other fashionable entertainment, since, as Addison complained in the *Spectator*, "the whole Design of this libidinous Assembly seems to terminate in Assignations and Intrigues." Perhaps the best example of the strong association between the masquerade and its awakening of unbridled female passion is a fictitious device, the Female Thermometer. Essayist Bonnell Thornton, writing in the London periodical the *Connoisseur* in 1754, claimed that an optician friend had invented "THE FEMALE THERMOMETER" to measure "the exact temperature of a lady's passions." He was purported to have taken the instrument to the opera house and playhouse before discovering that the masquerade had the most violent effect on his subjects. At a masked ball, Thornton relates, "the temperature of the climate always proved so exceeding hot, that on the moment of our coming into the room the liquor has boiled up with a surprising effervescence to ABANDONED IMPUDENCE," the highest extreme.[16]

Thornton was not the first to associate a scientific instrument that measured the passions with the masquerade. In 1726 Hogarth had made a similar connection in his

Masquerade Ticket (see fig. 2). Two instruments that resemble barometers but that are labeled "Lecherometers" have been mounted just behind the masqueraders, on either side of the entry to the hall, to register "ye Companys Inclinations as they approach em." The Lecherometers' association with sexual desire is reinforced by the statues displayed in niches before the instruments, on the right Venus and Cupid, and on the left Priapus, god of fertility and male genitalia, identified by the antlers (symbols of cuckoldry) that decorate the altar below his statue. Like the Female Thermometer, the Lecherometer nearest to Venus measured an approaching woman's changing temperament in addition to her body's sexual readiness, by displaying "Cool—Warm—Dry-Changeable—Hot—moist Fixt." The device closest to Priapus made more explicit reference to the sexual act, purporting to show a masquerader's "Expectation—Hope—Hot desire—Extreem Hot—Moist—Sudden Cold."[17]

While Hogarth exaggerated the sexual license afforded by the masquerade for humorous effect, at least one colonist's account of a public masque presents a hedonistic assembly that resembles the one satirized by the artist. Virginia planter William Byrd II documented his attendance between 1717 and 1721 at a number of London masquerades in his now notorious secret diary. Then a widower in his mid-forties, Byrd found the sexualized pleasures of a public masquerade held at the Haymarket on April 17, 1718, to be especially noteworthy. The night began with Byrd donning his costume "in the [sight] of my mistress," a voyeuristic pleasure followed by his appearance at the masquerade, where, he recorded in his diary, "I was exceedingly well entertained and particularly I put one woman's hand upon my business and spent." After this anonymous sexual encounter, Byrd engaged in flirtatious physical play with "pretty Mrs. H-n-t-n who was a great romp." The planter remained at the masque until "5 o'clock in the morning" and, not surprisingly, "neglected to say . . . prayers" before retiring.[18]

The revealing costumes worn by those attending London's masques heightened the sexually charged atmosphere that Byrd and others enjoyed. A print attributed to London engraver Charles Mosley depicts the infamous and repeatedly illustrated incident in 1749 when Elizabeth Chudleigh appeared at a public masquerade in the guise of Iphigenia (in mythology, the daughter sacrificed by Greek king Agamemnon) complete with bare breasts (fig. 11). Lady Mary Wortley Montagu described the diaphanous dress "or rather undress" that Chudleigh wore: it was so revealing "that the high priest might easily inspect the entrails of the victim." Yet just as much as the masquerade costume, the mask itself contributed to the sensual pull of the ball. The mask's frequent appearance in pornography and its association with prostitutes, evidenced by its prominent placement in plate 2 of Hogarth's *A Harlot's Progress* (fig. 12), opposite Moll Hackabout on the dressing table at lower left, heightened the disguise's libidinal energy. But commentators feared that the mask held greater danger by freeing its female wearers from inhibitions. One critic writing for London's *Weekly Journal* summarized the threat, "The mask . . . encourages a Liberty, the Guilt of which . . . [the ladies'] Blushes would betray when barefac'd, till by Degrees they are innur'd to that which [it] is out of their Vertue to restrain." His language recalls the later description of the Female Thermometer. Step by scientifically measurable step, the masquerade pulled female participants from civility to dangerous sexuality.[19]

11 Attributed to Charles Mosley, *Iphigenia*, 1749. Etching, 13⅛ x 9⅞ in. British Museum, London. Photo © Trustees of the British Museum

12 William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress, Plate 2*, 1732. Etching and engraving, 12 5/16 x 14 13/16 in. British Museum, London. Photo © Trustees of the British Museum

Colonial Reception

Wollaston's portraits of colonial women in masquerade dress are both geographically and pictorially far from the realm of the bacchanalian delights that London's masqueraders enjoyed and the city's critics bemoaned. Yet his sitters' welcoming poses seem to present the women for visual delectation. Their bodies open toward the viewer, enabling unlimited scrutiny, while their pleasant expressions intimate acceptance of the spectator's attention. The mask in Ann Gibbes's portrait may lend her a greater allure than the others in the group, but each of the pictures reflects the whirling sexuality of the masquerade through the lushness of texture and fabric, which combines with the décolletage of the sitters' fictitious costumes to render their youth and physical beauty risqué. When considered in light of these depictions, the artist's portrait of New Yorker Cornelia Beekman Walton (see fig. 9) appears staid and conservative, a monument to her civility rather than her sexuality.

Contemporaneous American observers, too, remarked on the erotic appeal of Wollaston's Vandyke depictions. Although no reactions from Charlestonians survive, at least one response to the artist's more generalized type of female Vandyke portrait, which he painted sporadically throughout the mid-Atlantic region, does exist. A poem attributed to Francis Hopkinson, the prominent Philadelphian, published in the *American Magazine* in 1758, details the charms of an anonymous female sitter, who is likely young Mary Willing, painted by the artist wearing Vandyke dress in the city that same year (fig. 13). Hopkinson rhapsodizes, "The lucid lips in rosy sweetness drest, / The well-turn'd neck and the luxuriant breast, / The silk that richly flows with graceful air—All tell the hand of *Wollaston* was there." The poem imagines the moment of creation, when the male artist's hand caressed, if not the sitter's actual body, then the facsimile of her that he had created—a facsimile later perused by the male connoisseur who, in recording his sexualized viewing of the portrait, invites the reader to possess the body of a beautiful woman through his text. Hopkinson's description of the artist's roving hand finds a visual analogue in

13 John Wollaston, *Mary Willing (Mrs. William Byrd III)*, 1758. Oil, 30 x 25 in. Virginia Historical Society, Richmond

the sinuous line of lace trim that encircles Willings's breasts, tracing a meandering path across her bust before bringing the viewer's gaze to rest on the fabric that mounds and spills from her cleavage.[20]

Hopkinson assumed the right to describe the sexual appeal of a female portrait as part of the guise of the connoisseur. Authors in the metropole instructed that, though connoisseurs would experience the rise of dangerous passions while viewing works like Wollaston's, their exercise of taste effectively protected them from the desire inflamed by sensuous depictions. Unlike the educated male who viewed Wollaston's portraits, however, the colonial women who sat for them had no privileged position of safety to which they could retreat when their base desires became aroused. Instead, the temptations raised by their contemplation of the masquerade had a bodily effect on them that is intimated

14 John Wollaston, *Jane Bowles Wormeley*, ca. 1755–57. Oil, 49½ x 39½ in. Virginia Historical Society, Richmond

15 John Wollaston, *Portrait of Jane Bolling Randolph Walke*, ca. 1757. Oil, 35 x 27 in. Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. O. W. June

in their portraits. Where Iphigenia's self-exposure offered spectators unmistakable evidence of the passions awakened by the masque, Wollaston's Vandyke depictions seem to capture an unstable civility, where bodily discipline and moral control remain intact but may yet be overturned. In portraits such as those of Elizabeth Izard Blake and Jane Bowles Wormeley (fig. 14), chemises and shifts poke through slits in sleeves and bodices, threatening to tear the satin fabric that ripples and resists in its struggle to remain closed. The many hands that grab at pearls and ribbons, like those of Mary Ross Beale or Jane Randolph Walke (fig. 15), imply that the sitters even toy with the idea of disrobing. In Wollaston's portraits, women's bodies appear ready to overwhelm the costume that covers them, suggesting that although civilized exteriors momentarily contain riotous desires, they cannot extinguish them permanently.[21]

Courtship and Disguise

One might expect such transgressive sexuality from a woman like Hogarth's Moll Hackabout, whose breasts bursting from the constraints of her costume confirm her full embrace of the life of a prostitute. The willingness of Wollaston and his colonial patrons to portray elite women as sexually emboldened masqueraders teetering toward licentiousness, however, requires further explanation. The biographical circumstances surrounding Ann Gibbes's portrait help to explain the appeal of this type for Charlestonians. Wollaston painted

fifteen-year-old Gibbes sometime after January and before May 1767, four to eight months before the sitter married planter Edward Thomas, locating her portrait firmly in the middle of the couple's courtship. The majority of the artist's female Charlestonian sitters had their portraits painted during this transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, which offered elite women significant, if ephemeral, power within a system of patriarchy. Suspended between the households of their fathers and those of their future husbands, courting women in the upper ranks of society enjoyed an increasing say in their choice of a mate over the course of the eighteenth century. While fathers and community members had selected suitable marriage partners for women in the past, new ideals of companionate marriage encouraged parents to give young women a voice in their courtships, to help them forge both emotionally satisfying and financially prudent matches.[22]

Although courtship offered elite women a degree of control unequaled during any other stage of their lives, female dominion within courtship, like the sexual license afforded by the masquerade, relied on concealment. In the words of one female Charlestonian, published in the *South Carolina Gazette* in June 1734, courting men "freely can their Thoughts disclose," whereas women's "must burn within; We have got Tongues and Eyes in Vain, And Truth from us is Sin." Novels and prescriptive manuals encouraged women around the Atlantic to hide their romantic attachment until a suitor proposed. Or, as one popular poem instructed, "Reluctant hear the first address / Think often ere you answer yes / But once resolved throw of[f] disguise / And wear your wishes in your eyes." This language of women's disguise in courtship made a natural association between the courting woman who masked her sentiments and the woman at the masquerade who effaced her true identity. Wollaston's portrait of Ann Gibbes, then, drew on a familiar metaphor to memorialize the culmination of the sitter's courtship—the moment when she reveals her true feelings and accepts her suitor—by representing her as a woman divulging her real identity at the masque's conclusion.[23]

The surviving letters of one of Wollaston's sitters, Harriott Pinckney (daughter of the famous Eliza Lucas Pinckney), written while she was between fifteen and nineteen years old, reveal the adoption by elite female Charlestonians of strategies of concealment during courtships. Pinckney's portrait was unfortunately destroyed in the nineteenth century, but her letters interweave its completion with her courtship and eventual marriage to Daniel Huger Horry, a South Carolina planter whom she wed in 1768. In particular, her correspondence with "Miss R," likely Mary Rawkes—a friend who acted as matchmaker for the couple—locates Wollaston's painting of the portrait amid Pinckney's attempts to encourage her suitor while simultaneously hiding her feelings. A letter dated January 14, 1767, begins abruptly, "Tho' Wollaston has summon'd me today to put the finishing stroke to my Shadow which . . . [strains] me for time I cant help sending a line." Harriott thanks Mary for her gifts of a pincushion and housewifery manual—notably presents associated with marriage—but admonishes, "You say very truly there is but one state of life I could be happier in, & I find you are hurrying me into it as fast as you can." She questions, "[H]ow can you fill a poor girl's head with conquests she has never made, and flatter her with notions merely ideal?" Faced with Mary's speculation about Horry's intentions, Harriott presents an inscrutable front, refusing to confirm or to deny her desire to marry the planter. Harriott circumspectly informs her friend that she will not announce her feelings until Horry proposes and makes her conquest actual, rather than "ideal." In the meantime she prolongs her courtship, ensuring that she will attract the attention of other suitors and attain the most promising husband she can.[24]

Other letters from Pinckney to Rawkes reveal a similar strategy of delay and dissimulation, as Harriott alludes to her growing feelings for Horry while denying any particular attachment. She admits to Mary, "The Conquest you tell me I have made both pleases and makes me Vain," since she would "rather have ye esteem of ye good Gentleman of half the fellows I know." Yet later she worries that she has let her feelings for Horry become too visible, lamenting that she can no longer inquire after him, because, were "I to ask questions, it would be taken notice of & animadverted upon." At the same time, Harriott wants to ensure that her disinterested posture does not scare Horry away, reassuring her friend, "I should be sorry to behave with any particular reserve to Mr Horry. If I have done so I cant account for it, I never intended it, and am not conscious I ever did, however shall endeavour to rectife it for the future." Even in the spring of 1767, six months before her marriage, Harriott continued to curtail any demonstrations of preference for Horry, noting that though her suitor "is [so] joked about me that it . . . [prevents] him calling on us," and she was "as much joked that I . . . look so Simple when he is in Company that he thinks me half an Idiot," she still "did not ask him to take a ride" in her carriage for fear of making public their mutual attraction.[25]

Wollaston painted several of the elite courting women who were members of Harriott Pinckney's intimate circle, yet only one example has survived (fig. 16). Mary "Polly" Golightly's portrait is large—the only known three-quarter-length painting that the artist undertook in Charleston—and is especially dynamic and lavish. A set of brooches fastens the halves of Golightly's bodice and another jewel adorns her sleeve, drawing the viewer's eyes to her left arm and the rippling fabric of her silk jacket as it pools around her hand to form a visual counterpoint to her right arm, which reaches up to grasp the brim of her hat. Golightly's portrait suggests not only that the artist painted Pinckney and her friends while they were being courted but that his portraits memorialized the young women's temporary authority within courtship, a life stage that would not have been recognized, much less celebrated, before midcentury. The independent status of Golightly's portrait is noteworthy; it, like a number of Wollaston's Charleston female portraits, was painted neither as a pendant nor one of a family series, which was often the case in colonial America, but instead as an autonomous work. Whereas Wollaston's pendant portraits of Mr. and Mrs. John Beale form a single compositional unit—Beale's left arm and his wife's right are bent toward one another, parentheses that internally frame their portraits and direct the viewer's attention from one spouse to the other—Golightly's depiction was not originally conceived of, or painted as, one half of a pair. Rather, it is a singular portrait that does not look to another work for visual completion. Hers, like Gibbes's, is a stand-alone portrayal of a sexually desirable young woman who was currently making her own choice of a mate.[26]

The story of Polly Golightly's marriage illuminates how elite Charlestonians embraced new ideas about a woman's role during courtship and contributes to the reading of her portrait I present here. Although Golightly's preference for planter Benjamin Huger was evident, her family tried to dissuade her from the match. Polly's friend Harriott Pinckney noted, "it is past a doubt with every body that Mr Huger is ye object of her affections," but "her friends are so averse to . . . [the marriage] at present, I cant say whether he will succeed or not." Concern most likely centered on Huger's relatively small fortune and the desire to protect Polly's sizable inheritance. (The attraction the family's wealth held for suitors is revealed by Harriott's observation that a Mr. DeLancey "chose out Miss Golightly before he saw her for his flame.") Harriott's mother, Eliza Lucas Pinckney, a close friend of the Golightly family, cautioned

16 John Wollaston, *Mary Golightly (Mrs. Benjamin Huger)*, 1765–67.
Oil, dimensions unknown. Private collection

Polly to "Guard *well* your heart," since "the Beauties that you are to seek are internal ones." She added, "I am not such an Enemy to a fine Coat to persuade you . . . to dislike a pretty fellow the worse for wearing one but I should wish it ye last attraction, if it were one at all." The family finally heeded the guidance offered in prescriptive literature and conceded to Polly's decision, upholding her right to choose her husband. One manual reminded parents that their duty was simply to sanctify their daughter's wishes, since "To choose belongs to her alone." Wollaston's three-quarter-length portrait of the animated and independent Golightly, painted during the negotiations between Polly and her family, captured the young woman's power within courtship as much as it anticipated her marriage to Benjamin Huger in September 1767.[27]

For most Charlestonians, the masquerade portraits' association with courtship was fleeting, just like the sitters' short-lived authority. After the women married, their portraits would likely have been placed alongside depictions of their new husbands, thus replacing the temporary autonomy of the portraits and sitters with more familiar injunctions about familial duty and female obedience. The tales that subsequent generations told about Polly Golightly, however, preserved the association between her Vandyke dress and her courtship by visualizing her marriage through the imagery of Wollaston's portrait. Pinckney descendant Harriott Horry Rutledge Ravenel, writing in 1896, repeated "one of the romantic stories that used to be told" by her ancestors. When Golightly was at "a ball one night," she "picked up a straw hat which chanced to be lying on a bench, and, with no more preparation, stepped out of the long window . . . and ran away to be married with Mr. Huger." Ravenel's retelling integrates the young woman's active pose in her portrait—she seems to move toward the viewer while reaching for her hat—with the reimagination of her contested union as an elopement, proof that "even in that formal age, 'love would find out the way.'" While family memory explains away the sitter's Vandyke dress by labeling it a ball gown and dismisses her pastorally inspired hat by imagining it a prop grabbed spontaneously as she walked from the assembly, the association of Wollaston's depiction with courtship remains strong and was probably heightened by the sitter's death "in the bloom of life," in childbirth in 1771, three years after her portrait was painted.[28]

The Blush and Sexual Awakening

Wollaston's portraits functioned as both documents of courtships and representations of the sitters' burgeoning sexuality within that transitional state. The blush that he skillfully captured on Ann Gibbes's cheeks held great significance for viewers schooled in period literature that placed emphasis on a courting woman's flushed face. Believed to be an involuntary rise of heat that enabled suitors, parents, and community members to discern her true feelings, the blush, especially during the expectation and delay of courtship, also hinted at the erotic encounters that would take place within marriage. Gibbes's flush is still innocent, and, as "fair Virtue's best defense," it symbolizes her modesty. Simultaneously, however, it indicates her growing passions, awakened by her suitor, which will soon find expression in the consummation of marriage. Charlestonians were familiar with analogies between a young woman who "put off" her mask and one who provoked, and perhaps reciprocated, sexual desire. An author writing in the *South Carolina Gazette* in 1753 humorously described the effect that an unmasked woman's blush could have on male spectators. He asked that the city's young women stop donning the cloth masks they often wore in "Defence against the too powerful Influence of the Wind and Sun," a practice also common in England.

Such masks, he complained, denied men "The Sight of . . . a rosy Glow upon the [women's] Countenance." Relating how the vision of a woman's stained cheek "impresses a new Degree of Velocity on the animal Fluids," the author left it "to every Intelligent Reader to determine" what greater sexual or "pleasurable Effects must flow from the same Cause, in Men who are in the very . . . vigor of Age."[29]

Ann Gibbes's seeming unmasking and the blush thus revealed will provoke a similar reaction in her suitors and her eventual husband, leading in time to another unveiling, when she becomes a sexual being. The canvas is in effect both pre- and postliminal; it mediates between two narrative moments, suggesting, but forever delaying, the sitter's future rite of passage. The masquerade portraits, therefore, provided elite Charlestonians with a titillating but safely bounded space to consider the dangers inherent in arousing women's animal natures. The depictions allowed viewers to imagine sitters' incipient sexuality while assuring them that, within the confines of the paintings' frames, the women could not act on their carnal desires. Wollaston's portraits revealed female sensuality and sexual liberty only to ensnare both by imagining the moment when desire would be channeled safely into the procreative limits of marriage. Courtship, like the masquerade, provided elite women with a limited but nevertheless potent opportunity to select a sexual partner. The artist's Charleston depictions celebrated this autonomy even as they reduced and constrained its unsettling power. Removing her mask and announcing her affection, Ann Gibbes relinquishes both her disinterested pose and her power of choice when she, like a masquerader shedding her costume, steps back within the bounds of propriety and patriarchy.[30]

While it is impossible to ascertain who selected Ann Gibbes's pose and costume—the artist, his young sitter, or William Gibbes, her father and the painting's likely patron—the artist's design sources could only have heightened the portrait's association with the pressing need to contain women's sexuality. Gibbes's portrait strongly resembles, in both composition and size, two depictions of scandalous English beauties painted by Joshua Reynolds about 1760, those of courtesan Kitty Fisher and demimondaine Kitty Hunter, seen here in engravings after the portraits (figs. 17, 18). During Wollaston's brief stay in London between the two stages

17 Edward Fisher, after Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Catherine Maria ("Kitty") Fisher*, 1759. Mezzotint, 12⅞ x 8⅞ in. (plate size). Acquired Fleming Collection, National Portrait Gallery, London. Photo © National Portrait Gallery

18 Robert Bowyer Parkes, after Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Catherine Clarke (née Hunter)*, 1865. Mezzotint and stipple engraving, 8⅜ x 6⅜ in. (plate size). National Portrait Gallery, London. Photo © National Portrait Gallery

of his colonial painting tour (1759–ca. 1764), the artist would have witnessed Londoners' fascination with the women's exploits. He doubtless also saw Reynolds's depictions and perhaps even purchased one of the many mezzotints produced after the artist's tremendously popular portrait of Fisher, such as Edward Fisher's, published in 1759 (see fig. 17). Wollaston integrated elements from both women's portraits into his depiction; Gibbes replicates Fisher's pose, seated behind a table with arms crossed in front and hands clasping her forearms, while she reverses Hunter's: holding a mask in one hand, she tilts her head in the opposite direction. For metropolitans, and almost certainly for Charleston's elites who sought to keep informed about the newest London gossip, both sitters epitomized the dangers women's unchecked passions posed to a civilized society. Hunter, an aristocrat, eloped at a masquerade with the married tenth Earl of Pembroke and bore him an illegitimate son, while Fisher rose to prominence as a prostitute favored by elite patrons, achieving celebrity status after a series of satirical broadsheets, poems, and prints lampooned her sexual voracity. Even the Venetian lothario Casanova expressed shock at the courtesan's bodily appetites, recording his disdain on learning that Fisher, displeased with the small payment a lover had proffered, had eaten "a hundred-pound bank note on a slice of buttered bread." Critics worried about the negative example such behavior provided. One commentator remarked that Fisher alone had tempted more impressionable women from virtue "than had been corrupted by all the rakes in town."[31]

19 Anonymous, *Remarkable Characters at Mrs. Cornellys Masquerade*, 1770. Etching, 4¼ x 6⁹⁄₁₆ in. British Museum, London. Photo © Trustees of the British Museum

Borderland Savagism

British perceptions of the colonies as a distant outpost of empire, where heightened passions threatened to triumph over reason, encouraged Americans to scrutinize women's bodies and behaviors, guarding against any slippages into savagery. Colonists depended on women to help maintain civility in an unfamiliar environment. Hopkinson argued, only somewhat facetiously, that were it not for "their connection with the refined sex," men would "wallow in filth, and populous cities would infect the atmosphere with their noxious vapors." It was only women's "attention" that "prevent[ed] men from degenerating into swine." Yet Hopkinson also portrayed colonial women as dangerous creatures whose desires, like those of Kitty Fisher and Kitty Hunter, could render their bodies literally combustible. In a poem published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, the author related a dream in which he discovered a special snuff that enabled him to enter the soul of another person. When he occupied the soul of a female libertine, he discovered that the woman's "palace," or body, bore unmistakable evidence of her "unruly passions," being "so filled with combustibles that I expected every minute it would take fire and be entirely consumed." Hopkinson condemns women's base natures even as he relies on women to counteract the perceived fragility of New World civility.[32]

20 Thomas Jefferys, *Habit of a Nobleman of Virginia*, 1772. Engraving, 11¼ x 7½ in., from *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Ancient and Modern* (London: Thomas Jefferys, 1772), 205. The Library Company of Philadelphia

21 Thomas Jefferys, *Habit of a Lady of Virginia*, 1772. Engraving, 11¼ x 7½ in., from *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Ancient and Modern* (London: Thomas Jefferys, 1772), 206. The Library Company of Philadelphia

At London's masques, by contrast, participants reveled in the opportunity to unleash the constraints of civilized society and temporarily embrace "savagery" by assuming the bodies of Native Americans, Jamaican slaves, or even animals—monkeys, owls, bears, or pigs. A contemporary depiction of a masque, seen in an engraving entitled *Remarkable Characters at Mrs. Cornellys Masquerade* (fig. 19), produced for the *Oxford Magazine* in 1770, shows an event populated with beasts and fantastical American natives; a bear on a chain dominates the foreground, while a Native American, distinguished by his bow and arrow and feathered headdress, is pictured at the middle of the assembly. Londoners adopted the dress of American Indians, both male and female, at masked balls, and popular costume manuals such as Thomas Jefferys's *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Ancient and Modern* (1757–75) illustrated Native American dress for masque-goers to adapt. Jefferys's costumes for *A Nobleman of Virginia* and *A Lady of Virginia* (figs. 20, 21) are taken directly from John White's watercolors, which were included in one of the earliest and most famous accounts of North America, Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of VIRGINIA* (1590).[33] This historical reference assured Londoners that by imitating Jefferys's designs and appearing in animal skins with bared chests, and possibly darkened legs, they accurately re-created Native American dress.

In addition to their choice of costume, London's masqueraders inverted ideals of civility by inciting what novelist Henry Fielding called a "State of wild and Savage Barbarism." Participants abandoned normal codes of social interaction, touching one another with more freedom and intimacy than usual decorum allowed and altering their voices to a distinctive "masquerade speak," which often devolved into

animal growls. Though masqueraders spent most of the evening reversing the civilizing process, moving from politeness to savagery, the masque's conclusion ultimately contributed to participants' "freedom from Barbarity"; at the end of the evening each person relinquished his or her mask and resumed polite behaviors, reaffirming the need to become part of a civil British society. Danger, however, lay in the possibility that participants' embrace of "riot, disorder, and intemperance" during the masque would so arouse their passions that they would be unwilling to resume decorous behavior. Or, as Fielding asserted, masquerades were "as infectious by Example, as the Plague itself by Contact."[34]

The masquerade, then, was hazardous to civility in a metropolitan environment, but to a British audience the colonies were a locale far more unsettling than even the most hallucinatory masked ball. In the British Atlantic imagination, the uneasy borderland of North America constituted a real-life masque, complete with "savage" Others, both Native and African—a place where, it was feared, slippages into barbarity could have irreversible consequences. In his *Life of Johnson*, published in 1791, James Boswell recorded an earlier conversation about colonial women's civility that commingles disguise and the perceived dangers of colonization. Samuel Johnson reminded his friend, "You may remember an officer . . . who had served in America, told us of a woman they were obliged to bind, in order to get her back from the savage life." Boswell responded, "She must have been an animal, a beast." Johnson retorted, "Sir, she was a speaking cat." In Johnson's account, the female colonist became a feral feline, an animal long associated with women's sexuality, not for the purpose of the masquerade but because of the colonial experience. Her savagery unleashed, the woman was unable to return to the civilized state through her own volition.[35]

Charlestonians, despite their financial success and adeptness at adopting the newest British fashions, recognized the limits of their urbane, cultivated environs and feared that the North American landscape and the "savage disposition" of its indigenous inhabitants would lead them into barbarity. In its founding declaration of 1748, the Charleston Library Society reminded readers of the "pity . . . horrour and detestation" members felt on viewing "the naked Indian" and proclaimed it their "duty . . . to prevent our descendants from sinking into a similar situation." South Carolina's elite planter class worried not only about the Cherokee, who remained an actively menacing presence on their frontier until 1761, attacking forts and scalping frontier settlers, but also the uncouth and potentially rebellious slaves who surrounded them, not to mention the wild, subtropical landscapes they believed threatened their health and their politeness.[36] The questions posed by Wollaston's portraits mattered deeply in this colonial context and were those of the masquerade itself: What became of civility in the presence of unbridled sexuality, where did real identity reside, and how did the presence of the Other unleash dangerous behavior in previously civilized men and, more important, in women?

Unmasking

Beyond its association with courtship, Ann Gibbes's mask links her portrait to larger transatlantic debates about the nature of selfhood and the malleability of civility that concentrated on the masque. The dramatic shifts in identity at the masked ball made the masquerade a popular topos for authors to consider the transience of identity and the feasibility of discerning character from outward appearance. If at the masquerade, as Addison noted,

"Women changed into Men . . . Ladies of the Night into Saints [and] People of first Quality into Beasts," commentators wondered what relationship a person's exterior appearance bore to his or her character and to what extent identity could be manipulated. Several eighteenth-century writers negotiated this dilemma by maintaining that the masquerade merely rendered a person's character more legible, since the choice of a costume revealed his or her vices and virtues. An author in the *Connecticut Courant* summarized in 1769, "in all masquerades . . . persons assume the characters that are most natural to their dispositions." For others, however, the masque highlighted the dangerous possibility of a person assuming an appearance that diverged markedly from his or her true civility. One popular stage character remarked, in a masquerading era, "There's no knowing a Man by his Face; he always wears two."[37]

When placed against the backdrop of these conversations, Wollaston's portrayal of Ann Gibbes as a masquerader offers a meditation on the looseness of identity revealed at the masquerade that made both the civilizing and uncivilizing processes possible. The portrait is especially effective at denying the spectator a vantage point from which to understand the sitter's nature. Neither her pose nor her coquettish but slightly mysterious expression indicates whether Gibbes is about to reveal or conceal her identity; she could be donning her mask in preparation for her entrance to a ball or removing it in the ritual unmasking that concluded the evening. The portrait leaves the viewer, like the sitter, in an infinitely suspended state of waiting, unable to resolve the question of which identity Gibbes will ultimately assume, the civilized woman who stands before us with her sexuality tantalizingly evident but still contained, or the dangerous masquerader, symbolized by the black mask she grasps, whose libidinal energy is let free. The visual contrast between Gibbes's fair skin and the blackness of her mask heightens the disjunction between these two extremes of behavior by playing on long-standing associations of whiteness with purity and blackness with sin, connotations that were especially strong for Charlestonians who linked white skin with civility and dark skin with the lasciviousness they believed to be characteristic of African American slaves. Wollaston's fantastical doubling of white and black, virginal and debauched, unmasked and masked conjoins paradoxical civilities and refuses to reconcile them. The painting is in effect a double portrait: two portraits of one woman and one portrait of two characters. Gibbes's depiction replicates the phantasmagoric flux of identity at the masque and leaves the sitter's true persona unknowable.[38]

Yet Ann Gibbes's mercurial identity at an imagined masquerade is only an extreme example of any person's ability to be improved on or harmed through deeds, clothing, and environment. Drawing on a familiar trope, an author writing in the *South Carolina Gazette* reminded Charlestonians in 1754, "Human life in some degree resembles a masquerade." All colonists, then, could be understood to masquerade daily; Americans may appear civilized, but, as Hopkinson noted, they were threatened by heightened passions that could easily overrule politeness at any time. Contradictory ideas of true identity and disguise, mutability and permanence, locked colonists into what many deemed to be an eternal masquerade of civility, in which each new "mask" revealed the "true" self, yet no "disguise" could be assured of permanence. The dialectical confusion enacted by Wollaston's portrait of Gibbes cannot be resolved any more than civility could be permanently achieved in the colonies, where elites believed "savage" desires

within and "savage" peoples without constantly imperiled their politeness. Rather than the traditional portrayal of a fixed persona, Gibbes's depiction can be seen as a portrait of metamorphosis that reminds the viewer of the potentials for civility and savagery that coexisted uneasily in any colonist.[39]

In these Charleston portraits Wollaston used the painted bodies of courting women, caught between innocence and sexual awakening, to reconcile theories generated in the metropole about women's passions with the heightened demands of a North American environment, and to question any woman's ability to achieve, and a portrait's means to record, a polite persona. Charlestonians adopted the masquerade portrait because it allowed them to proclaim their Britishness, but, perhaps more important, because it enabled them to question the constructed nature of that Britishness—the system of civility that bound colonists to the metropole and distinguished them from indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans—even as colonists' position at the periphery rendered their morality suspect and vulnerable. By placing Ann Gibbes's portrait within a transatlantic context, we gain a tantalizing glimpse of the role colonial portraits could play in providing colonists a site to express the New World's potential to disrupt the civilized self.

Notes

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1 For *Ann Gibbes*, see "Ann Gibbes," in *Early American Paintings in the Worcester Art Museum*, Worcester Art Museum, David R. Brigham, project manager, www.worcesterart.org/Collection/Early_American (accessed June 21, 2006). See also Richard H. Saunders and Ellen G. Miles, *American Colonial Portraits: 1700–1776* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Portrait Gallery, 1987), 181–82.

2 For London's masquerades, see esp. Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1986). For mock-carnivals, see ibid., 21, and for Heidegger's Midnight masques, 10.

3 For the English tradition of depicting men and women in masque-inspired dress, see Aileen Ribeiro, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730 to 1790, and Its Relation to Fancy Dress in Portraiture* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984). For Van Aken's studio, see Ellen Miles, "Thomas Hudson (1701–1779): Portraitist to the British Establishment" (PhD diss., Yale Univ., 1976). For Wollaston's possible training with Van Aken, see Saunders and Miles, *American Colonial Portraits*, 177–79.

4 On Charlestonians' preference for English goods, see Maurie D. McInnis, *In Pursuit of Refinement: Charlestonians Abroad, 1740–1860* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1999). For the argument that colonial masquerade portraits are solely emulative of metropolitan models, see Aileen Ribeiro, "'The Whole Art of Dress': Costume in the Work of John Singleton Copley," in Carrie Rebora and Paul Staiti et al., *John Singleton Copley in America* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 106–7. See also Carrie Rebora Barratt, *John Singleton Copley and Margaret Kemble Gage: Turkish Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (San Diego: Putnam Foundation, 1998), 27–28.

5 For the role of the portrait in colonial America, see Wayne Craven, *Colonial American Portraiture: The Economic, Religious, Social, Cultural, Philosophical, Scientific, and Aesthetic Foundations* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986); T. H. Breen, "The Meaning of 'Likeness': Portrait Painting in an Eighteenth-Century Consumer Society," in *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America*, ed. Ellen Miles (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1993), 37–60; Paul Staiti, "Character and Class: The Portraits of John Singleton Copley," in *Reading American Art*, ed. Marianne Doezema and Elizabeth Milroy (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1998), 12–37; and Margaretta M. Lovell, *Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans, and Patrons in Early America* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

6 For John Wollaston, see esp. Wayne Craven, "John Wollaston: His Career in England and New York City," *American Art Journal* (November 1975): 19–31; Carolyn J. Weekley, "John Wollaston, Portrait Painter: His Career in Virginia, 1754–1758" (MA thesis, Univ.

of Delaware, 1976). For the need to rectify a northeastern regional perspective, see Maurie D. McInnis, "Little of Artistic Merit? The Problem and the Promise of Southern Art History," *American Art* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 11–25. Others urging an Atlantic world approach in art history include Wendy Bellion, "The Return of the Eighteenth Century: Introduction and Overview," *American Art* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 2–10. See also John Davis, "The End of the American Century: Current Scholarship on the Art of the United States," *Art Bulletin* 85 (September 2003): 543–80. For the model of the Atlantic world, see Bernard Bailyn, "The Idea of Atlantic History," *Itinerario* 20 (1996): 19–44. See also Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006): 722–57.

7 For traveler Johann David Schoepf's assessment of Charleston, see *Travels in the Confederation (1783–1784)*, ed. and trans. Alfred J. Morrison, 2 vols. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 2:167–68. Quotations from the *Boston Evening Post and General Advertiser*, July 13, 1752, 12, and the *Virginia Gazette*, January 24, 1753, 31–32, are found in *The Performing Arts in Colonial American Newspapers, 1690–1783, Text Database and Index*, ed. and comp. Mary Jane Corry, Kate Van Winkle Keller, Robert M. Keller (New York: Univ. Music Editions, 1997), CD-ROM. For elite Charlestonians' leisure activities, see Hennig Cohen, *The South Carolina Gazette, 1732–1775* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1953), 71–91. On Charleston's 1801 public masquerade, see the *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* January 12, 1801, cited in "Ann Gibbes." For the portrait of Robert Carter III, see *Virginia's Colonial Dynasties*, Virginia Historical Society online exhibition, www.vahistorical.org/dynasties/ (accessed June 21, 2006).

8 For the term "transmedia," see Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), 11–12. On the popularity of Hogarth's prints in the colonies, see Joan Dolmetsch, "Prints in Colonial America Supply and Demand in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," in *Prints in and of America to 1850*, ed. John B. Morse (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press for the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1970), 53–74, esp. 54. For the importation of Hogarth's prints into Charleston, see Cohen, *South Carolina Gazette*, 145. On Chelsea masqueraders, see John C. Austin, *Chelsea Porcelain at Williamsburg* (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1977), 130–33, 140–46. Since no provenance is attached to these figurines, it is impossible to know whether they were used in the colonies, but Chelsea examples appear in colonial inventories; see Stephen E. Patrick, "A Maryland Grouping of Bow and Derby Figures of the 1760s," in *Ceramics in America*, ed. Robert Hunter (Madison, Wis.: Chipstone Foundation, 2003), 249–51. For *Romeo and Juliet*, see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 7, 1732, 12, and February 12, 1767, 33. For the waxworks display, see *Boston Chronicle*, February 22–29, 1768, 98, and *South Carolina Gazette*, August 8, 1768, 24. For eighteenth-century authors' obsession with the masquerade, see Dror Wharman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2004), 159. See also Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*, 113–15. For "masquerade mad," see *Boston Evening Post*, January, 1779, 223. All newspaper citations in *Performing Arts in American Colonial Newspapers*.

9 For the portrait of Rebecca Bee Holmes, see Louis A. Shepherd, *A Summary Catalogue of the Collection at the Mead Art Gallery* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1978), 216. On Charlestonians' libraries, see Richard Beale Davis, *A Colonial Southern Bookshelf: Reading in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1979). Quotation from the *Spectator*, no. 8, March 9, 1711.

10 For the characteristics of Vandyke dress, see Ribeiro, *Dress Worn at Masquerades*. See also Emilie E. S. Gordenker, *Van Dyck and the Representation of Dress in Seventeenth-Century Portraiture* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2001), esp. 77. For Vandyke dress details corresponding to Wollaston's portraits, see Ribeiro, *Dress Worn at Masquerades*, 36, 160, 162, 169, 172–74, 183, 185. Horace Walpole quoted in "Hannah Babcock (Mrs. John Bours)," in *Early American Paintings in the Worcester Art Museum*.

11 For the Elizabeth Izard Blake portrait, see James Thomas Flexner, *First Flowers of Our Wilderness: American Painting in the Colonial Period* (1947; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 192. For the portraits of John and Mary Ross Beale, see John Bivins and Forsyth Alexander, *The Regional Arts of the Early South: A Sampling from the Collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press for the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1991), 85. In addition to the portraits discussed here, see *A Lady*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1960-687; Anderson Galleries, New York, Neltnor Sale, November 18, 1926; and Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, February 17, 1982. Laura K. Mills discovered these; see Laura Mills to Martha Rowe, March 23, 1999, Catalogue of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts. The portraits of Harriott Lucas Pinckney and Rebecca Izard Campbell have been lost; for both, see Harriott Horry Ravenel, *Eliza Pinckney* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), 231, 241.

12 For the Cornelia Beekman Walton portrait, see *A Catalogue of American Portraits in The New-York Historical Society*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press for the New-York Historical Society, 1974), 2:852–53. For the costumes in Wollaston's portraits, see Claudia Brush Kidwell, "Making Choices: The Real and Pictorial Dresses of Margaret Marston Philipse Ogilville (1729–1807)," in *The Forty-fourth Washington Antiques Show* (Washington, D.C.: Board of Development of the Hospital for Sick Children, 1999), 86–93, esp. 90. See also Leslie Kaye Reinhardt, "Fabricated Images: Invented Dress in British and Colonial American Portraiture" (PhD diss., Princeton Univ., 2003), 303–9.

13 For fictional dress in early American portraiture, see Claudia Kidwell, "Are Those Clothes Real? Transforming the Way Eighteenth-Century Portraits Are Studied," *Dress* 24 (1997): 3–24. See also Leslie Reinhardt, "Serious Daughters: Dolls, Dress, and Female Virtue in the Eighteenth Century," *American Art* 20, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 33–55. For Copley's and Blackburn's use of imaginary dress, see Ribeiro, "'The Whole Art of Dress,'" 103–16.

14 For the relation between disguise and gender in eighteenth-century portraiture, see Gill Perry, "Women in Disguise: Likeness, the Grand Style,

and the Conventions of 'Feminine' Portraiture in the Work of Sir Joshua Reynolds," in *Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture*, ed. Perry and Michael Rossington (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994), 18–38. For the colonies, see Deborah I. Prosser, "'The Rising Prospect or the Lovely Face': Conventions of Gender in Colonial American Portraiture," in *Painting and Portrait Making in the American Northeast*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston Univ. Press for the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 1995), 181–200.

15 Samuel Johnson quoted in Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600–1800* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 179. For civility, see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Urizen Books, 1978); and Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). On savagery, see Bernard W. Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980).

16 Addison from the *Spectator* quoted in Terry Castle, "Eros and Liberty at the English Masquerade," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 156–74, at 156. Castle quotes at length from Thornton's essay, which originally appeared in *Connoisseur*, no. 85 (September 11, 1754), in *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 21–22.

17 For Hogarth's *Masquerade Ticket*, see Castle, *Female Thermometer*, 28. See also Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth's Graphic Works* (London: Print Room, 1989), 70–71.

18 William Byrd, *The London Diary, 1717–1721 and Other Writings*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958), 108.

19 For the sexualized experience of the masquerade, see Castle, *Female Thermometer*, 89–90. *Weekly Journal*, April 19, 1718, in Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*, 39. For prints of Iphigenia, see Sheila O'Connell, *London 1753* (London: British Museum Press, 2003), 227–28. On the relationship between the visibility of the female body and the masquerade, see Sophie Carter, "'This Female Proteus': Representing Prostitution and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century English Popular Print Culture," *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (1999): 57–79.

20 Francis Hopkinson, "Verses Inscribed to Mr. Wollaston," *American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle for the British Colonies* 1, no. 12 (September 1758): 607–8. For Hopkinson's poem and related examples, see Jessie Poesch, "'In Just Lines to Trace'—the Colonial Artist, 1700–1776," in Miles, *The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America*, 38–61, 76. For the Mary Willing portrait, see *Virginia's Colonial Dynasties*.

21 For the connoisseur in relation to the dangers of consumption, see John Brewer, "'The Most Polite Age and the Most Vicious': Attitudes towards a Culture as Commodity, 1600–1800," and Ann Bermingham, "Elegant Females and Gentlemen Connoisseurs: The Commerce in Culture and Self-Image in Eighteenth-Century England," both in *The Consumption of Culture, 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed. Bermingham and Brewer (London: Routledge, 1995), 341–58 and 489–513. On the uncovering of the female body as proof of the passions within, see Elizabeth Hunt, "A Carnival of Mirrors: The Grotesque Body of the Eighteenth-Century British Masquerade," in *Lewd and Notorious: Female Transgression in the 18th Century*, ed. Katharine Kittredge (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2003), 94–96. For costume details that give a sexual nature to Wollaston's portraits, see Reinhardt, "Fabricated Images," 305–9. Wollaston painted both Jane Bowles Wormeley and Jane Bolling Randolph Walke in Virginia.

22 For Ann Gibbes, see "Robert Gibbes, Governor of South Carolina, and Some of His Descendants," comp. Henry S. Holmes, *South Carolina Biographical and Genealogical Magazine* 12, no. 2 (April 1911): 84. For changing courtship practices, see Ruth Bernard Yeaznell, *Fictions of Modesty* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), esp. chap. 3.

23 "The LADIES *Complaint,*" *South Carolina Gazette*, June 29, 1734, in Cohen, *South Carolina Gazette*, 200. For elite women's courtship in the colonies, see Nicole Eustace, "'The Cornerstone of a Copious Work': Love and Power in Eighteenth-Century Courtship," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 3 (2001): 517–46. For the colonial quotation, see Eustace, 534. On concealment as a strategy, see ibid., 534–36. Catherine Craft-Fairchild, *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century Fictions by Women* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1993).

24 See Harriott Pinckney Letterbook, 1763–1767 11/332/8, Pinckney-Lowndes Papers, Harriott Horry Ravenel Family Papers, 1694–ca. 1935 (1806.00), South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina. See also Ravenel, *Eliza Pinckney*, 232–33.

25 For quotations, see Harriott Pinckney Letterbook.

26 For Wollaston's portrait of Mary "Polly" Golightly, see Anna Wells Rutledge, *Artists in the Life of Charleston: Through Colony and State from Restoration to Reconstruction* (1949; repr., Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1980), 174. On the influence of changes in family structure on portraiture, see Margaretta M. Lovell, "Reading Eighteenth-Century American Family Portraits: Social Images and Self-Images," *Winterthur Portfolio* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 243–63.

27 For Mary "Polly" Golightly Huger, see "Dr. Anthony Cordes and Some of His Descendants," comp. Emma B. Richardson, *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 48, no. 3 (1942): 153. For the quoted correspondence, see Harriott Pinckney Letterbook. Quotation from Edward Moore, *Popular Fables for the Female Sex* (London, 1744), in Yeaznell, *Fictions of Modesty*, 37. For the connections among elite Charleston women, see Cara Anzilotti, "Autonomy and the Female Planter in Colonial South Carolina," *Journal of Southern History* 63, no. 2 (May 1997): 239–68, esp. 264.

28 Quotation from Ravenel, *Eliza Pinckney*, 234–35. For Golightly's obituary, see "Death Notices from the South Carolina and American General Gazette and Its Continuation The Royal Gazette, May 1766–July 1782," comp. Mabel L. Webber, *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 17 (1916): 46.

29 Quotation from Thomas Marriott, *Female Conduct: Being an Essay on the Art of Pleasing; To Be Practiced by the Fair Sex, before, and after Marriage* (London, 1759), in Yeaznell, *Fictions of Modesty*, 71. Quotation from the *South Carolina Gazette*, November 16, 1753, in Cohen, *South Carolina Gazette*, 214–15. For cloth masks in Charleston, see Gail Gibson, "Costume and Fashion in Charleston, 1769–1782," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82, no. 3 (July 1981): 236–37.

30 For the blush, see Yeaznell, *Fictions of Modesty*, 71–77. See also Angela Rosenthal, "Visceral Culture: Blushing and the Legibility of Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century British Portraiture," *Art History* 27, no. 4 (September 2004): 563–92. My argument is indebted to Marcia Pointon's similar reading of British female portraits of the period; see Pointon, *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession, and Representation in English Visual Culture, 1665–1800* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 175, 178–79, 195–97, 216.

31 For Wollaston's return to London during these years, see Jennifer Van Horn, "The Object of Civility and the Art of Politeness in British America (1740–1780)" (PhD diss., Univ. of Virginia, 2009), 159–61. For Reynolds's portraits, see *Reynolds*, ed. Nicholas Penny (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), 193–96, 211–12. For Fisher, see Marcia Pointon, "The Lives of Kitty Fisher," *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27 (2004): 77–97. For Hunter, see Kate Redford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2006), 112–13. On the popularity of Fisher's portrait and for Hunter's elopement, see Angela Rosenthal, "The Fall and Rise of Kitty Fisher: Joshua Reynolds and the Sitter's Share," in *Framing Women: Changing Frames of Representation from the Enlightenment to Postmodernism*, ed. Sandra Carroll, Birgit Pretzsch, and Peter Wanger (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2003), 53–77, esp. 54, 62–64. Casanova quoted in Pointon, "Lives of Kitty Fisher," 78. Critic of Fisher from the *Town and Country Magazine* of 1770 quoted in Rosenthal, "Fall and Rise," 57.

32 Francis Hopkinson, *The Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings of Francis Hopkinson, Esq.*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1792), 1:61–62 and 2:162–65. For debates about women's role in civilizing, see Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993).

33 For the inversion of standards of behavior at the masquerade, see Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*, 27, 36–37, 53–55, 74, 113. For descriptions of these masquerade characters, see *London Weekly Journal*, February 15, 1718, quoted in Wharman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 159, and *Virginia Gazette*, July 30, 1772, 41. For painted skin at the masquerade, see Castle, "Eros and Liberty," 166. John White joined expeditions to Virginia between 1584 and 1590 and is famous for being the first Englishman to record North America's flora and fauna in addition to depicting the Algonquian Indians. For White, see Kim Sloan, *A New World: England's First View of America* (London: British Museum Press, 2007).

34 Quotations from Henry Fielding, *Charge Delivered to the Grand Jury* (1749) and *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Last Increase of Robbers* (1751), both quoted in Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*, 190.

35 For the impact that the formation of empire had on formulations of gender and constructions of Englishness, see Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003). Johnson quoted in ibid., 21, 26. For a view of the American colonies as dangerous and liminal places, see ibid., 1–6. See also Kenneth A. Lockridge, "Colonial Self-Fashioning: Paradoxes and Pathologies in the Construction of Genteel Identity in Eighteenth-Century America," in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America,* ed. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1997), 274–342.

36 For Charlestonians' fears about their slaves, Native Americans, and the climate, see S. Max Edelson, "The Nature of Slavery: Environmental Disorder and Slave Agency in Colonial South Carolina," in *Cultures and Identities in Colonial British America*, ed. Robert Olwell and Alan Tully (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2006), 21–44. See also Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1660–1717* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2002), esp. 345–57. Declaration of the Charleston Library Society quoted in James Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers: Transatlantic Literary Community and the Charleston Library Society, 1748–1811* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2002), 43.

37 Joseph Addison, *Guardian* 154 (September 7, 1713), quoted in Wharman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 161. Quotation from the *Connecticut Courant*, March 6, 1769, 31. For the use of the masquerade to consider identity, see Wharman, 181–85. Quotation from *The Country Coquet; or, Miss in Her Breeches. Ballad Opera . . . by a Young Lady* (London, 1755), in Wharman, 167.

38 My argument for the uncanny doubling in Gibbes's portrait derives from Terry Castle's analysis of the masquerade's function in the eighteenth-century novels *Pamela* and *Amelia*; see Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*, 171–75, 227–28, 248–50. For ideas about race, see Kathleen Brown, "Early Modern Concepts of Race," in *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1800*, ed. Michael Daunton and Rick Halpern (London: UCL Press, 1999), 88–91; and Roxanne Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

39 *South Carolina Gazette*, January 29–February 5, 1754, in *Performing Arts in Colonial American Newspapers*.