Whinney notes that little garden statuary of the period has survived. There is no reference in Carew to the antiquity of the statues, and if they were ancient, they would not likely be recognizable as Amalthea or Ceres, as most of the collected ancient statues were far from intact.


Scott-Elliott describes the sketch itself as "a Divinity, Ceres or Fortuna, seated and holding a patera and cornucopia," and suggests that this statue may be that which later ended up in the collection at Wilton House.

O. Millar, "The inventories of the King's goods 1649-1651," Walpole Society, 43 (1972) 143. I find no particular reference to one "crown'd with wheaten wreathes," and "with a crook'd circle in her hand."

O. Millar, "Abraham van der Doort's Catalogue of the Collections of King Charles I," Walpole Society, 37 (1960) 165. This statue was described by van der Doort as being in the "Little Room in the Long Gallery" at Whitehall in the late 1630s.


COURTSHIP AND PRIVATE CHARACTER IN JOHNSON'S Rambler Essays on Marriage

One of the recurrent themes of Samuel Johnson's Rambler is the separateness of public and private behavior, and the latter's authenticity. This notion informs some of Johnson's best known moral and critical pronouncements, such as Rambler 60's famous recommendation that the biographer "lead the thoughts into domestick privacies, and display the minute details of daily life, where exterior appendages are cast aside." It emerges as well in the less celebrated context of the periodical fictions. In Rambler 138, one of Johnson's fictional narrators alludes to "The pride which, under the check of publick observation, would have been vented only among servants and domesticks." The fictional narrator of Rambler 34, in the course of describing a difficult courts-
hip, makes a similar point regarding the public-private divide: “I often attended her to publick places, in which, as is well known, all behaviour is so much regulated by custom, that very little insight can be gained into the private character.” These references reflect the general Johnsonian view, definitively expressed in *Rambler* 68, that the domestic part of life is where a man “shrinks to his natural dimensions, and throws aside the ornaments or disguises, which he feels in privacy to be useless encumbrances.” The domestic view is, according to Johnson’s moral perspective, the “real” view: “The most authentick witnesses of any man’s character are those who know him in his own family, and see him without any restraint, but such as he voluntarily prescribes to himself.” Conversely, Johnson tends to depreciate the validity of the public self, to view it as “empty,” specious, the product of a kind of dissembling:

Every man must have found some whose lives, in every house but their own, were a continual series of hypocrisy, and who concealed under fair appearances bad qualities, which, when they thought themselves out of reach of censure, broke out from their restraint, like winds imprisoned in their caverns, and whom every one had reason to love, but they whose love a wise man is chiefly solicitous to procure.

Such insistence on the truth of the domestic self must seem both extremely familiar and, perhaps, exaggerated to the modern mind; it is an opinion differing somewhat from our own assumptions about identity, which are relativistic, and incline us to grant equal credence to the different incarnations of a single individual — or, more precisely, to deny absolute reality to any one incarnation.

To locate a person’s “real” character in the domestic, or familiar, sphere is commonplace enough, with ancient antecedents that we need not go far to find. Boswell, in his introduction to the *Life of Johnson*, quotes a passage from Plutarch that Johnson undoubtedly knew:

Nor is it always in the most distinguished achievements that men’s virtues or vices may be best discerned; but very often an action of small note, a short saying, or a jest, shall distinguish a person’s real character more than the greatest sieges, or the most important battles.
Such pronouncements, with their weight of classical sanction, would certainly have influenced Johnson’s thinking about domestic identity. But environmental factors seem likely, too, and we should examine Johnson’s attitudes in connection with his historical position, and the transformation of manners within a burgeoning commercial society.

Social historians of the twentieth century have persuasively argued that the period spanning the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries saw the steady codification of public manners and, accordingly, a sharpening distinction between public and private behavior. With the rise of domesticity, the family home displaced outside venues as the central site for relaxation and comfort, and the borders of the private sphere were expanded and fortified: human functions and behaviors that, in the middle ages, had been subject to community interest and control now came under the rubric of personal or private conduct. Such eighteenth-century institutions as the Society for the Reformation of Manners, founded in 1692 and renewed at intervals through the period, provided official countenance to these deep, perhaps inevitable, cultural changes, establishing standards of public delicacy unknown in previous centuries. A perception of the “doubleness” of modern life became common in the period, part of a growing awareness of discrepancy between the classical and the contemporary worlds. Thomas Blackwell, for instance, in his *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*, compares the personality of the “natural Greek,” who “covered none of his sentiments,” to that of his English contemporaries, “with more refined but double characters.”

The “doubleness” remarked by commentators of the time bears an obvious relation to the notion of “self-fashioning,” a term popularized by Stephen Greenblatt’s 1980 study and since taken up by such historians of the early modern period as Barker-Benfield. Greenblatt’s influential thesis — not so much a new idea, as he himself points out, as a supplement to earlier studies of individualism by Burckhardt and others — is that “in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process.” Self-fashioning developed in tandem with an intensified consciousness of private, individual identity; it was “that complex, self-conscious, theatrical accommodation to the
world which we recognize as a characteristic mode of modern individuality." This new psychic structure was in part a secular phenomenon, a response to the demanding, sometimes dangerous pressures of Renaissance public life:

As the public, civic world made increasing claims on men’s lives, so, correspondingly, men turned in upon themselves, sought privacy, withdrew for privileged moments from urban pressures. This dialectic of engagement and detachment is among those forces that generated the intense individuality that, since Burckhardt, has been recognized as one of the legacies of the Renaissance.

Self-fashioning was also, like individualism itself, a religious phenomenon, its general context, in the words of Barker-Benfield,

the successful spread of Protestantism’s aggrandisement of an individual’s sense of private self, of the idea that one’s self lay in one’s own hands, to be shaped and presented publicly or not at will, in contrast to the enforcement of that hierarchy of limited and communal roles mediated by confession, a site reaching deep into the individual’s most private self.

Another factor in self-fashioning was the diffusion downward of material wealth: it has been suggested, plausibly enough, that the material deprivation of medieval England had a psychic equivalent in a kind of imaginative poverty, and that the escape from a culture of bare subsistence produced a greater capacity for imaginative self-projection, for the fashioning of one’s own identity. If it was wealth, or a general increase in material comfort and security, that made self-fashioning possible, it was the immediate demands of getting wealth that supplied the pervasive motivation. Barker-Benfield, following a number of other historians, has suggested that success within the mercantile world of eighteenth-century England required the construction of a mannerly mask that would, to use the appropriate modern cant, facilitate interpersonal transactions: “Trade required the presentation of self and not necessarily self itself.” Peter Borsay sounds a more Shakespearean note, and one that accords with Johnson’s darker view of the deceptive public self, when he writes of an “altruistic facade behind which to pursue self-centred ambition.” The most extreme theories of characterological alteration, such as Pocock’s, go beyond the notion of creative self-fashioning to suggest a
process of passive environmental conditioning, “a new model of personality shaped by ‘objects,’ ‘products,’ and ‘things,’” within an increasingly “transactional universe of commerce and the arts” in which “relationships and interactions with other social beings, and with their products, became increasingly complex and various, modifying and developing aspects of his personality.”

Johnson’s emphasis on the split between public and private identity, and on the comparative truth of the latter, should be viewed against the background of these socio-psychological developments. So should those of his Rambler essays that deal with courtship and marriage. For although these marriage essays, most of them fictions, sometimes touch on such conventional marriage topics as the foolishness of marrying for money — a staple theme among sentimental writers — they are most centrally concerned with identity, and with the task, at once crucial and uncertain, of ascertaining the hidden character of one’s prospective spouse. In Rambler 46, Johnson explicitly identifies dissimulation within courtship as a modern phenomenon, relating it to luxury and the spread of civility, or manners. Comparing the courtship conventions of contemporary England with “the ancient custom of the Muscovites,” who “never saw each other till they were joined beyond the power of parting” and whose struggle-dulled sensibilities precluded “capricious dislike,” he wonders if the Russians “lost much by their restraint,” since for the English, “whom knowledge has made nice, and affluence wanton,”

the whole endeavour of both parties, during the time of courtship, is to hinder themselves from being known, and to disguise their natural temper, and real desires, in hypocritical imitation, studied compliance, and continued affectation. From the time that their love is avowed, neither sees the other but in a mask, and the cheat is managed often on both sides with so much art, and discovered afterwards with so much abruptness, that each has reason to suspect that some transformation has happened on the wedding-night, and that by a strange imposture one has been courted, and another married.

The art of detecting — and, where possible, of seeing beyond — such masks and disguises so as to obviate post-nuptial surprises is the dominant theme of Johnson’s marriage papers.

The common problem for Johnson’s marriage-bound protagonists, as they solicit acquaintance with their prospective mates, is how to gauge private character from public behavior, or, more
generally, how to anticipate transitions between an individual's performative and domestic modes. Florentius, one of the hapless suitors described in *Rambler* 18, becomes enamored of his future wife very hastily, and under restricted conditions: "He happened to see Zephyretta in a chariot at a horse-race, danced with her at night, was confirmed in his first ardour, waited on her next morning, and declared himself her lover."20 Having only a public, external view of Zephyretta, and lacking "knowledge enough of the world, to distinguish between the flutter of coquetry, and the sprightliness of wit, or between the smile of allurement, and that of cheerfulness," Florentius fails to detect her artificiality or the thin private culture it conceals, and he subsequently finds her, in their married life, a poor domestic companion:

Zephyretta had in four and twenty hours spent her stock of repartee, gone round the circle of her airs, and had nothing remaining for him but childish insipidity, or for herself, but the practice of the same artifices upon new men.21

The public-private pattern is inverted in this essay's next exemplar of conjugal unsuccess. Melissus is Florentius's intellectual superior — "a man of parts, capable of enjoying, and of improving life"22 — and Johnson accordingly inflicts on him a more complex, less foreseeable misfortune than the one suffered by Florentius. Melissus and Ianthe first meet in a comparatively private setting, at a lodging in a "village little frequented" where there are no public diversions and so no opportunity for Melissus to assess his future bride's social, performative character. In this insular environment, Melissus perceives in Ianthe the similitudes crucial for conjugal contentment: he is "convinced of the force of her understanding," and finds, or imagines he is finding, "such a conformity of temper as declared them formed for each other."23 Melissus is not wrong in his assessment of Ianthe's private virtues, but when the newlyweds migrate to the town's public sphere, he finds himself at odds with the identity his wife displays under less domestic, more performative conditions:

They had both loved solitude and reflection, where there was nothing but solitude and reflection to be loved; but when they came into public life, Ianthe discovered those passions which accident rather than hypocrisy had hitherto concealed.24
Once again, it is the suitor’s failure — in Melissus’s case almost inevitable, one feels — to acquire both public and private perspectives on his prospective spouse that leads to marital infelicity.

All of Johnson’s courtship narratives, whatever the particular problem they detail, are structured around the disclosure of hidden character. Not surprisingly, the most successful of Johnson’s candidates for marriage are those able to delay the fateful step, thereby learning more about their prospective partners. The narrator of *Rambler 34* is of this cautious type; he describes himself as “a young man at my own disposal” and “too old to be given away without my own consent.” Untouched by family pressures or financial concerns, he sensibly determines “to obtain a nearer knowledge of the person with whom I was to pass the remainder of my time.” This proves fortunate, since Anthea, the woman he opts to court, is another “double” character of the modern type, her familiar identity unclear, with a “wonderful facility of evading questions” and of “barring approaches,” and accessible only in public places where “very little insight can be gained into the private character.”

Hymenaeus, the suitor-subject of Johnson’s most extensive treatment of courtship and marriage — his story occupies four *Rambler* essays — is another character successful in discerning the hidden evils of a potential spouse. *Rambler 113*, in which Hymenaeus’s initial courtships are described, exemplifies the Johnsonian adage that “more knowledge may be gained of a man’s real character, by a short conversation with one of his servants, than from a formal and studied narrative.” In two of the three cases recounted here, the crucial disclosures of private identity occur in connection with servants. His first love-interest, “the gay, the sparkling, the vivacious Ferocula,” is enthralling to Hymenaeus until, thanks to a chance encounter in the street, he witnesses her conduct in the sphere of common life, and glimpses an unsavory underside:
I should have consented to pass my life in union with her, had not my curiosity led me to a crowd gathered in the street, where I found Ferocula, in the presence of hundreds, disputing for sixpence with a chairman.  

Secret meanness of this sort is likewise the defect of "the calm, the prudent, the oeconomical Sophronia," who is attractive to Hymenaeus until he learns of her harshness toward a poor and vulnerable servant, dismissed "for breaking six teeth in a tortoise-shell comb." Thereafter he begins to see that her prudential nature entails a lack of common humanity.

Hymenaeus returns in *Rambler* 115, more cautious for having been "too often deceived by appearances," and quicker to decide against the women he is considering. He no longer requires the firsthand evidence previously needed to deter him. This new pattern of precipitous judgement is most marked in the case of the ostensibly agreeable Nitella, "a lady of gentle mien, and soft voice, always speaking to approve, and ready to receive direction from those with whom chance had brought into her company," who represents to Hymenaeus "an easy friend, with whom I might loiter away the day without disturbance or altercation." Before long, however, he becomes suspicious that "her apartments were superstitiously regular" and that "unless she had notice of my visit, she was never to be seen." This leads to an inferential feat of curious subtlety:

There is a kind of anxious cleanliness which I have always noted as the characteristick of a slattern; it is the superfluous scrupulosity of guilt, dreading discovery, and shunning suspicion; it is the violence of an effort against habit, which, being impelled by external motives, cannot stop at the middle point.

His worries are well-founded; he learns from other "competitors for the fame of cleanliness" that "Nitella passed her time between finery and dirt; and was always in a wrapper, night-cap, and slippers, when she was not decorated for immediate shew." Hymenaeus, who eventually gains an ideal spouse, is a kind of exemplary modern suitor for Johnson. He realistically confronts the danger of dissimulation, scrutinizes all available evidence, and makes bold determinations about private character.

It is perhaps not surprising, given Johnson's penchant for fundamentals, that his marriage essays should take as their main topic the practical implications of two profound socio-historical
 developments. One of these developments, I have suggested here, is the one described by such modern historians as Elias and Greenblatt: the progressive codification of public manners from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, and the resulting disparity between public and private behavior. The other relevant background has to do with the history of marriage in England, and the gradual devolution of marital choice from parents and kin to the participants themselves. Johnson saw that the courtship process was becoming a profoundly risky transaction between two "double" individuals, each striving to discern the private character beyond the other's public face. His Rambler essays on marriage are predominantly concerned with the difficulty — and the necessity — of such calculations.

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NOTES


2 4: 366.
3 3: 186.
4 3: 360.
5 3: 361.
6 3: 360.


12 Greenblatt 37.
13 Greenblatt 46.
14 Barker-Benfield 82.
15 Barker-Benfield 82.

“O THINK IN WHAT SWEET LAYS, HOW SWEETLY STRONG / OUR FAIRFAX WARBLES TASSO’S FORCIFULL SONG”: WILLIAM COLLINS AND EDWARD FAIRFAX

William Collins (1721–59) holds a secure place in the literary history of the mid-eighteenth century, mainly because of his slender collection of Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects (1746). This collection of twelve odes, in more than one way, voices Collins’s interest in such poetic forebears as Spenser, Milton, and Shakespeare. Roger Lonsdale, in his scholarly edition of the poems of Collins, emphasises the “allusive” nature of the poet’s productions by supplying an apparatus of notes that establishes intertextual references to Ancients (like Sophocles, Aeschylus or Euripides) as well as Moderns (like Dryden, Pope, the Warton brothers). Apart from frequent references to Pope, Collins, especially in his revised 1744 edition of An Epistle: Adress[ed] to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his Edition of Shakespear’s Works (Epistle to Hanmer), articulates his fascination with Italian writers (of tragedy and epic). The literature that he considers worthy of imitation is characterized by the “beauteous union [...] / Of Tuscan fancy, and Athenian strength” (47–8), a characterization that, in his
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