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***THE PROTRACTED PORTRAIT OF A LADY:
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CARICATURE PORTRAIT NEGOTIATIONS***

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Abstract: *Known, among others, as a “culture of appearances” (Roche 1989), the eighteenth century is a time of accelerated individual comfort and the age of luxury par excellence, combining “leisure and pleasure” (Margetson 1970). As the London of the day goes French, in an effect of “fearful symmetry” to the inceptive Anglomania on the Continent, the secular portrait becomes an asset in its own right, with “hanging the head” (Pointer 1993) as a current legitimization practice. Pride of place is held by fabulous hairdos out of tune with any sense of proportion and, as such, favourite caricature subjects. In its historical embeddedness of the same kind and character as genre painting and the novel, the caricature portrait confirms the Blumenberg-Löwith debate on the (il)legitimacy of modernity, or what I call “the collapse of the isomorphic model”. It functions as a modern negotiation of the ἐργον and πάρεργον, while it is an identitary narrative of the play of power, a form of “consumption of culture” (Bermingham 1995), and an assertion of the emerging “public sphere” (Habermas 1994) of the late 1700s. This paper is a case study based on research at the Lewis-Walpole Library, Farmington, Connecticut. The demonstration ends up with The Flower Garden (1777) portrait as a pro-tracted rather than por-tracted image – the triumph of fashion over common sense: an aristocratic lady carrying a garden of a coiffure on her head, in the culture that had produced The Rape of the Lock.*