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# Visualising Elite Political Women in the Reign of Queen Charlotte, 1761–1818

Volume I

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Doctor of Philosophy in History of Art

University of Edinburgh

2017



## Declaration

This is to certify that that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, except as specified.

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Heather Carroll  
March 2017



## Abstract

This thesis examines the visual representations of elite women, who wielded and were seen to transgress, gendered political roles through their activity in the elite socio-political spheres of eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Britain. In analysing the portraits and satirical prints of this select breed of women, this study questions the common bifurcation of gender debates in existing secondary literature, which include, but are not limited to, the porosity of traditionally conceived public and private spheres, contested masculine and feminine identities, and the gendering of morals and vices. The study will explore how predominantly male artists represented these women alongside an examination of how elite women were able to manipulate and choreograph their own portrayal. As such, it will probe how these political women utilised portraiture as a crucial means of self-fashioning; and likewise how their satirical representation was routinely subjugated to the male gaze. In doing so, it will reveal the varieties, vagaries and subtleties of the political power held by women and how this could be iterated, celebrated, or criticised in the visual culture of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Britain.

Four case studies form this examination. The first, argues that three women from Rockingham-Whig social networks, Lady Elizabeth Melbourne, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and Hon. Anne Damer, used portraiture as a form of self-fashioning to both celebrate their friendship and declare their burgeoning political agency. Chapter two revisits the 1784 Westminster election, to probe the theme of rivalry in satirical prints representing female canvassers. It argues that the visual vocabulary expressed in such prints pertains to wider cultural debates concerning class and gender that crucially came to a head during this political event. The third chapter introduces the dialogues between portraiture and satirical prints through its examination of the visual media that politicised Scottish Pittite hostess, Jane, Duchess of Gordon. Whilst the duchess used painted portraiture to proclaim her adherence to culturally-inscribed gender roles, satirical prints attacked her for her perceived political access, acquired through her daughters' marriages and through her close proximity with prominent members of the Pittite government. The thesis concludes with a study of arguably the most political woman in the period of study: Queen Charlotte, consort of George III. This chapter revisits her reputation, arguing that a close examination of visual culture reveals that the queen, long thought to be an uncontroversial figure, became deeply problematic after the king's bout with 'madness'.

In seeking to connect the visual aspects of women's political engagement, this thesis expands on previous work in gender, social, cultural, and art histories such as those by Elaine Chalus, Cindy McCreery, Marcia Pointon, and Kate Retford to further our understanding of women's political activity and eighteenth-century visual culture.

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Excerpts from Chapter 3 will appear as ‘The Making and Breaking of Wedlock: Visualizing Jane, Duchess of Gordon *after* marriage’ in the forthcoming *After Marriage in the Long Eighteenth Century* edited by Karl Leydecker and Jenny DiPlacidi, and published by Palgrave Macmillan.

## Abbreviations

BL	<i>British Library</i>
EE	<i>Electronic Enlightenment (digital database)</i>
LWL	<i>Lewis Walpole Library</i>
NA	<i>National Archives</i>
NLS	<i>National Library of Scotland</i>
NPG	<i>National Portrait Gallery, London</i>
NRS	<i>National Records of Scotland</i>
NT	<i>National Trust</i>
RCAHMS	<i>Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland</i>
SNPG	<i>Scottish National Portrait Gallery</i>

## Introduction

The visual representation of elite eighteenth-century British women who engaged with governmental politics is the focus of this thesis. Many visual sources produced between 1761 and 1818, including prints, painted portraits, and satirical prints, articulated both women's political presence and the gender- and class-related fears that the male hegemony held about women's involvement in the polity, the civil organisation of state. Though women were unenfranchised and prevented from holding public office by tradition, by dubbing them as 'political' or a 'politician', this thesis identifies the historical individual as having a semblance of agency in the governance of Britain through the role afforded her by society.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the term 'politics' and its variants that underscore this thesis, unless otherwise noted, pertain to the polity. Despite visual culture's extensive role in representing and actualising women's roles in the eighteenth-century British politics, these depictions have long been under-represented in the academic literature addressing eighteenth-century British women. This introduction will first expand upon its definition of the elite political woman and what roles she was allotted within the patriarchal confines of society. It will then address the media examined throughout the thesis, broaching the theoretical underpinnings that frame this thesis as a whole. Finally, it situates this study within the current historiographic debates concerning gender roles, demonstrating how a visual study of political women is crucial to our understanding of these debates.

Over the past twenty years, elite women's political intervention, long-viewed as a fiction, has become an established fact. Judith S. Lewis observes that as recently as 1989, historians argued that prior to 1883 women did not participate in elections aside from occasional occurrences.<sup>2</sup> Elaine Chalus was one of the first to publish in this field with "That Epidemical Madness": Women and electoral politics in the late

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<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the OED defines a politician as 'A person who is keenly interested in practical politics, or who engages in party politics or political strife'. See, "Politician, n. and adj". OED Online. December 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/146891> (accessed December 11, 2016). As Amanda Vickery points out, before 1832 no law prevented women from voting; rather, tradition discouraged it (2001,). Amanda Vickery, "Introduction," in *Women, Privilege, and Power : British politics, 1750 to the present*, ed. Amanda Vickery (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 6–7.

<sup>2</sup> Judith S. Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism : Gender, class, and politics in late Georgian Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 2.

eighteenth century' (1997), a chapter which immediately negated Marcia Pointon's assertion in *Hanging the Head* (1993) that women's sex excluded them from political groups.<sup>3</sup> Beginning in 1993, Anne Stott, Chalus, Amanda Foreman, Kathryn Gleadle, Sarah Richardson, Amanda Vickery, Lewis, Anna Clark, and Fiona Montgomery began making significant contributions to the field.<sup>4</sup> However, although Amelia Rauser uses visual sources connected to the Duchess of Devonshire's electioneering and its aftermath in her article, 'The Butcher-Kissing Duchess of Devonshire' (2002) to seek the wider socio-cultural implications of female canvassing, and Chalus examines how women used material culture inscribed with political symbolism to politicise spaces in 'Fanning the Flames' (2012), visual culture's role in addressing and negotiating women's political identity has yet to be thoroughly investigated by eighteenth-century scholars. Indeed, one of the few criticisms of Chalus's work, noted by G.M. Ditchfield, is that it lacks engagement with the 'visual aspects' of social politics. Ditchfield argues that 'the splendour of physical settings in which female hostesses operated were themselves frequently the result of female enterprise and amounted to expressions of political status'.<sup>5</sup> While Ditchfield offers Rosemary Baird's architectural/biographical exposé *Mistress of the House* (2003) as a means to rectify this problem, this thesis aims to make the same intervention in terms of visual culture, complementing studies such as Chalus's and Lewis's in demonstrating how

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<sup>3</sup> See Elaine Chalus, "'The epidemical Madness': Women and electoral politics in the late eighteenth century," in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, representations and responsibilities*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Longman, 1997) and Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and social formation in eighteenth-century England* (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 1993), 184.

<sup>4</sup> Notably, Pointon's statement was published in the same year as Anne Stott's article on female canvassing in the 1784 Westminster election, see Anne Stott, "'Female Patriotism': Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and the Westminster Election of 1784," *Eighteenth Century Life* 17, no. 3 (1993). See also Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (London: Harper Collins, 1998); Chalus, "The epidemical Madness," 151–78; Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson, "Introduction The Petticoat in Politics: Women and authority," in *Women in British politics, 1760-1860: The power of the petticoat*, ed. Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Elaine Chalus, "Elite Women, Social politics, and the Political World of Late Eighteenth-Century England," *The Historical Journal* (2000); Amanda Vickery, "Introduction," 1–56; Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*; Anna Clark, "Women in Eighteenth-Century British Politics," in *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment*, ed. Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Elaine Chalus and Fiona Montgomery, "Women and Politics," in *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: An introduction*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005); Elaine Chalus, "Kisses for Votes: The kiss and corruption in eighteenth-century English elections," in *The Kiss in History*, ed. Karen Harvey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> G. M. Ditchfield, "Elaine Chalus, Elite Women in English Political Life, c. 1754-1790," *Parliamentary History* 26 (2007): 254.

political women operated in the visual sphere. It argues that a balanced approach drawing from both formal portraits and satirical prints will negotiate the dialogues and nuances connecting portraiture and prints, yet scholars have been slow to adopt this methodology. This thesis proposes to advance the study of political women in eighteenth-century Britain by bridging how they were represented in both media, thereby offering a comprehensive view of how the elite female politician was forged, functioned, and understood by contemporaries. It contends that visual representations played a crucial role in the identity of these individuals, and therefore must be considered in in order to gain a firm understanding of gender in this complex period.

One of the most articulate examples of the role visual culture played in representing women's place in the polity is *Hints towards a Change in Ministry*, a graphic satire by Isaac Cruikshank (figure 0.1), published on 1 February 1797 by S.W. Fores. The print, measuring 32.1 x 44.2 cm, is divided into two registers of five figures, forming a matrix of ten finely-dressed women. A number accompanies each figure, and a political office, such as 'Chamberlain', is inscribed above her head; a key at the bottom of the composition indexes the women's incomplete honorific titles. In the middle of the index of semi-disguised names, the full print title, *Hints towards a Change of Ministry: Respectfully submitted to the consideration of the ladies of Great Britain* petitions its viewers to take notice of female influence in the polity. Created more than a hundred years before woman would vote or hold a seat in the House of Commons, the satire simultaneously critiques both its subjects, for trespassing on the male-dominated world of Parliamentary politics, and society for permitting such a transgression.<sup>6</sup> As graphic satire was an especially visible medium, Cruikshank's assembled satirical government of recognisable and predominantly aristocratic late-eighteenth-century British women contributed to ongoing debates regarding elite women's roles in society. Each woman this thesis discusses was considered a celebrity or celebrated public figure in her lifetime. Celebrity culture flourished during the reign of Queen Charlotte due to the affluence and influence of print media, and visual representations were particularly instrumental in promoting

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<sup>6</sup> Women over thirty could vote in 1918; the first female Member of Parliament, Viscountess Nancy Astor, took her elected seat the following year.

female public figures.<sup>7</sup> Just as the seemingly distinct fields of art, politics, and celebrity are unified in Cruikshank's print, so too, this thesis shows, are the debates surrounding them.

Cruikshank's print serves as an apt introduction to deciphering how elite women could be politicised through visual culture. The first figure in Cruikshank's composition is Jane, Duchess of Gordon (1748/9–1812); seated at a desk, with a document before her signalling authority in this imagined ministry, she is placed in a prominent position at the top left of the print and the top of the hegemony. Cruikshank dubs her the 'First Lady of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer'. The appointment was a salient designation as Jane was a powerful political hostess whose London home became a venue for Pittite politicians to informally meet and whose advice was otherwise sought by them. The figure sitting across from her, Mary Isabella, Duchess of Rutland (1756–1831), engages Jane in conversation, extending her right arm while holding a closed fan in her left hand. Like Jane, Mary Isabella, whom Cruikshank employs as the 'President of the Council', served as a Pittite political hostess. She was a renowned political patroness, controlling interest in at least six constituencies after the death of her husband in 1787 while her son, the Duke of Rutland, was a minor.<sup>8</sup> Standing to her right, though still shorter and more rotund than the seated Mary Isabella, is the newly titled Albinia, Lady Buckinghamshire (1737/8–1816). Rendered as the 'Lady High Chancellor' and accordingly represented in a judicial wig and robe, she carries the chancellery burse. This sombre status directly contrasts her popular reputation as a gambler, actress in private theatricals, and occasional election canvasser. Cruikshank places Albinia next to the tall and slender figure of the noted beauty Elizabeth, Margravine of Ansbach (1750–1828), further emphasising Albinia's portliness.<sup>9</sup> Equally known for her passion for acting in private theatricals, Elizabeth is assigned

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<sup>7</sup> See Michael Rosenthal, "Public Reputation and Image Control in Late-Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Visual Culture in Britain* 7, no. 2 (2006): 69–71, for print culture's contribution to celebrity culture and Martin Postle et al., *Joshua Reynolds : The creation of celebrity* (London Tate Publishing, 2005), for portraiture's contribution to celebrity culture, and for an overview on celebrity culture in eighteenth-century Britain, see Cheryl Wanko, "Celebrity Studies in the Long Eighteenth Century: An Interdisciplinary Overview," *Literature Compass* 8, no. 6 (2011).

<sup>8</sup> LWL Journal of Lady Mary Coke, 23 December 1789.

<sup>9</sup> Previously, Lady Craven.

as ‘Chamberlain’, a position with jurisdiction over play censorship.<sup>10</sup> The final figure in the top register, Lady Sarah Archer (1741–1801), the ‘Mistress of the Horse’, was frequently lampooned in satirical prints for her gaunt face and hooked nose. Her reputation for unsightliness and cruelty to her daughters were rendered unnatural to her gender in the eyes of the print media; here, she wears in a riding coat and holds a whip, referring to earlier satirical prints that imagined her using her daughters as horses for her carriage.<sup>11</sup> Sarah’s masculinised dress alerted consumers of print media to these gender-crossing transgressions.

The riding coat which Sarah and other women in the print wear was a loaded garment, often ingrained with notions surrounding women’s unnatural adoption of male authority through their adoption of male dress.<sup>12</sup> The derision pertaining to masculinised dress experienced a resurgence in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, a result of what Dror Wahrman terms ‘gender panic’: ‘a pattern of change that, over a relatively short period of time, decisively reversed a variety of interconnected cultural forms through which eighteenth-century Britons signalled their recognition of the potential limitations of gender categories’.<sup>13</sup> Wahrman argues that while a general acceptance of porous gender categories distinguished most of the century, the late 1770s and early 1780s experienced a ‘gender panic’ in which gender play – experimenting or engaging with gender identities – began to be contested and eventually to disappear.<sup>14</sup> There is a palpable distinction between the ‘short eighteenth century’ (1700–c. 1780), which Wahrman terms the *ancien régime* of gender, and the last two decades of the century, a period encompassing two

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<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth’s passion was such that she built a lavish theatre in her home. See Gillian Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations : Viewing the actress in British art and theatre, 1768-1820* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2007), 16–7.

<sup>11</sup> See *The Happy Escape- or Arch- runaway’s* and *The Vain Pursuit* (both 1788), which satirise Lady Archer’s attempts to keep her daughters from marrying due to the daughters being joint beneficiaries of their deceased father’s estate. Cindy McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze : Prints of women in late eighteenth-century England* (Oxford; Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 2004), 197.

<sup>12</sup> See Cally Blackman, "Walking Amazons : The Development of the Riding Habit in England During the Eighteenth Century," *Costume* 35, no. 1 (2001).

<sup>13</sup> Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self : Identity and culture in eighteenth-century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 33–4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–82.

revolutions, both significantly impacting English culture.<sup>15</sup> Acknowledgement of this shift in gender perceptions is pertinent throughout this study, as the images under investigation were created both during the ‘*ancien régime* of gender’ and when gender boundaries began to be reassessed in the 1780s. Though anxieties surrounding perceived masculine women appeared before the 1780s as well, the rise of the press and popularity of graphic satire in this period arguably catalysed the distribution of these views.<sup>16</sup> This, in effect, accelerated the speed in which information was relayed and consumed, thereby increasing the dissemination of gendered anxieties. The inclusion of perceived masculine dress of female riding coats in satirical renderings articulated these gender anxieties. Cruikshank crafted *Hints towards a change of Ministry* in the crisis’s aftermath, when more static gender roles became *de rigueur* and transgressions of those roles caused anxiety and derision, thus making the print a product of this gender crisis.

Despite other scholars noticing a shift in gender categories, many have been hesitant to adopt Wahrman’s theory.<sup>17</sup> Although persuaded by his arguments on gender, there are some difficulties inherent in his theory. As Jill Campbell and Randall McGowen note, Wahrman draws heavily from literary examples, which limits the credibility of his argument.<sup>18</sup> Although fellow-historian Lawrence Klein praises Wahrman for including select visual examples, Wahrman mostly uses these

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<sup>15</sup> During the ‘*ancien régime* of gender’, women could be veiled in traditional masculine accoutrements: memoirs of female soldiers were widely read, successful British queens were hailed for their masculine determination or dubbed as Amazons, and stage actresses could assume ‘breeches roles’ without thought of opprobrium from viewers (Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 1-82).

<sup>16</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) and Bob Harris, "Print Culture," in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. H. T. Dickinson (Oxford; London: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Wahrman has by no means ‘discovered’ the trend which he has termed ‘gender panic.’ Gender historians have also, perhaps unsurprisingly, noted a tilt in the reception of gendered behaviour; see Chalus, "The epidemical Madness," 152–3; "Kisses for Votes," 127; Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 128–31, 150; and McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 147. Gender historians whose work has been informed by Wahrman’s theory of gender panic include Gillian Russell, Amelia Rauser, and Caitlin Blackwell; see Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Amelia Rauser, *Caricature Unmasked : Irony, authenticity, and individualism in eighteenth-century English prints* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 20; and Caitlin Blackwell, "'The Feather'd Fair in a Fright' : The Emblem of the Feather in Graphic Satire of 1776," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 3 (2013): 354.

<sup>18</sup> Karol Berger, Jill Campbell, and Don Herzog, "On Dror Wahrman's *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 152 and Randall McGowen, "Dror Wahrman. *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*," *The Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 01 (2006): 169.



examples as illustrations. A closer engagement with visual media would however, have greatly benefitted his study.<sup>19</sup> This thesis demonstrates how such engagement with visual evidence provides a more complete picture of Wahrman's theory of gender panic by assessing a series of prints related to the 1784 Westminster election. Wahrman also argues that the great satirists, including James Gillray, Thomas Rowlandson, and George Cruikshank, rose to prominence because of a newfound interest in physiognomy; however, Wahrman does not consider the economic and technological advancements that occurred due in part to the ever-increasing (not sudden) popularity and subsequent demand of satirical prints.<sup>20</sup> This study addresses these flaws and expands Wahrman's argument, offering art-historical evidence and methodologies such as visual analysis to show how the gender crisis both was shaped by broader forces than the primarily textual sources Wahrman examines and applies beyond those texts as well.<sup>21</sup>

The second row of figures in Cruikshank's composition commences with the representation of the stage actress Dorothy Jordan (1761–1816), depicted with her hair in loose curls and a similarly casual muslin gown, performing a sailor's jig. Cruikshank includes an officer's hat to further indicate her authoritative position as 'First Lady of the Admiralty', a role he likely assigned the popular actress because of her romantic relationship with William, Duke of Clarence (later William IV, the 'sailor king'), implying that she procured her political power through sexual avenues. Cruikshank allots the next military designation, the 'Secretary of War & Cap<sup>n</sup> of the Guards', to Eglantine, Lady Wallace (d. 1803), who stands with arms akimbo, eyes bulging, and brow furrowed in a dress resembling military uniform. Eglantine, a playwright and sister to the Duchess of Gordon, was so determined to see the proceedings in Parliament (a privilege forbidden to women) that in 1793 she disguised herself in men's clothing to make the attempt.<sup>22</sup> To her right, Emily Mary,

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<sup>19</sup> Lawrence E. Klein, "Book Review: The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 37, no. 4 (2007): 611.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to using visual evidence illustratively, Wahrman's readings of satirical prints as confirmation of eighteenth-century Britons' dependence on physiognomic evidence are erroneous and based on the work of only one scholar, Amelia Rauser.

<sup>21</sup> See McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 14–38 and Rosenthal, "Public Reputation," 61–74.

<sup>22</sup> *Bombay Courier*, 5 January 1793. Nathaniel Wraxall describes witnessing her donning male dress in his memoirs, see Nathaniel William Wraxall and Henry B. Wheatley, *The Historical and the Posthumous Memoirs of Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall, 1772-1784* (London: Bickers & Son, 1884), 48.

Marchioness of Salisbury (1750–1835), displayed in masculinised female dress, is rendered as ‘Mistress of the Buck Hounds’, two of which she restrains effortlessly despite her geriatric appearance. Like Jane, Duchess of Gordon and Mary Isabella, Duchess of Rutland, Emily Mary served as a Pittite political hostess and canvasser; she was also known to print-consumers for her love of the hunt. Standing to her right is Letitia, Lady Lade (d. 1825), the erstwhile courtesan and possible mistress to the Prince of Wales. She is the only woman in the satirised ministry not rendered in profile and instead, directly engages the viewer with flirtatious eye contact. Letitia, a skilled horsewoman, is dubbed ‘Ranger of Hyde Park’. The final and perhaps most cruelly depicted figure is Lady Francis Jersey (1753–1821). Unlike the other women, she was normally associated with Foxite circles. Represented as old and infirm, she squints through thick spectacles at the private letters she carefully opens using steam. Lady Jersey had been conducting an affair with the Prince of Wales since 1793, whilst simultaneously bullying his wife, Caroline of Brunswick. After her interception of the princess’s letters was discovered in 1796, she became a deeply unpopular figure.<sup>23</sup> Cruikshank designates her as ‘Post Master General and Inspector of Mis-sent Letters’.

Cruikshank’s metaphorical identity parade reveals some of the anxieties related to elite or famous women in the public view in 1797, such as meddling in politics, the adoption of masculine behaviour, physical repulsiveness, and deceptive power usurpation. It also introduces some of the Pittite women who feature in this thesis while simultaneously demonstrating that their allegiance to the government faction did not protect them from social critique. Although diverse in geographic and social origins, the print-consuming public’s familiarity with these figures makes them a more natural grouping.<sup>24</sup> Cruikshank’s print implies that their influence in the society had progressed to the point of generating legislative power. *Hints towards a Change of Ministry* responds to this cultural tension surrounding elite women and their roles in the polity. As such, it exposes some of the different avenues in which

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<sup>23</sup> Martin J. Levy, "Villiers, Frances, countess of Jersey (1753–1821)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> It portrays eight English and Scottish aristocrats and one Irish stage actress, at least four of whom came from humble origins. The majority of sitters were Pittites or romantically linked to members of the royal family.

women were perceived to have political intervention, but also how that intervention was interpreted, and furthermore, expressed in a visual medium.

### *Gendering Politics*

#### **Public and Private**

Cruikshank's print censures its female sitters for assuming roles that they were not privileged to occupy on the basis of their gender, yet most of the women acted in socially acceptable roles as hostesses or canvassers, soliciting a necessary examination of the boundaries of women's participation not only in the political sphere but also the public sphere. In the past, historians adopted Jürgen Habermas's framework introduced in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962/1989) to conceptualise gender roles. Habermas advocates a separate spheres model in which women were restricted from participation in the so-called public sphere and limited to a life confined within the home, or the private domestic sphere.<sup>25</sup> Recently, this model has come under scrutiny by gender historians. In *Sacred to Female Patriotism* (2003), which specifically addresses the role of political women in the eighteenth century, Judith S. Lewis argues that Habermas's model 'simply doesn't work' in Georgian Britain because of the absolutist state Habermas outlines in his theory: 'To Georgian aristocrats examined under the microscope,' she argues, 'there seemed little, if any, distinction between public and private life. And it is not only that women refused to stay at home, but that politics also refused to stay "in public"'.<sup>26</sup> Increasingly, historians are moving toward using contemporary sources to locate a reliable model of the public and private spheres, and women's

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<sup>25</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere : An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), 27–43. Habermas defined the public sphere as a site where private (male) citizens came together to discuss the affairs of state outside of official state-mandated venues, therefore raising these venues up to public scrutiny.

<sup>26</sup> Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 8. See also Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history," *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993); Sylvana Tomaselli, "The Most Public Sphere of All: The family," in *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere : 1700-1830*, ed. Elizabeth Eger, et al. (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Lawrence E. Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some questions about evidence and analytic procedure," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 1 (1995).

place within them, as they were understood in the eighteenth century, a pattern this study continues.<sup>27</sup>

One useful resource in locating the eighteenth-century 'public sphere' is the travel diary of Frances or 'Fanny' Crewe (1748–1818), a Foxite canvasser, hostess, advisor, and informant who shared a close friendship with prominent politicians. Upon her arrival in Paris in late December 1785, after describing the gay atmosphere, Fanny avowed, 'I have positively determined however on not making my *public Entry* till I have rested myself a few Days; for my Head turns round with all that I have heard and seen already about the Paris World', indicating that women had a public presence, but it was not in the public sphere that Habermas describes.<sup>28</sup> Crewe's '*public Entry*' was her metaphorical departure from the solitary and quiet confinement of her rented property into the sociable world of the Paris élite, whether through attendance elsewhere or through entertaining guests in her temporary residence. Her diary indicates that, far from a refuge for the 'private', the home was another venue for public activity. Rather than perceiving the private/public as home/not-home as the separate sphere model would dictate, Lawrence Klein asserts that the home should be regarded as 'sociable' rather than public and 'solitary' rather than private in what he terms the 'associative public sphere' model.<sup>29</sup> Public matters constituted 'those that were exposed to the perception of some others or of people in general, while "private" matters were generally imperceptible or kept from the perception of others. The "public" and the "private" were, thus, aligned with the difference between openness and secrecy'.<sup>30</sup> When using the terms 'public' and 'private,' this thesis adheres to Klein's associative public sphere model, which better accounts for elite women's palpable public presence.

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<sup>27</sup> Klein, Amanda Vickery, as well as Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona Ó Gallechoir, and Penny Warburton in their volume *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700–1830* (2001) advocate this approach ("Gender and the Public/Private," 104; Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres," 412; Tomaselli, "Most Public Sphere," 1–9).

<sup>28</sup> BL Add MS 37926. Emphasis original.

<sup>29</sup> Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private," 104–5. In his argument of shifting public spheres, Klein suggests four models of major public spheres that coexisted, but admits that the associative public sphere most closely matches the contemporary notions of public.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Furthermore, these spaces cannot be firmly gendered, as Vickery points out there are several examples of married couples in which the man was particularly home-loving and the woman decidedly publicly active. The Duke and Duchess of Gordon were one such couple; see Elizabeth Grant, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady, 1797–1827* (London: J. Murray, 1950), 41–2 and Rosemary Baird, *Mistress of the House : Great ladies and grand houses, 1670–1830* (London: London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), 225.

Whilst elite women had a public presence, the strict cultural limitations of traditional gender roles still made transgressions inevitable. Some of these limitations were overtly prescribed in conduct manuals or novels, while others were more covertly culturally inscribed and passed down generationally. Within these sources, a separate-spheres model and notions of a private domestic sphere thrive; however, as Amanda Vickery points out in her influential article 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?' (1993), these forms of conduct literature serve us ideologically rather than evidentially, as women did not necessarily follow their advice.<sup>31</sup> Vickery's article not only questions the separate spheres distinction but also draws attention to the difference between how separate spheres were understood in theory and how they were actually practiced.<sup>32</sup> As Nel Whiting and Shearer West demonstrate, portraiture provides one means for negotiating this disparity.<sup>33</sup> In her work on David Allan's conversation pieces, Whiting argues that portraits of women in a domestic setting (that is, either in the home or with children) adhere to the prescribed model of a woman's place in the private domestic sphere; however as instruments of display, portraits and the women portrayed within them became public entities.<sup>34</sup> Display not only bridges the gap between prescribed public and private spheres; it also unifies prescription with reality. This thesis builds on the work of Vickery, Whiting, and West, applying their frameworks to the complex and multifaceted realms of gendered political activity and visual depiction. As such, viewing the concept of 'public' and 'private' in terms of spheres should be preceded with caution unless considering them in terms of prescription rather than reality - in which case the confining concept of 'sphere' as a nomenclature seems apt. The female politician had a rather public

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<sup>31</sup> Tomaselli, "Most Public Sphere," 2 and Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private," 101. As Vickery challenges, 'Just because a volume of domestic advice sat on a woman's desk, it does not follow that she took its strictures to heart, or whatever her intentions managed to live her life according to its precepts' (Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres," 391).

<sup>32</sup> Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres," 385.

<sup>33</sup> Nel Whiting, "Gender and National Identity in David Allan's Small, Domestic and Conversation Paintings," *Scottish Historical Studies Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 34, no. 1 (2014): 20–9 and Shearer West, "The Public Nature of Private Life : The conversation piece and the fragmented family," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18, no. 2 (1995): 153–72.

<sup>34</sup> Whiting, "Gender and National Identity," 27. Furthermore, a woman could utilise her formal depiction in order to publicly cull accusations of transgressions; see Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life : Family portraiture in eighteenth-century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 188–214 and Rosenthal, "Public Reputation," 69–91.

life dictated to her by duty, yet her genteel politicking responsibilities were conspicuously absent from conduct books.

## Political Women

Just as elite women had a public presence, so too could they have a political presence. Firstly, as Queen Consort, Charlotte was the only woman in Britain with an official political role. Despite the objective of the position to be chiefly reproductive, the queen's responsibility in the family governance could occasionally expand into national governance. If a regency needed to be enacted, queen consorts were often the member of the royal family that would act as regent in the absence of the king. Other elite women gained roles through political factions rather than the state-sanctioned positions. This access to the polity may have been indirect, but an examination of visual culture further attests to its existence. Unlike male political roles formed through legislative posts or family dynasties, women's political engagement was frequently forged through sociability.<sup>35</sup> Termed 'social politics' or 'political sociability', this form of political activity centred on the management of people and social situations for political ends.<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, we should view social and political histories less as separate disciplines and more as intimately linked cultural elements, or, as Sean Wilentz urges historians, we should see 'politics as a form of cultural interaction, a relationship (or set of relationships) tied to broader moral and social systems'.<sup>37</sup> In her comprehensive book *Elite Women in English Political Life, c. 1754–1790* (2005), Chalus outlines the multiple avenues via which elite women accessed politics. Chalus maintains that women could engage in political life simply by acting as confidants, advisors, agents, secretaries, or even

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<sup>35</sup> This study adopts Gillian Russell's definition of sociability: 'the practices, behaviours and sites that enable social interaction that were orientated towards the positive goals of pleasure, companionship or reinforcement of family, group and professional identities'. Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 9.

<sup>36</sup> Chalus, "Elite Women, Social Politics," 673.

<sup>37</sup> Sean Wilentz, "Introduction : Teufelsdröckh's Dilemma: On symbolism, politics and history," in *Rites of Power : Symbolism, ritual, and politics since the Middle Ages*, ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 3.

partners to politicians.<sup>38</sup> Wives and mothers most often took up these roles, but many women who interacted with politicians socially also became confidants and advisors.<sup>39</sup> Many of the women who feature in Cruikshank's print were wives or partners and thus took upon these roles. Some, such as Lady Archer, were politicised through being a highly visible member of the ruling classes. Lady Archer's frequent mentions in newspapers and representations in satirical prints transformed her and her actions into a commodity, a topic of public debate. *Hints towards a Change of Ministry* therefore, helps us to clarify the eighteenth-century perspective of how women were perceived to have political agency.

In addition to such quotidian yet politicising roles, women could assume more active positions that imbued them in the political process. Elite women could, and often were encouraged by their family, to canvass for parliamentary candidates in local elections. These candidates could be hand-picked by the landed gentry to represent their interests in Parliament. As the patriarchs of aristocratic families were barred with interfering in these elections, their female family members were employed with the task of ensuring that the family's choice of candidate would be victorious.<sup>40</sup> More ambitious women served as political hostesses by holding informal political meetings, sometimes nightly, in their homes. Such meetings, in which a faction could discuss tactics, debate issues, or recruit members, were critical to the maintenance of the party line. Unlike Parliament, both genders could not only be found at such events, but could also participate in political discourse. Once again, this role grew out a familial responsibility to factional political interests.<sup>41</sup>

Many elite women engaged in political activity without controversy because the particular activity was viewed as an obligation to their family. Lewis contends that, for women of property, politics was a responsibility that came with their privileged position and was 'a facet of their relationships with their families,

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<sup>38</sup> Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754-1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 55–74.

<sup>39</sup> Fanny Crewe was a friend to many in the Whig party and acted as their switchboard, disseminating and collecting political news. See BL Add MS 37926.

<sup>40</sup> See Stott, "Female Patriotism," 63–82; Chalus, "The epidemical Madness," 151–78; Chalus, "Kisses for Votes," 122–6 and Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 45–63. Female electioneering will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

<sup>41</sup> See Chalus and Montgomery, "Women and Politics," 226–7; Chalus, "Elite Women, Social Politics," 685–7; and Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 96–124. The role of the political hostess will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.

neighbors, friends, and dependents'.<sup>42</sup> Chalus concurs, stating that viewing political women's activity in this way rectifies their prescribed place within the domestic sphere:

In the eighteenth century [...] the gap between societal rhetoric about women and the reality of their political involvement was made easier to bridge by the familial nature of politics at the time [...] as such, it could be fitted quite nicely into contemporary beliefs about the importance for women of attention to family and duty.<sup>43</sup>

Elite women's political participation became transgressive only when political activity was interpreted as falling outside of traditional female roles and solely within the realm of personal ambition.<sup>44</sup> *Hints towards a Change in Ministry* displays three political hostesses and at least as many canvassers – roles assumed by women in order to secure their family's political interests but which also granted them agency in the political process.<sup>45</sup> Unlike elected officials or dynastic heirs, this power was acquired indirectly but still granted elite women various points of access to politics.<sup>46</sup> The inseparability of family from politics further testifies to Wilentz's assertion that politics has a firm place in cultural history. Accordingly, as Chalus fervently argues, through expanding our understanding of politics to include socio-cultural elements, we can fully incorporate women into the political spectrum of the eighteenth century.<sup>47</sup> This study is located precisely at this intersection of culture, society, and art.

Although this thesis focuses on socio-cultural outcomes rather than political ends, in order to best classify how this social, familial, and indirect female activity affects politics, it adopts a model of power from political scientist Joseph Nye. Women's political agency is a form of soft power (in contrast to the hard power of official legislative process), which Nye argues is as much of a cohesive player in political action as the more palpable 'command' power.<sup>48</sup> This fundamental construct upholds Chalus' position that politics is an art rather than a science: it does not

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<sup>42</sup> Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 40.

<sup>43</sup> Chalus, "Kisses for Votes," 126.

<sup>44</sup> Chalus and Montgomery, "Women and Politics," 219–20.

<sup>45</sup> Although family obligation was the gateway into politics, the most successfully political women had personal interest in governmental politics.

<sup>46</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, 8.

<sup>47</sup> Chalus, "Elite Women, Social Politics," 687.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (1990): 166–7.



follow a prescribed set of rules, but rather is ‘shaped by intangible elements’ – a set of mercurial processes which take place both inside and outside official venues such as Parliament.<sup>49</sup> Women’s political participation is such an ‘intangible element’, and its indirect activity contributed to the rhetorical tributaries flowing into the larger river of legislative outcomes.<sup>50</sup> This available agency was wrought through multiple avenues, allowing elite women to actively participate in politics, even to the point of becoming welcome members of political groups in which they could nourish and develop their party’s programmes.

### *Media: The Politics of Representation*

#### **Satirical Prints**

As indicated by the discussion of Cruikshank’s *Hints towards a Change of Ministry*, this study relies on satirical prints as a form of historical evidence, however, as with any form of print media, satirical prints must be approached with scholarly nuance.<sup>51</sup> A brief account of graphic satire’s placement within eighteenth-century British culture both attests to its historic use and raises points of caution. Prints such as *Hints towards a Change of Ministry* are visual objects rife with opinion, moral messages and principles. However, these messages rarely contained the satirical artist’s

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<sup>49</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, 5 and “Elite Women, Social Politics,” 674. The intangible elements Chalus offers: personality, appearance, influence, and the creation and manipulation of belief and atmosphere.

<sup>50</sup> For example, Lady Jersey, while the Prince of Wales’s mistress, convinced him to marry Caroline of Brunswick, see Levy, “Villiers, Frances, countess of Jersey (1753–1821),”. See also the Duchess of Devonshire’s 1784 Westminster canvas: Stott, “Female Patriotism,”; Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 136–59; and Chalus, “Kisses for Votes,” 126–7.

<sup>51</sup> A note on terminology: although sometimes referred to as ‘caricature’, this genre of prints will be referred to as ‘satirical prints’ or ‘graphic satire’. Caricature is associated with the ridicule of physical appearance rather than the content or context of the imagery; see McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 7 and Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature : Satirical prints in the reign of George III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 9–15. ‘Print media’, coined by William B. Warner, encompasses items in the printed medium such as newspaper, novels, and graphic satire, as well as acts of participation with them, such as reading, publishing, and sales. This term emphasises the circulation and portability of printed works, which contributes to what Warner terms ‘print-media culture’. William Beatty Warner, *Licensing Entertainment : The elevation of novel reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 126.

personal views.<sup>52</sup> Prints criticising legislative matters or the character of a politician were often suggested or commissioned by a rival politician or even a political party.<sup>53</sup> This in turn meant that in their professional capacity, satirists expressed the full range of political opinion. Unlike influential political cartoonists in the following century such as Thomas Nast (1840–1902), satirists at this time were professionally impartial, mercenaries never committing to issues taken up by a single faction.<sup>54</sup> Artists such as Cruikshank made a name for themselves through their artistic skill and sharp wit, which embellished others' commissioned ideas.<sup>55</sup> Print production was a collaborative effort from start to finish. The majority of satirical prints featured in this thesis were produced by publishers in the West End of London from the late 1770s onward. This neighbourhood was at the vanguard in producing graphic satires of well-known social and political figures. Not coincidentally, the main purchasers of this genre of satirical prints, the *ton*, or fashionable set, generally resided in this area during the parliamentary season.<sup>56</sup> Most graphic satires examined in this study are etchings, although satirical print production also encompassed mezzotint drolls and line engravings.<sup>57</sup>

The print process involved many hands. After first sketching out the image on paper, the satirist, using an etching needle, would commit it to a copper plate covered in a thin coating of wax. The plate was then immersed in acid which would bite into exposed metal, partially dissolving it.<sup>58</sup> Once the wax was cleared, ink was applied

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<sup>52</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 23–7.

<sup>53</sup> Tim Clayton, *Caricatures of the Peoples of the British Isles* (London: British Museum Press, 2007), 11. Likewise, individuals could commission scathing prints of those who personally offended them outside of the political realm. Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull : Political caricature and national identity in late Georgian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 6.

<sup>54</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 26–7. Thomas Nast was a German-American political cartoonist who famously was instrumental in the downfall of the corrupt politician 'Boss' Tweed (William M. Tweed) and his political party, Tammany Hall, in the early 1870s.

<sup>55</sup> Satirists were paid per executed plate, approximately 25–30 shillings per plate before 1813. At this time Cruikshank's sons (Isaac Robert and George) began charging three guineas per plate (Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 7–8).

<sup>56</sup> For example, Samuel Fores was located in Piccadilly, Hannah Humphrey (and thereby James Gillray) moved from Old Bond Street to New Bond Street before finally settling at St James Street, William Holland was on Drury Lane before moving to Oxford Street, and Rudolph Ackerman was situated on the Strand. Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter : Sex and satire in eighteenth-century London* (New York: Walker & Co., 2007), 58. In contrast, Carington Bowes, who produced mezzotint drolls that generally did not depict specific individuals, had a prints shop located in St Paul's Church Yard (McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 25). See Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde : Fashionable society in Georgian London* (2013) for a study of the *ton*.

<sup>57</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 22.

<sup>58</sup> Clayton, *Caricatures*, 11.

and the image was printed on paper via a rolling press; normally a printer would be employed for this task. Approximately 500–1,200 prints could be produced per plate.<sup>59</sup> Afterward, colourists employed by the publisher added washes to the print; these colour-washed prints were sold for about a shilling, as opposed to about sixpence for the uncoloured prints.<sup>60</sup> The multiple hands which contributed in producing the prints meant that the average person could not afford them; they were not, however, entirely inaccessible to the humbler classes. As Cindy McCreery suggests, they were sometimes purchased jointly by less advantaged consumers.<sup>61</sup>

The satirical print market targeted the educated classes, typically those from the middle and upper classes, as purchasers.<sup>62</sup> Tamara L. Hunt maintains that the print output drastically increased during parliamentary sessions, indicating that the arrival of the elite in London produced both more business for publishers and more inspiration for prints depicting social and political figures.<sup>63</sup> Although predominately men purchased satirical prints, both genders enjoyed them, as evidenced by the owners of surviving collections, including Sarah Sophia Banks, whose personal accumulation of satire forms the basis of the British Museum's extensive collection. Vic Gatrell brashly asserts that prints were produced with male humour in mind; however this would not explain the large number of prints related to women's fashion or perhaps even the sardonic subheading of Cruikshank's print.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, as this thesis maintains, women's interests could fall outside of those traditionally associated with their gender. One example originates from an unlikely source: Lady Mary Coke, whose letter-journal (1766–1791) provides indispensable insight into events and figures in popular society and reveals that the author viewed herself as a paragon of propriety. On 3 July 1788 she wrote of a satirical print depicting an event that she had recently been writing to her sisters about: 'there is a print come out of the Prince of Wales and Mrs Fitzherbert falling out of the chaise

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<sup>59</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 7. The plates could be touched up or a second edition made if it was a popular print.

<sup>60</sup> Clayton, *Caricatures*, 11 and John Richard Moores, *Representations of France in English satirical prints 1740-1832* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 4. This increased to one shilling for uncoloured and two shillings for coloured in 1800. Gillray prints could be over three shillings (Moores, *Representations of France*, 4).

<sup>61</sup> McCreery 2004, 37.

<sup>62</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 31.

<sup>63</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 9.

<sup>64</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 14.

I've bought it for Lady Greenwich [her sister]'.<sup>65</sup> This is one of the few surviving examples of contemporaries recording their interaction with satirical prints; it reveals Lady Mary as a purchaser, consumer, and donor, and it evidences women's engagement in the consumption of print culture.<sup>66</sup>

The consumers of prints were not necessarily also the purchasers. Graphic satires, though ephemeral, were a highly mobile form of visual culture due to their size, seriality, and quick output. In addition to their display in homes or places of business, publishers would paste their wares in large bay windows looking out onto the street.<sup>67</sup> Graphic satires such as Gillray's *Very Slippery Weather* (1808, figure 0.2) document how each pane of glass was covered with a print, drawing a group of gawkers to examine them from the street.<sup>68</sup> Various social classes are represented in the crowd, including members of the elite, military, middling, and working classes. An anonymous satire published in 1801 entitled *Caricature Shop* (figure 0.3) similarly represents a large crowd of viewers consisting of differing genders, races, ages, social classes, and physical abilities. Two points of dispute have been argued regarding consumers' access to prints: first, that their influence was only effective in the educated and literate social classes and second, that their influence was confined to metropolitan London.<sup>69</sup> These contentions have roused considerable debate among print historians, as determining the prints' audience establishes their reach of influence. While Eirwen E.C. Nicholson and H.T. Dickinson argue that the illiterate or underprivileged viewers would not have had the comprehension to fully participate in the prints, Diana Donald, Tamara Hunt, and Cindy McCreery supply ample evidence to dismiss these arguments.<sup>70</sup> Satirical prints, memoirs, and correspondence document the diversity of print consumers. The working classes

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<sup>65</sup> LWL Journal of Lady Mary Coke 3 July 1788. Maria Fitzherbert was the wife of George, Prince of Wales.

<sup>66</sup> The print also acted as a signifier of the celebrity gossip they relayed to each other.

<sup>67</sup> Prints were displayed in the home, pasted on walls or screens (usually by women), or stored in albums which were pulled out and examined in group settings. They also were displayed in places of business such as inns or coffee houses (McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 31–2). See also Kate Heard, "The Print Room at Queen Charlotte's Cottage," *British Art Journal* 13, no. 3 (2012): 53–60.

<sup>68</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 32.

<sup>69</sup> For this view see H. T. Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution, 1760-1832* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986).

<sup>70</sup> Eirwen E. C. Nicholson, "Consumers and Spectators : The Public of the Political Print in Eighteenth-Century England," *History* 81, no. 261 (1996): 5–21; Dickinson, *Caricatures*, 15; Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 2; Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 10–3; and McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 26. See also Moores, *Representations of France*, 5–6.

often walked by print shop window displays as part of their daily routine, and window gatherers usually discussed these displays.<sup>71</sup> The novelist William Thackeray recalled how the text of the prints would be read aloud by those viewing them to the gathered crowd, much as figures 0.2 and 0.3 depict.<sup>72</sup> The visual nature of prints means they could effectively communicate to both the illiterate and literate. For those without access to metropolitan streets in their daily routine, prints could be delivered to their rural homes by applying directly to publishers or, as Lady Mary Coke's diary details, through requests to their friends.<sup>73</sup> Foreign tourists also purchased graphic satires as souvenirs, eventuating a very far-reaching message indeed. This mobility and quick output, which allowed for current events to be speedily commented upon, prompts print scholars to increasingly view graphic satires as 'cultural barometers', thus making them an invaluable historical resource and a means of exposing historic verisimilitudes.<sup>74</sup>

While this thesis uses satirical prints as a form of historical evidence, satire itself is notoriously complex and, much like painted portraiture, must be assessed with a grain of salt. In a chapter dedicated to the controversy surrounding Queen Charlotte's jewels, Marcia Pointon cites Frank Prochaska's hasty statement that a Gillray depiction of the king and queen was fundamentally at odds with the truth. Pointon rebuts that 'caricaturists like Gillray were telling a different "truth" and one that was clearly congenial to a wide-spread, visually literate and highly educated audience since print is commercial and caricatures were produced in response to a market.'<sup>75</sup> Her statement about satire's 'truth' is useful for questioning the use of these prints. Despite their propensity to be overstated accounts, they were temporal products which simultaneously reacted to and provoked a public response. Joseph Monteyne argues that graphic satire offered a mirror view of the behaviour of men and women, much as the spectacle of magic lanterns enlarged and projected transparent images onto walls for group-viewings in the eighteenth century; these

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<sup>71</sup> Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 10.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>73</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 21. Publishers were not confined to London; they also flourished in cities such as Edinburgh and Bristol, where they created both original prints and copies of popular metropolitan ones (Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 6).

<sup>74</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 11 and Moores, *Representations of France*, 16.

<sup>75</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Brilliant Effects : A cultural history of gem stones and jewellery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 196–97.

magic lanterns were themselves employed as a motif in satirical prints to negotiate how satirical imagery reflected truth.<sup>76</sup> Monteyne maintains that ‘as a motif in images that use caricature or distortion to illuminate the moral failings and political hypocrisy of public officials, the magic lantern produces its own truth or, even better, reveals that truth is really just a matter of a convincing projection’.<sup>77</sup> Many eighteenth-century sources consist of a variety of ‘convincing projections’, ranging from personal diaries to painted portraits; arguably, the truth must be unpicked from each of these sources.

Satirical prints are what distinguish this specific period of study. The reign of Queen Charlotte encompasses what Diana Donald has dubbed, the ‘golden age’ of graphic satire (c. 1780–1830), defined as such because of the increased agency of the visual medium. Whilst elite women were politically active throughout the eighteenth century, this activity was magnified under the lens of graphic satire, exposing it to new audiences which furthermore making it a topic of public debate. As most female political engagement was not visible to the general public, due to being conducted through private platforms such as aristocratic homes and correspondence, or in rural constituencies, it could easily go unnoticed. By portraying this gendered activity, satirical prints informed their viewers of elite women’s role within the polity. These crossroads between the agency of graphic satires and female politicking, were also intersected by intensified debates surrounding gender roles, prompting us to further reflect upon the timing of ‘gender panic’ and the increased influence of prints. As McCreery’s work has demonstrated, in the last two decades of the century, satirical prints commonly problematized elite female behaviour.<sup>78</sup> With this in mind, we should acknowledge ‘gender panic’ to be symptomatic of the rise of the satirical print. Graphic satire, therefore, not only serves this thesis in evidencing transient events, figures, and values, but also made a definitive mark on this period, particularly with regard to gender perceptions.

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<sup>76</sup> Joseph Monteyne, *From Still Life to the Screen : Print culture, display, and the materiality of the image in eighteenth-century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 193–225.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>78</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 115–251.

## Painted Portraiture

To deconstruct the politics of portraiture, its mechanics, including its construction, agency, and display, must first be evaluated. Portrait production, according to Pointon, 'involves a relationship of unequal parties in a contention for power.'<sup>79</sup> The eighteenth-century portraitist, sitter, and patron (the latter two sometimes being one and the same) each held prerogatives over the production of the portrait, but each inevitably had to relinquish some of that power.<sup>80</sup> Pointon argues that this already precarious balance drastically tilted depending on gender: if the sitter was female, she had little to no authority over her painted representation by a male artist, and the portraitist and patron possessed control.<sup>81</sup> Susan P. Casteras finds Pointon's argument 'overreaching', and indeed, such a sweeping generalisation is problematic for a period when widows such as the Duchess of Rutland exercised familial and political agency.<sup>82</sup> Chapter 1 offers several examples of portraits that women both commissioned and exerted a level of control over.<sup>83</sup> Pointon's argument also does not consider that many artists, such as Joshua Reynolds, socialised in elite circles as a means of professional networking; nor that artists may have had pre-existing relationships with their female sitters which could arguably mediate her influence over the final portrait.<sup>84</sup> In practice, portraiture was a means through which elite women participated in the construction of their public image. In *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the actress in British art and theatre 1768–1820* (2007), Gill Perry challenges Pointon's assertion, arguing that stage actresses such as Dorothy Jordan (pictured in the bottom left of Cruikshank's print) actively sought to control or narrate their own histories through portraiture. Perry maintains that 'portraiture

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<sup>79</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 184–88.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. For example, although the patron would theoretically hold the most power through his/her funding of the portrait, the portraitist's or sitter's fame could give him/her more power to dictate his/her preferences.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> S. P. Casteras, "Hanging the Head: Portraiture anti Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England by Marcia Pointon," *Woman's art journal*. 17, no. 2 (1997): 34.

<sup>83</sup> For example, Maria, Countess of Waldegrave was portrayed by both Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough, in 1763. Her portraits represent a woman no longer tied to her husband commissioning and paying for her portrait as a gift to a family member. David Mannings and Martin Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: A complete catalogue of his paintings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 476.

<sup>84</sup> Postle et al., *Joshua Reynolds*, 19. See Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 12 for a discussion of artists' friendships with female sitters.

could perform important mediating functions in the discursive struggle to control and define' the actress's status.<sup>85</sup> Elite political women were actresses of a different stage, performing tasks and rituals as part of their roles on the social, political, and familial stages, and with an increasingly expanding public audience. This thesis follows Perry's argument, emphasising that elite women used portraits politically to control and define their public reception, in direct opposition to satirical prints such as *Hints towards a Change of Ministry*, which subjected women to the male gaze, attempted to control their public image, and influenced their reputation. While women did not exert control over every occurrence of their painted image, they had more than a modicum of input on their representation, especially when we consider the display and consumption of formal portraiture.

Both Martin Postle and Linda Colley have highlighted how fashionable life, especially in regard to the prevailing tastes for artistic styles and artists, had previously been dictated by the Court but this tradition began to disappear in the second-half of the eighteenth century.<sup>86</sup> Public art exhibitions relocated this control over fashionable life out of the palace and into the hands of the viewing public, who further participated in the consumption of works on display by discussing them in letters and reading about them in newspapers. For instance, one anonymous critic reviewing the 1775 Royal Academy Exhibition in the *Public Advertiser* praised Reynolds on the variety of his portraits on display and his ability to represent each of his sitters in a manner that tailored their portrait to their character.<sup>87</sup> Exhibited portraits were often catalogued, pored over, and critiqued through newspapers, which themselves were consumed by 'an animated and sometimes unruly' reading public who may or may not have decided to pay the one-shilling entrance fee to see the exhibition themselves.<sup>88</sup> Both the artist and the sitter were subjected to criticism: gossip print media not only commented on the artistic integrity of the works but also often took advantage of the social platform in order to comment on the sitters'

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<sup>85</sup> Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations*, 13. For example, Perry writes extensively about Dorothy Jordan's portraits, arguing that the representation of her loose, curly hair contributed to her reputation as a frank and sometimes unpredictable 'Child of Nature' (ibid., 87– 103).

<sup>86</sup> Postle et al., *Joshua Reynolds*, 17 and Linda Colley, *Britons : Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 200.

<sup>87</sup> *Public Advertiser* 28 April 1775.

<sup>88</sup> Mark Hallett, "Reynolds, Celebrity, and the Exhibition Space," in *Joshua Reynolds : The creation of celebrity*, ed. Martin Postle (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), 35 and Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations*, 19.



personal lives. Exhibition culture solicited viewer engagement further by not including the sitters' names in the portrait listing, leaving viewers to guess the sitter's identity based on information gleaned from print media.<sup>89</sup> Scholars now recognise these practices as developments in the formation of celebrity culture that both magnified prominent figures and cast them as consumable commodities.<sup>90</sup> The wide dissemination of portraiture played a crucial role in this new cultural development.

Print culture furthered the dissemination of the painted portrait and with it the visibility of the sitter. Costing from sixpence to a guinea, print reproductions of grand and expensive portraits were obtainable by those outside of the artist-sitter-patron trinity, exposing portraits to a wider public.<sup>91</sup> Mezzotints disseminated the artist's, printer's, and sitter's skills and qualities through their display and consumption. Mark Hallett describes the production of mezzotints as a symbiotic process that mutually benefitted the sitter, painter, and engraver: portraitists and sitters profited from the free publicity and the printer profited financially.<sup>92</sup> Not every portrait was transferred into print: mezzotints were made for a speculative sale, making a widespread demand for that sitter's representation essential.<sup>93</sup> Mezzotints could also be reissued years after the original painting was deposited within the patron's less accessible home, thus keeping the sitter's representation in circulation and building on the image's legacy.

Art historians including Pointon, West, and Kate Retford also emphasise the significance of painted portraiture within the elite family home, arguing that portraits worked reciprocally with the stately home to generate messages of grandeur,

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<sup>89</sup> Mannings and Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 221. Attendees could play a guessing game to test their knowledge of the public characters on display, and if the sitters could not be deciphered by viewers, print culture outlets such as the *Public Advertiser* included the sitters' names; see Marcia Pointon, "'Portrait! Portrait! Portrait!!!,'" in *Art on the Line : The Royal Academy exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 95.

<sup>90</sup> Stella Tillyard, "Paths of Glory : Fame and the Public in Eighteenth-Century London," in *Joshua Reynolds : The creation of celebrity*, ed. Martin Postle (London: Tate Publishing, 2005); Hallett, "Reynolds, Celebrity," 35–47; and Rosenthal, "Public Reputation," 69–72.

<sup>91</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 17. Portraits could cost from tens to hundreds of pounds depending on the artist and the canvas size.

<sup>92</sup> Mark Hallett, *Reynolds : Portraiture in action* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 134–8. Pointon notes that finished portraits were immediately sent from the artist's studio to the engraver, a fact which exemplifies the interdependency of the painter and engraver (Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 41).

<sup>93</sup> Clayton, *Caricatures*, 51.

continuity, and legacy.<sup>94</sup> Painted portraits were often hung in the home's public rooms to purposely attract attention from visitors. Viewers were most often family members and guests, but could also be tourists, people with no connection to the family who came to view a stately home.<sup>95</sup> Just as portraits represented the sitter, the country home, Pointon argues, operated as a three-dimensional portrait, symbolically representing its owner.<sup>96</sup> The display of portraits within the home functioned primarily as a status symbol, signifying material wealth and prestige, and secondarily as a spectacle of familial power. Family members' portraits were hung adjacent to ancestral portraits, encouraging a visual narrative of dynastic family longevity.<sup>97</sup> Portraits of friends or politicians were also commissioned and hung in the home to display professional networks and affiliations.<sup>98</sup> For example, in Crewe Hall, Fanny Crewe's home, both her portrait and that of family friend and opposition leader Charles James Fox were displayed.<sup>99</sup> The domestic display of portraiture communicated a personal and familial identity to visitors. Significantly, even when portraits were in a private home, they still engaged in the process of public consumption, albeit on a smaller scale.

Both elite female sitters and the painted portraits depicting them were significantly visible in late-eighteenth-century Britain, and painted portraiture was a vital component of a publicly visible woman's reputation, building that reputation through its carefully constructed narrative of the sitter's admirable qualities. Hallett argues that portraiture and its public display 'helped generate, shape and sustain the reputation of a wide range of public figures', both men and women, and Perry demonstrates that women contributed to the creation of their visual image as a means of constructing their public identity.<sup>100</sup> Publicised personal probity ensured a secure social position, especially for the ruling classes, who were expected to act as role

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<sup>94</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 14–20, West, "Public Nature," 153–72, and Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 149–85.

<sup>95</sup> "Sensibility and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century Family Portrait: The collection at Kedleston Hall," *The Historical Journal* 46, no. 3 (2003): 536 and *Art of Domestic Life*, 10.

<sup>96</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 20

<sup>97</sup> Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 149–85 .

<sup>98</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 20–2.

<sup>99</sup> Mannings and Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 152 and 203.

<sup>100</sup> Hallett, "Reynolds, Celebrity," 35.

models for the nation.<sup>101</sup> Portraiture helped to sell this narrative and imbued it with a sense of permanence through its materiality. However, many elements, including the satirical print, could counterbalance this manipulation of public opinion. This thesis proposes to bridge how political women in eighteenth-century Britain were represented in both formal portraits and satirical prints, thereby offering a comprehensive view of how the elite female politician could shape her political identity as well as how it could be perceived by others.

### **A Coalition of Media**

A balanced approach drawing from both formal portraits and satirical prints negotiate the dialogues and nuances connecting portraiture and prints, yet researchers have been slow to adopt this methodology. In 1996, Donald argued that ‘the study of eighteenth-century graphic satire suffers from its ambiguous situation, a kind of limbo between the disciplines of political history and art history’.<sup>102</sup> While the academic status of satirical prints has changed somewhat since Donald’s statement, this study furthers her call to broaden the definition of History of Art to include satirical prints in juxtaposition with formal portraiture. Although the two types of representation operated in different circles of consumption and display, they both possessed an agency that contributed to public figures’ reputations and thus serve together as a vital means to study these women and their greater socio-political impact.

Multiple scholars have taken up Donald’s call to arms regarding satirical prints’ purgatorial state between art and political history, producing thought-provoking advances in the field. In *City of Laughter: Sex and satire in eighteenth-century London* (2006), for example, Vic Gatrell examines satirical prints’ association with humour, using them to illustrate the prevalence of impoliteness in polite culture. In *Defining John Bull: Political caricature and national identity in late Georgian England* (2003), Tamara L. Hunt builds on Linda Colley’s *Britons*:

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<sup>101</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 188–93 and Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter : Women's lives in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 266.

<sup>102</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 44.

*Forging the nation 1707–1837* (1992) to examine the role satires played in creating Britishness. Among art-historical works, Joseph Monteyne's *From Still Life to the Screen: Print culture, display, and the materiality of the image in eighteenth-century London* (2013), integrates print culture with material and consumer culture, and Amelia Rauser's *Caricature Unmasked: Irony, authenticity, and individualism in eighteenth-century English prints* (2008) analyses caricaturing and its association with notions of selfhood within satirical prints in the late-eighteenth century. Cindy McCreery and Michael Rosenthal have been the most influential for this study, however, by advocating for the study of prints alongside formal portraits for a broader understanding of eighteenth-century society. McCreery's seminal book *The Satirical Gaze: Prints of women in late eighteenth-century England* (2004) broke new ground in solely investigating women's depictions in graphic satire. McCreery acknowledges the difficulty of defining women's roles in the late-eighteenth century and offers satirical prints, with their ability for social critique, as a vital tool for uncovering the equivocal social prescriptions for and expectations of elite women.<sup>103</sup> Rather than criticising women for not following prescribed gender roles, formal portraits asserted their female sitters' adherence to them. Whether painted to show them as muses, mothers, or respectable women of fashion, portraits, as a rule, exhibit the desirable qualities women were expected to have.<sup>104</sup> Thus this thesis shares Pointon's view in *Hanging the Head* (1993) that the genre was as much a social product as it was a visual reinforcement of social attitudes and behaviours.<sup>105</sup> Portraits inscribed those desirable attributes upon the sitter, just as satirical prints, with their messages of condemnation, inscribed so-called inappropriate behaviours upon their subject(s). Rosenthal's 'Public reputation and image control in late eighteenth-century Britain' (2006) claims that both media significantly affected the formation of public figures' reputations. Rosenthal's argument that together, formal and satirical portraits formed a single public image as complex and intriguing as the sitters themselves forms the backbone of this study. Both formal and satirical imagery greatly influenced the perception of public figures, specifically female, from 1761–1818, one displaying the sitter's appearance using rhetoric meant to promote a

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<sup>103</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 2.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 1, 89, 116–119, and 164–167.

<sup>105</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 1–35, 51, and 141–9.

noble legacy and the other offering an embellished narrative of her actions and thus furthering their visibility.

The strong emphasis on graphic satire requires that this thesis engage with resources and topics not only in art history but also in the broader discipline of cultural history.<sup>106</sup> As highly visible members of society, the women who form the basis of this study frequently appeared in arenas of social display such as pleasure gardens and theatres, garnering significant attention in newspapers, magazines, and prints, which mapped their movements and appearances.<sup>107</sup> Prints and portraits participated in this mapping, providing a range of commentaries on elite women, both responding to and intersecting with one another. Portraits were discussed in newspapers and exhibitions by attendees; they were referred to or reproduced in mezzotints or satirical prints. These prints were often bought or consumed by the same people who interacted with the portraits in exhibitions and print media. Thus this thesis draws on the cross-media discourses central to eighteenth-century society and the numerous types of cultural output – newspapers, plays, literature, correspondence, memoirs, paintings, and print media – involved in those discourses to configure the narrative of elite women's political participation, further narrowing the divide between social and political histories.

### *Thesis Structure*

In the 57 years that Queen Charlotte sat on the British throne, numerous elite women were active in political life and/or politicised in visual culture. The four case studies that form the basis of this thesis have been included for their ability to offer new perspectives about the women, political culture, and female agency of eighteenth-century Britain and are not meant to be a comprehensive account of all politically-active women and their representations in this period. While discussions of painted portraiture dating from the 1760s and 1770s are included in the analysis, its focus

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<sup>106</sup> For a review of the development of cultural studies, see Peter McCaffery, *The Cultural History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>107</sup> For a wider discussion on women's visibility see Greig, *The Beau Monde* and Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*.

turns primarily to graphic satire from the 1780s onward due to the rise of satirical prints in a period marked by increased concerns surrounding national security, gender roles, and political corruption. The women examined in this thesis were some of the most politicised in visual culture during this time. They have been selected due to their understudied status and ability to offer significant insight in contemporary visual culture. Their visual representations best exemplify the formation of political women's identity and perception in late eighteenth-century British culture and further contribute to deciphering the larger picture of women's experience in British history. Notable female politicians such as Lady Susan Keck, Lady Hester Stanhope, and Lady Elizabeth Holland, to name a few, are absent from this study, not due to a lack of political agency but because of the dearth of visual representations that stimulate crucial dialogues. Likewise, the Duchess of Devonshire, who features in this study, was purposely excluded as a focal point due to the ample extant scholarship. By expanding our reach beyond one individual we are able to gain more comprehensive understanding of elite women's experience in political life.

Chapter 1 questions the meaning behind Daniel Gardner's overlooked portrait, *The Three Witches of Macbeth* (1775), which depicts Lady Elizabeth Melbourne; Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire; and the Hon. Anne Damer as the antagonists of Shakespeare's famous tragedy. This chapter asserts that the three women, who had been raised in politically-active families, commissioned an allegorical portrait commemorating their union in friendship while also asserting their potential for political access. It discusses women's agency over visual portrayal and how that agency could be used for self-fashioning. Chapter 2 revisits the topic of the 1784 Westminster election which has received ample attention from scholars due to the criticism surrounding Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire's canvass. While many satirical prints representing the duchess were produced during the election, this chapter turns its attention to the prints displaying rivalry among the female canvassers. A close analysis of this imagery reveals that this visual language was underscored with anxieties concerning appropriate gender and class roles. Though the topic of female rivalry has been omitted in scholarship, these conclusions support recent findings in gender history. Chapter 3 surveys the visual representations of the understudied Scottish political hostess, Jane, Duchess of Gordon to chart how she

was politicised in both painted portraiture and satirical prints. It introduces the dialogues between the two modes of representation and the cultural weight of a woman's maternal status, two crucial discourses underpinning the remainder of the thesis. Lastly, it questions how the duchess' Scottish identity affected her satirical representation and perception as a political player, a topic that has previously has not been investigated by scholars but yields considerable insight into perceptions of Scottishness in the late eighteenth century.

The culminating chapter is dedicated to arguably the most political woman in the period, Queen Charlotte. In contrast with the other women examined, the queen, despite her position, was adamantly apolitical, concentrating her energies on familial duties out of love of and respect for her husband. Visual resources reveal that her reputation faltered in older age, transforming her identity as a celebrated consort to a queen determined to assume power. By the time of her death in 1818, the queen was no longer a beloved public figure, unlike her husband, who had been confined in Windsor Castle since 1811 due to mental instability. The lack of scholarly attention regarding Queen Charlotte's public downfall in contrast with her widely acknowledged good repute when her reign began demonstrates a deficiency in academic attention to the narratives visual culture offers about elite women's political participation.

Women's political presence and the gender- and class-related fears that the male hegemonic class held regarding women's involvement in the polity are omnipresent in the visual culture of late-eighteenth-century Britain. Despite visual culture's use as a tool for representing, actualising, circumscribing, and challenging women's roles in the eighteenth-century British polity, it has received little attention. This thesis offers a much-needed approach balancing both formal portraits and satirical prints and investigating the dialogues and nuances that connected portraiture and prints, offering a comprehensive view of how the elite female politician was forged, functioned, and understood by contemporaries. This thesis does not aspire to establish elite women's political participation; rather, it examines how that participation was perceived, how it intersected with the politics of reputation and the practical realities of portraiture and print culture, and how it contributed to the

ongoing creation of British culture. As such, this thesis aims to recover some of those lost narratives about women's participation in the polity.



## Chapter 1

### ‘Bewitching witches’: Daniel Gardner’s *The Three Witches from Macbeth*

In the summer of 1775, emerging portraitist Daniel Gardner painted three of London society’s most captivating women. They were not portrayed accompanied by their husbands, with their families, or even in the fashionable gowns that London newspapers reported to readers almost daily. Instead, the three young debutantes were portrayed in a triple portrait of themselves in fantastical guise. Though fancy dress was by no means uncommon, it was their choice of fancy dress that was unusual. The three ‘beauties’ of the social stage were depicted as *The Three Witches from Macbeth* (figure 1.1). Far from the haggard creatures of the Scottish moors that William Shakespeare described in his c. 1606 play, the three socialites are represented as young and pretty, smiling as they concoct their witches’ brew. On the right of the composition, dressed in black and wearing a paradigmatic witch hat, is Anne Seymour Damer. She was later known as a sculptress and friend to Horace Walpole, but at the time of *The Three Witches*’ execution she had built a reputation as a London socialite who moved in Rockingham-Whig circles. Represented to her left, depositing herbs into the cauldron, is the then eighteen-year-old Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, who was newly visible to public view after her marriage in the previous year to the prominent William, 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire. Represented on the far left, the most peculiar figure due to her miniature scale, is Elizabeth, Viscountess Melbourne, who had been the leading opposition political hostess until she recently relinquished the position to Georgiana.<sup>1</sup>

The unusual subject of the portrait naturally provokes questions as to the three aristocratic women’s motivation behind the commission. In his introduction to her collection of letters, Jonathon David Gross has proposed that Elizabeth commissioned the painting, yet he notes that the subject matter is something that appears suspiciously Damer-esque in appealing to the ‘feminist’ qualities of the

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<sup>1</sup> Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 50.

future sculptress.<sup>2</sup> Neither Gardner's account book nor the sitter's correspondence records the commission, making it impossible to determine whose idea it was to portray the friends as the witches from *Macbeth*. The only contemporary mention of the triple portrait that has survived is from the letter-journal of Lady Mary Coke to her sister, Lady Stafford, and contains the author's own theories as to the choice of subject matter:

Has Lady Greenwich told you of the Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Melburn, and Mrs Damer all being drawn in one picture in the Characters of the three Witches in Macbeth[?] they have chosen that Scene where they compose their Cauldron, but instead of 'finger of Birth-strangled babe, &c' their Cauldron is composed of roses and carnations and I daresay they think their charmes more irresistible than all the magick of the Witches.<sup>3</sup>

Lady Mary's mention of her other sister, Lady Greenwich's, familiarity with the rumour reveals how the three young women were already becoming a topic of gossip, gaining attention for their social pursuits. Regardless of who appointed Gardner with executing the artwork, the playful nature of the painting, as displayed by the figures' smiles and flattering depictions, suggests that the context was possibly a topical subject, or an inside joke among the three friends. The painting encapsulates what Christine Roulston defined as 'aristocratic friendship broadcast in the public arena', a display of an intimacy that was contradictorily and flagrantly inaccessible to the common public, yet still, as indicated in Lady Mary's diary, available for consumption.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned previously, the three women were often

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<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Milbanke Lamb Melbourne and Jonathan David Gross, *Byron's "Corbeau Blanc" : The life and letters of Lady Melbourne* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1997), 20 Gross cites no evidence for this assumption. The painting was once in Panshanger House, which was owned by the Earls Cowper. Lady Melbourne's daughter Emily married into the family and would have made her home in Panshanger, which would explain the painting's place in the collection. However, it is not substantial evidence for crediting Lady Melbourne with the painting's commission (Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800* (London: Unicorn Press, 2006), 195).

<sup>3</sup> LWL Journal of Lady Mary Coke, 14 July 1775.

<sup>4</sup> Christine Roulston, "Separating the Inseparables : Female friendship and its discontents in eighteenth-century France," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 2 (1999): 215.

reported on in the popular newspapers of the time, giving the public a means of absorbing the details and excitements of their social lives.<sup>5</sup>

The device through which we can approach this work begins with the very item that Georgiana holds in her hand: an ugly witch mask (figure 1.1.b).<sup>6</sup> The mask, at first indistinguishable from the rising smoke and steam of the cauldron, is composed of a long pointed nose, a grotesque open mouth, and a red gleaming eye, the muddy grey skin tone contrasting with Georgiana's white complexion. Gardner's brushwork implies that the mask is unfinished or perhaps, erased, but its haggard presence offers a metaphorical avenue down which to proceed. From amidst the extensive work produced on eighteenth-century masquerades, we can glean that the mask held contemporary significance as a symbol of escapism and malleable identity.<sup>7</sup> Twentieth-century theorists such as Joan Riviere, Jacques Lacan, and Judith Butler employ masquerade as a theoretical framework, particularly for

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<sup>5</sup> 'Gaming among the females at Chatsworth has been carried to such a pitch', reported *The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* on 4 September 1776, 'that the phlegmatic Duke [of Devonshire] has been provoked to express at it and has spoken to the Duchess in severest terms against a conduct that has driven many from the house who could not afford to partake of amusements carried on at the expense of £500 or £1,000 a night (*The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 4 September 1776).

<sup>6</sup> The long and warty nose on the mask indicates that it represents a witch. The mask also alludes to the portrait's theatrical theme.

<sup>7</sup> Terry Castle's seminal work, *Masquerade and Civilization* (1989), reveals that the masked ball played a substantial role in the cultural composition of London society, offering a form of escapism to its attendees, regardless of rank or gender. Castle describes the events as a form of anarchy; a ubiquitous, celebrated public feature, and a site of condemnation. Wahrman adds that 'overall, eighteenth-century Britons – above all in London, but elsewhere too – were entranced by the masquerade, partly horrified, partly fascinated, and perhaps most often breathlessly attracted to an unwholesome mixture of both'. He uses the concept of masquerade as a means of understanding identity in the eighteenth century, arguing that in the period of the painting's creation, one's personal identity was imagined as malleable and unfixed. Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The carnivalesque in eighteenth-century English culture and fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 2–5 and Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 158–9.

exploring gender roles and performativity.<sup>8</sup> Drawing from their work, as well as the work of Terry Castle, Catherine Craft-Fairchild seeks the female voice in regard to the masked ball in contemporary literature by female authors:

My effort is to trace the points of intersection, to regard masquerade as the creation of an image or spectacle for the benefit of a spectator, and to explore the distance or proximity between the representation and the self beneath in order to determine the significance of the masked moment in fiction.<sup>9</sup>

She observes that there are two circulating notions of masquerade: the first view, which sees masquerade as an inevitable female disguise that submits to dominant social codes, and the opposing view of the masquerade being disruptive and resistant to patriarchal norms.<sup>10</sup> While Craft-Fairchild argues that women's voices are too diverse to draw overarching conclusions, the masquerade, and alternatively the mask, is useful to reveal the natural and affected guises adopted by women in society. It is from this viewpoint that this chapter poses Judith Butler's poignant observation: 'reflections on the meaning of masquerade [...] have differed greatly in their

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<sup>8</sup> Riviere's 1929 article 'Womanliness as Masquerade' is credited as the casting-off point for viewing gender as a form of masquerade. In it, she employs a female university professor to illustrate how women who 'wish for masculinity' (in roles traditionally gendered as male) exaggerate their femininity to assert their cisgenderism and thus to 'avert anxiety and the retribution feared from men'. Lacan adopted Riviere's theory, using masquerade to contextualise women's movements/actions/decisions as a calculated guise based on their gender. Butler expands on this further by arguing that gender is culturally learnt behaviour. Stephen Brogan flags issues with Butler's theory, calling into question her reliance on drag performers (without thorough analysis into the subcultures within that performative subculture), overuse of theory, and the dismissal of costume from her analysis: 'put simply, her complex theory of gender as a reiterated performance could be elucidated thus: gender is a verb not a noun'. Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as Masquerade," *The International Journal of Psychology* 10 (1929): 303; Jacques Lacan, Juliet Mitchell, and Jacqueline Rose, *Feminine Sexuality : Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne* (New York: W.W. Norton : Pantheon Books, 1982), 84; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: New York : Routledge, 2006), 64–5; Stephen Brogan, "A "monster of metamorphosis" : Reassessing the Chevalier/Chevalière d'Eon's change of gender," in *The Chevalier d'Eon and his worlds : gender, espionage and politics in the eighteenth century*, ed. Simon Burrows, et al. (London; New York: Continuum, 2010), 85–6.

<sup>9</sup> Catherine Craft-Fairchild, *Masquerade and Gender : Disguise and female identity in eighteenth-century fictions by women* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 7.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 52.

interpretations of what precisely is masked by masquerade', and applies it to Gardner's *The Three Witches from Macbeth*.<sup>11</sup>

Butler's question of 'what is masked by masquerade' does not invite us to place the painting within the context of the eighteenth-century masquerade itself, but instead asks what can be revealed by unmasking the sitters' witchy guises. Gardner's rendering of Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne in the guise of the Weird Sisters, the catalysts responsible for the ascension (and collapse) of two Scottish sovereigns in the course of the play, encourages portrait-viewers to question the sitters' identities that are on display. Masquerade, by definition, is thought to be a means by which one can mask their everyday self in order to display a borrowed guise. However, Butler and Dror Wahrman highlight the performative aspect of everyday life, suggesting that individuals assume a prescribed identity based upon societal codes.<sup>12</sup> With this in mind, masquerade allows participants to assume a 'chosen' guise. Upon reviewing eighteenth-century sources it is apparent that this viewpoint was not novel. Many eighteenth-century Britons viewed the masquerade as a means of displaying the true self, a chosen identity, rather than a prescribed one.<sup>13</sup> Joseph Addison, writing on masquerades in 1710 in the *Spectator*, complained that 'The misfortune of the thing is people dress themselves in what they have a Mind to be, and not what they are fit for'.<sup>14</sup> To Addison, the mask was an aspirational guise. A more affirmative anonymous writer for the *Ladies Magazine* implied in 1777 that everyday life was performance, while in masquerades, 'every one divests himself of his borrowed feathers, and following his natural propensity, assumes the character which suits him

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<sup>11</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 64. Her assertion of gender as a performative act allows her to question the theoretical usage of masquerade further: 'Is masquerade the consequence of a feminine desire that must be negated and thus, made into a lack that, nevertheless, must appear in some way? [...] does masquerade, as Riviere suggests, transform aggression and the fear of reprisal into seduction and flirtation? Does it serve primarily to conceal or repress a core given femininity, a feminine desire which would establish an insubordinate alterity to the masculine subject and expose the necessary failure of masculinity?' (ibid., 64–5).

<sup>12</sup> See Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 167 for examples of writers relating life to a masquerade.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Addison, "The Works of Joseph Addison Complete in Three Volumes : Embracing the whole of the "Spectator," &c," (1837): 37; *Spectator* No. 41, 16 March 1710–11.

best'.<sup>15</sup> This chapter will propose that the 'chosen' guise of Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne was the witch.

As British masquerades waned, the appearance of the Weird Sisters in visual culture waxed, thus placing *The Three Witches from Macbeth* on an axis point of changing cultural tastes.<sup>16</sup> This inevitably poses the question of why these three young aristocratic women would want to be rendered as villainous witches in a painted commission. Having been featured only in catalogues, the painting has never been thoroughly assessed critically.<sup>17</sup> This chapter intends to reveal the production, critical themes and meanings behind Gardner's work. By unveiling the portrait as a portrayal of female friendship, it will suggest that Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne ultimately chose the guises of the witches from *Macbeth* due to the association of the Weird Sisters with governmental politics and political intrigue. They were thereby identifying themselves as having political agency despite the cultural restrictions of their gender. Additionally, the association of witches, or witches' covens, with female friendship was likely to have informed the commission, making it a commemoration of a feminised political amity. Using visual and textual examples from what Wahrman defines as the 'ancien regime of identity', the period in Anglo-European history spanning the period from the late-seventeenth century to c. 1780 when British culture was open to experimenting with alternative identities, this chapter argues that like the Weird, or Weyward Sisters of *Macbeth*, the portrait is also 'weyward', defying the pictorial norms present in most eighteenth-century female portraiture.<sup>18</sup> Daniel Gardner's *The Three Witches from Macbeth* discloses the 'chosen' identities of three elite women, within an unusual declaration of amity, sorority, and political influences.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ladies Magazine* Vol. 7, December 1777, 637–8.

<sup>16</sup> At the time of this visual proclamation of masquerading in their 'chosen' guises, the popularity of actual masquerades was in decline, waning in the 1780s and 1790s (Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*, 3).

<sup>17</sup> It appears in George Charles Williamson, *Daniel Gardner, painter in pastel and gouache. A brief account of his life and works. With ... plates, etc* (London: John Lane, 1921), 44 and Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists*, 191.

<sup>18</sup> Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, xiii. The first folio, the earliest published edition of *Macbeth*, listed the characters as 'Weyward' rather than 'Weird' Sisters and they were known interchangeably as the Weird or Weyward Sisters in the eighteenth century (David Garrick, Harry William Pedicord, and Fredrick Louis Bergmann, *The Plays of David Garrick; Vol 3, Garrick's adaptations of Shakespeare, 1744-1756* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), 100).

## The Weyward Sisters

Writing to her dear ‘Thémire’ (Elizabeth) from her country seat in Derbyshire, Georgiana candidly unleashed a tirade of fury against a ‘Mrs St John’ for an unknown affront: ‘I have been very good about speaking to her before, but now I never will, I assure you’. After continuing the diatribe for several more lines, she ends the letter with an abruptly pleasant postscript: ‘If Mrs Damer is with you, give my love to her’.<sup>19</sup> The undated letter is typical example of the correspondence between the friends. Unrestrained declarations of love or candid complaints of personal offences make frequent appearances: ‘*Je t’aime mon coeur bien tendrement*, indeed, indeed, indeed, I love you dearly’.<sup>20</sup> Georgiana’s highly coded letters to Elizabeth, now in the British Library, were almost always undated, and addressed to Themis, the goddess of justice.<sup>21</sup> In a letter from 1782, Elizabeth wrote to Georgiana:

The D<sup>c</sup> of Richmond has been here and told me you and I were rival queens, and I believe, if there had not been some people in the room, who might have thought it odd, that I should have slap’d his face for having such an idea.<sup>22</sup>

Their correspondence suggests a strong intimacy and relationship between the two women.

The friendship between Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne culminated in a period that exalted female friendship. While women detailed their intimate relationship through letters, the novel popularised fictional friendships to the reading public. Samuel Richardson’s epistolary novel, *Clarissa* (1748), helped to promote the trend for sentimental fiction featuring a heroine protagonist; a movement that would continue throughout the century and witness the talents of authors such as Fanny

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<sup>19</sup> BL Add. MS 45911, f. 10; Georgiana Devonshire to Elizabeth Melbourne, c. 1780.

<sup>20</sup> BL Add. MSS 45548, f. 14; Georgiana Devonshire to Elizabeth Melbourne, undated.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Thémire’ was the French spelling.

<sup>22</sup> Georgiana Cavendish Devonshire, *Georgiana : Extracts from the correspondence of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, ed. Eric Ponsonby Bessborough (London: Murray, 1955), 54; Lady Melbourne to Duchess of Devonshire, June 1782.

Burney, Charlotte Lennox, and Georgiana.<sup>23</sup> Richardson had created the character of Clarissa Harlowe in the mould of the ideal woman, one who remained a model of morality despite the obstacles thrown before her. When all her family abandons or betrays Clarissa, it is her female friend, Anna Howe, who remains loyal to her. Much like the letters exchanged between Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne, Anna Howe continually comforts Clarissa with proclamations of her unyielding love and it is Clarissa's dying sentiment that Anna's friendship had been 'the dearest consideration to me'.<sup>24</sup> Even the antagonist of the novel, Lovelace, to further imbue his villainy, attempts to break up the 'vehement' friendship, which he curses as 'nothing but chaff and stubble'.<sup>25</sup> Another novel that was influential in the cultural respect granted to female friendship was *Julie, or the New Héloïse* (1761) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.<sup>26</sup> As Martha Vicinus has addressed, readers of Rousseau were familiar with his philosophies articulating 'the Romantic belief in a true self that is hidden beneath social convention, just as the body is hidden beneath layers of superfluous clothing', what this chapter refers to as the 'prescribed' guise.<sup>27</sup> Friendship, according to Rousseau, was a safe channel in which a woman's true or 'chosen' self could be displayed. Claire unveils this guise to her future husband when she declares, 'as a woman I am a kind of monster, and I don't know what quirk of nature makes me prefer friendship to love'.<sup>28</sup> In assuming a socially dictated 'prescribed' guise, Claire could not be her 'true' self; she naturally valued her friend over her husband. This celebration of female friendship on the page disseminated a glamorised depiction of

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<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Eger also cites Madame Sévigné's letters to her daughter (translated into English in 1727) as a popular publication demonstrating written female affection. The letters were popular among the Bluestocking Circle and later praised by Wollstonecraft for being 'intimate and open letters'. Elizabeth Eger, "Paper Trails and Eloquent Objects: Bluestocking friendship and material culture," *Parergon* 26, no. 2 (2009): 124.

<sup>24</sup> Janet Todd, *Women's Friendship in Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 58.

<sup>25</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa; or, the History of a Young Lady : Comprehending the most important concerns of private life, and particularly shewing the distresses that may attend the misconduct both of parents and children, in relation to marriage; complete in four volumes Vol. 3 Vol. 3* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1862 [1748]), 162.

<sup>26</sup> Roulston, "Separating the Inseparables," 217. While Rousseau was not looked upon as fondly in Britain as he was in his native France, he still remained influential. That the sitters had access to Rousseau's work is evidenced by Georgiana's copy of *Julie, or the New Héloïse* still surviving in her family's collection at Chatsworth House, scored with her personal notes and markings (Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 55).

<sup>27</sup> Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends : Women who loved women, 1778-1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), xvii.

<sup>28</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Judith H. McDowell, *La Nouvelle Héloïse Julie, or, The new Eloise : Letters of two lovers, inhabitants of a small town at the foot of the Alps* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000 [1761]), 146.



friendship across culture, an exaltation that continued to be extolled during the period of Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne's friendship in the 1770s.

Turning away from textual sources, the lived experiences of the three sitters indicate the value they placed on friendship. Georgiana's recent entry into society in 1774, after her marriage, had introduced her to Elizabeth and Anne. All three women were descended from aristocratic Whig families and had continued this political lineage by marrying into them. Each of their marriages was relatively loveless and only Elizabeth had a child at the time of *The Three Witches*' creation.<sup>29</sup> Anne was the eldest of the three friends. She was the only child of the politician, Hon. Henry Seymour Conway and his wife Caroline Lady Ailesbury. In her youth she formed a close relationship with her father's secretary, David Hume, and her guardian, Horace Walpole, the latter of whom remained a father figure to her throughout her life. Anne was seventeen when she married the politician Hon. John Damer in 1767. The marriage (which would never produce children) was an unhappy one due to the couple's frivolous overspending, resulting in extreme debt. Anne was twenty-five, and separated from her spendthrift husband when she was portrayed in *The Three Witches*; a year later she would be a widow after his suicide.<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth was approximately a year younger than Anne and had connected with her through moving in similar fashionable circles in London. After her marriage to Sir Peniston Lamb (later, Lord Melbourne) in 1769, she became the primary opposition hostess between the years 1770 and 1774 before relinquishing the role to Georgiana.<sup>31</sup> Neither Elizabeth nor her husband remained faithful in the marriage, eliciting questions of their children's legitimacy with Lamb family biographers; it is believed that only her eldest child, Peniston (1770–1805), was Lamb's biological son.<sup>32</sup>

Georgiana, the youngest member of Gardner's group portrait at eighteen, had not yet successfully brought a child to term after one year of marriage to William, 5<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> For more on their marriages and personal lives see Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, Melbourne and Gross, *Byron's "Corbeau Blanc"*, Alison Yarrington, "Damer, Anne Seymour (1749-1828)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Yarrington, "Damer, Anne Seymour (1749-1828)."

<sup>31</sup> Jonathan David Gross, "Lamb, Elizabeth, Viscountess Melbourne (bap. 1751, d. 1818)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> See Melbourne and Gross, *Byron's "Corbeau Blanc"*.

Duke of Devonshire.<sup>33</sup> While Georgiana floundered in provoking affection in her private life, she conversely remained a popular public figure. ‘The Duchess of Devonshire effaces all without being a beauty,’ wrote Horace Walpole at her societal debut, ‘but her youth, figure, flowing good nature, sense and lively modesty, and modest familiarity, make her a phenomenon.’<sup>34</sup> Raised in a household that entertained numerous celebrated visitors, Georgiana quickly and enthusiastically adopted the role of hostess in the large public rooms of Devonshire House, London, as soon as she took residence there in January 1775.<sup>35</sup> It was then that Elizabeth befriended Georgiana and introduced her to Anne. In Elizabeth, Georgiana found a mentor with the ability to guide her through the callous trials of London society. Elizabeth was known for her resilience in this precarious realm, so much so that the playwright, Richard Brinsley Sheridan was inspired to depict her in his 1777 play, *The School for Scandal*, as the ruthless character, Lady Sneerwell. Georgiana also depicted Elizabeth in her anonymously published 1778 novel, *The Sylph*, as the frank Lady Besford; and Lady Caroline Lamb modelled the manipulative Lady Margaret Buchanan on her in the 1816 novel, *Glenarvon*.<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth’s social buoyancy was a useful quality, as all three women were regularly reported on in the newspapers and commented on in society. On her return from France in 1772, Lady Mary Coke noted in her journal:

Mrs Damer was presented at Court: She was said to be extremely well dressed *a la mode de Paris*, but I don’t think it will be to her advantage that She has exceedingly increased the quantity of ruge [*sic*]: She was thought to wear too much before She went out of England.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Her failure to provide an heir caused a strain on their already mismatched marriage. It was not until 1783 that the couple would have their first child, also named Georgiana, followed by Harriet in 1785. The long-awaited heir, William, finally came in 1790. See Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*.

<sup>34</sup> Horace Walpole and W. S. Lewis, *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), vol. xxxii, 232.

<sup>35</sup> Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 32. Not only was she entertaining London’s fashion elite, known as the *ton*, but also prominent Whigs who used Devonshire House for political meetings. Her socially awkward husband was more comfortable socialising at the gaming tables of Brooks’s and had difficulty (or perhaps, no interest) in socialising in large group settings, leaving Georgiana to keep their many guests happy and comfortable.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>37</sup> Mary Coke, *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke. Vol 4. Vol 4*, ed. James Home (Bath: Kingsmead Repr., 1970), 128.

Not long afterward the *London Evening Post* devoted two articles on 28 May 1772 to describing a masquerade held by Mrs Cornelys, both detailing Anne's appearance and attendance.<sup>38</sup> The three young women were a social commodity to be consumed by the reading public. The *Morning Post* even published a table scoring the women of the *ton* on their attractive characteristics, their beauty, figure, wit, and so forth; it featured all three friends, with Georgiana presiding at the top (figure 1.2).<sup>39</sup>

Gardner's group portrait, portraying the friends in the guise of the witch, attempts to visually reinforce some of the qualities exhibited in the *Morning Post*'s table. In the centre of the composition a brass cauldron steams as Georgiana, on the left, deposits the herbs she has collected in her dress, into the brew. The duchess arguably resembles a classical priestess more than a wild Highland witch; a jaunty miniature witch hat perched atop her high coiffure alludes to her occult role amidst her suggestive ancient Etruscan braids and the white classicised gown she is represented in.<sup>40</sup> Across from the duchess, on the right of the composition and represented casting a spell, is Anne who is instantly recognisable as a witch due to her iconic high-crowned hat and black robes, which feature astrological embroidery. The two divergent costumes echo those donned by the actors playing the Weird Sisters. The theatre critic, Francis Gentleman complained in 1770 that a production of *Macbeth* in Covent Garden had them dressed in 'Sybillic taste', which 'makes them rather Roman than Scots witches'.<sup>41</sup> Three years later, an equally displeased Horace Walpole protested that the witches 'are dressed with black hats and blue aprons, like basket women and soldiers' trulls, which must make the people not consider them as beings endowed with supernatural power'.<sup>42</sup> Gardner alludes to this supernatural power by representing Anne raising a magic wand while engaging the viewer's gazes. Of the three sitters, Elizabeth is the most enigmatic. She is represented in a crouched stance, supporting herself from a tree branch while adding

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<sup>38</sup> *London Evening Post*, 28 May 1772.

<sup>39</sup> *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 2 October 1776. See Greig, *The Beau Monde* for an extended discussion of the *ton*.

<sup>40</sup> Georgiana would revisit a similar guising in 1782, when she was depicted by Maria Cosway as Diana, Roman goddess of the moon, dressed in a similar Classical white gown.

<sup>41</sup> Francis Gentleman, *The Dramatic Censor; or, Critical companion* (London: Printed for J. Bell [etc.], 1770), 112.

<sup>42</sup> Brian Vickers, *William Shakespeare : The critical heritage Volume 5* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1995), 475.

ingredients to the steaming cauldron. Her suspended position implies that she has recently alighted from flight. A mysterious face emerges from the tree behind Elizabeth, coalescing with her robes. Unlike the other two sitters, her hair hangs loose below her shoulders and is arranged in a style that is suggestive of sprouting horns. In a period when fashionable women were known to decorate their hair with fruit, flowers and even miniature ships, a bat adorns the hair of Lady Melbourne.<sup>43</sup> Although they are represented as the Weird Sisters who, despite being three separate actors, constitute a unifying entity in the play; these witches all have distinguishing guises. Were the three women being presented as individuals within their intimate coven? A gouache and pastel sketch now in a private collection, executed concurrently and of roughly the same size, *Witches 'Round the Cauldron* (figure 1.3), does not articulate the same degree of difference in the three women.<sup>44</sup> Instead, the unfinished work displays them in more uniform costumes consisting of loose robes, witch hats, and notably, aprons as they dance around the cauldron, emphasising that the finished Gardner piece portrays them as individuals within their 'chosen' guises as the Weird Sisters. Like the different ingredients in their witches' brew, each woman lends singular contributions through their union.

The only contemporary reference to *The Three Witches* is found in Lady Mary Coke's journal, previously cited on page 44, and is an invaluable insight into the production of the painting in that she asserts that it was a commissioned piece rather than a personal project of Gardner's.<sup>45</sup> As Elizabeth Eger argues, 'emotional attachment was frequently cemented by concrete proof of that attachment, often in

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<sup>43</sup> Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 37 and Caroline Weber, *Queen of Fashion : What Marie Antoinette wore to the Revolution* (New York: H. Holt, 2006), 94–130.

<sup>44</sup> Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists*, 195. It has been suggested that this was a second of three painted editions in order for each of the three friends to have their own copy, as some sitters chose to do when commissioning group portraits (Williamson, *Daniel Gardner*, 65). While the theme, the figures, and facial positioning of the sitters are all the same, the composition and level of detail are notably different. The background is ambiguous and unfinished. Despite these differences, the representation of the necks and heads that appear in *The Three Witches* remains the same in this private collection version, despite the bodies being rendered differently. The women's faces are the most meticulously rendered aspect of the artwork; the rest of the painting appears in an unfinished state. A third version of *The Three Witches* has never been found or documented, and the unfinished state of this second piece (particularly in comparison to the other edition as well as Gardner's completed paintings) suggests the potential of the painting as an experimental sketch that Gardner would have used when interpreting the commission.

<sup>45</sup> LWL Journal of Lady Mary Coke, 14 July 1775. Lady Mary states that 'they have chosen that Scene' in her letter-diary to her sister.

the form of highly articulate and individual objects'.<sup>46</sup> *The Three Witches* should therefore be viewed as a material affirmation of the three women's friendship. The painting's provenance supports Lady Mary's claims of the commission. In the nineteenth century, it hung in Panshanger, a country house owned by the Cowper family, into which Elizabeth's daughter, Emily married in 1805.<sup>47</sup> Writing on Panshanger's collection in 1885, the nineteenth-century author Mary Boyle included *The Three Witches* in her catalogue writing:

We can easily imagine what prettily turned compliments were paid, what flattering contrasts drawn, between these three bewitching witches, who met and, met again not on a 'blasted heath' but in the sylvan shades of Brocket, and the midnight hags whom Shakespeare drew, 'so wizen, and so wild in their attire'.<sup>48</sup>

Although it is impossible to identify which of the three friends is responsible for the commission, the painting's passage through Elizabeth's female line suggests that she was the force behind the commission. This theory is supported further when we examine where the sitters were, geographically, when Gardner was executing the piece.

When Gardner produced his bewitching portrait in the summer of 1775, at least one of the sitters was out of the country. The Duchess of Devonshire was in Spa, Belgium during the period of the *Three Witches*' creation, raising the question of how Gardner captured Georgiana's appearance when she did not physically sit to him.<sup>49</sup> The answer can be found in *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, Joshua Reynolds's portrait of her, dating from 1775–6.<sup>50</sup> The full-length portrait was commissioned by her father, John, Earl Spencer and depicts Georgiana in an Arcadian garden, dressed in classical white drapery. Her hair is in the style she helped to popularise: piled into a high coiffure and crowned with ostrich feathers. If

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<sup>46</sup> Eger, "Paper Trails," 120.

<sup>47</sup> K. D. Reynolds, "Temple, Emily Mary, Viscountess Palmerston (1787–1869)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>48</sup> Mary Louisa Boyle, *Biographical Catalogue of the Portraits at Panshanger, the Seat of Earl Cowper* (London 1885), 476. The 'Brocket' that Boyle refers to is Brocket Hall, a country house in Hertfordshire where Lady Melbourne lived.

<sup>49</sup> See Brian Masters, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981).

<sup>50</sup> Mannings and Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 124. Reynolds's Pocket Books for 1775 and 1776 are missing but the hairstyle depicted on the duchess has helped to determine the approximate date. The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1776 (ibid.).

we look at a reversed image (figure 1.4) of the Reynolds portrait a doppelgänger appears, strongly indicating that Gardner used Reynolds's portrait of Georgiana in order to create his depiction of her as a witch. Both representations display Georgiana in an identical attitude, only differing in the positioning of her arms, which Gardner altered in order to represent her adding ingredients to the cauldron. Even the fancy dress Georgiana is depicted wearing in Gardner's painting resembles the robes Reynolds had represented his sitter in. As both portraits were created in 1775, Gardner must have seen the original oil in Reynolds's studio, as it was not publically exhibited until 1776 with its first etched reproduction published in 1780.<sup>51</sup> Gardner and Reynolds were on close terms with one another; Gardner was a former student of Reynolds and had worked in his studio in 1773, two years prior to the painting's creation.<sup>52</sup> Under Reynolds's tutelage Gardner was allowed to copy his master's work as part of his training.<sup>53</sup> It is due to this familiarity with Reynolds and his history of copying Reynolds's work that Gardner would most likely have had access to Georgiana's full-length portrait in order to add the absent duchess to his commission.

Inevitably, this solicits the question of why Daniel Gardner, an emerging artist with no previous oeuvre of history paintings or allegorical portraits, was chosen to execute the work. Although there are no textual traces of the commission, Gardner's professional profile offers potential answers. Gardner did not exhibit his work at the Royal Academy, however he had established himself as a reputable artist; years later he would enjoy a comfortable lifestyle and an early retirement because of his success.<sup>54</sup> He also would have been more accessible due to being in less demand than other portraitists, such as Reynolds or Thomas Gainsborough. Additionally, Gardner had a reputation as a fast worker – perhaps an enticement to

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<sup>51</sup> Mannings and Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 124.

<sup>52</sup> Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists*, 191.

<sup>53</sup> Williamson, *Daniel Gardner*, 16. He also contributed to some of the background painting in Reynolds's work.

<sup>54</sup> Gardner submitted one piece to Royal Academy in 1773 and then refrained from exhibiting ever again. This choice may have been based on the decision of his friend and mentor, George Romney, to stop exhibiting his work publicly after 1772 (Stephen Lloyd and Kim Sloan, *The Intimate Portrait : Drawings, miniatures and pastels from Ramsay to Lawrence* (Edinburgh; London: National Galleries of Scotland ; British Museum, 2008), 88).

young women eager to see themselves in their adopted guises.<sup>55</sup> Gardner disregarded oils in exchange for painting with a mixed media combination of gouache and pastels: this characteristic method produced translucent layering with rich colours. The technique was the artist's own invention, derived from trial and error, and included mixing the media with substances such as brandy or watercolours in order to achieve the vibrancy of oil paintings with the visual effect of pastels. Gardner was highly protective of his painting recipes, and refused to tutor students so that his methods could not be duplicated.<sup>56</sup> Gardner's technique, availability to his patrons, and particularly, his professional network, would all have recommended him for the commission.

Gardner's professional networking proved to be useful for reproducing Georgiana's likeness in her absence; however Anne too may have been elsewhere at the time of the painting's creation. Gardner's depiction of her facial features strongly resembles those seen in Angelica Kauffman's *The Honourable Anne Damer as Ceres* (1766, figure 1.5) indicating that Reynolds was not the only Royal Academician that Gardner copied his sitters from. Unlike Georgiana's representation in *The Three Witches*, Gardner did not adopt the positioning of Anne's body from the Kauffman portrait, only referencing the painting to replicate her face. Kauffman depicted Anne sitting while facing the viewer whereas Gardner has amended her posture in order to represent her glancing over her shoulder while turning from the viewer. Regardless, Anne's face, with her familiar smile, is a striking reminder of Kauffman's painting. It is likely that Gardner could have gained access to the portrait through his and Kauffman's common connection to the Royal Academy or through their mutual friendship with Reynolds.<sup>57</sup> Unlike the renderings of Georgiana and Anne, it is difficult to accurately assess whether Elizabeth sat for Gardner. However, due to there being no known portraits of her in a similar attitude, it is likely that her portrayal may be the only original representation of the three sitters. She is consistently depicted in a three-quarters angle with a slight smile; it is this attitude

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<sup>55</sup> Williamson, *Daniel Gardner*, 33.

<sup>56</sup> Lloyd and Sloan, *The Intimate Portrait*, 88.

<sup>57</sup> The original painting appears to be lost but prints of it remain (Yarrington, "Damer, Anne Seymour (1749-1828),").

that Gardner also uses in *The Three Witches*.<sup>58</sup> Although there are no definite means of determining whether Elizabeth sat for Gardner, her representation in addition to the likelihood of her commissioning the work suggests that she may have been the sole person to sit for Gardner's portrait. The three friends, who were physically separated at the time of creation, were unified on the painted canvas.

While the three sitters did not collectively sit for Daniel Gardner in the summer of 1775, Lady Mary Coke's account of the painting infers that the theatrical theme of the group portrait was a collaborative decision between them. More importantly, *The Three Witches* is a commissioned female group portrait between three unrelated women marking it as an unusual, or 'weyward', piece within the canon. Drawing on the sitters' guise as the Weird Sisters, we can adopt this sisterly thread to further tease out *The Three Witches*. Elite women's painted representation in eighteenth-century Britain tended to be dominated by their position within the family unit resulting in most female group portraits depicting blood relatives, specifically sisters. Marcia Pointon and Kate Retford have written extensively on familial portraiture in this period; both scholars arguing that the public display of the private family was a means of presenting genealogical narratives.<sup>59</sup> Retford argues that the family portrait was an important document that 'appealed to emotion and provided a traditional statement of hierarchy and familial heritage'.<sup>60</sup> While Retford presents a convincing argument in *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (2006), her substantial study of familial portraiture excludes representations of siblings. Her omission of sororal portraiture from her study is not singular in art historical scholarship. More recently, Amber Ludwig's chapter in the exhibition catalogue on *Thomas Gainsborough and the Modern Woman* (2010) regarding the 'fashioning [of] female identity' includes a case study on the sororal portraits of Gainsborough's daughters, but fails to divulge any deeper cultural meaning. Instead it serves merely as a narrative on Mary and Margaret

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<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth had a clear preference for her painted portrayal. The majority of her surviving portraits place her head at a three-quarters angle with her gaze directed outside of the picture plane. An example of which is found in Reynolds's 1771 half-length of Elizabeth in classical drapery. A George Romney portrait, recently sold at Christie's, represents Elizabeth, again depicted in classical drapery, looking outside of the picture plane. The two paintings were created around the time of the Gardner triple portrait and serve as indicators of Elizabeth's preference for her portrayal.

<sup>59</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 159–62; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*.

<sup>60</sup> Retford, "Sensibility and Genealogy," 234.



Gainsborough's relationship with their doting father and their trials within London society.<sup>61</sup> This absence in scholarship leaves room for us to unmask the greater significance of visual representations of sisterhood in the eighteenth century and with it, the intimately linked topic of female friendship.

Jerrine E. Mitchell highlighted this concern over fifteen years ago in her exploration of French eighteenth-century sister portraits. She argues that 'sister' was one of the three familial identities woman were granted, the other two – daughter and wife – establish feminine identity by specifying women's connection to men (father; husband) thus making sisterhood, 'the only relation among these [labels] *specific* to women'.<sup>62</sup> Yet, as Mitchell argues, 'sister portraits have received scant attention as a distinct type'.<sup>63</sup> She suggests a rationale for this slight is due to an 'ambiguity of a sister position in families' and suggests that examining sisterhood in portraits offers 'a singular vantage point for viewing feminine identity as constructed within the institution of the family'.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the majority of sororal portraits representing the sitters in adulthood were engagement portraits – commissioned pieces surrounding the engagement or an anticipated engagement of one or more of the female sitters.<sup>65</sup> This indicates that the approaching union to a man (and subsequent expansion of family pedigree) was a worthy enough occasion to commemorate a daughter in painted portraiture. Meanwhile, Gill Perry has identified engagement portraits as an 'important tool in the public socialisation of the sitter', and argues that they designate 'a period of ambiguous feminine identity between family and wifely obligations', reaffirming Mitchell's suggestion that the representation of sisters in

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<sup>61</sup> See Amber Ludwig, "Virtue in a Vicious Age: Fashioning Feminine Identity in Eighteenth-Century London," in *Thomas Gainsborough and the Modern Woman*, ed. Benedict Leca (London: Giles, 2010), 145–79.

<sup>62</sup> Jerrine E. Mitchell, "Picturing Sisters : 1790 Portraits by J.-L. David," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 2 (1998): 175. Emphasis mine.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 176

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Georgiana herself was represented in such a portrait with her brother and sister by Angelica Kauffman: *Viscount Althorp with his sisters, Lady Georgiana and Lady Henrietta-Frances Spencer* (1774).

portraiture may offer a unique view on the sitters and their identity.<sup>66</sup> But what could this mean for a painting represented of unrelated female sitters identifying themselves as a sisterhood? As this chapter asserts, *The Three Witches* offered its subjects a form of identity outside of natal and marital family identities and within the constructed family in which they safely displayed their chosen guise.

Both Mitchell and Janet Todd have highlighted the tradition of female friends guising themselves as sisters as a means to account for their lack of familial relation.<sup>67</sup> Sisterhood as a trope, Mitchell notes, is especially prevalent in literature but *The Three Witches* marks its uncommon appearance in art. Mitchell's approach of using sisterhood as a tool to locate feminine identity as a construction within an institution therefore serves as a useful means of unpacking *The Three Witches*, which presents three friends as fictional sisters. Within the context of *Macbeth* and the political involvement of the sitters, we can view this institution not as the biological family, but rather as the Rockingham Whig social circle – a metaphorical or even adopted, family. Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne had been united through political social networks consisting of politicians, activists, and nobility, and it was from this circle that they had constructed their own sisterhood. This sorority offered a shelter for them, or as Eger argues, 'a shared independence', unavailable to them within their marriages.<sup>68</sup> Therefore this chapter not only addresses female group portraiture but also contributes to the growing scholarship on female identity, arguing that while women were limited in the definitions prescribed to them in the patriarchal family as daughter, wife, or mother, some were able to create an alternative identity, or a guise, through their social networks. *The Three Witches* can thus be viewed as a declaration of the sitters' 'weird', or 'weyward', Sisterhood, which was interpreted as their 'chosen' selves rather than the societally dictated 'prescribed' guises that were expected of them.

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<sup>66</sup> Gillian 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. Gill Perry and Michael Rossington (Manchester; New York; New York: Manchester University Press ; Distributed exclusively in the USA and Canada by St. Martin's Press, 1994), 25.

<sup>67</sup> Mitchell, "Picturing Sisters," 178. For a further discussion on this the sisterhood trope tradition, see Todd, *Women's Friendship*, 307.

<sup>68</sup> Eger, "Paper Trails," 112.

Curiously, for a period that valued sentiment and admired female friendships in literature, there are few group portraits commemorating non-familial female friendship. The exchange of mementos, such as a lock of hair, was a common practice but celebrating friendship through portraiture was significantly less so.<sup>69</sup> One of the few English examples of painted depictions of female friendship is a portrait-object by Christian Friedrich Zincke (c. 1740, figure 1.6).<sup>70</sup> Despite the 'Friendship' Box consisting of two gold boxes with two enamel portrait miniatures contained on each box, the boxes were considered to be one piece by its patron, Margaret, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duchess of Portland. The commission arose out of the duchess's desire for visual keepsakes of her close friends and displays miniature portraits of herself, Elizabeth Montagu, Mary Delany, and an unknown lady, most likely Mary Howard, Lady Andover.<sup>71</sup> In her will, the Duchess of Portland left her 'Snuff box with the four Enamel pictures by Zincke' to Lady Andover demonstrating the sentimental value placed on the intimate portrait-object.<sup>72</sup> Notably, in her representation Montagu dons the familiar gown and headdress of Anne Boleyn. Much like Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne's group portrait, Montagu chose the guise of a British woman famous for wielding power and 'particularly respected by the [group of friends] for her role as mother of Elizabeth I, who formed a compelling example of female power and patronage'.<sup>73</sup> Zincke's 'Friendship' Box constitutes an atypical example of women assuming assertive female guises within the smaller niche of portraiture that celebrated a female friendship.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup> For further information on jewellery see Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*.

<sup>70</sup> I have adopted Marcia Pointon's phrasing, 'portrait-object', which compromises the multiple forms of miniature portraiture; see "Surrounded with Brilliants : Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England," *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 1 (2001): 48.

<sup>71</sup> Elizabeth Eger, "The Bluestocking Circle, Friendship, Patronage and Learning," in *Brilliant Women : 18th-century bluestockings*, ed. Elizabeth Eger, Lucy Peltz, and Gallery National Portrait (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 37.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>73</sup> "Paper Trails," 116. Montagu's correspondence indicates the guise being that of Anne Boleyn.

<sup>74</sup> Other examples include Frances Crewe and Elizabeth Bouverie's portrait by Joshua Reynolds *Mrs Bouverie and Mrs Crewe* (ca. 1767-9) which represents the friends in an Arcadian setting, thoughtfully reflecting in front of a stone sarcophagus, gestured to by Crewe, who is featured centrally in the composition. Reynolds's ledger has both women's names recorded as purchasers even though the painting was displayed at Crewe House (Mannings and Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 152-3). Georgiana would continue to be represented in group portraits with her friends and was depicted with her live-in friend, Lady Elizabeth Foster, multiple times in intimate portraits such as a miniature by Jean-Urbain Guérin (1791) and drawing by John Downman (1791). Despite these examples, the practice of female group portraiture remains unique within the greater canon.

The constructed sisterhood of Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne is not the only element that can be considered ‘weyward’, the painting is also defiant in its pictorial convention. As previously noted, elite women were distinguished by their familial position thus limiting their group portrait depictions to genealogical narratives. On the other hand, male friendship was a more common trope in portraiture.<sup>75</sup> While men’s visual representations could denote their rank or status through the use of dress, attributes, and posturing, as Perry contends, it was more difficult for women’s status to be distinguished in portraiture.<sup>76</sup> However this could be negotiated through allegorical portraiture. Typically, female allegorical guises were recognisable mythological or historical figures that could be related to the sitters’ virtues, morals, and political values.<sup>77</sup> In assuming these guises in portraiture, the sitters projected the likenesses they shared with those figures. It was, therefore, extremely unusual or ‘weyward’ for those guises to be infamous literary antagonists such as the Weird Sisters. However, adopting a more traditional allegorical guise in portraiture could still relay an unconventional message. Francis Cotes’s 1765 double portrait, *The Hon. Lady Stanhope and the Countess of Effingham as Diana and her Companion* (figure 1.7) is demonstrative of how allegory served as a means to convey the status of the female sitters and likewise offers a rare parallel to Gardner’s *The Three Witches* in terms of its allegorised representation of female friendship. The two friends are depicted in fancy dress, enacting a classical scene of the goddess on a hunt. It was created three years after Lady Stanhope and her husband, Sir William Stanhope, had separated following a long honeymoon in Italy. Horace Walpole gleefully recorded that Sir William’s last words to his wife were ‘Madame, I hope I shall never see your face again’; they were followed by Lady Stanhope’s equally lofty reply, ‘I shall take all care I can that you never shall’.<sup>78</sup> In displaying herself in the guise of the virgin-huntress, Diana – a popular masquerade costume – Lady Stanhope visually asserted the independence that came with her separation from her

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<sup>75</sup> For example, Joshua Reynolds’s *Colonel Acland and Lord Sydney: The Archers* (1769, Tate) and Philip Wickstead’s *The Grand Tour Group* (1772–3, NT Springhill).

<sup>76</sup> Perry, “Women in Disguise:,” 21–5.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>78</sup> Royal Academy of Arts and Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, *Citizens and Kings : Portraits in the age of revolution, 1760-1830* (London; New York: Royal Academy of Arts, 2007), 307.

husband, while also demonstrating her intimacy with Lady Effingham.<sup>79</sup> Much like *The Three Witches*, Lady Stanhope's exhibits her 'chosen' guise, or an identity based around friendships in lieu of a traditional family structure.

Despite the affluence of praise for female friendship in popular novels, painted portraiture in eighteenth-century Britain tended to celebrate the individual or their family. It rarely displayed friendship, and in particular female friendship, as these few examples attest.<sup>80</sup> *The Three Witches* is one of the few known examples of portraiture that uses painted guises as a means to celebrate the friendship. However, Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne were not the only women to adopt the witches' guise as a means of defining the friendship; eighteenth-century Britain birthed multiple covens.

In 1742, the Bluestocking writer Elizabeth Carter was a guest of the Lynch family, staying in their home in Canterbury.<sup>81</sup> After writing to her friend Hannah Underdown, Carter took up her pen again that night to add an amusing postscript: 'the Chimney has been a fire & Mrs. Lynch & two maids have ben extinguishing it with long Brooms, which in the midstd [*sic*] of all her fright set Miss Lynch a laughing very heartily by putting her in Mind of the 3 Witches in Macbeth'.<sup>82</sup> As Carter's retelling of Miss Lynch's experience attests, the Weird Sisters were recognisable characters who, as we shall see later, were endeared to the eighteenth-century audience. However, this was not the only mention of witches in Carter's correspondence. Both Carter's and fellow Bluestocking Elizabeth Montagu's (portrayed in figure 1.6) personal letters contain topical references to being witches, implying that the prominent members of the Bluestocking circle had also adopted the guise of the Weyward Sisters, comparing their friendship to a witches' coven.<sup>83</sup> The

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<sup>79</sup> For masquerade costumes in Britain see Aileen Ribeiro's PhD thesis, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730 to 1790, and its Relation to Fancy Dress in Portraiture* (Courtauld Institute of Art, 1975).

<sup>80</sup> This brief overview of the painted representation of female friendship invites additional discussion of the public display and reception of female friendship, an understudied topic that requires further investigation elsewhere.

<sup>81</sup> For an extensive discussion of the Bluestocking circle see Eger, "Bluestocking Circle," .

<sup>82</sup> Elizabeth Carter and Gwen Hampshire, *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806 : An edition of some unpublished letters* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 123.

<sup>83</sup> Montagu Papers, Huntington Library, see Emma Major, *Madam Britannia : Women, church, and nation, 1712-1812* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 13.

surviving letters of Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne make no references to witches or their relationship with them. The only near-mention of the Weird Sisters is in one of Georgiana's letters, dated three years after the completion of the painting: 'I have no terms to express the horror of Mr Garrick's reading *Macbeth*,' she wrote to Hon. Mary Graham, 'I have not recovered yet, it is the finest and most dreadful thing I ever saw or heard, for his action and countenance is as expressive and terrible as his voice. It froze my blood as I heard him.'<sup>84</sup> Despite writing to her friend not long after her portrayal as an antagonist from the same horror-provoking play, Georgiana failed to mention any personal connection she may have had with the tragedy.

Carter's letters to Hannah Underdown, contrarily, are littered with references to witches. When describing a taxing walk in Windsor in 1739, she wrote:

Some [companions] indeed were so complaisant as to affirm that I could not have performed such an arduous a Task as ascending the Hill without the Assistance of Pegasus, but this polite Speech was soon contradicted by others who gave me a frightful Greek name of Aerobates which they maliciously translated, riding like a witch upon a Broomstick. This Adventure of the Wood gave us no small diversion, for we wrangled & laugh'd about it most part of the way to Oxford.<sup>85</sup>

The happy recollection reveals that her friends jested about her being both Perseus the mythological Greek hero and a witch – respectively a hyper-masculine and a gender-crossing figure, as we will see later. Carter's documentation of the conversation evinces her amusement with it. A few years later Carter, again writing to Underdown during her stay with the Lynches, reported: 'Miss Lynch desires her Compliments & says if she had been witch enough to manage the Broomstick you wd. long since felt her vengeance for keeping me so long at Deal'.<sup>86</sup> Miss Lynch's comment offers further implication that 'witch' may have been used as a topical definition within this circle of friends in which to describe a specific type of woman. These examples also suggest that there was a significant circle among whom the topical joke of Carter being a witch was circulated. For our purposes though, these surviving letters attest to elite women guising themselves as witches, just as

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<sup>84</sup> Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 46–7

<sup>85</sup> Carter and Hampshire, *Elizabeth Carter*, 69.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 122

Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne had had themselves immortalised in painted portraiture.

*The Three Witches* remains a powerful signifier of the Rockingham Whig social networks that the three sitters had enthusiastically aligned themselves with, and consequently, can remain a commemorative friendship portrait. The alternative family thus produces an alternative family portrait. While this chapter argues that *The Three Witches* was a 'weyward' group the portrait of a constructed sisterhood – the limited scholarship on the newly rediscovered painting generally infers that it depicts the three sitters in a private theatrical.<sup>87</sup> Private theatricals, were a form of entertainment staged in the sitting rooms of noble homes by elite amateur performers.<sup>88</sup> Even the first publication to reference Gardner's painting, Mary Boyle's catalogue of Panshanger, accredits the entertainment as the inspiration behind the work, stating that Elizabeth and Anne were 'addicted to private theatricals'.<sup>89</sup> Instead of dismissing this argument, the possibility of Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne performing in an amateur performance of *Macbeth* opens further possibilities for consideration, and calls into question the significance of the theatrical and artistic Weird Sisters.

### **'Charming Creatures': *Macbeth* and the Witches in Eighteenth-Century Culture**

*Macbeth* was a play highly ingrained with cultural resonance throughout most of the eighteenth century in Britain. David Garrick's role in London theatre in the mid-eighteenth century had ignited a renewed interest in Shakespearean plays, including *Macbeth*, yet its popularity had hit a small slump in the mid-1770s. The play saw only four performances in London in the year preceding *The Three Witches*' creation

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<sup>87</sup> Gillian Perry, "Star Systems : Then and Now," in *The First Actresses : Nell Gwyn to Sarah Siddons*, ed. Gill Perry, Joseph R. Roach, and Shearer West (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2011), 125.

<sup>88</sup> See Helen E. M. Brooks, "'One entire nation of actors and actresses' - Reconsidering the Relationship of Public and Private Theatricals," (2012); Carly Watson, "Private Theatricals in the Harcourt Family Papers," *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 38, no. 2 (2011); and Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations*, 169–90 for a further discussion of private theatricals.

<sup>89</sup> Boyle, *Portraits at Panshanger*, 458.

and a mere single performance in 1775 before the portrait was begun.<sup>90</sup> This is in contrast to the following year which had seven performances; 1778 saw no fewer than eleven performances.<sup>91</sup> In their description of *The Three Witches from Macbeth*, the London National Portrait Gallery has attempted to shed light on the inspiration behind the previously unexplored group portrait, accrediting it with the popularity of the play. It reads: 'Due to the contemporary interest in the supernatural, the sublime and the Gothic, the Witches' appearance was one of the most popular scenes with theatre-goers, and was also one of the most frequently painted scenes from Shakespeare during the eighteenth century.'<sup>92</sup> This statement, while evocative, is also misleading. Many theatre-goers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries looked forward to the scenes containing the witches in *Macbeth*, for they tended to be the most extravagant displays of theatrical special effects. Despite the thrill of the witches' appearance on stage, the Weird Sisters' depictions in painting were rare before Gardner's 1775 portrait. In order to continue assessing *The Three Witches* as an unusual or 'weyward' theme, this section will situate the witches' place and popularity in British eighteenth-century culture.

Before 1744, British audiences were accustomed to an adaption of *Macbeth* dating from the early 1660s by William Davenant (c. 1606–68). Davenant, being roughly the same age as the tragedy, sought to update and simplify *Macbeth* for Restoration audiences.<sup>93</sup> Scenes were cut, lines altered, and musical numbers added to the scenes with the witches. Special effects included the witches flying into scenes and their cauldron mysteriously disappearing below the stage. Upon Hecate's entrance in Act III, a horde of witches joined the Weird Sisters on stage and performed an elaborately choreographed song.<sup>94</sup> It is incredibly likely that Alexander Pope was referring to the Davenant version when he complained of the witches' scenes being overindulgent in order to entertain the 'meaner sort of people' in the

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<sup>90</sup> Ben Ross Schneider, *Index to The London Stage, 1660-1800* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 768–9.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> See NPG website; National Portrait Gallery, "The Three Witches from Macbeth," National Portrait Gallery, <http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/display/2011/the-three-witches-from-macbeth.php>.

<sup>93</sup> Stuart Sillars, *Painting Shakespeare : The artist as critic, 1720-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>94</sup> Vanessa Cunningham, *Shakespeare and Garrick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 50.



audience, indicating that these scenes catered to either lower-class or fatuous viewers.<sup>95</sup> Garrick's welcomed alteration in 1744 (printed for the public in 1773) retained many of the special effects and musical numbers surrounding the witches, while restoring much of Shakespeare's original text into the play.<sup>96</sup> Notes in the stage direction read, 'Symphony, whilst Hecate places herself in the machine', indicating that the witch-queen was raised in a contraption while her followers danced before her.<sup>97</sup> Garrick's decision to preserve Davenant's spectacle-rich witch scenes most assuredly stemmed from their resilient popularity.<sup>98</sup> This evidences that the supernatural disposition of witches presented an opportunity for playhouse managers to implement special effects and theatrical puffery into their production of *Macbeth* in order to appeal to the tastes of the diverse social classes in attendance.

The witches provided another means of tailoring the play to the diverse tastes of the audience. Male actors commonly played the Weird Sisters due to Banquo questioning their sex upon their first meeting in the third scene of Act I.<sup>99</sup> This gender-swapping had a pantomime effect, allowing the witches to act as agents of light relief in an emotionally charged, horror-inducing tragedy that otherwise, offered none.<sup>100</sup> Echoing, Pope's earlier complaint, witch-aficionado Elizabeth Montagu felt that the Weird Sisters' scenes were lowbrow, protesting that 'the solemn character of the infernal rites would be very striking, if the scene was not made ludicrous by a mob of old women, which the Players have added to the three weird sisters'.<sup>101</sup> The theatre critic, Francis Gentleman, though disapproving of the witches sinking into the stage after proclaiming to hover, felt that the added musical scene with the witches was a 'very seasonable relief to a feeling mind, from the painful weight of horror

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<sup>95</sup> Alexander Pope and Joseph Warton, *The Works of Alexander Pope*, Vol 9, 9 vols. (London: Richard Priestley, 1822), 396.

<sup>96</sup> Cunningham, *Shakespeare and Garrick*, 43–4. For further information on Garrick's adaption see Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*; Cunningham, *Shakespeare and Garrick*; and Nick Moschovakis, "Introduction : Dualistic Macbeth? Problematic Macbeth," in *Macbeth : New critical essays*, ed. Nick Moschovakis (New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>97</sup> Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*, 33.

<sup>98</sup> Cunningham, *Shakespeare and Garrick*, 50.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>100</sup> Garrick cut the Porter's comic relief scenes (Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*, xv).

<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth Montagu, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear, compared with the Greek and French dramatic Poets : With some remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Mr. de Voltaire* (London: Printed by H. Hughs, 1772), 197.

which some preceding scenes must have laid upon it'.<sup>102</sup> However, by 1784, John Phillip Kemble, believing that witches were beginning to take on an air of buffoonery, encouraged the return of their mien to that of 'sinister figures' at Drury Lane.<sup>103</sup> This may not have been a fixed interpretation, as Gentleman viewed the witches as 'extraordinary agents' who had the power to 'impress superstitious feelings and fears upon weak minds', presumably excluding himself from that assessment.<sup>104</sup> Due to its cultural longevity many *Macbeth* scholars agree that the Weird Sisters, and the play itself, offer varying interpretations that resonate and can be viewed freshly under each generational lens.<sup>105</sup>

One of the generational associations that eighteenth-century audiences had with the Weird Sisters was their questionable gender. As indicative in male actors commonly playing the Weird Sisters, the witch in eighteenth-century culture was an agent mediating a compromise between gender and gender roles. Witches were viewed as bi-gendered individuals; simultaneously feminine while also possessing 'masculine' traits and physical characteristics due to their ugly appearance and (magical) power. The play stresses this indeterminacy through Banquo's initial struggle to identify the Weird Sisters which, Diane Purkiss argues, demonstrates how the witches 'inhabit a borderland between clearly marked states'.<sup>106</sup> They remain on the nexus of the gender binary.

Despite their ability to entice playgoers, the bi-gendered witches' scenes as an artistic subject had not yet reached the zenith it would acquire after the creation of *The Three Witches* in 1775. Only a handful of British history paintings depicting the Weird Sisters survive, but tracing their pictorial chronology discloses the contemporary connotations of the witches themselves. British-based artists John Wootton and Francesco Zuccarelli had both dabbled with the theme in the middle of the century, using the scene from the play as a means of depicting a sublime landscape with Macbeth and Banquo's initial contact with the witches featured in the

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<sup>102</sup> Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, 92.

<sup>103</sup> Moschovakis, "Introduction," 11.

<sup>104</sup> Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, 79–80.

<sup>105</sup> See Moschovakis, "Introduction," 1–72.

<sup>106</sup> Diane Purkiss, "Macbeth and the All-Singing, All-dancing plays of the Jacobean Witch-vogue," in *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender*, ed. Kate Chedgoy (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave, 2001), 225.

foreground.<sup>107</sup> Contrary to the National Portrait Gallery's claim, the Zuccarelli and Wootton compositions remain two of the only known painted depictions of the Weird Sisters from 1700 to 1775 and, notably, in both paintings the landscape takes artistic precedence.

Michael Levey is one of the few art historians who has argued that the witches were generally uncommon artistic motifs, stating that Zuccarelli was 'one of the first eighteenth-century painters to choose such subjects'.<sup>108</sup> However, Esther Dotson, in her widely cited 1973 doctoral thesis, argues that the Weird Sisters scenes were some of the most commonly depicted Shakespearean theme between the years 1770 and 1820, basing her argument on the records of exhibition catalogues. A closer inspection of her data reveals that images of the Weird Sisters were exhibited six times out of the 46 Shakespeare-themed artworks recorded between the years 1760 and 1775, with most of the images of the witches being exhibited after 1775.<sup>109</sup> While many still reference Dotson's unpublished thesis as the archetype of research on Shakespeare-themed artwork of the period, it refers to works that there are no further mention of beyond the contemporary catalogue from which it was extracted, and also excludes non-exhibited works.<sup>110</sup> One artist not included in Dotson's thesis who experimented with the subject of witches was John Runciman. His pen and ink sketch, *The Three Witches* (figure 1.8), from 1767–8, depicts three grizzled and masculine heads in conference. The glabrous skulls have masculine facial features that verge on inhuman; their ears being indecipherable as either long and pointed, or gauged cavities in their head. Another un-exhibited sketch that survives from the period, *The Witches in Macbeth* (figure 1.9) by John Michael Rijsbrack, was a gift

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<sup>107</sup> See John Wootton, *Macbeth and Banquo meeting the Weird Sisters* (c. 1750, Rafael Valls Gallery); Francesco Zuccarelli, *Macbeth, Banquo and the Witches* (c. 1760, Royal Shakespeare Company) and Zuccarelli, *Macbeth, Banquo and the Witches* (c. 1760, Folger Library). For information on notions of the sublime see, Edmund Burke, "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful the Sixth edition [...]," (1771) and Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764).

<sup>108</sup> Michael Levey, "Zuccarelli in England," *Italian studies / publ. by the Society for Italian Studies*. 14 (1959): 6.

<sup>109</sup> Esther Gordon Dotson, "Shakespeare Illustrated, 1770-1820" (New York University, 1979), 505.

<sup>110</sup> William Pressly references the Dotson thesis in reference to the Zuccarelli paintings in *A Catalogue of Paintings in the Folger Shakespeare Library* (1993), and it is likely the source of the NPG description's claim of portraying the 'most frequently painted scenes from Shakespeare in the eighteenth century'.

that the artist gave to David Garrick.<sup>111</sup> It portrays the witches in conversation, and they are depicted as haggardly but with the toned muscles of men, most likely due to the common practice of men playing the roles of the Weird Sisters on stage to emphasise the witches' ugly appearance.<sup>112</sup> Despite the witches being represented with masculine physical characteristics, they are not depicted as buffoons, and rather assume dark and frightening appearances. The fact that both works are sketches suggests a more intimate, possibly private communication between the artist and his viewers. Like these examples, Gardner's scene does not include the figure of Macbeth and was likely made for a more private reflection, as it was not exhibited in public. *The Three Witches* emphasises the figures' presence due to its nature as a portrait, but is also heavily laden with Shakespearean details in the composition.

Rather than simply guising the sitters in witches' garb, the portrait references the play from which it was devised. An owl, 'the fatal bellman' that shrieked before the death of Duncan (Act II, Scene I), perches above Elizabeth and Georgiana to observe their dark art, while an orange 'brinded' cat (Act IV, Scene I) climbs a stump in order to witness the scene from below.<sup>113</sup> The cat is a well-known emblem directly associated with witches throughout the centuries, as Samuel Johnson explained in his *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth*, 'the usual Form in which familiar Spirits are reported to converse with Witches, is that of a Cat'.<sup>114</sup> Represented fluttering and spitting fire above the cat is a bat-winged familiar that takes the appearance of a small dragon. To the right of the two familiars is a black ram which, at first glance, gives the appearance of a puff of dark smoke. Below the ram is a rat-like creature that is plausibly a 'hedge-pig', whining to mark that "'tis time' for the witches to meet again (Act IV, Scene I).<sup>115</sup> Gardner has united animals from the tragedy with emblematic familiars traditionally associated with witches to identify the sitters' guises as the Weird Sisters.

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<sup>111</sup> Levey, "Zuccarelli in England," 6.

<sup>112</sup> Catherine Alexander, "The Dear Witches: Horace Walpole's *Macbeth*," *The Review of English Studies* 49, no. 194 (1998): 135.

<sup>113</sup> Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*, 24 and 49.

<sup>114</sup> Samuel Johnson, *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth* (London: Printed for E. Cave, and sold by J. Roberts, 1745), 45.

<sup>115</sup> Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*, 49.

The three witches as an artistic subject became more prominent in painted depictions in the last twenty years of the eighteenth century. The two artists responsible for these more iconic depictions were Francisco Goya and Henry Fuseli. In 1794, the Duke and Duchess of Osuna commissioned six paintings of witches from Goya.<sup>116</sup> Even at this later date the Spanish artist noted the odd nature of the theme to the Vice-Protector Bernardo de Iriarte; almost twenty years after Gardner's light-hearted painting, he wrote: 'I set myself to painting a series of cabinet pictures in which I have been able to depict themes that cannot usually be addressed in commissioned works.'<sup>117</sup> Fuseli's interest in the subject matter can be attributed to his well-known love of Shakespeare, with *Macbeth* being his favourite of the Bard's plays.<sup>118</sup> He painted multiple depictions of Macbeth's interactions with the three witches, the most famous of which being *The Three Witches* (figure 1.10) from 1783. Unlike the other portrayals previously examined, the shrouded elderly women's profiles fill the frame from the chest up and all extend their left arm in a foreboding gesture while gazing upward. True to Shakespeare's description, they each hold their right index finger up to their mouth. James Gillray parodied Fuseli's *The Three Witches* on 23 December 1791 in his satirical print, *Weird Sisters; Ministers of Darkness; Minions of the Moon* (figure 1.11), connecting the politically inscribed characters with contemporaneous politics. The three shrouded figures represent Lord Dundas, William Pitt, and Lord Chancellor Thurlow. The politicians are satirised in this print for their alliance at the unstable time when George III's sanity was in question.<sup>119</sup> Gillray's satirical print voiced the concern surrounding the three men taking advantage of a situation in order to meddle and take control of the government. In the play, the witches serve as a device to incite the plot when, upon meeting Macbeth, they tell him that he is destined for power. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth become intent on seeing the Weird Sisters' prophecy become a reality and

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<sup>116</sup> It is more plausible that the duchess, rather than the duke, commissioned the witch paintings from Goya. It should also be taken into consideration that the Duchess of Osuna took a politically active role similar to that of the sitters in *The Three Witches* in her native Spain (Linda C. Hults, *The Witch as Muse : Art, gender, and power in early modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2005), 222).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>118</sup> William L. Pressly and Library Folger Shakespeare, *A Catalogue of Paintings in the Folger Shakespeare Library : "as imagination bodies forth"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 55.

<sup>119</sup> M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Vol 6*, vol. 6 (London: The British Museum, 1938), 834.

resort to acts of murder, regicide and betrayal. Just as the witches steered Macbeth and his wife into dark actions based on their vague prophecies, Gillray represents three high-ranking government officials under suspicion of using dark practices to take advantage of a situation pertaining to the government. Gillray's political satire is a discernible example of the increase in visual imagery relating to the characters of the Weird Sisters, as well as audiences' artistic familiarity with the characters in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is also an example of an association of Shakespeare's witches with the political – more specifically, with feminised and meddling political entities. This proved to be a general association with the Weird Sisters in eighteenth-century Britain. With this in mind, we can now raise the rhetorical curtain on the political connotations surrounding the Weird Sisters in the late eighteenth-century and fully unmask Gardner's painting.

### **'Borrow'd Robes': The Weird Sisters' Political Connotations<sup>120</sup>**

Thus far, this chapter has suggested that the witch guise adopted by Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne in Gardner's portrait garnered significance outside of popular entertainments and the theatre. It has argued that Gardner's portrait is a display of 'chosen', or more personally truthful, guises, which as we will see with a further unpacking of contemporary meanings, were of a political nature. *Macbeth* is a play detailing the destructive personal and political effects of a man's temptation into power. One of the main antagonists of the play is Macbeth's own wife, Lady Macbeth, whose support for her husband transgresses into an obsessive and destructive plot for political supremacy. Lady Macbeth is static in signifying the aggressively political female in the play. However, as Nick Moschovakis maintains, 'the weird sisters have been variously understood by different individuals, times, and cultures. They embody humanity's perennial failure to impose its conscious will and its ideas of order'.<sup>121</sup> In addition to viewing Lady Macbeth as a contentious political figure, many also viewed the Weird Sisters as political agents. The witches are

<sup>120</sup> Quoted from *Macbeth*: 'Macbeth: Why do you dress me in his borrow'd robes?' (Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*, 12; Line 116).

<sup>121</sup> Moschovakis, "Introduction," 1.

politically inscribed entities due to their use of intrigue and prophecies to disrupt the course of government in the play. Unlike Lady Macbeth, who became an active player in governmental changes throughout the play, the witches actively *guide* and inspire Macbeth into his wicked deeds. Without their vague predictions Macbeth would not have embarked on his course of destruction, thus implicating the witches as political puppet masters.

Recruiting, inspiring, and offering a site for political contemplation were also the roles of political hostesses such as Elizabeth and Georgiana. Hostesses made their private homes venues for political discussions and debates. Young men would be recruited to political causes partially through the efforts of the respective political hostess, providing a tempting social network and comfortable environment in which to form political alliances.<sup>122</sup> In her memoir, Lady Hester Stanhope (a political hostess herself) evaluated the different hostesses' guests and their abilities:

I remember too what a heavy, dull business the Duchess of R[utland]'s parties were – the rooms so stuffed with people that one could not move, and all so heavy – a deal of high breeding and *bon ton*; but there was, somehow nothing to enliven you. Now and then some incident would turn up to break the spell. [...]

Now, at the Duchess of Gordon's there were people of the same fashion, and the crowd was just as great; but then she was so lovely, and everybody was animated, and seemed to know so well what they were about – quite another thing. [...]

As for the Duchess of D[evonshire]'s, there they were – all that set – all yawning, and wanting the evening to be spent, that they might be getting to the business they were after.<sup>123</sup>

Though biased, her account of Georgiana's hosting reveals both the fashionable nature of the Foxite set, but more importantly, how her home was an envisaged site of political mobility, whether personal or for the benefit of the party. Georgiana, in

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<sup>122</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, 91–7.

<sup>123</sup> Hester Lucy Stanhope and Charles Lewis Meryon, *Memoirs of the Lady Hester Stanhope, as related by herself in conversations with her physician Vol. 2 Vol. 2* (London: Colburn, 1845), 52–3. Her memoir was written by her friend, Charles Meryon and based on interviews. He notes that she was biased against Georgiana (and her circle), which was due to her status as a hostess for her uncle, William Pitt the Younger. As noted in the Introduction, the Duchesses of Rutland and Gordon were both Pittite hostesses.

essence, just as Elizabeth before her, provided her male guests with a venue for political strategising, just as the Weird Sisters did for Macbeth.

*Macbeth* denotes questions of hierarchical governmental power and corruption, a theme that still resonates today. Stephen Buhler argues that while the moral message of *Macbeth* is fixed, 'the political significance of Shakespeare's plays was regularly transformed and increased throughout their performance histories in England'.<sup>124</sup> For example, the increase in stage performances of *Macbeth* after 1775 could be accredited to the American War of Independence. Depictions of regicide and tyranny resonated with British audiences who were attempting to reconcile the ambition behind the American colonies' fight for independence.<sup>125</sup> In spring 1775, Catherine Macaulay published *An Address to the People of England, Ireland, and Scotland, on the Present Important Crisis of Affairs*, a lament on the ability of the voting public to elect honourable men suited to handling the mounting injustice leading to the crisis with the American colonies.<sup>126</sup> April of that year saw the battle of Lexington and Concord between British troops and American minutemen, marking the beginning of the war. In Britain, an evident division appeared between those who supported the freedom of the American colonists and those who opposed it. Moschovakis argues that 'it was now common in England to invoke Shakespeare's witches as figures for political subversion', the main signifier of which in the mid-1770s was the colonial rebel.<sup>127</sup> Not coincidentally, the Rockingham Whigs, behind the leadership of the Marquess of Rockingham, were staunch supporters of the Americans colonists' bid for freedom against the oppressive monarchy, which they felt was forcing an unjust system upon the colonists. The North Ministry, however

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<sup>124</sup> Stephen M. Buhler, "Politicizing Macbeth on U.S. stages: Garson's MacBird! and Greenland's Jungle Rot," in *Macbeth : New critical essays*, ed. Nick Moschovakis (New York: Routledge, 2008), 259.

<sup>125</sup> Moschovakis, "Introduction," 11. Moschovakis uses the example of Kemble's 1788 production of *Macbeth*, keeping Macbeth's dying speech from Garrick's adaption, which warned against ambition in a period that saw the tensions in France building.

<sup>126</sup> Catharine Macaulay, "An address to the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland on the present important crisis of affairs," (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1775), see also Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg, "The Brood Hen of Faction: Mrs. Macaulay and Radical Politics, 1765-1775," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 11, no. 1 (1979): 43.

<sup>127</sup> Moschovakis, "Introduction," 11.



were aghast at what appeared to be the opposition's encouragement of colonial independence and lack of support for the crown.<sup>128</sup>

Aside from the socio-political repercussions, the American War of Independence was a catalyst for cultural change. The newfound friendship between Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne culminated, not only in a period of war, but also at a turning-point in the cultural reception of women – a crisis point that allows us to better gauge the impact of women visualising both their union of friendship and their 'chosen' guise. As Wahrman has outlined in his extensive theory of 'gender panic', previously discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the ignition of the war with America triggered what he has described as an 'identity crisis'.<sup>129</sup> The American colonies were viewed by many Britons as an extension of Britain so its divorce from the home nation challenged the dominate perception of their country, facilitating questions relating to the government as well as the makeup of Britain.<sup>130</sup> Wahrman catalogues how many Britons viewed America as a wayward child on whom its father (an amalgamation of Britain and George III) failed in keeping a patriarchal hold. This perception of Britain stripped of its bravado cast an accusatory finger at what now came to be seen as a highly feminine culture.<sup>131</sup> The 1770s was a peaking point in awareness of the cosmetically enhanced macaroni and gender-bending fop, but Wahrman notes that,

1770s England was hardly flooded with *bona fide* Macaronis, any more than it was suddenly submerged by the gushing tears of men of feeling, [yet] the resonance of these cultural types depended on a widespread familiarity with the various components of their exaggerated portrait: they represented the excess rather than the antithesis of acceptable, if counter-hegemonic, modes of behaviour.<sup>132</sup>

Britain's excessive birthing of effeminate men was viewed as a likely explanation for its loss of the colonies. They, like the emasculated George III, symbolised the impotence of Britain. Simultaneously, high-ranking women were also entered into

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<sup>128</sup> Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 62.

<sup>129</sup> This near-obsession with identity can be exemplified by the personification of British identity in the form of John Bull, the portly, working-class, and hard-headed Englishman.

<sup>130</sup> Dror Wahrman, "The English Problem of Identity in the American Revolution," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 4 (2001): 1240.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 1251–4.

<sup>132</sup> Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 62.

blame, mostly due to their association with luxury and the adverse effects that were linked to it.<sup>133</sup> Britain, it appeared, was losing control over its lesser people – colonists and women – subjects from whom it was expected to have unbridled loyalty.<sup>134</sup> It was this nervous discourse on fashionable society that Wahrman argues ‘came to embody the concern with the mutability and transience of forms, and in particular those forms that affected people’s signs of identity’, causing a cultural shift that would restrict women’s actions out of their own gender sphere, beginning in the 1780s.<sup>135</sup> *The Three Witches* can be viewed as a display of these ‘unreliable identities’, which surged in the 1770s due to the bi-gendered status of witch.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, women choosing this identity suggested an assertion of agency outside of traditional gendered strictures.

This perspective of the Weird Sisters as political agents is affirmed by contemporary criticism. Writing five years before Gardner painted *The Three Witches*, Gentleman argued that the witches’ quizzing of each other as to their employments (‘Killing swine, cursing sailors, etc.) ‘shew them pregnant with that diabolic malevolence’.<sup>137</sup> His commentary reveals that the witches were perceived to have evil intent, and to use seduction and intrigue in order to fulfil their mission. Writing in Samuel Johnson’s edition of Shakespeare (1773), George Stevens elucidates on this:

It is apparent from what Banquo says afterwards that he had been solicited in a dream to do something in consequence of the prophecy of the witches that his waking sense were shock’d at; and Shakespeare has here finely contrasted his character with that of Macbeth. Banquo is praying against being tempted [...] while Macbeth is hurrying into temptation.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Wahrman argues that concern over effeminacy in men was due to its association with luxury (Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 63).

<sup>134</sup> Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability, and the Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 194.

<sup>135</sup> Wahrman, “English Problem,” 1258.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 1255. Wahrman illustrates these identities: ‘Figures that embodied the limitations of gender categories – the female warrior, the macaroni, the Amazon, the lachrymose man of feeling, the female politician – had been acknowledged throughout most of the eighteenth century as possible and at times even seductive alternatives to prevailing norms of masculinity and femininity’ (ibid., 1254). We are once again reminded of the bi-gendered identity of the witch, which negotiated the political nature of a female figure.

<sup>137</sup> Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, 81.

<sup>138</sup> Vickers, *The Critical Heritage Vol 5*, 525.

While this commentary reveals the highly visible shortcomings of *Macbeth*, it also demonstrates the critical view of the Weird Sisters actively making an effort to cause change in Macbeth's actions, and thus the polity. Thomas Whately, writing in the following decade, places all the blame for the tragedy on the witches:

The first thought of ascending to the throne is suggested, and success in the attempt is promised, to Macbeth by the witches: he is therefore represented as a man whose natural temper would have deterred him from such a design if he had not been immediately tempted, and strongly impelled to it.<sup>139</sup>

These sources reveal that eighteenth-century audiences witnessed the witches plotting on stage at every performance, allowing them to be understood as agents of corruption and as creatures that indirectly caused political change. Garrick's adaption of *Macbeth* omitted many of the changes Davenant had incorporated into the play, but not all. As mentioned previously, Garrick chose to retain the witch scenes that Davenant had added. The second scene in Garrick's Act II of *Macbeth* is one of these additions; it includes a song adopted from Thomas Middleton's (1580–1627) Jacobean play, *The Witch* (c. 1606–16).<sup>140</sup> The three witches are joined by a fourth, who delights that 'many more murders must this one [Macbeth] cause'.<sup>141</sup> They then all rejoice as to the success of their plan:

Second witch: He must!

Third Witch: He shall!

Fourth Witch: He will spill much more blood / And become worse, to make his title good.<sup>142</sup>

The witches delight in the violence in Macbeth's pursuit of the crown. They continue the celebration through song: 'Let's have a dance upon the heath. / We gain more life by Duncan's death', implying that they will benefit from Macbeth's political progression.<sup>143</sup>

Another of the Davenant additions was the character of Hecate whose presence in the play affirms the witches as actively attempting to infect the Body

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<sup>139</sup> William Shakespeare : *The critical heritage, Volume 6* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 410 (Thomas Whately, *Richard III and Macbeth compared*, 1785).

<sup>140</sup> Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*, 32.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.; Line 7.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.; Lines 12–15.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.; Lines 36–7.

Politic.<sup>144</sup> She appears in Act III, before Macbeth seeks out the witches in a cave for further prophecies and is shown apparitions from their cauldron. Gentleman describes the scene, writing that ‘the witches receive [...] a sharp rebuke from their superior, Hecate, for dealing in any mischief which did not originally spring from her’.<sup>145</sup> After the first witch asks her why she looks ‘angrily’, Hecate responds that it is due to not being included in their scheme:

And I, the mistress of your charms,  
The close contriver of all harms,  
Was never called to bear my part  
Or show the glory of our art?<sup>146</sup>

In reprimanding the witches for proceeding to lead Macbeth without her, Hecate’s lines give agency to both the witches and herself in terms of ‘contriving’ or engineering the plan. Her final line indicated that manipulation is the witches’ artform. She tells the witches that she will now take part in directing Macbeth:

Meet me i’ the’ morning. Thither he  
Will come to know his destiny.  
Your vessels and your spells provide  
Your charms and every thing beside.<sup>147</sup>

The last two lines remind us, in our investigation of Gardener’s *The Three Witches*, of Elizabeth and Georgiana being represented as adding ingredients to their cauldron and how their ‘charms’, as political hostesses, were used in order to recruit and inspire. Following Hecate’s confrontation, the Weird Sisters follow her orders and concoct a brew in the cave where Macbeth is to meet them. As they deposit their foul ingredients, they take turns making incantations – ‘For a charm of powerful trouble / Like a hell-broth boil and bubble’, and the audience is, once again, reminded of their power and their intent to cause political disruption.<sup>148</sup> Hecate enters, exclaiming, ‘O,

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<sup>144</sup> There is an ongoing debate for the last thirty years between Shakespeare scholars Gary Taylor and Brian Vickers as to whether Hecate was present in the original play or added later. See Marcus Dahl, Marina Tarlinskaya, and Brian Vickers, "An Enquiry into Middleton’s supposed 'adaptation' of Macbeth," (2014). Importantly, Garrick included the Hecate scenes in his version, so she would have been an established feature for eighteenth-century audiences.

<sup>145</sup> Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, 96.

<sup>146</sup> Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*, 47; Lines 1, 6–9.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.; Lines 16–19.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 50; Lines 18–19.

well done! I commend your pains, /And every one shall share i' th' gains'.<sup>149</sup> Although, not a Weird Sister, Hecate validated eighteenth-century audiences' perception that the witches were political figures, through confirming the witches agency in disrupting the polity. Her presence in both Davenant's and Garrick's adaptions of the play meant audience members throughout the century witnessed intent in their actions to change the fictional government on the stage. This association is even more apparent when we examine satires inspired by Shakespeare's tragedy.

The idea of relating the Weird Sisters with a woman who utilises her feminine skills to meddle in politics was not a new concept when Daniel Gardner began painting *The Three Witches*. However, connecting Shakespeare's witches to the politically active female in eighteenth-century culture is a topic that has been overlooked in extant scholarship. The evidence of this association having been present in the century is exemplified by Horace Walpole's anonymously published parody on contemporary political events, entitled *The Dear Witches: An Interlude; being a Parody on some Scenes of Mackbeth*, which appeared on the front page of *Old England; or, The Constitutional Journal* on 18 June 1743.<sup>150</sup> The title was an ironic gesture derived from Joseph Addison's account of the woman who could not contain her excitement at seeing 'the dear witches enter' a production of *Macbeth*, published in the *Spectator* on 21 April 1711.<sup>151</sup> The popularity of the *Spectator* implies that Walpole could assume his audience would have been familiar enough with the Addison narrative to name his parody after it; however the contemporary readership of *The Dear Witches* is undetermined. According to Catherine M.S. Alexander:

[*The Dear Witches*'] authorship is only confirmed by Walpole's reference to the piece in his biographical record *Short Notes on the Life of Horatio Walpole* [...] Surprisingly, there is no reference to the piece in any of Walpole's letters or correspondence of his contemporaries, and much of the

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<sup>149</sup> Garrick, Pedicord, and Bergmann, *Plays of Garrick Vol 3*, 50; Lines 39–40.

<sup>150</sup> *Old England* was published for ten years between 1743 and 1753. It more notoriously featured criticism of George II and his government by the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Chesterfield under the pseudonym 'Jeffrey Broadbottom'.

<sup>151</sup> Alexander, "The Dear Witches," 133.

silence surrounding it must be the result of public attention switching from domestic matters to events abroad.<sup>152</sup>

Remarkably for the notorious gossip, it appears Walpole allowed his association with the piece to remain unknown rather than an open secret.

Walpole wrote *The Dear Witches* in reaction to the 1741–2 political downfall of his father, Sir Robert Walpole, First Lord of the Treasury and Prime Minister. Many factors contributed to Sir Robert's political defeat, but the ultimate cause has been attributed to the actions of William Pulteney, later Lord Pulteney, Earl of Bath.<sup>153</sup> Pulteney was once among Robert Walpole's closest allies but after Walpole did not honour a vow to present Pulteney with a political office for his displays of loyalty, Pulteney became intent on revenge. He began to oppose Walpole's parliamentary proposals and then accused the Prime Minister of using Treasury funds to bribe MPs. Pulteney saw his victory come to fruition in 1742 when Walpole was forced to resign following a number of other publicised defeats.<sup>154</sup> *The Dear Witches* was Horace Walpole's creative outlet in voicing the injustice he felt on behalf of his father. As Alexander argues, the witches 'use patronage, convenient marriage, and scheming to infiltrate the Treasury during a period of political strife'.<sup>155</sup> Alexander's summary resonates with Anna Clark's definition of the elite, politically influential eighteenth-century woman: 'these women derived their influence from their dynastic position, advantageous marriages, landholdings, and the personal connections of high society'.<sup>156</sup> The parodied play uses only the scenes from *Macbeth* that contain the witches, appropriating Shakespeare's original lines.<sup>157</sup> Walpole follows the written and poetic form of *Macbeth*, keeping most of the original text by Shakespeare and altering it slightly to create his satire. An example of this is when Macbeth (who is representative of 'Squire P[ulteney]') encounters the witches for the first time:

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<sup>152</sup> Alexander, "The Dear Witches," 138. Walpole's single reference was brief: 'June 18, 1743, was printed in a weekly paper called *Old England or the Constitutional Journal*, my parody on some scenes of *Macbeth*, called "The Dear Witches." It was a ridicule of the new ministry' (Walpole and Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. xiii, 13).

<sup>153</sup> Alexander, "The Dear Witches," 137.

<sup>154</sup> Stuart Handley, M. J. Rowe, and W. H. McBryde, "Pulteney, William, earl of Bath (1684–1764)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>155</sup> Alexander, "The Dear Witches," 140.

<sup>156</sup> Clark, "Women in Eighteenth-Century British Politics," 571.

<sup>157</sup> The readers of his pamphlet were therefore expected to know the play well in order to fill in the gaps left by the removal of the other scenes that did not contain the witches.

MACB. Speak if you can, what are ye?  
 1ST W. All hail *Macbeth*, hail, Privy Counsellor!  
 2D W. All hail *Macbeth*, hail to the E[arl] of B[ath]!  
 3D W. All hail *Macbeth*, That shalt be T[reasurer]!<sup>158</sup>

Instead of hailing Macbeth by his Shakespearean titles, as the Thane of Glamis or the Thane of Cawdor, they hail him in the positions that Pulteney would come to hold, aside from Treasurer, which was a title Pulteney never ascended to.<sup>159</sup>

Walpole's satire was written in the form of a script, suggesting that *The Dear Witches* could have been acted out in an intimate setting, such as a private theatrical within Walpole's circle of friends. In his anonymous letter, 'To the Printer', which acts as a preface to the satire, he dons a guise himself; Walpole explains that he wrote it to entertain an elderly countess and her neighbours at Christmas, requiring him to '*create a comedy from some scenes of tragedy in Shakespeare which will be within the capacity of the elderly women who were to be her co-performers*'.<sup>160</sup> Is it possible that the anonymously penned Whig satire continued to be performed as a private theatrical years later by future generations of Whig progeny, such as Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne?<sup>161</sup> As mentioned previously, Anne and Walpole had a close kinship; after his death in 1797, he bequeathed his beloved estate, Strawberry Hill to her.<sup>162</sup> Their connection and mutual interest in politics increases the possibility that the satire was accessible to the trio of friends. Even if the intimate group at Devonshire House did not have access to the parody, it is likely that they were aware of its presence and could have drawn comparisons between themselves and Walpole's three meddling witches. Although Walpole's work was created with the goal of condemnation, it was written with an overall mocking tone, using humour to gain the empathy of the audience. As indicated in his introduction, Walpole was creating a comedy from a tragedy. Gardner's painting employs a similar transformation in his portrait, depicting the same hags, which Banquo struggled to

<sup>158</sup> Horace Walpole [as Anonymous], "The Dear Witches : An Interlude; being a Parody on some Scenes of Mackbeth," *Old England or, The Constitutional Journal* 1743, 1.

<sup>159</sup> A footnote in the original text explains, '*This part of the prophecy never was fulfilled*' (ibid.).

<sup>160</sup> Walpole [as Anonymous], "The Dear Witches," 1.

<sup>161</sup> Hester Thrale recorded reading a *Spectator* article from 1711 to her daughters, so it was not an uncommon practice to read articles written in previous decades for entertainment (G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility : Sex and society in eighteenth-century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 291.

<sup>162</sup> Yarrington, "Damer, Anne Seymour (1749-1828),".

identify as male or female, as beautiful young women. Both the painting and the parodied play are appropriating Shakespeare's tragedy as means to communicate an alternative message.

In the final scene of *The Dear Witches*, which Alexander identifies as 'the climax of the parody', the Weird Sisters gather around the cauldron to add foul ingredients to their brew.<sup>163</sup> While singing 'Double, double, Toil and Trouble, parties burn and Nonsense bubble', the witches add ingredients from the Treasury scandal such as 'Scraps of Journals, broken Sums', 'Judgement of a Beardless Youth', and 'Foolish Notes and bitten Thumbs'.<sup>164</sup> It is this 'climatic' scene of the parody that is also parodied, through the painted medium, in the Gardner portrait, with Elizabeth and Georgiana represented depositing what appears to be lavender into the cauldron. Traditionally, lavender is a symbol of devotion or luck, but Gardner's inclusion of it in the painting might be a device to compliment the women's femininity. Alternatively, as Diane Purkiss argues, the witches' cauldron is a reminder of women's control over food and 'at this point in the play [it] represents other forms of misfeeding, since the purpose of the potion is to produce the prophecies which will deceptively lure Macbeth to his (self) destruction'.<sup>165</sup> Gardner's witches do not compose their brew of horrifying things; rather they contribute ingredients that do not pose a threat. These could therefore be viewed as a totem of 'misfeeding' due to the enticing quality of the ingredients. Even Lady Mary Coke erroneously believed that Gardner's portrayal included a cauldron 'composed of roses and carnations': a further example of pretty ingredients. It is therefore suggestive that these attractive young witches are represented as casting a spell that grants them political influence. The ambiguous ingredients that they add to their brew represent their deceptive, 'misfeeding', or perhaps, soft techniques of political infiltration while the cauldron's indistinguishable contents are representative of the outcome of their magic.

A poem written on the back of the work, which Gardner also took care to write in his personal notebook, further implicates this painting as an expression of

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<sup>163</sup> Alexander, "The Dear Witches," 140. She lived at Strawberry Hill from 1797 to 1811.

<sup>164</sup> Walpole [as Anonymous], "The Dear Witches," 2.

<sup>165</sup> Purkiss, "Macbeth," 228.



the three sitters' political designs.<sup>166</sup> It warns of the witches' powers as well as their alluring youth:

Tales of old witches are no longer heard,  
Fictitious [*sic*] legends once receiv'd for truth.  
And *wisely* here the Artist has transferr'd  
*The pow'rs of sorcery from age to youth.*

Beware, ye Mortals, who those comforts prize,  
Which flow from peace from liberty, and ease,  
Th'Enchanter's wand, and magick spells despise,  
But shun the witchcraft of such eyes as these.<sup>167</sup>

Since the sitters are guised as the Weird Sisters, who we know employed their powers to influence the fictionalised medieval government into changing the head of state from Duncan to Macbeth to Malcolm over the course of the play, the poem's warning to 'mortals' to 'beware' reinforces the notion of the sitters' ability to influence their current government. The use of the word 'wisely' in defence of portraying youthful witches is indicative of viewing the sitters as threatening in spite of their enchanting appearance.<sup>168</sup> Despite its ominous tone, the poem was also unlikely to be an attack on character due to its accessibility to the sitters. Rather, it most likely exhibits the three women's aptitude for political influence due to their positions in Rockingham Whig social networks and familial political legacies.<sup>169</sup>

Indeed, the poem, and its accessibility to the sitters, supports the idea of the group portrait being a knowing and light-hearted commentary by the sitters on women's limited access to politics. Like the Wayward Sisters, these sitters used non-traditional, or wayward, avenues in order to access the male-dominated realm of governance such as sociability and canvassing. Additionally, by having themselves rendered in roles intended for male stage actors, the three women were making a further implication of their infiltration of a male occupation. If we consider these components in combination with Walpole's anonymous work, *The Dear Witches*,

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<sup>166</sup> Williamson, *Daniel Gardner*, 44 and Kendal Archives WDX 398. Williamson also notes how it is likely that someone other than Gardner transferred the poem onto the back of the work, despite Gardner's habit of scribbling notes on to the back of artwork that he both created and owned.

<sup>167</sup> Kendal Archives, WDX 398. Emphasis mine.

<sup>168</sup> While the poem could have been alluding to the women's sexual lives, the three sitters had not yet acquired reputations for promiscuity in 1775, making this an unlikely stimulus.

<sup>169</sup> All three women came from prominent Whig families.

which casts women as having political influence through elements such as marriage and patronage, it begins to be increasingly discernible as to why the three women were represented in the roles of the Weird Sisters, and subsequently why Gardner's poem is cautionary.<sup>170</sup> Like Shakespeare's Weird Sisters, women could influence or 'prophesise' the government, and do so through their acumen and social position.

The foreboding poem attached to the portrait elicits the question of why the witches were portrayed in a positive manner if they and their powers should be feared. While it was recognised that clever women could and did have their hand in politics, it was also the view that their powers were soft, and would not have a long-term effect and would mostly just cause a hiccup in an otherwise smooth stream of male-dominated order.<sup>171</sup> Samuel Johnson pointed out that the witches' powers in *Macbeth* also had boundaries, since 'the Power of the Witches [was] not universal, but limited as Shakespeare has taken care to inculcate'.<sup>172</sup> Witches were not considered all-powerful beings and therefore had to use cleverness in combination with their magic in order for their wretched schemes to come to fruition. Moreover, Elizabeth Montagu titles the Weird Sisters as 'artificers of the Catastrophe' for their ability to strategise ruin.<sup>173</sup> As the mischievous nature of their portrait suggests, Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne's persuasive powers outside of Parliament were seen to be new, and at a limited stage. Elizabeth had retired from her hostess role, but would continue participating in highly politicised social functions due to her Rockingham Whig social network. Meanwhile, Georgiana had just begun her reign as a hostess but became a political figure when her public electioneering became more visible. This was also true of Anne who, after her husband's death, participated in canvassing and, like Elizabeth, continued to participate in the Rockingham Whig social network. Direct participation in governmental politics was still unavailable to women; however the gender-flexible witch was representative of the porous boundaries through which women could participate in politics.

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<sup>170</sup> All three sitters were considered by society to have made advantageous marriages. The Duchess of Devonshire was particularly known for her patronage of the arts, particularly in the theatre and literature.

<sup>171</sup> For example, Lady Orford was able to secure her favoured local candidate political office by promising to build a school for the children of the parents who voted for him (Chalus, "The epidemical Madness," 156).

<sup>172</sup> Johnson, *Miscellaneous Observations*, 454.

<sup>173</sup> Montagu, *Writings and Genius of Shakespeare*, 196.

## Conclusion

‘Sisters, how came we three here?’ questions the First Witch in Walpole’s *The Dear Witches*.<sup>174</sup> This chapter has been devoted to asking that same question in regard to Gardner’s *The Three Witches from Macbeth*. What has been revealed from this enquiry is that *The Three Witches* was a proclamation of both Lady Melbourne, the Duchess of Devonshire, and Anne Damer’s friendship within the Rockingham Whig social network and of their potential for political agency though the painted guise of the Weird Sisters. This assessment of Gardner’s portrait bridges both circulating notions of masquerade: as a female disguise that submits to dominant social codes and, the opposing view, as the masquerade being a disruptive agent that resists patriarchal norms. In guising themselves as the Weird Sisters, Elizabeth, Georgiana, and Anne were displaying what they believed to be their true selves rather than the guises they adopted in their daily lives, which submitted to the normative patriarchal culture. However, the period of the painting’s creation is significant due to the charged and changing climate of gender identity. The bi-gendered witch signified gender mobility for women, and within that mobility lay political power. We can conclude by viewing Daniel Gardner’s *The Three Witches from Macbeth* as a guise, in itself, which informs us of the ‘chosen’ identities of its elite female sitters, all of whom were involved, or were becoming involved, on London’s political stage in this critical period of gender identity. By having Gardner render them as the three supernatural sisters who altered the natural course of government, the young female Whigs were articulating their ability to do the same in the metaphorical drama of eighteenth-century politics. This prophecy can be viewed as coming to fruition when we look to other visual representations of at least one of these women in the following decade. William Paulet Carey’s satirical print, *Devonia, the beautiful daughter of love & liberty, inviting the sons of freedom to her standard in Covent Garden* (figure 1.12) represents Georgiana (centre) and her accompanying female canvassers, which included Anne, in the 1784 Westminster election. Holding a

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<sup>174</sup> Walpole Walpole [as Anonymous], "The Dear Witches", 1.

foxtail in her right hand and a banner for her candidate, Charles James Fox in her left, Georgiana is represented not only as a canvasser but as an emblem of the Foxite cause.<sup>175</sup> These ‘bewitching witches’ were thereby using a portrait as a vehicle to demonstrate their emerging feminine role in the male-dominated realm of politics, a role they would come to be recognised for in the oncoming years.

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<sup>175</sup> The foxtail acted as a symbol for her candidate, Charles James Fox, whose sculptural bust is displayed on her banner.

## Chapter 2

### Beauty Contests and Boxing Matches: Female political rivalries in satirical prints of the 1784 Westminster election

Among the greater historiography of elite female participation in eighteenth-century Britain there is one event that has attracted significant academic scholarship: the 1784 Westminster election.<sup>1</sup> This attention is warranted; attitudes toward the active elite female participation in this borough for the General Election has been seen as a watershed moment for perceptions of the position of elite women in both politics and society more broadly. However, when we sift through the abundance of secondary material analysing this notable event in late eighteenth-century gender history, there is one common theme: Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire's electioneering. While the duchess's canvass and its controversy, as a case study of women and politics, has yielded important findings, many other women canvassed and were commented upon in print media during the 1784 election. This chapter will attempt to further demonstrate the socio-cultural significance of this event by exploring common visual themes surrounding elite women's participation in the Westminster election and through unpacking the deeper meanings of these images.

The popular narrative surrounding Georgiana's infamous 1784 canvass was that the new mother and physically-attractive woman tirelessly campaigned for the Foxite-Whig candidate, Charles James Fox, and reduced herself to trading kisses with butchers in exchange for votes. It is unclear as to whether Georgiana did kiss labouring-class voters. However, there is no denying the print media spectacle surrounding her participation: in the six weeks of the open polls satirical prints representing the duchess were printed almost every day excluding the week in which Easter fell (see table 1). In her seminal book, *Britons* (1992) Linda Colley posited that Georgiana was attacked for the 'unnaturalness of female participation in the public sphere'.<sup>2</sup> Yet, shortly afterward, scholars such as Anne Stott, Amanda Foreman, Elaine Chalus, and Judith S. Lewis convincingly demonstrated that public

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<sup>1</sup> See Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 144 and Chalus, "Kisses for Votes," for likelihood of the kiss.

<sup>2</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 245.

political activity in fact was expected of elite women from political families.<sup>3</sup> They argue that the controversy surrounding Georgiana's participation was rather a class issue, polemical because of her transgressive ease of interaction with those below her rank at a time of increasing class tensions. This was in contrast to female Pittite canvassers who socially distanced themselves from voters by physically conducting their canvass from the safety of their carriages.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the topic of Georgiana's canvass continues to garner a particularly scholarly fascination, producing studies ranging from Renata Lana's exploration of the use of women as a specific Foxite canvassing strategy to Elaine Chalus' dissection of the electioneering kiss.<sup>5</sup> Prevalent in these works is the use of satirical prints lampooning the duchess in order to illustrate the visual culture of the public attacks on her reputation, which themselves, have been subject to careful study by historians and art historians alike, including Amelia Rauser, Cindy McCreery, Kate Retford, and Michael Rosenthal, who mainly focus on the visual narrative of conflict in Georgiana's role as a mother and also as a public politician.<sup>6</sup>

However, when we refocus our attention away from a single individual and examine the visual representation of the multiple women participating in the Westminster election as a whole, other narratives emerge. A key theme that has been overlooked, for example, is the concept of rivalry between female political opponents. In a period distinguished by the increasing presence of print media, these political rivalries – real or imagined – captured public interest. Satirists capitalised on this interest, producing representations of the women engaging in competitive demonstrations of beauty, physical prowess, and combat. This chapter explores this previously undiscussed iconography surrounding politically-engaged elite women in

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<sup>3</sup> Stott, "Female Patriotism,"; Amanda Foreman, "A Politician's Politician : Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the Whig party," in *Gender in eighteenth-century England : roles, representations, and responsibilities*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London; New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997), 184–7; Chalus, "The epidemical Madness," ; and Judith S. Lewis, "1784 and All That : Aristocratic women and electoral politics," in *Women, privilege, and Power : British politics, 1750 to the present*, ed. Amanda Vickery (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Stott, "Female Patriotism," 71 and Lewis, Lewis, "1784 and All That," 108.

<sup>5</sup> Renata Lana, "Women and Foxite Strategy in the Westminster Election of 1784," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 26, no. 1 (2002) and Chalus, "Kisses for Votes," 122–47.

<sup>6</sup> Amelia Rauser, "The Butcher-Kissing Duchess of Devonshire: Between Caricature and Allegory in 1784," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 1 (2002); McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 196–202; and Rosenthal, "Public Reputation,".

the late eighteenth century and questions why it appeared during this election. In doing so, it seeks to highlight how these images of female political rivalries participated not only in debates surrounding gender and politics, but also wider issues pertaining to social class. Finally, it situates how this behaviour contributed to contemporary anxieties surrounding British national identity – a concern that gained attention through the loss of the American colonies in the American War for Independence.

### **Transgressive Genders in a Period of Change**

To analyse what I am terming ‘rivalry prints’ it is necessary to first map some of the critical events that underpin these late eighteenth-century debates surrounding gender, social class and identity. In her book, *Women, Sociability, and the Theatre* (2007), Gillian Russell convincingly argues how the 1770s was a crucial decade in the cultural makeup of eighteenth-century Britain, allowing these debates to take root. She identifies the period as ‘the years of the mobilization of public opinion’ and also one of ‘national trauma in the form of the loss of the American colonies’.<sup>7</sup> Aside from the political and economic effects of war, the American War for Independence also proved to be a blow to Britain’s national identity. According to Dror Wahrman, when war broke out, it catalysed an identity crisis of national proportions for many Britons, as the American colonies were seen both as an extension, and sometimes as the progeny, of Great Britain.<sup>8</sup> This familial relationship is evidenced in a 1774 letter from colonial patriot, Mercy Otis Warren, to English author Catharine Macaulay: ‘America stands armed with resolution and virtue; but she still recoils at the idea of drawing the sword against the nation from whom she derived her origin. Yet Britain, like an unnatural parent, is ready to plunge her dagger into the bosom of her affectionate offspring’.<sup>9</sup> This notion of the two nations in the middle of a bloody

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<sup>7</sup> Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> The war was sometimes referred to by contemporaries as a civil war. Wahrman, "English Problem," 1240.

<sup>9</sup> Mercy Otis Warren to Catharine Macaulay December 1774, quoted in Kate Davies, "Revolutionary Correspondence: Reading Catharine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren," *Women's Writing : the Elizabethan to Victorian period*. 13, no. 1 (2006): 74.

domestic dispute is visualised in the anonymous satirical print *The Female Combatants, or, Who Shall* (figure 2.1), which was most likely published in Britain in January 1776.<sup>10</sup> In it, we see an unusual rendering of Britannia on the left, who, rather than being represented in her habitual classical garb, is depicted in the sack dress and high coiffure that dominated popular fashion of the mid-1770s.<sup>11</sup> She raises her fists and frowns at her adversary, Columbia, who is tellingly portrayed as a tattooed Native American woman.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the decadently dressed Britannia, Columbia is half-naked, dressed only in moccasins, a feather headdress and skirt, and her hair flows freely behind her as she delivers a swift right cross to her foe. Though the two figures could not appear more dissimilar, their verbal exchange indicates that they are blood-relatives. 'Liberty, Liberty forever Mother, while I exist' cries Columbia while Britannia proclaims, 'I'll force you to Obedience you Rebellious Slut'.<sup>13</sup> The print echoes Mercy Otis Warren's sentiment that the American colonists were driven to fight due to Britain's bad parenting. In documenting published textual satires referring to the war as a disrupted familial relationship, Wahrman argues that these allusions to unnatural and unsuccessful parenting had a broader resonance regarding proper gender roles and identities.<sup>14</sup> Namely, if Britons did not adhere to their natural roles and identities Britain would descend into chaos.

Not only did *The Female Combatants* articulate a message of Britain as an overbearing mother to a wild and untamed daughter, the choice of dress for the figure of Britannia carried a loaded meaning. The allegorical figure's rendering is

<sup>10</sup> "The female combatants, or, Who shall," in *Lewis Walpole Library Digital Collection* (New Haven: Yale University, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> For more information on the traditional representation of Britannia in this period see, Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 121–69 and, more broadly, Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens : The allegory of the female form* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), 45–9.

<sup>12</sup> This was a common representation for the allegory of Columbia. See E. McClung Fleming, "From Indian Princess to Greek Goddess the American Image, 1783-1815," *Winterthur Portfolio* 3 (1967) and Stephanie Pratt, *American Indians in British Art, 1700-1840* (Norman: University Of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 12–29 for further literature on the history of the representation of the continental allegory. The print also contains representations of shields with emblems specific to the feuding countries on them: Britain's contains a compass, symbolising their empire and America's shield leans against a post with a liberty cap and contains a rooster standing upon a pointed finger symbolising French sympathy.

<sup>13</sup> In the eighteenth century 'slut' most often was used to describe a 'woman of dirty, slovenly, or untidy habits or appearance; a foul slattern' but could additionally refer to a 'woman of a low or loose character'. "Slut, n." OED Online. June 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/182346> (accessed July 20, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Wahrman, "English Problem," 1251–3.



extremely similar to the satirical representation of the ‘woman of fashion’, which, as McCreery highlights, was a morally dangerous figure – a message disseminated further in graphic satire.<sup>15</sup> The hair tower donned by Britannia in the print was popularised by leaders of fashion, like the Duchess of Devonshire, and as Russell argues, it ‘implicitly declared an identity for women as creatures of the public’.<sup>16</sup> In her extended analysis of the ‘high head’ as a potent symbol of assertive womanhood in late-1770s society, Russell pinpoints the controversy’s origin. Despite remarks on high heads appearing as early as 1771, she argues that this commentary became the most ‘intense’ during 1775, noting that this period saw such publicised events at the trials of two women of fashion (the Duchess of Kingston and Margaret Caroline Rudd) and the ‘theatre of war [become] another theatre for sociability’.<sup>17</sup> The ‘theatre of war’ to which Russell refers is, more specifically, the 1778 assembling of militia corps at Coxheath Camp in Kent after France joined the American colonists fighting in the American War for Independence – an event which provoked further attention to the maintenance of gender binaries and furthermore, would come to impact collective views of elite women’s behaviour into the 1780s.

With the threat of home invasion from France looming in 1778, the nobility assembled their regiments at Coxheath with many elite wives accompanying their husbands as a show of patriotism. Rather than remaining in their luxurious tents while their husbands worked, these genteel women paid visits to one-another, transplanting the social practices of metropolitan London to the temporary military settlement.<sup>18</sup> As a further means of displaying her patriotic support, the Duchess of Devonshire began wearing a riding habit to match her husband’s regimentals,

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<sup>15</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 139–41.

<sup>16</sup> Russell compares this to the Mohican or Mohawk hairstyle, which in the late twentieth century proclaimed the wearer’s rebellion against society. Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 180. Russell builds her argument of hair towers, or ‘high heads’ as they were contemporaneously known, being sites of cultural inscriptions upon Marcia Pointon’s argument regarding gentlemen’s wigs in Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 14–23. For further scholarship on hair and elite culture in eighteenth-century Britain see Margaret K. Powell and Joseph Roach, “Big Hair,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004); Angela Rosenthal, “Raising Hair,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004); and Blackwell, “Feather’d Fair,”.

<sup>17</sup> Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 192. Elizabeth Chudleigh, Duchess of Kingston was tried for bigamy in 1775; Margaret Caroline Rudd was tried for forgery but acquitted despite, in all likelihood, being guilty of the crime.

<sup>18</sup> Foreman describes how local tradespeople left their businesses to set up shop at the camp and how sightseers also flocked to Coxheath, see Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 63–4.

commencing the sartorial trend of dressing ‘*en militaire*’, which proliferated at Coxheath.<sup>19</sup> While the nobility’s act of marching their troops up and down the camp in anticipation of invasion was seen as the male hegemony playing with toy soldiers, the reports of their wives parading themselves in military dress within the camp insinuated that the wives were playing a man’s game. For example, a 21 July 1778 *Morning Post* article sardonically reported that ‘the Ladies connected with the different corps of militia &c. are to be immediately *embodied* in *two* battalions at *each* camp; the one consisting of the *wives*, the other of the *mistresses* of their respective officers’.<sup>20</sup> Russell argues that ‘the behaviour of women of fashion at the camps was constructed in [print media] not only as reflecting on masculinity of the officer class but a problem of female assertiveness *per se*’.<sup>21</sup> This is demonstrated in a letter to the editor in *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle* in which the male writer relays a lament from his friend:

A cursed visit to Coxheath hath infected my poor girls to a degree that gives me the keenest concern. *The chaste and elegant dress, which was once their characteristic*, is now converted into [gowns *en militaire*]. *Female delicacy is changed to masculine courage*, and as much as the garb assumed as at first view almost leaves the difference of sex indistinguishable.<sup>22</sup>

The satirised narrative goes on to emphasise that this gender-fluidity transcends outward clothing, suggesting that in wearing military dress, the women are displaying masculine body language, mannerisms, and attitudes. Significantly it betrays an anxiety that the alleged trend for militaristic women will evolve from play to permanent practice.

Satirical prints also posited Coxheath as a breeding-ground for unnaturally assertive women. While criticisms of gender-fluid behaviour was certainly not a new phenomenon in the 1770s, Wahrman and Russell’s work has demonstrated how this gender anxiety became prominent across literature, plays, the press, and visual

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<sup>19</sup> See Joshua Reynolds’ portrait of Lady Worsley (1775–6, Harewood House) for a visual portrayal of riding habit. Female riding habits prompted male concern throughout the eighteenth-century due to their masculine cut, see Blackman, “Walking Amazons,”.

<sup>20</sup> *Morning Post*, 21 July 1778.

<sup>21</sup> Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 193

<sup>22</sup> Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle Vol. LI* (London: D. Henry, 1781), 58. Emphasis mine.

culture during and after the rebellion of the American colonies.<sup>23</sup> Their work however, does not thoroughly engage with contemporary satirical prints which articulated these same concerns: that society women had been gaining increasing power alongside their heightened visibility, in both the streets of London and on the printed page, and would soon be acquiring other unsavoury behaviours, more associated with men or, even more unsettling, the lower classes. *The Coxheath Race for £100, no Crossing nor jostling, won by Miss Tittup Agt Tumbling Jenny* (figure 2.2), published by Matthew Darly in 1779 was one print voicing concern over gender-crossing behaviour through the iconography of female rivalry. It represents three aristocratic women horse-racing *en militaire*. The Duchess of Devonshire is represented as a leader in the satirical race to win £100, comfortably sitting atop a horse with a cropped tail. The central figure about to tumble off her horse after reaching for her hat has been identified as Jane, Duchess of Gordon, a loyal crown supporter, who subsequently came to be perceived as an active player in William Pitt the Younger's ministry. The third rider, represented halting her horse, is Elizabeth, Duchess of Grafton, whose husband was Prime Minister when they married in 1769.<sup>24</sup> The three figures represent women associated with politics through their activities and social relationships. In 1779 they were more firmly associated as women of fashion, what Russell refers to as the high-headed 'creatures of the public'.<sup>25</sup> Women of fashion were highly visible in the 1770s: viewable in theatres and pleasure gardens, described in the pages of newspapers, and represented on the sheets of satirical prints, these women impressed an image of a female-obsessed society. This was a specific breed of women though: perceived as rich, privileged,

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<sup>23</sup> Elaine Chalus's article on Lady Susan Keck's activity in the Oxfordshire election of 1754 indicates that accusations of gender inversion aimed at female politicians was not a new concept in the last quarter of the century. However the concentration of these attacks in 1784 is significant in that they demonstrate the growing influence of the press which catalysed cultural change. Elaine Chalus, "'My Lord Sue': Lady Susan Keck and the Great Oxfordshire Election of 1754," *Parliamentary History* 32, no. 3 (2013).

<sup>24</sup> George has identified the three figures based on a previous print by the same artist, *The Three Graces of Cox-Heath* (1779) and the three women being commonly identified in newspapers reporting on the camp at this time, see M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Vol. 5*, vol. 5 (London: The British Museum, 1935), 356. Peter Durrant, "FitzRoy, Augustus Henry, third duke of Grafton (1735–1811)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008). The Duchess of Gordon and her political activity will be discussed in significant detail in the following chapter.

<sup>25</sup> Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 180.

and superficial.<sup>26</sup> After the loss of the American colonies, many Britons, seeking answers as to how such a powerful country lost their subordinate colonies, began querying their modern society. Had women been increasingly acquiring masculine traits such as being brash and bold through their public visibility; and had men, in this period which saw the proliferation of the macaroni, become too frail, too *feminine*? A newspaper article from the *Morning Post* expressed these concerns when, on 31 March 1778, it described two unidentified ladies ‘of high rank in the polite world’ engaging in a physical dispute. It criticised Englishmen for having too little ‘spirit’ and Englishwomen for having too much.<sup>27</sup> While these questions surrounding appropriate gendered behaviour appeared throughout the century, the increasing influence of print media both cultivated this narrative and problematised it further.

Newspapers, such as the *Morning Post*, played a crucial role in influencing the changing attitudes toward elite women. Britons already eagerly consumed a variety of print media, including published periodicals, pamphlets, novels, broadsides, and ballads in addition to the daily, bi-weekly, and tri-weekly newspapers. Significantly, newspapers had become more available to various classes not only through the rapid growth of the industry, but also owing to their increased accessibility and public consumption via coffee houses, taverns, and street hawkers.<sup>28</sup> Much of the commentary in newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets was editorial, expressing opinions ranging from current events to popular culture. According to Hannah Barker, this meant newspapers were often viewed as the ‘public tribunal in which the behaviour of the country’s rulers could be judged, criticised, and ultimately kept in check’.<sup>29</sup> As a result, the press held significant power and influence, allowing newspapers to become a vehicle that contributed moralised commentary regarding the behaviour of women. As McCreery maintains in *The Satirical Gaze* (2004), satirical prints lent further commentary regarding women’s role in society, thus

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<sup>26</sup> Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 180, 192–4 and Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 45–82, 251–61.

<sup>27</sup> *The Morning Post*, 31 March 1779.

<sup>28</sup> Harris, “Print Culture,” 292. Both genders read newspapers too, as Amanda Vickery maintains, ‘a polite lady also laid claim to wider cultural horizons through reading and exchanging periodicals, pamphlets, papers and novels, through letters, and through cultural consumption on an unprecedented scale’. Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Barker, *Newspapers*, 1.

penetrating the wider debates through the visual medium.<sup>30</sup> Prints such as *The Coxheath Race* lent ammunition to perceptions such as those expressed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*: that elite women were not merely dressing as men but displaying an aggressiveness that was specifically gendered as male. Unlike *The Female Combatants*, *The Coxheath Race* does not articulate this trait through violence but through another practice associated with men: a competition.<sup>31</sup>

Horseracing, as a physical competition uniting the governance of man and the power of the horse, had loaded connotations. Though the sport was enjoyed by upper-class spectators, jockeys were male and relatively un-celebrated figures throughout the majority of the century. Races were regarded as chaotic events with 'undisciplined' spectators.<sup>32</sup> A French tourist at a horserace in Britain around 1785, for example, described in horror how there were no barriers protecting the throng of onlookers: 'The horses run in the midst of the crowd, who leave only a space sufficient for them to pass through, at the same time encouraging them by gestures and loud shouts'.<sup>33</sup> This account allows us to question the associations that eighteenth-century audiences may have held when viewing figure 2.2 depicting three aristocratic women participating in the physical, and often dangerous sport of horseracing. Betty Rizzo notes that class strictures 'demanded that middling- and upper-rank women', such as the ones represented in the print, 'remain physically noncompetitive', which was in direct contrast to men and even labouring women who were culturally permitted public displays of strength and boldness.<sup>34</sup> With this in mind, the three racing duchesses in their matching military-style habits in *The Coxheath Race*, were portrayed as transgressing both their gendered and social positions through their representation as racing one another on horseback in military dress.

While Coxheath Camp and the attention surrounding it proved to be an ephemeral spectacle, the American War for Independence waged on, changing

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<sup>30</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Betty Rizzo, "Equivocations of Gender and Rank: Eighteenth-century sporting women," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 26, no. 1 (2002), 71.

<sup>32</sup> Roger Longrigg, *History of Horse Racing* (London: MacMillan, 1972), 92.

<sup>33</sup> Longrigg, *History of Horse Racing*, 93.

<sup>34</sup> Rizzo, "Equivocations of Gender," 71. For example, labouring women were often heard shouting in the streets as part of their profession.

cultural outlooks in its wake. The anxieties surrounding the limits of gender categories that surfaced in the 1770s, and articulated through prints such as *The Female Combatants* and *The Coxheath Race*, became more prominent in the expanding print media of the 1780s after the colonial rebels and their allies defeated the British military.<sup>35</sup> While the competing duchesses in *The Coxheath Race* were softly associated with political groups at this time, it would be the General Election of 1784 that saw an influx of prints which connected the canvassing elite women to political fervour, and furthermore, to partisan hostility. The political landscape in post-war Britain had been destabilised during the war, causing factional disagreements and infighting.<sup>36</sup> In 1783, the year in which the Peace of Paris was signed, ending the American War for Independence, Britain saw no less than three First Ministers and their corresponding governments. This culminated with George III dissolving Parliament in December 1783 and bringing in the new Pitt Ministry, forcing a general election in March 1784. For the two seats of the urban constituency of Westminster there were three candidates: the incumbent Fox; Sir Cecil Wray, a Foxite deserter and the king's preference; and Lord Admiral Hood, a Pittite. As Hood was a war hero, it was understood that he would win one of the two seats, making the election a race between Fox and Wray. Fox's success was critical to Foxite-Whig interests; if he was to be defeated, the political faction would lose their leader.<sup>37</sup>

For six weeks from 1 April, the polls were open in Covent Garden and votes were tallied and reported daily in newspapers while the candidates and their

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<sup>35</sup> Wahrman argues that this pattern appears across cultural outputs at this time, see Wahrman, "English Problem," 1255.

<sup>36</sup> By the start of 1784 the incumbent government was a coalition between Fox and Lord North which the king disapproved of. In March, Charles James Fox had introduced the East India Bill which aimed to end corruption in the East India Company. After the bill passed in the House of Commons, George III, who detested Fox, made it known that anyone who passed the bill in the House of Lords would be considered an enemy of the crown. The threat succeeded and the bill was defeated, allowing the king to dismiss the incumbent Fox-North Coalition government and replace it with that of William Pitt the Younger's government. For a detailed account of the political landscape immediately preceding the 1784 General Election see Stott, "Female Patriotism," 66–70 and Dorothy Marshall, *Eighteenth Century England* (London: Longman, 1974), 494–533.

<sup>37</sup> Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 136–9; Marshall, *Eighteenth Century England*, 524–35; and Hugh Stokes, *The Devonshire House Circle* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1917), 192–3.

supporters vigorously campaigned.<sup>38</sup> Within violent crowds in the politically-charged atmosphere was the incongruous sight of elite female canvassers. On the first day of the polls Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire; Anne Damer; and Frances Crewe, three women of quality, led canvasses in support of Fox, walking among the varied urban classes. These women were well-versed in electioneering; it was customary for elite women from political families to canvass for their family's chosen candidate in their country seat's constituency.<sup>39</sup> Canvassers could be of either gender and their primary task was to convince freeholders to vote for their candidate while keeping records of the promised votes.<sup>40</sup> These records were tallied and strategised over in private homes which served as the equivalent of a modern political office.<sup>41</sup> In the urban setting of Westminster numerous women canvassed for both government and opposition factions. Primarily these consisted of the aforementioned women, the Duchess of Devonshire's sister-in law, Dorothy, Duchess of Portland, and sister, Henrietta, Viscountess Duncannon canvassing on behalf of Fox.<sup>42</sup> The Wray canvass was led by the prominent government hostesses: Mary Isabella, Duchess of Rutland and Emily Mary, Marchioness of Salisbury and supported by Mrs Albinia Hobart, a relative of Wray. Most of the canvassing women were youthful, attractive, and had young children, attesting to the acceptability of canvassing as a form of female politicking.<sup>43</sup> They also were well-known figures of fashion whose names or likenesses commonly appeared in print media. Although elite women traditionally canvassed for political candidates, London print media was consumed with drawing attention to the female canvassers due to their youth, popularity, and unusually high number in the Westminster election. One example of which can be found in Thomas Rowlandson's oft-cited *Political Affection* (figure 2.3) which represents Charles

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<sup>38</sup> Covent Garden was normally a busy area of the city, but with the erection of the Hustings for the election, it transformed into a crowded pit of chaos that included gangs of hired ruffians, first employed by Hood to deter voters for Fox, followed by Fox hiring men to repel Hood's gang. (*Devonshire House Circle*, 196). The Hustings was a temporarily-erected platform adjacent to the polling booths which was also where candidates would deliver their speeches.

<sup>39</sup> Lewis, "1784 and All That," 92. While canvassing for Fox in Westminster, Georgiana and her sister Lady Harriet Duncannon were summoned to St Albans by their mother to briefly aid her in canvassing for the Spencer's choice of candidate.

<sup>40</sup> Chalus, "The epidemical Madness," 171 and Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 45.

<sup>41</sup> Chalus, "The epidemical Madness," 166.

<sup>42</sup> It also included noted beauties celebrated for their exhibited portraits such as the Waldegrave sisters (Joshua Reynolds, 1780) and Elizabeth Linley Sheridan (Reynolds, 1775).

<sup>43</sup> Lewis, "1784 and All That," 108.

James Fox, as a fox suckling from the breast of his canvasser, Georgiana, while her own child cries.<sup>44</sup> The print shows the persistence of ‘bad mother’ iconography, echoing the broken family rhetoric so strongly articulated in *The Female Combatants*, and likewise, accuses a highly visible elite woman of transgressing prescribed gender roles. The significant attention paid to the female canvassers in print media made them more vulnerable to campaign attacks as the election progressively appeared to be between the canvassers rather than the candidates.<sup>45</sup>

The impact of elite female canvassers in the Westminster election is articulated in a print that uses the same visual vocabulary as *The Coxheath Race for £100* (figure 2.2), employing the iconography of horse racing to convey anxieties surrounding female transgressions.<sup>46</sup> *Ride for Ride or Secret Influence Rewarded* (figure 2.4) charges the Westminster candidates of garnering ‘secret’, or underhanded, influence, from their female canvassers. These women are represented in the background riding ‘horses’ with the candidates’ faces. Albinia Hobart on the left rides a creature with the face of Wray and Lady Salisbury rides a horse with Hood’s face.<sup>47</sup> The three competitors race toward an open door in a brick wall to symbolise their ability to access previously inaccessible spaces such as politics.

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<sup>44</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 1–3 and Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 196–202. Notably Georgiana is accused of illicit extra-marital relationships with the Prince of Wales and Fox through their portraits being represented on the walls behind her.

<sup>45</sup> Georgiana in particular featured heavily in scathing satirical prints due to aggressive canvassing on foot and entering private homes and businesses. Chalus, “Kisses for Votes,” 138–41; McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 1, 185–91; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 196–202 ; and Lewis, “1784 and All That,” 90–122.

<sup>46</sup> Horse racing as a motif was common in election prints as it visualised the competitive ‘race’ for a government post. Isaac Cruikshank’s *Westminster Races* (19 May 1784) for example, represented Fox, Wray, and Hood horse racing and William Dent’s *The Brentford Race for the Middlesex Septennial Plate* (22 April 1784) represented the three candidates for Middlesex and their royal and political supporters one of which was the Duchess of Devonshire riding a horse with the face of Fox.

<sup>47</sup> In addition to being a Pittite political hostess and rival canvasser to the Duchess of Devonshire in Westminster, Emily Mary, Marchioness of Salisbury had also been leading a tenacious campaign against the duchess in the concurrent St Albans election. Georgiana and her sister Lady Duncannon had been called to St Albans by their mother, the Dowager Lady Spencer, who managed her family’s Foxite interests in the borough, to use their skills and popularity after she realised that Emily Mary was leading a successful canvass. Eventually both sides returned to their respective canvasses in Westminster and the Spencer interest prevailed in St Albans. However, her loss in St Albans did not stop Emily Mary from throwing lavish dinner parties in the borough afterwards to nurture future fealty. Lewis details how these dinners, which included the mayor and aldermen as guests, worried Lord Spencer. Although this exemplifies how tactical Lady Salisbury was in her engagement with politics, her partisanship appears to have not personally prejudiced her, as her supposed rival, Georgiana attended one of her parties soon after the election where the two courteously discussed children rather than politics (Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 115–7).



Georgiana appears to be winning the race on her mounted fox. This message is reiterated in the foreground as well. Georgiana is represented sitting atop Fox's shoulders with her skirts hiked up to reveal her legs and furthermore, draw the viewer's attention to her pubic area.<sup>48</sup> The anonymous artist accomplishes this further by rendering Georgiana as holding Fox's particularly phallic queue between her thighs, in place of reins. These sexual implications echo other prints from the election, such as Thomas Rowlandson's *The Poll* (figure 2.5), which also seek to highlight the female canvassers' sexual, and therefore, moral laxity. Though these allusions are rife, and further contribute to the *Ride for Ride*'s (figure 2.4) general theme of scepticism surrounding female participation in the election, the print also communicates an anxiety regarding the social rank of the canvassers by accusing them of using bribery, presumably both sexual and monetary, in order to advance their politician of choice (and his prerogatives). By raising concerns surrounding sex and money, prints such as this perpetuated notions of prostitution, a theme that commonly appeared in election print media, particularly with regard to the female canvassers.<sup>49</sup> Though a stale trope utilised to silence female agency, Lana underlines that likening the canvassers to prostitutes during the election diminished their political resolve and relocated it to their husbands or male candidates.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the allusions to prostitution contribute to the lower-class behaviour connotations that the print already assigns to its female figures through their representation as jockeys in a horse race. *Ride for Ride* reveals that female figures could access political situations through their privileged economic status despite the fact that they were unenfranchised women. These notions of 'secret influence' are further emphasised through implications that Georgiana was motivated by either her husband's instructions or a romantic relationship with Fox. While the print disseminates an anxiety about the source of elite canvassers' power being predominantly economic, it also serves as a reminder that the power these women had was allotted to them

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<sup>48</sup> Further accusations of an affair between Georgiana and a Fox are implied through euphemism-littered speech bubbles: he says 'Pray support me till you are quite spent' and she responds with, 'I'll hold fast by your tail & am sure we cannot fail'.

<sup>49</sup> See Lana, "Women and Foxite Strategy," 55 for the application of 'prostitution' etc. in the propaganda language of the 1784 Westminster election against both male and female players.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Prints likening Georgiana to a prostitute were abundant and have been discussed in detail in Rauser, "Butcher-Kissing Duchess," 29; Lana, "Women and Foxite Strategy," 55; and Rosenthal, "Public Reputation," 82. For further reading on the representation of the prostitute in satirical prints see McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 39–79.

through their social position. This attention to the misuse of their position as members of the ruling elite and its effect on the country would prove to be a predominant theme in what this chapter has designated as ‘rivalry’ satirical prints during the election.

Wrought from national anxiety surrounding Britain’s place on the world stage and the behaviour of its ruling classes, and propagated through prolific print media, rivalry prints articulate contemporary concerns surrounding elite women’s behaviour and its wider effects on society. While the prints under examination criticise women’s political participation, they also disseminate more complex underlying issues regarding transgressive gendered and social behaviour. Satirical print publishers capitalised on highly-visible women’s engagement in the 1784 election by highlighting their opposing factional loyalties through personal competition. These can be categorised into two themes: beauty contests and physical competitions. While the Duchess of Devonshire featured in many of these prints, she was often accompanied by another woman who rarely features in modern scholarship: Albinia Hobart.

### **Miss Westminster 1784**

As Gillian Russell has astutely noted in an article on female gaming, Albinia Hobart, one of the prominent canvassers for the Pittite candidate Cecil Wray, has been ignored by scholars despite being widely ‘known to readers of newspapers and journals, passersby of print shops, theatergoers, masqueraders and pleasure-garden promenaders’.<sup>51</sup> Russell’s observation is especially surprising given the substantial amount of satirical prints lampooning this understudied individual. From 1784 to 1812, at least 55 satirical representations of Albinia were published. Significantly, there are no satirical representations of the ageing woman of fashion before the 1784 election which suggests that visual culture surrounding her canvass transformed her into a commodity for satirical print consumers (see table 2). Before the election,

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<sup>51</sup> Gillian Russell, "'Faro's Daughters': Female Gamesters, Politics, and the Discourse of Finance in 1790s Britain," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, no. 4 (2000): 486.

Albinia divided her time between her homes, Nocton Hall in Lincolnshire, Sans Souci in Ham Common, and Derby House in St James's Square, London, and was considered to be a celebrated member of the fashionable elite.<sup>52</sup> She entered society upon her marriage, at age nineteen to the Honourable George Hobart in 1757 and became the Countess of Buckinghamshire in 1793 upon his succession to the earldom.<sup>53</sup> Although renowned for being highly sociable, this reputation probably originated later in her life as she had children consecutively for the first six years of marriage before giving birth to her last child in 1774.<sup>54</sup> Horace Walpole refers to Albinia numerous times, and usually derisively, in his correspondence. He first mentions her in 1768 as a metaphor for looking foolish, writing 'it is only an object of ridicule, like Mrs Hobart in her cotillion'.<sup>55</sup> Though her husband served as an MP for Bere Alston, Devon, from 1761–80, there is little evidence of Albinia taking an active role as a politicking wife prior to 1784. However, her only known correspondence held in public archives are letters to Lord Shelburne shortly after he succeeded as Prime Minister, indiscreetly and unsuccessfully requesting for her husband to be appointed as ambassador at the Court of Berlin.<sup>56</sup> Her name often appeared in private correspondence which detailed her appearance at parties, her dancing, and her private theatrical performances.<sup>57</sup> Readers of newspapers would also be familiar with Albinia's name, which usually appeared under sections devoted

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<sup>52</sup> Albinia Lucy Cust, *The Albinia Book : Being the history of Albinia Cecil and of those who have borne her name, with a new and particular account of the celebrated Albinia Bertie, Countess of Buckinghamshire and her immediate descendants* (London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, 1929), 51.

<sup>53</sup> The previous earl was George Hobart's half-brother. Matthew Kilburn, "Hobart, George, third earl of Buckinghamshire (1731-1804)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>54</sup> All eight children lived into adulthood although her eldest son died fighting in the American War for Independence (Kilburn, "Hobart, George, Third Earl of Buckinghamshire (1731-1804)").

<sup>55</sup> The full quotation, written to George Montagu on 15 April 1768 is as follows: 'I avoid talking before the youth of the age as I would dancing before them: for if one's tongue don't move in the steps of the day, and thinks to please by its old graces, it is only an object of ridicule, like Mrs Hobart in her cotillion'. Walpole and Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence*, Volume 10, 259.

<sup>56</sup> The correspondence consists of two letters from Albinia and one from George Hobart, who did not receive the position. BL Add. MS 88906/3/13.

<sup>57</sup> For example see Walpole and Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence* and Frances Crewe's travel diary from 1785–6 Add MS 37926. Private theatricals were performances of plays by elite amateurs as a form of entertainment. See Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations* and Watson, "Private Theatricals," for further reading on the topic.

to masquerade or pleasure garden intelligence.<sup>58</sup> Her frequent parties and private theatricals were reported on without criticism prior to 1784. However, once she began canvassing for her distant cousin, Wray, public opinion soured and the commentary shifted to assaults on her character, and in particular, her physical appearance.<sup>59</sup> One satirical anecdote publishing in the *Morning Post* on 24 May reported that,

as Mrs Hobart and the Dutchess of Devonshire were walking in the Rotunda at Ranelagh on Friday, the latter arm in arm with the Prince of Wales, a wag observed that the former [...] had little soft down upon her chin, but that all the Dutchess's *hairs* were *hairs apparent*.<sup>60</sup>

Albinia's visibility in the election abruptly rendered her a foolish and ugly woman who traversed gender boundaries. Due to her unappealing physical appearance in contrast to her political rivals' perceived beauty, female participation in the election was commonly interpreted in print media as a self-indulgent beauty contest between canvassers. Additionally, Albinia's obese physical form, while making her more visible to the public, suggested that she had uncontrollable impulses, provoking questions of whether her political participation would be as insatiable as her eating habits.

Despite late-eighteenth-century Britain being a culture that was wary of overweight individuals, specifically women, the significance of the fat female body in this period has been overlooked by modern scholarship. Rather, corporality scholars have focused on the period in which weight-related health issues were first brought to the attention of the British populace at the beginning of the century by

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<sup>58</sup> For example, Albinia would be listed among the celebrated individuals: 'the most select company in the kingdom met last night [in Vauxhall pleasure gardens ...] The most fashionable and distinguished characters present were the Duchess of Gloucester and her three daughters, the bewitching Duchess of Devonshire and her sister [...] the Hon. Mrs. Hobart, Lady Salisbury, Lady Melbourne, Lady Jersey [...]' (*Morning Post*, 24 March 1781). Sometimes Albinia was the only celebrity allurements to an event: 'the company was not very numerous but rather singular in its assortment. Mrs Hobart, Lord Harrington, and Lord Ferrers were the only people of fashion we saw' (*Morning Chronicle*, 13 May 1779).

<sup>59</sup> Cecil Wray was a friend of Fox but disbanded from the Foxites after Fox proposed the East India Bill. The election marked his first time running as a Pittite, which generated accusations in print media of Wray being a political turncoat.

<sup>60</sup> *Morning Post*, 17 May 1784. The excerpt is insulting to both women, and implicates the duchess as having an affair with the Prince of Wales.

doctors such as George Cheyne and Thomas Short.<sup>61</sup> However, through the critical lens of feminist thought we can better interpret how dictates on the female body were a means for the control of women in this patriarchal society. Feminist scholars have repossessed the old metaphor of the Body Politic – the state or society imagined as a human body – converting it to ‘body politics’ and positing the human body as a politically inscribed entity.<sup>62</sup> As Susan Bordo has maintained, ‘the body – what we eat, how we dress, the daily rituals through which we attend to the body – is a medium of culture’.<sup>63</sup> With this in mind, body politics serves as a useful means of reading the deeper implications behind the ridicule of Albinia’s body in graphic satire from the 1784 election and the wider interpretations these images impressed upon their eighteenth-century audience.

Obesity was not always viewed as distasteful or unhealthy; the seventeenth century embraced the fleshy female body. Beauty manuals recommended eating goose grease to obtain a desirable plumpness, for ‘Bodies that are very Lean and Scragged, we all must own, cannot be very Comely’.<sup>64</sup> However, beauty standards underwent a transformation in the eighteenth century when medical publications highlighted health risks associated with weight, until obesity was generally viewed to be an unappealing physical characteristic. Lucia Dacome argues that by the 1770s ‘excessive fatness’ had become a stable concern in the British populace.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Cheyne famously suffered from obesity himself, and consequently low spirits, or ‘the English malady’ as he dubbed it, and overcame his weight problem (and depression) through temperance and a vegetarian diet. His *Essay on Health and Long Life* (1724) ran into 20 editions in fifteen years and was instrumental to the understanding of obesity’s effect on one’s health. Roy Porter, *Bodies Politic : Disease, death, and doctors in Britain, 1650-1900* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 84. His diet remained influential until the end of the century. Thomas Short viewed the time in which he lived as an age of eating: ‘no Age did ever afford more Instances of Corpulency than our own’, he wrote in 1727’s *A Discourse Concerning the Causes and Effects of Corpulency (Flesh in the Age of Reason)* (London: Allen Lane : Penguin Books, 2003), 233). Roy Porter, Ken Abala, and Lucia Dacome have discussed at length the complicated cultural history of obesity at this period in eighteenth-century Britain, but specifically in relation to men and with little attention paid to the later part of the century; see *Bodies Politic*; Ken Abala, "Weight Loss in the Age of Reason," in *Cultures of the Abdomen: Diet, digestion, and fat in the modern world*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Ana Carden-Coyne (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); and Lucia Dacome, "Useless and Pernicious Matter: Corpulence in eighteenth-century England," in *Cultures of the Abdomen : Diet, digestion, and fat in the modern world*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Ana Carden-Coyne (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>62</sup> Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight : Feminism, Western culture, and the body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 21.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>64</sup> N. H. *The Ladies Dictionary; Being a general entertainment for the fair-sex: a work never attempted before in English* (London: Printed for J. Dunton, 1694), 61.

<sup>65</sup> Dacome, "Useless and Pernicious Matter," 186.

Conversely, a healthy appetite was viewed as and remained a characteristic of true Englishness, and the regular consumption of roast beef a patriotic duty.<sup>66</sup> However, this view exempted the fairer sex; women were expected to have a restrained appetite and an accordingly slender waist. While eating disorders have been viewed as a fairly modern phenomenon, the societal pressure of maintaining a slim waist to the point of self-harm also existed. The Duchess of Devonshire suffered from an eating disorder and would starve herself over the course of multiple days, prompting concern from her mother, who warned her not to run 'into extremes which your constitution will not bear'.<sup>67</sup> Georgiana's anxiety over her outward appearance furthermore, suggests an awareness as to the extent that her body was publicly visible.

These constraints upon female gastronomy exemplified what Bordo has described as the cultural use of the body as a 'powerful symbolic form', a surface inscribed with the central rules and hierarchies of a culture: 'the body is trained, shaped, and impressed with prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, femininity'.<sup>68</sup> This derived from a strong history of male dictates on female beauty that remained influential into the latter-part of the eighteenth century. Joseph Spence's *Crito: or, A Dialogue on Beauty* (1752), a published example of those dictates, ran through multiple editions until the 1770s. In defining the ideal female form, Spence uses an inanimate manmade object, the *Venus de' Medici*, as

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<sup>66</sup> Brian Rejack, "Gluttons and Gourmands : British romanticism and the aesthetics of gastronomy" (Vanderbilt University, 2009), 85.

<sup>67</sup> Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 51, quoting Chatsworth 641, letter dated 26 August 1784.

<sup>68</sup> Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 165–6. This definition therefore agrees with Rozsika Parker's definition of femininity as a product of culture, see Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch : Embroidery and the making of the feminine* (London: The Women's Press, 1984), 2–3.

the standard to which women's bodies should aspire.<sup>69</sup> Although Spence acknowledges that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, especially culturally ('It was from the most common Shape of his Countrywomen that Rubens, in his Pictures, delights so much in Plumpness [...] It seems as if nobody could be a Beauty with him, under Two hundred Weight. His very Graces are all fat'), he is the self-appointed authority for female beauty in the second half of the eighteenth century ('To own the Truth, I have thought on this Subject [...] more gravely at least, then ever you have').<sup>70</sup> Spence is explicit in the disgust one should feel upon viewing overweight individuals, and describes 'a pair of apish Lovers, that sat by each other', who attended a public trial and 'smil'd together, grinn'd together, laugh'd out together. All their Actions were pleasing to each other, though so very displeasing to every body else'.<sup>71</sup> In the context of his book, it appears that the couple's only crime is being both happy (with one another) and overweight.

Spence's anecdote also illustrates the eighteenth-century association of excessive corporeality with bad behaviour. Scholars such as Dacome, McCreery, and Ludmilla Jordanova have discussed how female physiognomy – their physical attractiveness, both tangible and in print – was seen as a barometer of their personal

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<sup>69</sup> Spence 1752, 13. Vicky Coltman has already brought attention to the *Venus de' Medici* as the ideal female form in her discussion of Hugh Douglas Hamilton's portrait, *Sir Rowland and Lady Winn in the Library at Nostell Priory* (1767), arguing that the painting compares Lady Winn's superior beauty with that of Sir Rolland's bust copy of the famous statue. Vicky Coltman, "Status, Stasis, and Statue," *Visual Culture in Britain* 3, no. 1 (2002): 43–7. Coltman's argument builds on Shearer West's assertion that it was common for portraitists to portray their elite sitters with qualities found in classical beauty. Shearer West, "Patronage and Power : The role of the portrait in eighteenth-century England," in *Culture, Politics, and Society in Britain, 1660-1800*, ed. Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 148. This use of what Mikhail Bakhtin has termed the 'classical body' as an archetype means, as Janet Wolff has observed, that women are held up to an unrealistic standard. For not only does the classical body demonstrate an aesthetic ideal, but it also contains no orifices nor engages in bodily functions; the classical body is only obtainable in manmade form, much like Spence's *Venus de' Medici*. Janet Wolff, "Reinstating Corporeality : Feminism and body politics," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 416. Roy Porter also cites the classical body, the form 'endorsed by official high culture', as a model for eighteenth-century thinking, which he rationalises with popular fields of study at the time, such as physiognomy and phrenology. Porter points out that 'elaborate social parade, courtly protocols, gesture and dress codes vaunted and flaunted the superior ("classical") body upon the social stage' (Porter, *Bodies Politic*, 71–2).

<sup>70</sup> Joseph Spence, *Crito : or, a dialogue on beauty. By Sir Harry Beaumont* (London: Printed for R. Dodsley, and sold by M. Cooper, 1752), 48–9, 5.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 47. Because long Fs were used in this publication, 'sat' appeared as 'fat', which was probably an intentional happy coincidence. Spence does not divulge any details about the trial such as time or place.

qualities.<sup>72</sup> Albinia's unattractive corpulence in prints was used to substantiate her public transgressions. Furthermore, Albinia and other fat women in society, as McCreery has noted, violated social propriety merely through being publicly visible – through their blatant disregard of social codes that dictated the appropriate bodily shape.<sup>73</sup> Their offensive bodily display was, like Russell's argument regarding high heads, a grossly discernible indication of women's visibility in the public sphere.<sup>74</sup>

Spence's grievance also calls attention to Michelle Meagher's exploration between the relationship of the cultural reception of fat and disgust in which she argues that 'being fat is visible; it's at best an open secret', which confirms that Spence's 'apish' couple's offence lies in their visibility.<sup>75</sup> Their greater transgression arises from their affectionate interactions with one another, which imply additional internal faults inferred by their physical appearance, ones which are associated with unrepressed cravings: 'Bulges and eruptions suggest bodies that are out of control', which, as Bordo suggests, are representational of 'uncontained desire, unrestrained hunger, uncontrolled impulse'.<sup>76</sup> If the 'apish' couple has no self-control in their food intake, then they surely lack moral self-control, as indicated through Spence's repulsion from their flirtation – an explicit danger for women as prescribed by the dogmas of femininity in the eighteenth century. Thus, as Bordo argues in her most revealing point: 'anxiety over women's uncontrollable hungers appear to peak [...] during periods when women are becoming independent and are asserting themselves politically and socially'.<sup>77</sup> As this chapter argues, the sudden visual attention on Albinia and her body coincided with the heightened anxiety or 'gender panic' surrounding elite women, suggesting that visual ridicule of fat female bodies was symptomatic of the anxiety circumscribing the excessive behaviour of women of the ruling classes.

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<sup>72</sup> Dacome, "Useless and Pernicious Matter," 187; McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 240–2; and Ludmilla Jordanova, *Nature Displayed : Gender, science, and medicine, 1760-1820* (London; New York: Longman, 1999), 23–4.

<sup>73</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 241–2.

<sup>74</sup> Russell has written on the anxieties surrounding high hair and female visibility, see Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 178–225.

<sup>75</sup> Michelle Meagher, "Jenny Saville and a Feminist Aesthetics of Disgust," *Hypatia* 18, no. 4 (2003): 28.

<sup>76</sup> Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 189.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.



Much like the negative press relating to her activities, satirical prints of Albinia seem not to have existed prior to her canvass for Wray in the 1784 election. The first graphic satire that can be identified as featuring Albinia was Thomas Rowlandson's *The Poll* (figure 2.5), published on 12 April, about two weeks into the campaigns. Albinia is represented opposite Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire on a seesaw outside the Hustings in Covent Garden; both women's bodices are ripped open to reveal their bared breasts. A lecherous, jeering crowd cheers as Albinia's weight elevates her attractive opponent high into the air. The print ultimately questions who the actual candidates are: the male politicians or the women canvassing for them. It displays the Pittite runners, Wray and Lord Hood, behind Albinia, holding her in place, while Fox, standing behind Georgiana, has lost his grasp on his canvasser. However, the print is more revealing in its depiction of the election in terms of how it was beginning to appear in print media: as a beauty competition between the female canvassers.

The *Morning Post* compared the different canvassers's physical attractions, reporting, 'Among the *female canvassers* there is none more formidable from personal charms than *Mrs. S[heridan]*; her features seem to meliorate by time, and to mellow into an *irresistible sweetness*'.<sup>78</sup> The daughters of the Duchess of Gloucester from her first marriage, also canvassed for Fox and were commented on for their youth and beauty, with one newspaper reporting: 'the Ladies W[aldegrav]e are in the right to make the best use of their time. Their beauty is by no means of the keeping kind; and in another seven years [...] they will not be able to secure a single plumper in the whole district of St. Giles's [*sic*]'.<sup>79</sup> Articles such as these distorted election reporting into a misogynistic undermining of female participation. At age 47,

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<sup>78</sup> J. Hartley, *History of the Westminster Election* ... (London: Printed for the editors, and sold by J. Debrett, opposite Burlington-House, Piccadilly, and all other Booksellers, 1784), 258. Hartley, a Foxite, compiled all the newspaper and pamphlet excerpts relating to the election in *History of the Westminster Election*. Although the excerpts are not labelled and dated but the book remains a vital source of ephemeral texts relating to the election. Elizabeth Sheridan (*née* Linley 1754–1792) was a celebrated singer until she married Foxite, Richard Brinsley Sheridan who forced her to give up her career.

<sup>79</sup> Elizabeth Laura (1760–1816), Charlotte Maria (1761–1808), and Anna Horatia Seymour (1762–1801) known as the Ladies Waldegrave after Reynolds's 1780 portrait of the three sisters by the same name, was exhibited to great acclaim, with critics likening the three sitters to the three graces. They were all in their early 20s when they canvassed in 1784. St Giles was a notoriously poor neighbourhood in London and associated with prostitution, see, Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 25, 153.

Albinia's immersion in the election, canvassing for the government faction, served as a fitting counterpart to the young and beautiful Duchess (aged 26) and her coterie. Print media focused on the physical contrast between the two women rather than to report on Albinia's canvassing methods:

Mrs. *Hobart*, to convince the world that *Sir Cecil*, as well as *Mr. Fox*, is a favourite of the *loveliest* part of the creation, takes her station near *Sir Cecil's* side of the Hustings. She there while *opposing* herself to the Duchess of *Devon*, animates all *be howlers!* and where, ye agents and observers, can you find among the *female* race, one fitter to be placed in *contrast* to the fair *Duchess!*<sup>80</sup>

In addition to satirical prints and newspapers which related the election to a beauty contest, and one in which Wray would lose due to the comparatively unattractive Albinia canvassing on his behalf, songs and pamphlets also disseminated this narrative. One particularly cruel ballad was blatant in relating the female canvass with seducing male working-class voters into bed:

Fair Devon' all good English hearts must approve,  
And the Waldegraves (God bless their sweet faces)  
The Duchess she looks like the sweet queen of love,  
And they like the three sister graces.  
Then let, &c.  
But behold Mrs. Ho—t with mouth like a dike,  
And bloated cheeks daub'd very foul, Sir,  
To one of the fair sex in truth she's as like,  
As Venus is like to an owl, Sir.  
Then let, &c.  
Such a mass of fat blubber to canvass our votes,  
'Tis indeed a most imprudent freak, Sir,  
Why her flesh hangs as loose as our ragged great coats,  
And her face it is like a beef steak, Sir,  
Then let, &c.  
Much rather than come in the same pair of sheets,  
With such a coarse huge piece of lumber,  
By G—d I'd consent to lie in the streets,  
All night in the month of December.<sup>81</sup>

Through the use of patriotic language, the ballad perpetuates the beauty contest illusion of the canvass through its comparison of the female canvassers' physical merits. Classical imagery is used to describe the beauty of Georgiana and the Ladies

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<sup>80</sup> Hartley, *Westminster Election*, 325. Emphasis is original.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 509.

Waldegrave ('sweet queen of love', 'three sister graces'), just as Spence used classical sculpture to define the ideal feminine body. This idealisation of beauty is later invoked in order to express how Albinia's physicality fails to fit the definition of beauty so much so that she is more masculine than feminine (lines 8–9). Her masculinity is conjured through comparisons to course objects such as a 'beef steak', a 'piece of lumber', or 'our [from a male perspective] ragged great coats', all of which are associated with men, specifically men of the labouring classes. By describing her as having 'bloated cheeks daub'd very foul', the ballad also accuses Albinia of overcompensating for her masculine appearance with excessive cosmetics, but her failure in their successful application further evidences her inadequacies in her gender.<sup>82</sup> Albinia's faults seem to go beyond transgressions of femininity; they also defy nature. The ballad charges her as being an 'imprudent freak', a person guided by whim or fancy rather than judgement.<sup>83</sup> The ballad paints her as a woman who is out of control, yet the ballad only criticises her outward appearance and does not detail her actions. Her offences, as described by the anonymous ballad-composer, lay chiefly in being visible alongside attractive women, thus highlighting her flawed female body which renders her as more masculine than feminine. This line of thinking was also articulated in satirical prints of the 1770s, as we have seen in figures 2.1 and 2.2, which represented women perceived as impersonating men in aggressive behaviour and masculinised dress; Albinia is accused of being unfeminine merely for not being pretty, for being fat. The ballad both demonstrates this discomfort of Albinia's public display and reproves her through lyrics indicating that she has lost all physical traces of femininity.

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<sup>82</sup> McCreery has highlighted how satirical prints of the 1780s and 90s demonstrate an increasing anxiety regarding 'old' aristocratic women; which she estimates to be women over the age of 35 through her study of satirical prints, see McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 213–22. Common iconography in graphic satires criticising 'old' women was representing them overusing or abusing makeup in order to attract men by disguising their true appearance. McCreery argues that this was meant to emphasise both their vanity and deceit, further labelling them as immoral or indecent (ibid., 231–3). See also Amy M. Froide, "Old maids: The lifecycle of single women in early modern England," in *Women and Ageing in British Society since 1500*, ed. Lynn A. Botelho and Pat Thane (Harlow: Pearson education, 2001).

<sup>83</sup> In the eighteenth-century 'freak' was described as the act of being 'capricious', see "freak, n.1". OED Online. February 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/74344> (accessed October 05, 2016).

Like the ballad, *The Poll* uses beauty contest allusions, but through a visual vocabulary; it also demeans its figures with rife sexual allusions, the most notable example of which is the phallic fulcrum in the centre of the print. The fulcrum supports the lever that Albinia and Georgiana straddle, thereby directing viewers' eyes to their parted legs. This central symbol of male virility not only lends sexual connotations to the print, but also, as in *Ride for Ride* (figure 2.4) acts as a reminder of the underlying male dominance – the control that these women are trying to achieve on the seesaw is determined through something entirely male. The voracious spectators cheering in the background are entirely male as well, serving as a further reminder of the patriarchal arena in which these two women are attempting to participate. Their bared breasts, again, have a double connotation. On the one hand, their naked breasts have sexual implications and further designate the female canvassers as competitors for sexual favour much like the aforementioned ballad. Georgiana was famously represented in satirical prints kissing or caressing lewd butchers in exchange for the promise of votes since the beginning of April, which accounts for *The Poll*'s narrative.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, displaying the women as bare-breasted creates connotations of what Linda Nochlin has termed, the 'negative woman warrior', displaying socially-anarchic women as dissolute and with intention to violently disrupt 'the traditional political establishment'.<sup>85</sup> The bare-breasted woman iconography can also be viewed as an Amazonian figure which Wahrman argues, 'has always presented, by definition, a threatening challenge to patriarchy' due to the classical tribe's association with inverting traditional Western gender roles.<sup>86</sup> This point becomes more significant when we recall that one figure represented in the print, had a visual history of Amazonian associations. Georgiana had been represented in a military-style riding habit in *The Coxheath Race for £100* (figure 2.2), which, as Cally Blackman first highlighted, was a form of dress which

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<sup>84</sup> Rauser, "Butcher-Kissing Duchess," 28–36 and Chalus, "Kisses for Votes," 122–47. Rowlandson's salacious satirical prints were prominent participants in this widely-cited smear campaign and could be seen as precursors to the pornography he famously created at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

<sup>85</sup> Linda Nochlin, *Representing Women* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 45.

<sup>86</sup> Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 7. Wahrman argues that the cultural position of the Amazon in the eighteenth-century underwent a change of esteem in the beginning of the century to vilification during the period marked by 'gender panic'.

often earned its wearers the label of ‘Amazon’.<sup>87</sup> The socio-political events preceding the 1784 General Election had nurtured an environment wary of elite women, and particularly when those elite women threatened the male political order. Common visual vocabulary expressing these concerns had developed, and would continue to thrive in satirical prints.

The themes of sexual disgust and competition between female canvassers can be seen in another Rowlandson election print, *Dark Lantern Business: or, Mrs. Hob and Nob on a Night Canvass with a Bosom Friend* (figure 2.6) published on 24 April. Like figure 2.5, the satirical narrative is set in Covent Garden, but not in the open square. Instead, it tellingly places the female canvassers outside Haddock’s, one of Covent Garden’s well-known brothels. While Foxite canvassers appear to be succeeding in their seduction of voters (a slim, fashionably dressed woman and a man in an intimate embrace walk into the brothel), Albinia is pictured as struggling in the bottom left of the print. While shining her lantern on her two suitors, a Chelsea pensioner and a black man on stumps and crutches, she complains, ‘D—n the Dutchess, She got all the young voters’.<sup>88</sup> Rowlandson published *Dark Lantern Business* two days after publishing a print that also highlighted Albinia’s unappealing sexuality, *Madam Blubber on her Canvass* (figure 2.7). In this print, Albinia enters a butcher’s stall to solicit the professional demographic her rival was reported to be successful with; however she finds no interested parties.<sup>89</sup> As with figures 2.5 and 2.6, figure 2.7 serves as visual *double entendre*, substituting canvassing rituals with contests of sexual conquest. Albinia’s sexual advances display her insatiable ties to sex as well as the food which has made her overweight. *Madam Blubber on her Canvass* again flags male control over Albinia’s body; instead of politicians controlling her from behind as in *The Poll*, it is now the ugly, lower-class butchers which she has exposed herself to. One man holds Albinia by the waist and exclaims, ‘The fattest I have ever handled’ as he presents her to a fat butcher smoking a pipe.

<sup>87</sup> Blackman, "Walking Amazons," 49.

<sup>88</sup> The inclusion of the Chelsea pensioner was also a reference to the controversy over Albinia’s candidate, Wray attempting to disband the Chelsea Hospital as a tax-saving measure. The two men are meant to provoke disgust, themselves, in order to render Albinia more repulsive for pursuing them.

<sup>89</sup> This print plays on the series of prints accusing the Duchess of Devonshire of trading kisses with butchers in exchange for votes, see Colley, *Britons*, 242–9; Lewis, "1784 and All That," 89–121; Rauser, "Butcher-Kissing Duchess,"; Lana, "Women and Foxite Strategy,"; McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 1, 185–98; Chalus, "Kisses for Votes," 122–47.

Despite his unappealing appearance, he rejects her, stating 'I am engaged to the Duchess [of Devonshire]'. The discussion highlights notions of the elite women making themselves too available to the lower classes, likening them to prostitutes. While Albinia's blatant disregard for her own respectability and safety in soliciting working-class men for sex is a source of humour in the print, it is her despairing of quality suitors, followed by further perseverance that serves as the source of humour in *Dark Lantern Business*.

Compared to *Madam Blubber on her Canvass* (figure 2.7), Albinia's figure takes a less active role in *Dark Lantern Business* (figure 2.6) due to another fat woman who is central in the print. As in *The Poll*, the woman's breasts are bared, here emphasising a connection to prostitution. She links her arms with what appears to be a middle-class man and turns her head in profile, exhibiting her double chin, to say to him, 'vote for whom you please but Kiss before you poll'. The man fiddles with his hands, obviously nervous and uncomfortable with the bold sexual advance and responds, "'Tis too much neighbour! I could not go through with it'. The voracious woman is Georgiana, as indicated by Albinia's complaint in the background of the print that 'the Dutchess [gets] all the young voters'.<sup>90</sup> The print exemplifies how Georgiana's inappropriate behaviour while canvassing has transformed her satirical body from one of sexual enticement to one, like Albinia's, of sexual derision: the disgusting, fat body, a platform of abhorrent behaviour. Essentially, the duchess's trespass into the realm of competition for working-class men has also rendered her to be as unattractive as a woman nearly twice her age and size. The competition between the two rivals is no longer on unequal grounds, as Georgiana is rendered to be as physically unappealing as Albinia. This example demonstrates how the obese female body served as a trope for the concerns surrounding gender boundaries that were piqued during the publicity regarding elite female canvassing in the Westminster election of 1784. With Georgiana and Albinia's increasing visibility, their satirical representations became progressively corpulent.

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<sup>90</sup> George, *Catalogue*, Vol. 6, 6, 112.

Significantly, Rowlandson's satirical prints demonstrate Bordo's theory that women's bodies are heavily criticised during periods of social change. The 1784 Westminster election was situated in a period of significant social change due to occurring after the loss of the American colonies. These prints of highly visible female canvassers competing for sexual conquests were both a reaction and a contribution to this change. As we have seen, Albinia's body was absent from satirical consumption and then abruptly hurled into it through her participation in the 1784 Westminster election. The visual arsenal used against Albinia was her disgusting body, which was made more repulsive through her public actions. This was further compared with her rival canvasser, Georgiana, allowing satirists to imagine the two women not as canvassing but as competing in a lascivious beauty contest with one another, the judges of which were their social inferiors, middle- and lower- class men. While the rife sexual references were rather trite iconography for demeaning the female canvassers, another iconographic theme appeared that more overtly emphasised competition and delivered a multi-layered message about the anxieties surrounding these public women.

### **Brawling for Fox and Wray**

Two days after Rowlandson's print *Dark Lantern Business* appeared in publisher, Hannah Humphrey's Bond Street print shop, William Paulet Carey, the stipple engraver and occasional satirist had his print, *A Meeting of the Female Canvassers in Covent Garden* (figure 2.8) published by William Holland.<sup>91</sup> The graphic satire represents a confrontation between Albinia Hobart and the Duchess of Devonshire as the two meet face to face at the polling place in Covent Garden. The former figure is displayed on the left, and though still represented as physically large, her appearance differs from Rowlandson's soft and relatively feminine representation, seen in the previous prints. Despite her heaving bosom peaking over her bodice, Carey has rendered Albinia's facial features to be more masculine by giving her a hard brow and by excessively shading her rounded jaw as if to suggest whiskers. Again,

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<sup>91</sup> George, *Catalogue*, Vol. 6, 114-5.

Georgiana is represented as a foil to Albinia, and has a flattering appearance. A Foxite bill posted on the wall can be seen behind the canvassers as well as two Foxite ballad-singers in the right of the composition.<sup>92</sup> Each canvasser holds an animal representing their candidate tucked under their arm. Georgiana holds a fox and Albinia holds a badger with the head of Wray as indicated by a collar around his neck labelled 'Ministerial Badger'. While the two candidate-animals quibble over the Pittite supporter Lord Mountmorres, the two women are represented in profile, and to use colloquial phrasing, 'stare each other down'. Albinia only mutters 'I should burst with indignation'. The two largest and most central figures are seemingly the least active players in the composition, as all the other figures have much larger speech bubbles. This indicates that notions of the Westminster elections had become closely associated with iconography of the elite female canvassers. However a deeper reading of the print suggests a nonverbal tension between the two figures. The remainder of this chapter will establish the prevalence of prints depicting violence or physical competition between the female canvassers in the Westminster election. In doing so it will highlight that, in addition to the beauty contest narrative of election prints, which predominantly emphasised gender transgressions, rivalry prints of physical confrontations, like those representing elite women horse-racing, wove a narrative of transgressed social boundaries.

The first print depicting a violent exchange between two female canvassers did not appear in print shops, but in the pages of the satirical and salacious *Rambler's Magazine* (figure 2.9), exemplifying the increasing proliferation of images in print media. The *Rambler's Magazine* (1783–1790), a predecessor to the tabloid magazines of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, was one of the many sources for metropolitan gossip. The magazine's intended audience was indicated in its extended title: '*calculated for the entertainment of the Polite World; and to furnish the Man of Pleasure with a most delicious banquet of Amorous, Bacchanalian,*

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<sup>92</sup> The bill in the print may quote an actual bill. It reads: 'And for the coarse, vulgar abuse which appear in certain manifestos, signed 'John Churchill, the Select Committee are only sorry to see the friends of the Court Candidates so very angry at this period of the Poll, as they will probably stand in need of some portion of temper at the close of it. With this caution they leave the Committee at Wood's at full liberty to rave about bribes and bludgeons, perjuries and butchers, lodgers and wounds, weavers and cleavers, and according to their own discretion to decorate their advertisement with all that election quackery suggests in desperate cases. By order of the Committee, R. Morrell, Secretary'.



*Whimsical, Humorous, Theatrical and Polite Entertainment*'. Most of the magazine's content focused on what was designated to be female misbehaviour, both real and imagined.<sup>93</sup> Selected articles were illustrated with an accompanying plate, which could verge on satirical to semi-pornographic. Figure 2.9, simply entitled, *The Westminster Election* appeared in the May 1784 issue of the magazine. It represents the Duchesses of Devonshire and Rutland, in their full finery, tearing at each other's hair in the middle of a crowd at Covent Garden. Mary Isabella, Duchess of Rutland, like her printed counterpart, came from a highly political family, the Beauforts, and likewise entered into one when she married Charles Manners, Marquess of Granby (4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Rutland after 1779) in 1775. Together with Lady Salisbury, the duchess was a leading political hostess for the Pittites, though she would truly demonstrate her proficient political aptitude in 1787 when she became a widow and had to safeguard political interests for her son. She had actively canvassed in the previous general election in 1780 while pregnant.<sup>94</sup> According to Georgiana's correspondence, Mary Isabella's engagement with the election was excessive, verging on fanaticism. She recalls how, at an opera in March, with many of the political elite in attendance Mary Isabella yelled out 'D— Fox, upon which Colonel St Leger with great difficulty spirited up L<sup>y</sup> Maria Waldegrave to say D— Pitt'.<sup>95</sup> Earlier that week Georgiana had written to her mother complaining that she found herself at a social function with Mary Isabella who 'came from her Cabinet dinner [...] The Duchess looked beautiful, but w<sup>d</sup> scarcely speak to me'.<sup>96</sup> The rivalry portrayed in *The Westminster Election*, though exaggerated, was allegedly tenable.

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<sup>93</sup> The content was supplied by editorial contributors who were compensated with a free copy of the magazine (Paula Byrne, *Perdita : The literary, theatrical, scandalous life of Mary Robinson* (New York: Random House, 2004), 216). Although its articles mainly targeted male clientele of the coffee shop, the *Rambler's Magazine* also contained advertisements for female cosmetics and therefore may have also had a female readership.

<sup>94</sup> Elaine Chalus, "Manners, Mary Isabella, duchess of Rutland (1756-1831)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>95</sup> Devonshire, *Extracts from the Correspondence*, 78. Letter from Georgiana to her mother, Lady Spencer, dated 20 March 1784.

<sup>96</sup> Letter from Georgiana to Lady Spencer, dated 17 March 1784, Chatsworth mss. 608 quoted in Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 117 and Devonshire, *Extracts from the Correspondence*, 77; letter from Georgiana to Lady Spencer, dated 17 March 1784. Lewis points out that Mary Isabella was still bitter in autumn of that year and did not receive a visit from Georgiana while the rest of her family did.

The etched illustration was accompanied by an article entitled ‘The Westminster Election or, the Poll Determined by Single Combat, Between a Pair of Duchesses’, a title conscious of how election reports focused on the elite female canvassers. Satirists often employed the imagery of rival politicians boxing in order to represent a partisan disagreement, however elite or even celebrated women were traditionally depicted in verbal, rather than physical, altercations in order to express a disagreement.<sup>97</sup> The accompanying article is written as a dialogue which imagines Georgiana challenging Mary Isabella to ‘single combat’. After exchanging heated words about the current political climate, which Mary Isabella as a Pittite, has benefitted from, the two women proceed ‘to blows, scratching, etc. as depicted in the copper plate’.<sup>98</sup> In the accompanying print, each canvasser has a labouring-class second who yells ‘D[evon]shire for ever!’ and ‘R[u]t[lan]d for ever!’ respectively, using the celebratory phrasing common for candidates to instead cheer on their female canvassers. Though the women are each depicted with male seconds, as associated with boxing matches, the torn clothing at the ground and open-hand attacks aligns the fight with a street brawl or a clichéd ‘cat fight’ rather than the gentleman’s sport of boxing. The two duchesses, in their passion for political candidates are conducting themselves in a manner more befitting of labouring-class women than privileged élites. This is also highlighted in one of Mary Isabella’s lines from the article in which she rebukes her rival with, ‘Your Grace appears to be as deficient in *Manners* as in *Delicacy*’.<sup>99</sup> The print recalls the concerned 1778 *Morning*

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<sup>97</sup> Two prints preceding the election which use this motif are Thomas Colley’s *War Establishment* (July 1783) which represents Fox and Lord Chancellor Thurlow boxing, and *Anticipation* (9 February 1784) which represents the latter now boxing with Lord North. It is important to note that only Colley’s print contains other figures and they are the boxer’s well-dressed seconds.

<sup>98</sup> *Rambler’s Magazine : Or, The annals of gallantry, glee, pleasure, and the Bon Ton [...]*, ed. G. Lister, vol. 2 (London: G. Lister, 1784), 188.

<sup>99</sup> *Rambler’s Magazine*, 2. ‘Manners’ may be italicised due to it being Mary Isabella’s surname. Delicacy was a manifestation of social rules, that Claude Rawson identifies as ‘tact’ and ‘tactful considerateness’, and were proportional to modesty. Both genders of the upper classes were expected to participate in this culture of delicacy (a subset of Sensibility, according to Rawson), but women especially were expected to operate within its parameters, see Claude Julien Rawson, *Order from Confusion Sprung : Studies in eighteenth-century literature from Swift to Cowper* (London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 342–3 for a further discussion of the concept of ‘delicacy’ in the eighteenth century.

*Post* article, quoted earlier, that described a physical altercation between two ladies of high rank.<sup>100</sup>

The duchesses in the *Westminster Election* (figure 2.9) are depicted as savagely tearing at their opponents' hair. We could easily attribute this visual detail as a further means of differentiating their social stature or to mark them as more vicious than the hardy prostitutes and labouring-class women who were commonly portrayed in prints as boxing to settle disputes. However, recent arguments made by Margaret Powell, Joseph Roach, Gillian Russell, and most recently, Caitlin Blackwell that the towering coiffures of the 1770s were highly visible and prolific sites of cultural inscription that marked their female hosts with an extravagance especially reserved for the urban elite, suggests that this imagery has a more loaded symbolism.<sup>101</sup> Though women's hair of the mid-1780s saw coiffures decrease in height in exchange for wider, frizzed constructions, these hairstyles still remained physically big and socially exclusive.<sup>102</sup> The two women in *The Westminster Election* are represented as having this hairstyle, however both of their coiffures have become deflated in the fray; much of Georgiana's hangs loose down her back while Mary Isabella's has become lopsided. In targeting each other's hair during this tussle, the two elite women are represented as attacking the mouldable part of the body that most conspicuously identifies their social rank. As hairdressing was an expensive labour and conspicuous consumption, elite women's hair was a visible indicator of their social stature and thus, power, once again echoing Bordo's notion of the body as a 'powerful symbolic form'.<sup>103</sup> In representing the women tearing at each other's hair, the printmaker portrays them attacking and dismantling the visible status symbol that distinguishes their rank, and thus grants them power. The accusations of social transgressions did not stop with the print from the *Rambler's Magazine*, nor would this be a singular image of elite canvassers fighting. As the election

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<sup>100</sup> *The Morning Post*, 31 March, 1779. Imagery of two women fighting was not uncommon, but representing fighting elite women was. Fighting women almost always were represented as members of the lower classes, namely prostitutes and fisher-women. For examples, see John Collet's *The Female Bruisers* (1768, Museum of London) and Carrington Bowles's *An Engagement in Billingsgate Channel, between the Terrible and the Tiger, two First Rates* (1781, British Museum).

<sup>101</sup> Powell and Roach, "Big Hair," 87–96; Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 178–99; and Blackwell, "Feather'd Fair," 354–5.

<sup>102</sup> See Gillian Perry, "Staging Gender and "Hairy Signs": Representing Dorothy Jordan's Curls," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004).

<sup>103</sup> Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 165.

progressed, so too did the martial arts of the elite female canvassers in satirical representations.

Boxing iconography would appear in later imagery, such as *The Rival Canvassers* (figure 2.10), which was published on 16 June after the election had finished. Again, Georgiana is represented, dressed *en militaire*, in her signature riding habit, seen previously in 1779's *Coxheath Race* (figure 2.2), and in this representation is sparring with Albinia. Featuring a similar composition to Carey's *A Meeting of the Female Canvassers in Covent Garden* (figure 2.8) in which the same women were represented, *The Rival Canvassers's* (figure 2.10) depiction of Georgiana in her iconic dress has flattened her feminine physique, which is further contrasted by Albinia's curvaceous form. Albinia is backed by the two Pittite candidates, Hood and Wray while the duchess is backed by Fox. Heavenly hands extend from clouds above the candidates' heads: one crowns Fox with laurels (who had won his seat by this date), and the other crowns the loser, Wray, with a fool's cap. Though her fists are still raised, Albinia admits defeat due to a bloodied nose, but the duchess indicates her unquenched appetite for the bout proclaiming, 'I have not done yet'. The two opponents take pugilist stances similar to those seen in *The Female Combatants* (figure 2.1). The composition of *The Rival Canvassers* is acutely similar to a more detailed graphic satire that was published in late 1782: *The Rival Queens of Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres, at a Gymnastic Rehearsal!* (figure 2.11). The title is a play on the popular Restoration theatrical production, *The Rival Queens* by Nathaniel Lee (1677). The longevity of the play's popularity, as Felicity Nussbaum has argued, lay in the spectacle surrounding the two primary female players 'locked in combat' on and off the stage.<sup>104</sup> The anonymous print highlights this popularity as well as the blurring between private drama and stage spectacle by representing the actress Sarah Siddons (left) exchanging blows with a rival actress, Ann Crawford (formerly Barry). Notably, Siddons is represented as bare-breasted, much like Georgiana and Albinia in *The Poll*, and a vindictive figure on a cloud above her crowns her with a fool's cap, as is done with Wray in *The Rival*

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<sup>104</sup> Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens : Actresses, performance, and the eighteenth-century British theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 68–70. The plot focuses on the love triangle between Alexander the Great and his two wives, Roxana and Statira.

*Canvassers*. The actresses are backed by their husbands and watched by an eager audience who are rendered in such a way that the boundaries between theatre audience and urban street audience are difficult to decipher. The play's arrival in theatres usually accorded with a demand for behind-the-scenes drama from theatre-goers, inspiring gossip printed in newspapers and memoirs of *The Rival Queens* actresses as fighting over men or costuming for the play. While these petty private issues may have been made public in order to promote the play, *The Rival Queens of Covent Garden* demonstrates a general interest in female rivalry, as well as in the imagery of violence between them. Although Siddons and Crawford were not from the elite classes, the print makes allusions to them playing women who were. On one hand, labelling the two figures as queens refers to their status as queens of the stage, but on the other, it evokes notions of the characters of Roxana and Statira who notably, held a seductive power over the sovereign ruler and thus had political agency which could be driven by their whims. Likewise, in referencing *The Rival Queens*'s boxing iconography, *The Rival Canvassers* elicits comparisons between stage actresses of middling- and lower-class origins and the elite canvassers, and thus calls into question their class-sanctioned behaviour.<sup>105</sup> It also questions the associations surrounding boxing which was ripe with meaning.

Since the early eighteenth century, boxing had steadily grown in popularity. By the 1780s, champion pugilists such as Daniel Mandoza were elevated to celebrity status in a period when the concept of a 'sporting hero' was in its infancy. It was also a decade in which boxing schools became popular, with public figures, such as the Prince of Wales, becoming known pupils of the martial art.<sup>106</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, boxing was firmly rooted to an association with masculinity and manhood, specifically a 'British', and often gentlemanly manhood. Robert Shoemaker argues that the definition of a gentleman became increasingly fluid in the eighteenth century, which meant that those 'who aspired to gentility were especially

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<sup>105</sup> There is a great wealth of literature regarding the stage actress and her associations in eighteenth-century Britain, notably Gillian Perry, Joseph R. Roach, and Shearer West, *The First Actresses : Nell Gwyn to Sarah Siddons* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2011); Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations*; Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*; and Robyn Asleson, *Notorious Muse : The actress in British art and culture, 1776-1812* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>106</sup> Peter Radford, "Lifting the Spirits of the Nation: British boxers and the emergence of the national sporting hero at the time of the Napoleonic Wars," *Identities: Global studies in culture and Power* 12, no. 2 (2005): 225.

anxious to assert distinctiveness against their increasingly prosperous middle-class social inferiors'.<sup>107</sup> As a selective member of this group, one was expected to follow a set of rules regarding the appropriate conduct of violence with the objective of 'fair play'.<sup>108</sup> Since pugilism followed a system of conduct it was one avenue for men to present masculine displays of brute strength while also exhibiting their sense of honour. For example, on the day following a match, the winner was expected to pay a house call on their defeated opponent to ask after their health. Peter Radford contends that despite their lower-class origins, prize fighters were often praised (presumably by those outside their class) for their gentlemanly conduct; their sporting behaviour thus elevated them to a level of respectability that was otherwise prevented by their social stature.<sup>109</sup>

Despite the association of boxing and manhood, ever since the creation of the sport in the beginning of the eighteenth century, both genders participated in it. Female boxers could be and were acknowledged as 'professional' pugilists or prize fighters, and could also be crowned as 'champion' or rather, 'championess'. The *London Journal* reported in 1723 that,

scarce a Week passes but we have a Boxing-Match at the Bear-Garden between Women, where one, who stiles herself the *City Championess*, gains the [...] of the mob who assembles there. She is allowed to equal any of her Sex with her Tongue, as well as her Hands, there not being one in the *British Fishery* of Billingsgate that dare to attack her that way.<sup>110</sup>

The female champion most widely cited in current scholarship, Elizabeth Wilkinson, was active in the 1720s and often took out advertisements in newspapers in order to challenge opponents and promote her bouts.<sup>111</sup> Similarly, to the promotions for *The*

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<sup>107</sup> Robert Shoemaker, "Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London," *Social History* 26, no. 2 (2001): 198. For a more complete analysis on masculinity in the eighteenth century see Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding : Reforming masculinities in British art 1750-1810* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2005).

<sup>108</sup> Shoemaker, "Male Honour," 198.

<sup>109</sup> Radford, "Lifting the Spirits," 258–9.

<sup>110</sup> *London Journal*, 31 August 1723. As exemplified in Figure 10, the female fishmongers at Billingsgate were reputedly violent.

<sup>111</sup> Wilkinson's popularity among current boxing historians is due to the abundance of her surviving newspapers advertisements. It is likely that Elizabeth Wilkinson became Elizabeth Stokes after marriage due to this abundance of adverts mentioning both names in a small timespan. For further information on Wilkinson see Tony Gee, "Stokes, Elizabeth (fl. 1723–1733)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

*Rival Queens*, these adverts followed a common rhetoric which touted the fight by implying that an unnamed insult had taken place between the two adversaries, such as this example from 1722:

I Elizabeth Wilkinson, of Clerkenwell having had some works with Hannah Hyfield, and requiring satisfaction, do invite her to meet me on the stage and box me for three guineas; each woman holding half-a-crown in each hand, and the first woman that drops the money to lose the battle.

I, Hannah Hyfield, of Newgate-market, hearing of the resoluteness of Elizabeth Wilkinson, will not fail, God *willing*, to give her more blows than words — desiring home blows, and from her no favour: she may expect a good thumping.<sup>112</sup>

The advertisements in which Wilkinson is featured reveals that female pugilists were often known by nicknames relating to their day occupation. ‘The Newgate Market Basket-Woman’, ‘the fighting ass-woman’, ‘the female fighting blacksmith’ are monikers that crucially divulge that these boxers were of the labouring classes.<sup>113</sup> Cultural outputs such as Eliza Haywood’s comedic play *A Wife to Be Lett* (1723) further indicate that female boxing was not taboo unless, of course, the boxers were of the wrong class. After an angry outburst from the wealthy Widow Stately, she is chastised by Captain Gaylove: ‘Patience, madam, patience! Boxing does not become a woman of quality!’<sup>114</sup> Although professional pugilism was not necessarily gendered, it was firmly rooted in the labouring classes. These boxing associations with the labouring-classes prevailed until the popularity of female prize fighting waned at the end of the century.<sup>115</sup>

The fighting 1784 Westminster election canvasser prints communicated that not only was there a rivalry between these women based on partisanship, but also that these beliefs had forced them to betray the very thing that brought them power: their social rank. In getting their hands dirty, so to speak, by attempting to appeal to working-class voters, elite women were understood to be behaving in a manner that was unnatural to their privileged rank. This was behaviour more suited to women of

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<sup>112</sup> *The Ladies Monthly Museum*, September 1812, 164, quoting an unnamed newspaper in June 1722.

<sup>113</sup> Malissa Smith, *A History of Women's Boxing* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 5.

<sup>114</sup> Eliza Fowler Haywood, “A Wife to be Lett : A comedy,” (1724): 71.

<sup>115</sup> Smith, *History of Women's Boxing*, 9–10. The satirical print, *The Battle Royal between the Prig Major and Big Bess* (1788) also exemplifies the prevalent labouring-class associations with female fighting.

the labouring classes, women who were expected to publicly yell, sweat, and settle disputes through physical altercations. Prints such as *The Rival Canvassers* (figure 2.10), representing physical competition between female canvassers, though humorous, betrayed an anxiety that they had increasingly been exhibiting similar behaviour in other walks of life. This notion is emphasised in Georgiana's statement: 'I have not done yet' indicating that she wants to continue fighting. Much like Bordo's arguments regarding the unquenchable fat female body, Georgiana is represented as unsatisfied and wanting more.<sup>116</sup> As Lewis has highlighted, this breach of rank by female canvassers caused concern because it implied that other social boundaries may be crossed into such as the more unsavoury idea of the lower classes perforating spaces outside of their social sphere.<sup>117</sup> Ironically, widely-consumed satirical prints such as these were already participating in this social porosity, giving the lower orders access to elite women through their visual representation.<sup>118</sup> Not only were women fictionally interacting with and acting like people of lower classes in prints, but the prints' display in commercial shops made them more accessible, more visible to those outside their class.

A print representing Georgiana continued to portray the duchess as masquerading in the wrong social sect even after the election ended. *A New way to Deside the Scrutany* (figure 2.12) has relegated her to a boxing second to Fox, who continues to battle Wray (seconded by Hood). The anonymous print, published in June 1784 was created in reaction to Wray contesting Fox's win in Westminster. He is represented in a tartan jacket, kilt, and stockings, indicative of his new constituency the pocket borough of Tain, Scotland, and also bears an expression of reluctance to re-enter this political match.<sup>119</sup> Georgiana is now represented in male clothing, with the exception of her signature hat, and reassures Fox, 'Take Courage I'll support the cause while I can ware [*sic*] the Breaches'.<sup>120</sup> This print continues the

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<sup>116</sup> Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 36.

<sup>117</sup> Lewis, "1784 and All That," 113.

<sup>118</sup> For information on the social range of satirical print consumers see the introduction to this thesis.

<sup>119</sup> After Fox won his seat in Westminster by a narrow margin, the Pittites demanded a scrutiny of the votes. Fox, anticipating this move had arranged to be represented by the Tain Boroughs in the remote Orkney islands of Scotland so that he could still stand in Parliament (George, *Catalogue*, Vol. 6, 6, 149).

<sup>120</sup> According to George, each second is holding out a lemon, a common motif in female fighting iconography. I have been unable to locate the purpose for this practice.



pattern of depicting the duchess among labouring-class men; the bald man with a pot belly standing behind her is reminiscent of many of the representations of John Bull, an allegory representative of the everyday labouring-class man of England.<sup>121</sup> Gendered political boundaries are also ultimately questioned through Georgiana's representation in drag. Like most of the graphic satires criticising the female canvassers, the print questions if women would soon attempt to gain the same political rights as men. Some women would test these boundaries such as the Duchess of Gordon and her sister, Lady Wallace, who on two separate occasions in the 1790s attempted to view sessions of Parliament, a privilege denied to women.<sup>122</sup>

These anxieties surrounding gender and class would become more conspicuous after the 1784 General Election. Lewis argues that 'in the 1780s and the 1790s, as the British came to grips not only with the events of the American and French Revolutions, but with the issues that created them, aristocratic women lost their footing', contending that the 1784 Westminster election both 'embodied and contributed to' this loss of balance.<sup>123</sup> Though prints representing elite female canvassers entering into physical disputes may initially appear to highlight gender transgressions, these graphic satires often offered commentary on the supposedly crumbling disorder of British society by denouncing elite female canvassers for social indiscretions. The female fighting and boxing iconography also continued to be applied in satirical prints after the election, further demonstrating visual media's role in exemplifying and furthering aristocratic women's 'lost footing' in the political sphere. I would suggest that the fighting motif continued to appear in satirical prints of women perceived as asserting agency outside of their traditional gender roles such

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<sup>121</sup> For further information on John Bull iconography see Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, and for a succinct analysis of John Bull's working-class origins and physiognomy see Rauser, "Butcher-Kissing Duchess," 31–7.

<sup>122</sup> *Bombay Courier*, 5 January 1793. Notably, Lady Wallace dressed in drag in her attempt. 'The Dutchess of Gordon was on a late occasion, reluctantly obliged to quit the Gallery of the House of Commons [...] Lady Wallace that she might avoid the fate of her Sister, put off—the Lady, and put on—the Gentleman—she was introduced by a Member, and easily obtained admission within the Walls of the British Senate, but whether from the effects of animal magnetism, or that our Legislators have secret signs of knowledge, the beautiful Impostor was discovered, and an order was issued by the Speaker that she should retire—it was conveyed by the Macebearer—The Lady contended for the privilege of her male attire, but when she found this would not avail, the bowed obedience and withdrew'.

<sup>123</sup> Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 128. Lewis documents the decline of the political woman in the conclusion of her book, arguing the political woman of the eighteenth century diminished by the early nineteenth century (ibid., 191–202)

as the 1801 print, *The Female Politicians or the D—ss defending the honour of old Corny* (figure 2.13).<sup>124</sup> The print attributes an interest in politics to its female figures' violent actions. It therefore continues the narrative of the fighting prints from 1784, degrading women's political efforts due to a belief of those efforts infringing upon the male hegemony.

## Conclusion

Rather than providing a close reading of one individual's satirical representations during the 1784 Westminster election, this chapter has looked at a cumulus of depictions of elite female canvassers, and in doing so has argued that there was a visual narrative of personal rivalry between the Foxite and Pittite canvassers, namely the most visible canvassers: the Duchess of Devonshire, Albinia Hobart, as well as, Lady Salisbury and the Duchess of Rutland. In doing so it has contended that a gendered study of election prints yields significant information to understanding the changing cultural attitudes toward women. Satirical prints used a visual language to participate in the wider debates surrounding elite women, communicating their message to substantial and diverse audiences. Prints, such as those examined, were both reactionary and contributed to gendered and social anxieties that had been developing since the revolt of the American colonies and would continue to gain momentum after the French Revolution.

Gender, and specifically elite gender identities, proved to be a contentious issue in 1784 because it signalled larger issues concerning the frailty of national identity and security as a whole. While gender transgressions were certainly not an

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<sup>124</sup> The context for *The Female Politicians* is frustratingly unclear. George believes the underwritten print represents, Jane, Duchess of Gordon and Lady Eleanor Butler, sister of the Earl of Ormonde and Upper Ossory, fighting . However I would suggest that the 'Old Corny' referenced in the title is arguably Sir Charles Cornwallis who retired as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in mid-February of 1801. Cornwallis's son, Charles, Viscount Brome was married to the duchess's daughter, Lady Louisa Gordon. George identifies the man on the right holding the broom as the Duke of Gordon but it is more likely a representation of the younger Cornwallis due to being represented holding a broom and the figure's resemblance to a print of the viscount by Charles Turner. M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, Vol. 8, vol. 8 (London: The British Museum, 1947), 46.

invention of the 1770s and 1780s, the debates surrounding gendered behaviour were connected with wider debates surrounding appropriate familial roles, and eventually, national roles. This scepticism and anxiety was articulated in satirical prints by highlighting female canvassers' 'uncontrollable bodies' and their insatiable nature, presenting them as competing for lower class favour under the guise of a political canvass. The anxiety surrounding the dangerous path of unreliable identities was also expressed in prints displaying a discomfort in porous social boundaries. This chapter has built upon recent literature from gender historians arguing that the contemporary controversy surrounding the Duchess of Devonshire's canvass can be traced to social issues through a close reading of female canvassers engaged in physical competitions. These prints accused the canvassers of behaviour that was unnatural to their genteel upbringing by representing them as competitive and in some cases, violent. While these behaviours were abhorrent in elite women they were more or less expected from women of the labouring classes. Satirical prints making the comparison between the two social classes sowed further anxiety through a nuanced message of social class usurpation. As such we can align these images in the greater progression of cultural outlooks on gender and social class as these categories continued to become more rigidly defined and fretted over, transforming satirical imagery into subjective records of a collective cultural anxiety.

## Chapter 3

### ‘Buxom Caledonian dame’: Politicising Jane, Duchess of Gordon in visual culture

In April 1775 the popular satirists and print-sellers Matthew and Mary Darly published a small satirical print entitled *The Breeches in the Fiera Maschereta* (figure 3.1). Against an empty background a large pair of breeches is represented in the centre of the composition. A closer inspection reveals small heeled shoes emerging from the opening of the trouser legs and a smiling female face appears out of the open fly. This head is crowned by an elaborately feathered coronet, indicating that the owner of the smiling face is a duchess. The print was one of a pair; the companion, *The Petticoat in the Fieri Maschareta* (figure 3.2) depicts a frowning male face with a ducal coronet appearing out of an oversized petticoat. Using the iconography of a woman in breeches, to assert the inversion of traditional gender roles, the prints mock Jane, Duchess of Gordon and her husband, Alexander, Duke of Gordon, Scottish aristocrats and staunch supporters of the crown.<sup>1</sup> The titles which loosely translate to ‘proud masquerade’, further emphasise the duchess’s seemingly shameless adoption of masculine gender roles while simultaneously making a libellous statement as to how her visible personality translated into her private marriage.<sup>2</sup> The Darlys’s graphic satire is the earliest known satirical representation of Jane, a woman, who would come to inspire numerous satirists, newspaper journalists, and letter-writers due to her bombastic displays on both the political and social stages of late-eighteenth Britain. Despite Jane’s status as a political hostess for William Pitt the Younger, she has cultivated little academic interest in comparison to her well-documented English political ‘rival’, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. Yet the visual culture surrounding Jane’s character, nationality, and approach to familial and

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<sup>1</sup> ‘To wear the *breaches*’, according to Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary, ‘is, to usurp the authority of the husbands [*sic*]. Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary Of The English Language* (London: Knapton, 1755), 286.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Fiera’ is feminine singular and ‘fieri’ masculine plural. There is a possibility that the Darlys were using a play on words as prints could translate to ‘the beast masquerade’ as ‘le fiere’ guards the gates of Dante’s hell, but this is less likely. Thank you to Lara Demori for her confirmation and explanation of the Italian titles. As Chapter 1’s discussion of Daniel Gardner’s *The Three Witches from Macbeth* underlines, the notion of masquerade signified a disruption to social norms. See Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*, 1–5 and Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 158–9.

national politics remains a rich source which can lend itself to piecing together a more complete picture of late eighteenth-century attitudes toward elite political women. This chapter will contribute to filling this lacuna while also building upon recent studies of gender in Scotland.<sup>3</sup>

Jane would be represented in visual culture throughout most of her adult life. Some of these representations, such as painted portraits, were in her control and that of her family. Others, such as the Daryl prints, were not.<sup>4</sup> When examined chronologically, these depictions do not merely record Jane's appearance, but document events, aspirations, activities, and the criticisms she faced. This chapter will weave together the two contrasting narratives from portraiture and print media in order to explore how both Jane fashioned herself and how print media viewed her in terms of being a Scot, duchess, mother, and Pittite. In doing so, it will form a visual life cycle of the duchess as a political figure. As discussed in the introduction, the term, 'political' refers to the polity. Though Jane's status as an unenfranchised woman traditionally barred her from being an active participant in this realm, visual culture, indicates that she was perceived as still having an active interest, influence, and occasionally, impact, in the governance of Britain. Despite this focus on one individual, this study, with an emphasis on visual representation, allows for contributions to other fields of gender history in the eighteenth century. In particular, Pittite women have been underwritten in gender scholarship, and the study of Scottish women in eighteenth-century visual culture remains an emerging field.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, as Gordon Pentland's seminal study of Scots in political prints

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<sup>3</sup> For recent work on women in eighteenth-century Scotland see, Katie Barclay and Deborah Simonton, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Scotland: Intimate, intellectual and public lives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Katharine Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011); and Rosalind Carr, *Gender and Enlightenment Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 1 for a discussion of women's control over their painted representations.

<sup>5</sup> In comparison to the output of literature on women connected to Foxite-Whig circles in late eighteenth-century London, there has been little interest in women connected to the Government faction; for example see Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*; Melbourne and Gross, *Byron's "Corbeau Blanc"*; and Byrne, *Perdita*. The study of Scottish women in portraiture has yet to be fully separated from their identity as British women. However, this is emerging field as demonstrated by recent works such as Whiting, "Gender and National Identity,"; Jordan Mearns, "'Synonymous with manly portraits': Re-evaluating Raeburn's women," in *Henry Raeburn: Context, reception and reputation*, ed. Vicky Coltman and Stephen Lloyd (2012); and Kate Retford, "'The small Domestic & conversation style': David Allan and Scottish Portraiture in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Visual Culture in Britain* 15, no. 1 (2014).

highlighted, there has been little research devoted to the representation of Scottishness in satirical prints of the eighteenth century, though not due to a lack of material.<sup>6</sup> This case study does not represent the experiences of all elite, Scottish, and political women in eighteenth-century Britain, however, in probing the meanings of Jane's visual culture, it will contribute to the historiography of such topics. However, we first must question who Jane, Duchess of Gordon was.

The popular narrative handed down by mostly amateur historians since her death in 1812 has been that Jane was a unique figure in the aristocracy, known for her thick accent, outspoken commentary, and tenacity in both the domestic and political spheres. The daughter of a minor Scottish baronet, Sir William Maxwell, Jane was raised with her sisters by her mother Magdalene Blair, in a second-floor Edinburgh tenement. While her upbringing was not humble, she was still an unconventional choice of bride for one of the most powerful aristocrats in Scotland. After meeting the twenty-four year-old Alexander, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Gordon at a ball, the two were married in 1767 on a reputed basis of love rather than political alliances or economic advancement.<sup>7</sup> However, their personal relationship would deteriorate, resulting in an eventual separation early in the 1790s.<sup>8</sup>

Writing in 1785, ten years after *The Breeches in the Fiera Maschereta* was published, Lady Louisa Stuart, Lord Bute's youngest daughter, described Jane to her friend, Lady Carlow, stating that she 'looks as fierce as a dragon, and contents herself with spending her breath upon politics, and ringing a daily peal in the ears of

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<sup>6</sup> Gordon Pentland, "'We Speak for the Ready': Images of Scots in Political Prints, 1707-1832," *Scottish Historical Review* 90, no. 229 (2011): 65. This chapter has adopted Pentland's definition when referring to 'political prints' which he defines as 'all prints pertaining to political issues, events and personalities' (ibid., 67).

<sup>7</sup> Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 214. Jane appears in more popular history literature than academic scholarship and much of her history appears to have been relayed verbally for many years, making her an unattractive figure to academic scholars, as it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. Rosemary Baird's aforementioned biographic chapter has the most complete biography, though, Baird is not critical with some of the more mythical aspects of Jane's life. Her entry in the ODNB by Christine Lodge provides a brief but critical biography; see Christine Lodge, "Gordon, Jane, duchess of Gordon (1748/9–1812)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> While English couples could only dissolve their marriage through an act of Parliament, Scottish couples, such as the Gordons, seeking divorce could do so through Commissary Courts or, alternatively, seek a legal separation, as the Gordons would eventually do toward the end of the century. See Leah Leneman, *Alienated Affections: the Scottish experience of divorce and separation, 1684-1830* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 1–9 for an extensive discussion on separation and divorce for Scottish couples in the eighteenth century.

her poor husband, with whom [...] she squabbles more than ever'.<sup>9</sup> The spinster's description of Jane was written after observing her at a private ball they attended in London. She complains that Jane is excessive in her discussion of politics. Though a later observation, her account of Jane supports the Darly prints' narrative of Jane being a domineering spouse to her unhappy husband. The Darlys often relied on the aristocracy to commission prints, even using newspaper advertisements to request ideas for new satirical compositions, thus making it possible that the design for the print pair was submitted by someone acquainted with the Gordons.<sup>10</sup> The print pair exemplifies how individuals were increasingly being seen as public property. As Michael Rosenthal contends, from 1769, these public figures became more accessible and commented upon due to their visibility in public spaces.<sup>11</sup> The Darlys's prints were the products of what we now understand to be celebrity culture; they boast an ownership of a woman with whom they have little to no personal relationship, through their criticism.<sup>12</sup> Rosenthal argues that 'particular individuals appeared to be understood as a species of public property, their lives and episodes from them represented in readily available print or graphic media over which they had no control'.<sup>13</sup> This made Jane's behaviour into a commodity, both economically and as a mode of entertainment. Like the majority of British aristocrats, the duke and duchess split their living arrangements between their seat in Moray and their home in London during the season, thus granting her opportunities that made her more visible to the public. Jane initially indicated her difficulty in navigating London society, complaining to her brother, William Maxwell, in 1771 that 'the Men have not the same ideas they have in Scotland a Woman of fashion is no more respected then [*sic*] a Chambermaid if she has any Levity', implying that her failure in adhering to the

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<sup>9</sup> Louisa Stuart and R. Brimley Johnson, *The Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart* (New York: L. MacVeagh Dial Press, 1926), 77. Letter dated May 1785.

<sup>10</sup> Harriet Stroomberg et al., *High Heads : Hair fashions depicted in eighteenth-century satirical prints published by Matthew and Mary Darly* (Enschede: Rijksmuseum Twenthe, 1999), 21.

<sup>11</sup> Rosenthal, "Public Reputation," 69–71. This visibility consisted of physical appearances at venues such as pleasure gardens and theatres, or appearances in visual culture such as portraits (and the prints made after them) and satirical prints; see also Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre*, 178–225 for elite women and sociability in public spaces.

<sup>12</sup> For a recent review of the literature on celebrity studies of eighteenth-century Britain see Wanko, "Celebrity Studies,". The relationship between portraiture and celebrity has been explored in Tate's exhibition, *Joshua Reynolds and the Creation of Celebrity* (2005) and its corresponding catalogue, as well as in Rosenthal, "Public Reputation," 69–91.

<sup>13</sup> Rosenthal, "Public Reputation," 69.

austere societal codes for elite women was a cultural barrier rather than a personal one.<sup>14</sup> Satirists also noted this national difference and often used Jane's Scottish identity to ridicule her in prints.

This chapter will highlight two dominant themes extracted from the visual culture associated with Jane, Duchess of Gordon: her representation as a mother and as a political figure. As such, it will be divided into these themes through a chronological analysis of her representation as a mother, firstly in commissioned portraiture and secondly in satirical prints, before concluding with a thematic analysis of Jane's representation in graphic satires commenting on political issues. Though framed by two themes, this study reveals a visual crescendo, with each image building upon Jane's political reputation. In doing so, this chapter will highlight how visual culture is a critical lens for understanding how political women self-fashioned and were perceived in this period of British history.

### **Politicising the Domestic in Gordon family portraits**

Throughout her adult life, Jane fashioned herself as a mother of a grand dynasty and in death, wished to be remembered in such a way. Her grave inscription has her name, notes her parentage and the date of her marriage, and is followed by a list of her children, who they married, their titles, and their issue. In effect, her grave monument reads more as a family tree than a personal memorial. However, this was her explicit wish, as indicated by the concluding line in the memorial: 'This monument was erected by Alexander Duke of Gordon and the above inscription placed on it at the particular request of the Duchess his wife'.<sup>15</sup> Jane's letters to family friend, Francis Farquharson in the last several years of her life also reveal the emphasis she placed on her status as an elite mother, with one letter avowing 'I have done every thing for my family'.<sup>16</sup> In addition to her personal correspondence and memorial, much of the visual representations of Jane in her lifetime expressed or

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<sup>14</sup> NLS 7043. Jane Gordon to William Maxwell (Junior), 8 September 1771.

<sup>15</sup> Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 230.

<sup>16</sup> Jane Gordon Gordon and James Wyllie Guild, *An Autobiographical Chapter in the Life of Jane, Duchess of Gordon* (Glasgow 1864), 12. Letter dated 15 June 1805.



commented on her family devotion or role as a mother. Before we can address how she was perceived in visual culture as a political figure, we must first examine how she was homogenised into elite British society through painted portraiture. An examination of the formal portraits that represent Jane as an elite mother, demonstrate how her visual representation served as a tool to aid in navigating the domestic, social, and ultimately, political spheres as a figure in view of the public.

In 1778, George Romney was commissioned to execute a portrait of Jane with her then eight-year-old son George, Marquess of Huntly (figure 3.3), to be hung at her brother's family seat, Monreith House in south-west Scotland.<sup>17</sup> A note from Romney to Jane, reminding her that the portrait had yet to be paid for in January 1779, suggests it was a gift from her.<sup>18</sup> Jane's portrait was intended to glorify her status as both a duchess and a mother. Wearing a striking ivory gown, she is representing sitting in a chair while resting her head lightly on her left hand.<sup>19</sup> In her right hand she holds a chalk drawing that her son has brought to her. He appears over her shoulder, holding a portfolio and gazing down at the sketch that Jane grasps, thus forming a narrative in which a mother reflects on the artwork her son has presented to her. The drawing also acts as a trope for George's comprehensive education, an aspect of child-rearing overseen by mothers, which casts Jane as nurturing George both intellectually and emotionally.<sup>20</sup> George is represented at an age when, in a couple years' time, he would be leaving his childhood home to pursue his formal education at Eton. In an undated letter, Jane wrote to her brother, that George would be put 'into some school in the Mouth of England to lose his Scotch', expressing a maternal sadness in losing her son in the pursuit of a privileged education.<sup>21</sup>

Romney's portrait highlights the popularity of emotional scenes of maternal love and duty, as Jane is presented in a state of sentimental contemplation, reflecting

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<sup>17</sup> SNPG Curatorial File.

<sup>18</sup> Alex Kidson and George Romney, *George Romney : A complete catalogue of his paintings* (2015), 243.

<sup>19</sup> Romney used the pensive gesture portraits of other women including Lady Derby (1776–8), Lady Grantham (1780–1), and Mrs Champion de Crespigny (1786–90).

<sup>20</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 115.

<sup>21</sup> NLS Acc 7043, Jane Gordon to William Maxwell, nd.

upon the transience of shared experiences with her eldest son.<sup>22</sup> Kate Retford has convincingly demonstrated that the cultural admiration regarding sentiment and its further attachment to domestic life, expressed in conduct and fictional literature, was a central influence on family portraiture in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Jane's portrait typifies this shift: the depicted interaction between family members prompts a domestic narrative that appealed to late eighteenth-century audiences. Though Jane's portrait was not exhibited, maternal portraits were frequent fixtures at the annual Royal Academy Exhibition, and through their anonymised depiction of tender maternity, promoted the sensitivity of the artist, the celebration of emotion, and women as exemplars of domestic life.<sup>24</sup> The popularity of this genre of portraiture was inexorably linked to the cultural importance placed on motherhood, viewed both as women's 'natural' role and the means by which they could be elevated to the height of virtue through maternity's associations with self-sacrifice and morality. As a woman's reputation was intrinsically linked to her virtue, her ability to fulfil cultural expectations predominantly relied on her reproductive status.<sup>25</sup>

A portrait representing an elite member of society as interacting with her child or children proclaimed the sitters' commitment to motherhood, and thus her personal virtue by means of maternal associations. This was especially important for women such as Jane, as their reputation was perceived to reflect that of their family and the political faction they supported. In sitting for portrait exalting her role as a

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<sup>22</sup> This thesis has adopted Janet Todd's definition of the eighteenth-century concept of 'sentiment', which Todd describes as 'moral reflection, a rational opinion usually about the rights and wrongs of human conduct', or an 'emotional impulse leading to an opinion or principle'. Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An introduction* (London; New York: Methuen, 1986), 7–8. The preliminary sketches indicate that Romney experimented with the composition to find one that captured Jane's domestic engagement as well as display a maternal inner monologue.

<sup>23</sup> Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, 83–114; West, "Public Nature," 167; and James Christen Steward, *The New Child: British art and the origins of modern childhood 1730-1830* (Berkeley Berkeley University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, 1995), 118–20. Parma Giuntini's examination of domestic portraits in the Royal Academy exhibitions has revealed that maternal portraits were the most common type of family portraiture exhibited, see Parme P. Giuntini, "The Politics of Display: Family portraits, the Royal Academy and modern domestic ideology" (1995), 178–9. For a further discussion on how the celebration of sensibility was translated into family portraits, see Retford, "Sensibility and Genealogy," and *Art of Domestic Life*.

<sup>25</sup> Retford, "Sensibility and Genealogy," 543; Tanya Evans, "Women, Marriage and the Family," in *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: An introduction*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 68; and Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 98.

mother, Jane, like many elite British mothers, was making a proclamation of her assimilation to social strictures surrounding appropriate gendered behaviour. The connection between maternity and reputation is demonstrated in newspaper articles such as one from the *True Britain* in May 1793 that reported, 'the feelings of the Dutchess of Gordon are those of a tender Mother, and as such are certainly highly honourable to her'.<sup>26</sup> Having already been accused of marital dominance by the Darlys (figures 3.1 and 3.2), identifying Jane as a devoted mother was a means of homogenising a potentially contentious figure in elite British society.

Romney's portrait would have contributed to disseminating this message of virtuous maternity to viewers. Though it was meant to hang in Monreith House, a letter from Edinburgh architect John Baxter to James Ross reveals that Jane was making enquiries about having a copy made in 1780. This suggests that it was in her possession for two years and on display in one of her homes in London, Edinburgh, or at Gordon Castle, with a copy in one of these locations after 1780.<sup>27</sup> Familial portraits by popular artists such as Romney were traditionally hung in a state room in the home in order to best communicate a narrative of family unity and lineage to visitors, which included guests of the family and domestic tourists. While no records exist describing where Romney's portrait hung in the late eighteenth century, when many of the Gordons' portraits, including others by Romney and Angelica Kauffman were sold from Gordon Castle in 1938, they were recorded in the auction catalogue as being hung in public rooms including the south drawing room.<sup>28</sup> Published travel diaries from the eighteenth century and onward affirm that Gordon Castle served as a domestic tourist destination and that its art collection was highly esteemed. Nathaniel

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<sup>26</sup> *True Briton* 15 May 1793.

<sup>27</sup> Kidson and Romney, *George Romney*, 243 and NAS 44/51/366/4 Letter from John Baxter to James Ross of Fochabers, dated 17 July 1780. Kidson believes the copy in question now resides at Brodie Castle, the childhood home of Elizabeth Brodie who married Jane's son, George.

<sup>28</sup> Anderson & England, *Gordon Castle Fochabers Morayshire : Catalogue of antiques and other surplus furnishings* (Elgin: Anderson & England, 1938), 17. If this was the original setting for Romney's portrait, it would have been accessible to the family and visitors comprising of friends and tourists. Shearer West notes that in the previous century, family portraits were usually hung in private quarters, but by the eighteenth century they were hung in public spaces such as state rooms where they would have been seen by visitors (West, "Public Nature," 157). Retford argues that country house viewing was 'highly popular pastime' that transformed the homes of the gentry and aristocracy into a rural equivalent of the London exhibitions (Retford, "Sensibility and Genealogy," 536). For a further discussion of display within the elite home, see Oliver Millar, "Portraiture and the Country House," in *The Treasure Houses of Britain : Five hundred years of private patronage and art collecting*, ed. Gervase Jackson-Stops (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

Spencer's *The Complete English Traveller*, published in 1772 and with numerous editions, proclaimed that Gordon Castle has 'more fine paintings in the gallery [...] than in any we have seen in the north'.<sup>29</sup> Writing many years later, in his 1804 sporting travel diary, Thomas Thornton also interrupted his discussion of hunting in Scotland to commend Gordon Castle's portrait collection.<sup>30</sup> Some tourists, such as Thornton, were given an introduction to the duke and duchess and invited to stay. In 1779, Jane recorded that they had so many 'wanderers' staying with them that they had upwards of twenty dinner guests every night.<sup>31</sup> Although we cannot specifically pinpoint where each portrait was hung, these accounts attest to Gordon Castle having a significant audience for the family portraits on display. As was common of many elite homes, visitors to the Gordon's estate were presented with a visual narrative of the mistress of the house as a loving and devoted mother.

One portrait that hung in Gordon Castle was a 'Family Picture' from W.A. Smith, painted around 1787.<sup>32</sup> Smith, a relatively unknown artist whose work is occasionally found in country houses in northern Britain, painted *Alexander, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Gordon with his Family* (figure 3.4) between 1786 and 1787.<sup>33</sup> The portrait is a conversation piece that celebrates the family's lineage through its use as an heirloom documenting family continuity and the articulation of social and hereditary property.<sup>34</sup> It depicts all nine members of the Gordon family on the grounds of Gordon Castle. Jane is seated at the centre of the group. Surrounding her from left to

<sup>29</sup> Nathaniel Spencer, *The Complete English Traveller* (Printed for J. Cooke, 1772), 653.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Thornton, *A Sporting Tour Through the Northern parts of England, and great part of the Highlands of Scotland : Including remarks on English and Scottish landscape, and general observations on the state of society and manners* (London: [Printed for Vernor and Hood], 1804), 195. The estate continued to attract tourists into the nineteenth century; the American author Nathaniel Parker Willis described Gordon Castle's impressive art collection in his travel letters published in the *New York Mirror* in the 1830s when the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Gordon lived there. Nathaniel Parker Willis, *The Prose Works of N.P. Willis* (Philadelphia: H.C. Baird, 1852), 202.

<sup>31</sup> Jane to Lord Kames, West Sussex Register Office, Goodwood Ms. 1171, f. 45, quoted in Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 219.

<sup>32</sup> The painting is included in the 1877 painting catalogue for Gordon Castle (SNPG curatorial file for Romney's *Jane, Duchess of Gordon with her son George*). NRS GD44/51/320/7 W.A. Smith to John Menzies, 2 January 1788. Goodwood Estate, where the painting is housed, dates the painting at c. 1785 and spells the artist's last name as 'Smyth'. Based on the correspondence between the Gordons' cashier with the artist. I can, however, confirm that his full name was William Augustus Smith and the portrait's creation can be dated to c. 1787, based on Smith requesting the payment of £50 in January of the following year as well as the ages of the children (NRS GD44/51/320/7 W.A. Smith to John Menzies, 2 January 1788).

<sup>33</sup> Email from James Peill, Curator of Goodwood Collection, 10 April 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 159 and West, "Public Nature," 157–8.

right are her children, Charlotte; George, Marquess of Huntly, later, 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Gordon; Georgina (sitting); Jane with baby Alexander; Madelina; Louisa (sitting with an open book); Susan; and finally, on the far right, the Duke of Gordon. Each family member's hair hangs loose below their shoulders, and the women are all dressed in fashionable white muslin gowns. The family's prestigious Scottish heritage is referenced through the Order of the Thistle star prominently displayed on the duke's coat and George's highland military dress.<sup>35</sup>

The Gordons' patriotic contributions to the nation are expressed through the duke's chivalric order, prominently displayed on his chest, as well as the abundance of children represented in the painting.<sup>36</sup> Motherhood was viewed as a patriotic duty both for instilling manners and a love of king and country in children, as well as for producing able-bodied boys to enlarge Britain's military. Jane excelled in both tasks especially in regard to her eldest son. Named after the king, George was portrayed in the conversation piece in the interim between his education at Eton and the commencement of study at St John's College, Cambridge. The Scottish military dress and sword allude to an intention to enlist in his majesty's forces, which he would do in 1791, beginning his impressive 36-year career in the army.<sup>37</sup> George's rapid military success was accredited to nepotism and his mother's influence by social critics such as Charles Pigott who scathingly observed in 1794, 'her son, not yet Twenty-three years of age, has a company in the guards'.<sup>38</sup> Other print media sources highlighted George's successes as a credit to Jane's maternity such as the

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<sup>35</sup> The portrait is similar to David Allan's family portraits of the Scottish gentry on their property, such as *John Francis, 7th Earl of Mar, and Family* (c. 1780–9, National Trust for Scotland); see Whiting, "Gender and National Identity," 20–39. The tartan pattern of the kilt George wears appears to be that of the Black Watch or 42<sup>nd</sup> highlanders, which he would eventually raise a company for in 1791. H. M. Chichester and Roger T. Stearn, "Gordon, George, fifth duke of Gordon (1770–1836)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> The motto of the Lying-in Charity for Married Women at their Own Habitations, 'Increase of Children a Nation's Strength', exemplifies this outlook, see Colley, *Britons*, 240. Further discussions of motherhood's associations with patriotism can be found in Ruth Perry, "Colonizing the Breast : Sexuality and maternity in eighteenth-century England," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2, no. 2 (1991); Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 96; McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 18; Ingrid Tague, "Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family in the Early Eighteenth Century," in *The Family in Early Modern England*, ed. Helen Berry and Elizabeth A. Foyster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 200; and Steward, *The New Child : British art and the origins of modern childhood 1730-1830*, 103.

<sup>37</sup> Chichester and Stearn, "Gordon, George, fifth duke of Gordon (1770–1836),".

<sup>38</sup> Charles Pigott, *The Female Jockey Club or a sketch of the manners of the age. ... By the author of the former jockey club* (London: D.I. Eaton, 1794), 55.

*Sun*'s report on the 1793 siege of Valenciennes: 'The Duchess of Gordon probably lingers in Town [London] till the fate of *Valenciennes* is determined. When it is considered how much she is individually interested in the British Army, her maternal feelings do her the highest honour'.<sup>39</sup> After originally enlisted in his brother-in-law, Colonel Lennox's company, George would eventually, in 1806, be nominated by another brother-in-law, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess Cornwallis, and elected as MP for the Cornwallis family pocket of Eye.<sup>40</sup> These opportunities would arguably, not have been available to George, were it not for his sisters' prestigious marriages that their mother took an active part in organising.

In 1787 all the Gordon daughters were still unmarried, allowing for Smith's portrait (figure 3.4) to not only document the Gordon dynasty, but also make an attractive argument for its expansion. Smith's portrait emphasises the four eldest daughters' marriageability, presenting them as refined and desirable young women to potential husbands, and future in-laws. The elder daughters each hold a prop signifying their refined education: Charlotte holds a drawing portfolio, and Madelina and Louisa both hold books. Smith was briefly employed as a drawing tutor to the Gordon daughters, therefore by including these accessories, the artist references his own participation in their comprehensive education.<sup>41</sup> Pryse Lockhart Gordon (whom was not a relation of the ducal Gordons), a memoirist and guest of Jane's in the late 1790s, observed the value that Jane placed on education:

While she has such weight in the fashionable world, she was strictly attentive to domestic duties. On the education of her daughters, five in number, she bestowed great pains, directed by the soundest judgement; taking a comprehensive view of the relation in society in which they stood and were destined to stand; her object was to make them amiable, accomplished, and worthy, a task not difficult, as they were beautiful, lovely, and intelligent, but which, without skill and wisdom, even with these natural advantages, might not have been performed.<sup>42</sup>

The account contends that Jane successfully balanced her social status with her domestic responsibilities in order to produce attractive young women that fit into the

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<sup>39</sup> *Sun* 6 July 1793. The siege of Valenciennes was a battle in the War of the First Coalition between France and the Allied Forces.

<sup>40</sup> Chichester and Stearn, "Gordon, George, fifth duke of Gordon (1770–1836)".

<sup>41</sup> NRS GD44/51/320/7, receipt signed by W.A. Smith to Gordon Estate, 4 December 1788.

<sup>42</sup> Pryse Lockhart Gordon, *Public Characters of 1799-1800. To be continued annually* (London, Edinburgh, Dublin: Richard Phillips, T. Gillet, E. Balfour, J. Archer, 1799), 514–15.

idealised mould of British womanhood and likewise, would appeal to attractive husbands. Pryse Lockhart Gordon's excerpt echoes the visual account in Smith's portrait which details the Gordons' adherence to familial expectations, celebrates their domestic virtues, and veils any private realities.

*Alexander, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Gordon with his Family* embraces the formal conventions of conversation piece portraiture in which a group is displayed in a setting depicting one group member's impressive property. Smith's portrait articulates a message of family unity, by displaying all figures in their respective roles. The Gordon offspring are represented in a way that articulates their gendered good breeding. In addition to the feminine educational references and allusions to George's future services to his country, the heir to the dukedom wears a military dress which highlights his Scottish identity, and furthermore, his upholding of genealogical heritage. The duke takes his patriarchal place in the composition, positioned in front of his family estate, Gordon Castle. He asserts what Vicky Coltman terms his 'masculine territory' through his extended right arm resting on a branch that guides the viewer's eyes to his estate, Gordon Castle, and progeny: a nod to both his genealogy and his virility.<sup>43</sup> Jane's subordination to her husband is communicated compositionally, through her seated position. She is surrounded by her children; her proximity to her sons, the Gordon heirs, asserts her critical role in the successful continuation of the family line. Smith's portrait continues the narrative of the Gordon family's adherence to gender roles and the preservation of genealogy. Jane's representation in the conversation piece exemplifies her dual role as wife and mother, projecting her as successfully fulfilling her gendered obligation to secure the family dynasty. Such artistic presentations were essential for the procurement and maintenance of a good reputation in society. As a duchess and a mother, good esteem befitting her social rank was Jane's weapon in an emergent celebrity culture that commodified behaviour. A good reputation was also essential for navigating society, as this attribute made dealings with Jane and, likewise, her family, more attractive, socially, politically, and dynastically. In this regard, the attractive family portrait promulgating virtues was a navigational tool for the Scottish duchess.

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<sup>43</sup> Vicky Coltman, "Classical Sculpture and the Culture of Collecting in Britain since 1760," (2009): 163.

However, the truth behind the façade of Smith's portrait was an entirely different narrative. The duke and duchess separated soon after the portrait was finished, in the early 1790s.<sup>44</sup> The split was not amicable: the duke accused Jane of gross overspending (an accusation she denied) while she was resentful that he lived with his mistress Jean Christie and their children in the family seat, once referring to the situation as 'the depravity of the Gordon Castle family'.<sup>45</sup> She would reflect on her marriage in 1805 as '28 years of wretched married Life'; a bitter sentiment that reveals the fiction of Smith's conversation piece.<sup>46</sup> In short, Smith's portrait, which articulates the narrative of a fruitful and united elite family, was created during the ultimate breakdown of the couple's marriage.<sup>47</sup> However Romney and Smith's portraits, containing tender exchanges between children and situating Jane's successful place in a familial legacy, contributed the dissemination of a favourable reputation for her, through highlighting these culturally-esteemed roles. Her successes, in this regard, can be measured through the commentary of contemporary memoirists who often highlighted her achievements as a mother in their descriptions of her.<sup>48</sup> It is apparent, as well, from Jane's personal correspondence and grave inscription that she wanted to be remembered for her contributions as a mother. As we will see in the next section, the importance of Jane's reputation as a selfless mother would prove to be especially imperative as her daughters approached marrying age.

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<sup>44</sup> It is difficult to pinpoint a precise date when the Gordons separated. They may have been living separately as early as 1789; by 1792 they had parted ways and Jane was receiving an allowance from Alexander. At this stage of their estrangement Jane would occasionally return to Gordon Castle to take up hostess duties to select visitors. See 'Kinrara', Historic Scotland Data Website, at <http://data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmldb/f?p=2400:15:0:::GARDEN:GDL00246> (accessed 30 June 2014) and Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 225.

<sup>45</sup> See Gordon and Guild, *Autobiographical Chapter* for a full account of the couple's battles over money and NAS GD44/41/63/2/16; quotation from *ibid.*, 10; Letter from Jane Gordon to Francis Farquharson 15 June 1805. Christie, whom the duke would marry after Jane's death, was either the housekeeper or the daughter of the housekeeper to Gordon Castle.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. Letter from Jane Gordon to Francis Farquharson 1 July 1805. Jane had actually been married for 38 years; 28 years implies that she had been unhappy in the marriage since 1777.

<sup>47</sup> Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 225. The duke was probably conducting his flagrant affair with Christie at this time.

<sup>48</sup> As previously mentioned, her maternity is discussed in the memoirs of Nathaniel Wraxall, Matthias D'Amour, and Pryse Lockhart Gordon as well as Charles Pigott's criticism of elite society; see Wraxall and Wheatley, *Memoirs*, 267–8; D'Amour, *Memoirs of Mr Matthias D'Amour* (London: Whittaker and Co, 1836); Gordon, *Public Characters*, 511–20; and Pigott, *Female Jockey Club*, 49–56.



### **'Hymeneal Negotiatrice'**

Writing to her friend, Lady Melbourne in early 1802, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire lamented that 'no possible event could have so thoroughly overturned the habit of our society as this'.<sup>49</sup> The event in question was the courtship of the wealthy Foxite, Francis, 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford, and Jane's daughter Lady Georgina Gordon. Bedford had previously wooed the Duchess of Devonshire's own daughter before moving to the youngest daughter of her political rival. Georgiana feared that a marriage between the two could have political ramifications, with Bedford taking up the Pittite cause. She blamed herself for the development: she was deeply indebted to Bedford and his interest in a young woman from a prominent Pittite family could be an act of retribution upon her and consequently, injure the Foxite faction.<sup>50</sup> The duchess' lament in her letter to Lady Melbourne originates from the knowledge that dynastic unions through marriage were also political unions; an important detail that was commented upon in prints relating to the marriages of the Gordon daughters.

The first of the Gordon daughters to be married was the second-eldest, Madelina, whose nuptials received little interest in print media when she married her cousin, Sir Robert Sinclair, in 1789.<sup>51</sup> However, public attention shifted to focus on the eldest daughter, Charlotte, once she began accompanying her mother on her routine visits to Lord Advocate, Henry Dundas' Wimbledon home, with the objective of gaining the attention of his nightly guest, the Prime Minister, William Pitt. This hymeneal tactic earned Jane several cameos in the 1789 book, *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions*, which criticised the Pitt-led government. Written as a play script, the anonymously-penned political satire contains several imagined scenes between Pitt and those closest to him. In one scene, George Pretyman, Bishop of Lincoln, states 'It has been sometime her [Jane] object, and that of Dundas, to marry her daughter to [Pitt]' to which the politician, John Robinson responds, 'And so

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<sup>49</sup> BL Add. MSS 45548, f.28, Georgiana Devonshire to Elizabeth Melbourne c. Feb/March 1802.

<sup>50</sup> Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 354.

<sup>51</sup> Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 221. Madelina would prove to be political at a local level, as she actively recruited soldiers in her role as a military wife. See also, John Malcolm Bulloch, *The Gay Gordons* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1908), 199.

become *Premier herself*.<sup>52</sup> Robinson's declaration indicates that Jane would control the Prime Minister through her daughter's marriage. Significantly, it betrays an anxiety surrounding the business of elite marriages having the agency to form or disband political alliances. Furthermore, it suggests that Jane is working together with a fellow Scot, Dundas, to achieve this goal of manipulation.<sup>53</sup> Robinson continues by musing, 'does she mean to change her sex on the occasion? The transition would not be violent; and according to John Hunter, not impracticable: for he says, it is not uncommon for old HENS TO TURN COCKS'.<sup>54</sup> This further statement criticising Jane's lack of femininity allows a glimpse into an accusation that satirical prints would exploit. Importantly, *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions* situates Jane as a political figure, through her inclusion in the satire, and furthermore, implies that she can gain more political currency through the marriages of her daughters. By the late 1780s Jane began holding London political gatherings for the Pittites at both Pitt's house and her own home, thus forming a close friendship with Pitt and his friend, colleague, and drinking companion, Dundas.<sup>55</sup> This friendship triad would sow a reasonable amount of suspicion, with *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions* allowing us to date when these controversies began. It would eventually be presented in print media as a threatening *triumvirate*.

Despite Jane's friendship with Pitt, she was unable to inspire a marriage between him and her eldest daughter, forcing Charlotte to find a more receptive suitor. Soon afterward, she married Colonel Charles Lennox, heir of the Duke of Richmond, on 9 September 1789. Two weeks later an anonymously authored print, *Scotch Wedding* (figure 3.5) satirised the circumstances surrounding the union.<sup>56</sup> The

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<sup>52</sup> *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions, for all the addresses that have been; and all that will be, presented to the Rt. Hon. Wm. Pitt, and the virtuous and uncorrupted majorities in both houses of Parliament; who have voted themselves in possession of all the rights of th people, and prerogatives of the crown of England*, 2nd ed. ed. (London: James Ridgway, 1789), Monograph, 17

<sup>53</sup> Rosemary Baird argues that Dundas actually forestalled the potential relationship by pretending to have an interest in Charlotte. Her assessment indicated that there were many hands involved in political figures' courtships. Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 221.

<sup>54</sup> *Authentic Specimens*, 17. John Hunter was an eminent Scottish surgeon who experimented with dental transplants which led him to other strange and disturbing experiments including the successful transferal of a rooster testicle onto the belly of a hen, thus 'turning cocks into hens'; see John Hunter and James F. Palmer, *The Works of John Hunter* (London: Longmans, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, 1835), 391.

<sup>55</sup> William Hague, *William Pitt the Younger* (London: HarperCollins, 2004), 221.

<sup>56</sup> According to the Lewis Walpole Library the print is either by Henry Wigstead or William Holland.

print displays a bedroom in which Lennox, in military dress and with a duelling pistol protruding from each pocket, and his blushing bride hold hands while they jump over a broom – a symbol of a hasty marriage. Lennox had recently garnered public attention for nearly killing the king's second-eldest son, the Duke of York in a duel.<sup>57</sup> Rather than showing concern over this reckless suitor, Jane is represented as enthusiastically encouraging the marriage. Sitting next to a 'Scotch Pint', she happily ushers the couple to bed while playing the bagpipes like a Scottish Pied Piper. These visual details carried strong implications that the duchess' bad behaviour could be traced to her Scottish identity. Despite the pointed jest of the print, the couple were married in Jane's dressing room and the ceremony was only witnessed by her and two serving women. The duke was not even in residence at the time, although his absence could be attributed to the hostility between himself and his wife. Jane was reputed to have a strong role in the swiftness of the wedding, which allegedly took place to avoid the usual fanfare of wedding festivities.<sup>58</sup> The print puts Jane in a slightly incestuous role; she is so consumed with advantageous matchmaking that she remains in the bedroom to confirm the marital consummation. In this sense, notions of the brothel madam are ingrained in Jane's representation, drawing parallels between prostitution and elite matchmaking.

Jane's involvement in her daughters' courtships was fairly usual; mothers were active participants in the prospects, negotiations, and settlements of the marriage market. This was an important process in which highly ritualised pursuits, courtships, and negotiations united two powerful families through wedlock with the end goal of producing children of good breeding, as we see in figure 3.4.<sup>59</sup> Aside from attractive character and mutual affection in spouses, a desirable union advanced

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<sup>57</sup> D'amour, *Memoirs*, 181–2. Soon after, Lennox challenged the author of a slanderous letter regarding the affair to another duel; the insult curiously being brought to his attention by his bemused fiancée. D'amour was Jane's servant; his memoir details first-hand accounts of the events leading up to both duels. He details how Charlotte had heard of a letter being published blackening Lennox's name and sent for a copy which she handed to him after teasing, 'See Colonel, what a curious letter I have got here'.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 185. D'amour's memoirs imply that the wedding was planned and it was always Jane's intention to have them married at Gordon Castle in a small ceremony after returning from London. He also notes it was Jane's *best* dressing room.

<sup>59</sup> This maternal participation is evidenced in representations of marriage in the period's literature, such as in Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818), when protagonist Anne Elliot is discouraged from marrying the economically inferior Captain Wentworth by her godmother, Lady Russell, who exerts maternal authority and influence over Anne in place of her late mother.

familial status and property or, at the very least, kept one's family on an equal footing with the newly joined relations.<sup>60</sup> In his memoirs, Nathaniel Wraxall recalled that, for the 'elevation' of Jane's daughters' 'no sacrifices appeared to her to be too great, no exertion too laborious, no renunciation too severe'.<sup>61</sup> While it was customary for mothers to influence their children's decisions or to veto a bad match, public attention became fixed on Jane due to her daughter's advantageous marriages and the controversy surrounding her seemingly shameless and tactical matchmaking. Social custom frowned upon women actively pushing their daughters on gentlemen, and the visual backlash that erupted in response to Jane's efforts in matchmaking display a woman progressively growing larger and more hideous with each depiction. She became characterised as an ambitious mother consumed with hunting high-ranking husbands for her daughters in order to benefit personally from the match.

The inflammatory accusations of Jane's aggressive dynastic matchmaking articulated in *Scotch Wedding* trickled through print media and into private discussion. Meanwhile Jane's separation from her own husband allowed her to hone her efforts on matchmaking while living in London during the season. By the time Jane's third daughter, Susan was out in society in 1793, London newspapers were already anticipating a further disregard of modesty from the Duchess of Gordon and sarcastic remarks on her persistent tactics to encourage her daughters' marriages began appearing. When Susan eventually became engaged to the Duke of Manchester in October 1793, newspapers kept a close eye on the couple's movements, reporting when the duke left London allegedly to marry Susan and when the marriage had been confirmed.<sup>62</sup> A gossip-filled letter from Lady Stafford to her son implies that this attention was due to the duke's hesitation in the pairing:

I had a Letter Yesterday from Mrs. Howe. She brags of London being agreeable, and Parties every Night. I fancy they must consist of Widows, old

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<sup>60</sup> Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester: Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2011), 71; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 82; and Marcia Pointon, *Strategies for Showing : Women, possession, and representation in English visual culture, 1665-1800* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 59.

<sup>61</sup> Wraxall and Wheatley, *Memoirs*, 559.

<sup>62</sup> See the *World*, 14 October 1793 and the *Star*, 13 November 1793. After the nuptials, the *World* reported that the duke received £5,000 for Susan's dowry (*World*, 15 November 1793).

Maids, and old Batchelors - Excepting the Dutchess of Gordon and the Duke of Manchester, whom her Grace keeps in Leading-Strings. [...] A Gentleman lately ask'd his Grace of Manchester when he was to Marry Lady Susan Gordon. He answer'd that he had not the smallest Intention of ever marrying her. "Then why are you constantly with the Dutchess of G.?" "Because I cannot help it. She will not let me rest, but comes, and sends for me constantly; but I am soon going into Scotland to the Duke of Montrose's." To which the Gentleman said: "Then she will certainly carry you to Gordon Castle, and as certainly marry you to her Daughter."<sup>63</sup>

Lady Stafford's account discloses that Jane's matchmaking was reported on in private circles as well as in newspapers. Significantly, the tale is not a first-hand account and rather, is gossip which she perpetuates further.<sup>64</sup> Lady Stafford's embellishments to the narrative, such as her reference to the Duke in leading strings, maintain the portrayal of Jane, as seen in *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions*, as using matchmaking as a tool to control powerful men.

When the fourth Gordon daughter, Louisa was married on 17 April 1797 to Charles, Viscount Brome, the *True Briton* blithely reported that, 'the Marriage of Lady Brome has *swept* the Dutchess of Gordon's house clean of Daughters'.<sup>65</sup> The clever reference to 'sweeping' plays upon the pronunciation of 'Brome' while also alluding to the 'jumping the broom' idiom visualised in figure 3.5. Susan's marriage was viewed as another tactical match as Lord Brome was the son and heir to Charles, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess Cornwallis, war hero and eminent politician, currently serving as Governor-General of India.<sup>66</sup> The newspaper reported two days later that, 'the Duchess of Gordon's Box at the Opera, on Tuesday evening, resembled a Drawing-room, so many came to wish her Grace joy of the recent happy event in the family',

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<sup>63</sup> Granville Leveson Gower Granville, Henrietta Frances Spencer Ponsonby Bessborough, and Castalia Rosalind Campbell Leveson-Gower Granville, *Lord Granville Leveson Gower (First Earl Granville): Private correspondence, 1781 to 1821*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: J. Murray, 1916), 68. Letter from Susanna Leveson-Gower to Granville Leveson Gower dated 13 August 1793.

<sup>64</sup> For further reading on gossip see, Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

<sup>65</sup> *True Briton*, 18 April 1797.

<sup>66</sup> According to the memoirist, Samuel Rogers the marquess opposed the match. Roger's doubtful account recalls that Jane 'told the following anecdote to Lord Stowell, who told it to Lord Dunmore, who told it to me', with Jane telling Lord Cornwallis, "I know your reason for disapproving of your son's marriage with my daughter : now, I will tell you one thing plainly, — *there is not a drop of the Gordon Blood in Louisa's body.*" With this statement Lord C. was quite satisfied, and the marriage took place." The Duchess prided herself greatly on the success of this manœuvre [*sic*], though it had forced her to slander her own character so cruelly and so unjustly! In fact, manœuvring was her delight'. Samuel Rogers, Alexander Dyce, and William Maltby, *Recollections of the table-talk of Samuel Rogers; To which is added Porsoniana* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1856), 143–4.

and subsequently, ‘since the Dutchess of Gordon’s success as a *Hymeneal Negotiatrix*, there has been an eager struggle among the *single-sisterhood* of the *fashionable world* to join with her Grace in the Subscription for an *Opera-Box* next season’.<sup>67</sup> This abundance of print media interest stemmed partially from the successes of the matches in terms of economic and social status, but was further fuelled by Jane’s increasing political currency, as seen in textual sources such as *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions* which accused her of politicised matchmaking. Interest in Jane’s matchmaking would peak with regard to her youngest daughter, Georgina. This can be attributed to two reasons: the first being that there was now an expectation that Jane would surpass her past successes in this realm, the second, and more significant, was due to the politicisation of Georgina’s courtships.

Georgina Gordon’s pursuit of a husband would, like elite women’s participation in 1784 Westminster electioneering, inspire a series of satirical prints by multiple artists. Unlike her sisters’ short courtships, it would take over five years for Georgina to find a husband, despite her reputed beauty and good nature. As mentioned previously, her first suitor, the Duke of Bedford was a somewhat surprising choice as a potential match for Georgina in 1797 due to both his factional associations with the Foxites and his earlier courtship with the Duchess of Devonshire’s daughter.<sup>68</sup> The metaphorical clash of titans battling over a mate for their respected daughters to preserve their genealogical and political dynasties drew attention to the courtship. On 19 April 1797, *The Gordon-Knot: or The Bonny-Duchess hunting the Bedfordshire Bull* (figure 3.6) by James Gillray appeared in Hannah Humphrey’s popular print shop on Bond Street, London. The title is a play on a ‘Gordian knot’, a seemingly impossible problem that is solved through cheating

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<sup>67</sup> *True Briton*, 20 April 1797 and 28 April 1797.

<sup>68</sup> Despite being a fervent Pittite, Jane was known for not prejudicing herself against people based on their rank or political sympathies. This tolerance of Foxites expanded into suitors for her daughters; otherwise the Duke of Manchester, who came from a Foxite family, would not have been permitted to marry Susan. At this point in time the Duke of Bedford was not courting either girl, given that Lady Georgiana Cavendish had accepted the marriage proposal of Lord Morpeth (Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 337).

or brute force, thus referencing Jane's perceived aggressive matchmaking.<sup>69</sup> The print is set in landscape reminiscent of the Scottish Highlands and centres on Jane and Georgina. In her outstretched hands Jane holds a blue ribbon labelled 'MATRIMONY', and moves toward a brown bull, representing Bedford, due to his interests in cattle breeding, which flees from her lasso. Georgina is a skinny foil to her colossal mother; represented behind Jane, hunched over with her claw-like hands rapaciously positioned toward the bull. The three elder Gordon daughters (excluding Madelina) who had already been successfully married are represented in the background dancing in a circle.

The presence of the three Gordon daughters/sisters is a reminder of the successes of Jane's previous attempts at dynastic and political alliances through marriage. Just as Smith identifies the daughters' education through props in *Alexander, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Gordon with his Family* (figure 3.4), Gillray uses symbolism to identify each daughter's auspicious marriage. Charlotte dances on the left, as indicated by the spaniel which is attached to her by a ribbon similar to the one her mother holds, labelled 'K. CHARLES BREED' to symbolise her husband, Charles Lennox; while on the right a broom is strung in the tartan sash around Louisa's waist to identify her as Lady Brome.<sup>70</sup> However, these items could have further interpretations regarding controversial matchmaking and marriage. Charlotte's dog is attached to her by a lead, suggesting marital dominance, and Louisa's broom, again, has associations of a hasty marriage. The central figure of the three is Susan, the back of whose dress is open to reveal breeches that read 'MANCHESTER VELVET' across her backside, suggesting that, like her mother in *The Breeches in the Fiera Maschereta* (figure 3.1) published twenty-two years earlier, Susan 'wears the breeches' in her marriage.<sup>71</sup> Using their Scottish identity to mock the duchess and her young daughter, Gillray includes speech bubbles filled with Aberdonian vernacular

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<sup>69</sup> The metonym originates from the legend of Alexander the Great in which he cut through the intricate knot after an oracle declared that whoever should loosen it should rule Asia. "Gordian knot, n.", OED Online. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/80082> (accessed 1 September 2015).

<sup>70</sup> The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel's connection with the Lennox family is due to the family having been descended from Charles II and his mistress, the Duchess of Portland.

<sup>71</sup> Like her parents, Susan and her husband separated from one another. After their separation, their eldest daughter, Lady Jane Montagu moved in with Jane (Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 228).

above the two women's heads.<sup>72</sup> Jane yells to halt the fleeing bull while Georgina greedily urges, 'Run, Mither! – run! run! O how I lang to lead the sweet bonny Creature in a string!' Georgina's speech makes allusions to baby leading strings, implying that Georgina will, like a puppet-master, control her husband. Significantly, it is Jane whom Gillray represents as holding the metaphorical leading strings that Bedford is attempting to escape from and which Georgina yearns to acquire from her mother, echoing Lady Stafford's comments about 'Leading-Strings' quoted earlier.

In an unfortunate twist, the 'Bedford Bull' did escape the 'Gordon-Knot', although through no fault of Jane or Georgina. Nearly five years after Gillray's print was released, marking the commencement of the courtship, Bedford suffered a strangulated hernia during a game of tennis and died. Sources differ as to whether Georgina and Bedford were engaged at this time or not; nevertheless it appeared that the marriage was anticipated at the time of Bedford's sudden death.<sup>73</sup> Two months after Bedford's death, a print by Charles Williams mocked Jane and Georgina's apparent grief over his loss. Its title references Gillray's print, suggesting the familiarity that print consumers would have had with *The Gordon-Knot* and the continuation of the matrimonial saga. *The Gord-ian Knot still Untied or The Disappointed Dido still in Despair* (figure 3.7) represents Jane and Georgina at Bedford's funeral.<sup>74</sup> They stand in black mourning dresses on either side of the duke's ornate red and gold coffin, on which a seal with the words, 'che sara sara' (whatever will be, will be) are inscribed. Georgina disrobes herself of any feminine accoutrements: dramatically throwing off her wig and jewellery. In her grief, Georgina divests herself of a bracelet miniature of Bedford, which lies on the floor

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<sup>72</sup> I would like to thank Dr Catriona Murray for indicating that the dialogue in the print, particularly the use of 'Loon', can be pinpointed as a dialect associated with Aberdeenshire.

<sup>73</sup> Bedford's entry in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* claims that he and Georgina were engaged, whereas Rosemary Baird states that they were 'almost' engaged. E. A. Smith, "Russell, Francis, fifth duke of Bedford (1765–1802)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) and Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 222. A third source is perhaps the most accurate since it is a combination of the two theories: according to Amanda Foreman, Jane insisted the two were engaged, 'in a flat contradiction of Bedford's brother [...] who claimed that his brother had never expressed any intention of marrying' Georgina (Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, 354).

<sup>74</sup> The second half of the title refers to Dido, the tragic queen of Classic mythology who committed suicide after being abandoned by her lover.



next to fallen Broadside ballads.<sup>75</sup> She laments her failed spousal attempt and never having the opportunity to ‘feel the genial warmth of mine and Mothers Love [*sic*]’. Jane, even more obese than Gillray had portrayed her, fills the left of the composition with her presence. She assures her daughter that Bedford’s death will not deter their search for a husband: ‘I’ll take You down to the Abbey [Woburn, the Duke of Bedford’s seat] and try again’, indicating her determination to unite her family with the Bedfords through a marriage with one of the late duke’s brothers.<sup>76</sup> The print questions whether the young woman is seeking a beloved husband or a lucrative economic arrangement. In doing so, it continues the Hogarthian tradition of visually articulating an antiquated cliché of aristocratic marriages being a formation of greed and superficiality, and firmly places Jane within this narrative.<sup>77</sup>

Following the death of the Duke of Bedford in 1802, Jane and Georgina travelled to Paris, where they were guests of Napoleon Bonaparte. Lady Bessborough, also in Paris at the time, wrote to Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, complaining of Jane’s sycophantic behaviour at court:

Of it is necessary to do as the Dss. Of G. does to be in favour, I have no chance. I thought her very servile attendance on Mad[ame] Louis Buonaparte bad enough, as literally the Dame d'honneur who is just appointed to Mad. Louis is not half so assiduous in holding up her train, giving her her shawl, &c., as the Dss.<sup>78</sup>

Lady Bessborough’s account participates in the common perception that Scots were inclined toward obsequiousness, though there was likely some truth to her observation.<sup>79</sup> Jane promptly began to pursue a marital union between Georgina and the Empress Josephine’s son, Eugène de Beauharnais; however Bonaparte would not

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<sup>75</sup> The ballad titles are further sardonic references to Jane and Georgina’s grief: ‘There’s Nae luck about the House’, ‘We’ll tuck up our petticoats under our arm and over ...’, ‘Wither my LOVE ah Wither art thou gone’, and ‘Mad Bessy of Bedl[am]’.

<sup>76</sup> The duke was the eldest of three, his younger brothers were John Russell (later 6th Duke of Bedford) and Lord William Russell.

<sup>77</sup> This refers specifically to his satirical series, *Marriage à-la-Mode* (1743–5); for further reading, see Judy Egerton, *Hogarth’s Marriage À-la-mode* (London: National Galleries Publication, 1997). The Madame Louis Buonaparte that Lady Bessborough refers to is Hortense de Beauharnais, daughter of Empress Josephine from her first marriage.

<sup>78</sup> Granville, Bessborough, and Granville, *Private Correspondence*, 1, 407; letter from Granville Leveson Gower to Henrietta Ponsonby, dated 31 January 1803.

<sup>79</sup> John Brewer, “The Misfortunes of Lord Bute: A case-study in eighteenth-century political argument and public opinion,” *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 1 (1973): 19 and Pentland, “We Speak for the Ready,” 87–9.

allow a marriage. Despite the couple's mutual affection, Bonaparte, like Jane, was an astute matchmaker and would use his stepson's marriage to fortify political unions, eventually marrying Beauharnais to a Bavarian princess.<sup>80</sup> A potential marriage with a family member of Britain's enemy scandalised British society and Jane was perceived as placing personal profit over national loyalty and respect to the king.<sup>81</sup> During her trip to France, Jane had managed to establish herself in the new French court and returned to England with a portrait of Bonaparte – a gift from the emperor.<sup>82</sup> The exchange of such a familiar and intimate gift with Britain's former enemy offended the Prince of Wales, resulting in a quarrel between the prince and the duchess. Lord Granville Leveson-Gower described the publicised affair in a letter to his mother, commencing his letter with 'I saw the P. of Wales yesterday, who gave me a long account of his quarrel with the Dss. of Gordon. It was nearly as it appear'd in the news papers'.<sup>83</sup> According to Leveson-Gower, Jane defended herself by highlighting the popularity of Bonaparte portraits in the British print market, stating that 'it was not worse to have his picture than his print which all London bought', and declared that she and Georgina would not be attending the upcoming King's Birthday. When the two ladies did appear at the Birthday they were ostracised by the other guests, inspiring another satirical print by Williams, published five days later.<sup>84</sup>

Williams's print presented a visual account of the scandalising narrative while also offering insight as to why Georgina remained unmarried. *A Racket at a Rout or, Billingsgate Removed to the West* (figure 3.8) imagines the contested portrait of Bonaparte as a (large) miniature, displayed in the prominent place, between Jane's breasts. The intimate placement of the portrait ascribes Jane's public

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<sup>80</sup> Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 222.

<sup>81</sup> While it is unclear as to whether Jane would have benefitted from the match economically, it is evident from her personal records that she was unhappy with her finances. Separated from the duke, Jane owned a farmhouse in rural Scotland, and would rent accommodation during the London season. Though content with her rural retreat she was constantly battling her estranged husband to receive an allowance that she felt matched her social station. In one frustrated letter to their financial mediator she protested, 'how [could] the Duke could expose the mother of his children to such a degrading situation' (Gordon and Guild, *Autobiographical Chapter*, 14, Letter from Jane Gordon to Francis Farquharson 1 July 1805).

<sup>82</sup> Jane's portrait of Bonaparte has not been traced: the type, medium, and artist of the work are unknown.

<sup>83</sup> Granville, Bessborough, and Granville, *Private Correspondence*, 1, 242. Letter from Granville Leveson-Gower to Susannah Leveson-Gower dated 14 June 1803. I have not been able to locate a surviving newspaper article describing the argument.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

loyalty to Bonaparte. Her visual representation has evolved into a monstrosity: nearly devoid of all feminine features and brandishing a large bottle of spirits she engages in a verbal argument with the Prince of Wales. The print also reveals a change in the depiction of Georgina, who is now rendered more sympathetically. With her arm looped to her mother's, she holds her head in shame muttering, 'Oh dear I de-Clare I am so frighten'd I wish I could get away'. Unlike *The Gordon-Knot* (Figure 3.6), where Georgina is rendered as rivalling her mother in greed, she is now depicted tethered to Jane's arm, a prisoner to her mother's will and a pawn in her plans for marriage brokering. Jane angrily confronts the prince in thick Scottish vernacular: 'You Lie you — donna I ken the fellow wha told you muckle bad O me'. He responds with: 'I have no chance with you Madam in point of Language and the only excuse I can make is, how came you so?', accusing her of intoxication. Williams, like Gillray and the anonymous author of *Scotch Wedding*, highlights Jane's coarse accent (and thus, coarse behaviour) and accuses her of excessive alcohol consumption. In the background, two party attendees observe the scene in shock while two others walk away, remarking, 'nothing New my Lady often taken *so*'. In contrast to previous satirical depictions of Jane, an audience has been added to the composition to emphasise the shame of her behaviour. Rather than benefactor, Georgina is now a victim of her mother's aggressive matchmaking, which has caused her the loss of a respectable husband. As defamatory as Williams's print was, within a month of its publication, Georgina had married the Duke of Bedford's brother and heir, John, who had allegedly fallen in love with her after their first meeting.<sup>85</sup> Effectively, the dialogue in *The Gord-ian Knot still Untied* (figure 3.7) was prophetic; a second attempt at 'the Abbey' proved to be fruitful and Georgina was now the Duchess of Bedford. Jane's resolve had succeeded in cultivating the family line and making further potential political alliances.

Jane actively fashioned herself a mother and did succeed in often being remembered as such, but she was also specifically remembered as a tenacious matchmaker. A selection of textual accounts further reveals why graphic satirists became so interested with the otherwise private matter of the Gordon daughters' courtships. The first, Jane's obituary from the *Morning Chronicle*, lists the marital

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<sup>85</sup> John, 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford had been married previously and had issue.

statuses and titles of all her children. It immediately concludes with a statement which notes that this was an achievement rather than an index of progeny: 'So splendid an establishment of a family is without parallel in the history of the Peerage'.<sup>86</sup> Pryse Lockhart Gordon's memoir, *Public Characters of 1799–1800* (1799), contains a similar enumeration in his profile of Jane:

of the daughters of the family, three have become members of the first houses in England; and one married a respectable Scotch baronet. Lady Charlotte, the eldest, is the wife of Colonel Lennox, heir of the Duke of Richmond. Lady Madelaine, the second, married Sir Robert Sinclair. Lady Susan is Duchess of Manchester; Lady Louisa is the wife of Lord Broome, son and heir of Marquis Cornwallis.<sup>87</sup>

However, social critic, Charles Pigott's anonymously penned, *The Female Jockey Club* (1794) more obliquely states what these previous two authors merely hint at in their family listing. He writes:

Her Grace's husband is colonel of the G–d–n fencibles, and Chancellor of King's College. Aberdeen; her brother, Deputy Ranger of the Parks, and Lord High Admiral in Scotland; her uncle L–d A–m G–d–n, Commander in Chief in that country, and her son, not yet Twenty-three years of age, has a company in the guards; her daughters, one married to an English duke; another to the heir of an English dukedom; and a third to Sir J–n S–c–r, who, through her interest, has been appointed president of Mr. P–tt's newly elected board of Agriculture. In short, all her connections have been long honourably and splendidly provided for.<sup>88</sup>

Pigott was not the only person to credit, or possibly, accuse, Jane with the appointments and social climbing of her family members. Wraxall wrote 'the duke, her husband, who wanted her energy of character, did not in that account derive less benefit from her exertions. He received in due time the great seal of Scotland as his remuneration'.<sup>89</sup> Jane made similar statements in her letters to Farquharson, writing on two separate occasions, 'I am Duchess of Gordon– He is Duke– and 'I feel I have done as much Credit to the name as any Duke ever did' and 'I have done every thing

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<sup>86</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 14 April 1812. 'Her son George, Marquis of Huntley, remains unmarried. Her daughter, Lady Charlotte, is Duchess of Richmond; Lady Madelina, married first Sir Robert Sinclair, Bart. And secondly to Fysh Palmer, Esq.; Lady Susan is now Duchess of Manchester; Lady Louisa is the marchioness Cornwallis; and Lady Georgiana is Duchess of Bedford'.

<sup>87</sup> Gordon, *Public Characters*, 519.

<sup>88</sup> Pigott, *Female Jockey Club*, 55–6.

<sup>89</sup> Wraxall and Wheatley, *Memoirs*, 276.

for my family—and got thousands for his’.<sup>90</sup> These textual accounts support the satirical prints’ assertions of Jane cultivating political influence through familial and dynastic avenues. With this in mind, we can contextualise the prints as not merely exposing Jane as a crude Scotswoman trying to find rich husbands for her daughters but a shrewd and influential woman who could manage political power for her family and herself. However she was equally perceived in satirical prints to make a more direct intervention in parliamentary politics, to which this chapter will now turn.

### **Bute, Dundas, and Lady Scotia**

In her discussion of women’s political roles in eighteenth-century Britain, Judith S. Lewis argues that elite women ‘were expected to exercise the responsibilities that accrued to their privileges’ and that ‘politics was among, other things, a facet of their relationships with their families, neighbors, friends, and dependants’.<sup>91</sup> Jane was no exception. Upon her marriage and ascension as Duchess of Gordon, Jane inherited these expected responsibilities from a robustly political mother-in-law.<sup>92</sup> Jane utilised her position to bring schools and new industries to remote areas of Scotland, and was patroness of the Northern Meeting, an important event of the highland season.<sup>93</sup> Surviving correspondence to Pitt and Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General of India, contain pension and employment requests from Jane on behalf of men under the protection of the Gordons.<sup>94</sup> She also played an active role in recruitment for the British Army, particularly when her son raised the Gordon Highlanders. Combining the spectacle of her rank with a presentation meant to elicit Scottish patriotism, she

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<sup>90</sup> Gordon and Guild, *Autobiographical Chapter*, 7, 12. Letters from Jane Gordon to Francis Farquharson dated 2 November 1804 and 15 June 1805, respectively.

<sup>91</sup> Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 40.

<sup>92</sup> Katherine, Duchess of Gordon was impressively and successfully political through widowhood. The death of her husband, Cosmo, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Gordon, meant that Katherine maintained Gordon interests during her son’s minority, actively staving off the influence of their rival, Archibald Campbell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Argyll. See Elaine Chalus, "Gordon, Katharine, duchess of Gordon (1718–1779)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>93</sup> Gordon and Guild, *Autobiographical Chapter*, 9: letter from Jane Gordon to Francis Farquharson dated 7 May 1805; Lodge, "Gordon, Jane, duchess of Gordon (1748/9–1812),"; and Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 222–3.

<sup>94</sup> Chatham Papers 147/2/217–18 and BL Add MS 37282, letter from Jane Gordon to Richard Wellesley 23 October 1799. Despite their friendship, Jane and Pitt appear to have rarely corresponded with one another, possibly due to their regular face to face interactions.

attended highland fairs and markets accompanied by pipers and drummers on a white horse and wearing a black feather bonnet. A prevailing, yet unlikely, narrative describes how she offered a kiss to new recruits and held a guinea between her teeth while doing so.<sup>95</sup> These activities were, in effect, expectations attached to her aristocratic status. However, as Elaine Chalus has highlighted, women who distinguished themselves politically were those who took a personal interest in the enterprise rather than viewing it as an obligatory task.<sup>96</sup> Jane's roles as a patroness, canvasser, and hostess decidedly classify her as one of these women. As such, Jane's political activities in London, much like her matchmaking drew the attention, and eventually, criticism of the capital city's printmakers. Through an analysis of her representation in political prints, this chapter will not only establish Jane's classification as a political woman, but also extract how the politicisation of her identity was interlinked with accusations of her corporality, drinking habits, and nationality.

The duchess' visual representation in prints first allows us to date her association with politics on a national level, while simultaneously enabling us to gauge the impact of her political engagement. In 1787 a large mezzotint (53.5 x 63.5 cm) was created to celebrate the British naval victories at the Battle of the Saintes and the Siege of Gibraltar.<sup>97</sup> The print, William Hincks's *The Increasing Grandeur of the British Nation* (figure 3.9), represents four allegorical female figures in the centre of the composition with two detailed naval battle scenes revealed behind curtains on either side of them. At the bottom of the print, the British lion is represented as having slain a four-headed hydra, symbolising Britain's enemies, France and Spain. A standing female figure rising behind the animals triumphantly

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<sup>95</sup> Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 225. It is unlikely that Jane kissed young recruits due in part to the controversy surrounding the Duchess of Devonshire exchanging kisses in 1784. Contemporary newspapers never reported this recruitment tactic, and the same story was used to slander Jane's daughter, Madelina, when she was actively recruiting soldiers year later; an accusation that she found to be laughable (Bulloch, *The Gay Gordons*, 200–1). The one potential piece of evidence comes from a book containing the local history of Banfshire, where Gordon Castle is located, and contains the account of a man claiming his grandmother witnessed Jane using this method of recruitment, see S. H. *A Souvenir of Sympathy* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Journal Office, 1900), 168.

<sup>96</sup> Chalus, "The epidemical Madness," 154 and "Elite Women, Social Politics," 385.

<sup>97</sup> The Battle of the Saintes took place in 1782 as part of the American War of Independence; the British Navy successfully stopped a French fleet that intended to invade Jamaica. The Siege of Gibraltar (1782) saw Britain staving off French and Spanish troops from Gibraltar.

holds a treaty of alliance with Holland in her upraised right hand and palm and olive leaves in her left hand. She represents Britannia and is flanked by Hibernia on the left, and Scotia and Fame on the right. The three geographical allegories (ie: Britannia, Hibernia, and Scotia) were modelled after real women who, significantly, were staunch supporters of the king. Britannia is a flattering likeness of the twenty-one-year-old Princess Royal; Hibernia is represented by the Pittite hostess, Mary Isabella, Duchess of Rutland; and finally, Scotia has taken the likeness of Jane, recognisable from her distinctive profile.<sup>98</sup> Their active political fealty to George III and the faction that supported him, has elevated them to symbols of the respective kingdoms of Britain.

Hincks's representation of Jane as a personification of Scotland, unified with Britannia and Hibernia, acts as a visual record of her public dedication to king and country. By the late 1780s Jane was serving as political hostess for the administration. Her 'open' home allowed politicians to meet informally, outside of Parliament, maintaining the stability of the Pittite government. Hincks's print attests to her successes in this role by aligning her with another widely recognised Pittite, the Duchess of Rutland, as well as an immediate member of the royal family. The inclusion of the two duchesses with a daughter of the king and queen insinuates that the duchesses' devotion runs as deep as the familial ties that bind the princess. The choice of these three particular women as representatives of a unified Britain was a political statement. Rendering popular figures as allegorical representations of countries relayed a message of partisan bias - that Government loyalty was noticed and celebrated. It also, as McCreery has argued, categorised the female subjects as 'muses': inspirers of political process rather than agents.<sup>99</sup> Much like female sitters represented in classical guises in portraiture, Hincks dignifies Jane's depiction through her transformation into a female allegory – a common trope connoting virtue.<sup>100</sup> In her examination of satirical prints representing the Duchess of

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<sup>98</sup> Initially the Duke and Duchess of Rutland did not support William Pitt (Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 103). Mary Isabella was English rather than Irish; her connection to Hibernia stems from the duke's role as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, which led to the duchess living in Dublin from 1784 to 1787, see Chalus, "Manners, Mary Isabella, duchess of Rutland (1756-1831),".

<sup>99</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 145.

<sup>100</sup> Jane herself, was painted in an allegorical guise by Angelica Kauffman. In the c. 1772–4 portrait, Jane is represented as Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt.

Devonshire during the 1784 Westminster election, Amelia Rauser highlights how the Whig party commissioned a series of graphic satires that transformed the female political figure into an allegory as a suppressive means of negotiating her political agency.<sup>101</sup> Hincks's mezzotint performs a parallel ritual. Only under the veil of allegory could these women have an uncontroversial political presence in visual culture.

Prior to Hincks's print, Jane participated in electoral politics in Scotland, and possibly in London. However, it was when she assumed the role of Pittite political hostess that she began to be widely recognised as a devoted servant of the Government faction.<sup>102</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, political hostesses offered their home as a venue to politicians, administering an atmosphere that combined sociability and politics. Jane distinguished herself in this position in the late 1780s. Pigott sardonically described her open home as the 'voluptuous asylum, where mirth is so judiciously blended with business'.<sup>103</sup> This combination of business and mirth proved to be a source of contention for the pious social reformer, William Wilberforce, whose diary details the self-flagellating guilt he experienced after attending meetings at the Duchess of Gordon's house due to the attendees' drinking. During the Regency Crisis he often found himself at her home. 'Called at Duchess of Gordon's: where an assembly grew on me' Wilberforce recorded on 5 January 1789; 'Dined Bishop of Salisbury's — then called Duchess of Gordon's, and Pitt's, where staid too late; but could not well get away — discussing with Dundas and Rose the Household business', he wrote on 17 January; and 'Called Duchess of Gordon's, and long discussion about Prince of Wales, &c.' on 24 January.<sup>104</sup> His frustration at this mode of political business is pronounced in an entry written later in July 1789: 'Obliged to dine with S. to meet Duchess of Gordon — Chatham and P. Arden. How ill these meetings suit my state of mind, and how much do they incapacitate me for

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<sup>101</sup> Rauser, "Butcher-Kissing Duchess," 37–42.

<sup>102</sup> Jane was seen as such an effective politician by the 1780s that the Scottish Foxite, F.H. MacKenzie, employed a friend to spy on her movements during the 1789 election in Scotland (Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 119). Baird believes that she canvassed in the 1784 Westminster election but I have not found any sources supporting to support this (Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 220).

<sup>103</sup> Pigott, *Female Jockey Club*, 50.

<sup>104</sup> Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce* (London: J. Murray, 1838), 199–200.



the exercises of religion, and what wrong notions do they lead to of my real character!’<sup>105</sup> Wilberforce’s hyperbolic entries reveal both a sense of obligation to visit the home of a hostess (particularly during a political crisis), as well as the social atmosphere Jane fostered at these political congregations.

Two years before Wilberforce recorded these laments, Jane featured in a satirical print responding to the royal proclamation that the social reformer pressured the king to pass: the Proclamation for the Discouragement of Vice (1787).<sup>106</sup> The understudied print, *Reformation- or, the Wonderful Effects of a Proclamation!!!* (figure 3.10) by Thomas Rowlandson, was the first graphic satire that directly aligned Jane to Westminster politics. In the print, the king, queen, and fashionable members of society are represented listening to the Pitt-backed proclamation in a church. Jane is depicted in the foreground, chasing a herd of small dogs with a whip in her upraised hand. Compositionally, the print aligns Jane to Pitt who is represented in close proximity to her on the left, while, in contrast, prominent Foxites such as the Prince of Wales, Maria Fitzherbert, Edmund Burke and the Duchess of Devonshire, are shown listening above in the upper gallery. The print has not been thoroughly probed in scholarship beyond these superficial details, prompting a more thorough investigation in order to extract the meaning behind Jane’s curious representation.<sup>107</sup> Arguably, Rowlandson represents Jane as the parish dog-whipper, a servant traditionally employed with the task of removing dogs that fought or fouled during church services.<sup>108</sup> Although, she is chasing unwanted dogs out of the parish (or possibly up to the gallery), Rowlandson is referring to Jane as a ‘whipper-in’ or party whip, the influential party member who ensures that other members follow the party

<sup>105</sup> Wilberforce and Wilberforce, *Life*, 234. It is unclear who ‘S’ is.

<sup>106</sup> James Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol: A history of the drink question in England* (Manchester University Press, 2009), 83–4. The proclamation called on local magistrates to apply existing laws more rigorously in order to suppress licentious behaviour, gambling, sexual impropriety, and drunkenness. Wilberforce also set up the Proclamation Society to support the proclamation’s implementation.

<sup>107</sup> The print appears in twentieth-century catalogues, see George, *Catalogue*, Vol. 6, 6, 426–7 and Joseph Grego, *Rowlandson the Caricaturist* (New York: Collectors Editions, 1970), 220–1. Jane’s presence or representation is not discussed by Vic Gatrell or Anne Stott in their discussion of the print; see Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 474–5 and Anne Stott, *Wilberforce: Family and Friends* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 33.

<sup>108</sup> Norman John Greville Pounds, "A History of the English Parish : The culture of religion from Augustine to Victoria," (2000): 191. Dogs were common church attendees. Dog-whippers traditionally used long sticks with leather strips attached to the end such as the one Jane is depicted holding.

line. The representation grants Jane a significant amount of power, highlighted further through the physicality of her herding dogs out amongst the multitude of static figures. Jane is not only active in her (political) participation, but the most active figure in the composition. The term, ‘whipper-in’ began to be used in late eighteenth-century political discourse, having originated from the hunting expression for the ‘huntsman’s assistant who keeps the hounds from straying by driving them back with the whip into the main body of the pack’.<sup>109</sup> Rowlandson’s print draws on these hunting references. Jane is not frantically chasing the dogs out of church, but is controlling the herd, a further indication that she is represented as a whipper-in. While this portrayal is not meant to be complimentary to Jane or her faction, Wraxall was positive in his memoirs when he recalls that she ‘even acted as *whipper-in* of ministers’, though his phrasing indicates that it was unusual for a woman to have this position.<sup>110</sup> Although Jane, like the Duchess of Rutland, was known as a dedicated Pittite, it is difficult to locate sources supporting Wraxall’s claim of her having a party role beyond her gendered position as hostess. Figure 3.10, however, offers a visual testament which supports his assertion of Jane acting as the party whip. Rowlandson’s print was published in 1787, around the same year as *Alexander, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Gordon with his Family* (figure 3.4) was painted and in the same year as *The Increasing Grandeur of the British Nation* (figure 3.9) was published, both which flattered Jane’s role as a Scot, mother, and patriot. However, Rowlandson’s print, as one of the first political caricatures of Jane, questioned if her patriotism, like her maternity, could run into extremes, and positioned her as powerful force behind the Pittites.

Before she drew public interest as a matchmaker, Jane first attracted attention for her close proximity to Pitt through acting as his hostess. While a hostess proved to be an essential tool for the opposition due to their minority in Parliament, the threat that the Regency Crisis posed to Pitt’s ministry put the majority faction in a similar position, increasing the necessity of having a Pittite hostess with an ‘open’ house for the party to meet in.<sup>111</sup> Jane’s role proved to be pivotal during the Regency

<sup>109</sup> “Whipper-‘in, n.”, OED Online. September 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/228426> (accessed September 22, 2016).

<sup>110</sup> Wraxall and Wheatley, *Memoirs*, 267.

<sup>111</sup> Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 109.

Crisis, as demonstrated by Wilberforce's numerous reluctant visits to Jane's house in 1789. In November 1788 George III fell ill with what was assumed to be insanity, prompting a dispute as to who should rule as regent: Queen Charlotte or the opposition-supporting, Prince of Wales. The event prompted accusations by the Foxites of Pitt and the queen taking advantage of the king's illness to rule in his absence.<sup>112</sup> One of the prints that visualised this accusation was *A Coronation in Pall Mall* (figure 3.11) by a satirist who worked under the initials, H.W. The print represents Pitt seated in the centre of the composition. He turns his head toward Jane who is represented in a dress reminiscent of those worn at court. She crowns him with a chamber pot while a male and female figure on either side attempt to stop this twisted coronation. Jane, as the officiant of the ceremony, proclaims, 'Hail King of Strathbogy! Petty France, Bridle Lane, and the Kingdom of Kew!', making references to scatology, the queen, and petticoat influence, as she places the article for bodily waste on his head. The chamber pot, and likewise, the spectators' reaction to Jane crowning Pitt with it, indicates the foolishness of garnering Pitt with more power. The print continues the narrative of Jane's domineering behaviour that appeared in both Rowlandson's 1787 print (figure 3.10) and the Darlys's 1775 print (figure 3.1), and would be maintained in the graphic satires commenting on her daughter's marriages. While the Darlys satirised how this behaviour affected the Gordons' private marriage, Rowlandson's and H.W.'s prints (figures 3.10 and 3.11) suggest that, as with her husband, Jane could also steer the men in her political faction according to her whims. The lengthy caption located below the image elaborates on the scene. Written in the style of the official published reports on the king's health, it describes Jane's day:

PALL MALL JAN. 16. 1789. After eating a haggas for supper, her Grace slept well – woke refreshed, and eat [*sic*] a hearty breakfast, with good proportion of lacing to her tea – grew afterwards disturb 'd – on Pit's entering the room, discharg'd an utensil (she lately us'd) full in his face, but recollected herself soon after, and ask'd if he could like where it came from - fix'd

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<sup>112</sup> The Regency Crisis will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

furiously the vessel on his head – said the crown was empty, and he should have it.<sup>113</sup>

*A Coronation in Pall Mall* uses the lengthy narrative at the bottom of the print to humorously describe Jane adding liquor to her tea and then becoming eccentric. The excerpt underlines the perceived corruption of the Pittites during the Regency Crisis by also exposing their prominent members' personal corruptions. It focuses on their primary hostess, the Duchess of Gordon, by accusing her of heavy alcohol consumption and likening her alcohol-induced behaviour to the king's publicised mental breakdowns. By spotlighting Jane's alleged involvement, and indeed, parallel behaviour to the king, this print situates Jane as a politically-inscribed individual – one who not only uses soft manoeuvres of marriage brokering to gain political agency, but one whose footing is firmly rooted in the heart of the action.

References to alcohol in Jane's satirical portrayals became prevalent after the publication of *A Coronation in Pall Mall* (figure 3.11). Later in 1789, when *Scotch Wedding* (figure 3.5) was published, a 'Scotch Pint' was represented next to Jane bagpiping during her daughter's marriage. Williams's *A Racket at a Rout* (figure 3.8), like *A Coronation in Pall Mall*, also credited Jane's bad behaviour to intoxication. Jane's alcohol consumption would also become the focus of a later print, *The Triumph of Bacchus or a Consultation on the Additional Wine Duty!!!* (figure 3.12) created by Isaac Cruikshank in 1796. It adopts a similar layout to *A Coronation in Pall Mall*: Pitt is represented in the centre sitting astride a wine tun and has donkey ears and laurels, iconography associated with the mythical king, Midas. His two drinking companions are represented on either side of him: Dundas is seated on the right and Jane is standing in a revealing gown with a tartan sash to his left. She gulps wine from a glass with a crown engraved on it whilst emptying a tun labelled 'Gordon's Entire'. The print was a response to the new wine duty, one of Pitt's measures to balance the country's budget. The three are represented singing a song from Kane O'Hara's popular burletta, *Midas* (1762): 'oh the Tremendous Justice Midas, Oh what a God is Justice Midas, Who dare oppose wise Justice

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<sup>113</sup> For example: 'Kew Palace, Jan 3. His Majesty passed the Day quietly Yesterday, but became disturbed in the Evening. His Majesty has had a very good Night, and is calm this Morning' (*St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* 1–3 January 1789).

Midas'.<sup>114</sup> The donkey ears equate Pitt to the corrupt justice from the mock-opera who was turned into the animal by Apollo as a punishment.<sup>115</sup> Cruikshank's print exposes the seeming hypocrisy of the duty; both Pitt and Dundas had reputations as drinkers, particularly when together. Although this was not viewed as normally impairing their abilities to work, opposition press admonished the two men when they came into the Commons still noticeably intoxicated in February 1793.<sup>116</sup> Pitt and Dundas's love of drink likely influenced Jane's satirical characterisation as she increasingly became linked to them socially. Although, as Wilberforce's diary indicates, meetings at her home often included (in his opinion) copious amounts of alcohol, William Hague notes that one of 'rare' occasions where a night spent with Jane and Dundas impaired Pitt's parliamentary abilities occurred when he gave a poor speech in March 1788 and then failed to defend himself against Fox.<sup>117</sup> On one hand, the representation of Jane as a drinking companion to Pitt and Dundas builds upon the *triumvirate* trope by suggesting that Jane was perceived as an equal by her two male friends. On the other hand, heavy drinking was a contradiction to perceptions surrounding virtuous maternity which were expressed in Jane's portrait (figure 3.3) and, as shall be discussed further, her social rank.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to underlining the trope of heavy drinking, Cruikshank highlights both Jane's and Dundas's Scottish identity through the tartan clothing that they both wear and the blue scotch bonnet on Dundas's head.<sup>119</sup> The emphasis on their Scottish origins in a print centring on wine consumption suggests that there was a common

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<sup>114</sup> M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Vol. 7*, vol. 7 (London: The British Museum, 1942), 248. In Pitt's budget speech on 18 April 1796 he announced an additional duty of £20 a tun (6d. a bottle).

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>116</sup> Hague, *William Pitt the Younger*, 220–1.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 247. The speech was regarding the India Declaratory Bill. The satirical print, *Auspicium Melioris Aevi* (17 March 1788) published by SW Fores, lampooned Pitt for being impeded by his hangover.

<sup>118</sup> Additionally, Rosalind Carr notes that heavy drinking was engendered in male sociability and women only tended to drink alcohol in mixed sex company; see Carr, *Gender and Enlightenment Culture*, 117–22. A visual example of the connections between bad maternity and alcohol can be found in William Hogarth's well-known print, *Gin Lane* (1751), which represents a mother of low-class origins unaware that she has dropped her infant due to intoxication. See, Fiona Haslam, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson: Medicine in art in eighteenth-century Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 119 for a further discussion on the print and the gendered and social associations of drinking.

<sup>119</sup> For an overview of tartan and identity in portraiture, see Vicky Coltman, "Party-coloured plaid? Portraits of Eighteenth-Century Scots in Tartan," *Textile History* 41, no. 2 (2010).

cultural link between the two. This connection is also indicated by the ‘Scotch Pint’ represented next to Jane in *Scotch Wedding* (figure 3.5). While these tropes could be linked to personal associations regarding Jane and Dundas’s drinking habits, an earlier print, the c. 1787 droll by Robert Dighton, *Hooly and Fairly* (figure 3.13), indicates that it was more likely an ethnic stereotype, playing on Scots as lowly and uncivilised people.<sup>120</sup> The central figure is an old and unattractive male who wears both the tartan sash and blue bonnet that Cruikshank depicted Jane and Dundas respectively wearing in his print. The figure holds a small tankard that gin was commonly served in and smokes a pipe.<sup>121</sup> The ballad underneath contains his lament that his wife drinks gin ‘hooly and fairly’ which impedes upon his own drinking. She is represented in the background leaning against a fence and smiling at a tankard that she raises in her left hand. Another empty bottle lies at her feet. Dighton’s print exemplifies the negative association between Scots and drinking, which contributed in facilitating the image of Jane’s fondness for alcohol in satirical prints, and furthermore, present her as a problematic figure to the print-viewing public.

Though these prints are critical of alcohol consumption, they must be approached with the understanding of contemporary late eighteenth-century drinking culture. Hague argues that outlooks on alcohol were more ‘liberal’ than those of today, but heavy drinking was still considered to be an unattractive trait, particularly for elite figures. Jane herself criticised an associate of her husband by commenting that he ‘drinks as much as the prince of Wales’ – a known drinker.<sup>122</sup> In his historiography of alcohol, James Nicholls highlights how the gin craze early in the century birthed negative associations with drinking and specifically, public drunkenness, which in turn, provided another means of reinforcing social hierarchies. Excessive and public drinking was viewed as a way of distinguishing the lower orders from polite society.<sup>123</sup> This is perpetuated in visual culture such as *Hooly and Fairly*, which portrays its Scottish subjects as gin drinkers and, as indicated by the

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<sup>120</sup> The rural setting was another trope, Scots in satirical prints were often portrayed as having rural or highland origins; see Moores, *Representations of France*, 194–6.

<sup>121</sup> George, *Catalogue*, Vol. 6, 6, 453.

<sup>122</sup> Hague, *William Pitt the Younger*, 220. Gordon and Guild, *Autobiographical Chapter*, 6. Jane Gordon to Francis Farquharson, 2 November 1804. The Prince of Wales was known for his excesses in eating and drinking.

<sup>123</sup> Nicholls, *Politics of Alcohol*, 51. See also Haslam, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson*, 119.

male figure's ragged gloves, impecunious. Heavy drinkers were generally associated with figures on the peripheries of society who should be lambasted and lampooned for their reliance on drink. In addition to this cultural view of drinking, in late-eighteenth-century scientific fields, links between alcohol and disease advanced that are similar to our modern concepts of alcoholism.<sup>124</sup> So whilst a public figure's fondness for alcohol may not have been a launching point for criticism, it was still a point of contention which demonstrated a personal flaw, and therefore was an avenue for censure.

Jane featured in another print that typified her as drinker in 1797. Richard Newton's *Cries of London* (figure 3.14) was a series of three sheets rendering political figures as street hawkers. Jane shares her section of the satirical triptych with Edmund Burke who sells 'old Shillelees' and 'Irish Brogues' (cudgels and shoes), the Duke of Queensbury who sells ballads, and the Duke of Bedford who peddles the tails of Bedfordshire bulls.<sup>125</sup> Jane is represented with a bottle of 'Gordon Whiskey' in her left hand and holds a full glass in her right. 'Who buys, Who buys my Scotch Whiskey as delicious as Cherry Bounce! G-don's Elixir of Life, only a penny a glass' she yells. While Cruikshank represents her as relatively slender in his print, created in the previous year (figure 3.12), Newton explicitly portrays Jane as heavysset to elicit disgust from viewers.<sup>126</sup> Notably, Newton employs ethnic stereotypes in his representation of Burke, highlighting his Irish identity through his wares, indicating that, once again, the association of Jane and drinking is forged from her Scottish background and is further emphasised through her hawking 'Scotch Whiskey'. There is little evidence outside of satirical prints that Jane drank too much by contemporary standards; sharp critics such as Pigott and Lady Louisa fail to mention Jane's drinking habits, and Jane reported that her collection of wine and spirits at Kinrara in 1804 were 'not half drunk' after what she claims to have been at

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<sup>124</sup> Nicholls, *Politics of Alcohol*, 59–65, 59–65.

<sup>125</sup> Queensbury is dressed as a woman due to ballad-singers and sellers often being female. As discussed earlier, Bedford was often associated with bulls due to his activity in bovine husbandry. The other sheets portray figures such as Pitt, Fox, Dundas, Lady Archer, and Lady Buckinghamshire (formerly Albinia Hobart).

<sup>126</sup> This chapter follows the same framework regarding the fat female body as presented in Chapter 2.

least a year after purchase.<sup>127</sup> If the duchess's association with alcohol consumption was based upon tropes relating to her Scottishness then it proved to be a site of loaded meaning, specifically in connection with her political activities. While this chapter has addressed how her Scottishness was highlighted in satirical prints, it will now turn to discussing how this identity was, like her gender, linked to perceptions of the political interloper.

Jane's Scottish identity was first highlighted in Hinck's complimentary print, *The Increasing Grandeur of the British Nation* (figure 3.9) and later in the less flattering political satires, *A Coronation in Pall Mall* (figure 3.11) and Cruikshank's *The Triumph of Bacchus* (figure 3.12). Figure 3.11 does so through the caption, mockingly narrating that Jane ate 'a haggas for supper', while figure 3.12 uses visual devices by representing Jane wearing a tartan sash. This sartorial detail visually linked Jane to Dundas, whom Cruikshank represented in a matching tartan waistcoat. Scottish identity is highlighted further through Dundas's blue bonnet, a trope also utilised in Dighton's stereotypical representation of an intoxicated Scotsman (figure 3.13). In his examination of Scots in political prints of the long eighteenth century, Pentland argues that the blue bonnet predates tartan as an identifier of Scots in visual culture.<sup>128</sup> Jane's national identity was often alluded to through sartorial details such as a tartan sash in prints such as *The Triumph of Bacchus*, *The Gordon Knot* (figure 3.6), and *A Racket at a Rout* (figure 3.8), or a blue bonnet in Williams's satirical prints (figures 3.7 and 3.8). Such sartorial details were included to help viewers identify figures in the print, but they also emphasised Jane's Scottishness as a rationale for her behaviour. As Coltman argues, tartan had cultural currency as a 'contraband cloth', conveying notions of the rebellious Scot or rugged Highlander who resisted assimilation into British culture.<sup>129</sup> These associations with tartan accorded with the domineering and contentious character satirical printmakers assigned to Jane. Pentland's chronological exploration of the representation of Scots

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<sup>127</sup> Gordon and Guild, *Autobiographical Chapter*, 4. Jane Gordon to Francis Farquharson, 10 October 1804.

<sup>128</sup> Pentland, "We Speak for the Ready," 69. For a further discussion on how articles of women's clothing and accessories were politicised see, Elaine Chalus, "Fanning the Flames: Women, Fashion, and Politics," in *Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Tiffany Potter (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

<sup>129</sup> Coltman, "Party-coloured plaid," 183. Chalus has also written on dress articles inscribed with political meaning, see Chalus, "Fanning the Flames," 92–112.



in English satirical prints documents the common iconography of Scottishness and how these built upon pre-existing tropes which contributed to, what Pentland argues, was the creation of the Scot as ‘Other’.<sup>130</sup> Lord Bute’s close relationship with the king and unpopularity with politicians, the press, and the public had cultivated the concept of ‘Scottish influence’, a closeness to political leaders, usually obtained through sycophancy, granting the Scot the ability to manipulate them. Scottish politicians, namely Bute and Dundas, were imbued with a visual narrative which presented them as deceitful interlopers – as unnatural and cumbersome figures in the political landscape.<sup>131</sup> The threat of the Scottish politician was not necessarily that they had access to politics; rather, it was their perceived inexplicable influence within politics.

Political prints featuring Jane arguably treated her in the same fashion as Bute and Dundas, accusing her of having ‘Scottish influence’ over the prime minister through her role as Pittite hostess. Connotations of meddling or influence surrounded the role of the political hostess through the hostess’s close proximity to powerful politicians. Prints articulated these concerns over the dual avenues of Jane’s influence in terms of her closeness with Pitt and her perceived predisposition toward political corruption as a Scot. For example, *Coronation in Pall Mall* (figure 3.11), represents the duchess as boldly crowning a bewildered Pitt in front of two scandalised spectators, encouraging him to become regent. The threat of her influence was more subtly articulated in other prints merely by pairing the two

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<sup>130</sup> Pentland, "We Speak for the Ready," 66–95. This iconography developed organically, first rising out of anxiety surrounding Jacobitism and mass Scottish immigration into England, and afterward, the distrust of Scottish Prime Minister, Lord Bute’s perceived influence over George III in the wake of the ‘45 uprisings. By the time that Dundas came into political prominence in Pitt’s ministry, he received the same treatment as Bute, with Pentland arguing that “‘Scottish influence’ retained a prominent if diminished place in political prints’ of the 1780s (ibid., 84). Dundas’s friendship with Pitt, success in politics, and tendency to get fellow Scots Parliamentary positions, cultivated his portrayal in satirical prints as sycophantic, servile, and avaricious, except when it came to helping his fellow countrymen, in which case, he was portrayed as eager to elevate fellow Scots. Much of his treatment in satirical prints echoed that of Bute. For an abridged survey of the Jacobite movement and its cultural outputs see, Daniel Szechi, "The Jacobite Movement," in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. H. T. Dickinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006); Murray Pittock, "The Culture of Jacobitism," in *Culture and Society in Britain, 1660-1800*, ed. Jeremy Black (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); and Richard Sharp, *The Engraved Record of the Jacobite Movement* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996).

<sup>131</sup> See Brewer, "Misfortunes of Lord Bute," Brewer argues that ‘hostility to the Scots and opposition to Bute worked in tandem; Bute’s conduct was used to confirm the popular conception of the Scots, and the prevailing view of the Scots was used to belabour Bute’ (ibid., 21).

powerful elected officials with Jane, such as *The Triumph of Bacchus* (figure 3.12). Although Jane's home and her hostessing skills were used in service to the Government, it is apparent that she was perceived to have reigned at these functions, rather than taking an auxiliary role. Wraxall recalled that through 'her rank, her sex, and personal attractions, she ventured to send for members of parliament; to question, to remonstrate, and to use every means for confirming the adherence to government'.<sup>132</sup> Her success in this realm meant that Jane would, in the tradition of Bute and Dundas, face accusations of having undue influence in print media with Pigott commenting that her 'influence is [...] great'.<sup>133</sup> Even her former servant wrote that she 'acquired no small influence over the administration of Mr. Pitt', though he credited it to her 'her extraordinary personal attractions, her high mental qualifications, and her splendid entertainments'.<sup>134</sup> What we can glean from these accounts is that Jane excelled in her post as hostess by virtue of her charisma and character. However, this role, as well as her status as a Scot, garbed Jane in two identities that were strongly associated with outsiders gaining access to politics, and relied on their charisma to do so.

Jane's close proximity to Pitt was highlighted in another print that, like *Coronation in Pall Mall* (figure 3.11), was a product of the Regency Crisis. Thomas Rowlandson's *The Hospital for Lunatics* (figure 3.15), published on 7 February 1789, represents a doctor visiting three mad patients chained to a wall under the label, 'INCURABLES'. The doctor is depicted saying, 'I see no signs of Convalescence' and followed by an attendant who replies, 'No damme, they must be all in a state of Coercion'. The first figure is Pitt who now sits upon the chamber pot Jane crowned him with in Cruikshank's print (figure 3.11). He wears a crown crafted from sticks. A label above him reads 'went mad supposing himself next heir to a Crown'. Next to him is the Duke of Richmond, who plays with toy cannons under the label, 'went mad in the Study of Fortification'. Lastly, Jane is shown huddled in a space to the far right and itching her breast under the label 'Driven mad by a Political itching', indicating that her attraction to politics has driven her to an agitated mental

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<sup>132</sup> Wraxall and Wheatley, *Memoirs*, 267.

<sup>133</sup> Pigott, *Female Jockey Club*, 55.

<sup>134</sup> D'amour, *Memoirs*, 156.

state. In contrast to the previous prints examined, this is a gendered attack highlighting the perceived unnaturalness of women's political engagement as articulated through Jane 'itching', or, longing for politics. It suggests that she had attracted notice for her successes in hostessing during the crisis and was now perceived as a threat by Foxite print media. *The Hospital for Lunatics* was one of many Foxite prints that championed the Prince of Wales's bid as Regent by vilifying Pitt and his supporters' efforts to prevent the prince from becoming regent. Jane's inclusion identifies her as a prominent supporter of the prime minister and asserts that she is overstepping gendered boundaries in her politicking.

The British Museum's version of *The Hospital for Lunatics* shares its sheet, with *Britannia's Support or the Conspirators Defeated* (figure 3.15), which represents the Prince of Wales shielding Britannia from Pitt, who wields an axe, Richmond, who leans against a cannon and shoots a musket, and the former Prime Minister, the Duke of Grafton, who brandishes a dagger and a conspirator's lantern. Notably, both Pitt and Richmond appear in *The Hospital for Lunatics*, which is located below *Britannia's Support*, establishing that Rowlandson is presenting a 'before and after' narrative.<sup>135</sup> The preliminary pen and ink sketch of *Hospital for Lunatics* (figure 3.16) held in the Wellcome Collection reveals that originally, a man, presumably Grafton, was represented in the part of the composition that Jane occupies in the final print.<sup>136</sup> The change of the figure from Grafton to Jane by the time Rowlandson committed the image to plate suggests that Jane had gained enough political currency during the crisis to warrant the compositional modification. Recalling that her services as a hostess were essential during the Regency Crisis, Jane's visibility increased and, consequently, drew more attention to her political influence. Her name appears in several correspondences during the crisis, often relaying accounts of her admonishing those she felt were disloyal to the crown. Lady

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<sup>135</sup> This was not an uncommon practice, particularly during the Regency Crisis. See *The Restricted Regency* and *The Free Regency*, 1789 (figures 4.8 and 4.9).

<sup>136</sup> In the drawing, he holds an iron and the caption above his wigged head reads 'went mad and fancied himself a Taylor's goose'. A tailor's goose was a nickname for an iron. Richmond and Grafton appeared in other prints accusing Pitt of wanting sovereign power during the Regency Crisis such as *King Pitt* (29 December 1788, British Museum) which represents Pitt standing upon the two men in order to reach a crown on a high shelf. A tailor's goose appears in between the two men in this print, as well. Grafton was a supporter of Pitt during the Regency Crisis. George, *Catalogue*, Vol. 6, 6, 534–5.

Harcourt's diary in an entry on 7 January 1789, wrote that the Duke of York, who firmly supported the prince, and Jane 'have had a great quarrel, but it is made up again; she told him that he and the Prince of Wales were playing for kingdoms, whilst those into whose hands they had thrown themselves could only lose straws'.<sup>137</sup> In addition to hosting nightly meetings, Jane reportedly 'whipped' those who did not come to her house and reproved 'a certain nobleman before his lordship was out of bed, purposely to upbraid him for his disloyalty and abandonment of his friends' when he either refrained from voting or voted against Pitt.<sup>138</sup> Accounts of Jane's activities and satirical representations increased her association with politics during a highly polemical crisis. Significantly, it is through these visual forms of print media that her engagement with politics during the crisis is criticised. *The Hospital for Lunatics* (figure 3.15) and *A Coronation in Pall Mall* (figure 3.11) both accuse Jane of taking advantage of the crisis of state to expand the breadth of her political agency. While *The Hospital for Lunatics* accuses Jane of crossing gender boundaries *A Coronation in Pall Mall* underlines her Scottish identity, prompting its associations with undue influence. In this sense, an iconographic narrative was woven in Regency Crisis prints, proclaiming Jane's political currency to be transgressive in terms her gender, but more substantially, through her nationality.

Jane's last satirical representation was published in 1806. After having successfully married off all her daughters, the duchess was conspicuously absent from London society and living on a meagre allowance from her husband in rented hotels in London and Edinburgh and in her remote Highland cottage, Kinrara.<sup>139</sup> Despite this relative silence in society, she featured in a print commenting on Scottish corruption in the government. *Caledonia Triumphant* (figure 3.17) represents Jane marching outside of Westminster while playing the bagpipes. She is followed by two men in kilts, tartan stockings, and audaciously plumed blue bonnets, one of whom carries the other on his shoulders. The rider is Dundas, now Lord Melville, who waves his hat excitedly and cries, 'Huzza! Huzza! We have sous'd

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<sup>137</sup> Edward William Harcourt, *The Harcourt Papers, Vol 4 Part 1*, 13 vols. (Oxford: Printed for private circulation by J. Parker and Co., 1880), 147–8, 147–8.

<sup>138</sup> D'amour, *Memoirs*, 156.

<sup>139</sup> See Gordon and Guild, *Autobiographical Chapter* and Baird, *Mistress of the House*, 228.

[drenched] em in their awn brewing – the Deel [Devil] bung up the Gang for me!’<sup>140</sup> The younger man carrying him is Alexander Trotter, who happily exclaims, ‘Deel a my Scuil [skull?] Mon but we’ve dish’d em completely’. The heavy Scots vernacular indicates that the two men are celebrating a successful deception, most likely, Melville’s victory in his impeachment trial as First Lord of the Admiralty. The trial against Melville was called after it was revealed that there were some irregular financial dealings, but suspicion eventually shifted to Trotter, the navy paymaster. Both men managed to escaped conviction.<sup>141</sup> As this controversy had no direct connection to Jane, it appears that she only features in the print due to her shared national identity with Melville and Trotter. This visual treatment likens Jane to a twisted allegory for Scottish political corruption. In her discussion of female allegory in satirical prints, Rauser has argued that during the 1784 Westminster election, Foxite-backed satirists would make affirming images of the Duchess of Devonshire as an allegory in order to redeem her reputation after being heavily criticised in print media. Rauser argues that while the duchess was presented with the veneer of virtue, this representation made her a hollow vessel, robbed of individuality.<sup>142</sup> While this iconographic treatment was applied to Jane in *The Increasing Grandeur of the British Nation* (figure 3.9), her allegorical representation in *Caledonia Triumphant* not only robs her of her character and agency, but represents her as corrupt, exploiting her visual representation further. The female allegorical iconography is polluted in rendering Jane as buxomly obese rather than the comely and idealised representation found in traditional iconography. While Jane’s weight-gain in her later life could account for this styling, her exaggerated corporality corrupts the allegorical female form, thereby designating Jane as depraved as her flawed body.<sup>143</sup> Since Jane spent nearly the last decade of her life away from politics, her inclusion in the print appears to be solely on the basis of her Scottish nationality. The continued anxiety surrounding ‘Scottish influence’ and its association with corruption in the government, as displayed in *Caledonia Triumphant*, indicates why such an emphasis

<sup>140</sup> With thanks to Dr Catriona Murray for her help in dialectic deciphering.

<sup>141</sup> Michael Fry, "Dundas, Henry, first Viscount Melville (1742-1811)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>142</sup> Rauser, "Butcher-Kissing Duchess," 37–42.

<sup>143</sup> Gordon recorded in 1799 that Jane was ‘somewhat above the middle size, very finely shaped, though now considerably *embonpoint* (Gordon, *Public Characters*, 519).

was put on Jane's Scottishness in satirical prints from the late 1780s to the early 1800s.

As scholars such as Pentland, and John Richard Moores have attested, the Scot in graphic satires was presented as 'Other' to an 'English-Britishness' ethnocentricity.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, Chapter 2 of this thesis follows McCreery's argument, maintaining that elite women, particularly when perceived to be crossing gender boundaries, were ostracised in prints.<sup>145</sup> Therefore Jane's two most distinguishing attributes also those that are most criticised in graphic satires. These points inevitably facilitate questions regarding Jane's treatment in print media in comparison to her widely-researched, perceived rival and political counterpart, the Duchess of Devonshire. In addition to their gender and social status, the two women shared gendered political roles within their respective factions, but the Duchess of Devonshire was English. The abundant scholarship analysing the criticism against the Duchess of Devonshire during the 1784 Westminster election has detailed how Pittite print media targeted her new maternal status and attractive appearance to form a narrative of unnatural elite female behaviour.<sup>146</sup> Jane, on the other hand, was criticised in political prints for drinking and infiltrating the political system through friendships which was presented as an attribute of her Scottish identity. While the association of the servile, avaricious, resourceful, and sycophantic Scot may have germinated through print media accounts of Bute, it perpetuated as Dundas distinguished himself politically. Upon becoming more publicly visible in London, Jane too, received the same iconographic treatment. While this Scottish-centric criticism culminated from clichés rather than her actions, it is significant to note that in receiving the same treatment as figures like Bute and Dundas in her satirical representations, Jane was being equated to powerful enfranchised males. These satirical prints firmly categorise Jane as a political player, despite her sex. Though they present her as a political figure, is not Jane's gender that poses the biggest threat to socio-political strictures, but her nationality.

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<sup>144</sup> Pentland, "We Speak for the Ready," 65 and Moores, *Representations of France*, 196–8.

<sup>145</sup> McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 115–84.

<sup>146</sup> Stott, "Female Patriotism,"; Foreman, "Politician's Politician," 184–7; Chalus, "Kisses for Votes," 122–47 and Lewis, "1784 and All That," 90–122.

## Conclusion

‘This buxom Caledonian dame reminds us very much of the Bacchantes described by the Ancients, nor do her manners in any respect belye [*sic*] what her appearance announces’.<sup>147</sup> Pigott’s opening sentence to his scathing profile of Jane, Duchess of Gordon, in *The Female Jockey Club* (1794) divulges a cultural association between visual appearance and behaviour. He lists these unwanted traits as: ‘a contempt for all the settled rules of etiquette; convivial freedom, and an unrestrained indulgence of her own genuine feelings’.<sup>148</sup> Pigott is hyperbolic in his physiognomic belief that these definitive characterisations were readable from Jane’s outward appearance. However, his list accurately summarises what much of the visual culture surrounding Jane asserted: namely that Jane was an overweight, aggressive, and unrestrained Scotswoman with a penchant for alcohol. A close study of such images of Jane reveals how her appearance, and likewise personality, was manufactured and politicised by herself, her family, as well as satirical printmakers.

While the last section of this study explicitly dealt with political prints – graphic satires pertaining to the polity or elected figures – the majority of the images under investigation throughout this chapter politicised the duchess in a variety of ways. Firstly, Jane’s representation in familial portraiture was a means for presenting a flattering likeness of her and thus building a good reputation in society. This method’s fallibility however, is evidenced by the increased print media attention Jane received during her daughters’ courtships which presented her as a monstrous mother while concurrently demonstrates the importance of maintaining a good social reputation. The satirical prints inspired by these courtships, while not explicit, betray an anxiety surrounding the new alliances Jane brokered with her matchmaking, chiefly by commenting upon it. The Gordon daughters’ marriages linked together powerful political families, transforming natal Gordons into mistresses of dukedoms, matriarchs of military families, and wives of active politicians, and thereby giving

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<sup>147</sup> Pigott, *Female Jockey Club*, 49.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

other members of this expanded family access to nepotistic opportunities. Furthermore, the significance print media placed on these courtships becomes more pertinent when we consider that Jane was represented in only two more graphic satires (figures 3.17 and 3.18) after her last daughter, Georgina, was married in 1803. Jane's decreased visibility in prints signals that her political currency also decreased after her daughters were married and thus demonstrates the potency of matchmaking as a form of female political agency.

In addition to Jane's visibility as a 'hymeneal negotriatrix', she simultaneously began appearing in satirical prints commenting on her role as a Pittite political hostess. These more explicitly political prints, specifically labelled her as a political player through her close proximity to Pitt. In doing so, they participated in tropes surrounding Scots in politics that had been building ever since Lord Bute's prominence in government, proliferating stereotypes of Scots using sycophantism in order to make political, social, and economic progressions. Although the Duchess of Gordon has not received as much scholarly attention as her factional counterpart, the Duchess of Devonshire, her representation in visual culture attests to her significance in eighteenth-century political society. These images offer a case study of visual representation both in Jane's control and outside of it.



## Chapter 4

### Queen Charlotte's Nadir: Representations of a queen in a time of madness

In the histories of 'political' queens of Britain, many would fail to place Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, queen consort to George III, among them. Her two predecessors: Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha (Princess of Wales and mother to George III) and Queen Caroline of Ansbach (Queen Consort to George II) on the other hand, have been described as such by both their contemporaries and historians, and that is perhaps one of the reasons that Charlotte strove for an apolitical queenship.<sup>1</sup> However, as this chapter argues, halfway through her reign (1761–1818) she was widely seen not only to wield political power but to actively seek it.

Queen Charlotte has garnered little scholarly attention by present-day historians, and likewise, her imagery is in significant need of review. Clarissa Campbell Orr has led the way in contemporary scholarship on Charlotte, first publishing in 2002 on her patronage in botany and in 2004 on her correspondence with her brothers and what it could reveal about her self-identity as German.<sup>2</sup> Since Orr's 2002 publication on her patronage in botany, the few secondary works on

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<sup>1</sup> For Charlotte's two predecessors' political agency and its reception see, John L. Bullion, "'To play what game she pleased without observation': Princess Augusta and the political drama of succession, 1736–56," in *Queenship in Britain, 1660-1837: Royal patronage, court culture, and dynastic politics*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) and Lucy Worsley, *The Courtiers: Splendor and intrigue in the Georgian Court at Kensington Palace* (New York: Walker & Co., 2010)

<sup>2</sup> Clarissa Campbell Orr has written extensively on Queen Charlotte, providing the most recent studies of the queen, with particular emphasis on patronage and German dynastic links. See Clarissa Campbell Orr, "Queen Charlotte, 'Scientific Queen'," in *Queenship in Britain, 1660-1837: Royal patronage, court culture, and dynastic politics*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) and "Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Queen of Great Britain and Electress of Hanover: Northern dynasties and the Northern Republic of Letters," in *Queenship in Europe, 1660-1815: The role of the consort*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Orr has also contributed ODNB's excerpt for Charlotte, see "Charlotte [Queen of Great Britain] (1744–1818)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Charlotte have also focused on her as a patron.<sup>3</sup> Marcia Pointon is one of the few scholars to investigate Charlotte's visual representation; a chapter in her book, *Brilliant Effects* (2009) explores the cultural significance of jewellery and its role in the construction of a queen, as exemplified through Charlotte.<sup>4</sup> This research has resulted in an affirming historiography of Queen Charlotte, indicating that she was, according to Linda Colley, a 'totem of morality' to her eighteenth-century subjects.<sup>5</sup> Scholars such as Colley have interpreted Charlotte as a scandal-free and benevolent queen, a foil to her extravagant French counterpart, Marie Antoinette. This direction has led to other eighteenth-century scholars such as Cindy McCreery, to widely accept that throughout her reign Charlotte was beloved by her people and looked upon as a paradigm of ideal femininity. However these studies do not account for why many British citizens refused to mourn Charlotte's death in 1818, with a Richmond pastor even refusing to publically acknowledge her passing to his congregation.<sup>6</sup> This chapter aims to unearth the representation behind the derision of this consort through visual culture.

Before this body of post-1990 scholarship, one scholar acknowledges Charlotte's disfavour. Michael Levey published *A Royal Subject: Portraits of Queen Charlotte* (1977), a compendious essay on the visual representations of Charlotte in painted portraiture. While the work is a brief survey of a selection of the queen's visual representations throughout her life, Levey's language indicates that his readers have preconceived notions of Charlotte being a negative historic figure. He argues (somewhat subjectively) that through the painted medium 'emerge[s] the outlines of a life, and intimations of a personality, remaining otherwise dim, dull, even forbidding and more than faintly disagreeable'.<sup>7</sup> His narrative reveals the mutable

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<sup>3</sup> The 2004 Royal Collection exhibition, *George III & Queen Charlotte: Patronage, collecting and court taste* and a corresponding catalogue by Jane Roberts, examined George and Charlotte jointly as patrons of art, See Jane Roberts, *George III & Queen Charlotte : Patronage, collecting and court taste* (London: Royal Collection, 2004). Heidi Strobel's 2011 study examines her as a patron, or as Strobel prefers, as 'matron' of female artists. Heidi Strobel, *The Artistic Matronage of Queen Charlotte (1744-1818) : How a queen promoted both art and female artists in English society* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011). Most recently, Kate Heard's exploration of her cottage at Kew Gardens examines Charlotte's relationship with print collecting and craft production in her private domestic space. Heard, "Print Room," 53–60.

<sup>4</sup> See Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*.

<sup>5</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 268.

<sup>6</sup> Olwen Hedley, *Queen Charlotte* (London: J. Murray, 1975), 300.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Levey, *A Royal Subject : Portraits of Queen Charlotte* (London: National Gallery, 1977), 4.

nature of Charlotte's historiography, and demonstrates that between 1977 and 1992, Charlotte's negative eighteenth-century reputation has been forgotten, or unacknowledged, forming a prevailing narrative of a stoic and enlightened Queen of Great Britain. Pointon has also observed this trend, asserting that 'social historians have sought to establish the court of George III as benefiting from an image of benevolence' and 'have been at pains to deny the King's "miserliness" or Charlotte's "reputation for parsimony"'.<sup>8</sup>

Early biographies of Charlotte also acknowledge a negative legacy. In Walley Chamberlain Oulton's biography of the queen published in 1819, just a year after her death, he uses his introduction to decipher the decrease in her popularity stating that she 'seemed to outlive those people by whom she was thus idolized, and it must be acknowledged that her popularity considerably declined previous to her decease'.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, when Alice Drayton Greenwood chronicled the lives of Hanoverian queens at the turn of the twentieth century she wrote that in Charlotte's later life,

she was spoken of in a grudging manner; the mirth of London was provoked by her presentment in some of the cleverest caricatures of the day, and a kind of tepid unpopularity gathered about her name, destined to be intensified in her old age.<sup>10</sup>

Greenwood acknowledges the depression in Charlotte's popularity, the impact of ageing, and the substantial role graphic culture had in cultivating her negative reputation. Current scholarship however, has not acknowledged this change in Charlotte's reputation. This presents a significant gap in the current understanding of Queen Charlotte, which leads to greater misunderstandings in political culture and the anxieties surrounding elite women, ageing rhetoric, and royalty. By looking at the visual culture associated with Charlotte in her advanced years (1788–1818), this chapter aims to familiarise readers with the queen's contentious reputation. As Charlotte was widely and negatively discussed in the last half of her life, this chapter argues that her transgressions were of cultural concern, and thus, reveal the values and anxieties of late- eighteenth and early- nineteenth-century culture.

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<sup>8</sup> Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*, 196.

<sup>9</sup> Walley Chamberlain Oulton, *Authentic and impartial memoirs of Her Late Majesty, Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland...* (London: J. Robins and Co., Albion Press, 1819), iii–v.

<sup>10</sup> Alice Drayton Greenwood, *Lives of the Hanoverian Queens of England* (London: G. Bell and sons, 1909), 132. Greenwood names Rowlandson and Gillray specifically.

As Katherine Crawford's research on French queens evidences, the circumstances surrounding Charlotte's decline were not singular, there are multiple examples in Western history of foreign-born consorts being scapegoated for political misfortunes.<sup>11</sup> Charlotte's wane in popularity coincided with what Colley has described as an 'apotheosis' in George's popularity in the latter-half of his reign, occurring after his publicised bout of 'madness'.<sup>12</sup> This chapter argues that whilst King George was experiencing his 'apotheosis' in the 1780s onward, Queen Charlotte experienced the nadir of her popularity, as visually documented through contemporary print culture.

This chapter will challenge current scholarship's understanding of the queen and in so doing, further the study of changing anxieties surrounding women in the political sphere in the long eighteenth-century. It will revisit Charlotte's reputation and, through a chronological study of her visual representations, review the aversion to her, probing further than Levey, to pinpoint how it developed and how it was maintained. Through charting Charlotte's painted portraits, allegorical prints and paintings, and satirical prints, it will argue that during periods of her husband's impairment, the Regency Crisis (1788–9) and the Regency (1811–20), Charlotte became viewed as an untrustworthy usurper rather than a benevolent mother, making her a highly abrasive political figure.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, this study adopts Crawford's framework, in which she reveals a 'template', or patterns in contemporary print culture, 'for anyone wishing to publically discipline a queen' by 'educating' the public of the queen's pernicious and deceptive ways.<sup>14</sup> This chapter will do so with a specific study of visual culture, arguing that graphic satires offered a powerful tool in which to 'discipline' a queen through tarnishing her reputation. As will be discussed in greater detail, during the Regency Crisis, the Prince of Wales and the Foxite faction that supported him were at the forefront of disciplining the queen for not supporting the prince's bid as regent, commissioning a series of satirical prints which

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<sup>11</sup> Katherine Crawford, "Constructing Evil Foreign Queens," *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*. 37, no. 2 (2007): 393.

<sup>12</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 212. Colley describes the first half of the king's reign as 'deeply controversial and sometimes unhappy' (ibid., 195, 212).

<sup>13</sup> Although contemporaneously acknowledged as madness, and later identified as Porphyria, a diagnosis now contested, this chapter will refer to George III's disability during these periods simply as an illness due to the ambiguity of the affliction.

<sup>14</sup> Crawford, "Constructing Evil Foreign Queens," 394.

vilified her to the print-consuming public. This event proved to catalyse the queen's reputational demise. An analysis of these visual examples and their adjacency to national and international political events reveals how visual culture continuously built upon negative aspects of Charlotte's actions or assumed characteristics until the once-regaled queen became a distorted characterisation and furthermore, a political and social scapegoat.

### **'In virtue high': Representations pre-1788**

In 1765, after three years on the throne, the king fell victim to a sudden illness which is now understood to have been a precursor for the mental breakdown that brought about the Regency Crisis.<sup>15</sup> Although the attack was fleeting, it prompted the king to visit to the House of Lords in April 1765 and formally recommend a regency bill in case he died during his heir's, the Prince of Wales, minority. Charlotte was named his first choice for regent.<sup>16</sup> During this brief but tumultuous time for the royal family, Johann Zoffany was painting, *Queen Charlotte with her Two Eldest Sons* (figure 4.1). Zoffany represents the twenty-one year-old queen in her private dressing room as she holds court with her toddlers and the family dog, enthroned at her toilet. Pointon asserts that Zoffany's rendering posits Charlotte in an authoritative role, in both a familial and royal sense, one in which she both tames and contains her children, as both effective mother and royal consort, which was an expectation of all British mothers.<sup>17</sup> As motherhood glorified the female sex's contributions to the nation, Charlotte, as the first lady of the nation, did more than follow the moral code of women: she became the exemplar for it through her avoidance of profligate pursuits and her domestic métier. The significance of this painting is heightened

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<sup>15</sup> The 'regency crisis of 1765' has received little scholarly attention but has been detailed in Jarrett 1970. Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter have extensively documented the history of George's illness, see Ida Macalpine and Richard Alfred Hunter, *George III and the Mad-Business* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 95. Charlotte was the king's first choice for regent, however in April 1765 when he proposed this regency bill she was not eligible due to her minority, her twenty-first birthday being on 19 May 1765. If anything happened to George before this date one of the decedents of George II usually resident in Great Britain would be regent. Derek Jarrett, "The Regency Crisis of 1765," LXXXV (1970): 300.

<sup>17</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 164.

further when we take into consideration Pointon's argument that as a conversation piece, *Queen Charlotte with her Two Eldest Sons* represents a 'last will and testament' and was created at a time coinciding with the king formally decreeing a Queen Regent in the case of his sudden death.<sup>18</sup>

Reflecting on Charlotte's life, after her death in 1818, Fanny Burney's niece, Charlotte Barrett, wrote that despite the queen's 'negative qualities' she deserved recognition 'for not having given in to Faro playing when surrounded by all the gambling Duchesses [...] and for not spending & dressing extravagantly when she had power & example to tempt her'.<sup>19</sup> She was a dutiful wife, extremely successful in producing and sustaining children, and was perceived to be happy to take an obsequious place in the patriarchal family structure.<sup>20</sup> Whilst holding court was one of Charlotte's duties that she carried out in earnest, she tended to refrain from public appearances without her husband, seemingly to attend to her calling as a mother. Pointon's discussion of the painting in *Hanging the Head* (1993) highlights how the arrival of the Hanoverians to the British throne brought restricted royal power.<sup>21</sup> Zoffany's portrait echoes this change in power and in taste: 'in depicting Queen Charlotte in her dressing-room, Zoffany offers a view of the queen and her offspring in an apparently spontaneous moment and an informal setting appropriate to George III's court and its authority'.<sup>22</sup> Despite this move to show majesty in an informal and more-relatable projection, Zoffany's painting, Pointon argues, serves a purpose as a 'set of domestic commands for future generations' or a template, in its capacity as a conversation piece.<sup>23</sup> Viewing court-commissioned portraits of Charlotte as a rhetorical 'set of demands' is useful for conceptualising the calculated control over the queen's image, which was perpetuated further by her limited and ritualised public appearances.

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<sup>18</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 161.

<sup>19</sup> BL Egerton Mss. 3703A, ff. 75–6, 2 December 1818.

<sup>20</sup> Charlotte bore fifteen children to George, all but two survived to adulthood.

<sup>21</sup> Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 166. Pointon discusses this limited monarchy in terms of the arrival of George I rather than the Glorious Revolution of 1688, arguing that his accession in 1714, 'further enhanced the authority of parliament [*sic*]'.  
<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 161.

While Zoffany's 1765 portrait of Charlotte encapsulates her maternal virtues, Benjamin West captures the vast range of her admired qualities in his 1779 portrait (figure 4.2), painted fourteen years later. The large-scale *Queen Charlotte*, measures 256.5 x 181.6 cm, and was created as a pendant portrait, paired with West's vision of George in a military uniform (figure 4.3), preparing for a French invasion.<sup>24</sup> The separation of prescribed gendered spheres are separated in a literal sense in West's individualised dual portraits; whilst her husband is depicted nobly defending the country from its traditional enemy, Charlotte is represented indoors as Queen Consort and family matriarch. In the background of *George III*, West incorporates warships and British soldiers as a reminder of the king's prowess as the imperial leader. Charlotte's portrait, on the other hand, reminds viewers of her gendered achievements by displaying a window in view of her thirteen children assembled in front of Windsor Castle.<sup>25</sup> She is not depicted in full dress but in a more informal day dress, once again drawing connotations of the domestic space. However, her pillar-like posturing connotes her royal status while also participating in the glorification of the consort as a site of fertility and duty.<sup>26</sup> Print media perpetuated Charlotte's emblematic morality in the first half of George's reign.<sup>27</sup> During the 1784 Westminster election, a time when elite female canvassers were pilloried by print media, one newspaper reported that,

Her Majesty has all the morning prints at breakfast every day, and the Princesses are permitted to read them. Her eye caught the indecent language of that one which attacked the Duchess of Devonshire. She gave it to an attendant and said, let that paper never more enter the palace doors.<sup>28</sup>

Regardless of the verisimilitude of the account, it evinces the public circulation of the queen's morality in several ways. By reportedly prohibiting a newspaper based on its indecency, the report disseminates the narrative of Charlotte's strict sense of moral decency. Most readers would be familiar with the Duchess of Devonshire's factional association with the opposition, making her a woman who, by canvassing

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<sup>24</sup> Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 464. This invasion was assumed and never actually happened.

<sup>25</sup> Prince Alfred and Princess Amelia were born after the completion of the portrait and therefore were not included.

<sup>26</sup> Colley 1992, 268.

<sup>27</sup> Jeremy Black, *George III: America's last king* (New Haven: New Haven, 2006), 146.

<sup>28</sup> Hartley, *Westminster Election*, 309.

for her chosen candidate, was essentially, publicly criticising the king in view of the public and thus, stresses the expanse of the queen's superior sense of ethics.

Charlotte was a product of royal patriarchy. When he was Prince of Wales, George had delayed marriage negotiations so as to retain prerogatives over the choice of bride, rather than marry his mother or grandfather's choice.<sup>29</sup> Upon George's ascension to the throne, Baron Philip Adolphus von Münchhausen, the Hanoverian minister to London was appointed with the task of accruing a list of the most suitable Protestant princesses for the king to choose from.<sup>30</sup> George stipulated that his preferences were for a wife with a pleasant disposition and a disinterest in affairs of state. The latter requirement proved to be essential, for the Princess of Brandenburg-Schwedt was rejected because she was considered too opinionated and the Princess of Saxe-Gotha vetoed due to her interest in philosophy.<sup>31</sup> The seventeen-year-old Princess Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz ultimately became the king's first choice due to reports of her agreeable and admirable character which overshadowed the concern that she had not received an education befitting that of a consort of one of the most powerful countries in Europe.<sup>32</sup> These spousal stipulations remarkably resulted in a compatible match and faithful marriage. Charlotte's strong senses of duty meant that she was compliant to her husband's requests, and seemingly content to have him as her only friend in an otherwise alien court. She reflected on this fact later to Lady Harcourt in 1813, writing that the king was determined that she not interfere in politics:

I am most truly sensible of the dear king's great strictness, at my arrival in England, to prevent my making many acquaintances: for he always used to say, that in this Country, it was difficult to know how to draw a line, on account of the politics of the Country; & that there never could be kept up a society without party, which was always dangerous for any woman to take part in, but particularly so for the Royal Family [...] The Party's at the Queen's House have of course been guided by the Ins & Outs of the moment, by the King's orders, but He allowed and encouraged me to be Civil to all.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> His grandfather, George II died on 25 October 1760.

<sup>30</sup> Black, *George III*, 47 and Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 7. The Act of Settlement (1701) decreed that in order for someone to ascend to the throne of Britain they must marry a protestant.

<sup>31</sup> Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 7.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Edward William Harcourt, *The Harcourt Papers, Vol 8*, 13 vols. (Oxford: Printed for private circulation by J. Parker and Co., 1880), vol. 6, 109–10.



Charlotte's account evidences the political considerations that were a foundation for her marriage. She was immediately informed that her domestic behaviour had political ramifications. This message of absolute obedience and loyalty to the king was reiterated in Charlotte's formal portraits: West's depiction includes a spaniel resting at her feet, employing the traditional symbol of feminine loyalty. Charlotte's account also recalls the discussion of female friendship in Chapter 1 in which Lady Melbourne, the Duchess of Devonshire, and Anne Damer celebrated their amity with one another in lieu of the lack of marital companionship. Charlotte established her devotion exclusively to her husband, by avoiding female sociability beyond her nuclear family. In the same manner, West's portrait is demonstrative of Charlotte's connection to her husband; her identity was dependent on being linked to him.

While Charlotte's letter to Lady Harcourt evidences the sincerity in which she took her role as a wife, she took an equal, or possibly, a more consuming interest in her role as a mother. As Toni Bowers argues, a queen's maternity was her political role and therefore of the utmost importance: 'traditionally, queens had been public figures whose maternal bodies were, literally, political agents: a queen bodily engendered the political state, and representations of her maternity helped to define the political status of motherhood'.<sup>34</sup> Painted portraiture lent a visual to this notion and portraits such as West's emphasised her success in this realm. Aside from Zoffany and West, multiple prominent artists were commissioned to execute portraits of Charlotte with her children.<sup>35</sup> The queen's private correspondence also describes an preoccupation with her children's upbringing. In a 1772 letter to her brother, Duke Charles of Mecklenburg she wrote,

We will resume soon our true solitude. For myself, it will be spent in perfecting myself as much as possible in all that is good, for the welfare of my children, and above all my daughters [...] I love being occupied, both in

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<sup>34</sup> Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood : British writing and culture, 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 41.

<sup>35</sup> Zoffany depicted the queen multiple times; Allan Ramsay and Francis Cotes also received commissions for mother-child portraits of the queen.

itself, and as a means of being sustained in disagreeable moments and above all against the temptations of a corrupt world.<sup>36</sup>

Orr has argued that Charlotte's library also demonstrated her maternal devotion as it contained many of the educational treatises and works of children's literature.<sup>37</sup> In 1786, Betsy Sheridan wrote that after the moralist, Jane Bowdler died, her friends published her educational poems and essays,

to distribute among those who knew and valued her — by a chance one of these volumes fell into the *Queen's* hands, who being inform'd that the work had not been publish'd, sent to beg a couple of them for her Daughters, adding that as a Mother She was more anxious they should Study that book than any of the kind She had ever met with.<sup>38</sup>

These accounts attest to the queen's widespread reputation as a devoted mother, a quality that was furthered through visual communication via her painted portraits.

By the time West portrayed Charlotte in 1779, she had established herself as a woman of high esteem which was further perpetuated with multitudinous publications that presented her as a paragon of prescribed female behaviour. John Inglis's poem, *The Patriots*, printed in 1777, summarised all of Charlotte's worthy qualities and credits her with having an almost divine ability to embody feminine virtue:

While Charlotte England's throne shall grace,  
In virtue high, as high in place;  
And, with a fond maternal care,  
Her people's joy and troubles share;  
The orphan's stay, the widow's guard,  
Of piety the sure reward;  
And, with a blooming offspring blest,  
The sweetest transports fill her breast;  
Blest Queen! Long shall thy spotless praise

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<sup>36</sup> Hausarchiv des Mecklenburg-Strelitzschen Fürstenhauses, 'Briefsammlung', 4.3–2, n. 868, sheets 62–4, letter dated 14 Feb 1772 quoted from Orr, "Charlotte [Queen of Great Britain] (1744–1818)". The emphasis Charlotte puts on her daughters' education likely stems from her sons' education being in the hands of their governors. In 1771 the Dutch House at Kew had been transformed into a figurative academy for the two eldest princes, removing them from the nuclear family (Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 106).

<sup>37</sup> Orr, "Charlotte [Queen of Great Britain] (1744–1818)," Orr 2004.

<sup>38</sup> EE, Betsy Sheridan to Alicia LeFanu Thursday, 1 June 1786.

Awake the poet's rapt'rous lays.<sup>39</sup>

Inglis uses the poetic medium as a means to broadcast the long list of Charlotte's admirable qualities which includes virtue, maternal dedication, piety, empathy, and love for her subjects. Reports of Charlotte's ideal female behaviour were supported by her limited public appearances. Charlotte and her daughters would accompany the king on visits and state occasions which Orr argues 'helped provide supporters of the monarchy with an image of apparently unimpeachable domestic probity'.<sup>40</sup> Physical, poetic, and painted proclamations of probity were also complimented by book dedications. The most well-known piece of literature dedicated to Charlotte is Fanny Burney's *Camilla* (1796), but another work, passed over by scholars, is particularly useful to understanding Charlotte's public reception before the Regency Crisis. Despite focusing on the traditionally masculinised topic of legislature, Joseph Cawthorne dedicated his book, *A Constitutional Defence of Government* (1782) 'to her excellent majesty Charlotte, queen-consort of Great Britain'.<sup>41</sup> Cawthorne opens his pro-government essay with, 'Madam! If there is a bold singularity in dedicating a work of a political nature to Your Majesty, who, with great virtue and distinguished wisdom, does not interfere with the constitutional authorities of the state, of which you are the brightest ornament' that the dedication can be accounted for in Charlotte 'being unbiassed [*sic*] by partial motives and party-purposes' and having 'eyes that are not eclipsed by political passions, and with a heart that is not diverted from Truth and public virtue, by prepossessions and prejudices'.<sup>42</sup> While Cawthorne's dedication can easily be dismissed as sycophantic flattery it also repeatedly emphasises qualities that her husband hand-picked her for: a lack of interest in political engagement and a character exemplary of female virtue. Furthermore, Inglis would have had to obtain royal permission to publish the dedication, indicating that this portrayal of Charlotte was approved by the king and queen. The same merits Inglis waxes lyrical about are visually implied in West's canvas of *Queen Charlotte*. Viewers are reminded of her

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<sup>39</sup> John Inglis, *The Patriots or, an evening prospect on the Atlantic. In which some noted political characters are delineated ; with Strictures on those Ladies who have distinguished themselves in the Fashionable Modes of Gallantry* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, and Drummond Edinburgh, 1777), 21.

<sup>40</sup> Orr, "Charlotte [Queen of Great Britain] (1744–1818),".

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Cawthorne, *A Constitutional Defence of Government* (London: J.P. Coghlan, 1782), v.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, v–vi.

royal status through her regal air, but more literally through the crown and ermine-lined cloak that are represented on display on the plinth next to her. These regalia appear in *George III* as well, but are notably enveloping the king through the disrobed cloak, surrounding him from side to side. By contrast, Charlotte's queenly regalia are depicted behind her, pushed to the side of the composition. Instead of imposing an overt emblem of royal status, as they do in *George III*, her partially exposed regalia allow the emphasis of the portrait to be Charlotte's maternity – which, recalling Bowers's argument regarding the importance of a queen's maternity, was a political agent in itself.

Charlotte's political neutrality continued to be exalted throughout the 1780s. Six years after Cawthorne's pro-Government praise of Charlotte's 'unbiased' views were circulated, the *Public Advertiser*, which did not shy from criticisms of the king, commended his wife.<sup>43</sup> 'The Crown-headed Ladies of Europe at present have no little sway in the respective councils of their Courts' the 1788 article bemoaned,

The Queen of Sweden has taken up her pen - the Princess of Orange used hers with success during the troubles in Holland last year - Portugal and Russia are governed by Ladies - and the Queen of France it is well known is the head of a formidable party; while our Queen is contented with the humble yet substantial virtues of domestic life, and was never known to interfere in matters of State.<sup>44</sup>

The article paints a picture of a Europe plagued by political queens, using these examples to boast of Britain's superiority in not being subjected to such a matriarchy. Queen Charlotte proved to be a popular figure at this point in time, regaled for her probity and political distance by those on both sides of the party divide. Cawthorne was convinced that her subjects' 'devotion' was 'founded on the conviction and admiration of the most exalted virtues, so it will be permanent'.<sup>45</sup> West too was able to incorporate these venerations into the queen's portrait, creating a cumulative image of her admired qualities. *Queen Charlotte* therefore represents the consort at a time of domestic contentment; predating the premature deaths of any

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<sup>43</sup> The *Public Advertiser* was associated with the opposition.

<sup>44</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 22 October 1788. The article refers to Sophia Magdalena of Denmark (1746–1813) who by order of her husband negotiated with Denmark in the Russo-Swedish War, Wilhelmina of Prussia (1751–1820), Maria I of Portugal (1734–1816), Catherine II of Russia (1729–96), and Marie Antoinette of Austria (1755–93).

<sup>45</sup> Cawthorne, *A Constitutional Defence*, x.

of her children, family arguments broadcast in the public arena, or the mental breakdown of her husband. Not only can we use this portrait as a tool to decipher the qualities admired by Charlotte's eighteenth-century subjects but also as a timestamp representative of her status before the Regency Crisis, which would damage her personal life and public reputation, invalidating Cawthorne's statement that her subjects' devotion 'will be permanent'.<sup>46</sup>

### **The Regency Crisis: 'Pitt and the Petticoat'**

Charlotte had been queen for nearly twenty-five years before she became involved in controversy. A 1786 graphic satire entitled, *The Queen of Hearts cover'd with Diamonds* (figure 4.4) marks this turn.<sup>47</sup> The anonymous printmaker created a lightly caricatured three-quarter portrait of the queen, displaying her in profile, as she had appeared on coins or medallions, but in the act of taking snuff. Charlotte is represented 'cover'd' in gold and diamonds from her hair ornaments and earrings to the rings on each of her fingers. Atop her spangled coiffure sits an exotic turban which alludes to the foreign origins of the queen's diamonds and the controversy surrounding them. Furthermore, the foreign headgear, questions how well British subjects knew, or thought they knew their queen, relegating her to something unfamiliar and foreign.

Earlier that year, Warren Hastings, Governor General of India from 1773 until his resignation in 1784, had presented the king and queen with a spectacular 101 carat diamond. This was not actually a gift from Hastings. The Governor General was merely the messenger on behalf of Nizam Ali Khan of the Deccan who was making a diplomatic gesture to George.<sup>48</sup> The diamond had a timely appearance, and coincided with Edmund Burke formally producing charges for Hastings's

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<sup>46</sup> Cawthorne, *A Constitutional Defence*, x.

<sup>47</sup> Charlotte had already been dubbed 'Queen of hearts' earlier that year in a complimentary depiction in *The Caricatures Stock in Trade* which arranged easily-mocked celebrities, such as 'Queen Scrub' (the actress, Frances Abington) and 'Queen would be' (Maria Fitzherbert).

<sup>48</sup> Edwin W. Streeter, Joseph Hatten, and A. H. Keane, *The Great Diamonds of the World : Their history and romance* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1882), 220; Omar Khalidi, *Romance of the Golconda Diamonds* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 1999), 64; and Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*, 192.

mismanagement of the East India Company, which would eventually lead to his impeachment.<sup>49</sup> Hastings bestowed the costly gift to the king and queen, possibly downplaying his role as a messenger to the Nizam.<sup>50</sup> The news of Hastings's gift spread and was widely interpreted as an act of bribery, thereby casting both parties as corrupt, leading to accusations of influence over the crown.<sup>51</sup> Hastings's poor judgement played into Foxite beliefs (and accusations) of secret influence, or the king's 'double cabinet' that Burke had first highlighted in 1770 and Fox had resurrected in 1783 after the king threatened to withdraw his patronage if the House of Lords supported Fox's East India Bill.<sup>52</sup> *The Queen of Hearts cover'd with Diamonds* marks Charlotte's entrance into political scrutiny, branding the previously admired 'Queen of Hearts' as a woman preoccupied with avarice – the nickname now having a bite of irony rather than affection.<sup>53</sup> The print opposes the reports of Charlotte being an *exemplum virtutis* for women and instead marks her with the characteristics (superficiality, greed, ostentation) one might find in the alluring 'gambling Duchesses' that Charlotte Barrett referred to.<sup>54</sup> Such characteristics gave weight to accusations of 'queen's influence' over the king. The Foxites believed she was the force behind Hastings's protection and this influence was another example of the king's perversion of the British Constitution.<sup>55</sup> Notions of queen's influence were

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<sup>49</sup> P. J. Marshall, "Hastings, Warren (1732-1818)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press 2008). According to Khalidi, Hastings was 'anxious to secure favour from the king, as evidenced by a copy of a letter of the Nizam to Hastings found in the Andhra Pradesh State Archives' (Khalidi, *Romance of the Golconda Diamonds*, 64).

<sup>50</sup> Streeter, Hatten, and Keane, *Great Diamonds of the World*, 220. Hastings's enemies may have circulated rumours that he presented the diamond and accompanying purse as if it were his own gift. For more information on the Hastings Diamond and surrounding controversy see Khalidi, *Romance of the Golconda Diamonds*; Ian Balfour's account of the situation in *Famous Diamonds* (2009) reads as being biased and is at times inaccurate (e.g. he states that Charlotte 'enjoyed the reputation of being avaricious where jewellery was concerned'. Ian Balfour, *Famous Diamonds* (London: Collins, 1987), 123).

<sup>51</sup> Pointon has used the Hastings diamond affair as a case study in her exploration of Charlotte's symbolic body through the medium of jewellery, see Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*, 180–96.

<sup>52</sup> Jane Hodson, *Language and Revolution in Burke, Wollstonecraft, Paine, and Godwin* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 52 and Anna Clark, *Scandal: The sexual politics of the British constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 72. Burke's model of the secret, or double cabinet, as laid out in *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770), was that there was an official cabinet and an unofficial one that was made up of the court faction, who held influence of the king and control over the government.

<sup>53</sup> Charlotte had appeared in a small amount of satirical prints previously, which mostly commented on her dedication to her husband and the couple's frugality; see William Holland's *Farmer George and his Wife* (1786), SW Fores's *The Farm Yard* (1786), and S Trent's *Going to Market* (1786).

<sup>54</sup> BL Egerton Mss. 3703A, ff. 75–6, 2 December 1818, BM.

<sup>55</sup> F. P. Lock, *Edmund Burke, Volume II: 1784-1797* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 273–4.

also tied to perceptions of the French court, which was concurrently experiencing its own controversy surrounding queens and diamond gifts. The so-called, Diamond Necklace Affair which had blighted Marie Antoinette's name during an already hostile period in France, 1785–6, was widely reported on in British print media and discussed in private circles.<sup>56</sup> The parallel between the diamond controversies involving queens, as Pointon noted, did not go unnoticed, and would have impacted Charlotte's controversy with diamonds, by drawing correlations between the frivolous French queen and the supposedly modest British queen. *The Queen of Hearts cover'd with Diamonds* makes a similar link, playing on Charlotte's perceived faults despite her reputation as 'Queen of Hearts'.

Three years later, in 1788, Warren Hastings's impeachment trial began, an event which would mobilise the perceived crossover of Charlotte from neutral to partisan in the eyes of the public.<sup>57</sup> His trial in Westminster Hall was brought forward by leaders of the opposition, Edmund Burke, Charles James Fox, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan who acted as the principal managers of the impeachment proceedings.<sup>58</sup> The king and queen privately supported Hastings but could not publically involve themselves, especially in light of the diamond scandal. However, a month after the trial had begun another anonymously-authored print appeared, again accusing Hastings of deceiving the king and queen through the use of bribery. *The Diamond Eaters, Horrid Monsters!* (figure 4.5) represents Lord Chancellor Thurlow, Charlotte, and George hungrily gobbling diamonds, poured into their mouths by Hastings, who wears a turban. Hastings is represented as a twisted satire of a mother-bird, and the state leaders resemble his greedy brood which thrive on diamonds.

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<sup>56</sup> Although Marie Antoinette was not involved in the ploy by Jeanne de la Motte to fool Cardinal Louis de Rohan into buying the expensive diamond necklace under the pretence that it would be delivered to the queen, 'the association of the Queen's name with low intrigue and, particularly, with diamonds, irreparably damaged her position' according to Pointon (Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*, 152). Sara Maza argues that this association between the queen and low intrigue developed when it was questioned whether Rohan should be charged with 'criminal presumption' for assuming the queen would deal with a figure such as la Motte, since there was also grounds acquittal, as such behaviour from the queen was not implausible. Sarah Maza, "Private Lives and Public Affairs : The causes célèbres of prerevolutionary France," (1993): 185. For a detailed accounts of the so-called Diamond Necklace see Maza, *Private Lives*, 167–211 and Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*, 147–77. Pointon also has an extended discussion of the how Britons viewed the affair *ibid.*, 150 and 190.

<sup>57</sup> Betsy Bolton, "Imperial Sensibilities, Colonial Ambivalence: Edmund Burke and Frances Burney," *ELH* 72, no. 4 (2005): 874.

<sup>58</sup> Fanny Burney and Peter Sabor, *Journals and Letters* (London; New York: Penguin, 2001), 256.

Thurlow and the king are shown with more desperate, animalistic expressions which are exemplified by Thurlow's claw-like hand pawing at the king's chest as if to establish a brood hierarchy. Charlotte's presence in the print could have originated from a gendered association of women with jewellery; however the deeper significance is in the fact that she *is* featured. Removed from the domestic setting, she is associated with the Head of State and the Lord Chancellor, equating both her input and her power in the affair.

Even though the queen did privately support Hastings, the gendered associations of women with diamonds implicated her in the controversy.<sup>59</sup> Orr asserts that when she was first married, Charlotte knew the importance of displaying a majestic image and did don opulent jewels in order fit her new role, as can be seen in her earlier portraits, such as Nathaniel Dance's c. 1769 portrait of the queen (figure 4.6).<sup>60</sup> This jewellery was imbued with sentiment and loyalty as it was given to her by the king on their wedding day and therefore was a material articulation of her devotion to her husband and their union.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, Charlotte's jewellery-wearing was suddenly perceived to have an acidic significance which transformed it into a visual signifier of Hastings's ill-judged gift and thus, the king and queen's susceptibility to corruption. This pattern of change in her imagery is echoed in correspondence. Reflecting to the Earl of Charlemont after the Regency Crisis, Burke directly accuses the queen of political instigation in this period:

My particular province has been the East Indies. This Session has shewn the power and predominance of the Queen in this Province. Hastings is known to be under her protection. Last year [1788] her influence, though considerable, was not so decided; and the Lords did not look up to her so fully as since the time when the leading cabal in the house had reason in the Regency Business, to attach themselves to her Majesty as the head of the faction.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> See Pointon, *Brilliant Effects* for a discussion on the relationship between women and jewellery.

<sup>60</sup> Orr, "Charlotte [Queen of Great Britain] (1744–1818)."

<sup>61</sup> In almost all of her portraits Charlotte wears pearl-string bracelets with miniatures of George III. Because of the frequency of their appearance and Charlotte's blind devotion to her husband Michael Levey likens them to manacles (Levey, *A Royal Subject*, 5). Charlotte Papendiek, who served as a Keeper of the Robes and Reader to Charlotte, recorded that Charlotte always wore a diamond hoop 'guard' ring that made up part of the wedding gift and 'on that finger the Queen never allowed herself to wear any other in addition, although fashion at times almost demanded it' (quoted in Roberts, *George & Charlotte*, 362).

<sup>62</sup> Alfred Cobban and Robert Arthur Smith, *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke, Vol. 6*, vol. 6 (Cambridge; Chicago: University Press; University of Chicago Press, 1967), 2.



Although written in retrospect, Burke's letter evidences how an astute and respected politician perceived Charlotte as having political aspirations in this period.<sup>63</sup> Burke's view was further supported by Charlotte and the princesses' presence at Hastings's trial, where they appeared '*incognito*' as opposed to an official state appearance.<sup>64</sup> While the diamond controversy may have otherwise been labelled a circumstantial blip in the course of her spotless reign, the future events of 1788 would transform it into a keystone onto which Charlotte's negative reputation was built.

On 5 November 1788, Fanny Burney, serving as Second Keeper of the Robes to the Queen, wrote to her friends, the Phillipses in distress: 'O my dear Friends, what an history! - The King at Dinner had broken forth into positive Delirium, which long had been menacing all who saw him most closely; and the Queen was so overpowered, as to fall into violent Hysterics'.<sup>65</sup> King George, though known for his value of industriousness, had been working more than usual, having been active to a point of restlessness. He talked incessantly and refused to sleep, causing him to progressively get physically weaker.<sup>66</sup> In Burney's account to her friends she chose not to include the most alarming detail of the dinner – the king had physically attacked the Prince of Wales, grabbing him by the collar and throwing him against the wall.<sup>67</sup> It appeared that the King of Britain had fallen victim to the prevailing concern of European hereditary monarchies: madness. While the contemporaneous king, Christen VII of Denmark was allowed to rule in what was perceived to be a state of insanity, Britain's monarch was treated by doctors in a desperate attempt to cure him of the malady.<sup>68</sup> The question arose of whether a regency was required; and more specifically, *who* should rule as regent.

As George's affliction continued to worsen, British citizens were informed of the king's state. Colley highlights that his symptoms were freely discussed in

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<sup>63</sup> During the Hastings trial Burney (who supported Hastings) bemoaned Burke's role as the Head of the Committee due to her respect for him: 'how did I grieve to behold him now, the cruel Prosecutor' (Burney and Sabor, *Journals and Letters*, 259).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 258. They were still highly visible to those present. So many people took interest in Hastings's trial that it was a ticketed event in addition to being widely reported on in newspapers.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>66</sup> Macalpine and Hunter, *The Mad-Business*, 19–25.

<sup>67</sup> Hester Davenport, *Faithful Handmaid : Fanny Burney at the court of King George III* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 107.

<sup>68</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 195–6.

public, private, Parliament, and in the press.<sup>69</sup> Inherently, the topic would also be breached in graphic satires and on 20 December 1788 Thomas Rowlandson's print, *The Prospect Before Us* (figure 4.7) was published, possibly commissioned by the Prince of Wales.<sup>70</sup> The satire is set outdoors in Westminster, and centrally features Queen Charlotte; her longstanding Keeper of the Robes, Mrs Elizabeth Schwollenberg; and Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger. The three figures are represented as walking from the Treasury into the House of Lords with the large and heavily caricatured Mrs Schwollenberg leading the way. Mrs Schwollenberg, holding the regalia of the Lord Chancellor - a mace and a seal burse, in place of a muff - is represented lumbering into the House of Lords, displaying her aggressive and therefore threatening personality.<sup>71</sup> 'Take care to secure the Jewels' Mrs Schwollenberg instructs the queen, referencing the Hastings's diamond debacle, before planning her own rise in power which will culminate to sitting 'at the council with Billy's [Pitt] assistance'. Her monologue references two anxieties: female and royal influence in Parliament. Charlotte, despite being represented as treading upon three ostrich feathers, the signet of the Prince of Wales (here labelled, 'MY SONS RIGHT'), does not display the same ambition as her honorary servant and declines, saying, 'I know nothing of the matter I follow Billy's advice'. To reinforce this point Rowlandson has represented Pitt holding a length of cloth attached to the queen's back, indicative of a child's leading strings which parents affixed to them when they were learning to walk or had a tendency to run away.

When the print was published in 1788, Pitt and his Government were fighting against the Regency Bill that proposed instating the Prince of Wales as regent during the king's illness, knowing that, as regent, the prince would dismiss them in favour of putting his Foxite friends in power.<sup>72</sup> Rowlandson was thus representing the queen as a pawn of Pitt's; averring that she would not actually rule if a regency headed by

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<sup>69</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 196.

<sup>70</sup> Exhibition, *High Spirits: The Art of Thomas Rowlandson*, Holyrood Palace, visited 21 November, 2013.

<sup>71</sup> Mrs Schwollenberg accompanied Charlotte from Mecklenberg and remained with her in England. See Burney and Sabor, *Journals and Letters*, 253–7 for an account of her cruelty and James Gillray's print, *An angel, gliding on a sun-beam into paradise; Milton* (1791) created at the time of her death, which mocks Mrs Schwollenberg's undesirable personality.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen Lee, "Parliament, Parties, and Elections (1760-1815)," in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. H. T. Dickinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 75.

the queen went into effect. A coronet split in halves above Charlotte and Pitt's heads indicates that the latter would truly be ruling as a king. The message more blatantly conveyed through the scroll Pitt holds in his left hand reads: 'I think myself as more entitled to be Regent as the Prince of Wales'. Rowlandson's print presents a comprehensive illustration of Foxite-based concerns. Rowlandson represents the queen holding a document listing new taxes, 'BY BILLYS DESIRE,' to indicate that she is carrying out Pitt's agenda. The list consists of items associated with Foxite social circles, and more specifically the women in those social circles, in order to demonstrate the biased treatment those associated with the opposition would face.<sup>73</sup> These factional concerns were echoed further in their correspondence. The Foxite MP, Sir George Elliot's letters to his wife provide an illuminating, though biased, source in detailing the progression of the Regency Crisis and the decline of Charlotte. Though not one of the more renowned players during the crisis, Elliot's personal relationship with members of the Whig party and elder princes divulge substantial insight (from a Foxite perspective) of the crisis. Two days before *The Prospect Before Us* was published Elliot had written:

This [Pittite] majority in Parliament may tempt Pitt [...] to increase yet more the restrictions he means to lay on the Regency; in which he looks for one of two advantages – either that the Prince will refuse it, and thus enable him to appoint the Queen, or perhaps himself, and a few more of his followers, to that situation; or else, if the Prince should accept, that his government will be so weak as to disable him from carrying it on [without] Mr. Pitt for his minister.<sup>74</sup>

Elliot's excerpt follows the narrative of Rowlandson's print so closely it could serve as its caption. If the Prince of Wales did commission the print, it demonstrates the

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<sup>73</sup> The tax list includes fabric in the adopted Whig colours of blue and buff; 'Devonshire Brown silk,' a cloth colour popularised by the fashion leader, the Duchess of Devonshire so that the shade was named after her; 'Portland Ston[e],' a reference to the Duke and Duchess of Portland, a traditionally powerful Whig family; and 'Fox Muffs' which were fashion accessories that became public expressions of female support for Charles James Fox during the 1784 Westminster Election.

<sup>74</sup> Gilbert John Murray Kynynmond Elliot Minto and Emma Eleanor Elizabeth Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound Minto, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, first earl of Minto, from 1751 to 1806* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1874), 247–8.

visualisation of information exchange within the Foxite circle.<sup>75</sup> The print could therefore be viewed as a material form of gossip; it articulates a message with the intent of causing a change in events. In her study of gossip, Patricia Meyer Spacks terms this 'distilled malice', gossip that, 'serves serious (possibly unconscious) purposes for the gossipers, whose manipulations of reputation can further political or social ambitions by damaging competitors or enemies, gratify envy and rage by diminishing another, generate an immediately satisfying sense of power, although the talkers acknowledge no such intent'.<sup>76</sup> Much like verbal gossip, commissioned satirical prints, such as Rowlandson's, were created to defame the subject and benefit the commissioner.<sup>77</sup> The Prince of Wales and Duke of York would relentlessly spread both verbal and visualised gossip throughout their father's illness at the expense of their mother and with the express interest of granting the prince the regency. Rowlandson's print documents a concern held by a selection of the men in Parliament. This anxiety did not derive over the prospect of having a Queen Regent, a position held by British queens in the past; the Foxites were concerned that Charlotte would become a puppet to Pitt in the role.<sup>78</sup>

The queen's weakness in relenting to others is emphasised in the print through her relationship with her Keeper of the Robes who is also depicted as wielding power over her. In representing Mrs Schwellenberg in black, holding the regalia of the Lord Chancellor, she is depicted as a political official, a literal power in a petticoat government. As noted above, the diamond controversy is alluded to in Mrs Schwellenberg's speech bubble. On the right of the composition, a crowd of men are depicted in front of the Treasury that the political trio has vacated. A turbaned man is represented as separating from the group, foolishly flapping his

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<sup>75</sup> The Prince of Wales's unpaid bills record outstanding payments for 'Money expended [...] during the time of His Majesty's Malady' and list copper plates, paper, and the services of Rowlandson and a printer. While this does not identify the specific prints which were commissioned it is substantial that these records exist and can be traced back to the Prince of Wales, as records relating satirical print commissions usually do not survive and were often destroyed. M. T. W. Payne and J. E. Payne, "Henry Wigstead, Rowlandson's Fellow-Traveller," *The British Art Journal* 4, no. 3 (2003): 27.

<sup>76</sup> Spacks, *Gossip*, 4.

<sup>77</sup> Due to their defamatory nature, there are very few records which identify the commissioning party, see Hunt, *Defining John Bull*, 6.

<sup>78</sup> Catherine of Aragon and Catherine Parr both respectively served as Queen Regents while Henry VIII fought in France and Mary of Guise and Queen Margaret served as regents for Scotland during their children's minority. Lady Margaret Beaufort, who was never a queen, was regent during Henry VIII's minority.

hands while exclaiming, 'My diamonds will now befriend me. Huzzah'. The figure is Hastings and his representation in this instance is used as a device to remind viewers of the Queen's previous political mishap. His dialogue indicates additional tribulation if the ignorant queen is to become regent. Behind Hastings, a man dressed in the Foxite colours of buff and blue, is depicted with his arms crossed proclaiming, 'he never meddled with a Petticoat before'. The double-entendre attacks Pitt's sexuality (he never married) and also implies the hopelessness of a female-headed government. Rowlandson uses petticoat government imagery as a vehicle to instil shame upon Pitt and his faction while also harbouring the anxiety related to women in power – their breaking of patriarchal structure.<sup>79</sup> Writing in 1814, Lady Frances Shelley described her own disdain for petticoat governments in reference to Alexander I of Russia's kingship, stating, 'he is as brave as a lion, but entirely under petticoat government. His sister, the Grand Duchess, has complete power over him; and, shocking as the notion is to English morals, is generally regarded as his evil genius'.<sup>80</sup> Shelley thereby associates male-run government with English principles and marking female-led governments as foreign or 'other'. By 29 December, Elliot's letters display a change in tone. According to him, Charlotte was not Pitt's pawn after all: 'She is playing the devil, and has been all this time at the bottom of the cabals and intrigues against the Prince. It is believed that she was ready to accept the Regency if the Prince was advised to refuse it'.<sup>81</sup>

As well as documenting the supposed turn of Charlotte from Pitt's pawn to a woman who sought power, Elliot's Regency Crisis correspondence also reveals the complexities of the royal family's infighting, as relayed through the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York to their friends in the opposition. Due to the royal family's political role, familial disputes that stemmed from George's illness became public matters. The disagreements between Charlotte and the Prince of Wales were relayed

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<sup>79</sup> Criticism of women's influence in the polity was commonly known as 'petticoat government' or a 'petticoat ministry.' These seemingly negative metonyms, as Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson argue, had fluctuating meanings in the eighteenth century and were normally used to describe the female dominated task of household management, however 'in times of political crises' they argue, 'the petticoat could acquire new resonances of anxiety and tension; see Gleadle and Richardson, "Introduction," 2.

<sup>80</sup> Frances Winckley Shelley and Richard Edgcumbe, *The Diary of Frances Lady Shelley 1787-1817* (London: John Murray, 1912), 62.

<sup>81</sup> Minto and Minto, *Life and Letters*, 252.

to members of the opposition where the accounts were altered in the course of second-hand retellings. Any coldness Charlotte displayed toward her son was churned out into the public sphere via Foxite social networks, conveying a new, adverse image of Charlotte. The following month, two anonymously-authored prints entitled *The Restricted Regency* (figure 4.8) and *The Free Regency* (figure 4.9) perpetuated this new image of the queen as an ambitious and cruel political figure.

*The Restricted Regency* was a piece of Foxite propaganda.<sup>82</sup> The print represents the prince restrained like a criminal by Pitt while a Spaniard in a plumed hat snaps his fingers in his face and a skinny Frenchman kicks him in the backside. Though demeaned by the two semi-allegorical figures, the prince, who stands before a throne, is rendered heroically, with an expression of stoic determination.<sup>83</sup> Charlotte appears behind the Prince of Wales, gleefully jeering as his hands are bound behind his back by Pitt. By 1 January 1789 Elliot reported: ‘The Queen is set at the head of a strong separate party or faction, against the government of the country’.<sup>84</sup> Charlotte had been vilified. The two elements that the queen had been widely praised for in the first half of her reign – her lack of political intervention and maternal reputation – were perceived to be reversed during the Regency Crisis, transforming Charlotte into a highly deceptive and contentious figure. Recalling Bowers’s argument that a queen’s political status was determined by her maternity, a critical construct of female virtue, we can begin to see how Charlotte’s reputation began unravelling quickly through actions thought to be self-seeking at the expense of her son.<sup>85</sup> This usurper queen image, exemplified in *The Restricted Regency*, renders Charlotte as an unnatural mother, contravening the patriarchal family through her pursuit of power.

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<sup>82</sup> ‘Propaganda’ was a relatively unused term at this time, though it features in the Prince of Wales’ 1790 correspondence (see “propaganda, n.”. OED Online. September 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/152605?> (accessed October 26, 2016).), however, as Peter Burke highlights, it is still a useful concept to employ as historians because the eighteenth-century public ‘were unaware of attempts at persuasion and manipulation’ which corresponds with our concept of propaganda. Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis X I V* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>83</sup> A reversed copy of the print, also published that month, emphasises the throne through additional details.

<sup>84</sup> Minto and Minto, *Life and Letters*, 254.

<sup>85</sup> Bowers, *Politics of Motherhood*, 41.

By February 1789 almost every London newspaper had daily updates concerning the king's condition. Regardless of the newspaper's political stance when reporting the debates in Parliament over the Regency Bill, these updates were generally sympathetic to the royal family. However, a poem by the social commentator known by the pseudonym Peter Pindar, printed in the *Morning Herald* on 23 February, evidences how the queen began to be criticised in newspapers in addition to graphic satires. It was prefaced by 'the fanciful Peter has touched upon that strange-fangled government, by which this unhappy country is threatened to be convulsed' and read:

PITT and the PETTICOAT shall rule together,  
Each with each other vastly taken;  
Make when they chuse, or fair filthy weather,  
And cut up kingdoms just like bacon!<sup>86</sup>

The rumours of a coup between Charlotte and Pitt were gaining momentum. Pindar's poem advanced the message that had been visually conveyed since December in satirical prints. Through visualising the rumours and accusations with graphic satires that would be purchased or simply plastered in print shop windows, the message would have been able to reach a wide and varied audience of concerned British subjects.<sup>87</sup>

The usurper queen appears again, though thwarted, in the companion print, *The Free Regency* (figure 4.9), which imagines the Prince of Wales instilled as regent. He sits enthroned, surrounded by his Foxite supporters, of whom Fox, Burke, and Sheridan are the most discernible. Charlotte can be perceived in the background, rendered to be dabbing at her tears as she exits the throne room in shame alongside Pitt who steals a last glance as at statue of Justice holding balanced scales. The handsome prince is left to deal with the Frenchman and Spaniard who are met with a deferential gaze as they grovel at his feet. The contrived print pair conveys the prince's honourable intentions and Charlotte and Pitt's deceit in the face of crisis. The underlying message was that in attempting to assume power they were betraying

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<sup>86</sup> *Morning Herald*, 23 February 1789. According to one of Charlotte's earlier biographers the king would read the Peter Pindar poems despite the anonymous poet's disposition to criticise the Court Greenwood, *Hanoverian Queens*, 94).

<sup>87</sup> See the Introduction of this thesis for the consumption of satirical prints.

both their king in his vulnerable state and his rightful heir – a worse transgression for Charlotte due to her direct filial connection to both the king and prince.

In actuality, Pitt (with Charlotte's support) had not been attempting to assume power but delay a regency in order for the king to potentially recover.<sup>88</sup> The tactic succeeded: on 23 February, with days to spare on the approval of the Regency Bill, George's health was deemed to be restored. On that day he wrote to 'renew [his] correspondence,' with the Prime Minister, informing Pitt that he had met with the Prince of Wales and Duke of York in the queen's apartments and the disagreements between he and his sons had been settled.<sup>89</sup> On 10 March, the official declaration of the king's recovery was read in Parliament. However, the dispute between Charlotte and her sons had not been forgiven by either party. On the same day that the king wrote to Pitt, a letter from Elliot to his wife relays a more adverse version of the meeting between the king and the princes:

The Queen was present, and walking to and fro in the room with a countenance and manner of great dissatisfaction; and the King every now and then went to her in a submissive and soothing sort of tone, for she had acquired the same sort of authority over him that [Dr] Willis and his men have, and the King's mind is totally subdued and in a state of the greatest weakness and subjection.<sup>90</sup>

The story communicated to Elliot by the Prince of Wales and Duke of York can be summarised by Elliot's later sentiment of 'you may guess whether he or the Queen is really *King*'.<sup>91</sup> The princes' bitterness toward their mother allowed the mobilisation of denunciation to endure after the Regency Crisis had ended. These accounts contradict scholars such as TCW Blanning, Colley, and McCreery's assertions that Charlotte was an uncontroversial and exalted figure throughout her reign.<sup>92</sup> Rather, Charlotte's reputation had transformed her from an idealised mother and wife in the 1760s and 1770s to a deceitful and power-hungry woman by the late 1780s, allowing

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<sup>88</sup> T. C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture : Old regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 351.

<sup>89</sup> Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 172.

<sup>90</sup> Minto and Minto, *Life and Letters*, 275. Dr Francis Willis was a physician specialising in the treatment of the mentally ill. After George's illness baffled the court doctors, Willis was sent for to treat the king where he remained his primary doctor throughout the crisis.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>92</sup> Blanning, *Culture of Power*, 244–5; Colley, *Britons*, 268–70; and McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze*, 179–201.



her subjects to question her true nature and intent. Previous to the Warren Hastings diamond controversy, print media references of Charlotte celebrated her feminine virtue, maternity, or loyalty as a wife. The diamond controversy introduced Charlotte into dispute leading to her once idealised character to be questioned. The swift arrival of the Regency Crisis thereafter cultivated her bad reputation merely through her becoming a focal figure in the debate. Charlotte, at the age of 44 had reached the turning point in her reputation; her decline in popular opinion had commenced.

### **'The Snaky Sorceress' in the Aftermath of the Regency Crisis**

George's recovery was a celebrated event demonstrating, as Colley has argued, how the king's reception had shifted into the realm of popularity. She argues that 'by way of its alchemy, his severe bout of illness, his encroaching age and his bevy of dissolute sons seem not so much to have detracted from the reputation of the monarchy, as to have increased public protectiveness towards the king himself'.<sup>93</sup> Visual resources evidence another significant pattern which originated from his recovery, which was not acknowledged by Colley. The visual representations of Charlotte following the Regency Crisis reveal two separate narratives of the queen, with court-approved works articulating her loyalty to the king and satirical prints publicising her unwelcome political interference in affairs of state.

The king's recovery also prompted a visual communication of his resolve, emphasising his rightful place as king. West created a commemorative portrait of the king's recovery ten years after painting pendant portraits of George and Charlotte (figures 4.2 and 4.3), which articulated the royal couple's filial-political pairing and gendered responsibilities to the nation. *The Recovery of His Majesty in the Year 1789* (figure 4.10), a 51.9 x 76.8 cm history painting, represents George in profile, wearing his state robes and walking away from Drs Francis and John Willis toward a crown,

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<sup>93</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 233.

barely visible among the mass of politicians surrounding it.<sup>94</sup> On the left of the composition stands Lord Chancellor Thurlow in his chancellor's robes under a pillar labelled, 'HONOR' and the number (99) of peers in the House of Lords who opposed a regency. His governmental position is further identifiable through the seal burse that he holds in his right hand – the same item of regalia Mrs Schwollenberg was represented as using as a muff in *The Prospect Before Us* (figure 4.7).<sup>95</sup> To the right of Thurlow, standing behind the crown, is Pitt under a pillar labelled, 'VIRTUE' which displays the number of opposers (267) of the regency in the House of Commons. Charlotte is represented next to Pitt and is the most central figure in the composition. She wears a gown not dissimilar to the one West portrayed her in ten years earlier (figure 4.2) however, unlike the dress represented in that work, this one is a coruscating champagne colour, making her appear to glow. In comparison to the other, notably male, figures, Charlotte is the brightest, drawing the viewer's eye to her. Above the royal couple's heads storm-clouds disperse and rays of light begin to peak out, symbolising George's resumption of the throne to deliver Great Britain from the metaphorical darkness it had been under for four months. There is much significance to be placed on Charlotte's central presence in the painting which is emphasised further through both her bright rendering and gender. West's portrait aligns her with the king's loyal political supporters who fought to keep him on the throne.<sup>96</sup> It represents a celebration of Charlotte in the aftermath of a period when other visual sources had been actively used as a tool to slander her. More significantly though, West removes Charlotte from the domestic setting that she had commonly been depicted in and places her in a politically charged atmosphere alongside many of the men running the country. In exulting Charlotte, West's painting actually thrusts her further into an association with politics. Examination of the years directly following the Regency Crisis reveal that circulation of Charlotte's

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<sup>94</sup> Dr Willis and his son were credited with healing the king of his illness. In West's painting they stand under a pillar labelled, 'SCIENCE' on which is written, 'THE KING being restored to HEALTH opened the PARLIAMENT on the X of March MDCCLXXXIX' (Erffa and Staley, *Benjamin West*, 220).

<sup>95</sup> For an example, Lord Chancellor Hyde (1609–74) was portrayed by Peter Lely with the emblems of the Lord Chancellor, the seal burse and mace.

<sup>96</sup> Her loyalty is echoed by the spaniel represented on the stool below the crown, the animal commonly associated with loyalty as well as with Charlotte's imagery, see figures 4.1 and 4.2, Thomas Gainsborough's 1781 portrait, William Beechey's 1796 portrait, and Peter Edward Stroehling's 1807 portrait.

bad reputation occurred visually, verbally, and textually, thereby revealing a template of public castigation. West's painting, not only politicised the queen by removing her from the domestic setting, it did so also by participating the visual rehabilitation of her image.

*The Recovery of His Majesty in the Year 1789* was not a royal commission; the painting was sold out of West's estate in 1829, so it was likely a personal project of the artist.<sup>97</sup> According to the compilers of West's catalogue raisonné, Helmut Von Erffa and Allen Staley, the painting, or a variation of it, existed also as an illuminated transparency which West projected upon his house in Windsor upon the king's recovery.<sup>98</sup> Reflecting in 1821 on the celebration following the recovery, one of the king's early biographers wrote,

It is unnecessary to recapitulate the illuminations and other rejoicings further than to observe, that in all parts of the metropolis the people seemed to vie with each other who should give the most beautiful and picturesque devices on the occasion, and who should testify their loyalty in the most conspicuous manner.<sup>99</sup>

West's image, therefore, is a strong statement of his personal beliefs, but for the purposes of this chapter can also be used as an example of a loaded display of a (quite literally) public projection of his loyalty to the king. On 10 March, the official date of the king's recovery, residents of London and Windsor illuminated their homes with lamps, flambeaus, and transparencies as a show of support for George. Records detail the variety of transparencies being projected, from the simplistic, such as mottos such as 'George III Rex' to the more ornate, such as India House's full-length portraits of Pitt and the king.<sup>100</sup> West's ambitious transparency was likely to have garnered attention and conferred a grand message to the viewers coming to see the luminary spectacle. As such, the light hue of Charlotte's gown suggests that her representation would have had a further vivacity through the illuminated medium. This thereby articulated, through visual language, her importance to George, and therefore the crown.

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<sup>97</sup> Erffa and Staley, *Benjamin West*, 220.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> John Galt, *George the Third, his Court and Family*, vol. 2 (London: H. Colburn, 1821), 100.

<sup>100</sup> Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 172.

While illuminations could communicate the queen's role in the king's recovery to a mixed local audience, mass-produced prints also contributed to the cult of gratitude surrounding Charlotte after the king's recovery. Isaac Jehner's, *On His Majesty's Happy Recovery 1789* (figure 4.11) appeared in 1790 but, according to its inscription at the bottom of the print, was based on a larger painting which was likely to have been created the previous year. The 49 x 53.4 cm print features only two living figures, the remaining thirteen are allegorical. The setting, much like West's recovery painting, represents storm clouds dispersing upon being touched by the sun. *George III* (figure 4.3) is also brought to mind in view of the warship, visible behind the pillars and drapes, in the background. Allegorical figures of the sea and war are a further reminder of the king's return as a great defender of the nautical nation. George is represented, fully-robed and crowned, descending from his throne on the right, in order to greet the allegories, Freedom and Prosperity. In attendance behind them are Scotland and Ireland. Britannia stands vigilant on the right of the composition. While George is represented as receiving obeisance from all the aforementioned allegories, Charlotte is grouped in the background with 'Protestantia'.

Of all the allegorical figures, Protestantia is the only one identified by an accompanying text, indicating the importance of *not* mistaking the figure for any religion other than British Protestantism.<sup>101</sup> Protestantism's place in the composition imparts multiple meanings but foremost emphasises the ties between the denomination and the queen. First, the visualised unity between queen and allegory was meant to prompt Charlotte's association with the Act of Settlement (1701), the law stipulating that the Queen Consort must be a protestant. Her status as wife to the Head of the Anglican Church also stresses her importance to the nation and its religion. This had patriotic significance in 1790, as Britain was, once again, anticipating war with France, which carried with it the anxieties of an invasion and enforcement of Catholicism. Protestantia's place in the composition asserts both Britain's identity as a protestant nation as well as Charlotte's connection to that

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<sup>101</sup> This recalls Emma Major's argument that the figure of Britannia, besides symbolising Great Britain, also served as an emblem of Protestantism to eighteenth-century audiences, see Major, *Madam Britannia*, 25.

identity.<sup>102</sup> Finally, Jenner's print aligns her with an allegory inscribed with femininity due to the church being gendered as female and the association of a religious regiment being part of female household management.<sup>103</sup> While she does not feature as centrally as she did in *The Recovery of His Majesty in the Year 1789* her inclusion contains implicit connotations. The subject in both West's and Jenner's recovery artworks are, strictly speaking, the Head of State, and both include Charlotte by his side, not as a mother, as depicted in many of her previous portraits, but as Queen Consort. British subjects, long-familiar with Charlotte in the role of a wife and mother were now confronted with a new image of the ageing, but still healthy, queen, further reminding them that this was a woman with political agency through her marital rights. Both West's and Jenner's images, like the satirical prints created during the Regency Crisis, draw Charlotte out of the domestic sphere and further into the political realm, reintroducing her as a woman with political agency through her marital rights. Significantly, they display Charlotte's political importance, putting the queen who was once regaled for being apolitical, in a susceptible position, liable for criticism.<sup>104</sup>

Personal diaries and correspondence are particularly useful in revealing the effect of print media and gossip on Charlotte's reputation. During the Regency Crisis

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<sup>102</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 143, 51. As Colley notes, Francophobia was prevalent during the 1790s due to the French Revolution; see *ibid.*, 24–5, 33–5, 88–90; and Robin Eagles, *Francophilia in English society, 1748-1815* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000) for more information regarding the prevalence of Francophobia.

<sup>103</sup> Major, *Madam Britannia*, 21.

<sup>104</sup> This imagery was perpetuated further with her next commissioned portrait, executed soon after the king's recovery in 1789 by Thomas Lawrence. Although Lawrence's portrait of the queen was notoriously rejected by the royal couple it was still exhibited in the 1790 Royal Academy Exhibition; see Lucy Peltz, "Queen Charlotte, 1744-1818," in *Thomas Lawrence : Regency power & brilliance*, ed. Art Yale Center for British and Gallery National Portrait (New Haven; London: Yale Center for British Art ; National Portrait Gallery ; in association with Yale University Press, 2010), 94. Charlotte, supposedly disturbed by the troubles in France in the summer of 1789 and still recovering from the Regency Crisis was agitated during the one sitting she allowed Lawrence. The king cited the lack of decorum in the queen's head being uncovered as his reason for the painting's rejection (Levey, *A Royal Subject*, 15–6 and Peltz, "Queen Charlotte, 1744-1818," 94). However, what exhibition viewers were again seeing was a queen void of the maternal signifiers with which she had been represented for the last twenty years. While many of Charlotte's portraits when she first arrived in Great Britain were full-length pendant portraits paired with the king, Lawrence's painting returns the queen to the solitary full-length canvas. Viewers now had a new image of the queen imbued into their conscious: an ageing queen with unpowdered grey hair, a woman no longer representative of fertility, as she had come to embody since 1762. Lawrence was toasted in newspapers for his exhibited work, see *World*, 1 May, 1790. The *St James's Chronicle* wrote that his portrait of Charlotte was a 'strong resemblance of the Queen: The whole extremely well finished; and the landscape in the background very beautiful' (*St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* 1 May, 1790–4 May, 1790).

the diarist and member of the Foxite circle, Betsy Sheridan's letters are generally sympathetic to the royal family. However on 2 June 1789 she wrote to her sister, Alicia LeFanu to relay a story about the Duke of York after he had survived a duel with Charles Lennox. She immediately began her letter with:

Tonight they [the royal family?] are all going to a ball given by the Duke of Clarence. I will tell you a fact that sets our amiable Queen's character in a true light. Friday last [29 May] the Duke of York went to Kew for the first time since his duel. He found the King sitting in an outward room with a door of communication open to that where the Queen was. The minute he saw the Duke he went softly to shut the door, then running to him embraced him most affectionately and with tears congratulated him on his safety — in short in his whole manner was quite the father. On the Queen's entering, he drew back and fell into the reserved manner he has assumed lately. She took no other notice of her son than with a cold and distant air asking whether he had been amused at Bootle's Ball, which was the evening of the day he fought [26 May]. It is no wonder that all her sons are disgusted with a conduct so unfeminine. They showed their displeasure by leaving the Ambassador's grand entertainment before supper, and this step of course has given great offence.<sup>105</sup>

Sheridan writes in disgust, citing her own femininity as a requisite for her disdain. She is incensed by Charlotte's lack of maternal feeling toward a son who had come so close to death. This offense renders the queen as 'unfeminine', an accusation, as we have seen in Chapter 2, was a charge accusing Charlotte of unnatural and potentially transgressive behaviour.

Originally told by the Prince of Wales's crony, Jack Payne, and later confirmed by the prince himself, Sheridan's tale appears in other letters, demonstrating its proliferation in Whig networks and accordingly, the power of gossip.<sup>106</sup> Spacks asserts that, in general, gossip has an incalculable scope in which its destination, transmission, and receivers are ambiguous; and whilst the prince was specifically spreading this gossip among his friends, it inevitably extended outside of this elite political circle.<sup>107</sup> When George Elliot relays the same story to his wife in a letter dated 30 May 1789, the details are strikingly similar to Sheridan's account: 'When the Queen came in she took no *notice at all* of the transaction, good or bad

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<sup>105</sup> EE Betsy Sheridan to Alicia LeFanu, 2 June 1789.

<sup>106</sup> Minto and Minto, *Life and Letters*, 319–20. Jack Payne was a significant gossip-agent during the crisis.

<sup>107</sup> Spacks, *Gossip*, 4.

[...] All this will show you what a *step-mother* she is, and what a state of absolute subjection the King is in'.<sup>108</sup> In using the insult '*step-mother*', Elliot is referencing the cross-cultural and transhistorical notion of an 'evil stepmother'.<sup>109</sup> The mythology of the stepmother stems from their distance from natural motherhood, so in applying this term to Charlotte, Elliot highlights her irregular maternity. Both Elliot and Sheridan's letters describe Charlotte as a cold and domineering matriarch, but Elliot emphasises how she has assumed patriarchal authority.<sup>110</sup> Elliot's transcription includes more contextual gossip regarding the duel stating that 'Mr. Lennox had been amusing himself all this winter with abusing and insulting the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York in the most scurrilous and blackguard way [...] You must know that this is the *ton* of the Court or the Queen's party'.<sup>111</sup> The gossip against the queen had exaggerated into rumours of Charlotte actually forming a faction of socio-political supporters. Despite having followed her husband's advice, to avoid friendship in order to evade any accusations of political bias, Charlotte had now become a 'political' queen due to the malicious gossip spread by her sons during and after the Regency Crisis.

Charlotte's continued descent into disrepute was documented in satirical prints in addition to the circulated gossip, with Gillray's *Sin, Death, and the Devil. Vide Milton* (1792, figure 4.12) being a particularly potent example of the visualisation of the queen's flailing reputation. The print adopts a scene from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) in which the allegory, Sin halts a fight between her

<sup>108</sup> Minto and Minto, *Life and Letters*, 318.

<sup>109</sup> Marianne Dainton, "The Myths and Misconceptions of the Stepmother Identity: Descriptions and Prescriptions for Identity Management," *Family Relations* 42, no. 1 (1993): 93. Ancient Roman literature, familiar to the educated gentry in the eighteenth century, yields many examples of *novercae* having evil intent and specifically, associations with poison; see Anthony A. Barrett, "Tacitus, Livia, and the Evil Stepmother," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 144, no. 2 (2001): 172. Furthermore, Marianne Dainton asserts that their place as one of the most common antagonists in folk tales equates them with mythical dangers such as ogres and witches – the latter being an association imputed upon Charlotte at this time (Dainton, "Myths and Misconceptions," 93).

<sup>110</sup> Dror Wahrman has already brought attention to satirical attacks during the American Revolution which gendered the king as feminine, namely, *The Annals of Administration, Containing the Genuine History of Georgiana the Queen-Mother, and Prince Colonius Her Son: A Biographical Fragment...* (1775) which dubbed George as 'Queen Georgiana'. Wahrman, "English Problem," 1253.

<sup>111</sup> Minto and Minto, *Life and Letters*, 313. Elliot's report is besieged with references to the queen's negative behaviour toward her two eldest sons. He writes that when Prince of Wales had told Charlotte of the Duke of York's duel she refused to tell George. When he later went to tell his father of the duke's survival, he was not permitted a private audience and in relaying the story George was visibly affected while Charlotte, 'heard it all with perfect composure, and without the slightest expression of feeling or agitation' (ibid., 317).

father, Satan, and their incestuous son, Death. In Gillray's version, Death is represented by Pitt, on the left, who draws a sceptre in defence against Lord Chancellor Thurlow (Satan). Charlotte as Sin extends her arms between the two abominable figures. Gillray's rendering of Charlotte/Sin fuses literary accuracy and repulsive representation. The figure of Sin is accurate to Milton's description – the lower-half of her body being serpentine but, more significantly, Gillray has also drawn a correlation between the abhorrent Sin and Queen Charlotte in terms of her maternity. Milton's Sin is in a constant state of labour and begets foul offspring which, in a chaotic state, noisily clamour around and in her.<sup>112</sup> Viewers would recognise Gillray's tongue-in-cheek correlation between Sin and the queen; a woman who similarly bred deceitful sons and surrounded herself with her brood of daughters. As Milton's Sin had loyalty to both Death and the Devil, Charlotte's alleged loyalties with Pitt and Thurlow stem from accusations of their shared influence during the Regency Crisis.<sup>113</sup>

Gillray's satirical commentary arose out of the political fallout between the two men, culminating in Pitt's request to the king for Thurlow's resignation, on threat of losing Pitt himself. George complied and Thurlow was forced to resign on 15 June 1792.<sup>114</sup> Other satirical prints from the time portrayed the two politicians boxing with the king backing Pitt and Charlotte behind Thurlow.<sup>115</sup> One of the outcomes of the Regency Crisis, as demonstrated in graphic satires, was that the two men became to be viewed as creatures of the queen.<sup>116</sup> This alleged influence is evidenced in Gillray's 1791 print, *Wierd-sisters; Ministers of Darkness; Minions of the Moon* (figure 1.11), which, as stated in Chapter 1, depicts Thurlow and Pitt, as two of the Weird Sisters, gazing at a moon that waxes Charlotte and wanes a sleeping George. The equally macabre *Sin, Death, and the Devil* presents Charlotte in despair at the conflict between the two powerful men. In addition to holding a sceptre, Pitt wears a crown that Gillray highlights further with the inclusion of an

<sup>112</sup> 'These yelling Monsters that with ceaseless cry/Surround me, as thou sawst, hourly conceiv'd/And hourly born, with sorrow infinite/To me, for when they list into the womb/That bred them they return, and howle and gnaw' (John Milton, "Paradise Lost," (1667); lines 795–9).

<sup>113</sup> Thurlow had been accused of not picking a side in the regency debate as a time-saving tactic.

<sup>114</sup> George, *Catalogue*, Vol. 6, 6, 911.

<sup>115</sup> Richard Newton, *Political Boxing; or, an Attack at the Woolsack*, May 1792

<sup>116</sup> The Cerberian creature crawling behind Charlotte with the heads of Lord Dundas, Grenville, and the Duke of Richmond alludes to further alleged political alliances.



excerpt from the epic poem: 'Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as hell, / And shook a dreadful dart: what seem'd his head / The likeness of a **Kingly** crown had on; / Hell trembled at his hideous name'.<sup>117</sup> Three years after the Regency Crisis, Pitt still stood accused of using his political position to rule as *de facto* king with Charlotte supporting his effort. Another excerpt from Milton, rebukes the queen further: 'Had not the **Snaky Sorceress** that sat/ Fast by Hell Gate, and kept the fatal Key, / Ris'n, and with hideous outcry rush'd between'.<sup>118</sup> The 'fatal' key to Hell's gate, is held by Charlotte's serpentine tresses by her waist and is labelled, 'The Instrument of all our Woe' it is a metaphor for the current political disharmony. The print's intense message managed to capture royal attention. Dorothy George records that it gave 'great offence at Court' which demonstrates the mobility of Gillray's visual slander against the queen.<sup>119</sup> More importantly, it also evinces Charlotte's public reception's link with satirical renderings. The Court's acknowledgement of, and furthermore, affront by the print demonstrates its influence in the construction of popular opinion.

Despite being couched in a satirical register, Gillray succeeds in appropriating Milton in *Sin, Death, and the Devil*. However he took one liberty in his casting of Charlotte as Sin, opting to make her appearance haggard when Milton in fact described her as 'woman to the waste, [*sic*] and fair'.<sup>120</sup> Charlotte is rendered with Medusa's writhing hair and her deflated breasts are reminiscent of the traditional depiction of archetypal witches in western culture.<sup>121</sup> These visual attributes recall multiple discussions previously considered in this thesis. First, we have seen how there was a correlation between witches, specifically the Weird Sisters, and women with undue political agency. While Charlotte is not a witch, *per se* in *Sin, Death, and the Devil* she takes upon the appearance of one in a work of

<sup>117</sup> Emphasis original. See, Milton, "Paradise Lost," lines 670–4, lines 670–4. Gillray misquotes line 675 which is: 'The Monster moving onward came as fast / With horrid strides, Hell trembled as he strode' (ibid., lines 675–6). The error may have been intentional. For further information on the print's connection to Milton see Ian Haywood, *Romanticism and Caricature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 12–32.

<sup>118</sup> Emphasis original. See Milton, "Paradise Lost," 724–6.

<sup>119</sup> George, *Catalogue, Vol. 6*, 6, 917. Karen Domenici argues that the breadth of the print's influence was so widespread that it may have inspired the composition for David's monumental history painting of 1799, *Les Sabines*; see Karen Domenici, "James Gillray, an English source for David's *Les Sabines*," *The Art Bulletin* (1983): 493–5.

<sup>120</sup> Milton 1667, II, line 650.

<sup>121</sup> See Dianna Petherbridge's catalogue for *Witches & Wicked Bodies* (2013, National Galleries of Scotland) for an extensive overview of the visual representation of the witch in Western culture.

visualised political commentary that criticised her female influence in the course of government. Her representation in *Wierd-sisters; Ministers of Darkness; Minions of the Moon* also takes on an occult undertone. Secondly, Charlotte's body is being contorted; much like the bodies of the female canvassers satirised in prints of 1784 Westminster Election had been. Just as Albinia Hobart's body was bloated, ridiculed, devalued, and made monstrous upon her increased visibility in the political realm, so too is Charlotte's in this post-Regency Crisis print. By the 1790s, satirical prints begin to display Charlotte as something distinctly 'Other,' neatly coinciding with the accusations against her of having political aspirations and lacking conventional maternal feeling. Gillray incites disgust in his depiction of the queen while also garnering implications of witches to create an anxiety-inciting depiction of Charlotte.

These visual and textual examples dating from 1789-92 indicate that there were various venues of communication through which to articulate Charlotte's negative or even, dangerous nature. The aftermath of the Regency Crisis perpetuated this new image of the queen, stripping her of the feminine virtues she was previously praised for and revealing a domineering and politically-ambitious tyrant in her dual roles as wife within a nuclear family and as Queen of Britain. Attempts to affirm Charlotte's noble devotion to her husband had been ventured in paintings, celebratory transparencies, and prints, however these works only served to remove Charlotte further from the domestic realm and highlight her political position. Charlotte had gone from being discussed in print media and private correspondence as a paragon of virtue to being discussed in these sources as a highly contentious and politically dangerous woman. Another significant event would cement this perception: the Regency.

### **'Old Snuffy' and John Bull: Queen Charlotte and the Regency**

A year after his 1809 Jubilee and at the height of his popularity, George at the age of 72, was about to disappear from public view. By the end of October 1810 the youngest princess, Amelia died after a lengthy illness, in an event that catalysed the

king's unstable mental state.<sup>122</sup> It became increasingly evident that George's mental health was in the process of a relapse. George was already becoming increasingly disabled by blindness and the physical infirmities of old age, so for the second time, plans for a regency headed by the Prince of Wales began to be drafted.<sup>123</sup> The basic principles of the previous Regency Bill were used, for as Olwen Hedley points out, in this instance 'the renewed possibility of such office being introduced was not the inflammatory core of dissent it had been'.<sup>124</sup> The warring political figures that dominated the previous decades: Fox, Pitt, and the Duchess of Devonshire, poignantly had all died in 1806 and a new era in Britain's political history had begun. This new era was significantly distinguished by the conflicts and anxieties surrounding the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>125</sup> On 5 February 1811, the Regency officially went into effect.

This new arrangement left the queen in an uncomfortable position. With her husband in isolated apartments in Windsor Castle, Charlotte was fated to a state of false widowhood. Her purgatorial status situated her somewhere between a queen consort and dowager queen. Charlotte addressed her precarious state by holding a separate court from her son at St James's Palace and through acting as an advisor to him in the upbringing of his fifteen year-old daughter, Princess Charlotte.<sup>126</sup> Despite the public's knowledge of the king's situation, his popularity prospered whilst Charlotte's continued to wane. Colley asserts that, like the future Queen Victoria, George's 'ill-health, old age, and reduced activity' acted as a protective barrier for his public image.<sup>127</sup> Curiously, the same three attributes appear to be the factors that vilified Charlotte, as suggested by a reading of her satirical depictions of this period.

<sup>122</sup> Macalpine and Hunter, *The Mad-Business*, 143.

<sup>123</sup> Steven Parissien, *George IV : The grand entertainment* (London: John Murray, 2001), 245 and John Cannon, "George III (1738–1820)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>124</sup> Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 242.

<sup>125</sup> British citizens feared an invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte's armies after the invasion of various European states, including the Netherlands, Spain, German and Italian states, and Russia (Colley 1992, 305). For further reading on the Napoleonic Wars and their greater socio-political effects, see Charles Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars: An International History 1803–1815* (2008, Penguin) and Frederick W Kagan, *The End of the Old Order: Napoleon and Europe, 1801-1805* (2007, Da Capo Press).

<sup>126</sup> Orr, "Charlotte [Queen of Great Britain] (1744–1818)," Princess Charlotte was the only daughter and next in line for the throne. Her situation was complicated by her mother, Caroline of Brunswick's estrangement from court at the desire of the Prince Regent as well as Charlotte.

<sup>127</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 212.

Despite her minimal public appearances for the last seven years of her life, Charlotte tended to be depicted as a haggish, meddling, old woman with an addiction to snuff and a tendency to encourage the princesses of the royal household to rule over their husbands.

Although the same controversies of the Regency Crisis did not reappear with the Regency Bill of 1811, contentions arose when the Prime Minister Spencer Percival requested that Charlotte retain her powers of appointment to the royal household for a year. This would have allowed her to select new peers to act against her son in the House of Lords in case a situation arose where he chose to make ministerial changes to dismiss the incumbent Tories.<sup>128</sup> Percival's concern over self-preservation was at the queen's expense. The resolution was rejected by the opposition because, according to the Duke of Northumberland it 'would have rendered the Regent a mere puppet, to be played upon by those who seem very anxious to assume to themselves all the regal powers & functions [...] to play the King under the Queen'.<sup>129</sup> Northumberland's statement echoes the resentments expressed two decades earlier in Elliot's letters to his wife. The queen did, however, make one political intervention, when she beseeched her son not to make ministerial changes out of fear that it would have an adverse effect on the king's health. After some consideration, the now Print Regent complied with his mother's wishes.<sup>130</sup>

Two years into the Prince of Wales's Regency and the anxieties expressed by Northumberland of the Regent being controlled by someone else, perpetuated in satirical prints such as George Cruikshank's *John Bull in the Council Chamber* (1813, figure 4.13). The 20.7 x 49.5 cm print represents John Bull, the personification of England or Britain, discovering a cave containing a separate court of the queen.<sup>131</sup> Charlotte's court is a mass of sycophants, dissolute politicians, and goblins. Cruikshank uses loaded imagery to censure her, combining the grotesque and xenophobic motifs to enhance her prevailing reputation as a political

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<sup>128</sup> Orr, "Charlotte [Queen of Great Britain] (1744–1818),".

<sup>129</sup> Quoted in Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 245.

<sup>130</sup> Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 247. It was allegedly the belief of one of the king's doctors that a change in ministry would exacerbate George, putting his life in jeopardy due to his frantic state of mind.

<sup>131</sup> For the history and development of John Bull as a national emblem in satirical prints, see Hunt, *Defining John Bull*.

interloper.<sup>132</sup> The physiognomic signs of ageing are exaggerated and she is represented sitting with her legs widely spread apart. Recalling that Gillray used monstrous illusion to denote disgust and contempt for the queen in *Sin, Death, and the Devil* (figure 4.12), Cruikshank's 1813 print successfully does the same, manipulating Charlotte's physical form. In revealing the true power on the throne of the United Kingdom, the print also highlights the crippling addictions of those allegedly sitting on it in order to expose their weaknesses, and therefore inferiority of post. The Prince Regent is rendered as an infant, sleeping in a cradle tended to by Chancellor Eldon. He holds a decanter of curacao in one hand and a doll resembling his latest mistress, Lady Hertford in the other. Meanwhile, Charlotte's addiction is highlighted by being represented taking snuff from her mob-capped lackeys while smiling demons bring even more boxes to her.<sup>133</sup> The emasculated servants suggest the country's emasculation in allowing this woman to rule. The resulting image is reminiscent of the evil stepmother likeness Elliot designated Charlotte with in the aftermath the Regency Crisis. Slander against Charlotte continued to circulate in this period, as made evident by Lady Holland's 1810 journal entry describing the premature death of George and Charlotte's youngest daughter, Princess Amelia:

Previous to her receiving the Sacrament, in compliance with the earnest entreaty of the Prince, she consented to see the Queen, with whom she had inflexibly refused to have an interview, saying that she ascribed the misery she had undergone for 10 years, and perhaps her actual hopeless situation, to her hardness of heart.<sup>134</sup>

Princess Amelia had been suffering ill-health for many years, and had become embittered toward her mother due to her parents' over-protection of her and her sisters. However, the queen's private grief, documented by Lady Cranley and Lady

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<sup>132</sup> As will be discussed further, this was accomplished through the use of fantastical and disgust-provoking imagery as well as stereotypical signifiers associated with Germans. Charlotte sits next to a large supply of 'Sauer Kraut' which both designates her nationality while probably also acting as an insulting play-on-words description of her.

<sup>133</sup> Cruikshank suggests that Charlotte's supposed dependence on snuff was one of her many shortcomings. Although exaggerated in satire, Charlotte was a known snuff-taker. Many of her snuffboxes still survive in the Royal Collection.

<sup>134</sup> Entry dated 2 November 1810, Elizabeth Vassall Fox Holland and Giles Stephen Holland Fox-Strangways Ilchester, *The Journal of Elizabeth lady Holland (1791-1811)* (London; New York: Longmans, Green, 1908), 266.

Harcourt, would not be disseminated to the large social networks Lady Holland had access to as an active society hostess.<sup>135</sup>

Much like Lady Holland's chronicled gossip, the language in Cruikshank's print was meant to provoke indignation from viewers. From her place of power Charlotte is represented as unimpassionedly making a statement of undeserved privilege, 'Am I not the Q—n. I will not lose one jot of my prerogative—More Strasburgh [snuff] there—lay before me the Reports'.<sup>136</sup> This speech also marks a new development in Charlotte's reputation: she is now identified as thickly German - as foreign, despite having lived in England for the majority of her life. Crawford maintains that the longstanding queen-xenophobia was a common misconception in times of political stress, transforming 'the good woman' into 'the evil foreign queen deployed not as a positive model, but rather, to assert political "truths" about women who' allegedly 'enjoyed extraordinary access to power' in their monarchical position.<sup>137</sup> Crawford's description corresponds with the existent authoritarian portrayal of Charlotte. Perhaps most surprisingly, Cruikshank's loaded imagery was stimulated by a minimally civic matter: the activities of the regent's estranged wife, Caroline, Princess of Wales.

The print demonstrates, once again, how private matters that would otherwise be contained within the nuclear family became a public spectacle for the Royal Family. The Prince Regent never mustered any affection for his bride from Brunswick and despite little interaction with her, his lack of affection developed into loathing and furthered into aspirations for severance by means of divorce. Charlotte too, never having approved the match, did not care for her daughter-in-law. It was primarily the king who liked Caroline, but after his relapse into madness Caroline lost her only supporter at court, putting her into a vulnerable position.<sup>138</sup> In 1806 the Prince, in an effort to find grounds for divorce, called for a 'Delicate Investigation'

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<sup>135</sup> Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 242-44. Lady Elizabeth Holland was also a successful Whig hostess, see Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 97, 99.

<sup>136</sup> As with *The Queen of Hearts cover'd with Diamonds* (c. 1786, figure 4.4), Charlotte's love of snuff is highlighted.

<sup>137</sup> Crawford, "Constructing Evil Foreign Queens," 394.

<sup>138</sup> E. A. Smith, "Caroline (1768–1821)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press 2004) and Colley, *Britons*, 265.

into Caroline's fidelity which ultimately proved fruitless.<sup>139</sup> The scaly politician holding the 'Secret Inquiry' paper on the left of *John Bull in the Council Chamber*, possibly Lord Liverpool, is represented as delivering this unwanted news to the queen. The fully-wigged, Lord Ellenborough meanwhile, bemoans the defender of the princess, Samuel Whitbread. On the far left of the composition, sheepishly approaching the throne is Sir Henry Halford, the king's doctor.<sup>140</sup> Halford's name became recognisable to the reading public at this time because he was one of the men responsible for publishing reports on the king's health which would appear monthly. Citizens were kept politely familiarised with their sovereign's health through updates such as the following example from 6 June 1814:

Yesterday the following Bulletin of the state of his Majesty's health during the last month was exhibited at St. James's Palace : -

‘His Majesty's health has been uninterruptedly good, and his Majesty has been very tranquil throughout the last month, though his Majesty's disorder continues without any sensible alteration. H. Halford, M. Baillie, W. Heberden, J. Willis, R. Willis.’<sup>141</sup>

Cruikshank humorously exposes the vague doctor's reports in his print. Halford is representing approaching the queen saying, ‘May it please your M[i]g[h]ty the Reports of the Physicians is admirably confused & equivocating & well calculated to meet the public eye!’ The print suggests that Charlotte's lack of maternal feeling for her daughter-in-law, who was currently in favour with the British public, in correlation with her past accusations of maternal cruelty continued to lay a pathway of blame toward the queen.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, it questions Charlotte's input in the public's awareness of the king due to her past and current discrepancies in her personal life as a mother and wife.

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<sup>139</sup> For a further discussion and analysis of Caroline's relationship with her husband and the Royal Family, see Parissien, *George IV*, 209–26.

<sup>140</sup> M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, Vol. 9, vol. 9 (London: The British Museum, 1949), 254–6.

<sup>141</sup> *The Morning Post*, 6 June 1814.

<sup>142</sup> Caroline was astutely political and often triumphed over her husband's attempts to publicly bully and shame her. In 1813, during which the Prince was paying the *Evening Star* to defame her, she wrote to the House of Commons requesting a £20,000 reduction to her annual allowance due to the heavy burden of wartime taxation (Parissien, *George IV*, 216).

The controversy with the Princess of Wales continued into the following year when London hosted the Allied sovereigns' celebration of the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>143</sup> The state visit of fellow monarchs and their consorts brought attention to the Prince Regent's estrangement from Caroline. While London residents were attempting to view the foreign royals as they toured the Thames, J Lewis Marks created *R-l Advice* (figure 4.14).<sup>144</sup> The print employs similar motifs as Cruikshank's print created the year before. Charlotte is represented as sitting on a throne while unsightly female attendants bring her 'royal snuff'. The Prince Regent approaches her, looking for advice on what to say when questioned by the Allied Sovereigns as to the location of Caroline. Using two hands to administer snuff, an emaciated and old Charlotte foolishly instructs him to say nothing or if need be, claim she is his royal wife.

*R-l Advice* was published on 6 June 1814, the same day that the *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, as well as other newspapers, printed the correspondence between Caroline and Charlotte in which the queen informed the Princess of Wales that she would not be receiving her at the following two Drawing Rooms due to the attendance of the Prince Regent.<sup>145</sup> This affront, while generating further public sympathy for Caroline, was viewed as an instance of Charlotte allowing personal politics to cloud her ability to carry out royal duty with respect to rank. Lady Shelley recorded in her diary the impact of the publicised disagreement:

The only drawback to the splendour of the welcome which these Princes received! Was the unfortunate *renouvellement* of the dispute between the Regent and the Princess of Wales. Until this happened the tide of popularity ran strongly with the Prince Regent's favour, and as strongly against the Princess. But the Regent's ill-judged letter [through his mother], in which he declared that he would never meet his wife, either in public, or in private, turned the whole city against him.<sup>146</sup>

Once again, matters that would otherwise be private, family issues became affairs of state due to Charlotte's dual role as family matriarch and queen consort. As the prints

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<sup>143</sup> This state visit included the sovereigns of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Sweden.

<sup>144</sup> Shelley and Edgcumbe, *Diary*, 61–2.

<sup>145</sup> *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 6 June, 1814.

<sup>146</sup> Shelley and Edgcumbe, *Diary*, 62.



from these two years demonstrate, poor or absent handling of her daughter-in-law continued to cultivate the perception of Charlotte's domineering usurpation.

With all her children grown into adulthood, Charlotte, who had always preferred to busy herself in family management, now assisted her son in the management of his teenage daughter, Princess Charlotte. After 1814, she became an active participant in negotiating the princess' marital prospects. After a series of suitors, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld was selected and the couple's marriage on 2 May 1816 was followed by an onslaught of satirical prints. Most focused on the reputedly imperious princess exploiting power over her new, impoverished husband.<sup>147</sup> In 1814, Lady Shelley described Princess Charlotte as having manners 'as bad and hoydenish as possible' and being 'very clever and wilful'.<sup>148</sup> This translated into satire as an attempt to 'wear the breeches' in the relationship, just as the Duchess of Gordon was accused of 40 years earlier in *The Breeches in the Fiera Mascherata* (figure 3.1). William Heath's *The Battle R-I* (figure 4.15) imagines the prince and princess having a tug-of-war with a pair of the his breeches. The Prince Regent aids Prince Leopold urging him to pull: 'my Rib [Caroline] wanted to wear mine but they would not Fit her!!' On the right of the composition Princess Charlotte declares, 'I will have them Granny says I must'. Charlotte assists her grand-daughter in pulling the trousers proclaiming, 'yes! yes! you shall have them your Grandpappa allways [*sic*] let me wear his[.] never give up hold fast'. The print represents a shift in perspective, where satirists and other social commentators reflected back on the reign of George III and Charlotte, recalling the couple's relationship to be one of matriarchal dominance. This accusation had not previously been circulated whilst George was healthy - as we have seen, Charlotte was only inscribed with parental, not marital, betrayal in the mythologised narrative of political-power aspirations. Heath's print questions the origins of the downfalls of George's reign in the absence of the apotheosised ruler while also exposing cultural gendered concerns. Chapter 2 of this thesis has charted the increased anxieties surrounding elite women. This trajectory of gendered anxieties became more acute

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<sup>147</sup> For example see George Cruikshank, *Anticipation* (1816) and Charles Williams, *The Interview – or- Miss out of her Teens* (1816).

<sup>148</sup> Shelley and Edgcumbe, *Diary*, 55.

during the years of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815).<sup>149</sup> Women displaying power in their roles as wives, mothers, or as consorts, was the cause of much social unease, and Charlotte was now interpreted as having used her position as queen to brandish power over her husband and likewise, Britain.<sup>150</sup>

Despite the vague monthly reports, circulated in newspapers, which acknowledged the king's delicate condition, satirical prints now displayed the monarch incensed by the running of government in his absence. Charles Williams's *Political Balance* (figure 4.16), also published in 1816, represents George peering through a spyglass from a tower in Windsor Castle to observe the dealings of Henry Brooke Parnell, the politician responsible for taxing food. The powerless king rages at the 'heavy' food laws which have 'distress'd' his 'people' and barks orders to Parnell to return England to its former glory. Parnell ignores him musing, 'How rich I shall get by plundering the Poor, now my old Master is blind and there is no one to watch me'.<sup>151</sup> This statement can be contextualised with the previous prints from the decade which visualise the court being in the destructive hands of the Prince Regent and Charlotte, who are more preoccupied with family dramatics than the laws that affect their subjects. Like former monarchs who had been criticised during their reign but valorised in death such as Queen Anne, the surviving but absent king, becomes a spectre - an emblem of the glorified past.<sup>152</sup> This print suggests that George's absence from government strengthened his appeal and the mythology that contributed to his 'apotheosis' while his wife and son were increasingly seen to be politically detrimental.

Rather than an absent king observing the current chaos of court, Heath's *The Battle R-I* (figure 4.15) contains a leering John Bull in a similar role as William's

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<sup>149</sup> John Richard Moores argues that the pre-Revolutionary stereotype of French women having too much political power and British women yearning for their French equivalents' access to power was expressed implicitly in British prints during the Regency. Satirical prints displayed patterns which articulated concern over English women romanticising Bonaparte. They also targeted his empress, Josephine, questioning her suspicious elevation in social stature; see Moores, *Representations of France*, 177-92.

<sup>150</sup> Significantly, this was also the era in which female political activity became seen as more transgressive and thus decreased, see Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, 198-202.

<sup>151</sup> By 1808 George was deaf and blind. The satire demonstrates the information permitted to the public about the king's current state of health. Christopher Hibbert, *George III : A personal history* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 405.

<sup>152</sup> Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*, 8.

representation of George. He is an observer, and watches the tussle from a window remarking, ‘by Godes they be at it they Tear them [the breeches] and I shall have to buy a new pair’. In identifying the breeches as belonging to John Bull, the allegorical figure representative of England, Heath asserts that the princess is fighting with her foreign husband for leadership of the country. Likewise, the dialogue transitions in meaning to imply that it was not solely marriage in which Charlotte domineered over her husband; it was the governing of the country. Heath’s message recalls Elliot’s reflections at the close of the Regency Crisis when he wrote to his wife, ‘Charlotte has the *breeches*, but God forbid I should ever know it otherwise than by report’.<sup>153</sup>

The visual examples from the 1810s of Charlotte depict her as an old, cantankerous, and authoritarian figure. This model of the queen also figures in textual sources as will be revealed in a concluding examination of the 1815 satirical poem by Peter Pindar, *The Cork Rump, or Queens and Maids of Honour* which can be viewed as a conclusive description of her public reputation by the end of her life. The humorous narrative tells the fictional story of Charlotte forcing the Maids of Honour to wear padding under their gowns in order to begin a sartorial fad as a means of disguising one of the princess’ unwanted pregnancies. Pindar’s description of the queen reflects years of satirical criticism:

The Queen, compos’d of diff’rent stuff,  
Above all things ador’d her snuff, -  
Save gold, which in her great opinion,  
Alone could rival snuff’s dominion.<sup>154</sup>

Her recent exploited reputation as a fervent snuff-taker is paired with the accusation of aurophilia, stemming from the Hastings diamond affair, the first event to put her in a controversial light. Once again, her (old) age is highlighted in a speech made by George: “‘Tis nonsense the poor girl to scold, / She’s young, CHAR. Young, and you are old””.<sup>155</sup> The poem is littered with examples of George submitting to Charlotte: ‘Rouz’d from his trance, the royal sire / Submitted to the Queen’s desire’.<sup>156</sup> One example of which notes the injury his submission has to the country; when Charlotte

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<sup>153</sup> Minto and Minto, *Life and Letters*, 319.

<sup>154</sup> Peter Pindar, *The Cork Rump, or Queen and maids of honour : A poem* (London: James Johnston, 1815), 7.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

desires to show George her diabolical sartorial creation, her husband immediately complies: 'Soon came the great man, blowing, sweating, / Affairs of state for once forgetting'.<sup>157</sup> Charlotte's lack of maternal feelings is highlighted throughout the text. She berates her fallen daughter and the poem concludes with Charlotte imprisoning her in the castle. Pindar describes her as void of natural maternity:

And then her Majesty would try  
To squeeze a tear from either eye;  
And then resume her wonted strain,  
And let her fury loose again.<sup>158</sup>

Pindar's poem, like the satirical prints, sows comedy from harsh criticisms of the queen. It also offers an antithesis to her former glorification, recalling John Inglis' fateful words: 'Blest Queen! Long shall thy spotless praise / Awake the poet's rapt'rous lays'.<sup>159</sup>

## Conclusion

When Queen Charlotte died on 17 November 1818 some newspapers devoted ample article space to her passing, however the content was devoted mostly to Charlotte's final hours and a comparison to former British queens' funerary arrangements rather than a biographical celebration of her life.<sup>160</sup> Edinburgh's *Caledonian Mercury* noted her charitable benevolence, a trait that put her in debt after her death.<sup>161</sup> A popular sketch of the queen's character appeared in multiple newspapers:

One of the most esteemed and conspicuous traits of the late Queen's character was the strictness with which she consulted the moral decency of her Court. Her fine reply to Lady —, when soliciting her Majesty for permission to present Lady —; and, when refused, saying, she did not know what to tell her disappointed friend, will long be remembered and repeated — 'Tell her,' said the Queen, '*You did not dare to ask me*'.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Pindar, *Cork Rump*, 30.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>159</sup> Inglis, *The Patriots*, 21.

<sup>160</sup> For examples see the *Morning Chronicle*, 23 November 1818 and the *Hull Packet & Original Weekly*, 24 November 1818.

<sup>161</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 23 November 1818.

<sup>162</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 23 November 1818; *The Morning Chronicle*, 20 November, 1818; and *The York Herald, and General Advertiser*, 28 November, 1818.

The posthumous anecdote presents an icy picture of the queen in fitting with the ‘nadir’ imagery of her after 1788.

This chapter has revisited Queen Charlotte’s reception and revealed its changeable and multidimensional progression. While her visual imagery acted as a vehicle to convey a series of messages related to her morals or vices, post-1788 imagery specifically impacted her credibility, causing her become an unpopular figure in the later-half of her life. A chronological exploration of visual representations reveals Queen Charlotte’s protean reputation waxed upon her arrival into England and waned after she was connected to Warren Hastings’ indiscretions. Previous to the Regency Crisis, Charlotte was celebrated for her apolitical nature, feminine virtue, and maternity – both textually and through portraiture. During and after the crisis, however, Charlotte and her political prerogatives began to be questioned by political figures and likewise in satirical prints. This was echoed further in print media and gossip. Her reputation never fully recovered, and was further effected by her own agedness, cementing a public image of a domineering and cruel queen.

As Colley has convincingly demonstrated, George III became a more popular figure as he aged and displayed more vulnerability to his subjects.<sup>163</sup> However, Colley is one of numerous historians who has disseminated a prevailing false history of George’s queen which portrays her as a woman admired throughout her reign. This chapter has addressed this forgotten history of Charlotte and demonstrated that Charlotte not only suffered from a negative perception in the second half of her reign, but that her perceived actions and behaviour that contributed to this perception was a source of cultural anxiety. Visual sources were administered to discipline the queen and as such, should be viewed as significantly mobilising her nadir. Through this visual chronology, this chapter has demonstrated how a woman born into a political position, which was further ratified through her task of procreation, could still be viewed as transgressive despite her active effort to retreat from governmental politics and reign in the domestic space.

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<sup>163</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 212.

## Conclusion

Whilst previous scholarship has aptly demonstrated how many elite women were an integral part of political life in eighteenth-century Britain, this thesis has probed the visual aspects of women's political lives. The years of inquiry, 1761–1818, in which renowned artists such as Joshua Reynolds and James Gillray rose to prominence, are noted for both the popularity and increased visibility of portraiture and satirical prints, the two genres of representation which elite women were commonly the subject of. By examining representations of a selection of some of the most politically-active and actively politicised women, this study has sought to demonstrate the key role visual culture played in the perception and identity of these women. These representations enable us to understand not only how women were political players but also how they presented themselves in an emergent celebrity culture with the objective of gaining or proclaiming political agency, how visual culture participated in the familial nature of eighteenth-century politics, and how these elite women were presented and perceived by others as political players.

It is not intent of this thesis to be a comprehensive account of all political women and their visual representations in this period. Rather, it has highlighted significant themes in this vast and complex field through four case studies. The numerous images that form the compendium of this study demonstrate the metaphorical 'tug of war' between the two visual sources and between elite political women's visual representation and reputation. Firstly, formal portraiture could provide women a semblance of control over their representation through their role as patron or sitter. An unusual but salient example of women exerting control over their visual representation is found in Daniel Gardner's *The Three Witches from Macbeth* (figure 1.1) which was commissioned by one or all of its three sitters, Anne Damer, Lady Elizabeth Melbourne, and Anne Damer. By employing this power over their painted representation, the three women forged an alternative identity, casting themselves as three witches, a guise ingrained in notions of governmental meddling and intrigue. However, the group portrait also presented a narrative of sorority formed through factional social circles. This self-fashioning via portraiture is also demonstrated in familial portraits of Jane, Duchess of Gordon and Queen Charlotte

which extolled their maternal roles. Whilst the period of examination encompasses 1761–1818, and explores portraits created in the 1760s and 1770s, its emphasis turns to satirical prints in the remaining decades of study. This change of emphasis is reflective of the growing influence of satirical prints during the so-called ‘golden age’ of graphic satire (c. 1780–1830), a period in which prints became widely produced and accessible.<sup>1</sup> The increased production and dissemination of prints likewise expanded awareness of satirical print subjects, such as elite female political engagement. In producing satirical prints portraying female politicking, an activity that was previously obscured due to commonly being conducted behind the closed doors of aristocratic manors or in rural constituencies, prints made this aspect of elite female life visible to a wider public. This rise in satirical prints participated in catalysing anxieties surrounding gender, class, and power. Following notions of ‘gender panic’ disseminated by Dror Wahrman and Gillian Russell, this thesis has charted some of the increasing anxieties surrounding women’s role in politics. As visual representations provided a medium through which to carve out and disseminate identities, visual culture proves to be an important means of charting cultural anxiety surrounding identity.

The overriding conclusion maintained throughout this thesis is that visual culture played a significant role in the creation of political women’s identities. Women could declare an identity through commissioned portraits, as demonstrated by Daniel Gardner’s *The Three Witches from Macbeth*. More commonly, elite women, such as the Duchess of Gordon, were able to employ painted portraits celebrating their familial role as mothers to establish their political identity. Far, from being separate categories, maternity granted elite women gendered political access through their dynastic status. Therefore, a portrait highlighting a woman’s maternal status was imbued with notions of the agency acquired from their dynastic position. Maternal portraits also served as public testaments to gendered virtues, serving as a tool for female sitters in societal navigation. The maintenance of a favourable reputation in elite eighteenth-century society, as expressed in the case studies, was an essential attribute for social buoyancy. Chapter 4 demonstrated how Queen Charlotte maintained a reputation as a totem of virtue in the first half of reign, partially through

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<sup>1</sup> Donald, *Age of Caricature*

the use of portraits emphasising her maternal, rather than state-sanctioned, status. Likewise, the studies have demonstrated how abrupt political events such as general elections, impeachments, or sovereign illnesses, could draw a sudden increase of attention to these highly visible women, leading to questions surrounding their morality.

The representations under investigation also affirm how politics was a family-based enterprise. A family's factional loyalty, for instance, was handed down through generations, and shaped social networks. This has been demonstrated by Lady Melbourne, the Duchess of Devonshire, and Anne Damer, three women from Whig families, who commemorated their friendship through a group portrait and thereby proclaimed a sisterhood established through political social networks. These same social networks are what compelled the female canvassers in 1784 to participate in a polemical urban election: the task was driven out of dynastic family duty to a political cause. This connection between family and politics accounts for the significant attention the Duchess of Gordon received in satirical prints when her daughters were of marrying age. The new familial connections made between aristocratic marriages politicised the very act of courtship and marriage, with mothers having a vital role in the process. The most explicit example of the link between family and politics is demonstrated by Queen Charlotte's fall from grace due to the inseparability of family politics and governmental politics. While the queen's visual representations were used to emphasise her familial and monarchical role, her enemies during the Regency Crisis also employed visual sources in order to slander her with accusations of political meddling and familial betrayal.

Such attacks on the queen and other political women contained in this study are demonstrative of the changing tides of thought regarding appropriate gender roles. This thesis has argued that the rise of the satirical print highlighted women's activities in a period of increased gender-based anxieties. Britain's loss in the American War for Independence prompted many questions surrounding hierarchical structures and misplaced identities facilitated by the loss of their subordinate colonies. Indeed, these anxieties are etched upon the graphic satires commenting upon the 1784 Westminster election. Prints demeaned the female canvassers'



participation by justifying that they acted out of vanity rather than political initiative or related their public political participation to the behaviour of working-class women. The prints that make up this study also divulge that, in addition to the changing tides in political culture, old tropes and traditions remained influential. The memory of the intrigues between Princess Augusta and Lord Bute continued to influence perceptions of Scots in politics and the queen consort's apolitical role years after their respective death and retirement.

In addition to articulating these cultural perceptions relating to female politicians, visual media could politicise elite women as well. Satirical prints often labelled their female subjects as political players, irrespective of whether the woman identified herself as such. For example, Albinia Hobart and Queen Charlotte struggled to dismiss their association with governmental meddling after featuring in satirical print narratives focused on temporal political events.<sup>2</sup> As graphic satires were a form of circulating print media with an audience that consumed and debated the prints' content, even a woman's representation in this medium could be a politicising act. Moreover, as their behaviour became increasingly scrutinised in prints, so too did the debates surrounding their political participation. This aspect is what makes the period of examination so rich: increased visibility of female politicking transformed a role ingrained in tradition, into a topic of debate.

In order to expand upon our growing understanding of the elite woman in eighteenth-century political life, this study has probed the visual sources that portrayed them. It has argued that during the reign of Queen Charlotte, political women were highly visualised, due to the intersectionality between the affluence of print media and prominence of elite gendered political roles. These two aspects are distinguishing features – occurring when satirical prints flourished and preceding the decline of elite female politicking. Therefore visual representations are vital to understanding the perception and identity of these highly-visible women at this point in British history. This essential, yet overlooked, source of evidence provides us with a means of access to contemporary thought surrounding political women. As such, it has argued that in order to expand our understanding of elite political women, we

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<sup>2</sup> Albinia Hobart's association with politics after the 1784 Westminster election is demonstrated by her representation in figure 0.1.

need to consider the dialogues between painted portraiture and graphic satire in order to decipher how these gendered political identities were formed. Portraiture was a vital means for women to project their social, familial, and crucially for this study, political identity. However, graphic satire also provided a platform in which women could be criticised for their perceived political engagement. Ultimately, visual sources are a key construct in the formation of the eighteenth-century political woman.

This thesis has been informed by threads from social, political, and art histories and, as such, has woven together a study combining these disciplines in order to further ingratiate women into the political fold of eighteenth-century culture. While visual resources such as *Hints towards a change of Ministry* (figure 0.1) evidence women's presence in politics, this study has employed these images to examine how women were perceived and operated within the greater culture. Such visual sources it has argued, were not just evidence of this gendered political participation, but active signifiers within it.

# Visualising Elite Political Women in the Reign of Queen Charlotte, 1761–1818

Volume II

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Doctor of Philosophy in History of Art

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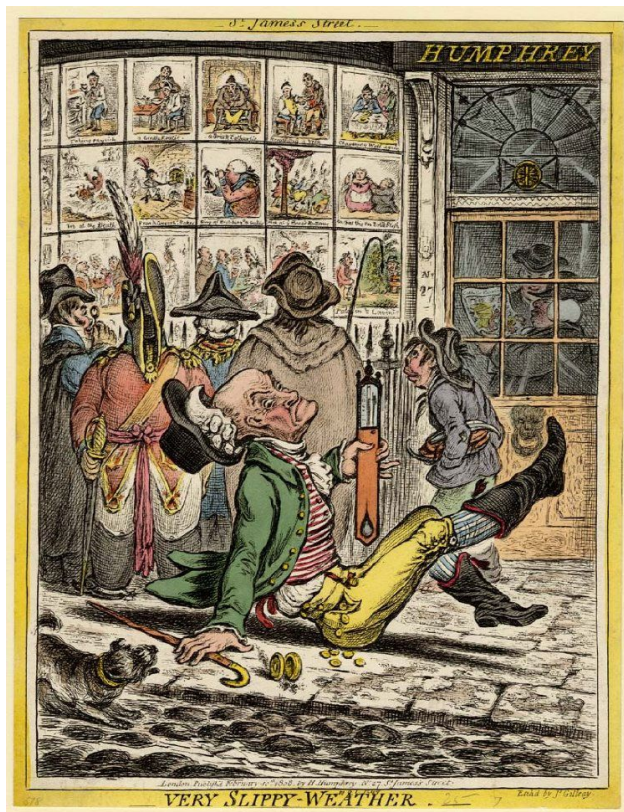
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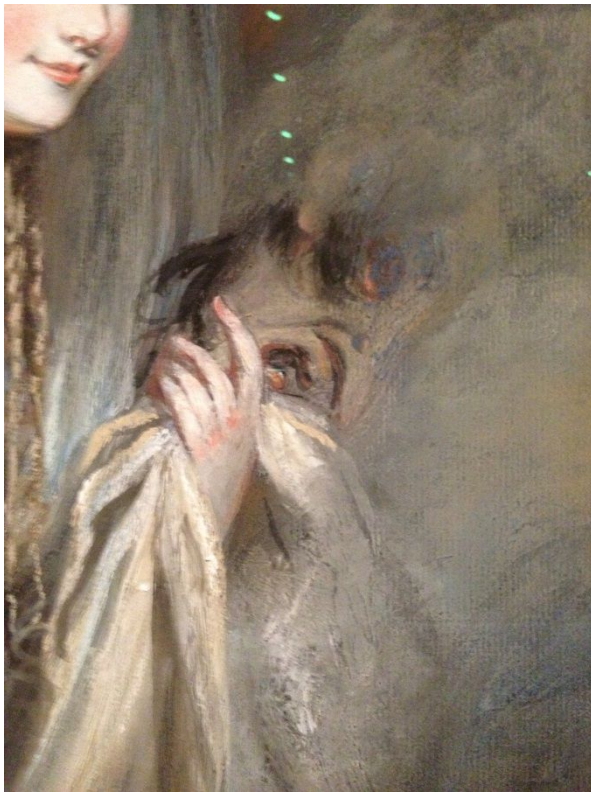


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	Beauty,	Figure,	Elegance,	Wit,	Sense,	Grace,	Expression,	Sensibility,	Principles,
Duchess of Devonshire	15	17	13	11	10	5	3	9	16
Duchess of Gordon	12	5	0	14	13	5	15	13	3
Countess of Derby	4	11	5	2	3	7	4	9	11
Countess of Jersey	11	6	1	2	0	11	12	5	0
Countess of Barrymore	19	18	18	19	18	19	17	19	13
Countess of Sifton	14	16	13	3	4	6	9	12	13
Lady Harriot Foley	9	17	14	13	7	12	11	13	16
Lady Anna Mar. Stanhope	7	17	13	15	12	11	2	18	17
Lady Melbourne	9	0	11	3	5	14	6	8	15
Mrs. Damer	7	16	15	13	14	12	14	5	2
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# THE FEMALE COMBATANTS



OR WHO SHALL

*Published According to Act Jan<sup>y</sup> 26. 1776. Price 6.<sup>d</sup>*

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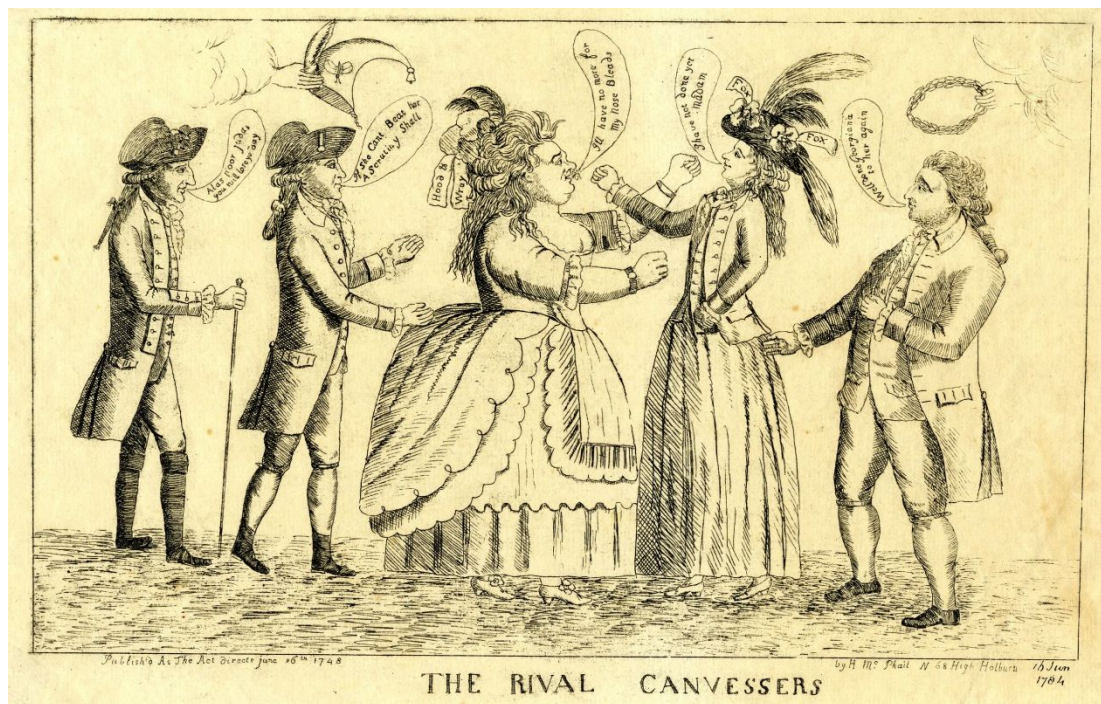
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**Figure 4.3** Benjamin West, *George III*, 1779, oil on canvas, 255.3 x 182.9 cm, Royal Collection, London.



**Figure 4.4** *The Queen of Hearts cover'd with Diamonds*, c. 1786, hand-coloured etching, 14.3 x 11.1 cm, British Museum, London.



**Figure 4.5** *The Diamond Eaters, Horrid Monsters!*, c. March 1788, hand-coloured etching, 24.8 x 17.1 cm, British Museum, London.





**Figure 4.6** Nathaniel Dance, *Queen Charlotte*, c. 1769, oil on canvas, 254 x 150 cm, Philip Mould, London.

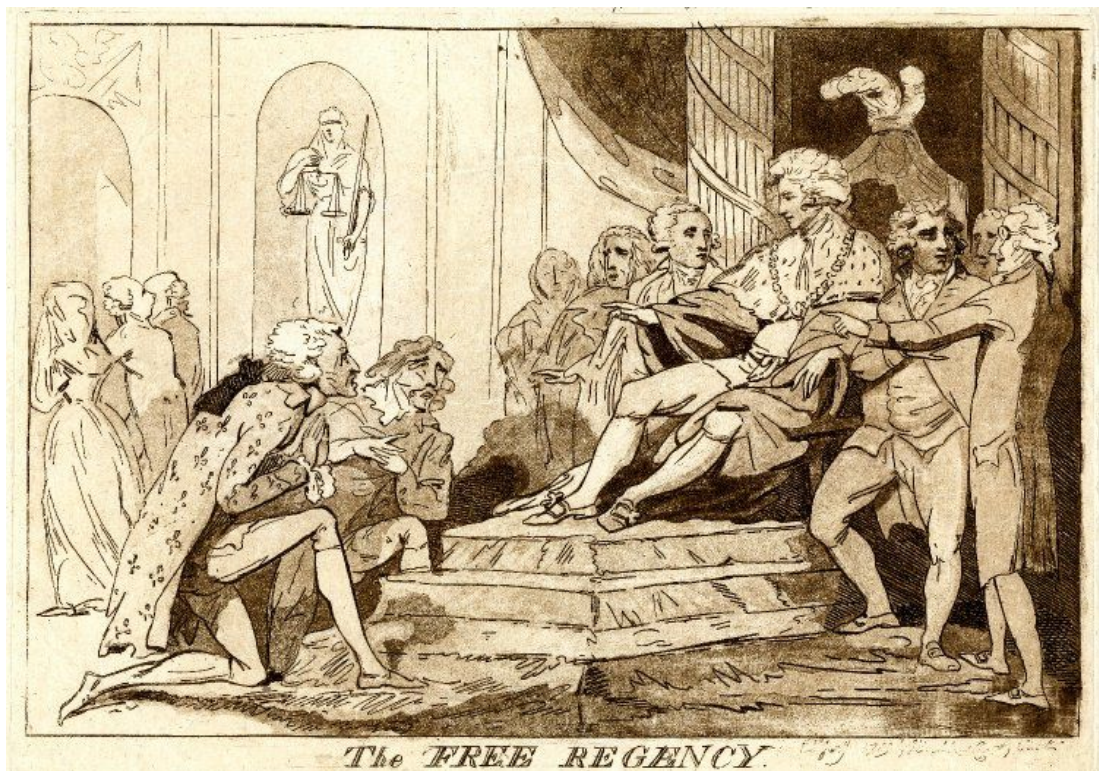


**Figure 4.7** Thomas Rowlandson, *The Prospect Before Us*, 20 December 1788, hand-coloured etching, William Holland, 25.5 x 34.6 cm, British Museum, London.





**Figure 4.8** *The Restricted Regency*, 1789, aquatint, 21 x 29.8 cm, British Museum, London.



**Figure 4.9** *The Free Regency*, 1789, aquatint, Thomas Bradshaw, 25.4 x 35.6 cm, British Museum, London.





**Figure 4.10** Benjamin West, *The Recovery of His Majesty in the Year 1789*, c. 1789, oil on canvas, 51.9 x 76.8 cm, private collection.





**Figure 4.11** Isaac Jehner, *On His Majesty's Happy Recovery* 1789, 1790, mezzotint, Anthony Molteno, 49 x 53.4 cm, British Museum, London.



Detail, **figure 4.11**



**Figure 4.12** James Gillray, *Sin, Death, and the Devil*. *Vide Milton*, 9 June 1792, hand-coloured etching, Hannah Humphrey, 31.8 x 40.3 cm, British Museum, London.





**Figure 4.13** George Cruikshank, *John Bull in the Council Chamber*, 1 July 1813, hand-coloured etching, M Jones, 20.7 x 49.5 cm, British Museum, London.



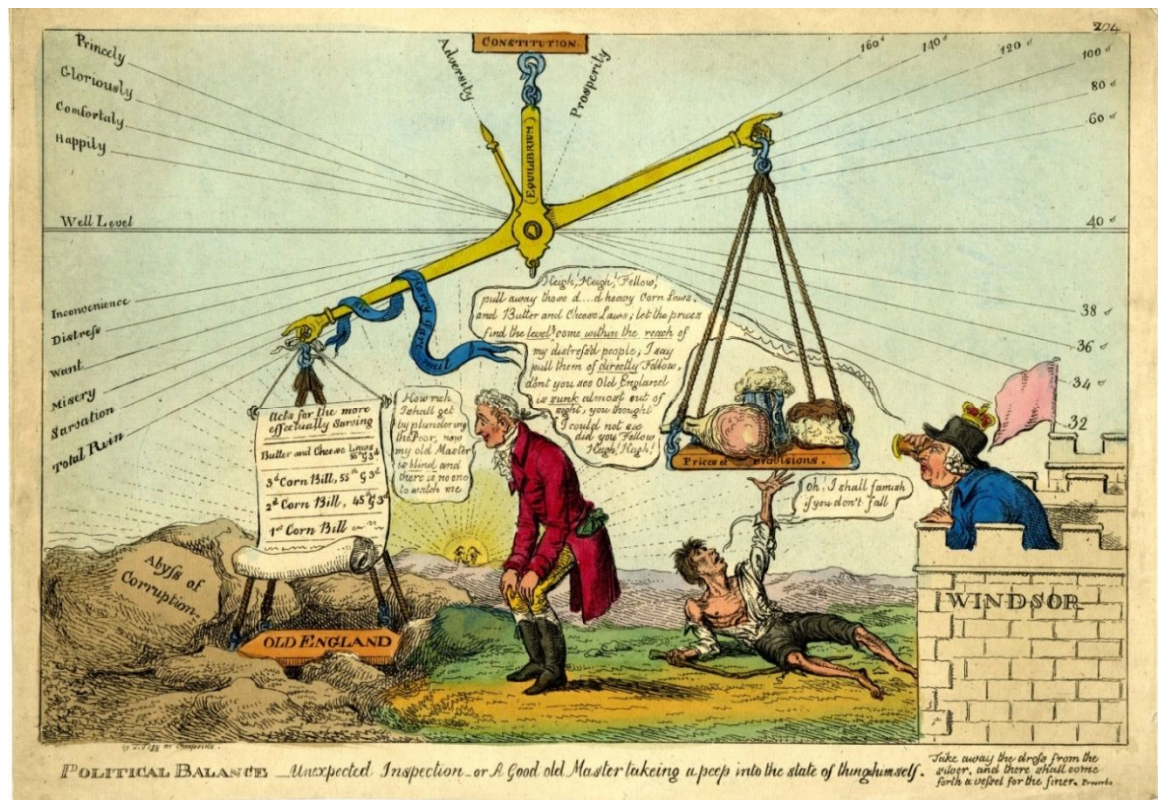


**Figure 4.14** J Lewis Marks, *R-l Advice*, 6 June 1814, hand-coloured etching, Thomas Tegg, 24.8 x 35 cm, British Museum, London.



**Figure 4.15** William Heath, *The Battle R-l*, 18 May 1816, hand-coloured etching, Thomas Tegg, 23.4 x 33.8 cm, British Museum, London.





**Figure 4.16** Charles Williams, *Political Balance*, 1816, hand-coloured etching, Thomas Tegg, 24.6 x 35 cm, British Museum, London.

# Appendix

April 1784						
Sunday	Monday	Tues day	Wednes day	Thurs day	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> The election late & late <i>Polls Opened</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> TR: Two Patriotic Duchesses on their Canvass Female Influence; on the Devons--e canvass
<b>4</b> Palm Sunday	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Good Friday	<b>10</b> Supplies for the Year
<b>11</b> Easter	<b>12</b> Charing of Foxes TR: The Devonshire or Most Approved Method TR: The Poll WPC: Devonian, the beautiful daughter of love & liberty,	<b>13</b> WD: The Dutchess Canvassing for her favourite member	<b>14</b> TR: Lords of the Bedchamber The Devonshire method to restore a lost member	<b>15</b> WPC: Fox's Collion in St James' Market	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Fox and Burke as Hudibras
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> WPC: The Devonshire Minuet Fox in a Trap and the constitution preserved	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> TR: Political Affection WD: The Brentford Race TR: Wff's Last Stake Faal Ambition	<b>23</b> TR: Reynard put to his Shifts	<b>24</b> TR: Mrs Hob and Nob on a
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Devonshire Route	<b>27</b> A Meeting of Female Canvassers	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> AA: The Tipling dutchess returning from canvassing TR: The depature	<b>30</b> TR: Procession to the Hustings WD: Her +++ carrying a plumper for Charley	
TR: Thomas Rowlandson		WD: William Dent				
WPC: William Paulet Carey		AA: A Aiken				

May 1784						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 TR: Every man has his Hobby Horse
2	3 JB: Cheek by Jowl Reynard's Doubt and his friends combating him	4	5 Devonshire Amusement	6 Wisdom led by Virtue and Prudence to the Temple of Fame WD: Doctor Barnacle	7	8
9	10 HK: The Political Shaver	11	12	13	14	15 WD: The force of friendship
16	17 Polls Closed	18 SC: Carlo Khan's triumphal entry into St Stephen's Chapel	19 IC: Westminster Races	20 TR: For the benefit of the Champion	21 WD: Fox and Geese Triumphant	22
23 Vox Populi, Vox Dei	24 The Matter Reversed A Borough Secured	25 TR: Liberty and Fame introducing Female Patriotism to Britania The Apophysis of the Duchess	26	27	28	29
30	31					
TR: Thomas Rowlandson		WD: William Dent		JB: John Boyne		
WPC: William Paulet Carey		AA: A Aiken		HK: Henry Kingsbury		
SC: Samuel Collings		IC: Isaac Cruikshank				

**Table 1** Satirical prints featuring Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire in the months of April and May 1784



		1784	1785	1786	1787	1788	1789	1790	1791	1792
Faro		<a href="#">The Poll 12 April</a>			<a href="#">The way to keep him as perform'd at the Richmond La Belle Assemblée 12 May</a>	<a href="#">The installation-supper 4 June</a>	<a href="#">Restoration dressing room 24 April</a>	<a href="#">A private rehearsal of Jane Shore 1 Feb</a>	<a href="#">Le dernière ressource; or- Van Buchell's</a>	<a href="#">A sphere, protecting against a plane 3</a>
Theatricals		<a href="#">A side box at the Opera 14 April</a>				<a href="#">Fashionable Follies. Les Follies á la Mode</a>				<a href="#">No Swallow without an opening 31 Jan</a>
Politics		<a href="#">Madam Blubber on her canvass 22 April</a>							<a href="#">At Church 4 Oct</a>	
Body		<a href="#">Dark lantern business, or, Mrs. Hob and Veluti in speculum 26 April</a>							<a href="#">Getting the length of the Duchess's foot</a>	<a href="#">Road to Ruin 20 March</a>
		<a href="#">A meeting of the female canvassers in</a>							<a href="#">The Duchess's first levee 19 Dec</a>	<a href="#">Modern hospitality, -or-a friendly party in</a>
		<a href="#">Madam Blubber's last shift or The</a>								<a href="#">The rape of Helen, 10 Apr</a>
		<a href="#">Ride for ride or secret influence rewarded 25</a>								<a href="#">A voluptuary under the horrors of</a>
		<a href="#">The rival canvassers 16 June</a>								<a href="#">A Beef Eater 24 oct</a>
		<a href="#">Catlap for Ever, or the Smuggler's</a>								
TOTAL	55	10	0	0	2	2	1	1	4	7



1803	1804	1805	1806	1807	1808	1809	1810	1811	1812
<a href="#">Coblers of fashion or modish pastime</a>	<a href="#">L'Assemblée Nationale 18 June</a>								<a href="#">The Coronation of the Empress of the Nairs 1</a>
<a href="#">Dilettanti-theatricals 18 Feb</a>									<a href="#">Management-or-Butts &amp; Hogsheads 1 Dec</a>
2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

**Table 2** Table documenting all known satirical prints of Albinia Hobart 1784-1812

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