UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

"MY HUSBAND? A WOMAN, A WOMAN, A WOMAN": CROSS-DRESSING AS SOCIOECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

CALLIE CRAIG
Norman, Oklahoma
2018

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/299904

"MY HUSBAND? A WOMAN, A WOMAN, A WOMAN": CROSS-DRESSING AS SOCIOECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

_____
Dr. Daniela Garofalo, Chair

_____
Dr. Daniel Cottom

_____
Dr. Ronald Schleifer

© Copyright by CALLIE CRAIG 2018
All Rights Reserved.

This thesis is dedicated to my OU English and CRL cohort, Sammy, Wilkie, Willoughby, Charlotte, and, most importantly, my late father, Don, and my mother, Marcia.

Table of Contents

I.	Abstract	p. v
II.	Introduction	p. 1
III.	Hamilton's Husbandry	p. 5
IV.	Charke's Convincing Costume	p. 18
V.	Conclusion	p. 29
VI.	References	p. 35

Abstract

During the evolutionary period that is the eighteenth century, constructing and differentiating between genders was contentious, as was establishing tenants of masculinity and femininity. Because of the era's interlocking social and cultural components, eighteenth-century women viewed gender and sexuality as inextricable from their socioeconomic status. Eighteenth-century scholarship tends to overlook the intersectional motivations driving cross-dressed women. This thesis acknowledges cross-dressed women as enacting and performing the self, masculinity, gender, and sexuality; however, by analyzing Mary Hamilton as depicted in Henry Fielding's *The Female Husband* and Charlotte Charke as depicted in her *A Narrative of The Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke*, I maintain the aforementioned types of performance are fringe benefits of cross-dressed women's primary motivation: socioeconomic mobility. By cross-dressing, Hamilton and Charke challenge established eighteenth-century gender binaries by reconfiguring sexuality, masculinity, and femininity in order to improve their socioeconomic standing.

Keywords: 18th-century cross-dressing; cross-dressed women; socioeconomic navigation; Charlotte Charke; Henry Fielding; Mary Hamilton.

Introduction

Gender was undoubtedly a point of contention during the eighteenth century. Constructing and differentiating between genders, as well as establishing masculinity and femininity as they are associated with men and women, were sources of anxiety, particularly for the eighteenth-century man. After all, the eighteenth-century image of woman is often rooted in her binary difference from the image of man.[i] Cross-dressing is a key component in understanding the "gender panic" that took hold during the eighteenth century (Wahrman 34).[ii] We must recall that "gender-bending self-representation" should not solely be viewed "as conscious resistance to fixed categories of gender and sexuality"; instead, such representations "demonstrate the incomplete dominance as well as the emergence of a gender system that polarized masculine against feminine" (Straub 121).[iii] Cross-dressing has traditionally been understood by eighteenth-century scholars as a way to express identity and enact sexuality by mirroring society's more privileged sex in order to take part in, if not usurp, masculine power (Kahn 37).[iv] However, the critical emphasis on the performance aspect of cross-dressing as allowing for sexual expression and enactment tends to obscure a crucial driving factor: socioeconomic need. In certain cases, cross-dressing is less about expression and identity and more about accessing socioeconomic privilege and power inherent to masculinity. Charlotte Charke and Mary Hamilton are two notorious cases of cross-dressing women performing gender as a way to access economic privilege and increase social mobility. Henry Fielding composed and published *The Female Husband* (1746) about Mary Hamilton, a pamphlet supposedly based on Hamilton's own accounts.[v] Charke's *A Narrative of The Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke* (1755) is an

autobiographical account of her life that emphasizes her cross dressing. By analyzing these two texts, we can understand how women such as Charke and Hamilton see their gender and their cross-dressing as inextricable from their socioeconomic standing. They engage in masculine performances in order to increase their standing and financial security. By cross-dressing, Charke and Hamilton imitate established eighteenth-century gender binaries by reconfiguring sexuality, masculinity, and femininity in order to improve their socioeconomic mobility.

In order to discuss how Charke and Hamilton use cross-dressing as a subsistence device, we must examine the influence of the theatre and the masquerade—both spaces where cross-dressing is commonplace. The eighteenth century saw cross-dressing become more transgressive in certain sections of society during the latter part of the century, despite the practice being a long-held theatre tradition and common in masquerade culture. Female cross-dressers were transgressive because they relocated cross-dressing, something more commonly seen in the theatre and the masquerade, into mainstream society, where cross-dressed people were traditionally viewed as oddities. By doing this, the visible transgression of cross-dressing as related to the masquerade and theatre become invisible—thereby becoming all the more threatening. Through their gender performances and masculine masquerading, Charke and Hamilton remove themselves from the devalued realm of women and infiltrate the privileged realm of men, while also revealing the instability of both. This mobility, in turn, allows them to infiltrate polite society and introduce transgressive elements of the theatre and the masquerade into dominant society. Charke's *Narrative* allows her to "recast" herself and those around her in order to "restage" her actual life. Meanwhile, in *The Female*

Husband, Hamilton's masquerading allows her to mask and re-mask herself as needed in order to marry wealthy women. Both women allow us to rework our understanding of the motivations driving eighteenth-century cross-dressing and its impact on society.

Inspecting Hamilton's "female husbandry" and Fielding's depiction of it are important to understanding how eighteenth-century gender can be performed by way of cross-dressing. Hamilton was eventually found out and prosecuted, and the surviving judicial proceedings reveal how society sought to have her "castrated into femininity" for her "female husbandry," thereby putting an end to her cross-dressing (Kittredge 37). Fielding originally published his pamphlet anonymously, and his "Surprising History" was gathered primarily from newspaper accounts. He saw the opportunity to immediately profit from Hamilton's scandal. Indeed, his pamphlet sold out and was reprinted due to its popularity (Castle 602). Like Charke, Hamilton cross-dressed for socioeconomic reasons, and she married women of higher status than herself, thereby increasing her financial standing. Unlike Charke, however, who capitalizes on her transgressive behavior in order to avoid judgement and reprimand, the real-life Hamilton was discovered, tried, and found guilty of fraud for marrying Mary Price. Fielding's pamphlet, however, shows that Hamilton was found guilty of vagrancy. Charke purposefully masks herself in her autobiography, yet eighteenth-century readers' understandings of Hamilton were filtered through Fielding's mostly fictional character. While Fielding claims to have interviewed Hamilton for his pamphlet, we know this is likely false.[vi] Despite this, Fielding's depiction of Hamilton positions financial opportunity as the primary motivation readers see for her cross-dressing.

Charke's autobiography is likewise crucial to this examination of cross-dressing as opportunity because while she originally published her narrative as a man, she is one of the few self-representing cross-dressers of the century. The eighteenth-century public devoured books guaranteeing intimate and scandalous insights into the lives of others. As someone already quite notorious, Charke knew readers would savor the salacious details of her life, and so she thus provides them. She also knew an autobiography would ensure a profit to help ease her impoverished state (Shevelow 349).[vii] While it is unclear exactly how much she profited from her *Narrative*, the book originally appeared as an eight-part serial publication in *The Gentlemen's Magazine* (1755) and later appeared in bound editions, which suggests that Charke's financial situation saw improvement for an uncertain period of time (Shevelow 354). Charke reveals information both about her life as Charlotte and about her alter-ego, Mr. Brown. Charke's *Narrative* provides intriguing insights into her cross-dressed performance. Mainly, Charke's autobiography highlights that her motivations for cross-dressing change over time, particularly as her financial worries increase. Her cross-dressing eventually becomes a matter of financial survival, but her *Narrative* also sees her make other fascinating moves, such as performing and re-performing elements of masculinity and femininity. These added motivations increase Charke's complexity. But, despite clear additional motivations for her cross-dressing, socioeconomic opportunity remains the primary incentive for her cross-dressing.

In the following sections, I will examine how the masquerade and theatre cultures influence Charke and Hamilton's cross-dressing, as well as how both cultures influence Charke's *Narrative* and Fielding's *The Female Husband*. In order to fully

comprehend Charke and Hamilton's cross-dressing, we must observe how cross-dressing exists in the masquerade and theatre, and how cross-dressing changes once removed from either culture and relocated to mainstream society. I will then establish Charke and Hamilton's cross-dressing as two types of performance, and I will analyze how the socioeconomic motivations driving their cross-dressing shape their performances.

Hamilton's Husbandry

While Charke's account of cross-dressing is autobiographical, Mary Hamilton's cross-dressing is not self-represented (other than in her deposition); instead, modern critical understandings of Hamilton are mostly influenced by Fielding and *The Female Husband*, which he alleges is inspired by interviews with Hamilton. But *The Female Husband*, Fielding's pamphlet, is more accurately understood as a fictionalized parable that warns against gender deviancy and, more implicitly, the masquerade. The prevalence of the masquerade, as Kittredge says in *Lewd and Notorious*, demonstrates that "British culture cemented an already extant tradition of understanding disguise, particularly in the carnival atmosphere, as potential motivation for political action" (100). The perceived debauchery and the possibility for political action makes the masquerade controversial. Castle emphasizes the political element of the masquerade, claiming that the "masked assembly" confronts the sociopolitical problems of the era, including questions of gender: "an established and ubiquitous feature of urban public life" during eighteenth-century England, the masquerade "was universally condemned by contemporary moralists and satirists as a foolish, irrational, and corrupt activity perpetrated by irresponsible people of fashion" (1-2). The masquerade is a

"promiscuous gathering… at once a highly visible public institution and a highly charged image—a social phenomenon of expansive proportions and a cultural sign of considerable potency" that serves as a space of disguise where desire can be enacted, as well as a space where commonplace moralistic ideology can be challenged (2). Within the performative space of the masquerade lies "the experience of doubleness, the alienation of inner from outer, a fantasy of bodies simultaneously and thrillingly present, self and other together, the two-in-one" (Castle 5).[viii] This culture and its inherently disruptive power allows for participants to experiment with gender, sexuality, and identity through performance.

The age of Enlightenment saw the disturbing possibility that "nothing stood behind decorum... Fashion, masquerade, theater, cross-dressing emphasized the total disagreement between seeming and being, the deliberately fabricated incongruity between exterior and interior" (Stafford 86).[ix] Despite its popularity, masquerade culture is often conceived as threatening to the foundations of English society because it forwards "ostensibly un-British desires and activities"; the perceived moral corruption of the masquerade is seen as attracting morally corrupt people into the fold, something that causes critics to position the masquerade as "an intensely charged erotic arena in which participants were thought to endanger their virtue" (Hunt 91). Women are seen as the most endangered by the masquerade, and this is a theme we see in *The Female Husband*. In "A Carnival of Mirrors: The Grotesque Body of the Eighteenth-Century British Masquerade," Elizabeth Hunt claims that opponents of the masquerade combated the perceived threat to the female body by utilizing moralism and "masculine reason and rationality" (92). She continues, "In specifically highlighting an image of the

female body who violates the boundaries of presumed gender roles, critics emphasize the way the masquerade's sexual liberty can endanger women in particular. Within criticism of the masquerade, the result is the construction of a female body threatened (often terrorized) by the suggestion of bodily and social transgression" (92). By partaking in the masquerade and assuming masculinity, female cross-dressers such as Hamilton violate "the boundaries of presumed gender roles" while also jeopardizing their fellow women.

We can see this bodily violation in *The Female Husband* rather than Charke's *Narrative*: Whereas Charke refuses romantic advances from women, Hamilton capitalizes on such advances, and her wives unknowingly partake in her transgression. They are horrified by her behavior because of how their status is negatively impacted. Hamilton's wives respond with a sense of violation to her disguise because although Hamilton's cross-dressing is a type of masquerading, her wives are not engaged in the masquerade with Hamilton— they thought they were properly married to Mr. Hamilton. This point is particularly evident when Hamilton meets and attempts to seduce two widows. The second widow is Widow Rushford, "whose Fortune was much superior to the former Widow, and who received Mrs. Hamilton's addresses with all the complaisance she could wish"; Rushford's complaisance inspires Hamilton, and "a device entered into her head, as Strange and Surprizing, as it was Wicked and Vile; and this was actually to marry the old Woman, and to deceive her… The Wedding was accordingly Celebrated in the most Public Manner... the old Woman greatly triumphing in her Shame, and instead of hiding her own head for fear of Infamy, was actually proud of the Beauty of her new Husband" (*The Female Husband*). Rushford fails to detect

Hamilton's deceit and unknowingly risks her reputation. Upon finding out about Hamilton's cross-dressing, Rushford says, "I am Undone, Cheated, Abused, Ruined, Robbed by a vile Jade, Impostor, Whore" (*The Female Husband*). Here we see how Hamilton forces her wives to partake in her transgressive masquerading in order to increase her socioeconomic standing, a decision that emphasizes masquerade critics' concerns for the endangerment of women. We also see a critique of Hamilton's masquerading in Rushford's sense of betrayal. Rushford and Hamilton's other wives are "threatened" with ruin due to her cross-dressing. Fielding's depiction of Hamilton's cross-dressing highlights the "festive, dangerous nature" of the masquerade (Castle 67). For Fielding, Hamilton "embodies matters which preoccupy him in his plays and fiction"—namely, the "hypnotic power and subversiveness of the masquerade" (69). Hamilton's cross-dressing carries the threat of gender role destabilization and access to social mobility, two additional characteristics of masquerade culture.

Hamilton's masquerading as a man serves her economic self-interest, but, as Lillian Faderman and Lynne Friedli notably argue, her self-serving moves lead to condemnation that is directly linked to her "implied rejection" of femininity and maternity, as well as her seizing of male prerogatives (Friedli 237).[x] Hamilton's "female husbandry" is outrageous in the eyes of eighteenth-century society, something Fielding makes explicit; however, there is irony here because "Fielding's complaints against masquerade, even sexual masquerade, are profoundly compromised by his own intimacy with the world of 'false appearances' and illusion" (Castle 78). Fielding is torn between moral and playful impulses—the desire for both law and mischief (Castle 78). *The Female Husband* posits that Hamilton's punishment is difficult to observe for

“those Persons who have more regard to Beauty than to Justice could not refrain from exerting some Pity toward her” (*The Female Husband*). Fielding likewise struggles with the “Beauty” of Hamilton’s masculine performance and the “Justice” required for her crime, "the Clause in the Vagrant act, for having by False and Deceitful practices endeavoured to impose on some of his Majesty’s Subjects" (*The Female Husband*). While covering Hamilton’s scandal and trial, *The Newgate Calendar* notes, “a woman marrying a woman according to the rites of the Established Church is something strange and unnatural. Yet did this woman, under the outward garb of a man, marry fourteen of her own sex!” (Hart 2015). In Hamilton’s case, and the cases of other “female husbands,” the societal confusion stems from the revelation that her “outer” does not match her “inner.” Like Charke, Hamilton’s cross-dressing fixes her as “strange and unnatural” (*The Female Husband*).

Derry’s "Sexuality and Locality in the Trial of Mary Hamilton, 'Female Husband'" is particularly useful in understanding the implications of Hamilton’s cross-dressing from a legal perspective because she reveals that "what drove the authorities to greater severity" in certain cases, such as Hamilton's, is a combination of factors that mostly center on the perceived “threat” cross-dressed women posed to the female body**.** The biggest legal issue at hand, however, is "the attempt of women to live together without male involvement" (603). "Female husbands" are threatening beyond cohabiting without men; they can also gain property rights and legal authority over their wives, two instances of authority traditionally maintained by men. That women like Hamilton can acquire legal authority over their partners is but one instance of how

successfully performing masculinity allows cross-dressed women to navigate socioeconomic issues and wield power traditionally designated male.

I add that Hamilton's "female husbandry" is also threatening because of how she draws inspiration from the masquerade culture for her gender performances, which amplifies her transgression by adding sexual elements. *The Female Husband*'s conflicted portrayal of Hamilton stems from Fielding's relationship with "'false appearances and illusion" as related to the masquerade, as well as his theatre career; his theatre background "is clue enough to that ambivalence he seems to feel for Mary Hamilton" since his stage activity implies his familiarity "with the conventions of stage transvestism" (Castle 78-79). He appears to delight in cross-dressing actresses, even employing Charke and producing plays involving disguised women, such as commonly performed Shakespearean comedies.[xi] But because Hamilton's cross-dressing is more closely linked to masquerade culture than theatre culture, and because her cross-dressing appears off-stage instead of on-stage, her masculine performance becomes more threatening than traditional "breeches parts". Hamilton uses her masked personas to "betray" her wives "into [the] deceit" of her cross-dressing transgression (Fielding, 408).

Like the theatre, the masquerade was "identity play," yet its "triumphant bursting into the center of public life" troubled moralists while other Britons were entranced by the spectacle (Wahrman, 158-159). Castle suggests that the masquerade was controversial from a moralistic standpoint because, besides obvious moral issues of "chicanery and vice," the masquerade highlighted that "eighteenth-century English society was indeed a world of masqueraders and artificers, self-alienation and

phantasmagoria" (82). Castle points to travesty as a driving transgressive element of the masquerade. She says that "travesty... is never innocent; it is often a peculiarly expressive, if paradoxical, revelation of hidden needs" (83). Fielding's disapproval of the masquerade is evidenced in *The Masquerade* (1728), where he claims that to "masque the face" is "t'unmasque the mind" (qtd. in Castle, 83). Hamilton goes beyond masking her face, she masks and re-masks herself as a "sexual shape-shifter" who "parodied and charmed away the hieratic fixities of gender" while also establishing herself as a socioeconomic mobile agent (83).

In "An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," Fielding speaks of the "great depravity of human nature," which allows "the artful and cunning part of mankind" to be "enabled to impose on the rest of the world"; this moralistic essay reveals that, for Fielding, the masquerade is a place where "the artful and cunning" reside (401). Fielding's essay highlights the "most detestable character[s] in society," with masqueraders, though not mentioned explicitly by name, implied to be some of these detestable characters because of the "compound of malice and fraud" present in the masquerade (419, 408). Despite Fielding's theatre connections, he opposes the masquerade. Therefore, his pamphlet shows his complicated take on the two types of performance in light of their similarities—with cross-dressing being one of the more obvious shared traits. Just as Charke's *Narrative* is a dramatized autobiography that's more fabrication than fact, Fielding's *The Female Husband* is less a factual account and more a fictionalized depiction of Hamilton's cross-dressed persona, George Hamilton. While Charke's *Narrative* demonstrates cross-dressing as informed by the theatre

percolating into everyday society, Fielding's pamphlet showcases cross-dressing as an aspect of the masquerade culture infiltrating the domestic space of marriage.

We can see Hamilton's masquerading threaten the marriage space in how she justifies cross-dressing to marry women. She says that women marrying cross-dressed women carries "all the Pleasures of Marriage without the inconveniences" (*The Female Husband*). She thereby structures marriage as a type of masquerade filled with artful deception and "sublime artifice," which causes, "[t]he ideological burdens of masculinity and femininity" to be "in one carnival gesture, cast off. Through costume one can be either male or female: art triumphs over nature" (Castle 80). In other words, Hamilton's cross-dressed gender performance can be viewed as a form of art—and perhaps artifice, from Fielding's perspective. From his viewpoint, cross-dressing off-stage as opposed to on-stage raises questions of truthfulness and validity, questions that emphasize the instability of eighteenth-century gender constructions. He writes:

> But if once our Carnal Appetites are let loose, without those prudent and secure Guides, there is no excess and disorder which they are not liable to commit, even while they pursue their natural satisfaction; and, which may seem still more strange, there is nothing Monstrous and Unnatural, which they are not capable of inventing, nothing so brutal and shocking which they have not actually committed. (*The Female Husband*)

Fielding regularly incorporates aspects of masquerade culture into his work, and the above quoted passage hints at the unregulated "Carnal Appetites" of the masquerade as they relate to *The Female Husband*. By beginning his pamphlet with a masquerade atmosphere, one where desires are excessive and run rampant, Fielding positions cross-

dressing as something that belongs in the realm of the masquerade. He likewise suggests cross-dressers like Hamilton are “Unnatural” even while “they pursue their natural satisfaction,” which suggests cross-dressed women are masquerading as “natural,” perceptible men. Once Hamilton’s cross-dressing crosses the boundary into the realm of marriage, she becomes uncanny— “Monstrous and Unnatural” (*The Female Husband*). Castle claims that Fielding's depiction of the masquerade is the *carnival moralisé*, which "stands as the living emblem of a wider decay, a theatre of excess in which modern society enacts its own perversity" (190). Employing Charke as an actress and later writing about Hamilton gives "Fielding a gratifying opportunity to dwell on the tropes of disorder and moral inversion" present in masquerading while "seeming (even to himself) to preserve his orthodox stance as a satirist and disseminator of official viewpoints and values" (Castle 249). The excess Castle speaks of can help us understand Fielding’s view of the theatre as art and the masquerade as a transgressive “theatre of excess” (Castle 249). This element of excess, where desires and appetites are unfettered, makes the masquerade an inherently transgressive space.

The Female Husband suggests that Hamilton’s masquerading is a type of artful performance. Fielding writes, “It has been observed that Women know more of one another than the Wisest men (if ever such have been employed in the Study) have with all their art been capable of discovering” (*The Female Husband*). Hamilton, “the Female Gallant,” masquerades as a form of opportunity. Hamilton never has "any other design than of gaining” wealthy wives (*The Female Husband*). In order to accomplish her goals of economic gain, she acts as a trickster figure who re-costumes herself as needed. Hamilton’s transgression serves as a cautionary tale to women:

> In order to caution therefore that Lovely Sex, which, while they Preserve their Natural Innocence and Purity, will still look most Lovely in the eyes of men, the above Pages have been written, which, that they might be Worthy of their perusal, such strict regard hath been had to the Utmost Decency, that notwithstanding the Subject of this Narrative be of a Nature so difficult to be handled inoffensively, not a single word occurs through the whole, which might shock the most Delicate ear, or give Offence to the Purest Chastity. (*The Female Husband*)

If Charke presents herself as a tragic heroine, Fielding presents Hamilton as a "Heroine in Iniquity" (*The Female Husband*). Hamilton goes beyond seizing male prerogatives—she uses her "Unnatural Lusts" to seduce wealthy women into marriage. Hamilton's (mis)behavior raises concerns, and Fielding's pamphlet deters women from similarly transgressing, while also deterring them from being "seduced" by "artful [women]" such as Hamilton and her childhood friend, Anne Johnson (*The Female Husband*). Fielding suggests conversations between Hamilton and Johnson are "in the highest manner Criminal, and transactions not fit to be mention'd past between them" (*The Female Husband*). Here Fielding hints at vagrancy being pervasive— Hamilton's crime is not an isolated incident. He encourages women to "Preserve their Natural Innocence and Purity" rather than model themselves after Hamilton and Johnson (*The Female Husband*).

Hamilton's understanding of marriage-as-economical stems from her parents' outlooks on marital opportunity. Fielding depicts her as using her awareness of women to prey on them. Her father is able to retire from the army after having "the good

fortune to marry a Widow of some Estate"; upon her father's death, "her mother, tho' she had not two months to reckon, could not stay till she was delivered, before she took a third husband." (*The Female Husband*). Here we see Hamilton's parents give her an image of marriage as survival, a concept common to the eighteenth-century marriage market. Charke's *Narrative* likewise addresses marriage as a form of survival, yet Charke did not marry women while cross-dressed as a man. This distinction is perhaps useful in understanding how Hamilton's cross-dressing is criminalized while Charke experiences a certain level of celebrity instead. Hamilton's utilization of cross-dressing as a means to marry multiple women stands in stark contrast to Charke, who rejects women romantically interested in her cross-dressed persona, Mr. Brown.

Hamilton may have been "brought up in the strictest principles of Virtue and Religion," and she may not have discovered "in her younger years... the least proneness to any kind of Vice, much less give cause of suspicion that she would one day disgrace her Sex by the most abominable and unnatural pollutions" (*The Female Husband*), but her gender deviancy begins after being "first seduced" by Anne Johnson, who "made an easy convert of" Hamilton. Fielding's depiction of Johnson, "whose fortune was not thought inconsiderable in that cheap country" of the Isle of Man, highlights the socioeconomic issues at play in the pamphlet. Johnson's "seduction" is not purely sexual, but likewise pecuniary (*The Female Husband*). By insisting Hamilton's cross-dressing develops from economic necessity and Johnson's seduction, Fielding poses questions of consent and exposure while also granting that Hamilton's vagrancy, although illegal, is a subsistence device.

In fact, it is Johnson's eventual rejection of Hamilton that leads her to marry four women: "As soon as the first violence of her Passion subsided, [Hamilton] began to consult what course to take, when the strangest thought imaginable suggested itself to her fancy. This was to dress herself in mens cloaths, to embarque for Ireland, and commence Methodist teacher" (*The Female Husband*). At first, the cross-dressed Hamilton attempts to interact with men as a fellow man, but she is nearly found out on several occasions. While sailing, Hamilton encounters a Methodist man who, "in the Extasy of his enthusiasm, thrust one of his hands into [her] Bosom. Upon which, in her surprize, she gave so effeminate a squawl, that it reached the Captain's ears, as he was smoaking his pipe upon deck. Hey day, says he, what have we a woman in the Ship!"; The Captain continues to the Methodist, "I thought you had had a woman with you here; I could have sworn I had heard one cry out as if she had been ravishing, and yet the Devil must have been in you, if you could convey her in here without my knowledge" (*The Female Husband*). While the presence of the Captain offers protection from the Methodist, upon his departure, Hamilton "at last recollected the Sex she had assumed, and gave him so violent a blow in the nostrils, that the blood issued from them with great impetuosity" (*The Female Husband*). This episode sees the cross-dressed Hamilton assume masculine power in order to defend herself.

After discovering her newfound masculine authority, Hamilton meets "a brisk Widow of near 40 years of age, who had buried two husbands, and seemed by her behaviour to be far from having determined against a third expedition to the Land of Matrimony" (*The Female Husband*). Interestingly, for a paragraph Fielding refers to George Hamilton rather than Mary by switching to "he" from "she". Mary/George

becomes the "Adventurer" who "at present wanted tongue to express the Ardency of his Flame" through "Actions of Endearment, such as Squeezing, Kissing, Toying, etc." (*The Female Husband*). Here we see Hamilton capitalizing on the Widow's original advances since her widowhood would strike Hamilton as desirable due to her inherited wealth. Yet the Widow responds, "if I could have conceived my innocent freedoms could have been so misrepresented, I should have been more upon my guard: but you have taught me how to watch my Actions for the future, and to preserve myself even from any suspicion of forfeiting the regard I owe to the memory of the best of men, by any future choice" (*The Female Husband*). Fielding uses this first widowed woman to emphasize that the cross-dressed woman's seductive moves can be spotted and avoided if women are safeguarding themselves.

After being found out by the first Widow and Widow Rushford, Hamilton must adapt and re-costume in order to continue masquerading as her cross-dressed persona, so she re-masks herself as a "Doctor of Physic" (*The Female Husband*). Yet she is once again found out by her newest conquest, which forces Hamilton to re-costume herself again. Fielding demonstrates Hamilton's re-maskings with pronoun shifts: when his wife discovers Hamilton's womanhood, her "resolution the Doctor finding himself unable to alter, she put on her cloaths with all the haste she could, and taking a horse, which she had bought a few days before, hastened instantly out of the town" (*The Female Husband*). A third round of masquerading comes to a close, and we actively see Hamilton-as-Doctor shift from man back to Mary Hamilton the woman.

Hamilton's masquerading comes to an end with her final conquest, Mary Price. Fielding writes, "With this girl, hath this Wicked Woman since her Confinement

declared, she was really as much in Love, as it was possible for a man ever to be with one of her own Sex" (*The Female Husband*). We see here that Fielding writes Hamilton's marriage to Price as though Hamilton were really a man, as is indicated by Fielding's use of "man" in the aforementioned quote. Hamilton's masquerading does indeed make her a man to her wives and society at large—until she is discovered. Once discovered, she is continually converted back to "she" versus "he". Hamilton's cross-dressing, overall, is problematic because of how Hamilton uses cross-dressing as a form of socioeconomic mobility. She is threatening for Fielding because of how she repurposes cross-dressing and disguise as they relate to the masquerade in order to marry wealthy women, thereby jeopardizing their reputations, as well as taking on men's rights to property. For these reasons, Hamilton is transgressive, and her cross-dressing is one instance of her other transgressive behaviors. *The Female Husband* shows that Hamilton's behaviors are criminalized, whereas Charke's cross-dressing is not viewed in the same way. Charke's cross-dressing is more successful than Hamilton's because she is less threatening, something we can see in her *Narrative*.

Charke's Convincing Costume

Charlotte Charke, née Cibber, was born on January 13, 1713 to actor-playwright and poet laureate Colley Cibber and wife Katherine. The eighteenth-century theatre is unquestionably influential to Charke's cross-dressing. She regularly performed "breeches parts," roles where actresses play men on-stage. Such roles were common fixtures of the theatre that normalize cross-dressed gender performances on-stage. Hence, Felicity Nussbaum notes, distinguishing between on- and offstage cross-dressed women is quite an involved process because of how on- and off-stage instances of

cross-dressing grew increasingly conflated over the course of the eighteenth century (195).[xii] Lesley Ferris furthers this complexity by emphasizing that cross-dressing in performance is punctured with rebellion and ambiguity (9).[xiii] Ingrid H. Tague explains that "breeches parts" are not as controversial as we might expect because these roles "served most often to reinforce gender boundaries by *permitting* and *containing* moments of transgression. It was safe to applaud actresses in breeches because those women were already at the margins of society and because the transgression was only temporary" (31 [emphasis mine]).[xiv] Thus, cross-dressing is acceptable so long as it is confined to an obviously performative space, like the theatre; the threatening nature of cross-dressing, as confined to the stage, reminds eighteenth-century audiences that this behavior is dramatic, parodic, sarcastic, ridiculous, and so on. Women wearing breeches aren't, however, considered commonplace and natural. There are outspoken moralist opponents of cross-dressed actors because "breeches parts" still carry apparent transgression: "while many people reveled in such presentations, there were also many strident voices raised against any blurring of gender boundaries" (31). As a native to a performance-based theatre environment, Charke constantly blurs gender boundaries by cross-dressing, both on-stage and off-stage.

Charke's *Narrative* gives numerous reasons for her cross-dressing, the most important being her relationship with her parents, her failed marriage, and her eventual impoverished state. Charke and her mother shared a strong bond, but her relationship with her father was strained. While aiming to reconcile with Colley, her *Narrative* also discusses her own successful theater career, including working with Fielding, a strong rival of her father's. Richard Charke, Charlotte's first husband, was similarly a

performer: he was an actor, violinist, and composer who worked for Colley at Drury Lane Theatre.[xv] From her parentage, to her marriage, to her career, Charke was surrounded by theatrical performers who undoubtedly influenced her performance tendencies. Being steeped in the theater tradition allowed Charke to maintain a certain level of ambiguity, something she utilizes in her *Narrative*. As Shevelow indicates, Charke was defiant in the face of propriety, and she viewed her autobiography as another performance, "one that infused tragicomedy with Charke's 'Serious but Comic' self-portrait"; she painted herself both as a tragic heroine and a sentimental comic heroine (Shevelow 349). This conflicted portrait is foregrounded in the prologue to John Gay's play *The What d'Ye Call it,* which Charke quotes at the beginning of her *Narrative*: "This tragic story, or this comic jest, / May make you laugh, or cry--as you like best" (3). Intriguingly, Charke manages mixing tragicomic genre conventions while also purposefully enshrouding herself in her text by presenting dramatized versions of herself in five stages: her childhood, which depicts the "mad pranks committed" while she was a child; her theatre career; her marriage to Richard Charke; her cross-dressed "adventures in men's clothes"; her return to the theatre; and her eventual career as a pastry cook in Wales (3). Her readers are given glimpses not into Charlotte Charke, but into variations of Charlotte Charke the actress and performer. We can see this in how Charke compartmentalizes her *Narrative* into particular sections, each depicting certain aspects of her life.

Despite her ambiguity, and despite her obvious attempt to avoid classification, critics have given Charke numerous disparate labels; she has been identified as a "sentimental heroine," a "cross-dressing failure," a "freak," a "whore," a lesbian, and a

proto-feminist (Pullen 79).[xvi] The current scholarly fascination with eighteenth-century cross-dressing has resulted in Charke's once forgotten autobiography regaining popularity. However, by configuring herself as an oddity and a spectacle, her resistance to representation has often seen her as misrepresented entirely. Some scholars argue that affirmations of Charke's subversive power rest on unfounded assumptions, such as: "first, that the cross-dressed Charke is an inevitably transgressive figure; and, second, that this masculine Charke is somehow more 'real' and more significant than the feminine Charke, the repentant daughter eager to reclaim her place in her family and society" (Mackie 842).[xvii] Cloud says, "[c]ritics of 18th-century British literature have at best lamented Charke's 'failed feminism' and at worst condemned her as a psychotic, schizophrenic mess whose autobiographic text has proved itself worthless to the cause of women's liberation" (Cloud 857).[xviii] Mackie accuses Charke of being a failed feminist figure due to her "inability to construct a feminist position independent of the patriarchy" because she "reproduces a patriarchy where she may play a whole constellation of conventional roles" (842-843). The difficulty with interpreting Charke's text might be seen in how her writing occupies a "third space where identity is hybrid, multiple and disconcerting" (Cloud 858). Like Kahn's conception of narrative transvestism, this non-binary type of writing is itself cross-dressed because it "refuses to situate itself within one gender or the other and thus defies any and all types of gender based theoretical classifications" (858).

Indeed, Charke's gender performance does in fact extend to her writing. Her use of autobiography to detail her life-long cross-dressing is an attempt to construct an image of masculinity that is less disappointing than the masculinities of her father and

husband Richard. While Charke's text presents many potential avenues of research, and while scholars have explored some of these avenues, I suggest that Charke's cross-dressing as it relates to her parents deserves more attention. Charke's Mr. Brown persona sees her chastise and attempt to correct Colley's behavior, as well as her husband Richard's. To debate whether Charke can be seen as feminist and subversive or as a patriarchal reproducer and complier misses a crucial component of Charke's biography: She is continually disillusioned with the paternity of her father and the masculinity of her husband, yet she longs to correct both. Additionally, Charke's closeness with her mother means she has intimate insight into how Katherine is impacted by Colley's behavior. Through her theatre career, her cross-dressing, and her autobiography, Charke attempts to revise Colley and Richard's masculinities by redressing and re-performing them. I suggest Charke's cross-dressing and autobiographical writing can be limited to three main motivations: her strained relationship with Colley, her disappointing marriage to Richard, and, later, her poverty.

We see Charke hint at these motivations when she writes to herself, "I hope, dear madam, as Manly says in *The Provoked Husband*, that 'last reproach has struck you,' and that you and I may ripen our acquaintance into a perfect knowledge of each other, that may establish a lasting and social friendship between us" (VIII). The "perfect knowledge" Charke aims for is informed predominantly by the images of masculinity and femininity given to her by her parents. She expertly mirrors the images given to her, a trait she acknowledges by saying, "I thought it always proper to imitate the actions of those persons whose characters I chose to represent, and, indeed, was as changeable as Proteus" (26). Although Charke sees "examples of housewifely perfections daily," even

as a child, she favors masculine traits over traditional roles of maternity and femininity. She claims: “I had no notion of entertaining the least thought of those necessary offices,” even though “many and vain attempts were used to bring me into [women’s] working community” (22). Rather, Charke aligns herself more closely with traditional men’s roles: “I had so great a veneration for cattle and husbandry, it was impossible... either by threats or tender advice, to bring me into [the] sober scheme” of womanhood (22). The interplay between favoring masculinity to femininity and desiring a stronger relationship with her father influence her cross-dressing, as her cross-dressed performance lets her recreate her family dynamic and revise her parents’ images of masculinity and femininity.

Cibber’s detachedness creates an image of cold masculinity for Charke, while her mother’s affectionate yet fragile maternity translates to a mirrored image of femininity. Charke tells readers her autobiography will detail “the several stages [she has] passed through since [her] birth” (10). These stages involve Charke positioning paternity and maternity as inextricable from masculinity and femininity. While Charke struggles to reconcile her parents’ masculine and feminine images, her strained relationship with Cibber is deepened by how she desires to gain his fondness despite his aloofness. We can see her desperation even in the aforementioned quote to herself: Cibber finished John Vanbrugh’s *The Provoked Husband* (1728) and turned it into a successful play. In another play, *The Lady's Last Stake: Or, the Wife's Resentment* (1707) Colley says of provoked husbands: “When so provok'd—Revenge had been a Virtue” (192). Later, Colley says it is vital to "use moderate means for reparation" when engaging with a "provok'd" husband, or as seen in Charke’s *Narrative*, a “provok’d”

father (192). Interestingly, this theme of provocation (and, perhaps, revenge as virtue) runs throughout Charke's *Narrative*.

In many ways, the *Narrative* is less an autobiography and more a play (in the vein of Colley) that recounts how Charke provoked her family and fellow Britons and how she was provoked in return—all the while provoking her readers to react to her theatrics. Charke's provocation works in a few different ways throughout her *Narrative*: the most apparent of these ways is in how Charke, both in her autobiography and in her real life, regularly uses provocation as a method to get Colley's attention. Further, Charke provokes her readers as a form of self-defense against any judgement she may receive. She aims "to give some account of [her] unaccountable life," and to "satisfy a curiosity which has long subsisted in the minds of many" (10). Charke claims that once her history is known by her readers, then "if oddity can plead my right to surprise and astonishment, I may positively claim a title to be shewn among the wonders of ages past and those to come" (10). She avoids judgement and satisfies her readers' curiosity by making herself into a spectacle and flagrantly parading her transgressions throughout her *Narrative*.

By penning her autobiography, Charke attempts to incite her father into a relationship, an attempt Colley swiftly rejects after having already rejected his daughter in other ways. Charke's *Narrative* recounts an episode in which she sends Colley a letter. She says, "I wrote, and have thought it necessary, in justification of my own character, to print the letter I sent my father; who, forgetful of that tender name, and the gentle ties of nature, returned it me in a blank. Sure that might have been filled up with blessing and pardon, the only boon I hoped for, wished, or expected" (72). Colley's

rejection dumbfounds Charke, and she includes the letter to her father in her autobiography. We can view this inclusion as another instance of Charke's performing a role. With the inclusion of her letter, she "beg[s] pardon for this intrusion on the reader's patience, in offering to their consideration" the letter, asking whether they agree with Colley's actions (72).

If Charke's *Narrative* functions as her casting herself as the spectacular yet tragic heroine in a dramatization of her life, and if Charke is "restaging" and "re-performing" her parents' marriage with her own, then it is reasonable to suggest that Charlotte views Richard as Colley recast. She hopes her relationship with Richard will be stronger than her relationship with her father, while also hoping that marrying a protégé will gain her favor with Colley. This point is evidenced by how Richard, "whose memory will, by all lovers of music who have heard his incomparable performance on the violin, be held in great estimation," worked with and admired Colley. She says of Richard:

> upon being soon after acquainted with Mr. Charke, who was pleased to say soft things, and flatter me into a belief of his being a humble admirer, I—as foolish young girls are apt to be too credulous—believed his passion the result of real love, which indeed was only interest. His affairs being in a very desperate condition, he thought it no bad scheme to endeavour at being Mr. Cibber's son-in-law, who was at that time a patentee in Drury lane theatre, and I in the happy possession of my father's heart, which, had I known the real value of, I should never have bestowed a moment's thought in the obtaining Mr Charke's, but preserving my father's. (32)

Here we see interesting insights into Charke's writing style: She casts herself as the "foolish" tragic heroine who mistakes Richard's interest for passionate love. She says, "Alas! 1 thought it a fine thing to be married, and indulged myself in a passionate fondness for my lover" (32). This mistake allows for her to be seduced, as tragic heroines often are. Richard is depicted as a something of a scheming rake, one whose "very desperate condition" leads him "to endeavour at being Mr. Cibber's son-in-law" (32).

As Colley steps out on Katherine, Richard quickly abandons Charke to pursue other women, leaving her entirely destitute. This destitution leads directly to Charke cross-dressing as a means of caring for herself and her daughter. She writes, "Accordingly, I made our infant my care, nor did the father's neglect render me careless of my child; for I really was so fond of it, I thought myself more than amply made amends for his follies, in the possession of her" (34). The failure of both her father and her husband lead to money issues and her overall disappointment with masculinity. In attempting to "restage" her parents' marriage in an attempt to create happier results, Charke winds up even worse off than her mother. Yet she dedicates herself to amending the "follies" of their masculinities for the betterment of her child. Thus, Charke officially "appeared as Mr. Brown … in a very genteel manner" (65). If Richard becomes the rake to Charke's heroine, then her cross-dressing as Mr. Brown can likewise be understood as her "saving" herself from seduction, social ruin, and poverty—she becomes her own gentlemanly hero while likewise acting as protective mother.

Despite her troubles, Charke refuses to use women for economic gain like Colley and Richard (and Hamilton). Mr. Brown becomes “the unhappy object of love in a young lady” (65). Charke says Mr. Brown likely would have become the woman’s husband, “had it been possible for me to have been what she designed me” (65). Still, Charke's "tender concern" for the woman leads to her revealing herself (67). The discovery that Mr. Brown is in fact Charlotte leads the young woman to be "absolutely struck speechless... but when she regained the power of utterance, [she] entreated [Charke] not to urge a falsehood of that nature, which she looked upon only as an evasion, occasioned, she supposed, through a dislike of her person" (68). The woman’s shock at Charke’s identity is understandable, as she is nearly an unwitting participant in Charke’s masculine performance; by inadvertently marrying a woman instead of a man, the young woman’s reputation could well have been ruined due to her ignorance, which is exactly what we see with Fielding’s Hamilton. By refusing to “seduce” the young woman for financial gain, Charke reconfigures masculinity to be more positive than what she had experienced previously.

As a former active theatre performer, Charke may have appeared to transition from the stage, but she continues performing numerous roles off-stage; in other words, Charke lives via theatrical characters, and “her role as a professional actor is deeply entwined with the roles she plays in her personal life” (Lobban-Viravong 203).[xix] Writing is yet another type of performance for Charke, one that mirrors both her on-stage and real-life performance. Charke’s theatrical sensibility complicates her autobiography insofar as she is seemingly lost in the text; Lobban-Viravong adds:

> Because she plays the part of actor, repeatedly casting herself in different roles, readers are left with no fixed view of Charke; this lack of fixity has prompted critics to accuse her of not being fully present in the text, of almost willfully writing herself *in absentia.* It isn't that Charke is physically absent from the text, but that the text does not offer a full representation of Charke's inner life, an absence under-scored by her active role playing. (194).

Rather than a "lack of fixity" that results in Charke "not being fully present in the text" to the point of being "*in absentia*," I suggest that Charke's variety of performances function as a way for her to enact her own maternal, feminine identity as informed by her mother while also revising the disappointing paternity and masculinity of Colley and Richard. Charke, the self-proclaimed "strange creature" who moves through eighteenth-century society like a network of weeds "in the hot-bed of corrupt civilization" rejects traditional constructions of gender, sexuality, and class, which makes her especially unique as a subject of study for eighteenth-century scholars. She successfully circumvents—and mocks—conceptions of gender, sexuality, masculinity, and femininity by identifying herself as an oddity; continually performing and re-performing roles related to the aforementioned constructions allows her to showcase alternative options for behavior. In a sense, Charke and other cross-dressing women of the time pluralized existing gender constructions. Although she constantly struggles financially, she uses her cross-dressed persona to work jobs commonly held by men, thereby navigating the socioeconomic structure of the eighteenth century.

There continue to be scholarly questions surrounding whether Charke can be viewed as a subversive feminist figure or a failed feminist who replicated the patriarchy. Mackie maintains that Charke is a failed feminist because of her "inability to construct a feminist position independent of the patriarchy" (843). She adds, "Utterly absorbed in patriarchal ideology, Charke was not only blinded to any alternative, but she also enacted the conventions and values of this ideology in a way so overdetermined that her self-representation takes on contradictory and plural forms" (843). Yet by claiming that there was no attempt made by Charke, we find an assumption of failure. Because Charke is virtually unclassifiable, it is easy to consider her various performances as failed performances, but we must resist this inclination. Charke's *Narrative* sees her perform gender and re-stage traditional paternal (and patriarchal) masculinity while also criticizing its failures. She highlights these failures through her own. Cross-dressing as Mr. Brown gives her a way to survive financially while also reconfiguring the disappointing images of masculinity and paternity present in her childhood and young adulthood. To accuse Charke of merely replicating Colley and Richard ignores how she actively attempts to revise their masculine failures. I contend that Charke is no failure; instead, she lived as an impoverished transgressor in some regards, but also a public celebrity who openly and successfully challenges gender conceptions, which grants her a certain amount of power as a socially mobile eighteenth-century woman.

Conclusion

Viewing cross-dressing as it relates to socioeconomic opportunity and viewing how Charke and Hamilton relocate cross-dressing from the theatre and the masquerade is crucial to understanding just how transgressive such gender deviancy was during the

eighteenth century. I have argued cross-dressing was transgressive for how it relocates elements of the theatre and the masquerade to the mainstream, thereby making cross-dressed women interlopers whose masculine performances threaten the very (unstable) structure of eighteenth-century society. The gender and sexual transgression of cross-dressed women is more complex that we may believe, however. There has been and continues to be a tendency in eighteenth-century scholarship to isolate cross-dressing as sexually transgressive. Yet, as I have argued, sexual transgression is but one component. As I have attempted to demonstrate with Charke's *Narrative* and Fielding's *The Female Husband*, cross-dressing's sexual transgression is inextricable from its other transgressions. The gender performances of cross-dressed women cannot only be viewed from the angles of sexuality and gender. Women such as Charke and Hamilton were not merely seizing male prerogatives as a way to assume masculine power or express sapphic tendencies; instead, these cross-dressed women demonstrate that eighteenth-century gender identity is deeply intertwined with socioeconomic identity.

Cross-dressing, for Charke and Hamilton, is a form of identity expression, but, further, the performance of cross-dressing serves other purposes. For Hamilton, cross-dressing allows lucrative mobility in the form of seducing wealthy women into marriage. For Charke, cross-dressing allows her to revise the masculine failings of her father and husband while also presenting herself as the spectacular tragicomic heroine of her life. Additionally, her cross-dressing eventually grants her access to traditionally masculine jobs, thereby allowing her more financial stability than she would otherwise have. Both Charke and Hamilton reveal that cross-dressed women in the eighteenth century are motivated by a variety of interconnected factors, but both the *Narrative* and

The Female Husband emphasize that socioeconomic need is one of the more essential factors. Their cross-dressing is rooted in improving their economic status, as well as their social mobility.

---

[i] See Madeleine Kahn's *Narrative Transvestism: Rhetoric and Gender in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cornell University Press, 1991).

[ii] See Dror Wahrman's *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (Yale University Press, 2006). Wahrman points to a burgeoning cultural change, a "former and freer understanding of gender identity... [that] became, by the closing years of the century, overwhelmingly unacceptable" (33). This cultural change instigated a "gender panic," which was "a pattern of change that decisively reversed, over a relatively short period of time, a variety of interconnected cultural forms through which eighteenth-century Britons signaled their recognition of the potential limitations of gender categories. It is not time to evaluate the meaning, significance, and scope of this transformation" (34).

[iii] See Straub's "The Guilty Pleasure of Female Theatrical Cross-Dressing and the Autobiography of Charlotte Charke," in *Introducing Charlotte Charke: Actress, Author, Enigma* (University of Illinois Press, 1998).

[iv] While Kahn focuses more on men such as Richardson and Defoe "narratively transvesting" as female characters in their novels, she points out that "men masquerading as women might find themselves trapped in the devalued realm of the feminine; and women, by masquerading as men, might usurp male power and

prerogatives--not least of which was the right to masquerade (without lasting consequences) as women" (37).

[v] It should be noted that Hamilton's deposition survives and is preserved in the Somerset Record Office.

[vi] Baker, Sheridan, "Henry Fielding's *The Female Husband*: Fact and Fiction," (*Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, Vol. 74, No. 3, Jun., 1959), pp. 213-224.

[vii] See Shevelow's *Charlotte: Being a True Account of an Actress's Flamboyant Adventures in Eighteenth-Century London's Wild and Wicked Theatrical World* (Macmillan, 2005).

[viii] See Castle's *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford University Press, 1986).

[ix] See Barbara Maria Stafford. *Body Criticism* (MIT Press, 1993).

[x] See Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men* (HarperCollins, 1981) and Friedli, "'Passing Women'—A study of gender boundaries in the eighteenth century" in *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment* (Manchester University Press, 1987). Friedli claims that female cross-dressing carries an "implied rejection" of maternity and "appropriation" of the male sexual role. It is crucial to note that Friedli does not identify sexual deviance as the primary issue, but infiltration into the realm of man and the deception therein (237).

[xi] In *The Female Thermometer: 18-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (Oxford University Press, 1995), Castle writes that Fielding's criticism of "the Juvenal imitation of actresses in breeches (and of the women who mimic them in real life) is

transparently compromised by the fact that on several occasions a manager of the Little Theatre he encouraged the 'strange abomination' of women in drag. He produced several of those plays involving women in disguise, and supported the career of Charlotte Charke, an actress who specialized in breeches parts" (79).

[xii] In her book *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), Nussbaum states, "There was conflation not only between [cross-dressing actresses] onstage and off, but also between the dramatic character[s] and the new freedoms [they] embodied" (195). Cross-dressed women, according to Nussbaum, can be understood as signifying "both political and sexual" liberation.

[xiii] See Ferris' *Cross the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing* (Routledge Press, 1993).

[xiv] See Tague's *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760* (Boydell Press, 2002).

[xv] See Morgan's *The Well-Known Troublemaker: A Life of Charlotte Charke* (Faber Press, 1988).

[xvi] See Kristina Pullen, *Actresses and Whores: On Stage and in Society* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[xvii] See Mackie's "Desperate Measures: The Narratives of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke" (*ELH*, vol. 58, no. 4, 1991).

[xviii] See Cloud's, "The Chameleon, Cross-Dressed Autobiography of Charlotte Charke (1713–1760)" (*Women's Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 8, Aug 2009). Cloud rightly argues that:

> many theorists have fallen into the trap of looking past the transvestite in order to appropriate him or her for their own political reasons. This is unfortunate, because attempts to look past the transvestite to the "identity" that he or she is covering with clothing erases the power that he or she possesses as a transgressor of categories. When we fix a "true" or "essential" identity on a transvestite figure in the name of identity politics, we of necessity categorize him or her as either/or rather than a space of possibility, a type of "third space" that resists binary thinking. The tendency to minimize the breach of transvestite power has been detrimental to the understanding of the destabilizing agency of cross-dressed autobiographers. (857)

[xix] See Lobban-Viravong's "The Theatrics of Self-Sentiment in *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke*." (*a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, vol. 24 no. 2, 2009), pp. 194-209.

Works Cited

Blackwell, B. "'An Infallible Nostrum': Female Husbands and Greensick Girls in Eighteenth-Century England." *Literature and Medicine*, vol. 21 no. 1, 2002, pp. 56-77. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/lm.2002.0004

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1988, pp. 519–531. Accessed 27 February 2018.

-- "Your Behavior Creates Your Gender." *Big Think*. N.p., 19 Feb. 2011.

-- *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. Routledge Press, 1993.

-- *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge Press, 1990.

Castle, Terry. "Matters Not Fit to Be Mentioned: Fielding's *The Female Husband*." *ELH*, vol. 49, no. 3, 1982, pp. 602–622. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2872757.

-- *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction*. Stanford University Press, 1986.

-- *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny*. Oxford University Press, 1995.

Charke, Charlotte. *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke*. London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot, 1755.

Cloud, Christine. "The Chameleon, Cross-Dressed Autobiography of Charlotte Charke (1713–1760)," *Women's Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 8, Aug 2009.

Craft-Fairchild, Catherine. *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century Fictions by Women*. Penn State Press, 2010.

Derry, Caroline. "Sexuality and Locality in the Trial of Mary Hamilton, 'Female Husband'." *King's Law Journal*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2008, p. 595+. *LegalTrac*. Accessed 10 Apr. 2017.

Eastwood, Adrienne L. "Surprising Histories: A Comparison of Two Pamphlets." *Notes and Queries*, vol. 252, no. 4, 2007, p. 490.

Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men*. HarperCollins, 1981.

Ferris, Lesley, ed. *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing*. Routledge Press, 1993.

Fielding, Henry. *The Female Husband, or, The Surprising History of Mrs Mary, Alias Mr. George Hamilton, Who Was Convicted of Having Married a Young Woman of Wells and Lived with Her Husband: Taken from Her Own Mouth since Her Confinement.* Adelaide, South Australia, the University of Adelaide, 2014.

Fielding, Henry and Arthur Murphy. *The Works of Henry Fielding, Esq. with an Essay on his Life and Genius*. Nichols and Son Printers. 1806.

Friedli, Lynn. "'Passing Women'—A Study of Gender Boundaries in the Eighteenth Century." *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*. Manchester University Press, 1987.

Gibson, Michelle. *Femme/Butch: New Considerations of the Way We Want to Go*. Harrington Park Press, 2002.

Hunt, Elizabeth. "A Carnival of Mirrors: The Grotesque Body of the Eighteenth-Century British Masquerade." In *Lewd and Notorious*. Michigan UP, 2003

Kahn, Madeleine. *Narrative Transvestism: Rhetoric and Gender in the Eighteenth-Century Novel*. Cornell UP, 1991.

Kittredge, Katharine. *Lewd and Notorious: Female Transgression in the Eighteenth Century*. Michigan UP, 2003.

Klein, Ula Lukszo. "Eighteenth-Century Female Cross-Dressers and Their Beards." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 16, no. 4, Fall 2016, p. 119-143.

Knapp, Andrew and William Baldwin. "Mary Hamilton." *The Newgate Calendar: Comprising interesting memoirs of the most notorious characters who have been convicted of outrages on the laws of England since the commencement of the eighteenth century; with occasional anecdotes and observations, speeches, confessions, and last exclamations of sufferers*, J. Robins and co. 1824.

Lanser, Susan. "Queer to Queer: The Sapphic Body as Transgressive Text." In *Lewd and Notorious*. University of Michigan Press, 2003.

Lawrence, W.J. "Actress, The, as Usurper of Man's Prerogative." *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Volume CCLXXX (280). Chatto and Windus, Piccadilly, 1896.

Lobban-Viravong, Heather. "The Theatrics of Self-Sentiment in *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke*." *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, vol. 24 no. 2, 2009, pp. 194-209. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/409064.

Mackie, Erin. "Desperate Measures: The Narratives of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke." *ELH*, vol. 58, no. 4, 1991, pp. 841–865. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2873284.

Morgan, Fidelis. *The Well-Known Troublemaker: A Life of Charlotte Charke*. Faber Press, 1988.

Nussbaum, Felicity. *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century*

British Theater. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Pullen, Kristina. *Actresses and Whores: On Stage and in Society*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Shevelow, Kathryn. *Charlotte: Being a True Account of an Actress's Flamboyant Adventures in Eighteenth-Century London's Wild and Wicked Theatrical World*. Macmillan, 2005.

Solomon, Alicia. "It's Never Too Late to Switch: Cross toward Power." *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing*. Routledge Press, 1993.

Stafford, Barbara Maria. *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine*. MIT Press, 1993.

Straub, Kristina. "The Guilty Pleasure of Female Theatrical Cross-Dressing and the Autobiography of Charlotte Charke," *Introducing Charlotte Charke: Actress, Author, Enigma*, ed. by Philip Edward Baruth, University of Illinois Press, 1998.

Tague, Ingrid H. *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760*. The Boydell Press, 2002.

Wahrman, Dror. *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (Yale University Press, 2006).

Wanko, Cheryl. *Roles of Authority: Thespian Biography and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Texas Tech University Press, 2003.

Wheelwright, Julie. *Amazons and Military Maids*. Pandora Press, 1990.