Critical Views

In the same series

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RENAISSANCE BODIES

The Human Figure in English Culture
c. 1540–1660

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REAKTION BOOKS
In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing by Hans Eworth

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On 29 June 1541 twenty-five-year-old Thomas Fiennes, Baron Dacre, was executed at Tyburn for the murder of a gamekeeper in a brawl. His innocence was maintained by popular opinion, and this was echoed by later chroniclers who blamed his conviction on greedy courtiers and on Henry VIII's vindictive cruelty. Upon the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 the family honours were finally restored to Fiennes's surviving son and daughter. At around the same time his widow had her portrait painted by the Flemish artist Hans Eworth.

The painting (p. 61) shows Mary Neville, Baroness Dacre, seated solidly in a red armchair, the very image of weighty, almost masculine, stability. She gazes off to the side, evidently absorbed in her private thoughts, yet Eworth has carefully provided clues to the beholder to suggest what those thoughts might be. Following first the axis from Mary Neville's unseeing eyes to the left, we come upon another pair of eyes, those of Thomas Fiennes. Though long dead, he has rejoined his wife on the plane of representation in the form of a small portrait set within her large one. It hangs against a lush tapestry which Eworth has remade with as much care as he has remade the sober work of his great predecessor Holbein. On its frame are inscribed a date and the sitter's age, fixing the image as the relic of a certain moment (1540) and defining Fiennes temporally in relation to that moment (aetatis 24). The historical specificity of this portrait seconds the play of scale in differentiating its status from that of the primary portrait: in the latter, 'time' is obliquely referred to by the clock face that decorates the sand-box on the table, but it is an unspecified time, as distinguished from the specificity of Lord Dacre's past instant.

Traces of Mary Neville's thoughts also follow a vertical axis downward from her eyes. Upon her breast is pinned a nosegay - 'There's rosemary, that's for remembrance ... There's pansies, that's for thoughts,' as the Renaissance 'language of flowers' had it. Next on this axis is a book which she holds slightly open in her left hand. An illuminated letter glimpsed on the page indicates that this is one of the devotional works that were considered fitting reading material for a woman. Thus at Mary Neville's left hand we find that she has stopped reading, while at her right hand we find that she has stopped writing, for
her quill pen hangs suspended over another open volume. Writing and reading, particularly in a pictorial context, are usually associated with a man; here, they are performed by a manly woman. What relation do the Baroness's arrested literary activities have to the suggestions of thought and memory we have remarked? A visual clue lies in the tie from which Baron Dacre's portrait hangs. One strand hangs over the edge of the frame, and the other two disappear behind it, but they seem to be completed by two other points in the image: the tie that leads from his wife's flowers to drop over the edge of one book, and the tip of the quill pen which is poised above the other. Pictorial axes and pictorial metaphors bind a painted image of the past, present writing and devotional reading together, focussed by Lady Dacre's thoughtful, unseeing eyes.

Mary Neville's portrait poses many questions to the interpreter: the relationship between the pictured image, writing and reading and how they are channelled through the sitter's thoughts; the relative status of words and images within the discourse of the portrait; the relation of a portrait to the time of and after its making; and why these things should have been important to Baroness Dacre — or to Hans Eworth. As a portrait, Eworth's work carries within it an insistence on a 'backward' direction of interpretative practice toward the moment of its making — a strong element of what the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer calls 'occasionality' in a painting. 'Occasionality', as Gadamer means it, 'lies in a work's claim to significance, in contradistinction from whatever is observed in it or can be deduced from it that goes against this claim. A portrait desires to be understood as a portrait, even when the relation to the original is practically crushed by the actual pictorial content of the picture.' Thus one task of the interpreter must be to reveal traces of the particular circumstances behind the portrait, but this occasionality is ultimately only an element or a motive of meaning in the image. As a pictorial fixing of the moment of its making, the portrait inevitably also exists in a 'forward' temporal direction along which subjectivity of interpretation is unavoidable. In my reading of Eworth's portrait I will follow the construction of meaning in both of these directions and will also try to recognise how they are acknowledged within the work itself. Thus my preliminary inquiry into certain socio-historical phenomena which seem to inform the portrait will then provide the basis for a closer examination of how meaning is made in this painting and what the manner of making itself can mean. This process of interpretation should enable me to provide an account of the painting which is not incompatible either with the intentions of the artist or those of the sitter, or with the assumptions which are more unconsciously figured in it. I begin with the meaning that lies simply in the circumstances of Lady Dacre's presenting herself to the artist for representation. It seems likely that this circumstance was the restoration to honour of the Dacre family, for the character which Mary Neville has clearly chosen to assume at this moment is that of the widow, harking back over the many intervening years to her marriage with Baron Dacre.

THE GOOD WIDOW: HIGH TUDOR MARRIAGE AND WIDOWHOOD

A large proportion of sixteenth-century British portraits are 'marriage portraits,' showing couples from the highest nobility or merely from the gentry, couples who have been married for years or who have just been married, couples portrayed together on the same canvas or separately in pendant works. This reflects a society in which self-definition in terms of marriage was essential on political and economic levels, as well as on personal or moral ones. The problem of defining the institution of sixteenth-century marriage has been the subject of considerable historical debate over the past decade, and it now seems clear that its nature varied according to circumstance and class. During the period when new ideals of marriage were being formed, leading toward the modern idea of companionate marriage, the changes were apparently occurring most rapidly among the bourgeoisie and gentry and only gradually and partially penetrating the upper reaches of the old aristocracy; there, dynastic considerations as well as a different code of public behaviour determined such usually private matters.

A key issue in the understanding of the new 'companionate' marriage is the nature of the affective bond between husband and wife. Lawrence Stone concludes that the practice of arranged marriage, combined with the high adult mortality rate, necessitated pragmatically low expectations of marital happiness; Alan Macfarlane believes that affection was central in marriage but claims to speak for 'the minor gentry downwards.' The art historian Berthold Hinz has traced the figuration of the 'non-affective marriage' as the double portrait in which the two partners are merely represented within the same frame, not acknowledging each other's presence or showing any sort of physical or emotional connection; this type was particularly popular with the aristocracy in the sixteenth century. We must keep in mind, though, that portraits of marriages — Lady Dacre's included — do not express the lived essence of the marriage but reflect the aspects of marriage that sitter and society considered appropriate for representation.
Such ideals found their literary expression in books offering advice about marriage. These became increasingly popular during the sixteenth century, evidence of a deep concern with the practical and psychological problems of domesticity. The author of one, Edmund Tilney, was a warm advocate of the affective marriage. In his Brieve & pleasant discourse of duties in Mariage, subtitled ‘The Flower of Friendship’, he declares that ‘no friendship, or amity, is, or ought to be more deere, and surer, than the love of man and wyfe...’ He carefully explains how a true and perfect love should grow between the couple – and this before the marriage, for he argues against the arranged marriage of strangers. Tilney also lays some of the responsibility for the happiness of the marriage on the husband. While on the one hand this seems to carry a step further opinions articulated by his progressive contemporaries, Tilney speaks a rhetoric of love which, in the voices of other writers, indicates chastity, understanding and tolerance more than deep emotion. He furthermore places his work squarely in a tradition of courtly manners by choosing Castiglione as his model and populating the dialogue with well-known humanists. Thus, even the discourse of affection cannot be taken at its face value but must be considered in the context of the ideologies which underlie it.

The companionate marriage has been hailed as one of the most progressive contributions of the English Renaissance to the status of women, for it assumed that the wife was capable of the sympathy, understanding and intelligence necessary to maintain her side of the partnership. Yet such ‘progress’ was inevitably made through describing the role of the woman in relation to her husband, for the Renaissance woman was defined entirely in terms of marriage. The conjugal paradigm was essential to social philosophers, jurists and theologians alike as a way of thinking about women. So deeply rooted was this notion of woman as one-half of a married couple that in Tudor portraiture women portrayed singly are posed according to the conventions of pair portraiture. There is also no doubt that in the ideal companionate marriage the woman’s role was a subordinate one, much as it was in its medieval form. Obedience was truly the cardinal feminine virtue; writers on women expond and cajole, berate and persuade; they endlessly cite scientific fact and biblical authority. It is difficult to gauge the relation of their verbiage to social reality, but the ideal is unmistakable. Take for instance a commonplace that will be useful for our examination of the representation of marriage: the idea that in wedlock two individuals become one. This implies a levelling of male and female partners, indicating that they cannot be hierarchised after their union. But listen to the progressive Tilney: the husband ‘by little and little must gently procure that he maye also steale away his private will, and appetite, so that of two bodies there may be made one onelye hart’. The composite married being is made at the expense – no expense at all from the male point of view – of the female partner’s individuality, will, desire.

What then when the equation is reversed – when, from the two that have been added to become one, one is taken away? What happens, particularly, if this is the one who had originally absorbed the other? – for this is the situation of the widowed Lady Dacre. Her portrait presents a curious resolution of the question: the partner whose individual being was supposedly subordinated to the point of negation has expanded to a total occupation of the space of representation. The husband, definitively negated by death, is subordinated and absorbed by her primary image while still playing a structuring and, as it were, occasional role in it. The painting calls upon specific social notions of widowhood, complicated in their depiction by particular circumstance and individual maker.

Renaissance commentators frequently voice concern about the situation of the widow. The woman who had once been married was not so aberrant as the woman never married, yet as a woman who was in fact unmarried she caused a certain amount of uneasiness. Writers attempted to define her status and to determine whether or not it was best for her to re-enter the married state. Again, the resolutions to these problems differed according to class. The social fact of the wealthy widow was that of a woman independent of a man, with considerable freedom to manage her own property. Women with such economic power did exist – Bess of Hardwick is a famous example – but they were both truly exceptional and unacceptable. They would no doubt have come under considerable pressure to remarry, particularly if the control of land was at stake. Yet there were also both idealistic and practical matters that argued against remarriage. Essentially, the proponents of this view resolved the problem of the widow as unmarried woman by claiming that she was not unmarried but still tied to her dead husband. By marrying her, he had made her part of himself in a fundamental way: death did not change this. Hence, remarriage was often portrayed as a sort of shameful posthumous cuckoldry of the first husband, and the blame for it fell squarely on the natural sexuality of woman which became unfettered when she ceased to be tied to a ‘rational’ man.

The argument against remarriage seems to have been in part a response to economic concerns which, paradoxically, were often strongest in the
very classes in which widows were urged to remarry. When the wealthy widow was a mother, it was feared that her taking a second husband would endanger the interests of the children of the first marriage. In his Instruction of a christen woman, intended largely for noblewomen, Vives makes a strong case against remarriage and explicitly admits dynastic concerns as crucial in this matter.  

Vives’s good widow continues in what had been one of her primary functions as a wife, that of custodian of her husband’s goods. She must handle his household as he would wish, ‘and thynke that he is happie to leafe such a wyfe behynde hym’.  

The good widow does not function as an independent woman but as the remaining element of a combinative marriage which had been defined in terms of the male partner. We may consider that Lady Dacre is portrayed as conforming to such an ideal, as the attributes of male and female, husband and wife, are united in her attitude and appearance. Yet even if we read the image of Lady Dacre as the portrayal of a Good Widow, we are still not wrong to see it as somehow disturbing, a problematic assimilation of masculine traits into a woman. The whole socially constructed idea of the Good Widow is an artificial one, born of male anxieties about the place and potential of the female when released from the bonds of wedlock.

Just how artificial this ideal is becomes clear when the facts of Mary Neville’s biography are taken into account. The baroness was not in fact faithful to the memory of Thomas Fiennes: it is recorded that in 1559 she had already remarried not once but twice and had had at least six children by her third husband.  

Yet in her portrait, seventeen years of personal history, marriages, births and deaths are erased to allow her to play her part on a very particular occasion.

A year after the restoration of the Dacre family honours, Hans Eworth painted another portrait of Mary Neville (p. 67). In this extraordinary painting, Lady Dacre is shown with her only surviving son from her first marriage, Gregory, tenth Baron Dacre.  

The mother stands to her son’s right, looking outward with the rather undirected gaze familiar from her first portrait. In one claw-like hand she clutches a jewelled glove; in the other she holds a heavy signet ring, a symbol of dynastic authority, through which she passes the tip of her forefinger. She stands impregnable behind a great red cushion upon which she rests her right arm with confident ease. Standing before her, ‘backed up’ by the broad expanse of his mother’s figure, is Gregory Fiennes. He is the treasure which she displays, and his gaze openly meets that of the beholder. Equally open are his garments, slashed and refastened, trimmed and layered, insubstantial compared to the solid apparel which encases the baroness. And while her fingers grasp at tokens of wealth and power, his are invisible, inexpressive, passive. The emphasis on her son’s superficiality and almost feminine youthfulness stresses the contrasting masculine consolidation of self which power, cemented by experience, has given Mary Neville.  

The locus of power in this portrait is clear to the modern beholder; to Eworth’s contemporaries, what would have been striking was its relocation. A sixteenth-century viewer would have immediately recognised the paradigm of the double marriage portrait as the model for this image, yet it breaks one of the fundamental conventions of its model: that the man should be on the dominant left-hand side of the image and the woman on the right.  

Indeed, even when a woman was painted outside a marriage context she was nearly always shown turning towards the viewer’s left, as if toward the centre from the right-hand side of a pair. The Dacre portrait also transgresses the norm of posing women to face more frontally than men, both within and outside marriage portraiture. This convention, I believe, is linked to the matter of the sitter’s relation to the viewer. Women face us and meet our eyes while
men turn away and look to the side, absorbed in their own thoughts: the artist grants the man interiority, while women are receptive of and dependent upon the gaze of the viewing other. In both of her portraits, Mary Neville claims the masculine privilege. Virilified by age and power, by marriage and especially by widowhood, she finally occupies her first husband's place as the keeper of the Dacre dynasty.

ARS MEMORIA/MEMORIA ARTE

Thus far I have considered various social constructs of woman as wife and widow which the Ottawa portrait's occasionality draws upon and figures forth. I have been concentrating on the person of Mary Neville rather than on the full dialogue of representation within the frame of the painting, which would include the secondary portrait of Thomas Fiennes. To explain its presence on a primary level, in terms of the apparent demands of the portrait's commissioner, I shall begin by examining another aspect of the Good Widow ideal, that of the wife's role as the preserver of her husband's memory. In a later section, I shall show that the issues raised here are related to more general questions of the ontological status of representation in time.

Marriage, as we have seen, was not only until death: the wife's duties to her husband continued through her widowhood. Besides acting as custodian of his material goods, a woman who remained faithful to the memory of her husband kept that memory alive. The increasing emphasis on this role of the widow was in accord with a broader trend at this time, as 'commemoration' shifted from the public to the private sphere. According to the doctrines of the Reformation – and specifically the abolition of Purgatory – lavish funerals and masses for the soul of the deceased were not sufficient or even appropriate: a new way of coping with the fact of death had to be invented. 34 Philippe Ariès has noted that, beginning in the sixteenth century, tombstones appear on which simple epitaphs make an appeal to 'memory'. 35 Instead of demanding prayers for the soul of the dead, these epitaphs ask the living to think back into the past to capture and preserve the appearance and character of the dead and the events of their life.

Vives reminds the widow that her husband is not really dead: 'a good wydowe ought to suppose, that hyr husbande is not utterly deade, but liveth bothe wyth lyfe of hys soule ... and besyde wyth hyr remembranc' He adds, 'Leat the wydowe remembre, and have styll before hir eyes in hyr mynde, that our soules doe not persie together wyth the body'. 36 In the memory, conceived of as a visual faculty, both substantial body and immortal soul are preserved as viewed, for the dead truly live 'if the lively image of them be imprinted in our hartes wyth often thinking upon theym', and they die only if we forget them. 37 Through remembering, a mental picture is first formed and then fixed in the heart and the emotions; therefore, faithfulness to a memory both produces and can be represented by an image of the dead husband. An illustration on the title page of Richard Brathwaite's English Gentlewoman (1631) makes explicit this concept as it had continued in marriage iconography (above). Among eight vignettes illustrating womanly virtues, one shows a seated woman; beside her, a curtain is pulled aside to reveal a full-length portrait of her husband. On a banner appears a motto which she seems to be speaking: 'Fancy admits no change/ of choice'.

Closer to Eworth's time there is a tradition of portraits of women with portraits of their husbands, both on the continent and in England, where the second portrait is often a miniature. 38 But seldom is there any clear temporal break between the two levels of image – the wives are not noticeably older than their re-pictured husbands – and since the women follow convention in looking at the viewer, the aspect of memory is not made an issue. On the other hand, in the portrait of Lady Dacre the placement of Thomas Fiennes's image on the axis of her unfocussed eyes suggests that it is the figuration of those thoughts which initially seem so private. Thus we find, not surprisingly, that the woman's interiority is not
one of wholeness and containment of self but one of devotion to the male, his memory internalised as ‘image’.

Seen as possessors of intellects which were essentially passive, of minds which tended toward the emotional rather than the reasonable, women were particularly associated with devotion to memory. Retaining traces of the past, rather than actively producing new thoughts, was considered the essence of their mental process. In Mary Neville’s portrait, we have seen that the image of her remembered devotion to her husband is visually tied to religious devotion, indicated by the prayer book in her hand; it is an image which then interposes itself between the moment of reading and the moment of writing. Or rather, it is the image of the memory provoked by her devotions and is perhaps about to be written into the book before the baroness, transformed into a verbal testimony of the vision which she, as a woman, is so able to retain. In the following century there arose in England a tradition of widows as their husbands’ biographers, and the portrait of Lady Dacre seems to embody some of the expectations and assumptions that underlay that development. But no more than any of her contemporaries did Lady Dacre actually write any sort of memorial to her husband: she only commissioned this painting. In being pictured, her text becomes always about to be written, and it is the image of Thomas Fiennes, remembered and recorded as an image, that proclaims the preservation of memory.

The metaphor used in this analysis thus far has been that of a presumably intended relation between Eworth’s visible reification of Thomas Fiennes and the invisible figuration of him in the mind’s eye of Mary Neville. We have seen that in the writings of Vives, reflecting common contemporary ideas, memory is made the equivalent of a picture, as both function to preserve the past. But when this concept is put into play in a painting, the change from language to pictorial metalanguage necessarily causes a shift in the issues that are at stake. By doubling representation, Eworth demonstrates the power of the image to join past to present; this should occur both through the memory-images of Lady Dacre and through his own two painted portraits. But his strategy also compels us to consider the status of the image as enduring memorial and the status of the primary portrait as a work of art which calls attention to itself through incorporating the second painting. To clarify how these issues were important to the artist and his patrons, I will now turn to the portraits of a couple painted by Eworth nearly a decade after that of Lady Dacre.

**Vanitas and Value**

Richard Wakeman and his wife, Joan, née Thornbury, are shown at three-quarter length in pendant images – the most common way of presenting a couple in Tudor portraiture (pp. 72, 73). Both present themselves self-consciously, acknowledging that they are posing in order to be portrayed and to be viewed. The artist, in turn, has made no attempt to suggest inner, psychological presence but allows his sitters’ resolute exteriority to carry the full burden of signification. Although the two images are of equal size, Richard Wakeman is made to appear the larger and more imposing figure; he stands closer to the picture plane and occupies a greater portion of its surface. His heavy coat and broad collar emphasise the width of his shoulders, and between them his head is supported by a smooth high collar with a heavy gold chain, more armour than ornament, at its base. His stance conveys a confidence that borders on the aggressive, a challenge which is repeated in his expression, as he confronts the viewer’s gaze with a firm mouth and a raised eyebrow.

Turned slightly more to the front and standing properly to her husband’s left, Joan Wakeman’s pose is clearly a passive one. Her simple stance, uncomplicated gaze and placement farther from the picture plane serve to diminish her as a psychological presence; similarly, her feminine costume diminishes her as a physical presence. Her hands engage in no ‘gestures’ at all but are clasped at her waist in a position typical of female portraiture, connoting submissiveness. At her neck, a chain is loosely wound and tied in an ornamental knot: she is ‘tied’ by the chain of wedlock and is ornamented by it, but she is not supported as her husband is by his share of it.

Unlike most of Eworth’s other sitters, the Wakemans were not members of the nobility but mere gentry from a well-to-do Gloucestershire family. Their portraits, therefore, lack the trappings of politics and dynasty and instead partake unusually clearly of conventions of marriage portraiture that were developing at this time in Eworth’s native Netherlands – conventions which evolved for the portrayal of people of the Wakemans’ class in the context of the modern marriage and its ideals. The ‘chaste, silent and obedient’ wife was the paragon of virtue for the bourgeoisie and the gentry, and the formula used to portray Joan Wakeman is one which connotes those qualities whilst that depicted in the portrait of her husband connotes her male opposite, active, independent and eloquent.

The Wakemans’ portraits seem to conform easily to accepted ideas
about marriage and its depiction, but their second level of discourse – their verbal inscriptions – problematises their apparently unproblematic representation. The inscriptions themselves, as assertively graphic presences upon the panels, immediately undercut the images' potentially illusionistic qualities. Yet the sixteenth-century portrait frequently bears such markings and preserves its function as a document, a fixing of the appearance of a certain individual (name) who has passed through a relative amount of time (age) at a certain absolute time (date). In acknowledging the temporality of the subject, such inscriptions conversely assert the ability of the painted 'copy' to perform its proper function of making immortal and of transcending time. The Wakemans' inscriptions, however, do not participate in this dialogue of assertion between word and image; instead, they create another dialogue which draws attention to these very assertions and, in doing so, renders them suspect.

Above the recording of Richard Wakeman's age (43) and the date, the following couplet appears:

Why vanisthowe thy changing face or hast of hyt such store
To form anewe or none thowe hast or not lyke as before.

The words sound like a challenge, which I think is to be read as 'spoken' by Richard Wakeman, as the inscription on his wife's portrait is to be read as 'spoken' by her; for the inscriptions match two traditions of writing on tombs which call upon the passer-by to behold and to consider the situation of the dead, either by directly addressing him (with remarks comparable to the words of Richard Wakeman) or by merely reflecting upon that situation (as do the words of Joan Wakeman). The relevance of appropriating funerary modes of verse will become clear in the following discussion.

Combined with his confrontational stance, Richard Wakeman's words might be addressed to any spectator, yet they remain cryptic unless also understood as part of a dialogue with his wife which will be completed by her words. He demands 'why vanisthow thy changing face' – why do you put it forward so proudly? Addressed to his wife, the implied question is, 'Why do you put it forward to be painted?' For, as he says, it is a changing face, and this makes questionable the act of displaying it to be recorded. 'Hast of it such store?' he continues, on one level a standard accusation of vanity. But the following line shifts the connotation of the word 'store' by demanding whether 'you' will be able to form a new face or not – and suggests that, even if you can, it will necessarily not be like that which you had before. The instant of display passes, the face changes; but in that display for the artist the face's momentary quality has been appropriated by the image, and a new face must be made, if possible, from the 'store' within. The painted image is thus invested at a quasi-physical level with the visible essence of its subject, as defined at the moment of its making.

Joan Thornbury Wakeman does not reply directly to her husband but speaks in the first person as if to mediate between him and the viewer.

My chylhoodde past that bewtrifi my fleshe
And gonne my youthe that gave me color fresshe
Y am now cum to thos iype yeris at last
That telles me howe my wonon days be past
And therefore frinde so turnes the tyme me
Y ons was young and now am as you see.

This statement is at once a forthright response and a paradoxical contradiction to the ideas conveyed by her husband's challenge. With typical vanitas rhetoric she recognises the passage of time and the ravages it has worked upon her, first simply reflecting on this fact and then, in the final couplet, speaking in her turn to the viewer. 'So turns the time me' – even now, at the moment of viewing, time is changing her as it is changing the 'frinde' with whom she communicates. What then of the final line, 'I once was young and now am as you see'? 'Now,' at any time, Joan Wakeman is not as she looks in the portrait. Her husband's speech made it clear that the face was appropriated through being pictured, and no viewer but the artist can ever see her possessing that particular appearance.

Why, within the implied dialogue of the Wakemans' portraits, is the temporal paradox here directed at the passive female image from that of the aggressive male, and why is the issue so crucial that it must be aired in the ostensibly benign context of marriage portraiture? Let us consider first an assumption about the purpose of portraiture that is made here: the portrait is a record. This function is particularly central to marriage portraits, which served as dynastic chronicles for the couple's descendants, hanging in the family galleries; towards the end of the century, we begin to find ancestral portraits within family portraits, a visual documentation of genealogy. In its role as a family record, the goal of the portrait is to be an accurate transcription of the sitter's appearance and a document of his or her social situation.

Such demands on the part of the patrons complemented the status of painting as craft that was so deep-rooted in Renaissance England, even
concerning pre-eminent artists such as Holbein and Hilliard. The description of status through a social mask, through controlled and deliberate gestures and signs, does not demand or even allow the artist the interpretative response to character which was increasingly favoured in Italy. Expectations of the miniature were different, since it was considered to communicate at a more private level; in a famous passage, Hilliard describes how the limner must catch 'those stolne glances with sudainely like lighting passe and another Countenance taketh place . . .'. He refers to the transience of 'appearances' as does Richard Wakeman's inscription, but Hilliard is concerned with the potential of the fleeting expression to convey mood and character while Eworth is troubled by it, seeing it as something that undermines the validity of the portrait as record.

Existing alongside or perhaps acting as the basis of the concept of the portrait as record is the idea of the portrait as a bid for immortality; this underlies much continental rhetoric about the genre and is implicit in the development of portraiture as a component of tomb sculpture. As a memorial, the status of the portrait was different from that of other images, and in England this raised the portrait to a level of respect that rendered it virtually inviolate. During the long years of iconoclasm in the mid-sixteenth century, portrait images were often the only ones spared destruction. Elizabeth I, at the beginning of her reign, issued specific proclamations protecting tombs and monuments, basing her defence on the idea of the 'commemorative image' which held that memorials were 'only to show a memory to posterity of the persons there buried . . . and not to nourish any kind of superstition'.

Elizabeth's argument loosely follows those made throughout the century by defenders of religious images. Pictures, they contended, served merely as 'reminders' or, in Catholic terms, as references to a 'prototype' - they were a substitution for and shared the status of the images of the memory. The value of images lay in qualities that existed between them and the minds of their beholders. Protestant detractors of images often dwelt on their materiality or objecthood and the possible demotion of the figure represented to mere physicality. These notions are in part reflections of the sense that the representational object physically partook of the nature of its referent. It was the defenders of images who wished to deny them this power, but it is abundantly clear that, particularly in the popular and Protestant mind, there was a strong sense of the investment of subject in portrayal. Rioters spared portraits even before Elizabeth's ruling, surely because to damage them was to damage murderously the person they portrayed; and throughout Elizabeth's reign, abuse of her picture was considered abuse of her, and there were actually assassination attempts made by doing violence to her portrait.

The memorial or documentary portrait neutralises the demand for the 'penetration' and representation of the soul of the sitter, but it may instead partake of his or her nature in a substantive way. In the process of being portrayed one shares oneself not with the artist-viewer, as did Hilliard's flirtatious sitters, but with the object. Returning to the inscription on Richard Wakeman's portrait, firstly, we find that it articulates a certain anxiety about the dangers of such self-investment. Secondly, when his words are combined with those of his wife and set onto the surface of an image, an interplay is set up between the traditional vanity of proud appearance and the vanitas of the object on which that appearance is remade. The painted panel is, essentially, a man-made object of beauty, and as such is destined to decay and perish. There seems to be far less certainty in northern Europe than in Italy that art can triumph in its paragone with time; this could in part be due to the reminders of iconoclasm that art is always subject to destruction, but I think also to a more persistent consideration of the status of the work of art as object, perishable rather than transcendent. As such, the work of art is in itself a reminder of transience, a vanitas.

The following poem appears inscribed on a portrait by Peake, dating from thirty years after Eworth's Wakemans:

The life that natures lends death soone destroi(es)
and momencie is that lifis remembrans
This seeminge life which pourful art supplieth
is but a shadowe, though lifes perfect semblans
But that trewe life which vertue doth restore
is life in deed, and lasteth euermore.

Here, the viewer is explicitly reminded of the limitations of the portrait: first, that there are two sides to life, that which is visible and passing and that which is invisible and enduring. The image, whether of 'remembrans' or of paint, is only concerned with the first of these and so is by definition flawed, imperfect. Art is termed 'pourful', but this seems to be ironic, for it is twice removed from the 'trewe life' of the last couplet and only gives a shadow of the life that is mortal. The term shadow is multivalent; art is the shadow of a life which is itself shadowed by death. In the Wakemans' portraits, the figured shadows curiously play the roles of both signifiers and metaphors. In the normal fiction of pictorial representation the shadow is a strategy of illusionism used to denote the
corporeality of the body. But I think we have reason to read these shadows as a deliberate addi- tion by Eworth to the vanitas iconography of the works, for shadows are not part of his usual scheme of portrayal. In the Wakeman portraits the resolute placement of the words on the surface of the panel, directly above the shadows, undercuts their efficacy in defining the space of and surrounding the bodies; instead, the shadows take on a metaphorical role, pictorialising the fact of mortality. Paradoxically cast in a dual role of asserting life and symbolising its loss, the shadow replicates at one more remove the status of the portrait itself, which represents its subject as alive, testifies to present vitality but, in the very act of picturing, inevitably reminds the viewer of death.

**VANITY: THE PAINTED LADY**

In his *Treatise of the Images of Christ* (1567), the Catholic theologian Nicolas Sanders explains that like all beings man has both an immutable nature and a physical substance and that only the second may be pictured: ‘The cause why the shape of our Persons may be represented by arte, and not our natures, is, for that, the Artificer who worketh by his own knowledge, is able to conceive in his understanding, and afterward to forme outwardly that proper shape of every thing which he perceiveth by his senses that it hath’. Sanders here articulates a dichotomy which was common at the time but, none the less, troubling. The Peake portrait is one of many in which words call attention to a missing element in an image, the soul that portraiture is not able to give. It is significant that Peake’s inscription, like most inscriptions of this type, is on the portrait of a man. This brings us back to the question of why the dialogue of vanitas on the Wakeman portraits is directed at Joan Wakeman, why it is she who is charged with vaunting her beauty to the gaze and brush of the painter, while Richard Wakeman’s presentation of himself goes unchallenged.

Portraiture’s abilities are relegated to the level of surface appearances, and this takes on a particular pressure in the portrayal of a woman, for woman is defined as *being* appearance. We have seen this assumption at work in the ‘exteriority’ of traditional female portraiture; the concept is excused or explained by Christian–Aristotelian dichotomising (soul: man/body:woman) underscored by biblical principles. Its real psycho-social underpinnings co-operated in fundamental ways with the power structures of Tudor England, but for the purposes of this essay it will be sufficient to consider what is revealed by the rhetoric of the subject. While man was created whole and perfect, it was said, woman was created as the mere image of him, defective, incomplete; the traits she lacked were the ‘immutable’ aspects of the soul. To picture a woman, then, was truly to capture and partake of her essence. Woman and picture become parallel, as both exist as images of man, dependent upon him, lacking those things which are immortal.

A further common ground between woman and painting is that both are defined in terms of the senses, with all the attractions and dangers this denotes. The remarrying widow, discussed above, was behaving in a typically female manner since her lack of reason caused her to be excessively passionate and desirous of gratification. Woman is morally repulsive yet endlessly fascinating and attractive as the embodiment of what is sensual in mankind. Sensuality and pure appearance come together in man’s greatest charge against woman – echoing, in our context, his greatest charge against painting – that she is vain. The vanity of woman and the vanitas of the image may seem to embody different qualities, but they are conflated both metaphorically and actually in significant ways.

‘Painting’ was an ambivalent term in sixteenth-century England; terms such as ‘curious’ or ‘artificial’ were used to distinguish perspectival images, while the simple word ‘painting’ referred to cosmetics – and to non-illusionistic art such as conventional portraiture. England’s greatest painters were women, which is to say that the vice of using cosmetics was a particularly feminine one. Cosmetics were comparable to painted pictures not merely because of their physical properties but also in the status of the ‘image’ they each created and in the response they were intended to elicit from their viewer. The artifice of images, said the iconoclasts, was inferior to and hindered the handwork of God; the artifice of cosmetics, the moralists cried, offended God by adulterating his workmanship. In painting herself, the woman audaciously creates a work of art that purports to correct and outdo that of the Creator, and Stubbes even uses Pliny’s tale of the artist and the cobbler to illustrate this point. The transience of woman’s efforts was stressed: they concentrated on ‘the beautie of their bodyes, which lasteth but for a time . . . but for the beautie of the soule they care nothing at all’. Finally, women were accused of using cosmetics in order to fashion themselves falsely into objects of appeal, to entice men to lust through beautiful deceits.

Woman is the artificer, the trickster, the allurer, the dealer in that which is superficial yet attractive. Musing on the problems faced by the artist when confronted with his model, Hilliard remarks, ‘howbeit gent or vulgar we are all generally commanded to turne awaye ouer eyes
frome beauty of humayne shape, least it inflame the mind, howe then the
curious drawer wach and as it catch those lovely graces . . . "63 Again, the
problem he sets is redoubled when the sitter is a woman, for then the
'curious drawer' is himself the first viewer to be snared by external beauty
in a series of painted faces; he must confront in the original the very
qualities that he hopes to create artfully in its copy. The painter is asked
to make artifice from artifice, the sensual from the sensual, the transitory
from the transitory — indeed, the vain image from a living memento mori.
The painted woman elides neatly with many characteristics of the
portrait, but they are those characteristics that mark it as problematic
and that lead to the questioning of its ability to preserve those strong,
active and enduring traits with which the man liked to consider himself
endowed.

Woman exists as the image of man, created as such by God after He
had created man in his own image.66 Accordingly, the good wife does not
paint herself but instead remakes herself in the image of her husband; he
becomes her 'dayly looking glasse . . . whereto she must always frame
hir owne countenance'.67 In the course of married life, the husband's duty
is to consider the vanity of the superficial being that is his image, his wife;
he must be aware of her artifice and maintain and instruct her in the
judgement she lacks. No wonder a husband like Richard Wakeman takes
the opportunity of their joint representation to instruct his wife, and
through her the viewer, about the vanity of portraiture.

A telling comparison to Eworth's formula is the portrait painted in
1541, possibly by Dirck Jacobsz, in which a husband teaches his wife
about the vanity of life (p. 81).68 Two inscriptions, both directed from
him to her, meditate on the passing of worldly riches. These texts are
visually repeated by the couple's emphatic gestures toward the multitude
of traditional vanitas attributes which litter the table before them. In the
Dutch portrait, however, the wife does not participate in the dialogue but
simply mediates, by her glance, between her husband's discourse and the
viewer. There is none of Eworth's subtle conflation of the couple
portrayed, the fact of their portrayal or the message of the image. Vanity
is emblematized in the depicted items and explicated by the inscribed
words, but the image qua image is not permeated by vanitas, is not
undermined by it. In the Wakemans' case, each sitter gives a part or
moment of the self in the cause of permanence while at the same time
acknowledging the futility of the gesture. As the status of what each gives
must differ, they are represented in separate frames; the wife responds to
her husband, completing and embodying the charge of vanity conveyed
by his image. Eworth's portraits encode assumptions and definitions
which had developed in order to cope with the duality of the sexes, with
the inevitability of decay and with the implications of having a marriage
portrait painted within this system of beliefs.

BROKEN TIME: PORTRAITURE PAIRED AND IM-PAIRED

The inscriptions on the Wakemans' portraits fix the temporality of
the representations, their absolute belonging to a time that is past. At the
same time they admit to the existence of the portrait as an object in
changing time, into which ever-different viewers enter to gaze, remember
and be reminded of the time that has passed and is passing. In the portrait
of Lady Dacre no such words appear within the image proper; their very
absence is important, for there is thus no element that works to deny
illusionism as an attainable goal of the picture. This then enables the
metalinguage of incasement — the image within the image — to work a
purely pictorial ruse that asks similar questions, questions which are,
however, put on a different basis by being asked visually rather than
verbally. The fact of Eworth's pairing here seems to show on one level
that artifice can indeed transcend time: his painting should heal the break that occurred in the Dacres' marriage by reuniting the dead and the living in a single frame. But Eworth's double act of portrayal and re-portrayal is not so simple. Instead, the relative time of the two images and the value of their endurance are problematised, as Eworth reframes the question of portraiture.

The situation of the Fiennes and Neville portraits may be put thus: art and death have fixed the husband in youth; his wife has changed and is now, on another occasion, fixed in her turn. The rupture of time between the two serves not as a memento mori but, as it were, a memento senesce. A stage of life is reached; art intervenes; the resultant image is saved for time to come. This construction assumes that the primary and secondary portraits here function in essentially the same way. But do they? Holbein's portrait is obviously very different in its structure and style from that which encompasses it. To define this difference, we may consider a question which Berthold Hinz has posed about late Renaissance portraiture: does a portrait's 'anti-aesthetic', documentary function conflict irresolvably with the wish to consider it as a work of art? ¹⁰ Hinz implies that what defines a portrait as 'art' rather than 'document' is an acquisitive desire for it on the part of collectors to whom the sitter is unimportant. The problem is one of ambivalence between the 'use' and 'value' orientation of the painted object – a problem because, as the portrait becomes 'art', the name of the sitter it was intended to immortalise may be lost without any harm to the picture in its new status. This kind of transformation did indeed occur in England during the late sixteenth century: Van Mander reports that Holbein's portraits were sought out and purchased by collectors because they were by him, their subjects thus becoming unimportant.¹¹ From the point of view of these later beholders, what we termed the 'occasionalistic', patron-centred character of the portrait is dismissed or rejected in favour of the aesthetic character of authorship.

Having returned to Gadamer's terminology, I would like to introduce a dichotomy he sets up, on which Hinz's materialist-historical division is in fact based. Gadamer proposes a distinction between what he calls the 'copy' and the 'picture'. The goal of the copy is to resemble its original, and we measure its success by the degree to which we recognise the original in it: 'it is its nature to lose its own independent existence and to serve entirely the communication of what is copied' – it cancels itself out by definition of its purpose.¹² Gadamer's 'picture', though, is not merely a means to an end: it is itself what is meant, and it 'affirms its own being in order to let what is depicted exist'.¹³ His definition of the 'copy' seems to fit the commemorative-dynastic type of portraiture which Holbein's painting exemplifies. The face of Lord Dacre is described against an absolutely neutral ground, and no second term is given for interpretative play within the image. The documentary information inscribed upon the portrait's frame cements its status as a copy rather than providing any release from it.

Through the devices by which he incorporates Holbein's work into his own, however, Eworth signals a self-consciousness of artifcing that makes a bid for Lady Dacre's portrait as something different, what Gadamer terms a 'picture'. The care with which Eworth's sitter has been described is certainly important, but the rich symbolism of form and content, the quasi-narrative activity so ambiguously connoted, folds layers of meaning into the image as representation that are absent from a documentary portrait, taking it beyond a function of mere replication. The portrait of Thomas Fiennes serves both as a component of the structure of meaning here and as an element that draws attention to that mode of making meaning by the absence within its own frame.

This is not to suggest that Eworth simply sets up his great predecessor as a sort of straw man off whom to play a type of portraiture which is 'better' in so far as it is non-inscriptive, iconographically rich and psychologically suggestive, but there are, nevertheless, paragones here at a number of levels. Holbein's portrait is a competition with time for both of the sitters and for the artists as well. Van Mander actually concludes his life of Holbein by acknowledging this as a goal of his art but also doubting its efficacy: 'Holbein made the world more beautiful with his noble art. Human life and all worldly things are perishable; they will melt, will be destroyed, will come to an inexorable and unpreventable end. So Holbein died in London, choked by pest, in the year 1554... His body was left rotting, a corpse, soon to disappear, but he left his name and fame to posterity and to an imperishable memory'.¹⁴ Only a few years after the death of his rival on the artistic scene in England, Eworth both pays him homage and attempts to outdo him, helps to preserve his fame (memory) and undercuts it by positioning his work as a portrait qua copy. He absorbs the Fiennes portrait's temporality into his own rhetoric of temporality, validating it by the very fact that it can play such a central role. Indeed, Eworth's strategy of incasement here ultimately suggests that the whole idea that an image can exist purely as a copy is flawed;
even the documentary portrait already carries within itself the potential to become a term in a discourse, be it verbal and historical or, as here, visual and critical.

Holbein’s representation itself plays with image-making, and Eworth repeats and acknowledges the cleverness of its artifice. On the right of Thomas Fiennes’s jacket, the bottom-most fastener slightly overlaps what is thus a partly fictive frame. Paint crosses over the border of illusion and into the world of reality — or, now, into another world of illusion. In thus calling attention to its artifice, Holbein’s portrait itself gestures towards the boundaries of the copy and begins to enter the status of picture, refusing to be ‘cancelled out’. Eworth echoes Holbein’s strategy by encroaching upon the frame of the Fiennes portrait from the space of the primary representation, with the tie creeping over it from above and the tassel overlapping at the side. These sleights, by just breaking the perfect self-enclosure of the framed portrait, anchor it into the space — and the time — of his own image.

Eworth plays out the question of the boundaries of representation and representability on the frame of the painting — that is, on the represented frame of his rival time-slayer Holbein, the frame of a portrait which ‘transcends’ time only to be recaptured in a further attempt to fix an image. The breaking of the Fiennes portrait’s frame signifies its ambivalent function and status here: it is a memory-image that is ‘living’ in the fiction of the thoughts of the surviving widow and also a painted image that claims the ability to fix and preserve the appearance of the dead beyond the time of living memory; it is a copy that serves to resemble and record its sitter in 1540, aged 24, and also a picture that is both a rival and a co-conspirator in Eworth’s complex discourse of time, memory and the image. In the representation in paint of the husband and wife who are divided and yet are one, we find, paradoxically, that the ‘vainy’ of the memorial image which captures only the transient is redeemed when, by the manoeuvres of the artificer, it is transformed into a picture. The feigning artist re-presents a woman who is an image herself as well as a maker of images; he remakes the image made through her memory, an image that is living because of her living absorption into herself of its original. Eworth’s ultimate paragone in his portrayal of Mary Neville is one with the powers of the woman who is his subject. It is in fact precisely by co-operating with those feminine powers and replicating them through his art that he can both fulfil the demands of an occasion which requires the representation of a bridge between present and past time, and offer a new solution to the question of how any portrait conquers future time — not through its physical endurance, but through that supposedly passive, ‘feminine’ memory that is endlessly replicating as every viewer, every artist, sees, recalls, remakes.
References


The phrase is from Sonnet 16, see Astrophel and Stella, ed. Max Putzel (Garden City, 1967), p. 16; on female beauty in sixteenth-century painting see Elizabeth Cooper, 'On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style', Art Bulletin, 50 (1976), 374–94; the poetic tradition of praising the individual perfection of each part of the woman’s body is discussed as a rhetorical strategy of fragmentation and refraction in Nancy Vickers, ‘The Blazon of Sweet Beauty’s best’; Shakespeare’s Lucrece’, Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York, 1985), pp. 95–115.


The relation between heraldry and painting has often been noted; see Roy Strong, The English Icon, pp. 16–17 and Piper, ‘Tudor and Early Stuart Painting’, p. 73. Mason Tung discusses the transformation of heraldic arms into emblems in ‘From Heraldry to Emblem: A Study of Peacham’s Use of Heraldic Arms in Minerva Britannia’, Word and Image, 3 (1987), pp. 86–94. For a discussion of heraldry, emblem and impresa in Tudor pageantry see Alan Young, Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments (Dobbs Ferry, NY, 1987).

Gent, Picture and Poetry 1560–1620, p. 20.

See, for example, the portrait of Letiche Knyollys, Countess of Leicester, attributed to George Gower (Longleat, The Marquess of Bath) in which the dress is embroidered with Leicester’s badge, the ragged staff.


Hendrik Goltzius, Muslin Torquatus; Roy Strong makes this connection in Henry, ill. 43.


Peake’s concerns echo those of modern art historians: ‘... that period should gestate at its close the greatest English-born genius of the human imagination – Shakespeare, rooted so deeply in the English soil yet of such unparalleled and enduring universal relevance – seems entirely proper. But when one looks for this English counterpart in visual arts one looks in vain...’ (italics mine) Piper, ‘Tudor and Early Stuart Painting’, p.62. The privileging of the standards and assumptions of Italian art are deeply involved in these discussions of national pride. Art historians have indulged in a kind of proleptic art history.

Stephen Orgel, The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 10–11; the assumption behind Jones’s stage is that ‘a theater is a machine for controlling the visual experience of the spectator and that the experience is defined by the rules of perspective’, Orgel and Strong, Inigo Jones, I, p. 7. This aspect of perspective is somewhat modified in John Orrell, The Theatres of Inigo Jones and John Webb (Cambridge, 1985), p. 147.

Strong, Henry, pp. 169–70.

For a discussion of the curtain painted with a perspective scene that is dropped before the beginning of the masque, see Orgel and Strong, Inigo Jones, ch. 1, ‘The Poetics of Spectacle’, esp. pp. 18–20.

Strong, Henry, p. 114; Friedman, House and Household, usefully explores the synthesising of different stylistic traditions, pp. 71–134.


Gloria Kury, The Arcadian Mask (forthcoming); Jones’s description of the corporeal body seems to make the transition from body to soul less problematic than Jonson’s sensuous appreciation: ‘so that corporeal beauty, consisting in symmetry, colour, and certain unexpressable graces, shewing in the Queens Majesty, may draw us to the contemplation of the beauty of the soul, unto which it hath analogy’, from Orgel and Strong, Inigo Jones, II, p. 483 and i, ch. 4, ‘Platonic Politics’, esp. p. 5.

See also Isaac Oliver’s Young Lady in Masque Costume (London, Victoria and Albert Museum). For a description of these two miniatures see Jill Finsten, Isaac Oliver (New York, 1981), Vol. ii, pp. 82–3, 94–5.


John Freccero suggests that the laurel, emblem both of the lover's enthrallment and of the poet's triumph, 'stands for a poetry whose real subject matter is its own act and whose creation is its own author', see 'The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics', Diacritics, 5 (1975), 34–40.

I have paraphrased Stephen Greenblatt who discusses this in Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare (Chicago, 1982) pp. 210–1; the importance of this rhetorical strategy to the English Renaissance is explored by Joel Altman, The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama (Berkeley, 1978), pp. 31–106.

Elizabeth Honig, In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing by Hans Eworth

References


2 I find a date of 1558 or very near to it most likely: for reasons which will become clear, it seems that the composition of this portrait must have been linked to the vindication of Thomas Fiennes. Roy Strong dated the work c. 1555 on the evidence of costume both in The English Icon (London/New York, 1966), p. 101, and in Hans Eworth (exh. cat., Leicester/London, 1965), p. 10. A lost pair of portraits by Eworth dated 1557 showed Mary Neville's granddaughter-by-marriage, Anne Wooton, and her husband, Bassingbourne Gaudy; G. Vertue, Notebooks, vol. ii in The Walpole...
References

Society, xx (1931-32), p. 87; perhaps Eworth's successful completion of this commission led to his receiving the other.

In the discussion which follows it should be kept in mind that Eworth was a native of the Low Countries and received his artistic training there, as did many of the other painters active in sixteenth-century England. Thus, although the demands of English patrons and their culture produced a distinct tradition, there was a strong link to continental developments in portraiture.

The portrait of Mary Neville measures 37.7 X 57.8 cm. It is impossible to judge the real size of the portrait of Thomas Fiennes, although the width of its frame relative to the surface of the image indicates that it is quite small. Vermeer recorded that this portrait was after a 'large picture' then owned by the Dacre family (Notebooks, vol. vi, The Walpole Society, xxvi (1931-1931), p. 199), but that could have been the late sixteenth-century copy still in the family (cf. Strong, Hans Eworth, p. 15). My first analysis of the visual complexities of Mary Neville's portrait was much helped by the guidance of Jules Prown.

The portrait of Thomas Fiennes is accepted as being by Holbein by Paul Ganz, The Paintings of Holbein (London, 1956), p. 251, cat. no. 108, and, tentatively, by John Rowlands, Holbein (Oxford, 1985), p. 226, cat. no. 1.17. While this cannot be firmly established, since the painting no longer exists, it does not seem unlikely. The painting fits well with Holbein's 'autore from c. 1540; a portrait by him from 1538 is inscribed on the frame in a very similar way (Ganz, The Paintings of Holbein, no. 100), and Fiennes would have been in a position to commission his portrait from the best painter available.

Hamlet IV, v.

While prayer books had long been luxury items for noble ladies, a concern with women's reading religious texts was new to the Renaissance. Erasmus and Vives, whose thoughts on women were especially important to the English upper classes, had both argued that women should read the Bible. See Suzanne W. Hull, Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475-1640 (San Marino, Calif., 1982), pp. 91-105; Ian Maclean, The Renaissance Notion of Woman (Cambridge, 1980), p. 22; Pearl Hogrefe, Tudor Women: Commoners and Queens (Ames, Iowa, 1975), ch. 8, 'Women with a Sound Classical Education'.

I do not know of any other sixteenth-century English portrait which shows a woman writing. A closed or half-open devotional book becomes a fairly common prop in female portraiture only several decades later; see for instance the portrait of Anne Wyatt, Mrs Twisden (Col. C. Wynne Finch), and several portraits by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger from the early seventeenth century.


On marriage portraiture see David R. Smith, Masks of Wedlock (Ann Arbor, 1982) and E. de Jongh, Portretten van Echt en Trouw (exh. cat., Haarlem, 1986). Both of these deal with Dutch portraiture; no comparable work on English portraits exists, but many of their observations are valuable for its study.

For an overview of this debate see the introduction to Ralph A. Houblouche, The English Family 1450-1700 (London/New York, 1984).

The strongest argument for a steady 'development' of companionate marriage was made by Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (London, 1977). For a critique of his teleology see the review by Alan Macfarlane in History and Theory, xiv/1 (1979), 103-26. Stone's schema implies that the new ideas flowed from the wealthier classes downwards; for an opposing view see Macfarlane's Marriage and Love in England 1300-1840 (Oxford, 1986); he also criticises Stone on these grounds (review, pp. 109-10). See also John R. Gillis, For Better, For Worse, British Marriages 1600 to the Present (Oxford/New York, 1985), p. 14; Linda T. Fitz, "What Says the Married Woman?", Mosaic, xix (1980), 1-22.

Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 102.

Macfarlane, Marriage and Love, ch. 9, 'Romantic Love', and p. 46.


This despite K.M. Davies's argument that the advice offered in these books frequently echoes that offered in earlier ones: 'Continuity and Change in Literary Advice on Marriage' in Marriage and Society, ed. R.B. Outhwaite (London, 1981), pp. 48-80. Note that her goal is to define a more 'popular' discourse of marriage: the Tudor sources she uses were intended for priests as counselling guides. The books I discuss below were intended for the elite circles in which most of Eworth's patrons moved.


(London, 1568).

On other proponents of affective marriage see Macfarlane, Marriage and Love, pp. 134 ff. and Davies, 'Continuity and Change'; on less 'affective' writers see Maclean, The Renaissance Notion of Woman, p. 59.

Fitz, "What Says the Married Woman?", p. 9.

See below, p. 67.

On obedience as a prime virtue, see Hull, Chaste, Silent and Obedient, passim; Hogrefe, Tudor Women, pp. 3-9. Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, argues that the dominance of husbands over wives actually increased during this period; he also points out the apparent contradiction between this and the rhetoric of the affective marriage.

It is sometimes claimed that this rhetoric occurred in reaction to an abundance of 'disobedient' women in the surrounding society (Fitz, "What Says the Married Woman?"), p. 23; Hogrefe, Tudor Women, p. 8); while this seems too simplistic, tension certainly existed at some level.

For example see H. Bullinger, The Christian State of Matrimony. Wherein husbands and wives may learn to keepe house together with love, trans. M. Coverdale (n.p., 1541; reprint Amsterdam/Norwood, N.J., 1974), p. lvi verso (with all scriptural bases) and passim.

Tilney, Brief & pleasant discourse, p. B vi verso.

See Barbara J. Todd, 'The remarrying widow: a stereotype reconsidered' in Women in English Society 1550-1800, ed. Mary Prior (London/New York, 1985), pp. 54-92. She finds that not until after 1570 did upper-class men begin making wills penalising their wives for remarrying, a trend that followed by those of other ranks (p. 73). However, her study only concerns the small town of Abingdon in Berkshire where local gentlemen were surely following a trend begun in still higher circles. On wealthy widows in general see Hogrefe, Tudor Women, p. 23; on the economic situation of widows see Vivien Bradby, 'Widows in Late Elizabethan London: Remarriage, Economic Opportunity and Family Orientations' in The World We Have Gained, ed. L. Bonfield et al. (Oxford, 1986), pp. 122-46.

On the dichotomy of woman as sensual and emotional vs. man as rational and judgmental see Maclean, The Renaissance Notion of Woman, p. 42 and passim; on the lecherous widow stereotype see Woodbridge, Women and the English Renaissance, pp. 177-8.

References


28 Ibid., p. liv verso. On the wife as custodian, see Maclean, The Renaissance Notion of Woman, pp. 58-9; Hogrefe, Tudor Women, pp. 59 ff.; for contemporary praise of women for performing this duty well, see Woodbridge, Women and the English Renaissance, p. 37.

29 Barrett-Lennard, An Account, p. 207; information derived from the History of Families of Barrett and Lennard by Thomas, Lord Dacre, c. 1776. I am grateful to Julia Walworth for helping me to obtain this information.

30 On the identification of the sitter in this painting see Susan Foister, 'Noibility Reclaimed,' The Antique Collector, iv (1986), 58-60. My thanks to Anne Thackeray for directing me to this article.

31 Until recently the painting was in fact thought to be a marriage portrait, representing Frances Brandon and her scandalously young husband and former master of the horse, Adrian Stokes. See Strong, Hans Eworth, pp. 4-5 (no. 18). The only other mother/son portrait of which I know which uses this format is, significantly, a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots and James VI (col. Duke of Atholl, Blair Castle, dated 1585); although far less subtle than Eworth, this anonymous artist too places the royal mother on the left and slightly behind her son. It is interesting to note that Gregory Fiennes was already married when Eworth painted this portrait, another fact which his mother erases in claiming her place in the family image (Barrett-Lennard, An Account, p. 208). It is further recorded that Gregory’s wife, Anne Sackville, complained that he was kept so busy by his mother (DNB, vol. xviii, p. 428).

32 This placement probably derives from the rules of heraldry (Smith, Masks of Wedlock, p. 47) and thence from the genesis of marriage portraiture in donor portraits on triptych wings (Hinz, 'Ehepaarbildnisse,' pp. 143-5). The heraldic formula is based on the man being shown to the woman’s right, in the more important position. On left-right in marriage portraits see also de Jongh, Portretten, p. 56 and passim.

33 Within Eworth’s œuvre the only exception to this, apart from Mary Neville, is his portrait of Mary Fitzalan (Strong, Hans Eworth, no. 26): she was a notoriously learned young lady who translated Latin and Greek and hence had particularly masculine abilities.

34 In her recent book Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England (London/Sydney, 1984), Clare Gittings discusses this dilemma: see ch. 2, ‘Funerals and Faith’. She does consider the issue of preserving the memory of the dead but concentrates on social aspects of funeral ceremonies.


36 Vives, Instruction of a chresten woman, p. liv verso.

37 Ibid.

38 A good example of this is the portrait by George Gower said to be of Lady Walsingham (1572, Col. Viscount de l’Isle) in which the woman holds open the miniature of a young man: see also the portrait of Lady Catherine Grey (before 1568, Petworth, cat. no. 251); the portrait of Elizabeth, wife of Sir Walter Raleigh, as Cleopatra (Col. Basil Oxenden); and a portrait of Frances Howard, Duchess of Richmond and Lennox (1653, Arundel Castle): the last-named is also shown reading a book.

39 Maclean, The Renaissance Notion of Woman, pp. 42-64. The theory was that female humours were moist and cold; these produce a retentive memory because impressions register easily and remain fixed upon moist, cold things. Memory was in fact often defined as ‘passive intellect’ and hence obviously the domain of the passive sex.

40 This possible connection was first brought to my attention by the members of Margaret Ferguson’s seminar on ‘Women Writers of the Renaissance,’ to whom I presented an early version of this paper. For women’s biographies of their husbands, see those listed in Patricia Crawford, ‘Provisional Checklist of Women’s Published Writings 1600-1700’, in M. Prior, ed., Women in English Society, pp. 232-64; see also Elaine Hobby, Virtue of Necessity, English Women’s Writing 1649-88 (London, 1988), ch. 3, ‘Autobiographies and Biographies of Husbands’.

41 On thought as vision in the Renaissance, see Forrest G. Robinson, The Shape of Things Known (Cambridge, Mass., 1974). For a strong account of memory as a visual process see, for instance, the work of Nicolas Sanders, discussed below.

42 The portrait of Joan Wakeman is fractionally longer than that of her husband: possibly the latter was cut down at some point, as the two did not remain in the same collection.

43 On the Wakemans see DNB, vol. lxx, ed. S. Lee (London, 1899), pp. 1-3. Richard Wakeman’s uncle, the Bishop of Gloucester, had made the family fortune by going along wholeheartedly with Henry VIII and Cromwell at the time of the Reformation. It has sometimes been argued, based on the fact that Eworth was patronised by Mary Tudor but not by Elizabeth, that he must have been a Catholic; the Wakeman family background argues against this, as does the fact that he painted the portraits of the Earl and Countess of Moray (Strong, Hans Eworth, no. 34 and 35) in 1561, shortly after their marriage had been performed by John Knox.

44 On the phenomenon of inscriptions, see Michel Butor, Les Mots dans la peinture (Geneva, 1969).

45 On this see Ariés, The Hour of our Death.

46 An early example of this is a Family Portrait by Frans Floris from 1561 (Lier, Museum Wyuys-Van Campen-Caroly). Perhaps the most famous and complex dynastic family portrait is the generesque Family Making Music by Jan Miere Molenaer (Haarlem, Frans Halsmuseum), discussed in De Jongh, Portretten, cat. no. 69 and by Berthold Hinz, ‘Das Familienbildnis des J.M. Molenaer in Haarlem; Aspekte zur Ambivalenz der Porträtfunktion,’ Städel Jahrbuch, ns. 4 (1975), 207-16. For a very different British example see the portrait of the family of Lady Anne Clifford (Westmorland, Appleby Castle: 1661).

47 On the craft quality of Holbein’s work, note for example the grounds on which Van Mander praises him in his Life— the quantity of the master’s production, his ability in all media, including what we now consider ‘minor arts,’ see Karel van Mander, Lives of the Dutch and Flemish Painters (1604), trans. C. van de Waal (New York, 1936), p. 89. The emphasis on craftsmanship is clear in the ‘practical’ sections of Hilliard’s Treatise on the Art of Limning, ed. R.K.R. Thornton and T.G.S. Cain (Ashington, 1981), but is also strong in the theoretical sections, despite a surface gloss of continental ideas. For an interesting example, note his transformation of Pliny (p. 62); he changes the story of how the Romans forbade slaves to paint, used by continental theorists to show art’s inherited nobility, into a guild-like concern for product quality. My reading of these northern Renaissance art theoretical texts owes much to the teaching of my adviser, Celeste Brusati.

48 Hilliard, Treatise on the Art of Limning, p. 76.

49 The concept is articulated at least as early as Pliny; for Renaissance theorists see M. Jenkins, The State Portrait (New York, 1947), p. 4; David Rosand, ‘The Portrait, the Courtyard, and Death’ in Maclaren, Castiglione. The Ideal and the Real in Renaissance Culture, ed. R.W. Henning and D. Rosand (New Haven, 1981), pp. 91-139; for tomb sculpture see Lawrence Stone, Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages (Harmondsworth, 1955), passim.


51 See for example the Catholic pro-image tract of Nicolas Sanders in which he easily switches back and forth between physical and mental images in his defence of the
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74 I assume that the device of the fastener was in the original portrait since Holbein uses a similar ploy to transgress the boundary of the picture's surface in the portrait of Mary Wyatt, Lady Lee, painted around the same time — Ganz dates it c. 1540 (The Paintings of Holbein, p. 235, cat. no. 112). For suggestions on the function of the frame see Louis Marin, 'The Frame of the Painting or the Semiotic Functions of Boundaries in the Representative Process,' in S. Chatman et al., eds, A Semiotic Landscape (The Hague/Paris/New York, 1979), pp. 777-81.

4 Tamsyn Williams, 'Magnetic Figures': Polemical Prints of the English Revolution

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2 The Diarium, Or Journall: Divided into 12. Jornados In Burlesque Rhime, Or Drolling Verse, with divers other pieces of the same Author (1656), E1669(2), To the Reader.
4 Samuel Richardson, Some brief Considerations On Doctor Fieldes his Book, intituled, The Dipper Dift, Wherein In some measure is discovered his many great and false accusations of divers persons, Anabaptists, with an Answer to them, and some brief Reasons of their Practice (1645), E720(422), p. 18; Thomas Styrty, A Rot Amongst The Bishops, Or, A Terrible Tempesst in the Sea of Canterburie, Set forth in lively Emblems to please the judicious Reader (1641), E1102(4), To the reader.
5 John Vicars, Coleman-street Conclave Visited (1648), E435(6).
6 Mark Painter, Neues From Avemns (1642), E498(9), To the reader.
7 Edward Derling, A Discoverie of a Proper Sacrifice, In Way of Answere to A.B.C. Jesuite, another Anonymus of Rome: Whereunto the reason of the now Publication, and many observable passages relating to these times are prefixed by way of Preface (1644), E31(13), Preface.
8 The Court Mercurie (22 June — 2 July, 1644), E35(8).
10 A Terrible Plot Against London And Westminster Discovered (1642), E31(9).
11 J.D. Peter, Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature (Oxford, 1956), p. 100.
13 Peter, Complaint and Satire, p. 113.
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18 Corsin-Copia, Or, Roome for a Ram-head (1644), E515(6).
19 The Kingdomes Monster Uncloaded from Heaven: The Papish Conspirators, Malignant Plotters, and cruel Irish, in one Body to destroy Kingsdome, Religion and Lawes; But under colour to defend them, especially the Irish, who having destroyed the Protestants There, fly hither to defend the Protestant Religion Here, 6698(62).
21 See P. Vincent, The Lamentations Of Germany (1638), 1077-79.