The Art of Plantation Authority: Domestic Portraiture in Colonial Virginia

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The Art of Plantation Authority: Domestic Portraiture in Colonial Virginia

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A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty of The College of William & Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation critically examines the political and social significance of colonial portraiture by focusing on domestic portraits commissioned for Virginians between the mid-seventeenth century and 1775. Portraiture was a site where colonial and imperial identity was negotiated and expressed. Portraits also supported the construction of social relationships through the acts of representation, erasure, and reception. Chapter one focuses on portraits painted in England for Virginians before ca. 1735 and the use of English portrait conventions to suit the political needs of colonists and to express visions of themselves as agents of empire. This chapter reveals some of the ways Virginians used portraits to engage in transatlantic politics and social networks. Chapter two uncovers the regional preferences for expressing elite, community values centered around gender and family before 1770 in portraits of men, women, and children. It argues that portrait collections had dynastic purposes and visualized women as sexual beings and men as masters over colonial and female nature. Chapter three discusses the influence that enslaved Africans had on portraits of Virginians throughout the colonial period. It argues that the physical presence of enslaved people as audiences caused colonists to erase them from portraiture in order to construct and enforce a plantation complex system of visuality. Planters also disavowed the realities of slavery to emphasize their British civility. The last chapter uncovers the rapid changes in portraiture in the 1770s as colonists and artists confronted imperial crises and responded in diverse ways. The fracturing of gentry planter cohesion and the greater availability of artists changed portraiture in the colony. Virginians left behind the conventionalized nature of portraiture from earlier decades and many began including messages of resistance to imperial policy and partaking in pan-colonial modes of representation. This dissertation combines archival research with visual analysis to shed light on portraiture from a region typically overlooked by art historians. By focusing on a specific region over a long period of time, this project emphasizes the varied and important roles that portraits played in shaping colonial culture and society.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1. Empire of Pictures: Transatlantic Portraiture and Colonial Identity</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2. Manly Success and Good Wives: Picturing the Planter Family</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3. Invisible Presence: Slavery and the Planter Image</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4. New Virginia Characters: A Revolution in Portraiture</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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This dissertation began during a curatorial internship at Colonial Williamsburg, where I had the pleasure of working with Laura Pass Barry and Margaret Pritchard. I was asked to research the Westover portrait collection and from this initial project grew my dissertation. I am grateful to Laura and Margaret for their continued support of my scholarship. A special thanks is due to Shelley Svoboda for her willingness to share her expertise and advise me on the material histories and technical examinations of several paintings discussed throughout the dissertation. I would also like to thank the rest of the staff of the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg for allowing me access to the collections and research files and for consulting with me on specific paintings, particularly Kate Teiken and Virginia Foster.

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This dissertation is dedicated to Carl Akira Yorimoto (1938-2011), my Superman.
LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Unknown artist, Said to be Richard Lee I, date unknown 138
1.2 Unknown artist, Said to be Anne Constable Lee (Mrs. Richard Lee I), date unknown 138
1.3 Unknown artist, Said to be Richard Lee II, date unknown 138
1.4 Unknown artist, Said to be Laetitia Corbin Lee (Mrs. Richard Lee II), date unknown 138
1.5 Unknown artist, Said to be Sir William Berkeley, date unknown 139
1.6 Unknown artist, Said to be Lady Frances Culpeper Stephens Berkeley, date unknown 139
1.7 Studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, James Craggs the Younger, ca. 1708 140
1.8 Unknown artist, William Randolph I, date unknown 141
1.9 John Wollaston after unknown artist, possible Elizabeth Beverley Randolph (Mrs. William Randolph II), ca. 1755 141
1.10 John Hesselius after unknown artist, Henry Fitzhugh I, 1751 141
1.11 John Hesselius after unknown artist, William Fitzhugh I, 1751 141
1.12 Unknown artist, Colonel John Page, ca. 1660 142
1.13 Unknown artist, Robert Bolling, ca. 1695 143
1.14 Style of Sir Peter Lely, Sir Joseph Williamson, ca. 1665 144
1.15 Circle of John Closterman and John Riley, William Byrd II in Roman Dress, ca. 1680 145
1.16 Unknown artist, Edward Hill III, ca. 1685 146
1.17 John Closterman, John Poulett, 1st Earl Poulett, ca. 1680 147
1.18 Attributed to John Closterman or John Riley, Boy of the Montagu family, ca. 1685 148
Detail of figures 1.15, 1.17, 1.18

Detail of figures 1.15, 1.17, 1.18

1.19 Theodor de Bry after John White, *Weroan, or Great Lorde of Virginia*, 1590

1.20 Theodor de Bry after John White, *Pict Warrior*, 1590

1.21 Frontispiece from John Speed, *The History of Great Britaine*, 1611

1.22 Edward Cooper and John Smith after Willem Wissing, *Edward Rich, Earl of Warwick*, 1684

1.23 Edward Cooper and John Smith after Willem Wissing, *William Cecil*, 1686

1.24 Possibly Robert Dowsing, *Edward Jaquelin*, ca. 1720

1.25 Unknown artist after Abraham van Diepenbeck, *Portrait of a group of five of the 1st Duke of Newcastle’s Manage Horses each with an attendant*, ca. 1665-1676

1.26 Unknown artist, *Lucy Parke Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd II)*, 1716

1.27 Pierre Mignard, *Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth*, 1682

1.28 John Raphael Smith after Benjamin West, *Sir Joseph Banks*, 1773

1.29 John Closterman, *Daniel Parke II*, 1704-1706

1.30 Unknown artist, *Queen Anne*, ca. 1704

1.31 Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Daniel Parke II*, 1704-1706

1.32 Attributed to Charles Jervas, *Teresa Blount*, ca. 1720

1.33 By or after Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Robert Southwell*, ca. 1702

1.34 Unknown artist, *Charles Boyle, 4th Earl of Orrery*, ca. 1726
1.35 John Faber after Hans Hyssing, *John Percival, 1st Earl of Egmont*, 1734 163
1.36 William Aikman, *John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll*, 1719 164
1.37 Hans Hyssing, *Sir Wilfrid Lawson*, ca. 1726 165
1.38 Unknown artist, *Charles Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax*, ca. 1714-1720s 166
1.39 Attributed to Thomas Gibson, *Charles Wager*, ca. 1720s 166
1.40 Unknown artist, *Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford*, ca. 1726 167
1.41 Studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, *William Byrd II*, ca. 1704 168
1.42 John Smith after Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Charles Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax*, ca. 1690-1693 169
1.43 Hans Hyssing, *William Byrd II*, ca. 1726 170
1.44 Enoch Seeman, *Jane Pratt Taylor (Mrs. Thomas Taylor)*, 1734 171
2.1 Unknown artist, *Evelyn Byrd*, ca. 1724 273
2.2 Unknown artist, *Maria Taylor Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd II)*, ca. 1724 274
2.3 Robert Feke, *Elizabeth Burwell Nelson (Mrs. William Nelson)*, ca. 1750 275
2.4 Robert Feke, *William Nelson*, ca. 1750 276
2.5 John Wollaston, *George Braxton III*, ca. 1755-1758 277
2.6 John Wollaston, *Mary Blair Braxton (Mrs. George Braxton III)*, ca. 1755-1758 277
2.7 John Wollaston, *Daniel Parke Custis*, 1757 278
2.8 John Wollaston, *Martha Dandridge Custis (Mrs. Daniel Parke Custis)*, 1757 278
2.9 John Wollaston, *Fielding Lewis*, ca. 1755-1758 279
2.10 John Wollaston, *John Tayloe II*, ca. 1755-1758 279
2.11 John Wollaston, *Rebecca Plater Tayloe (Mrs. John Tayloe II)*, ca. 1755-1758 279
2.13 John Wollaston, *Elizabeth Randolph Chiswell (Mrs. John Chiswell)*, ca. 1755 280
2.14 John Wollaston, *Frances Tasker Carter (Mrs. Robert Carter III)*, ca. 1755-1758 281
2.15 John Wollaston, *Susannah Everard Meade (Mrs. David Meade)*, ca. 1755-1758 282
2.16 John Wollaston, *John Parke Custis and Martha Parke Custis (The Custis Children)*, 1757 283
2.17 Attributed to John Wollaston, *The Grymes Children*, ca. 1750 284
2.18 Charles Bridges, *Benjamin and Ludwell Grymes*, ca. 1735-1740 284
2.19 John Wollaston, *Rebecca and Warner Lewis*, ca. 1755-1758 285
2.20 John Wollaston, *Mann Page III and Elizabeth Page*, ca. 1755-1758 286
2.21 Charles Bridges, *Lucy and Bernard Moore*, ca. 1735 287
2.22 John Hesselius, *Janie Oakie and Gawin Corbin*, 1755 288
2.23 John Wollaston, *Anne Randolph*, ca. 1755 289
2.24 John Wollaston, *Elizabeth Randolph*, ca. 1755 290
2.26 John Wollaston, *Mary Lightfoot*, ca. 1755-1758 292
2.27 John Wollaston, *Mildred Howell Lightfoot (Mrs. William Lightfoot)*, ca. 1755-1758 293
2.28 John Wollaston, *John Page*, ca. 1755-1758 294
2.29 John Wollaston, *William Byrd IV*, 1755-1756 295
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>John Wollaston</td>
<td>John Carter Byrd, 1755-1756</td>
<td></td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>John Wollaston</td>
<td>Thomas Taylor Byrd, 1755-1756</td>
<td></td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>Unknown artist</td>
<td>William Byrd III, ca. 1747</td>
<td></td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>John Wollaston</td>
<td>Ralph Worneley V, ca. 1755-1758</td>
<td></td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>John Wollaston</td>
<td>Ralph Worneley IV, ca. 1755-1758</td>
<td></td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>John Wollaston</td>
<td>Jane Bowles Worneley (Mrs. Ralph Worneley IV), ca. 1755-1758</td>
<td></td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>Arthur Devis</td>
<td>John Orde, His Wife, Anne, His Eldest Son, William, and a Servant, 1754-1756</td>
<td></td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>Charles Willson Peale</td>
<td>The Edward Lloyd Family, 1771</td>
<td></td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>John Hesselius</td>
<td>James Gordon, ca. 1750</td>
<td></td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>John Hesselius</td>
<td>Milicent Conway Gordon (Mrs. James Gordon), ca. 1750</td>
<td></td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>John Hesselius</td>
<td>Mary Harrison Gordon (Mrs. James Gordon) and her son, James, ca. 1750</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>John Hesselius</td>
<td>John Gordon, ca. 1750</td>
<td></td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>John Hesselius</td>
<td>Anne and Sarah Gordon, ca. 1750</td>
<td></td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>John Hesselius</td>
<td>Anne and Sarah Gordon, ca. 1750</td>
<td></td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advertisements from Virginia Gazette</td>
<td></td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Detail of figure 2.42</td>
<td></td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Unknown artist</td>
<td>William Byrd III as a child, ca. 1729-1730</td>
<td></td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Sir Godfrey Kneller</td>
<td>Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu, ca. 1720</td>
<td></td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>By or after Sir Godfrey Kneller</td>
<td>Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu, ca. 1720</td>
<td></td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>John Hesselius</td>
<td>Charles Calvery and His Slave, 1761</td>
<td></td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Justus Engelhardt Kühn</td>
<td>Henry Darnall III, ca. 1710</td>
<td></td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Unknown artist</td>
<td>Anne Byrd as a child, ca. 1729-1730</td>
<td></td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7  Daniel Orme after William Denton, Olaudah Equiano, 1789

3.8  William Faithorne after Sir Peter Lely, Beauty's Tribute, late seventeenth century

3.9  Attributed to Gustavus Hesselius, Girl of the Carroll Family

3.10 William Hogarth, plate 2, A Harlot's Progress, 1732

3.11 The Fortunate Transport, ca. 1741

3.12 John Wollaston, Thomas Mann Randolph, ca. 1755-1758

3.13 Justus Engelhardt Kühn, Eleanor Darnall, ca. 1710

3.14 William Dering, George Booth, 1748-1750

3.15 Bartholomew Dandridge, Young Girl with an Enslaved Servant and a Dog, ca. 1725

3.16 Unknown artist, Landon Carter, ca. 1750

3.17 Richard Houston after Thomas Spencer, The Portraiture of White-Nose, 1756

3.18 Richard Houston after Thomas Spencer, The Portraiture of the fine Chestnut Arabian, 1756

3.19 John Hesselius, William Byrd III, ca. 1750

4.1  John Hesselius, Henry Fitzhugh, 1771

4.2  John Hesselius, Elizabeth Stith Fitzhugh (Henry Fitzhugh), 1771

4.3  John Hesselius, Gavin Lawson, 1770

4.4  John Hesselius, Susannah Rose Lawson (Mrs. Gavin Lawson), 1770

4.5  John Hesselius, Ann Fitzhugh Rose (Mrs. Robert Rose), 1771

4.6  Robert Walker, Side Chair, 1746

4.7  Matthew Pratt, James Balfour and his son, George, 1773
4.8 Matthew Pratt, Mary Jemima Balfour (Mrs. James Balfour), 1773
4.9 Carington Bowles, A New Method of Macaroni Making, 1774
4.10 Sayer & Bennett, The Alternative of Williamsburg, 1775
4.11 Sayer & Bennett, A Society of Patriotic Ladies, 1775
4.12 Matthew Pratt, Hugh McCulloch, 1770-1773
4.13 John Singleton Copley, Thomas and Sarah Morris Mifflin, 1773
4.14 Charles Willson Peale, William Pitt, Lord Chatham, 1768
4.15 Charles Willson Peale, John Beale Bordley, 1770
4.16 Charles Willson Peale, John Dickinson, 1770
4.17 Charles Willson Peale, George Washington, 1772
4.18 Charles Willson Peale, Benjamin Harrison, 1775
4.19 Charles Willson Peale, Elizabeth Page Harrison (Mrs. Benjamin Harrison), 1775
4.20 Frontispiece from Thomas Hale, A Compleat Body of Husbandry, 1758
4.21 Charles Willson Peale, John Lewis, 1772
4.22 Charles Willson Peale, James Lewis, 1772-1775
4.23 Charles Willson Peale, Lambert Cadwalader, 1771
4.24 Charles Willson Peale, Martha Cadwalader, 1771
4.25 Charles Willson Peale, Henry Tazewell, 1775
4.26 Charles Willson Peale, Dorothy Waller Tazewell (Mrs. Henry Tazewell), 1775
4.27 Cosmo Alexander, Mary Willing Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III) and her daughter, Mana, 1771
4.28 Matthew Pratt, *Mary Willing Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III)*, 1773 504

4.29 John Durand, *Mary Orange Rothery (Mrs. Matthew Rothery)*, 1773 505

4.30 John Durand, *Thomas Newton, Jr.*, 1770 506

4.31 John Durand, *Martha Tucker Newton (Mrs. Thomas Newton, Jr.) and her son, Thomas Newton III*, 1770 507

5.1 Titus Kaphar, *Billy Lee: Portrait in Tar*, 2016 522

5.2 Titus Kaphar, *Ona Judge: Portrait in Tar*, 2016 522

5.3 Titus Kaphar, *Absconded from the Household of the President of the United States*, 2016 522
Introduction

"the other British Colonies on the main, have one after another, been carved out of Virginia...All that part of the northern American continent, now under the Dominion of the King of Great Britain, and stretching quite as far as the Cape of Florida, went at first under the General Name of Virginia."¹

William Byrd II (ca. 1736)

As William Byrd II and other eighteenth-century Virginians were quick to point out, Virginia was the first permanent British settlement on the North American mainland and originally encompassed all of North America in the British imperial imagination. Virginia remained politically and economically important throughout the entire colonial period. It was the most populous British colony on the mainland, one of the wealthiest, and the earliest mainland colony with slaves. While colonial Virginia has received much attention from historians, its rich visual culture has remained largely neglected. This dissertation brings long overdue attention to colonial Virginia portraiture. Focusing on an understudied region allows for careful examination of local contexts and communities that are often lost in projects with broad geographical scopes or in American art scholarship, which tends to have a northern bias. Regional studies also allow for a sustained exploration of how imperial contexts affected people and artistic production on a local level. Employing extensive archival research and visual analysis, this dissertation uncovers some of the social and political

motivations for commissioning portraits and reveals how portraits of planters contributed to the construction of social, gender, and racial hierarchies in colonial Virginia.

Domestic Portraiture in Colonial Virginia

This project uses Richard Brilliant's succinct definition of portraiture as "art works, intentionally made of living or once living people by artists, in a variety of media, and for an audience." As works of art, portraits draw on a long history of representation, even as they respond to the sitter at a specific moment in time. Artists negotiate painting what they see in front of them with traditions of artistic practice, with specific local contexts, and with the patron's individual desires for representation. Sometimes, the intended audience is a small group of people, perhaps the sitter's immediate family. On other occasions, portraits are commissioned to represent the sitter to a larger community. This dissertation thus engages with reception theory by considering not only the different messages that images of gentry sought to convey to various audiences, but also the fact that different audiences received inherently different messages. Enslaved Africans, for example, "read" a portrait of a white planter differently than the sitter's children might "read" the same painting.

The interpretations of individual portraits in this study are also influenced by Harry Berger's Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt against the Italian Renaissance (2000), which explores the sitter's important role in producing their

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portrait. As Berger notes in his study of early modern portraiture, such images do not just capture a person's physical appearance, but also represent the act of posing. Therefore, portraits are also acts of self-representation, even though the sitter does not pick up the paintbrush. This project thus approaches portraiture as a cultural practice. A portrait is not a fixed object. Its meaning depends on negotiations undertaken between sitter and artist, and sometimes a separate patron, as well as the ensuing dialogue between object and spectator, and the social and political contexts and practices that change over time but shape the ways that viewers understand the image in front of them.

This dissertation focuses on domestic portraiture: portraits commissioned to hang in homes. "Family" portraiture is too limited a definition, as some homes included portraits of friends and acquaintances who would not be considered family. This was the case at Westover plantation, for example, where the Byrd family maintained a portrait collection featuring many friends, political contacts, and extended family members. Focusing on the domestic excludes public commissions and state portraits. For example, portraits of the reigning king and queen of England hung in colonial capitol buildings, including that of Virginia. These types of public paintings fulfilled a function different from that of domestic portraits. They represented royal authority and hung in public locations.

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plantation homes were semi-public sites of sociability and hospitality, they were primarily family residences.

Miniatures and printed portraits are excluded as primary evidence in this study in favor of oil paintings. Miniature portraits were small, intimate objects typically worn close to the body as jewelry. They were far more private than oil paintings and were used, commissioned, and gifted differently. Miniatures and printed portraits are excluded as primary evidence in this study in favor of oil paintings. Miniature portraits were small, intimate objects typically worn close to the body as jewelry. They were far more private than oil paintings and were used, commissioned, and gifted differently. Tracking and identifying miniature portraits is even more challenging than researching oil portraits, as there are relatively few records of miniatures before the mid-eighteenth century, and many miniatures in museum collections have little or no provenance. Virginians also owned English portrait prints of famous individuals, nobility, and royalty. These prints were typically published in England and imported to the colonies. As publicly circulating images and commodities, these types of portraits also fulfilled a function distinct from oil portraits. Prints allowed Virginians to collect images of famous visages, show their loyalty to the royal family and to political ideologies, and view the latest fashions from England. Prints were also relatively inexpensive and thus available to a wider range of consumers. English prints often served as models for colonial portraiture, a topic

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that has been discussed extensively by other scholars. Portrait prints and miniatures are mentioned in this study only as supporting evidence for interpreting colonial oil portraits.

Throughout most of the colonial period, only wealthy Virginians could afford oil paintings. Therefore, the subjects of this study are predominantly white, affluent members of the Virginia gentry, or the prominent leading families. In Virginia, the gentry were principally tobacco planters, though most engaged in mercantile activities as well. In the seventeenth century, the gentry were primarily Anglo-Virginians who survived long enough in Virginia's harsh climate to accumulate land-based wealth and control a labor force composed of both indentured servants and enslaved Africans and Indians. These leading men typically had important political and mercantile connections in London and used those connections to control the tobacco and African slave trades and to obtain political appointments. The gentry largely controlled the lawmaking bodies of the Governor's Council and the House of Burgesses. Over the course of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, the gentry became increasingly dominated by creole, or Virginia-born, families who consolidated their wealth and


political power through marriages. By the mid to late eighteenth century, the
gentry were composed of families with long-standing political appointments,
transatlantic connections, and extensive landholdings. They continued to
possess cultural, political, and social authority. However, owing to the nature of
tobacco agriculture, which relied heavily on systems of credit, and to their own
conspicuous consumption, the gentry were increasingly in debt after the 1750s,
some families severely so, and as a result, their authority was challenged in the
late colonial period.

The Virginia gentry were an anxious group. They were aware of the
 precarity of their social position, which was based on wealth, land, and fictions of
white superiority. Male planters were continuously reasserting their authority at
home and in public. Elite white women also benefited from the construction of

---

9 My understanding of the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gentry and class
formation has been shaped by Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American
Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: History Book Club, 2005);
Kathleen M. Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender,
Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute
of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North
Carolina Press, 1996); and Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790
(Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and
Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

10 On the rise and decline of the Virginia gentry, see Emory G. Evans, A “Topping
People”: The Rise and Decline of Virginia’s Old Political Elite, 1680-1790
(Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009). For the gentry in the late colonial
period, see T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters
on the Eve of Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Woody
Holton, Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American
Revolution in Virginia (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early
American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina
Press, 1999).
racial and class hierarchies and participated in maintaining the status quo. The gentry carefully planned landscapes and built environments that emphasized their status, attempted to control their families and enslaved workers, and used systems of patronage and condescension to earn the deference of poorer whites. These planter anxieties manifested in domestic portraiture, as portraits became tools to display and uphold elite, white, male authority.

Although the patrons of portraits were largely gentry, the audience for the paintings was diverse. Plantation homes were frequented by visitors of varied social status and race. Planters regularly hosted family and friends. Native Americans, free and enslaved, were regularly recorded as visitors in early eighteenth-century diaries. Enslaved Africans lived and worked within the planters' homes. Poor whites visited gentry homes on business. Ship captains docked at plantations located along rivers and visited the homes. As a result, domestic portraiture was never truly a private, family-only affair. Diverse audiences, both intended and incidental, impacted the production and reception of Virginia portraiture in important ways.

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The archival and genealogical research employed in this dissertation offers new dates and sitter attributions for several Virginia portraits. Indeed, most of the images discussed herein have never been subjected to rigorous visual and art historical analysis. Some of the paintings are housed in public collections and are easily accessible. The largest repositories of colonial Virginia portraits are found at Colonial Williamsburg and the Virginia Historical Society, although many still remain in private collections. Using a number of visual reference collections and portrait indices, this dissertation draws upon reference images and information for approximately four hundred and ten documented colonial (before ca. 1776) Virginia portraits by various artists. Although the resulting reference list is likely the most extensive inventory of colonial Virginia portraits to date, it is

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14 I visited the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) Object Database in July 2016. The database is now available online at http://mesda.org/research/object-database/. Portraits referred to in the MESDA database will appear with their inventory number. I used the online resources from The Frick Art Reference Library and Photoarchive (FARL), which are available at https://www.frick.org/research/library. I visited Winterthur’s Decorative Arts Photographic Collection (DAPC) in October 2017. The Smithsonian Index of Paintings and Sculpture is available online at https://siris-artinventories.si.edu. I would also like to thank Ellen G. Miles for granting me access to the in-house version of the National Portrait Gallery’s Catalog of American Portraiture in December 2016. The Clarke County Association archives are available online at http://clarkecounty.pastperfectonline.com/. It appears that these records were collected mostly in the 1930s and 1940s. The Colonial Dames Portrait Index, compiled in 1971, was housed at Wilton House Museum, but is in the process of moving to the Virginia Historical Society. I would like to thank William Strollo for showing me the index in April 2017. In 1930, the Virginia House in Richmond mounted an exhibition of Virginia portraiture and published a limited-run catalog with a number of illustrations. See Alexander Wilbourne Weddell, ed., A Memorial Volume of Virginia Historical Portraiture, 1585-1830 (Richmond: The William Byrd Press, 1930). Many extant portraits appear in multiple or all databases; however, they vary in the amount of information contained (for example, not all include dimensions) and sometimes there are conflicting attributions of sitters and/or artists. Since institutions collected information at various times, they contain useful provenance information as portraits changed owners over time. I would also like to thank the Carter family of Shirley Plantation, the Emery family of Mount Airy, and the Wellford and O’Hara families of Sabine Hall for allowing me to visit their private collections in the fall of 2015.
by no means exhaustive. Eighteenth-century inventories and records occasionally make vague references to portraits that are today unknown or are no longer extant. Descendants may have sold off portraits and, in the process of changing ownership, the Virginia origins and sitter identifications of the portraits were forgotten or went unrecorded. The vagaries of weather, war, fire, and other disasters have undoubtedly destroyed many colonial portraits. Nonetheless, the existence of over four hundred portraits with histories of ownership in Virginia constitutes a group large enough to identify and characterize regional trends in portraiture over the course of the long eighteenth century.

**Virginia in Art History**

Art historians have largely ignored Virginia's colonial visual culture and, indeed, southern art in general. In 1949, Joseph Downs, curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, came to Williamsburg, Virginia and stated: "little of artistic merit was made south of Baltimore."\(^{15}\) Since then, curators, particularly from southern institutions like Colonial Williamsburg and the Museum of Southern Decorative Arts (itself created partially in response to Downs' comments), have responded by conducting studies of southern decorative arts. Furniture and architecture in particular, have received attention from scholars.\(^{16}\) Nonetheless, American art historical scholarship on colonial

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\(^{16}\) For example, see Ronald L. Hurst and Jonathan Prown, *Southern Furniture, 1680 - 1830* (New York: Abrams, 1997); and Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury, eds., *The Chesapeake House: Architectural Investigation by Colonial Williamsburg* (Chapel Hill: 9
paintings and the visual arts still tends to reflect a regional bias that privileges the North.

Maurie McInnis, in her 2005 essay, "Little of Artistic Merit?: The Problem and Promise of Southern Art History," addresses some of the reasons that arts of the South have received so little attention. First, southern culture is tainted by slavery. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, collectors were less interested in objects with southern provenance because of cultural bias. Second, southerners tended to collect European art and other imports in greater numbers than did northerners. The southern interest in European collecting was not aligned with narratives of American exceptionalism that emerged in the nineteenth century. William Dunlap, who in 1834 wrote the first history of American painting, emphasized the importance of patronizing American artists and largely ignored the southern collectors of European art. The presence of European objects also affected southern regional styles, which differed from quintessential "American" styles based on a northern paradigm. Third, northern urban areas tended to produce more visual objects than the agrarian South. In the nineteenth century, New York came to dominate the art market, which furthered regional bias and production imbalance. Fourth, many colonial objects, particularly paintings, suffered damage and destruction in the hot, humid, southern climate, and during the American Revolution and the Civil War. British

Published in association with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation by The University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

17 McInnis, “Little of Artistic Merit?”
and northern soldiers damaged paintings, but southerners themselves were also responsible for inadvertently harming these works, as they often rolled canvases or cut paintings out of frames for safekeeping or travel.\textsuperscript{19} Such damage and destruction contributed to the imbalance of extant northern and southern objects. Damage has also caused many surviving paintings to lose their original aesthetic appeal or become buried in overpaint or layers of varnish due to early restoration efforts. As a result, many damaged paintings either do not appeal to collectors and researchers for aesthetic reasons, or they languish in museum storage because the expense of conservation is too great.

Many southern colonial paintings remain in private collections, often with descendants of the original owners, which can make accessing them difficult. When colonial portraiture was commodified on the art market in the nineteenth century, artists like John Singleton Copley, who worked in mostly in New England and briefly in New York before relocating to England, led the market for colonial art.\textsuperscript{20} Copley was highly skilled, mostly self-trained, and he was the focus of many early American art histories because of the appeal of his all-American, native-born genius success story, which in turn added to his commercial value.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} McInnis, “Little of Artistic Merit?”
Many early public exhibitions of colonial portraits, which increased interest in private as well as public collecting, occurred in New York and Boston, further contributing to the rise of northern portraits on the market.\textsuperscript{22}

In the South, sentimental familial ties to land and home were very strong, and many southerners who inherited family portraits felt a sense of duty to keep them in the family, as did the Hill-Carter family of Shirley plantation in Charles City, Virginia. The owner of Shirley in the early twentieth century was Marion Carter Oliver. Like many owners of large, historic homes in this period, Oliver found herself struggling financially to keep the estate afloat. Yet, of the many portraits in the Shirley family collection, the only one Oliver sold to help with expenses was a portrait of George Washington by Charles Willson Peale (1780, Colonial Williamsburg).\textsuperscript{23} Washington was not related to the family; thus, his was the only portrait Oliver was willing to sell.

\textit{National Era} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Paul J. Staiti, \textit{Of Arms and Artists: The American Revolution through Painters’ Eyes} (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2016); and Margaretta M. Lovell, \textit{Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans, and Patrons in Early America} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). Copley has also attracted the interest of historians. See Jane Kamensky, \textit{A Revolution in Color: The World of John Singleton Copley} (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016).\textsuperscript{22} Saunders, “The Eighteenth-Century Portrait,” 142–43.\textsuperscript{23} This 1780 portrait of George Washington was purchased by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for Colonial Williamsburg in 1928. Oliver agreed to this arrangement because she wanted the portrait to remain nearby and in Virginia. The portrait was originally commissioned in 1780, most likely by Thomas Nelson of Yorktown, whose daughter married Robert Carter of Shirley and presumably inherited the painting upon Nelson’s death in 1794. For the history of this painting, see Object file 1933-502, \textit{Portrait of George Washington}, Colonial Williamsburg and the Shirley Plantation Collection, Special Collections, Rockefeller Library, Colonial Williamsburg. See especially the series of letters to and from Marion Carter Oliver in container 75, folder 7 and container 76, folders 1-6, dating from 1922-1928. These letters detail the appraisal and sale of the George Washington portrait and provide a glimpse into the market for early American portraiture in the early twentieth century. Notably, the other portrait Oliver briefly considered selling was that of Elizabeth Hill Carter Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III, 1731-
Of course, southern painting has not been completely ignored in the scholarly literature. Maurie McInnis's 2005 book on antebellum Charleston discusses paintings as well as other forms of artistic production to argue that material culture was central to understanding cultural authority in Charleston.\textsuperscript{24} John Michael Vlach's 2002 \textit{The Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings} traces the relationship between slavery and southern landscape painting from the 1790s to the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{25} Similarly, the 2008 exhibition and accompanying publication, \textit{The Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation and American Art}, illuminates the changing representation of the plantation in American art from the late eighteenth century to the present.\textsuperscript{26} Jennifer Van Horn's recent book, \textit{The Power of Objects in Eighteenth-Century British America} (2017), includes discussions of Charleston as one regional center of artistic production that sheds light on how objects constructed civility.\textsuperscript{27} In particular, Van Horn discusses gravestone portraits and John Wollaston's oil portraits of the colonial elite in Charleston. Some of Charles Willson Peale's portraits from Maryland have also received attention because of their complex

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\textsuperscript{26} Angela D. Mack and Stephen G. Hoffius, eds., \textit{Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art} (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).
\textsuperscript{27} Jennifer Van Horn, \textit{The Power of Objects in Eighteenth-Century British America} (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

1760) by John Wollaston. As Byrd was a daughter of the Hill-Carter family, but not a direct ancestor, perhaps Oliver felt that Byrd's portrait could reasonably be parted from the family estate.
emblematic compositions and Peale’s revolutionary politics. However, as these examples reveal, Charleston and nineteenth-century studies overshadow other regions and topics in early southern art history. More recently, Carolyn Weekley’s *Painters and Paintings in the Early American South* (2013), which accompanied a large exhibition at Colonial Williamsburg, includes many Virginia portraits in a survey of southern painting. Weekley’s ambitious book is an important resource for tracking the activities of artists working in the early southern colonies, and it builds on earlier studies focused on identifying artists and sitter attributions. Yet Weekley concentrates on artist biographies and movements before the nineteenth century, and rarely engages in visual or socio-cultural analysis.

Wayne Craven’s foundational book, *Colonial American Portraiture: The Economic, Religious, Social, Cultural, Philosophical, Scientific, and Aesthetic Foundations* (1986), was the last major study to engage critically with Virginia art.

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portraiture. Craven discusses the development of colonial portraiture from the transfer of English mercantile styles during the late seventeenth century to the late eighteenth-century American style characterized by realism. The primary influences in colonial artistic development, as Craven understood it, were Protestantism and the related values of mercantile and individual success.

According to Craven, the apogee of colonial portraiture occurred between 1740 and 1790 with the movement towards realism and individualism that is best observed in Copley's portraits of New England merchants. Throughout his study, Craven sets up a dichotomy between New England and Virginia, with New Englanders celebrating individualism and personal success, and Virginians emphasizing aristocratic values and eschewing individuality for class-based similarities in portraiture. Writing of Virginia portraiture after 1740, Craven claims,

We never seem to find a crusty individual of the type that stares back at us from a portrait by Copley, nor are we permitted entrée to the real personality that shines forth in a likeness by Copley. The portrayal of class virtues was more important than the powerful individualism of the New England merchants and their families.

The very structure of Craven's volume betrays a regional bias and an ideological approach. In the third section of the book, "The Culmination, 1740-1790," which constitutes approximately one hundred and forty-seven pages, only one twenty-page chapter, "Painting in the South after 1740," covers the South, including

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32 Craven, Colonial American Portraiture, 373.
Virginia.\textsuperscript{33} Intentionally or not, studies of colonial portraiture subsequent to Craven's work similarly tend to overlook southern portraiture and to employ northern examples as representative for all of early America.\textsuperscript{34}

The 1987 exhibition catalog and essays in \textit{American Colonial Portraits, 1700-1776} by Richard Saunders and Ellen Miles, published around the same time as Craven's monograph, provide another survey of colonial art.\textsuperscript{35} Saunders and Miles offer a better overview of the actual practices of portraiture, discussing pricing, the use of prints, and the status of the artists. Saunders and Miles similarly discuss art works from different colonial regions, and include more analysis of individual objects. However, owing to its comprehensive approach and format as an exhibition catalog, analysis of regional character is limited.\textsuperscript{36} Like Craven, Saunders and Miles divide colonial art into two distinct periods, though their chronology ranges from 1700-1750 and 1750-1776. Saunders and Miles' chronology ignores seventeenth-century paintings. The typical divide at 1740/1750 evident in both studies reflects the greater number of artists and thus extant images in the colonies after ca. 1740. This timeline is evident in Virginia as well. The present dissertation of Virginia portraiture employs three time periods: pre-1735, 1735-ca. 1770, and the 1770s. The earliest time period is dominated by English portraits. The middle period saw an increasing number of artists

\textsuperscript{33} Craven, 253–400, esp. 353-373.  
\textsuperscript{34} See, for example, Rather, \textit{The American School}; and Lovell, \textit{Art in a Season of Revolution}.  
\textsuperscript{35} Saunders and Miles, \textit{American Colonial Portraits}.  
\textsuperscript{36} On the strengths and weaknesses of both Craven and Saunders and Miles, see Margaretta M. Lovell, “The ‘Terre Inconnue’ of the Colonial Face,” \textit{Winterthur Portfolio} 24, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 69–76.
working in the colony and a more conventionalized approach to portrait painting. Charles Bridges, the first documented, English-trained artist in Virginia with firmly attributed works, arrived in 1735, and thus he serves as the chronological divide for this regional study.\footnote{For Bridges, see Hood, \textit{Charles Bridges and William Dering}.} The last period, though short, saw sudden changes in Virginia's colonial visual culture.

This dissertation complicates Craven's assessment of colonial Virginia portraiture and expands on the work of Saunders and Miles. It contends that the aristocratic nature of colonial Virginia portraits had important social and political functions. Portraits supported not just class authority, but racial authority, and participated in the construction of gender and the control of female bodies. Portraiture also provided a way for planters to participate in imperial politics, materializing important regional and transatlantic connections. Moreover, this research, which is based on a broader range of evidence from Virginia than that employed by previous scholars, reveals that pan-colonial trends in portraiture and a greater emphasis on individuality and realism do in fact become apparent towards the end of the colonial period in Virginia. The rise of realism in portraiture in 1770s Virginia suggests a turn towards pan-colonial values of representation as Virginia portraiture aligned more closely in this period with works from other colonial regions. Realism and portraiture thus had political significance in Virginia, as colonists in this period negotiated regional and imperial social changes.
Two other major studies have established several of the basic functions of colonial portraits and have influenced this dissertation. First, the historian T. H. Breen examines portraits as commodities within the context of the consumer revolution, which dates to ca. 1740. In his influential 1990 article, "The Meaning of Likeness: Portrait Painting in an Eighteenth-Century Consumer Society," Breen argues that portraits, or likenesses, were commodities intended for little more than conspicuous displays of consumption.\(^{38}\) Breen's primary evidence is the "sameness" in the faces of many colonial sitters and the careful attention paid to textiles and other commodities within portraits. As a result, Breen adopts a largely dismissive attitude to the affective dimensions of portraiture. For Breen, portraits were less about preserving physiognomic likeness than they were about making inherently public statements regarding the wealth and success of the sitters. Building on this contention, in a subsequent study, Breen tracks the rising popularity of portraiture in the 1740s as the consumer revolution was accelerating in the Atlantic world.\(^{39}\) Portraiture, in Breen's estimation, helped fix or permanently visualize the status of the sitter.\(^{40}\)

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A second major study, Margaretta Lovell’s *Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans, and Patrons in Early America* (2005), examines family portraiture from about the 1740s to the 1770s, establishing the important genealogical work that portraits performed in colonial America. Lovell discusses how portraits preserved family likenesses for future generations and were intended to inspire descendants to perpetuate the family's success and honor. Using group portraits as evidence, she argues for the shifting ideologies of family life over this period, from the patriarchal and authoritative to the more paternal and sentimental. Lovell's consideration of three female subjects wearing the same blue dress in paintings by Copley also sheds light on how portraits could participate in visualizing social connections between friends and families. However, Lovell's sources are drawn exclusively from post-1740s New England and Philadelphia. Colonial Virginia was not an urban center like New England and Philadelphia, nor was it dominated by the merchant families that are so central to the studies of both Lovell and Craven.

Wendy Katz's 2004 article, "Portraits and the Production of the Civil Self in Seventeenth-Century Boston," is noteworthy for its focus on seventeenth-century colonial portraiture. Katz argues that there were two competing modes of portraiture imported from England to Boston in the seventeenth-century: the flat, flat,
linear, neo-medieval style and the more naturalistic Anglo-Dutch style. In her words, selection of the neo-medieval style for portraits implied that the subjects occupied a "timeless and unchanging position in a hierarchical body of sitters," while the more naturalistic approach "implied that character was the dependent and relative product of circumstances."\(^{43}\) Katz's article is Boston-centric, focusing on Puritan merchants and their portraits, and the neo-medieval style of portraiture is not present in any extant Virginia portraits. Nonetheless, the article is an important study of how early colonial domestic portraits could function as public statements, not just of wealth and status, but of more complicated visions of the "civil self." The article also provides a look at the different theories of representation that colonists were familiar with through English art and courtesy manuals.

This dissertation does not dispute the role portraits played in either conspicuous consumption to visualize social status or in picturing genealogical narratives. Virginia portraits were both public displays and private family images, and as such they possessed multiple social functions. The Virginia home was never truly private, and dynastic planter politics differed significantly from northern mercantile family politics. The dynastic emphasis on landed inheritance affected the expression of familial values and the social function of portraiture in the region. Many of the portraits discussed in the following chapters also had political significance. Moreover, in Virginia, the constant presence of people of African descent and, before the mid-eighteenth century, of Native American

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 101.
descent impacted the production and reception of portraiture, a reality that none of the aforementioned scholarship on colonial portraiture adequately addresses.

Jennifer Van Horn's *The Power of Objects in Eighteenth-Century British America* (2017) considers how colonial anxieties regarding living in proximity to Native Americans, African Americans, and the wilderness affected material and visual culture. Van Horn argues that colonists used "assemblages" of objects to construct a civil, British society. Objects had the power to counteract cultural degeneration in a provincial society and to construct civil bodies. Van Horn focuses on specific objects from regional, urban centers of production, namely Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, and Charleston, to show how a shared British transatlantic culture had distinct manifestations in regional "aesthetic communities." Among the object types she discusses are city prints, dressing tables, gravestones, prosthetic devices, and portraits. Van Horn's analysis reveals how regional studies can shed light on imperial British culture in early America. Virginia was also a regional center of cultural production, and this dissertation builds on Van Horn's approach to consider the ways that portraits helped to shape Virginia's aesthetic community.

Recently, Susan Rather has interrogated the status of artists in the late colonial period and the transition into the early nineteenth century in *The American School: Artists and Status in the Late Colonial and Early National Era*

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44 Van Horn, *The Power of Objects.*
Rather's book is important because it focuses on artists rather than artworks to discuss the uneasy and parallel transitions from artisan to artist and British colonist to American citizen in early American society. Rather places artists in a transatlantic world and reveals how experiences abroad shaped the identities of American artists and their expectations about practicing art in America. Like earlier scholarship, Rather's book focuses exclusively on the northern, urban cities of Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia. Her primary artists are John Singleton Copley, Benjamin West, and Gilbert Stuart, though she also considers the less-studied artists Matthew Pratt and William Williams. Even though Matthew Pratt worked in Virginia (indeed, he appears in chapter four of this dissertation), Rather explicitly overlooks the South as a center for artistic production, stating that "none of the artists central to [her] study worked in the South." This dissertation provides insight into the southern oeuvre of artists like Matthew Pratt. Further, by considering artists who worked outside of northern, urban areas, the present study establishes the groundwork for expanding discussions of the social status of artists in early America. However, unlike Rather's work, this study is less concerned with the status of the artists and instead focuses on the social role of portraiture.

Early American art history is closely tied to British art history. The majority of artists working in colonial America were either English-born or English-trained. Many colonists traveled to England during their lifetime, where they were

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46 Rather, The American School, 3.
exposed to British art, and most colonists had access to English prints, which often reproduced paintings. In this regard, two studies of eighteenth-century British portraiture have greatly informed this dissertation's methodological approach to interpreting colonial Virginia portraits. First, Marcia Pointon's foundational study, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (1993), argues that portraiture in eighteenth-century Britain was a social process with political implications. Pointon discusses portraiture as a result of both artistic convention and social practice, and reveals how the literal act of hanging a painting in a particular space informed interpretation.\(^{47}\) Second, Kate Retford's *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (2006), a study of country house collections and domestic portraiture in eighteenth-century England, explores the ways that portraits constructed genealogical narratives, family relationships, and social status. Retford also uncovers how domestic portraiture participated in larger social and political debates.\(^{48}\) Planters in Virginia aspired to the landed status of English gentry. They modeled their homes after English gentry country homes and saw themselves participating in the same culture. Thus, Retford's study informs the interpretations of domestic collections in Virginia in important ways.


Colonial American art history has long recognized the influence of British art in America, and transatlantic approaches to early American art are now standard in the field. 49 Jennifer Roberts’ influential study of John Singleton Copley in her recent book, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America* (2015), reveals the importance of transatlantic transmission and circulation of images and ideas to colonial art. 50 Roberts argues that Copley was influenced not only by English ideas and prints, but that the physical distance between Boston and London also affected his style. According to Roberts, the anxieties regarding transatlantic travel and communication affected Copley’s paintings, as he felt the need to employ mimetic realism to transmit his ideas to England intact. Less studied by art historians, however, are the works of art created in England for colonists and then carried back to America. These images fall in between British and American art: they were created by artists recognized as part of the British art world, but their American patrons and their relocation to America place them beyond the bounds of British art historical inquiry. Similarly, since these paintings were executed in England, they seem to have escaped the notice of most American art historians, with the exception of cursory remarks about colonial artists copying metropolitan examples. Chapter one of this


This dissertation contends that colonial art in America was also imperial. Thinking about colonial art as imperial means considering the ways that cultural production supported an ideology of empire. This approach affords new insight into the political and social context of colonial portraits. The Virginia colonists discussed throughout the present study self-fashioned themselves as imperial agents and identified themselves as British. Their creole status caused them anxieties that amplified the importance of portraiture’s ability to represent them as genteel British citizens and participants in British culture. Historians of British art have only recently considered the relationship between art and empire, showing how art participated in forging a global imperial culture and British identity. However, this literature is dominated by the production of imagery in England, India, and the Caribbean, and often focuses on the nineteenth-century British Empire. As this dissertation demonstrates, Virginia and the other North

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53 Douglas Fordham, “New Directions in British Art History of the Eighteenth Century,” Literature Compass 5, no. 5 (September 2008): esp. 7-12. See, for example, Douglas Fordham, British Art and the Seven Years’ War: Allegiance and Autonomy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Tim Barringer, Geoff Quilley, and Douglas Fordham, eds., Art and the British Empire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); Beth Fowkes Tobin, Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-
American mainland colonies merit greater attention in this regard, particularly before the 1740s, when much imperial art historical scholarship begins. Patterns of settlement and governance differed in the North American colonies than in Asia, and to an extent the Caribbean. Creole American colonists were both part of the imperial culture and agents of the British Empire and provincial subjects who conflicted at times with the imperial government. This study of portraiture reveals some of the ways that colonists expressed imperial ideology through portraiture, fashioning themselves as conquerors of the American landscape and non-Europeans and thus as participants in imperial politics. However, colonists often had expectations regarding how the British Empire should benefit them that diverged from imperial policies. The tension between colonial and metropolitan expectations occasionally manifested in portraiture, where colonists confronted how to represent themselves as British subjects.

In a 2003 survey of the field of American art history, John Davis cites the colonial period as the most neglected in American art scholarship.\(^\text{54}\) Davis points to Margaretta Lovell and T. H. Breen's publications as the most influential studies on colonial portraiture, but argues that many issues regarding portraiture were yet unexplored, as their scholarship shaped subsequent studies and was rarely challenged. In particular, Davis notes that research is lacking on colonial artists beyond John Singleton Copley, Benjamin West, and Charles Willson Peale. Davis also points to a recent trend in approaching American art within a British

\(^{54}\) Davis, “The End of the American Century.”
imperial framework, particularly in regard to issues of race and cultural exchange. Only two years later, Wendy Bellion wrote "The Return of the Eighteenth Century" (2005), in which she argues that there is in fact a flourishing of new research and publications on eighteenth-century American visual and material culture topics. Among the reasons Bellion offers for pursuing colonial studies are the possibilities for the employment of interdisciplinary methods and Atlantic and imperial approaches, allowing for the discussion of colonists as creole subjects. In particular, Bellion suggests that a fruitful topic would be "focused studies of portrait production in regional centers including...the Chesapeake." Now, twelve years later, this dissertation participates in the continued "return of the eighteenth century" and provides an interdisciplinary, imperial, and Atlantic examination of portraits created for colonial Virginians.

The Art of Plantation Authority

The word "plantation" was synonymous with the term "colony" in the seventeenth century, when Virginia was first permanently settled by the English. The term referred to the "planting" of colonial outposts. "Plantation" also refers to the agricultural system of large-scale farming. In America, the term specifically denotes the southern estates cultivated by coerced laborers. I employ "plantation" here and in the title of the dissertation in terms of both meanings. Portraiture participated in the construction of racial and gendered authority within

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56 Bellion, 8.
the plantation household and in the political debates over Virginia's relationship to the British Empire as a colony, or plantation. This dissertation traces changing colonial and imperial identities in Virginia from the mid-seventeenth century to the American Revolution and reveals the ways that portraiture participated in the constant reassertion of colonial authority.

Chapter one argues that seventeenth-century portraiture constituted an important element of the seventeenth-century material world, allowing colonists to participate in British culture and materialize transatlantic networks. Importantly, it discusses the ways that Virginians adapted British portrait conventions to suit their local purposes and audiences. Seventeenth-century Virginia portraits were commissioned by the burgeoning gentry and participated in the consolidation of class-based power. These portraits were markers of cultural and political authority. Of particular interest are the English portraits of young Virginians William Byrd II (figure 1.15) and Edward Hill III (figure 1.16), dated to the 1680s, which participate in English baroque portraiture but make important references to local audiences and colonial conflicts. Moreover, Virginians wanted the British Empire to work for them, and they understood their relationship to Empire differently than did the royal governors and the imperial administration. These circumstances manifested in Virginia portraits at moments of intensified personal and political conflict. In this regard, the confluence of events surrounding the 1716 portrait of Lucy Parke Byrd (figure 1.26) provides insight into how creole Virginians understood their role in the British Empire. The portraits of Daniel Parke II (figures 1.29 and 1.31) and the large English portrait collection
assembled by William Byrd II reveal the ways portraits participated in imperial social and political networks, materializing connections to the metropole. The first chapter thus focuses on rarely and never before studied portraits and reveals the necessity of examining pre-1740 and imported portraits in order to understand the functions of visual culture in early America.

Chapter two considers how portraits negotiated gender roles and participated in dynastic politics. This chapter begins with a discussion of female representational agency in Lucy Parke Byrd (1716, figure 1.26) to argue that early colonial portraits could be sites where gender roles were negotiated. By 1740, the presence of artists working locally and the strong class identity of the gentry, who commissioned portraits, led to the development of a community or regional aesthetic. The portraits of the ensuing period reveal shared values based on gender roles. A survey of female subjects by the artists John Wollaston and John Hesselius demonstrates the conventionality of portraiture that portrays successful patriarchs alongside obedient wives. Portraits allowed for the visual command of female bodies, which were central to the imperial project of populating the colony and maintaining dynastic lines of inheritance. An exploration of children's portraiture reveals how Virginians sought to control their children's sexuality and underscores the role of portraiture in containing women's bodies. Lastly, this chapter considers how portraits of fathers, mothers, and children fit within multigenerational portrait collections to participate in dynastic politics and visualize the ideal, patrilineal inheritance of land, home, and family
success. Chapter two thus highlights regional preferences in family portraiture to contribute to existing scholarship on picturing family and gender in early America.

Chapter three argues that the presence of enslaved people affected portraits of Virginia planters throughout the long eighteenth century. There are only three portraits from colonial Virginia that feature (presumably) enslaved people: Edward Hill III (figure 1.16), Lucy Parke Byrd (figure 1.26), and William Byrd III as a child (figure 3.1). In another important portrait, that of the Duchess of Montagu (figure 3.3), an African servant was literally erased from the original English composition to make her portrait acceptable for display in Virginia. All four portraits date to before ca. 1730. This chapter focuses on these four Virginia portraits to show how portraiture participated in the construction of a racial hierarchy through the erasure and elision of black bodies. Further, through visual analysis, it argues that the three examples of portraits that include enslaved attendants were failed experiments in visualizing racial slavery and actually destabilized social relations, thus explaining the absence of enslaved attendants in other colonial portraits. Planters used their portraits to disavow slavery in order to emphasize their participation in a British culture of refinement. This chapter also reveals the ways that portraits were used as tools of surveillance and white mastery in a plantation context. By focusing principally on absence, this chapter provides new insight into the relationship between slavery and the visual arts.

Chapter four examines the ways that portraiture changed in Virginia in the 1770s. Portraits became increasingly diverse and individualized. As the colony’s relationship to the British Empire changed, so did its portraits. In this decade, the
status and power of the gentry was increasingly challenged by debt, imperial policies, merchants, and fellow colonists. Their portraits responded to these challenges in various ways, including new types of props and costumes, allegorical references to political resistance, and emphasizing land and status to promote a natural social order in a time of change. This chapter also considers the different aesthetic choices in portraiture made by middling Virginians that reveal how Virginia’s society was becoming more democratic, examining a range of portraits by the artists John Hesselius, Matthew Pratt, Charles Willson Peale, Cosmo Alexander, and John Durand. Apart from Charles Willson Peale, these artists are largely neglected in art historical scholarship. Further, all of these artists displayed an interest in individuality and realism, suggesting a pan-colonial trend in representation during these years that has been overlooked by scholars. Although this chapter covers only about six years, it nonetheless shows how quickly Virginia’s relationship to the British Empire changed during this time and how individuals responded in different ways vis-à-vis portraiture.

This dissertation combines archival, genealogical, and art historical research with visual analysis of individual and groups of paintings to shed light on the social and political significance of colonial portraiture in Virginia. The study began with a survey of approximately four hundred and ten colonial Virginia portraits in order to look for changes over time, engagement with historical events, and any notable inclusions or exclusions of objects, poses, themes, or motifs based on pre-existing knowledge of eighteenth-century British and colonial visual culture. Taking a post-colonial perspective and interdisciplinary approach,
this study contends that diverse audiences affected portraiture and gentry self-fashioning. By combining the notion that portraits have a vital agency with a careful consideration of historical context and biographical details, this project offers new interpretations of neglected paintings and presents a vibrant, regional visual culture that has been marginalized in the existing literature. In Virginia, portraits were an essential element of the material world and tools for constructing creole identities, social relationships, and colonial culture.

Portraits are an important type of historical evidence because they are inherently about self-representation. They allow us brief glimpses into a historical moment and an individual's life and times. As cultural productions, they can also tell us about social and political contexts and the ways that individuals reacted to them. Portraits provide potentially powerful means of telling stories about people and topics that are underrepresented in the written archive. Sometimes, art can express things that words cannot.
Chapter One
Empire of Pictures: Transatlantic Portraiture and Colonial Identity

"[I] have the pleasure of conversing a great deal with your picture … the painter has not only hit your ayr, but some of the vertues too which usd to soften and enliven your features... I was pleasd to find some strangers able to read your Lordships character on the canvas, as plain as if they had been physiognomists by profession."  
William Byrd II (1736)

Portraits created in England before ca. 1735 for Virginians first materialized an empire of pictures, helping colonists imagine themselves as imperial agents, circulating images of Britishness, and allowing colonists to participate in English gentility. In particular, the formative years between ca. 1676 and ca. 1735 saw the reconfiguration of Virginia's relationship to England. Colonists, led by gentry planters, clashed with the royal governors and fought against imposed taxes and legislation as the colonial administrators in London attempted to create a more centralized empire. These years also saw the expansion of slavery, the creation of racialized slave codes, and the waning of the Virginia Indian trade. Portraits created for Virginians while in England for business participated in the ongoing negotiation of colonial authority. Portraits were sites of mediation as colonists constructed complex identities in their often-conflicting roles as both imperial agents and colonial subjects with local interests.

58 I would like to thank Jane Kamensky for her comments at the 2017 Colonial Society of Massachusetts Graduate Student Form, where she encouraged me to think about an "empire of pictures," and for encouraging me to use this term.
Further, by working with British artists to commission portraits, colonists brought to England new ideas and adapted English practices for an American setting. Anglo-Virginians fashioned themselves as distinct creole subjects in response to the local presence and activities of Native Americans and Africans. In this way, colonists participated in the formation of an imperial British culture. Men like Daniel Parke and William Byrd II used portraits for strategic political and social purposes, to connect themselves to people and to centers of power. The portraits discussed in this chapter reveal the importance of portraiture to seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century colonists and demonstrate some of the ways Anglo-Virginians used portraits to materialize and negotiate their relationship to the British Empire.59

**Seventeenth-Century Portraiture in Virginia**

Portraits adorned the homes of prominent Virginians from at least the mid-seventeenth century, if not before, although studying early examples poses a challenge. Seventeenth-century Virginia gentry were wealthy colonists who were in the House of Burgesses, served on the Governor's Council, or held another office, and had English political and mercantile contacts. The gentry typically owned large tracts of land and used their networks to dominate both the tobacco

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trade and trade in African slaves. The gentry were also able to afford English portraits. Regrettably, few seventeenth-century portraits survive and archival source materials are scarce, making their study particularly challenging. The vagaries of Virginia's climate, multiple wars, and the ravages of time have damaged or destroyed most seventeenth-century portraits from Virginia. Those that survive are heavily damaged or were "restored" in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by heavy-handed artists or family members. There are few remaining archival records that discuss portraits in detail, and fires destroyed many of Virginia's colonial records. Identifying the original artists of these works is therefore nearly impossible. In spite of a number of methodological challenges, it is nonetheless important to consider the seventeenth-century portraits that survive, either materially or in archival records.

Wills and testaments of early colonists reveal the presence of portraits that have long since disappeared. For example, a man named John Page bequeathed to his stepson, Mann Page I, in 1709 "five pictures...now hanging in the parlor...of his father Matthew Page of his Mother Mrs Mary Page of himself and of his two sisters Alice and Martha." Page's household included portraits of extended members of his family, indicating a larger portrait collection that went

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62 Will of John Page, 1709, Proved 1719, PROB 11/567/8, National Archives, Kew.
unnamed. Based on John Page’s life dates, these portraits may have dated to the late seventeenth century. Similarly, the Parke family household possessed seven family pictures in 1709, which likely included seventeenth-century paintings. Other seventeenth-century wills simply list "pictures," which may or may not refer to portraits.

In other cases, oral histories and family traditions identify extant portraits as seventeenth-century ancestors. Unfortunately, the material evidence does not always definitively support family attributions. Sometimes the style and costumes do not match the time period they supposedly represent. For example, according to Lee family tradition, two family portraits depict Richard Lee I (1618-1684) (figure 1.1) and his wife, Anne Constable Lee (ca. 1620-1706) (figure 1.2). Two additional portraits by different hands are believed by the family to feature Richard Lee II (1647-1714/5) (figure 1.3) and his wife Laetitia Corbin Lee (1657-1706) (figure 1.4). All four are bust length and rendered in painted oval frames. Stylistically, the portrait said to be Richard Lee I does not appear to be mid-seventeenth century. His plain jacket and cravat appear to be early eighteenth century, more closely related to the restrained style of William and Mary's reign.

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63 Schedule containing an account of all the estate real and personal of Daniel Parke, 1709. 1750 copy. Emmet Collection, 6077. New York Public Library. See also Thomas Ludlow Inventory, 1660, York County Records, which includes a picture of "Judge Richardson to ye waist." See Davis, *Intellectual Life*, 1228.
than the opulent style of the mid-seventeenth-century Stuart period. The man known as Richard Lee I is dressed in a wig and costume similar to the 1720s portrait of Sir Charles Wager by Thomas Gibson (figure 1.39). These features call into question the traditional sitter identifications and the dating of the Lee family portraits. The Lee family at one time also owned purportedly seventeenth-century portraits of Governor William Berkeley (1605-1677) (figure 1.5) and Lady Frances Berkeley (1634-ca. 1695) (figure 1.6). Based on old photographs, these were larger canvases, as befit a royal governor and his wife. Berkeley stands with one hand resting on a ledge and one hand on his hip. The background is very simple, and he wears a plain suit and waistcoat. The life dates of the subjects suggest that they were painted in England. Again, however, Governor Berkeley's costume in the portraits does not seem appropriate to the period, as his plain coat became fashionable in portraiture in the period after his death (e.g., figure 1.7).

The prevalence of copies and "restored" portraits makes affirming sitter identification and dating difficult. For the example, the portrait of William Randolph I (1660-1711) (figure 1.8) is heavily restored and could be either the

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68 Richard Davis Beale also expressed skepticism over the Lee and Berkeley portraits based on costume and style. See Davis, *Intellectual Life*, 1224.
original or a later copy by John Wollaston. Later copies of portraits could also result in changes to the costumes or style. In the 1750s, while working in Virginia, John Wollaston painted copies of earlier portraits of other members of the Randolph family, including two believed to depict William Randolph II (1681-1742) and his wife, Elizabeth Beverley Randolph (1691-1723) (figure 1.9), the originals of which are no longer extant.\textsuperscript{69} John Hesselius also painted copies of earlier portraits of Henry Fitzhugh (1614-1664) (figure 1.10) and his son, William Fitzhugh (1651-1701) (figure 1.11), in 1751.\textsuperscript{70} Henry Fitzhugh never came to Virginia, but his son, William, brought a portrait of his father to the colony. Since it was a fairly common practice to commission copies of existing portraits, it is plausible that some extant portraits are not the originals or have undergone substantial modifications over the years.

Perhaps the earliest portraits to hang in Virginia belonged to the Moseley family and were actually Dutch in origin. The Moseleys, a merchant family that immigrated to Virginia from Rotterdam in 1649, apparently brought a group of at least four family portraits depicting William (1606-1665) and Susanna Moseley (1595-1656) and their two sons, William (ca. 1630-1671) and Arthur (ca. 1635-1703). In the nineteenth century, the Moseley portraits were part of a collection of thirty-two "family pictures" descended from William Moseley II. Unfortunately, the current location of the Moseley portraits is unknown; however, photographs of


the four abovementioned paintings were published in 1919.\textsuperscript{71} To judge from the black-and-white photographs, the subjects appear stylishly dressed and adorned with lace and jewels. These four are the earliest recorded portraits in Virginia. They are dated based on the year of the family's immigration and the costume styles.

Two seventeenth-century portraits of prominent Virginia settlers underscore the presence of fashionable English portraiture in the seventeenth century. John Page "the Immigrant" (1627-1692) brought his portrait from England as early as the 1660s to hang in his home at Middle Plantation (figure 1.12). Robert Bolling (1646-1709) also brought a portrait from England in the seventeenth century (figure 1.13).\textsuperscript{72} Page and Bolling were both progenitors of politically influential Virginia dynasties. Each of their portraits is bust length, yet each represents different, fashionable English modes of portraiture. Page holds a piece of paper, perhaps an emblematic reference to his surname (any writing is no longer legible), and stands with a once-richly colored sky visible behind him. He wears a simple black suit with white collar. The only visible ornamentation in

\textsuperscript{71} Bolton, \textit{Portraits of the Founders}, 175–89. They are reproduced from Bolton in Weekley, \textit{Painters and Paintings}, 66–67. For more on the thirty-two missing Moseley portraits recorded in the late nineteenth century, see Davis, \textit{Intellectual Life}, 1224–25. According to Davis, some of the original documentation is missing.

\textsuperscript{72} Weekley suggests a date of ca. 1695 for the Bolling portrait. Both are illustrated and briefly discussed in Weekley, \textit{Painters and Paintings}, 67. Craven suggests a date of ca. 1690 for the Bolling portrait. He does not discuss the Page portrait. Craven, \textit{Colonial American Portraiture}, 187–89. Object file 1897.006, \textit{Portrait of John Page}, Muscarelle Museum; and Object file 1940.001, \textit{Portrait of Robert Bolling}, Muscarelle Museum. The Page portrait was cleaned and repaired multiple times before the College of William & Mary acquired it in 1940. The background was possibly altered and an inscription on the right of the canvas that identifies the sitter's age as 32 and partially reads "1660 London" was a modern addition. It is unclear if the inscription was a copy of a lost original or an invention by the owners and/or restorer. While the background landscape is potentially allegorical, I have opted to be cautious in my interpretation pending further research.
his dress is small a tassel at his neck. Robert Bolling is attired more elaborately than Page, in a gold embroidered cloak fastened with a jewel at his shoulder and baroque lace cravat. His wig is longer and fuller than that of Page. Bolling is pictured inside a painted oval with a plain background.

Page and Bolling appear to have been painted by artists practicing the English court style but who catered to minor nobility, gentry, and wealthy merchants. Over the centuries, the John Page and Robert Bolling portraits suffered heavy-handed restoration, fading, and damage. However, their skillfully modeled faces largely survive, and they both accord with the styles of portraiture fashionable in late seventeenth-century Stuart England that were popularized by the Flemish artists Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) and Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680). Their portraits of aristocrats featured rich colors, deep tones, and sensual elegance. Their status as official court painters and their success in London inspired other artists to follow their styles (e.g., figure 1.14).

John Page's portrait, with his somber costume and hair, adheres to what Wayne Craven describes as "the conservative, subcourtly, nationalistic style espoused by upper-middle-class mercantile and gentry society" in England and

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73 For several examples that closely relate to the Page and Bolling portraits, see Sir Peter Lely, Portrait of Henry Stone (ca. 1648, National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 6007), which is very similar to the Page portrait. The portrait after John Riley, Portrait of Edmund Waller (ca. 1685, National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 144), which is similar to the Bolling portrait, and another in the style of Sir Peter Lely, Portrait of Sir Joseph Williamson (figure 1.14), which appears to be somewhere in the middle of the Page and Bolling portraits, revealing how these styles were not necessarily competitive.

transported to New England.\textsuperscript{75} Craven discusses the transference of this "mercantile image" to New England, as opposed to the "proto-aristocratic" image preferred in Virginia, and best represented in Craven's estimation by Robert Bolling's likeness, with his more elaborate textiles, wig, and rich coloring.\textsuperscript{76} However, Page's portrait complicates the New England/Virginia, merchant/planter dichotomies present in Craven's study of seventeenth-century colonial portraiture. Page's portrait suggests that style in this period depended on personal tastes and values, rather than a pre-existing class mindset.\textsuperscript{77} The quantity of missing portraits from Virginia underscores the problem of making widespread assumptions based on a small number of extant images from the period.

By the late seventeenth century, leading Virginians had the means to commission local painters and provide imported painting materials. In July 1698, William Fitzhugh wrote to a factor in England requesting materials necessary to "set up a painter." He ordered "Six three quartered lacker book frames for pictures well burnished. About 40 or 50 shillings worth of colours for painting wt. pencils Walnut Oyl & Lynseed Oyl proportionable together with half a doz: 3

\textsuperscript{75} Craven, \textit{Colonial American Portraiture}, 52.
\textsuperscript{77} Wendy Katz discusses the competing Anglo-Dutch naturalistic style and the linear neo-medieval style of portraiture in New England. While the neo-medieval mode seems absent in extant Virginia portraits, Katz explores competing ideas of self-presentation in a colonial setting. “Portraits and the Production of the Civil Self.”
quarter clothes [canvases]. This painter may be the same indentured servant trained as an engraver to whom Fitzhugh referred in a different letter that same month. William Fitzhugh I later bequeathed to his son, William Fitzhugh II, "my own & wife's pictures & the other 6 pictures of my Relations" upon his death in 1701. The Fitzhugh family collection spanned at least three generations of seventeenth-century sitters. The painter that Fitzhugh supported has yet to be identified, but it seems likely that he painted other Virginians as well. Fitzhugh's painter may be the earliest portraitist to work in Virginia; however, with the loss of the original William Fitzhugh portrait collection, attributions are currently impossible to make.

From the remaining evidence, it is clear that portraits constituted an important part of the material world of early Virginia. Portraits were serious investments, as they cost a lot of money for commissions, materials, frames, and transportation. Throughout most of the seventeenth century, portraits were brought from England or Europe with the colonists. These works tended to be bust length, a format that was more portable than larger canvases, which was ideal for transportation across the Atlantic. Colonists likely commissioned portraits in anticipation of their immigration or while on business trips in England after they were settled in Virginia.

79 When ordering silver, Fitzhugh stated, “I would have no letters engraved upon them nor Coat of Arms, having a Servant of my own singular good Engraved, [sic] & so can save that money.” William Fitzhugh to George Mason, 21 July 1698, in Fitzhugh, 362.
80 William Fitzhugh’s Will and Inventory, 1701, in Fitzhugh, 379.
Importantly, colonial portraits allowed Anglo-Virginians to visually collapse the physical distance between Virginia and England and to participate in an empire of pictures. Portraits of colonists and their family members created a material network between Virginia and contemporary English images. The English took special pride in portraiture. As the English artist Jonathan Richardson proclaimed in 1715:

> when Van-Dyck came hither he brought Face-painting to us; ever since which time, that is for above fourscore Years, England has excell’d all the World in that great Branch of the Art, and being well stor’d with the Works of the greatest Masters, whether Paintings, or Drawings, Here being moreover the finest Living Models, as well as the greatest Encouragement. This may justly be esteem’d as a Complete, and the Best School for Face-Painting Now in the World.  

Therefore, colonists who commissioned portraits of themselves and their relations were engaging in an activity marked by national pride. Images of ideal Englishness were spread through these paintings created in England for Virginians (and other colonists) who self-fashioned themselves as genteel British subjects.

Commissioning portraits was a recent prerequisite to attain genteel social status in England as the art market expanded beyond the nobility.  

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the Bollings, the Lees, and the Fitzhughs were wealthy, powerful families who set the genteel standard of living in Virginia. Their probate inventories, wills, and archaeological evidence of their homes reveal that they built the grandest houses and owned the material accouterments associated with English gentility—pictures, fine silver, forks, clocks, etc.—before they became commonplace. These families entertained conspicuously to show off their wealth and gentility, in a few cases actually constructing lavish banqueting houses to promote fellowship among their wealthy peers. One visitor to William Fitzhugh's plantation in 1686 recollected, "He called in three fiddlers, a clown, a tight rope dancer and an acrobatic tumbler, and gave us all the divertisement one would wish." William Fitzhugh described his "Dwelling house" as "furnished with all accomodations for a comfortable & gentile living, as a very good dwelling house, with 13 Rooms in it, four of the best of them hung, nine of them plentifully furnished with all things necessary & convenient." Many of the wealthy gentry had libraries that included classical literature, philosophy, histories, and other genres, with titles in Greek and Latin, indicating classical education. Richard Lee II's library, for example,
contained nearly three hundred titles, and William Fitzhugh maintained a "Study of Books." Their fashionable portraits enhanced their grand homes and participated in these material displays of wealth and stylish English living.

As colonists settled in Virginia, adapting English lifestyles to new climates and conditions, portraits acted as tangible evidence that they remained English in a foreign land. These images pictured models of English civility within the harshness of the American environment, the realities of plantation labor, and ongoing warfare with the Indians. The portraits also enhanced plantation homes, which for the wealthy became increasingly comfortable as the seventeenth century progressed. Portraiture recorded the colonists at their imagined best, posing as English gentlemen and ladies wearing fine clothes, and ensured that their visage would survive for future generations.

**Boys in Roman Dress: William Byrd and Edward Hill Conquer the Wilderness**

In addition to the John Page and Robert Bolling portraits, two significant seventeenth-century portraits imported from England to Virginia are notable for their size, skill, and allegorical representations: the portraits of William Byrd II (figure 1.15) and Edward Hill III (figure 1.16). Both full-length portraits of

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88 Despite the lack of archival sources regarding these specific portraits and their commissions, a consideration of their historical context and the visual analysis of their
children were created by skilled artists in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. They were fashionable images that utilized iconographic strategies seen in English portraits of aristocratic children. However, these works are unique survivals for the British colonies. Their American provenance and social context raise intriguing questions about colonial portraiture and highlight the ambitions of the rising Virginia gentry.

The first portrait depicts a young boy of the Byrd family in the fashionable, late seventeenth-century baroque style (figure 1.15). It employs classicizing, allegorical iconography to aggrandize the sitter. The young boy stands full-length with one hand on his hip, lending him an imperious attitude. He wears an antique, Roman military costume. With his right hand, he holds a chain, keeping a large spaniel in submission. The dog looks up at the boy and stands attentively on his right. The dog's collar features a gold shell at the closure and a gold star on the side. A discarded spear lies at boy's feet. The setting is a wild forest, with a chasm visible beyond the figure. Pine trees at different life stages populate the landscape.

This painting has been published occasionally as a portrait of William Byrd I as a child, an attribution based on family history and a nineteenth-century inventory. According to Byrd family tradition, William Byrd I "brought the portrait...
of the ‘the Boy’ with him - and also according to tradition the portrait of the child was painted in the costume he had worn when he was taken by the Gypsies. Van Dyke was said to be the painter.” This story is clearly more fancy than fact. William Byrd I (1653-1704) was a son of a London goldsmith. Byrd came to Virginia in the 1660s to live with his childless, maternal uncle, Thomas Stegge (d.1670), an Indian trader. Though portraiture was becoming increasingly popular among the London professional classes in the mid-seventeenth century, it seems unlikely that a young son of a London goldsmith would be the subject of an expensive, full-length, aristocratic portrait created around 1660. Moreover, the portrait is clearly not by Anthony van Dyck, as the painter died in 1641, twelve years before William Byrd I was born.

Instead, the image of the young boy in Roman dress is a portrait of young William Byrd II (1674-1744), the son and heir of William Byrd I, and dates to ca. 1680. The earliest documented reference to this portrait is an 1826 letter that includes an inventory of paintings owned by Byrd descendants at Brandon plantation. There is no descriptive reference to this portrait in the 1813 will of Mary Willing Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III, 1740-1814), who listed all of the portraits at Westover plantation (the Byrd family home) and divided them among her heirs. Mary Willing Byrd did, however, mention three portraits of William Byrd II at Brandon plantation.

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90 Family history related in Object File 56.30, William Byrd I as a Young Boy, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. The portrait will be referred to in my dissertation as William Byrd II in Roman Dress in order to differentiate it from other portraits of the subject as an adult and to reflect the new attribution.
91 Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 3.
92 Morton, Ritchie, and Mease, “The Portraits at Lower Brandon, and Upper Brandon, Virginia.”
Westover, one of which was described as full length. Only one of the three has previously been identified (figure 1.41). Mary Willing Byrd did not mention any portraits of William Byrd I.\textsuperscript{93} It is likely that, at some point over the subsequent twelve years, the next generation confused the sitter's identity, influenced perhaps by romantic fancy and amateur historians. During these years, William Byrd II's granddaughter, Evelyn Byrd Harrison (Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, 1766-1817), took the portrait to Brandon plantation. In 1826, Dr. James Mease from Philadelphia visited Brandon and listed the portraits, most of which came from the Byrd family. This 1826 inventory contains the first documentary reference to the portrait of "The first Colonel Byrd, when a boy," clad in "fancy dress."\textsuperscript{94} Notably, Mease also recorded that "the family believe, in accordance with Mr. Conway Robinson's theory, that this is a picture, not of the 1st Col. Byrd, but of an ancestor who never came to America."\textsuperscript{95} The origin of the sitter attribution as William Byrd I is thus unclear in the documentation.

Stylistically, the portrait appears to date to the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and biographical information supports that conclusion. William Byrd II was definitely in England by 1681, when he enrolled in Felsted

\textsuperscript{93} Mary Willing Byrd, "The Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd, of Westover, 1813, with a List of the Westover Portraits," \textit{The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography} 6, no. 4 (April 1899): 345–58. Another known portrait of William Byrd II is by Hans Hyssing, but it never hung at Westover (figure 1.43).

\textsuperscript{94} Morton, Ritchie, and Mease, "The Portraits at Lower Brandon, and Upper Brandon, Virginia," 340.

\textsuperscript{95} Conway Robinson was a lawyer and amateur historian from Virginia. Italicization in original. See Morton, Ritchie, and Mease, "The Portraits at Lower Brandon, and Upper Brandon, Virginia," 340.
Grammar School near his maternal grandfather's estate in Essex. He may have traveled to England with his mother as early as 1676, or with his father in 1678. In any case, the younger William’s age at the time he was in England between 1676 and 1681 accords with the apparent age of the child in the Byrd portrait, of approximately five to ten years old. The boy's round cheeks and stature suggest his young age.

By ca. 1680, the elder Byrd could afford a large portrait of his son and he had an interest in the genteel arts. A large portrait like that of William Byrd II in Roman dress was an expensive investment. In the 1670s, artist John Closterman charged approximately £40 for full-length and £20 for three-quarter-length portraits. Since William Byrd II's portrait was about half-length canvas size but featured a full-length portrait of a child, it could have cost as much as £20 to £30. By the late 1670s, William Byrd I could afford such a portrait of his son because of his success as a slave and fur trader in Virginia. Although there is no record that William Byrd I ever sat for a portrait himself, he demonstrated an interest in collecting family portraits and investing in the arts. He wrote to English relatives in 1690 stating, "I am now building & hope you will send us (according to your

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97 William Byrd I went to England in 1678, presumably following the death of his father, John Bird, in 1677. See Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, 4. Mary Horsmanden Byrd apparently traveled to England during the conflict known as Bacon's Rebellion. See "Mrs. Bird's relation, who lived nigh to Mr. Bacon in Virginia, and came from thence in July last for feare of the Indians," n.d., Egerton MS 2395, British Library. It is also possible that this account was taken in Jamestown, Virginia as no date or location is recorded on the manuscript.
promise) yours (with your fair lady's) picture to adorne my new house." In 1686 he wrote to John Clayton requesting a copy of "Salmons Polygraphice the last edition" from England. Salmon's Polygraphice was a popular art manual that offered instructions on drawing, engraving, painting, making paint colors, varnishing, and other related activities. Like other such manuals and courtesy books, Polygraphice addressed itself to gentlemen who understood that gentility required engaging in the arts. Rather than expounding on the virtues of the "Study or Practice of this Art," Salmon assumed the gentleman reader "already understands...its usefulness as apparent as it is excellent." By purchasing this art manual, Byrd fashioned himself as a genteel Englishman who understood that the rudiments of civility included knowledge of and participation in the arts. During the seventeenth century, pursuing the arts became associated with gentlemanly virtue as social status in England transformed into "a way of seeing and visualizing the world" rather than merely a birthright. The commission of a fashionable, allegorical painting of his son accorded with William Byrd I's interest in constructing himself as a gentleman. With his son's portrait, William Byrd I made a statement about his own role as an imperial agent, his dynastic legacy in

99 William Byrd I to Daniel Horsmanden, 25 July 1690, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 121–22. There is no evidence that portraits of Daniel Horsmanden and his wife ever hung at Westover. Either the Horsmandens never sent their portraits to Virginia or they were destroyed or lost before Mary Willing Byrd's 1813 will.
102 Bermingham, Learning to Draw, 33–64, quote 63.
Virginia, and his gentry status. It was additionally a material connection to his only son and male heir, who remained in England for the rest of his youth.

Further evidence that the portrait dates to ca. 1680 comes from two portraits attributed to the artist John Closterman and/or John Riley, Closterman's studio partner: John Poulett, 1st Earl Poulett (figure 1.17) and a boy of the Montagu family (figure 1.18). Both of these paintings are dated ca. 1680 to 1685 and feature young, male aristocrats standing with spaniels that are nearly identical to the spaniel in the portrait of young William Byrd (details of figures 1.15, 1.17 and 1.18). The spaniels in the portraits of John Poulett and William Byrd II stand in matching, mirrored poses, and the Poulett dog wears a collar embellished with a gold shell similar to the Byrd dog collar. The dog in the Montagu portrait adopts same position as the Byrd spaniel, though it stands on the boy's left side, and wears a collar featuring the same six-pointed star as the collar in the Byrd painting. The spaniel in the Byrd portrait features rougher brushwork than the other two dogs and its body is slightly boxier. Nonetheless, the spaniel in the Byrd portrait is clearly the same as the other two dogs, featuring an identical pose, coloring (notice the similar spots on the front legs seen in the details), collar designs, and floppy ears that sit high on the dog's head. The three portraits of boys with the same spaniel suggest that an artist

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103 The Montagu portrait is illustrated in T. V. Murdoch, ed., *Boughton House: The English Versailles* (London: Faber and Faber: Christie's, 1992), 181. The Poulett portrait is recorded in Rogers, "John and John Baptist Closterman," no.78, 256. Close observation of technique suggests that these three paintings were not all painted by the same hand, though areas of damage and overpaint in *William Byrd II in Roman Dress* complicate technical study. However, most successful artists like Closterman and Riley employed studio assistants. It is possible that the three portraits were created in the same studio by different hands or by artists with ties to the same studio.
affiliated with the John Closterman and John Riley studio painted William Byrd II sometime around 1680.

While the William Byrd II portrait shares elements with the Poulett and Montagu portraits that link them to the same studio and time period, significant iconographic differences locate the Byrd portrait in a colonial context. Poulett wears a modern costume and appears with a hunting rifle. The dog is unchained and the two figures stand in a landscape featuring classical ruins. A temple-like structure is located to Poulett’s right, with plants growing around it and a broken column on the ground. The Montagu boy wears a vaguely classical costume with a red drape over his blue jacket and sports Roman boots. He points to a castle in the distance. His spaniel is tied to a red ribbon, which Montagu holds in his left hand. The temple and castle in the two English portraits refer to the Poulett and Montagu lineages and ties to ancestral lands. Apart from the architectural features, the landscape is undefined and the foliage in the distance is sketchily painted. Neither the Poulett nor Montagu portrait features an arrow or chain, as seen in the Byrd portrait. In contrast, William Byrd II’s historicizing "Roman" portrait is militaristic, and includes a carefully painted forest in the background.

Thinking about the local audience for William Byrd II in Roman Dress and engaging in visual analysis, it becomes evident that Indians and Africans affected the choice of iconography for the portrait and thus the burgeoning gentry’s self-fashioning. This portrait hung in the Byrd home, known as Falls Plantation, on the falls of the James River. Its location on the western Virginia frontier meant that it served as both family home and trading post. The Byrds regularly hosted Indian
visitors, and enslaved people of African and Indian descent lived in the house. Further, William Byrd I had traveled extensively among the Indians in the 1670s. He was familiar with various Indian languages and customs. He explored the Appalachian region and, together with his uncle, Thomas Stegge, and fellow traders, developed commercial links with the Cherokee west of the Appalachians.¹⁰⁴

Around the time that I argue *William Byrd II in Roman Dress* would have been painted, Virginia was recovering from the social upheaval of Bacon's Rebellion of 1676-1678. This conflict divided the Virginia colonists over warfare with the Indians. A group of Anglo-Virginians led by newcomer Nathaniel Bacon rose up against Governor Berkeley over his Indian policy. Berkeley was intent on maintaining relations with the tributary Indians and a semblance of peace. Bacon and his supporters wanted Indian lands and vengeance for the murders of Anglo-Virginians by Indians. Bacon mobilized planters of various wealth, along with indentured servants and slaves, by declaring war on all Indians against the express orders of the Governor. Bacon did not differentiate between allied and enemy Indians. After Bacon unexpectedly died in 1677, the rebellion against Berkeley fizzled. However, Berkeley punished those who sided with Bacon against the recommendations of the King's Commissioners sent to investigate the conflict. The civil conflict gave King Charles II and his advisors the excuse they needed to assert greater control over the colony's affairs. The imperial

government took advantage of the lack of united leadership in the colony. They used the opportunity to enact regulations and greater oversight by the Lords of Trade (later the Board of Trade and Plantations).  

To resist the increased intrusion of the King's administration into local affairs, the leading colonists appointed to the Governor's Council and elected to the House of Burgesses needed to cooperate with the general Anglo-Virginian populace in order to present a united front. After 1676, creole Virginians were elected to the Burgesses more often than well-connected, recent settlers, which had been the norm before the conflict. The local leaders of the colony increasingly distanced themselves from the governor. To keep smallholders happy, the leaders of the colony turned a blind eye to anti-Indian activities. Following the conflict, Indian slavery increased in Virginia. Protections for tributary Indians and their land decreased and the tidewater Virginia Indian population dwindled. Many Indians were killed, enslaved, or died of disease, while others migrated away from the Virginia colony. This led to displacement and Indian warfare that eventually resulted in the Tuscarora War of 1714-1715, the Yamasee War of 1715-1717, and the growth of the Indian slave trade. The

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106 Schmidt, *The Divided Dominion*, 178.

effect of Bacon’s Rebellion on African slavery has been chronicled by historians such as Edmund Morgan, who argue that the Rebellion provided a catalyst for white unity, as wealthy planters saw the need for cooperation with the general Anglo-Virginian populace.  

The creation of William Byrd II in Roman Dress during these years is suggestive, particularly given its militaristic iconography and the fact that the Byrd family was heavily involved in all of the aforementioned conflicts. William Byrd I was a neighbor and trading partner of the upstart rebel Nathaniel Bacon. James D. Rice suggests that Byrd actively recruited Bacon to rebel against Governor Berkeley and raise a militia to fight the Indians. A contemporary account also implies Byrd's central role instigating the conflict. Records confirm that Byrd was involved in ransacking the homes of Berkeley loyalists and supporting the raising of a militia to fight the Indians in the early part of the conflict. As an Indian trader living on the frontier, Byrd was angry with Governor Berkeley for cancelling his trading license with the Indians. Byrd also resented the tributary

108 Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom.  
109 Rice, Tales from a Revolution, 40–41. See also “A True Narrative of the Rise, Progress, and Cessation of the Late Rebellion in Virginia, Most Humbly and Impartially Reported by his Majestyes Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Affairs of the Said Colony,” in Charles M. Andrews, ed., Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675-1690 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), 110; Shefveland, Anglo-Native Virginia, 48–49; and Schmidt, The Divided Dominion, 162–64.  
110 Andrews, Narratives of the Insurrections, 72.
Indians of Virginia who profited from acting as middlemen in trade with more western Indian groups, including the Cherokee, and who possessed valuable land desired by men like Byrd. Since Byrd and his employees lived on the western front of the colony, they were occasionally targeted in Indian raids. His wife recounted ca. 1676 "that her husband had 3 men killed by the Indians before Mr. Bacon stirr'd." But eventually Byrd switched sides. Though there is no record explaining his decision, historians speculate that the rebel attack on the capital city of Jamestown, the increased animosity towards wealthy settlers (among whom Byrd numbered), and the call to indiscriminately kill all the Indians, thus threatening Byrd's lucrative trade in skins and slaves, led to his decision to change loyalties—or perhaps he could simply sense the tide was turning against the rebels. Whatever his reasons, by the end of the conflict Byrd was firmly on Governor Berkeley's side and he did suffer politically from his actions. He was not among the rebels targeted by Berkeley for punishment. In 1677 he was elected to represent Henrico County in the House of Burgesses. Byrd was appointed to the Governor's Council in 1682 and to the position of deputy auditor and receiver general in 1688—appointments that he eventually passed to his son. Byrd also remained a political ally of Governor Berkeley's former supporters after the appointment of a new governor.

111 "Mrs. Birds relation."
112 Rice, Tales from a Revolution, 116; Shefveland, Anglo-Native Virginia, 54.
After the civil conflict ended between Anglo-Virginians, colonists continued to attack local Indians, drastically reducing their numbers and stimulating the Indian slave trade. Several Indian tribes disappeared from the record altogether. In 1705, Robert Beverley, Byrd’s son-in-law, recorded that the remaining members of the Appomattox tribe "Live in Collonel Byrd’s Pasture, not being above seven Families." The dispossession of local Indians led to migrations and increased internal conflict along the frontier. This caused an increase in Indian slavery, as tribes sold captives from rival tribes to British traders from Virginia and the Carolinas. William Byrd was among the colonists who increased his slave trading activities and profited financially from inter-Indian warfare.

Warfare to the west and south threatened the safety of Anglo-Virginians living along the frontier, as the Byrd family did, making trading with Indians a dangerous business—and providing an evocative context for the military costume in William Byrd II in Roman Dress. In 1690, Byrd wrote to family in England that "I had lately one murderd & two carryed away by the Indians. Within this twelue months I hope to gett setled att Westopher (which I bought last year) where (at least our selves) will bee out of danger." Byrd does not specify who was murdered or carried away, but they were not members of his immediate family.

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114 Rice, Tales from a Revolution, 191–201.
116 William Byrd I to Warham Horsmanden, 25 July 1690, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 121.
Instead, they were slaves, servants, or employees. This letter reveals that a number of people were living at the falls with the Byrd family. To ensure the safety of his family, Byrd moved his wife and children downriver in the 1690s, relocating them within the more heavily English-settled area of the lower James River. He continued to operate his trading post on the falls.

Indians were regular audience members for the militaristic portrait of William Byrd II in Roman dress at the time of its conception ca. 1680. One of William Byrd's contract traders, Richard Traunter, documented his forays into the Virginia and Carolina wilderness in 1698 and 1699. Traunter's manuscript records the dangers associated with living on the frontier, traveling established trading paths and forging news ones. Traunter's story begins with the discovery of an escaped, injured Indian whose plight was precipitated by the murder of a Carolina trader working in Virginia. According to Traunter, the Indian was brought to the "house belonging to Colonel Bird of Virginia, where I then lived and Merchandized with the Indians for the said Colonel, who being Acquainted with the condition of this poor Indian, he immediately sent for A Surgeon."\(^{117}\) Eventually, the Indian recovered and he and Traunter set off on a trading and

\(^{117}\) Richard Traunter, “The Travels of Richard Traunter on the Main Continent of America from Appomattox River in Virginia to Charles Town in South Carolina. In two Journals; performed in the Years 1698: and 1699.” Mss5 :9, T6945:1. Virginia Historical Society. Though this account is approximately five years after the Falls Plantation stopped serving as primary residence for Byrd's wife and children, it supports the evidence from the earlier Byrd accounts (that discuss Byrd's people being killed) that strongly suggest a number of employees, servants, and slaves working and living at the Falls Plantation home and trading post where William Byrd II's portrait originally hung. The portrait was likely moved to Westover plantation with the family in 1693.
exploratory excursion to find a path to Charleston, South Carolina. Notably, Traunter's journal records that Byrd's home on the Falls was also quarters for his employees, and the presence of Indians was a regular occurrence.

The chained dog in the portrait of William Byrd II in Roman dress may well be a reference to slavery, or might have been perceived as such by Native Americans in its colonial context, and was likely used to promote a vision of the Byrd family as imperial conquerors to whom the Indians were subjugated. In several Native American languages, the word for "slave" is the same as that for "dog." In 1709, John Lawson published A New Voyage to Carolina, which contained descriptions of local Indians. He noted their terminology for slaves:

As for Servant, they have no such thing, except Slave, and their Dogs, Cats, tame or domestick Beasts, and Birds, are call'd by the same Name. For the Indian Word for Slave includes them all. So when an Indian tells you he has got a Slave for you, it may (in general Terms, as they use) be a young Eagle, a Dog, Otter, or any other thing of that Nature, which is obsequiously to depend on the Master for its Sustenance.

The Indians Lawson discussed, the Cherokee and Creek, were some of the Southeastern peoples that traded regularly with Byrd. Given Byrd's experience and success in negotiating as an agent for Virginia and as a trader, he surely knew the regional indigenous word for "slave." Brett Rushforth has analyzed the social position of slaves and dogs among the Illinois of the Great Lakes region, who similarly equated dogs and slaves linguistically. To turn captives into slaves

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118 For a discussion of Traunter’s narrative, see Shefveland, Anglo-Native Virginia, 68–70.
119 For the dog's metaphorical relationship to enslaved Africans, see chapter 3.
was to domesticate them like animals.\textsuperscript{121} By 1730, local Indians clearly associated chains with English chattel slavery. In that year a Cherokee delegation negotiating with North Carolinians stated, "This small rope which we show you is all we have to bind our slaves with and may be broken but you have iron chains for yours."\textsuperscript{122} The Cherokee agreed to return runaway slaves to the English, but they differentiated themselves and their system of slavery from that of the English by the use of chains versus rope.

Around 1680, it is likely that local Indian viewers could interpret the emblematic dog in the Byrd portrait as related to slavery. John Lederer, an explorer of the Appalachian region, noted in 1672 that Indians in the region used "Emblems," and that of a dog expressed "fidelity."\textsuperscript{123} Therefore, Indian viewers might well have perceived the dog as symbolic of slavery and submission in the portrait of William Byrd II. In this regard, it bears mention that Lederer also advised that Europeans traveling among "remoter Indians" should bring with them "small Looking-glass, Pictures, Beads and Bracelets...For they are apt to admire such trinkets, and will purchase them at any rate."\textsuperscript{124} Lederer's inclusion of pictures as a desirable trade good underscores Indian familiarity with European imagery and that such items were considered valuable. Indeed,

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 27.
viewing the portrait of William Byrd II became an act of submission itself. First, it would have hung high on the wall, forcing spectators to look up at it. Second, viewers share the gaze of the dog, directed toward young Byrd. As viewers turn their gaze to the boy, they become associated with the dog's subjugated status.

The spear or large arrow lying in the foreground of the portrait, which appears to have a feather attached to the shaft, also holds multiple meanings and promotes a powerful vision of the Byrd family. The arrow makes a literal reference to the type of weaponry still utilized by Native Americans against Anglo-Virginians in this period. For example, in 1700, a group of Native Americans in Stafford County murdered English children with arrows and tomahawks.\(^\text{125}\) In a colonial context, the implication of the spear or arrow (particularly with no bow visible), when paired with Byrd's military costume and the chained dog, is that the Native Americans have laid down their weapons and submitted to the English. Though likely exaggerated flattery, William Byrd I's son-in-law, Robert Beverley wrote in 1705 about Byrd, "This Gentleman has for a long time been extremly respected, and fear'd by all the Indians round about, who, without knowing the Name of any Governour, have ever been kept in order by Him."\(^\text{126}\) The message of English dominance partially targeted a local audience of Native Americans and partially other English colonists, to whom Byrd promoted a vision of himself as "fear'd by all the Indians" and able to keep them in "order." Byrd was in fact recognized by other officials as an expert in Indian...
affairs. The Governor's Council appointed him multiple times to commissions tasked with negotiating with Native Americans on behalf of the colony.\textsuperscript{127}

The arrow also makes emblematic references to savagery that an Anglo-Virginian audience would understand from firsthand experience. Spears and arrows were also associated in the European mind with "primitive" peoples. Similar spears appear in images of Africans and Indians in contemporary prints, travel books, costume books, map illustrations, and other ephemeral materials, including Theodor de Bry's 1590 illustrated edition of Thomas Harriot's 1588 narrative, \textit{A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia}, which incorporated images after watercolors by John White, who visited the region in 1585 (figure 1.19).\textsuperscript{128} Spears and arrows thus became emblems of "savage" cultures. In William Byrd II's portrait, the implication is that the young Anglo-Virginian warrior has conquered the "savage" people of Virginia.

An educated audience could also recognize the arrow and costume as imperial references to conquest. The Byrd family owned Basil Kennett's history of

\textsuperscript{127} For example, he was sent to New York to treat with the Seneca in 1685. See McIlwaine, \textit{Executive Journals of the Council}, I: June 11, 1680-June 22, 1699:71–72.

the Roman Empire, *Romae Antiquae Notitia* (1696). Kennett's book included essays on classical education and Roman learning, emphasizing the importance of education. These essays were new inclusions for English books on Roman history. However, the book also contained a history of the Roman Empire that was largely derivative of previously existing narratives. Notably, Kennett discussed Roman warfare and the method of taking slaves:

> If a State or People had been necessitated to surrender themselves into the Roman Power, they us'd *sub jugum mitti*, to be made pass under a Yoke, in Token of Subjection: For this Purpose they set up two Spears, and laying a third cross them at the Top, order’d those who had surrender’d their Persons to go under them without Arms or Belts. Those who cou’d not be brought to deliver themselves up, but were taken by Force....were publickly sold for Slaves.

Given that young William Byrd II is dressed like a Roman soldier, it seems significant that he appears standing over a spear. According to stories about Roman warfare circulating in England at the time and articulated in Kennett's history, conquered people who surrendered peacefully walked under a spear, while those who refused to submit became captive slaves. Though contemporary Native Americans and Africans were unlikely to be familiar with Roman history, the Byrd family's inclusion of this symbolism seems significant for the Anglo-Virginian audience and reveals the Byrd family's classical education.

Spears, such as the one seen in *William Byrd II in Roman Dress*, also appeared in European images of pre-Roman British peoples, thereby associating

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the conquest of Virginia with the noble pursuit of spreading civilization. The best such examples are the images of the Pict warriors found in Theodor de Bry's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (figure 1.20). First published in 1590, the volume remained in circulation throughout the following centuries. In fact, Virginian Robert Beverley re-used many of the de Bry images of Algonquins in the 1705 publication, *The History and Present State of Virginia*. De Bry's engravings provide a telling comparative look at ancient Picts and Virginia's Algonquins to postulate an ameliorative theory of civilization. If the Picts could be civilized by the Romans, then the Indians also possessed the potential to be civilized in the British manner. Therefore, the Anglo-Virginians living in Virginia were civilizing agents equated with the Romans of antiquity on a noble mission to incorporate America and its native inhabitants into the British Empire.

Picturing an Anglo-Virginian as a conqueror in the Roman tradition was to imagine participation in a historical cycle of imperial conquest. The spear and the Roman costume in young Byrd's portrait relate to images and narratives that identify the British Empire with Roman antiquity, as in the frontispiece of John

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131 Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report*. Thomas Harriot first published his narrative after visiting the region (now North Carolina) in 1585. Theodor de Bry re-published the narrative in four languages and included illustrative prints after original watercolors by John White, who also visited the region in 1585. Both White and Harriot traveled with Sir Walter Raleigh’s expedition to settle a colony on Roanoke Island. The images were re-used by many authors and publishers.

132 Beverley first published his history in 1705. It was the first creole history of Virginia. Beverley re-used some of de Bry’s engravings, making a few modifications. Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia*.

Speed's 1611 publication, *The History of Great Britaine* (figure 1.21), a book owned by the Byrd family. Speed's frontispiece includes images of an ancient warrior in the top register, flanked by a Roman and a Saxon warrior, all three of whom hold spears. Significantly, Speed's book also reproduced de Bry's images of the ancient Picts. The text and illustrations of John Speed's *History* linked England to the Roman Empire and associated authority with lineage through extensive family trees and portraits. Introducing each Roman emperor was an illustration of a medal with his respective portrait. Heraldic devices replace and supplement portraits when Speed's history arrives at the British kingdoms. Reading Speed's *History* allowed the Byrd family to envision themselves as part of the glorious historical family tree of the expanding British Empire. In this vision, the British are now the conquerors, having overcome their primitive nature, and are spreading culture to the wilds of America.

An expensive and stylish painting, the portrait proclaimed the Byrd family's wealth and status, and engaged in dynastic politics. The classicism of the portrait reflected the family's sophistication and education. William Byrd's family members were successful tradesmen, but his wife, Mary Horsmanden Byrd, was a member of the landed English gentry. Her first husband and cousin was

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134 Hayes, *The Library of William Byrd of Westover*, 481. The Westover copy's location is not known; thus, the date of the edition owned by the family and whether it was first owned by William Byrd I or II is unclear.
Samuel Filmer, son of the English political theorist Robert Filmer, who wrote *Patriarcha* (1680), a defense of the divine right of kings. Mary Byrd's cousin, Frances Culpeper, married Governor William Berkeley.\(^{137}\) The Byrds ensured that their children would be well educated in England in order to guarantee their success in Virginia as adults of a certain status. Mary Byrd's involvement in decisions regarding her children's education is hinted at in the letter from William Byrd I to his father-in-law, Warham Horsmanden, who took charge of the Byrd children's education in Essex. Byrd wrote, "My wife hath all this year urged me to send little Nutty [Ursula Byrd] home to you, to which I have at last condescended... she could learne nothing good here, in a great family of Negro's."\(^{138}\) Though there is no letter specifically explaining why William Byrd II was sent away, it was likely for reasons similar to that of his younger sister: to prevent cultural degeneration from exposure to Africans (and probably Indians as well).

Since young Byrd sat for the portrait when he went to England to get a formal education, this painting positions him as poised to bring back British culture to Virginia's wilderness and as the beneficiary to the spoils of war gained by his father. William Byrd I also ensured that his son received mercantile training, apprenticing him for a time with the Perry & Lane firm in Rotterdam, and supported his study of the law at Middle Temple in London. When William Byrd II had completed his education, his father had him appointed as an agent of Virginia to represent the colony's interests in London. Upon William Byrd I's

\(^{137}\) Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, *Correspondence*, 3.
\(^{138}\) William Byrd I to Warham Horsmanden, 31 March 1684/5, in Ibid., 32.
death in 1704, the younger William Byrd inherited the lucrative position of deputy receiver general.\(^{139}\) William Byrd I invested in his son's future through education and political posts. The portrait of his son thus visualizes the family's dynastic ambitions.

The arrow or spear and the surrounding landscape in the portrait further emphasize the Byrd family's newly founded dynastic ties to Virginia land. Spears, pikes, and arrows were emblems not just of victory, but also symbolized the spread of the victor's "glorious name."\(^{140}\) Even the landscape in the portrait of William Byrd II in Roman dress is more carefully rendered than many contemporary British portrait backgrounds. Most wooded landscapes in contemporary British portraits are sketchily painted, as in Ralph Montagu's portrait (figure 1.18). In contrast, the careful delineation of the pine trees in successive life stages in the Byrd portrait, painted in precise detail and emphasized against the lightened sky, suggests their allegorical import. On the left side of the canvas is a rocky chasm divided by water, and to the far right of the rocks is a dead pine tree, which tilts toward the right. Beside it, another evergreen in the prime of its life cycle leans to the left, its green limbs almost bridging the waterfall. A lone pine tree on the left side of the rock formation stands erect, but it has started to die: the top of the tree is bare, while lower portions are still green. Evergreen trees possessed traditional symbolic associations with everlasting life, and trees in general were associated with

\(^{139}\) Ibid., 196.
ancestral ties to the land and genealogical relationships, hence the term "family tree." The pictorial use of these evergreens thus served as metaphors for the eternal regeneration of the Byrd family. Moreover, until 1693, the family's residence was located at the falls of the James River and known as Falls Plantation (later Belvidere). The inclusion of a waterfall between the rocks in the portrait may well symbolize the Byrd's actual land at the falls, for the family was intimately associated with this specific location. Not only did they trade and live there, a 1670 English map of Virginia and Maryland marks the location of the Byrd home on the map as "James River falls Staggs Ile," referring to Thomas Stegge, Byrd's uncle from whom he inherited his Virginia estate.

Most importantly, the painted pine trees over the waterfall served as a cross-cultural reference to regional practices of marking land. As Richard Traunter recorded, travelers carved their names and dates into "Pine Trees there growing not other sort of Wood on this Land" to mark trading paths. Traunter was traveling with "the Indian King" and a contingent of both Anglo-Virginians and Indians when they performed this activity. After carving names into trees, Traunter recorded,

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142 Meyers, “From Refugees to Slave Traders,” 92–93. See also the surveys in the Byrd Title Book, Virginia Historical Society.
143 "Virginia and Maryland as it is planted and inhabitet this present year 1670" (London, Augustine Hermann and Thomas Withinbrook, 1673), Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G3880 1670.H4.
144 Traunter, "The Travels of Richard Traunter."
We asked our Indian King what we must doe next, then he order’d one of my men to cutt down a Pine tree ... which he then did, and afterwards squared it, and upon one of the Edges He ordered him to cutt a Notch ... haveing soe done wee take a New Rope and Slung this Twenty foot peine just by the middle like a ballance, and tied it fast to the Top of the Tree that we had bent down, and then lett goe the Tree soe that it sprung up to its old place again, The peine with the Notches being poysed in the Ayr, made a figure that mightil[y] pleased the Indians, And if ever English or Indians should come that way, They would wonder how we could gett that pine up soe high.145

Traunter's anecdote raises the possibility that the three pine trees in William Byrd II in Roman Dress were supposed to be viewed as deliberately stripped, or notched, rather than as trees in different, natural life stages. Manipulated trees elevated in the skyline thus served as signs that others had been there first, perhaps acted as a warning to enemies and impressing viewers. In the painting, the trees are deliberately placed on high ground to reference traversed land and serve as a marker for future travelers. Combined with the Roman soldier reference, they emphasize to both Anglo-Virginian and Indian viewers that the land at the falls of the James River was controlled by the Byrd family.

Since the Byrds were staking a claim in Virginia, a "new" land without ancient English associations, the trees and falls depicted in the portrait become symbolic of new aristocratic and dynastic ties to the land acquired through conquest. Allegorical landscapes of this sort were popular in contemporary English portraiture, as dynastic land ownership was integral to aristocratic

145 Ibid.
identity. For instance, the John Poulett portrait (figure 1.17) includes a symbolic ancient temple, and the Montagu portrait includes a castle, both of which denote family longevity and landed inheritance. Because such ancient English landmarks did not exist in Virginia, in the Byrd portrait, the evergreen trees assume this dynastic significance instead. Seventeenth-century English portraiture was preoccupied with dynastic imagery as a result of the Stuart monarchical crisis. The English Civil War, followed by the restoration of the monarchy and the ensuing lack of Stuart royal heirs, resulted in dynastic political crises. Portraiture became one way that the royal family proclaimed their legitimacy and other English patrons followed suit. By commissioning the portrait of William Byrd II in Roman Dress, the Byrd family was participating in a widespread, aristocratic British practice of celebrating dynastic lineage as a claim to authority.

The presence in Virginia of another skilled English portrait utilizing similar classical Roman iconography suggests a broader cultural trend celebrating

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147 For example, the William Byrd II portrait shares iconography similar to the ca. 1686 portrait of the deceased royal heir James, Duke of Cambridge, by Willem Wissing (Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 401234). This portrait features the young prince in a forest wearing a classical costume, holding a spear over his shoulder, with a spaniel running at his side. For a discussion of this portrait and how it engages with Stuart dynastic politics, see Murray, Imaging Stuart Family Politics, 164–70. For the military and royal significance of a pike in a printed portrait of Henry, Prince of Wales, in the early seventeenth century, see Timothy Wilks, “The Pike Charged: Henry as Militant Prince,” in Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England, ed. Timothy Wilks (London: Southampton Solent University; in association with Paul Holberton publishing, 2007), 180–211. On the impact that interest in royal lineage had on genealogical practices among Anglo-Americans, see Karin Wulf, “Bible, King, and Common Law: Genealogical Literacies and Family History Practices in British America,” Early American Studies 10, no. 3 (Fall 2012): esp. 480-483.
dynastic, imperial imagery. The Hill family of Shirley Plantation also
commissioned around 1685 a portrait of a young male heir in Roman military
dress (figure 1.16). The portrait of the Hill boy is similarly aristocratic and
baroque in style, and features fashionable, luxurious brocade fabrics with an
antique military costume highlighted by a lion epaulet. Since the Byrd and Hill
families occupied the same social and political network, it is plausible that one
portrait inspired the other. Unfortunately, without firm dates for either painting, it
is impossible to know for certain which portrait arrived in Virginia first.

According to Hill-Carter family tradition, the portrait features Edward Hill
IV, and was painted in the early eighteenth century. Little is known about Edward
Hill IV except that he reportedly died at a young age, leaving his sister, Elizabeth
Hill (ca. 1704-1771), as the heir to Shirley plantation. In 1723, Elizabeth Hill
married John Carter (1696-1742) and Shirley passed into the Carter family. Hill-
Carter oral tradition maintains that Edward Hill IV died of consumption around
1706 at the age of sixteen. The family believes that this is a post-mortem portrait
memorializing the last male heir of the Hill family. Unfortunately, there are no
extant archival records that mention Edward Hill IV.148

148 Unpublished guide to the Shirley Plantation Great House Collection, accessed 14
October 2015. Marion Carter Oliver was a family historian and long-time owner of
Shirley. Oliver was the first to write down the oral history of the portrait, recording only
that Edward Hill IV died at 16 in 1706 but without any particulars of his death. 1937
Notes by Marion Carter Oliver in the Shirley Plantation Notebook of Robert R. Carter,
and the Marion Carter Notebook, July 1942 notes on Shirley Portraits, Shirley Plantation
Collection, Colonial Williamsburg. Unfortunately, the Shirley Plantation family papers do
not include personal documents dating before the late eighteenth century. Most Charles
City County and Parish records burned during the Civil War.
Based on the painting's style and the available biographical information for the Hill family, it seems likely that the Hill portrait was commissioned in the 1680s, or possibly the 1690s, and features Edward Hill III (d. 1723), rather than his son, Edward Hill IV. Conspicuously, an 1846 newspaper article listing the portraits at Shirley stated that there were "two portraits" of Edward Hill III, "one taken in early youth."\(^{149}\) It would appear that, in the early to mid-nineteenth century, someone believed the portrait of the Hill boy was Edward Hill III and not Edward Hill IV. Edward Hill III's date of birth is unknown; however, records from Bacon's Rebellion document that in 1676 Edward Hill II's wife was "bigg with child" and the couple already had other young children.\(^{150}\) It is likely that Edward Hill III was one of these children born in the 1670s, making him the correct age to be painted in the 1680s. Finally, although there are few records of the Hill family, thanks to William Byrd I's correspondence, it is certain that Edward Hill II traveled to England in 1685, which provided at least one documented opportunity to have his son's portrait painted.\(^{151}\)

\(^{149}\) "Portraits at Shirley", "COPIED FROM RICHMOND ENQUIRER, Richmond, VA., April 10, 1846," Shirley Plantation Collection, Colonial Williamsburg. This is a transcript of the newspaper article. Marian Carter Oliver wrote "Full of Mistakes!" on it in the twentieth century. The article does make at least one verifiable mistake. It identifies Edward Hill III as the "founder of Shirley," which is incorrect. He was the third of the name to live at Shirley. While the author of the article only names the subject as "Edward Hill," based on the context of the description and the existence of the second portrait long identified as Edward Hill III as an adult, and which stylistically dates to Edward Hill III's adulthood, I assume that the author is in fact identifying Edward Hill III as the subject.


\(^{151}\) Edward Hill carried "tokens," or gifts, to William Byrd I's agents in London. See William Byrd I to Robert Coe, 5 June 1685, and Byrd to Thomas Gower, 8 June 1685, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, \textit{Correspondence}, 41, 43.
Elements of the Hill portrait belie its traditional dating in the early eighteenth century; indeed, the fabrics and the boy's hairstyle date the portrait closer to the 1680s. By 1700, the gold and silver brocade fabrics, the patterned textiles, and the metallic fringe seen in Hill's garments had given way to solid, plain silks and simpler costumes in portraiture. Instead, the Hill portrait looks similar to works by prominent artists painting in London in the 1680s, such as John Michael Wright and Willem Wissing. For example, Willem Wissing's portraits of Edward Rich, Earl of Warwick (figure 1.22) and William Cecil (figure 1.23) show young boys dressed in similar allegorical costume and seated in forest landscapes. Both boys adopt poses very similar to that of Edward Hill. The two Wissing portraits were circulated as prints that frequently served as models for other painters. In fact, around 1720 an unknown artist in Virginia painted Edward Jaquelin (1716-1734) (figure 1.24) of Jamestown in the precise pose and setting as William Cecil. The artist of Jaquelin's portrait clearly used Wissing's portrait as a model. Moreover, Jaquelin's portrait includes the same dog and bird that appear in Wissing's original. Notably, the Virginia artist updated the costume

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152 These conclusions are based on research conducted in the visual reference collections at the Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, and the Heinz Library, National Portrait Gallery, London during the summer of 2017. I consulted artist and sitter files containing photographs of paintings in public and private collections covering the mid-seventeenth century through the late eighteenth century. For examples of stylistically related portraits, all of which are pre-1700, see especially, in the associated artist's files, Willem Wissing, Lord Wilmot (Witt Library); John Michael Wright, Francis Radcliffe, 1st Earl of Derwentwater (Heinz Library); John Closterman, Sir Benjamin Bathurst (Witt Library); Sir Godfrey Kneller, James Cecil, 5th Earl of Salisbury (National Portrait Gallery); Henri Gascar, Robert Bertie, 1st Duke of Ancaster (Witt Library); Henri Gascar, George Fitzroy, Earl of Northumberland (Witt Library); and the aforementioned John Closterman portraits.

153 Carolyn J. Weekley suggests that the painter of the Jaquelin family portraits was Robert Dowsing of Yorktown, based on Dowsing's probate inventory and a document linking Dowsing to the family. See Weekley, Painters and Paintings, 91–93.
to the contemporary fashion of plain silk, suggesting that allegorical, classical
costume had gone out of style in Virginia by the 1720s.

Following Bacon's Rebellion, Edward Hill II (1637-1700) had good reason
to promote an aristocratic image of himself and his family as he struggled to
repair his reputation at home and abroad and reassert his social authority in
Virginia. Hill found himself in a very different position than had William Byrd I
during and after Bacon's Rebellion. Hill remained loyal to Governor Berkeley
throughout the entire conflict. Following the cessation of civil conflict among
Anglo-Virginians, Hill was on the defensive. As one of Berkeley's most prominent
supporters, Bacon and the rebels hated Hill almost as much as Berkeley. Local
residents filed grievances against Edward Hill's behavior before and during
Bacon's Rebellion, accusing him of misusing taxpayer funds and mistreating his
fellow Virginians. Edward Hill found it necessary to write a defense of himself
and his actions, drawing largely on the excuse that he was loyal to the King's
appointed Governor. Interestingly, considering they were on opposing sides of
the conflict for a period, William Byrd I signed a defense of Hill's character, which
stated:

we have known the above said Colonel Hill this many years...and
have always known him to be a man of good fame and reputation,
in all his actions, conversation, and behavior; and we know that in
the late unhappy disturbance, he always behaved himself loyal to
his King and country, while in the mean time his estate was

154 “Charles City County Grievances 1676,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and
155 Edward Hill’s defense was published in three parts as "Defense of Col. Edward Hill"
in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 3, no. 3 (1896): 239-252; 3, no. 4
(1896): 341-349; and 4, no. 1 (1896): 1-15. See also McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of
the Council*, I: June 11, 1680-June 22, 1699:2–3.
plundered, destroyed and embezzled by Bacon’s commands, and his wife and children kept prisoners.\textsuperscript{156}

In the years after Bacon's Rebellion, the leading planters presented a united front in order to maintain political authority and consolidate power. Byrd and Hill were members of this elite group.\textsuperscript{157}

Like William Byrd I, Edward Hill II chose to commission a portrait of his son and heir rather than investing in an image of himself in order to promote a dynastic vision. Hill was born and raised in Virginia. He clearly had some education, though how much is uncertain. His father, Edward Hill I (d. 1663), was a prominent colonist and served as Speaker of the House of Burgesses. Edward Hill II, however, described himself as "a naked, unlearned & unskilled Virginian borne & bred who have not had the dress and learning of schools."\textsuperscript{158} This self-description was deliberately humble and probably exaggerated, as he was writing a defense of his actions. Hill's post-Bacon's Rebellion defense was addressed to the King's Commissioners sent to investigate Berkeley and the causes of the Rebellion, who he probably wanted to flatter and who already held a negative opinion of him. If there is a grain of truth to Hill's self-description as lacking a formal education, then the purpose behind his investment in his son is clear. Like other wealthy children, including William Byrd II, Edward Hill III was likely sent to

\textsuperscript{156} "Charles City County Grievances 1676," 158.
\textsuperscript{157} On the gentry and political culture during these years, see Douglas Bradburn, “The Visible Fist”; and Alexander B. Haskell, “Counsel, Slavery, and the Politics of Empire: Rediscovering the Dynamism of Virginia’s Seventeenth-Century Council of State,” \textit{The William and Mary Quarterly} 68, no. 3 (2011): 414–19.
\textsuperscript{158} “Defense of Col. Edward Hill,” 3, no. 3 (1896), 240.
England for education so that he could surpass his father's status and ensure his family's future success in Virginia.

The portrait of Edward Hill III speaks to the dynastic aspirations of the Hill family and affirms their status as wealthy, slave-owning gentry. In the portrait, the young boy wears a stylized classical costume made of expensive brocade fabric, and sits on a carved stone block. Young Hill engages the viewer's gaze and points to a distant vista beyond. Visible through a clearing in the woods is a large, imaginary, fashionable English country house with three chimneys, fretwork along the roof, and multiple wings. Similar imagined country homes appear in other British portraits of the period, including the Wissing portrait of the Earl of Warwick. Just below Hill's pointed fingers, in the middle ground, is a groom leading a dark horse (tracing and detail of figure 1.25). The groom and horse appear at the margin of the picture, as though preparing to walk out of the canvas. The carved stone block on which Edward Hill sits belies the natural setting and locates him in an imaginary realm, lending a sense of permanence to

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159 The house visible in the Hill portrait is probably imaginary for at least three reasons. First, there is no evidence that a house in the pictured style was built in seventeenth-century Virginia. Second, the family residence constructed before the 1720s was not demolished until 1868. In 1851, artist Frederic Edwin Church drew the two Shirley houses, the still-standing home dating to ca. 1720s-1730s, and the older residence. The older structure clearly has a pitched roof with two chimneys. Third, similar houses appear in other contemporary English portraits, indicating that they were idealized visions of country homes. For the Church drawing, see the Shirley Plantation Collection, Colonial Williamsburg. For a history of Shirley plantation, see Catherine M. Lynn, “Shirley Plantation: A History” (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1967); and Theodore R. Reinhart, ed., *The Archaeology of Shirley Plantation* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984).

the landscape, and alluding to antique monuments. The country house and the horse and groom were traditional aristocratic emblems of wealth, land, and prowess, and appear in countless English paintings.\(^{161}\)

The Hill portrait also reveals an investment in property. In the portrait, Edward Hill III points out the land, house, livestock, and laborers that he will one day inherit. The portrait may simultaneously celebrate the recovery of the Hill family following Bacon's Rebellion. During the conflict, Bacon's forces "plundered" the house, "destroyed" all their sheep, hogs, cattle and grains, and "burnt" all of the Hill family's "writings, bills, bonds."\(^{162}\) However, in the years following his 1680 self-defense, Edward Hill II seems to have successfully restored and improved his reputation, status, and wealth. In March 1690, he was sworn onto the Governor's Council.\(^{163}\) In this portrait, the audience shares young Hill's prospective view and is left to admire his fortune.

In the portrait of Edward Hill III, the race of the groom is an intriguing and important mystery, for the painting has been damaged and repaired over the years. The painting exhibits multiple layers of varnish, areas of overpaint, evidence of holes and scratches, paint loss in certain areas, and substantial crackling all over the canvas. Remarkably, although the areas of the horse's muzzle and around his hooves have been extensively damaged, the figure of the


groom remains in relatively good condition. While it is possible that the paint on the figure has darkened over the years due to varnish and dirt, perhaps the most telling evidence for identifying the groom as an African is his hairline, which is tightly cropped (see tracing and detail of figure 1.16). European grooms typically are painted with long hair, while African figures, when not wearing turbans, are almost universally painted with short, tightly-curled hair (e.g., figure 1.25, 1.27, and 3.1). In seventeenth-century England, African attendants were most frequently pictured in portraits of children and women, though grooms were occasionally pictured in military portraits of seventeenth-century European men; thus, the depiction of an African groom in the Hill portrait would not be unprecedented.  

Additional circumstantial evidence that the groom in the Hill portrait is African is found in the striking resemblance of the Hill horse and groom to the figures of a Turkish horse with an African groom in a series of paintings copied from seventeenth-century prints by Abraham van Diepenbeck. The original images illustrated William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle’s book, La Methode et invention nouvelle de dresser les chevaux (Antwerp, 1658). Diepenbeck created a series of six horse and groom images, among other illustrations, to accompany

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164 Unpublished conservation report (2012). I would like to thank Charles Hill Carter for sharing this report.
Cavendish’s text on horsemanship. At least two British paintings, one now at Welbeck, the English estate of Cavendish (figure 1.25), and one now at Wimpole House (but not original to it), show the Duke of Newcastle’s prestigious manège horses. Both of these paintings, dated to about 1665-1675, feature grooms and horses from the Diepenbeck book illustrations.\textsuperscript{166} The Turkish horse with the African groom appears in the far left of both paintings, practically walking off the canvas, just as seen in the Hill portrait. Moreover, the Hill groom wears a costume identical to those in the British paintings, and even appears to be rendered in the same golden color as the African groom leading the Turkish horse. Additionally, the position of this groom in both the Diepenbeck images, a step in front of the horse and toward the bottom of the picture, is the same as that of the Hill portrait, as are the positions of the grooms’ feet and tilt of his head up toward the horse so that he appears almost in profile. The gait of the horse and the position of the reins in the paintings are also the same in all of these examples. The only apparent difference between the Diepenbeck images and the Hill portrait is the color of the groom’s belt and leggings, but the darkened colors in the Hill portrait could also be the result of dirt accumulation and discoloration over the years. Since the Hill painting was completed in England, it is likely that the portraitist drew inspiration from these or related paintings and prints of the African groom with Turkish horse.

Given these circumstances, the groom in the portrait of Edward Hill III is therefore likely the earliest known image of an African painted for a British colonial patron, and marks the Hill family as gentry. The African population grew throughout the seventeenth century in Virginia, as wealthy planters turned to slavery and increasingly invested in the African slave trade. The wealthiest Virginia planters, who tended to be on the Governor's Council or held other political offices, owned most of the African slaves before the eighteenth century. This group of early slave traders and owners included Edward Hill II. Men like Hill used political and mercantile connections in London and the Caribbean to import enslaved Africans and dominate the slave trade within Virginia.167 Moreover, even as African slaves became increasingly available in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, only the wealthiest planters could afford domestic slaves in this period. Most Anglo-Virginians did not like to spare any agricultural labor, but instead tried to maximize their tobacco crop.168 The labor regime in Virginia stood in contrast to the contemporary English practice of African slaveholding. In England, African slaves were most often utilized as domestic servants, not agricultural workers. Their public-facing labor was a method of


showing off the owner's wealth and access to luxury goods. The rarity and expense of African enslaved attendants made them suitable emblems of wealth in British portraiture. The inclusion of an African groom in the Hill portrait thus spoke to the Hill family’s English gentility and wealth.

The portrait visually asserts the Hill boy’s mastery over enslaved Africans. Following an already well-established aristocratic pictorial formula, the marginal position of the groom and horse objectify them as commodities. Seen from a distance, they lack individuality. The placement of the groom and horse in the middle ground of the portrait at the edge of the frame render them secondary and subsidiary to Edward Hill. When located at the picture plane, servants and slaves are far more conspicuous. Horses and grooms are depicted in the background of a number of English and continental portraits throughout the seventeenth century; however, none of the examples feature African grooms. In fact, art historians argue that African attendants are deliberately placed directly next to white sitters in order to emphasize the sitter’s whiteness. In the Hill portrait, however, the location of the groom and horse in the distance allowed the Hill family to detach themselves from the growing African population in Virginia in order to maintain their Englishness, mastery, and whiteness. Throughout the late

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170 See, for example, Daniel Mytens, *James Hamilton, 2nd Marquess of Hamilton* (1622-24, Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 402897); and in the John Michael Wright artist file at the Witt Library: *Portrait of a boy, possibly Philip, 7th Earl of Pembroke; Portrait of John Bridgeman; and Portrait of a Lady with a Riding Crop* (ca. 1679).

171 For one example of this argument, see David Dabydeen, *Hogarth’s Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 22–30. See also chapter 3.
seventeenth century, slave codes racialized Virginia slavery and protected the rights of white men. These laws increasingly defined enslaved people as non-white and made it more difficult for enslaved people to be emancipated. They also created further legal distinctions between white indentured servants and enslaved people of African or Indian descent. For example, in 1662 the General Assembly of Virginia decided that all children born to enslaved woman inherited their mother's status and would be a slave for life, no matter the father's legal status. This ensured that owners would profit from their enslaved women's children and hindered the rights of black men to pass their legal status on to their children.\footnote{172} In the Hill portrait's colonial context, the distance between the sitter and the African groom was a logical decision that reflected hardening legal distinctions.

Similar to the portrait of William Byrd II in Roman dress, the classicism and expense of the Hill portrait revealed the family's education and claimed social status and cultural authority. The presence in the Shirley plantation library of seventeenth-century books in Latin and English on classical topics affirms the family's interest in literary classicism. For example, one of the books bearing the signature of Edward Hill is a 1687 edition of Virgil poems. The library also included multiple seventeenth-century editions of books by Cicero and Aristotle.\footnote{173} In the same vein, the Byrd family library also contained a number of

\footnote{173} Guide to the Shirley Plantation Collection, Colonial Williamsburg. The Shirley Plantation Library was transferred to Colonial Williamsburg for preservation when the
books on classical topics, including Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Epistles*, Virgil's *Georgics*, a biography of Alexander the Great, and works by Cicero. Many of these classics, particularly Virgil's *Georgics*, envisioned nature as an aristocratic retreat and were used by the English aristocracy to emphasize land ownership as a right and basis for political authority. Classical literature thus contributed to the British imperial vision of conquest. The availability of these books in Virginia supports the analysis of the Hill and Byrd portraits as allegorical expressions of aristocratic power informed by English baroque classicism.

The use of antique costume in the Hill portrait marks the family as imperial agents. As Edward Hill II made clear in his 1677 defense, he was a loyal subject of the king and desired to promote royal interests. He touted the success of his father (Edward Hill I), who "had the houn.r to be one of the first Coll.s [Colonels] in Virginia" and "comanded the greatest army raised in Virg.a ag.t the Indians and w.th success & Victory." The militaristic nature of the portrait of Edward Hill III emphasizes the family's imperial aspirations and commitment to England.

*William Byrd II in Roman Dress* and *Edward Hill III* constitute part of a larger British imperial project that imagined the British colonists as heroic

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174 Hayes, *The Library of William Byrd of Westover*, Ovid, 271 and 278; Virgil, 272 and 282; Alexander the Great, 278; Cicero, 280. This list only includes books that could have been owned before ca. 1680. Unfortunately, in a few cases, it is unclear which editions the Byrd family owned.


warriors spreading civilization in the Roman manner. The portraits also express the desire of colonists to establish aristocratic landed dynasties in the colonies. They partake of the allegorical, baroque portraiture popular in England; however, as they hung in Virginia, their message was intended for a colonial audience. The Hill and Byrd portraits represent the adaptation of English forms for a colonial setting. The portraits incorporate Anglo-Virginia colonists into an established pictorial tradition, yet the influence of Native Americans and Africans on creole gentry self-fashioning reflects the colonial status and imperial imagination of the colonists. They were highly aware of being surrounded by non-Europeans and understood themselves in relation to these “others.” In transporting British classicism and baroque portraiture to Virginia, they produced British culture that was in dialogue with local colonial realities of violence and race relations.

A Basket, a Textile, and a Slave: Domesticating the Exotic in Early Virginia

Upon the death of his father, William Byrd I, in 1704, William Byrd II returned to Virginia a highly educated man with political, legal, and mercantile experience and a transatlantic network of correspondents. He inherited William Byrd I's position of receiver general, his African and Indian trade, and a large estate of land and slaves. In 1706, William Byrd II married Lucy Parke, the daughter of Daniel Parke II, and in 1708 was appointed to the Governor's Council.177 Daniel Parke, a native Virginian and former member of the Governor's Council, was the royal governor of the Leeward Islands and a hero of the War of

177 Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 195–96.
Spanish Succession. Through her mother, Jane Ludwell Parke, Lucy was also the granddaughter of the politically prominent Virginian Philip Ludwell, who served on the Governor's Council. The Ludwells were staunch Berkeley loyalists during Bacon's Rebellion, and Philip Ludwell later married Governor Berkeley's widow, Frances Culpeper. Through his marriage to Lucy Parke, Byrd forged powerful kinship connections.

In 1716, Lucy Parke Byrd sat for her portrait (figure 1.26)—an image that participates in contemporary political debates involving her family members.

From 1710 to 1722, the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia was Alexander Spotswood. Spotswood faced opposition from the local gentry during his long tenure as de facto governor. Spotswood's actions reveal that he understood his role as governor as one of promoting the larger British project of empire. Invoking the biblical text of Genesis, Spotswood declared to the House of Burgesses in 1720, "our duty engages us Governours to be Specially mindful of Great Britains Interest...I look upon Virginia as a Rib taken from Britains Side and believe that while both proceed as living under the Marriage compac."

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181 Alexander Spotswood, speech read to the House of Burgesses, 3 November 1720 in H.R. Mcllwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia,* vol. 5 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1912), 250. On the relationship between family governance and
came into conflict with leading Virginians who resented the authority of the
governor and his actions, which eroded their own local power. Virginia's gentry
wanted the British Empire to work for them and they resented Spotswood's vision
of Virginia's relationship to Empire. In 1715, William Byrd II traveled to
England, partly to settle his father-in-law's estate and partly to represent
members of the Governor's Council in their dispute with Spotswood. Lucy
Parke Byrd joined her husband in England the following year, and it was then
that they took the opportunity to have Lucy's portrait painted. Lucy's portrait is
unusual in many ways, as explored below, but especially in its revelation of a
colonial adaptation of English and European portraiture conventions during a
time in which the Byrds negotiated imperial tensions.

Lucy's extraordinary portrait was painted in England in 1716. The
technical skill of the unknown artist of her image is superior to any portrait
painted in Virginia before the 1730s, indicating its creation abroad. A letter from
Micajah Perry of London to John Custis dated August 23, 1716, reads, “Col. Byrd

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182 On the leading gentry’s view of empire, see Douglas Bradburn, “The Visible Fist.”
183 Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 196.
184 This portrait has remained undated until the present study. Occasionally, it is referred
to as a portrait of Wilhelmina Byrd, daughter of William and Lucy Byrd; however, the will
of Mary Willing Byrd does not list a portrait of Wilhelmina, but does mention that there
was a portrait of Lucy. The provenance of the portrait shows a direct descent from
Westover. Furthermore, the early twentieth-century identification of the portrait as
possibly Wilhelmina largely depended on the fact that it was identified as a work by
Charles Bridges, an artist who worked in Virginia in the 1730s, long after Lucy died.
Nonetheless, the portrait is no longer believed to be by Bridges. See Byrd, “Will of Mrs.
Mary Willing Byrd,” 350.
is with his lady in Essex." On October 2, 1716, William Byrd II wrote to John Custis from London, "the kind visit which my wife has made me will be the occasion of my staying here another winter, that so she may see this town in all its glory," suggesting that she arrived in England after the previous winter season and that she had never before experienced London. Lucy died of smallpox in England in late November 1716, perhaps even before the portrait was finished. Therefore, the portrait dates no earlier than spring 1716 and no later than the fall of that year.

Lucy's portrait includes two objects and a person that would be considered "exotic" in England: a coiled basket that features a lid with a geometric pattern, a red and white (or silver) embroidered textile, and a non-European attendant dressed in an Ottoman-inspired costume. Historian Benjamin Schmidt defines the "exotic" as "things foreign or extrinsic to ("outside of") a defined indigenousness," in this case, non-European things, and "things that had not only foreign but also delightful attributes." The rarity and beauty of exotic goods made their consumption a "delight." Native American, Asian, and African goods were considered exotic, and were conflated in the early modern European and

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185 Micajah Perry to John Custis, 23 August 1716, Custis Papers, Mss1C9690a, Virginia Historical Society. Also quoted in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 293, fn.2.
186 Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 293.
187 Ibid., 296.
Colonists often supplied collectors in England with exotica and information about foreign people and places, contributing to the production of knowledge in England and taking pride in their expertise. For example, in 1686, William Byrd I sent John Clayton in Yorkshire, England, "an Indian habit" for Clayton's son, presumably to play dress up. Byrd stated that it was the best I could procure amongst our neighbor Indians. There is a flap or belly clout 1 pair stockings & 1 pair mocosins or Indian shoes also some shells to put about his necke & a cap of wampum. I could not get any dyed hair, which would have been better & cheaper. These things are put up in an Indian basket, directed as you desired, there are a bow & arrows tyed to it.

Colonists in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries lived in lands still considered “exotic” by the English. However, colonists interacted regularly with Africans and Indians. Therefore, a portrait like Lucy's, which represents objects that the English found exotic but were commonplace in the colonies, raises an interesting issue of colonial representation: how to represent exotic objects in an imperial context that were not actually exotic within the sitter's local experience.

Taken together, the three "exotic" elements in Lucy Parke Byrd's portrait establish a context that creates a tension between the real and the imaginary, the specific and the general, and the imperial and the colonial. The meticulously

190 Susan Scott Parrish, American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
painted detail of the basket and red textile strongly imply that they were painted from actual objects and underscore their importance to the image. The position of the basket lid, carefully angled to display its design, draws further attention to the object. Similarly, the textile is prominently placed. A survey of hundreds of contemporary images reveals that baskets of this type and textiles of this size, shape, and pattern do not appear in other known portraits, and were therefore likely supplied by the Byrds rather than the artist. In contrast, the male attendant in the portrait appears vaguely generalized and racially ambiguous. Firmly identifying the origins of the two objects and the attendant has proven difficult, but all possibilities indicate references to potentially “exotic” origins.

First, the coiled basket may be either Native American or African. The colors of the basket and the geometric design on the lid are similar to Native American baskets from the period. At the same time, extant early eighteenth-century baskets from eastern North America were typically woven, not coiled, and often had square bases. The basket in Lucy's portrait has a round base and appears coiled. Unfortunately, few baskets survive from this period, and

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192 This calculation is based largely on research in the reference collections at the Heinz Library, the National Portrait Gallery, London, and the Witt Library, Courtauld Institute, London.
193 I would like to thank Grey Gundaker, Danielle Moretti-Langholtz, Buck Woodard, Ruth Phillips, Tom Davidson, Amanda Keller, Kate Hughes, Giovanna Vitelli, Deborah Harding, Eva Garrantte, Laura Peers, Elizabeth Hutchinson, Stephanie Pratt, and Jonathan King, for consulting with me on the basket and its possible origins.
194 See, for example, the 1720s woven Cherokee basket collected by Francis Nicholson in South Carolina for Hans Sloane, which has a square, geometric pattern around the lid and uses similar colors (British Museum, Am,SLMisc.1218.a-b).
those that do are representative of only a handful of indigenous groups, such as the Cherokee and the Iroquois. It is possible that the basket in this portrait was made by a cultural group that is not represented by surviving baskets. The English collected Native American baskets, along with other Native American-made objects, so they were certainly available in England in 1716 when the portrait of Lucy Byrd was likely painted.\(^{196}\) Moreover, William Byrd II, as an Indian trader, had easy access to indigenous baskets from the region.

Early modern Africans also made coiled baskets, and the geometric design on the lid in Lucy's portrait is similar to some modern African designs based on traditional patterns.\(^{197}\) Highly decorative baskets from the Congo were prized in Europe, and a few of these survive in British collections.\(^{198}\) Hans Sloane, a correspondent of William Byrd's, possessed African objects that were later donated to the British Museum.\(^{199}\) Surviving early eighteenth-century African baskets from European and English collections, however, are more elaborately


\(^{199}\) Bassani and McLeod, “African Material in Early Collections.”
decorated than the basket in Lucy's portrait, which displays a relatively simple design. William Byrd II traded in African slaves, so he potentially had access to baskets imported directly from Africa. It is also possible that the basket was Afro-Virginian. Although no archival evidence from the seventeenth or early eighteenth century proves that enslaved Africans made baskets in Virginia, limited material evidence exists. Enslaved Africans and their descendants in South Carolina developed a local tradition of coiled sweetgrass baskets. A pre-1745 African drum associated with Virginia also provides circumstantial evidence for the availability of African material culture in Virginia.

Peeking out of the basket in the portrait is a sheer white cloth with a thin, hand-sewn trim, suggesting a utilitarian function as Lucy's sewing basket rather than an object of mere display. Typically, African and Native American objects that survive in museums and private collections were treasured for their rarity and were thus not regularly used. For someone like Lucy, however, who was born and raised in Virginia, married to an Indian trader, and owned African and Indian slaves, the basket was likely a relatively unremarkable domestic item. William Byrd wrote in 1710 that he gave Lucy "some Indian goods to the value of 4 pounds 10 shillings." It is possible that at least one of these goods may have

200 See the illustrations and descriptions of surviving baskets in Bassani, *African Art and Artefacts in European Collections.*
201 Rosengarten et al., *Grass Roots.*
202 The Akan drum, part of the Hans Sloane collection, British Museum (Am,SLMisc.1368). There is some debate over whether the drum was made in Africa or Virginia, but it has a Virginia provenance and an African form.
been a basket similar to the one depicted in the painting. William also recorded that the Nottoway Indians offered baskets as gifts to Europeans, and his brother-in-law, Virginia historian Robert Beverley, specifically mentioned that Indian "Household Utensils are baskets made of silk grass." Baskets like that depicted in Lucy's portrait may not survive simply because they were regularly used and consequently deteriorated over time.

The second "exotic" element in the portrait is a red textile decorated with an abstract, geometric design that may relate to textiles from India, the Ottoman Empire, North Africa (Morocco), or may even represent a European-made fabric with designs that relate to the Native American trade. While Ottoman or "Turkey" carpets were relatively common elements in English and colonial portraiture, Lucy's red cloth is unusual. The global trade in textiles in this period would have made it easy for the Byrds to acquire fabrics from around the world, either in Virginia or during their stay in England. Geometric patterns

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205 I would like to thank Linda Eaton, Linda Baumgarten, Neal Hurst, Niloo Paydar, Sibel Zandi-Sayek, Anna Stein, Jonathan King, Clare Browne, Ruth Barnes, and Grey Gundaker for their opinions on the textile.

206 For example, "Turkey" carpets appear in the following colonial portraits: Unknown artist, called Mary Mann Page (Mrs. Matthew Page) (Muscarelle Museum of Art) and John Smibert, *The Bermuda Group (Dean Berkeley and His Entourage)* (1728, Yale University Art Gallery).

similar to the one on Lucy’s cloth are found in contemporary textiles from India, North Africa, and Middle Eastern countries. Textiles from these regions were luxury items. Adding to the confusion regarding the origins of the textile is the fact that, during this period, English textile manufacturers began copying “exotic” patterns. English textiles were also used in trade with the Native Americans, who often preferred those with geometric patterns like the one in Lucy’s portrait. It is therefore also possible that the textile was made in England for export to the colonies for trade with Native Americans in exchange for skins and furs. Regardless, wherever the textile originated, in Lucy’s portrait it represents trade with non-European peoples.

The third element is the racially ambiguous attendant who wears an Ottoman-style costume that was fashionable for domestic African slaves in England at the time. The costume connoted the exotic east as well as the successful civilization of a non-European. The boy’s physical features do not appear to be West African. European artists of this time typically painted Africans

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210 Molineux, Faces of Perfect Ebony, 49.
with broad noses, large lips, and short, tightly-curved hair. The boy in Lucy’s portrait has more aquiline features, wavy hair, and his skin is not very dark. He looks like he could be Middle Eastern, East Indian, or possibly North African. He is likely painted from a print source: a nearly identical boy appears in a 1697 portrait of William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire by John Closterman (National Trust, England, Hardwick Hall). Although the two portraits are by different artists, the positions of the attendants in each, their livery, and their physical features look very similar, indicating that both artists used the same source material. African and Indian slaves frequently were painted in English and European portraits of this period as exotic motifs that were included to show off the sitters’ wealth and their access to slaves. In Lucy Parke Byrd's portrait, the use of another visual source as a model for the attendant is an indication of the boy’s function as an exotic commodity. Since individuality was not a concern, the boy in Lucy’s portrait need only to serve as a type of subjugated "other."

Lucy’s likeness responds to a portraiture convention popular in Europe and England wherein a white sitter appears surrounded with exotic objects and people in order to celebrate the commercial nature and expanse of empire. One example of this type of portrait is Pierre Mignard’s 1682 depiction of Louise de

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212 The history of the enslaved attendant motif in English and European portraiture has been widely discussed. See, for example, Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony*, 18–60; Dabydeen, *Hogarth’s Blacks*, 22–30; Hall, *Things of Darkness*, 211–53; Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 27–55; and chapter 3.
Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth (figure 1.27). The Duchess wears richly patterned fabrics, sits on a red cushioned bench, and accepts coral and a shell filled with pearls from a young African girl, who also wears exceedingly fancy clothes and is adorned with pearls. The enslaved African in this portrait functions as another “exotic” object of wealth. As Catherine Molineux has observed, enslaved people in aristocratic portraits "hardly conjured up the reality of enslaved life on colonial plantations, but they illustrated ideological foundations on which Britons built the 'imperial framework.'" In images like Mignard’s *Duchess of Portsmouth*, the English empire was figured as a benevolent institution, spreading civilization to non-Europeans, and African figures were depicted as grateful admirers bearing tribute.

As Beth Fowkes Tobin argues, British portraits of elite whites with non-white attendants and exotic objects emphasized imperial privilege and power, displaying an appropriation of exotic cultures without being negatively influenced by them. This appropriation is particularly evident in portraits featuring men with exotic objects. Such portraits remained popular throughout the eighteenth century. For example, the Irish baronet Sir John Caldwell was painted ca. 1780 clad in Native American costume (National Museums, Liverpool). Caldwell had

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213 Another example from the Netherlands, but featuring an English royal, is Adriaen Hanneman's Portrait of Mary Henrietta Stuart, Princess of Orange with a Black Attendant, (ca. 1650, Mauritshuis, the Hague), which shows Princess Mary wearing a large, bejeweled turban and a featherwork cloak from South America, while an African attendant fastens a bracelet on her wrist. Another version of this portrait with a simpler background and without the attendant (but with the same costume) is in the British Royal Collection (RCIN 405877).

214 Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony*, 58.

collected the objects he wears in his portrait while serving in the British military in the Great Lakes region.\(^{216}\) Benjamin West's portrait of Sir Joseph Banks (1771-1772) (figure 1.28) celebrates the naturalist's role in the South Seas voyage commanded by Captain James Cook. Banks is depicted in his portrait with objects collected during the trip, including a cloak, spears, bowls, and plants.\(^{217}\) Both Banks and Caldwell play dress-up. They wear and present objects they have collected in a disjointed display of pleasure and power rather than as evidence of participation in the cultures they appropriate.

Lucy's portrait offers a colonial interpretation of the empire's relationship to the “exotic.” While the Duchess of Portsmouth is draped in expensive textiles, accepts the exotic gifts, and interacts with her slave, Lucy appears quite restrained by comparison. She is clad in a plain silk wrap dress and appears to pull away from the boy. The red textile proffered by the young male attendant, though impeccably painted, is small with respect to the scene as a whole. The textile draws the viewer’s attention without dominating the canvas. Its odd triangular shape and position of the pattern implies that it is a folded handkerchief. Silk handkerchiefs were made or traded in Africa, India, Europe, and the Americas. Handkerchiefs were regular gifts from Europeans to Native Americans.\(^{218}\) Enslaved people also wore handkerchiefs throughout the Atlantic


\(^{217}\) Tobin, Picturing Imperial Power, 87, 89.

world, though perhaps not as fine as the one painted in Lucy’s portrait. As traders involved in the Caribbean, African, and Native American trade, the Byrds engaged with kerchiefs regularly. In the painting, the handkerchief is proffered by an attendant, suggesting his subservience, yet the textile also refers to a global practice of exchange. The pictured handkerchief thus emphasizes the Byrd family’s veritable and active participation in global trade, rather than an imaginary and idealized version of gift exchange in the Duchess of Portsmouth.

Lucy’s use of the basket Anglicizes it and, combined with the white fabric—probably English cotton or linen—argues for her active role in domesticating, refining, and “whitening” the American wilderness. The reference to Lucy’s domestic work through the basket is another departure from the type of exotic portraiture that the Duchess of Portsmouth epitomizes. Whereas the Duchess is pictured as an idle recipient of imperial wealth, Lucy is imagined as a more active participant in the imperial agenda. Lucy sews and oversees domestic labor. Lucy has literally domesticated the exotic basket by turning it into a container for her sewing. Clean white fabrics like that projecting from the basket were status markers in the British Atlantic. Such fabrics signified "social whiteness" and participation in British civility. They were moderately expensive

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220 For an example of an Algonquian basket turned into a sewing basket by a Massachusetts woman, see Ulrich, The Age of Homespun, 49.
221 Kathleen M. Brown, Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 111.
to purchase during this period, and keeping them clean and bleached white required womanpower for regular laundry. As a plantation mistress, Lucy oversaw indentured and enslaved washerwomen and could thus keep her white fabrics clean and in regular rotation. Moreover, white shirts and chemises, such as the one Lucy wears under her dress, had special connotations because they were closely associated with skin. Such white undergarments were believed to literally absorb the skin’s excretions, cleansing the body.\textsuperscript{222} The enslaved boy in Lucy’s portrait also wears a white shirt under his livery, as glimpsed at his wrist. The white shirt, when worn by non-Europeans, became a sign of spreading European influence that stood as evidence of colonial subjects adapting to English practices.\textsuperscript{223} These fabrics serve to "whiten" the non-European figure and the Native American basket. The sheer quality of the fabric encourages the viewer to literally gaze through a veil of whiteness to see the entirety of the basket. Lucy represents the commerce of empire spreading civilization to the colonies.

In contrast to the celebration of conquest seen in the Caldwell, Banks, and Duchess of Portsmouth portraits, Lucy’s portrait presents a much smaller number of objects in a more modest fashion, turning her colonial simplicity into a virtue.

\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 109–11.

\textsuperscript{223} My interpretation of white fabric in Lucy’s portrait is informed by Brown, especially 26-32, 98-117. Sophie White makes a similar argument in the French Atlantic context. She argues that a Native American negotiated laundry into a job contract because wearing clean white shirts was a sign of European civility and cleanliness as opposed to Native Americans who bathed but did not regularly wash clothing; thus, he used the contract to construct himself as "civil." See Sophie White, \textit{Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 176–207.
Lucy's likeness is reminiscent of Robert Beverley's self-description in his *History and Present State of Virginia* (1705), in which he introduces himself to the "Reader" by stating, "I am an *Indian*, and don't pretend to be exact in my Language: but I hope the Plainness of my Dress, will give him the kinder Impressions of my Honesty...like Beauty, [truth] is rather conceal'd, than set off, by Ornament."\(^{224}\) Beverley's tract was political, as he sought to defend the gentry and present a negative view of the Governor and imperial interference.\(^{225}\) In the case of Beverly, positioning himself as a native Virginian, or "Indian," lent his account authenticity. The "plainness" of his appearance was described as a virtue. These words also recall Edward Hill II's self-defense, in which he called himself "naked" and "unlearned" to counteract attacks on his character.\(^{226}\) In Lucy's portrait, her appearance in a plain but fine dress, with the modest yet "exotic" basket, her sewing, and the folded kerchief, make a similar statement about her virtue as colonial woman.

*Lucy Parke Byrd* illustrates an attempt by self-conscious colonists to emphasize the potential of colonial society and situate Virginia as a place where luxuries that were considered exotic in England could be produced for the benefit of the British Empire. As Robert Beverley avowed in 1705,

> All the Countries in the World, seated in or near the Latitude of *Virginia*, are esteem'd the Fruitfullest, and Pleasantest of all Clymates....*Canaa, Syria, Persia*, great part of *India, China*, and *Japan*, the *Morea, Spain, Portugal*, and the Coast of *Barbary*, none of which differ many Degrees of Latitude from *Virginia*. These are...


\(^{225}\) On the history and political context of Beverley’s *History*, see Susan Scott Parrish, “Introduction” in Beverley, xi–xxxviii.

reckon'd the Gardens of the World, while Virginia is unjustly neglected.\textsuperscript{227}

William Byrd II made a similar comment in 1731, writing of Virginia, "it lies in much the same latitude with Italy, Greece, Sicily, Asia-minor, Syria, Persia and all other fine clymates of the world."\textsuperscript{228} Comments like these reveal the ways that Virginians favorably compared their colony and its potential to the rest of the world, particularly with respect to places associated with the "exotic." In the eyes of men like Beverley and Byrd, Virginia offered the British Empire the climate necessary to grow the exotic and expensive commodities they otherwise had to import, including tea, coffee, and silk. The forest setting in Lucy’s portrait conjures the idea of the wild but “tameable” and "fruitful" American wilderness. The portrait of Lucy Parke Byrd plays with the exotic European portraiture convention to represent Virginia as a site where the exotic becomes domesticated, controlled, and produced by Anglo-Virginians.

The textiles make clear that Lucy’s portrait is a visual treatise on Virginia’s potential and significance to the British Empire. Lucy Parke Byrd was painted in England amidst heated debates regarding the global textile trade. English manufacturers desired trade protections on their textiles as foreign imports grew in popularity. The American colonies became integral to the discussion of markets, as the English increasingly understood colonists as consumers of

\textsuperscript{227} Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia, 236.
\textsuperscript{228} William Byrd II to John Boyle, 15 June 1731, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 444.
products and not just producers of raw goods. The artist of Lucy’s portrait presents her as a consumer of textiles involved in foreign trade (the red fabric) and from England (the white cloth). The askew sewing basket lid further hints at the potential of the basket to hold more items. However, many Virginians also wanted to produce raw silk and flax (for linen production) for the market. In fact, in Samuel Hartlib’s 1652 treatise addressed to colonists, *The Reformed Virginia Silk-Worm*, the first two "things...of no or small difficulty to you and the Savages to enterprize, and get gain and wealth" were:

1. This Silke, so easie, speedy, and profitable a thing.
2. The Silk-grasse naturally there growing, which to the Indians the onely labour is of putting it up, and bringing it to you at such a price; a rich Commodity if known.

The author thus linked the potential of colonial silk with indigenous American silk grass (also known as sweet grass), which was the material likely used to construct Lucy’s basket. Multiple English explorers, colonists, and colonial investors remarked upon the potential benefits of producing silk, flax, and silk grass in the colonies, including William Byrd II. The portrait thus links these

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229 On the textile industry between the 1690s and 1720s, see Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 72–117.
recognizable commodities relating to textile production and consumption as symbols of Virginia's potential to supply the Empire.

Lucy Parke Byrd's likeness also engages in Virginia-specific trade debates as well as larger imperial ones. Alexander Spotswood, the maligned lieutenant governor of Virginia, was responsible for two major trade regulations and acts that diverged from the economic interests of many of the leading Virginia gentry. The conflict between Spotswood and the faction of planters led partially by William Byrd and Philip Ludwell (Lucy's uncle) provides an important local context for Lucy Parke Byrd's portrait. In 1713, Spotswood was responsible for the passage of the Tobacco Inspection Act, a law that required all tobacco to be inspected before export. The Act was supposed to stimulate the local economy by resulting in smaller, better quality shipments of tobacco, thus raising market prices. However, it also expanded the governor's power through the appointment of inspectors who received money for the post. Spotswood acted as patron by appointing his supporters from among the Burgesses as inspectors. To pass the Act, Spotswood manipulated the votes of the Virginia Governor's Council and House of Burgesses by promising men posts in exchange for their support.232

The Tobacco Act was unpopular with the general populace of Virginia because it

did not raise prices quickly. Further, the inspectors usurped the traditional role of large-scale planters as factors for smaller planters, thereby cutting into their income.

Another unpopular trade law of this time was the 1714 Indian Trade Act, which created the Virginia Indian Company. The Virginia Indian Company was given a twenty-year monopoly on the Indian trade and established a defense post and Indian settlement at Fort Christiana. Spotswood justified the Act by saying,

> The manner of carrying on the Trade heretofore with the Indians has not only been the occasion of frequent quarrels between y’m and ye English but at last proved the entire loss of that Commerce...people imploying themselves in that Trade...use such Frauds in their dealings with the Indians as have too frequently incited them to revenge the injustice by private murders.  

Spotswood intended the Act to stimulate Virginia's Indian Trade, increase security on the frontier, and foster peaceful relations with local Indians by regulating the behavior of traders and creating an Indian school and mission at the Fort. However, men like William Byrd II, who engaged in private trade with the Indians, were angry at the creation of the monopoly. In 1715 and 1716, Byrd testified at the Board of Trade and Plantations about the negative impact of the Tobacco Inspection and Indian Trade Acts while in London.

During these years, William Byrd was also called by imperial officials to testify regarding the recent Tuscarora and Yamasee Wars in North Carolina. On several occasions in the summer of 1715 Byrd testified that the Wars were

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caused by "greedy" Carolinians who "misused" the Indians and "frequently debauched the Indians wives and daughters." Byrd also blamed the Carolinians, who "incouraged their neighboring Indians to make war upon one another, that they may buy the prisoners taken on each side as slaves." In contrast, Byrd stated that the Virginians "have always well treated" the Indians.

Byrd's testimony elided Virginia's long history of involvement in the Indian slave trade, including the role of his father. As a Virginian, Byrd was invested in making Virginia look better than Carolina in order to stimulate the Virginia Indian trade. His interests aligned with the larger goals of repealing Spotswood's Indian Trade Act of 1714. Spotswood's justification of the Act relied partially on the alleged misbehavior of independent Indian traders like himself. By casting aspersions on the Carolinians, Byrd defended Virginians and bolstered his claims against the Indian Trade Act.

These political conflicts exposed fundamental differences between the creole gentry and foreigners like Governor Spotswood. Spotswood described Byrd and his faction as "men who look upon every benefit that accrues to their Soveraign as so much taken from themselves...these are the men that look upon all persons not born in ye Country as forriegners." He later called the men "Creolian" and stated that while "they prove me to be Staunch for his Maj'ty's

234 Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, 3, March 1714–5 to October 1718:15 July 1715, 54; 26 July 1715, 62; see also 10 August 1715, 69; and 30 August 1715, 75.
236 Alexander Spotswood to the Lords Commissioners of Trade, 23 May 1716, in Spotswood, Official Letters, II: 153.
Rights, they'll think me a Gov'r not for their purpose, and for that Reason Strive to blast my Credit.” Spotswood impugned William Byrd's reputation and questioned his behavior as Receiver General of the colony in an attempt to defend himself from Byrd and the Council. The Board of Trade was inclined to support Spotswood as the royal representative in the colony. The Lords Commissioners of Trade resented Byrd and his fellow faction members for questioning the imperial authority that Spotswood represented. Increasingly, the Virginia gentry resented interferences from imperial officials and desired relative political autonomy; or at least desired imperial trade policies that benefited the gentry.

Painted in the midst of these political debates and testimonies in 1716, Lucy Parke Byrd's portrait visually reinforces William Byrd II's official testimony on Virginia's trade and positions Virginia, allegorically represented by Lucy, as central to trade and as a site of creole virtue. The painting includes references to commodities under the control of the Byrd family, who engaged in Atlantic trade. Lucy's simple silk dress and understated domestic industry suggests virtuous creole simplicity and truthfulness. Moreover, during the fall of 1716 Spotswood and his allies challenged William Byrd II's reputation and William found himself on the defensive. On November 2, 1716, not long before Lucy died, he appeared at the Board of Trade and Plantations to respond to accusations made against him by Spotswood. He found "several persons to be examined in his behalf" to the Lords Commissioners of Trade, 14 August 1718, in Spotswood, II:291.
defend his honor. William Byrd II's wife, Lucy Parke Byrd, also represented him in her portrait but in a more private capacity.

Lucy's portrait participated in the defense of William Byrd's reputation by alluding to his role as a successful trader and a colonial gentleman. Lucy points toward the left side of the portrait, redirecting the viewer's attention beyond the canvas. In this regard, it is probable that a portrait of her husband once hung next to hers. Three portraits of William Byrd II hung at Westover, but only two are known today. The first, the portrait of William Byrd II in Roman dress, represents him as a child, and thus too young to function as a pendant portrait to that of his wife. The second, a ca. 1704 portrait by the studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller (figure 1.41), features William Byrd II gesturing in the same direction as Lucy in her portrait, making it unlikely that they were intended to hang side-by-side. The third missing portrait may very well have been painted as a companion to Lucy's portrait. If so, Lucy pointed to her husband's likeness, indicating his expertise in trade, drawing into focus the elements of the basket, fabric, and attendant in her portrait. Back in Virginia, Lucy's portrait would remind any colonial audiences of his participation and expertise in the Indian and Atlantic trade, bolstering his local reputation.

Lucy Parke Byrd's portrait, considered within its social context of imperial debates over trade and authority, reveals a colonial adaptation of European portrait conventions designed to make a political statement. The painting

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239 Mary Willing Byrd's will listed three portraits of William Byrd II. See Byrd, “Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd.”
domesticates the “exotic” to show that Virginia was a lucrative colony and its creole gentry were capable of improving it without the interference of unwanted imperial regulations. The lack of flashiness in Lucy's portrait, seen in more grandiose paintings such as the *Duchess of Portsmouth* (figure 1.27), reminds viewers that colonists were hardworking agents of trade and empire and not mere beneficiaries of it. The trade and political debates that William Byrd II found himself in the center of in 1716 surely influenced the unusual iconography of his wife's portrait. Lucy Parke Byrd gestures towards her husband's expertise and trade and supports his political agenda, while at the same time promoting herself as a model colonial woman participating in the domestication of Virginia's wilderness.

**Portraits of War and State: Daniel Parke's Imperial Ambitions**

The life and portraits of Daniel Parke II (1669-1710) reveal the ways that portraiture materialized imperial ambitions and participated in the creation of a transatlantic British identity. John Closterman painted two identical portraits of Parke in London between 1704 and 1706. They eventually arrived in Virginia, presumably as gifts for each of his daughters. One portrait descended in the family of Frances Parke Custis (Mrs. John Custis) (now in the collection of Washington-Lee University), and the other was passed down in the family of Lucy Parke Byrd, wife of William Byrd II (figure 1.29). These two Closterman portraits are the most ostentatious of the known portraits of Parke. Since Parke sent them back to Virginia, he intended them to materially represent him and
ensure his presence and family continuity in the colony. The portraits also celebrated his political and military success.

Daniel Parke II, born in Virginia in 1664/5, spent his childhood in England with his mother's kin, the well-connected Evelyn family of Surrey. He returned to Virginia in 1674 with his father. In 1685, Parke married Jane Ludwell, daughter of a prominent Virginia family. Two of their daughters survived into adulthood: Frances (later Mrs. John Custis) and Lucy (later Mrs. William Byrd II). In 1690, Parke traveled to London with his father-in-law, Philip Ludwell, to represent the Virginia gentry against the Governor's taxation policies. Upon his return to Virginia in 1693, Parke was elected to Virginia's House of Burgesses before being named to the Governor's Council in 1695.240

Though a wealthy and well-connected planter, Daniel Parke became known as a rake in Virginia. He openly kept a mistress and fathered an illegitimate child with her. Parke feuded with the powerful Reverend James Blair, once dragging Blair's wife, Sarah Harrison Blair, out of the Ludwell family pew by her wrist and into the aisle during church services at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg. Parke's feud with the Maryland Governor Francis Nicholson (later Virginia's Governor) led to another public altercation. During one argument, Parke struck Nicholson with a horsewhip.241 Parke's greatest ambition was to be

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241 Miller, Colonel Parke of Virginia, 84–88. Stories about Parke recounted in James Blair, “A Memorial Concerning Sir Edward Andros, Governor of Virginia by Dr. Blair” in
named royal governor of Virginia. He abandoned his wife and children in Virginia and went to England in 1701 to seek power and political appointments. He never returned to the colony.

After failing in a bid to be elected to the English Parliament, Parke joined the military, and in 1702 became aide-de-camp to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, at the beginning of the War of Spanish Succession. The Duke of Marlborough was arguably the most powerful man in England at that time. Marlborough and his wife, Sarah, were close to Queen Anne. Parke's moment of glory came in 1704. In August of that year, Parke was involved in the momentous Battle of Blenheim. This victory was a turning point in the war and contributed to the British imperial agenda by weakening France and Spain, England's greatest political rivals. The Duke of Marlborough chose Parke to deliver the news of English and Allied victory to Queen Anne.242

Upon delivery of the good news, the Queen asked Parke what he desired as a reward, and Parke requested a miniature portrait of the Queen (figure 1.30).243 He subsequently wore this miniature, encrusted with diamonds, on a ribbon around his neck. Such miniatures are intimate objects, and Parke...
understood that his was a special gift from a monarch. Asking for and receiving a miniature of Queen Anne was to enter a relationship of obligation and patronage. Typically, only friends and important diplomats received miniatures; thus, requesting one was strategic.²⁴⁴ Wearing it in public ensured that everyone knew Parke enjoyed a royal connection, and he utilized the miniature in his public imagery to materialize his connection to the Queen. Parke wanted the governorship of Virginia, and he manipulated his public image in an attempt to reach that goal. The Queen Anne miniature thus appears in every known portrait of Daniel Parke, all of which date to the years 1704-1706, between the Battle of Blenheim and his departure from England. Parke commissioned several portraits from a number of prominent artists working in London, including Sir Godfrey Kneller and Michael Dahl. Of particular interest are the two identical portraits he commissioned from the artist John Closterman because he specifically intended them for his daughters' homes in Virginia. They make a lavish materialistic statement about his success and prominence, guaranteeing that his role in the imperial conflict and patronage of Queen Anne would be memorialized in Virginia.

Notably, the portraits sent to Parke's daughters in Virginia emphasize powerful diplomatic connections over military service. In the Closterman portraits, Daniel Parke stands three-quarter length, wearing a richly embroidered

²⁴⁴ Tabitha Barber, “‘All the World Is Ambitious of Seeing the Picture of so Great a Queen’: Kneller’s State Portraits of Queen Anne and the Pictorial Currency of Friendship,” in Court, Country, City: British Art and Architecture, 1660-1735, ed. Mark Hallett, Nigel Llewellyn, and Martin Myrone (New Haven: Published by The Yale Center for British Art, The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2016), 233–37.
waistcoat, a velvet coat trimmed in gold, a lace kerchief around his neck, and a gold brocade sash tied around his waist. The diamond-encrusted miniature of Queen Anne is featured prominently, placed directly upon his breast. The hilt of a sword is visible on his left hip. To his left, his helmet is perched on a ledge and on his right lies his armor. Below the armor appear large gold medals on heavy chains. Three are visible, the most prominent of which is the ambassador's medal gifted to Parke by the Dutch States General.\textsuperscript{245} The medals were gifts from England's allies following Parke's delivery of the victory at Blenheim. In the background, to Parke's right, is a glimpse of two cannons firing over a body of water, an apparent reference to the Battle of Blenheim. The canons and armor certainly reference Parke's military service, but the martial allusion is secondary to his diplomatic and political service.

In contrast, two portraits of Parke that remained in England, presumably with political connections, emphasize his military service. For example, Sir Godfrey Kneller painted Daniel Parke (figure 1.31) in a more explicitly martial portrait around the same time that John Closterman painted Parke. The Kneller portrait's provenance is unclear, but it depicts Parke as a military commander wearing armor and holding a baton of command, a sword hilt located by his left hand. Here, the helmet is more prominently displayed than in the Closterman portrait, sitting just above the Dutch medals. The helmet's visor is raised to show off the red fabric lining, which draws further attention to the armor. The scene in the background depicts men fighting on horseback in a more explicit reference to

the battlefield. There were several design changes during the portrait's execution. Most visible at the neckline between the red ribbon, discoloration makes it appear that Kneller originally planned to paint Parke in a coat and waistcoat, but then switched to armor. This suggests that either Parke or Kneller determined that armor was the more appropriate option for its intended setting. Parke also appears in armor and wears the miniature on a red ribbon in a contemporary portrait by Michael Dahl, though the Dahl portrait is only bust length. The Kneller and Dahl portraits emphasize Parke's role as military hero first, while the Closterman portraits recognize Parke's diplomatic aspirations first, and military heroism second.

In the Closterman likenesses sent to Virginia, Parke has laid down his soldier's accouterments and is ready to accept a political role. Parke likely wanted to be remembered by his descendants for his prominent political appointment and affluence, while he knew his military service and connection to the powerful Duke of Marlborough would serve him better in England. The visually prominent inclusion of the miniature of Queen Anne in all of his portraits ensured that all viewers would be well aware of his powerful patroness. The

246 Object file 1990-245, Portrait of Daniel Parke, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The Kneller painting was acquired by Colonial Williamsburg from an unknown Scandinavian owner by a couple from the UK who then sold it at Sotheby's. See also Michael Dahl, Portrait of Daniel Parke (Sold by Christie's, The Barratt Collection, 16 December 2010).

portraits of Parke, which include a recognizable visage of the Queen, connected him and the households of Frances and Lucy with both local and imperial centers of power in Virginia and London. Like the previous monarchs, Queen Anne's portrait hung in the colonial Capitol building in Williamsburg. His portraits also linked the homes of Frances and Lucy to locations in England where his other portraits hung. Parke's portraits were tangible reminders of his political importance. Since he never returned to Virginia, the portraits represented him for his descendants. Frances and Lucy were his only legitimate children, and they each married a man who held colonial office. Parke's portraits represented him in each of their households, where he visualized their links to imperial offices. At the time that the portraits were commissioned, Parke had grand ambitions for imperial appointments. He used his portraits to cement personal and political networks.

The Closterman, Kneller, and Dahl portraits were not the first occasions that Parke utilized portraiture for political purposes. In 1692, Daniel Parke sent a letter from Virginia to his English cousin John Evelyn asking that Evelyn and his father advocate for Parke's nomination to the Virginia Governor's Council. He desired them to solicit William Blathwayt, Secretary of the Lords of Trade and Plantations, for the position. Parke wrote, "it leyes allmost wholy in Blathwaits Power to add any to ye Councell, My Desire to you is that if you have any

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Acquaintance with him that you will Desire him to doe you the kindness to add me to the Councell of Virginia...I will give you A good [share] of Glory. I hope you took Care of the Pictures according to yr Prommiss.249 This letter refers to two portraits, which Evelyn the younger described to his father "as a Picture of my Coz. Parke and a Gentlewoman very ill done."250 Parke sent portraits of himself and a woman to his politically influential English relatives to materialize his presence and make it more difficult to refuse his request for a political favor. Doing so linked his political ambition and familial obligations with his likeness and allowed him figuratively to cross the Atlantic to claim power.

Though the Parke portraits by Closterman clearly had political dimensions, they were also familial images that partook in visualizing a dynastic lineage on a local level. According to Daniel Parke's son-in-law, John Custis, the 1709 inventory of Parke's property at Queen's Creek Plantation (taken at Jane Ludwell Parke's death), contained "7 family pictures" and "2 old Landskips".251 Unfortunately, it appears that many, if not all, of these portraits were lost or destroyed over the years.252 Seven family portraits was a large number for the

250 John Evelyn to John Evelyn, 26 October 1692, in Bourne, 20. It is unclear who the woman was, but it was likely a portrait of his wife, Jane Ludwell Parke. That they were “ill done” likely indicates that a Virginia artist painted them, making them potentially older than the Fitzhugh portraits (ca. 1698) discussed at the beginning of this chapter.
251 Schedule containing an account of all the estate real and personal of Daniel Parke.
252 These portraits may have been among those hanging in the Custis family home that a descendant remembered at Abingdon house as “crumbled into dust.” George Washington Parke Custis, Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis with a Memoir of the Author, by His Daughter; and Illustrative and Explanatory Notes by Benson J. Lossing, ed. Benson J. Lossing (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860), 21.
colony in 1709. This number indicates that the Parkes were keen on memorializing their family genealogy through portraiture. The seven portraits apparently descended to Frances Parke Custis, Parke's eldest daughter. The celebration of wealth and military success in the Closterman portraits was a method of showing off his victories in Virginia. Further, since he had no legitimate male heirs, the portraits guaranteed that the Parke legacy would be memorialized through his daughters' descendants.

That Parke was particularly interested in preserving the Parke family name and legacy becomes clear in the terms of the will he devised in 1710. Parke's will left his lucrative Caribbean estates to his illegitimate daughter, "provided ...[she] alter her name and call herself Parke and use my Coat of Arms etc. which is that of my Family of the County of Essex, but if she refuse to godson Julius Caesar Parke then to heirs of my Daughter Frances Custis then of my Daughter Mrs. Lucy Bird always to call themselves Parke etc." The terms of Parke's will created many problems for his two legitimate daughters, Frances and Lucy, and their husbands, John Custis and William Byrd II. However, the specification that any heir take the surname Parke and use the Parke family coat of arms highlights significant interest in his dynastic legacy. Both Frances and Lucy named a child after their father. Frances's son was named Daniel Parke Custis and Lucy's first son was named Parke Byrd, though he died in infancy. Of course,

253 Parke’s will is published in Daniel Parke, “Virginia Gleanings in England,” The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 20, no. 4 (October 1912): 372–81. See also Byrd Title Book, Virginia Historical Society. On Parke’s will and the multi-generational legal trouble it caused, see Miller, Colonel Parke of Virginia, 208–19; and Micajah Perry to William Byrd II, 12 May 1711, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 280–82. Part of the reason Byrd traveled to London in 1715 was to settle Parke’s estate.
Parke Byrd lived before William and Lucy learned of the terms of Daniel Parke's will, which inexplicably left Lucy very little in comparison to her sister Frances and her father's two illegitimate children, Lucy Chester Parke and Julius Caesar Parke.254

Unfortunately for Daniel Parke, he was appointed royal governor of the Leeward Islands instead of Virginia. Parke delayed traveling to Antigua, capital of the Leeward Islands, for as long as possible in the hope that he might obtain a different appointment. He probably hoped that his Caribbean appointment would eventually lead to another more coveted position, if one became available. Once in Antigua, Parke's tactics to enforce British law and suppress long-standing practices of illegal trade, as well as his blatant womanizing, led to an insurrection. Daniel Parke was brutally murdered by Antigua residents in 1710.255

Nonetheless, his portraits survive in Virginia. They remain a testament to Daniel Parke's ambitions and his colonial participation in imperial affairs abroad.

"From this lonely part of the world": Materializing William Byrd II's Transatlantic Network

In 1726, Daniel Parke's son-in-law William Byrd II returned to Virginia from England for the final time. He established a portrait collection featuring at least

254 “Genealogical Notes” in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 828, 832.
255 For an account of Parke’s murder, see George French, The History of Col. Parke’s Administration Whilst He Was Captain-General and Chief Governor of the Leeward Islands with an Account of the Rebellion in Antegoa: Wherein He, with Several Others, Were Murther’d on the 7th of December, 1710 (London: Printed, and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1717); Miller, Colonel Parke of Virginia, 197–204; and Falkner, “Parke, Daniel (1664/5-1710)."
sixteen English friends and acquaintances at Westover plantation (see Appendix I). These portraits were conduits for transatlantic connectivity in a world where communication was unreliable and distances formidable. The paintings that hung at Westover became tangible evidence of Byrd’s connections to influential politicians and military leaders. The portraits were also tokens of obligation and affection. Like his father-in-law, Daniel Parke, Byrd used portraiture to enhance networks of patronage.

Byrd’s network was crucial to his identity as an English gentleman. Like other colonial gentry, he placed great importance on letters to maintain civility, even as overseas correspondence increased his sense of isolation. Letters could take months to arrive at their destination and were sometimes lost. Colonists frequently felt inferior to their English peers and worried that their communications would go unrecognized.256 When a long period passed before hearing from an English correspondent, Byrd wrote anxiously, “Not a syllable have I heard this long time of any of the Southwell family. They are so unkind as to drop me, distance being in their reckoning the same as death.”257 Byrd’s portraits thus had both sentimental and practical use, depending on the sitter. If distance felt like death, then the portrait collection kept his contacts alive and

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257 Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, *Correspondence*, 489.
perpetually available for conversation. The vast distance between Virginia and England made the connection materialized by the portraits all the more important. Through participating in the English art market by commissioning original paintings, buying copies of portraits of well-known sitters, and hanging portraits of influential men and women in his colonial home, William Byrd II contributed to building an empire of pictures.

Westover became a node on a visual map of social and political connections that linked him to imperial centers of power and knowledge. The portraits of Byrd's English contacts created material links between sitters, viewers, and place. Portraiture was important for developing and maintaining social networks in the growing public sphere of the eighteenth century. Thinking about social networking can lead to a better understanding of how portraits were viewed at the time. As Kate Retford explains in regard to English family portraits, “image[s] created a direct pictorial link" between houses; "such links meant that portraits in great houses formed a visual map of aristocratic connections across the country.” The visual maps created by portraiture extended beyond family and across the British Empire.

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259 Retford, The Art of Domestic Life, 152. See also Retford, The Conversation Piece, 252, 269.
Collecting the portraits of friends and acquaintances also allowed Byrd to self-fashion himself as an English gentleman. William Salmon's *Polygraphice* (1678), ordered by William Byrd I and present in the Westover library, reminded readers that "The Art of Painting was a thing which of old Princes admired, Kings did affect, Emperours and Noble men of almost all Ages did love and make use of." By the late seventeenth century, all wealthy gentlemen could participate in the art of painting. In particular, *Polygraphice* included directions for hanging "draughts of the life, of Persons of Honour, intimate or special friends, and acquaintance, or of Artists only." Salmon assumed that proper gentlemen would own a portrait collection. Traveling in England, William Byrd experienced firsthand such collections in country homes, and determined to create his own in Virginia.

In late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, portraits served important roles in aristocratic country homes. Portraits of eminent non-family members impressed viewers with power by association. William Byrd II visited Burghley House, home of the Cecil family, with his friend John Percival while on a tour of England in 1701. Byrd's account of the visit is no longer extant, but

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261 Ibid., 160.
Percival’s diary records their travels. At Burghley, Percival mentions seeing "the two Rooms call'd live & dead Bedlam," which were hung with portraits of members of the Honourable Order of Little Bedlam, an aristocratic drinking club that met at Burghley. The two men also saw other portrait collections and private galleries during their travels. At Euston, Percival noted the "Gallery that runs the whole length of the house," which featured portraits of the royal family and foreign royals alongside the Duke and Duchess of Grafton's portraits. Byrd's British country house tour likely inspired him to create his own gallery of pictures at Westover. Given the size of Byrd's collection and the space required to hang the paintings, it is likely that his English collection of portraits hung in his library at Westover that was built as a long gallery. Byrd recorded in his diaries that he walked around the library, or gallery, for exercise when the weather was bad, indicating the length and purpose of the room, as when he recorded, “The rain would not let me walk abroad therefore I walked in the library.” Although no hard evidence for reconstructing Byrd's hanging scheme currently exists, we

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can assume that the picture gallery Byrd formed at Westover was smaller in scale but similar in function to those he saw in England.267

The English sitters represented in Byrd’s gallery formed overlapping social networks and ranged from affective friends to barely acquainted political connections. All of the men and women represented at Westover were influential or connected to powerful people through marriage. Personal favors and correspondence reinforced the social connections that were made in person and visualized by the portraits. In one case, a portrait is the only evidence that Byrd knew a sitter personally: he acquired a portrait of Teresa Blount (1688-1759) (figure 1.32), a friend of Alexander Pope’s.268 None of Byrd’s extant writings indicate that he knew her, but to possess her portrait, a woman without major political ties, strongly implies that they were acquainted. He also owned a portrait of Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu (figure 3.3). The exact nature of their friendship is unknown, though he recorded socializing with her at Tunbridge Wells.269

The first and largest group of sitters depicted men and women with whom Byrd regularly socialized and corresponded. They traveled, walked, drank, and

dined together, as recorded in his London diary. Byrd’s writings register an affective attachment to these sitters: Sir Robert Southwell (1635-1702) (figure 1.33); Charles Boyle, 4th Earl of Orrery (1674-1731) (figure 1.34); John Percival, 1st Earl of Egmont (1683-1748) (figure 1.35); John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll (1678-1743) (figure 1.36); Sir Wilfrid Lawson (1697-1737) (figure 1.37); Lady Elizabeth Southwell, née Cromwell (1674-1709) (private collection); and another portrait of a Lady Elizabeth Southwell. Robert Southwell was an older mentor who took an interest in William Byrd. It was Southwell who asked Byrd to accompany Southwell's nephew, John Percival, on a tour of England in 1701. Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery was the godfather of Byrd’s daughter Anne, born in England in 1725. Anne was left behind in England with relatives when her family sailed for Virginia in 1726. Orrery apparently helped look after her, as Byrd wrote to him in 1727 saying, “Mrs. Byrd too gives your Lordship a thousand thanks, for your favors to her daughter.” Byrd particularly treasured his friendship with Southwell and Orrery, for he mentioned them on the epitaph he wrote for himself, which reads in part,

under the Care and direction of Sir Robert Southwell and favored with his particular Instruction he made a happy Proficiency in polite and various Learning. By means of the same noble Friend he was

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270 There were two Lady Elizabeth Southwells in Byrd’s portrait collection. The second is either the wife or daughter of Sir Robert Southwell, both named Elizabeth. The location of this portrait is currently unknown. Two other portraits called "Mr. Brent" (unlocated) and "Barrister Dutton" (Colonial Williamsburg, 1966-211) descended in the Byrd family. The identity of these two men is uncertain.

271 For Percival’s journal of this tour and related correspondence between Byrd and Southwell, see Percival and Wenger, *The English Travels of Sir John Percival and William Byrd II*.

introduced to the acquaintance of many of the first persons of that Age...and particularly contracted a most intimate and bosom Friendship with the learned and illustrious Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery.\textsuperscript{273}

Byrd traveled in his youth with John Percival and socialized frequently with John Campbell, Duke of Argyll and Sir Wilfrid Lawson in London.\textsuperscript{274} All of the men corresponded with Byrd while he lived in Virginia, filling him in on gossip, current events in English politics and military ventures, and the latest scientific discoveries.\textsuperscript{275} The presence of their portraits in his library gallery stood as tokens of true friendship. Byrd also wrote a number of love letters to Lady Elizabeth Cromwell before she married Edward Southwell, one of Byrd’s close friends and the son of Sir Robert Southwell.\textsuperscript{276} Her portrait at Westover is somewhat conspicuous, as Byrd did not own a portrait of her husband, Edward Southwell.

A second group of the male sitters in Byrd’s gallery were fellows of the Royal Society of London, the prestigious scientific group to which Byrd was elected in 1696. Besides the aforementioned Southwell, Lawson, Percival, and Boyle, this group included Charles Montagu, 1\textsuperscript{st} Earl of Halifax (1661-1715) (figure 1.38). Sir Robert Southwell had nominated William Byrd for election to the Royal Society. In 1718, Byrd nominated his friend Sir Wilfrid Lawson. The Earl of

\textsuperscript{273} Inscription on William Byrd II’s gravestone, 1744, Westover Plantation, Charles City.
\textsuperscript{274} Various entries in Byrd, \textit{The London Diary}.
Halifax was president of the Royal Society when Byrd joined. Byrd published a report about an African who developed white skin in 1697, and maintained correspondence with the Society and several members after his return to Virginia, informing them of plants and animals found in the colonies.\(^{277}\) This network of fellows visualized Byrd’s participation in a learned scientific community. In fact, the portrait of Robert Southwell that hung at Westover is a copy of an original that Southwell gave to the Royal Society to hang in their meeting room.\(^{278}\)

A third network represented in portraiture is a political one. This network included all of the previously mentioned male sitters, in addition to Charles Wager (1666-1722) (figure 1.39), Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745) (figure 1.40), and William Blathwayt (1649-1717).\(^{279}\) These men all served in prestigious government positions, but Byrd was not on intimate terms with Wager, Walpole, or Blathwayt. Byrd’s correspondence with Wager and Balthwayt is full of business, political and military news, and requests for political favors. Blathwayt, longtime Secretary of the Board of Trade and Plantations and the Auditor and Receiver General of the Colonies, appointed William Byrd I to the position of auditor-general of Virginia, and subsequently William Byrd II after his father’s death. In another instance, Byrd wrote to Wager, First Lord of the Admiralty,

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\(^{279}\) The location of Byrd’s portrait of William Blathwayt is presently unknown, but was last recorded in the private collection of a descendant in Georgia.
asking him to use his friendship with Sir Robert Walpole, commonly referred to as Britain's first Prime Minister, to obtain for him the post of Virginia's Surveyor of Customs, a post worth "£500 a year, and not unpleasant in the execution." ²⁸⁰

Byrd's friendship with Argyll may also have been his saving grace in 1720. At that time, Byrd's personal and political conflict with Virginia's Governor Spotswood had reached its peak and he was on the verge of losing his seat on the Governor's Council. It appears that Argyll used his connections to save Byrd's post. ²⁸¹

The act of commissioning a portrait was a sign of admiration attaching the owner to the sitter, even if they were not personally connected. Of all the Englishmen represented, Sir Robert Walpole was the one with whom Byrd was least acquainted. It is unclear if they ever met in person, and they did not correspond with each other. Walpole was very powerful, but Byrd, as far as extant documents record, never wrote to him directly for a favor. He relied on men like Wager to speak to Walpole in his interest. Interestingly, Walpole is the only male represented in Byrd's collection that does not look directly out of the composition (figure 1.40), which is expressive of the nature of their relationship (or lack thereof).²⁸² The men in the other portraits gaze directly at the viewer, forming a connection with them. By contrast, Walpole evades eye contact. For

²⁸² Of the known male portraits, only Walpole does not look out of the canvas at viewer. Of the women in Byrd's collection, Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu (figure 3.3) is painted in profile. The other women look out of the canvas.
Byrd, commissioning Walpole’s portrait was a way to ingratiate himself to the powerful man rather than a sign of affection. At least seventy-eight contemporary portraits of the man existed, and many were published as prints, providing numerous opportunities for copying. The large number of extant portraits of Walpole throughout England underscores the political nature of portraiture in this period.

Another sign of admiration was the imitation of portraits. Sir Godfrey Kneller, or members of his studio, painted a portrait of William Byrd between 1700 and 1704 (figure 1.41). This portrait of Byrd hung at Westover among the other English portraits of noblemen. The portrait is a nearly exact copy of the 1685 portrait of Charles Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax, by Sir Godfrey Kneller. Prints of the Halifax portrait by Kneller were widely available in the 1690s (figure 1.42). Indeed, Byrd may have owned a copy of the print in his collection. This particular pose and setting was a popular choice for male sitters painted by Kneller's studio. Given Byrd’s propensity for copies, however, it is very possible that Byrd's portrait was a deliberate reference to the Halifax portrait. Byrd styled himself an aristocrat and man of science by imitating Halifax’s portrait. The corresponding print and portrait reinforced their relationship.

Copying portraits connected Byrd to the original owners and locations. Indeed, several of Byrd’s portraits were copies of previously existing portraits,

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284 On the practice of collecting printed portraits of famous individuals, see Pointon, Hanging the Head, 53–78.
285 On copies in general, see Catharine MacLeod, “‘Good but Not like’: Peter Lely, Portrait Practice and the Creation of a Court Look,” in Painted Ladies: Women at the
including those of Percival and Walpole. The portrait of Sir Robert Southwell that William Byrd commissioned was a copy of an original that hung in the Royal Society meeting room. This original portrait by Kneller from ca. 1695 was reproduced in prints in 1705. From Westover, Byrd could recall and connect to the Royal Society meetings by viewing his portrait of Southwell. He corresponded with the Southwell family for many years, particularly Robert Southwell's son, Edward Southwell, so he also maintained a personal connection to the Southwells through this portrait. Byrd's Westover collection included a modified but obviously direct copy of the portrait of Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu (figure 3.3 and 3.4) hanging at Boughton House. As this was not a published portrait, Byrd likely saw the portrait in the artist's studio or in the home of the Montagu family and asked permission to commission a copy.

Of course, Byrd was friends with a number of his sitters, some of whom gifted Byrd portraits as tokens of their friendship, and vice versa. Byrd recorded asking the Duke of Argyll for his portrait while at a coffeehouse in his diary on January 25, 1718. The Duke “promised” him one. Further, Byrd had a portrait of Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery at Westover, and Boyle owned a portrait of Byrd.

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as well. Though there is no written record of the exchange of portraits, it is probable that Byrd and Orrery exchanged their likenesses around 1726 when Byrd left for Virginia. Orrery had a portrait of Byrd by the artist Hans Hyssing in his home (figure 1.43).289 This image happens to be almost exactly the same as the portrait of Sir Wilfrid Lawson by Hyssing (figure 1.37) that Byrd displayed at Westover. Dated around the same time, I argue that Lawson deliberately copied Byrd’s portrait as a compliment. Byrd was older than Lawson and sponsored his election to the Royal Society. The main difference between the compositions is that Lawson’s portrait features architectural elements, whereas the portrait of himself that Byrd gave Orrery shows a ship at sea through a window. The inclusion of this ship emphasized the physical distance between the two. The lone ship’s isolation carries greater meaning when we consider that Byrd wrote to Orrery in 1728, “Thus have I troubled your Lordship with an account of my travels, which is the greatest news I can tell you from this lonely part of the world.”290 The portraits of Lawson and Orrery at Westover thus memorialized their long-distance friendships with Byrd and created a triangular relationship between the three men's portraits.

Some of William Byrd II’s writings reveal how viewing portraiture was a social concept and practice. In 1735, Byrd wrote to his sister-in-law, Jane Pratt

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Taylor, regarding her portrait (figure 1.44), observing, "We often discourse you in effigie, and call the painter a bungler for falling so short of the original." To Taylor, Byrd insinuated that the whole family engaged with her portrait. The next year, following the receipt of the portrait of John Percival, recently created the Earl of Egmont, Byrd wrote to his friend,

[I] have the pleasure of conversing a great deal with your picture. It is incomparably well done & the painter has not only hit your ayr, but some of the vertues too which usd to soften and enliven your features. So that every connoisseur that sees it, can see t’was drawn for a generous, benevolent, & worthy person. It is no wonder perhaps that I could discern so many good things in the portrait, when I knew them so well in the original … I was pleasd to find some strangers able to read your Lordships character on the canvas, as plain as if they had been physiognomists by profession.

The terms “discourse” and “converse” in these two passages imply that the portrait literally embodied the sitter, providing a conduit for connecting and “conversation” over long distances. Byrd’s comments may read as hyperbole and flattery today; however, other colonists made similar comments.

In 1686, William Fitzhugh wrote to his brother, Henry Fitzhugh, who remained in England, "your picture would have been mighty acceptable, & pleasing to me in your absence… I should be heartily glad of your Picture…if you cannot find an advantageous Opportunity of shewing me the Original." The following year, Fitzhugh requested a portrait once again: "I must repeat my

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293 William Fitzhugh to Henry Fitzhugh, 30 January 1686/7, in Fitzhugh, William Fitzhugh and His Chesapeake World, 192–93.
former desires & wishes either to see you in person, or to see you truly personated by your lovely Picture which would largely contribute to the satisfaction of Your Dearest Brother."\(^{294}\) For William Fitzhugh, a portrait was an important tool for connecting with a beloved brother. In Fitzhugh's estimation, a painting was no substitute for the original, but it could "truly personate" the subject and fulfill the need for emotional connection despite physical separation. In 1726 Peter Jay of New York wrote of portraits performing analogous social work, keeping sitters metaphorically alive. In that year, Jay received a portrait of his cousin from Bristol, England, and stated that "It only lacked speech." He then wrote to the cousin,

> I often find myself in our Bristol room (as we call it) to pay you a visit, along with those of your dear family. I avow that in one sense, I am renewing my memory of you; but in another, it is not just a painting I own. I fix my eyes upon them, and it seems they are all around me, but like mutes, who cannot say a word. In fact, it is unfortunate that our sad destiny does not allow us to enjoy talking to each other during the short time we have in this world.\(^{295}\)

Jay's letter discloses a similar social and affective relationship with portraits. For colonists living across a vast ocean from family and friends, portraits materialized sitters and allowed metaphorical visits and conversations. Jay's mention of "our sad destiny" and Fitzhugh's desire for a picture that could "personate" his absent brother, echo Byrd's description of living in a "lonely part of the world."\(^{296}\) The comments of these three men reveal the ways that colonial anxieties amplified

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\(^{294}\) William Fitzhugh to Henry Fitzhugh, 5 April 1687, in Fitzhugh, 216.


the social aspects of portraiture and added value to likenesses of distant friends and family.

Byrd's letter to Egmont also exposes the public nature of his portrait collection. Byrd admitted to showing Egmont's portrait, and presumably the whole collection, to other Virginians, specifically to "strangers" who did not know Egmont in person. Clearly, Byrd's collection was open to visitors. The act of viewing Egmont's portrait impressed on the spectators that Byrd had lofty connections. Even if provincial Virginia colonists could not identify every sitter by sight, the composure, costumes, and accouterments of the sitters marked them as eminent, while their countenances revealed their "character." Many of the men from Byrd's collection wear costumes and accessories in their portraits that allude to their various honors: Robert Walpole, Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, and John Campbell, Duke of Argyll wear blue sashes and the star of the prestigious royal Order of the Garter; Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery, wears the sash and badge of the royal Order of the Thistle; and John Percival, Earl of Egmont dons his official red and white parliamentary robes. Like his English gentry counterparts whose country house collections were semi-public, Byrd's gallery of English portraits constituted semi-public displays of wealth and aristocratic connections intended to impress visitors.

Byrd wrote that he "conversed" with Egmont and "was pleased to find" that other "connoisseurs" could "read" Egmont's character, implicating Byrd and his fellow colonists in contemporary English social practices. Portraiture and paintings were popular topics for polite conversations and were closely linked to
the development of the public sphere in England. As artist Jonathan Richardson stated, "Upon the Sight of a Portrait, the Character, and Master-Strokes of the History of the Person it represents, are apt to flow in upon the Mind, and to be the Subject of Conversation." Furthermore, the word "conversation" in early eighteenth-century England held multiple meanings: it meant to talk, but it also meant a community. While in England, Byrd surely participated in public conversations that involved painting as a part of social discourse. He visited homes with painting collections and was friends with men who patronized artists. For instance, John Campbell, Duke of Argyll, was an important patron of the Scottish portraitist William Aikman (the portrait he gave Byrd is attributed to Aikman). Byrd also took drawing lessons, patronized several different portrait artists, and may have purchased paintings he believed were painted by Rubens and Titian. Notably, Byrd frequented coffeehouses,

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299 From “the Latin conversatio, meaning ‘life, company, society’, and they cluster around two central ideas: one’s ‘conversation’ as one’s conduct or behaviour, and one’s ‘conversation’ as one’s circle of acquaintance or community,” in Retford, *The Conversation Piece*, 28.


301 Byrd took drawing lessons from Eleazar Albin while in London, see Byrd, *The London Diary*, 49, 53, 62, 65, 67, 68, 71, 73, 75, 78, 79, 88; Albin also brought him prints, 89, 106, 183, 288; brought glass, 291; brought a paint box, 333. On the importance of drawing as a gentlemanly pursuit, see Bermingham, *Learning to Draw*, 33–64. Mary Willing Byrd’s will lists a painting by “Rubins” and a painting by “Titian.” According to descendants, the Rubens painting was a portrait of a man and the Titian painting was a Venus. I have not seen either painting. The original purchaser of these paintings (Byrd I,
which were centers of sociability in Georgian London and meeting spots for several groups of artists and literary men. He particularly favored Will's Coffeehouse, which appears many times throughout Byrd's London diary. For example, according to a March 27, 1718 entry, Byrd "about six went to Will's Coffeehouse and read the news, and then went to the play where I slept. After the play I went to Will's again." Another time Byrd recorded that he "went to St. James's Coffeehouse, where I took up Mr. P-I-t and went to the park...from thence to Will's Coffeehouse, where I stayed the whole evening." He met Orrery, Argyll, Lawson, and Egmont at coffeehouses multiple times during the years 1717 through 1720, and it was in an unnamed coffeehouse that Byrd requested Argyll's portrait. Therefore, when Byrd wrote to Egmont that "connoisseurs" could read Egmont's character through his portrait and that he conversed with it, Byrd implied that Virginia, or at least Westover, was a polite, sociable space.

II, or III) is unconfirmed, though Byrd II’s particular interest in painting strongly suggests that he was the buyer. Further, copies of Old Master paintings were so common in England that it is likely not a “real” Rubens or Titian, but a copy. See Byrd, “Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd,” 350, 355, fn.18, 19. On the London art market, see Stephens, “Palace of Westminster”; and Pears, The Discovery of Painting, 51–106.


Byrd, The London Diary, 98.

12 April 1718, in Byrd, London Diary, 106.

See, for example, entries in Byrd, London Diary, 102, 200, 201; Argyll’s portrait, 70; “found my Lord Percival at Garraway’s” (Garraway’s was another coffeehouse), 227. Byrd went to Will’s multiple times a week, sometimes daily during the years 1717-1720.

On connoisseurship and sociability, see Pears, The Discovery of Painting, 181–206; and Retford, The Conversation Piece, 13–31, 255–64. On portraiture and conversation, see Solkin, Painting for Money, 27–47.
The relationship between portraits and conversation was made explicit in a 1730 letter from Byrd's friend John Boyle (Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery's son), which reads, "Give me leave therefore to paint a conversation piece at Wills Coffee House, without placing a prelude by way of frame to my picture." The letter continues to minutely describe a night at Will's Coffeehouse and share gossip from London. Byrd responded to that letter, saying, "The pictures you drew are so exceeding like, that I see the originals without the trouble of a voyage." The epistolary exchange between Boyle and Byrd links conversations, verbal and metaphorical, with visual imagery. The written portrait from Boyle allowed Byrd to "see the originals," or participate in the scene, from across the sea and months after the night described. Consequently, when Byrd wrote to Jane Pratt Taylor that he and the family "discourse her in effigy," and to the Earl of Egmont that he "conversed" with his picture, he was not exaggerating; rather, he was participating in the social practice of British portraiture by reminding his English friends that they were part of his community even from afar.

Portraits connected colonists to larger imperial networks, visualizing the owner's place in the British Empire. For Daniel Parke, items selected for inclusion in his portraits became tangible reminders of his broader connections in the Atlantic world and military success for posterity. William Byrd II's large collection of English portraits reveal the various social functions of portraiture and the

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307 John Boyle, Baron of Broghill to William Byrd II, 8 August 1730, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 433.
308 William Byrd II to John Boyle, Baron of Broghill, 15 June 1731, in Ibid., 443.
different methods of obtaining portraits through exchange, ordering copies, and original commissions. Portraits could be gifts, tokens of friendship, political statements, and conduits for conversation. For William Byrd II, hanging his visage alongside English acquaintances and friends (many of them illustrious) materialized his associations and allowed him to "converse" with his English community from the colonies.

**Conclusion: From Soldiers to Gentlemen**

Many early eighteenth-century Virginians commissioned fashionable portraits during their travels in England and carried them home to Virginia. Other English portraits from this period include those of Edward Hill III as an adult and his wife, Elizabeth Williams Hill (before 1710, private collection, Shirley Plantation); Henry Willis (ca. 1720, MESDA Database, NN-2296); Lewis Burwell and his wife, Mary Willis Burwell (ca. 1720s, FARL); and a woman called Mary Winn (Mrs. John Winn) (ca. 1720s, FARL). These English portraits imported images of Britishness and civility and allowed colonists to participate in England's thriving art market. The circumstances of these portraits are not always documented; however, as revealed by the portraits of Edward Hill III, William Byrd II in Roman dress, and Lucy Parke Byrd, English-made portraits responded to and participated in a number of social and political conversations in Virginia.

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309 The Frick Art Reference Library attributes the two Burwell portraits and Mary Winn to Charles Bridges; however, these attributions were made in the early twentieth century when all Virginia portraits dating roughly to pre-1750 were attributed to Bridges. Based on the black-and-white photographs, these portraits appear English, and in the style of Sir Godfrey Kneller.
Adaptations of English conventions for a local, colonial context allowed colonists to mediate British culture and craft creole identities.

While some Virginians continued to commission portraits in England during the eighteenth century, growing numbers of British artists arrived in Virginia to serve a local market. As a result, portraiture became increasingly available and accessible at home. The early portraits brought from England served as examples and models for self-trained artists in the colonies, like William Dering, who saw William Byrd's picture collection and studied his prints. Painters like Dering, the artist who created the eight Jaquelin and Brodnax family portraits (e.g., figure 1.24), Charles Bridges, and John Wollaston, helped Virginians craft community portrait conventions, which will be examined in the following chapter. Virginia family collections grew and participated in dynastic politics as gentry families consolidated their wealth and political power through marriages and land expansion.

William Byrd II's large collection of portraits was probably the most extensive in all of the British North American colonies. Byrd's collection was a fulfillment of his father's aspirations for him to be an English gentlemen and colonial politician. The Westover collection of the Byrd family included portraits of many prominent imperial officials by respected artists. Through these portraits,

311 "showed Dering my prints," 31 July 1741, in Byrd, Another Secret Diary, 178.
Byrd connected with his transatlantic network. The collection featured the portrait of Daniel Parke, an imperial war hero who, through a strategic marriage, became William Byrd II's father-in-law. Byrd's collection also included portraits of most of his children and his wives, which were variously painted by London artists and artists working in Virginia. William Byrd II himself was painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller's studio, the leading studio in London during this period (figure 1.41). The stylish portrait by Kneller was an image of gentlemanly refinement. No hint of the violence or warfare from William Byrd II's youth appears in his adult portrait. The little Roman soldier became a learned, respectable, landed gentleman.

From at least the mid-seventeenth century, portraits were an important part of colonial self-fashioning, allowing colonists to participate in British culture and construct themselves as genteel British citizens. However, imported British portraits were often adapted to meet colonial needs and address a local audience. Creole anxieties and local conflicts affected the iconography and reception of these early portraits. The social function of portraiture became amplified in Virginia, materializing transatlantic connections and conversations for colonists a long way from the imperial center.
Figure 1.1. Unknown artist, Said to be Richard Lee I, date unknown. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Reproduction from Stratford Hall, original in private collection.

Figure 1.2. Unknown artist, Said to be Anne Constable Lee (Mrs. Richard Lee I), date unknown. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Reproduction from Stratford Hall, original in private collection.

Figure 1.3. Unknown artist, Said to be Richard Lee II, date unknown. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Reproduction from Stratford Hall, original in private collection.

Figure 1.4. Unknown artist, Said to be Laetitia Corbin Lee (Mrs. Richard Lee II), date unknown. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Reproduction from Stratford Hall, original in private collection.
Figure 1.5. Unknown artist, Said to be Sir William Berkeley, date unknown. Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 x 40 1/2 in. (125.73 x 102.87 cm.). Private collection.

Figure 1.6. Unknown artist, Said to be Lady Frances Culpeper Stephens Berkeley, date unknown. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Private collection.

Figure 1.7. Studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, *James Craggs the Younger*, ca. 1708. Oil on canvas, 48 1/2 in. x 39 1/2 in. (123.19 x 100.33 cm.). National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 1134. © National Portrait Gallery, London
Figure 1.8. Unknown artist, *William Randolph I*, date unknown. Oil on canvas, 35 x 27 in. (88.9 x 68.58 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Bequest of Kate Harris Williams, 1951.31.

Figure 1.9. John Wollaston after unknown artist, possibly *Elizabeth Beverley Randolph (Mrs. William Randolph II)*, ca. 1755. Oil on canvas, 34 x 26 in. (87.31 x 66.99 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Bequest of Kate Harris Williams, 1951.32.

Figure 1.10. John Hesselius after unknown artist, *Henry Fitzhugh I*, 1751. Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 25 in. (76.84 x 63.5 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Bequest of Alice Lee Thomas Stevenson, 1972.19.

Figure 1.11. John Hesselius after unknown artist, *William Fitzhugh I*, 1751. Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 25 in. (76.84 x 63.5 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Bequest of Alice Lee Thomas Stevenson, 1972.20.
Figure 1.12. Unknown artist, *Colonel John Page*, ca. 1660. Oil on canvas, 28 x 23 in. (71.12 x 58.42 cm). Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William & Mary, Gift of Dr. R.C.M. Page, 1897.006.
Figure 1.13. Unknown artist, *Robert Bolling*, ca. 1695. Oil on canvas, 29 x 24 in. (73.66 x 60.96 cm.). Muscarelle Museum at the College of William & Mary, Gift of Mrs. Robert Malcolm Littlejohn, 1940.001.
Figure 1.15. Circle of John Closterman and John Riley, *William Byrd II in Roman Dress*, ca. 1680. Oil on canvas, 48 1/4 x 40 1/2 in. (122.56 x 102.24 cm.). Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mrs. Edmund Randolph Cocke in memory of George Byrd Harrison, M.D., 56.30. Photograph by Katherine Wetzel. © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Figure 1.16. Unknown artist, *Edward Hill III*, ca. 1685. Oil on canvas, 51 3/4 x 41 1/2 in. (131.45 x 105.14 cm.). Private collection, Shirley Plantation, Charles City, Virginia. Courtesy of Charles Hill Carter.
Figure 1.17. John Closterman, *John Poulett, 1st Earl Poulett*, ca. 1680. Oil on canvas, 76 1/2 x 52 in. (194.31 x 132.08 cm.). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1973.1.6.
Figure 1.18. Attributed to John Closterman or John Riley, *Boy of the Montagu Family (Ralph Montagu?)*, ca. 1685. Oil on canvas, 49 x 39.5 in. (124.5 x 100.3 cm.). Buccleuch Collection, Boughton House.
Detail of figure 1.15, *William Byrd II*

Detail of figure 1.17, *John Poulett* and 1.18, *Boy of the Montagu family*
Detail of figure 1.15, *William Byrd II in Roman Dress*

Details of figure 1.17, *John Poulett* and 1.18, *Boy of the Montagu family*
Figure 1.19. Theodor de Bry after John White, *Weroan or Great Lorde of Virginia*, from Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590). Hand-colored engraving, 5 9/10 x 8 2/3 in. (15 x 22 cm.). University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Library, North Carolina Collection.


Figure 1.24. Possibly Robert Dowsing, *Edward Jaquelin*, ca. 1720. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Lent by the Brodnax Family Trust © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Figure 1.25. Unknown artist after Abraham van Diepenbeck, *Portrait of a group of five of the 1st Duke of Newcastle’s Manage Horses each with an attendant*, ca. 1665-1676. Oil on canvas, 30 x 36 in. (76.2 x 91.4 cm.). The Harley Gallery, Welbeck Abbey, the Portland Collection.

Figure 1.26. Unknown artist, *Lucy Parke Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd II)*, 1716. Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in. (101.6 x 76.2 cm.). Estate of A.C. Stewart, Courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society.
Figure 1.27. Pierre Mignard, *Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth*, 1682. Oil on canvas, 47 1/2 x 37 1/2 in. (120.65 x 95.25 cm.). National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 497. © National Portrait Gallery, London
Figure 1.28. Molteno Colnaghi & Co. (publisher), John Raphael Smith (engraver), after Benjamin West (artist), Sir Joseph Banks Bt., 1773. Mezzotint engraving, 24 x 15 in. (61.2 x 14.92 cm.). British Museum, S,3.3. © Trustees of the British Museum
Figure 1.29. John Closterman, *Daniel Parke II*, 1704-1706. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (101.6 x 76.2 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1985.35. An identical portrait is in the collection of Washington-Lee University and descended through the family of Frances Parke Custis.
Figure 1.30. Unknown artist, *Queen Anne*, ca. 1704. Watercolor, copper, 2 3/16 x 1 5/8 x 3/16 in. (5.56 x 4.13 x 0.48 cm.) Mount Vernon Ladies Association, Gift of Katherine Merle-Smith Thomas, H-4913.
Figure 1.31. Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Daniel Parke II*, 1704-1706. Oil on canvas, 49 3/8 x 40 in. (125.41 x 101.6 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1990-245,A.
Figure 1.32. Attributed to Charles Jervas, *Teresa Blount*, ca. 1720. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1993.14.

Figure 1.33. By or after Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Robert Southwell*, ca. 1702. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (101.6 x 76.2 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1978.11.
Figure 1.34. Unknown artist, *Charles Boyle, 4th Earl of Orrery*, ca. 1726. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of August Harrison Dunstan from the estate of her mother Mrs. George Evelyn Harrison, 2008.103.2.

Figure 1.36. William Aikman, *John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll*, 1719. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1987.36.
Figure 1.37. Hans Hysing, *Sir Wilfrid Lawson*, ca. 1726. Oil on canvas, 50 1/2 x 39 1/2 in. (128.3 x 101.6 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1966-210.
Figure 1.38. Unknown artist, *Charles Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax*, ca. 1714-1720s. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Richmond. 1985.34.

Figure 1.39. Attributed to Thomas Gibson, *Charles Wager*, ca. 1720s. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Augusta Harrison Dunstan from the estate of her mother, Mrs. George Evelyn Harrison, 2008.103.3.
Figure 1.40. Unknown artist, *Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford*, ca. 1726. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Richmond. 1987.35.
Figure 1.41. Studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, *William Byrd II*, ca. 1704. Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 x 39 3/4 in. (125.7 x 101 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1956-561.
Figure 1.44. Enoch Seeman, *Jane Pratt Taylor (Mrs. Thomas Taylor)*, 1734. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, 1987.37.
Chapter Two
Manly Success and Good Wives: Picturing the Planter Family

Where is that easy look, that pleasing air,
Which speak her fairest midst a thousand fair?
Where those bright locks that charming Celia deck,
Weaving the wondrous ringlets round her neck?
And where that bosom white as Alpine snow,
The smile that dimples, and those cheeks that glow?³¹²

Anonymous, Virginia Gazette (1769)

In Virginia, portraiture played an important role in constructing idealized visions of gender, sexuality, and dynasty. The mediation of patriarchal authority between image and reality was played out in portraits. Women's bodies in particular became sites of contestation, as reproduction was central to both the imperial project of colonization and masculinity. This chapter considers visual conventions of gender before about 1770. It starts with an analysis of female representational agency in Lucy Parke Byrd (figure 1.26), painted in 1716, to argue that early portraits could be sites of gender role negotiation. By about 1740, Virginians reached a community consensus regarding the portrayal of female and male subjects. This was a result of demographic changes that reduced female participation in public affairs, the consolidation of the Virginia gentry through marriage and political domination, and the increased availability of artists. Portraits of men and women by John Wollaston and John Hesselius became very similar in poses, costumes, and settings in order to promote an ideal vision of patriarchal authority and female submission. Images of young

³¹² Emphases in original. "On a Young Lady's PICTURE." 9 March 1769, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 4.
children, which were far more original in composition, emerged as sites where patriarchal anxieties manifested as parents controlled images of their offspring and presented them to the viewer. Portraits of youth imagined children in adult roles to simultaneously protect, display, and govern them. In particular, portraits of young girls participated in the objectification of female bodies. To partake in these regional conventions of portraits was to claim participation in the gentry class, which relied on landed property and inheritance. Portrait collections thus also engaged with dynastic politics, as they materialized patrilineal inheritance patterns and kinship networks.

The Bodies of Lucy Parke Byrd: Picturing Sexuality in Early Virginia

Historians have called Lucy Parke Byrd (1688-1716) many things: temperamental, fiery, petulant, undisciplined, spoiled, and the list could continue.\(^{313}\) Such characterizations of Lucy are based largely on the diary of her husband, William Byrd II (1674-1744), kept between the years of 1709 and 1712. The diary is often cited as a record of daily life in Virginia and at the same time a

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rare, intimate record of a marriage. Lucy left no writings of her own, so her husband's side of the story dominates the historical record of her existence. In this regard, we must read against the perspective of William's diary to learn more about Lucy's agency. Reading the diary in this way reveals a self-possessed woman who regularly undermined her husband's desire for absolute patriarchal authority. Therefore, I suggest that we also subvert the male gaze in order to consider how Lucy engaged in an act of self-fashioning through her 1716 portrait (figure 1.26).

Analysis of Lucy's portrait reveals how she deployed her sexuality to assert power over others and over her own body while at the same time defining the role of a Virginia planter's "good wife." Lucy's likeness is thus an important site for investigating gendered and racial power struggles in colonial Virginia. In 1716, Virginia was a colony in transition as wealthy planters and their wives negotiated gender roles amid the expansion of slavery, the increased use of domestic slaves, and longer life expectancies. The realities of plantation life did not always match the idealized, prescriptive literature about English household mistresses. Lucy's portrait, in conjunction with her husband's accounts, should be

Byrd, The Secret Diary.

I use the term "good wife" as it was interrogated and employed by historians Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Kathleen Brown to describe how women adapted to the lived realities of being a wife and mother in the colonies. See Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750 (New York: Knopf, 1982); and Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs. For a discussion of changing ideas about women’s roles and planter anxieties over maintaining authority, see Ibid., 262-263, 283-366. For demographic changes that affected gender roles in Virginia, see Daniel Blake Smith, Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 79–81; and Sturtz, Within Her Power, 4–7.
understood as the document of at least one woman's intervention and active participation in the construction of gendered and racial roles and hierarchies.

Over the course of three years, William Byrd II mentioned his wife Lucy 850 times in his diary, providing readers a sense of their tumultuous relationship but also Lucy's authority and leverage within their marriage. Historian Michael Zuckerman conducted a statistical analysis of William's diaries and discovered that out of 850 references to Lucy, her husband writes of her with affection on forty-two occasions, while sixty mentions refer to sexual intercourse. Moreover, arguments between the couple appear 146 times over 117 days.316 William chronicled when he won an argument with Lucy; however, given the frequency of their disagreements and the lack of reconciliation or victory noted for most events, we might wonder how often Lucy's victories went unrecorded. For example, William wrote, "My wife was out of humor for nothing. However, I endeavored to please her again, having consideration for a woman's weakness."317 While the cause of the argument was undocumented from Lucy's point of view, it appears that in this instance William bowed to her wishes, as he "endeavored to please her." In three years of documented quarrels, it seems likely that Lucy won several arguments. At one point in the diary, William

317 31 March 1709 in Byrd, The Secret Diary, 15. Daniel Blake Smith has a different interpretation of the Byrd's marriage. He sees William as having complete control over the couple's household and sex life. Smith, Inside the Great House, 163–68.
facetiously called Lucy "the Governor," suggesting she held at least some authority.\(^{318}\)

Lucy Parke Byrd's behavior, often described by William in negative terms, appears aligned with accounts of late seventeenth-century women and surely was influenced by her upbringing and the strong females in her family. Many strong-willed women appear in colonial Virginia records. Lucy's grandfather, Philip Ludwell II, married Lady Frances Berkeley, Governor Berkeley's widow, who was instrumental and politically influential during Bacon's Rebellion. Lady Berkeley was stepmother of Lucy's mother, Jane Ludwell Parke. William Byrd II's great-aunt, Sarah Stegge, was the only woman charged with treason after Bacon's Rebellion, but one of many women involved in the conflict.\(^{319}\) In 1687, Sarah Harrison refused to obey her husband, James Blair, in her marriage vows, telling the minister, "no obey."\(^{320}\) As men lived longer and women, particularly widows, lost their political influence after Bacon's Rebellion, the image of the "good wife" changed.\(^{321}\) Lucy and her sister Frances, who by all accounts was as feisty as Lucy, were raised by their mother, Jane Ludwell Parke, after their father,

\(^{320}\) See “Papers Relating to the Administration of Governor Nicholson and to the Founding of William and Mary College (Continued),” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 7, no. 3 (1900): 278; and Suzanne Lebsock, “A Share of Honour”: *Virginia Women 1600-1945* (Richmond: W.M. Brown & Son, 1984), 23.
\(^{321}\) On seventeenth-century women, see Terri L. Snyder, *Brabbling Women: Disorderly Speech and the Law in Early Virginia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), for the transition into the eighteenth century, see 141-144; and Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers*. 
Daniel Parke, abandoned them in 1697. Jane Parke acted as a single parent and deputy husband running the family plantations. Being raised in a female-run household likely colored Lucy's expectations of marital roles and perhaps made her more independent than was typical for the period.

Even the biased portrayal of Lucy in William's diary conjures the image of a woman who would not silently pose for a portrait without intervening in the process. Although it seems that William downplays her individuality and authority, we see glimpses of her agency within his records. In this regard, we might consider one marital argument that occurred before a ball celebrating the Queen's birthday at the Governor's Palace. As the couple prepared to leave Westover plantation and travel to Williamsburg, William reported, "My wife and I quarreled about pulling her brows. She threatened she would not go to Williamsburg if she might not pull them; I refused however, and got the better of her and maintained my authority." This argument illustrates an instance in which the couple fought over Lucy's physical appearance when she was going to be playing a public role as William's wife at the ball. Lucy's threat "not go to Williamsburg" to attend the Governor's ball reveals her investment in constructing her public presentation. As a planter's wife, she was expected to maintain a certain genteel image, as everything she did in public and her maintenance of the household reflected on her husband. Refusing to participate in the social ritual of

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322 Martin, "Lucy Parke Byrd: Inside the Diary and Out."
323 5 February 1711 in Byrd, The Secret Diary, 296.
the ball would reflect poorly on him. Ultimately, William won that argument. However, Lucy used her public role as a wife in an attempt to negotiate. Her portrait as a planter's wife served a public role similar to her appearance at a ball, on display in their home for all visitors and posterity to see.

As a planter's wife, Lucy was responsible for household management, though the extent of her domestic authority was contested by William. As Linda Sturtz argues, William understood the domestic realm as "Lucy's responsibility but his domain." When Lucy did not manage the household to William's expectations, he interfered, causing a quarrel. For instance, William recorded in his diary, "I reproached my wife with ordering the old beef to be kept and the fresh beef used first contrary to good management, on which she was pleased to be very angry." These arguments reveal the couple's struggle over domestic authority and their contested ability to act as the primary household manager. However, at one point William wrote, "I took a walk about the plantation and threatened those of my negroes that stole some eggs from my wife." William thought that the eggs belonged to Lucy, suggesting he recognized some division in household authority.

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324 Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs, 272–74.
326 7 April 1709, in Byrd, The Secret Diary, 18.
327 15 May 1711, in Byrd, 344. For a discussion of “chicken and egg” accounts, or records of household income derived from domestic animals and produce controlled by women in eighteenth-century Virginia, see Sturtz, Within Her Power, 116–17.
It would not be unusual for Lucy to actively participate in either the commissioning of her portrait or in deciding how to represent herself. Receipts, records, or other accounts of women commissioning portraits directly from artists are rare in the early eighteenth century. Typically, husbands kept the financial records and were responsible for paying bills. Record keeping elides women's economic participation by covering them with their husband's accounts. Linda Sturtz also argues that women were more likely to pay in cash or "in-kind" when making purchases, and thus appear as anonymous entries in account books or do not appear at all as they were not purchasing on credit. As an elite woman, Lucy had some autonomy to purchase goods, particularly items of clothing. William recorded that Lucy could independently order goods from abroad, as when he noted a ship arrived from England with "an invoice of things sent [for] by my wife which are enough to make a man mad," or when they "had a terrible quarrel about the things she had come in." Case studies from England also

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329 Sturtz, Within Her Power, 121–25.
331 9 July 1710 in Byrd, 202. On the importance of fashion to female identity in Virginia, see Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs, 291–95. On women’s purchasing power and how they carved out spaces of economic autonomy in colonial Virginia, see Sturtz, Within Her Power.
reveal that women were active participants in the art market and commissioned portraits of themselves and family members.³³²

Lucy's portrait evinces the image of a self-possessed, assertive woman. Overall, it appears to be an original composition, though there is at least one contemporary portrait of a woman in nearly an identical pose.³³³ There is evidently no print source, however, as was common for the eighteenth century.³³⁴ Indeed, Lucy's portrait is a rather unusual portrait of a woman in a number of ways. First, she stands directly facing the audience, at the picture plane, looking directly at the viewer. More commonly, women in contemporary portraits stand at


³³³ Lucy Parke Byrd bears a remarkable resemblance in dress and pose to the portrait of Judith Strangways by Thomas Hill (Melbury Collection, ca. 1720); Thomas Hill artist file, National Portrait Gallery, London. Both women wear a wrap dress and jeweled clasp. The position of both women’s hands is nearly the same - the right arm lifted and pointing with an upturned hand and the left hand curved and resting against the dress. The primary difference is that Judith Strangways’ left hand gently holds a belt that is tied around her waist and she does not have a ribbon at her breast. Relatively few works are attributed to Hill and little is known about the artist, though Ellis Waterhouse described him as “a portrait painter of some distinction.” Ellis Kirkham Waterhouse, British 18th Century Painters in Oils and Crayons, Dictionary of British Art, v. 2 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors’ Club, 1981), 171. There is no archival reference linking Hill and the Byrds.

³³⁴ However, it does appear likely that the enslaved boy in Lucy Park Byrd’s portrait was copied from a print or other source. A very similar looking attendant appears in a 1697 portrait of William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire attributed to John Closterman (National Trust, Hardwick Hall). On the use of prints as sources for portraits see, Prosser, “The Rising Prospect”; and Belknap, Jr., American Colonial Painting, 273–329.
an angle or sit, and are positioned further away from the picture plane (compare figures 1.26, 1.32, 2.1, and, 2.2). Second, the unusual basket and red textile are unique to her portrait. Third, while slave attendants were common motifs in European and English portraiture, they were rare in colonial American paintings. Finally, though Lucy’s chosen style of dress is frequently found in portraiture throughout the eighteenth-century British world, the undone ribbon at her breast and the visible opening that runs down her body, which enhance the sexuality of the image, are relatively unusual.

Lucy's activism in shaping her representation seems more likely when her portrait is compared to the later images of her daughter, Evelyn (figure 2.1), and William's second wife, Maria Taylor Byrd (figure 2.2), both of whom are represented in more passive poses that are similar to other contemporary, fashionable depictions of women in their props and settings. Unlike Lucy's portrait, only minor variations exist between Maria and Evelyn's portraits and other contemporary images. For example, the portrait of Evelyn Byrd, apart from the cardinal (likely a play on her last name and a reference to Virginia), is basically identical to other portraits of British women in the guise of a

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335 For the basket and textile, see chapter 1.
336 The only other known colonial Virginia portraits to include (presumably) enslaved attendants are the portraits of Edward Hill III (figure 1.16) and William Byrd III as a Child (figure 3.1). The William Byrd III portrait represents William Byrd II's son with his second wife, Maria Taylor Byrd. See chapters 1 and 3 for discussions of these paintings and a more in-depth discussion of Lucy's attendant.
337 A few other British portraits of women feature undone ribbons at their breast, but it seems to be a fairly uncommon feature in contemporary portraits. See, for example, Charles d'Agar, Portrait of a Lady, Possibly Henrietta Louise Jeffreys, Countess of Pomfret and d'Agar, Lucy, Duchess of Rutland, Artist file, Heinz Library, National Portrait Gallery, London.
shepherdess painted by the artist Enoch Seeman. A group of women sit in the same pose, dress, and setting with identical straw hats decorated with the same flowers and with a shepherd's crook laid across their lap.\textsuperscript{338} Evelyn's portrait was probably composed in a London studio and directly copied from another painting. The direct copying from other sources was a common studio practice that caused the Dutch painter and art theorist Gérard de Lairesse to criticize portraitists in the early eighteenth century by saying, "when the Face was finished, they had no further Regard to the Life, but chose a Posture, at Pleasure, out of Drawings or Prints."\textsuperscript{339} In Lucy's portrait, the unique basket and textile, unusual attendant, and uncommon pose indicate a higher degree of intervention by the Byrds than is typically seen in many other portraits of women, either English or colonial.

Lucy's image participates in the ongoing negotiations of gender roles and domestic authority that are well documented in William's diary. She is not pictured with traditional European symbols of female fecundity, such as pearls or woven baskets filled with flowers and fruit.\textsuperscript{340} Instead, she appears with a non-

\textsuperscript{338} For example, see the portrait attributed to Enoch Seeman believed to represent Mary Fermor (d.1729), Artist file, Heinz Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. Fermor's hat is identical to Evelyn's, down to the flowers on the brim. The dress folds are essentially the same, and the small white flower to the left of the sitter is identical. Colonial Williamsburg also owns an unattributed portrait of a woman that is nearly identical to Evelyn (object number 1957-87). Maria's portrait will be further discussed below.

\textsuperscript{339} De Lairesse, \textit{The Art of Painting}, 355. De Lairesse's original writings in Dutch date to 1701 and 1710, but they were translated into English shortly thereafter. On London studio practices and print sources, see Desmond Shawe-Taylor, \textit{The Georgians: Eighteenth-Century Portraiture & Society} (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1990), 10–20; and Prosser, "The Rising Prospect."

\textsuperscript{340} Susan E. Klepp, \textit{Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America, 1760-1820} (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 141–49; Lovell, \textit{Art in a Season of Revolution}, 147.
European basket filled with white cloth. If the basket is Native American, it is possible that Lucy was deliberately associating herself with Native American women, asserting her own "native-born" Virginia identity. Native American women on the eastern seaboard made baskets, passed on basket-making knowledge through female lines, participated in the colonial economy by selling baskets to Europeans, and used baskets for domestic chores and in ceremonial rituals. Travel and historical accounts associated Native American women with basketry. In 1710 he "presented" Lucy "with some Indian goods," which may have included baskets. Native American baskets also traveled as gifts in transatlantic female networks. In 1700, Nathaniel Blakiston, residing in London, wrote to Philip Ludwell, Lucy's uncle, stating, "my Girle is very obliged to your Daughter Lucy for her kinde remembrances of an Indian baskett." In southeastern Native American societies, women possessed a greater degree of sexual autonomy than among Anglo-Virginians, and many of these cultural groups were matrilineal. English and European accounts often dwell on female sexuality in descriptions of Native Americans. Virginian Robert Beverley

341 See chapter 1.
344 Nathaniel Blakiston to Philip Ludwell, 28 April 1700, Mss1L51f53 section 28, Lee-Ludwell Papers, Virginia Historical Society.
remarked of the local Algonquin women, "the Maidens are entirely at their own disposal, and may manage their persons as they think fit." Lucy was familiar with the indigenous communities with whom William regularly traded and who were visitors at Westover. Selecting an Indian basket for her portrait may have been a deliberate choice by Lucy to represent her husband's Indian trade while at the same time asserting her bodily autonomy and reproductive power. Regardless, baskets of any origin were highly gendered props in portraiture and represented female fecundity.

The sewing basket alludes to Lucy's control over domestic chores and enslaved laborers, while the red and white textiles reveal her interest in fashion and status. As plantation mistress, Lucy was in charge of ensuring that slaves completed domestic tasks, such as laundry. Clean white cloth, which was still a relatively expensive import in 1716, was a sign of gentility and whiteness. The ability to afford enough enslaved labor to do regular laundry and to maintain a supply of clean white linens was still limited in 1716 Virginia to wealthier planters; thus, such linens stood as signifiers of race and class. Further, the expensive imported red kerchief was another female status marker. It had social value as a symbol of her wealth and good taste. In this way, the basket and fabrics may

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Weaving New Worlds, 37–43. For Algonquin women, see Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs, 42–74. Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia, 134. Brown, Foul Bodies, 26–32, 98–117. See chapter 1. Brown, 110–11. On clothing as a gendered form of property and as a signifier of social rank, see Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs, 291–95; and Kate
simultaneously be associated with gentility, whiteness, and the oppression of enslaved laborers. Lucy's portrait uses these highly gendered elements, along with the enslaved attendant, to reassert control over the domestic realm and laborers.

Through her portrait's inclusion of an enslaved attendant and her behavior as plantation mistress, Lucy participated in the disempowerment of non-white people for the benefit of white women. Lucy benefitted in many ways from Virginia's racial hierarchy. Though she was legally and socially dependent on her husband, as a wealthy white woman and plantation mistress she also benefitted from the social and legal constructions of race and gender in Virginia. Lucy's social honor and privilege as a white woman, and her ability to produce white offspring, afforded her protections and respectability. This superior position relied on the oppression of non-white men, who were legally denied the elements of masculinity enjoyed by white men: property ownership, marriage, guardianship over their children, and the ability to pass their legal status on to their children.³⁵⁰

The domestic slaves that appear frequently in William’s diary lived in great intimacy with the Byrd family, and control over them was a gendered struggle for authority in the household. William never mentioned his wife in conjunction with the agricultural laborers in his diary; those slaves were his purview. But William did note that his wife was responsible for domestic slaves. When the enslaved

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laborers did not do their work to his satisfaction, he blamed Lucy, saying, "I had a quarrel with my wife about her servants who did little work." The bodies of these enslaved people – especially Jenny, Eugene, Prue, and Anaka – became marital battlegrounds upon which the couple negotiated their domestic authority. Lucy had brought her own slaves to their marriage. According to William’s diary, Lucy favored Anaka, a domestic enslaved woman whom she likely brought to Westover. On the other hand, William favored Prue and Jenny, two bondwomen, and Eugene, his personal manservant. William and Lucy displaced anger with each other onto their slaves, who became extensions of the spouses. For example, William recorded, “My wife caused Prue to be whipped violently notwithstanding I desired not, which provoked me to have Anaka whipped likewise who had deserved it much more, on which my wife flew into such a passion that she hoped she would be revenged of me.” On another occasion, William recorded,

I had a terrible quarrel with my wife concerning Jenny that I took away from her when she was beating her with the tongs. She lifted up her hands to strike me but forbore to do it. She gave me abundance of bad words and endeavored to strangle herself, but I believe in jest only. However after acting a mad woman a long time she was passive again.

By attacking her own body, Lucy was trying to punish William. Legally, William owned everything that Lucy possessed, including, in many ways, her own body.

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351 12 August 1710 in Byrd, The Secret Diary, 216.
352 22 May 1712 in Byrd, 533.
353 2 March 1712 in Byrd, 494. Another time Lucy “threatened to kill herself but had more discretion,” 5 February 1711, 296.
If he would not allow her to harm Jenny, Lucy's body could be substituted, as both were theoretically his property.

Notably, Lucy chose to appear in her portrait with a male attendant, a public record of her authority over non-white men. Conspicuously, neither of the two known portraits of William includes a slave. The presence of the boy attendant in Lucy's portrait, which models the ideal relationship between white mistress and slave, signifies her control over the enslaved. Lucy's authority over non-white bodies, as well as her own, is thus made explicit in her portrait. The boy looks up at Lucy to direct the viewer's gaze and acknowledge her authority. His body is cut off by the edge of the canvas, locating him in a marginalized position. Although he offers her a lavish textile, she pulls away from it and from him. By refusing to engage with and touch the boy, Lucy enhances her position as a white woman, denying him access to her. Further, the ambiguous age of the enslaved figure, his tightly-buttoned jacket (in direct opposition to Lucy's sensual appearance), and his inferior position to a white woman all work to emasculate him. His appearance bolsters a racial hierarchy in which non-white males are neither sexually desirable nor dominant over women. Dominance over women was a masculine attribute of white men only. In the portrait, Lucy's movement away from the boy, coupled with his physical appearance, also served to mitigate white planter anxieties over racial mixing. Moreover, a pendant portrait of her husband, William, likely hung to the left. The presence of her husband's image...
may have softened any potential allusion to sexual activity between two figures in Lucy's portrait.

Lucy's husband valued her body for its reproductive capacity, which her portrait seems to emphasize at first glance. The ribbon and the seam in her dress draw the viewer's eyes to her highlighted décolletage. The arm that she pulls away from the slave is curved around her womb, accenting this area of her body, which is further enhanced by the placement of her fingers and the folds they create in the dress. The open basket and the attention to her womb in the portrait thus hint at her potential to bear children. Conspicuously, the white cloth that emerges from the basket underscores her ability to reproduce whiteness. In this regard, William meticulously documented in his diary Lucy's pregnancies, miscarriages, and illnesses relating to pregnancy. In the three years covered by his diary, Lucy had two, possibly three, miscarriages, and gave birth to a son who died in infancy.\textsuperscript{354} William and Lucy had frequent arguments over Lucy's body, many of them involving reproduction. For example, in 1711 William wrote, "My wife could not be persuaded to be let blood neither by the Doctor or me to prevent miscarriage."\textsuperscript{355} Following her miscarriage about six weeks later, William tried restricting her diet, recording, "I ate veal for dinner, but gave my wife none, which bred a mortal quarrel."\textsuperscript{356} When William disrespected Lucy's control over her body, she apparently made him suffer for it. William also recognized a wife's

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\textsuperscript{355} 14 May 1711 in Byrd, 344.
\textsuperscript{356} 2 July 1711 in Byrd, 368.
ability to bear children as a sign of power in their relationship. Writing of his second wife Maria in 1729, William joked,

I know nothing but a rabbit that breeds faster. It would [be] ungallant in a husband to dissuade her from it... The truth of it is, she has her reasons for procreating so fast. She lives in an infant country which wants nothing but people. Then she is apprehensive I should marry again, if she should start first out of this world, but is determined to prevent [that] by leaving me to a great an encumbrance. Is not this a little spiteful.\(^{357}\)

Despite the humorous nature of William's description of his second wife's many pregnancies, his account contains the truth that women were essential to populating the colony with Englishmen and to providing William with heirs.

In Lucy's portrait, she deploys her sexuality to assert control over the general viewer and over her husband. Historians have interpreted William's diary notations about the couple's sex life as a method of him affirming mastery over his wife.\(^{358}\) But what if we read the portrait as revealing Lucy's similar use of sex and reproduction to assert her power over William? Her husband certainly

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\(^{357}\) William Byrd II to Jane Pratt Taylor, 3 April 1729, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 391.

recognized that Lucy could enjoy and initiate sex.\textsuperscript{359} William recorded one morning that "my wife kept me so long in bed where I rogered her," indicating Lucy’s sexual desire.\textsuperscript{360} Another time, he noted that "[l] gave my wife a powerful flourish and gave her great ecstasy and refreshment."\textsuperscript{361} When a viewer gazed at Lucy’s body in the portrait hung on the wall at Westover, he or she mimicked the inferior position of the pictured enslaved boy. Thus, the viewer became similarly captivated and dominated by her beauty and authority, not unlike the other objects on display in the painting.

The pictured relationship between Lucy and the enslaved boy and their relationship to the viewer takes on additional significance when William’s love letters are consulted. In love letters written ca. 1704 to a woman called "Facetia" and to a woman called "Panthea," William signed the missives as "Your Slave," rather than the more commonly used signature of "servant."\textsuperscript{362} This signature inscription reveals William's deployment of the "slave to beauty" trope to suggest

\textsuperscript{359} Godbeer notes Lucy’s sexual appetite but writes that Byrd “recognized that his spouse had an appetite of her own...Nonetheless, Byrd expected his wife to acknowledge his mastery over her and the primacy of his will.” Godbeer, “William Byrd’s ‘Flourish,’” 140.
\textsuperscript{360} 5 February 1712 in Byrd, The Secret Diary, 481; See also, 6 January 1712, “my wife made me lie bed and I rogered her,” 465.
\textsuperscript{361} 30 April 1711 in Byrd, 337; See also, 4 November 1710, “I gave my wife a flourish in which she had a great deal of pleasure”, 253.
\textsuperscript{362} William Byrd called Elizabeth Cromwell "Facetia" in a series of letters written between June 12 and September 18, 1703. The letter in which he signs himself as “Your Slave” is dated after her marriage to Edward Southwell in October 1703. Therefore, it is unclear if this "Facetia" is Elizabeth Cromwell Southwell, or if he was using the nickname for another woman, which is less likely but still possible. The woman called “Panthea” has not been identified. See Byrd, Another Secret Diary, 196–97. On the use of literary nicknames and their relationship to literary cultural practices at this time, see “Introduction,” Ibid., xvii-xxviii. See also, Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 218, fn.1. William regularly signed his letters to men and women as “faithfull,” “humble,” or “obedient” servant rather than slave.
his powerlessness in their relationship. Though William did not sign the extant love letters of 1705 to 1706 to Lucy, nicknamed "Fidelia," as "Your Slave," he expressed devotion to her during their courtship. The employment in the portrait of an enslaved attendant gazing submissively at Lucy draws upon this same trope. William was the most frequent viewer and presumably the principal intended spectator, from Lucy's point of view, so she forces him to gaze at her, thus acknowledging her power.

Lucy's participation in her pictorial representation should be understood as a negotiated process. For the reasons stated above, Lucy very likely influenced the composition of the picture, but William was surely involved as well. He was the one who ultimately paid for the portrait, and his interest in paintings (he eventually would own over thirty) indicates that he arranged for the sitting. The inclusion of expensive objects like the textiles, which also referenced his involvement in trade, as well as a domestic attendant, showed viewers that he was financially successful and could support his wife in fine style. In the portrait, Lucy points her finger and re-directs the viewer's attention outside the frame. In this regard, it is very likely that, originally, there existed a pendant portrait of her husband, William Byrd II, which was intended to hang beside it, for it was

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363 See William Faithorne, after Peter Lely, "Beauty's Tribute," late 17th century (figure 3.8).
364 William's four extant letters to Lucy, also known as "Fidelia," are published in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 252–56, 258–59. William style himself as "Veramour."
365 For the assumption that the husband/father is the primary audience for a woman's portrait, see Retford, The Art of Domestic Life, 105; and Pointon, Hanging the Head, 160.
366 On women's portraiture as a negotiated process, see Pearson, "Portraiture's Selves."
common practice to commission portraits of spouses to hang together. If so, Lucy pointed to her husband, perhaps as a gesture to his political and financial success. Although Lucy is presented sexually and boldly, she is still contained within the frame and refers viewers to her husband, supporting his masculinity as a husband with sexual access to her body. Possessing a portrait of his wife, a woman with important kinship ties, bolstered William's self-presentation as a colonial gentleman. Though they fought bitterly at times, he understood her value to him as a planter's wife. Lucy died in 1716, shortly after, or possibly during, the portrait's execution. Following her death, William lamented, "all pronounced her an honor to Virginia. Alas! how proud was I of her." That William continued to display Lucy's portrait at Westover indicates his approval of the image.

A comparative analysis of Lucy's portrait with that of William's second wife, Maria, adds further circumstantial evidence that Lucy participated in composing her likeness. When William Byrd II married his second wife, Maria Taylor of Kensington, in 1724, her portrait was painted as well (figure 2.2). Like Lucy, Maria sits outdoors and wears a similar style dress. Her legs are splayed and her left arm rests on a stone ledge so that her fingers are placed to draw

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367 Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, 20–34; Lovell, *Art in a Season of Revolution*, 146–47. Of the two extant portraits of William Byrd II, one depicts him as a young boy (figure 1.15). The portrait of Byrd II as an adult shows him turned and gesturing towards the left, oriented in the same direction as both of his wives (figure 1.41). Therefore, it is highly unlikely that either of his wives' portraits were intended as a pair to that image.


369 Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, 350. The exact date and artist of the portrait is unknown. The artist's skill implies it was painted in England, likely between their marriage in 1724 and their permanent relocation to Virginia in 1726.
attention to her genitalia more explicitly than in Lucy's portrait. Her dress is painted to show off the shape of her legs. Maria's right hand gently grasps a small dish that receives a stream of water from an invisible source. Like Lucy, Maria's arms are oriented towards the left of the canvas, indicating that her portrait was commissioned to accompany a portrait of William Byrd II, probably the same painting created alongside Lucy's. This correspondence is further supported by the similar outdoor setting in each portrait.

While Lucy's portrait is bold and assertive, Maria's portrait is far more passive. Lucy's body is a forceful presence, standing and facing the viewer right against the picture plane. Lucy pulls away from the enslaved boy's attention and re-directs the male gaze from her body by pointing outside the frame. Lucy draws some notice to her womb and body, but at the same time, her dress is not form-fitted, suggesting greater bodily autonomy. The presence of the basket, textile, and attendant reference her domestic work and authority. The wilderness landscape is open behind her. In contrast, like the dish she proffers, Maria appears as a receptive vessel, open to the viewer's gaze. She also sits enclosed in the landscape, with a rock formation behind her. The difference in the way the

Unlike Lucy's, Maria's portrait uses a fairly conventional pose. Many contemporary portraits feature women sitting with a similar hand and finger positioning. For examples, see Sir Godfrey Kneller, Portrait of Lady Crofts, Duchess of Bolton (Witt Library artist file), in which the Duchess of Bolton also sits with a fountain; Kneller, Portrait of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (Witt Library artist file); Kneller, Portrait of Mrs. Northleigh (Witt Library artist file); Enoch Seeman, Julia, Lady Calverley (Witt Library artist file); Isaac Whoood (attr.), Portrait of an unknown lady (Heinz Library artist file). In the latter portrait, an unidentified woman sits outside with her hand resting on a stone ledge. As Susan Klepp and Deborah Prosser note, this open pose became popular in the colonies as well, and emphasized fecundity. See Klepp, Revolutionary Conceptions, 142–49; and Prosser, “The Rising Prospect,” 183.
two wives of William Byrd II are represented in portraiture is also reflected in William's writings. While William's 1709 to 1712 diary is filled with references to Lucy, the extant diary from a period of his marriage to Maria, covering the years 1739 to 1741, hardly mentions his second wife. She appears mostly when she is sick, and William never records sexual relations between the two. The only quarrel that involved Maria recorded in William's diary occurred between Maria and Wilhelmina (Lucy and William's daughter). Instead of intervening in the conflict, William "retired." Maria, by all accounts, was a more complacent wife than Lucy, and as such she was perhaps content to be painted rather more conventionally.

Since Lucy died of smallpox in London in 1716, she never saw the portrait hang in Westover, and her death perhaps changed one of the portrait's original messages. When William returned to Westover in 1726, he brought home Maria and Maria's portrait. Presumably, William and Maria's portraits hung together, as Maria was his current wife. Therefore, we can imagine that when Lucy's portrait hung in the interior space of Westover, likely the passage, dining room, or parlor, she was no longer pointing at her husband. Whatever she intended to indicate, she ultimately directed the viewer to look around the domestic space, another reminder that she was once in control of the household and those who lived and worked within it.

372 21 May 1741 in Byrd, Another Secret Diary, 160.
The male perspective dominates the archival record, but Lucy, as presented in William's diary and in her portrait, affords a female point of view on women's participation in the construction of gendered and racial hierarchies in colonial Virginia. While her portrait is unusual, it is likely not exceptional in its conception. Lucy's likeness provides evidence for the necessity of interrogating portraits of other women, whose archival record is even sparser, in order to better understand female portraits and the performance of race and gender in early Virginia. As Lucy reminds viewers, we need to look beyond our usual frame of reference.

Elizabeth Nelson's Flower: Female Portraiture in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Virginia

Elizabeth Burwell Nelson (1718-before 1798) is another woman about whom very little is known, and her ca. 1750 portrait by Robert Feke is one of the only records of her life left to historians (figure 2.3). At first glance, the portrait appears to be a standard representation of an eighteenth-century colonial American woman, strongly influenced by English prints, and of a type present throughout the British colonies. Robert Feke painted many women throughout the colonies who appear in similar dresses, poses, and landscapes. However, the material history of the painting reveals that Elizabeth Nelson's portrait may tell us more about the performance of gender in mid-eighteenth-century Virginia than the average painting of a woman. Elizabeth Nelson was the wife of William
Nelson (figure 2.4), a prominent merchant in Yorktown. Ironically, given the very few records of Elizabeth's life, it is her will that confirms that Robert Feke painted her and two other family members. Elizabeth Nelson's will names "Feake" as the artist of William Nelson's portrait and, by extension, her own. The portraits of the Nelsons and a portrait of William Nelson's sister, Mary Nelson Berkeley (private collection), are the only three paintings attributed to Feke in Virginia. The three portraits were probably intended as a sort of family triptych. Mary Nelson Berkeley's portrait is square, one of only two surviving such examples by Feke. Canvases were typically rectangular and purchased at standard sizes; thus, the square shape of Mary Nelson Berkeley's portrait is unusual. It was probably cut to fit a specific architectural niche at one of the Nelson family's homes in Williamsburg or Yorktown. The portraits of William and Elizabeth are a standard size and appear rather conventional.

Elizabeth Nelson's finished portrait is representative of the type of female portraiture that was pervasive throughout the colonies in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. In her likeness, Elizabeth sits in a simple blue dress adorned with small jewels at her bust and elbows—a costume similar to the dresses worn

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373 Will of Elizabeth Nelson, 26 February 1793; recorded 16 July 1798. York County Records: Wills and Inventories, vol. 23, pp. 504-505. How Feke came to paint the Nelsons is unknown. One theory is that Feke briefly stopped in the port city of Yorktown on his way to the Caribbean. However, if Feke was in Virginia, there would probably be more portraits attributed to him. Another theory is that Feke painted the Nelsons when they were in Philadelphia on a business trip. There is no documentation of the family making a trip during this period, either. See Weekley, Painters and Paintings, 253.

374 The other is a portrait of Grizzell Aplotor (Mrs. Barlow Trecdotick) of Boston. Zara Anishanslin, Portrait of a Woman in Silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 258. The three Wormeley portraits executed by John Wollaston in the 1750s are of a similar format (figures 2.33, 2.34, and 2.35).
by many of Feke's female subjects. Her right elbow rests on a stone block and her left arm lies across her lap, her hand gently holding a pink rose. She is seated in a wooded landscape with a distant hilly vista beyond. From about 1735 to the late 1760s, as increasing numbers of artists began working in the colonies and English prints became available in greater numbers, colonial portraiture became increasingly standardized. Poses, settings, props, and costumes were frequently borrowed from English print sources and appear numerous times in an artist's body of work. Female portraiture was especially generic, as men's varied professions and public roles inspired greater experimentation with props and settings. However, there remained regional differences in taste and expectations with regard to male and female portraiture. Sometimes, a portrait as seemingly conventional as Elizabeth Nelson's tells a larger story.

Over the years, the Nelson portraits endured overpainting and varnishing while in the possession of successive generations of the Nelson family before they were deposited at Colonial Williamsburg. Recently, the Colonial Williamsburg conservator undertook a major conservation of the Nelson portraits. In the process, it was discovered that Feke had originally composed Elizabeth with a book or letter in her left hand. This object may have been selected by

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376 Current technical evidence indicates that the book/letter was executed in the original artist's hand. Feke painted the skirt in three layers: a ground, a color, and a third layer of shadowing and glaze. The object did not show up in an x-ray, suggesting that there was...
one of the Nelsons, or it may have been chosen by the artist himself. For some reason, Feke painted over, or never completed, the book/letter, and gave Elizabeth a rose instead. In the nineteenth or early twentieth century, the portrait was aggressively cleaned and a restorer removed much of the paint layer that originally covered the book, exposing the outline. The area was then re-painted and re-varnished. The Colonial Williamsburg conservator removed these later layers of paint and varnish and the faint outline of Feke's original book or letter is now visible in the post-conservation portrait. This object would not have been visible when the Nelsons first took possession of the painting.

Not a discrete, heavy layer of paint overlaid on the skirt, as would be expected if the object was added at a later date, or finished on top of the third paint layer and covered up at a later date. Close examination therefore suggests that the first and/or second layer of paint for the skirt was painted around an intended object, which may have been lightly sketched out. Then, the object was covered up, likely before the third layer of paint was added. Therefore, the book/letter may never have been completed. No discernible change was found in either hand position. Though it is impossible to tell based on current technical evidence alone whether the flower was added before or after the book was painted over, I could not find an extant portrait by Robert Feke in which a sitter holds objects in both hands. Either two hands grasp one object, such as a book, or one hand holds an object while the other is left empty. This suggests that the book was the original object in the portrait and a flower was added later. Further, the very similar wrist and hand positions, particularly of the ring finger, which is bent as if to hold an object, in the portrait of Elizabeth Nelson and the Feke portraits of Margaret McCall (Mrs. Joseph Swift) (1749, The Dietrich American Foundation, on loan to the Philadelphia Museum of Art) and Phebe Murdock Bowdoin (Mrs. William Bowdoin) (1748, Bowdoin College Museum of Art), wherein the women hold a small book in the finished portrait, suggests that Elizabeth’s hand was painted with the intention of adding a book. It bears mention that William Nelson’s portrait also underwent a change during its execution. Originally, his waistcoat was blue like Elizabeth’s dress. However, Feke changed it to the current silver. This may also reveal the patron’s preference, as Virginia men in the 1750s typically wear browns, blacks, silvers, and dark blues, not bright colors. Object files 1986-246, Portrait of Elizabeth Burwell Nelson and 1986-245, Portrait of William Nelson, Colonial Williamsburg; and conversation with Shelley Svoboda, Paintings Conservator, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. I am grateful to Shelley for discussing her technical findings with me. The interpretations regarding the order of events and the relationship to the other Feke portraits are my own.
The reason that Feke changed the prop from a text to a flower is unknown; however, typically, when an artist made a major change to a completed or nearly completed portrait composition, it was undertaken at the demand of the patron. For example, in 1766 John Carlyle of Alexandria wrote to his brother George in Scotland, to whom he sent his portrait: "as to the Likeness I never thought it very like when it was first finished I believe you woud have liked it better, but I thought he had flattered me & made him make it Seven Years Older at least."\(^{377}\) The artist in this case was John Hesselius, who made the requested changes to Carlyle's appearance. In 1767, Colonel Henry Fitzhugh II paid John Hesselius two pounds and twelve shillings for "altering my picture and my wifes," which were originally painted in 1751.\(^{378}\) Indeed, these two portraits show evidence of changes in Sarah Battaile Fitzhugh's hair and Henry Fitzhugh's hair and costume. Charles Willson Peale recorded making changes for patrons in his diaries and letters. For example, he noted in 1789 that, "with the hope that I should better please Mrs. Swan in her portrait which I painted last winter, I requesting her sitting again...by retouching it I made the portrait better. I have finished also a part of Major Swans portrait that had been displeasing to them."\(^{379}\)

\(^{377}\) John Carlyle to George Carlyle, 1 August 1766, in "The Personal and Family Correspondence of Col. John Carlyle of Alexandria, Virginia," Annotated by J. F. Carlyle (March 2011). I would like to thank Helen Wirka of the Carlyle House Historic Park for sharing the transcription of the correspondence.


\(^{379}\) Charles Willson Peale et al., \textit{The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family} (New Haven: Published for the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution by Yale University Press, 1983), I: 552.
Peale's accounts indicate that it was Mrs. Swan's displeasure as much, or more so, than her husband's, which led to the retouching. Given these circumstances, we can assume that either William or Elizabeth Nelson requested the change to Elizabeth's likeness, and that one or both of them found the book displeasing.

The removal of the book/letter by the Nelsons is notable because only six Virginia women were painted with books before 1775. William Dering painted Mrs. Mordecai Booth ca. 1748-1750 (private collection) with a book, but it lies closed on a table, half-covered with a curtain and Mrs. Booth's sleeve. In the 1750s, John Wollaston painted Jane Bolling Randolph (Muscarelle Museum, College of William & Mary) with a very large book, likely a bible, and Lucy Bolling Randolph (Shirley Plantation) with a book of music. Wollaston used these props to highlight the women's piety and musical accomplishments, respectively. Mary Willing Byrd (figure 4.27), Mary Orange Rothery (figure 4.29), and Mary Jemima Balfour (figure 4.8) appear with small books in the 1770s, much later than Nelson, indicating changing conventions for female portraiture in Virginia in this later decade. No colonial Virginia woman is depicted with a letter. By contrast, New England and Philadelphia women were more often painted with books and bibles to denote their education or piety. While Virginia gentry women typically

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380 Illustrated in Weekley, *Painters and Paintings*, 191; and Hood, *Charles Bridges and William Dering*, 104. Anne Butler Brayne Spotswood (Mrs. Alexander Spotswood), an Englishwoman who married the former Virginia Governor, was painted with a book in her lap. The original painting was destroyed by a fire at the Virginia Governor's Mansion in 1926. It is known only from a twentieth-century copy in the Virginia State Library collection. Therefore, it is unclear if Anne was painted in England before emigrating to Virginia in 1729, or if she was painted in Virginia. Charles Bridges painted her husband in Virginia in 1736.
were literate, it is notable that they do not appear with emblems referring to their intellectual capacity and education. Instead, Virginia women in three-quarter-length and half-length portraits are portrayed with flowers, fruit, and children, all of which are symbols of their fertility and role as mothers. The flowers and fruit draw on language used to describe pregnant women in agricultural terms, such as "flowering" and "fruitful," and associate them with nature, which was itself gendered female. The women are frequently depicted as seated with their legs splayed and arms positioned in such a way as to highlight their wombs and breasts in a celebration of their reproductive capacity and contribution to the project of colonization.  

It is unclear who first decided to include a book/letter in the portrait of Elizabeth Nelson. Since the three Nelson images were commissioned together, Feke may have included the book/letter simply for visual interest and variation. Mary Nelson Berkeley holds flowers in the palm of her hand, and perhaps it was the artist who thought that portraits of two women holding flowers in the same room would be visually repetitive. While books were not necessarily common in Feke's portraits of women, they do appear in at least three female portraits from New England and Philadelphia, and books and letters appear frequently in

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portraits of Feke’s men.\footnote{For the female portraits, see the \textit{Portrait of Margaret McCall} (1749, The Dietrich American Foundation, on loan to the Philadelphia Museum of Art), \textit{Portrait of Phebe Murdock Bowdoin (Mrs. William Bowdoin)} (1748, Bowdoin College Museum of Art), and \textit{Portrait of Grizzell Eastwick Apthorp (Mrs. Charles Apthorp)} (1748, de Young Museum). Note that all of these date to around the same time that Elizabeth Nelson was supposedly painted.} Therefore, Feke certainly had both objects in his repertoire.

Nelson family history indicates that Elizabeth Nelson was well educated, which was expected for wealthy Virginian women.\footnote{Catherine Kerrison, \textit{Claiming the Pen: Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 13–19; Lauren F. Winner, \textit{A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith: Anglican Religious Practice in the Elite Households of Eighteenth-Century Virginia} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 60–89.} Elizabeth’s education was overseen by her aunt, Judith Carter Page. Bishop David Meade, a Virginian who penned the 1861 memorial \textit{Old churches, ministers and families of Virginia}, wrote of Elizabeth, "She had been educated religiously by her aunt, Mrs. Page, of Rosewell," and her descendants remembered "her well-known frequent prayers for her children and pious instruction of them, and exemplary conduct in all things."\footnote{Bishop William Meade, \textit{Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia}, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1861), 206.} Judith Page, the aunt responsible for Elizabeth's education, was remembered fondly by her grandson, the future governor John Page, who recalled,

\begin{quote}
I was early taught to read and write, by the care and attention of my grandmother...My Grandmother excited in my mind an inquisitiveness, which, whenever it was proper, she gratified, and very soon I became so fond of reading, that I read not only all the little amusing and instructing books which she put into my hands, but many which I took out of my father's and grandfather's collection, which was no contemptible library.\footnote{John Page, “Governor Page,” ed. William Maxwell, \textit{The Virginia Historical Register and Literary Notebook} 3, no. 3 (1850): 144.}
\end{quote}
Although there is no account of Judith Page's education of her niece, Elizabeth Nelson, it is probable that she instilled a similar interest in reading and shared access to the family's library with Elizabeth. Given these stories, it is possible that Elizabeth chose a book (maybe a religious text) for inclusion in her portrait.\footnote{\textsuperscript{386}}

The erasure of the book or letter from Elizabeth Nelson's portrait raises questions about appropriate ways to visualize gender in Virginia. In contrast to women, men in Virginia appear with books and letters fairly often, including John Page (figure 1.12).\footnote{\textsuperscript{387}} In male portraits, books and letters symbolize broader connections to other men, education, and their professional success. Books indicate that the sitter was educated, whether the book is identifiable or not. When the title of a book or legible pages were visible, such volumes could take on additional iconographical significance. Zara Anishanslin noted this in her study of Robert Feke's 1748 portrait of Grizzell Eastwick Apthorp (Mrs. Charles Apthorp) (de Young Museum) of Boston. Apthorp reads John Milton's \textit{Paradise Lost} in her portrait, which provokes interpretation based on the book's moral message.\footnote{\textsuperscript{388}} The inclusion of \textit{Paradise Lost} also indicated to viewers in the Apthorp's parlor that Apthorp could discuss literature. Books signaled that the sitter could improve his/her mind by reading and served as a point of interest to

\footnote{\textsuperscript{386} On the use of prayer books in Virginia to denote devotion and also status, see Winner, \textit{A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith}, 90–118.}  
\footnote{\textsuperscript{388} Anishanslin, \textit{Portrait of a Woman in Silk}, 258–63.}
spark polite conversation. Removing a book from Elizabeth Nelson’s likeness erased this type of explicit reference to her ability to participate in polite conversation, which was an important part of sociability and hospitality. Moreover, most of the books that Virginia women read in the early to mid-eighteenth century were religious and prescriptive texts, which recommended that women stay out of public affairs and keep to domestic matters. For example, in Richard Allestree’s The Ladies Calling, the author stated that meekness was "particularly enjoin’d to women as a peculiar accomplishment of their Sex." Other examples of texts that remained popular in Virginia throughout the colonial period included Allestree’s The Whole Duty of Man, Lord Halifax’s The Ladies New Years Gift, and Tillotson’s religious sermons. All advised women to avoid public discourse.

Meanwhile, correspondence connected sitters to the British empire of letters, built social networks, and made commerce and communication possible. Oftentimes, names, addresses, or notes are visible in letters painted in portraits in order to emphasize personal and commercial connections. Letters and objects

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391 There were many editions of Allestree published; indeed, William Parks of Williamsburg, Virginia printed one. Richard Allestree, The Whole Duty of Man (Williamsburg: William Parks, 1746); George Savile Halifax Marquis of, The Lady’s New Year’s Gift: Or, Advice to a Daughter, ninth edition (London: Printed for D. Midwinter, 1716). Many different collections of Tillotson’s sermons were published. The one cited here was held in the original library at the College of William & Mary. John Tillotson, Sermons Preach’d upon Several Occasions (London: Printed for Ed. Gellibrand, 1680). For documentation of specific women reading specific titles, see Kerrison, Claiming the Pen, 42–43.
related to letter writing, such as quills and inkstands, were typically masculine symbols of success when used in portraiture.\textsuperscript{392} Painted letters connected the sitter with the world outside of the home. Like books, they signaled that the sitter was educated. Even more so than books, letters indicated that the sitter participated in public discourse through the circulation of news and business.

The erasure of a book or letter in Elizabeth Nelson's portrait ensured that her image did not participate in public discourse or parlor discussions. The Nelsons substituted a flower for a book or letter in order to confine Elizabeth to the more domestic role of wife and mother. The portrait presents her as an object of beauty and "nature" rather than a subject open to conversation. Though women in Virginia obviously read books and wrote letters, regional conventions of gender restricted their portrayal in portraiture. If Elizabeth requested the change, it may indicate her desire to participate in local constructions of a planter's "good wife" and celebrations of reproduction that flowers represented. As discussed above, elite women benefited socially from Virginia's particular constructions of white womanhood. For Elizabeth and her female contemporaries in Virginia, that meant cultivating an image of themselves as mothers and celebrating their reproductive powers. On the other hand, if William Nelson

requested the revision, he may have been affronted by an image of his wife with an emblem connecting her to intellectual or commercial life. His own portrait did not include such objects (figure 2.4). He is depicted standing outdoors, one hand resting on a stone pediment, the other hand tucked into his waistcoat. His hat is placed under his left arm. Nothing in his portrait refers to his role as a leading Virginia merchant.

Access to books was a sign of masculine power in eighteenth-century Virginia. Men largely ordered books, exchanged books, and showed off libraries to each other. William Byrd II denied his wife Lucy access to his library at least once, stating that he caused a quarrel because he "was not willing to let her have a book out of the library."393 The Nelsons also maintained a library, though little is known about its size or contents before the 1760s, when several letters record orders for books that William Nelson sent to London.394 It is possible that William Nelson requested that the book be removed from Elizabeth's portrait in a display of power.

Like the portrait of Lucy Parke Byrd, the inclusion and erasure of the book/letter in Elizabeth Nelson's portrait affords a glimpse into the negotiations involved in female portraiture and marital relations in colonial Virginia. In the generation between Lucy Parke Byrd and Elizabeth Burwell Nelson, the ideal "good wife" image changed. There was less room for negotiation in portraiture. In

393 28 December 1711 in Byrd, The Secret Diary, 461. On women and literacy in the early South, see Kerrison, Claiming the Pen, 6–19.
the years following *Lucy Parke Byrd*, female subjects look increasingly familiar. There was no longer room for books or "exotic" basketry and textiles in pictures of Virginian women during this period. Instead, good wives of the 1750s and 1760s appear almost exclusively with repetitive emblems of fertility and natural abundance.

**John Wollaston and Gendered Conventions in Virginia Portraiture**

By the 1740s, more artists worked throughout the colonies in general, and Virginia in particular. Broader circulation of English prints contributed to the development of British portrait conventions that spread throughout the colonies, inspiring different artists to create works that drew on the same visual vocabulary.\(^{395}\) The repetition of poses inspired by antique sculpture that appeared in English portraits spread models of genteel, English comportment that were recognizable by contemporaries.\(^{396}\) Gendered conventions of portraiture became standardized throughout the British world. Although the Nelsons are Robert Feke's only known Virginia portrait subjects, they share a similar style and iconography with the portraits created by Charles Bridges, who painted Virginians in the 1730s and 1740s, and with John Hesselius's work in Virginia during the early 1750s. Colonists participated in British portrait

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\(^{395}\) Deborah Prosser's dissertation discusses colonial portraiture conventions and their relationship to English prints and studio practices. Prosser, "Visual Persuasion."

conventions to mark themselves as British. Nonetheless, local realities and anxieties dependent on their colonial conditions led to regional preferences and styles that subtly differ from other areas while still drawing on a shared British visual language.

The prolific itinerant painter John Wollaston is perhaps the best artist through which to study regional difference because he painted a large number of sitters from New York to Charleston during the years 1749 to 1767, showing greater geographic mobility than any other colonial artist before the 1770s. Wollaston’s work is frequently criticized for lacking originality and displaying repetitive qualities. However, Jennifer Van Horn’s study of John Wollaston’s portraits from Philadelphia, New York, and Charleston uncovers different regional tastes in each market. Van Horn argues that the similarity of portraits in these urban areas acted as "the visual bonds through which his sitters constructed their aesthetic community." In Philadelphia, Wollaston painted individual portraits of many men seated, as if in conversation. They tend to wear the same, plain suits. Taken as a community of portraits, they appear to be "conversations in paint," rendering all the men as equal participants in public conversation. Van Horn finds that most of the sitters shared common intellectual pursuits. In contrast, New York men tend to appear in more commanding poses and are located

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outdoors to suggest landholding. Their clothes are fancier, denoting wealth. Still, Wollaston’s New York portraits display a greater variety than those of his Philadelphia oeuvre, particularly in terms of the men. As Van Horn argues, "if Philadelphians' portraits spoke to a shared commitment to group membership, Wollaston's depictions of male New Yorkers, as well as his experiences in the city, may reflect those residents' privileging of wealth and factions over polite discourse and civic community."³⁹⁹ Wollaston's paintings from Charleston are the most ostentatious of all his work. The Charleston sitters are dressed and adorned the most lavishly, so that their prosperity becomes integral to these images of aristocratic aspiration.⁴⁰⁰ In each of these cities, Wollaston found a style and mode of presentation that appealed to the local tastes and constructed civility for the colonists based on a British model.

The Virginia men Wollaston painted were frequently connected by marriage and were all members of the same gentry class; thus, the resulting oeuvre shows a regional aesthetic community that emphasized manly vigor, landholding, and self-control. As a group, the Virginians rejected the lavish displays of wealth seen in the Charleston and New York portraits in favor of a neat and plain style of costume and embraced an outdoor setting. Wollaston's portraits of Virginia men feature a plain, nearly ubiquitous suit of clothing in

⁴⁰⁰ On Wollaston’s work in Charleston, see Van Horn, “The Mask of Civility”; Van Horn, The Power of Objects, 214–72; and Weekley, Painters and Paintings, 244–47. Wollaston’s contemporary, Jeremiah Theus, also painted portraits in a similar style in Charleston. See Weekley, 196-208.
shades of brown, blue, and white, similar to those worn by men in Philadelphia portraits. The few men who appear in different suits, such as George Braxton (figure 2.5), who wears a lightly gold trimmed jacket, still lack the heavy embroidery seen in portraits of men from Charleston and New York.\(^{401}\) Like the New York men, however, Wollaston frequently painted Virginia planters posed in landscapes and with stone pediments. Nearly all Virginia men with their hair pulled back have a flying ribbon behind the nape of their neck. This feature is most common in Wollaston's Virginia portraits, and lends the compositions a sense of movement.\(^ {402}\) Wollaston also highlighted many of the Virginia men's stomachs, so that they appear to have a wide girth. The favored outdoor setting for Virginian gentry emphasized landholding, and their poses emphasized masculine vigor and stability.

For example, John Wollaston painted Daniel Parke Custis (figure 2.7), Fielding Lewis (figure 2.9), and John Tayloe (figure 2.10) in very similar compositions. All three wear the same coat in different shades of blue or brown, with brown or white waistcoats. They each stand in similar poses: one arm or hand resting on a stone ledge and the other hand on their hip, pulling back their jacket to emphasize their stomach. This pose was drawn from the "leaning, cross-legged stance" of antique leaning satyr statues that was made popular in

\(^{401}\) Another lightly trimmed suit appears in the portrait of Ryland Randolph (Wilton House Museum). Captain Thomas Cocke (Colonial Williamsburg research files on John Wollaston) is depicted in a military uniform.\(^ {402}\) On Wollaston’s career in Virginia, see Weekley, “John Wollaston, Portrait Painter”; and Weekley, *Painters and Paintings*, 233–43.
British portraiture.  The English artist Thomas Hudson, who influenced Wollaston's style, favored this pose for many of his male portraits, including that of Maryland governor Samuel Ogle (private collection). In the Virginia portraits, all three men appear in nondescript outdoor settings. Lewis has a different hairstyle, but Custis and Tayloe sport Wollaston's trademark ribbon behind their neck. The flying ribbon alludes to the sitter's manly vigor, even as they are rendered forever still in the portraits. Virginian men tend to have wide shoulders and are posed to draw attention to their width and stomach. At least three men stand at an angle with one arm on a stone pillar and one hand in their waistcoat, which draws significant attention to their girth, as in the portrait of William Randolph III (figure 2.12). The fabric folds along the closure of the waistcoats give the appearance of a tightly fit, or stretched fabric. Their highlighted stomachs show off fat, which emphasizes their comfortable lifestyle with access to plenty of food, particularly meats and sugars, and hints at their virility. These are confident, landed planters who outwardly reject self-indulgent fashion choices in favor of self-regulation. Their careful poses are models of classical bodies and masculine power. The effect of these images was enhanced by the plantation

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404 Other examples include the portraits of William Allen (Brooklyn Museum of Art), Warner Lewis (Muscarelle Museum), Ryland Randolph (Wilton House Museum), and Ralph Wormeley IV (figure 2.34).
405 Additional examples include portraits of Richard Randolph, Sr. (Muscarelle Museum) and Peter Randolph (Colonial Williamsburg).
houses in which they hung, by the genteel furnishings surrounding their portraits, and by the vast landholdings encountered by viewers who first had to traverse the actual landscape to enter the house and were then treated to expansive vistas beyond the plantation windows.

Portraits of manly success were supplemented by those of their wives, which hung beside them and emphasized complementary female virtues. Almost all Virginia women painted by Wollaston wear one of three different dresses, with minor differences in lace, accessories, and color to individualize them. All three are invented dress types that would not actually have been worn by contemporary women. The first common type is a wrap dress, as seen in the portrait of Elizabeth Randolph Chiswell (figure 2.13). This style is worn without an

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There are five known exceptions out of twenty-eight known portraits of adult women. These women wear a realistic style of dress with a stomacher most frequently found in portraits of Wollaston's New York subjects. However, this style of dress is worn by Wollaston's dolls, as seen in portraits of young girls (discussed below), suggesting that Wollaston painted this "realistic style" of dress from a doll. As a result, these are not "real" items of clothing, either. Four of the sitters are clearly older women, who perhaps chose these dresses to appear more modest or because they found the imagined dresses less age-appropriate. First, is the portrait of Jane Bolling Randolph (Muscarelle Museum), a woman in her fifties who was painted in much more modest clothing. Her bosom is covered with a white handkerchief and a white cap covers her head. The inclusion of a bible in her portrait suggests that Jane Randolph was a pious woman who likely wanted to appear more modest in her portrait. Second, Lucy Bolling Randolph (Shirley plantation), is depicted with with a music book. Third, an older woman tentatively identified as Judith Carter Page (Muscarelle Museum). The fourth and fifth are both women known as Clara Walker Allen, though they seem to depict different women. Based on photographic reproductions, it is also hard to confirm if the portraits are both by John Wollaston. The images consulted were in the MESDA Object Database and the Winterthur DAPC, but the originals should be deposited at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Shelburne Museum.
obvious closure or fastener visible on the dress.\textsuperscript{408} It is the same type worn by women like Lucy Parke Byrd (figure 1.26) earlier in the century, although here its open seam is enhanced. The second genre of dress is a variation of van Dyck costume, derived from seventeenth-century portraits by Anthony van Dyck and the popular English masquerade costume that borrowed from the Flemish artist's portraits. Some have lace collars and fasteners, but all of them feature bodices or sleeves whose seams appear ready to burst. Rebecca Plater Tayloe and Frances Tasker Carter wear this modified van Dyck style of dress in their portraits (figures 2.11 and 2.14).\textsuperscript{409} Finally, the third type of dress appears in the portrait of Martha Dandridge Custis (figure 2.8). According to Leslie Reinhardt, "the sitters wear what seems to be a dress worn on top of a skirt and bodice or stomacher and tied with a bow at center front. This gown is pulled back, or falls away in an exaggerated way to the sides... in order to create a sense of simultaneous covering and revealing."\textsuperscript{410} The covering/revealing aspect of all of

\textsuperscript{409} Reinhardt, 305–7. On the van Dyck costume in portraits of Charleston women, see Van Horn, “The Mask of Civility.” Other examples include, \textit{Jane Bowles Wormald} (figure 2.35); \textit{Elizabeth Harrison Randolph (Mrs. Peyton Randolph)} (Virginia Historical Society, 1927.19); \textit{Jane Bolling Randolph Walke (Mrs. Anthony Walke II)} (Muscarelle Museum, 1963.005); and \textit{Mary Meade Walker (Mrs. George Walker)} (Virginia Historical Society, 1986.43). Susannah Everard Meade (figure 2.15) and Mary Blair Braxton wear this type of dress with closed seams on the bodice (figure 2.6).
\textsuperscript{410} Reinhardt, “Fabricated Images,” 309. Other examples include, \textit{Mary Walker Carter Carter (Mrs. Charles Carter)} (Shirley Plantation); \textit{Elizabeth Hill Carter Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III)} (Shirley Plantation); \textit{Mildred Howell Lightfoot (Mrs. William Lightfoot)} (figure 2.27); \textit{Clara Walker Allen (Mrs. William Allen)} (Brooklyn Museum); \textit{Betty Washington Lewis (Mrs. Warner Lewis)} (Kenmore Plantation); \textit{Anne Corbin Tayloe Page (Mrs. Mann Page II)} (Clarke County Historical Association records); and \textit{Anne Harrison Randolph (Mrs. William Randolph III)} (Virginia Historical Society, 1927.12).
Wollaston's dresses draws attention to the female sitter's body and hints at their sexuality. The women's hands, when visible, are arranged in order to draw further attention to their breasts or womb.\footnote{See also Klepp, \textit{Revolutionary Conceptions}, 143.} Since all the costume types were invented, the women are pictured as frivolous in contrast to their husbands, who wear realistic contemporary dress.

As fanciful as their painted costumes, women's portraits placed them outside of reality. By appearing in invented costumes, they are idealized constructions of female sexuality. Like dolls, they pose and are dressed for display. They appear in nondescript settings, either in gardens or with plain backgrounds. A few are painted with the generic marble-top tables that appear in Wollaston's portraits up and down the eastern seaboard, rather than a prop that locates them in real space or place. They are removed from space and even time, as their costumes cannot be dated with specificity, given their fictitious origins and appearance. Many of these female sitters are also older, already mothers of multiple children. These portraits are not necessarily about youth or blooming sexuality. For example, Susannah Everard Meade (1712-1771) (figure 2.15), an older woman with grown children in the 1750s, is painted in a van Dyck style dress. Her garment is far more modest than the similar clothing worn by her two daughters in their portraits. Susannah wears an extra collar to cover her chest, rather than showing off a plunging neckline like younger women. Yet the folds in her bodice suggest a seam on the front of her dress, and the seams in
her sleeves are open, allowing a glimpse at her chemise, and alluding to the van Dyck masquerade style in a more age-appropriate way.

Since fashion was gendered as female and women's clothing was typically considered their property, representing women in invented dresses placed them under firmer control of their husbands. Women typically owned their clothing and many wives could order their clothing independently of their husbands.412 Therefore, the use of imaginary dresses effectively removed references to female property and one of the few modes of self-fashioning left to women. Interest in fashion was politicized as a female activity and as a sign of immoral interest in luxury and female autonomy, which stoked fears about female sexual virtue.413 William Byrd II recorded such a concern in his 1720s commonplace book, writing, "When a Wife dresses to stay at home, tis to engage the affection of her Husband: but when she only dresses to go abroad, it may be suspected, that she dos it with a traiterous intent to tempt other people."414 As Leslie Reinhardt has observed, "if fashionable dress was equated with threatening female desires and autonomy, invented dress represented masculine control and posited an ideal

submissive and obedient feminine virtue.” Reinhardt argues that invented dress appears only on women of childbearing age, underscoring male fears about sexual fidelity and paternity; however, the example of Virginian Susannah Everard Meade shows that is not strictly the case. Regardless, invented dresses further objectified women through portraiture and emphasized female submission.

In Wollaston's portraits of women, particularly in the slave colonies of Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina, their breasts are highlighted by low necklines, large bows, jewels, carefully placed hands, and shadowing (e.g., figures 2.6, 2.8, 2.14). The often unnatural appearance of female breasts in Wollaston's portraits from these colonies draws attention to them, and seems to be a deliberate method of representation. Highlighting women's bosoms underscored their attractiveness and sexuality. Painted breasts were frequently referred to in contemporary poems about portraiture. Francis Hopkinson's 1758 "Verses Inscribed to Mr. Wollaston," published in American Magazine, praised Wollaston's "well-turn'd neck and the luxurious breast" in female portraits. In Boston, James Bowdoin described his wife's portrait by Robert Feke in a poem:

Her tempting breasts in whiteness far outgo  
The op'ning lilly, and the new faln snow:  
Her tempting breasts the eyes of all command,  
And gently rising court the am'rous hand:

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Their beauty and proportion strike the eye,
And art's best skill to equal them defy.\textsuperscript{417}

The idealization of the female form in portraiture was expected. In a poem titled "On a Young Lady's PICTURE," published in 1769 in the \textit{Virginia Gazette}, a poet disparaged an artist for not idealizing a woman's beauty. He asked,

\begin{quote}
Where is that easy look, that \textit{pleasing} air,
Which speak her fairest midst a thousand fair?
Where those bright locks that charming Celia deck,
Weaving the wondrous \textit{ringlets} round her neck?
And where that bosom white as Alpine snow,
\textit{The smile that dimples, and those cheeks that glow}.\textsuperscript{418}
\end{quote}

The whiteness of female breasts is referred to specifically in the \textit{Virginia Gazette} and Bowdoin poems. Similarly, the portraits of women by Wollaston emphasize the idealized white expanse of the female bosom. Women's portraits were also clearly discussed by contemporaries as objects of beauty whose physical attributes were the most important qualities. The lack of props of interest, such as books, facilitates the viewer's focus on their bodies. This focus adds to their elevation as objects of admiration that needed to be isolated from the outside world, which could corrupt their beauty, virtue, and possibly their whiteness—a particular concern for slave-holding colonists.

Paradoxically, Wollaston's women suggestively reveal their bodies through clothing in an attempt to emphasize the need for their protection by white men.

Salmon's \textit{Polygraphice} warned male readers: "in the \textit{Bed-chamber}, put your

\textsuperscript{417} James Bowdoin, \textit{A Paraphrase on Part of the Oeconomy of Human Life} (Boston: Printed and sold by Green and Russell, 1759), 17.
\textsuperscript{418} Emphases in original. "On a Young Lady's PICTURE," 9 March 1769, \textit{Virginia Gazette} (Purdie and Dixon), 4.
own, your Wives and Childrens Pictures; as only becoming the most private Room, and your Modesty: lest (if your Wife be a beauty) some wanton and libidinous guest should gaze too long on them, and commend the work for her same." Salmon's advice suggests that portraits of women could raise improper thoughts in male viewers. His advice was not widely followed, as most portraits were hung in the home's semi-public spaces, like central passages and parlors. Salmon's warning may actually have made it more appealing to show off women's portraits. By displaying their wives' likenesses in semi-public spaces, men showed off their ownership of their wife's body. Since the women's dresses are invented, the implication is that their painted bodies are, too. Therefore, Wollaston did not have to actually observe the female sitter's body closely in order to paint them, and male viewers are distanced from the sitter's actual body. This approach is also supported by Wollaston's apparent use of dolls to model fabrics. He could certainly have painted adult female bodies from a doll.

The emphasis on breasts and sexuality in portraiture could reference not just the female sitter's attractiveness to men and her fecundity, but her maternal authority over fertility and the breastfeeding of her children. Most women in eighteenth-century Virginia breastfed their own children. Nursing was believed to be the healthiest option for children, and it was a sign of maternal devotion.

419 Salmon, Polygraphice, 160.
420 Identical dolls wearing identical dresses appear in several of Wollaston’s portraits of young girls, which are discussed in the next section, and indicate that the doll belonged to the artist, not the sitters. On dolls in portraits of young girls, see Reinhardt, “Serious Daughters.” Wollaston was not the only artist who used dolls to model fabrics. See Lovell, Art in a Season of Revolution, 79–80; and Prosser, “Visual Persuasion,” 10–12, 39–40.
Breastfeeding was also a way for women to assert some control over their fertility, as longer lactation periods delayed conception. Chesapeake women had relatively longer birth intervals than women in other colonial regions, on average between twenty-four and thirty months.\textsuperscript{421} The ability to delay conception through nursing was clear to Landon Carter, who criticized his daughter-in-law for breastfeeding too long, avowing, "baby Fanny is every time to share her Mamma's disorder by sucking her, and this because she should not breed too fast."\textsuperscript{422} Still, Virginians tended to have large families. A large family was a point of masculine pride and showed prowess, while colonial women were praised for their fertility, adding to the family dynasty but also promoting empire. As William Byrd II stated, "It woud [be] ungallant in a husband to disswade" a wife from childbearing "in an infant country which wants nothing but people."\textsuperscript{423} Clearly, the imperial project of colonization depended on the increase of the population and thus on the female body.\textsuperscript{424}

It appears that women were happy with Wollaston's portraits of them. The ubiquity of the costumes and poses alone suggests their popularity. A receipt in the Custis family papers records a 1757 payment of 56 pistoles from Martha Dandridge Custis to John Wollaston for three family portraits: an image of herself

\textsuperscript{423} William Byrd II to Jane Pratt Taylor, 3 April 1729, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, \textit{Correspondence}, 391.
\textsuperscript{424} Klepp, \textit{Revolutionary Conceptions}, 56–71.
(figure 2.8), one of her (first) husband, Daniel Parke Custis (figure 2.7), and a
double portrait of their children, John and Martha Custis (figure 2.16). This
receipt seems to indicate that Martha was in charge of the artistic commissions.
Indeed, Martha also commissioned the later portrait of her second husband,
George Washington, from Charles Willson Peale. William Byrd III was away
much of 1756, when John Wollaston most likely painted his first wife and at least
three of his children; thus, it is possible that Elizabeth Hill Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd
III) engaged Wollaston to create those portraits. Female sexuality was both a
constraint and an opportunity for white women. Like Lucy Parke Byrd earlier in
the century, many of Wollaston’s female subjects may have accepted his vision
of the female body because they could be viewed as both paragons of female
virtue and maternal authority as well as objects of desire for their husbands.
Colonial women understood that reproduction benefited both family and empire
and could leverage their position in the social order.

425 Custis family papers, 1683-1858, Mss1C9698a, Section 17. Virginia Historical
Society. Daniel Parke Custis died in summer of 1757, but the receipt is dated in October
from "Mrs. Custis." Martha Dandridge Custis’s participation in George Washington’s
portrait further supports her primary role in portrait commissions.
426 Peale et al., The Selected Papers, I: 120.
427 Wollaston was only in Virginia from 1754 (when he left Maryland) to maybe 1758. The
first record of Wollaston in Virginia is 1755 and the last record of him in Virginia is 1757.
The age of the youngest Byrd child to be painted (born in 1752) makes 1756 a more
likely date of production. Young Byrd does not look like a toddler in the portrait (in
contrast to John and Martha Custis who were toddlers [figure 2.16] and appear quite
young). From February 1756 to at least April 1756, Byrd was in the Carolinas negotiating
a treaty with the Catawba and Cherokee. He sent his sons to England in 1756 and by
August 1756, friends believed he was resolved to never return to Virginia. The fact that
William Byrd III was not painted by Wollaston contributes to the theory that he was not
present when the artist painted his family. See Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III,
Correspondence, 604–5; and Weekley, “John Wollaston, Portrait Painter,” 17.
428 On women’s sexuality as a constraint and opportunity, see Brown, Good Wives,
Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs, 283–318.
The large number of portraits featuring men and women in similar poses and costumes by another artist during this period, John Hesselius, further attests to the local preferences of the Virginia elite. A contemporary of Wollaston, Hesselius painted men and women, with few exceptions, in poses and costumes similar to those of Wollaston in the late 1750s and early 1760s. A case in point is the 1755 Hesselius portrait of Martha Corbin (MESDA object research files, S-4671), which shows the sitter wearing a dress inspired by Wollaston's van Dyck derivations, with open seams in the bodice and a drape wrapped around her waist. The similarities between Wollaston and Hesselius's paintings emphasize and reaffirm the conventional nature of portraiture during this period.

John Wollaston and John Hesselius would have traveled from plantation to plantation in Virginia looking for commissions, and both artists surely helped foster a sense of community through their production of portraits. Being able to walk into the home of a friend or family member on a distant plantation and see a portrait that shared the same characteristics as one's own had to be a comfort to the Virginia planters and their wives, adding to a sense of shared community values and aesthetics. At this time, Williamsburg was a social capital for special events and court days, but as a city it never fostered the type of social scene or intellectual community found in northern urban areas. The majority of wealthy Virginians preferred living on their plantations where they could keep an eye on their crops and workforce. However, Virginia planters frequently socialized in each other's homes. As Philip Vickers Fithian recorded in 1773, "It is a custom..."
here whenever any person or Family move into a House, or repair a house they have been living in before, they make a Ball & give a Supper - So we because we have gotten Possession of the whole House, are in compliance with Custom, to invite our Neighbors, and dance, and be merry.\textsuperscript{429} James Gordon's 1759 diary records frequent visitors at his home, Gordonsville, and visits he made at other plantations. For example, over three days in February 1759, Gordon first "Dined at Col. Conway's," the next day entertained "Col. Selden, Mr. Chichester & Mr. Armistead" at Gordonsville, and then "the above company stayed till after dinner" on the next day.\textsuperscript{430} All three of William Byrd II's diaries register many visitations at Westover and his own visits to other plantations.\textsuperscript{431}

Viewed together, John Wollaston's and John Hesselius's Virginia portraits of husbands and wives support a patriarchal vision of family life. The men's appearance gives an air of stability and virtuous self-control. They generally


\textsuperscript{431} Byrd, \textit{The Secret Diary}; Byrd, \textit{The London Diary}; and Byrd, \textit{Another Secret Diary}. Michael Zuckerman found that between 1709 and 1712, Byrd entertained visitors "almost two days out of every three" or "at least fifty people a month," either at Westover or in his Williamsburg lodgings. In 1720-1721, Byrd "received guests at least every other day and still fed or bedded more than forty men and women a month." See Zuckerman, "William Byrd's Family," 290–91. For more on sociability in Virginia, see Kierner, "Hospitality, Sociability, and Gender in the Southern Colonies"; Shields, \textit{Civil Tongues}, 301–3; and Smith, \textit{Inside the Great House}, 175–230.
stand erect, have wide frames, and wear muted costumes that are made of nice material but show restraint or frugality. In half-length portraits, stone pillars ground the male figures and suggest their moral uprightness and stability. These patriarchs are firmly in control of themselves and their landscape, and their wives are safely contained within their pendant portraits. The dresses worn by their wives suggest that their bodies will only reveal themselves to their husbands, even as they are put on display, and in this way they support their husband's displays of virility. Female bodies visualize matrimonial and maternal ideals and celebrate reproduction and whiteness.

Forbidden Fruit: Children's Portraits in the Mid-Eighteenth Century

Children's portraits are also important sites of gender analysis because they reflect their society's idealized visions of adult roles and represent young sitters before they experienced courtship and marriage firsthand. While far fewer in number than portraits of adults, portraits of children were less restrained by adult behavioral expectations and are therefore far more imaginative. Portraits of children tend to be original compositions rather than merely copies from prints, indicating that the children posed for their portraits, at least for a short while. In sitting still for a portrait, the children learned proper posture, interacted with gender-appropriate props, and showed disciplined control over their bodies. Virginia parents represented their children in perpetuity as young models of male and female civility. Indeed, the costumes and props were likely imposed on the
children by their parents and/or by the artists. Artists blended the expectations of adult roles with the playfulness of childhood, registering the parents' anxieties over colonial threats of endangerment to female virtue and celebrating masculine prowess. Parents used portraiture to help control the sexuality of their daughters, while boys were pictured as models of genteel masculinity. Portraits of children also represent affective kinship ties and celebrate patrilineal dynastic succession and responsibility.

Portraits of children did more than educate and trace childhood development; they also manifested tensions between gender expectations and the colonial condition that had implications for adults as well as children. Scholars have argued that portraits of children served as didactic tools, modeling proper behavior for the child sitter. Parents viewed images of their children as evidence of successful childrearing, presenting their children acting like proper young ladies and gentlemen, as well as documenting family affection.⁴³² Most studies of children’s portraiture discuss a shift in representational strategies from earlier depictions of children as miniature adults to later portrayals of childhood as a separate, special stage of life. Portraits in the latter category typically include toys, clothing, and playful behavior that distinguish children from adults. The evolution of this genre of portraiture is frequently linked to changing conceptions of childhood and childrearing. The influence of philosophers such as

John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who emphasized the importance of education and nurturing in raising a child to be an independent member of society, is often credited with transforming images of youth. While all of this is true, the enactment of adult roles by children in Virginia portraits reveals much about colonial social relations that has gone largely unacknowledged in scholarship.

Portraits of children allowed Virginians to work out anxieties over challenges to patriarchal authority. The majority of extant portraits of colonial Virginia children, particularly those of young daughters, date to the 1740s and 1750s. Historians have demarcated a societal change in Virginia around these years, as another generation of Virginians came of age. According to historians, by about 1740, the leading Virginia gentry had consolidated their power through marriages and political alliances. At the same time, the gentry acutely felt challenges to the established patriarchal model of authority. Anxieties about cultural and social change intensified as evangelical religion spread, the Scottish involvement in tobacco trade expanded (thus diminishing the economic power of

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the wealthiest local families), westward land speculation increased, and the colony's population grew rapidly. In particular, intergenerational conflicts abounded, as parents worried about their children squandering away money through gambling and conspicuous consumption as family debt increased. All of these circumstances made child portraiture a particularly desirable outlet for patriarchal anxieties during this time, as paintings fix images for posterity. With children contained within the frame and within a genealogical narrative visualized by family portraits, and completely controlled by parents, tensions regarding the precarity of their status could be relieved through portraiture.

Portraits featuring siblings created lasting images of affective and obligatory bonds between kin. Typically, the portraits of children remained in the family great house, which was inherited by the eldest male. Other sons frequently built new homes, while daughters moved into the homes of their

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435 For example, the following portraits of young children descended in their father's house, which was inherited by the eldest surviving male sibling. Two generations of children's portraits of the Grymes family of Brandon plantation remained at Brandon for generations: *The Grymes Children*, (figure 2.17), *Benjamin and Ludwell Grymes* (figure 2.18), and *Two Girls of the Grymes Family* (MESDA, S-28284). *Anne Byrd as a Child* (figure 3.6) remained at Westover plantation with her brother, William Byrd III, until his widow was forced to sell the estate. A portrait of Lucy and Bernard Moore (figure 2.21), plus another portrait believed to represent their brother, Thomas (FARL), remained at Chelsea plantation for generations, which was initially inherited by Bernard Moore. The portrait of Sarah and Ann Gordon (figure 2.42) presumably remained at Gordonsville (it descended from a brother rather than from their children). Provenance for all of these portraits comes from their respective museum object files or FARL.
spouses. Portraits of siblings as children remained tangible reminders of their familial bond and helped cement family networks in Virginia. Sibling relationships were both emotionally and financially important. Letters and diaries reveal the affective bonds between siblings. As children, siblings were playmates. As adults, siblings looked after each other, shared news, and took care of each other's children. Brothers ensured dowries and marriage settlements for sisters. Older siblings provided educational support for younger children after the death of parents. Siblings also loaned money and paid debts for each other. The relative popularity of portraits of young siblings in Virginia indicates that parents fostered these bonds. Portraits of siblings stood as testaments to the familial obligations of brothers and sisters even after parental death.

Around 1750, John Hesselius painted the *The Grymes Children* (figure 2.17) in a large group portrait filled with emblems of familial love. Pictured in *The Grymes Children* are the four eldest children of Philip and Mary Randolph Grymes: Lucy (1742-1830), John (1747-1796), Philip (1746-1805), and Charles (b.1748). In the lower right corner is what appears to be a burdock or mandrake plant, an emblem associated with love. In the portrait, Lucy, the only daughter, sits on a stone plinth holding cherries in her apron, while young John drops more

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437 This portrait is sometimes attributed to John Hesselius's father, Gustavus Hesselius; however, there are no other extant portraits attributed to Gustavus in Virginia to support the claim that he ever worked in the colony. Object file 1893.3, *The Grymes Children*, Virginia Historical Society.
into her lap. According to a contemporary emblem book, cherries were considered to be "An Emblem of Matrimony, or true Love, in which, when two are united, none can, or ought to separate them. What God hath joined let no man endeavour to put apart." Cherries were a reminder of familial obligations to watch over each other's virtue, as the fruit had biblical associations as the fruit of paradise. Cherries were thus also symbols of sexuality, which was only socially acceptable for women within marriage. In a portrait of siblings, cherries are also signs of everlasting bonds created through their parents' union. In this portrait, John, young enough to still wear skirts, holds more cherries in his hat. Though John is clad in skirts, the hat he holds is a sign of his future as a gentleman. By contrast, the eldest son, Philip, is dressed like an adult in a suit and waistcoat. With one hand Philip gestures towards Lucy and John, and with his other he pulls his youngest brother Charles in a two-wheeled wagon. Charles is clad in the simplest outfit of all, as befitting a very young child. He raises a toy whip in his hand. Philip pulls Charles along by a strap over his shoulder. Philip's position suggests that, as the eldest male in the family, he bears the responsibility of caring for his relations.

The depiction of landscape in *The Grymes Children* is a reminder of the family's landed status. In the background, the artist represented a house set back

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439 Italicized in the original. *Emblems for the Improvement and Entertainment of Youth* (London: Printed for R. Ware, 1755), 122. On the use of emblems in portraits of children, see Fleischer, “Emblems and Colonial American Painting.”

440 For the “fruit of paradise,” which also appears in a number of English children’s portraits, see Elizabeth Einberg and Rica Jones, *Manners & Morals: Hogarth and British Painting 1700-1760* (London: Tate Gallery, 1987), 141.
in the hills and a single mountain. The scene in the foreground is set in a classical garden, with a stone structure on the left of the canvas and a balustrade on the right. A large tree occupies the center of the canvas, directly behind the two eldest sons, Philip and John, perhaps a reference to the Grymes "family tree," and offers another visual reference to their interconnectedness. The background elements thus situate the children in a metaphorical landscape that lends a sense of permanence and classical authority.

None of the four Grymes children visually dominates the scene. The three eldest are positioned in a row so that their heads are on a level. Charles, the youngest, is slightly elevated on the right side of the canvas owing to his position in the wagon, but he turns his body towards his siblings. All four children look outward but simultaneously engage with another sibling. The equality among the siblings reflects their egalitarian relationship. Most Virginians rejected the English practice of primogeniture in favor of dividing their estates between their male children and providing moveable property for their daughters upon marriage. This practice encouraged affection between siblings. The Grymes Children, then, could serve as a reminder to the siblings as future adults about their equal roles and mutual obligations. In this portrait, Hesselius created a whimsical composition into which he embedded moral messages of familial love and duty.

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The presence of the parents in this portrait is felt even in absentia. The Grymes parents commissioned the portrait and are the implied primary audience members. Though portraits of the Grymes children's parents, Philip and Mary Randolph Grymes, are no longer extant, it is likely that they once existed. There are multiple portraits of Grymes family members painted by Charles Bridges, who worked in the 1730s and 1740s. At some point, the Grymes estate was broken up and the portraits were separated. In particular, a portrait by Bridges of Benjamin and Ludwell Grymes (figure 2.18) portrays the two brothers in a classical garden with balustrade similar to that pictured in *The Grymes Children*. Benjamin and Ludwell Grymes were the younger brothers of Philip Grymes, the father of the four children in the portrait by John Hesselius. Philip Grymes inherited the family plantation in Middlesex County, together with the portrait of his brothers and other existing family portraits. Hesselius's *The Grymes Children* thus speaks to the earlier portrait by Bridges and creates a visual narrative of familial continuity.

As in *The Grymes Children*, where Lucy is presented as a fruitful female, her skirts literally full of cherries, other portraits featuring a brother and sister contain sexual undertones that highlight the ways Virginians both expressed and contained the sexuality of their daughters. These portraits present brothers and

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442 Bridges painted Alice Grymes (Mrs. Mann Page II) and two girls of the Grymes family, as well; however, the identification of which of the Grymes daughters were painted remains unclear. See Hood, *Charles Bridges and William Dering*, 16–21, 54–62, on sitter identifications see, 62, fn.46. See also Weekley, *Painters and Paintings*, 186.
sisters interacting as if they were spouses.\textsuperscript{443} John Wollaston's portrait of Rebecca and Warner Lewis (figure 2.19) depicts a brother and sister pair and is probably the most implicitly sexual example of siblings enacting spousal roles. Rebecca stands wearing a hat modeled on that in the famous portrait of the artist Peter Paul Rubens’s wife, Helena Fourment. This accouterment marks Rebecca as masquerading in a popular costume and playing dress up as a recognizable character.\textsuperscript{444} The fanciful yet identifiable costume that Rebecca wears refers to London masquerade balls, which had reputations for promoting licentious behavior and therefore carried sexual implications.\textsuperscript{445} Though she was no more than eight years old when she sat for Wollaston, Rebecca's masquerade costume and low neckline hint at her burgeoning sexuality. With one hand, she lifts up her dress to hold the cherries, revealing a portion of her underskirt. With her other hand she drops cherries; two pairs of cherries are visible peeking out of the folds in her dress, and another lies at her feet. The falling fruit alludes to her potential to bear children and her marriageability. Rebecca’s brother, Warner, sits on a rock and proffers a phallic sporting club. A ball and a discarded hat lie on the ground below him. Warner extends one hand toward his sister, gesturing to

\textsuperscript{443} Double portraits of spouses are relatively rare in colonial America, but they were growing in popularity in England. For American examples, see Lovell, \textit{Art in a Season of Revolution}, 147–53. For English double portraits, see Retford, \textit{The Art of Domestic Life}, 49–82.

\textsuperscript{444} John Wollaston painted Dorothy Willing of Philadelphia in the same hat. Van Horn, \textit{The Power of Objects}, 227.

\textsuperscript{445} On Wollaston’s use of invented dress in portraits of young girls and the identification of Rebecca’s hat, see Reinhardt, “Fabricated Images,” 307. On the sexual nature of masquerade costumes in colonial portraits, see Van Horn, \textit{“The Mask of Civility”; and Van Horn, The Power of Objects}, 228–41.
the fruit in her apron, as if telling the viewer that Rebecca is fruit waiting to be plucked. Warner's coat is unbuttoned, revealing his white undershirt. The poses, costumes, and props give the portrait sexual undertones. Importantly, Rebecca was a young child who likely had no say in her portrait. Therefore, though the portrait encourages viewers to understand the girl as playing dress up, in reality, she was the object of play, dressed up and controlled by the artist and by her parents.

Planters were anxious to control their daughter's bodies, just as they sought to control their wives' bodies, and portraits constituted another tool of patriarchal authority. It was common belief in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic that women were naturally governed by emotions and prone to irrational behavior. One of the fears of colonists, particularly in the hot southern climate, was that the virtue of their women would be compromised. Females were the barometer of English civilization; thus, it was an imperial project to ensure control over female nature through marriage, where women's sexuality could be put to procreative use. William Byrd II's remarks in 1727/8 about the marriageability of his young daughter, Maria, no more than one year old at the time, demonstrate concern about the sexuality of girls in the southern climate: "If she lives we must get her a husband as soon as the law will allow, which makes females forbiden fruit before ten years old. But that statute was calculated for your northern

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446 Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriots, 17–19.
clymate, and not for the latitude of 37." 448 John Tayloe wrote in 1757 about his many daughters to William Byrd III, who had four sons, "I have neither prospect nor hopes of a son therefore will endeavour to make good wives for your boys." 449 As Byrd and Tayloe demonstrate, fathers sought to shape their daughters into future wives from very young ages. Indeed, some Virginians did marry young. In one documented case, William Fitzhugh was twelve years old when he married Anne Lee, who was only eight or nine years old in 1692. 450 The aforementioned Maria Byrd was fifteen when she married Landon Carter, who was thirty-two, in 1742. 451 Apparently, her father, William Byrd II, was willing to wait five years after she turned ten "to get her a husband." Though the average age at marriage had increased by the mid-eighteenth century, the legal age of consent was only twelve for girls and fourteen for boys, and parental consent played a legal and customary role in marriages. 452

An entry in Byrd's 1720s commonplace book also demonstrates anxiety about young women appearing in public: "Hyperides usd to say, a Woman shoud not appear out of her House, til she is old enough for people to enquire whose Mother she is, & not so young as to have it askt, whose Wife she is, or whose

448 William Byrd II to Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery, 5 February 1727/8, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 370.
449 John Tayloe to William Byrd III, 4 April 1757, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, 646.
450 Holly Brewer, By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 290.
451 William Byrd II to Daniel Parke Custis, 23 September 1742, and “Genealogical Notes,” in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 595, 828.
452 On the history of age, legal consent, and marriage in colonial Virginia, see Brewer, By Birth or Consent, 288–237.
Daughter?" In 1766, Landon Carter wrote, "My daughter Judy the 17th of this month went to the great race, when it seems it was a most improper time being her Lunar period." The concern over their daughters' appearances in public, their female physiology, and their sexual behavior reveals the patriarchal impulse to control their children while they were still young enough to be controlled, but also how they saw their children as sexual beings. Therefore, depicting young daughters as sexual beings was a method of controlling their appearance and behavior.

There is evidence that young girls enacted maternal roles in real life as well as in portraiture. In 1774, Philip Vickers Fithian, a tutor at Nomini Hall, wrote of his charges, "Among the many womanish Fribbles which our little Misses daily practise, I discovered... Fanny and Harriot by stuffing rags & other Lumber under their Gowns just below their Apron-Strings, were prodigiously charmed at their resemblanc to Pregnant Women! They blushed, however, pretty deeply on discovering that I saw them." At the time, Fanny and Harriot Carter were eleven and seven years old, respectively. Fithian recorded that they "blushed deeply," indicating their embarrassment at being discovered while playing pregnant. Though high birth rates were celebrated in the colonies, the act of being pregnant was at the same time negatively associated with sexual shame.

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Susan Klepp explains that "pregnancy signaled the physical passion that initiated pregnancy," and argues that there are no extant colonial portraits depicting pregnant women because of these shameful associations with uncontrollable sexual passion. Instead, women are painted with emblems of pregnancy, like baskets of flowers or fruit. The Carter girls' blushing raises a question about their level of understanding of pregnancy and sex, which unfortunately goes unanswered. Blushing itself was an act associated with the passions of young women.

In contrast, boys were encouraged to be sexually active and display sexual prowess. While the social ideal was sex within marriage, boys and men were far less condemned for extramarital activity than were women. Particularly in the plantation context, planters took advantage of women of all races. Eighteen-year-old Benjamin Carter's tutor from New Jersey was appalled when Benjamin "took" a "young likely Negro Girl" into the stables to fool around.

Robert Bolling's account of his 1759 courtship of the fifteen-year-old Anne Miller

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456 Klepp, Revolutionary Conceptions, 138.
458 Godbeer, Sexual Revolution in Early America, 194–96; Sharon Block, Rape and Sexual Power in Early America (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 20–23; Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs, 328–34; Thomas A. Foster, Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).
459 Fithian, Journal & Letters, 86.
also reveals a man barely able to restrain himself. Bolling was twenty-one. He wrote,

the great Intimacy, between Relations in this Colony, permitting many Freedoms, I found it impossible to have this Lady in my Arms for Hours together, without feeling such Emotions...The pleasing Passion insensibly wrought itself into my Constitution, and became as much a Necessity with me as Hunger...She gave no other than evasive Answers, expressing Doubts of my Sincerity and Apprehensions of her Father's Disapprobation...Nothing cou'd be more encouraging than this Kind of Behaviour.\footnote{Bolling and Lemay, \textit{Robert Bolling Woos Anne Miller}, 52.}

In spite of, or perhaps because of, Anne's modest behavior, Bolling found her irresistible. Anne was later subjected to another bout of passion from Bolling. Upon finding her sitting on a bed, Bolling recorded, "overcome by an Excess of Passion, I threw myself \textit{thereon}, and pressed her to my Bosom." Though she "reproached" him, Bolling continued to "caress" her, breaking her fan and a necklace.\footnote{Italicized in original. Bolling and Lemay, 55.} Bolling's account of their courtship reveals a double standard. Anne was expected to act with self-control and decorum even under assault by a suitor. Her modest actions and rebuffs only spurred Bolling's behavior. While Bolling sought to control himself, he blamed her appearance and alluring behavior for his lack of control.\footnote{For more on Robert Bolling's behavior, see Bolling and Lemay, 1–32; and Kenneth A. Lockridge, "Colonial Self-Fashioning: Paradoxes and Pathologies in the Construction of Genteel Identity in Eighteenth-Century America," in \textit{Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America}, ed. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Frederika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 274–339. On women's consent and the interpretation of resistance as "pro forma," see Block, \textit{Rape and Sexual Power in Early America}, 40–44.} The double standard also relates to female
portraiture. Women and girls were simultaneously displayed as sexual objects and as models of female virtue in need of protection from their natural passions.

Bolling’s account also illuminates the elite, heterosocial spaces that allowed, even encouraged, sexual encounters between men and women. As he explained, the "Intimacy between Relations in this Colony, permitting many Freedoms" created a space where female bodies could be violated by elite men within their social circles without repercussion, men who were often simultaneously potential spouses and relations. Allowing this kind of behavior hastened marriages. John Tayloe's comment about raising his daughters to be good wives for his friend's sons represents elite matchmaking between parents who encouraged marriages that would protect and add to family wealth. As the recently arrived Mary Willing Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III), originally from Philadelphia, explained in a 1762 letter to her sister, "They are all Brothers, Sisters, or Cousins; so that if you use one person in the Colony ill, you affront all." Virginians frequently married their cousins, a practice that helped gentry

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463 On courtship and premarital sex (coerced and consensual) in Virginia, see "Introduction," in Bolling and Lemay, Robert Bolling Woos Anne Miller, 2–13; Block, Rape and Sexual Power in Early America, 57–63; and Smith, Inside the Great House, 130–40.

464 The role of parents in choosing marriage partners seems to have diminished in importance over the course of the eighteenth century. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that it varied from family to family and may have depended on the gender and age of the child. The 1750s was perhaps a transitional decade in practice, as well. On parents' roles in choosing or encouraging marriage partners, see Smith, Inside the Great House, 141–50; Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs, 253–60, 342–50; Isaac, Landon Carter’s Uneasy Kingdom, 37–54; and Brewer, By Birth or Consent, 288–337.

consolidate their wealth and political power.\textsuperscript{466} For instance, John Randolph Grymes, pictured in \textit{The Grymes Children}, eventually married his first cousin, Susannah Randolph, in 1779.\textsuperscript{467} In another case, Charles Carter of Shirley Plantation married his cousin, Mary Carter, in ca. 1756. Their fathers, John Carter of Shirley and Charles Carter of Cleves, were brothers, two sons of Robert "King" Carter. Therefore, presenting young girls as sexual beings or future spouses in their portraits supported the planters' dynastic ambitions.

As Marcia Pointon argues, the tendency to focus on the sweetness and playfulness of child portraiture has led to an inclination to overlook the contrived nature of portraits of young children—in particular, portraits of young girls. Pointon argues, "what makes paintings of young girls exciting and visually significant is the contrast between that presumed innocence and something that is not shown and that might generally be understood to endanger it."\textsuperscript{468} The threat to young girls was men who could corrupt their virtue. English courtesy books warned parents that if they did not keep their children close, they could spend too much time with servants, which was a great danger:

For besides that that low sort of converse debases their Minds, makes them mean and sordid, it often corrupts their Manners too... Perhaps this will be thought to concern only the Masculin part of Children, and that the Female, who are commonly in a distinct Apartment, and converse only with their own Sex, are more secure. But I would not advise Mothers to depend too much on that, for they are no surer that their Daughters shall not converse with Men,

\textsuperscript{466} On the role of marriage in class formation, see Brown, \textit{Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs}, 253–60.
\textsuperscript{467} Object file 1893.3, \textit{The Grymes Children}, Virginia Historical Society. Susannah Randolph was the daughter of John Randolph, brother of Mary Randolph Grymes.
\textsuperscript{468} Pointon, \textit{Hanging the Head}, 182.
nay Men of the meaner sort too, then that their Maids and attendants shall not do so. In Virginia, the English fear of class-mixing was compounded by the presence of non-white slaves, who became the most significant potential threat to their daughters.

Anglo-Virginians feared the “hypersexuality” of African men, as well as the prospect of racial mixing. Laws prohibiting or penalizing interracial relations sought to keep black men away from white women. The sexual promiscuity of planters likely heightened their awareness of their daughters’ endangered virtue. Even when sexual intercourse was not a primary concern, there was a belief among colonists that simply being around Africans could negatively impact a girl’s behavior. This unease was shared by mothers, fathers, and grandparents alike. Maria Taylor Byrd wrote about her concern for her granddaughter in 1760, stating, "her chief time is spent with servants & Negro children her play fellows, from whom she has learnt a dreadful collection of words, & is intolerably passionate." Uncontrolled passion in a woman was a sign of incivility and, in Maria Byrd’s opinion, was learned from the enslaved population.

Given the fears over their daughters’ virtue, the commissioning of portraits of young siblings with sexual undertones seems odd; however, these portraits model the children in spousal roles to make their sexuality socially acceptable.

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471 Maria Taylor Byrd to William Byrd III, ca. February 1760, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 682.
Apart from the toys sometimes held by the brother, the images of siblings appear like English marital portraits featuring husbands and wives together. The presence of the brother in portraits of siblings also serves as a symbol of guardianship over female virtue. In the portrait of Rebecca and Warner Lewis (figure 2.19), Warner presents his sister, but by playing the role of her husband, the implication is that he controls and protects her as well. The portrait of Mann and Elizabeth Page (figure 2.20) by John Wollaston features a sibling relationship similar to that seen in the Lewis portrait. Mann Page stands to the right of his sister, dressed like a young gentleman. He extends his left arm out to support a cardinal that is perched on his hand. The bird is tied to a ribbon, an emblem of discipline and control over nature, typically masculine attributes. The cardinal appears in several Virginia portraits since it is a bird specifically associated with the region. By taming the cardinal, Mann Page has mastered Virginia's nature and by implication, his sister's "natural" tendencies. His sister, Elizabeth, is seated and holds a doll in her lap. The doll alludes to her fecundity and future role as a mother. John Wollaston also painted the Custis children, John Parke Custis and Martha Parke Custis (figure 2.16), in very similar poses, except that young Martha has flowers in her lap instead of a doll. The Custis children, who were only three and one years of age, are dressed as young adults, though their very young age meant that, in reality, they both likely wore

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simple, gender-neutral clothes. Wollaston, however, painted them in adult clothing to highlight their complementary gender roles.

Canvases featuring a brother and a sister together as companions appear four times among John Wollaston’s portraits from Virginia, and at least once in both Charles Bridges’s and John Hesselius’s oeuvres, indicating that such portraits were not the vision of Wollaston alone but fulfilled expressed desires of Virginia patrons. Charles Bridge’s ca. 1735 portrait of the siblings Lucy and Bernard Moore (figure 2.21) pre-dates the Wollaston examples. Less sexual in nature, Bridges nonetheless painted Lucy and Bernard holding hands while walking in a landscape. Lucy holds a rose in her other hand, and Bernard is dressed in formal attire with a sword on his hip and hat under his arm. Their pose is reminiscent of the "promenade" portraits of English married couples, wherein a husband proffers his arm to his wife and they walk together in a garden. John Hesselius’s 1755 portrait of sister and brother Janie and Gawin Corbin (figure 2.22) is nearer to Wollaston’s compositions in tone, though it also pre-dates them. The available black-and-white photograph is difficult to examine closely, but the two siblings are located outdoors. Janie sits with her legs splayed and lightly holds flowers in her lap. Her left hand is prominently placed around the

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475 Their older sister, Martha Corbin, was painted by Hesselius at the same time. She appears alone in her portrait, as she was seventeen and of courting age, in a conventional, adult female pose and imagined van Dyck-derived costume like the ones discussed above (MESDA Object Database, S-4671)
bouquet, drawing attention to her genitalia with two pointed fingers. With her right hand, she holds a flower up to her breast. Her younger brother stands beside her, pointing towards her chest. His other hand rests on the head of an animal, likely a dog, which sits between them. The upward looking dog is a recognized symbol of fidelity and mastery that, in this case, also implies mastery over females.

The sexual behaviors referenced in the Virginia images are attempts to shape the youth into prescribed adults roles in which male mastery was necessary to govern female sexuality. In a discussion of later eighteenth-century portraits by English artists Sir Joshua Reynolds and George Romney, Marcia Pointon observes that "the trope of male mastery and female passivity is familiar in child-portraiture," and references to sexual behavior were visual jokes enjoyed by adults at the expense of children. However, the placement of fruit, flowers, and the use of hand gestures, poses, and adult costumes seen in the abovementioned portraits make the girls seem less passive and more like active participants. Instead, the girls' behavior at young ages implies that sexual passion is natural in females that passion can be tamed or channeled in adult women through marriage. Notably, there are no extant examples from Virginia of married couples sharing a canvas, and relatively few from the other colonies. The

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476 Pointon, Hanging the Head, 184–93, quote 192. Historian Lawrence Stone also argues that in the early modern period, “adults found the genital stage of childhood sexuality amusing rather than horrifying. This encouragement of sexual play may have been no more than one aspect of a general tendency to treat children from about two to seven as amusing pets.” Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, 160–61.
portraits of Virginia children thus model marital relationships unseen in images of adults.

While the girls discussed above are protected by the presence of their brothers, portraits of other young girls utilize different pictorial strategies that reveal a similar concern for protection from the outside world while simultaneously presenting daughters for the viewer's pleasure. The inclusion of dolls in many of the portraits indicates the young girls' future roles as mothers, but also references their vulnerability and malleability as youth still learning proper behavior, and underscores female objectification. Like the dolls they hold, the young girls are poseable and play dress up for their portraits. Once painted, their bodies became similarly objectified. For example, the two Wollaston portraits of the sisters Anne Randolph (figure 2.23) and Elizabeth Randolph (figure 2.24) use a unique format. John Wollaston painted ten portraits for their father, William Randolph III of Wilton Plantation. All are approximately 36 x 29 inches in size. However, Anne Randolph and Elizabeth Randolph are painted with the rectangular canvas turned on its side, making them horizontally wider. Both girls are rendered within a faux masonry construction that appears like a window, indicating that they were conceived as a pair. The left side of Anne's canvas features a red swag of drapery acting as a curtain. Elizabeth holds a doll propped up on the sill of the window, with the doll in profile. She gently arranges the doll's hair, which appears similar to her own. Anne, however,

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477 Dolls were pervasive in colonial, European, and English portraits of young girls in the eighteenth century. On the educational role of dolls in portraiture, see Reinhardt, “Serious Daughters.”
holds a basket of flowers on the sill. Her dress is the same color and fabric type as that of the doll held by her younger sister, and her hairstyle is similar to the doll's hair, pulled back with little flowers along the crown of her head. Anne, who was likely about eleven years old when she sat for her portrait, is too old to play with the doll with which her younger sister, Elizabeth, about five years old, plays in her portrait. However, since Anne is dressed and coiffed like the doll, the implication is that she has become the doll: Anne is on the verge of womanhood. The basket of flowers, often used to symbolize fertility, signifies that she is becoming a sexual being. Both girls are protected in their portraits, contained by a heavy stone frame, and separated from the viewer. Significantly, Anne, the elder daughter, is revealed to the viewer by the red curtain, as if ready to emerge into womanhood and begin courtship. The use of the curtain echoes the cover/reveal aspect of the adult women's dresses.

Given the size of the Wilton plantation portrait collection, the two portraits of Elizabeth and Anne, the young daughters of the household, probably hung in more private rooms. They did not adorn the central passage, the most public part of the house, where the remaining nail holes are not the right size for their

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478 There is a similar implication that a little girl has become a doll in John Singleton Copley's *The Copley Family* (1776-1777, National Gallery of Art, 1961.7.1). Copley's eldest daughter, Betsy, is dressed like the discarded doll that lies in the bottom left corner of the painting. Betsy is the most serious of the four Copley children. This relationship has been interpreted by Lovell and Rienhardt as Betsy moving into the next stage of childhood or modeling herself after her mother. See, Lovell, *Art in a Season of Revolution*, 155; and Reinhardt, "Serious Daughters," 46.
horizontal canvases.⁴⁷⁹ Therefore, the two portraits likely hung in a smaller room off the central passage, where viewing was more restricted, or perhaps in a family parlor or the upstairs hall. The red curtain in Anne's portrait participated in the slow and intimate revelation of the girls' portraits, as family members and invited guests moved into the family space and saw the painted images of the two girls.

While the portraits of Anne and Elizabeth Randolph are unique in their use of fictive masonry frames to separate them from the viewer, a similar, less pronounced strategy is employed in Wollaston's portraits of the sisters Mildred and Mary Lightfoot (figures 2.25 and 2.26). The two girls are depicted within painted ovals, partially obscured by stone plinths in non-descript settings that separate them from the viewer. Mildred, the younger sister, stands slightly behind a pediment upon which rests a basket of flowers. She wears a straw hat and rests one arm on the basket, pointing downwards with her other hand as if to direct attention away from herself. Mary, the elder sister, was no more than eight years old at the time her portrait was painted. She stands with her hair pulled up, attired in a pale pink dress adorned with lace. Mary stands partially behind a stone pediment, though she seems to emerge from behind it, unlike her younger sister. She looks directly at the viewer. Her left hand gently plays with the doll's hair while her right hand holds the doll's arm. The doll, dressed in a golden gown edged with lace at the neckline and sleeves, is the same doll seen in the portrait.

of young Elizabeth Randolph. Here, Mary sits the doll on a stone ledge at an angle so that her face and the front of the dress are hidden from the viewer.

The doll is dressed in a manner very similar to that of Mary and Mildred's mother, Mildred Howell Lightfoot, in her portrait (figure 2.27), and the doll's relationship to the mother underscores the objectification of adult women as well as children. The mother wears a golden dress with lace at the neck and sleeves, and her hair is pulled up and adorned with pearls like that of the doll. The implication is that Mary is modeling herself after her mother, learning how to be a proper gentlewoman. The doll sits in for the mother, providing a watchful gaze as well as a model of proper behavior. Turning the doll away from the viewer in Mary Lightfoot's portrait makes the doll's dress look more like Mildred Howell Lightfoot's dress, which is an invented costume. The doll actually wears a realistic sack-back dress with a white stomacher. The front of the doll's dress is best displayed in the portrait of Mann and Elizabeth Page (figure 2.20). If the doll faced outwards, it would not match Mildred Howell Lightfoot's attire. Positioning the doll to hide the front of her dress actually allows it to more fully represent the mother. The mother's sleeves and trim at the neckline, as well as her hairstyle, exactly match those of the doll from the viewer's perspective. Unlike the children, whose portraits show more playfulness and creativity, the woman/doll is restricted to a prescribed role. Moreover, the doll wears a realistic, fashionable dress, while the adult Virginia women depicted in portraits almost universally wear invented clothing. The doll's relationship to the adult Lightfoot woman
mimics the other portraits of Wollaston's women during this period, pictured with
dresses and bodies that do not belong to them and rendered as rigid models of
female civility.

In contrast to Wollaston's portraits of girls in non-descript settings, which
seek to separate the viewer from the sitter and use dolls, fruit, and flowers to
represent their future and "natural" roles as wives and mothers, Wollaston's
portraits of boys are more varied, presented without any obvious obstruction
before them, and carry symbols of mastery over nature. For example, John Page
(figure 2.28) is depicted with a hunting rifle. At his feet lie two dead birds and a
powder flask, showing off his hunting skills. The birds, identified as indigenous
American bobwhites or Virginia quails, suggest a specific mastery over the
American wilderness.480 John Page was the older brother of Mann Page (figure
2.20), who tames a Virginia cardinal in his double portrait with their sister,
Elizabeth. Wollaston painted the three sons of William Byrd III and Elizabeth Hill
Carter Byrd before they left for England in 1755. William Byrd IV (figure 2.29),
John Carter Byrd (figure 2.30), and Thomas Taylor Byrd (figure 2.31) are all
depicted in the same outfit: a jacket over a patterned waistcoat. Each wears his
hair pulled back into a ponytail with a ribbon flying behind the neck. The three
portraits of the Byrd boys represent three attributes affiliated with genteel
masculinity and mastery. Thomas, the youngest, appears with a conspicuously
placed bow and arrow. These elements represent his natural prowess as a

480 On the identification of the bird as the bobwhite, a species of quail, also referred to as
the Virginia quail, found throughout North America and the Caribbean, see Davis,
*Intellectual Life*, 1237.
hunter at about three years old. Only one year older, John is depicted with a nest of small birds. He gently tilts up the nest with one hand and points to the birds with the other. These features represent his ability to control nature and provide for dependents. They are also likely a play on the Byrd family name, and a reference to the continuity of the family line through the male children's future offspring. The oldest son, William, is posed with one hand in his waistcoat and the other in his pocket, a hat tucked under his arm. William represents the self-control and proper comportment of an older man, and stands in the recognizable pose of an English gentleman. He has learned to control the more "natural" states of manliness that his younger brothers still show in their likenesses. In fact, William Byrd IV's pose matches closely the pose of his father, William Byrd III, from an earlier portrait (figure 2.32). As the eldest son and namesake, William Byrd IV would have inherited Westover. Wollaston established a clear patrilineal relationship between the William Byrd III and IV portraits.

All of these portraits of children also record familial affection and an investment in the family's future. In Wollaston's portrait of Ralph Wormeley V (figure 2.33), for example, the sitter holds a tricorn hat filled with peaches and wears an elaborate satin or silk jacket trimmed with silver embroidery. He stands behind a stone plinth, resting his hat on it; however, unlike the portraits of young girls, the stone is very low in the composition and Ralph leans over it, his hat intruding into the viewer's space, thus breaking the barrier. While Ralph's father, Ralph Wormeley IV (figure 2.34), displays frugality in his costume and

481 Meyer, "Re-Dressing Classical Statuary."
appearance, his son, literally, enjoys the fruits of his labor. Young Ralph also represents the fruit of his mother, Jane Bowles Wormeley (figure 2.35). Although the Wormeleys had three living children, two of them daughters, it appears that only a portrait of their son was painted. Viewed as a family group, the portraits present an image of the father as a man of steady frugality and mastery, the mother as model of female sexuality, and their son bearing the fruit representing their success at producing a male heir, thus perpetuating the Wormeley dynasty. The Wormeley group epitomizes the planter family ideal in portraiture.

The Dynastic Collection: Planters and Genealogical Narratives

Recent scholarship on family group portraits argues that family life became increasingly sentimental in the mid-eighteenth century and that a change from patriarchal to more paternal relationships is evident in painted images of the family. Margaretta Lovell’s studies of group portraiture from New England and Philadelphia argue that mothers and children became more prominent in group portraits, and that fathers took on a more paternal role. Group portraits were increasingly sentimentalized as family members interacted closely with one another, sometimes ignoring the viewer altogether to provide an intimate family appearance.\textsuperscript{482} Kate Retford’s studies of English family portraiture make a similar argument, although Retford cautions scholars against assuming that increased

\textsuperscript{482} Lovell, \textit{Art in a Season of Revolution}, 141–83.
affection meant a weakening of patriarchal authority. While colonial family conversation pieces, or group portraits, exist for New England, New York, Philadelphia, Maryland, and South Carolina (albeit in relatively small numbers), there is no extant example from Virginia. This conspicuous absence reveals a regional digression from British Atlantic practice in Virginia portraiture, and results in patriarchal visions of family life. Affection between fathers and children and between husbands and wives are absent in Virginia portraiture because no male planter shares a canvas with another family member.

Retford, The Art of Domestic Life, 115–48. Conversation pieces are generally “small-scale portraits, in which amplified settings are carefully described, and in which complex, particular and often lively narratives are featured.” Retford, The Conversation Piece, definition, 18; on family conversation pieces, see esp. 217-250.

There is one possible exception. A group portrait of a father, mother, and child, believed to represent Virginian John Blair (ca. 1687-1771), his wife Mary Munroe Blair, and his son, James Blair (1741-1772) has descended in a private collection. The Frick Art Reference Library suggests a possible attribution to Charles Bridges and dates the portrait to ca. 1744 based on the oral history of the painting and the pictured age of the child. However, the painting does not stylistically resemble Bridges’ work or the style of any known artist working in Virginia in the 1740s. It is possible that the family was painted in England. Adding to the problem of attribution is the line of descent. According to family history recorded by the Frick, the portrait descended from James Blair (the young boy in the portrait) to his wife, Kitty Eustace of New York, and from Kitty to her stepson through her second husband, John Cuthbert of Georgia. James Blair and Kitty were married for less than a year, and she had an infamous affair with Governor Dunmore, which resulted in a separation almost as soon as the Blair marriage took place. Blair was searching for a way to divorce Kitty when he died in 1772. He left nothing to her in his will, and though she won some of his property through legal action, it is questionable whether Kitty would have inherited such a family portrait, particularly because James Blair had multiple siblings who fought Kitty in court for James’s property. Further, discrepancies in Georgia records suggest a possible divorce or separation from Kitty's second husband, James Cuthbert, as well. This group portrait deserves greater research and attention to confirm the sitter attributions. See FARL files, http://arcade.nyarc.org:80/record=b1206659~S6. For an account of the Blair scandal, see Frank L. Dewey, Thomas Jefferson, Lawyer (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1986), 57–65.

There is one significant exception: the portrait of merchant James Balfour with his son George, by Matthew Pratt (figure 4.7), which was painted in 1773 and is discussed at length in chapter 4.
Group portraits did not fulfill the needs or desires of Virginia families, though several material factors also contributed to the absence of group portraits in Virginia. Importantly, Virginia never supported a long-term resident colonial painter and studio, unlike other colonies, where urban areas supplied regular clientele. In the 1770s, the artist Matthew Pratt attempted to set up a studio in Williamsburg, but it did not last long. Colonial artists Charles Bridges and William Dering, as far as we know, worked exclusively in Virginia, but even they traveled to find patrons. Painters in Virginia moved from plantation to plantation, residing with the families whose portraits they painted. Such artists relied on acquaintances, word of mouth, and personal letters of introduction in order to find patronage. For example, in 1735, Charles Bridges carried a letter of introduction from William Byrd II to Alexander Spotswood. Itinerancy in Virginia was attractive to at least one painter, Charles Willson Peale. In 1775 Peale hoped to escape debt in Annapolis by traveling to Virginia, where he enjoyed the hospitality of planters. Peale noted, "by these trips I have but just now worked myself out of debt." For Peale, the free room and board, coupled with the payment for portraits, were enticing reasons to travel through Virginia.

Itinerancy had its drawbacks. Painting materials—paints, pigments, brushes, canvases, stretchers, etc.—all had to be carried by the artist from...

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plantation to plantation. This requirement could be a burden, as Peale recorded during a trip from Maryland to Massachusetts: "my Paint Box proves very Troublesome, the Hips of poor Little Gimblet is very much Galded: and Rather than be Detain'd I put all my Paints in the Bags and through away the Box and Pall[et]". Additionally, most colonial group portraits were executed on large canvases; thus, it is possible that artists were not able to carry around canvases large enough to be appropriate for large-scale group portraits. Moreover, ordering materials through local merchant factors and suppliers could take a long time to import from England or to gather from other colonies.

The popularity of small-scale conversation pieces by artists like Arthur Devis in England, however, who worked among the country gentry and wealthy mercantile families, make it clear that group portraits could be completed on smaller canvases. Devis regularly painted family groups on canvases as modest as 37 x 38 inches, as is the case with John Orde, His Wife, Anne, His Eldest Son, and a Servant (figure 2.36). On this reduced canvas, Devis includes four full-length figures in a fully furnished interior space. The mercantile and gentry families that Devis painted in England were of a social status akin to that of colonial group portraits.

491 Colonial group portraits include: John Smibert, The Bermuda Group (Dean Berkeley and His Entourage) (1729, Yale University Art Gallery), which is 69 1/2 x 93 in. (176.6 x 236.1 cm.); Robert Feke, Isaac Royall and Family (1741, Harvard Law School Library), 56 3/16 x 77 3/4 in. (149.9 x 197.5 cm.); and Charles Willson Peale, The Peale Family (1773, changes in 1808, New-York Historical Society), 56 1/2 x 89 1/2 in. (143.5 x 227.3 cm).
492 The majority of conversation pieces in mid-eighteenth-century England were small-scale paintings. On the English conversation piece, see Retford, The Conversation Piece.
of the Virginia planter families. The painter William Williams painted conversation pieces of similar size and style in Philadelphia and New York in the 1760s and 1770s. Had Virginia families desired group portraits, they could have commissioned them in the style of Arthur Devis and William Williams.

Another explanation for the lack of conversation pieces in Virginia may depend on the skill of the artists available in the region, but that seems unlikely. Indeed, relatively few artists painted group portraits of any size in the colonies. John Smibert, Robert Feke, William Williams, and John Singleton Copley all painted conversation pieces, but they worked mainly in the northern colonies. However, Charles Bridges, John Hesselius, and John Wollaston created multi-figural portraits of children and mothers with children in Virginia. Wollaston also painted at least one northern family group featuring an unknown married couple and a child (Newark Museum), indicating that he possessed experience with multi-figural adult compositions. Most strikingly, Charles Willson Peale created a large number of group portraits, many of which are from Maryland. In fact, several of the Maryland group portraits feature families with close ties to Virginia. For example, Peale painted a group portrait of the Edward Lloyd family in 1771 (figure 2.37). Mrs. Edward Lloyd was Elizabeth Tayloe of Mount Airy, Virginia, whose family had extensive ties to Maryland through trade in Annapolis. Particularly in the Northern Neck of Virginia, where Mount Airy was located, the Virginia planters traded through the port city of Annapolis. While Peale painted several families from Virginia’s Northern Neck, none has an extant group portrait.

though such works exist just over the geopolitical border in Maryland. Virginians also visited cities further north, such as Philadelphia and Newport, where group portraits were produced, and they visited England, where such portraits were on display in private homes and public venues throughout the eighteenth century. Further, Virginian Ralph Wormeley V appeared in two versions of a conversation piece painted by Benjamin West while living in England. The portraits, commissioned by Wormeley's friends, feature a group of young colonists abroad for their education and include the South Carolinian Ralph Izard and the Pennsylvanian brothers James and Andrew Allen (The Cricketers, also known as Ralph Izard and His Friends, 1764). Virginians were also exposed to group portraits via English prints, which were regularly imported to the colonies. Therefore, if any Virginians wanted a group portrait, they had ample familiarity with the genre, and the models and means to commission one, yet they seemingly did not.

Peale was able to negotiate patriarchal and sentimental family values in the 1771 group portrait, The Edward Lloyd Family (figure 2.37), of Talbot County, Maryland, by combining older models of family life with the fashion for images of sentimentality. In this work, Elizabeth Tayloe Lloyd sits on an ornate bench playing a lute, and stares into the distance. Elizabeth's young daughter, Ann

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494 A fifth person is tentatively identified as either Peter Beckford of Jamaica or Arthur Middleton of South Carolina. The five young men appear with cricket bats and a dog. There are two versions of this painting, the first believed to have been commissioned by the Allen family (Brook Club, New York) and the second by Ralph Izard (private collection). For more on these paintings, see McInnis, In Pursuit of Refinement, 100–103.
Lloyd, stands beside her on the bench, leaning against her mother. Edward Lloyd stands next to the bench, leaning toward mother and child. His right hand is on his hip, while his left arm encircles his daughter's waist to hold her hand. Both Edward and his daughter look directly out at the viewer. Here, Edward and Elizabeth are connected through their progeny. In the distant background behind Edward is an image of Wye House that stands on the Lloyd family plantation. This portrait depicts an intimate family scene in a garden; however, Edward Lloyd as the husband and father still physically dominates the composition. The inclusion of the family home in the background emphasizes property and family inheritance. This portrait expresses sentimental values in its intimacy and in the affectionate relationships pictured. It simultaneously conveys the patriarchal prerogatives and concern for landed inheritance that existed in the Chesapeake. This portrait (among others) suggests that Peale could certainly have created similar compositions when he traveled to Virginia in the early 1770s, had there been a demand for them.

Historians of Virginia families, such as Jan Lewis and Daniel Blake Smith, argue that Virginians embraced sentimental relationships around the 1760s, encouraging the ideal of companionate marriages and the centering of children in family life.\textsuperscript{495} Their findings, based on letters, diaries, and prescriptive literature, concur with Lovell's argument about family values in mid- to late-eighteenth-century colonial painting. Yet whatever affection Virginians may have expressed

\textsuperscript{495} Jan Lewis, \textit{The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Smith, \textit{Inside the Great House}. 255
in writing, they simultaneously resisted the visual depiction of these values in portraits of adults. Portraits were investments in posterity, and it makes sense that they would be conservative in nature. More importantly, displaying family members on individual canvases had practical effects for dynastic politics in Virginia.

Colonial Virginians emphasized dynastic relationships and patriarchal patterns of inheritance in their portrait collections. Drawing inspiration from the British country house example, plantation homes were built for permanence in the landscape and were handed down to the eldest son. Family portraits were considered part of the estate and inheritable with the house, rather than as individual commodities. Wills and inventories rarely mention family portraits, except when there were no direct male heirs to inherit the house or when the family was deeply in debt and the estate, including the house, was divided and sold. Similarly, when there were only daughters or grandchildren and the estate was divided, portraits were more frequently mentioned. For instance, Daniel Parke had only two daughters when he died, and seven "family pictures" were included in the list of his belongings. When William Byrd I, II, and III died, no individual family portraits were mentioned in their respective wills. William Byrd II's will simply stated that "the rest of my Estate in Land, Slaves, Stock, Plate, Books, Pictures, Mony, and other Personal Estate whatever" went to his son,

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496 On dynastic politics of portraiture in England at this time, see Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, 149–85.
497 Schedule containing an account of all the estate real and personal of Daniel Parke.
William Byrd III.\(^{498}\) However, when William Byrd III’s widow, Mary Willing Byrd, wrote her will in 1813, the Byrd family was in serious debt and the estate was sold. As a result, she listed all the portraits from Westover and divided them among her heirs in her will.\(^{499}\) In the case of the Tayloe family of Mount Airy, where both John Tayloe I and II had male heirs, none of the family portraits were listed in their wills or inventories.\(^{500}\) The portraits descended with the home, where they remain today. The relative lack of documentation regarding family portraits complicates the art historian’s task of identifying them, but it also highlights the ways that portraits were intended to descend as part of an inheritable estate. Scholars such as Lovell have also noted that portraiture was not typically included in inventories. Prints and paintings that were not portraits were often included and given values in probate inventories. As Lovell points out, family portraits had no real commercial value, their value was sentimental or genealogical; thus, they were not accorded monetary value.\(^{501}\) As a nineteenth-century correspondent of art historian William Dunlap wrote from Virginia, “There are certainly a few pictures in some of the old family mansions ... no record is


\(^{499}\) Byrd, “Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd.”


\(^{501}\) Lovell, \textit{Art in a Season of Revolution}, 21–22.
attached to them, and they are remembered by the possessors as old fixtures.⁶⁰²

The picture collection belonging to William Randolph III (1723-1761) of Wilton plantation makes for an interesting case study that highlights the importance of dynastic portraiture in colonial Virginia. William Randolph III was a younger son of William Randolph II (1681-1742) of Turkey Island plantation. He inherited some of the Randolph family plantation quarters, including Wilton plantation, but did not inherit the primary family plantation quarter or house. As a result, William Randolph III had to build his own house at Wilton, which he did in the 1750s. The Wilton house was completed ca. 1753. In 1755, the itinerant artist John Wollaston arrived in Virginia, providing William Randolph III with his first opportunity to commission family portraits. Randolph commissioned at least ten paintings from John Wollaston, probably Wollaston's largest commission in Virginia, if not the colonies. The ten paintings that Wollaston completed for Wilton were: portraits of William Randolph III (figure 2.12) and his wife, Anne Harrison Randolph; their two living children, Anne Randolph (figure 2.23) and Elizabeth Randolph (figure 2.24); three of William Randolph III's siblings or relatives, Peter Randolph, Elizabeth Randolph Chiswell (figure 2.13), and a man thought to be Beverley Randolph (a brother or cousin); portraits of William Randolph III's parents, William Randolph II and Elizabeth Beverley Randolph (figure 1.9); and a

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⁶⁰² Italicization in original. Dunlap, History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts, 169.
portrait said to be Elizabeth Harrison Randolph, his wife's sister.503 These ten portraits also descended with portraits believed to depict William Randolph III's grandparents, William Randolph I (figure 1.8) and Mary Isham Randolph. The Randolph portraits thus span three generations. Hanging together at Wilton, they created an extensive genealogical narrative of inheritance.504 All of the portraits are identical in size, except for the paintings of the daughters, which are the same size canvas flipped horizontally. As a result, no portrait visually dominates the others.

Viewed together at Wilton, these portraits create the illusion that multiple generations lived within the house, and they materialize a successful, dynastic inheritance from fathers to sons. At least two of the portraits, William Randolph II and Elizabeth Beverley Randolph (Mrs. William Randolph II), appear to be copies of earlier images. They do not have Wollaston's particularly recognizable features of almond shaped eyes and round faces; instead, their attribution to Wollaston is based on the inscription on the back of William Randolph II's portrait that reads, "Copied 1755/By J. Wollason [sic]."505 It is also possible that Wollaston copied the portrait of William Randolph I, as that portrait is stylistically different from his

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504 On the cultural importance of genealogy in British America, see Wulf, “Bible, King, and Common Law.”

other known portraits, although the brushwork looks similar to Wollaston's technique. The original portraits are no longer extant, but they are evidence of Virginia families commissioning posthumous copies of portraits. William Randolph III's mother and grandmother are included among the portraits as progenitors. Unusually, William Randolph III also commissioned portraits of his siblings and (supposedly) his wife's sister. These portraits materialize connections to other prominent Virginia families and their plantation homes. Randolph III's three younger children, Peyton, Lucy, and Peter, born after Wollaston's visit, were painted ca. 1773 by Matthew Pratt, thereby completing the family collection.\textsuperscript{506}

Four or five of the Randolph family portraits hung in the central passage at Wilton where they established a narrative of patriarchal inheritance and connected the family to other gentry. Recent architectural research reveals that four nails, dating to the eighteenth or early nineteenth century, were spaced equally on the west wall of the passage between the parlor and dining room doors. A fifth nail is slightly off-center from the other four, suggesting that it may have been added at a later date. The nails were 71 1/2 to 72 inches from the floor; one nail held the painting from the top and another supported the frame at the bottom. The west wall was the longest expanse of paneling in the room. Notably, no nails were found in the opposite wall.\textsuperscript{507} The original paint color of the

\textsuperscript{506} The three Randolph portraits by Matthew Pratt are also at the Virginia Historical Society.
walls was a light gray. Considering the lack of nails on the opposing wall, the subtle color of the passage, and the hanging height, the family portraits would have been visually arresting in this setting. It is likely that the portraits of William Randolph III and his wife, Anne Harrison Randolph, hung in the passage, along with those of his parents. The fifth set of nails may have accommodated the later portrait of their eldest son and heir to Wilton. Although speculative, this theory supports the generational transference of land and wealth from father to son. Given the sitters' positions, the two generations would be located back-to-back, visualizing generational continuity. Traditionally, in pendant portraits of husbands and wives, the spouses hang next to each other and their bodies are oriented towards one another. William Randolph III is turned to the right and his wife's body is turned to the left so that they face each other when hanging side-by-side. Similarly, William Randolph II turns to the left, while the woman believed to be his wife leans towards the right. Either the two men hung back-to-back, or the two women hung side-by-side. The passage was the most public space of the house, often serving as a waiting room for visitors of all classes and races and, during the summer, it doubled as a sitting room. Portraits of other family members probably hung in the parlor and dining room off the central passage. As visitors walked from room to room, they encountered more faces, reminding them of the family's connections and heritage. John Wollaston actually painted the Peter Randolph portrait three times: one for Wilton plantation, another identical portrait

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apparently given to his friend, William Byrd III, and a larger portrait for Randolph’s home at Chatsworth plantation. Thus, the Wilton collection materially linked the Randolphs to other important Virginia homes.

Consider the Gordon family portraits, which, although a smaller collection, reveal a similar concern for dynastic legacy. James Gordon (1714-1768) was a Scotch-Irish merchant who immigrated to Virginia in 1738 with his younger brother John. The two brothers prospered as merchants, and James slowly began purchasing land. James Gordon became well respected in his community, marrying women from prominent families; first, Milicent Conway (1725-1748) and, after her death, Mary Harrison (d. 1771). In 1747 he purchased an extensive tract of land and began building a large, fashionable home for his growing family. Appropriately enough, he named this plantation Gordonsville. Gordon was known to welcome many neighbors into this house. In 1750, not long after the completion of his great house and the birth of his first surviving son, he commissioned the artist John Hesselius to paint portraits of himself (figure 2.38), a post-mortem portrait of his first wife Milicent Conway (figure 2.39), his second wife, Mary Harrison, with their son James (figure 2.40), a portrait of his brother

509 The Chatsworth version was inherited by a descendant who married into the Hill-Carter family in the nineteenth century. The portrait is now at Shirley Plantation. “Shirley Plantation Great House Collection.” Mary Willing Byrd lists a portrait of Randolph in her will: “unto Mrs. Eliza. Randolph the portraits of Col. Peter Randolph & lady.” This is likely the version now at Colonial Williamsburg. Byrd, “Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd,” 349.
and business partner John Gordon (figure 2.41), and a double portrait of his daughters, Anne and Sarah (figure 2.42).\textsuperscript{511}

The five Gordon portraits made a powerful visual statement about James Gordon, celebrating his recently acquired status as a landed planter. As at Wilton, the portraits likely hung in the central passage, the most public part of Gordon’s new home. The portraits contain no direct references to the mercantile source of his wealth; instead, there are allusions to classical antiquity in the columns and plinths, demonstrating the Gordon family’s awareness of portrait traditions and symbolizing their cultural and political authority. The rocks and the plinth upon which James leans lend a sense of permanence to the landscape. Gordon’s commission of portraits of both of his wives, who brought him status and connections to prominent families, visually connect the Gordon family to those of his in-laws. Gordon’s first wife was the mother of his two living daughters, Ann and Sarah, who were also painted by Hesselius. The unusual commission of a post-mortem portrait is likely a reflection of James Gordon’s anxiety over his recently acquired status as gentlemen and his desire to build a dynastic legacy. The portraits of Milicent Conway Gordon and their daughters became tangible reminders of their kinship ties to the Conway family. Similarly, the portrait of Mary Harrison Gordon includes their very young son, James, who was born in August 1750.\textsuperscript{512} The group of portraits celebrates baby James, the

\textsuperscript{511} The dating of the portraits is based on Milicent Conway Gordon’s portrait, which is signed and dated 1750 in the lower right of the canvas.
\textsuperscript{512} Another son by his first wife died after only three days. Gordon family bible, transcribed in Genealogies of Virginia Families from Tyler’s Quarterly Historical and
new male heir, and his daughters, who were living ties to the Conway family.

These three children had lineage claims to prominent Virginia planter families.

Of particular interest is the double portrait of James Gordon's daughters, Ann and Sarah, as the two girls are seated in a landscape with a river and a small plantation scene in the background. Rivers were prime real estate because they provided a location for docks, warehouses, and easy access to shipping routes and ports. Therefore, rivers were dominated by the gentry rather than smallholders. More importantly, the landscape includes a two-story, two-bay building with a solid fence, likely made of brick. This building is probably intended to represent the newly constructed, or still under construction, great house at Gordonsville. Notably, the building bears a striking resemblance to the woodcut images of plantation complexes that appeared in newspaper real estate ads (figure 2.43 and detail of 2.42). These small images generally feature simplified, narrow houses to fit in the small frame—shorthand symbols for plantation estates. Otherwise, the landscape is imaginary, with a flat-topped mountain in the distant background and a clearing dotted with trees. This portrait associates the next generation of Gordons with the landscape, both imaginary, to show off their cultural authority, and real, with the inclusion of the plantation house. It


emphasizes the newly acquired inheritable real estate by including the plantation, and therefore signals the family's participation in gentry culture.

One of the practical effects of portraying individuals rather than groups in portraits was the relative portability of the canvases. While the eldest son typically inherited the father's plantation house, as married adults they often lived in a separate home until their parents passed away. For example, William Byrd III and his first wife lived at a home at Belvidere plantation (the old Falls plantation), while his mother lived at Westover.\textsuperscript{514} Therefore, some of the family's portraits, such as those by Wollaston, could be displayed at Belvidere and then moved to Westover. Similarly, Charles Carter lived at Corotoman plantation until his mother, Elizabeth Hill Carter, passed away at Shirley plantation. It was only then that Charles took up primary residence at Shirley.\textsuperscript{515} The transfer of portraits from a temporary house to the patrimonial home was a right of passage. The movement of portraits materially enacted the dynastic transfer from father to son, as a son's portrait joined that of his father's in the ancestral home. Given the spatial arrangements of the home and the limited wall space in certain rooms, it is also probable that, on occasion, a son's portrait literally replaced his father's, which was moved to a different location within the home. Moreover, the high mortality rate meant that portraits could be swapped and replaced as needed. If a widow/er remarried, they could place their portrait next to their new spouse's likeness.

\textsuperscript{514} Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, \textit{Correspondence}, 603.
\textsuperscript{515} For the history of Shirley Plantation see, Lynn, “Shirley Plantation: A History.”
Portability was especially important for women's portraiture. Surveying a number of family collections, it is clear that fewer portraits of grown daughters remained in their childhood homes than did those of other family members. Children's portraits tended stay in their childhood homes; however, girls painted in their teens or as adults typically took their portrait with them to their husband's home. There, they were joined with the portraits of their husband's family. For instance, of William Byrd II's six surviving children, Evelyn, Wilhelmina, Anne, Maria, William, and Jane, only portraits of Evelyn, Maria, and William as adults descended at Westover. Evelyn never married and died fairly young at Westover. Maria's portrait was copied and given to her husband Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, where it remains today. Surviving letters from Maria Taylor Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd II), Maria's mother, reveal that Maria was a favored daughter. After Maria Byrd (later Carter) died, Maria Taylor Byrd helped raise her granddaughter (also named Maria).\textsuperscript{516} Favoritism probably explains why Maria Byrd Carter's portrait remained at Westover. William, of course, inherited Westover. Anne was painted as a young child, and that portrait remained at Westover. However, her portrait as an adult by William Dering, which contextual evidence suggests was painted at Westover, did not remain there. Jane Byrd (later Page) was also painted, though no evidence connects the portrait to Westover. Her portrait descended in the Page family.\textsuperscript{517} There is no extant portrait of Wilhelmina Byrd

\textsuperscript{516} Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, \textit{Correspondence}, 623.  
\textsuperscript{517} The Westover version of Maria Byrd Carter's portrait is still privately owned by a descendant, but is on long-term loan to the College of William & Mary. The portrait of Anne Byrd Carter as an adult, which was painted by William Dering, is at Colonial
(later Chamberlayne); however, the fact that all of her siblings were painted, together with information in an unsubstantiated letter by William Byrd II, which claims that Charles Bridges "has drawn my children" (no known portrait of a Byrd family member is currently attributed to Bridges), makes it likely that her portrait once existed but passed into the Chamberlayne family and was subsequently lost.\textsuperscript{518}

The relationship between portraits and patrilineal inheritance is also made clear in wills and patterns of provenance. Elizabeth Nelson wrote in her 1793 will, "I give also to my said son Robert the small miniature picture of his father now in the possession of his sister Judith Nelson unless his Brother Hugh chusis to give him for it the picture of his father drawn by Feake."\textsuperscript{519} Although Elizabeth's daughter Judith was in possession of a portrait of her father at the time of Elizabeth's death, Elizabeth dictated that it was her sons who should inherit the two portraits of their father. Robert "King" Carter's 1726 will stated that, "my son [John] to have my first picture and his mothers...my Son Robert to have my other

Williamsburg. The landscape behind Anne in her portrait features a fence that is similar to the Westover fence. Bowling pins and a ball are also visible in the lawn. Dering was a friend of William Byrd II and a regular visitor to Westover. Byrd's diary from the 1740s records lawn bowling with Dering and other visitors. See Object file 1963-28, \textit{Portrait of Anne Byrd Carter}, Colonial Williamsburg. The portrait of Jane Byrd Page is now owned by the Muscarelle Museum at the College of William & Mary. This is a damaged portrait with a lot of overpaint. However, her dress and pose suggest it was painted ca. 1750, possibly by John Hesselius. The dress is very similar to that worn by Milicent Conway Gordon.\textsuperscript{516} William Byrd II to Alexander Spotswood, 22 December 1735, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, \textit{Correspondence}, 468.\textsuperscript{519} The Will of Elizabeth Nelson.
picture & his mothers picture." Three of Carter's five surviving sons, John, Charles, and Landon inherited portraits of their fathers and their mothers (either Judith Armistead or Elizabeth Landon Willis), though Landon's copies were not mentioned in his will. At Carter's death he also had five surviving daughters, none of whom inherited portraits of their parents, though he provided generously for all of his children and many of his grandchildren. In the case of the Byrd family portraits from Westover, Mary Willing Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III) left nearly all the family portraits to her sons. Her daughters and a few granddaughters inherited portraits of some female relatives and peripheral relations, but most of the portraits of the two William Byrds and their wives went to her sons. When the plantation house remained in the hands of the family,

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521 Portraits believed to be Robert "King" Carter and Judith Armistead Carter were inherited by John Carter and remain at Shirley Plantation. Portraits said to be "King" Carter and Betty Landon Willis Carter are still in the private collection of Landon Carter's descendants at Sabine Hall, though the portrait believed to be Betty Landon may be a later copy. A portrait believed to represent "King" Carter is at the National Portrait Gallery and descended in the Carter family. This, perhaps, is the version inherited by Charles.

522 Byrd, “Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd." Byrd, “Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd." Charles Willing Byrd (1770-1828) was bequeathed a portrait of William Byrd II; Richard Willing Byrd (1774-1815) was left portraits of William Byrd III, William Byrd II, Lucy Parke Byrd, and Maria Taylor Byrd; and William Powell Byrd (1777-1820) was left a portrait of William Byrd II. Interestingly, her eldest daughter, Maria, actually received “the portrait of honored father, and one of myself,” while Maria’s husband, John Page, received “a portrait of his dear wife and myself.” For various reasons, including her brothers’ deaths and relocation to the west, her daughter Evelyn Byrd Harrison ended up in possession of the largest number of Byrd portraits. Evelyn was originally to inherit only “the portrait of her Aunt Evelyn." The case of the Byrd women preserving the family's portrait collection
the portraits tended to descend with the house to the eldest male child and, in many cases, were never specifically mentioned in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century wills and inventories, as indicated in the examples cited above.

Descendants also felt the responsibility of maintaining the portraits of their ancestors. In 1775, Robert Beverley sent his parent's portraits to London "to be repaired by Pine." It also appears that John Custis IV sent his grandfather's portrait to London for repairs around 1717. In that year, Custis thanked the London merchant Micajah Perry for sending "my grandfathers picture to satisfaction, and return you A thousand thanks for your Care in that affair." This portrait was probably the one referred to in John Custis III's will as "my fathers Picture now hanging in my hall." Therefore, if his grandfather's portrait was in London, it was sent there by John Custis IV. These records exist because the owners of the portraits sent them abroad for repairs. It is probable that artists in the nineteenth century appears symptomatic of a shift in genealogical practices in that century. The provenance records I have examined during the course of my research show a growing number of families leaving family portraits to daughters and nieces during the early nineteenth century. This trend parallels the loss of large family homes and estates as a number of colonial gentry families became insolvent, such as the Byrd family, causing portrait collections to be re-distributed. Women seem to have inherited many ancestral portraits throughout the nineteenth century.

523 Robert Beverley to Samuel Athawes, between 4 June and 6 July 1775, in Robert Beverley Letterbook, 1761-1793. Microfilm, Colonial Williamsburg. Original at Library of Congress. The current location(s) of the portraits of William and Elizabeth Bland Beverley is unknown. The artist referred to is Robert Edge Pine, who painted a number of colonists in England and later came to the colonies to paint.

524 John Custis IV to Micajah Perry the Elder, 1717, in John Custis and Josephine Little Zuppan, The Letterbook of John Custis IV of Williamsburg, 1717-1742 (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 38–39. According to the editor, the word "great" appears crossed out before "grandfather" in the original manuscript letterbook.

525 Custis and Zuppan, 39, fn.4. The original will is in the collection of the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association.
working locally repaired other portraits and left no record. The care and expense devoted to maintaining family portrait collections speaks to their dynastic importance.

**Conclusion: The Limits of Family**

When John Custis IV died in 1749 his will ordered that a "picture of my Negro boy John" be given to Ann Moody. 526 John, called Jack, was the natural son of John Custis and Alice, one of Custis's enslaved women. Custis provided papers for Jack to be freed at age twenty and to be supported from his estate. His will included provisions for land, slaves, horses, a house, and furniture for Jack. Until Jack was twenty-one, Daniel Parke Custis, John Custis's legitimate son, was to care for Jack. 527 John Custis's will is the only documentation from colonial Virginia of a portrait of an African, free or enslaved. It is unclear if this was a miniature portrait, an intimate object carried by John Custis, or if it was an oil painting displayed on the walls of the Custis home at Arlington plantation or in Williamsburg. Regardless, the portrait did not descend with the Custis family. Instead, it was given to Ann Moody, a tavern keeper's wife, and it disappeared from the visual archive. Perhaps there was an undocumented understanding that Moody would give the portrait to Jack when he had his own home in which to display it. Maybe Custis was afraid his son Daniel would destroy Jack's portrait if

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526 Will of John Custis IV, 1749, Mss1C9698a 52-57, Custis Papers, Virginia Historical Society.
527 Deed of trust, 1747/8, Mss1C9690a 38-40 and Will of John Custis IV, 1749, Mss1C9698a 52-57, Custis Papers, Virginia Historical Society.
left in his care. Whatever the reason, there was no room for Jack in the Custis family portrait collection at Arlington plantation. According to a later family history, which elides the father-son relationship, Jack was:

a small negro boy to whom the old gentleman had taken a most violent fancy; and on one occasion when in great displeasure with his son, Daniel, on account of his refusing to concur in his ambitious views, he made a will, duly recorded, leaving all his fortune to this boy. Through the solicitations of his friends and his own paternal feelings, when the ill-humor had vanished, he destroyed that will, but manumitted the boy with his mother, Alice, and provided them with a most comfortable maintenance.\textsuperscript{528}

There was, moreover, no room in the family history for an enslaved, mixed-race son that disrupted the Custis genealogical narrative.

This chapter has focused on issues of family and gender; however, as Jack's portrait reveals, there is an invisible aspect to Virginia family portrait collections. Unseen in the visual record are the faces of the enslaved people that Virginians referred to as members of their "family." These "family" members were named as such in the general sense that they were dependent on the planters. Some, like Jack, were the biological children of planters who went largely unacknowledged in planter family records, visual or otherwise. By representing idealized white patriarchs, good wives, and children in portraiture, planters also had to reckon with the reality of slavery.

The gender relations and dynastic concerns that developed in Virginia over the course of the eighteenth century led to Virginians departing from a number of British Atlantic conventions. Their vested interested in protecting white

\textsuperscript{528} Custis, \textit{Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington}, 20.
women, displaying patriarchal authority, and developing dynastic ties to land led
to regionally distinct preferences for domestic portraiture. The emphasis on
female sexuality related to the imperial project of mastering colonial nature. The
association of male subjects of all ages with mastery over the natural world and
the female body is an important feature in portraits of Virginians. While their
portraits in many ways reflect their participation in a British Atlantic world of taste,
local portrait practices and the performance of gender remained distinctly
Virginian.
Figure 2.1. Unknown artist, *Evelyn Byrd*, ca. 1724. Oil on canvas, 50 3/16 x 40 3/8 in. (127.5 x 102.6 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1941-76.
Figure 2.2. Unknown artist, *Maria Taylor Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd II)*, ca. 1724. Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 x 40 in. (125.7 x 101.6 cm.). Metropolitan Museum of Art, 25.108.
Figure 2.3. Robert Feke, *Elizabeth Burwell Nelson (Mrs. William Nelson)*, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 49 5/8 x 39 5/8 in. (126 x 100.6 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Gift of Mrs. Douglas Crocker, 1986-246.
Figure 2.4. Robert Feke, *William Nelson*, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 50 11/16 x 40 11/16 in. (128.7 x 103.3 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Gift of Mrs. Douglas Crocker, 1986-245.
Figure 2.5. John Wollaston, *George Braxton III*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 35 7/8 in. x 28 7/8 in. (91.12 x 73.34 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1956-26.

Figure 2.6. John Wollaston, *Mary Blair Braxton (Mrs. George Braxton)*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 36 1/2 x 29 1/2 in. (92.7 x 74.9 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1956-27.
Figure 2.7. John Wollaston, *Daniel Parke Custis*, 1757. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Washington and Lee University, Bequest of Mary Custis Lee, U1918.1.2.

Figure 2.8. John Wollaston, *Martha Dandridge Custis (Mrs. Daniel Parke Custis)*, 1757. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Washington and Lee University, Bequest of Mary Custis Lee, U1918.1.1.
Figure 2.9. John Wollaston, *Fielding Lewis*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Kenmore Plantation, The George Washington Foundation.

Figure 2.10. John Wollaston, *John Tayloe II*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.).

Figure 2.11. John Wollaston, *Rebecca Plater Tayloe (Mrs. John Tayloe II) and daughter*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Private collection, Mount Airy.
Figure 2.12. John Wollaston, *William Randolph III*, 1755. Oil on canvas, 36 x 29 in. (91.44 x 73.66 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Kate Harris Williams, 1951.33.

Figure 2.13. John Wollaston, *Elizabeth Randolph Chiswell (Mrs. John Chiswell)*, ca. 1755. Oil on canvas, 36 x 29 in. (91.44 x 73.66 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Kate Harris Williams, 1927.15.
Figure 2.14. John Wollaston, *Frances Tasker Carter (Mrs. Robert Carter III)*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 50 x 39 1/2 in. (127 x 100.33 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1956-237.
Figure 2.15. John Wollaston, *Susannah Everard Meade (Mrs. David Meade)*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 34 x 26 1/2 in. (86.36 x 67.31 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Mrs. Charles A. Penick, 1966.10.
Figure 2.16. John Wollaston, *John Parke Custis and Martha Parke Custis (The Custis Children)*, 1757. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Washington and Lee University, Bequest of Mary Lee Custis, U1918.1.3.
Figure 2.17. Attributed to John Hesselius, *The Grymes Children (Lucy, John, Philip, and Charles Grymes)*, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 56 x 66 in. (142.24 x 167.64 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Bequest of Nora Crena Braxton Macon, 1893.3.

Figure 2.18. Charles Bridges, *Benjamin and Ludwell Grymes*, ca. 1735-1740. Oil on canvas, 39 1/2 x 49 1/2 in. (100.33 x 125.73 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Miss Charlotte Picot, 1981.9.
Figure 2.19. John Wollaston, *Rebecca and Warner Lewis II*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 47 x 38 in. (119.38 x 96.52 cm.). Private collection.
Figure 2.20. John Wollaston, *Mann Page III and Elizabeth Page*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 49 x 40 in. (124.46 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Bequest of Louise Anderson Patten, 1973.16.
Figure 2.21. Charles Bridges, *Lucy and Bernard Moore*, ca. 1735. Oil on canvas, 40 x 50 in. (101.6 x 127 cm.). Private collection.
Figure 2.22. John Hesselius, *Janie Oakie (Jane) and Gawin Corbin*, 1755. Oil on canvas, 43 x 34 in. (109.22 x 86.36 cm.). Private collection. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, MESDA Object Database, S-4670.
Figure 2.23. John Wollaston, *Anne Randolph*, ca. 1755. Oil on canvas, 29 x 36 in. (73.66 x 91.44 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Kate Harris Williams, 1951.34.
Figure 2.24. John Wollaston, Elizabeth Randolph, ca. 1755. Oil on canvas, 29 x 36 in. (73.66 x 91.44 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Kate Harris Williams, 1947.71.
Figure 2.25. John Wollaston, *Mildred Lightfoot*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas. Private collection. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, MESDA Object Database, S-6170.
Figure 2.26. John Wollaston, *Mary Lightfoot*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 37 x 32 in. (93.98 x 81.28 cm.). The Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Gift of Mr. Herbert Lee Pratt, 4725.
Figure 2.27. Attributed to John Wollaston, *Mildred Howell Lightfoot (Mrs. William Lightfoot)*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas. Private collection. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, MESDA Object Database, NN-2396.
Figure 2.28. John Wollaston, *John Page*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 48 x 38 in. (121.92 x 96.52 cm.). Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William & Mary, Gift of Mr. R.C.M. Page, 1897.004.
Figure 2.29. John Wollaston, *William Byrd IV*, 1755-1756. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Private collection. Photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library, Photoarchive.

Figure 2.30. John Wollaston, *John Carter Byrd*, 1755-1756. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Private collection. Photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library, Photoarchive.

Figure 2.31. John Wollaston, *Thomas Taylor Byrd*, 1755-1756. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Private collection. Photograph courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library, Photoarchive.

Figure 2.32. Unknown artist, *William Byrd III*, ca. 1747. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Virginia State Library.
Figure 2.33. John Wollaston, *Ralph Wormeley V*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 27 x 25 in. (68.58 x 63.5 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of the Estate of Carter Warner Wormeley and Ralph Harvie Wormeley through the courtesy of Mrs. Carter Warner Wormeley, 1958.30.

Figure 2.34. John Wollaston, *Ralph Wormeley IV*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 x 39 1/2 in. (125.73 x 100.33 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of the Estate of Mr. J. Chauncey Williams through Mrs. Elizabeth Spillman Williams, 1951.20.

Figure 2.35. John Wollaston, *Jane Bowles Wormeley (Mrs. Ralph Wormeley V)*, ca. 1755-1758. Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 x 39 1/2 in. (125.73 x 100.33 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of the Estate of Mr. J. Chauncy Williams through Mrs. Elizabeth Spillman Williams, 1951.21.
Figure 2.36. Arthur Devis, *John Orde, His Wife, Anne, His Eldest Son, William, and a Servant*, 1754-1756. 37 x 37 7/8 in. (94 x 96.2 cm.). Oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B2001.2.65.

Figure 2.37. Charles Willson Peale, *The Edward Lloyd Family (Edward Lloyd, Elizabeth Tayloe Lloyd, and their daughter, Anne)*, 1771. Oil on canvas, 48 x 57 in. (121.92 x 144.78 cm.). Winterthur Museum, Museum Purchase, 1964.124.
Figure 2.38. John Hesselius, *James Gordon*, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of James W. Gordon, Jr., 1982.35.
Figure 2.39. John Hesselius, *Milicent Conway Gordon (Mrs. James Gordon)*, 1750. Oil on canvas, 50 1/4 x 39 3/4 in. (127.64 x 100.97 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Mr. James W. Gordon, Jr., 1984.4.
Figure 2.40. John Hesselius, Mary Harrison Gordon (Mrs. James Gordon) and her son, James, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 50 1/4 x 40 in. (127.64 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Mr. James W. Gordon, Jr., 1985.96.
Figure 2.41. John Hesselius, *John Gordon*, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Mr. James W. Gordon, Jr., 1983.79.
Figure 2.42. John Hesselius, *Anne and Sarah Gordon*, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Gift of Mr. James W. Gordon, Jr., 1984.47.
Figure 2.43. Advertisements from *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), August 15, 1766, p. 4. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Chapter Three
Invisible Presence: Slavery and the Planter Image

"...when I immediately after observed a picture hanging in the room, which appeared constantly to look at me, I was still more affrighted having never seen such things as these before. At one time I thought it was something relative to magic."

Olaudah Equiano (1793)

This chapter considers how slavery impacted portraiture in colonial Virginia. It begins by asking why slaves are nearly invisible in colonial portraits, particularly when the African slave motif was a popular expression of wealth and aristocratic refinement in England. Virginia planters self-consciously departed from this European practice of portraiture in an effort to construct a racial hierarchy and to present images of refinement. Close visual analysis of the two Virginia portraits that include enslaved attendants reveals the subversive potential of images of Africans and their ability to destabilize the intended racial hierarchy. Therefore, two Virginia portraits that include enslaved attendants, Lucy Parke Byrd (figure 1.26) and William Byrd III as a Child (figure 3.1), were failed experiments in visualizing colonial slavery that help to explain why the African slave motif is rarely used in colonial portraiture. Picturing references to slavery undercut colonial claims to gentility while at the same time admitting the black gaze. From a colonial Virginia perspective, the black gaze had to be erased from portraiture in order to construct "plantation complex visuality," which denied non-

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whites the right and ability to "see" and upheld the surveillance power of the white gaze.\textsuperscript{530} The presence of African slaves in the plantation household thus affected portraiture by making their erasure necessary in order to maintain the planter facade of gentility and authority. The invisible presence of enslaved people in portraiture must be teased out from the margins of the visual and material archives.

**The Missing Servant: The Case of Charles and the Duchess of Montagu**

Hanging in Boughton House, the ancestral English country home of the eighteenth-century Dukes of Montagu, is a striking portrait of Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu (1689-1751) (figure 3.2) that is attributed to Sir Godfrey Kneller. The Duchess is seated in profile wearing a simple, blue wrap dress, seemingly oblivious to or ignoring the viewer. Her pale skin contrasts with the dark stone wall behind her. She holds a small ball of thread that an African servant boy unspools and winds in his hands. The two figures—Duchess and servant—are literally tied together, although they otherwise do not acknowledge one another. Standing in front of her and closer to the picture plane, the boy, a young page named Charles, is clad in handsome red and gold livery that surpasses the Duchess's clothes in luxury.\textsuperscript{531} In contrast to the Duchess, he

\textsuperscript{531} Identification of Charles derives from references to him by name in the Montagu account books during the early 1720s. The accounts document expenses for his services, education, clothes, etc. The individualized facial details and his outward gaze also suggest that the artist was painting an actual person rather than a generic representation of an African. E-mail correspondence and conversation with Crispin
stands turned slightly towards her but faces the viewer, directly confronting his audience by looking forward. Charles is framed by a stone archway, his head surrounded by foliage in the background. A stone wall ornamented with carvings and urns rises beyond the greenery and a glimpse of clouds in a blue sky is visible above the wall.

Sometime during the early 1720s, the colonial Virginia planter William Byrd II, then residing in England, commissioned a copy of this portrait of the Duchess (figure 3.3). However, the final product was not a simple replica. Instead, Byrd's copy of the portrait eliminated Charles and replaced him with a view into a pleasure garden. The stone archway in Byrd's version provides a view of a low, ornamental stone wall, rows of trees, and a fountain in a clearing. Strangely, the artist kept the tiny ball of thread in the Duchess's hand. The thread in the second version dangles just past her knees, where Charles's hand is located in the original portrait. The two canvases are the same size, but Byrd's copy enlarges the figure of the Duchess so that she takes up slightly more space within the picture frame. The ornamental relief carvings on the wall behind the Duchess are the same in both paintings, although Byrd's copy makes them


532 An identical garden scene appears in the portrait of Lady Jane Hyde, wife of the 3rd Earl of Essex (ca. 1720, The Cassiobury Collection, Watford Museum), possibly by or after Sir Godfrey Kneller. This indicates that the garden was a "stock" scene selected by Byrd or the Montagus rather than one of individual iconographic significance to either party. This also provides further evidence that the two portraits came from the studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller. The Duchess of Montagu portrait has occasionally been attributed to Enoch Seeman.
proportionally larger, indicating that the portrait was carefully copied. Any changes made to the composition were deliberate.

The question then, is why did the copyist make certain changes to this particular portrait? The original half-length portrait was never published in its entirety or publicly circulated as a print; therefore, Byrd likely saw the portrait at Boughton House or perhaps in the artist's studio (believed to be that of Sir Godfrey Kneller). It is also possible that he asked for a portrait and the Duke or Duchess of Montagu selected this one to copy, although why this particular portrait was chosen remains unknown. The Duchess of Montagu had other oil portraits available to copy, and a bust-length version of this particular portrait was published in 1720.533 Adding to the intrigue is the fact that two portraits of Byrd family members commissioned by William Byrd II include slaves (figure 1.26 and 3.1), suggesting that he considered certain African figures to be acceptable presences in portraiture while others, such as Charles, were not.

533 Reportedly, the bust-length portrait of Sir Godfrey Kneller came first, ca. 1720. This portrait is also at Boughton House. According to the Boughton House catalog, Enoch Seeman apparently created a copy after Kneller’s original. See Murdoch, Boughton House, 182; There is also a published mezzotint print after Sir Godfrey Kneller, Her Grace the Duchess of Montagu (J. Faber, Sold by Faber at the Golden Head in Bloomsbury Square, 1740), published in Thomas Thorne, “The Duchess and William Byrd,” Antiques LXXXIV (November 1963): 563. For portraits of Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu, see sitter research files at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Expense has been suggested as an explanation by at least one scholar, supposing that either the Montagus or Byrd wanted to save money. However, if that were the case, why not copy another portrait, commission a smaller canvas, or eliminate the thread altogether so that the composition made more sense? Further, the Montagus were not financially troubled and Byrd’s large portrait collection (at least 27 by his death), which suggests that he would spare little expense for a fashionable portrait. While expense may have contributed to the decision and should not be ignored, it is important to explore other explanations given the rarity of African figures in colonial painting. Object file 1954.309, Portrait of Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
Charles’s erasure from the portrait of Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu, and the two unnamed bondmen in the portraits of Lucy Parke Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd II) and William Byrd III as a child, provide insight into why there are so few formal portraits that include African figures in British colonial North America. Through visual analysis, it becomes evident that colonists consciously departed from an established European portrait convention because images of slaves were inherently subversive in a slave society. An image of an African could destabilize the social hierarchy in Virginia, where the African population was quite large. The same image would be less threatening in an English country house, such as Boughton, where there were very few, if any, African slaves. While it is difficult to estimate the total number of enslaved Africans in England before the 1770s, the numbers were much lower than in Virginia and were concentrated in urban centers.

There are two interrelated reasons for the elision of enslaved people and their subversive potential in colonial visual culture. First, the presence of the black gaze, or the power to objectify and control through looking, was subversive.

534 Other than Lucy Parke Byrd and William Byrd III as a child, the Virginia portrait of Edward Hill III includes a very small African groom in the distance (figure 1.16). There were more portraits featuring enslaved attendants from Maryland. Frequently published are the three portraits: Justus Englehardt Kühn, Henry Darnall III, (figure 3.5), John Hesselius, Charles Calvert and his Slave (figure 3.4), and John Hesselius, Gustavus Hesselius, Jr. and his Nurse (Baltimore Museum of Art). Two others from Maryland are Kühn, Portrait of Master Digges, ca. 1710 (FARL), and Gustavus Hesselius (attr.), Portrait of a Girl of the Carroll, Damall, Brooke, or Digges family (figure 3.9). The latter two are also illustrated in color in Kennedy Quarterly 9, vol. 4 (May 1970): 232-234. There is also an overmantel painting from Rhode Island featuring an African serving tea to a family: unknown artist, John Potter and Family, c.1740 (Newport Historical Society).

The black gaze created a liminal racial space within the compositions that troubled planters. Portraits, in conjunction with the plantation house and other furnishings, became part of the planter's carefully constructed material world, which was meant to proclaim and enforce social and racial hierarchies. Elevating an image of a slave through his or her inclusion in a portrait undermined this social hierarchy by permanently admitting black figures to the genteel spaces of the plantation home. Moreover, portraits of white planters and their families acted as tools of surveillance and oppression, materially defining who belonged to the genealogical narratives they configured and reminding enslaved audiences of white authority. Close visual analysis of the portraits of Lucy Parke Byrd (figure 1.26) and William Byrd III as a Child (figure 3.1) reveals how the portraits attempted to construct, but ultimately deconstructed, a racial hierarchy due to their admittance of the black gaze.

Second, gentry planters anxiously constructed themselves as models of refinement. Granting Africans a pictorial presence in portraits had the potential to undermine the image of gentility and social order that the planter gentry wanted to project. Colonial slavery was inextricably associated with violence, as stories of the violent nature of punishment and enforcement on plantations circulated throughout the Atlantic world. Additionally, fears and accusations from the metropole warned that living in close proximity to slaves and Indians would lead to the cultural and racial degeneration of white colonists. Colonists chose not to include images of Africans in their portraits because they did not want to be
associated with the violence of slavery or charges of degeneration. Even when
dressed in livery, an enslaved figure revealed the violent foundations upon which
Virginia's refinement was built. For creoles, already anxious about their status,
this association was more damaging than for European aristocrats who
possessed wealth, titles, political influence, and long lines of inheritance to
protect them from negative connotations of appearing with black bodies.

The visual analysis of colonial portraits presented here necessarily
considers the invisible presence of enslaved people who act as ghosts, "one form
by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our
supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us."536 I assume
that slaves affected images from outside the frame in tangible ways, haunting the
white planters' likenesses from the edges of the visual archive. Slaves were an
incidental and unavoidable audience for planter portraits. Paradoxically, their
presence as audience members and as the source of planter wealth necessitated
their removal from portraits. Planters actively disavowed their relationship to
slavery; the act of erasure was simultaneously a recognition of slavery's
inhumanity and a material denial of their actions. My analysis interrogates the
uneasy relationship between slavery and visuality to understand how slavery
affected the production and reception of colonial portraiture.

Existing scholarship argues that the image of the enslaved African in
European portraiture functioned as an emblem of the primary sitter's wealth, by

536 Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 8.
the figure's association with the “exotic,” and as an emblem of whiteness, through
the comparison of the white sitter's and the African figure's skin tones. By
describing or utilizing the African body as exotic, Europeans dehumanized them,
objectifying them as commodities of imperial commerce and emblems of desired
wealth. The employment of the attendant slave motif continued in England and
elsewhere in Europe throughout the eighteenth century. 537 Pierre Mignard's
painting of Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth (figure 1.27) is a well-
known example of this portrait convention. When scholars have discussed the
image of the black figure in colonial American domestic portraiture, they
assumed that the figure functioned in the same way that it did in Europe, with the
added benefit of allowing colonists to assert their aristocratic pretensions. 538

The elision of the black figure in colonial painting suggests that the
"adaptations" made by planters to European practices were actually failed
experiments in visualizing racial slavery and that previous scholars have relied

537 See, for example, David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, eds., The Image of the
Black in Western Art: From the “Age of Discovery” to the Age of Abolition. Artists of the
Renaissance and Baroque., vol. III, part I, Image of the Black in Western Art
African and African American Research and the Menil Collection, 2010); Molineux,
Faces of Perfect Ebony, 18–60; Dabydeen, Hogarth’s Blacks, 22–30; Hall, Things of
Darkness, 211–53; Tobin, Picturing Imperial Power, 27–55. On the exotic, see Schmidt,
Inventing Exoticism; and chapter 1.
538 For example, see Charles Ford et al., “The Slave Colonies,” in The Image of the
Black in Western Art, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., vol. III, Part 3
African and African American Research and the Menil Collection, 2011), 241–305;
Ellwood Parry, The Image of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art, 1590-1900
(New York: G. Braziller, 1974); Guy C. McElroy, ed., Facing History: The Black Image in
American Art 1710 - 1940 (San Francisco: Bedford Arts, 1990); and Albert Boime, The
Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century (Washington:
too heavily on the long-held assumption that colonists simply mimicked metropolitan precedent. The chapter on "The Slave Colonies" in the comprehensive series *The Image of the Black in Western Art* summarizes the consensus argument regarding the few colonial portraits that include enslaved figures. The authors of this chapter, Charles Ford, Thomas Cummins, Rosalie Smith McCrea, and Helon Weston, state that such portraits, 

follow with some adaptation to local conditions, the typology of European traditions. The presence of a black page was not necessarily intended as a proclamation of the basis of the owners' wealth or their possession of large numbers of slaves, or even of their daily contact with them, but indicate their desire to assert a kinship with their landowning counterparts in what was still for them the home country, for whom a real black would have been an exotic feature of life and portraiture.539

This problematic argument principally relies on two well-known Maryland portraits: *Charles Calvert and his Slave* by John Hesselius (figure 3.4) and *Henry Darnall III* by Justus Engelhardt Kühn (figure 3.5), and excludes the few Virginia examples from discussion. The authors of the chapter also overlook the fact that the black figure is extremely rare in formal portraiture in colonial British North America. In eighteenth-century Europe, Africans remained a small, exotic minority. Conversely, in the colonies, people of African descent were far more common and therefore would not immediately have signified wealth or whiteness. Especially in colonial plantation societies like Virginia, black figures were

539 Ford et al., “The Slave Colonies,” 259. This volume specifically mentions only the Darnall portrait, the Calvert portrait, and a portrait of “Wilhelmina Byrd” attributed to Charles Bridges as the “three most prominent” colonial portraits. The latter portrait actually depicts Lucy Parke Byrd, Wilhelmina's mother, and is no longer attributed to Bridges.
associated with heavy agricultural labor, the opposite of the refined, domestic servant or groom generally seen in European portraits. Moreover, the statement that the colonists wanted to "assert kinship" with their "landowning counterparts" in the "home country," ignores the fact that these canvases, with the exception of the Calvert portrait (commissioned for friends in Italy), were created to hang in the colonies and were therefore intended for a local audience.\textsuperscript{540} The authors do not account for the lack of such examples in the plantation colonies, where planters who desired to fashion themselves as aristocrats had easy access to black bodies to serve as models.

Recent scholarship on the relationship between slavery and colonial art has largely neglected the mainland British colonies. For example, the 2013 volume \textit{Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World} includes only one chapter on the mainland colonies. The essay, written by a literary historian, focuses on the African artist Scipio Moorhead, whose single attributed work is a portrait of the poet Phyllis Wheatley (known only by a print).\textsuperscript{541} Moorhead worked in Boston in the 1770s. The 2003 volume, \textit{An Economy of Colour: Visual Culture and the Atlantic World, 1660-1830}, completely ignores the British mainland colonies,


focusing solely on the Caribbean. The Caribbean has recently received attention from art historians and cultural historians, who have shown slavery’s impact on colonial and imperial visual culture, particularly in landscapes and prints.

A reconsideration of images of enslaved people from the thirteen colonies that would become the United States, especially the southern plantation-based colonies, is long overdue. Ellwood Parry’s often-cited 1974 discussion of slavery in *The Image of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art, 1590-1900* neglects historical context. For example, Parry argues that the enslaved boy included in John Hesselius’s portrait of Charles Calvert was a playmate of young Charles and was selected by the family to appear in the portrait as a "reward" for his love and loyalty. Parry’s interpretation takes the portrait at face value, overlooking the politics of coercion and the nature of portraiture as a social construct. Guy McElroy’s 1990 study, *Facing History: The Black Image in American Art, 1710-1940*, is largely concerned with the nineteenth century and does little to consider the ways that enslaved people affected colonial

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portraiture. The nineteenth century has recently received increased attention from art historians, who have discussed slavery and race in American visual culture; however, few consider visual evidence from the colonial period. The lack of images of enslaved people in colonial art has been taken for granted instead of interrogated.

Two slightly later images that are frequently invoked in scholarly discussions of slavery and portraiture in early America feature George Washington, Virginia planter and revolutionary leader: *George Washington* by John Trumbull, which includes a representation of Billy Lee, Washington's enslaved manservant, wearing a turban and sitting astride a horse (1780, Metropolitan Museum of Art), and *The Washington Family* by Edward Savage (1789-96, National Gallery of Art), which also includes a manservant. However,

545 McElroy, *Facing History.*

both of these portraits highlight the different function that the black attendant motif played in American versus European paintings. Both of these paintings circulated as prints. Trumbull painted his portrait of Washington in London for a European audience. Trumbull took advantage of Washington’s growing international fame during the American Revolution. Trumbull intended for the image to be widely circulated in print form, as he painted the portrait from memory and quickly found a printer to distribute the image. Following European tradition, Trumbull added Billy Lee to make Washington appear aristocratic and to render his position as a leader legible to a continental audience. The black groom motif was particularly popular in European portraits of generals and nobility.\textsuperscript{547} The Savage portrait of the Washington family originally did not include the figure of a black page. However, Savage reportedly added the figure when he decided to take the oil painting to England and have it published as a print.\textsuperscript{548} Like Trumbull’s portrait of Washington, the resulting print was widely circulated abroad.

Neither portrait featuring Washington was intended for private, domestic consumption as a genealogical document. In both cases, these portraits of Washington with an enslaved manservant were designed for a broader, post-

colonial, transatlantic context in which American identity and its relationship to slavery was still being negotiated at home and abroad. The Washington portraits reveal, however, that American artists and patrons understood that their visual culture operated differently in local and transatlantic contexts. During and immediately following the American Revolution, Trumbull and Savage experimented with the use of black figures to envision an American leader, in which they employed an established European visual language for a global audience. The meaning of the black figure in American painting began to change in the Federal and Early Republican eras as Americans grappled with the role of African Americans in the body politic, though the black attendant motif in portraiture remained remarkably rare in the United States.

The few extant colonial portraits that include enslaved figures are the exceptions that prove the rule. Only three formal Virginia portraits include enslaved figures. Two follow the European precedent of a black figure serving a white sitter: the portraits of Lucy Parke Byrd (figure 1.26) and William Byrd III as a child (figure 3.1). The third, and earliest, is the portrait of Edward Hill III (figure 1.16), discussed at length in chapter one. The Hill portrait appears to show an African groom leading a horse in the distant background. It is unusual in its placement of the groom in the distance, indicating that the African groom functioned differently than did the figures of the two pages in the other portraits, each of whom occupies foreground space. All three of these Virginia portraits were painted no later than ca. 1730. Although the present study focuses on
Virginia portraits, it is important to note that a close examination of the five extant Maryland examples featuring African figures reveals problems of representation similar to those found in the Virginia paintings that are discussed at length in this chapter.\(^{549}\) It is also notable that there are no examples of enslaved attendants in colonial portraiture from South Carolina (of which I am aware), another heavily populated slave colony with a thriving interest in art and portraiture.

Importantly, Edward Hill III and Lucy Parke Byrd were painted in England, and evidently neither of their portraits included a bondperson painted from life. As discussed in chapter one, the African groom in the Edward Hill portrait relates to images of the Turkish horse and groom in seventeenth-century manège paintings and engravings. Lucy Parke Byrd's attendant appears in another portrait, that of William Cavendish (National Trust, Hardwick Hall), which is dated to 1697, nearly twenty years before Lucy sat for her painting. Therefore, neither portrait included an enslaved person actually owned by the sitter's family. This fiction created a distance between the primary sitter and slavery, as their image could not reference a real person.

In contrast, young William Byrd III (1728-1777) sat for his portrait in Virginia. This portrait's origin has a confused history. It sustained damage and overpainting in the nineteenth century, obscuring certain areas, particularly William's face. In the early twentieth century, art historians assumed that the

\(^{549}\) Justus Englehardt Kühn, *Henry Darnall III*, (figure 3.5), Kühn, *Portrait of Master Digges*, ca. 1710 (FARL); John Hesselius, *Charles Calvert and his Slave* (figure 3.4); John Hesselius, *Gustavus Hesselius, Jr. and his Nurse* (Baltimore Museum of Art); and attributed to Gustavus Hesselius, *Portrait of a Girl of the Carroll, Darnall, Brooke, or Digges family* (figure 3.9).
artist Charles Bridges painted it in Virginia simply because of its creation date (ca. 1730, based on the boy's age) and a reference from William Byrd II stating that Bridges painted his children; however, the portrait does not share the formal qualities of known Bridges paintings. Cleaning and examination by the painting conservator revealed that the same artist who painted William's sister, Anne Byrd, as a child (figure 3.6) also painted young William Byrd III. Based on this observation, the conservator and curators at Colonial Williamsburg assumed an unknown English artist painted this portrait in England. This conclusion was understandably based on the artist's skill and the long-held belief that no artist working in the colonies at the time was so well trained. However, the Byrd family papers record that William Byrd III was born in Virginia in 1728 and did not travel to England until adulthood. His mother's correspondence indicates that a tutor was largely responsible for William Byrd III's education, and her fear of smallpox delayed his travel to England until 1747. Therefore, these portraits had to be executed in Virginia upon Anne's arrival from England in 1729-30 or shortly thereafter. Since the unknown artist painted the children in Virginia, it is

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551 Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 580, 603.
553 Anne Byrd was born in England in 1725 and apparently was too young to relocate to Virginia with her parents in 1726. She was left in the care of an aunt and arrived in Virginia in 1729 or 1730. “My little daughter...is arived safe,” William Byrd II to Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery, 18 June 1730, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 429. No other portrait can be firmly attributed to this unknown artist. However, these portraits are evidence that a well-trained artist was working in Virginia as early as 1730.
very likely that the African child in the portrait was actually owned by the Byrd family.

William Byrd II spent a significant amount of time in England. His extant diaries, letters, and literary tracts have provided historians insight into his psyche. By all accounts, Byrd was particularly anxious to be seen by his aristocratic English acquaintances as a refined Englishman. Perhaps because it was fashionable in England, he was willing to experiment with picturing enslaved people. The two portraits from his family collection picture slaves as marginal and subservient, yet they ultimately failed to construct the genteel, aristocratic image of slavery that Byrd wanted to project. I contend that their failure sheds light on the absence of enslaved people in other colonial portraits. The relationship between the two portraits of the Duchess of Montagu and the removal of Charles in the one intended for Virginia is central to my examination of the black figure in colonial Virginia painting, for the Byrd copy constitutes an important example of an African body literally being erased.

"Appeared constantly to look at me": The White and Black Gaze in Colonial Virginia

In most European and all colonial portraits featuring black attendants, the slave or servant is placed in an explicitly subservient position and usually looks at

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Perhaps the artist arrived from London at the same time as Anne but did not survive long in Virginia.

the white sitter to recognize their superiority.\textsuperscript{555} This is the case in the portraits of Lucy Parke Byrd and William Byrd III as a child. In the Duchess of Montagu's portrait, her black page boy stands directly in front of her. Charles engages the audience with his gaze, while she looks away. His active looking out of the canvas challenges attempts to objectify him. He claims subjectivity by forcing the viewer to interact with him instead of with the Duchess. Although literally connected to the Duchess by the thread and trapped by the wall behind him, Charles maintains an individuality unseen in portraits such as the Byrd examples. His powerful gaze, I contend, is a primary reason for his eventual removal from the Virginia copy.

The Montagu family had complicated ties to slavery and relationships to free Africans that may shed light on the portrait's composition. The Duchess's husband, John, the 2nd Duke of Montagu (1690-1749), invested in Caribbean plantations. In 1722 he was appointed governor of St. Lucia and St. Vincent and attempted to settle the islands with sugar plantations, an enterprise dependent on slavery.\textsuperscript{556} Later in life, he invested money in the education of a freed Jamaican slave, Francis Williams (1702-1770). The Duke and Duchess of

\textsuperscript{555} Many scholars have written on English and European representations of Africans and slavery in portraiture. See, for example, Molineux, \textit{Faces of Perfect Ebony}, 28–30; Dabydeen, \textit{ Hogarth’s Blacks}, 23–26; and Bindman and Gates, \textit{The Image of the Black in Western Art: From the “Age of Discovery” to the Age of Abolition. Artists of the Renaissance and Baroque}.  
Montagu also served as patrons of the slave and later freedman, Ignatius Sancho (ca. 1729-1780). Both men of African descent rose to fame as men of letters. While certainly not anti-slavery, the Montagus were more liberal-minded than many contemporaries and encouraged the emancipation and education of "talented" Africans. In the portrait of the Duchess with Charles, the Montagus visualized their treatment of certain Africans, emphasizing that their fates were tied to their patrons' benevolence and condescension, as Charles's hands are literally entwined in the thread held by the Duchess.

The relationship between Byrd and the Duchess of Montagu, or the specific reason he possessed her portrait, is unclear, as is his familiarity with Charles. How much Byrd knew about the Duke and Duchess's views on slavery or the intellectual capacity of Africans is unknown. Besides the paintings, the only evidence they knew each other is Byrd's London Diary, which records them socializing at Tunbridge Wells in 1719. As a page, Charles traveled everywhere with the Duchess. It is therefore likely that Byrd knew Charles, if not by name then at least by sight. It is even more likely that any attendants Byrd brought with him to England would have known Charles, as they were similarly marginalized in social spaces. The notion of hanging a portrait with a free, educated, black servant in his house was probably unnerving for Byrd, especially

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558 Byrd, The London Diary, The Duchess arrives at Tunbridge, 296; both attended a private ball, 301; “played at hazard with the Duchess of Montague,” 302. Byrd also published a verse dedicated to the Duchess in the 1719 publication, Tunbrigalia. See Byrd, Another Secret Diary, 403.
in view of the almost imperious attitude that Charles projects in the portrait of the Duchess. Conventionally, the portrait would have hung above eye level, so Charles would actually have been looking down at the audience.

Charles’s gaze, individuality, and prominent position remind viewers of his humanity and agency. As art historians Marcia Pointon, David Bindman, and Paul Erickson argue, slavery and portraiture are theoretically incompatible because portraiture depends on the recognition of the sitter’s subjectivity while slavery relies on the denial of subjectivity and the commodification of the human into an object. As a result, portraits of slaves retain the potential to undermine the existing social structure because they resist objectification and insist on humanity. As historians like Walter Johnson remind scholars, enslaved people were never truly dehumanized. Planters constantly confronted their bondpeople’s humanity. Herein lies the true problem with Charles in the Duchess of Montagu portrait. Though Charles himself was not enslaved, with his dark skin and domestic livery, he looks like one in the British imperial context and would likely signify as a slave in contemporary colonial society. Although the portrait is ostensibly of the Duchess of Montagu, it also seems to be very much a portrait of

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Charles. Indeed, Charles's appearance actually draws attention away from the white sitter. In England, Charles's presence in the Duchess of Montagu's portrait did not threaten the established aristocratic status of the Montagus. However, the pictured relationship between mistress and servant in the original Duchess of Montagu painting would not have fit comfortably with the proscribed relationships between masters and slaves in Virginia.

Discussing the early nineteenth century, scholar Jasmine Nichole Cobb describes "slavery as a 'peculiarly ocular institution' that utilized an unstable visual logic of race to enslave persons of African descent and to protect Whites from the threat of the gaze."\(^{561}\) The continued practice of slavery in America relied on visual markers that became identified with race. Indeed, the focus on visible difference in western visual culture began in the colonial period. As early as the sixteenth century, the inclusion of black figures in European portraiture was intended to highlight white skin and beauty.\(^{562}\) The juxtaposition of black and white bodies created hyper-visible differences. As Cobb points out, "hypervisibility depended upon the suppression of a Black gaze...[construing] unfree Black people as devoid of the ability to properly see, prefiguring them as visible objects that lacked the ability to consciously manipulate notions of visuality."\(^{563}\) In other words, the right and ability to see and surveil belonged only to whites. Whites could not be subjected to the gaze of an enslaved person because the discourse of visuality rendered slaves incapable of possessing the

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562 Bindman and Weston, "Court and City: Fantasies of Domination."
gaze. This configuration is the "plantation complex of visuality" as defined by Nicolas Mirzoeff.564

Colonial society also depended on the fiction that enslaved people were capable of invisibility, as they were "outside" of white society. They could be rendered absent from genteel spaces and forced into marginal places where white people could ignore their existence, or at least pretend to ignore their presence.565 This fiction of invisibility simultaneously allowed enslaved people to subvert the planters' constructed spaces. Because they were not viewed as participants in white society, enslaved people could cross the social barriers erected by planters to define class amongst whites. In some ways, blacks possessed more freedom of movement in elite spaces than did poor whites.566 This paradoxical issue of in/visibility was related to portraiture, as portraits were part of the carefully choreographed space of the plantation house in which enslaved people did not possess the ability to "see," and yet planters could not ignore their physical presence within the household. Enslaved people became incidental audience members for portraits.

If we take seriously portraiture's ability to convey a living presence, then the appearance of Charles actively asserting himself in the Duchess's portrait becomes problematic in the plantation context. As discussed in chapter one, portraiture had a social dimension. As portraits were conduits for conversation

564 Mirzoeff, “The Right to Look.”
565 Cobb, Picture Freedom, 36–37; Upton, “White and Black Landscapes”; Erickson, “Invisibility Speaks.”
566 Upton, “White and Black Landscapes.”
and social discourse, to admit an African in a portrait gallery was to allow an African's participation in British social practices. Byrd would not want to acknowledge Charles's presence. Worse, he would not want his slaves to interact with Charles's portrait, especially since portraiture was a tool of plantation surveillance.

White surveillance over enslaved laborers was integral to the plantation complex. The widespread nature of tobacco agriculture and the gang system of labor in Virginia meant that masters were frequently involved in direct supervision of their field laborers. Even wealthy planters employing overseers on their plantations often rode out on horseback to the fields in order to check on their crops and their laborers and to ensure that overseers were doing their job. Domestic slaves felt a particularly intense kind of surveillance, as they worked in intimate proximity to the planter family. Portraiture participated in this culture of surveillance and worked to enforce planter authority within the household.

Though very few archival references document the interaction between bondpeople and portraits, a few telling examples shed light on the potential power of portraiture for an enslaved audience. In Olaudah Equiano's 1789 autobiographical Narrative, he reflects on his enslaved experience in Virginia in

the year 1756, including a story about a time he was brought inside the great house to fan his master. Equiano’s account is important enough to be quoted here at length:

when I came into the room where he was I was very much affrighted at some things I saw, and the more so as I had seen a black woman slave as I came through the house, who was cooking the dinner, and the poor creature was cruelly loaded with various kinds of iron machines; she had one particularly on her head, which locked her mouth so fast that she could scarcely speak ... Soon after I had a fan put into my hand, to fan the gentleman while he slept; and so I did indeed with great fear. While he was fast asleep I indulged myself a great deal in looking about the room, which to me appeared very fine and curious. The first object that engaged my attention was a watch which hung on the chimney, and was going. I was quite surprised at the noise it made, and was afraid it would tell the gentleman any thing I might do amiss: and when I immediately after observed a picture hanging in the room, which appeared constantly to look at me, I was still more affrighted, having never seen such things as these before... I thought it might be some way the whites had to keep their great men when they died, and offer them libations as we used to do our friendly spirits.  

Whether Equiano's account of seeing a European-style portrait for the first time is a true report of his emotional reaction or a version that he thought white readers would appreciate does not lessen the narrative's message about the visual power of portraiture and its association with control and punishment.  

In Equiano's Narrative, the violence of a slave regime goes hand in hand with objects of refinement, and portraiture becomes another method of enforcement. Equiano's entry into the great house was through the workspaces

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569 Equiano, Interesting Narrative, 59–60.
570 There has been debate over how fictional Equiano's Narrative is and thus how it should be read. See, for example, Vincent Carretta, “Questioning the Identity of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African,” in The Global Eighteenth Century, ed. Felicity Nussbaum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 226–35.
where domestic labor was performed. The first thing he noticed in the house was the terrifying physical punishment of an enslaved woman. The association of violence with the planter's house as soon as he entered it alarmed him; it primed him for seeing the portrait in a negative and frightening light. It is worth noting that Byrd himself recorded using a similar "iron machine," or "bit," to discipline slaves at Westover, particularly as castigation for running away.\(^{571}\) Byrd's cruel actions demonstrated his need to constantly reinforce his control over the enslaved. The acts of punishment also reluctantly recognized the humanity of the enslaved as Byrd attempted to break them of their will.

Once Equiano took time to view the room around him, the next two things to startle him were the clock chiming over the mantelpiece and the portrait, which worked together in a system of surveillance. Concern over the control of time was another hallmark of plantation life, as masters sought to maximize work hours and production.\(^{572}\) The pairing of a clock, or "watch," emphasized the planter's ability to supervise his enslaved workforce and control their daily life, while the noise it made reminded the enslaved laborers of his presence in absentia. Immediately after noticing the clock, Equiano encountered the frightening presence of a portrait. Interestingly, it did not appear to be a likeness

\(^{571}\) For example, “Eugene was whipped for running away and had the bit put on him,” 10 June 1709, and “The negro woman ran away again with the bit in her mouth,” 1 July 1710, in Byrd, *The Secret Diary*, 46, 199.

of the master he fanned, as he did not identify the sitter. Instead, he related the portrait to the man’s ancestors, a method of keeping “great men” alive after death. In this way, he connected the past and present, living and dead. The eyes of the dead continued to watch over the plantation, and the portrait’s intended function of preserving likeness after death also allowed the planters to maintain vigilance and control post-mortem. Equiano paired the clock, which functioned as a voice, with a portrait, which functioned as eyes.\footnote{573}

When Equiano first published his \textit{Narrative} in 1789, he participated in the European practice of portraiture. He commissioned the English miniaturist William Denton to paint his portrait to serve as the book’s frontispiece (figure 3.7). Equiano chose to picture himself in fashionable English clothes, holding a book opened to reveal a biblical citation. This portrait appeared opposite the title page to Equiano’s \textit{Narrative}, attesting to its authentic authorship by an African. In light of his experience with portraits, it is interesting that he chose to present himself in the clothes and pose of an English gentleman, even as his title page proclaims him “the African” and uses his African name.\footnote{574} Equiano looks out of his portrait


\footnote{574}{For more on Equiano’s portrait and its function as a frontispiece of a book, see Vincent Carretta, “‘Property of Author’: Olaudah Equiano’s Place in the History of the Book,” in \textit{Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic}, ed. Philip Gould and}
with a direct gaze. Although he had written previously that the eyes of planters' portraits seemed to watch him, Equiano reproduced his own image, which can watch the readers (who are presumed to be white), thereby reclaiming for himself the power of portraiture.

In 1833, the novelist Catharine Maria Sedgwick traveled to Virginia and visited Wilton plantation where she recorded an anecdote about the Randolph family portrait collection. Sedgwick noted a strange method of disciplining young slaves at Wilton that recalls Equiano's experience: "The walls of one of the apartments was covered with ancestral paintings...The slaves fancy this room is haunted, and it is a common punishment for the young offenders to shut them up in this spectral apartment." Apparently, the Randolph family's young slaves found portraits fearsome enough that the family disciplined them by locking them up in a room where they would be surrounded by portraits. The paintings were those executed by the artists John Wollaston and Matthew Pratt in the 1750s and 1770s (including figures 2.12, 2.13, 2.23, and 2.24). Though an antebellum story, it speaks to one of the many ways that white planters used portraits to maintain social order.

There are a number of nineteenth-century anecdotes about enslaved people engaging with portraiture, particularly in the years following the Civil War, which shed light on the power of portraits to act as tools of surveillance and


social control within the plantation context. For example, one story comes from the Manigault family of Charleston, South Carolina. Post-emancipation in the city, the Manigault family's slaves entered their house, took down their portraits, and re-hung them inside the slave quarters, exerting a power over their sitters through the possession of their likenesses.\textsuperscript{576} The Manigault's former bondpeople gouged the eyes out of the family portraits.\textsuperscript{577} The freed slaves reclaimed the visual power of surveillance by claiming possession of the watchers and scratching out their eyes, in effect removing the white sitter's power to "see."

While similar eighteenth-century evidence is lacking, with the notable exception of Equiano's \textit{Narrative}, it is crucial to remember that it was in the colonial period that the function of family portraits on a plantation first became established. Further, it was often eighteenth-century ancestral portraits that were the targets of destruction by formerly enslaved people during the Civil War.

The erasure and elision of enslaved figures in portraiture was necessary for Virginia planters because an image of a slave possessed the potential to elevate that person in the eyes of the beholder. In Virginia, many of the viewers were fellow slaves. The inclusion of an enslaved figure, particularly a recognizable one, acknowledged their humanity because it allowed viewers to interact with them. Such inclusions also mitigated the surveillance aspect of portraits of white planters by inserting an individual with whom enslaved people

\textsuperscript{576} Jennifer Van Horn, “‘The Dark Iconoclast’: African Americans’ Artistic Resistance in the Civil War South,” \textit{Art Bulletin} 99, no. 4 (December 2017): 136–39. I thank the author for sharing this article with me before publication.

\textsuperscript{577} Van Horn, 147.
could identify—the very people that the portrait was supposed to be watching. Byrd's erasure of Charles was a recognition that, if Charles had remained in the Westover portrait of the Duchess, he could have surveilled the Westover slaves as well as the Byrd family and white visitors. Byrd was an "anxious patriarch" who desired complete control over his household and his bondspeople.

Erasing Charles was an act of psychological violence, but also an act that reassured Byrd of his control.

Colonial planters thus actively worked to suppress the black gaze by rendering it invisible. The subversive power of the black gaze partially explains why the few colonial portraits that include enslaved figures actually deconstruct racial hierarchies even though they were intended to help construct them.

Returning to the portraits of Lucy Parke Byrd and William Byrd III as a child, an interrogation of the relationship between viewer, sitter, and slave reveals the failure of colonial portraiture to maintain the fiction of white superiority.

*William Byrd III as a Child* (figure 3.1) and *Lucy Parke Byrd* (figure 1.26) each create a triangular relationship between the viewer and the two sitters that opens up a liminal racial space in which the viewer confronts his/her status. Both portraits contain two figures, although the primary sitter is the named white person. In both cases, the artists intended the portraits to construct a racial hierarchy in which the white sitter is dominant and enslaved people are marginalized. The boy in William Byrd III's portrait is positioned behind a rock,

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while the boy in Lucy Parke Byrd's portrait is located to the side and his arm is cut off by the frame. Both figures direct their gaze at the white sitter rather than outwards at the viewer. However, when one focuses on the white sitter in each portrait, the viewer's gaze aligns with that of the pictured enslaved person, who looks directly at the white sitter. As a result, the viewer shares the position of the slave, gazing upon and admiring the white sitter. The viewer becomes similarly captivated by the sitter and, for a brief moment, the white viewer's racial identification is called into question as the black and white gazes converge. Since in the plantation complex the gaze was defined as white, when the viewer is black, the same liminal space opens, in which black and white gazes join. This scenario offers the possibility for the black gaze to take power over the white sitter.

Alternatively, if the focus of the white viewer is on the enslaved figure, then the viewer becomes visually dominated by that figure, even for the briefest glance. The motif of the adoring slave becomes reversed—a realization that overturns the racial hierarchy. This uneasy revelation is compounded by the placement of the picture in a material space where the painted slave is physically elevated over white viewers. In the end, Charles had to be erased from the Duchess's portrait in order to maintain the racial hierarchy at Westover and the fiction that slaves were incapable of possessing the gaze.

In the case of *Lucy Parke Byrd*, the ambiguous positioning of the viewer is particularly troubling because the primary sitter is a white woman. If the viewer
and the enslaved boy are equated, they are both enslaved to her beauty and authority.\textsuperscript{579} If the viewer is admiring her figure, then the slave is admiring her physical form as well. This dynamic was problematic in colonial Virginia, as white women's bodies were considered the property of their white husbands (or fathers before their marriage), and there were legal and social provisions in place to control the female body and create a racial order.\textsuperscript{580} Lucy pulls away from the enslaved boy, but her action is not enough to dissipate the sexual undertones present in the portrait. Her dress is loosely held up; her ribbon appears ready to fall open. The open basket with lid askew suggests fecundity. While the boy's jacket is fully buttoned, as if in opposition to Lucy's state of dress, he stands holding a carefully painted cloth, richly colored and textured with embroidery, creating the desire to touch the painting. The boy's function as an exotic object enhances the sensuality of the image. Whiteness in this portrait is threatened through the woman's proximity to non-European people and as the object of a painted non-white gaze. Further, the boy's aquiline features and relatively light brown skin blur distinctions of racial difference and hierarchy, potentially raising the specter of racial mixing.

The late seventeenth-century English print, \textit{Beauty's Tribute} (figure 3.8), created after a painting by Sir Peter Lely, exemplifies the intended relationship in


\textsuperscript{580} Brown, \textit{Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs}. See chapter 2 for a discussion of gender in this portrait.
portraiture between non-white attendants and white females while simultaneously exposing the problem of the black gaze.\footnote{William Faithorne published this print after a portrait of Elizabeth Cooper by Sir Peter Lely. In turn, Cooper’s portrait was closely modeled after Lely’s portrait of Charlotte Fitzroy. However, the print, combined with the poem, transforms Elizabeth Cooper into a representation of European beauty rather than a specific likeness. For more on this print, see Molineux, \textit{Faces of Perfect Ebony}, 32–33; David Bindman, “The Black Presence in British Art: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in \textit{The Image of the Black in Western Art}, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., vol. III, part 1 (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; W.E.B. DuBois Institute for African and African American Research and the Menil Collection, 2010), 265–66; and Yale Center for British Art records, http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3652597.} In the print, a young white girl sits in a garden. An attendant, who is either East Indian or African, kneels and offers her a basket of fruit. At the bottom of the print is a poem that reveals that the white girl should be understood as a generalized representation of beauty, figured here as white and European, rather than as a specific sitter:

\begin{verbatim}
Beauty commands Submission as it's due, 
Nor is't the Slave alone that owns this true.
Much fairer Youths shall this just Tribute pay,
None Fate deplore, but thankfully obey.
\end{verbatim}

The poem's second and third lines suggest that all viewers, free or enslaved, white or non-white, will submit to true beauty. The print encourages viewers to align their gaze with that of the attendant in order to recognize the white, European beauty and accompanying authority of the female sitter. Notably, the attendant in \textit{Beauty's Tribute} is racially ambiguous, much like the attendant in Lucy Parke Byrd's portrait. This ambiguity allows for a generalization of non-whites as "other" in opposition to the European, who is figured as the apex of a natural order. However, the print also associates the white male gaze with the
non-white gaze by suggesting that all admirers of the girl (beauty) are equally submissive.

Copies of the *Beauty's Tribute* print were available in the Chesapeake region. A painting that descended in the Carroll family of Maryland, attributed to Gustavus Hesselius, directly references *Beauty's Tribute* (figure 3.9) as its source.\(^{582}\) The painting is undated; however, if the attribution is correct, then Hesselius likely painted it between ca. 1721 and 1745, when he was active in Maryland.\(^{583}\) Since William Faithorne published *Beauty's Tribute* as a print in the late seventeenth century, it likely arrived in the Chesapeake earlier than ca. 1721. Intriguingly, the artist of the Maryland painting rendered the attendant unmistakably African by coloring his skin a deep black and giving him tightly cropped hair. Perhaps this was a colonial interpretation designed to emphasize a racial order in a colony dependent on enslaved African laborers and to remove any ambiguity regarding the attendant's race.

The portraits of Lucy Parke Byrd and William Byrd III, which utilized the European motif of the African attendant, destabilized the racial hierarchy that William Byrd II and the artists intended to construct. The admittance of the black gaze within the two Virginia portraits undermined the plantation hierarchy by

\(^{582}\) The family and the Frick Art Reference Library assume the painting is a portrait of an unknown girl of the Carroll family. However, since the painting is a copy after a print, which is not necessarily understood to be a portrait, I have been cautious in referring to the painting as a portrait. Hesselius (if the attribution is correct) painted in different genres, including religious paintings. Thus, it is possible that the painting was not intended as a portrait. I have not viewed the painting in person and am uncertain of its current whereabouts.

turning the white sitter into the object of the black gaze. The erasure of Charles from the portrait of the Duchess of Montagu was an acknowledgement of the power of the black gaze in a colonial society. Byrd removed Charles because his outward gaze in the original portrait was subversive in the colonial context.

**Planters and the Uncivil Image: Picturing Refinement in the Wilderness**

The pictorial replacement of Charles with an English pleasure garden in William Byrd II's Duchess of Montagu portrait functions as a metaphor for the colonial impulse to erase the reality of a slave regime and replace it with the genteel. The concern for gentility explains why artists did not turn to a different strategy of including African figures in portraiture, as in the Edward Hill III portrait (figure 1.16). The African groom in the Hill portrait is so small and marginalized that the black gaze is not at issue. However, it appears that other colonists did not attempt to follow the Hill example, for the very presence of an African still referenced slavery as the source of wealth for Virginia planters. The Edward Hill III, Lucy Parke Byrd, and William Byrd III portraits all render visible the reality of plantation labor and discipline, even if these aspects are sanitized through the use of livery and domestic accouterments. Doing so undermined their intention to present themselves as genteel British subjects. In a slave society, a culture of refinement aestheticized the violence of slavery, resulting in the elision of explicit references to slavery in portraiture.
In the original portrait of Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu (figure 3.2), a tall stone wall and foliage appear behind Charles, in effect trapping him. When Charles was removed in the Byrd copy of the Duchess of Montagu portrait (figure 3.3), he was replaced by a distant view into a garden. The copyist could have simply left the original stone wall and greenery; however, by choosing to remove the wall, the artist implies that Africans pictorially needed to be enclosed, whereas removing the African allowed for a more open, pleasurable, and civilized landscape.\textsuperscript{584} The garden features a carefully manicured lawn lined with trees and a fountain in the center of a clearing. This is an English pleasure garden, not a kitchen or working garden.

William Byrd II directly compared Virginian slave labor to gardening. Writing in 1735 to Peter Beckford of Jamaica, Byrd stated, "Our Negros are not so numerous, or so enterprizeing as to give us any apprehention, or uneasiness, nor indeed is their labour any other than gardening, & less by far, then what the poor people undergo in other countrys."\textsuperscript{585} At the time Byrd wrote this letter, he was considering selling Westover to Beckford. Therefore, it was patently propaganda that made Virginia slavery sound less harsh than Caribbean slavery.

\textsuperscript{584} The use of a wall and garden in the portraits of the Duchess calls to mind the contemporary English system of enclosure, whereby elite landholders enclosed land once held in common, disrupting the livelihoods of rural poor and farmers. Enclosure accelerated in the early to mid eighteenth century and transformed the English countryside. Fences and hedges demarcated fields, and proponents of enclosure understood the process as “improvement.” A parallel development was the rise of pleasure gardens on elite country estates. See Bermingham, \textit{Landscape and Ideology}, 9–14; and Williams, \textit{The Country and the City}, 96–107.

\textsuperscript{585} William Byrd II to Peter Beckford, 6 December 1735, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, \textit{Correspondence}, 464.
Still, the comparison of rigorous tobacco cultivation to gardening is an enlightening one. The letter elides the reality of slave labor by calling it “gardening,” as if it is pleasurable. Similarly, the Byrd portrait copy erases an African laborer and replaces him with a garden.

The spread of pleasure gardens accompanying plantation homes in Virginia was one sign of refinement in the landscape. Formal gardens began to appear in late seventeenth-century Virginia. William Byrd I, William Fitzhugh, Robert "King" Carter, and Philip Ludwell (all of whom owned seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century portraits), along with other prominent Chesapeake planters, took an interest in maintaining well-groomed gardens at their plantations. These gardens were essentially extensions of parlors, and became sites of elite sociability and polite conversation. Manipulating the landscape required scientific knowledge, cultural understanding of genteel behavior, and the ability to afford extra labor that could be devoted to cultivating and maintaining the garden. Formal landscape gardens contrasted with the not too distant tobacco fields worked by enslaved labor. By "improving" the land near their homes with genteel gardens, planters created refined experiences that stood in deliberate and stark contrast to the agricultural fields of labor and to the untamed wilderness beyond. The replacement of Charles with a symbol of horticultural

587 This focus on “improving” the land and demarcating agricultural fields from aristocratic gardens relates to the practice of enclosure in England, the related development of elite pleasure gardens, and the imperial project of taming the landscape. See Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 9–14; Williams, *The Country and the City*, 96–107; and O’Brien, “Imperial Georgic, 1660-1789.”
refinement in the Duchess of Montagu portrait copy was a similar "improvement" to enhance Byrd's genteel material world at Westover.

The construction of refinement was a concern for Virginians as well as other colonists. Richard Bushman, in his foundational 1993 study, *The Refinement of America*, argues that the colonial, genteel material world constituted "but outward signs of what the inhabitants hoped would be an inward grace. They wished to transform themselves along with their environments." Bushman follows the spread of gentility from the European aristocracy, to the colonial gentry, to the American middle class from 1690 to 1850. Wealthy colonists presented themselves as genteel to construct and reinforce a social hierarchy. The knowledge of manners separated those who had cultural authority from those who did not, but aspired to it. Colonists became defined as gentry not just by their wealth, but by their overall appearance, composure, manners, and material presentation. In Virginia, as elsewhere, gentility became manifest in the planter gentry's fine clothing, rich furnishings, built environment, landscape architecture, and other forms of material culture.

The cultivation of polite society also became crucial to both local and imperial politics in the colonies. Politeness was linked to gentility, as well-mannered men and women engaged in gracious values of condescension and sympathy for others to earn local authority. Gentility also translated in a larger imperial context. As historian Steven Bullock argues, "Polite values provided a set of values that made colonial elites recognizable to imperial leaders as

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588 Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, xii.
gentlemen rather than backward provincials.” By the early eighteenth century, gentility and politeness were central to gentry life. To engage in transatlantic politics as respectable gentlemen, the colonial gentry wanted to appear to the metropole as equals in refined manners. William Byrd II and his peers carefully cultivated the image of the wealthy planter as living a life of sophisticated gentility.

The proximity of gentry planters to slavery, to people of African and Native American descent, and to “unimproved” wilderness, led to fears about degeneration. Europeans worried that European bodies would change as the result of climate and food differences, and that their manners would become savage from spending too much time in contact with non-Europeans. This fear of creole degeneration only made refinement more imperative as colonists sought to disprove these theories of degeneration. When Lucy Parke Byrd's portrait was executed in 1716, there were approximately 20,900 people classified as black, 1,300 Native Americans, and 74,100 Europeans in Virginia east of the Appalachians. Thus, non-whites constituted about one third of the total

population. By the time William Byrd III was painted as a child around 1730, those numbers had grown. In 1730 there were approximately 49,700 black people, 900 Native Americans, and 103,300 Europeans in the same region; nearly half the population was non-European.\footnote{The population statistics for 1715 and 1730 come from Peter H. Wood, “The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685-1790,” in Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast, ed. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and M. Thomas Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 60, 62–66.} The gentry, who were most likely to commission portraits and had the highest stake in the construction of civility, owned a large proportion of the enslaved population. Enslaved people were an unavoidable audience for planter’s portraits. As a result, the very presence of Africans shaped colonial portraiture and other forms of material culture.

Only recently have scholars seriously considered the effect of slavery on the practices of refinement. Literary historian Simon Gikandi’s 2011 book, Slavery and the Culture of Taste, argues that the British idea of taste was inextricably linked with slavery, as it emerged at the same time as the Atlantic slave trade. Gikandi "pinpoint[s] those aspects that would ultimately make the category of taste a key mediator between British modernity and...its repressive tendencies -- namely, the attempt to use culture to conceal the intimate connection between modern subjectivity and the political economy of slavery."\footnote{Gikandi, Slavery and the Culture of Taste, 17. Historian James Walvin has also meditated upon the affect of slavery on Western culture. See Walvin, Slavery in Small Things: Slavery and Modern Cultural Habits (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017).} Gikandi argues that the investment in cultural activities such as art allowed
planters to develop cultural capital that transformed them into a "cultural aristocracy, far removed from the primal scene of slavery that was their inheritance and duty." According to Gikandi, slavery and the enslaved became the antithesis of gentility: black, dirty, violent, and unmannered. Portraiture, as a method of self-presentation to contemporary and future audiences, was integral to the process of refinement.

The awareness of slavery's centrality to colonial civility provided the impetus for the colonial departure from European practice of using black pages to signify wealth and exoticism. Gikandi argues that colonial portraiture feels disjointed because, in attempting to emulate images of European aristocrats, the portraits disavow their colonial condition. Including a slave in a portrait acknowledges its colonial status because it refers to the commerce and labor that structured the British overseas empire. Gikandi finds American images that include slaves more persuasive objects of self-fashioning than those that do not. However, the relative lack of these images indicates that colonists did not want to admit the sources of their wealth or its colonial origins. Surrounded by slaves, showing the origins of planter wealth would give enslaved people a modicum of power, admitting their importance to the genteel lifestyle from which they were excluded.

Ideas regarding the harmful effects of slavery on planters and colonial British culture were transmitted to the colonies through texts and printed images.

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594 Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, 149.
595 Gikandi, 166–74.
The transatlantic circulation of prints meant that many Virginians owned and displayed English images on paper in the same spaces as their painted portraits. A large number of inventories in Virginia list prints that hung in various rooms of the home as well as in public spaces such as taverns. Colonial newspapers advertised the sale of English prints, revealing their ubiquity in America.\(^{596}\)

Unfortunately most inventories and ads omit the subjects and titles of specific prints, simply listing "prints" and "pictures."\(^{597}\) William Byrd, for instance, recorded in his diaries having shown his prints to various visitors and family members, looking at pictures before bed, and he also recorded the arrival of imported prints at Westover. After a shipment from England was received in 1711, Byrd wrote that he "put up a picture in the bed chamber."\(^{598}\) On another occasion, when the naturalist Mark Catesby was visiting, Byrd recorded that they "went into the library to see some prints."\(^{599}\) In 1741, between July 31 and August 18, Byrd wrote of looking at "prints," "pictures," and "French prints" on seven occasions in his diary.\(^{600}\) In 1717, John Custis ordered "good Comicall diverting prints to hang in the passage of my house" from England.\(^{601}\)

\(^{596}\) Dolmetsch, "Prints in Colonial America."


\(^{598}\) 14 March 1711 in Byrd, \textit{The Secret Diary}, 314.

\(^{599}\) 27 May 1712 in Byrd, 535.

\(^{600}\) Byrd, \textit{Another Secret Diary}, 178–83.

\(^{601}\) John Custis to Bell, [December] 1717, in Custis and Zuppan, \textit{Letterbook of John Custis IV}, 35.
Many English prints included images of African slaves or servants, as in William Hogarth's various satirical series. Colleen M. Terry has documented the popularity of Hogarth in British America, finding evidence of Hogarth prints owned and sold throughout the colonies. A number of inventories from colonial Virginia homes reveal the presence of Hogarth’s printed images. In a 1767 letter written by Thomas Jones of Williamsburg, Jones asked his brother, then studying in England, to purchase Hogarth prints for him, listing the Hogarth print series that he already owned: *A Midnight Modern Conversation*, *The Rake’s Progress*, *The Harlot's Progress*, and *The Roast Beef of England*. Hogarth prints remained available in Virginia even after the artist's death in 1764, as evidenced by *Virginia Gazette* ads in the 1770s that list Hogarth pictures for sale. In many of Hogarth's popular prints, African attendants function as emblems of degenerate luxury, and are used to critique aristocratic lifestyles. Blacks appear in Hogarth's visual stories juxtaposed with white aristocrats in order to invert the "normal" social order. While the white "civilized" people act

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602 Terry, “Presence in Print”; Dolmetsch, “Prints in Colonial America,” 54.
603 Terry provides a useful list of known owners of Hogarth prints, as well as the images they owned whenever documented, based on a selection of probate records, in “Presence in Print,” 361–366. Virginia owners listed by Terry include George Johnston of Alexandria; Thomas Jones, who owned several series of prints by Hogarth, including *The Harlot’s Progress*; John Mercer, who owned *The Rake’s Progress* and *The Harlot’s Progress*; Col. Pressley Thornton of Northumberland County; Dr. Nicholas Flood of Richmond County; Alexander Purdie and Reverend John Camm, both of York County; Robert Gilmor of Lancaster County; the Jones family of Northumberland County; John Tayloe of Mount Airy in Richmond County; and Ralph Wormeley of Middlesex County.
604 Terry, 363; Dolmetsch, “Prints in Colonial America,” 54.
605 29 November 1770; 13 December 1770; 3 January 1771; 17 January 1771; 24 January 1771; 7 February 1771; 21 February 1771; 7 March 1771; 21 March 1771; 28 March 1771; and 17 September 1771, *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon); and 16 October 1778, *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter).
immorally, the "savage" African is positioned to draw attention to their uncivilized behavior and undermine their cultural authority. For example, in plate two of *The Harlot's Progress* (figure 3.10), Moll, the titular harlot, upends a tea table and exposes her breast to her male protector so that her illicit lover can escape the room unnoticed. A young African page, dressed in a turban and holding a tea kettle, looks astonished at the scene. A masquerade mask left on the table hints at the popular activity of masquerades, events known for lascivious behavior, acting as an emblem of corruption and deceit. A monkey dressed in lace scampers in the foreground, functioning as a metaphor for the aristocrats pictured in the scene. The "uncivilized" African's costume and countenance comically emphasize the uncivil behavior of the English aristocrats in the scene. The African page has the decency to be shocked by Moll's behavior, while Moll's face remains calm in spite of her actions. The presence of Africans in Hogarth's prints confuses the categories of "civilized" and "savage" in a condemnation of lazy and licentious aristocratic behavior. The Hogarth satires are scathing critiques of aristocratic pretension and commercialism. Moreover, the presence of Africans, often shown with colonial products such as tea and silver, draws attention to colonial sources of wealth for the British aristocracy, who invested in plantations and imperial trade while living in England. Their luxury is financed by the exploitation of black bodies.

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607 Dabydeen, 74–90.
Particularly damning for Virginians was the print *The Fortunate Transport* (figure 3.11), which was based on a 1750 pamphlet story and drawn by an unknown artist. The image and story are examples of the English perception of Virginia that directly implicated planters in savage behavior. The *Fortunate Transport* tells the story of a white, female indentured servant named Polly Haycock, who was sentenced to work in Virginia. Once in Virginia, she was brutally beaten by her master and his African overseer. Another man took pity on her and rescued her by purchasing her indenture. Subsequently, Polly traveled to the Caribbean, where she married a planter and inherited his estate after his death. Polly then returned to England as a wealthy widow, where she treated her free-born English servants as poorly as she herself had been treated by her Virginia master.

As illustrated in the print, Polly's story appears as a series of vignettes that follow the written narrative. In the first register, Polly is shown chained and boarding a vessel to Virginia. She is the only woman on a dock surrounded by men, highlighting her female vulnerability. Then, in the upper scene, Polly is stripped naked and whipped by a vicious looking and fully clothed African overseer. Here, the expected racial power dynamic is inverted, with a black man punishing a white woman, emphasizing the barbaric nature of plantations. In the left background, the master planter sits inside his home eating a fine meal with a smile on his face. The text above this central scene reads: "Whipp'd during

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608 *The Fortunate Transport; or, the Secret History of the Life and Adventures of the Celebrated Polly Haycock, the Lady of the Gold Watch. By a Creole.* (London: Printed for T. Taylor, near the Corner of Friday-Street, Cheapside, 1750).
Dinner her Master boasting that no Monarch upon Earth had so fine Musick as he fancied her Cries." This scene is a condemnation of Virginia plantation life that reveals the violence beneath the planter's refinement: his fine dinner is accompanied by screams of pain. Polly's cries are referred to as "fine Musick," a critique of his barbarism and inability to distinguish between tasteful music and shrieking. Further denouncing taste in Virginia, Polly kneels on a pedestal with her dress draped around her legs. Her position is reminiscent of classical statuary. The print implies that, as a white woman, her figure should be admired like a statue; yet in Virginia, she is subject to beatings by an African who does not recognize her worth. To the right, in the shadows, the man who will rescue Polly from her vicious master passes by on horseback, his arms raised in shock at seeing her treatment at the hands of the African overseer.

In the final vignette on the print, which takes place in England, Polly is shown disciplining with a rod a white female servant, who writhes and cries on the floor (detail of figure 3.11). To Polly's left, three more white female servants cower in fear. In direct contrast, on her right, an enslaved African in livery stands quietly in judgment. Polly looks back toward the black figure, her eyes wide in astonishment or shame upon seeing the African, who functions as a reminder of the plantation violence she once endured herself. The cartouche above the scene reads: "Her usage to her Free-born English servants is as they do Negroes and Felons in the Plantations tho' She felt the Mesery herself." Polly's painted likeness hangs on the back wall, bearing silent witness to the scene;
indeed, she points directly to the portrait with the rod in her hand. Her portrait is juxtaposed with a mirror, while her figure is aligned with the African boy standing beneath the mirror. These compositional relationships encourage self-reflection and reveal two forms of viewing and presenting oneself: the genteel construction of a portrait versus the actual reflection of one's behavior through the looking glass. The portrait, Polly's dress, the African in livery, and the other fine elements of the room remind viewers that appearances can be deceiving.

Polly's portrait in The Fortunate Transport illustration performs the same way portraits in plantation great houses did: as silent, genteel images of masters and mistresses who were nonetheless capable of extreme violence. Her portrait exposes the irony of those like Lucy Parke Byrd's, which attempted to idealize the relationship between bondpeople and their owners. The illustration of Polly Haycock's story is a vivid example of the growing criticism of plantation society and the negative image of Virginia planters in England. The print visualizes the concern that living in proximity to Africans and in plantation societies would result in moral and cultural degeneration. As the published story described Polly after her return to England, "she lives in great Splendeur and Affluence; but unhappily for her, she has brought Home with her too much of the Spirit of the Planters; that is, a Disposition to use her Servants with great Severity...tho' she felt the Misery of that inhumane Temper in her Servitude with the Virginian Savage."609

The author of The Fortunate Transport claimed to be "a Creole" and identified the

609 Italicized in original. The Fortunate Transport, 42–43.
planter class as savage, not the servants or enslaved people who worked for them.

Virginians took great pains to rectify this negative image. In 1705, Virginian Robert Beverley wrote *The History and Present State of Virginia* for an English audience as a corrective to negative stories penned by others. Tellingly, Beverley compared his endeavor to executing a portrait of the colony, stating, "Such Accounts are as impertinent as ill Pictures, that resemble any Body, as much as the Persons they are drawn for. For my part, I have endeavour'd to hit the Likeness; though, perhaps, my Colouring may not have all the Life and Beauty I cou'd wish." Beverley’s description of Virginia was intended to emphasize the civilizing power of Anglo-Virginians and the abundant natural resources of the region. In book four, in which he discusses servitude, Beverley avowed:

> Because I have heard how strangely cruel, and severe, the Service of this Country is represented in some parts of *England*; I can't forbear affirming, that the work of their Servants, and Slaves, is no other than what every common Freeman do's. Neither is any Servant requir'd to do more in a Day, than his Overseer. And I can assure you with a great deal of Truth, that generally their Slaves are not worked near so hard, nor so many Hours in a Day, as the Husbandmen, and Day-Labourers in *England*. An Overseer is a Man, that having served his time, has acquired the Skill and Character of an experienced Planter, and is therefore intrusted with the Direction of the Servants and Slaves.  

Beverley's portrait of Virginia downplays the specific violence of plantation slavery by comparing slave labor in tobacco fields to the work of laborers in

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611 Beverley, 216–17.
England. He also displaces any negative side effects of slavery from the planter by locating the actual responsibility of managing slaves with overseers, who appear in his treatise to operate independently (though this was not entirely true, as Virginia planters paid attention to the actions of their overseers). Physical punishment of slaves and indentured servants was common in Virginia and was perpetrated by planters, overseers, and plantation mistresses.612

Lucy's active role in the physical punishment of slaves and indentured servants at Westover undermined the refined image presented in her English portrait. In fact, the portrait is a fictional construct of a mistress/slave relationship. The portrait imagines a young man dressed in fine livery as Lucy's loyal servant. He stands behind to her left and gazes towards her. There is no hint of coercion in their relationship; the portrait is meant to construct a natural racial order in which the white woman is superior. Intended for their plantation house, this image models for the Byrd family slaves and other viewers the ideal relationship between mistress and slave. However, according to her husband's diary, Lucy frequently asserted her authority, both directly through physical punishment, as when Lucy herself beat Jenny with tongs,613 and indirectly, as when Lucy

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612 On the violence of white women in the South, including Virginia, see Thavolia Glymph, Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 32–62. Landon Carter's early diary of the 1750s is scientific in nature, but he casually mentions punishing slaves to make them work harder. Carter, Diary of Landon Carter, 147. For examples of punishment meted out by William Byrd II or Lucy Parke Byrd, see Byrd, The Secret Diary, 79, 84, 113, 127, 205, 307. For a non-Virginian's reaction to the physical treatment of slaves by masters and overseers, see Fithian, Journal & Letters, 38.
613 2 March 1712 in Byrd, The Secret Diary, 494.
"caused Moll to be whipped," presumably by someone else. Lucy’s husband also upheld her authority when he occasionally punished slaves specifically for disobeying their mistress. While Lucy participated in punishment on many occasions, on the only two occasions that Byrd recorded Lucy striking a slave herself, her actions bred quarrels. The unfeminine act of brutally beating an enslaved person, particularly a male, was one that Byrd was ashamed to make public and perhaps discouraged. "Causing" a bondman to be punished was perhaps considered more ladylike than physically meting out the punishment herself. Regardless, all of these stories reveal that, like the fictional Polly Haycock, Lucy Parke Byrd was violent. Historian Thavolia Glymph has shown how white plantation mistresses were deeply implicated in the violence of slavery. Lucy is unusual for the eighteenth century in that her husband provided historians with evidence of her cruelty, but domestic violence was part of the standard disciplinary regime enforced by white women in a plantation society. The anecdotes of slave punishment sprinkled throughout Byrd’s diary reveal that the slaves were not blindly loyal as pictured in the family portraits. The Byrds relied on violence and coercion to maintain their authority.

The portrait of William Byrd III as a child (figure 3.1) also undermined the Byrd family’s attempt at constructing a racial hierarchy based on the supposed gentility of the white sitter. The portrait was intended to visualize white mastery.

614 9 April 1712 in Byrd, 512.
616 31 December 1711 and 2 March 1712 in Byrd, 462, 494.
617 Glymph, Out of the House of Bondage, esp. 32-62.
The child of a slaveowner, William Byrd III would have been trained as a young boy to be a slave master. This portrait imagines the intended plantation hierarchy, with the enslaved boy depicted as the inferior, even to a younger white child. The slave stands in the background and looks at his master, indicating his subservience. Moreover, Byrd is mostly nude, except for a luxurious blue drape and Roman sandals, a reference to classical antiquity and therefore a claim to cultural (read: European) authority. Whiteness was associated with the classical idea of beauty and the pure white marble statues of Greek and Roman antiquity.\textsuperscript{618} Young Byrd's nudity could also be a biblical reference to innocence and the absence of sin. In Christian art, nudity represented the innocent, natural human state before the fall of Adam and Eve. By the mid-eighteenth century, many in the English-speaking world recognized childhood as an innocent state. Nudity was consequently acceptable in representations of youth.\textsuperscript{619} In contrast, the enslaved African child is clad in a blue suit, his body denied the same beauty, purity, and innocence as that of the white child. The African boy's blue suit with white linen shirt locate him in colonial servitude and gesture towards his dependence on the Byrd family, in contrast to the glorified classicizing garb of his master. The artist intended for the African boy's clothed state to imply his servile status.

\textsuperscript{618} David Bindman, \textit{Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).
\textsuperscript{619} On childrearing and views towards children in early Virginia, see Smith, \textit{Inside the Great House}, 25–54.
Within the plantation context, however, the enslaved boy's dress actually weakens the image of white mastery and questions the social order. The viewer is left wondering, who is the savage and who is civilized? Clothing and outward appearance constituted a language of rank and status in colonial society. Especially on plantations, nudity became associated with enslaved people. It was common for African children to be nude and for adults to be shirtless while laboring, especially in the summer, and slaves for sale were typically examined while nude to check their physical health. In 1732, William Hugh Grove boarded a slave ship and noted, "The Boyes and Girles all Stark naked; so Were the greatest part of the Men and Women...I saw a Woman Come aboard to buy Examine the Limbs and soundness of some."\(^{620}\) By appearing nude in his portrait, William Byrd III is potentially understood as less "civilized" than the African boy, despite the artist's intentions to use nudity to associate him with Greco-Roman attributes or innocence. Certain audiences in Virginia may not have recognized such art historical allusions.

The placement of the arrow held at either end by both subjects moves the viewer's eye back and forth, as if questioning their relationship, further undermining the slave's subservient position. While the slave directs his gaze towards young Byrd, the arrow curiously draws the viewer's attention back up to

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the enslaved boy. The portrait pivots on the uneasy relationship between master and slave and acknowledges the intimacy between children and enslaved people on plantations. As Philip Vickers Fithian was surprised to notice when he arrived from New Jersey, "I find it is common here for people of Fortune to have their young Children suckled by Negroes!"

The visual affiliation of enslaved Africans with colonial labor and uncivilized behavior is one that Virginia planters wanted to avoid in their formal portraits. Though the Byrd family intended for the portraits of Lucy Parke Byrd and William Byrd III to reject this association and emphasize genteel, white mastery over obedient slaves, the portraits failed to maintain that construction. The reality of plantation life conflicted with these family portraits. Moreover, planters themselves realized the inherent negative effects on gentility posed by a slave society.

By 1736 Byrd would write to his friend John Percival, Earl of Egmont, who was a Georgia Trustee and was therefore involved with the settlement of the colony, to compliment the Trustees' decision to outlaw slavery in Georgia. Byrd observed that

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621 Unfortunately, this portrait has been severely damaged over the years. William Byrd III's face was heavily repainted by an unknown hand sometime in the nineteenth or early twentieth century, before Colonial Williamsburg acquired it. This makes it impossible to tell in which direction Byrd was gazing. He could have been looking off into the distance, which he appears to be doing now. Gazing off center would only enhance the ambiguous relationship between sitters and viewers. If he were gazing directly out at the audience, then he certainly would have drawn more attention from the viewer. Object file 1986-243, Portrait of William Byrd III as a Child, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Another unhappy effect of many Negros, is, the necessity of being severe. Numbers make them insolent, & then foul means must do, what fair will not. We have however nothing like the inhumanity here, that is practiced in the islands, & God forbid we ever should...private mischeifs are nothing compard to the publick danger...It were therefore worth the consideration...to put an end to this unchristian traffick of makeing merchandize of our fellow creatures.\textsuperscript{623}

Byrd recognized that slavery made masters violent and uncivilized. There was no genteel way to force labor. Additionally, he knew that slaves did not willingly accept their condition and, faced with the prospect of increased importation of slaves, he feared slave rebellions. Much earlier, in 1710, after rumors of a slave rebellion had led to arrests and trials, Byrd recorded that the Council "directed the negroes to be arraigned for high treason."\textsuperscript{624} A number of other conspiracies and rumors of rebellions inflamed planter fears over the course of the eighteenth century. The burgeoning number of slaves imported to meet demands of plantation labor led to increased oppressive measures to prevent uprisings.\textsuperscript{625}

Rather than include images of enslaved Africans in their portraits to show off their wealth and whiteness, as Byrd did, most planters chose to represent themselves without explicit references to slavery. The Chesapeake portraits that reference slavery reveal the ambiguity of master/slave relationships in a slave society. The inherent violence of the slave system could be overlooked in England, where portraits of aristocrats with their African manservants hung in country homes with few Africans, distant from colonial plantations. Within the

\textsuperscript{623} William Byrd II to John Percival, First Earl of Egmont, 12 July 1736, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, \textit{Correspondence}, 489.
\textsuperscript{624} 18 April 1710 in Byrd, \textit{The Secret Diary}, 167.
\textsuperscript{625} Parent, \textit{Foul Means}, 152–72.
colonial plantation complex, however, the falsity of the master/slave relationship pictured in such portraits undermined the use of slaves to construct images of gentility.

Rendering slavery invisible was one method of constructing colonial refinement. Planters did this in their portraiture, but also in other forms of material culture. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, planters both large and small increasingly built grander, more stately homes for their families, with separate quarters for slaves. Previously, all had lived under one roof. A few domestic slaves slept within the main house to serve the planter family throughout the day and night. Other domestic slaves slept in separate quarters near the great house, often above kitchens and laundries. These outbuildings, closer to the house, were usually well built and aesthetically pleasing because they were near or within sight of the great house. Planters carefully arranged these clusters of buildings to present the appearance of a well-ordered little village—albeit one with a definite hierarchy of scale. On larger plantations, however, the field hands slept in cabins far removed from the great house. The cabins were typically less well constructed, but were out of sight of most white visitors. These new physical accommodations and priorities separated planters

628 On slave housing in the colonial period, see Dell Upton, “Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” Winterthur Portfolio 17, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1982): 102–3; Upton, “White and Black Landscapes,” 63; and Edward
from slaves and made slaves less visible during social events, unless actively serving planters and their guests.

Other planters took further steps to hide slaves. Planter Landon Carter built Sabine Hall between ca. 1733 and 1742 with a separate set of service stairs for the use of his domestic slaves. The stairs provided entry to the second floor and were accessed from outside the house.\textsuperscript{629} This feature allowed slaves to enter the second floor without being seen in the central passage or upstairs parlor, both of which were most frequently used for entertaining guests. Similarly, Thomas Jefferson built semi-subterranean passages, a dumbwaiter system, and revolving service doors to keep his enslaved laborers out of sight.\textsuperscript{630} Following the American Revolution, these types of architectural modifications designed to hide slavery increased under growing pressure from abolitionists.\textsuperscript{631} The various methods of materially erasing enslaved people support the argument that colonists deliberately departed from the European practice of portraiture that placed Africans on public display.

The material culture of the Virginia gentry is haunted by the invisible presence of slaves that made refinement in the colonial wilderness possible.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{630} Chappell, “Housing Slavery,” 170–71.
\end{flushright}
Slaves performed the hard labor necessary to pay for consumer goods requisite to perform gentility. Planters, who counted slaves among their "family," were highly aware of being surrounded by slaves and of their humanity: planters knew the names of their slaves, attended to them when sick, and rode among them each day to supervise their work. Planters constructed the material world of planter gentility in direct opposition to the physical experience and inhumanity of slavery, trying to hide its unrefined reality. Just as the absence of Charles from the Virginia version of the Duchess of Montagu's portrait haunts and renders the composition incomplete, leaving the strand dangling from a strangely small ball of thread, the absence of slaves from Virginia portraiture renders the gentry's self-image deficient.

**Slavery in Absentia: Dogs, Horses, and White Mastery**

By ignoring enslaved people in their portraits, planters constructed the fiction of a refined, colonial society in which non-white people could not possess the gaze or negatively influence gentility. However, the erasure of bondpeople from colonial portraiture begs an inquiry into what might be included in their place to assert white mastery. Most planters conveniently ignored slavery altogether in their portraits. Their displays of expensive clothing and their participation in the British practice of portraiture were enough to show off most families' wealth and refinement. Their visages, along with those of their ancestors, watched over the household, surveilling their enslaved workers. White mastery was implied by the
very presence of white faces and the absence of all African faces. However, it appears that some planters made oblique references to slavery in their portraits through the inclusion of dogs. While the significance of dogs as emblems of fidelity and mastery was well established in English portraiture, in a plantation context, the dog could take on additional connotations. The pictorial attention paid to dogs and, occasionally, to horses in Virginia aided family portraiture in dehumanizing their enslaved workforce by visually elevating animals over enslaved people or making the dog or horse “stand in” for slaves.

Colonial portraiture constructed white mastery while dehumanizing non-whites by equating slaves with family pets and by picturing dogs in family collections. Like enslaved people, to whom planters frequently referred as "family," in the sense that they were dependent on the white patriarch, pets were intimately associated with family life. However, pets are often present in portraiture, while enslaved people are conspicuously absent. While only three portraits from colonial Virginia include enslaved people, there are at least ten dogs painted in portraits between ca. 1680 and 1776.632 Dogs in English and colonial portraits were well-established symbols of mastery, loyalty, and gentility. They were proof that the owner had mastered the animal's natural instincts to

632 These ten portraits are: Circle of John Closterman and John Riley, William Byrd II in Roman Dress (figure 1.15); possibly Robert Dowsing, Edward Jaquelin II (figure 1.24); Unknown artist, an unknown boy from Maryland or Virginia (ca. 1725-40?, MESDA Object Database, S-353); Unknown artist, Anne Byrd as a child (figure 3.6); William Dering, George Booth (figure 3.14); Unknown artist, Landon Carter (figure 3.16); Unknown artist, Francis Willis (Clarke County Historical Association Records); John Hesselius, Janie Okie and Gavin Corbin (figure 2.22); John Wollaston, Thomas Mann Randolph (figure 3.12); Benjamin West, Severn Eyre (ca. 1756-1759, private collection); Matthew Pratt, William Randolph (1773, FARL).
command obedience. The frequently imported or specially bred dogs raised by
gentry planters were also evidence of the owner's wealth, as they were monetary
investments. Further, unlike pet squirrels and birds, dogs were both loyal
companions and working animals, providing labor on the plantation by hunting
and guarding livestock. Therefore, the working dog breeds (unlike feminized
lap dogs) that appear in extant Virginia portraiture could act as metaphors for
enslaved people.

As discussed in chapter one, the portrait of William Byrd II in Roman
Dress (figure 1.15) used a spaniel on a chain to allegorically reference slavery as
early as ca. 1680. Chained dogs were unusual in English portraits. Typically,
dogs appear without a lead to signify loyalty, as in the contemporary John Poulett
portrait (figure 1.17). Poulett's dog is also a hunting companion, made clear by
the hunting rifle and powder bag. Ribbons appear as dog leashes far more often
than do chains in English portraits of children, as in the portrait of the Montagu
boy (figure 1.18) from the same circle of artists. Ribbons, and occasionally ropes,
imply gentle guidance rather than domination.

On pet-keeping in the Chesapeake and their use in portraits as symbols of mastery
and status, see Sarah Hand Meacham, "Pets, Status, and Slavery in the Late-
Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake," Journal of Southern History 77, no. 3 (August 2011):
521–54. On the English and their dogs, see Ian MacInnes, "Mastiffs and Spaniels:
Gender and Nation in the English Dog," Textual Practice 17, no. 1 (2003): 21–40; and
Thomas, Man and the Natural World, 100–122.

Meacham, "Pets, Status, and Slavery," 541.

On lap dogs, MacInnes, "Mastiffs and Spaniels," 22.

Though English and European portraits rarely feature dogs in iron chains, I found one
notable exception: the 1623 portrait of the Genoese boy Filippo Cattaneo by Anthony
van Dyck (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1492.9.93). Filippo is depicted as
a young boy who adopts a stance similar to that of young William Byrd II. He commands a
small mastiff puppy by an iron chain. This chain features much smaller links than the one
portrait conveys the sense of dominance that is present in the Byrd portrait. Therefore, the use of a chain in _William Byrd II in Roman Dress_ appears to be a colonial adaptation.

The chain in the painting evokes slavery, as chains and shackles were used as forms of punishment and restriction for enslaved people. On slave ships, Africans were regularly chained to prevent mutiny.637 In 1640 Virginia, a runaway African named Emanuel was sentenced to "work in shakle one year or more as his master shall see cause."638 Although Emanuel ran away with a group of white indentured servants, only he, a slave, was punished with shackles, indicating a racialized punishment. In 1757, Landon Carter recorded that he was "obliged" to make three of his "runaway" bondmen "work in Chains."639 Similarly, a whip, a symbol of slavery akin to the chain, appears in the 1750s portrait of Thomas Mann Randolph (figure 3.12) by John Wollaston to refer to planter mastery.640 In Randolph's portrait, he stands holding a whip with his right hand while a collared dog on his left looks straight up at him. Randolph, in the William Byrd II portrait and is largely obscured behind Filippo's back, so it is less prominent. Intriguingly, Filippo's portrait flanked that of his mother, the Marchesa Elena Grimaldi Cattaneo (Anthony van Dyck, 1623, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1942.9.92). The Marchesa's portrait is a famous image featuring an African shading the Marchesa with a red umbrella. Therefore, young Cattaneo's chained dog was hung next to a portrait of an African servant/slave in a subservient position. See the catalog entry, https://www.nga.gov/Collection/art-object-page.1232.html. Accessed 14 November 2017.

639 5 March 1757 in Carter, _Diary of Landon Carter_, 149.
640 I have not viewed this portrait in person and have only seen it in a black-and-white photograph published in Weddell, _Virginia Historical Portraiture_, next to page 203. The portrait is also documented in the Frick Art Reference Library, but the image is poorer quality.
with one hand in his waistcoat, is a gentleman at ease who simultaneously commands the obedience of his dog. The implication is that tough discipline has rendered the dog loyal and submissive. In ca. 1765, John Wollaston painted young Daniel Ward of Charleston, South Carolina, with a small black dog (MESDA). As Jennifer Van Horn has observed, Ward's dog has a "strangely human eye surrounded not by black fur but a ring of pale pink skin," suggesting that "the black attendant has become the beast himself." Wollaston and his southern patrons thus understood the implied association of a painted dog with enslaved people.

The dog in Thomas Mann Randolph's 1750s portrait recalls an enduring English proverb: "The more the spaniel is beaten, the fonder he is." The proverb, which existed in variations, expressed the ability to beat dogs into loyalty and submission. It is also reminiscent of William Byrd II's declaration regarding African slaves: "Numbers make them insolent, & then foul means must do, what fair will not." The implication of Byrd's statement is that only "foul means," such as physical punishment, will make slaves obedient. Planters used similar methods of physical punishment to force both animals and slaves into submission. Slaves could be branded, chained, and whipped, just like dogs and

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641 Jennifer Van Horn discusses the fascinating material history of this painting in Van Horn, “The Dark Iconoclast,” quote, 139.
642 MacInnes, “Mastiffs and Spaniels,” 34. MacInnes discusses the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; however, an English print from 1787 includes a version of this proverb, indicating its continued use throughout the eighteenth-century English-speaking world. See The way to keep him, or the female flagellants attacking the platonic hero at the Richmond Theatre (London: W. Dickie 1787), Library of Congress.
643 William Byrd II to John Percival, First Earl of Egmont, 12 July 1736, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 489.
livestock on the plantation. Indeed, one particularly conspicuous material object linked both dogs and slaves: the collar. Planters often forced both to wear collars as symbols of ownership or of punishment, as in the case of spiked or pronged collars. Planters deliberately equated enslaved people with beasts in an effort to dehumanize and dominate them.

Along with picturing themselves with instruments of control, planters used other pictorial strategies to equate dogs and the enslaved. For example, the portrait of William Byrd III as a child had a companion in the pendant portrait of his sister, Anne Byrd as a child (figure 3.6). In her portrait, Anne places her hand on a dog's head in a sign of mastery. As a pair, the slave and the dog in each work are visually equated. They both stand to the left of the white child and look at them subserviently. The same equation occurs in the Maryland portraits of Henry Darnall III (figure 3.5) and his sister, Eleanor Darnall (figure 3.13). The slave in Henry Darnall's portrait wears a silver collar, just like a dog, and offers Henry a bird. Dogs in English and colonial portraits frequently engage in the same activity, offering the sitter a bird in their mouth, as in the portrait of young Virginian George Booth (figure 3.14) by William Dering. Young William Byrd III's portrait includes a bow and arrow, a reference to hunting. William Byrd III's portrait uses hunting iconography similar to George Booth's portrait; however, instead of a dog, Byrd has a loyal African page. In English portraiture, dogs and

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644 For more on the association of slaves and animals, see Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 271–72; and Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 41–50.
645 Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 272; Meacham, “Pets, Status, and Slavery.”
646 On the Kühn portrait, see Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, 169–74.

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enslaved Africans frequently appeared together, both gazing obediently at the 
white sitter. For example, in Bartholomew Dandridge's painting, Young Girl with 
_Dog and Negro Boy_ (figure 3.15), both the dog and the African boy look up 
submissively at the white girl and wear coordinating collars. The hound and black 
boy share the same status and both recognize the girl's mastery. However, in 
the colonial context, the African body is erased and only the dog remains as a 
symbol of white mastery.

The linguistic equation of servants and slaves with dogs in Virginia adds 
further support to viewing dogs as metonyms for enslaved people. In 1678, 
Thomas Hellier, an indentured servant convicted of murdering his master in 
Virginia, cautioned planters,

> you that are Masters of Servants in this Country, have respect to 
them, to let them have that which is necessary for them, with good 
words, and not (_dam you, Dog, do such a thing, or such a thing._) 
They are not Dogs, who are professed Christians, and bear Gods 
Image; happily they are as good Christians as yourselves.

Hellier's warning indicates that at least some masters called and treated their 
servants (and slaves) as dogs. In 1770, Landon Carter called an enslaved 
carpenter named Toney an "idle dog," and remarked in 1772, "my dog of a

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648 Italicized in original. _The Vain Prodigal Life and Tragical Penitent Death of Thomas Hellier, Born at Whitchurch near Lyme in Dorset-Shire: Who for Murdering His Master, Mistress, and a Maid, Was Executed According to Law at Westover in Charles City, in the Country of Virginia, Neer the Plantation Called Hard Labour, Where He Perpetrated the Said Murders: He Suffer’d on Munday the 5th of August, 1678, and Was after Hanged up in Chains at Windmill-Point on James River._ (London: Printed for Sam. Crouch, 1680), 36. For Native American linguistic associations of “dog” with “slave” see Lawson, _A New Voyage to Carolina_, 210; and chapter 1.

foreman is now grown a lazy villain." Calling a person a dog was an insult intended to imply bestial behavior. Further, planters often used the same types of names for their dogs and their bondpeople, including classical names such as "Caesar" or "Pompey."

The multiple cultural and linguistic associations between dogs and the enslaved indicate that the inclusion of dogs in Virginia portraits obliquely referenced slavery. From a planter's perspective, dogs modeled the perfect behavior for the enslaved people they represented. Landon Carter's ca. 1750 portrait by an unknown artist includes a hunting dog at his side (figure 3.16). The subject places one hand on the dog's head, a firm sign of Carter's mastery that is simultaneously a reward for the canine's loyal behavior. In the background is a hunting scene that depicts other dogs and men on horseback riding after them. While this image refers to the genteel pursuit of hunting, it can also be read as a representation of the ideal master/slave relationship, as men like Landon Carter understood it. Notably, Virginia hunters used their enslaved people alongside dogs when hunting. In 1739, John Clayton described deer hunting in Virginia, stating that planters "send their servants w'th dogs to drive 'em out." Landon Carter also expected dog-like devotion from his slaves in return for food, shelter, and clothing. Carter's writings from the 1760s and 1770s are full of anecdotes

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650 19 October 1772 in Carter, 741.
651 On dog names, see Meacham, “Pets, Status, and Slavery,” 536. On classical names given to enslaved people as a means of degradation, see Sobel, *The World They Made Together*, 157–58.
revealing his imagined benevolent patriarchal relationship to his slaves. After eight of his bondpeople ran away in 1777, Carter wrote "that I have no kind of Severity in the least to accuse myself of to one of them; but on the contrary a behaviour on my part that should have taught them gratitude if there ever was a virtue of the sort in such creatures." Of course, Carter's diary was filled with instances of severe physical and emotional punishment inflicted on his enslaved people that belie his description of himself as a generous master. Nevertheless, when slaves disobeyed him, he took it as a personal affront. This patriarchal master/slave relationship is envisioned in his portrait but channeled through a dog.

Graphic prominence in portraits was given to another animal as well: the horse. In 1774, the tutor Philip Vickers Fithian described the Tayloe family's great house at Mount Airy, writing, "In the Dining-Room, besides many other fine Pieces, are twenty four of the most celebrated among the English Race-Horses, Drawn masterly, & set in elegant gilt Frames." None of the Tayloe family portraits include slaves or overt references to slavery. However, they prominently displayed at least twenty-four horse portraits in their plantation house and hung them in gilt frames. In contrast, their family portraits were hung in plain black frames (figures 2.10 and 2.11). Equine portraits were popular in England and Virginia during the eighteenth century, and artists often created likenesses of

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653 10 July 1777 in Carter, *Diary of Landon Carter*, 1109.
654 Landon Carter’s personality and relationship to his slaves has been investigated in Isaac, *Landon Carter’s Uneasy Kingdom*, esp. 17-36, 187-232, 313-322.
recognizable horses. Horses in paintings, whether pictured alongside their master or as the subjects of their own portraits, were signs of the owner's mastery and nobility. English horse portraits were turned into circulating prints that published the names and often the pedigrees and accomplishments of horses below their images (e.g., figure 3.17 and 3.18). The two illustrated here were part of a series of twelve (1755-1756), and may have been among those hanging at Mount Airy. Meanwhile, enslaved figures went unnamed in most European and American images, as they were intended as emblems rather than individual subjects.

Granting a strong presence to animals in portraits and other images further objectified the family's slaves. The Tayloe family's lists of bondpeople include impersonal records of first names, occasionally a special skill, and the enslaved person's monetary worth. Little regard is given to the kinship ties or individual personalities of the slaves, and their family names largely went unrecorded. By contrast, the Tayloe family maintained lengthy pedigrees of the horses the family bred, noting parentage and the specific qualities of each

658 Papers of the Tayloe Family, 1756-1893, Accession #38-630, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
659 Historian Richard Dunn has recently completed research on the enslaved people at Mount Airy; however, his research focuses on the Early Republic and Antebellum years rather than the colonial period, which reflects the lack of attention to enslaved people in the archival records of the earlier era. See A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life and Labor in Jamaica and Virginia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).
horse. The horse records reveal greater individuality than do those of the family's enslaved workforce. Objects like the horse portraits, which similarly record names and ancestry of individual horses, prominently visualized this inequality.

If portraits depend on subjecthood, then the horse was granted greater subjectivity, even humanity, in colonial visual culture than were enslaved people. Virginia planters loved horses, horse racing, and horse breeding. They took particular pride in their racehorses, as they came to represent genteel masculinity and social honor. Only a few horses are depicted in Virginia portraits, one of which appears in a portrait believed to be William Byrd III as an adult (figure 3.19), painted around 1750 by John Hesselius. The horse is located alone in a clearing just behind Byrd, and may very well have been a specific, favored horse because of its prominent position in the portrait. Byrd turns slightly towards it and the horse appears just underneath his left arm. The horse's stance in Byrd's portrait is similar to English paintings and prints of horses, which elevated horses to portrait subjects (e.g., figure 3.18).

Dogs and horses were already understood as symbols of mastery in western portraiture. The multiple associations of enslaved people with animals, particularly dogs, suggests that in a plantation context where images of enslaved

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660 Horse pedigrees, box 1, folder 2, in the Papers of the Tayloe Family, University of Virginia.
661 Breen, “Horses and Gentlemen.”
662 Horses appear in the following portraits: John Hesselius, William Byrd III (figure 3.19); Benjamin West, Severn Eyre (ca. 1756-1759, private collection); Edward Hill III (figure 1.16); unknown artist, Landon Carter (figure 3.16); and John Hesselius, William Fitzhugh (ca. 1770, MESDA Object Database, S-6966).
people were subversive, the dog could function metaphorically to signal slavery—a system requiring a specific type of mastery. The relatively high visual prominence given to dogs and horses in colonial Virginia, in comparison to the pictorial disavowal of slavery, indicates the role played by art in the process of dehumanization in the minds of planters.

**Conclusion: "that immoveable veil of black"**

By the late eighteenth century, race was an increasingly fixed concept in the minds of white Americans. As the colonial period came to a close, Americans faced the problem of defining the African American's place in the new nation. In 1781, immediately following the American Revolution, Virginian Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* couched the issue of African American political participation in aesthetic terms. His denigration of Africans using aesthetics relates to the colonial project of employing portraiture to construct gentility and character. Jefferson wrote,

> Why not retain and incorporate the blacks in the state, and thus save the expense of supplying, by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave?...To these objections, which are political, may be added others, which are physical and moral. The first difference that strikes us is that of color...Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in the one preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in countenances, that immoveable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race?...The circumstances of superior beauty, is that worthy of attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs, and other domestic animals; why not in that of man?...Some have been liberally educated, and all have lived in countries where the arts and sciences are cultivated to a considerable degree...But never yet could I find that a black had
uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never see even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture.\textsuperscript{663}

In Jefferson’s argument, the black face is inscrutable; it does not register emotion or character. The lack of emotional transparency is an insurmountable moral failing that renders Africans incapable of participating in a democratic republic.\textsuperscript{664}

His comments suggest the impossibility of pictorially representing individual African figures because their faces cannot be read; they are "monotonous."\textsuperscript{665} He describes blackness as the antithesis of beauty and Africans as incapable of refinement or understanding good taste. Tellingly, Jefferson compares the practice of dog and horse breeding to African-American "propagation." A product of colonial Virginia, Jefferson draws on his experience with enslaved people, arguing that even after years of enslavement by Euro-Americans and being surrounded by refinement, there was no evidence of true taste in any African he had yet met.

As Jefferson’s comments reveal, the historical invisibility and erasure of black figures in colonial portraiture in order to construct white mastery and gentility evolved ideologically into the impossibility of representing blackness in the American body politic. Colonists believed that portraiture conveyed individual


character of the sitter. William Byrd II made this explicit when he told the Earl of Egmont in 1737 that, "I was pleas'd to find some strangers able to read your Lordships character on the canvas, as plain as if they had been physiognomists by profession." The importance of portraiture for conveying character and representing physiognomy continued well into the nineteenth century. For Jefferson, the inscrutability of black physiognomy was a barrier to American citizenship.

The problem of representing African American faces persisted. Frederick Douglass wrote several speeches and articles that discussed portraiture. In an 1849 article, Douglass stated, "Negroes can never have impartial portraits at the hands of white artists. It seems to us next to impossible for white men to take likenesses of black men, without most grossly exaggerating their distinctive features...We have heard many white persons say, that 'Negroes look all alike.'" Douglass's comments read as a direct counterpoint to Jefferson's remark about the "immoveable veil of black." Douglass blames not the

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666 William Byrd II to John Percival, Earl of Egmont, 12 July 1737, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 487.
668 There is extensive literature on Frederick Douglass and his writings on aesthetics, portraiture, and photography. For a recent study of Douglass and his relationship to portraiture, see John Stauffer, Zoe Trodd, and Celeste-Marie Bernier, Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century’s Most Photographed American (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015).
complexion of Africans, but white artists and viewers for the inability to properly see and paint African faces because of deeply ingrained prejudices first constructed in the colonial period.

The plantation complex system of visuality thus began in the colonial period with the literal erasure and elision of African faces in order to divest Africans of the gaze, give power to the white gaze, and construct gentility as a characteristic of whiteness. In colonial Virginia, portraiture helped to construct a racial hierarchy in which to be white was to be pictured and to be non-white was to be rendered invisible. Nonetheless, the presence of enslaved people influenced portraiture. Their large numbers forced planters to reckon with the need to erase them in an attempt to deny them humanity. Their presence as audience members affected the ways portraits functioned within the plantation house, compelling portraits to become objects of social control while necessitating black absence from the visual archive. The presence of slaves also forced white viewers to reckon with both the black and white gaze, affecting the reception of portraiture and undermining racial hierarchies.
Figure 3.1. *William Byrd III as a child*, ca. 1729-1730. Oil on canvas, 49 3/4 x 40 1/2 in. (126.37 x 102.87 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Gift of Mrs. Fanny W. Parker, 1986-243.
Figure 3.2. Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu*, ca. 1720s. Oil on canvas, 55 3/4 x 45 in. (141.6 x 114.3 cm.). Buccleuch Collection, Boughton House, By kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch & Queensberry KBE.
Figure 3.3. By or after Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu*, ca. 1720s. Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 x 40 1/4 in. (125.73 x 102.24 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1954.309.
Figure 3.4. John Hesselius, *Charles Calvert and His Slave*, 1761. Oil on canvas, 50 1/4 x 39 7/8 in. (127.7 x 101.3 cm.). The Baltimore Museum of Art, Gift of Alfred R. and Henry G. Riggs, in Memory of General Lawrason Riggs, BMA 1941.4. Photograph by Mitro Hood.
Figure 3.5. Justus Engelhardt Kühn, *Henry Darnall III*, ca. 1710. Oil on canvas, 54 x 44 in. (137.16 x 111.76 cm.). Maryland Historical Society, 1912.1.3.
Figure 3.6. Unknown artist, *Anne Byrd as a child*, ca. 1729-1730. Oil on canvas, 50 3/8 x 40 3/8 in. (128 x 102.6 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1957-183,A.
Figure 3.7. Daniel Orme after William Denton, Frontispiece from The Interesting Narrative of The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or, Gustavus Vassa, The African, Written by Himself, 1789. Stipple engraving, 4 3/16 x 3 1/8 in. (10.6 x 7.9 cm.). National Portrait Gallery, NPG.78.82.
Figure 3.8. William Faithorne ( engraver) after Sir Peter Lely ( painter), *Beauty's Tribute*, late seventeenth century. Mezzotint engraving, Plate size 13 11/16 × 10 3/16 in. (34.8 × 25.8 cm). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1974.12.440.
Figure 3.9. Attributed to Gustavus Hesselius, *Girl of the Carroll Family*, no date. Oil on canvas, 53 x 38 in. (134.62 x 96.52 cm.). Private collection. Reproduced from "Two hundred years of American portraits: A selection of portraits from the early eighteenth to the early twentieth century," *Kennedy Quarterly* 9, no.4 (May 1970): 234.
Figure 3.10. William Hogarth, plate two from *A Harlot's Progress*, 1732. Etching and engraving, 12 7/16 x 14 15/16 in. (31.6 x 37.9 cm.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 32.25.
Figure 3.11 and detail. *The Fortunate Transport* ca. 1741. Etching, Plate size 7.91 x 12.8 in. (20.1 x 32.5 cm.). John Carter Brown Library.
Figure 3.13. Justus Engelhart Kühn, *Eleanor Darnall*, ca. 1710. Oil on canvas, 54 x 44 in. (137.16 x 111.76 cm.). Maryland Historical Society, 1912.1.5.
Figure 3.14. William Dering, *George Booth*, 1748-1750. Oil on canvas, 50 1/4 x 39 1/2 in. (127.64 x 100.33 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1975-242,A.
Figure 3.15. Bartholomew Dandridge, *Young Girl with an Enslaved Servant and a Dog*, ca. 1725. Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 in. (121.9 x 121.9 cm.). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.205.
Figure 3.16. Unknown artist, *Landon Carter*, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Private collection. Photograph courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
Figure 3.17. Richard Houston (engraver), after Thomas Spencer (artist), *The Portraiture of White-Nose*, 1756. Mezzotint engraving, 11 5/8 x 13 5/8 in. (29.5 x 34.6 cm.). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1985.36.978.

Caption reads: "This Excellent Stallion was bred by the R^1^ Hon^ble^ the L^d^ Middleton, he was got by the Godolphin Arabian his Dam was got by Childers out of a full Sister to Blaze, he got the R^1^ Hon^ble^ the L^d^ Onslow's Victorious M' Fenwick's Dutchess & M'r Rogers's Arian afterwards became the property of his Grace ye Duke of Marlborough who presented him to ye R^1^ Hon^ble^ ye Earl of Portmore."

Part of a series, "Twelve Portraits of Race Horses," see also figure 3.18.
Figure 3.18. Richard Houston (engraver), after Thomas Spencer (artist), *The Portraiture of the fine Chestnut Arabian*, 1756. Mezzotint, 11 5/8 x 13 5/8 in. (29.5 x 34.6 cm.). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1985.36.979.

Caption reads: "Imported into England by Fitshugh Esq. A true pedigree of this Beautiful Horse as attested in presence of many Witnesses before the Solemn Judge of the High Court of Judicature at Aleppo is to be seen in the Hands of M' Charles Wilson whose property this horse now is & Covers with him Every Season at Oran near Richmond in Yorkshire."

Part of a series, "Twelve Portraits of Race Horses," see also figure 3.17.
Figure 3.19. John Hesselius, *William Byrd III*, ca. 1750. Oil on canvas, 49 1/4 x 38 in. (125.1 x 96.52 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1985.20.
Chapter Four
New Virginia Characters: A Revolution in Portraiture

"You know the Character of the Virginians for Hospitality, and I doubt not can well account for that difference of Disposition between these southern & northern Colonies, Pensilvania & Virginia being a perfect contrast."\textsuperscript{670} Charles Willson Peale (1775)

In the 1770s, Virginia portrait conventions changed. Women's images became political, the landscapes reference actual places, the props are more specific to the individuals, and the paintings convey a greater sense of place and time. The transformation from the conventional British Atlantic portraits of the 1740s-1760s to more regionally-specific and individualized images indicates shifting colonial identities. The community aesthetic developed in Virginia by artists like John Wollaston and John Hesselius in the 1750s constructed the gentry as a class that shared a set of values. By the 1770s, members of the Virginia gentry were increasingly insecure about their status, as their authority was challenged by British imperial policies, crushing debt, and the lower and middling classes. The French and Indian War (1756-1763) had changed the British Empire and inaugurated social and commercial transformations in Virginia. As hostilities between the colonies and the imperial government worsened, Virginians responded to the conflict in a variety of ways. These reactions are reflected in the diverse methods of representation through portraiture. The community consensus of portrait conventions broke down. The likenesses created in the 1770s by the artists John Hesselius, Matthew Pratt, 

\textsuperscript{670} Peale et al., The Selected Papers, I: 142.
Charles Willson Peale, and Cosmo Alexander negotiated these changing, fracturing colonial identities. While these artists continued to utilize the British portrait conventions with which they were familiar, they adapted them to suit their patron's individual needs. Meanwhile, the arrival of the painter John Durand, who catered to the middling sorts of yeomen and merchants, offered more Virginians than ever the opportunity to commission portraits. Durand's paintings celebrate wealth and success in their straightforward approach to representation and pay tribute to the Virginia identity of his patrons.

The Walker Chairs: John Hesselius, the Lawsons, and the Scottish-Virginian Image

John Hesselius's post-1770 portraits illustrate a new individualized approach to portraiture in Virginia. Instead of the imagined costumes of the 1750s and early 1760s, his sitters from this later period wear clothes more likely to be their real outfits. The landscapes become more defined and specific than those of his earlier portraits. For example, Hesselius painted Virginian planter Henry Fitzhugh in 1771 (figure 4.1). Occupying the canvas to Henry's left is a distant, clearly defined landscape with realistic looking trees, complete with a small structure that appears to be a log cabin of the type that was increasingly popular in western Virginia.671 Hesselius's portrait of Henry Fitzhugh's wife, Elizabeth Stith Fitzhugh (figure 4.2), features buildings nestled next to a

mountain in a distant wooded environment. As a member of the Mississippi Land Company, the extensive landscapes in the Fitzhugh portraits may represent Henry Fitzhugh's keen interest in western land speculation.\(^{672}\) The Fitzhugh landscapes contrast with those seen in Hesselius's 1750 portraits of James Gordon (figure 2.38) and his daughters (figure 2.42). In the earlier Gordon portraits, the trees have a theatrical look to them and the pictured house looks like a simplified, almost abstract woodcut image rather than the depiction of a recognizable structure. The costumes worn by the Gordon women (figures 2.39 and 2.40) are more generic garments, as identical dresses appear on a number of women painted by Hesselius.\(^{673}\) By contrast, Elizabeth Stith Fitzhugh wears a fashionable pink dress and jewelry. Hers is the type of dress that was in style in the 1770s, rather than the imagined style of dresses from the 1750s.\(^{674}\) While it is unclear if Elizabeth actually owned the dress she wears in her portrait, Hesselius's portraits of Elizabeth and her contemporaries in the 1770s depict


\(^{673}\) The dress on Milicent Conway Gordon appears in multiple portraits by John Hesselius and Robert Feke, who was likely one of Hesselius's early instructors. See, for example: Robert Feke, *Anne McCall (Mrs. Samuel McCall)* (1746, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston), and John Hesselius, *Jane Champe Washington (Mrs. Samuel Washington)* (1750s, MESDA Object Database, S-10430). The dress on Mary Harrison Gordon also appears in a number of portraits, for example: Robert Feke, *Elizabeth Burwell Nelson (Mrs. Thomas Nelson)* (figure 2.3), and John Hesselius, *Alice Thornton Fitzhugh (Mrs. John Fitzhugh)* (1751, MESDA Object Database, S-5173).

individualized outfits rather than the repetition of the same dress in different colors. The heavy pearl necklace with four strands, the bow at her breast, and the lace trim, render her appearance more luxurious than the restrained looks of the 1750s. Together, the two 1771 Fitzhugh portraits represent the vision of a distinctively American landscape inhabited by individualized Virginians.

The three Lawson family portraits also painted by John Hesselius in 1770 and 1771 are examples of paintings that express particularly localized objects. Scottish merchant and planter Gavin Lawson (1738-1805) (figure 4.3), his wife Susannah Rose Lawson (1749-1825) (figure 4.4), and his mother-in-law, Ann Fitzhugh Rose (Mrs. Robert Rose, 1721-1789) (figure 4.5), are each depicted as seated in distinctive chairs made by the local Scottish cabinetmaker Robert Walker (ca. 1710-1777). Chairs from the Walker shop feature "crests with heavily scrolled ears" (figure 4.6), which are visible in all three of the Lawson portraits. Particularly in the Gavin Lawson portrait, the chair's ears are highlighted by a lighter paint color, drawing the viewer's attention to its unique form. Further, while the two women sit in armless side chairs, Gavin is seated in an armchair. The arm rail of the chair in his portrait is similarly highlighted to show off its graceful curve and its carved terminals. The carving on the table in Susannah's portrait is similarly highlighted and the table is prominently placed, occupying almost a third of the canvas. Though no similar extant table by Robert Walker is available for

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comparison, it is possible that Walker produced the Lawson's table. The table and two types of chairs show off two genres of seating in the Lawson home, designed for males and females, and underscore the family's ability to afford expensive carved furniture from one of the leading cabinetmakers in the region.

Local visitors to the Lawson house would likely recognize the chairs, and possibly the table, as Walker productions. Both the Lawsons and Robert Walker lived in the Northern Neck of Virginia in Stafford County. Robert Walker and his brother William, who died in 1750, were Scottish immigrants to that region who rose to local prominence. Robert made furniture for many of the most prominent families, while William was a builder. In 1749, colonial officials commissioned William to design and re-build the capitol in Williamsburg, indicating his powerful social connections. The Walker brothers' customers included the Fitzhughhs, the Carters, the Lees, and the Washingtons. The 1746 to 1751 diary of the Scottish Reverend Robert Rose (1704-1751), husband of Ann Fitzhugh Rose and father of Susannah Lawson, records many social interactions with the Walker brothers. The choice to include the Robert Walker chairs in their portraits was a personal one for the Lawsons. These chairs do not appear in

676 There are several examples of tea tables and case furniture attributed to Walker. Records indicate that Walker produced tables for local families and churches, although I have not seen any in the form pictured in the Lawson portrait. See Leath, “Robert and William Walker.”
677 Leath, “Robert and William Walker.”
678 Robert Rose records having dined, visited, and corresponded with the Walker brothers, and he attended William Walker's funeral. See Robert Rose, The Diary of Robert Rose, for mentions of Robert Walker, see 15, 52, 68, 74, 102; for mentions of William Walker see, 6, 17, 18, 23, 39, 51, 52, 71, 73; for William’s funeral, 73.
other known portraits from the period, despite the widespread patronage of Walker in the Northern Neck region of Virginia.

The fact that the Lawson, Rose, and Walker families were united not only by friendship but also by a common Scottish heritage explains the inclusion of the chairs. The chairs may have functioned as a type of advertisement for Walker, and they also provided a tangible sense of solidarity and pride amongst the Scottish-Virginian families. Despite the integration of Scottish immigrants into Virginian social networks at a personal level, there existed nonetheless a negative discourse surrounding Scots in Virginia. Jonathan Boucher, a tutor who worked for a time in Port Royal, Virginia, described the town thus: "Port Royal was inhabited by factors from Scotland and their dependents; and the circumjacent country by planters...There was not a literary man, for aught I could find...nor were literary attainments, beyond mere reading and writing, at all in vogue or repute." Some prejudice against the Scottish was religiously based, as many of the Scottish Virginians were not Anglicans but Presbyterians, a dissenting religion. James Gordon (figure 2.38), a Scottish merchant and Presbyterian, recorded in his 1760 diary a dispute over tobacco prices with a longtime customer (and a relative through his first wife): "As I can't be of his way of thinking in religion, he seems to take opportunity to hurt my interest." Even Gordon's association with leading families in the area and his general respectability could not fully protect him from prejudice.

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Recently arrived Scottish merchants faced amplified prejudice in the years after the French and Indian War, as they were outsiders at a time of financial crisis following the imperial conflict. Scottish merchants and firms, which dominated the tobacco market, called in debts, insulting Virginia planters' personal honor and disrupting the fragile system of credit. In 1767, before he married, a dispute arose between Gavin Lawson and the Dixon brothers (coincidentally, Boucher worked for John Dixon) over a Dixon-operated mill. The quarrel, featuring Lawson and his friend Dekar Thompson on one side and the Dixons on the other, entered the *Virginia Gazette* in the form of publicized letters. Roger Dixon described Lawson and Thompson thusly: "one of them from Whitehaven, the other from Scotland, and consequently transient persons, without wives or families." This character attack on Lawson centered on his Scottish identity, which to Roger Dixon meant that he did not belong in Virginia. The belief that Scottish merchants were a transient population who came to Virginia to get rich by taking advantage of tobacco planters only to return to Scotland was shared by many. A 1771 editorial, authored by "A Planter," implored other planters to withhold their business from merchants and to stop being "dependent on those who neither value you, or your country, any farther.

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682 2 April 1767, *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 2.
than to serve their present wants and purposes; for no sooner are they feathered
(like birds of migration) they fly away.\textsuperscript{683}

Returning to the Lawson portraits, that of Ann Fitzhugh Rose depicts her
holding out a snuffbox, an object directly associated with tobacco. Only one other
known Virginia portrait directly references tobacco, a late 1740s portrait of Mrs.
Mordecai Booth by William Dering (private collection). A snuffbox was an unusual
object to include in a colonial portrait and not one typically seen in Hesselius's
repertoire. The choice to depict the snuffbox was likely Ann Fitzhugh Rose's. Her
son-in-law, Gavin Lawson, was a Scottish tobacco agent, and her family
members (the Fitzhughs) were tobacco planters. The snuffbox thus referenced
her family's source of wealth. Tobacco was the Virginia staple crop, a product
that became synonymous with the colony in England: merchants referred to
tobacco products as "best Virginia" or even just "Virginia."\textsuperscript{684} The prominent
visual reference to tobacco in Ann Fitzhugh Rose's portrait reminded viewers that
the Lawsons and Roses had a stake in Virginia's economy. They were not there
to make a profit and then leave.

The Lawson portraits mark the family as part of a larger community of
Scottish-Virginian merchants, artisans, and planters, and as a family devoted to

\textsuperscript{683} 31 October 1771, \textit{Virginia Gazette} (Rind), 3.
\textsuperscript{684} Molineux, \textit{Faces of Perfect Ebony}, 152–57. See also Catherine Molineux, “Pleasures
of the Smoke: ‘Black Virginians’ in Georgian London’s Tobacco Shops,” \textit{The William and
Mary Quarterly}, Third Series, 64, no. 2 (April 2007): 327–76. For several examples of
English tobacco trade cards and papers that refer to tobacco as “Virginia,” see “Stolte’s
best Virginia” (ca. 1760-1818, British Museum D,2.3988), “Sharpe’s Best Virginia” (ca.
1725-1775, British Museum, Heal 117.145), and “Margerum’s Best Virginia” (ca. 1740-
1770, British Museum, Heal 117.112).
the Virginia tobacco trade in a time of turmoil. Notably, the earlier portraits of Scottish merchant families, such as James Gordon's family and William and Elizabeth Nelson (figures 2.3 and 2.4), do not allude either to their Scottish heritage or to the mercantile origins of their wealth. Given the dynastic function of portraiture in Virginia, the commissioning of the Lawson portraits was also a statement about the family’s commitment to Virginia. John Hesselius painted at least sixteen members of the extended Fitzhugh family (in addition to the Lawsons), including the father of Ann Fitzugh Rose, Henry Fitzhugh (Virginia Historical Society). Hesselius had visited Virginia on multiple occasions between 1750 and 1770, when the Lawsons sat for him. The painter likely had a good reputation in the area, as he kept returning and finding patronage. Furthermore, the Lawson’s decision to commission portraits from Hesselius materially connected them to the prominent Fitzhugh dynasty. When the portraits hung in the Lawson family’s house, they established one node in a visual network

685 Hesselius painted the following Fitzhugh family portraits: A man called William Fitzhugh (ca. 1750, Virginia Historical Society, 2008.103.1); Henry Fitzhugh (1614-1664) (figure 1.10); William Fitzhugh (1651-1701) (figure 1.11); two portraits of Henry Fitzhugh (1687-1758) (1751, Virginia Historical Society, 1987.53 and 1972.21); Henry Fitzhugh (1723-1783) (Virginia Historical Society, 1954.2); Sarah Battaile Fitzhugh (Mrs. Henry Fitzhugh, b.1731) (Virginia Historical Society, 1954.3); John Fitzhugh (1727-1809) (MESDA Object Database, S-5766); Alice Thornton Fitzhugh (Mrs. John Fitzhugh, 1729-1790) (MESDA Object Database S-5173); Sarah Fitzhugh (later Mrs. Theodorick Bland, 1746-1793) (1767, Maryland Historical Society, 46.1.1); William Fitzhugh (1741-1809) (MESDA Object Database, S-6966); Ann Randolph Fitzhugh (Mrs. William Fitzhugh, 1747-1805) (MESDA Object Database, S-6967); Elizabeth Fitzhugh Conway (Mrs. Francis Conway, 1754-1823) (ca. 1770, Virginia Historical Society, 1954.1); Henry Fitzhugh (1747-1815) (ca. 1770, DAPC); Henry Fitzhugh (1750-1777) (figure 4.1); Elizabeth Stith Fitzhugh (Mrs. Henry Fitzhugh, 1754-1786) (figure 4.2); and Susannah Fitzhugh Knox (Mrs. William Knox, ca. 1751-1823) (ca. 1771, Private collection, Sold by Sotheby's 21 January 2016). This list does not include all the spouses of the Fitzhugh women. These portraits hung at Fitzhugh family plantations at Eagle’s Nest, Bedford, Fitzhughburg, Chatham, and Bellair. See also Doud, “The Fitzhugh Portraits.”
of Fitzhugh family portraits by Hesselius that extended throughout the northern part of Virginia.

John Hesselius's portraits of the Lawsons are an important group that demonstrates changing portrait practices in Virginia. Since Hesselius worked in Virginia over the course of twenty years, these changes, not just in his skill, but also in the ways his patrons wanted to be memorialized in portraiture, constitute an important signpost for understanding Virginia portraiture. The inclusion of props specific to the individual sitters and their families, such as the Walker chairs, together with specific references to Virginia, is far different from the generalized portrait props of the 1750s. While some women (or artists) still preferred generic, imaginary dresses for female subjects, the inclusion of individualized garments in works by Hesselius marks another change in the conventions of female portraiture. Whereas the invented dresses and bodies in Hesselius's earlier works removed women from reality by evoking timelessness, his later trend towards depicting fashionable and individual dresses in portraiture located his sitters in a specific moment in time. Similarly, the snuffbox in Ann Fitzhugh Rose’s portrait also represents a shift in the props found in female portraiture. Unlike the fruits and flowers of the previous decades, the snuffbox directly references the economic activities of the region. In the 1770s, as tensions between the imperial government and American colonists increased, portraiture became more political as Virginians confronted their relationship to the British Empire.
The Balfours & Matthew Pratt: Towards a Pan-Colonial Resistance

Around 1773, when the artist Matthew Pratt (1734-1805) was in Hampton, Virginia, he painted the pendant portraits of James Balfour with his son, George, and Mary Jemima Balfour (figures 4.7 and 4.8). These works are particularly significant in the history of portraiture in Virginia, for not only do they depart from precedent—James Balfour is the only male from colonial Virginia who shares a canvas with another figure and who explicitly identifies as a merchant—they reveal an interest in pan-colonial resistance to British imperial policies. The Pratt portraits of the Balfours demonstrate the fracturing of colonial identification with England and document a growing identification with other North American British colonies. They also show how transatlantic republican discourse exerted an influence on Virginians.

James Balfour (d. 1775) was a successful merchant who supported the American cause and opposed the taxes levied by Parliament. Following the French and Indian War, Parliament passed a series of taxes intended to lower the imperial debt caused by the war and to pay for British troops needed to defend the American frontier. The maligned Stamp Act of 1765 and the Townshend Acts of 1767, which taxed certain goods imported from England, were part of Parliament's initiative to raise revenue. The taxes upset the American colonists who were already struggling financially. Colonists argued that

these taxes were an infringement on their liberty, as British citizens since they did not have representation in Parliament; therefore, Parliament did not have the right to tax them. In 1766 James Balfour testified at a Parliament hearing in London against the Stamp Act, stating, "I have been twenty-five years in America and never heard of a more loyal, affectionate people. They before complained of acts made in 1763 but did nothing but complain. They submitted to the authority of the British Parliament ever before held sacred." When asked whether he would carry on trading if the Stamp Act continued, he replied, "I dont know how to answer it, for all is at stake, and I have large concerns there which I would not give 50 shillings for if the Act is not repealed." One of the examiners wrote of Balfour's testimony that he was "primed...to say every thing against the Stamp Act, and neither to answer nor to know any thing on the other side...though he had lived there 20 years knew nothing of the price of labour, but said they had the finest wool, and more than 1,000 times enough to cloth all the province." Clearly Balfour was deliberately reticent in his testimony in order to favor the American cause. His testimony that Americans had the resources to manufacture


689 12 February 1766, Commons Proceedings, American Committee: Examination of Witnesses in Great Britain, Simmons, and Thomas, II: 1765-1768:200.

690 Harris Diary in Great Britain, Simmons, and Thomas, II: 1765-1768:218.
their own cloth also preyed on an English concern regarding the American resistance: that they could become producers as well as consumers, particularly of textiles. Although colonial Americans actually manufactured very little cloth (or much else), colonists recognized that the British imperial economy relied heavily on the American colonists role as importers and consumers of English-manufactured goods and exporters of raw materials. The political power of pan-colonial non-importation and non-exportation agreements as a form of protest lay in this imperial trade relationship.691

The following summer, in 1766, an advertisement connected to Balfour appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* for a set of two portrait prints featuring Charles Pratt, Earl of Camden, and William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, two prominent English politicians who supported the American cause. While the inclusion of prints in advertisements listing a variety of goods was common, this particular notice was noteworthy because it was exclusively for these two prints. The advertisement listed both "Little England," James Balfour's home, and the store of Balfour and his partner Daniel Barraud in Norfolk as places where samples could be viewed. At these locations, the merchants were taking subscriptions from customers to receive copies of the prints from England either in "elegant gilt frames" for seven

guineas or in "plain frames" for three guineas.\textsuperscript{692} The ad is evidence that James Balfour was involved in disseminating political portraits.

James Balfour was a respected revolutionary engaged in transatlantic imperial politics and one who was well informed of continental protests. In 1770, Balfour convinced a number of other merchants to attend a meeting in Williamsburg to discuss participation in a non-importation agreement.\textsuperscript{693} Balfour and his partner, Barraud, both signed the Virginia Non-importation Association agreement.\textsuperscript{694} In 1772, Balfour was named to the Virginia Committee of Trade, which attempted to enforce non-importation policies.\textsuperscript{695} The 1770 Virginia Association was largely ineffective, like other early non-importation agreements throughout the colonies. However, it was ideologically important, as colonists read about similar agreements elsewhere and began to imagine a common cause.\textsuperscript{696} When Balfour died in 1775, an obituary extolled him as "an agent for the house of Mess. Hanburys & Co. of London, to whom he was a most faithful

\textsuperscript{692} 15 August 1766, \textit{Virginia Gazette} (Purdie & Dixon), 3. Subscriptions were also taken in the Williamsburg Printing Office.
\textsuperscript{694} "The ASSOCIATION entered into last Friday, the 22d instant, by the Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses, and the Body of Merchants, assembled in this city" (Williamsburg: William Rind, 1770), John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg, MS2013.14. Notably, this is one of the few remaining imprints of the Association, and it was sent by Balfour and Barraud to the Hanbury firm of London; thus, their names are handwritten with directions on the back.
\textsuperscript{695} 26 November 1772, \textit{Virginia Gazette} (Rind), 2.
\textsuperscript{696} On the ineffective but important nature of non-importation agreements from 1767-1770, see Breen, \textit{The Marketplace of Revolution}, 244–53. For Virginia specifically, see Kaylan Michelle Stevenson, “‘Her Correspondence Is Dangerous’: Women in the Fashion Trades Negotiating the Opportunities and Challenges of Doing Business in the Chesapeake” (M.A. Thesis, College of William & Mary, 2013), 42–43.
servant, and executed his trust with the ease and politeness of a Gentleman. He was an agreeable companion, a steady friend, had a very humane and benevolent heart, and no man wished better to the cause of America, or had a higher sense of liberty in general. The 1773 portraits of James and his son, George, and his wife, Mary Jemima Balfour, represent the family as colonial leaders of the resistance.

James Balfour's portrait depicts him seated at a desk covered with books, papers, and a quill pen and inkwell (figure 4.7). These props appear in many portraits of merchants around the British Atlantic, but Balfour is the only Virginian to represent himself this way. He turns to face the viewer, his left arm placed protectively around his son, George (1771-1830). George is a young boy, about two years old, still clad in the gender-neutral gown of young children. He wears a cap with blue plumes and plays with a drum set. In his right hand, James holds out a letter with a legible address that reads: "To Mr Balfour/ Little England/ per The Hanbury/ Capt Esten/ Virginia." Not coincidentally, his thumb and forefinger are placed so that the word "England" is partially obscured and the word

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697 14 April 1775, Virginia Gazette (Purdie), 2.
698 It is very possible that the book bindings once had titles on them. Another portrait by Pratt of Thomas Bolling (Colonial Williamsburg, 1995-99) includes similar books with lettering on them. Since Bolling was a lawyer, the most visible book on the shelf reads "Laws of Virginia." In 1951 a descendant recorded that the Balfour portraits were found in an attic in Mississippi. Of the James Balfour portrait in particular she wrote, "It was so covered with dirt that I could hardly see it. I cleaned it with ivory soap and water and cotton." There was also a "large tear which I mended (using a mixture of casin glue and wall-paper paste)." The portrait also had a "thick varnish." If Pratt had applied lettering to the book bindings (and they are positioned to show off the titles), then they may have been politically charged texts. However, home conservation and years of damage could easily have rubbed them off. Object file 1968.2, Portrait of James and George Balfour, Virginia Historical Society.
"Virginia" is emphasized. James and George are posed as if the viewer has just walked in on them, perhaps in order to deliver the letter.

In her pendant portrait, Mary Jemima Balfour (d. 1785) is positioned as if in conversation with her husband (figure 4.8). Although depicted on separate canvases, the Balfours appear to occupy the same imaginative space. They are not divided by indoor/outdoor scenery; instead, they are joined by heavy swags of gold-fringed drapery. If placed side-by-side, Mary and James face each other and are connected by the theatrical curtain. Mary wears a pale, loosely fitted, classical dress vaguely inspired by ancient Roman costume with a bright red drape wrapped around her. Her hair is piled on her head and entwined with a pale purple scarf and pearls. The scarf wraps around her chest and a bright blue breastknot fastens the scarf at her left shoulder. She is seated in an upholstered chair with an open book in her left hand, the text of which is illegible except for the page numbered “92.”

Mary's blue breastknot may be more than simply a charming accessory; indeed, it is likely a politically-charged symbol associated with transatlantic British liberty protests. Blue cockades and breastknots were associated with John Wilkes, a radical English politician who gained great popularity in the American colonies during the 1760s.\footnote{Biographical information from, Arthur H. Cash, \textit{John Wilkes: The Scandalous Father of Civil Liberty} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). On American support of Wilkes, see Pauline Maier, “John Wilkes and American Disillusionment with Britain,” \textit{The William and Mary Quarterly} 20, no. 3 (1963): 373–95; and Bailyn, \textit{The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution}, 110–12.} Wilkes became associated with British liberty and anti-tyranny protests against Parliament. Wilkes published the periodical \textit{North
*Briton*, a publication critical of the government. His infamous *North Briton, no.45*, published in 1763, directly criticized King George III, causing the government to try him for seditious libel. As a result, Wilkes temporarily fled into exile in France in 1764. He returned to England in 1768, and was elected to the House of Commons by Middlesex. Wilkes' arrival in England and subsequent election led to his imprisonment. He was technically imprisoned for libel because of *no.45*, but ostensibly his confinement was an attempt to banish him from Parliament. The whole episode surrounding *no.45* marked an important milestone in debates regarding the English right to free speech. While Wilkes was in prison, Middlesex re-elected him to the House of Commons in 1769. The voters protested for their right to elect a representative of their choice. Wilkes thus became a symbol of liberty, particularly for the middling and lower classes, and commoners in England rallied in his name.\(^{700}\) Wilkes' plights became linked to the American cause, as colonists engaged in their own battles against Parliament and sought the right to representation. Wilkes himself remained a supporter of the American cause throughout the American Revolution. Since James Balfour (and possibly Mary) was in England from at least July 1765 through the winter of 1766, Balfour was undoubtedly well aware of the Wilkes and liberty political movement in

England and, like other Americans, he stayed informed through letters and newspapers upon his return to Virginia.\textsuperscript{701}

Virginians and their fellow American colonists closely followed Wilkes and the popular political movement. The \textit{Virginia Gazette} printed news articles on the Wilkes affair, and reprinted his speeches.\textsuperscript{702} In March 1769, the \textit{Virginia Gazette} reported that a "gentleman" was arranging to commission a full-length portrait of John Wilkes to hang in Boston's "public hall."\textsuperscript{703} A week later, the Gazette noted that "a fine whole length print of Mr. Wilkes is now drawing by an eminent artist to be sent to a certain province in America."\textsuperscript{704} This news item was printed above a proclamation from Westminster in support of Wilkes' election to Parliament. There was clearly a colonial interest in visual and material objects associated with Wilkes. Virginians also actively supported Wilkes. In 1770, planters from Virginia and Maryland made plans to send Wilkes a present of forty-five hogsheads of tobacco in a show of support.\textsuperscript{705} Coincidentally, in the June 16, 1768 issue of the \textit{Virginia Gazette} that reported political activity at Balfour's plantation, a report of the Middlesex election appeared on the same page, stating: "The infatuation for Mr. Wilkes was so great that every person was

\textsuperscript{701} In his testimony, Balfour stated that he arrived in England at the end of July 1765 and he appeared in Parliament in February 1766. 12 February 1766, Commons Proceedings, American Committee: Examination of Witnesses in Great Britain, Simmons, and Thomas, \textit{Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting North America, 1754-1783}, II: 1765-1768:199.


\textsuperscript{703} 23 March 1769, \textit{Virginia Gazette} (Purdie & Dixon), 2.

\textsuperscript{704} 30 March 1769, \textit{Virginia Gazette} (Purdie & Dixon), 3.

\textsuperscript{705} Maier, “John Wilkes and American Disillusionment with Britain,” 391.
obliged to declare for him, and have blue cockades, before they were admitted to poll.” Virginians were well aware of the blue cockade's political symbolism.

Moreover, the blue color of the Wilkes cockade was explicitly connected to the American colonial protests. The London newspaper *Middlesex Journal* reported that a blue suit made for Wilkes as a gift was "of a true blue (and from Mr. Wilkes's regard for the American colonies) with Carolina indigo." The act of wearing the blue ribbon showed support not just for Wilkes, but also for the colonial cause. By the 1770s, the blue cockade came to be associated with the colonial Sons of Liberty. In 1774, the London printmaker Carington Bowles visualized these various connections in the print, *A New Method of MACARONY MAKING, as practiced at BOSTON* (figure 4.9). In the print, two Sons of Liberty tar and feather a customs collector. One of the men has the number "45" on his hat, and the other wears a cockade to denote his Sons of Liberty membership.

Prints also visualized female support of the Wilkes and Liberty movement and colonial protests. Two 1775 Sayer & Bennett prints mock female participation in politics. *The Alternative of Williams-Burg* (figure 4.10) represents Virginians forcing merchants to sign the 1775 non-importation agreement. They are literally forced over a barrel; in this case, a hogshead of tobacco inscribed "Tobacco, a present for John Wilkes, Esqr., Lord Mayor of London." Two women

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707 1 August 1771-3 August 1771, *Middlesex Journal: or, Chronicle of Liberty*, no.365, 3. I would like to thank Thomas Whitfield for this reference.
appear in the mob. A print called *A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina* (figure 4.11) shows women endorsing a non-importation agreement. This image was a satire of the female-organized Edenton Tea Party. In the colonies, women like Mary Balfour participated in political protests as organizers and boycotters of imported goods. The use of a blue cockade in a portrait was therefore well within the bounds of acceptable female political protest.

While the blue breastknot in Mary Balfour’s portrait may at first appear to be a simple fashion accessory and not a political statement, the number "92" visible on the page of the open book makes the portrait's political message clear. Mary’s book has illegible writing, except for the distinct page number "92," making its legibility iconographically important, as it alerts viewers to the number's significance. Ninety-two refers to the "Glorious 92" of Massachusetts. In 1768, the Massachusetts legislature passed a statement condemning the Townshend Acts and calling them unconstitutional because colonists lacked representation in Parliament. The Massachusetts Circular Letter circulated throughout the colonies, and the *Virginia Gazette* published it in April 1768.

Lord Hillsborough, Secretary of the Colonies, ordered the Massachusetts

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710 "Copy of the letter written by the Hon. House of Representatives at their last session, to the respective Assemblies on the continent," 21 April 1768, *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), 2.
legislature to revoke the statement. The legislature voted 92 to 17 against rescinding the circular letter. In response, the royal governor dissolved the Massachusetts assembly. The ninety-two men who stood their ground became known as the "Glorious 92." Colonists toasted them throughout the colonies, including Virginia. The 92 were linked with number 45 as part of a circum-Atlantic protest movement against the tyranny of Parliament. Perhaps most famously, Paul Revere memorialized the Glorious 92 on the Liberty Bowl commissioned by the Sons of Liberty in Boston; indeed, the Liberty Bowl also references John Wilkes. Therefore, by 1773, the blue cockade and the number 92 were linked to radical protests on both sides of the Atlantic. For Americans, these elements had specific, new associations with the Sons of Liberty and the American cause.

The political nature of Mary Balfour’s 1773 portrait marks a notable departure from the earlier gendered conventions of portraiture in Virginia. As discussed in chapter two, before 1770, no woman in Virginia is pictured reading. Portraits of women between about 1740 and 1770 celebrate female obedience to husbands, their roles as mothers, and separate them from the real world through imagined costumes and settings. They are de-politicized bodies. By the 1770s, however, Virginia women in portraiture became more diverse. The mobilization of women as consumers of British goods and producers of homespun cloth thrust

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711 Maier, “John Wilkes and American Disillusionment with Britain,” 379.
712 Paul Revere, Sons of Liberty Bowl (1768, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 49.45).
women onto the political stage in Virginia and throughout the colonies. Despite their legal coverture and disenfranchisement, women actively participated in Virginia's political culture. The classically-inspired dress that Mary wears is a political reference to the Roman republic. One of the fashionable female conventions of both British and colonial portraiture was to appear in invented classical dress. Unlike "real" dresses preferred by women such as Elizabeth Stith Fitzhugh (figure 4.2), invented dresses allowed women to function allegorically in portraiture. Wearing an invented dress permitted Mary to disassociate from the act of consumption to make a political statement. Yet, she is depicted in a popular invented costume to show that she is still fashionable. Mary Balfour is represented as a prototype of the "Republican mother" that emerged during the revolutionary period. In other words, she was a "mother dedicated to the service of civic virtue; she educated her sons for it; she


condemned and corrected her husband's lapses from it.” The inclusion of her son in her husband's portrait emphasizes her status as a “Republican mother.” The couple's daughter, Charlotte, who was born before 1768, is not pictured. It is her son's future as a citizen about which Mary needs to worry most. Mary's political role was domestic and family-oriented. While her portrait includes politically charged items, they are feminized. The cockade placed over her heart is also a fashion accessory, and the number "92" is small and requires careful inspection to find. She also appears in the same imaginative space as her husband, suggesting his supervision of her political activity. Even her costume is not an outfit a woman would wear in public. Her husband's political role, on the other hand, was very public.

In James Balfour’s pendant portrait, the packets of letters on the desk and the letter he holds connect him to the world outside of his home and office, specifically to London and to the Hanbury. Since the letter is addressed to James, the implication is that someone else wrote to him. The pictured letter explicitly refers to his plantation at Little England. The directions painted on the letter ("per The Hanbury/ Capt Esten") are related to the business advertisements of the Balfour and Barraud firm. For example, one Virginia

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Gazette advertisement reads, "JUST IMPORTED, A NEAT and complete assortment of GOODS, suitable for the season, imported in the ship Hanbury, Capt. James Esten, from London, and to be sold cheap, for ready money or short credit, at our store in Norfolk. BALFOUR & BARRAUD."\footnote{22 February 1770, \textit{Virginia Gazette} (Purdie & Dixon), 3.} The portrait refers to the ship Hanbury and its captain, James Esten. Esten regularly sailed the Hanbury between Virginia and London, and the \textit{Virginia Gazette} recorded Esten's arrivals and departures. Esten also regularly carried letters between the Hanburys and Virginians.\footnote{See, for example, Capel & Osgood Hanbury to George Washington, 27 March 1766, in \textit{The Papers of George Washington}, vol. 7, 431.} Since the letter in the portrait is addressed to Balfour at Little England and was carried by Esten, the viewer can assume that it includes news from London.

Americans considered the Hanbury firm, directed in 1773 by Osgood Hanbury, as an ally in the American cause. For several generations the Hanbury firm did business with Virginian and Maryland tobacco planters as well as Philadelphia merchants.\footnote{On the Hanbury family, see Jacob M. Price, “The Great Quaker Business Families of Eighteenth-Century London: The Rise and Fall of a Sectarian Patriciate,” in \textit{The World of William Penn}, ed. Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 379–81.} The firm was a well-known entity in the Chesapeake and middle Atlantic colonies. The mention of the Hanbury ship, which belonged to the firm, was no coincidence. Capel Hanbury (d. 1769), a former Hanbury partner, testified against the Stamp Act with Balfour. The Hanburys themselves reassured their Virginia customers of their support. They wrote to George Washington in 1766 saying, "We Congratulate Thee & all our Friends in America
upon the Repeal of the Stampt Act We used our b[est en]deavours to prevent the Act passing when first it was in agitation & have ever since it passed spar’d no endeavours to demonstrate the necessity of Repealing it." In 1775, Osgood Hanbury reported to Balfour that "North American Merchants & Traders" appointed Hanbury to a committee "to prepare & bring in a Petition to the House of Commons for a repeal of all the obnoxious American Acts." The reference to Hanbury in the Balfour portrait highlights and connects transatlantic and pan-colonial interests.

The address to James Balfour at his plantation, called Little England, carries yet another important message. The word "Virginia," which Pratt highlighted with larger, bolder lettering that is further emphasized by the placement of Balfour’s fingers, is important. It locates Balfour in Virginia and suggests that his primary loyalty is to Virginia and not to England. The comparative scale of the words “England” and “Virginia” suggests England's diminutive size in contrast to Virginia. It is also a reminder that Virginia was, in a literal sense, a little England, and its inhabitants possessed the same rights as all other British citizens. Balfour only established his home at Little England in 1766, the same year he testified against the Stamp Act, and he renamed it (previously it was called Capps Point). His previous residence was called "Little Scotland,"

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and was located in Elizabeth City County. The naming of his new place of residence and business was deliberately politically charged. The Little England plantation was the site of at least one political celebration reported throughout the colony. Upon the election to Parliament of Barlow Trecothick, "a Gentlemen distinguished for his attachment to interests of America," Balfour apparently joined a celebration wherein "Many loyal and patriotick toasts (that of Mr. Trecothick in particular) were drunk, under discharges of the cannon from Little England." Trecothick was a former Boston merchant living in England who testified along with Balfour and Capel Hanbury against the Stamp Act in 1766. The Balfour plantation may well have been locally understood as a political gathering site.

Returning to the portrait of Balfour, James presents his son George as a "son of liberty." George Balfour is costumed as a little drummer boy. Drums were toys associated with boys in portraiture, but they also carried military connotations, as drumbeats communicated marching orders. George is so young, only about two years old, that he is still unbreeched. It was unusual in British portraiture for very young boys to appear in portraits with their fathers. Unbreeched boys were still primarily under the care of their mothers, and they

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723 "The Balfours of 'Little England,'" 2.
724 16 June 1768, *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie & Dixon), 2. This was the event that appeared on the same page as the notice regarding the Wilkes election of 1768.
typically appear in maternal portraits. Further, with the exception of James Balfour’s portrait, no children appear in colonial Virginia portraits with their fathers. This departure from local norms suggests George’s importance to the portrait’s political message. James presents his son to the viewer, placing one hand on his shoulder in a paternal gesture that also serves to usher him to the front of the canvas. Given the political activities of James Balfour and the political nature of the two Balfour portraits, the appearance of young George in a drummer boy costume signifies his role as a future leader, guided by his father. Whether or not James Balfour was a member of the Sons of Liberty in Virginia (Norfolk had a particularly active branch, but Virginia membership is largely unrecorded), the rhetoric of transatlantic republicanism frequently referred to supporters of the American cause as sons and daughters of liberty in a general sense. The blue breastknot in Mary Balfour’s portrait supports the interpretation of George as a son of liberty.

The Balfour images construct the couple as Virginians with pan-colonial interests. The two Balfour portraits reference the continental Sons of Liberty movement and transatlantic republicanism. In particular, the portraits refer to political activities in Boston where the Sons of Liberty originated, through the

breastknot and the "92" reference. Calls for the unification of Americans sounded throughout the colonies in the 1770s. As colonists mobilized to resist England they began seeing themselves as Americans with shared interests rather than as thirteen entirely separate colonies.\textsuperscript{728} No other extant portrait of a colonial Virginian features a man seated at a desk; indeed, James Balfour looks much like a merchant from Philadelphia, Boston, or New York.\textsuperscript{729} A comparison of Balfour's portrait with the 1770-1773 Matthew Pratt portrait of Philadelphia merchant Hugh McCulloch makes its northern association clear (figure 4.12). McCulloch is seated in a chair before a desk, holding a book in his hand. More books and an inkstand with quills are arranged on the desk, and a swag of drapery appears in the upper left corner. McCulloch and Balfour are dressed similarly, in relatively plain clothes with wigs. The composition of James Balfour's portrait represents a purposeful choice made by Matthew Pratt to align the Balfour family with the interests of northern merchants as well as Virginians.\textsuperscript{730}

\textsuperscript{728} Breen, \textit{The Marketplace of Revolution}, 1–8, 244–53.
\textsuperscript{729} A handful of men appear in portraits with books and/or letters. Besides Balfour, however, none is seated at a desk as if working. The closest comparison is a portrait of Augustine Moore (Colonial Williamsburg, 1976-376), painted by Charles Bridges in 1738-1740. Moore stands next to a table holding a letter. A quill and inkstand sit on the table and there are books behind him. Moore chose to stand, a more intimidating, formal pose than Balfour. Robert "King" Carter (private collection), painted before 1732 by an unknown artist, sits next to (angled outwards rather than towards) a table in a large, upholstered chair that almost looks like a throne in its size. However, only a single piece of paper appears on the table, and Carter wears formal gloves. The portrait does not conjure up the image of a working man.

\textsuperscript{730} The Matthew Pratt portrait of Cadwallader Colden and his grandson, Warren De Lancey from New York (ca. 1772, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 69.76), shares a similar composition to the Balfour portrait as well. Like James, Colden sits at a desk with his hand around his grandson's shoulder. However, Colden, a Loyalist, wears fancier clothes, including a banyan. De Lancey holds a book in his hand and the corner of another book appears on the desk. Colden's hand rests on a drawing, referencing his
Apart from the specifically addressed letter, the Balfour portraits would be at home in another colony. As a merchant, Balfour had inter-colonial networks. He traveled regularly between Philadelphia and Virginia in the 1750s, possibly into the 1770s, and certainly maintained inter-colonial communication networks.\footnote{I have not been able to find a collection of eighteenth-century Balfour papers, but his name appears occasionally in the papers of Benjamin Franklin, and he certainly had other Philadelphia contacts. His connection with Bostonian Barlow Trecotthick is also noted above. Balfour traveled with Franklin from Philadelphia to Virginia in the spring of 1765. He also carried letters between the two colonies. Benjamin Franklin to Deborah Franklin, [25 March? 1756], \textit{Founders Online}, National Archives, last modified 29 June 2017, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-06-02-0184. Accessed 21 November 2017. See also Benjamin Franklin to Deborah Franklin, 30 March 1756, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-06-02-0185. According to letters between Franklin and Washington, Balfour carried letters between the two on his business trips. Benjamin Franklin to George Washington, 19 August 1756, in \textit{The Papers of George Washington}, Colonial Series, vol. 3, 363-364.}

At the same time that James and Mary Balfour sat for Matthew Pratt in the summer of 1773, the Philadelphia Quaker merchant Thomas Mifflin and his wife, Sarah Morris Mifflin, sat for the artist John Singleton Copley during a visit to Boston (figure 4.13). Together, the Mifflin and Balfour portraits suggest a pan-colonial trend in political expression. Like Balfour, Mifflin was a merchant and a leader of the non-importation movement in Philadelphia. During the summer of 1773, the Mifflins were in Boston. While there, Thomas met with one of Boston's leading radical politicians, Samuel Adams, to discuss the growing colonial unrest.
and protests. Copley painted Thomas and Sarah together, seated at a table. Thomas holds a book in his hand and leans over the back of a chair to look at his wife. Sarah looks directly out of the picture. Her hands are busy weaving fringe on a tabletop loom. A classical column rises behind Sarah’s chair.

In light of Thomas’s political activities in both Philadelphia and Boston, his support of American non-importation agreements, and contemporary rhetoric around women’s production of homespun cloth as a patriotic activity, Copley’s portrait of the Mifflins is politically charged. Like the Balfour portraits, the explicit political activity is in the hands of the wife. The focus on the political activity of women in the Mifflin and Balfour portraits speaks to the politicization of the home and family in the 1770s. Non-importation efforts and production of homespun cloth depended on female participation. In the Mifflin portrait, Thomas’s hands hover just over those of his wife, as if guiding her. Similarly, James Balfour is pictured in the same imaginative space as Mary Balfour, and guides his son, George. Both Thomas and James remain head of the household and supervise and endorse their wives’ political activities. Further, both the Copley and Pratt portraits reference classicism, through the column behind Sarah Mifflin and in Mary Balfour’s costume. These elements endow the women with a moral authority.

The thematic similarities in the Pratt portraits of the Mifflins by Copley and the Balfours, created at almost the exact same time in the summer of 1773,

suggest similar ideologies and methods of expression spreading throughout the colonies. The Mifflin portrait was viewed in Boston before traveling to Philadelphia with the couple. Upon seeing the painting in August 1773, Bostonian Samuel Eliot wrote to Philadelphia merchant William Barrell, proclaiming, "this Town will have the Honour of furnishing Phila[delphia] with one of the best Pictures it has to boast." Eliot's remarks in conjunction with the Mifflin portrait itself, which involved both Philadelphians and Bostonians, exemplify the possibilities of portraiture to convey shared ideologies and foster pan-colonial resistance in this period.

James Balfour wanted portraits of his family that spoke to his pan-colonial interests, and he turned to Matthew Pratt, a formally trained artist recently arrived in Virginia. Pratt may have shared Philadelphia connections with Balfour. Matthew Pratt was born in Philadelphia in 1734 and was later apprenticed to his uncle, a house painter and limner. After his apprenticeship, Pratt painted houses, signs, and carriages, and began portrait painting in 1758. He traveled to England in 1764 to study painting under Benjamin West, Philadelphia’s expatriate artist. Pratt immortalized his art education in the famous painting The American School (1765, Metropolitan Museum of Art), which depicts Benjamin West instructing a

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734 Benjamin Franklin is one possible shared connection. Pratt painted Benjamin Franklin and his wife, although the portrait may be a copy after another portrait by the artist Benjamin Wilson. Nonetheless, there is still some evidence that Matthew Pratt’s father was a friend of Benjamin Franklin’s. They both were founding members of the Library Company of Philadelphia and Freemasons. Matthew Pratt also became a Freemason. William Sawitzky, Matthew Pratt, 1734-1805 (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1942), 26, 55–57.
number of students, including Pratt himself.\textsuperscript{735} Pratt returned to Philadelphia in 1768 to paint before traveling to New York, and then to Virginia in 1773. Pratt was an adept, trained artist by the time he arrived in Virginia.\textsuperscript{736} Upon his arrival in Williamsburg in 1773, Pratt's advertisement in the \textit{Virginia Gazette} described him as "Mr. PRATT, PORTRAIT PAINTER, lately from ENGLAND and IRELAND, But last from NEW YORK, Has brought with him to Williamsburg a small but very neat Collection of Paintings."\textsuperscript{737} Pratt was advertising not just his presence and ability to paint, but also his travels, which told customers that he knew the latest fashions from England and New York. Since Pratt lived in London during the 1760s, he was attuned to the Wilkes and Liberty protests and their related symbols. His travels in New York and Philadelphia also made him familiar with colonial politics. Pratt's formal training with the artist Benjamin West had prepared him well for a commission like that of the Balfour portraits, which blend the sitters' likenesses and characters with a political message. Because there are no similar compositions in Virginia that depict men sitting at desks working, it is likely that Pratt drew on precedents from other parts of the British Atlantic that he saw and created during his travels.

The Balfour portraits crafted by Pratt speak to transatlantic interests in British liberty with an emphasis on American activities. Though Pratt painted the Balfours about three years before Virginia officially joined with the other twelve

\textsuperscript{735} On \textit{The American School} and Pratt's training, see Rather, \textit{The American School}, 108–17.
\textsuperscript{736} For a biography of Matthew Pratt, see Rather, 108–17; Weekley, \textit{Painters and Paintings}, 345–51; and Sawitzky, \textit{Matthew Pratt}.
\textsuperscript{737} 4 March 1773, \textit{Virginia Gazette} (Purdie and Dixon), 3.
mainland colonies to declare independence, the portraits nonetheless reflect the political turmoil and uncertainty of the period. The Balfour portraits document a transition in Virginian identity and a strengthening resistance to imperial policies. They suggest both a pan-colonial American allegiance and an affinity to transatlantic British radicalism. What the portraits make explicitly clear is that the Balfours are, first and foremost, Virginians.

**Charles Willson Peale's Virginia: Place and Portraiture on the Eve of Revolution**

The interest in transatlantic republicanism led the gentlemen of Westmoreland County, Virginia, to commission a full-length portrait of Charles Pratt, Earl of Camden, for the county courthouse. The commission was undertaken in recognition of Camden's support of the American colonies in their fight against the Stamp Act. Richard Henry Lee spearheaded the effort. In 1767, Lee requested that the Maryland expatriate Edmund Jenings find an artist in London to paint the portrait of Camden, specifying only that he appear in "Judges robes," and suggesting, "the Gentleman [sic] would prefer Reynolds...I cannot help thinking, for my own part, that Mr. West, being an American, deserves the preference."\(^{738}\) The Westmoreland subscribers had grand plans for the portrait,

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requiring "that a rod should be fixed for hanging a Curtain before it." Placing a curtain in front of the portrait would add to the grandeur of the image, presenting it to viewers as a spectacle. Lee's suggestion that an "American" artist be preferred underscores the growing sense of shared American identity. When Benjamin West could not arrange a sitting with Camden, Jenings suggested instead a portrait of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and offered the commission to Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827), who was then in London studying under Benjamin West.

The resulting portrait of William Pitt is a highly allegorical and political image that celebrates the ideals of British republicanism (figure 4.14). Peale depicted Pitt in Roman costume, posing as an orator in front of a classical column. According to the broadside published by Peale to accompany and describe the image, Pitt holds the Magna Carta in his left hand, and with his right points to a statue of "BRITISH Liberty trampling under Foot the Petition of the CONGRESS at NEW-YORK." The pedestal supporting "Liberty" features an Indian with a bow and a dog "to shew the natural Faithfulness and Firmness of

739 Richard Henry Lee to Edmund Jenings, 1 June 1767, in Lee, I:1762-1778:25.
740 For more on the history of this painting, see Charles Coleman Sellers, "Virginia’s Great Allegory of William Pitt," The William and Mary Quarterly 9, no. 1 (1952): 58–66; Sidney Hart, “Notes and Documents: A Graphic Case of Transatlantic Republicanism,” The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 109, no. 2 (1985): 203–13; and Eric Langford, The Allegorical Mr. Pitt (Published for Eric Langford by Lawrence-Allen, Ltd., 1976). Peale actually painted two portraits. He offered the first as a gift to the state of Maryland. He then improved on this original composition before sending it to Virginia. Peale had the Virginia version published as a mezzotint for sale across the colonies. The portrait he sent to Richard Henry Lee was actually too large for the courthouse, so it hung for years at Chantilly, Lee’s plantation, and then at Stratford Hall, another Lee family plantation. Despite Peale’s and Lee’s original intention, the Pitt public commission became a domestic portrait.
AMERICA." Beside Pitt is an "ALTAR, with a Flame...to shew that the Cause of Liberty is sacred" and a "CIVIC CROWN" of laurel. The altar features busts of Algernon Sidney and John Hampden, two seventeenth-century liberal republican political theorists and English politicians who defended the "Principles of Liberty." Sidney and Hampden had opposed Charles I during the English Civil War. The whole scene takes place in front of the Banqueting House at Whitehall Palace, where Parliament had executed King Charles I for violating the "Rights of the BRITISH Kingdoms." Peale's portrait of Pitt emphasizes that American colonists saw themselves as inheritors of a British tradition of liberty.

Although the Pitt portrait was not what the Westmoreland gentlemen and Richard Henry Lee had originally envisioned, it nonetheless reveals a material investment in the republican ideals espoused by the colonists in opposition to the British Parliament. When the portrait arrived in Virginia, the Virginia Gazette lauded it as a "masterly performance." Richard Henry Lee reported to Jenings that it "is very much admired" and that there were plans to hang it in the courthouse. The painting is also representative of the allegorical nature of portraiture that Peale practiced upon his return to the colonies in 1769.

742 21 April 1769 (supplement), Virginia Gazette (Rind), 1.
Peale crafted images of colonists that emphasized a commitment to liberty and republicanism while celebrating specifically American settings and people. A radical politician in his own right, Peale visualized America as the site where British ideals of liberty and republicanism could thrive. He was present during the burning of a stamp collector effigy during a Stamp Act protest at Newburyport, Massachusetts, in September 1765.\textsuperscript{744} In his autobiography written in 1825-1826, Peale claimed that from the time of the 1765 Stamp Act, "he was a zealous advocate for the liberties of his Country."\textsuperscript{745} Following Parliament's suspension of the New York assembly as punishment for not complying with the Quartering Act, which required colonists to board and supply soldiers, Peale stated that he "would never pull of his Hatt, as the King passed by. and then he determined to do all in his Power to render his Country Independant."\textsuperscript{746} Peale referenced Parliament's suspension of New York's assembly in his 1768 portrait of Pitt, as the statue of "British liberty" tramples on a "petition of the Congress at New York."\textsuperscript{747}

Of particular interest are Peale’s 1770 portraits of Maryland politician John Beale Bordley (figure 4.15) and the Philadelphia politician John Dickinson (figure 4.16), author of the popular political essays collectively known as \textit{Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania} (1767-1768). Edmund Jenings commissioned these two

\textsuperscript{744} "Diary of a journey from Maryland to Massachusetts," in Peale et al., \textit{The Selected Papers}, I: 44.
\textsuperscript{745} Peale wrote his autobiography in the third person. Peale et al., V: 47.
\textsuperscript{746} Peale et al., V: 47.
\textsuperscript{747} "A Description of the Picture and Mezzotinto" in Peale et al., I: 74.
portraits from Peale.⁷⁴⁸ Peale depicted Bordley standing in the rural landscape of Wye Island, Maryland. A peach tree, a pack horse and groom, sheep, and a house under construction are visible in the background. Bordley was an agriculturalist who retired from public life. The portrait represents the republican ideals of rural retirement and agricultural self-sufficiency. These elements have also been interpreted as symbols of American independence from British manufacturing, as the sheep and packhorse carrying wool indicate local production.⁷⁴⁹ A legal document on the ground that reads "Imperial Civil Law" is torn across the words "sumary proceeding." Bordley stands, leaning on a rock, a book placed under his elbow. The book's Latin inscription, "Nolumus Leges Angliae mutari," translates to, "We are unwilling that the laws of England be changed."⁷⁵⁰ Bordley points to a statue of English liberty holding the scales of justice in her hands. At the base of the statue grows jimsen weed. Peale described the plant's inclusion to Jenings, explaining, "this Weed vulgarly call'd gmsen for James-Town (Virginia) where they were found in abundance on the first settling of that place. I have heard of Children Eating a few seeds and in a


⁷⁵⁰ John Dickinson would later use this phrase in his 1774 Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain Over the Colonies. For a history and explanation of this phrase, see Hart, “A Graphic Case of Transatlantic Republicanism,” 211–13.
few hours after was raveing Mad. it acts in the most violent, manner and causes
Death."\textsuperscript{751} The Bordley portrait uses emblems to argue for the American cause,
emphasizing that recent Parliamentary legislation constituted a change in
imperial policy and British laws that true republicans and supporters of liberty
would not support. The inclusion of a torn legal document and poisonous jimson
weed indicates the lengths that many colonists were prepared to go if their
liberties were threatened and hints at possible revolt.

Created the same year as Bordley's portrait, Peale's likeness of John
Dickinson (figure 4.16) employs a different American landscape to convey a
similar message of resistance. John Dickinson stands outdoors, walking stick in
hand. Like Bordley, he is dressed in a plain brown suit. To Dickinson's left is a
view of the falls of the Schuylkill River in Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{752} The falls of the
Schuylkill had biographical associations with Dickinson and an emblematic
purpose in the painting. Dickinson was honored in a ceremony by the Fort St.
David's Club, an institution with a clubhouse at the falls, in recognition of his

\textit{Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania} (1767-1768), which were well known
throughout the colonies and England by 1770.\textsuperscript{753} The series of twelve letters
responded to the passage of the Townshend Acts of 1767 and argued that the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[751] Charles Willson Peale to Edmund Jenings, 20 April 1771, in Peale et al., \textit{The
Selected Papers}, 96.
\item[752] Ibid., 96.
\item[753] Lawson, “Charles Willson Peale’s ‘John Dickinson,’” 480. In Virginia, Dickinson’s
\textit{Letters from a Farmer} were printed along with Arthur Lee of Virginia’s “Monitor Letters,”
which called for a colonial Bill of Rights. See John Dickinson and Arthur Lee, \textit{The
Farmer’s and Monitor’s Letters to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies} (Williamsburg:
Printed by William Rind, 1769).
\end{footnotes}
colonies were sovereign in internal affairs and that any taxes imposed by Parliament to raise revenue were unconstitutional. Dickinson argued that colonists should remain vigilant to prevent Parliament from passing similar legislation in the future and to act together to enhance their strength. Identifying himself as an American farmer, Dickinson drew upon ideals of rural virtue that were popular with gentry across the colonies. Peale's location of Dickinson in a rural landscape in his portrait accords with Dickinson's self-representation as a farmer who lived on a river. The painted falls of the Schuylkill River also refer to the established emblem for "danger." In Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, a popular book of emblems, waterfalls and torrents represented impending danger and hazardous situations. Just as Dickinson's *Letters* were warnings about the dangers of Parliament's recent policies, the portrait contains a warning of impending danger. Therefore, both the Bordley and Dickinson portraits refer to republican ideology and include subversive elements in opposition to British imperial policies.

In Virginia, Charles Willson Peale created portraits invested with similar political messages. He helped colonists construct images that convey a sense of rootedness in the local landscape. Peale’s realism and allegories appealed to the Virginians in the 1770s, as they became increasingly angered and alienated by British imperial policy. Virginians began imagining an American identity separate

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754 The letters begin, “I am a Farmer, settled, after a variety of fortunes, near the banks of the river Delaware, in the province of Pennsylvania.” See Dickinson and Lee, *The Farmer’s and Monitor’s Letters to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, 1.

from their British imperial identities. Unlike the earlier, generic landscapes of artists such as Robert Feke and John Wollaston—landscapes that could be anywhere in the British Atlantic—Peale created portraits that referred specifically to Virginia land and invested those places with political meaning.

Charles Willson Peale is an early American artist whose work in the colonies and in the Early Republic has been the topic of many books, articles, and exhibitions; however, with the exception of Peale's 1772 portrait of George Washington (figure 4.17), his career in colonial Virginia has been largely overlooked.\(^{756}\) Yet it was actually in Norfolk, Virginia, where Peale first decided to be a painter. There, he met a man named Fraizers, "who had some fondness for painting, and had painted several Landscapes and one Portrait, with which he had decorated his rooms. They were miserably done, had they been better, perhaps they would not have lead Peale to the Idea of attempting anything in that way."\(^{757}\) Peale subsequently studied painting in Maryland with John Hesselius, and briefly in New York with John Singleton Copley. Peale made a sojourn to Virginia in 1766, when he stayed with the Arbuckle family for six


months in Accomack and painted a few portraits while he waited out debts in Maryland.\textsuperscript{758} He painted residents of Maryland before traveling to London to study with Benjamin West from 1767 to 1769. Upon Peale’s return to America, he worked mostly in Annapolis, Maryland, until relocating to Philadelphia in 1776. However, he traveled to Virginia several times in the early 1770s.\textsuperscript{759}

In 1775, having fallen into debt in Annapolis, Peale traveled once again to Virginia. Writing to Edmund Jenings in London, Peale described his condition:

This disagreeable Situation made Annapolis quite urksome to me, I then went southward for Bussiness, I have frequently been employed at Gentlemen's houses in the Va. Country without any Charge but that of traveling, You know the Character of the Virginians for Hospitality, and I doubt not can well account for that difference of Disposition between these southern & northern Collonies, Pensilvania & Virginia being a perfect Contrast, but to my subject by these trips I have but just now worked myself out of Debt.\textsuperscript{760}

Peale painted a number of Virginians in the spring and summer of 1775. His description of Virginians' hospitality was an important aspect of regional identity for Virginia gentry who prided themselves on hospitality. The fact that Peale stayed in the homes of the planter families that he painted gave him ample opportunity to get to know his Virginia sitters. However, despite his claims that Pennsylvania and Virginia were a "perfect contrast," Peale's Virginia portraits reveal themes similar to those seen in the portrait of Pennsylvanian John Dickinson. Peale's portraits from the 1770s disclose more about pan-colonial similarities than difference, despite the different styles of sociability practiced in

\textsuperscript{758} Peale et al., I: 45, V: 24-25.
\textsuperscript{759} Charles Willson Peale to Paul Loyal, 1773 or 1774, in Peale et al., I: 130.
\textsuperscript{760} Charles Willson Peale to Edmund Jenings, 29 August 1775, in Peale et al., I: 142.
each colony. Peale’s portraits of Virginian planters constructed images of gentry authority drawing on British ideals of landed wealth and elite republicanism.

Peale’s 1772 portrait of George Washington (1732-1799) (figure 4.17) highlights the colonists’ relationship to the British Empire while representing an American landscape. Washington stands dressed in his Virginia regiment military uniform. Washington was a Virginia colonel during the French and Indian War between 1756 and 1763. Despite the fact that, in 1772 when this portrait was painted, Washington no longer served in the military, he nonetheless chose to appear in the uniform of his Virginia regiment. A pink sash drapes around one shoulder, above which a silver gorget hangs around his neck. He carries a rifle behind his back and a sword hilt is visible at his hip. Protruding from his left front pocket is a piece of paper that reads "Order of March." He stands before a rocky outcropping that opens out on his right to a landscape view of a waterfall with hills in the distance. Notably, two tipis are located on the far left of the canvas.

Art historian David Steinberg suggests that the portrait’s references to George Washington’s military service relate to his activities in western land speculation during the 1760s and 1770s. From 1763 to 1768, Washington was a member of the Mississippi Land Company, a group of Virginians and Marylanders who sought to acquire land along the Mississippi River in areas recently ceded by the French. English competitors thwarted the Mississippi

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761 "Mississippi Land Company Articles of Agreement, 3 June 1763," in George Washington Papers, Colonial Series, vol. 7, 219-223. The Mississippi Land Company continued to meet and petition the King for rights to the land through 1768. Henry Fitzhugh (figure 4.1) was also a member of this company.
Land Company in their endeavors to obtain a land grant, which increased Washington's hostility to the British government. Washington also invested in land in the Ohio River Valley where his earlier military campaigns had occurred. Virginia Governor Dinwiddie had previously promised land to Virginia militia recruits in exchange for enlisting in 1754, and Washington acquired land in the Ohio River Valley for his service.762 Washington's military service was thus the basis for some of his western land ownership. In the late 1760s and early 1770s, Parliament tried to restrict western expansion, in large part to appease the Native Americans who lived there. The Proclamation of 1763 prohibited settlement west of the Appalachians in lands ceded by the French for this reason. Virginians believed that these restrictions encroached on their liberties as British citizens.763 The portrait's reference to Washington's military activities in Indian country bolstered his claim to the land.

If the Pennsylvania waterfall in John Dickinson's portrait was an emblem of impending danger, than the waterfall in Washington's portrait could similarly allude to political resistance. Like the portraits of John Dickinson and John Beale Bordley, painted only two years earlier, Washington's portrait may show him contemplating further measures of resistance to the British Empire. As Steinberg points out, Washington appeared in his military uniform, like the one seen in the

762 Steinberg, “Characters of Charles Willson Peale,” 124. Historian Fred Anderson also suggests that Washington's portrait commemorates his participation in the march on Fort Duquesne (Fort Pitt) during the French and Indian War. Anderson, Crucible of War, 738.
763 On Virginia land speculation in the Ohio River Valley and the Proclamation of 1763 as a cause of the American Revolution in Virginia, see Holton, Forced Founders, 3–38; and Anderson, Crucible of War, 565–71.
1772 portrait, at the Second Continental Congress in 1775 to show that he was prepared for war against the English.\textsuperscript{764} By the mid-1770s, the military uniform demonstrated resistance to the English, even though the uniform from the French and Indian War had previously marked his participation in British imperialism. Expanding upon Steinberg's reading of the portrait, the waterfall pictured in the distance specifically represents the falls of the Potomac River, and the distant landscape refers to the hilly Ohio River Valley area near the Alleghenies. In October 1770, Washington traveled out towards Pittsburgh and through the Ohio River Valley to survey lands that were marked as gifts for the Virginia regiment. Washington described the lands near his particular tract as

> generally Hilly, and the growth chiefly white Oak, but very good notwithstanding; & what is extraordinary, & contrary to the property of all other Lands I ever saw before, the Hills are the richest Land, the soil upon the sides and Summits of them, being as black as a Coal, & the Growth Walnut, Cherry, Spice Busches &ca. The flats are not so rich, & a good deal more mixed with stone.\textsuperscript{765}

The distant, green, hilly landscape of the portrait and the rocky outcropping in the foreground adhere to Washington's earlier description of the area. Peale's demonstrated interest in painting actual sites associated with his sitters, seen in the earlier portraits of John Beale Bordley at Wye Island (figure 4.15), John Dickinson at the Schuylkill falls (figure 4.16), and the Edward Lloyd family with their house at Wye plantation (figure 2.37), supports the inclusion of a "real" place in the Washington portrait. The painted western landscape was contested

\textsuperscript{764} Steinberg, “Characters of Charles Willson Peale,” 125.
territory in 1772. Interest in land speculation and English restrictions on these activities were one of the causes of the American Revolution in Virginia.\textsuperscript{766}

Charles Willson Peale arrived at Washington's home, Mount Vernon, on May 18, 1772 and surely learned of the political and economic significance of this western land from Washington.\textsuperscript{767} Earlier that month, Washington exchanged several letters with Thomas Johnson, a Maryland politician, about his plan for improving the Potomac River route to allow navigation and trade up the river from the great falls to Fort Cumberland, located in western Maryland, "from whence the Portage to the Waters of Ohio must commence."\textsuperscript{768} This was a plan he had hatched several years earlier. As Mount Vernon was located on the Potomac, improving the navigation up the river through the mountains would greatly benefit Washington, who hoped the Potomac River would become "the Channel of conveyance of the extensive & valuable Trade of a rising Empire."\textsuperscript{769} Improving the Potomac River was so important to Washington that he continued to pursue the project following American independence.\textsuperscript{770} The letters that came for Washington just prior to Peale's arrival informed him that Maryland, which also

\textsuperscript{767} 18 May 1772 in Diaries, vol. 3. \textit{The Papers of George Washington}, 108.
\textsuperscript{768} George Washington to Thomas Johnson, 20 July 1770, in \textit{The Papers of George Washington}, Colonial Series, vol. 8, 357-360. For letters received and sent in early May 1772, see George Washington to Jonathan Boucher, 5 May 1772, and Thomas Johnson to George Washington, 10 May 1772, ibid., Colonial Series, vol. 9, 40-41 and 43-44.
had claims to the river, would not support his plan for the Potomac.\footnote{George Washington to Jonathan Boucher, 5 May 1772, and Thomas Johnson to George Washington, 10 May 1772, in The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, vol. 9, 40–41 and 43-44.} It is likely that Peale and Washington discussed this venture while Peale stayed at Mount Vernon. As a guest on the estate, Peale joined the Washingtons for dinners and, on at least one occasion, rode with Washington around the grounds, as when Washington recorded in his diary, "Set for Mr. Peale to finish my Face. In the Afternoon Rid with him to my Mill."\footnote{22 May 1772, Diaries, vol. 3, The Papers of George Washington, 109.} Peale remembered his time at Mount Vernon fondly and recalled daily conversations with Washington.\footnote{Sellers and Peale, “Portraits and Miniatures by Charles Willson Peale,” 217–19.}

Moreover, Washington was a professional land surveyor. Land, and particularly western land, was important to his identity. As a younger son of a planter family, surveying was a respectable position and a potentially lucrative one. Between 1749 and 1752 alone, Washington completed over two hundred surveys as a professional. He continued to survey land for himself and his friends for the rest of his life.\footnote{“George Washington's Professional Surveys,” in The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, vol. 1, 8-33, esp. 8-19.} The distant look that Washington has on his face in the Peale portrait suggests that he is imagining being in this western landscape. Washington's description of his sittings with Peale also intimates that he is pictured dreaming: "I am now, contrary to all expectation under the hands of Mr Peale; but in so grave—so sullen a Mood—and now and then under the influence of Morpheus, when some critical strokes are making, that I fancy the skill of this Gentleman’s Pencil, will be put to it, in describing to the World what manner of
Man I am." Washington's description of being "under the influence of Morpheus," the god of dreams, certainly fits the description of his facial expression in the finished portrait.

The tipis in Washington's portrait refer not just to land speculation in Indian territory and to Washington's previous leadership in the French and Indian War, but also to his American identity and his resistance to the British land policies following the Proclamation of 1763. Tipis are portable, temporary living structures that can be packed up and easily moved. They were used by Indians in Ohio River Valley for hunting and war parties. Including tipis in the landscape behind Washington indicates that the Indians were on the move. The portrait imagines a landscape where Virginians, such as Washington, could replace the Indians. Washington certainly envisioned that Indian occupation of the land was temporary. He wrote in 1767 that the King's restrictions on land settlement was only a "temporary expediens[t] to quiet the Minds of the Indians & must fall of course in a few years esp[ec]ially when those Indians are consenting to our Occupying the Lands." Furthermore, Indians were increasingly used as symbols of America and American colonists. Peale included an Indian at the foot of Lady Liberty in the portrait of William Pitt (figure 4.14) to signify American colonial resistance. Virginians considered the Ohio River Valley part of their

territory and defied English orders to stop moving west. The tipis in Peale's portrait symbolize Washington's right to the land as an American, as opposed to English investors who competed with Virginia land speculators.

Peale's first portrait of George Washington reflects the classical theory of republicanism—that only men who owned land and bore arms could be full citizens and political leaders. Washington's military leadership and the emphasis on land in the portrait construct him as an ideal leader in the republican model. This theory of republicanism was espoused by most of the Virginia gentry, who, in spite of their protestations against Parliament, tended to be politically conservative. In Virginia, only men who owned at least twenty-five acres were enfranchised. Land ownership was thus a prerequisite for participation in political life. The adherence to traditional British republicanism was shared by gentry throughout the colonies, as seen in Peale's portraits of Bordley and Dickinson, among others.

The 1775 Charles Willson Peale portraits of Benjamin Harrison (1743-1807) of Brandon plantation and his wife, Elizabeth Page Harrison (1751-1782), also represent the Virginia gentry's republicanism and interest in land (figures 4.18 and 4.19). The portrait of Benjamin Harrison features a wealthy gentry

777 Holton, Forced Founders, 3–38.
780 Kolp and Snyder, “Women and the Political Culture,” 274–76.
planter, standing with one hand on his hip, highlighting his ceremonial sword. He
is clad in a plain black suit, much like that worn by James Balfour. Such
garments were suitable for everyday wear, but they were hardly the fanciest
clothes that may have been in Harrison’s wardrobe. This choice of clothing gave
Harrison a timeless as well as a modest appearance. Further, it emphasized
frugality at a time when conspicuous consumption was a political topic and an
issue of public morality because of non-importation agreements.\footnote{781} Harrison’s
right hand rests on an ornately carved table, perhaps the only overt reference to
his wealth in the picture. In contrast to the table, the wall behind Harrison is
barren. The simple architectural setting downplays the decoration on the table.
The window behind him allows a view of the Virginia landscape. The paneling
depicted on the windows in the portrait was also typical of Virginia plantation
homes.\footnote{782} The portrait thus creates a convincing sense of Virginia domestic
space. Resting atop the table are two books, one of which is labeled "Hale’s
Husbandry," and the other bears the title "Rural Economy." These two books
reference Harrison's stewardship of his land and his education.

The book labeled "Hale’s Husbandry" in Benjamin’s portrait is an
abbreviated reference to A Compleat Body of Husbandry by Thomas Hale,
published in London in 1755, and identifies Harrison as a gentleman farmer. This
book was popular in Virginia, and it appears in a number of library inventories,

\footnote{781}{Holton, Forced Founders, 79–90; Breen, Tobacco Culture, 129–32, 190–96.}
\footnote{782}{Willie Graham, “Interior Finishes,” in The Chesapeake House: Architectural
Investigation by Colonial Williamsburg, ed. Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury (Chapel
Hill: Published in association with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation by The
University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 318–20.}
including those of George Washington from Mount Vernon and Thomas Jefferson from Monticello. Many of the portrait’s viewers would recognize the book and, given that Peale took the time to carefully delineate the title, it is an important reference to the identity Benjamin presents in the portrait. Among other things, this book’s title page claimed it contained "Rules for performing in the most profitable Manner, the whole Business of the Farmer and Country Gentleman." In a note to the reader, the author avowed, "What we shall say...will be useful to the Land-Owner as well as to the Tenant; and we shall be glad to instruct the Gentleman, while we assist the Farmer." Hale’s *Husbandry* emphasized that the gentleman farmer’s role was to oversee the cultivation or improvement of the land, even if he did not actually labor on it. The British considered such cultivation a noble pursuit. The frontispiece of the book shows the goddess Ceres overseeing the work and teaching the laborer (figure 4.20), thus connecting farming to classical tradition.

Hanging next to Benjamin’s portrait or across from it in the house at Brandon, the portrait of Elizabeth Page Harrison (figure 4.19) complements that of her husband, even though she is located in a dramatically different setting. Elizabeth leans against an imagined classical column rendered especially theatrical by a swag of red drapery, which matches the curtains in her husband’s

783 George Washington’s copy is owned by the Boston Athenaeum and Thomas Jefferson’s copy is owned by the Library of Congress.
portrait. The clothing that she wears is as imaginary as the column. The scarf and pearls woven in her hair, the sash around her waist, and the gauzy fabric wrapped around her left arm and held in her right hand are reminiscent of classical Roman clothing. She is not wearing stays, so her dress appears loose. This outfit would never be worn in public by a respectable woman. Choosing to be painted in informal costume in a fanciful setting domesticates Elizabeth while at the same time linking her to a larger world of fashion. Many women throughout the British Empire in the 1770s chose to be painted in similar clothing. This type of fashionable costumed dress showed that the sitters possessed cultural authority, in that it related them to classical images.\(^785\) Like Benjamin's simple suit, Elizabeth’s classically-inspired costume provides an image of timeless status.

Imaginary garments notwithstanding, the fields and forest depicted behind Elizabeth appear to represent the actual Virginia landscape. Visible in an open clearing, a Virginia rail fence runs across the entire view. This was a regional style of fencing that marks it as a specifically Virginia landscape.\(^786\) Beyond the fence one sees a glimpse of water, possibly the James River where Brandon was located, and a forest. Just visible above the tree line, at least two buildings can be distinguished, one of which has smoke emanating from a chimney. The vast expanse of terrain between Elizabeth and the buildings represents the large tract

of land owned by the Harrisons. The landscape in this portrait is intended to represent the Harrison's estate, showing the exterior sweep of their property, while Benjamin's portrait represents the domestic interior looking outwards towards the land. The portraits clearly locate the Harrisons in a Virginia house and landscape.

In his portrait, Benjamin positions himself as a gentleman farmer, or planter, with the power of surveillance and as a natural leader. He is educated on agricultural matters and oversees the landscape from his home, seen from his window. The Harrison pendant portraits hung together, so it is possible that the house in the background of Elizabeth's portrait was intended to be understood as the same building in which her husband is standing in his portrait. Regardless, in Elizabeth's portrait, the vista behind her emphasizes the power of the planter to oversee agricultural production. Further, the similarity in the arrangement of trees in the book's frontispiece and in Benjamin's portrait speaks to the popular understanding of how a cultivated landscape should appear. The books, trees, and landscape in Benjamin's portrait emphasize his success in improving the land, notions that are also apparent in his wife's portrait. The tidy fence line and cleared land shows the taming, cultivation, and stewardship of the landscape. The landscape becomes both a sign and the source of the Harrison's wealth and privilege. As Anne Bermingham argues in regard to outdoor English conversation pieces, which picture families interacting in the landscape, typically a country estate or landscape garden,
A subjected nature refers to culture because nature is part of a pictorial code that tells the viewer that the subjects of the painting enjoy a certain status, that they possess both property and taste; at the same time, a subordinated culture refers to nature for its ultimate justification...thus nature signifies class while class signifies a universal, classless nature.\textsuperscript{787}

Peale uses the tamed plantation landscape to suggest the Harrison's "natural" role at the top of a social hierarchy. The portraits also conveniently elide slavery and create a georgic vision of plantation life, in which the reality of labor is hidden from view but the rewards of labor are aesthetically presented to support the natural social order.\textsuperscript{788} Also striking is the classical dress that Elizabeth wears as she stands overlooking the family's agricultural landscape. Her loose dress is in fact quite similar to that of Ceres in the Hale's *Husbandry* frontispiece. Elizabeth leans upon the classical column, showing that the family's success rests upon timeless values.

The gentry promoted rural retirement and economic independence derived from living off the land. Robert Beverley, writing in 1763 from Blandfield, observed

tis ye Last Time I will ask any Man for Money For I thank god I have a very fine Estate, wh even with ye crop I Have alread [sic] will put in a State of Perfect Independence...I am vastly In my Domestick Way Life, I seldom go from home I delight in my Plantations & am commenced Farmer, this preserves my Health & my Books & Family Pleasure Render my Retirement very agreeable.\textsuperscript{789}

\textsuperscript{787} Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 15.
\textsuperscript{789} Robert Beverley to Samuel Athawes, 18 November 1763, in Robert Beverley Letterbook.
Beverley, owner of the largest private home in Virginia, had married after returning from his studies in England. His union with Maria Byrd Carter marked his domestic retreat to a rural life. Writing to a London merchant, Beverley proclaimed the benefits of using agriculture to become debt-free. His "retirement" to the plantation was more rewarding than a debt-filled, urban life in London with its taverns, coffeehouses, theatres, and other entertainments. Beverley's words are reminiscent of William Byrd II's statement made some forty years earlier, when Byrd wrote to the Earl of Orrery,

I have a large family of my own, and my doors are open to everybody, yet I have no bills to pay, and half-a-crown will rest undisturbed in my pocket for many moons together...Like one of the patriarchs, I have my flocks and my herds, my bonds-men, and bonds-women, and every sort of trade amongst my own servants, so that I live in a kind of independance on every one, but Providence.

The image of the pastoral patriarch living in economic independence had deep roots among the gentry. Benjamin Harrison, a contemporary of Beverley's and future grandson-in-law of William Byrd II, carried this cultural expectation with him and expressed it in his portrait.

790 The juxtaposition between the city as a site of corruption and the country as a place of virtuous retirement was also present in England. See Williams, The Country and the City, esp. 13-107; and Bermingham, Landscape and Ideology, 9–54.
792 Benjamin Harrison of Brandon married first, Anne Randolph of Wilton (d.1767), second, Elizabeth Page (1751-1782), and third, Evelyn Byrd (1766-1817), daughter of William Byrd III and Mary Willing Byrd. Evelyn Byrd Harrison inherited many of the Byrd family portraits and brought them to Brandon plantation.
Along with the reference to Hale's *Husbandry* in the Benjamin Harrison portrait, the explicit reference to James Thomson's popular book of poetry, *Seasons*, in at least two of Peale's portraits from Virginia indicate the widespread popularity of the ideal of rural retirement and its connection to liberty.\(^793\) Portraits of James Arbuckle (1766, private collection) and John Lewis in 1772 (figure 4.21) each include Thomson's book of poems. In the Lewis portrait, he holds the book so that the title on the binding is evident to the viewer. In Arbuckle's portrait, his copy of the book is open and tilted downwards so the viewer can see that he is reading "SUMMER."\(^794\) The poem "Summer" celebrates the pastoral ideal before a "transition to the prospect of a rich well-cultivated country; which introduces a panegyric on Great-Britain" that celebrates British liberty in contrast to foreign tyranny.\(^795\) Charles Willson Peale’s 1772-75 portrait of James Lewis (figure 4.22), which pictures him leisurely enjoying the gentlemanly sport of hunting with a tidy row of trees contained behind a Virginia rail fence visible in the distance, also connects the ideals of rural retreat and land improvement.

In Peale’s portraits of the Harrisons, the desire for rural retreat is balanced with civic duty and natural leadership. Like the Arbuckle and Lewis portraits by

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\(^794\) Sellers and Peale, “Portraits and Miniatures by Charles Willson Peale,” 24, 126. Both portraits are illustrated.

Peale, Benjamin Harrison's portrait refers to his preference for the private and rural over public and urban, and therefore to his supposed disinterestedness as a civil servant. Private wealth was understood to render a public official disinterested because he did not need to increase his personal wealth or rely on public salary and favors in order to carry out his duties. This, of course, is a myth that is still perpetuated today, but it did place gentry in strong positions of public authority. Portrayed as particularly fit for a government position, the year after Peale painted Harrison in 1775, he was appointed to the State Council, followed by his election to the House of Burgesses in 1777. Though more restrained than many of Peale's three-quarter-length portraits from Maryland and Philadelphia, the Harrison portraits are just as carefully and cleverly constructed as many of Peale's most well-known paintings from the other colonies (e.g., figures 4.15 and 4.16), with thoughtful allusions to classical imagery and a political message about the Harrisons' commitment to pastoral virtue and republican service.


797 Object file 1983-318, Portrait of Benjamin Harrison, Colonial Williamsburg. The Benjamin Harrison (1743-1807) of Brandon plantation discussed here was a second cousin of Benjamin Harrison (1726-1791) of Berkeley Plantation, who signed the Declaration of Independence and became Virginia's governor in 1781.

798 Lawson, “Charles Willson Peale’s ‘John Dickinson’”; Manca, “Cicero in America”. See also the later portrait of William Smith and his Grandson from Maryland (1788, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts), Brandon Brame Fortune, “‘From the World Escaped’: Peale's
The Peale portraits of the Harrisons also participate in the "neat and plain" aesthetic to invest the subjects with a moral authority. The neat and plain style was popular among many merchants and gentry in England who wanted to differentiate themselves from the ostentatious rococo styles favored by the aristocracy. Amanda Vickery defines the neat and plain style as "a recognized manner of decoration for social groups or rooms that made claims to taste, but not ostentatious grandeur...Neat radiated a certain moral assertiveness in its very restraint." The neat and plain style was favored in Tidewater Virginia for architecture and furniture as well. The Harrison portraits show fairly simple landscapes with buildings in the far distance, allowing for wide-open expanses. The foregrounds of the portraits are not cluttered with a multitude of props. The elaborate carving on the table is only visible in the lower corner of the canvas. The background wall in Benjamin's portrait is barren and his suit is plain, except for the silver lining of his coat, which highlights his dress sword.

The morally restrained neat and plain aesthetic in Peale's Virginia oeuvre, reveals how he adapted to suit the tastes of his Virginia patrons and to develop their characters. In contrast to Benjamin Harrison, Lambert Cadwalader of Pennsylvania (figure 4.23), who appears in a very similar pose and interior setting with a window allowing for a view of the landscape, wears a suit of light

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blue and shows off its silver lining the entire length of the coat. Lambert's hair is powdered white instead of left plain, and his black hat is discarded on the table behind him. He leans on a prominently placed, expensively carved chair. To his right, the wall is decorated with a classical landscape painting in a gilded oval frame that features a classical temple. Similarly, the portrait of Lambert's sister, Martha Cadwalader (figure 4.24), which was conceived as a pendant to Lambert's portrait, shares many similarities with that of Elizabeth Harrison. Both women wear very similar, classical style dresses in blue, and both lean on an antique, carved pedestal. However, Martha's costume includes a sumptuous fur-lined cloak and a pearl necklace. The pedestal against which she leans has more decorative carvings than that of Elizabeth's, and, instead of being topped with a simple column, a basket and a pile of fruit rest on top. An oval window in the upper left of the canvas reveals blue sky filled with diaphanous clouds. Despite their similarities, the Harrison portraits register a greater emphasis on rural land, stewardship, frugality, and thus moral authority. The Peale portraits of the Harrisons reveal the use of the Virginia neat and plain style to evoke a sense of natural leadership of society and of the land.

Benjamin Harrison's portrait also forces certain viewers into an unequal relationship with him, as if to remind viewers of his elite status. The painting's shorthand reference to Hale's Husbandry relies on literacy and knowledge of the book, setting apart those who read it from those who did not, either because of illiteracy or a lack of access. Fellow wealthy planters likely had access to the
book either through borrowing or owning it. They would have understood the classical agricultural reference; if they did not, then they were reminded of their inferior education. Additionally, Benjamin's dress sword, common in early eighteenth-century portraits but less so by the latter part of the century, creates an air of formality and authority. Although he leans against a table, he does not sit as if participating in a conversation. Since Benjamin towers over his viewers in formal dress, his portrait reminds viewers of his authority.

The emphasis in the Peale portraits on land and status was likely a response to social changes that threatened the gentry's authority. In the 1770s, most of Virginia's gentry were deeply in debt due to the nature of tobacco agriculture. Virginians used factors to sell their tobacco in England and Europe, and at the same time ordered goods from abroad on credit without knowing beforehand the profits of their tobacco crop. Merchants began calling in their debts following the French and Indian War, and Virginia planters took offense. They believed that their honor was in question.\textsuperscript{801} Jonathan Boucher, a loyalist who did not remember fondly his time in Virginia, described George Washington as "strictly just and honest (excepting that as a Virginian, he has lately found out that there is no moral turpitude in not paying what he confesses he owes to a British creditor)."\textsuperscript{802} Many gentry, including Benjamin Harrison, George Washington, and Landon Carter, supported the American cause and joined forces with the lower and middling classes, albeit partially to maintain their own

\textsuperscript{801} The best account of tobacco culture and the debt crisis faced by Virginia planters is Breen, \textit{Tobacco Culture}.

\textsuperscript{802} Boucher, \textit{Reminiscences of an American Loyalist, 1738-1789}, 50.
status and political authority. For example, the gentry found that their support of non-importation and non-exportation was a useful way to reduce their own debt. Therefore, the emphasis on rural retreat and landed wealth was a reaction that allowed them to emphasize their virtue, honor, and status at a time when they were called into question by creditors and fellow Virginians, and to visualize a "natural order."

Williamsburg lawyer Henry Tazewell (1753-1799) (figure 4.25) chose to be represented quite differently than the planters George Washington, Benjamin Harrison, and John and James Lewis. Tazewell's portrait provides a counterpoint to the elite planter visions of authority. Peale depicted Tazewell sitting casually in a chair, one arm draped over the back of his seat and the other arm resting on a table holding a book. A legal treatise is placed on the table behind him. Tazewell's portrait is informal and conversational in style, presenting Tazewell as a familiar equal to viewers. David Steinberg has argued that this pose "constructed the sitter as a trustworthy intimate." Meanwhile, Tazewell's wife, Dorothy Waller Tazewell (figure 4.26) is depicted outdoors in a landscape wearing a classically inspired gown similar to Elizabeth Harrison's. She holds a bouquet of wildflowers over her stomach alluding to her natural fecundity; indeed, she may have been pregnant with the couple's first son when this portrait was

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805 David Steinberg, “Suspicion, Scrutiny, Credibility and Late British American Portraiture” (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia: unpublished ms., 1999), 17.
As a practicing lawyer, Henry Tazewell relied on a different source of income and professional relationship to fellow Virginians than did the large-scale planters. Henry cultivated an image of himself as a trustworthy equal to the portrait's viewers and emphasized his legal education rather than insinuating a natural authority based on inherited land. His wife’s portrait participates in fashionable female allegorical representation, suggesting that they possessed cultural authority and implying that Henry deliberately rejected the fashionable, more formal aesthetic for his own portrait. While most of Peale’s Virginia portraits indicate an emphasis on traditional hierarchy in the face of social changes, Henry Tazewell’s portrait seems to embrace a leveling of authority to include the newly prominent and educated professional classes. Tazewell was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1775 and would go on to a long political career in the state of Virginia. In his portrait, Henry proclaims his legal education and professional success while that of his wife partakes in cultural trends to indicate the couple’s participation in elite culture.

The Virginia characters Peale created reveal social changes in the Virginia colony. The planters proclaimed their elite status as if to counteract their ambivalence over social changes. Peale's Virginia portraits of the gentry hint at the reasons that would cause his Virginia patrons to declare independence in 1776: to preserve their property and rights to land and maintain their elite social

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806 Object file 1985.50, Portrait of Dorothy Waller Tazewell (Mrs. Henry Tazewell), Virginia Historical Society.

807 Littleton Waller Tazewell, "An Account and History of the Tazewell Family," 1823, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.
status. Meanwhile, Henry Tazewell's portrait presents a different type of character, one willing to embrace changing social relations. Charles Willson Peale was a prolific artist, and his strategic use of poses, costumes, and other compositional strategies in portraits throughout the colonies in the 1760s and 1770s fostered a pan-colonial, emblematic visual language that endowed the American landscape with allegorical import and Virginia characters with moral authority.

"I meet with many insults, & have given great offence": Loyalism, Debt, and Domestic Virtue

While some of Peale's patrons used portraiture in an attempt to fix their social status permanently, portraits of Mary Willing Byrd (1740-1814), second wife of William Byrd III, reveal how domestic portraiture could be used to attempt to repair social status. William Byrd III (1728-1777) was a gentry planter who remained loyal to the British Empire and antagonistic to the American protests through late 1775. In 1771, Scottish artist Cosmo Alexander (1724-1772) painted a portrait of Mary Willing Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III) (figure 4.27) on a visit to Virginia. Only two years later, Matthew Pratt painted Mary again in 1773 (figure 4.28). No portrait of William Byrd III by Alexander or Pratt exists; either he

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808 It appears that Alexander also painted Elizabeth Hill Byrd (1754-1819), daughter of William Byrd III and Elizabeth Carter Byrd at this time (FARL). Elizabeth is painted bust length wearing an imagined costume and holds a handkerchief. There are relatively few American portraits attributed to Alexander, who worked in New York, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Virginia, and possibly South Carolina. He is best known as Gilbert Stuart's instructor. For more on Alexander, see Weekley, Painters and Paintings, 293–96.
did not sit for his portrait, or the pendant portraits of William are missing.\footnote{Mary’s will lists two portraits of herself but only mentions two portraits of William Byrd III. However, there are at least three extant portraits said to represent William. One is the portrait of William Byrd III as a child (figure 3.1); another is the portrait attributed to John Hesselius (figure 3.19); and a third is occasionally attributed to Cosmo Alexander (figure 2.32). However, this third portrait only shows William half-length and therefore is significantly smaller than Alexander’s portrait of Mary Willing Byrd. This size difference makes it unlikely that they were commissioned as pendants. His costume and wig in the portrait also appear to date to closer to 1750 (I would like to thank Philippe Halbert for pointing out the costume’s date). According to family records and late nineteenth-century histories, there were one or two other portraits identified as William Byrd III in the possession of descendants. It is possible that one or both were nineteenth-century copies or misattributions. These discrepancies suggest several potential explanations: one of the portraits of William is misidentified, one of the portraits left Westover before Mary’s death in 1814 and therefore was not included in her will, or one of the portraits was a gift to a friend or family member and did not hang at Westover. Since Mary is oriented to the right in the portrait by Alexander, it is unlikely that her 1771 portrait was conceived as a pendant to match the Hesselius portrait of her husband because he faces the same direction. Byrd, “Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd,” 349–50, 355–56; Research files on the Byrd family portraits, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.}{809}

Painted during the middle of a financial crisis made public, internal family struggles, and in a period when Byrd's loyalty to the English government and military was openly criticized, the portraits of Mary Willing Byrd present the viewer with images of domestic virtue.

In the 1771 Cosmo Alexander portrait, Mary Willing Byrd is depicted with her daughter, Maria. Mary sits on an upholstered couch dressed in vaguely classicizing garments of fine material, similar to those of Mary Balfour (figure 4.8). Her hair is entwined with pearls, and her left hand holds an open book. Unfortunately, the current location of this portrait is unknown, and its appearance is recorded only in an old black-and-white photograph; thus, it is impossible to tell precisely what Mary is reading. Maria appears to kneel on the couch next to her mother and looks up at her. She places one arm around her mother’s shoulder,
the other hand on her mother's breast. The couch is quite large, occupying the lower half of the portrait, which shows off its finely brocaded fabric upholstery. In contrast, the 1773 Matthew Pratt portrait of Mary is much smaller, only bust length (figure 4.28), and is more traditional in its composition. However, she wears a loose classical blue and pink dress, and her hair is wrapped with a scarf and pearls. In both portraits, Mary's garments allude to the classical style to emphasize her virtue.

When Cosmo Alexander and Matthew Pratt painted Mary in the early 1770s, William Byrd III was deeply in debt, though he still retained a position on the Governor's Council. Several years earlier, in 1766, William was involved in a major scandal when the Speaker of the House, John Robinson, died and it became public that he had loaned £100,000 from the provincial treasury to himself and to a number of his friends. William was the largest beneficiary. The Robinson scandal revealed the lengths certain members of the gentry were willing to go in order to preserve their public reputation and appearance of financial independence.\footnote{Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, \textit{Correspondence}, II: 611-613; Breen, \textit{Tobacco Culture}, 103–5; Holton, \textit{Forced Founders}, 39–40.} By 1769, William was insolvent owing to tobacco debts, failed mining and land investments, extensive consumption of luxury goods, and gambling. His mother, Maria Taylor Byrd, died in August 1771, adding to her son's debts when she left money from her husband's estate to her five adult grandchildren by William's first wife; money she had allowed her son to collect over the years. As a result, William Byrd III owed a large sum of money to
his older children.  

Maria Taylor Byrd's will both insulted and cut off William's second wife and her five young children (and three more born after 1771). Soon after his mother's death, William learned that his eldest son, William Byrd IV, had died in France and left most of his assets to his brothers rather than to his father. In 1768, William Byrd III disposed of some of his property through lotteries in an attempt to pay down his debts. Resorting to a lottery was humiliating, as it exposed the family's private affairs to the public. Worse, the lottery was largely a failure, as he was not able to sell all the tickets or to collect payment from all of the tickets that sold on credit.

In July 1770, William placed notice in the *Virginia Gazette* that stated: "I am obliged, once more, to apply in the publick manner to those Gentlemen who has not yet paid for the lottery tickets they bought of me." Newspaper notices regarding William's lottery and other property sales organized to pay off his debt appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* until he died in 1777. The public shame regarding his finances continued well after Mary Willing Byrd sat for her portraits.

There is evidence that the Byrd family faced internal divisions during these years. Maria Taylor Byrd's 1771 will, which benefited her older grandchildren at the expense of her son and his younger children, indicates a rift between mother

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811 Maria Taylor Byrd's will has not been found, but details are known from a later court case. See Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, *Correspondence*, 612, fn. 24.
812 Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, 613.
813 Breen, *Tobacco Culture*, 170; Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, *Correspondence*, 611.
and son. Maria also had to be aware of William's severe debts, making her decision to leave her money to her adult grandchildren a particularly insulting blow to William. (Though one could argue that, given William's gambling problems, Maria's actions were in the best interest of her older grandchildren.) William Byrd IV's 1771 will also hurt his father. When William Byrd III wrote his own will in 1774, he referred to his mother as "insane," "deluded and superannuated," and called his son William Byrd IV "ungrateful." William Byrd III's will also threatened to disinherit two of his other sons: Otway, if he resigned from the British navy, and Thomas Taylor, if he married a woman without his parents' blessing. His threat against Otway was carried out in July 1775, when Otway resigned in order to join the Continental Army.

That William's first marriage to Elizabeth Hill Carter (1731-1760) had been an unhappy one contributed to the family's tensions and public reputation. He abandoned Elizabeth in 1756 and joined the militia. He sent their three older sons away to England, apparently against his wife's wishes. His "repudiation" of Elizabeth evidently was discussed amongst their acquaintances, one of whom reported to George Washington: "Colo. Bird I am told has repudiated his Wife,

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816 “Will of Colonel William Byrd, 3d,” 86.
818 Letters from Elizabeth to William express how unhappy she was without her children and her desire to visit them in England. See Elizabeth Hill Carter Byrd to William Byrd III, 13 May 1757 and 16 August 1757, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 624–626.
who is now in a Dilirium for his Behaviour.\textsuperscript{819} Elizabeth died in July 1760 in a strange accident--somehow a wardrobe fell on top of her--and some suspected suicide. After Elizabeth's death, her mother quarreled with Maria Taylor Byrd (William was still out of Virginia) over her possessions and the two younger children that remained in Virginia.\textsuperscript{820} In January of 1761, William married Mary Willing in Philadelphia without any notice to his family.\textsuperscript{821} Notably, there were no pictures of Elizabeth Carter Byrd left at Westover when Mary Willing Byrd wrote her will, though four of Elizabeth's five children had portraits painted by John Wollaston.\textsuperscript{822} However, a portrait of Elizabeth by Wollaston descended at her childhood home, Shirley plantation, where it remains today. It is probable that the Byrds removed Elizabeth's portrait after her death and offered it to her mother, the matron of Shirley--a material and visual repudiation of Elizabeth.

Adding to the family's public struggles, William Byrd III was wary of the growing resentment towards England in the 1770s, and had a reputation as Loyalist. The pseudonymous "Voluntarius" publicly attacked Byrd in the \textit{Virginia Gazette} in June 1775, criticizing his "inglorious efforts" to oppose the American

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\item \textsuperscript{820} Maria Taylor Byrd to William Byrd III, 15 August 1760, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, 700-702; also, 609–10.
\item \textsuperscript{821} Maria Taylor Byrd to William Byrd III, 17 February 1761, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, 714–15.
\item \textsuperscript{822} William Byrd IV, John Carter Byrd, and Thomas Taylor Byrd were all painted in 1755-1756 by John Wollaston (figures 2.29, 2.30, and 2.31). "Portraits" of her stepdaughter Elizabeth Hill Byrd were named in the will as well. One of these is the Cosmo Alexander portrait of Elizabeth as an adult. If there was a second, perhaps Wollaston painted her as a very young child. The portrait of Elizabeth Carter Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III) at Shirley plantation is also by Wollaston and was likely done at the same time as her sons' portraits. Byrd, "Will of Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd."
cause, singling out William for public criticism because, “although you have been
publicly reputed a man of a very immoral character, yet you have been also
esteemed what the polite world term a man of honour.” Voluntarius” exposed
the depths to which William’s reputation had fallen in the years leading to 1775.
In July 1775, perhaps with the Virginia Gazette attack fresh in his memory,
William wrote to the British military commander Sir Jeffery Amherst, stating

The violent, who are at present by far the most numerous, are in
open rebellion, & the moderats are aw’d into silence...For my part I
meet with many insults, & have given great offence because I will
not offer my service to command the army, which our Convention is
now raising to oppose His Majesty's troops...when the Americans
are talk'd of as traytors, that you will be pleased to mention me as
an exception, for I am ready to serve His Majesty with my life &
fortune.

It was not until Virginia’s Governor Dunmore offered freedom to slaves who ran
away from rebellious households and joined the British in November 1775 that
William finally became a proponent of American resistance. At that point, William
offered his services to the Virginia militia but was turned away. Even then,
William's reluctant support of rebellion was an effort to maintain the local status
quo and preserve a racial hierarchy. Landon Carter, William Byrd III's brother-in-
law, upon hearing of William's change of heart in 1776, wrote, "I would never

823 "To the honourable W----M B--d, esquire," in 1 June 1775, Virginia Gazette
(Pinckney), 2.
824 William Byrd III to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, 30 July 1775, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III,
Correspondence, 812.
825 Dunmore’s Proclamation radicalized many moderate Virginia gentry, who were
determined to maintain the status quo and feared a slave rebellion. See Woody Holton,
“‘Rebel against Rebel’: Enslaved Virginians and the Coming of the American
Holton, Forced Founders, 156–61; and Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence,
613.
trust him and shall always remember his treatment of...his son, who left the navy to assist his own country even against the threats of being disinherited by his father. Mary Willing Byrd also became suspected of loyalism during the war. William committed suicide in 1777 and died a suspected loyalist. Mary’s parents and brother in Philadelphia were known loyalists. Though accused of loyalism and aiding the British army, Mary Willing Byrd was never brought to trial, possibly because she was related by marriage and sustained friendships with powerful patriots such as Thomas Jefferson. While Mary’s political opinions in the early 1770s are unknown, there is certainly reason to believe that she was not a “daughter of liberty.” The political, financial, and personal struggles faced by William and Mary Willing Byrd in the late 1760s and 1770s provide an important context for the 1771 and 1773 portrait commissions.

Despite these various unfortunate circumstances, the portraits of Mary Willing Byrd offer no hint of the family's dire financial situation or its internal strife; in fact, they promote the image of domestic harmony and wealth. The act of commissioning expensive portraits was itself a material denial of the Byrd family's serious economic circumstances. Certainly, paying for portraits when the family owed thousands of pounds to various creditors was an unnecessary

826 25 February 1776 in Carter, Diary of Landon Carter, 989.
extravagance. William's standing as a gentleman was at stake. In a letter to two creditors in 1774, William's condescending tone reveals an attempt to defend himself: "I have receiv'd [sic] a letter from you in a stile I am not accustom'd to. I neither care for yours, or Mr. Nesbit's complaints." Clearly, William felt the need to remind others of his status. The Byrds may have seen the portraits as an opportunity to re-affirm their status and to visually repair their reputation.

In the Alexander and Pratt portraits, Mary is depicted as the epitome of private, domestic virtue. In her portrait by Alexander, Mary is pictured as a loving mother. The fact that she is reading indicates that she is not idle, but improving her mind. While a book is included to show her intellectual capacity, the daughter's hand restrains her and keeps her fully within the domestic realm. Mary’s body belongs to her family. The inclusion of Mary's daughter also suggests that Mary will fulfill her motherly duties and teach her children classical virtues. Moreover, Mary’s imaginary gown separated her from contemporary public debates about female luxury. Her imagined, classically-inspired dress in the 1773 portrait by Matthew Pratt signified her attributes as "the ideal of the

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828 William Byrd III to Messrs. Inglis & Long, 7 July 1774, in Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 795.
829 On portraiture as a tool to restore character and reputation by focusing on domestic life, see Retford, The Art of Domestic Life, 187–214.
830 The pointed lace and pearls on Mary's sleeves suggest an imaginary blend of van Dyck and classical Roman costume. Otherwise, the dress is similar to the gown worn by Mary Balfour (figure 4.8). The compositional similarity of Matthew Pratt's 1773 portrait of Mary Balfour and Cosmo Alexander's 1771 portrait of Mary Willing Byrd suggests either a shared print source or perhaps that Matthew Pratt painted Mary Byrd at Westover in 1773 before painting Balfour in Hampton later that year. If so, Pratt would have seen Alexander's portrait of Mary Byrd and may have used it as inspiration for Mary Balfour's portrait.
Roman matron, a pillar of female virtue, the woman who was a married mother, learned, chaste, sober, and dignified.²⁺²³ Given how far William's reputation had fallen, emphasizing his wife's good qualities and family unity through portraiture was one method of defense. As no extant pendant portraits of William remain, it is possible that they did not commission his portraits at the time, choosing instead to focus on Mary's image in order to present a view of peaceful domestic life in the midst of public scrutiny.

The year 1771 also marked the death of William's mother, Maria Taylor Byrd. It is possible that Mary's portrait was executed after Maria's death in August 1771. Mary and William's eldest child, Maria Horsmanden Byrd (1761-1844), presumably named after William's mother, is depicted with Mary in Cosmo Alexander's painting. Choosing to appear with young Maria emphasized the transference of domestic maternal authority at Westover from Maria Taylor to Mary Willing. Maria looks lovingly towards her mother, indicating that Mary was a woman worthy of devotion. Since Maria looks at her mother intently and embraces her, a psychological connection and affective bond is expressed here that is absent in many colonial portraits of mothers and children. More typically, both subjects look out of the canvas, even if the mother's arms are wrapped around the child.²⁺²² In Mary's portrait, the typical arrangement of mother embracing child is reversed, with Maria embracing her mother while Mary looks

²⁺²² For example, see Charles Bridges, *Elizabeth Todd Seaton Moore and child* (1738-1740, Colonial Williamsburg, 1976-377); John Wollaston, *Rebecca Plater Tayloe and daughter* (figure 2.11); and John Durand, *Martha Tucker Newton and Thomas Newton, Jr.* (figure 4.31).
outwards. This relationship indicates maternal authority and filial obedience. Since the Byrd family was dealing with intergenerational conflict during these years, Mary's portrait reaffirms her role as maternal head of the family.

The employment of classical costume in the Mary Byrd portraits also suggests class solidarity at a time when the Byrd family's reputation was under public scrutiny and assault. Though William disagreed politically with the leading Virginia patriots in the years leading up to 1776, he was nonetheless related to many of the gentry and enjoyed long-standing friendships with men on both sides of the conflict, including George Washington and Benjamin Harrison of Berkeley (Byrd's neighbor and a signer of the Declaration of Independence). When Mary was accused of loyalism and of aiding the British army, she turned to old friends like Thomas Jefferson for help. Various forms of classically inspired, imaginary dress appear in portraits of elite women throughout the colony in the 1770s. While the classical costume represented Republican values to families who resisted British imperial policies, as in the portraits of Elizabeth Harrison (figure 4.19) and Mary Balfour (figure 4.8), its appearance in Mary Byrd's two portraits suggests that it also appealed to elite women who were not invested in the

834 “The Affair of Westover.”
835 See, for example, Matthew Pratt, *Mary Jemima Balfour* (figure 4.8); Charles Willson Peale, *Elizabeth Page Harrison* (figure 4.19); Peale, *Mary Chiswell Lewis (Mrs. Warner Lewis II)* (1772-1775, Colonial Williamsburg, 1991-1171); Peale, *Dorothy Waller Tazewell (Mrs. Henry Tazewell)* (figure 4.26); and Cosmo Alexander, *Sarah Waters Meade (Mrs. David Meade, Jr.)* (1770-1771, Colonial Williamsburg, 1989-312).
American cause. Classical dress, precisely because it was imaginary and timeless, could carry various meanings. For the Byrd family, Mary's costume in her portraits signified universal virtues associated with motherhood, domesticity, and class.

The Mary Willing Byrd portraits, then, provide an interesting point of comparison with those of the Lawsons, Balfours, and Harrisons by demonstrating the varying, sometimes competing, ideologies that were present in Virginia on the eve of Revolution. These four sets of family portraits are remarkable in their differences when compared to the repetitive nature of portraiture from the 1750s, in which nearly all Virginians appear in similar costumes, poses, and settings. By 1770, there was no more community consensus or gentry aesthetic, as Virginians responded to changing ideas of British and American identity in different ways. Portraiture, as a tool of representation, became a site in which sitters negotiated their own public character and form of representation.

"To serve them, upon very moderate terms": John Durand and Middling Virginia

During the 1760s, a painter named John Durand entered Virginia's art market. Unlike John Hesselius, Matthew Pratt, Charles Willson Peale, and Cosmo Alexander, Durand catered to quite a different set of patrons. Upon his

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836 For a discussion of the various political meanings of turquerie (another type of imaginary costume) in portraits of John Singleton Copley's portrait of women, see Isabel Breskin, "'On the Periphery of a Greater World': John Singleton Copley's 'Turquerie' Portraits," Winterthur Portfolio 36, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2001): 97–123.
arrival from New York in 1770, Durand placed the following advertisement in the

*Virginia Gazette*:

> GENTLEMEN and LADIES that are inclined to have their pictures drawn will find the subscriber ready to serve them, upon very moderate terms, either for cash, short credit, or country produce, at their own homes, or where he lives, which is next door to the Hon. the Speaker's. He will likewise wait up on Gentlemen and Ladies in the country, if they send for him. J. DURAND. He will also paint, gild, and varnish, wheel carriages, and put coats of arms, or cyphers, upon them, in a neater and more lasting manner than was ever done in this country.\(^837\)

Durand touted himself as an artisan rather a fine artist, a person willing to paint carriages as well as portraits. He also stated that he accepted "country produce" as well as cash. This opened up Durand's clientele to include middling and poorer Virginians who did not have cash or trustworthy credit, but nonetheless possessed a desire to enshrine their images in portraits. Indeed, Durand's sitters were largely from the middling classes, not the large-scale planters and wealthy merchants who could afford an artist with better training. Durand continued to paint Virginians throughout the 1770s, traveling between Virginia and New York. In the 1830s, Durand was remembered by Virginians as a "tolerable" artist whose "works are hard and dry, but appear to have been strong likenesses, with less vulgarity of style than artists of his calibre generally possess."\(^838\)

John Durand's portraits of merchants, lawyers, and yeoman differ aesthetically from contemporary portraits of the gentry by other artists. While Durand was less formally trained than his contemporaries, Pratt, Peale, and


Alexander, the choices that he and his patrons made reveal that the different aesthetics in his portraits were not simply a matter of artistic skill; they were also about representation and a preference for directness. Durand's faces are carefully modeled and highly individualized. While artists like John Wollaston, John Hesselius, and even Charles Willson Peale are often criticized because their sitters' faces all share similar qualities, Durand's faces do not take on a similar appearance—he was attentive to individuality. As noted above, Virginians in the 1830s remembered him as able to capture "strong likenesses." The patrons who commissioned Durand also appreciated his attention to texture and patterns, as well as to individuality. In the contemporary portrait by other artists, the choice of solid colors and simpler costume designs in most likenesses of gentry men and women allowed them to stand the test of time in the sense that their clothing would not go out of style very quickly. By choosing to appear in solids with simpler cuts, the sitter's garments would be less distracting and appear more refined, with an emphasis on the gleaming silk. John Durand's patrons, however, preferred to appear in other types of costumes. Durand's sitters, especially women, are depicted in garments heavily trimmed and accessorized with flowers, ribbons, jewelry, and lace that overwhelm the sitter. Even the men wear brighter clothes in comparison to the plain grays, browns, dark blues, and blacks in other portraits of gentry. Costumes and accessories became essential elements of Durand's portraits.
John Durand painted Mary Orange Rothery (b. 1747), the widow of a Norfolk merchant, in 1773 (figure 4.29). She commissioned the portrait the year after her husband died. Mary is depicted in a feigned oval, a popular format for three-quarter length portraits. She is shown from the waist up, her right hand resting on top of a book. Her left hand is not visible, though Durand was careful to compose her left arm in such a way that the lush lace trim on the sleeve is displayed. The spine of the book once had lettering on it, but is now mostly illegible. Mary wears a blue silk dress with a white damask floral pattern, and her bodice and cuffs are trimmed in ruching of the same fabric. The patterns do not match at the seams of the dress, resulting in lines and florals busily intersecting at different angles. A large bow of the same fabric is at her breast and is further adorned with a corsage-like rosette. White lace decorates her neckline and elbows. She wears a bold black ribbon as a necklace and another corded necklace that disappears into her bodice. Her head is slightly turned, but a large earring is nonetheless visible. Mary’s hair is piled high on her head, adorned with blue and red flowers as well as a hair clip and a lace-trimmed veil. A large blue bow is partially visible at the nape of her neck. Though Mary’s face is carefully painted, her elaborate ensemble distracts from her visage. She clearly wanted herself presented as wealthy, educated, and fashionable. This

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839 Mary Rothery placed an announcement in the Virginia Gazette as her recently deceased husband’s executrix. 2 April 1772, Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), 3.

840 The binding appears to read: "[D, O, Q, or U?]AUTI/. . . OCCTS". Object file 1991-150, Portrait of Mary Orange Rothery, Colonial Williamsburg.
relatively small painting is filled with many different patterns, textures, and colors that encourage careful looking by the viewer.\textsuperscript{841}

Mary's choice to appear in a damask dress is particularly important because printed fabrics went in and out of fashion quickly. Prints were limited in production, available in finite quantities, and new styles were constantly being imported to the colonies.\textsuperscript{842} The damask print that Mary wears was surely one that she owned and could be identified. Printed fabrics in portraits of women were unusual anywhere in the colonies. In one notable exception, John Singleton Copley painted Jemima Winslow of Boston in flowered silk in 1773 -- the same year Mary Rothery sat for her portrait. However, after the Loyalist Winslows fled to England during the American Revolution, Jemima commissioned another painter to alter her costume, giving her a plain green dress instead.\textsuperscript{843} Mary Rothery's portrait thus highlights her participation in the colonial market and her ability to afford fashionable, imported, printed silk.

\textsuperscript{841} Other portraits by John Durand that feature women in trimmed and accessorized costumes include: \textit{Elizabeth Boush} (1769, Colonial Williamsburg, 1982-271); \textit{Susannah Stith Meade (Mrs. Andrew Meade)} (ca. 1770, Virginia Historical Society, 1966.12); and \textit{Dorothy Pleasant Briggs (Mrs. Gray Briggs)} (1775, MESDA Object Database S-3120).

\textsuperscript{842} The specificity of patterns was such that it is sometimes possible to identify the pattern designer, the weaver, and the date of production. Zara Anishanslin examines the network of producers and consumers based on the damask silk dress worn by Anne Shippen Willing in her 1746 portrait by Robert Feke. Coincidentally, Willing was Mary Willing Byrd's (Mrs. William Byrd III) mother. See Anishanslin, \textit{Portrait of a Woman in Silk}, for English silk manufacturing and trade see especially, 25-161; on the rarity of printed fabrics in portraits, 180, 189.

It is possible that Mary Rothery chose to wear a damask gown as a political statement. As a widow, she could make own decisions regarding her representation. Matthew Rothery (Mary Orange Rothery's husband) attended Sons of Liberty meetings in Norfolk before he died, and presumably was a member. However, Mary Orange Rothery was apparently a Loyalist. She left the colony with her son in 1774 because "she saw the storm was brewing," although, she admitted that "she might have remained with personal safety but chose to come away to avoid the troublesome time which she foresaw coming on." It is unclear how involved Matthew Rothery was in the Sons of Liberty. Mary later described him as "a friend to government and a steady supporter of the British Legislator." Of course, it was in Mary's best interest to describe Matthew as a Loyalist. Regardless, John Durand's style and approach to dress in portraiture appealed to a broad range of merchants and yeoman in Virginia.

Even in Durand's large format portraits, costumes are elaborate. In his 1770 portrait of Martha Tucker Newton (1750/1-1816) (figure 4.31), she wears a sack back dress in a bright, solid pink color. The garment’s ruching and trim are highlighted in silver. The lace at her sleeves and the lace kerchief over her

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844 "Proceedings of the Sons of Liberty at Norfolk, 1766."
846 "The Memorial of Mary Rothery of Liverpool."
neckline are carefully painted. She wears a prominent floral corsage, a wide lace choker at her neck, earrings, and an elaborate lace- and floral-trimmed hairpiece. The thick trim, quantities of lace, big accessories, and deep folds in Martha’s dress overemphasize her costume. Martha wraps one arm around her son, Thomas Newton, Jr., as if to steady him on her lap. Thomas Jr. is draped in white and blue fabric and wears an armband and a red coral necklace. He draws additional attention to his mother's corsage by touching it with one hand. Blue tasseled draperies hang on either side of the composition. Painted against a plain background, the two figures and all their finery really stand out. The dark background also makes Martha and Thomas Jr. appear to be floating in space.

When Durand’s portrait of Martha Tucker Newton is compared to John Hesselius’s contemporary portrait of Elizabeth Stith Fitzhugh (figure 4.2), who wears a very similar costume, the difference in aesthetics is readily apparent. Elizabeth Fitzhugh's dress is very similar to Martha Newton's, but it is a softer pink, and it does not have as much ruching or trim. While both portraits feature broad expanses of silk fabric, Elizabeth’s skirt is not broken up with as many diverting details. Even with lace at the neckline and cuffs, the costume is less distracting. The relatively modest floral brooch at Elizabeth’s neckline is softly painted and much less prominent than Martha's large corsage. Elizabeth is accessorized with gently painted pearls. Elizabeth's hair is softly rendered with a small hairpiece. In contrast, Martha wears a busy lace cap topped with floral accessories that is emphasized against the dark background. The entire
composition is more harmonious than Martha Newton's, where the tasseled drapery fades into the dark background and the two figures seem to float in undefined space. The sartorial restraint and balanced composition in Elizabeth's portrait makes her appear more comfortable in her finery, suggesting that status and genteel comportment come naturally to her.

Martha Newton was married to Thomas Newton, Jr. (1742-1807), a merchant of Norfolk who was also painted by Durand in 1770 (figure 4.30). Newton was elected to the House of Burgesses in 1765, where he served until 1775, and he was a member of the Norfolk Sons of Liberty. He later became mayor of the city of Norfolk.\(^{847}\) The Newtons exemplify the rising prominence and political authority of the middling sorts during the 1760s and 1770s. Newton stands at the picture plane in an eye-catchingly bright red suit. Just behind him, opened letters are spread out on a table. The red seal on one of the letters echoes the color of his suit. An inkwell and quill are placed next to the letters, along with a blue ribbon. The wide classical column behind the table frames Newton and affords a glimpse of blue sky and clouds tinged with pink. Again, like fellow Virginia merchant James Balfour, Newton draws attention to his connections with a wider world through the inclusion of letters. Though the addresses are not clear, the letters reference the distant connections necessary to be a successful merchant. In contrast, John Hesselius’s 1771 portrait of Henry Fitzhugh (figure 4.1) depicts the sitter clad in a subtler suit of blue and white

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hues. Henry points out towards the land, the source of his wealth and social status. Henry stands more confidently with one leg thrust out to emphasize his stature, while Thomas stands in a straighter, less dominating pose. However, Thomas stands closer to the picture plane, perhaps to seem more familiar to the viewer, as with Henry Tazewell (figure 4.25). Placed next to the portrait of his wife, the blue of Henry's suit complements the bluish-green sprigs in Elizabeth's corsage and the blue curtain on the side of her portrait. Meanwhile, Thomas's red suit and Martha's equally vibrant dark pink dress clash. Their bright, elaborate garments, and accessories compete with their faces to be the center of attention.

Durand's likenesses pay equal attention to individual physiognomy and sartorial splendor. The costumes and accessories in the two Newton portraits and the Rothery portraits are detailed and complicated, as if the paintings are intended to be portraits of the garments. Yet, each sitter's face is also carefully painted. Durand's faces are carefully modeled to show the sitters' unique jaw lines, cheekbones, the shapes of their mouths and noses, and delineated eyes and eyelids. No two sitters look quite alike. In contrast, John Hesselius's sitters all share facial features, notably the upturned almond shape of their eyes, their rounded cheekbones and jawlines, and long noses (e.g. figures 4.1 and 4.2). Charles Willson Peale's faces tend to share similar characteristics as well, most clearly their oval-shaped heads with a lack of modeling near the cheekbones (e.g. figures 4.18, 4.19, and 4.23). Though Durand's compositions are often flat, his attention to detail and individuality seems to have appealed to his patrons.
The flat, somewhat linear quality of his figures makes the images more direct and suggests a more truthful representation.

The Newtons and Mary Rothery used their portraits to show off their wealth, to embrace the social and economic changes that led to their increased social authority, and to memorialize their success and status for posterity. Especially in the case of the Newtons, they had recently achieved political prominence, serving in public roles alongside the gentry. The Newtons and Rothery emphasized their wealth through fashionable dress, fabrics, and accouterments. They referenced their professional roles as merchants and leaders through letters and books that were prominently displayed in their portraits. The letters and fabrics refer explicitly to the global textile trade and communication networks that facilitated imperial news and commerce. By commissioning portraits to hang in their homes or stores, John Durand's patrons participated in a portraiture tradition that previously had been reserved for the wealthiest Virginians. Compositionally, Durand's portraits are in many ways similar those of other contemporary painters, employing recognizable poses and iconography, but they differ in overall effect. In particular, the sartorial choices made by Durand's sitters make them stand out as a different group of patrons. They appear to reject the elitist vision of republicanism perpetuated by most gentry, which emphasized status, land, and classical education as the basis for holding office, and instead celebrate a more democratic approach to republican representation. Their visual emphasis on wealth, physiognomy, and the
celebration of personal success, rather than on inherited property, promote a different vision of leadership.\footnote{848} Wearing fashionable clothes designated the sitters as wealthy people able to participate in the latest trends and to rise in social status. Along with respectable social status came the ability to participate in politics at a higher level that traditionally had been reserved for members of the gentry.\footnote{849}

It is notable that, amidst debates about non-importation and the boycotting of British goods, Durand's sitters proudly painted themselves in the latest imported fashions. These Virginians, who were of the middling sorts, do not appear concerned about being judged for conspicuous consumption. Nevertheless, the rising status in Virginia of the middling class of merchants and yeomen either made them secure in their appearance, or insecure in their position, which they compensated for with sartorial splendor. The gentry, on the other hand, were always anxious to maintain their status. Many chose to present themselves more modestly in order to win over the favor of their neighbors. Perhaps some gentry women chose imaginary dress as a means of visually separating themselves from the women of the rising classes who could afford to dress like gentry. If so, classical dress in Virginia became one way of differentiating status from wealth. Gentry portraits, through their use of costumes,\footnote{848 Durand's portraits with their emphasis on material goods, physiognomy, and direct representation are reminiscent of John Singleton Copley's realism as described by Paul Staiti in “Accounting for Copley” in John Singleton Copley in America (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 25–52; and Staiti, “Character and Class.” \footnote{849 On fashion and its relationship to status, see Breen, The Marketplace of Revolution, 151–66. On the availability of English fashion and goods, particularly for women, in Virginia, see Stevenson, “Her Correspondence Is Dangerous.”}
neat and plain aesthetics, and formality, betray their insecurity during a time of revolutionary change as they fought to maintain the status quo.

**Conclusion: From Colony to State**

By the 1770s, the gentry no longer shared a community aesthetic or uniform mode of representation in their portraits. Political divisions between the gentry as well as pressure from the middling and lower classes resulted in various representational strategies. Some couples chose to depict themselves with fashionable clothing and objects that gestured toward a specific community identity, such as the Scottish Lawson family. Other couples, such as the Balfours and Harrisons, elected to create political portraits. The Harrisons emphasized elite values of republican leadership during a period when gentry authority was challenged from below. The Balfours created a vision of pan-colonial American identity and resistance to imperial policies. Meanwhile, the Byrds responded to public and private challenges to their reputation and family cohesion by picturing Mary Willing Byrd as a paragon of domestic virtue. Middling Virginians turned to John Durand to celebrate their rising political influence and to display their wealth and personal success. Artists were attentive to individual concerns and their canvases became sites in which colonial identities were negotiated.

Frustrations with the British Parliament and the King led to changing visions of Virginia's relationship to the British Empire in the late 1760s and 1770s. A growing sense of disunity with the British Empire, coupled with increasing pan-
colonial identification across the mainland colonies, inaugurated a change in Virginia's portrait conventions. The availability of more artists in Virginia also allowed for a greater diversity of images as well as patrons. Each artist adapted British Atlantic portrait conventions to suit individual and local needs. However, this chapter reveals how Virginia portraiture in the 1770s increasingly aligned with portraiture in the other colonies. Charles Willson Peale practiced emblematic and allegorical forms of portraiture in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Matthew Pratt's portraits of the Balfours reveal his attention to pan-colonial trends of representation. Bostonian John Singleton Copley's particular employment of empirical or mimetic realism in his portraits has been noted as a distinctively American trait, as opposed to the more painterly, expressive styles rising to prominence in London and practiced by artists like Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough.850 While the artists Charles Willson Peale, John Hesselius, Matthew Pratt, Cosmo Alexander, and John Durand may not have shared Copley's technical skill, their portraits in Virginia reveal a similar use of directness and individuality as a response to rapid social and political change.

Following the American Revolution, Virginians joined their fellow Americans in the pursuit of "unbecoming British."851 By the 1770s, colonial American society was deeply British, thanks to a material dependence on British imports and a shared culture. After independence was won, Americans found

themselves struggling with simultaneously emulating and disavowing British culture. In the colonial period, portraiture had been an important tool for constructing colonists as genteel British subjects. Following independence, portraiture assumed a new role, that of constructing American citizens.
Figure 4.1. John Hesselius, *Henry Fitzhugh*, 1771. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1970.1.
Figure 4.2. John Hesselius, *Elizabeth Stith Fitzhugh (Mrs. Henry Fitzhugh)*, 1771. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1970.2.
Figure 4.3. John Hesselius, *Gavin Lawson*, 1770. Oil on canvas, 50 x 37 7/8 in. (127 x 96.2 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1954-261.
Figure 4.4. John Hesselius, *Susannah Rose Lawson (Mrs. Gavin Lawson)*, 1770. Oil on canvas, 49 5/8 x 38 7/8 in. (126 x 98.74 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1954-262.
Figure 4.5. John Hesselius, *Ann Fitzhugh Rose (Mrs. Robert Rose)*, 1771. Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 24 3/4 in. (76.84 x 62.87 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1989-338.

Figure 4.6. Robert Walker, Side Chair, 1746. Mahogany frame, beech slip-seat frame. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Gift of Mrs. A.D. Williams, 1938-199.
Figure 4.7. Matthew Pratt, *James Balfour and his son, George*, 1773. Oil on canvas, 48 x 39 in. (121.92 x 99.06 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Bequest of Emma Collier Akin, 1968.2.
Figure 4.8. Matthew Pratt, *Mary Jemima Balfour (Mrs. James Balfour)*, 1773. Oil on canvas, 48 x 39 in. (121.92 x 99.06 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, Bequest of Emma Collier Akin, 1968.3.
Figure 4.9. Published by Carington Bowles, A New Method of MACARONY MAKING as practised at BOSTON, October 12, 1774. Mezzotint engraving with period hand color, 14 1/4 x 10 1/4 in. (36.2 x 26 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1960.127.
Figure 4.10. Attributed to Philip Dawe, Published by Sayer & Bennett, *The Alternative of Williamsburg*, February 16, 1775. Mezzotint engraving, 14 1/4 x 10 1/3 in. (36.2 x 26.25 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1960-131.
Figure 4.11. Attributed to Philip Dawe, Published by Sayer & Bennett, A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina, March 25, 1775. Mezzotint engraving, 18 1/2 x 11 1/2 in. (47 x 29.21 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1960-132.
Figure 4.12. Matthew Pratt, *Hugh McCulloch*, 1770-1773. Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm.). Winterthur Museum, Gift of Henry Francis du Pont, 1959.1485 A.
Figure 4.13. John Singleton Copley, *Thomas and Sarah Morris Mifflin*, 1773. Oil on ticking, 61 5/8 x 48 in. (156.5 x 121.9 cm.). Philadelphia Museum of Art, 125th Anniversary Acquisition. Bequest of Mrs. Esther F. Wistar to The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1900, and acquired by the Philadelphia Museum of Art by mutual agreement with the Society through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Fitz Eugene Dixon, Jr., and significant contributions from Stephanie S. Eglin, and other donors to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as well as the George W. Elkins Fund and the W. P. Wilstach Fund, and through the generosity of Maxine and Howard H. Lewis to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, EW1999-45-1.
Figure 4.14. Charles Willson Peale, *William Pitt, Lord Chatham*, 1768. Oil on canvas, 95 1/4 x 61 1/4 in. (241.9 x 155.6 cm.). Reproduction from Stratford Hall.
Figure 4.15. Charles Willson Peale, *John Beale Bordley*, 1770. Oil on canvas, 79 1/16 x 58 1/16 in. (200.8 x 147.4 cm.). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Figure 4.17. Charles Willson Peale, *George Washington*, 1772. Oil on canvas, 50 1/2 x 41 1/2 in. (128.27 x 105.41 cm.). Washington and Lee University, Gift of George Washington Custis Lee, 1897.1.1.
Figure 4.21. Charles Willson Peale, *John Lewis*, 1772. Oil on canvas, 31 x 26 in. (78.74 x 66 cm.). Kenmore Plantation. Photograph from the Frick Art Reference Library Photographic Archive.

Figure 4.22. Charles Willson Peale, *James Lewis*, 1772-1775. Oil on canvas, 31 x 26 in. (78.74 x 66 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Partial gift of Miss Alice Dulany Ball, Mr. Francis Mallory Ball, and Mrs. Emma Matilda Ball Papp, 1991-1173.
Figure 4.23. Charles Willson Peale, *Lambert Cadwalader*, 1771. Oil on canvas, 51 x 40 7/8 in. (129.5 x 103.8 cm.). Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased for the Cadwalader Collection with funds contributed by the Mabel Pew Myrin Trust and the gift of an anonymous donor, 1983-90-4.
Figure 4.24. Charles Willson Peale, *Martha Cadwalader*, 1771. Oil on canvas, 50 3/4 x 37 9/16 in. (128.9 x 95.4 cm.). Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased for the Cadwalader Collection with funds contributed by the Mabel Pew Myrin Trust and the gift of an anonymous donor, 1980-135-1
Figure 4.25. Charles Willson Peale, *Henry Tazewell*, 1775. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1983-18.
Figure 4.26. Charles Willson Peale, *Dorothy Waller Tazewell (Mrs. Henry Tazewell)*, 1775. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm.). Virginia Historical Society, 1983-50.
Figure 4.27. Cosmo Alexander, *Mary Willing Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III) and her daughter Maria Horsmanden Byrd*, 1771. Oil on canvas. Current location unknown. Published in Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Salons: Colonial and Republican* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1900), between pages 144 and 145. Image from Google Books.
Figure 4.28. Matthew Pratt, *Mary Willing Byrd (Mrs. William Byrd III)*, 1773. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.8 x 64.5 cm.). Virginia State Library.
Figure 4.29. John Durand, *Mary Orange Rothery (Mrs. Matthew Rothery)*, 1773. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.8 x 64.5 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, Conserved through the generosity of Kinsey Marable and The Antique Collectors Guild, 1991-150.
Figure 4.30. John Durand, *Thomas Newton*, 1770. Oil on canvas, 47 7/8 x 36 7/16 in. (121.6 x 92.55 cm.). The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Museum Purchase, 1954-263.
"To know oneself has always been esteemed the perfection of human knowledge, it is a knowledge however, that few are scrupulously inclined to attain; being ever more solicitous to be known by others, than to know themselves ... After asking ourselves who we are, and what we are, it naturally arises from whom we are; and here too, self-love is to be either flattered or mortified; - particularly, when years encrease, we love to trace our genealogy...Thus seating myself surrounded with the pictures of my venerable Great Grandfather, Mother and their numerous descendants, I proceeded to examine the Contents of the drawers that I might develope their characters." 852

Elizabeth Jaquelin Ambler Brent Carrington (1798)

In 1798, Virginian Elizabeth Carrington (1765-1842) wrote a long letter to her sister, Anne, detailing their family's genealogy to the best of her knowledge. Childless herself, Elizabeth hoped her sister would share this information with her nieces. Elizabeth's genealogical project had begun in 1785, after her first husband, William Brent, died suddenly less than three months after their wedding. Traveling between her deceased husband's home and that of her parents in Richmond, she stopped at her uncle's property but found no family present. Unwilling to discuss her new "helpless and forlorn" situation with the "old domestics," Elizabeth escaped these inquiring minds by ducking into a room with an "antiquated Cabinet which [she] knew contained old letters and manuscripts of the family."853 There, she found herself surrounded by ancestral portraits of the Jaquelin and Brodnax families (e.g., figure 1.24). These images inspired her to


853 Ibid.
comb through old family papers and learn about her "venerable" ancestors.

Elizabeth wrote,

> Just over the door stood my great Grandfather, Edward Jaquelin...he was of French extraction, and from his buchom [sic] suit and antique periwig must have arrived in this country in its early settlement...The Costume of the Young Ladies and Gentlemen bespoke more modern fashion; amongst whom and she was the youngest stood my highly respected Aunt Martha...She was indeed a charming woman.  

And so Elizabeth continued, naming spouses, children, and other biographical facts about the family. Elizabeth mentioned familial ties with the Nelsons, Burwells, Carters, and Pages, all members of Virginia families encountered throughout this dissertation.

Thomas Lee Shippen (1765-1798) of Philadelphia, whose mother was a member of the Lee family, echoed Elizabeth's reverence for ancestors encountered through portraiture. On a 1790 visit to the Lee family's ancestral home of Stratford Hall, he described being overcome with emotion upon viewing four generations of his mother's "forefathers" (e.g., figures, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4). Shippen enthused, "I dwelt with rapture on the pictures of Stratford and felt so strong an inclination to kneel to that of my grandfather."  

Comments like those of Elizabeth and Thomas reveal the continued vital agency of portraiture and the ways colonial portraits turned into familial icons for descendants. Over the course

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854 Ibid.
855 Thomas Lee Shippen to Dr. William Shippen, 29 September 1790, Photostat copy, Research Department, Colonial Williamsburg. Original in the Shippen Family Papers, Library of Congress.
of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, colonial portraits were valued mainly for their genealogical and biographical import.

Over the last two hundred and fifty years, many of the portraits discussed in this study lost their original histories. Sitter identifications were occasionally forgotten as family lore replaced historical documentation. Some portraits were damaged during the American Revolution or the Civil War,\textsuperscript{856} others traveled with the families out west to new plantations,\textsuperscript{857} and more disappeared altogether. Some family portraits are likely yet to be found in attics or rolled up under porches.\textsuperscript{858} Virginia families created romantic stories about their portraits, as the Byrd-Harrison descendants did with regard to the portrait of William Byrd II in Roman dress (figure 1.15). For years, their family perpetuated a story that the young boy was painted in a costume in celebration of his rescue from gypsies.\textsuperscript{859}

At Shirley Plantation, one unidentified early eighteenth-century portrait of a woman called "Aunt Pratt" is believed to be haunted.\textsuperscript{860} Some family members

\textsuperscript{856} See, for example, Circle of John Closterman and John Riley, \textit{William Byrd II in Roman Dress} (figure 1.15). A large, repaired gash is evident in the lower right corner of the canvas, which family history records as having occurred during the Civil War when the Union Army occupied Brandon Plantation. Object file 56.30, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

\textsuperscript{857} For example, Matthew Pratt, \textit{James and George Balfour and Mary Balfour} (figures 4.7 and 4.8). Object files 1968.2 and 1968.3, Virginia Historical Society.

\textsuperscript{858} For example, the portrait by William Dering, \textit{Anne Byrd Carter} (1740s, Colonial Williamsburg), was rolled up under a porch in Mississippi where the family had stored it for safekeeping during the Civil War.


inscribed identifications on the back of canvases to ensure that future
generations would not forget the sitter or their relationship to the family.861

The role of portraiture in memorializing family members for posterity and
inspiring future generations to maintain a dynastic legacy is what is typically
remembered today. Even museums often have a difficult time interpreting
beyond the biographical function of colonial portraiture. Exhibition labels tend to
focus on sitter identity and biography rather than engaging with social and
political history. Displaced from their original homes and settings, it becomes
difficult to imagine the diverse messages originally embedded in domestic
portraits.

While many of these paintings have passed into museum collections,
several Virginia families continue to maintain ancestral portrait collections within
the original patrimonial home. In a 2012 magazine interview with Tayloe Emery
and his family, the current owners of Mount Airy and direct descendants of John
Tayloe II (figure 2.10), the builder of Mount Airy (1758), they presented
themselves as stewards of a dynastic legacy. They discussed their intention to
preserve and share Mount Airy, a neo-Palladian stone structure, with visitors and
scholars and explained how they continue to welcome distant relatives to the
estate. And yet, the building remains foremost a family home. As the interviewer
stated, "But the Emerys—whose energetic, towheaded sons...play or read on the
comfortable sofas in the great hall beneath ancient family portraits—are not

861 For example, see the portraits by John Hesselius, Gavin Lawson, Susannah Rose
Lawson, and Anne Fitzhugh Rose (figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5). The back of each canvas
records the name and age of the sitter at the time they sat for their portrait.
afraid to make Mount Airy their own; they have a bold vision for its future. Indeed, that is how the family was photographed for the magazine, seated on a couch in the central hall, surrounded by eighteenth-century family paintings. The Tayloe family portraits thus continue to function much as they were intended by the original sitters, inspiring future generations of the Tayloe family and aweing visitors with their presence.

As this dissertation has argued, however, colonial portraits were commissioned for a variety of social and political reasons and had a number of functions beyond preserving the likenesses and memory of family members. Portraits proclaimed their patron's English identity and gentility, materialized transatlantic connections, made political statements, negotiated gender roles, emphasized dynastic claims to land, and participated in the construction of a racial hierarchy. The very process of commissioning a portrait could involve the negotiation of creole, gendered, and racial identities. The focus on Virginia, a slave colony dominated by planter gentry, illuminates the history of colonial portraiture and has broader pan-colonial and transatlantic implications. Other studies of colonial American art tend to focus on mercantile families and values and largely analyze portraits from New England and Philadelphia. Looking more

closely at the political and social circumstances of individual paintings and thinking about regional differences affords a more diverse view of portraiture and American identity in the thirteen mainland colonies and the larger British Atlantic world.

More research remains to be done, particularly on seventeenth and early eighteenth-century portraits. For example, learning more about the artist, possibly an indentured servant, who originally painted the Fitzhugh family (ca. 1698, e.g., figure 1.11) will shed light on the availability of artists and materials in the late seventeenth century. Similarly, the ambitious set of Jaquelin-Brodnax family portraits (ca. 1720, e.g., figure 1.24), which inspired Elizabeth Carrington, deserves additional research. There are also a number of unattributed Virginia portraits dated prior to ca. 1735 that merit further investigation. For example, the technically sophisticated portraits of Anne Byrd (figure 3.6) and William Byrd III (figure 3.1) as children led curators to assume that they were created in England; however, biographical and archival research reveals that they were almost certainly painted in Virginia.863 Did this artist know the children’s father, William Byrd II, in England before traveling to Virginia to paint his children? If so, did Byrd invite him to Virginia? Who were these early eighteenth-century artists,

863 Carolyn J. Weekley states that the portrait of Anne “is now thought to have been painted in England; the likeness of William Byrd III is probably...by an unidentified painter.” See Weekley, Painters and Paintings, 180. However, technical examination of William Byrd III as a child after the publication of Weekley’s book suggests that the two children were in fact painted by the same artist. Conversation with Shelley Svoboda, Paintings Conservator, Colonial Williamsburg. See also Object file 1986-243, Portrait of William Byrd III as a child, and Object file 1957-183, Portrait of Anne Byrd as a child, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. For documentation of William Byrd III not traveling to England until adulthood, see Byrd I, Byrd II, and Byrd III, Correspondence, 580, 603.
why did they come to Virginia, and how did they find patrons? Addressing these questions will shed light on the social status of artists, local and transatlantic patronage networks, and the nature and availability of artistic training in the early colonial period.

This dissertation has largely omitted consideration of portraits created in England after ca. 1735 in the interest of focusing on how Virginia artists participated in the community construction of gendered, racial, and political identities between ca. 1735 and 1776, as discussed in chapters two, three, and four. There are also fewer extant examples of English portraits of identifiable Virginia sitters after ca. 1735, which is suggestive of changing or diverging tastes, an issue deserving of greater attention. Did colonists increasingly find that English styles and artists did not represent them adequately? If so, this shift holds implications for understanding colonial identity and the sitters' relationship to British taste and culture. At the same time, is this transformation simply a matter of the survival of portraits? Did fewer English examples survive with their provenance and sitter identifications than those of local manufacture? Whatever the explanation, some Virginians did choose to commission portraits in England, though perhaps in smaller numbers, throughout the rest of the colonial period. The circumstances surrounding these portraits and the choices colonists made regarding representation deserve future attention. Additional research on imported English portraits will contribute to the growing literature on transatlanticism in American and British art history, which still tends to focus on
either English influence in the colonies, or on colonial artists like Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley (both of whom relocated to England), rather than on portraits that were created by artists in England with the specific intention for hanging in a colonial setting. Like the artist who painted Lucy Parke Byrd in 1716 (figure 1.26), painters in England responded to colonial patrons and their individual needs, which surely differed on occasion from their London-based counterparts. Furthermore, English-made portraits had multiple contexts—both English and colonial—that should be explored in order to understand the ways that artists, sitters, and portraits negotiated different imperial contexts and audiences.

Further analysis of the mobility of artists and their agency in creating portraits also holds implications for understanding American identity in the colonial period. Chapter four focused on case studies in order to highlight how portraiture responded to individual needs within Virginia. However, the artists Matthew Pratt and Charles Willson Peale, in particular, traveled widely in the colonies. Future studies should bring Virginia portraits into greater conversation with contemporary portraits created in other colonies to shed additional light on pan-colonial trends and styles in portraiture. For example, Matthew Pratt, who is largely neglected in art historical scholarship, created two fascinating portraits of the Balfours (figure 4.7 and 4.8) that include references to transatlantic and colonial protest movements and show greater affinity to portraits of northern merchants than to portraits of Virginia planters. Did Pratt create similarly
politically-charged paintings in Philadelphia or New York? What role did artists like Matthew Pratt and Charles Willson Peale play in visualizing and circulating a shared American identity before and during the American Revolution? How aware were Virginia patrons of these artists' paintings from other colonies, and vice versa? These questions can only be answered by looking at the artists' complete oeuvre and networks of patrons from across the colonies. Scholars must look beyond Boston and Philadelphia to understand the nature of revolutionary portraiture.

Just as colonial portraits had diverse audiences and multiple meanings at the time of their execution, they have numerous and shifting legacies that continue to emerge. The most troubling legacy of colonial portraiture is the elision of slavery as a fundamental aspect of colonial and American identity. As early as ca. 1680, William Byrd II in Roman Dress (figure 1.15) alluded to slavery in absentia. In 1775, Charles Willson Peale painted an explicitly Virginia plantation landscape in the portrait of Elizabeth Page Harrison (figure 4.19), conveniently ignoring the enslaved workforce in order to create a pastoral vision. Fears about racial mixing and cultural degeneration also shaped images of white masculinity and the female body in Virginia portraits. This dissertation argues that the presence of enslaved people impacted portraiture and, in turn, portraiture participated in the objectification of enslaved people. The relationship between slavery and early American art is one that needs more attention, not just in the

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864 Susan Rather partially addresses some of these questions, but examines only a small selection of artists with a decidedly northern bias. Rather, *The American School*.
South, but also in the North, where both Native Americans and Africans were enslaved throughout the colonial period. Any study of early American art must confront the realities of slavery and consider how enslaved people and labor are depicted, but also why and how they are rendered invisible throughout the colonies.

Today, twenty-first-century African-American artists contend with historical absence in western art by responding to current events and the continued oppression of African Americans in the United States. The work of Titus Kaphar, in particular, most directly relates to the images and ideas about race and representation discussed in this dissertation. Kaphar creates portraits of African American men and women, historical and contemporary, and responds directly to the tradition of historical portraiture. In a series of portraits relating to George Washington, Kaphar created works of art that reflect on Washington's participation in the institution of slavery and the historical absence of enslaved people in the visual record. In 2016, Kaphar painted portraits of Billy Lee (Billy Lee: Portrait in Tar) (figure 5.1) and Ona Judge (Ona Judge: Portrait in Tar) (figure 5.2), two of Washington's famous enslaved people. Billy Lee was Washington's manservant. John Trumbull's portrait of George Washington (1780, Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Edward Savage's painting The Washington Family (1789-96, National Gallery of Art) are often purported to represent Billy Lee as Washington's manservant. However, neither "portrait" of Billy Lee was

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865 For more on Titus Kaphar and his artwork, see his website: https://kapharstudio.com/. Accessed 9 December 2017.
painted from life. "Billy Lee" became a generalized motif of African servitude in portraits of Washington. Ona Judge belonged to Martha Washington but ran away from the family in 1796 when they lived in the U.S. capitol of Philadelphia during Washington's presidency. She managed to escape by boat to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. George and Martha Washington attempted unsuccessfully to retrieve Judge, who chose to make the details of her escape public in the 1850s. In Kaphar's bust-length portraits of Lee and Judge, they are seated in front of sea views and dressed in fine clothing. The compositions and garments are reminiscent of eighteenth-century portraits. However, their faces are covered in tar. The obstruction of their visages reflects the lack of actual life portraits of them, and comments on their traditional treatment in histories and images of George Washington. We cannot know what Lee and Judge actually looked like because their images were not preserved in portraits.

To accompany the portraits of Billy Lee and Ona Judge, Kaphar created a portrait of George Washington titled, *Absconded from the Household of the President of the United States* (figure 5.3). Kaphar uses shreds of enlarged newspaper advertisements related to Ona Judge's escape to partially obscure Washington's face and body. The original advertisements notified readers that Judge had absconded from Washington's home and offered a reward for her...
return. Washington’s nose and mouth are covered with strips of paper that are attached to his face with rusty nails, the paper shreds hanging down the canvas to obscure his body. The paper crawls upwards over his face, smothering him with his participation in slavery. The titles given to the three portraits also reverse the typical titles of early American portraits featuring enslaved people, wherein the bondperson is not mentioned (often because they are unidentifiable), or described by the status inflicted upon them by white owners (e.g., Charles Calvert and His Slave, figure 3.4 and William Byrd III as a child, figure 3.1). In Kaphar’s work, Lee and Judge are named sitters, while Washington is unnamed and instead described by the actions of Ona Judge. Nonetheless, most modern viewers would recognize Washington's face, even just from his eyes, because of how ubiquitous his visage has become since the eighteenth century. Washington does not need to be named, nor does his face need be shown in entirety, for modern Americans to recognize the sitter. Moreover, while colonial planters disavowed slavery through portraiture in order to emphasize their gentility, Kaphar’s portrait of Washington forces viewers to recognize slavery as integral to Washington's identity. By drawing attention in the painting’s title to the fact that Judge escaped from the U.S. President's house, Kaphar also emphasizes that the institution of slavery was integral to the foundation of the country itself.

Importantly, Titus Kaphar's own family history informs his artistic approach to historical subjects. In a 2016 magazine interview related to his "Shifting Skies"
exhibition, wherein he displayed the portraits of Lee, Judge, and Washington together, Kaphar stated,

    my family has always—with no evidence—believed that our family was on Jefferson’s plantation, and it’s something that all of my family members talk about. I don’t know where that comes from, but it’s this lore. My wife’s family is directly related to George Washington and they have all the documentation; it’s something her family is very proud of.868

Kaphar’s family history connects him and his wife to Virginia plantations. Stories like Kaphar's provide a counterpoint narrative to the family histories of the Jaquelin family, provided by Elizabeth Carrington, or the Tayloe family's story of Mount Airy, which find sentimental value in maintaining the ancestral home and portrait collection. African-American family histories are often silenced or missing from both the visual and the written archive. Whether or not these family stories are historically accurate (and it bears mention that many white family histories are based on unsubstantiated oral tradition as well), they represent the ongoing historical process of recovering histories of African-American families long concealed by planter families' erasure of enslaved people from family records and images.869 Kaphar's work connects the historical processes of erasure and recovery to contemporary cultural production. Just as portraiture could participate

869 See, for example, Annette Gordon-Reed’s influential study of the Hemings family. Gordon-Reed, The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009). The enslaved Hemings family was related to the Wayles and Jefferson families of Virginia. Sally Hemings was the daughter of Thomas Jefferson’s father-in-law and the mother of several of Thomas Jefferson’s children, a story long silenced by descendants and overlooked by historians.
in the erasure or elision of enslaved people in the eighteenth century, art has the power to make them visible again.
Figure 5.1. Titus Kaphar, *Billy Lee: Portrait in Tar*, 2016. Tar and oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in. (152.4 x 121.92 cm.). Photograph from https://kapharstudio.com/.

Figure 5.2. Titus Kaphar, *Ona Judge: Portrait in Tar*, 2016. Tar and oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in. (152.4 x 121.92 cm.). Photograph from https://kapharstudio.com/.

Figure 5.3. Titus Kaphar, *Absconded from the Household of the President of the United States*, 2016. Oil, canvas, and rusted nails on canvas, 60 x 48 in. (152.4 x 121.92 cm.). Photograph from https://kapharstudio.com.
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